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Buhari, CJN, Gowon commission flyover, High Court Complex

By PALANG KASMI

It was a gathering of personalities as President Muhammad Buhari commissioned the British American Junction flyover constructed by Governor Simon Bako Lalong of Plateau State.

Other projects that were commissioned in the state were the Plateau State High Court Complex and Multi Door Courthouse, which was performed by the Chief

Justice of Nigeria, Olukayode Ariwoola.

The British American junction flyover was commissioned on Friday May 19, 2023 by the President virtually from the Council Chambers, Presidential Villa, Abuja and broadcast live.

The event had in attendance former Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, Deputy Governor of Plateau State, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden,

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Ahmed Idris Wase, House of Reps member representing Pankshin, Kanke, Kanam, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Gagdi.

The heavyweights that graced the occasion include Head of Service, Plateau State, Engr. Sunday Hyat, APC Party Chairman, Hon. Rufus Bature, commissioners, top government functionaries, political office holders and well-wishers.

At exactly 3:19 pm, the

President joined the commissioning ceremony virtually, commending Governor Lalong for completing the design and construction of interchange (Flyover) at the British American Junction, and the dualisation of 1.7km road from British American Junction to Lamingo Junction roundabout.

Other projects commissioned by the president were the Radio-Diagnostic and Imaging Center at Plateau State Specialist Hospital Jos, and the NSCDC

Command and Staff College, Lamingo, Jos.

Buhari apologised for not coming to Plateau physically due to tight schedules and commended the APC led government of Lalong for executing the laudable projects.

The president was optimistic that the road will not only end the suffering of citizens but will boost economic activities in the state.

He said other projects



Buhari

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Mangu killings: MDA raises alarm over ethnic cleansing

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE apex body of Mwaghavul Development Association (MDA), has raised alarm over the senseless and callous killings of its people in unprovoked attacks, describing it as a systematic genocide and deliberate ethnic cleansing of minority tribes in Nigeria.

The National President of Mwaghavul Development Association and the Makaman Panyam, Sir Joseph Gwankat (KSM), raised the alarm while addressing journalists at the World Press Briefing held at the state headquarters of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Jos, the Plateau State capital Friday.

The National President said, "Today, we want the world to know that what is happening to us can best be described as genocide. It is systematic and deliberate ethnic cleansing of minority tribes in Nigeria and we cannot allow this to continue.

"We are calling on our people to arise and defend yourselves, your God-given land and properties with all that you have. We will not leave our land of heritage, the only place we can call our own to anybody. We have no other place to run to.

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Plateau State Governor and Chairman, Northern Governors Forum, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, CON (left) admiring one of the copies of The Nigeria Standard newspapers publication during the commissioning of PPC Cityline Press Machine Photo: DANLADI DUK

Biden announces nine-man presidential delegation for Tinubu's inauguration

United State President, Joe Biden, has announced a list of Presidential delegations to attend the inauguration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Monday, May 29, 2023, in Nigeria.

The delegation, which will be led by Secretary of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Marcia

L. Fudge, was announced in a White House statement on Monday night.

This is coming one week after the United States Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, called Tinubu and assured him of a cordial working relations between both countries.

The full list of the delegation includes David Greene, Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., U.S. Embassy Abuja; Honourable Sydney Kamlager-Dove, United States Representative (D), California; and Honourable Marisa Lago, Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, U.S.

Department of Commerce. Others are General Michael E. Langley, Commander of U.S. Africa Command; Honourable Enoch T. Ebong, Director, U.S. Trade and Development Agency; Honourable Mary Catherine Phee, Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of African

Affairs, U.S. Department of State; Honourable Judd Devermont, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs, National Security Council; and Honourable Monde Muyangwa, Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Africa, U.S. Agency for International Biden

News

Buhari, CJN, Gowon commission flyover, High Court Complex



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executed by the governor in the health and other sectors will promote development of the state. And gave the assurance that he has approved the sum of N6.6bn Naira as refund to Plateau government for some federal road projects executed by the governor.

While condemning the cases of isolated attacks in villages in Plateau where innocent lives were lost, Buhari praised Governor Lalong for working hard to restore peace and stability on the Plateau.

In his remarks, Governor Lalong said the projects being commissioned are among over 35 projects executed by his administration.

He said in 2015, when his government came on board, it inherited uncompleted projects, completed some, and initiated some new ones

in order not to waste public resources.

"The British American Junction was constructed to solve the nightmare people faced due to heavy traffic" said Lalong as he thanked the president for putting the state at heart in areas like appointments and other interventions.

He prayed for the refund of funds used for the federal roads, including the British American Junction Flyover which is a federal road and gateway to the North East.

Lalong said despite scarcity of funds, his government took the bold step to construct the road within a record time of 12 months.

Earlier during the Commissioning of the Jos High Court Complex, and Indoor Multi door Courthouse, CJN Ariwoola, who was represented by President of

the Court of Appeal, Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem described the edifice as a state of the art facility that will go a long way in facilitating the dispensation of Justice to the people.

The CJN said as a person who has served in all arms of government as Lawyer, Legislator and Governor of Plateau, Lalong has demonstrated the will to serve his people.

Chief Judge of Plateau, Justice David Mang said "This is a remarkable day in the Judiciary and State," recalling that the old building had existed for over 60 years, since pre-colonial times.

Chairman, Nigerian Bar Association, Barr. Izang Aware called for the preservation of the old structure as a monument. He commended the governor for the edifice. "For completing the projects, the governor has given the judiciary its prestigious status as an arm of government", he stated.

Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Chrisantus Ahmadu while speaking said "The projects are in line with the Lalong Rescue administration's policy thrust which believes in continuity and completion of inherited projects, so that the state resources do not go to waste".

Nigeria to tackle flood disasters with N3.4tn -Committee

The Presidential Flood Committee, on Monday, announced that Nigeria would need about N3.4tn to tackle flood disasters across the country, particularly during the rainy season.

Chairman of the committee, who doubles as Minister of Water Resources, Suleiman Adamu, announced this during a press briefing in Abuja, while presenting the recommendations of the committee as contained in a report put together by his team.

The committee, which was established by President Muhammadu Buhari, also recommended the establishment of an 18-man National Flood Management Council, to be chaired by the Vice President of Nigeria.

Adamu stated that part of the

recommendations to the Federal Government was that an estimated cost of N3.4tn was needed for implementing the proposed 10 strategies contained in the report.

He said the council was necessary because there had not been any one that was set up to address the flood disasters across the country.

"This council is expected to carry out functions that would mitigate against any level of flood disaster, and some of these functions include advising the President on issues pertaining to the declaration of state of emergency based on flood categorisation," he stated.

He said the proposed 18-man National Flood Management Council would

also deal with any other matter that would be directed by the President.

"The council is also to source and provide funding on all flood related matters. It is to coordinate flood related matters in the country," the minister stated.

The committee called for multi-sectoral collaboration for the mitigation and management of floods in Nigeria.

Adamu said the committee recommended 10 strategic plans, which include a robust early warning system that contained the dynamics of rainfall, catchment characteristic and anthropogenic activities

The committee stated that there was the need for data acquisition and multi-sectoral sharing of integrated flood control information.

The committee, however, pointed out that the federal, state and Local Governments had not invested adequately in flood management infrastructure, but had been investing on post-disaster projects.

It therefore stated that to curb flooding, adequate funding strategies had to be established, which include annual budgets, ecological funds, natural resource development funds, among others.



we do not know those we saw recently in our communities.

"They are mercenaries brought to grab our ancestral land. They looked strange and moved in group and cannot speak our common Hausa or Mwaghavul languages and you expect us to believe that they are not hired killers squad? As it is now over twenty thousand (20,000) people are displaced and over one hundred and twenty-five (125) people killed with some bodies yet to be recovered", the President enthused.

Mangu killings: MDA raises alarm over ethnic cleansing

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"The humanitarian situation is overwhelming and pathetic. People are either squatting with relatives, neighbours, in churches and other available public places. They need food, toiletries, medication and places where they can rest their heads.

"There is trauma and psychological depression. There is fear of even their safety where they are taking shelter as the threats spread across the

local government and these are beyond the reach of Mwaghavul Development Association and Mangu Local Government Council.

"We are therefore seeking for help from spirited individuals, corporate organisations, NGOs and the international communities to help ameliorate the suffering of our people and what they are going through at the moment. Government should take immediate

steps to end these callous killings in the land", he emphasized.

The apex body has unanimously blamed the Police for demonstrating low capacity and political will to secure minority tribes in Nigeria, stressing that, there was strong need for an institutionalized state policing in all states and communities across Nigeria.

It however, called for the integration of the

vigilantes and Hunters Association into the state Operation Rainbow to assist in information gathering and proper protection of people and also build synergy between the communities, the people to secure their families.

While calling on the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to urgently mobilize resources to cushion the

suffering of these victims, Gwamkat said, "We wish to encourage our people to remain steadfast, firm and unshakable in the defense of ourland.

"We have never at any time left our land in the pursuit of any perceived enemies to attack and kill them, but enemies of the state mobilized themselves at regional, national and subnational levels to attack us. We know one another individually as a family and as a community, but

Northern Governors elect Yahaya Inuwa as new Chairman

The Northern Governors Forum have announced Gombe Governor, Yahaya Inuwa as it's new Chairman.

Inuwa replaces Plateau Governor, Simon Bako Lalong, who piloted affairs of the 19 Northern Governors that make up the NGF.

Announcing the new Chairman to newsmen Tuesday, May 23, 2023, after a valedictory meeting held at Transcorp Hilton Abuja, Plateau Governor Lalong appreciated the Governors for the privilege given to him to lead the NGF.

He appreciated his predecessor, and Vice President-elect, Senator Kashim Shettima for laying a good foundation for the forum before he took over the mantle of leadership.

Lalong said he dealt with many issues affecting the

region like kidnapping, insurgency, banditry, poverty, among others that affected the economy of the region, however stressing that with support of the Federal Government (FG) and Security agencies, they did their best to address the issues.

Governor Lalong urged the incoming and old governors to work with the FG to address the almajiri debacle and improve health, educational, economic, social, and other challenges bedeviling the region.

He appraised his leadership by stressing that during his tenure, the voice of the NGF was heard because together with other Governors and stakeholders, they engaged the traditional institution in governance, and worked on peace mediation across the

country for the unity of the nation.

"The North recorded huge success in exploration of oil in Gombe, Bauchi, Kogi, Nassarawa state, while licenses for oil exploration is anticipated in Plateau, Borno, Plateau and other states" he noted.

While congratulating the newly elected governors of the Forum for coming on board, he appreciated the fruitful partnerships the NGF enjoyed from donor agencies like the WHO, World Bank, including support from Secretaries of the State Governments (SGS), headed by SGS of Plateau State, Prof. Danaldi Atu, and Wife's of Governors for complimenting their activities.

The new Chairman, Governor Yahaya Inuwa in his acceptance speech thanked God for the

opportunity given him to serve and commended his colleagues for doing so much to address many social issues like security, religious and ethnic conflicts affecting the north.

While promising to sustain the tempo, the new NGF Chairman assured to work on the good precedence and legacies left by his predecessors to create development of the North including working with investors to ensure more States in the North commence oil and mineral exploration.

He commended the Governor of Plateau and his immediate predecessor Shettima for giving the NGF a great leadership that has led to the achievement of many developmental milestones in Northern Nigeria.



Governor Lalong



Business & Economy

RIPAN and burden of tackling rice smuggling

Nigeria is one country where the smuggling of foreign goods of all kinds is rife. The country's porous land borders are gateways for criminals better known as smugglers to bring in all sorts of contrabands, ABDULSALAM MAHMUD writes.

ARE the contrabands only injurious to the citizens' physical and mental health? Absolutely no! Some of them, like small and light weapons, whose proliferation across many parts of the country is frightening, are tools for snuffing out lives.

They have since become the prized assets of terrorists, armed bandits, and kidnapers, to mention a few of the daredevil criminals terrorizing many hapless Nigerians. As a staple food, rice production in the country would have since become a gold mine.

But producing it locally, especially on a massive commercial level, has become an uphill task. It is being threatened by smuggling. Less nutritious rice varieties cultivated in other parts of the world are finding their way to Nigeria.

In recent years, the Rice Processors Association of Nigeria, RIPAN, has waged a war against foreign rice, flooding many markets across the country. Though relative successes have been achieved in tackling the menace of rice smuggling into the country, the menace still thrives.

Between January and September 2016 alone, the Nigeria Customs Service seized 5.85 million kilogrammes of rice smuggled in through the land borders, a Nigerian newspaper, in 2017, reported. That translates to 117,000 bags in 50kg packages, the newspaper observed.

"The spokesperson for the NCS, Mr. Joseph Attah, stated that the service made rice seizures 1,933 times in 2016. The total duty paid value of those seizures is N1,299,433,530 (\$3.5m)

"Between January and June 2017 alone, the NCS had already intercepted large scale smuggled rice 1,156 times. The seizures have combined DPV of N746,977,000 (\$2m).

"Yet, findings suggest that these seizures are mere tips of the iceberg compared with the actual amount of smuggled rice which makes it into the Nigerian market," the tabloid asserted in its published story titled, "Inside Nigeria's multi-billion naira rice smuggling business".

According to a post on JOURNALISTS FOR TRANSPARENCY, a news blog, Nigeria exported more food than it imported, in the 1960s. The blog equally observed that, "In 2011, Nigeria was the world's second biggest importer of rice, bringing in about 2.5 million tons of rice.

"In early 2013, in an effort to regain food self-sufficiency, the



government increased the tax on imported rice from 50 to 110 percent, a 60 percent hike. The tax was meant to encourage locally produced and processed rice and wean the country off imported rice altogether before a full ban in 2015".

Equally, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, around December 2021, was reported in the media to have said that about two million metric tons of rice is currently being imported or smuggled into the country.

Vice Chairman of the Committee, Muhammad Enagi, disclosed this at a meeting with multi-stakeholder group on rice council advocacy bill promotion.

The interactive meeting was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – Global Environment Facility (GEF), in collaboration with Women Farmers Advancement Network (WOFAN), among others. Enagi stated that Nigeria's rice rose from 3.7 million metric tons in 2017 to 5.0 metric tons in 2021.

He said, "In spite of this, 6.7 million metric tons of rice is consumed in Nigeria annually, resulting in a deficit of about two million metric tons which is either imported or smuggled illegally into the country".

According to him, "Nigeria should consider putting in place a National Rice Development Council and a comprehensive

national rice development roadmap that will guide the country into self-sufficiency and export".

Not too long ago, RIPAN, at a press conference in Abuja, last month, also bemoaned the persistent importation of rice into the country. Andy Ekwelem, Director General of RIPAN, was speaking some few days after an investigative report by Economic Confidential on, "How Illicit Rice Importation is Threatening FG's Agricultural Sector Interventions".

Ekwelem lamented that, though the country's rice industry may have enjoyed considerable support from the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, all is still not well with the agro sub-sector.

He noted that rice smuggling across the land borders is the bane of the rice sub-sector, in Nigeria.

He said that because rice is a staple food for Nigerians, smugglers take it as an a-rated trade item and consequently smuggle millions of tons of finished packaged rice from India, Thailand and other southeast Asian countries into the country, from Nigeria's porous borders with Benin Republic, Niger Republic and Cameroon.

But the gospel truth is that Nigeria is endowed with arable land for the cultivation of any

kind of food crop. It should have little to do with smuggling of agricultural products. This reality has long been affirmed by both local and international agricultural institutions.

A worried Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank (ADB), but as Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Adesina, in 2016, observed that, "Nigeria has no business importing rice... We have a massive amount of land, we have water, we have cheap labor, but we're using these things to make a market for others.

"To make Nigeria a world producer of food, we had to reposition agriculture away from 'farming' [towards] a money making business."

It is however exciting to know that RIPAN, among other stakeholders in Nigeria's rice industry, has been unrelenting in its crusade of ending the importation of rice into the country. This, it has done with an uncommon panache, patriotic zeal and matchless commitment.

At the press conference it held last month in Abuja, the agricultural body had a word for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, President-Elect, on how to swiftly tame rice smugglers and their 'vicious' business.

The incoming administration must devise a new strategy of dealing with these economic

saboteurs if the Government really wants the huge investments of both the Government of Nigeria and the private sector in the rice subsector to survive, it said.

Above all, RIPAN is hoping that Tinubu's administration will follow through some of the laudable policies of the current administration, as well as design and launch new ones to further strengthen and sustain the Nigeria rice industry.

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Business & Economy

Reps task FG on solution to power interruption

HOUSE of Representatives has expressed worry over the incessant total collapse of power supply nationwide.

To this end, the House urged the Federal Government through the Ministry of Power and Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) to find a lasting solution to the issue of power distribution and supply across the country.

The resolution came on the heels of a motion under matters of urgent of public importance by Hon. Unyime Idem representing Ukanafun Oruk Anam federal constituency of Akwa Ibom State at the Tuesday plenary.

Presenting the motion, Idem said the House was "worried about the frequency and incessant interruption of power supply across the nation in the past weeks, which has been on the increase, thus disrupting businesses and lives of Nigerians who are equally burdened with several tariff increments."

He said "recently, the Federal Government through the Transmission Company of Nigeria and the Market Operator have begun disconnecting electricity distribution companies (Discos) that are not complying with the operation codes and guidelines."

"The Market Operator, a division of Transmission Company of Nigeria, has reportedly served some of the Discos notices of disconnection from the national grid due to their inability and failure to comply with operation ethics."

"Unfortunately, it was gathered that virtually all the distribution companies in Nigeria are defaulting in one area or the other to the detriment of the consumers ranging from non-compliance to the Market Rules with respect to payment of their outstanding invoices, posting of adequate bank guarantees, and forwarding of their active Power Purchase Agreements as the case may be to the MO/TCN for failure to make remittances of ancillary services bills."

The lawmaker warned that millions of electricity consumers in Nigerian homes and communities may be plunged into darkness in the coming weeks as the Federal Government through the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) and the Market Operator (MO) have begun massive disconnection of debtor electricity distribution companies (Discos) from the national grid.

"Unfortunately, the news is already generating unpalatable outburst as over 20,000 members of the Aba Landlords Protection and Development Association (ALPDA) and other Communities have threatened



Aliyu

to mobilize and occupy streets if the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) fails to rescind their decision.

An extension of the grace period of 60 days given the defaulters discos wherewith they are expected to comply with the provisions of the Market Rules with respect to payment of their outstanding invoices, posting of adequate bank guarantees, and forwarding of their active Power Purchase Agreements to the MO/TCN is almost over.

"In the general interest of millions of Nigerians, this House is hereby invited to urge the erring Discos to seize the dialogue opportunity to fix the crisis and ensure that they comply with the market

procedures; provide security deposit when so required to serve as a guarantee of payment for all amounts due from their participants to the TCN, as well as settle, in a timely manner, any payment due.

"The Federal government through the TCN to penalize the erring Discos for failure to remit payment by either freezing their bank accounts or reprimand rather than suffer the masses that have been diligently paying for their power supply," he said.

Adopting the motion, the House mandated its Committee on Power to oversee the implementation of the resolutions and report back within one week.

THE securitisation of the Central Bank of Nigeria's N22.7tn Ways and Means advances to the Federal Government by the Senate may push the interest rates of future debt securities higher, capital market analysts have said.

The Senate had recently approved the extra-budgetary spending of the Federal Government, about one month before the expiration of the regime of the President Muhammadu Buhari.

The decision of the upper legislative house has however elicited varied reactions from experts and stakeholders in the economy.

In the capital market, some experts have said that the perception that the government is unable to meet its debt obligations will drive up interest rates in the debt market.

The Chief Executive Officer of Arthur Stevens Assets Management, Tunde Amolegbe, said apart from boosting the capitalisation of the debt market, interest rates on future debt securities issues would go up.

"The rate on the bond may be issued at a higher interest rate, and since the government interest rate serves as a base rate, subsequent bond rates by corporations may also increase due to the public's perception that the government is unable to service its debts. In other words, the interest rate on future debt securities issues could be greater," he said.

In his submission, investment professional, Ayodeji Ebo, stated the fixed income market might experience high yields if the incoming government limits reliance on CBN's Ways and

Senate's N22.7tn loan approval may raise bond rates



Buhari

Means and goes to the debt market.

Ebo said, "If the new government limits their support via Ways and Means by the CBN, then we should expect more borrowings due to the budget deficit of over N10tn which will lead to high yields in the fixed income market."

Bashing the CBN and FG for the advances, which he called a financial crime, capital market operator and Executive Vice Chairman of Highcap Securities Limited, said, "Since the earlier illegal advances to FGN were inflationary, it will reverse inflationary pressure on the economy. However, FGN will now contend with a higher debt obligation to the investing public which it cannot afford to default on."

"These W&M advances have been recklessly and criminally undertaken by FGN and CBN making this government a misfit in financial management. They are now passing this financial mess to the future

generation. Yet, nobody is brought to justice for this huge public financial crime."

For professor of Capital Market, Uche Uwaleke, said, "Be that as it may, it's important that going forward, adequate safeguards are put in place to ensure that CBN's Ways and Means are curtailed due to its negative impact on the general price level. The relevant provisions of the CBN Act should clearly stipulate the conditions under which debt limits can be breached, the process which should involve approval by the National Assembly as well as stiff sanctions for breach of the limits provided in the Act without following due process," he said.

Meanwhile, the Debt Management Office has said that the repayments of principal to service the loans from the Central Bank of Nigeria through the Ways and Means Advances will begin in four years' time.

Inflation: Analysts fear another rise in interest rate

AS the Monetary Policy Committee of the Central Bank of Nigeria starts its two-day meeting on Tuesday (today), analysts have indicated that the committee may raise the Monetary Policy Rate again to tackle rising inflation.

The biting inflation rate had assumed an upward swing in the past few months and the situation had made the MPC to keep raising the MPR.

The MPC team had said in the past that it would be difficult to allow the inflation rate to be significantly higher than the MPC.

Although inflation hit 22.22 per cent in April but analysts at Cordros Research has predicted that the MPC might raise the MPR during this meeting.

The CBN had disclosed that it would hold its 291st meeting in Abuja on Tuesday (today) and Wednesday.



Emefiele

At the last MPC meeting in March, the Governor, CBN, Godwin Emefiele, had announced the members' decision after voting to raise the MPR by 50 basis points to 18.0 per cent; retain the asymmetric corridor of +100/-700 basis points

around the MPR; retain the CRR at 32.5 per cent; and retain the Liquidity Ratio at 30 per cent.

However, analysts at Cordros stated in its report on 'MPC likely to raise the MPR further by 50bps' ahead of the meeting that,

"As in the past meetings this year, the committee remains faced with either maintaining its hiking cycle or keeping policy parameters unchanged. We expect the committee to remain resolute on the path of smaller rate hikes, after taking the global and domestic events since its last policy meeting into account, more so that the CBN governor already hinted at such a path at last policy meeting held in March."

It added that, "On the global scene, systemic central banks are signalling a peak in their interest rate hiking cycles although they are leaving the door open for more tightening if conditions warrant."

"In the domestic economy, headline inflation maintained its upward trajectory, currency pressures remain intact and

there are signs the real GDP growth eased in Q1-23 primarily due to the CBN's naira redesign drive. Overall, we expect the MPC to increase the MPR by 50bps and retain other policy parameters."

On the expected impact on the equities market, the analysts said, "Looking ahead, we believe investors will focus on the outcome of the MPC meeting scheduled to hold next week to gain further clarity on the movement of yields in the Fixed Income market."

"As a result, we expect cautious trading from domestic investors in the short term. Overall, we reiterate the need for positioning in only fundamentally sound stocks as the uninspiring macro story remains a significant headwind for corporate earnings."



Towards adopting new technologies in telecom sector

It is gratifying when the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) ordered MTN and Airtel to immediately reverse the hike in their data tariff plan, which they had implemented on their respective networks recently. MTN and Airtel subscribers suddenly realised that the operators had commenced a new data tariff plan which was an upward review of the cost of their voice and data plan, without prior notice. ZEENAT SAMBO, writes.

FOLLOWING complaints by the telecom subscribers over the hike, NCC, in a statement signed by the Director, Public Affairs at NCC, Mr. Reuben Muoka ordered the mobile network operators to reverse the hike.

According to NCC, the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Dr. Isa Ibrahim Pantami, had maintained that his priority was to protect the citizens and ensure justice to all stakeholders involved.

As such, anything that would bring more hardship at this critical time would not be accepted, they added.

Telecommunication plays a prominent role in the digital transformation of economies. Through various telecom technology, millions of people around the world can access information, communicate, and interact without any obstruction.

To be tech trendy means to evolve, to evolve means to innovate, and innovation backed by spontaneity and creativity is a unique advantage to achieve through telecom tech integration in the country.

Over time, the rapid growth and deployment of new technologies to upgrade telecommunications in Nigeria have repositioned the telecom sector as the wiring aid for digital communication across sectors of the economy.

Thus, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has relentlessly reaffirmed its commitment to promoting the deployment and adoption of emerging technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), the utilization of Big Data, Blockchain, Virtual Reality, Robotics, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), among others, to stimulate a larger economic impact for the sector.

While addressing stakeholders at a Cyberchain conference in Abuja, the Executive Vice Chairman/CEO of the NCC, Prof. Umar Danbatta noted that the telecom sector has been a key promoter of Nigerian economic activities, transforming the way people live and work as well as increasing efficiency in other sectors of the economy.

The rapid pace of technological advancement makes it imperative that network providers adopt digital solutions and platforms to deal with the telecommunications sector's major digital shift.

Interestingly, IoT technology and location-based sensors like GPS will enable the creation of personal security solutions with location-tracking capabilities. Compared to previous tracking methods, GPS will provide extremely accurate location information for mobile objects and people. With the advancement in GPS technology and its capability to inform existing users' location to the cloud platform for further processing, it will help evaluate data and translate it into easy-to-understand language-based



encoded information.

For instance, with the advancement in telecommunications technology, Nigeria's military communications in conflict zones will be able to detect enemies with relative ease. Communication and control methods that are network-based will enable the armed forces to be more efficient, support intelligence gathering and communication between allies, and sometimes come in handy for quelling or defeating adversaries.

Military neck microphones, handsets, headsets, speakers, combat network radios and accessories, high-frequency land/mobile radio tactical communications, and other gadgets used in warfare will be technologically upgraded to fight insecurity in the country. Telecom operators and users can also utilize GPS tracking technology to understand supply chains, track goods, locate workers, and improve business efficiency.

Today, many Nigerian businesses rely heavily on telecommunication networks to maintain effective and efficient contact between employees, workers, and clients/customers. By integrating network management, companies can better track and control existing telecom expenses and ensure an error-free network and improve performance which is intended to grow profit and reduce paper workloads.

Again, operations system support and business support (OSS-BSS) integration is expected to provide telecom operators with the opportunity for growth and increased profitability. As customer demands evolve, telecom operators need to integrate IT and network services to remain competitive. In the long

run, this will lead to cost reduction and allow them to invest in unique opportunities.

The deployment of fibre optic cables and other telecom equipment by mobile network operators (MNOs) across Nigeria is entirely aimed at expanding the network infrastructure across the country to provide consumers with more efficient services in one visible step to telecom growth.

Another landmark shift was the growth leap of 5G technology to support the delivery of ubiquitous broadband services and usher Nigeria into a more robust Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

The advancement in telecom technology also calls for an increase in demand for bandwidth is at an all-time high, the evolution of the IoT, mobile applications, cloud-based applications, and other high-capacity activities will continue to drive the need for further bandwidth.

An upgraded telecommunications infrastructure can help workers work more efficiently by improving the flow of data and ensuring user privacy and data security.

Presently, many businesses thrive

The rapid pace of technological advancement makes it imperative that network providers adopt digital solutions and platforms to deal with the telecommunications sector's major digital shift. Interestingly, IoT technology and location-based sensors like GPS will enable the creation of personal security solutions with location-tracking capabilities. Compared to previous tracking methods, GPS will provide extremely accurate location information for mobile objects and people. With the advancement in GPS technology and its capability to inform existing users' location to the cloud platform for further processing, it will help evaluate data and translate it into easy-to-understand language-based encoded information. For instance, with the advancement in telecommunications technology, Nigeria's military communications in conflict zones will be able to detect enemies with relative ease. Communication and control methods that are network-based will enable the armed forces to be more efficient, support intelligence gathering and communication between allies, and sometimes come in handy for quelling or defeating adversaries.

on digital collaboration, from video conferences to cloud-based training. Thus, multimedia capabilities have become essential to connecting products and services to meet the needs of customers and employees.

Content creation has become a major source of income for many internet users. More and more subscribers/users are expected to create their content in the future. This is not to mention how digital giants spend billions of dollars on content creation to accelerate technological advances in their businesses.

As telecom technology advances, so do telecom sector operators. Nigerian telecom companies like MTN and Airtel have recently decided to expand their operations into the financial services sector to include the provision of different business models and distribution channels.

In granting Payment Service Bank (PSB) licenses to the two major telecommunications companies, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) noted that it is enhancing financial inclusion and developing the payment system through technology-driven environments that are secure and reliable.

Despite Nigeria's tech advancement,

glitches in telecommunication and internet services make it difficult for businesses and banks to respond quickly to emergencies.

While many telecom infrastructures have been vandalized over time, and the issue becomes worse when poor telecom services affect service delivery, the fight to ensure technological integration by many telecom service providers promises a brighter prospect of achieving top-notch services in the telecom sector.

Additionally, the majority of telecom customers have experienced problems downloading and uploading content, thus the need to integrate and adopt new technological solutions in the telecom sector is a wake-up call for all players in the ecosystem.

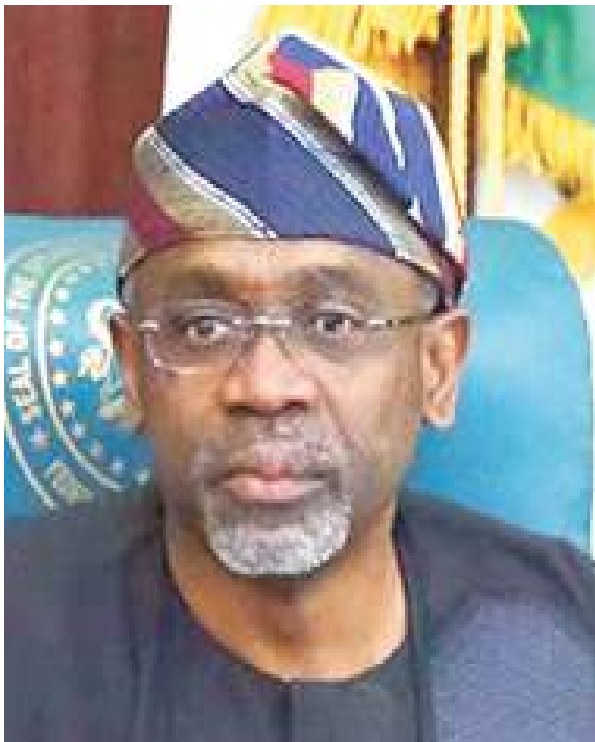
Awareness, support, and inclusion of all to ensure a more vibrant and robust telecom sector is imperative to achieve a thriving digital economy. As NCC, NITDA, telecom service providers, and stakeholders are geared toward the 4th industrial revolution, they need to ensure the development and integration of seamless telecommunication services to achieve a smart society.

Source: Economy confidential

Politics

Independent candidacy to the rescue?

Imagine the scenario during the last recent General Election: presidential aspirants had to pay as high as N100 million to obtain expression of interest and nomination forms in the governing All Progressives Congress, APC and as low as N15 million in the fringe Young Progressive Party, YPP. The mercantilist and exclusive, perhaps undemocratic, nature of the costs of the forms is captured in the justifications offered by former President of the Senate, Adolphus Wabara and the current Speaker of the House of Representatives. AMOS ESELE writes.



Gbajabiamila



Mahmood



Lawan

ACCORDING to Wabara, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, "The membership of the National Assembly is an investment because most of us sold our houses to get to the Senate... The maturity is there, but the ability to recoup whatever you spent legitimately is the problem.

Current Speaker, Femi Gbajabiamila, said: "For political parties, the sale of nomination forms is vital for operational revenue. Additionally, political parties use the high costs of nomination forms to screen candidates and reduce the practice of aspirants playing the spoiler or using the process as an opportunity to negotiate their personal ambitions."

When the violent conduct of party primaries, endorsements and adoption of preferred candidates, unprincipled defections, lack of internal party democracy, role of godfathers in the choice of candidates and the current leadership crisis plaguing virtually all the major political parties in the country are factored into the picture, it may be easy to understand why many senior lawmakers last Tuesday saw the view differently from both Wabara and Gbajabiamila.

The PDP had the aggrieved Governor Nyesom Wike led G-5 group to contend with until their target, the National Chairman of the party, Iyorchia Ayu, was restrained by the courts from presiding over its affairs.

The ruling APC and its presidential candidate, Bola Tinubu (President-elect) squabbled over the constitution of Presidential Campaign Council membership at some point and at another over his allegation of plans by powers that were to

sabotage his electoral chances with the cashless policy and petrol scarcity. Currently, disagreement over the choice of the National Assembly leadership is rocking the party. Labour Party is currently torn into factions with two National Chairmen, Julius Abure and Lamidi Apapa, holding their offices at the mercy of the law courts.

So that Tuesday, the Senate urged the Clerk of the National Assembly to transmit the bill, Constitution Alteration Bill No. 58 on independent candidacy to President Muhammadu Buhari for assent.

A visibly elated Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege, who is Chairman of the Senate Ad-hoc Committee on Constitution Review announced in plenary, "With the approval of the Gombe State House of Assembly, the bills on independent candidacy and inclusion of National Assembly presiding officers in the Security Council membership have met the provisions of Section 9(2) of the Constitution for passage."

The bill seeks to provide for independent candidacy in Presidential, Governorship, National and State Assemblies, as well as Local Government Council elections.

For any Nigerian to contest a presidential election as an independent candidate, he or she must obtain the verified signatures of at least 20 percent of registered voters from each state of the federation, provided that a registered voter shall not sign for more than one independent candidate in respect of the office.

For governorship, the independent candidate must obtain the verified signatures of at least 20 percent of registered

voters from each of the local government areas of the state.

The bill also states that anyone willing to contest the National Assembly election must obtain the verified signatures of at least 20 percent of registered voters from each of the local government areas in the respective senatorial district or federal constituency.

The proposed legislation empowers the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to prescribe the payment of administrative fees by independent candidates for respective elections.

It also mandates the electoral body, INEC, to waive 50 percent of the administrative fees for women.

Outside the hallowed chambers of the National Assembly, reactions trailing the issue are divided. Why some see it as a welcome development for the democratisation process in the country, some are not too optimistic about it. Independent candidacy is not new to Nigerian law. It was practised in the First Republic, though under the parliamentary form of government in practice then.

General Secretary of the Conference of Nigeria Political Parties, CNPP, Chief Willy Ezugwu thinks that like all things good in Nigeria, after approval the bill will remain beautiful on paper only.

"As far as I am concerned it is going to be one of those laws that we always pass and never obey. If this was happening in a civilised climate, I would say a big yes to it," he told THEWILL on Friday, adding, "If INEC can manipulate and manoeuvre major political parties, how many more individuals? I am not against passing any law that will open up the democratic space, but we need to fortify our

electoral process before law can work to its intents and purposes. Why don't we stop the president from appointing the INEC Chairman, for instance, to give some form of independence to the electoral umpire? How mutually interdependent are the three arms of government, the judiciary, legislature and executive to make democracy work? We have to learn to obey and implement laws or it will be the same old story."

Ex-Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly and governorship aspirant for the 2024 governorship election in the state, Bright Omokhodion, said the law on independent candidacy will deepen the democratic process.

Speaking from experience as a participant observer, he based his response on the pending law on three premises: Its capacity to open up the democratic space for quality representation, the check on excesses of political parties and the choice of alternatives for the increasingly discerning electorate.

He told this newspaper, "The law on independent candidacy will extricate the patriotic individual who wants to serve his country in any political office by removing the stranglehold of political parties, which, from past experience, are out to exploit the aspirants and candidates. In most cases, candidates are chosen from the rank of the boys. Many such persons go into elective offices and exhibit gross ignorance and inability to work according to the tenets of the Constitution."

To him independent candidacy will present a great opportunity for the people to choose from among the array of potential leadership in this country.

He foresees another benefit of

the law for political parties as they would be stimulated to internally generate revenue from members when aspirants stay away because of high costs of nomination forms.

"Although the constitution of many parties in Nigeria specifically states that members must pay dues on a periodic basis, many members do not pay. And once the money is unavailable, there is the tendency for the political parties to seize the opportunity of election to fleece the vulnerable aspirants. The coming of the independent candidacy law will make the parties put on their thinking caps."

Though it is arguable if independent candidates can muster the awesome structure and logistics available to major parties during election, especially at the presidential and governorship level, it is hoped that with the combination of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, BVAS, the independent candidacy law can make a significant impact of the democratisation process for the popular candidate and discerning voter.

"No doubt about that," said Omokhodion, "BVAS has come to make elections beautiful, notwithstanding the hitches identified with the just concluded election. In due course, the system will combine with the law to advance the democratisation process."

Spokesperson for the PDP, Mr Debo Ologunagba, refused to speak in his official capacity but offered his personal opinion. The proposed law, he said, would only add to the growing bodies of laws and activities that are aiding democracy to evolve in the country, adding that each political party may have to look into it, anyway.

Politics

APC condemns Mangu communities attacks

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

The All Progressives Congress Plateau State Chapter condemns in very strong terms the dastardly and unprovoked attacks on the Kubwat and Fungzai communities of Kombun District of Mangu Local Government Area, Plateau State.

This was contained in a press release signed by Hon. Sylvanus Namang, APC state Publicity Secretary, and made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** recently in Jos.

The statement added that perpetrators of these heinous acts left on their trail many lives lost with others maimed while houses and unquantified property were senselessly destroyed.

It is sad that the attacks are coming in the wake of the farming season, where the peasants have just begun planting their crops which they largely depend on for their subsistence. They described the act as wicked as it is condemnable in all its ramifications.

However, the displacement of the people who are running helter-skelter to safe havens in neighborhoods and the spiral effects of the attacks have created great anxiety and disquiet in the once peaceful local government area which has witnessed one surprise attack too many in recent times.

The APC in the state is greatly saddened by the unleashing of mayhem on unsuspecting people of the affected communities and hereby extends its heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the bereaved families, the Mishkaham Mwaghavul, Da John Putmang Hirse and Chairman of Mangu Local Government Area, Hon Daniel Daput over this very painful development.

The party also sympathizes with other communities in the state, particularly in Bokkos, Riyom, and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas which had witnessed a similar despicable loss of lives and property in the past few weeks or months.

The party urges security agencies to go on the trail of the attackers and fish and deal decisively with them as they are certainly not spirits but identifiable human beings.

The APC calls for the mobilization and reinforcement of more security forces to the local government area to nip this wicked act in the bud so that it does not spread to neighbouring communities and other local government areas.

APC is calling on emergency aid and humanitarian agencies operating in the state to provide urgent and most-needed relief to the victims of the attacks.

As a lasting solution, the APC calls for more vigilance



From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

ONE of the vocal voices in the Gombe State House of Assembly, Mr Rambi Ibrahim Ayala, is now the acting chairman of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) in Gombe State following the resignation of Eld Sammy Amos Filiya.

Elder Sammy Amos Filiya, who was also serving on acting capacity, had during the party's review meeting assessed its performance during the 2023 general election, verbally notified the party members of his resignation, citing old age, ill-health and other personal reasons.

However, during the meeting, the entire members requested Eld. Sammy to forward his resignation in writing for reference and documentation purpose.

But speaking later, on behalf of nine out of the eleven Local Government Party Chairmen of the NNPP in the state who endorsed Mr. Ayala, Tijjani Jungudo, the party's chairman in Gombe Local Government said they came to the conclusion following Ayala's

Rambi Ayala replaces Filiya as NNPP Chairman



kwankwaso

doggedness and track record in politics and contribution to the party.

He said, Rambi Ayala was chosen immediately because the position of the chairman should not be left in a vacuum.

"We followed all party rules and requirements because we called all those that matter in the party and these are, chairmen and secretaries in all wards and local government areas. Moreso, we have seen the resignation letter of Eld Sammy Amos. We sought the views of all the wards and local governments.

Responding, Rambi Ibrahim Ayala, a legal practitioner, who leads the minority caucus in the Gombe State House of Assembly, appreciated God and thanked the leadership and elders of the party for the confidence reposed in him to be the acting chairman of the party.

He said, "We've just gone through elections and the party needs to be repositioned for greater achievements and be better prepared for the next elections.

"We've been a nightmare to both the PDP and the APC during the last election and my focus will be to reposition the party for victory in coming elections. We'll also woo new members into the party," he assured.

He promised to lead the party into being an opposition to the core. Adding, "We'll criticize where we have to do that. If the people of Gombe State don't get their fair share, we will speak, but we'll be a very responsible opposition with a view to spur government to do the right thing". Rambi will end his two term legislative duties on 29th May, 2023.

Bature

and proactive measures as people who have lived together for centuries cannot be used by extraneous forces or covert agents of destruction to turn against each other at

this period when the government has put every mechanism in place to ensure peaceful co-existence of its citizens regardless of religion or ethnicity.

Human rights activist charges INEC on ethics, integrity

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Executive Director Conscience For Human Rights and Conflict Resolutions (CHRCR), Idris Miliki has charged Independent National Electoral Commission INEC to step up observance of ethics and integrity within the commission to arouse participation of electorate in the forthcoming governorship election in Kogi State. Miliki was of the opinion that the effort will go a long way in reducing voters apathy.

This is just as he came hard on civil society organisations CSO and the media for not doing much on the promotion of ethics and integrity within the system which has negatively affected their acceptability by the public.

This was the submission made by Miliki alongside participants at a one day programme on ethics and integrity, fight against corruption for civil society and media, held in Kogi which was organised by Conscience for Human Rights and Conflict Resolutions CHRCR in partnership with Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre CISLAC.

The programme featured presentations on corruption as absence of ethics and Integrity.

It described corruption as absence of ethical conducts and described ethics as a fundamental principle. Integrity is consistency, uprightness and wholesome conduct. Ethics is important in governance and even among the civil society organizations and the media, who were described as part of the building blocks of a vibrant democracy. This is because popular participation which is an important part of democracy increases democratic legitimacy. Popular

participation in a vibrant democracy increases opportunity for active citizenship, increases equality of access to policy and decision-making. It equally increases quality service to the people.

According to the Executive Director of the centre, Comrade Idris Miliki Abdul, the objective was to examine the post 2023 elections on ethics and integrity in the fight against corruption and accountability.

He said, lack of ethics and Integrity in the service of civil society organisation and media create big vacuum in the acceptability of the society in the service they render. "That INEC in the just concluded 2023 elections, have not improved on ethics and Integrity, despite the improved provisions in the 2022 Electoral Act.

"The civil society organizations (CSOs) are not doing enough in the promotion of ethics and integrity.

"That platform of stakeholders, that comprises

different and relevant stakeholders are lacking, therefore creating a big vacuum in Kogi State, in the fight against corruption and accountability in the electoral and political process.

"The civil society organisations (CSOs) were encouraged to work for popular participation, so as to increase democratic legitimacy because of their link to the citizens. Urge greater accountability of public bodies or institutions between different communities and social groups.

"The programme urged Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to intensify their activities and apply ethics and integrity, to encourage voice and participation in core value, that promote democratic principles, good governance, electoral integrity and legitimacy.

"Encourage at all political levels, that political process or institutions must respect freedom of thought and association.

"The media as the fourth

estate of the realm, as provided in section 22 of the 1999 constitution as amended, were encouraged to air and produce views, commentaries and information to enhance national ethics and integrity.

"To report issues of public interests in fair, accurate, unbiased, decent manner and language.

"Media were encouraged to create products or programmes which can enhance ethics and integrity.

"That stakeholders that comprise of civil society organisation (CSOs), women groups, religious institutions, youth groups etc should create a platform that will engage the governorship candidates in an open debate towards the 2023 November 11th Governorship election in Kogi State"

While emphasising the effective way of achieving the task ahead through the instrumentality of ethics and integrity, he appreciated the organisers for their consistency in the crusade against corruption.

Kogi Executive Council approves another university

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

KOGI State Executive Council has approved the establishment of another State University in Okun Land, located in the West Senatorial District of the state.

The Chief Press Secretary to Governor Yahaya Bello, Onogwu Mohammed who briefed journalists on the outcome of the meeting, said that the establishment of the university would alleviate the admission challenges faced by the youth of Okunland and the state in general, who

struggle to gain admission into the limited number of catchment area universities in Nigeria. Onogwu told newsmen that the State Executive Council also approved the procurement of three modern, advanced fire-fighting trucks for Kogi State Fire Agency.

This approval according to him, is aimed at enhancing the capacity of the Kogi State Fire Agency, enabling it to effectively and promptly respond to

distress calls regarding fire outbreaks from institutions and the general public.

He said that the council received reports on various ongoing projects across the state, including the construction of internal roads at the Confluence University of Science and Technology, Osara, Zone 8 roundabout-Crusher road, Itakpe-Okene road, and others and memos to ratify previously approved projects were also considered.



Farouq

IMAGES

BUHARI/LALONG COMMISSION PROJECTS IN THE STATE

Nigeria's President, Muhammadu Buhari, through his representative and former Nigerian Head of States, Gen. Dr. Yakubu Gowon last week commissioned projects in the state



Representative of the President and former Head of States, Gen. Dr. Yakubu Gowon unveiling the plaque at the British American Inter-change flyover and dualization of the road to Lamingo road roundabout



Governor Simon Bako Lalong, CON with Gen. Dr. Yakubu Gowon at the flyover commissioning ceremony



President of the Court of Appeal Justice, Monica Dongban- Mensem commissioning the High Court Complex



Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem, President Court of Appeal (middle) with Governor Simon Bako Lalong, CON and the Chief Judge of the State, Justice David Mann after commissioning the Plateau High Court and Multi-Door Court House Jos



Gen. Dr. Yakubu Gowon (middle) commissioning the Radio-Diagnostic and Imaging Center at the Plateau Specialists Hospital, Jos flanked by the CMD of the hospital, Dr. Golwa Filimon, Governor Lalong, his Deputy, Prof. Tyoden and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Engr. Benjamin James Gotan



CMD, Dr. Golwa Filimon taking the representative of the President, Gen. Dr. Gowon round facilities commissioned



Representative of the President, Gen. Dr. Gowon after commissioning NSCDC Command and Staff College Lamingo inaugurating the Course 001 (Pioneer set of participants)



Cross section of set 001 of the NSCDC, Command and Staff College, Jos being inaugurated by the representative of the President

Politics



May 29: 16 Govs-elect ready to hit ground running

As the countdown to the May 29, 2023 inauguration draws nearer, newly elected state governors are girding their loins and getting ready to hit the ground running. About 16 governors-elect will man the affairs of their respective states in the country for the first time. In these states, transition committees to facilitate a smooth handover are already rounding up their activities. All things being equal, the stage is almost set for the inauguration and the people of the various states are already yearning for a fresh breath of air that will accompany the new helmsmen of their states. Except there are unexpected twists in the proceedings at the Election Petition Tribunals in each state, the new governors will govern their states for four years. AYO ESAN, writes.

BAGO emerged the winner of the Governorship Election in Niger State after defeating Isah Liman Kantigi of the PDP. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science at Usumanu Dan Fodiyo University in Sokoto.

He is also a distinguished alumnus of Cambridge University in the United Kingdom where he graduated in 2014.

Siminalayi Fubara (Rivers)
Amaopusenibo Siminalayi "Sim" Fubara was the Rivers State Accountant-General between December 23, 2020 and May 2022.

Sim Fubara was pronounced the elected Governor of Rivers State on March 20, 2023 by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). He was born in Opobo Town in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area of Rivers State.

He is a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Management and Fellow of the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria.

Caleb Mutfwang (Plateau)
Mutfwang, a lawyer, was born on March 12, 1965 in Wussasa Zaria Kaduna State, where he received his primary education. Caleb attended the University of Jos and the Nigerian Law School, after which he was admitted to the Nigerian Bar as a Solicitor and Advocate of the Supreme Court.

He is also a graduate of Hawaii's famous Haggai Institute for Leadership Development. In addition to serving on the boards of various

firms, he provides legal services to individuals, corporations, federal ministries, international agencies, and governments.

Francis Nwiruru (Ebonyi)
Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru is an entrepreneur and administrator who served as two-term Speaker of Ebonyi State House of Assembly. He hails from Oferekpe Agbaja in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Hon. Francis Nwifuru is currently representing Izzi West Constituency at the State House of Assembly. He is the speaker of the 5th and 6th Ebonyi State House of Assembly.

Chief Alex Otti (Abia)
Alex Otti is an economist, banker, investor, philanthropist and politician. He is the former Group Managing Director of Diamond Bank Plc, a retail financial institution in Nigeria.

Otti was a governorship candidate of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). On December 31, 2015, the Court of Appeal which sat in Owerri removed Okezie Ikpeazu of the PDP as governor of Abia State and declared Otti the winner of the April 11 and April 25 Governorship elections in the state.

On February 3, 2016, the Supreme Court reversed the verdict of the Court of Appeal and affirmed the election of Ikpeazu as Governor. Otti is a member of the editorial board of Thisday Newspaper and writes a fortnightly column, every other Monday, titled "Outside the Box".

Alex Otti is from Isiala-ngwa and he is the Abia state governor-elect following the March 18, 2023 elections.

Peter Ndubuisi Mbah (Enugu)
Dr Peter Mbah, who was born on March 17, 1972 is a Nigerian maritime lawyer, financial analyst, and politician.

Mbah is from Nkanu East Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State. He is a Fellow of the Certified Institute of Public Administration and Management (CIPM), a member of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs and Nigeria Bar Association.

He was appointed Chief of Staff in 2003 and subsequently as Commissioner for Finance and Economic Development by former Governor Chimaroke Nnamani. He is a member of the PDP.

Abba Kabir Yusuf (Kano)
Abba Kabir Yusuf was elected Governor of Kano State in March 2023. He served as a commissioner in the Kano State between 2011 and 2015.

In 1999, Abba was appointed Personal Assistant to Engineer Rabiu Kwankwaso when the latter was governor of Kano State. He was retained as personal assistant when Kwankwaso became a Minister in 2003.

Abba becomes Commissioner of Works, Housing and Transport in 2011, while Engineer Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso became the governor of Kano State for a second term.

In 2018 Abba was anointed by his boss, Engineer Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso while he was a Senator representing Kano Central to challenge the incumbent Governor Abdullahi Ganduje under the platform of the PDP in the 2019 General elections.

In 2022, Abba moved from the PDP to the New Nigeria Peoples Party. He was declared winner on March 20, 2023.

Sherrif Oborevwo, (Delta State)
Oborevwo is the Speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly and the governor-elect of the state. He began his political career as a grassroots politician; Chairman of the Okpe Community. However he hit the melight in 2015 after he was elected as the member representing Okpe State Constituency in the Delta State House of Assembly under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). [This is after 19 years of serving in several key government positions, first beginning as a Councillor in 1996.

Oborevwo was elected Speaker of Delta State House of Assembly on May 11, 2017, following the impeachment of the then Speaker, Rt. Hon. Monday Igbuya. He was re-elected as Speaker for a second term in 2019.

Bassey Otu (Cross River)
Bassey Edet Otu represented the Calabar Municipal/Odukpani Federal Constituency of Cross River in the House of Representatives between

2003 and 2011. He was elected Senator for Cross River South in the April 2011 elections, running on the PDP platform. He later defected in 2016 to the APC and emerged the Cross River South Senatorial flagbearer of the party in the 2019 election. Prince Otu emerged as the governor-elect of Cross River State after the 2023 governorship poll.

Hyacinth Alia (Benue)
Alia is a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, politician and governor-elect of Benue State.

He studied for a Diploma in Religious Studies in 1987 and a Bachelor of Arts in Sacred Theology in 1990. In 1999, he obtained a Master's in Religious Education (Psychology and Counseling) at Fordham University, Bronx, New York City, USA. In 2004, he obtained an additional master's degree in Biomedical Ethics from Duquesne University, Pennsylvania, US, in 2004 and a doctorate degree in the same course and the same university in 2005.

Hyacinth Alia was ordained a Catholic Priest on July 7, 1990, by Bishop Athanasius Atule Ushu of Makurdi Catholic Diocese Umo Basey Eno (Akwa Ibom) Eno was born in April 1964. He is a cleric, politician and governor-elect of Akwa Ibom State. He is the immediate past Commissioner for Lands and Water Resources in Akwa Ibom State and the founder of All Nations Christian Ministry International.

News

Osinbajo to inaugurate Kogi fashion shared facility

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

VICE President Yemi Osinbajo, is to inaugurate the state-of-the-art Fashion Shared Facility in Kogi State, on Monday, 22 May, 2023.

The project was executed under the National MSME Clinics Shared Facility Scheme.

A statement by the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Kogi Enterprise Development Agency, Hajia Rekiya Onaivo Sanni, which was made available to our correspondent recently, indicates that on arrival, the Vice President will be received by the Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, then proceed to the Skills Center in Okene Local Government Area where the facility is cited for official commissioning and handing over.

The Fashion Shared Facility according to the

statement, is a partnership between the Government of Kogi State and the Federal Government aimed at fostering collaboration amongst MSME Fashion Designers in Kogi State as well as providing an enabling environment for the fashion sub sector in the state to grow into serving the international markets.

"The world-class facility will as well provide small and



Osinbajo

medium-sized fashion businesses with access to high-quality equipment, and resources at affordable costs

and provide training and technical assistance to entrepreneurs to help them grow and scale their businesses.

"The Kogi Fashion Shared Facility is equipped with high quality machines.

Hajia Rekiya Onaivo Sanni said the initiative which is being facilitated by her agency is highly transformational.

She added that the agency took delivery of 200 world-class manual and fully

automated fashion equipment with a capacity to service 350 MSMEs daily and 110,000 yearly.

Hajia Rekiya noted that the Fashion Shared Facility is purposely designed to reduce bottlenecks and provide practical and immediate responses to challenges faced by fashion designers as well as foster collaboration amongst them.

She urged prospective beneficiaries to see the project as an enterprise-friendly initiative that will promote economic growth and create job opportunities in Kogi.

SET-87 of the Gindiri Old Students Association (GOSA) in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, has congratulated one of their own, Mr. Mark Mannok, on his appointment as the Company Secretary of Total Energies Marketing Nigeria PLC Lagos.

This came in a press statement signed by the set's Public Relations Officer (PRO), Regina Chris-Ogbodo, and made available to SUNDAY STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau State capital recently, following his appointment on April 1, 2023 by the Board of Directors of the company.

The Chairperson of Set'87, Mrs. Nankus Adams Ngwalang said, "On behalf of the Executive Council and the entire members of GOSA 87, I heartily congratulate our brother, a one time Chairman

GOSA'87 congratulates Mannok on his appointment

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

of GOSA Unijos branch, 2 terms former GOSA National Legal Adviser, long time Chairman GOSA 87 and one time Chairman GOSA ATBU, Mark Mannok, on this elevation.

"We thank God for His grace upon you and we urge you to never take it for granted because it is an honour that gives Him glory. We pray that you shall serve meritoriously and remain as a blessing to mankind for light and truth. Like other members, we recognise your strides in all your endeavours and we say, "well done, we are proud of you", she enthused.

Recall that the Board of

Directors of Total Energies Marketing Nigeria PLC Lagos, has formally written to notify the investing public and the Nigerian Exchange Limited that it has approved the appointment of Mr. Mark Mannok, as the Company Secretary of Total Energies Marketing Nigeria PLC.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD understands that Mr. Mark Mannok is a graduate of Law and an Associate of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators. His career spans across legal practice, banking, credit and risk management as presented by the Executive Director, Human Resources and Corporate Services, Bunmi Popoola-Mordi.

Association pleads for ban lifting on security committee

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Chairman of Dekina Local Government Council in Kogi State, Alhaji Shiaka Okolo has been called upon to lift the ban on the security committee constituted by Egume community for safety of lives and property in the area.

The national President of Egume Ome Descendants' Union, (EODU), Alhaji

Muhammed Ibrahim made the call at the quarterly expanded Executive Council Meeting of the union held in Lokoja, Kogi State capital.

Alhaji Ibrahim noted that the call to unban the security committee of Egume became necessary in view of the ravaging security threat in the society which according to him, the committee had earlier proved its worth and capability in that

direction. The national president said he had made several efforts to meet with the chairman over why such executive action was taken without giving the committee or the national body of the union fair hearing of any possible allegations. He commended members of the vigilante group in the area for the maintenance of peace and called for the sustenance of synergy between the group and the police towards curbing criminality in the community.

Alhaji Ibrahim also called on the people of Egume to intensify efforts in the payment of the annual development levy towards the development of the community.

In their various contributions, the Amana-Ata Igala', Chief Atogijo Onu, the representative of Fulani, Madaki, the Herdsmen / Farmers Crises Resolution Coordinator, Chief Lawrence Alfa and the Chairman of Egume Vigilante Group, Navi Usman commended the efforts of the national body of EODU for the lofty achievements since the present executive came on board.

According to them much have been achieved in the area of security, maintenance of peace, respect for tradition and custom of the land and encouraging contributions by the sons and daughters of Egume towards the development of Egume community.

Court orders NDA to reinstate unlawfully dismissed cadets

From John FWAH,
Kaduna

THE Federal High Court sitting in Kaduna has ordered the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) to reinstate nine cadets of 67 Regular Course 'unlawfully' dismissed by the academy authorities after their Presidential Commissioning on October 5, 2019, and award them their degrees.

This was even as the Temple of Justice ordered the military institution to pay the accrued entitlements of the affected soldiers from the date of the dismissal.

Delivering a 50-page judgment recently, the presiding Judge, Justice Muhammad Umar described the academy's action to withdraw the cadets after their graduation as "unconstitutional, unlawful and amounts to conviction to trial".

"The plaintiffs are entitled to be heard before any disciplinary action can be taken against them and there is no place in the proceedings of the defendants that the plaintiffs were granted fair hearing by the NDA before their dismissal. This is unconstitutional.

"The action of the defendants to withdraw the plaintiffs after their graduation is unconstitutional, unlawful and amounts to a conviction of trial. The plaintiff should immediately be reinstated

and their degrees and entitlements should be awarded and paid for having participated in the PoP", the Judge noted.

Counsel to the plaintiffs, Yunus Ustaz Usman SAN who briefed newsmen outside the courtroom said the court's judgment was binding on the authorities concerned to obey.

To him, "we thank Almighty that we have judges who are in for justice at all times and that is a great hope for Nigeria because these cadets spent five years in the academy, they were not queried, they graduated, they participated in the PoP, some had first-class degrees and after their PoP when they came to collect their certificates then you say you have withdrawn them; it is most unfortunate."

The Defence Counsel, Al-Amin Abubakar said, "My clients will decide on the next step to take. We will relate the judgment to them, they will review it and decide on what to do next. There are many options available to them, so I believe they will look at the law and take it up within the confines of the law."

A father of one of the cadets, Alhaji Ibrahim Daura, who could not hide his joy queried why the service chiefs and the Minister of

Defence did not investigate the issue after writing a petition to them.

He however commended the judgment of the court and prayed that the NDA authorities act on the judgment of the court in good time.

15th Anniversary: Salem University is a blessing - VC

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

PROF Alewo Johnson-Akubo, Vice Chancellor (VC), Salem University Lokoja, said the institution, established 15 years ago, was a blessing and open-ability to Nigerian youths to fulfill their destinies. The Vice Chancellor made the statement while addressing newsmen in Lokoja on the 15th Anniversary celebration of the University.

Johnson-Akubo said that God was so gracious to Kogi and Nigeria for a senior citizen in the person of the vision Coordinator and Chancellor of Salem University, Dr Sam Amaga.

He described the Chancellor as an iconic leader, strong exemplary pillar of the Christian faith and a philanthropist per

Parents of the cadets who spoke through Alhaji Mohammed Ibrahim Daura had dragged the Chief of Army Staff, the Minister of Defence, the Secretary to the State Government, Major General I M Yusuf, NDA, the

excellence that people of Kogi and Nigeria should be proud of. "We are today celebrating Salem University Lokoja's 15th Founder's Day and the impact of the institution on not just our youths but the socio economic development of Nigeria as a whole.

"This university has graduated 11 different sets of 'Change Agents' who are out there creating impact in different fields and endeavours across the globe. "We are not just giving our students education in the different programmes we are running, ranging from Diplomas and Degrees, but morals and the fear of God to be future leaders of repute," he said.

The VC thanked the chancellor for his foresight and continuous

Chief of Defence Staff and three others to court after their wards were dismissed for allegedly holding a night party after their Passing out Parade officiated by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo in 2019.

effort at seeing to the growth and development of the university as a thriving citadel of learning.

Johnson-Akubo disclosed that God had helped the university to record a very strong showing in what easily became the largest and most diverse university ranking in the world, the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022.

"Today, Salem University made her way into the first 2000 universities in the World. Only 48 Nigerian universities made this cut. "We have also, by the approval of the Council, taken bold steps to improve the quality of our staffing, both academic and non academic alike for the desired result as a university," he said.

News

Journalists hail Lalong for remodeling Press Center

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU journalists could not hide their excitement on Thursday May 18, 2023 as Governor Simon Bako Lalong commissioned their newly remodeled Press Centre.

Led by their state Chairman, Mr. Paul Jatau, the journalists who came out in their numbers to celebrate their newly refurbished and furnished headquarters, located at Hill Station Junction Jos rained accolades on the Governor for giving them a befitting Secretariat.

The NUJ Chairman said the union is highly excited with its newly remodelled headquarters that houses its office, hall for press conferences and other activities.

Jatau disclosed that since 1982 when former civilian Governor, Solomon Daushep Lar allocated the structure to the Union, the Press Center had not witnessed any serious or significant remodelling, as was done by the governor.

The NUJ Chairman praised the governor for supporting the Union with welfare many welfare schemes and recalled the financial support he gave the NUJ Endowment Trust Fund set up in 2008 when 8 members of the NUJ lost their lives in a car accident, while on official duty over a decade ago.

NUJ National officer, Ladi Emmanuel, from the State Ministry of Information described the Governor as "A man of his words" who has not only kept to his promise to revamp the state print media, Plateau Publishing Corporation but renovated the NUJ Press Center to give it a befitting outlook.

Plateau Commissioner for Information, Hon. Dan Manjang described the interactive forum with the journalists as a valedictory session and the last interaction between journalists and the Governor before he leaves office in the upcoming week, on May 29.

Manjang said the Governor Lalong led rescue administration has proved critics who said the governor did not achieve anything wrong, with the commissioning of the British American overhead bridge, and over 30 projects in agriculture, health, infrastructure among others, which they



Lalong

achieved within the ambients of resources available to them.

While appreciating the support and critical role the Journalists played during the 8-year tenure of the Governor Lalong led administration, Manjang said the record of achievements of the government speaks for itself.

After commissioning the Press Center, the governor requested for an interactive question and answer session with the journalists, where he responded to personal questions concerning his high and low moments as governor, and other state issues.

Journalists from various media houses practicing in the state commended Lalong for bringing the Plateau Publishing

Corporation back to life, and called for employment of manpower for the organisation, including revamping of Plateau Radio Television Corporation.

Lalong pointed out that the role of journalists as the fourth estate of the realm has impacted in his government while their writing's and constructive criticism had put him on his toes.

He announced that aside remodelling the NUJ Press Center, his government had recorded a lot of infrastructural achievements to be commissioned which includes the British junction flyover, New Jos High Court Complex and Indoor Court House, among others.

He made cash donations and announced other welfare support as his parting gift to them

Aduku replaces Ogbe as ACF Chairman

From John FWAH, Kaduna

THE Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) has appointed Gabriel Yakubu Aduku as its new chairman to replace Audu Ogbeh, who has completed his tenure in office. Secretary of the ACF Leadership Selection Committee, Bukar Zarma, disclosed this, recently, during a media briefing after the National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of Arewa leaders. He said that the appointment of Aduku was unanimously endorsed by members. Chief Aduku was former Minister of State for Health and Amana Ogohi 1 of Attah Igala.

He said: "The ACF at its meeting held at the national headquarters on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, the NEC approved the appointment of Gabriel Yakubu Aduku as the new Chairman of the Forum.

"He takes over from Audu Ogbeh, whose tenure has

expired. Also, at the same meeting, the appointment of Secretary-General of ACF, Murtala Aliyu, was renewed for a second term of three years.

"It should be noted that the 21 members of the National Working Committee of ACF were dissolved, following the expiration of their tenure. A new committee is being considered and will be released soon."

Meanwhile, Ogbeh, who delivered a speech at the meeting, urged all members of the Forum to support Aduku in his mission to move ACF and the North forward under the new dispensation.

Besides, he implored the Federal Government to place a premium on the development of the agricultural sector of the country, and also find lasting solutions to insecurity in the country.



Social media and morals

THE or social media since its emergence has provided an alternative to the traditional media. It has brought information very close and at the finger-tips of all and sundry. And it is threatening to put traditional media out of business. Information is now within the reach of everyone. With just a click on an android phone, one can access a whole load of information. There is what is called an information overload as a result of the availability of so much information in the media space.

Unfortunately, there is the serious misuse of the information. What is most annoying is the fact that most people do not filter or are not interested in doing due diligence and take whatever they see on the social media as the truth and nothing but the truth. People forget that anyone can stay in their room and create content. Be the gatekeeper and the one that churn out that content all by themselves.

This, unfortunately removes the gatekeeper role that is found in the traditional media. And because there are no checks, trash and garbage are daily churn out to the gullible public who help in spreading some of these outright falsehoods and mischief.

Even though there are tools to help the citizenry verify some of these claims, they are too lazy to take advantage of them. In fact, most people hardly read what they share on the social media. Fact checking tools abound today yet very few individuals use them. And this has done a lot of harm to relationships between individuals and between communities.

You find young people on social media insulting people who are old enough to be their parents on issues that they know next to nothing about. The anonymity provided by the new media is clearly being abused and our societal

morals are being destroyed gradually. People post things that are not true and feel no qualms about it. They destroy other people's hard earned reputation and go to sleep feeling okay. I sincerely feel that there is a need for filters to be built by owners of these media to reduce some of these unfortunate happenings. If soft wares could be built to help in the spread and dissemination of information, other soft wares could as well be built to help filter truth from lies.

If this is not done quickly enough, there is the tendency that the next world or civil wars between countries or communities will be caused by the new media. And it would come

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with such a devastating effect that will consume all and sundry. The earlier the society starts taking responsibility the better for us all. We must take responsibility for our actions and inactions. We must caution ourselves each time we reach out to hit the share button on our gadgets. We do not need anyone to tell us what is right or wrong. We know them and must make a decision not to be mischievous and, in the course, destroy our fellow brothers.

Journalists and journalism' code of ethics

Each day I read, listen or watch the news I wonder if journalism still has a code of conduct. I feel sad that this code which was hitherto the Bible or Koran of the media practitioner has become useless and it is no longer adhered to. Journalism has become an all-comers- affairs. Anyone who can write becomes a journalist. That is even not the issue. It is the conduct of this lot that is the source of concern.

Out there, beggars litter the streets in the name of Journalists. As soon as they hear that there is an event, they mill around harassing people, collecting money and not writing anything at all. Giving those who go out on daily basis to genuinely do their jobs a bad name. Some even claim they are publishers yet attend assignments with their reporters. They collect a d v e r t s f r o m unsuspecting clients and do not produce copies but do Direct Imaging (DI) and take them to the unsuspecting clients.

The public should be wary of such wolves in sheep skins. They must endeavor to deal with genuine members of the profession through the professional union who know and keep genuine records of its membership. Also, the professional union must make it a responsibility to always insist and remind its members on its code of conduct.

News

Governor inaugurates Kaolin plant in Alkaleri

From Abbas Gungura,
Bauchi

GOVERNOR Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed of Bauchi State, has inaugurated a newly established Kaolin Ore Processing Plant at Gwaram community, Alkaleri Local Government Area of the state.

The governor while speaking at the occasion said the state government is determined and ready to continue to work with Miners Association of Nigeria, Kaolin Millers Association, Mineral Resources and Environmental Management Committee (MIREMC) and all other stakeholders on how to improve the value chain of the raw material.

Bala Mohammed who was represented at the occasion by the Secretary to the State Government, Barrister Ibrahim Kashim, said his administration had established the Ministry of Natural Resources in 2020 with the aim of complementing federal government's effort in streamlining the activities of solid mineral resources in addition to repositioning Bauchi Mining and Exploration Limited (BAMSEL).

According to him, so far, the Bauchi Mining and Exploration Limited has acquired 17 licenses comprising 9 exploration licenses, 7 small scale mining leases and 1 reconnaissance survey permit which makes it top ranking in the North-East.

"I am delighted to be part of this important and most auspicious occasion which is essentially a journey of promises and fulfilments. What we are witnessing today started with the recommendations by the Economic Sustainability Plan Committee of the Federal Government in response to the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic.

"The Federal Government had accordingly requested the Bauchi State Government for a piece of land for the setting up of the Artisanal and Small-scale Mining (ASM) Cluster and the Need Assessment for the North-East Geopolitical Zone. This noble objective has been achieved as we gather here today to commission the Kaolin Ore Processing Plant.

"Kaolin being important raw material with a wider spectrum of industrial applications is abundant in more than 5 local government areas in Bauchi State and indeed the North-East Geopolitical Zone. It is estimated that annual national demand of Kaolin stands at 350,000 metric tons while local production is only 25,000, metric tons leaving a huge deficit annually.

"This deficit will definitely create a humungous capital flight due to importation. This cluster is a special type being earmarked for an index Pharmaceutical Ingredient (IPL). There is no doubt that the ASM Cluster will help



Mohammed

North-East and Nigeria at large to achieve the long desired national policy on local content, substitution and deletion of mineral resources," he said.

The governor gave assurance that Bauchi State will collaborate with the other five states in the Northeast on the cluster through the Artisanal and Small-scale Mining (ASM) Department, Ministry of Mines and Steel Development by

providing security and infrastructure such as roads, electricity and water supply for the optimum operations of the cluster.

On his part, the Minister of Mines and Steel Development, Architect Olamilekan Adegbite explained that the Bauchi Kaolin Ore Processing plant would process Kaolin needed by the pharmaceutical industry in the country.

Monarch appeals to government to beef up security

From
Dumah Randong, Mangu

THE Mishkaham Mwaghavul and paramount ruler of Mangu Local Government Area, His Royal Highness, Dah John Putmang Hirse has appealed to the Plateau State Government and security agencies to intensify efforts and stop the wanton killings and destruction of properties in the area.

This is also as the President of the Mwaghavul Development Association, Joseph Gwankat has put the number of dead at 85.

Gwankat who spoke with newsmen shortly after a security meeting at the palace of the Mishkaham Mwaghavul, recently expressed concern over the manner these innocent people were gruesomely murdered by Fulani invaders.

"For some of us, I was nearly lynched yesterday. Like you are doing nothing to save lives. I am happy that the government is here to save lives because that is the responsibility of government. I was made to believe that there is no leader in Plateau State. This is happening for how many days now and we are left to defend ourselves," he added.

Although he stressed that he didn't have the exact casualty but by simple arithmetic, 50 have been buried on Wednesday in Kantoma with another 35 corpses on ground which is over 80. He noted that the casualty could be over a hundred as they were still picking dead bodies in several communities that came under

attack even as he said houses were still burning around the Panyam, Pushit and Gindiri axis.

The MDA President also expressed happiness over the presence of National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA and State Emergency Management Agency, SEMA as well as the paramount ruler. He appreciated the fact that the paramount ruler and District Heads were given the opportunity to explain what actually happened and for saying it the way it is, which is commendable.

Gwankat noted the Mwaghavul nation and the Piam people have no other place to go. Some other people have place to go. "We are left helplessly in the true sense of the word," he pointed out.

The monarch who was visibly worried, however said he had invited the governor to come and hear from the people what was happening to them and wants the government to tell them how to deal with the situation.

The palace of the paramount ruler was besieged by angry mourners who were mostly women and children that came to express their anger and displeasure over the attack that left many people dead during the meeting between government, the Mangu Traditional Council and security agencies.

The Mishkaham while calling for reinforcement, said the attackers who usually come with heavy weapons also urged the

GOVERNOR of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai, has revoked the Right of Occupancy of nine companies belonging to the former Governor of the State, Senator Ahmed Muhammed Makarfi, as the properties have been slated for demolition.

It was gathered that the notice of revocation and withdrawal of the Right of Occupancy was served to the officials of the affected companies on Thursday about 1pm.

Specifically, the official notice of revocation was addressed to the Director of Cane Properties, Plot 11, Murtala Square, Doka, Alhaji Ibrahim Makarfi.

When contacted, Makarfi who is a relation of the former governor told newsmen that they have contacted their lawyers to stop further action on the properties in question.

"Our lawyers will respond accordingly to the revocation and withdrawal of Right of Occupancy of the companies".

El-Rufai revokes Rights of Occupancy of ex-Gov's property

From John FWAH,
Kaduna



El-Rufai

Also reacting to the development, the former PDP National Committee's Chairman, Senator Makarfi said, "there is a serious issue right now. We need to meet Ustaz Yunus (SAN) to go to court to stop the state government; they just sent 9 Revocation Letters to us".

Listed among the affected properties, he said were five plots in Mogadishu, three plots on Kwato road, and the Doka plot.

Reacting, the Registrar of Kaduna Geographical Information Service (KADGIS), Mahmud Aminu, said the action of the state governor was in line with the power conferred on him under section 28(5)(a) and (b) of

Land Use Act 1978, revoked and withdrawal your rights and continued failure and contravention of covenanted terms and conditions of the Right of Occupancy"

Mangu killings: Security should build people's confidence- Gov

By PALANG KASMI

SECURITY agencies have been tasked to sustain the presence of their personnel to rebuild confidence on Plateau villages, and stop further attacks on innocent citizens.

They have also been mandated to ensure the

immediate prosecution of all suspects arrested during recent attacks in villages in Mangu Local Government Area of the state.

This was the position of the Plateau State Security Council after an emergency meeting to review and assess the recent attacks in various villages in Mangu Local Government which left many dead, property

destroyed and others injured.

Government, after the meeting gave its position while briefing newsmen recently at Government House Jos.

Governor Simon Bako Lalong told journalists that council reviewed the situation and resolved that all suspects arrested for allegedly carrying out the attack must be immediately prosecuted, in a transparent and open manner to send a strong message to the public that no criminal conduct will go unpunished.

"Council condemns the dastardly act and remains committed to sustaining the search for other fleeing perpetrators who must be arrested and dealt with swiftly", the governor said.

"Security Council also mandated the security agencies to sustain the presence of their personnel on ground to rebuild confidence and halt any further affront on citizens".

"Government will immediately step in to address the plight of displaced persons in the area and work towards restoring normalcy".

The governor announced the plans to step up engagement both at local and state levels which will lead to setting up of an Engagement Committee to douse the tension generated by the unfortunate incident.

He appealed to citizens to increase vigilance and avoid any action that can lead to escalation of the situation. He assured that government will not fold its arms to see its citizens being maimed and killed by criminals for no reason.

It would be recalled that the Deputy Governor, Prof. Sonni Tyoden, the Secretary to the Government of the State, Prof. Danladi Abok Atu and security chiefs in the state visited the affected areas on Wednesday.



HRH Hirse

security agents step up their intelligence so as to forestall any attack.

He appreciated the security personnel on ground but noted that they were handicapped because they were over stretched, adding that the responsibility of government was the provision of welfare and protection of lives of citizens.

District Heads of Kombun, Gabriel Gusat, Panyam, Aminu Derwam, Pushit, Diket Gupiya, Chanso in Gindiri, Tanko Adamu in their submissions, described the unprovoked attacks as purely an issue of land grabbing.

The simultaneous attack on several communities was a coordinated move aimed at ethnic cleansing, noting that in most places, there were no security on ground.

Plateau State Governor, Simon Lalong represented by his Deputy, Professor Sonni Tyoden described the situation

as sober and assured that the government was doing everything to ensure that the senseless killings were stopped.

The governor who was accompanied by the Commissioner of Police, Batholomew Onyeke, a representative of the STF Commander as well as top government officials, expressed the government's deep concern over the development.

According to the governor, "We have heard reports from the District Heads and that government is going to take concrete steps to forestall this occurrence."

He sympathized with the people over the loss of lives and urged them not to see the unfortunate event as their own alone.

Chairman of Mangu Local Government, Minister Daput appreciated all for their sympathy visit and concern over the unprovoked attacks which resulted in the death of so many people.

He described the people as the most peaceful in the state and wondered why the unprovoked attacks on the local government.

Daput appealed to the government and spirited individuals to come to their aid as the issue was beyond them as many children have been left orphans, women and husbands have been left, widows and widowers.

He noted that the security operatives on ground have done their best but that they were overwhelmed.

Foreign Commentary

Ukraine 'sabotage' group crosses into Russia

The Kremlin says Russian forces are working to eliminate a Ukrainian army "sabotage group" which crossed the border. Kyiv denied responsibility, saying Russian citizens were likely behind alleged attacks. The Wagner Group will leave Bakhmut starting on Thursday and transfer control of the eastern Ukrainian city to Russia, according to the chief of the mercenary force. Ukraine denies Russian claims that Bakhmut has fallen. The UK says Russian troops are likely forming a new "elite" aviation group as the West pledges to bolster Kyiv's air defences. NIKO VOROBYOV AND JOHN POWER writes.

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's senior aide says that Kyiv had nothing to do with the armed operation in Russia's Belgorod region.

"Ukraine is watching the events in the Belgorod region of Russia with interest and studying the situation, but it has nothing to do with it," presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted.

"As you know, tanks are sold at any Russian military store, and underground guerrilla groups are composed of Russian citizens," he added.

NATO's Parliamentary Assembly recognises Russia's crimes in Ukraine as 'genocide'

NATO's parliamentary assembly has recognised Russia's crimes in Ukraine as "genocide", according to Yehor Cherniev, the head of Ukraine's delegation at the assembly.

"This is our diplomatic victory. All our key wishes regarding the final text of the declaration have been taken into account," he said in a post on Facebook.

He highlighted that the assembly's declaration includes support for an international tribunal for Russian war crimes, helping Ukraine win the war and also a commitment to help restore the country's territories by implementing more sanctions.

Cherniev also added that the NATO assembly has pledged to urge the alliance's governments to support Ukraine's NATO membership during the upcoming summit in Vilnius, Lithuania.

A senior aide to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says Kyiv had nothing to do with what Russia is calling a "sabotage" operation in its Belgorod region.

"Ukraine is watching the events in the Belgorod region of Russia with interest and studying the situation, but it has nothing to do with it," Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted.

"As you know, tanks are sold at any Russian military store, and underground guerrilla groups are composed of Russian citizens," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has been informed about a Ukrainian "sabotage group" trying to enter the Belgorod region, according to a report by the Russian state news agency RIA Novosti.

RIA reported that Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said work was under way to "squeeze out Ukrainian saboteurs from Russian territory".

Peskov said the purpose of the Ukrainian mission in Belgorod is "to divert attention from the direction of Bakhmut and minimise the political effect of the loss of Artemovsk", the Soviet-era name of Bakhmut.

Ukrainian military intelligence officials say attacks in Russia's Belgorod region have been carried out "solely" by Russian citizens, according to Ukrainian media reports.

Military intelligence spokesperson Andriy Yusov said the Freedom of Russia Legion and Russian Volunteer Corps were responsible for the operation, the Ukrainian media outlet Hromadske reported.

Earlier, Belgorod's governor, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said a Ukrainian army "sabotage group" had entered Russian territory in the Graivoron district, which borders Ukraine.

He also reported increased shelling in the region and said two people had been injured.

Two women have been wounded by



Russian servicemen drive armoured personnel carriers on the outskirts of the city of Belgorod near the Russian-Ukrainian border

Russian shelling in Kupiansk in northeastern Ukraine's Kharkiv province, according to the region's governor, Oleh Syniehubov.

"Two women - 76 and 53 years old - were injured and have been hospitalised. Their condition is moderate," he said in a statement on Telegram, adding that residential buildings and other civilian infrastructure have been damaged.

Ukrainian forces took back Kupiansk from Russian control in September.

The governor of Russia's Belgorod region, Vyacheslav Gladkov, says a Ukrainian army "sabotage group" has entered Russian territory in the Graivoron district, which borders Ukraine.

According to Reuters, Telegram channel Baza, which is linked to Russia's security services, published footage that it said showed a Ukrainian tank attacking a Russian border post.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov says the European Union's reluctance to reconnect the Russian Agricultural Bank to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) represents the bloc's "non-constructive" stance.

According to TASS, Peskov also said EU spokesperson Peter Stano's words about the status of the Russian Agricultural Bank would hinder the UN's Antonio Guterres in the context of the execution of the grain deal.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has clarified earlier comments on the situation in Bakhmut, saying that it was "not occupied" by Russia "as of today". Earlier, he told reporters that there was "nothing left" of the eastern city and that the Russians had "destroyed everything".

Russia has claimed to have fully captured Ukraine's Bakhmut, with President Putin congratulating his troops and the mercenary Wagner Group for taking the largely-ruined eastern city.

Colonel General Oleksandr Syrsky, the commander of Ukraine's ground

forces, has said Ukrainian troops were approaching a "tactical encirclement" of Bakhmut," according to the Kyiv Independent. The commander earlier visited the front line.

A Russian-installed official in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhia region has said Kyiv struck the Russian-occupied port city of Berdyansk with UK-supplied Storm Shadow cruise missiles. Kyiv said it had hit a Russian headquarters there but did not say what weapons it used.

President Zelenskyy has compared the "total destruction" of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut with the World War II devastation of Hiroshima after it was hit by a US atomic bomb.

The White House has said it estimated Russia's army had suffered 100,000 casualties in the last five months - including the deaths of 20,000 Russian soldiers.

The three-day G7 summit has wrapped up in Japan, with leaders pledging more support for Ukraine following Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy took part in the summit in person.

The G7 meeting has resulted in "unwavering unity" in supporting Ukraine to fend off Russian war, and Zelenskyy's presence has sent "a strong message" to the world, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said after the three-day summit.

Tens of thousands of Moldovans have rallied in the capital Chisinau to support their pro-Western government's drive towards Europe amid what officials have said are Russian efforts to destabilise their country.

Canada will support Ukraine for as long and as much as necessary in its conflict with Russia, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said at the G7 summit.

United States President Joe Biden has confirmed a new military aid package worth \$375m for Ukraine, saying the US would provide ammunition, artillery, armoured

vehicles and training. The new pledge came days after Washington agreed to allow training on US-made F-16 fighter jets, laying the groundwork for their eventual transfer to Ukraine.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is denying claims that the eastern city is under Russian control after months of heavy battle.

On Saturday, mercenaries from the Russian private military contractor the Wagner Group claimed victory in the east Ukrainian town of Bakhmut after a gruelling battle that lasted for eight months. For the most part, the pro-Moscow camp has been elated at finally dislodging the stubborn Ukrainian defenders.

Although Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has denied on Sunday that Bakhmut has fallen, Russian businessman and Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin claimed otherwise in a voice memo to his 420,000 Telegram followers.

Through a statement on the Kremlin's official press service, Russia's President Vladimir Putin congratulated the Russian army and Wagner mercenary group on the capture of Artemovsk, as the city was known in Soviet times and until 2016.

Footage on both Russian TV and Telegram channels showed the Russian flag waving from the rooftop of an apartment building still standing among the ruins of Bakhmut.

"Without exaggeration, a historical moment - the Wagner fighters are hoisting the Russian flag, and the flag of their company, on the last street of Artemovsk," Amir Yusupov, a correspondent embedded on the front line, reported for the state-owned Channel One. One masked mercenary interviewed on camera compared the experience to World War II.

The Wagner Orchestra, a Telegram channel describing themselves as "fans" of the mercenary outfit, published a video of bearded commander Alexander "Ratibor" Kuznetsov raising the Russian and Wagner flags over the ruined city and yelling ethnic slurs at Ukrainians,

telling them to "go f*** yourselves!"

Another video on the channel shows a group of Wagner fighters triumphantly firing their weapons into the air as a Wagner flag waves in the background.

An article by the state-owned news agency RIA Novosti on the "liberation of Artemovsk" blames Ukrainian forces for any civilian casualties.

"Before the conflict began, more than seventy thousand people lived here," it read.

The article assured that, despite Ukrainian propaganda, "fortress Bakhmut" had indeed fallen, which will allow Russian forces to move on to the nearby town of Chasiv Yar.

Despite Moscow's claims of victory, Igor Girkin, nom de guerre Strelkov, a former Russian soldier and intelligence officer who led the original 2014-15 uprising of east Ukrainian separatists, painted a bleak picture to his nearly 800,000 Telegram subscribers.

He describes the capture of Bakhmut as not a victory in any tactical sense, but part of the Kremlin's policy of "freezing the conflict through a compromise agreement", and as such, only intending to wear the enemy down until Kyiv and its Western allies agree to let Russia keep Crimea and the Donbas. Strelkov is a hardline Russian nationalist who believes Moscow is not taking the conquest of Ukraine seriously enough.

Bakhmut, which once had a population of about 70,000 people, has seen eight months of fierce fighting in the bloodiest battle since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated his troops and the Wagner Group private army for "liberating" the city on Saturday, but Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that although Russian troops are in Bakhmut, the city is "not occupied".

Source: Al Jazeera

Foreign News



Mitsotakis

Greece's Mitsotakis seeks second vote after election win

GREEK Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has said he would not form a coalition government after his centre-right party won Sunday's election but fell short of securing a majority. Mitsotakis now hopes for a new election on June 25 after President Katerina Sakellariopoulou formally offered him an opportunity to form a coalition under the constitution.

His New Democracy (ND) party won 40.79 percent of the vote, double that of the left-wing opposition party Syriza at 20.07 percent.

The socialist PASOK party came in third with 11.46 percent, as 61 percent of the eligible voters turned up at polling booths on Sunday.

Using the proportional representation voting system meant ND gained only 146 seats out of 300, making them five short of a governing majority.

The second round of elections will revert to the previous system that grants the first party an extra 50 seats, ensuring that whoever gains the most votes will have a comfortable majority.

Mitsotakis's party performed better than predictions, and its margin of victory was the biggest since 1974 when Greece's first democratic elections were held after the fall of its seven-year military dictatorship.

Sunday's election results were a significant boost for his administration, which has dealt with a wiretapping scandal, the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and a deadly rail crash which led to protests.

"The dynamics of the result were more than clear: citizens want a strong government, with a four-year term, [to carry out] bolder reforms," Mitsotakis said after his win.

Analyst Wolfango Piccoli told The Associated Press news agency that Greek voters prioritised the economy and political stability over everything else.

"ND's overwhelming performance is largely due to the positive track record on the economic front of the past four years," the senior political risk analyst at Teneo told the AP.

"Syriza's inability to convey a coherent and credible economic plan also helped PM Mitsotakis and his ND."

Three of the biggest parties will now receive a three-day mandate to form a coalition government.

If no political parties choose to work together, it will pave the way for the appointment of a caretaker government until the next election is called.

On Monday, PASOK spokesperson Dimitris Mantzos told state broadcaster ERT, "I understand that there is no scope for convergences or collaboration."

"I think we can proceed to the second elections."

Palestinians killed by Israeli in raid on Nablus

THE Israeli army has killed three Palestinian men during a large-scale raid on the Balata refugee camp in the city of Nablus in the northern occupied West Bank.

The Palestinian health ministry identified the three, killed on Monday morning, as Muhammad Abu Zaytoun, 32, Fathi Abu Rizk, 30, and Abdullah Abu Hamdan, 24.

At least seven other Palestinians were injured, including four with live ammunition, and dozens of others suffered tear gas inhalation, according to the ministry.

Hundreds of Palestinians turned out for the funeral procession on Monday afternoon for the three men killed.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for the Palestinian Authority (PA) presidency, described Monday's raid as a "massacre".

"The continuous aggression on the city of Nablus, its villages and refugee camps by the occupation forces and extremist settlers, is a major war crime and collective punishment that must end immediately," he said in a statement.

"The US administration's silence on the occupation's crimes encourages it to persist in its aggression," continued Abu Rudeineh, warning that such attacks "will drag the region towards explosion."

Hundreds of Israeli soldiers and special forces participated in the raid that began at about 1am (22:00 GMT on Sunday) and continued until 5am (02:00 GMT).

Israeli forces blockaded the camp's entrances with bulldozers and demolished some homes. They also damaged some units, according to residents, who also alleged the use of anti-tank grenades.

Reporting from the Balata refugee camp, Al Jazeera's Givara Budeiri said at least seven homes inside the camp were demolished or damaged.

"The families here are remembering the 2002 invasion of Nablus. They felt the bullets had penetrated everything tonight," said Budeiri, adding that ambulance crews were also targeted as they attempted to reach the wounded.

The Palestinian Minister of Health Mai al-Kaila, said "Israeli occupation forces obstructed the work of paramedics and ambulances...while they were carrying out their humanitarian duty to transport the injured and provide them with treatment."

The Israeli army said in a statement it arrested three Palestinian men "suspected of involvement" in armed activity and confiscated weapons, but did not comment on the killings. It also said it found an "explosives laboratory" in one of the apartments in the camp.

Monday's raid took place after a car-ramming attack near Nablus on Sunday in which an Israeli soldier was

AT least 20 children have died in a fire that broke out in a school dormitory in central Guyana, the South American nation's government says.

"It is horrible. It is painful," President Irfaan Ali said late on Sunday.

The fire broke out in a secondary school in the gold-mining town of Mahdia in the Potaro-Siparuni district, 320km (200 miles) south of the capital, Georgetown.

"We have lost many beautiful souls in that fire," the government said in the statement. "The death toll currently stands at 20 while several others received injuries."

At least 20 children killed in Guyana school dormitory fire

"Five planes have already taken off to Mahdia to support the regional health officials with additional medical supplies and medivacs," it said.

The cause of Sunday's fire has yet to be determined.

It began shortly after midnight at a school that serves children aged 12 through 18, according to National Security Adviser Gerald Gouveia.

Local newspaper Stabroek News reported that the fire broke out in a girls dormitory and bad weather was a challenge for those responding to the

emergency by air. Prime Minister Mark Phillips is leading a team of cabinet and other officials going to Mahdia while Minister of Home Affairs Minister Robeson Benn is already on the ground. Opposition member of parliament Natasha Singh-Lewis called for an in-depth investigation. "We need to understand how this most horrific and deadly incident occurred and take all necessary measures to prevent such a tragedy from happening again in the future," she said.

Beijing summons Japanese envoy over 'anti-China' G7 summit

CHINA'S Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong has summoned the Japanese ambassador to register protests over "hype around



Japanese Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Shigeo Yamada, second from right, speaks to Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, second left, during the Japan-China security dialogue at the foreign ministry, February 22, 2023, in Tokyo

China-related issues" at the Group of Seven (G7) summit over the weekend, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The heads of the world's richest countries who met in the Japanese city of Hiroshima expressed serious concerns about rising tensions in the East China Sea and the South China Sea as well as voicing concerns about the human rights situations in China, including in Tibet and Xinjiang.

Sun said Japan collaborated with the other countries at the G7 summit "in activities and joint declarations ... to smear and attack China, grossly interfering in China's internal affairs, violating the basic principles of international law and the spirit of the four political documents between China and Japan", referring to the China-Japan Joint Communique of 1972.

A joint communique issued by the G7 nations on Saturday singled out China on issues ranging from Taiwan and maritime claims to economic coercion and human rights, underscoring the tensions between Beijing and the group of rich countries which includes the United States.

State-backed Chinese newspaper Global Times called the G7 an "anti-China workshop" on Monday. Beijing's foreign ministry said it firmly opposed the G7 statement and said it had summoned the Japanese ambassador as part of its protest to the summit host.

Russia, a close ally of China that was also called out in the G7 statement over its invasion of Ukraine, said the summit was an "incubator" for anti-Russian

and anti-Chinese hysteria. Separately, China's embassy in the United Kingdom on Sunday urged London to stop slandering China, after British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said Beijing represents the world's greatest challenge to security and prosperity.

Despite Beijing's pointed reaction, US President Joe Biden said he expected a thaw in frosty relations with China "very shortly". Apart from Japan, the UK and the US, the group also includes Canada, France, Germany and Italy.

Sun said Japan's actions were detrimental to China's sovereignty, security and development interests.



Netanyahu

Features

Museum security and the protection of Nigerian antiquities



WHAT is Security? It is a state of being free from danger or threats of any kind. It can also be said to be the quality or state of being secure. Security globally is a household Term which ordinarily is regarded as everyone's business.

For every Federated State, there are security outfits instituted by Government to take charge of the security business of every facet of the country; ranging from the Military to the Police and the Paramilitary outfits charged with security at different levels. This is the premise on which governments are run, business thrive and the state of anarchy is avoided.

Museum Security: Museum Security like another is a state of keeping the Museum and its staff and objects, Monuments and Sites safe from intruders whose mission are detrimental to the institution and its mission.

Museum Security is a very specialized kind of duty as it requires training in specialized field such as objects handling and care. This integral part of the workings of the museum, is conceptualized and Integrated while planning to build or locate a museum in any area or community. Therefore, in planning a museum, areas prone to theft, natural and manmade disasters and invasions of any kind must be avoided.

The security of the museum is pivot to its smooth running. In the year 2013, taking a comprehensive overview of the security of the fifty -three (53) stations of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments all over the Nation and the need to provide adequate security for each and every one of these stations, management of the Commission carved out a unit from the Department of Museums known as

ANTIQUITY PROTECTION UNIT. This arm of the department of Museums was basically charged with the security of Museum, staff on duty and properties.

With staff in every station of museum, the Commission has enjoyed relative security to its properties. The services of other security agencies like the Police and Civil Defense are sometimes engaged in the event of theft or crisis beyond the designated staff.

WAYS OF CARRYING OUT MUSEUM SECURITY

There are International best practices in carrying out the protection of Museum objects and its general security. These include: -

1. Every visitor to the museum put down some information about themselves in the visitor's book which makes it easy to trace such persons in the event of loss of an artifacts

2. Security cameras monitored from switch board which are located at strategic areas of the Museum to monitor the movement of staff and visitors in and out of the museum.

3. Every object that finds its way into the Museum through bequest, loans, excavations etc. must have an identification number in order to make for easy trace or track.

4. It must be documented in Antiquity Records book.

There must be movement of objects register.

There must be Antiquity store register for object not on the shelves or on exhibition.

Objects must have tag numbers.

There must be documented photographs of the objects taken from different angles.

Every object must be catalogued.

Every member of staff of the museum is encouraged to be security conscious at their duty post; this directive more so concerns staff whose duties require constant and frequent contact with the objects.

This requires providing any useful information that can help in the protection of these objects, information of discoloration, wrong placements, wrong positioning etc. and report same to the appropriate authorities.

Ahanonu Linus, Chief Antiquity Protection Officer, Antiquity Protection Unit, Abuja.

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EYE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Why you shouldn't strive for perfection

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

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

What It Means to Strive for Perfection

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

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

Reasons Why You Shouldn't Strive For Perfection

It's impossible to strive for perfection.

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

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

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



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

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

Perfectionism can be a

major obstacle for creative people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It takes away from what matters most

When people strive too much

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

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

Striving for perfection can make you feel like a fraud.

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

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

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

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

Perfectionists tend to be unhappy more often than others are.

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

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

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

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

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

Source: basicsbybecca.com



EVERY SOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Benefits of Avocado Seeds

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

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

Here are health benefits of eating an avocado seed

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

Helps to Prevent Cancer
Decades of research have gone

into finding a cure for multiple types of cancer, but one study that has recently gained attention is the link between avocado seeds and the prevention of Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). AML originates in bone marrow and, once developed, spreads to the bloodstream in the form of leukemia.

Heals Digestive Disorders
South Americans have been familiar with the digestive benefits that avocado seeds contain for hundreds of years and have been using it to treat ulcers, constipation and diarrhea. Avocado seeds contain soluble fiber and powerful anti-inflammatory compounds which help to reduce flatulence and bloating and eliminates toxins and waste that can cause complications.

Helps to Lower Cholesterol and Prevent Heart Disease
It's confirmed that avocado seeds offer some of the most intense amounts of soluble fiber compared to any other natural food source. Soluble fiber helps to rid the cardiovascular system of plaque buildup and cholesterol, which helps to prevent heart disease, heart failure and stroke. In particular, avocado seeds help to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and contain essential fatty acids that help to raise the HDL (good) cholesterol levels, which helps to restore a healthy cholesterol balance

Helps to Prevent Cravings



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

improve the rate at which food is broken down. This means a leaner, healthier composition from just one simple ingredient.

Helps to Prevent Blood Sugar Imbalance
A diet high in fiber and low in sugar helps to prevent blood sugar spikes and dips and can prevent the development of Type 2 Diabetes. Avocado seeds are the perfect addition to any smoothie or meal as the rich source of fiber helps to balance out any intake of sugar, keeping blood sugar levels stable.

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

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

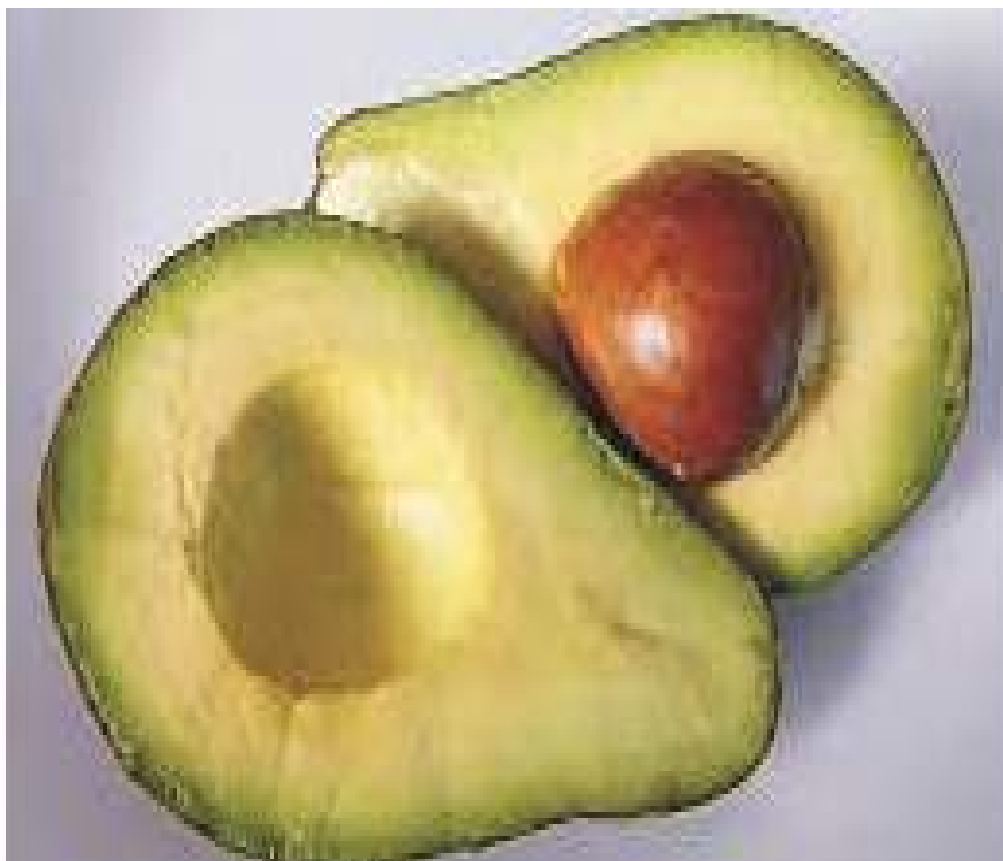
this tissue. Avocado seeds also contain nourishing oils which help to smooth wrinkles and improve the elasticity of skin, making you look younger and healthier in just one simple step.

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

Excellent Source of Potassium
Avocado seeds are a rich source of potassium, which makes it an excellent source of fluid-balancing nutrition. Potassium helps to eliminate excess toxins and fluid from the body as well as reducing muscle cramps.

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

Source: Health news.com



Editorial

On racism in football

The manager of Real Madrid, Carlo Ancelotti, emphasized on the need for action, in incidents of racism in football, saying the situation is unacceptable. It was in the La Liga Round 35 match involving Valencia CF and Real Madrid on Sunday, May 21, 2023 in the city of Valencia, Spain that the incident of racism in the top flight Spanish League occurred.

Racism in football is not something new. It has been around for quite some time.

When we talk about racism, football won't be the first thing that would come mind, it's likely associated with something much more monumental.

In recent times, we have witnessed some of the most entertaining match-ups the sport has ever seen, thanks to competitions like the European Champions League, FIFA World Cup (Male/Female), and a host of others around the globe. We have matches being played on at least a weekly basis. Little wonder it is being referred to as "the beautiful game."

Sadly, racism plagues football, and has so much stained this beautiful game. It has eaten deep, and is seeking to destroy the gains so far achieved. This ugly trend is still persistent and is on full display at stadiums around the world.

The way this ugly trend is going in Spanish football, it will make it look as if there are no measures to curb it. That however is not the case. In fact, La Liga has done much. Only that more needs to be done.

According to the referee's official report, fans directed racists' remarks at Vinicius Jr., screaming at him: 'Monkey, monkey' which led to the activation of the racism protocol, notifying the pitch delegate so that corresponding warning over the loudspeaker would be made. The match was halted until the announcement was aired."

In this instance, Vinicius Jr. was sent off from an altercation, which erupted in response to the alleged racist abuse from spectators. The match was stopped for 10 minutes as he identified individuals in the crowd to the referee for racial slurs directed at him. His manager, Carlo Ancelotti was not happy with the incident. He said, "such incidents should not occur in the world we inhabit."

Vinicius Jr. said on social media that it wasn't the first time, nor the second, nor the third. "Racism is normal in La Liga. The competition thinks it's normal, the Federation does too and the opponents encourage it. The championship that once belonged to Ronaldinho, Ronaldo, Cristiano and Messi today belongs to racists."

La Liga has filed nine separate reports with government authorities regarding the incident.

La Liga's president, Javier Tebas, seemed to take issue with Vinicius Jr.'s response to the abuse, chastising him on social media for allegedly not showing up to a pair of meetings with him about racism. He said before criticizing and insulting La Liga, it is necessary that Vinicius Jr. not let himself be manipulated. And that he makes sure he fully understands "each other's competencies and the work we have been doing together."

In response to the incident, Real Madrid filed a hate crime complaint with Spanish prosecutors.

Unfortunately, it's difficult to believe that Tebas, or any other soccer bureaucrat, will successfully stamp out racism, given Europe's long history of racial abuse in the game. In the 1970s, fans would spit at Black players from West Bromwich Albion, the English soccer club. In the 1990s fans called English pro Emile Heskey the N-word. Recently, after England lost to Italy at the Euro 2020 championships—which took place in 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic – the UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU) received more than 600 reports of online racist comments made towards England's Black players.

Last year, a fan threw a banana towards Brazilian player Richarlison after he scored during a friendly between Brazil and Tunisia in Paris. In April this year, Juventus fans could be heard making monkey noises as Inter Milan's Romelu Lukaku, who is Black, was preparing to take a penalty shot.

However, we commend soccer authorities like FIFA who have introduced stricter punishments for racist behavior. Pro leagues have to consider zero-tolerance measures. Teams could be forced to forfeit matches if officials can detect that their fans are racially abusing opponents. If that 1-0 victory, for example, were taken away from Valencia this week, their fans might act differently next time.

Sadly, the effects of racist abuse in the world's most popular game is felt far beyond the stadium walls. At the conclusion of the G7 summit in Japan, Brazil's President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, offered his support to Vinicius Jr. "It's not possible," Lula said "in the middle of the 21st century, to have such strong racial prejudice in so many football stadiums."

CONTENTMENT is said to be the state of happiness and satisfaction and also being grateful to what one has.

However, some individuals take to crime and other vices as a result of discontentment.

Parents should inculcate a habit of talking to their children as they grow on the need to be contented and also share the little they have with others for there is great gain in Godliness with contentment. For we brought nothing into the world and cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and do good, we will be contented.

A Jerad Anthony Higgins, An American rapper popularly known as JuiceWorld in his song titled, anxiety, he expresses gratefulness for the gift of life, he said money doesn't really matter to him, although he has money, but still struggling with anxiety heartbreaking and substance abuse.

My point is, despite his wealth he is still facing issues. We often envy celebrities and people who are living in affluence without considering the fact that they are human like us as also have physical, psychological and emotional issues.

Furthermore, Bible verses should be read in Christians homes in order to help children in their spiritual growth, which include Hebrews 13:5, and I Timothy 6:6-8, Luke 12:15 and so on.

The spirit of contentment often results to true happiness therefore, it is expected that for one to strive be contented, no significant amount of gratification can be compared to being happy. While being contented brings about peace of mind, most especially with

Contentment the great virtue

one's dear ones.

Pause for a minute and have a deep thought to see how misappropriation of public funds are being done by public officials due to discontentment. Does it mean they do not have enough? With all the assets they have in their possession, what else do they want to acquire?

All these is due to their selfish interests without even considering the poor who are living in object poverty and feeding from hand to mouth and do not have any hope of



getting their next meal.

We often talk about ways to eradicating corruption in Nigeria, when the monster behind it is discontentment.

Sensitizing the general public on the damaging effects not such vices can go a long way in eradicating corruption in Nigeria.

Furthermore, when we settle for unhealthy and unfulfilling limitation of what we really desire our appetite can begin to get out of control whose consequence forces us to either give in or indulge in social vices

that will lead to a bitter end.

But the truth is if you chase money in order to be contented it will only plunge you into destruction and will alienate you from God and people around you little by little until strangles you.

Let us try to focus our attention on doing good such as helping people improve in the overall interest of our society.

Jonathan Rabo Dammo, writes from the Plateau State Polytechnic Jos, Department of Mass Communication.

Child abuse and neglect

Its should be bought up strictly and with religious training which in most cases favours the male above female children. Some parents, having entrusted their children to religious teachers, never visit them or inquire about them and subsequently the children are forced to the streets to beg or become food vendors. The mallams often move some of these almajiris from city to city as beggars while some end up as prostitutes.

The Muslim religion which prohibits girls from becoming pregnant before marriage recommend that a girl should take a husband before her second menstruation. The abusive practices which are condoned by some parents. May parents send their children out to the streets to trade in order to make enough money for their mothers to buy house-hold goods for

tradition of early marriage is very difficult to change and has led to abusive practices which are condoned by some parents. May parents send their children out to the streets to trade in order to make enough money for their mothers to buy house-hold goods for them when they marry. It is for

morning or afternoon school and hawk goods out of school hours. Some are even exposed to trading on the streets the whole day to make income for their families.

Although most Nigerian children return home at the end of the day, a growing number, including

girls, have been confined to a life of street children whose future has already been destroyed by the same society they all belong and depend for care and succor.

By Mu'azu Adam Hudu Is an IT student from Federal Polytechnic Bauchi

Flouting of government order by truck drivers in Jos

IT appears government's directives are no longer respected in our society today because of how reluctant and unserious the system is. It is sad that, this lukewarm attitude has become a habit in each and everyone of us to the point laws are mere directive and not a rule.

However, recently, the Plateau State Government had issued press statement banning truck drivers from plying the road in the heart of Jos city from 6am to 6pm, but it was no order was issued at all. You see these truck drivers without regards to the constituted authority's order in the state breaking the law at any time of the

day. This action has generated a lot of argument because many lives have been lost daily as a result of their reckless driving. No week goes by without reports of truck running into moving small cars, buildings and roadside shop. It would be recalled that, the Polo Roundabout has been a "pit trap" to these truck drivers whose truck lose control.

It was in this regard that the Executive Governor of Plateau gave a restricting order to these drivers to save the lives of citizens, but it seems they are above the law. Unfortunately, the agencies saddled with the responsibility of arresting flouting this order are not doing much to control this ugly situation.

They are always busy concentrating on cars and tricycle riders who are using the road legitimately and allowing these truck drivers plying at odd hours against the government's directive making it looks as if there were no laws restricting them from plying the road in the day time.

Stringent actions should be taken by the State Government to put a stop to this unlawful act. A Special Squad should be caved out specifically to handle that aspect of disrespect. Again, a heavy fine as high as #20,000 to #30,000 should be charged on whoever flouts the law. This will generate huge revenue to the state government and also save the lives of citizens.

Written by Golching Gole Jenta-Adamu



Opinion

Will Tinubu administration end fuel subsidy controversy?

By
EMMANUELLA ANOKAM

NO policy in Nigeria's petroleum industry has generated more controversy than subsidy removal. Since the return to democracy in 1999, it has defied ministers and even the entire lifespan of administrations.

The argument is that the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) commonly known as petrol is lower than international benchmarks.

Proponents of subsidy therefore say Federal Government has to take care of the excess through the subsidy policy.

Opponents of the policy disagree, insisting that it is a waste of public funds, a drain on the commonwealth. They want it stopped.

Removing subsidy means leaving the cost of PMS in the hands of international market forces of demand and supply.

They say it would also pave the way for vibrant competition in PMS procurement and distribution.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in its Petrol Price Watch for February 2023 indicated that the average retail price of one litre of petrol rose from N170.42 in February 2022 to N263.76 in February 2023.

The figure represents an astronomical 54.76 per cent increase.

Sector operators have hinted that PMS pump price could go up as high as N600 per litre if subsidy for the product is removed.

They say it will likely drop to around N400/N500 if government encouraged Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to allocate forex to marketers at official rate.

Nigeria spent over N13 trillion subsidising PMS between 2005 and 2021, a figure equivalent to Nigeria's entire budget for health, education,

agriculture and defence in the last five years.

Orji Ogbonaya Orji the Executive Secretary, Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative disclosed this to the Ad-hoc Committee investigating subsidy regime between 2013 and 2021, chaired by Hon Ibrahim Aliyu

It is almost the country's capital expenditure for 10 years between 2011 and 2020.

According to a 2022 World Bank report, subsidy payments could significantly impact on public finance and pose debt sustainability concerns for Nigeria.

Recently, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) revealed that the amount being spent as subsidy on PMS had crossed N400 billion monthly threshold.

Malam Mele Kyari, NNPC's Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO), explained that the NNPC was spending about N202 as subsidy on every litre of petrol consumed nationwide.

He said NNPC was conscious of the occasional disruptions in the supply of the product but assured that as the sole importer of petrol the company would continue to meet its obligations to Nigerians.

Kyari said at the final cutover ceremony of NNPC and the birth of NNPC in Abuja that "we are transferring to our customers at N113/litre, which means there is a difference of close to N202 for every litre of PMS we import.

"In computation N202 multiplied by 66.5 million litres of PMS, multiplied by 30 will give you over N400 billion of subsidy every month," he said.

Mr Lawal Musa, Senior Business Advisor to the GCEO, NNPC, said opportunity cost of the subsidy spending could, among others provide basic infrastructures including 7.500 kilometres of road network annually at N400 million per kilometre.

He spoke in Abuja at a joint National Association of Nigerian Students, (NANS) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), sensitisation workshop on the NNPC operations.

"Nigeria is the largest producer of crude oil in Africa, possessing 28 per cent of Africa's reserve, with petroleum contributing significantly to the country's economy.

"However, the benefits derived have over the years been eroded due to the amount paid on subsidy, a regime that has been fuelling the vicious circle of poverty in the country," he told the audience.

To add to the controversy Mr Gabriel Aduda, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Resources, he said the Federal Government was committed to subsidy removal but was considering all indices, to ensure that the effect would not be harsh on average Nigerians.

"As we speak we are still taking a very close look at how best to achieve subsidy without disrupting the entire ecosystem of livelihood in Nigeria.

"We have to ensure that the buffers are in place and forex is made available for imports," Aduda said, he was recently quoted by the media as saying.

The National Economic Council (NEC) said recently that consultations were still ongoing with state governors and other stakeholders on the most appropriate ways to approach the policy.

"NEC deliberated on the issue extensively and came to the conclusion that the subsidy must be removed as it is not sustainable.

"There is the need for further consultations especially with members of the incoming administration and the representatives of state governments", said Dr Zainab Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget

and National Planning.

She said this in a statement signed by Tanko Abdullahi, her media aide.

Subsidy removal is already backed by law through Petroleum Industry Act (PIA 2021). Signed into law in 2021 by the President Mohammedu Buhari, the Act provides for total deregulation of the downstream sector.

Some operators in the oil and gas sector have decried the fact that deregulation which is one of the most fundamental aspects of PIA 2021 has not been implemented.

Mr Olumide Adeosun, CEO, Ardova PLC., Mr Tayo Akinwunmi, Chairman, Petroleum Contractors Trade Session (PCTS LCCI) and Mr Oladotun Isiaka, Executive Director, Deepwater, Exxonmobil Nigeria called for full deregulation of the downstream sector of the industry.

However, some experts have urged caution in the implementation of subsidy removal sections of the Act.

Prof. Olanrewaju Aladeitan an Associate Professor of Energy and Natural Resources at University of Abuja said before its removal, proper planning, including revamping the nation's refineries should be carried out.

"We expect those indices to be in place for us to benefit from the competitive advantage of being an oil producing country to avoid an untoward hardship on the citizenry", he told News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

"For us at IPMAN, our position remains that the subsidy should be removed because of the preferential for dollar which is so difficult to source", said Mr Chinedu Okorokwo, National President, Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN).

Okoronkwo said if subsidy was removed, PMS could be sold at

N500 per litre, adding that it was therefore necessary for government to make concerted efforts to cushion its effects on the citizenry.

Mr Charlse Majomi, Managing Director, Trajan Energy Ltd and an Adviser to the Federal Government on Gas-based Industrialisation, said continuing with subsidy meant spending funds that could have gone to critical sectors such as education and health on PMS.

He said diversifying energy sources would mean that the country will not virtually rely on PMS for power.

"If that is done we will not need to rely on PMS; because of that, we will not need to import and we would not require to subsidise costs", he told NAN.

One of the opponents of subsidy removal is the organised labour. The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) said in a recent media interview the union remained opposed to the policy because of its potential to aggravate workers' hardship if poorly implemented

"We are opposed to the removal of fuel subsidy until the Nigerian government acts responsibly by fixing our moribund refineries," Hakeem Ambali, NLC national treasurer of the NLC

"Let the government license and serve as the regulator by standardising the operation of private refineries to service the domestic value chain", he said.

As the fuel subsidy removal controversy rages observers of developments in the sector urge the relevant authorities to take a decisive decision on the matter after thoroughly considering its pros and cons.

They say it is necessary that this process is completed as quickly as possible by the incoming administration.

Petition tribunals: Matters arising

By **EMMANUEL NDON**

MEHMET Murat's postulations on bad politicians profoundly identified two kinds of politicians on earth: Those who expand freedom and those who restrict them. The second group, he said, has no chance to triumph and they will always be remembered as spooky characters from a horror movie.

The governorship candidate of the Young Progressives Party (YPP) in the 2023 General Election fits the bill.

These characters, whose cookies are crumbling, are fighting tooth and nail to dethrone the sovereign will of the people. Having failed at the polls where every credible opportunity was provided every candidate to test their strength in preference and popularity, they are now looking for a crooked means to impose themselves on the people.

The YPP and its governorship candidate in Akwa Ibom State, Bassey Albert, are alleging that the West African School Certificate of the governor-elect, Pastor Umo Eno, was not only forged but also formed the basis for his expulsion from the University of Uyo.

Interestingly, the party and its candidate have no dispute concerning the result of the election and how they lost in 29 local government areas of the state and won in only two, Ibiono and Ikono, after all the cracked up popularity.

Prior to the election, Pastor Umo Eno's WAEC certificate was the subject of a long-drawn litigation up to the Supreme Court. At every level of the battle it was proven that his certificates are not only authentic but original.

Left for the oral evidence and testimonies alone, it probably would have been difficult to determine the truth of the matter. But the court in its wisdom was able to unravel every material fact through a subpoena to the West African Examinations Council (WAEC).

Incontrovertibly, the examination body authenticated Umo Eno's certificates from their official register. The YPP and its candidate, including members of the public, are aware of the Supreme Court judgement on this matter, especially due to the wider publicity that the matter attained. And, in cognizance of this, the YPP's candidate is trying to pull off a leprechaun of sorts.

Even as a layman, no one can deny

the fact that the supreme court is the highest court in the country whose decisions and pronouncements – whether on individual rights or national issues – are binding on every person and authorities operating in the land.

Once the Supreme Court proclaims the authenticity of Pastor Umo Eno's certificates, it behoves every other court, tribunal, etc, to abide by it. No other court is vested with the authority to deliberate on or determine a matter already resolved by the highest court in Nigeria.

As it is the norm, resolutions of the supreme court become policies and are referenced as precedents which are treated like covenants.

However, weighed from the angle of its merit, the plaintiff, as is customary, is vested with the burden of proof. And this could be a tall order. If you allege that Pastor Umo Eno was expelled from the university, there must be a reason for such expulsion. So, on what basis was he expelled and how would that affect his nomination?

Secondly, the person you claim to have been expelled already has a Masters degree in his bag and is on the verge of being bestowed with a Doctorate (Ph.D). How did he achieve all these from the same university

under expulsion? As it is, whoever feels he's got a scrape to ride through to conquest will soon discover that he's on a wild goose chase.

Desperation by those who are bent on staying perpetually on the high end is always driving our politicians into madness. But the result should serve as a befitting answer to any candidate who failed an election that he has been rejected by the people he expected to serve.

Beyond that, it would have been reasonable if the YPP candidate complained about the process of the election than the credentials of the opponent. After the election, the message of the electorate appears to be like, 'whether Umo Eno has WAEC or not, he is our choice'. The people have stated in clear terms that they are tired of politicians who curtail their freedom, those who employ maximum force, coercion and intimidation to grab power.

The message is simple: those who restrict freedom has no chance to triumph anymore. Just like WAEC, the university will speak for themselves and the truth will always come to light. Those who think they can blackmail and browbeat Uniuyo officials will face their music.

CHANGE OF NAME

<p>JONATHAN</p> <p>I, JONATHAN GOSHIT, wish to state that my correct date of birth is 1/1/1999 not 5/5/1987. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>TIMOTHY</p> <p>I, formerly known as ODO ELIZABETH RUVOH, now wish to be known and address as ESTHER TIMOTHY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DATIT</p> <p>I, formerly known as DATIT TONGRIANG, now wish to be known and address as DATIT TONGRIANG MILDRED. My correct date of birth is 21/09/1992. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JOHNWESLEY</p> <p>I, formerly known as JOHN FILAH WESLEY, now wish to be known and address as JOHNWESLEY FILLAH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MIAPYIL</p> <p>I, formerly known as NAANMA MOSES, now wish to be known and address as MIAPYIL MOSES. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DUNG</p> <p>I, formerly known as DUNG ASTIEA SOLOMON, now wish to be known and address as DUNG ASTIRA SOLOMON. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>BAWA</p> <p>I, formerly known as AGUN VICTOR BAWA, now wish to be known and address as BAWA VICTOR AGUN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ISHAQ</p> <p>I, formerly known as ISHAQ MOHAMMED UMAR, now wish to be known and address as ISHAQ AHMAD. My correct date of birth is 18/07/1992 not 18/06/1992. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JOSHUA</p> <p>I, formerly known as PATIENCE JOSHUA GODSWILL, now wish to be known and address as JOSHUA PATIENCE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>LEDOU</p> <p>I, formerly known as NDODOKICLO LEDOU, now wish to be known and address as LEDOU NDOKOCLON MUSA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MICHAEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as MICHAEL JOSEPHINE SAJE, now wish to be known and address as MICHAEL JOSEPHINE KACHOLLOM. My correct date of birth is 12/01/1996 not 12/01/1999. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GASHON</p> <p>I, formerly known as GASHON ROTSHANG PAMELA, now wish to be known and address as GASHON ROTSHANG WUPTU. My correct date of birth is 22/10/1995 not 22/10/1993. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>NWOSU</p> <p>I, formerly known as NWOSU BRIDGET CHIMEZIE, now wish to be known and address as NWOSU BRIDGET ONYEKAOZURU. My correct date of birth is 28/08/1957. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>TIMOTHY</p> <p>I, formerly known as TIMOTHY JOSEPH DUNG, now wish to be known and address as TIMOTHY JOSEPH DUNGWOTT. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>PHILEMON</p> <p>I, formerly known as MARGRET SHIKCHE DORKAT, now wish to be known and address as PHILEMON MARGRET SHIKCHE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BAKO</p> <p>I, formerly known as SHALDONG BAKO REJOICE, now wish to be known and address as BAKO REJOICE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DASHE</p> <p>I, formerly known as DASHE SOLOME ABENEGO, now wish to be known and address as DASHE SOLOME ABEDNEGO. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JENNIFER</p> <p>I, formerly known as JENNIFER JANG YOHANNA, now wish to be known and address as JENNIFER ONU JAMES. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>DANJUMA</p> <p>I, formerly known as EMMANUEL NA'OMI EMMANUEL, now wish to be known and address as DANJUMA NA'OMI MANOMI. My correct date of birth is 17/09/1993. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>IBRAHIM</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUSA IBRAHIM MUSA, now wish to be known and address as IBRAHIM AUWAL. My correct date of birth is 05/05/1989 not 22/01/1989. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>YAKUBU</p> <p>I, formerly known as MAKURUMDU YAKUBU, now wish to be known and address as YAKUBU HOSEA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>OGBUNWEZEH</p> <p>I, formerly known as OGUNWEZEH NDIDIAMAKA DIANE, now wish to be known and address as OGUNWEZEH NDIDIAMAKA JOSEPHINE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JULIET</p> <p>I, formerly known as KANGYANG JULIET GYANG, now wish to be known and address as JULIET GYANG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ANYADELE</p> <p>I, formerly known as SUNDAY ABIGEAL, now wish to be known and address as ANYADELE ABIGAIL SUNDAY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>JONATHAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as JONATHAN CHRISTOPHER DAGWOM, now wish to be known and address as JONATHAN CHRISTOPHER TINJAH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ABUBAKAR</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABUBAKAR SANI, now wish to be known and address as ABUBAKAR SANI MUSA. My correct date of birth is 20/11/1961 not 11/08/1962. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>USMAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as IBRAHIM KABIRU, now wish to be known and address as USMAN JIBRIN. My correct date of birth is 16/12/2000. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>HUDU</p> <p>I, formerly known as YAHAYA MUDALSIRU HUDU, now wish to be known and address as HUDU MUDASSIR YAHAYA. My correct date of birth is 04/03/2002. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>PAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as TIMOTHY GYANG PAM, now wish to be known and address as PAM SHEDRACK TIMOTHY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>TONGKUNG</p> <p>I, formerly known as BULUS BLESSING SATI, now wish to be known and address as TONGKUNG BLESSING BULUS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>DAVID</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAVID PATIENCE DALYOP, now wish to be known and address as DAVID PATIENCE SABO. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>EDET</p> <p>I, formerly known as AUGUSTINE ARCHIBONG EDET, now wish to be known and address as EDET AUGUSTINE ARCHIBONG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MARY</p> <p>I, formerly known as MARY HURUG PIUS, now wish to be known and address as MARY SAJE ZIH. My correct date of birth is 27/04/1964. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MUKHTARI</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUNTARI RAMATU, now wish to be known and address as MUKHTARI RAMATU. My correct date of birth is 01/02/1980 not 01/01/1980. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GAI</p> <p>I, formerly known as ADAMU MARTHA BITRUS, now wish to be known and address as GAI MARTHA MWANVWANG. My correct date of birth is 09/03/1989. 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 USMAN MOHAMMED KWAGAL, now wish to be known and address as MUHAMMAD USMAN KWAGAL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MIMANG</p> <p>I, formerly known as PHEOBE DIYAK, now wish to be known and address as MIMANG DIYAK PHEOBE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DANASABE</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUHAMMAD ALHASSAN, now wish to be known and address as DANASABE BALA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MANBYEN</p> <p>I, formerly known as MANBYEN MARTHA DANRIMI, now wish to be known and address as MANBYEN MARTHA GONSHING. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ELSIE</p> <p>I, formerly known as ELSIE GWANCIT LEKAN EMOLE, now wish to be known and address as ELSIE GWANCIT LAKAN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ISTIFANUS</p> <p>I, formerly known as ISTIFANUS FIGBAMI, FIGBAMI ELISHA ISTIFANUS, now wish to be known and address as ISTIFANUS FIGBAMI ELISHA. My correct date of birth is 09/03/1989. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>PRISCILLA</p> <p>I, formerly known as SARAH BAKO, now wish to be known and address as PRISCILLA BAKO. 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 MARK SUNDAY KANGYANG, now wish to be known and address as MARKUS KANGYANG SUNDAY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ALUWONG</p> <p>I, formerly known as ISHAYA TABITHA MBUWAT, now wish to be known and address as ALUWONG TABITHA MBUWAT. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MACHAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as FELIX UTTAH RHODA, now wish to be known and address as MACHAM UTTAH HARUNA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>KING</p> <p>I, formerly known as KINGS LUKA, now wish to be known and address as KING LUKA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>UMAR</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUSA SAHURA, now wish to be known and address as UMAR SAHURA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GARBA</p> <p>I, formerly known as DA'ANG SATINA GARBA, now wish to be known and address as GARBA SATINA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MOHAMMAD</p> <p>I, formerly known as MOHAMMED BINTA AHMED, now wish to be known and address as MOHAMMAD BINTA AHAMAD. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>REBECCA</p> <p>I, formerly known as REBECCA JOSEPH, now wish to be known and address as REBECCA GILBERT. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ZI</p> <p>I, formerly known as CHUWANG BOK MICHEAL, now wish to be known and address as ZI PAM. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JONGOM</p> <p>I, formerly known as DANLAMI EMMANUEL JONGOM, now wish to be known and address as JONGOM SUMSHAK DANLAMI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>AHURA</p> <p>I, formerly known as AHURA WINIFRED MIMIDOO, now wish to be known and address as AHURA MIMIDOO. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MARYAMU</p> <p>I, formerly known as MARYAM MICHEAL, now wish to be known and address as MARYAMU MICHAEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>ADAKE</p> <p>I, formerly known as DANJUMA BULUS ADAKE, now wish to be known and address as ADAKE MAREN BULUS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DALLANG</p> <p>I, formerly known as QUEEN NANYAK BALI, now wish to be known and address as DALLANG CHALYA QUEEN. My correct date of birth is 02/03/1990. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>CECILIA</p> <p>I, formerly known as CECILIA NUHU, now wish to be known and address as CECILIA ADEOLU ADEWUYI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DALAGHAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as FRIDAY FREDRIK HARUNA, now wish to be known and address as DALAGHAM FREDERICK FRIDAY. My correct date of birth is 06/08/1995. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DUNG</p> <p>I, formerly known as DUNG DEBORAH YEIPYENG, now wish to be known and address as DUNG DEBORAH GWOM. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SALEH</p> <p>I, formerly known as SALEH SADAUKI YASHIM, now wish to be known and address as SALEH SADAUKI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>IDRIS</p> <p>I, formerly known as SHEHU YAHAYA, now wish to be known and address as IDRIS LAWAL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAPANG</p> <p>I, formerly known as AUDU SALISU, now wish to be known and address as DAPANG SALISU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAPANG</p> <p>I, formerly known as AZEEZ TONY MICHAEL, now wish to be known and address as AZEEZ TONY NANCHWAT. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>THIS SPACE IS FOR SALE</p>		

News

Kogi man kills stepmother with pestle

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

A man identified as Idris Aminu has allegedly killed his stepmother, Salamotu Aminu with a pestle in Ihima Obeiba Ebozohu community in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.

The incident was said to have happened on

Saturday night while the victim was fast asleep. Eye witness account told our correspondent that three days earlier, the suspect had attempted to kill the old woman with poison but she survived. Confirming the incident, the Kogi State Police Public Relations Officer, SP William Aya said the Command has arrested one

Idris Aminu for allegedly killing his stepmother with a pestle.

According to him, "the lifeless body of Salamotu was discovered by her daughter in her room. Our men immediately mobilised to effect his arrest.

He is currently in our custody while investigation is ongoing," he added.

THE reward of good work has earned two overall best graduating students of the Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University (IBBU), Lapai an automatic employment.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Abu Kasim Adamu who announced the employment of the graduates said that the two graduates will be employed as Graduate Assistants and will be trained up to the PhD level.

The two overall best-graduating students include the overall best-

2 Best Graduating Students gain automatic Employment

From MATHEW JWANTU, Minna

graduating student in the 2019/2020 academic session, Mohammed Aisha Egbako of the Animal Production Department with a CGPA of 4.85, and the overall best-graduating student in the 2020/2021 academic session, Yahaya Mahmud Baba of the Department of Food Science and Technology with a CGPA of 4.90.

Speaking during the 4th Combine convocation held on Saturday, the Vice Chancellor, 37 students will be awarded First Class Degrees, 954 students will be awarded Second Class Upper, 3,283 students with Second Class Lower, 1,518 students with Third Class, and 17 Students with Pass.

Adamu said that the university is graduating 6,154 students out of which 5,719 are undergraduates and 435 are postgraduates.

He disclosed that the institution has created six centers to enhance research, innovation, and patency in the institution adding that the University needs funding to accommodate the

increasing salary gap and payment of staff outstanding allowances, inadequate power supply, staff/student accommodation, additional classrooms and laboratories and completion of the Senate building as well as mitigating security challenges.

The University also conferred honorary doctorate awards to the Governor of Plateau state, Simon Bako Lalong with an Honorary Doctorate Degree of Administration (Honoris Causa), the Chairman, Mainstream Energy Solutions, Colonel Sani Bello with an Honorary Doctorate Degree of Humane Letters (Honoris Causa), the Chairman, Aliyu Trust Foundation, Malam Ibrahim Aliyu with an Honorary Doctorate Degree of Entrepreneurship Development (Honoris Causa), and Chairman, BUA Group, Alhaji AbdulSamad Isyaka Rabi with an Honorary Doctorate Degree of Business Management (Honoris Causa).

Jonathan commissions first Jalingo flyover

From VICTOR GAI Jalingo

FORMER President Goodluck Jonathan has commissioned the first ever fly over and 22 km dual carriage way in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital.

The projects were executed by the administration of the outgoing governor, Darius Ishaku.

The projects which cost was not disclosed consist of six pedestrian bridges, a bridge at Nukkai, a flyover bridge at road block and street lights.

Mr Jonathan commended the quality of the project, saying, "I want to commend the contractors and the governor for the quality of work."

"This is a project that will open up Jalingo to attract more investment.

Governor Ishaku appreciated Jonathan for affording him the opportunity to serve as a minister in three different ministries from where he got the experience to



governor Taraba.

"Cumulative being in the ministry of power, Niger Delta and environment all

was like a tutelage period for me, being the governor it helped me a lot in applying all the skills I

learnt," he said.

Also, the foundation laying for a trailer park was done by Jonathan. According to Governor Ishaku, the need to maintain the highway was the reason "why we are building a trailer park".

In his speech, the Taraba State Commissioner for Works, Irimiya Hammanjulde said the road has solved the problem of traffic accidents in the State capital. According to him, the contract for the entire stretch of the road was awarded in December 2019.

Governor commissions 40 megawatt hydropower project

From WILLIE ATTAH Gombe

GOMBE State Governor, Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya has described the completion and commissioning of the multibillion naira 40 megawatt hydropower project in Dadin-Kowa, Gombe State, as a milestone in the energy

independence of the North East subregion.

Governor Inuwa stated this at the commissioning ceremony of the project by the Minister of Water Resources, Engr Sulaiman Adamu over the weekend.

He said the Dadin Kowa Multipurpose Dam has become a very crucial project to the livelihood and socio-economic growth and development of not only Gombe State but the whole of North East sub-region.

According to him, Gombe State, under his administration, is on the path of economic independence and sustainability.

He commended the recent constitutional amendment that permits state governments the right to generate, transmit and distribute electricity, saying it will go a long way in galvanizing stakeholders at subnational level to exploit their potentials by leveraging on the comparative advantage they have.

"Our administration is already working on the 200MW solar power project under the Northern Governors' Renewable Energy Initiative. In addition, we are working to harness our hydropower potential at Balanga Dam in order to boost Gombe State energy capacity.

"We are intentional in

creating the enabling environment for businesses to thrive through deliberate formulation of favourable policies and provision of infrastructures and services to support business creation and growth.

"Our administration is committed to working with private investors and development finance institutions to plea a sluggish comparative advantage for the benefit of our people", he stated.

Governor Inuwa also commended all stakeholders and collaborators especially the Federal Government under President Muhammadu Buhari for its zeal and commitment in ensuring the project reaches its

logical conclusion despite the technical, financial and sundry challenges faced on the course of its execution. He vowed to ensure that the people of Gombe State benefit immensely from the project.

Minister of Water Resources, Engr Sulaiman Adamu, explained that the power component of Dadin Kowa Multipurpose Dam was built in 1988 with the reservoir capacity of 2.8 billion cubic litres. The goal was to provide 6000 hectares of irrigation, 40MW of electricity and 30,000 cubic meters daily water supply to Gombe and environs.

He revealed that the statutory inspection, testing and certifications of the project by the relevant agencies of government

have been completed, making it ready for commissioning. He appreciated stakeholders who participated in the making of the success story especially Mabon Limited, the Company that undertook the project.

Speaking earlier, the Managing Director, Upper Benue River Basin Authority, Engr Abubakar Halilu Muazu, explained that the concession agreement that saw the construction of the power plant was earlier signed in 2005, but due to some legal, technical and financial challenges, it was only able to be completed in December, 2020.

In his remarks, the Managing Director of Mabon Limited, Engr Richard thanked all stakeholders especially the federal and state governments as well as the host community for their efforts and contributions towards making the project a reality.

He said, the power station has so far contributed 401 gigawatt of power to the national grid and gave an assurance of effective and efficient handling of the facility.

Islamic sect accuses El-Rufai of victimisation

From JOHN FWAH, Kaduna

LEADERS of Islamic Movement in Nigeria, IMN, the Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky led Shi'ites group, has accused Governor Nasir El-Rufai of pushing the movement to the wall.

The group reacted, as the Kaduna State Urban Planning and Development Authority (KASUPDA) demolished six structures out of 48 belonging to the sect in Kaduna early Sunday morning.

The Shi'ite leaders made the accusation during a press conference in Kaduna Sunday evening after the demolition of the sect's structures, including schools, hospital and a private residence.

KASUPDA had in a leaked memo which went viral last week, sought the approval of Governor El-Rufai to carry out pending demolition of

structures across the state, including 48 structures belonging to the Zakzaky led Islamic Movement.

KASUPDA had in the early hours of Sunday carried out the demolition of six of the Shi'ites structures in Kawo, Rigasa, Tudun Wada and Ungwan Rimi, using security personnel to chase out the occupants of the buildings at unholly hours.

Briefing journalists on the development, one of the sect's leaders, Yunusa Lawal who was flanked by other leaders, said the demolition of their structures worth tens of millions of naira was not only, "illegal, but vindictive, as the only reason given by the government was that IMN has been banned".

Lawal also said that the Islamic Movement was not served any notice of demolition from Kaduna State Government or any of its agencies.



Yahaya

Feature

Outgoing 6th Nasarawa Assembly and speaker balarabe's stewardship

The Speaker Nasarawa State House of Assembly, Hon. Ibrahim Balarabe Abdullahi, no doubt is one Speaker in the history of Nigeria that has served two governors harmoniously and diligently, Governor Tanko Al-makura and Governor Abdullahi Sule's four years separately in peace and rancour free thus leading to smooth administration, good governance and speedy development in the State. SULEIMAN ABUBAKAR writes.

FOR time constraints we give a brief 15 outstanding records of achievements of the Speaker so far.

He stabilized the Nasarawa State House of Assembly for good 8years, no rancour, no party differences, peace and unity remains the order of the day.

He enhanced effective relationship between Executive and Legislature as well as the Judiciary thus cleared suspicious doubts which existed between Executive and Legislator he inherited as a result of impeachment moved against the 4th Assembly on Gov. Al-makura, paving the way for effective and efficient growth of the state.

He encouraged oversight functions akin to what is obtained at the National Assembly hence strengthened government MDAs.

In the history of the House, Balarabe passed the highest number of bills into law considering the fact that law making is the fundamental of legislative arm.

1st Assembly 33bills
2nd Assembly 20bills
3rd Assembly 31bills
4th Assembly 45bills
5th Assembly 48bills
6th Assembly with 54 bills passed so far aside 21 bills in



Abdullahi

various stages of passage (total 75).

Nasarawa Assembly at the moment is rated second best among the 36 State Houses of Assembly in terms of performance.

He is the first Speaker in

Nasarawa State to get Commonwealth Parliamentary Association CPA appointment to represent African Region. This is a big plus to the state, the position he is holding up to this moment. This was informed as a result of his performance.

During his regime, the over 140 casual staff of the House who have worked for over 10 to 20 years were absorbed as permanent and pensionable staff.

Still during his regime, the Nasarawa State House of Assembly published for the first time in history, a compendium that tells the journey and story of the House, a document that posterity will drink from it. He is the first Speaker in the state to get Presidential Award as best Speaker in North Central Nigeria presented to him by Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabamila.

He is the first Speaker in Nasarawa State to be presented with letter of commendation and recognition by the Nigeria Labour Congress NLC for his giant role in Government and Labour Relation.

He has hold the position of National Vice Chairman, North Central, Nigeria, Conference of Speakers of State Assemblies diligently.

The ruling APC members of the outgoing 6th Assembly and the opposition party PDP members of the House has separately passed votes of Confidence on Speaker Balarabe over what they described as his leadership qualities and all inclusive administration.

The Former lawmakers from first to firth Assembly in the state as well as those from the then Plateau State House of Assembly under the Association of Former Nasarawa State House of Assembly members led by their Chairman and two term Speaker of the House, Rt.Hon. Musa Ahmed Muhammed also passed a vote of confidence on Speaker Balarabe's leadership.

The Parliamentary Staff Association of Nigeria PASAN, Nasarawa State House of Assembly also passed a vote of confidence on Speaker Balarabe Abdullahi over his exceptional leadership qualities, workers welfare and relationship.

He got Late Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello Merit Award as one of the best Speakers in Northern Nigeria among other breakthroughs too numerous to mention.

These are facts to check, among other ground breaking records of achievements.

A popular adage maintains "The Devil You Know is Better than the Angel You Don't Know." His records speak volumes. These are digest facts to check for incoming members of the 7th Assembly in Nasarawa State.

For consolidation and good governance, we need Speaker Balarabe Abdullahi again.

News

Gunmen behead youth leader

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

A middle aged man, Daddy Noah was on Wednesday abducted from his village, Patanyi, a riverine village in Bagana Ward of Omala Local Government Area of Kogi State. He was beheaded and his corpse thrown into the river in Kogi State.

The incident was said to have occurred when Daddy, a youth leader in company of four friends went on hunting expedition. The gunmen based on information stormed the forest and abducted him while his other friends escaped by the whiskers.

The deceased, according to locals was one of the belligerents defending his clan, Ihiankpe against the onslaught of the Otututubatu clan, who have been up in arms against each other over the control of Bagana community in Omala LGA.

Our reporter gathered that the crisis which started off as Fulani herders and Agatu in Benue State snowballed into ethnic and clans cleansing which started over a decade ago.

According to another eye witness account, Daddy as he was fondly called, met his

waterloo on the fateful day, when the suspected bandits numbering over twenty stormed the sleepy town of Patanyi, shooting sporadically, as the villagers ran helter skelter to save their lives. In the process, Daddy was abducted and taken to an unknown destination. The eyewitnesses added that, Daddy was subjected to all manner of ill treatment before he was beheaded and the corpse thrown into River Benue at Bagana.

Recounting the ordeal to our reporter, a man who did not want his name in print in order not to be traced by the suspected militia, said, on Wednesday afternoon 17/5/2023, when the villagers were returning from farms, they were taken by surprise with staccato of gun shots from different directions and people scampered to safety. However, Daddy Noah was unlucky as he was cut up by the militia.

"The militia came through, Bagana and Ogba route before arriving at Patanyi to carry out the dastard act. The villagers then mobilised themselves into a search

party who later discovered the mutilated corpse floating at the bank of River Benue at Bagana, the epicenter of the lingering communal war that has taken the lives of tens of hundreds of lives and burning down of properties.

"It was a gory sight to behold, as his head was chopped off, his hands and legs were equally cut to smithereens. Lamentably, the deceased had lost his father, Noah Akoja, his senior brother, an uncle, Alih to the crisis, even as their family houses in Bagana were burnt to rubbles.

* As I'm talking to you, no member of Ihiankpe clan is having his or her house standing in Bagana. They have all been burnt down by the suspected militias allegedly helping the Otututubatu clan to prosecute the war.

"This latest onslaught against our clan is coming on the heels of the final phase of the fact finding engagement with the communities, by the peace committee set up by His Royal Majesty Ata'Igala Matthew Opaluwa Oguche-Akpa. This killing has taken us back in the peace building process," he recounted the ordeal amid wailing.

Recall that Bagana, a

commercial nerve centre of Omala LGA and 15km north of Abejukolo, headquarters of the council, has been engrossed in carnage since 2013, and all efforts by the state government to restore normalcy proved abortive.

When contacted, the paramount ruler of Omala LGA, HRH Boniface Musa, the Ojogba of Ife condemned the killing, saying it was one too many for the people of the communities.

He called on the state, federal government and security agencies to come to his aid to permanently end the crisis.

The royal father while lamenting the socio economic hardship the crisis has posed on Bagana communities, said it has become unbearable for the entire local government area to bear the burden of Internally Displaced Persons who had fled from their homes.

At the time of filing this report, the Police Public Relations Officer, SP William Aya could not pick his calls and several text messages sent to him was not responded to, but his second in command said he has reported the matter to the Divisional Police Officer of the LG who promised to revert as soon as he was in touch with the DPO.

Ishaku commissions "Model School"

From Victor Gai, Jalingo

TARABA State Governor, Darius Ishaku has commissioned the SUBEB Model School Nukkai Jalingo, which is one among three constructed in each of the senatorial zones in the state. The Model School comprises of a pre-nursery, nursery, primary and junior secondary schools, ECCDE furniture, staff quarters consisting of two bedroom twin flats, 15 constructed classrooms, a fully equipped laboratory and library, a sick bay and a motorized borehole.

Governor Darius Ishaku, in his speech during the occasion said, "one area that this administration will leave an indelible mark on is the massive investment in education; both in personnel and infrastructure".

He boasted that the state had improved in the WAEC examination from a "lowly 30% in 2015 to 67 and now 85 per cent".

"We rank first in northern Nigeria for exceptional academic performance in

WAEC and NECO external examinations," he stated.

The Commissioner of Basic and Secondary Education, Johannes Jigem, also stated that the investment on the education by the present administration had "significantly reduced the number of out-of-school children in the state by establishing more primary and secondary schools" and "increased the number of primary schools from 1826 to 2290, as well as the number of secondary schools from 225 to 306 since 2015 to date".

Jigem added that the investment on education had led to an increase in students enrolment, construction of classrooms, renovation of classrooms, provision of furniture for pupils and teachers and other teaching aids.

According to him, 3323 teachers known as the "Rescue Teachers" were recruited and their appointment made permanent.



By FRANCISCA ADIDI

THE random killings across the country especially in the North is a thing of concern in the society, especially for the present administration.

So many lives are being lost and property worth millions of Naira destroyed from attacks by terrorists on a daily basis. This is because insecurity has become order of the day.

It seems the present administration of President Buhari does not appear to have answers to the challenges of security which the society is facing today.

Should we continue like this? How long? And when should Nigerians expect an end to these killings? Nigerian roads are not safe as most people are being kidnapped on their journey. The killers on the roads and other criminals in the society appear to be comfortable as not enough is being done to stop their activities by the government. That is why they have gained more confidence in their

attacks.

The security situation in the country has gone worst under this administration such that the cry of the common man is for Nigeria to have a messiah to take over from Buhari. This is because it seems our leaders are more concerned with politicking than the wellbeing of

has been battling with.

Nigerians are tired of recycled politicians who are moving themselves from local government to state and from state level to National Assembly and to the presidency without tackling the security situation.

Today politicians are cross carpeting and switching from



The need for leaders to act

its populace.

Nothing is being taken serious today as everything is being politicized because of the greedy nature of politicians. Remember, Nigeria is bigger than all of us. The country needs to be fixed before it is being governed.

Everyone wants to contest into leadership position and not because they want to govern and fix things but rather because of position, money and fame that comes with it.

Everyday, the media reports killings here and there. They are also tired of reporting such news. They also love Nigeria and would want to report good things about the country.

Nigerians are saying enough of the bloodshed. Enough of kidnapping, enough of terrorism. Government should therefore wake up to its responsibility. Nigerians are not asking for too much, they need peace, they need security of lives and property.

Today Nigerians are praying for good and genuine leaders who will be totally committed to free the country from the numerous challenges the nation

one political party to the other just to get elected into leadership positions.

Former President Goodluck Jonathan was accused of being the architect of insecurity in the country. As a way out, a retired General of the Nigeria Army was brought in thinking he would change the narrative. But the situation got worst day by day that some Nigerians are calling for his resignation as insecurity has grown worst.

Nigerian government is duty bound to protect the lives of its citizens as enshrined in the constitution. But this can only be achieved if government reconstructs the security architecture of the country, by

bringing modern technology to bare so as to keep the security forces ahead of the insurgents.

The recent attacks on Kaduna/Abuja road and that of Plateau State in Kanam Local Government Area, where so many lives were lost and property destroyed, is pathetic and unfortunate. These attacks show the helplessness of our security personnel. Yet it is, only when terrorists strike before the presence of police or military will be seen.

And each time an attack is made, government is quick to condemn such attacks without apprehending those culprits. Are they invisible? Where are the perpetrators?

Nigerians only talk about elections without tackling the issue of insecurity which has gained grounds in the Nigerian society. The leadership does not come closer to the people for effective management of the situation.

We are a people that are suffering and smiling. They are killing us yet we are not tired of lining up under the sun to elect leaders that allow terrorists to kill us without being caught.

Security issue needs to be tackled fast to save the lives and property of the remaining Nigerians.

Is there nothing to be done to curb this insecurity in the country? Why are our leaders so quiet and nonchalant about the issue of security and lives are being wasted everyday as if human lives are valueless?

Our leaders should not allow the country to be battered and buffeted as in the words of Father Kukah. Our leaders should not inflict morals, psychological and emotional damage on Nigerians that will take a long time to heal.

Our leaders should not allow Nigeria to bleed as insecurity grows worst everyday.

“

Our leaders should not allow the country to be battered and buffeted as in the words of Father Kukah. Our leaders should not inflict morals, psychological and emotional damage on Nigerians that will take a long time to heal.

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Africa can no longer be re-colonized



By CELESTINE ATTSAR

THOUGH the relationship between Africa and the western world has a long history and time which many see as exploitative right from the moment it started. As it is now, most of the African countries have become independent politically and are expected to be economically independent too. But as it is now, most of these African so-called independent states are still at a static stage in their development, some even worse than the time they got independence. Many expert in the field of development studies attribute the backwardness of African development to bad leadership which the continent inherited

western country or the other and as a result of the debt burden, it cannot fast-track its development because of its dependence on the creditor nation.

At independence, it is expected that African countries should stand on their own in all spheres of life but reverse turns out to be the case. As a results over dependence on the west, the continent is almost at the mercy in everything that involves human development.

In Nigeria before the 2023 general election, Nigerian politicians especially the presidential candidates made it a duty to honour a London base political and economic think tank invitation chaittham House to voice out what they had to offer when elected president of the country. And those who did not honour the invitation when seen as not qualify to rule the country. Meanwhile, what Chartam House is doing is the same as the thing Nigerian Institute for Internal Affairs (NIIA) and Centre for Democratic Studies are doing.

The issue is that, why must we go to a country or countries of the west to campaign for what we can do for Nigeria and Nigerians? It is because we cannot develop our own

believe it is only when we have link with any of the western countries that we can win election or Nigerians will believe what we say is going to work?

The recent development in the political sphere in Africa especially my country Nigeria reminds me of what the former Senegalese President wrote in 1957 that by decolonization, I mean the abolition of all prejudice, any superiority complex in the minds of the colonizer and also of any inferiority complex in the mind of the colonized." No doubt Colonial authority never rested on social, economic and political control of our countries alone. Its population depended upon complex systems of knowledge and power that facilitated the

physical, racial, economic and linguistic subordination of colonial people. Senglor recognized the fact that decolonization is more than simply issuing certificates of independence. In his speech at the UN General Assembly in September 1960, the late Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah said for years, Africa has been the footstool of colonialism and imperialism, exploitation and degradation. He stood his ground on gaining independence for other African countries that were still under colonial rule then. His passion and drive for African unity, development and complete decolonization is total.

I am not saying that going to far away UK to deliver manifestoes

for Nigerian is not good. My concern as a Nigerian who believed in our independence in all ramification is to have any of those seeking political offices from these western countries ever come here to canvass for vote. Then where is our independence. By the way the west wants those that they can toy with not the ones that can stand firm for their country.

Though our problems can be said to be the same from Nigeria, Ghana, Niger, Mali etc. It is high time we cut our dependence on the west, for everything we want to do that will lead to development and embrace our home made ideas, our journey towards development will either be static or very slow.

"It is obvious that most African countries are indebted to one western country or the other and as a result of the debt burden, it cannot fast-track its development because of its dependence on the creditor nation. At independence, it is expected that African countries should stand on their own in all spheres of life but reverse turns out to be the case. As a results over dependence on the west, the continent is almost at the mercy in everything that involves human development."

ON Monday marks the golden jubilee of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), set up by the military regime of General Yakubu Gowon in 1973. Coming barely three years after the civil war ended, it was created to help heal the wounds by fostering national unity, integration and cohesion, in a country riven by the fratricidal conflict of 1967 to 1970, between the then Eastern Region and Nigeria. Decree 24 of 22 May, 1973, which established the NYSC, states its goal to be, inter alia, "...to inculcate in Nigerian youths the spirit of selfless service to the community and to emphasize the spirit of oneness and brotherhood of Nigerians irrespective of cultural and social background."

With this legal framework, all graduates from the country's universities have been mobilised for a compulsory one-year national service in states other than their states of origin since then. The pioneer 2,300 youth corps members were drawn from the 17,750 students' population when only six universities existed, namely: University of Ibadan; University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; University of Ife; University of Lagos; and University of Benin. The number of the 1973/74 set has "grown to between 350,000 to 400,000 youth corps members annually", according to the Minister of Youth and Sports, Sunday Dare.

A day like this is opportune for introspection on the journey so far. No doubt, the programme has recorded successes. Many states have found in the scheme, an annual source of cheap labour, especially of school teachers, medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, pharmacists and other professionals, many of whom are often deployed in rural areas, which do not attract workers ordinarily. The NYSC is also a reservoir of personnel for elections, census and national immunisation programmes. In the 2023 general elections, for instance, youth corps members numbering 200,000, served as ad hoc electoral officials, which constituted 75 per cent of the personnel deployed for the national assignment.

Conversely, the scheme's continued existence is seriously being threatened by challenges, to the point that some Nigerians have been demanding, for a while now, that it should be scrapped, claiming it has outlived its usefulness. The lack of adequate financial resources for the NYSC scheme is a big issue. Currently, there are 1,855,261 undergraduates in Nigerian universities expected to go through the service, sooner than later. This figure will invariably increase with the total number of 258 public and private universities, as of last Wednesday last week, following a Federal Executive Council (FEC) approval of 37 new private universities in the country. Students from abroad and in the polytechnics spike the number further.

Corruption in the administration of the NYSC and universities is crippling the scheme. Cases abound in which non-graduates are mobilised for service by tainted university officials, for the unqualified to collect the monthly allowance, as unemployment ravages. The effect of this racketeering on the programme was such that in 2017, the Director-General of NYSC, Brigadier-General Shuabu Ibrahim, called on the **Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)** to wade in, during a visit to its chairman, Ibrahim Magu. The NYSC boss had then revealed:

"Currently, we are investigating some of such so-called graduates, many of whom cannot write or spell any word in English."

Besides, children of the elite, through their parents, decide where they would be posted. This is an abuse, which has been going on for years but is exacerbated by the current wave of insecurity nationwide. In some instances, these corps members complete the orientation programme, get deployed to places of primary

August that year, those above the age of 30, military and police personnel, members of staff of the State Security Service, Nigeria Intelligence Agency, Defence Intelligence Service and individuals conferred with national honours, were exempted from service.

Yet, the strategy has not contained the surge because of illegal admissions by universities. The Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu, following pressure from vice-chancellors and parents, had



NYSC at 50: Repositioning for survival, better service



assignment and then vanish until the time to collect the discharge certificates. These challenges, among others, are why calls have been strident for the scheme to be voluntary now, as against its mandatory nature.

The exponential increase in call-ups to the service, with the earlier inclusion of National Certificate of Education (NCE) graduates of Colleges of Education, compelled a rethink on how to prune the figure in 1985. With effect from the 1st of

to regularise the admissions of about one million students in April 2022, who had already graduated, to make them eligible for service. At a stakeholders meeting, the Minister said, "I had approved that all illegitimate admissions from 2017 to 2022 be condoned, as long as such candidates met the minimum entry qualifications in their various courses of study." Graduates sometimes wait for three years or more after

graduation, before they are mobilised. These are abuses of epic proportions and existential toxic stressors, which require better handling than the Adamu recipe.

With the Federal Government spending 96 per cent of its revenue on servicing debts, it is time for it to think out of the box on how to sustain, strengthen and maintain the NYSC's relevance. The voluntary enlistment being canvassed is an option that strongly recommends itself. Nigeria is not the only country where such youth programmes exist. It could learn something good from Israel, Malaysia, Mexico, Chile, Taiwan and others with similar schemes to improve its own.

In many of these countries, enlistment is highly competitive or for the best. Malaysia has 85,000 vacancies for a three-month programme and selection is by lottery. In Chile, through competition, medical doctors, engineers and lawyers are professionals selected and deployed in rural areas for rural poverty reduction, which lasts for 13 months. In Israel, it is for three and two years for males and females respectively, and only for secularists aged 18, for military training. Recruitment is through examination and interviews.

As presently run, the scheme needs a radical overhaul for survival. A visit to some of the orientation camps across the states, tells a story of neglect and a national institution in dire straits. Many states no longer discharge their statutory support to the scheme in the maintenance of orientation camps. Its erstwhile Director-General, Sachari Kazaure, was so pained by the remiss when he inspected Yikpata camp in Kwara State, a few years ago, that he

exclaimed: "With what I have seen here, I am highly disappointed. It is nothing to write home about." The camp had no fence, while dilapidated buildings, inadequate beds, poor roads and obsolete facilities were ugly spectacles.

National discipline; conformity with the law, rules and regulations; and punishment for errant behaviours are irreducible conditions that should be strictly adhered to by all stakeholders in the years ahead, for the scheme to endure. A reduction in the number of participants through a well-considered set of criteria will significantly address its funding crisis and enhance the welfare package of corps members. The current allowance of N33,000 monthly cannot take care of a youth corps member, amid growing inflationary pressures in the country. If the welfare of corps members is well catered for, they will give their best in serving the nation.

For these reasons, the NYSC Trust Fund Bill before the House of Representatives is a welcome idea. It seeks to provide more funding for the scheme through one per cent of the profit of companies. This will help to scale-up the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Department (SAED) of NYSC, devoted to training corps members for self-reliance after national service.

With the 277,537 shortfall of teachers in the country, according to the 2018 National Personnel Audit report, in basic education – primary to the first three years of secondary education – scrapping the scheme will be tragic for education in Nigeria, due to the contributions of NYSC teachers.

source: Premium Times



IMAGES

BUHARI/LALONG COMMISSION PROJECTS IN THE STATE

Nigeria's President, Muhammadu Buhari, through his representative and former Nigerian Head of States, Gen. Dr. Yakubu Gowon last week commissioned projects in the state



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, CON (2nd left) commissioning the Cityline Press Machine at the PPC, Publishers of The Nigeria Standard to the admiration of the Acting GM, Mr. Paul Jatau, Commissioner for Information, Dan Manjang and others



MD/CEO, Plateau Minerals Development Company Ltd, Mr. Kwplong Martin Bialwan showing minerals found on the Plateau to Governor Lalong and entourage at the Solid Minerals House Anguldi, Bukuru Express Way, Jos South LGA.



NEWMAP Erosion Control Project commissioned by Governor Simon Bako Lalong, CON at Munchogopyeng, Bukuru, Jos-South LGA



NUJ State Chairman, Mr. Paul Jatau (right) making remarks to the Governor during the commissioning ceremony of NUJ Remodeled Press Centre, Jos



Governor Lalong, CON commissioning the Riyom Water Treatment Plant flanked by the Commissioner of Water Resources and Energy, Hon. Sa'ad Ibrahim Bello



Governor Simon Bako Lalong, CON (right) acknowledging cheers from Pupils of Lalong Legacy Model, Primary School Bukuru, Jos South LGA during the commissioning of the school



Commissioner of Health, Dr. Ninkong Lar (right) explaining some things to Governor Lalong during the commissioning of the General Hospital and Trauma Centre, Riyom LGA



Governor Lalong, CON (right) being received by the Commissioner for Secondary Education, Hon. Elizabeth Wapmuk and executive Secretary, PSUBEB, Prof. Matthew Sule at the Lalong Legacy Project

Odd World

Mum defies doctors, refuses abortion has baby without arms

A mum was called selfish for defying medics who told her to abort her baby boy, as she insists she would rather have her baby born without any arms as he is "perfect".

When Mariaan Strauss, 25, and her husband Hendrik Strauss, 26, from South Africa, found out they were pregnant, they were elated.

However, a sonar scan at 13 weeks revealed something that changed their lives forever, after the doctor told them that their baby wasn't developing arms.

He informed the pair that aborting the baby would be the best decision.

With full-time jobs, Mariann working in the food safety department of a national bakery and Hendrik being a manager at the parts department of a trucking company, the thought of managing and rearing a baby with a disability sounded tough to both.

But at the same time, Hendrik said that he did not want to go down the route of abortion. And Mariaan said that she had love for her unborn child, who is now eleven months old.

Hendré weighed six pounds and one ounce at birth as Mariaan said that they cried "because it was such a beautiful moment."

She continued to say: "Then the big, dark depression hit me.

"Society is cruel and I thought will our child ever be accepted? Is he going to be mocked and bullied?"

"The words of my specialist kept running through my head, 'You're selfish if you don't abort. You must think of the child. He will never be able to have a normal quality of life'.

"I was angry at God for allowing this.

"There was self-blame and pain. And the fear of the unknown and an uncertain future. I thought, 'Why us? Why our child?' You pray and you ask for a healthy child, but then this happens.

"But if I had to choose today, I would take him just like that, again. Without arms."

The couple remained optimistic that they could care for Hendré, and it was ultimately the best decision of their lives, with Mariaan saying: "When Hendré was three months old, he taught himself to roll from place to place and it was like a cloud lifted.

"I realised my child was okay, then I was okay and the depression went away."

Proud father Hendrik added: "You should see how he rolls these days.

"If he wants to get to a toy on the other side of the room, he moves or he pulls his little legs under him and pushes himself forward."

However, the parents revealed that Hendré had other physical problems, including being unable to digest more than 30ml of milk at a time.

The parents said: "A day after his birth his right leg was put in plaster because his foot was turned inwards.

"He also didn't have a fibula – the lower leg bone that supports muscles and nerve endings.

"His stomach hasn't grown and he can drink only 30ml of milk at a time before he's full."

But Mariaan and Hendrik's family has been unconditionally supportive of them, and they help them care for their young son in any way they need.

But Mariaan has admitted that she has never forgotten the words her specialist said to her, saying that she feels for women who terminate their pregnancies because of abnormalities.

Mariaan said: "I wish they could hear me when I tell them it's okay to have a child who's different from society's idea of 'normal'.

"Hendré is the greatest gift we could have received.

"We remember how the doctor looked at our first sonar for a long time. When he said that he was having trouble seeing the second arm, he referred us to a specialist in Bloemfontein who did a second sonar, three weeks later.

"He told us our baby didn't have arms. But we'll find out in future if Hendré can get prosthetic arms.

"Just the other day Hendrik jokingly remarked it's strange for him to see babies with arms."

Hendrik, too, is enjoying fatherhood like he never thought with his adorable son, adding: "Hendré sleeps in his cot next to our bed. When he wakes up, he lies there and smiles at us.

"And to think I wanted to throw it away because I was scared and insecure."

Source: MIRROR



Peter Obi: If wishes were horses

IF wishes were horses, yours sincerely would have preferred Peter Obi to be the next democratically elected leader of Nigeria come 2023. This is because; over the years, Obi's overwhelming performance when he was the Executive Governor of Anambra State has been consistently on the table of discourse. It is quite obvious today that this man is not only intelligent and sincere; it seems he has enough energy to handle the obligations of such an office knowing also that age is on his side.

Though many would read meanings into my hardheaded submission, I am certainly also aware of this notion which has blindfolded many citizens of this country in most recent times which is related to religion, ethnicity and regional sentiments. One can also say without mincing words that money has continued to play a vital role in Nigeria's political landscape in most recent years. Therefore, no matter how credible and transparent a candidate is; these oblivious cynics will still raise irrelevant and selfish allusions to accomplish their rancorous goals.

Therefore, no matter how good an individual is; the powers that be in this country don't always take into account his antecedents and capacity to govern the citizenry. This political manipulation and fallacious ideology has brainwashed many citizens into believing that any best leader must only come from their region and not elsewhere. These cynics sometimes even swear in God's name that aside their region, no other region is blessed with competent leaders to rule this country.

In Northern Nigeria where this misleading ideology has for decades proliferated like wildfire, the dogmatization of this notion has dragged the entire region into an irreversible abject poverty, starvation, overwhelming state of quagmire and insecurity. Today, even the author of this unhealthy notion and elusive ideology, Sir Ahmadu Bello who was quoted as saying "Northerners are born to rule" must be furiously weeping in his grave. He must be weeping uncontrollably knowing too well that his unguarded utterance has led to this avoidable calamity, backwardness and retardation inherently bedeviling the Northern region. Sad enough though the north has had the opportunity of leading this country more than any other region, there has been nothing to show for it in terms of development.

Be it the state of educational facilities, healthcare and or provision of basic amenities, the north has continued to be deliberately left in absolute want. To say the truth, nothing seems to be working in the north but ferocious activities of religious bigots, fanatics and extremists who have joyfully continued to help their God kill innocent lives and destroying properties worth trillions of naira since this madness started. Thus, it is becoming more obvious that the north is producing more "mad" people in different categories to the detriment of the entire country.

It is in the midst of this calamity that Nigeria has been left with no option than to vote for incompetent presidential candidates who based on their credentials will not successfully take the nation to the Promised Land. For those who do not comprehend the core northern oligarchy's battle for power retention, this is borne out of their greed and acts of self aggrandizement not minding the unity of the nation. Though most of them have nothing spectacular to offer this nation, they are deeply involved in the proliferation of several gimmicks including

this caliphate ideology of conquest and expansionism in a secular nation state like Nigeria.

It is in the midst of this political maneuverings that Mr. Peter Obi has indicated interest to contest under the platform of the Labour Party to according to his manifesto save the nation from nose-diving into oblivion. After trying without success to find his route under the platform of the opposition party. The Peoples Democratic Party he was later forced to change gear and eventually ended in another political party, the Labour Party. As it is, many political pundits are of the strong opinion that his party is not structured and may not be a strong platform to deliver him as president come 2023.

This is not to however say that Peter Obi is not competent to be trusted with power or is a mere pushover. In fact, just recently, I was opportune to watch an interview which Obi granted a television station during a programme titled "Brekete" where the former Anambra State Governor subsequently disclosed the humongous amount of money he left behind in government coffers after his tenure expired. I was moved to tears after the former governor was able to restore integrity and good governance in the state by ensuring that all the components of Human Development Index were reactivated with due diligence under his watch.

This aside, while giving a rundown of the monetary investments which yielded substantial profit during his tenure which amounted to trillions of naira; I could not imagine why Obi should not be given an opportunity to govern this country. What beats my imagination was how on earth was the Governor able to suppress any possible temptation of greed and self-centeredness to achieve this marvelous feat. Sincerely speaking, Peter Obi is a different kind of contemporary politician and democrat of high principle Nigerian politicians will never support.

That was perhaps the more reason why the powers that be in the PDP hurriedly bundled him out. But again, it must be known that his kinsmen, the Igbos did not also help him when it mattered most. If the billionaires in the south east could rise billions of naira to fight the Coronavirus pandemic at the right time, what equally stopped them from doling out these financial resources in support of their brother?

Why did most of these influential Igbos supported northern Presidential aspirants during the primaries when they know too well that they had a more competent personality in Obi? Why did it take them this long to decode the relevance of PVC during electoral process in the country? I can't imagine it is now that most Igbos are scrambling to get their PVC's and not strategizing to woo support and sell Peter Obi's candidature beyond his region.

But again, whosoever advised the Igbos to fight for their liberation through the barrel of the gun did not help them either. Though many of the south easterners have lost touch with the realities of the Civil War and the difficulties the region has continued to encounter, they ought to have gone back to history to understand that such revolutions in a contemporary time as such does not usually pay.

For the avoidance of any doubt, no sane Nigerian will support any form of arm insurrection by any group and or region which is aimed at achieving secession when this agitation can be better achieved through a referendum. These are some of the factors which may considerably affect Peter Obi's aspirations of becoming the president of this country. If wishes were horses however, I will have no regrets if Peter Obi becomes the President of this country come 2023 but the handwritings on the wall are indicating the contrary.

Feature

Golu: Story of an achiever

It was American business woman and founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics incorporated, Mary Kay Ash who once observed that, "There are three types of people in this world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened." Hon. Dr. Timothy Golu falls in the category of those who make things happened. The evidence of this abounds in his towering profile and achievements. (Modest Thoughts with AYUBA, YILGAK'HA, writes.

Born on November 18, 1972, to the humble and God fearing family of retired Pastor, Simon Golu, he has continued to prove himself a worthy son of his parents, community and nation. Just last year November, he celebrated his 50th birthday and for the five decades of being on this planet earth, the honourable has carved a niche for himself in the field of journalism, politics and academics. The speed with which this man of many parts recorded his achievements is relatively legendary and unequal in a country where life is difficult, especially, for peasant families.

Hon. Golu attended the Model primary School Sokoto (where he was born) for his nursery school and the Local Education Authority (LEA) primary school Limpye in present Kanke LGA from 1979 - 1985 where he obtained his First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC). This was after the civil war and voluntary retirement of his father from the military on health grounds.

Upon the successful completion of his primary school, 'the man in the mirror' got admission into Gonerit Memorial College (GMC), Tuwan - Kabwir, a missionary school, from 1986 - 1991. He then proceeded to the prestigious University of Jos from February 1992 - 1996 where he graduated with Second Class Upper degree in political science.

Between 2005 - 2007, Hon. Dr. Golu pursued and earned a Master's degree (Msc) in International Relations and Strategic Studies which qualified him to embark on the rigorous PhD journey in the same course between 2014 - 2021. Having been convocated on May 13, 2023, we are living witnesses to the successful consummation of the mountain-climbing journey to the peak of his academic career!

Hon. Dr. Golu, a much younger university graduate, at the time, picked up appointment as a News Reporter with the Nigeria Standard Newspaper, then, the Daily Times, National Interest before joining the Leadership Newspapers where he resigned in December 2010 to join partisan politics. This was after his successful completion of the mandatory, one year, National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) from June 1997 - June 1998 where he served at Government Secondary School Biu (located inside Army Barracks), Biu Local Government Area (LGA) of Borno State, North East Nigeria. He was the pioneer Politics Editor and Group Political Editor of the popular Leadership newspaper and through due diligence and dedication to duty, he became its political correspondence at the presidential Villa, Abuja from 2004 - 2010. During his stay at the Presidential villa, Golu worked with three Presidents namely: Chief Olusegun Obasanjo 2004 -

2007, Alhaji Umaru Musa Ya'Adua 2007-2009 and Dr Goodluck Jonathan 2009- 2010. During this period Golu travelled to many countries of the world in the course of his work and attended both national and international workshops and seminars in development and investigative journalism.

Golu performed with great distinction until he left to contest for the state House of Assembly in 2012 in which he won landslide.

The spur brief I got from his achievements at the state assembly indicated that he electrified 7 kilometres road from Sharram to Dungung and power is very stable up to this moment; graded about 24 kilometres rural roads: Dawaki - Tabulung - Somji, Myet - Nemel, Myet - Lerpye roads; construction of about 40 boreholes. Apart from over 40 jobs he gave to his state constituents, he was, also, the first person to clear and open the new Dawaki new market site. And having meritoriously served as the House of Assembly member representing the good people of Kanke and the Chief Whip of the house between 2011 - 2015, he contested and, again, won as member representing the good people Pankshin, Kanke, Kanam (PKK) in the National Assembly where he creditably served between 2015 - 2019. While in the green chambers, he was the Chairman House Committee on Legislative Budget and Research under Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara's led 8th House of Representatives.

Suffice to state that while at the National Assembly, Hon. Golu attracted 4 huge federal road projects to his constituency namely: Pankshin - Ballang (12 billion), Chigwon - Wuseli - Tapshin (N14 billion), Sharram - Babban Lamba (N19.2 billion) and the extension of Bogoro - Gobiya - Talbushi Road. He drilled over 200 motorised and hand pumped boreholes; two (2) well furnished skill acquisition centres; graded over 10 rural roads; built Dams and other irrigation facilities; two (2) modern Primary Health care centres at Mwel in Kanke and Talbushi in Kanam LGAs; Fifteen (15) primary schools; donated 1000 bundles of zincs towards community building projects and relief materials. He also gave over 200 various jobs to his constituents amongst others.

During the just concluded 2023 general election, Hon. Dr. Timothy Golu, a very experienced former state and federal legislator was one of the frontline governorship aspirants under the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Plateau State. Even though he stepped down from the race, I want to believe that his being in the race significantly expanded and deepened Golu's practical experience of the dynamics of



TIMOTHY

Nigeria and Plateau politics.

Aside politics, Hon. Golu is a successful academic giant (PhD holder). A PhD degree is a 'terminal degree' because it is the highest degree in the academic ladder. How Dr. Timothy managed to combine the rigours of politics and journalism with that of academic pursuit at this level is what has kept many in deep surprise. The great feat is a pointer that with determination and strategy, there is no mountain that one cannot climb in this life.

It is important to note that educational certificates, a PhD degree for that matter, can only be awarded to people who are worthy both in 'learning and character'. By this standard, therefore, Dr Golu has been satisfactorily found worthy in character and learning to be awarded this degree by a prestigious and second generation university like the University of Jos. What is left is for this awardee to bear the ambassadorial torch of the university anywhere he goes and to make the institution proud as an alumni.

The Nigeria's political system is in dire need of moderation or even reconstruction to meet contemporary realities. A jaundiced political system cannot guarantee rapid and holistic development in a country. Therefore, hatching political scientists of Dr. Golu's kind in an abnormal and distorted political

system like ours is very apt. At this time of Nigeria's history where there are so much contradictions in our political culture, the input of seasoned and practical political scientists like him is necessity to shape our political orientation as a nation.

Combining politics, journalism with academics can be a harculean task but through dexterity and strategy, Hon. Dr. Golu successfully combined the three. He has continued to use his Sunday Leadership newspaper column, "Melting Point", formerly known as "Point Blank", to shape political discourse in Nigeria. In fact, to maintain a weekly column in a leading Pan Nigeria Newspaper like Leadership is no mean feat. You have to try publishing an article in such newspaper to know how difficult it is to have access.

Hon. Dr. Golu's developing story is a testament to the power of good habits. His qualitative and winning habit has validated William Makepeace Thackeray thesis that, "successful people aren't born that way, they become successful by establishing the habit of doing things unsuccessful people don't like to do". This emerging political giant is very determined, resilient and has always demonstrated capacity in travelling roads less travelled and most often he ended up in huge success.

Hon. Dr. Golu is a daring risk taker, a frontal goal getter, a dynamic opinion moulder and a practical mentor who became a

great achiever through self development. He is a rallying point and grassroots political mobiliser. The man is a keen political observer, analyst and an active political participant who will not want to be left behind in the scheme of things. Hon. Golu is a respected and committed family man. To say the least, he represents many things to many people.

The story of Dr. Timothy Simor Golu is the story of a distinguished achiever who rose from grass to grace. He is an index of winning ways in a challenging world. He is not in anyway perfect but a lesson in the power of self-development. There is no better route to success than through the power of learning by doing and doing by learning. It is sweet when a man emerged from obscurity to be a man of honour.

The future looks bright for a nation that is committed to the development of human capital. Let me sincerely congratulate Hon. Dr. Timothy Simon Golu and others who were convocated during the 33rd and 34th combined convocation of the University of Jos which took place on May 13, 2023, for attaining this great academic feat. I salute your wonderful accomplishments and look forward to a future where the motivations arising from these sterling attainments will bear noble fruits for the advancement of our country and humanity. Press on, Honourable!



Accolades as Lalong commissions projects, bows out May 29



Buhari, Gowon, CJN rain accolades, as Lalong commissions projects.

For Governor Simon Bako Lalong, the few days before leaving office on May 29th, 2023 had been very engaging as he set out to commission over 32 projects completed or initiated by his administration.

He commissioned some of the projects within a two-day working tour from Thursday May 18-19, spread across 4 Local governments of Riyom, Jos South, Jos North and Jos East of the state. However he is set to continue with the commissioning of other projects across other local governments of the state.

Despite criticisms that the British American Junction road dualisation is merely a tall dream, Lalong proved his critics wrong and at exactly 3:19 pm, the President joined the commissioning ceremony of the completed project virtually, from the Council Chambers, State House, Abuja, on Friday, May 19, 2023, while the Governor, his executives, special guests, and well wishers viewed on screen.

The president described Lalong as a peace loving personality who has worked tirelessly to build peaceful coexistence amongst his people.

The President recalled that in 2018, he had visited the state to commission the Secretariat Junction Flyover, and Mararaban Jama'a junction, and apologised for not coming to the state, due to tight schedules marking the end of his regime.

"The road will not only end suffering of people but will boost economic activities in the state" Buhari said. And that the other infrastructural projects executed by the APC rescue administration of Governor Lalong in the health and other sectors will boost the development rating of the state. He went further to announce that he had already approved the refund of over N5bn Naira to the state for the federal road projects the governor constructed.

Buhari further lauded Lalong for his policy that targeted the completion of inherited and abandoned projects which has reduced wastage of state resources, noting that he is leaving the state on May 29 on a high note. He however urged the incoming administration to sustain the policy of continuity.

After virtually commissioning the bridge, former Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, physically continued with the process on behalf of the President as he cut the tape, including the magnificent fly-over cake which was earlier architecturally produced in the form of a prototype of the British American Junction Flyover to mark the governor's 60th birthday on 5th May. However, the governor had preserved the cake for cutting on the day the fly-over bridge will be commissioned, to make it a double celebration.

Gowon commended the Governor for the projects he has executed across the state and called for peace. He condemned the killings in Mangu and other parts of the state, and cautioned against a repeat of the sad incident and crisis of 2011 in the state.

There was a documentary on the flyover project, including other projects commissioned by the President which included the new Diagnostic Center at Plateau Specialist Hospital, and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) Command and Staff College Jos.

At the commissioning of the Jos High Court Complex, and Indoor Courthouse, remodeled and completed by the governor, President Court of Appeal, Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem, who represented Chief Justice Of Nigeria, Olukayode Ariwoola said the court was built to enhance and aid the administration of justice in the state, and urged people to take advantage of the indoor court to address cases out of the usual court.

The edifice has 9 courtrooms, 32 sitting capacity e- Library, clinic, restaurant, dressing room, lift, all furnished with state of the art equipment.

Governor Lalong in his remarks said the passion to complete the projects is because the Judiciary is central to governance explaining that since assumption of office, his government has not only sworn in 47 judges from the various courts, but executed over 32 different projects in various sectors across the state.

He said many people encouraged and put pressure on him to finish the work. He said among them was Justice Dongban-Mensem who constantly reminded him of completing the work by saying "Don't put me to shame".

Among other projects the governor commissioned earlier were the General Hospital and Trauma



Centre, Riyom, the Riyom mini Water Treatment Plant, the revived Kuru Ginnery which was moribund for over 30 years in Jos South, Mineral House of the Plateau Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC), Lalong Legacy Primary School in Bukuru, the NewMap Erosion Control in Chonongpong, and Standard Polo Roundabout, Rwang Pam Road network.

He also commissioned the City Line printing machine in The Nigeria Standard as well as the new NUJ Secretariat Complex in Jos.

After commissioning of the NUJ Press Center, Lalong gave a valedictory speech and praised the journalists for supporting his administration through their constructive criticisms.

He said despite being so busy working for his transition at the Presidency and in the state level, he had to be part of the valedictory speech and session with journalists.

He thanked them for writing to keep him on his toes during his 8 year tenure as governor of the state.

On the ongoing strike by workers for arrears of three months salaries, Lalong said it is political, adding that he has done his best for civil servants in the state compared to other states, which has earned him awards at the national level by the TUC, NLC and other bodies including the nickname "Governor alert".

On his high and low moments, he said his greatest regrets is not being able to complete projects due COVID-19 and economic challenges his government faced.

Other trying moments he said he faced was pockets of attacks and crisis which he did his best to address. "When your state is in crisis, and people are killed without cause, the governor does not sleep. There is distress calls, people call" he said.

With renewed attacks in parts of Mangu, Bokkos and Riyom Local Government Areas, the Governor held an emergency security council meeting to review the worrisome situation which led to the loss of lives and properties.

He also sent a team led by the Deputy Governor, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden, Security Chiefs, and other stakeholders to visit the affected areas.

Lalong was in Abuja on May 23, 2023 where he presided over his end of tenure meeting as NGF Chairman, which had a major agenda of reviewing their hand over reports, and addressing the appointment of a new Chairman for the 19 Northern Governors.

At the end of the meeting, Governor Lalong announced that the 19 Governors of the forum had unanimously elected Gombe State Governor, Yahaya Inuwa, as the new Chairman of the NGF.

The Governor also before exiting office launched a book at the Transcorp Hilton Abuja on Tuesday May 23, 2023.

The book titled 40 days and 40 nights written by renowned columnist and writer, Sam Omatseye tells about his experiences as Speaker, Plateau House of Assembly and his incarceration in prison during the State of Emergency period in Plateau State.

But before then, Governor Lalong had bagged an Honorary Doctorate Degree of Administration from the IBB University Minna, on 20th May 2023, where he was recognised for his contributions to the education sector.

Buhari, Tinubu, Govs, others attend Lalong's book launch

By PALANG KASMI

It was a roll call of Personalities across the country as President Buhari, President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, Deputy Speaker, Ahmed Idris Wase,

Governors, National and State Assembly members, Hajija Bola Shagaya, Alhaji Nasiru Danu, business men and women government officials, political appointees, traditional rulers, religious leaders, gathered for the public presentation of the Book and biography of the Plateau Governor, Simon Bako Lalong.

The event took place on 23rd May 2023 at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

Chairman of the event, Former Chairman Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) Kayode Fayemi, represented by the Director General (DG) National Orientation Agency (NOA) Dr. Garba Abare recalled with nostalgia his attachment to Plateau saying his father was the first Head Teacher of Township Primary School Jos.

He described Lalong's leadership style especially his stance on peace and security as exemplary and the type that should serve as a template for other Governors to emulate.

"We all must commend and appreciate Governor Lalong, for his book on his travails for 40 days and 40 nights, I recommend it to all of you" said the NOA Boss.

The Book Reviewer, Bishop Matthew Hassan Kuka, of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto said the 20 Chapter book captures childhood memories of the

governor including his early social life.

The Book Reviewer said the highest point of the book revealed the crisis in Plateau State, during the Governor Joshua Dariye regime, and how the governor was able to visit his perceived enemies, who incarcerated him with his forgiving heart and attributes, after the past terrible experiences.

Describing Lalong as a gentleman, Kukah commended the author for making efforts to put in writing the experiences of the Governor, captured in a very comprehensive and humorous way.

He called for an end to killings ongoing in Plateau and other states in the North, and called for the creation of a forum where all elites from the North will come together irrespective of tribes and religion to address the ethno-religious killings in the North.

Executive Chairman of BUA Group, Dr. Abdul Samad Isyaku Rabi, represented by Dr. Idi Hong who was Chief Launcher of the event, described the Governor as a friend and one he admires so much, because of his great exemplary leadership qualities.

Author of the book and award winning Journalist Sam Omatseye said he is happy to see the book come to life.

He said writing another person's story is not an easy task, however he managed write it down.

He said he had followed the Governor's activities when he was speaker of the Plateau

house of assembly, and admired him because despite his detention in prison, to betray his state, and accept the state of emergency, Lalong did not succumb to pressure.

He described Lalong as a "good soccer menstro" and urged readers of all classes to grab a copy of the book to know about the inspiring story of his life.

Former Plateau Governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, commended Lalong for documenting his experiences.

He called for writing of the second edition of the book, to accommodate other views about the happenings during the period of the state of Emergency, which occurred during his regime as governor.

About 10 Governors present at the event led by the new Chairman of the Northern Governors Forum, Gombe Governor, Yahaya Inuwa described the Author as "A friend to all irrespective of affiliations".

Deputy Speaker Ease also led over 10 members of the National Assembly present at the occasion to make handsome donations for copies of the book.

Asaruwa Dancers and comedian Ayuba Dutse spiced the event with their performance.

Author of the Book, Governor Lalong said he was humbled by the show of support at the presentation.

He was happy that his book had finally come into fruition to enable people read about his past experiences, and called for unity among Nigerians.

Sports

Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr accuses Spanish of racism

Brazilian forward calls La Liga and Spain racist after slurs yelled from stands during away match at Valencia. Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr says he has been subjected to racist abuse and the Spanish league "now belongs to racists". The latest incident against the Brazilian star came in Real Madrid's 1-0 loss at Valencia on Sunday, a match that had to be temporarily stopped after the forward said he was insulted by a fan behind one of the goals at Mestalla Stadium.

"It wasn't the first time or the second or the third," Vinicius said on Instagram and Twitter. "Racism is normal in La Liga. The competition thinks it's normal, as does the federation, and the opponents encourage it."

"The championship that once belonged to Ronaldinho, Ronaldo, Cristiano [Ronaldo] and [Lionel] Messi today belongs to the racists," he posted. "A beautiful nation, which welcomed me and which I love but which accepted to export to the world the image of a racist country. I am sorry for those Spaniards who disagree, but today, in Brazil, Spain is known as a country of racists."

"I am strong and I will go all the way against the racists," he said. "Even if it is far away from here."

The 22-year-old, who is Black, has been subjected to racist abuse since moving to Spain five years ago.

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti considered replacing the star forward after Vinicius said fans at Mestalla chanted "monkey" at him. He said Vinicius initially didn't want to continue playing.

"What happened today shouldn't happen," Ancelotti said. "When a stadium yells 'monkey' to a player, and the coach considers taking him out of the field because of that, it means that there is something bad in this league."

The veteran coach refused to talk about the game after what happened, saying his team's loss meant nothing.

"The game should have been stopped," Ancelotti said. "This shouldn't happen. It wasn't only one person as it has happened in several stadiums. Here, it was a stadium racially insulting a player. The game had to stop. I would have said the same thing if it was 3-0 for us. You have to stop the game. There was no way around it."

Ancelotti said he asked the referee to stop the match but was told that the protocol was to first make an announcement to fans and then take other action if the problem continued.

Real Madrid lodged a hate crime complaint. "Real Madrid C. F. strongly condemns the events that took place yesterday against our player Vinicius Junior," it said.



The attacks, in its view, "constitute a hate crime" for which the club has filed a complaint with the State Attorney General's Office, the club said.

La Liga will request all available footage to investigate what took place.

"If any hate crime is identified, we will take the appropriate legal action," it said in a statement.

La Liga President Javier Tebas responded to Vinicius Jr's comments by asking him to be more informed about what can be done in cases of racism.

"Since those who should explain to you what it is and what LaLiga can do in cases of racism, we have tried to explain it ourselves, but you have not shown up for either of the two agreed

dates that you requested yourself," he said on Twitter.

"Before you criticise and slander LaLiga, you need to inform yourself properly @Vinijr. Don't let yourself be manipulated, and make sure you understand each other's competences and the work we have been doing together," he added.

The league has made nine formal complaints over racist abuse directed against Vinicius over the past two seasons. Many of the cases have been shelved. A Mallorca fan may end up going on trial after being accused of racially insulting the Brazilian during a game.

FIFA's president has also Gianni Infantino expressed his support for the Real Madrid forward.

"Full solidarity to Vinicius. There is no place for racism in football or in society and FIFA stands by all players who have found themselves in such a situation," Infantino said in a statement.

"Events during the match between Valencia and Real Madrid show that this needs to be the case. That is why the three-step process exists in FIFA competitions and it is recommended at all levels of football.

"Firstly, you stop the match, you announce it. Secondly, the players leave the pitch and the speaker announces that if the attacks continue, the match will be suspended. The match restarts, and then, thirdly, if the attacks continue, the match will stop and the three points will go to the opponent."

Infantino added that the steps to stop racism need to be supported through education.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva joined a wave of Brazilian politicians, players and clubs coming out to support Vinicius and criticise racism in the Spanish league.

"I would like to express my

solidarity with our Brazilian player, a poor boy who succeeded in life and is potentially becoming one of the best players in the world, certainly the best at Real Madrid, and he is attacked in every stadium he plays in," Lula said at a news conference.

"I think it is important that FIFA, the Spanish league and leagues in other countries take real action because we cannot allow fascism and racism to dominate football stadiums," the president said.

Real Madrid player Vinicius Jr wants punishment to be handed out by Spanish authorities after a mannequin wearing his shirt was hanged from a bridge in front of the club's training centre in advance of the Madrid derby.

Real host Atletico Madrid in the Copa del Rey quarter-finals on Thursday and the mannequin was strung up next to a banner in Atletico's red-and-white colours that read "Madrid hates Real", police said.

"Vinicius Jr is aware of the situation but is fully concentrated on tonight's match," a spokesperson for the 22-year-old Brazilian said.

"He will discuss the issue tomorrow with his club and legal staff, but his position is still the same as before – he expects punishment from the authorities, not official statements."

Police said no charges had yet been filed but they opened an investigation for what could be a hate crime after they removed the banner and mannequin early on Thursday.

Real, Atletico, LaLiga and the Spanish Football Association all released statements condemning the incident.

"Such acts are absolutely repugnant and inadmissible and shame society. Our condemnation of any act that attacks the dignity of persons or institutions is categorical and unreserved," Atletico said in a

statement.

"The rivalry between the two clubs is the greatest but so is respect. No individual, whatever their intentions or colours, can tarnish the coexistence between different supporters. It is everyone's responsibility to avoid this."

The LaLiga on Twitter said, "intolerance and violence do not fit within football."

Vinicius has been subjected to racial abuse by fans on at least three previous occasions – at Camp Nou against Barcelona in November 2021, at Atletico in September 2022, and at Valladolid in late December 2022.

Prosecutors in Madrid decided not press charges over racist taunts aimed at Vinicius in September after finding they "lasted a few seconds" and did not constitute a crime.

In December, Vinicius accused LaLiga of continuing to do nothing about racist fans at matches, after videos on social media showed people shouting abuse and throwing objects at him during a match the previous day at Valladolid.

Football legend Pele, Neymar, and other leading Brazilian figures strongly defended Vinicius in September after a panellist on a Spanish football show criticised the forward.

He said Vinicius was not respecting opponents with his celebrations, comparing his behaviour to that of "a monkey".

Vinicius Jr issued a two-minute video statement at the time in response to what he called a "xenophobic and racist" insult, saying he "won't stop dancing".

"The happiness of a Black Brazilian being successful in Europe bothers," he added.

Source: Al Jazeera and news agencies



Vinicius Jr in action

Sports

Tiger Woods will miss US Open from ankle surgery



Wood

Tiger Woods will not recover from recent ankle surgery. The 15-time major winner, Open as he continues to

47, withdrew from the Masters midway last month because of injury.

The American had fusion surgery on a bone in his ankle in April to address post-traumatic arthritis from a previous fracture in the joint.

The former world number one did not participate in last week's PGA Championship, the year's second major.

Woods has kept a limited competition schedule after a 2021 car crash that required his leg to be rebuilt.

The US Open, which Woods won in 2000, 2002 and 2008, runs from 15-18 June at the Los Angeles Country Club in California.

Some major wins are more significant than others and Brooks Koepka's authoritative triumph in the US PGA Championship at Oak Hill is likely to carry far reaching implications for men's professional golf.

There can be no doubt that the Floridian's performance last week emboldens the Saudi Arabia-funded breakaway LIV circuit where he now competes. Koepka has proved you can win majors on a diet of 54-hole 48-man tournaments.

His third PGA title and fifth major have also put him in prime position for a spot in the US Ryder Cup team, an issue the American captain Zach Johnson has been reluctant to address.

Koepka is now second on the US points list thanks to his Oak Hill success and runner-up finish to Jon Rahm at last month's the Masters. There is an argument to say he is the best player in the world right now.

He has certainly recovered his extraordinary knack of finding his best form at the biggest tournaments. Koepka has won 14% of the majors he has played, in a quarter of them he has finished in the top three and in half of them he has been top 10.

Those are staggering statistics that compare favourably with Tiger Woods' career.

The official world rankings have Koepka as the 13th best player and that is an inaccurate reflection of his abilities. Likewise, a resurgent Bryson DeChambeau finished joint fourth and is this week ranked 90th in the world. That is also out of kilter.

In the LIV era, the rankings are rapidly looking out of step with reality. It is becoming an increasingly significant issue and finding a solution is far from easy.

Even allowing for Koepka's brilliance and the strength of players such as Open champion Cameron Smith and two-time major winner Dustin Johnson, there is not much depth to LIV's fields compared with the PGA Tour.

It is a cosy, comfortable

Koepka's US PGA Championship win raises awkward questions

format with guaranteed money and no cut. The team element can also compromise individual play because a player might lag a putt for team benefit rather than going for it as an individual.

That move might have a minuscule impact on world rankings but it could be the difference between another golfer getting into a major or not.

Whatever their weaknesses and compromised competitive legitimacy, the new tour - that has sent schisms through the game - now possesses in Koepka and Smith two of the four current

major title holders.

They are powerful assets and the new PGA champion is an inspired signing, a fact LIV chief Greg Norman was quick to pounce on.

"Congrats BKoepka your comeback has been impressive. I am so proud of you," the Australian wrote on Twitter.

He added "golf knows" that his players belong in the majors, pointing out there were three LIV golfers in the top 10 and five in the top 20.

Koepka acknowledged his win "is a huge thing and helps LIV" but said he was "more interested in my own self".

"I'm out here competing as an individual. I'm just happy to take this home for the third time," he added.



Koepka has joined some of the greats of the game, including Seve Ballesteros, on five major victories

Warner-Judd becomes back-to-back UK champion

Jessica Warner-Judd of 31 minutes 9.32 seconds, qualified for a second successive August's World Championships.

The 28-year-old, who finished fourth overall in the women's race in a time

Ethiopia's Mizan Alem Adane broke the meeting record to win the women's race with a time of 29:59.03.

Paul Chelimo of the United States won the men's race at London's Parliament Hill but narrowly missed out on the World Championship qualifying time of 27:10 by 2.73secs.

Warner-Judd, who has a personal best of 30 minutes 35.93 seconds, spoke about how she had "found her love" of running again after a difficult spell.

"I put too much pressure on myself," she told Athletics Weekly.

"I worried about what people thought of the shape I was in. I kept looking on social media and worrying about everybody else so I deleted Twitter and Facebook.

"I kept Instagram because I like posting pictures of my dogs. I really struggled with that, the whole pressure of it.

"I'm finished with my PhD this year. It's been really hard so it was just trying to go back to basics, enjoy it, not over train and be smart."



Doping case hearing delay is 'contrary to my rights'

Former world number one Simona Halep has accused tennis' doping authority of "publicly stating one thing while privately doing another" by requesting a further delay to her hearing.

Halep was charged with a second doping offence last week over "irregularities" in her biological passport.

The Romanian, 31, has been suspended since October after testing positive for a banned substance at the US Open.

The second charge is separate to the one for which she is already suspended.

In a statement on Twitter, 2019 Wimbledon champion Halep said the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) had requested a third delay.

Halep, who denies the

charges, said she was "extremely shocked and disappointed by the ITIA's attitude".

"While the ITIA via their

representative Nicole Sapstead was publicly stating three days ago that the ITIA 'has remained committed to engaging Mrs

Halep in an empathetic, efficient and timely manner', they were at the same time officially requesting the tribunal to delay my hearing...



Simona Halep's Wimbledon triumph in 2019 was her second Grand Slam title

the latest charge.

"Ultimately it is a decision for the independent tribunal. Ms Halep also has the opportunity to make her representations to them."

Halep's suspension last year was imposed after she tested positive for roxadustat, an anti-anaemia drug which stimulates the production of red blood cells in the body. She denies knowingly taking the banned substance.

The investigations into failed tests by the ITIA are often complex, particularly when a player denies taking a substance knowingly.

It is not uncommon for cases to take months to be resolved.

In such cases, a player can produce evidence to disprove or mitigate the failed test. This would bring further investigation and testing by the ITIA, leading to the process being further

for the third time," Halep said.

"The ITIA publicly states one thing while privately doing another, I have repeatedly asked for my hearing and the ITIA has repeatedly sought to delay it.

"When is it going to stop? I ask the question once again. I am entitled to a quick hearing. Acting this way is contrary to my rights."

Halep's coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, said the ITIA had played a "double game" from "day one".

An ITIA spokesperson said: "We have proposed that both charges are heard together to avoid multiple hearings. To do this, we wish to provide all parties (including the independent tribunal) sufficient time to consider the significant materials associated with

Sports



Great Britain, who have won only two of their past seven Billie Jean King Cup ties, faced France last weekend with no top-100 singles players

'Grand Slam tennis nation should have top-100 players'

Great Britain have never won the Billie Jean King Cup, despite playing every single year since the women's team competition began in 1963. That they did not win this year is no surprise at all. RUSSELL FULLER writes.

HARRIET Dart and Katie Boulter played some excellent tennis in Coventry last weekend, but a team fielding singles players with rankings of 138 and 154 was never likely to prosper against a side of France's quality - and this was only the qualifying round for the 12-team Finals.

There was admittedly no Emma Raducanu - who is currently 68 in the rankings but will forever be a Grand Slam champion.

What she achieved in New York in September 2021 was so spectacular that it has the potential to drive interest in the sport for at least a decade. She is, though, Britain's only female top-100 singles player, and there are no doubles players anywhere inside the world's top 50.

The numbers are healthier on the men's side in both singles and doubles, and British tennis has hit the ultimate high on multiple occasions in recent years.

In the past eight years, there have been British Grand Slam champions in the women's singles, men's singles, men's doubles, mixed doubles and each of the wheelchair events.

But there is no escaping the feeling that a Grand Slam nation like Britain should have far more top 100 players, especially on the women's side.

"Being a Grand Slam nation is not a passport to automatic success," Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) chief executive Scott Lloyd said in Coventry at the weekend.

"The depth of international competition now is greater than it has ever been historically, I think.

"But here in Britain, our competitive set is football, rugby, cricket: it isn't actually necessarily the tennis association in the Czech Republic.

"We have to get young players playing tennis rather than football, rugby, cricket and other things that

they have huge wealth of opportunity to access. So the funds available to the LTA relative to the funds available to another tennis association somewhere else isn't always the immediate comparison."

The LTA received £42.43m in funding from Wimbledon last year. There are a total of five British men and women in the world's top 100, and if we are to compare the UK with the other Grand Slam nations, then Australia has eight, France has 14 (but no Grand Slam singles champion for nearly a decade) and the United States 28.

What is the LTA doing to try to drive up that number?

At the bottom of the pyramid, there is the investment in public tennis courts - to try to encourage you and me to play more often.

Helped by government investment of £22m, and £8.5m of the LTA's own money, Lloyd says he expects about 2,000 courts - which were considered either unplayable or in very poor condition - will be brought back to life.

And at the top of the pyramid, on the development side, are the national academies - although from next summer, two academies will become one.

Stirling has encountered many problems in its first four years, and so in future all efforts will be focused on Loughborough.

Loughborough is currently home to two of the British girls in the top 30 of the junior world rankings: 17-year-old Ranah Stoiber, who reached the semi-finals of the Australian Open girls' singles in January, and 15-year-old Mimi Xu.

From September 2024 Loughborough's numbers will double, to anything up to 24. The LTA say this will ensure the best players are always surrounded by the best coaches, and will always have the best players to spar with. But with a

higher volume of players comes the risk that the quality of the service provided will be diluted.

The LTA accepts it needs more players, and also more coaches.

"The coaching cohort in Great Britain, in my view, is exactly like the playing cohort," the LTA's performance director Michael Bourne said.

"Our best coaches are world class - they can impact the development of these players to a high, high level. But as we've said we need a volume and as our volume of players gets higher, our volume of coaches also needs to get higher.

"We've got women coming through. I wouldn't say we've got a good number. We have female-specific performance coach development courses which includes some mentoring from coaches who have been able to make it further through the pathway.

"Some of the barriers we are seeing with our female coaches - it's not their coaching level - it's some of the barriers that are in the environment around them, or their knowledge of how to navigate them. Not having enough knowledge in terms of how to get into roles; perceptions a female coach may have going into a male-dominated environment."

And then there is the question of fitness. Both Emma Raducanu and Jack Draper have had many physical issues in the early years of their career, while Katie Swan's and Katie Boulter's problems have followed them into their mid-20s.

Former world number one Ashleigh Barty's strength and conditioning coach Mark Taylor joined the LTA as the head of performance, science and medicine in January, and it was interesting to hear Bourne say he is currently looking to appoint someone to work specifically on the physical development of junior players.

He added: "It's not in response to [recent problems] directly. It's something that we've always focused on that we know we needed to elevate. And yes, we do recognise that some of our top talents haven't been able to stay on the training court and match court as much as they would have liked.

"It's something we want to focus our attention on, because we know we have got the talent."

Great Britain have missed out on the Billie Jean King Cup Finals after Harriet Dart's loss to France's world number five Caroline Garcia sealed defeat in their best-of-five qualifier.

Dart, Britain's highest-ranked player in the absence of Emma Raducanu, was beaten 6-1 6-7 (10-12) 6-1 by Garcia.

The 2022 US Open semi-finalist's win gave France an unassailable 3-0 lead.

Instead of being in the 12-team Finals, Britain must contest a play-off to earn a spot in the 2024 qualifiers.

Anne Keothavong's squad will be demoted to the Group I stage of the competition - the level below the top world tier and played regionally in the European/African zone - if they lose the tie in November.

"The players should feel proud of themselves," Keothavong said.

"It hasn't been the easiest of years for any of our players on the team, but they've gone out there and there have been times where they've shown what they're capable of.

"Now it's important that they're able to take all the good stuff that they get from these weeks into their next tournament and continue to build on their season."

Great Britain earned a consolation victory in the dead doubles rubber, with Alicia Barnett and Olivia Nicholls beating French pair Clara Burel and Kristina Mladenovic 7-5 3-6 11-9.

Burel and Mladenovic had led 8-2 in the match tie-break and the Britons saved two match points to complete an extraordinary comeback to lift home spirits.

Britain always faced a tough challenge against a French team who are much stronger in terms of rankings and previous pedigree.

The task became even harder when they lost two tight singles matches in Coventry on Friday, which featured five tie-breaks and fine margins as Dart lost to Alize Cornet after teammate Katie Boulter was edged out by Garcia.

The nature of those defeats left British captain Keothavong describing sport as being "brutal" and she was tasked with picking up her players overnight.

British number three Dart, 26, was

back out on court about 18 hours after her chastening defeat by Cornet, knowing she had to win to keep alive Britain's faint hopes.

The chances of that looked slim after a one-sided opening set where Garcia clinically picked apart Dart's service game.

Garcia, who won the WTA Finals last year in her biggest triumph to date, quietened the 2,000-strong home crowd and the flat atmosphere indicated few truly expected a fightback from the home player.

But Dart is a feisty competitor and there was no way she was going to roll over.

"It's a short turnaround and it's not usually like that, when you lose your tournament is done," Dart said.

"Physically, I felt good and I was ready to play. She's four or five in the world for a reason."

Digging deep to hold her serves but unable to get a look on Garcia's, Dart led on the scoreboard in the second set before it moved into a nervy tie-break.

It was the sixth tie-break in the seven sets played over the weekend and, after missing three set points and saving two match points, Dart took her fourth chance to take the match into a decider.

After all the hard work needed to win the second set, Dart's energy levels and adrenalin dipped at the start of the third, with the Briton winning just nine points as Garcia took control to seal the tie for the visitors.

"I haven't felt my best but competed with what I had and left it all out there," Dart added.

"I'm just missing a few points here and there, it contributed to the momentum changes in the matches a lot. I'm not missing by a lot but missing a few points here and there can make such a big difference.

"If I tighten them up, the match is totally different."

British number one Raducanu, 20, was missing against France after making herself unavailable and preferring to focus on a clay-court WTA event in Stuttgart next week.

While the next tie is seven months away, Keothavong reiterated her belief that 2021 US Open champion Raducanu is keen to play for her nation and expects her back in the fold.

"If she continues playing and is fit and healthy, I see no reason why she wouldn't be part of the team," the British captain said.

"We're still months away and the end of the season is always a tough time and whoever is most fresh and healthy will be part of the team."

Great Britain earned a reprieve after losing at the same stage last year, awarded a wildcard for the finals when the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) stepped in to host the event in Glasgow.

The team made the most of the opportunity by going on to reach the last four, but it looks unlikely to happen again this year with the International Tennis Federation (ITF) - the tournament organisers - having other options.

The LTA made a financial loss on last year's event.

"I believe they are considering two proposals elsewhere. We did offer to host but that we would do so in partnership with them," LTA chief executive Scott Lloyd said.

"If they found themselves in a position where delivering the event was a challenge we were prepared to work with them to ensure it was delivered but weren't prepared to make that investment again this year."

Those who have made it through to the finals include Spain, the Czech Republic and Kazakhstan, who, led by Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, beat a Poland team struggling without world number one Iga Swiatek 3-1.



Quest



writer

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

FRAGMENT

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

'You have been veterans of creative suffering'

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity.

One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the



Biden

time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.

Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.

Nineteen sixty three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual.

And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds.

Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical

violence.

Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny.

And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities.

We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only."

We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which

to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells.

And some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning: My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that: Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!