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Sunday Standard

TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1972

VOL. 13 NO. 804

SUNDAY, August 20, 2023

N250

e-mail:nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com



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Shettima



Abdulazaz



Task before Nigerian youths

A few days ago, Nigerian youths came out in their number to celebrate this year's 2023 International Youth Day. Celebrated every 12th August of the year, the day is aimed at celebrating and putting trust in our youth and raise awareness about the challenges and issues faced by young people around the world as well as help promote their potentials.

In tandem with the theme for this year which is 'Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World, this gesture is also intended to advance positive impactful advance development amongst vulnerable youth across the globe.

Affirming the commitment of his administration to creating meaningful opportunities, President Bola Tinubu noted that an enabling environment would be created through several lucrative platforms including job creation, skills development to digital innovation, financial technology and youth participation in governance.

While acknowledging the growing interest of many young Nigerians in technology related field the world over, the president also vowed to fulfil his campaign promise of generating one million jobs in the digital economy for their upliftment and national economic development more broadly.

As it is however, the statistics of the jobless population of Nigerian youth is becoming unpalatable in all ramifications. For instance, unemployment rate for 2022 was 13.44 percent, a 0.21 decline from 2021. According to the unemployment rate released by the National Bureau for Statistics in 2022, fifty three percent of over 151 million Nigerian youths which translates to over 80 million are unemployed.

This aside, many of the youth of this country have indulged themselves in violence and thuggery, a situation that has raised serious concern amongst stakeholders and citizenry. Sad enough, most political thugs are paid by the political class to maim and create havoc on innocent citizens with impunity. Certainly, many scholars have opined that political thuggery which is overwhelming the polity is something that is ruining the lives of thousands of youths particularly, those who grew up with the belief that nothing matters in the nation.

We believe that our youths in the country have also continued to wallow in abject poverty and retrogression due to lack of proper planning by successive governments since time immemorial. Thus, these unfriendly policies employed have retrogressively affected the anticipated growth and progress of our youth in the country.

Consequently, it's high time the leadership and stakeholders navigate their strategic approach to ensuring the liberation of our teeming youth for their progress in the nation. Considering the present harsh economic reality, the incumbent administration must take more concrete measures towards encouraging our fragile youth in the country to become pragmatically self-reliant.

On the other hand, the youth of this country must come to the understanding of the obvious that nothing in this world is gotten on the platter of gold. Therefore, they must continue to work hard in their expected obligations to justify the confidence reposed on them.

Above all, we as a people must continue to educate and sensitise our younger ones to shun violent conduct which has serious implications on the polity and may retard our collective interest of national development and integration.

Intervention in Niger decided

West African military chiefs said on Friday that the D-Day for an armed intervention in Niger Republic had been decided but that a diplomatic mission was possible over the weekend to keep talks open.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has agreed to activate a "standby force" as a last resort to restore democracy in Niger after generals toppled and detained Bazoum on July 26.

ECOWAS defence chiefs met this week in the Ghanaian capital Accra to fine-tune details of a potential military operation to restore Bazoum if ongoing negotiations with coup leaders fail.

"We are ready to go any time the order is given," said Abdel-Fatau Musah, an ECOWAS commissioner for political affairs and security.

"The D-Day is also decided." But the leaders also say they still favour dialogue and that

-West Africa military chiefs



ECOWAS could send a diplomatic mission to Niger on Saturday.

"Tomorrow (today) there is the possibility of an ECOWAS mission going into Niger to continue to pursue the peaceful path to restoration of constitutional order," he said.

"We are ready to resolve the issue peacefully but it takes two to tango."

ECOWAS leaders say they have to act after Niger became the

fourth West African nation since 2020 to suffer a coup, following Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea.

The Sahel region is struggling with growing jihadist insurgencies linked to Al-Qaeda and Islamic State. Frustration over the violence has in part prompted the military takeovers

ECOWAS troops have intervened in other emergencies since 1990, including civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Ivory Coast, Benin and Nigeria are expected to contribute troops to a Niger mission.

Bazoum, whose 2021 election was a landmark in Niger's troubled history, has been held with his family at the president's official residence since the coup, with growing international concern over his conditions in detention.

ECOWAS chair and Nigerian President Bola Tinubu on Friday threatened Niamey with "grave consequences" if the new regime allows Bazoum's health to worsen under house arrest, an EU official said.

During a call to EU chief Charles Michel, Tinubu noted: "President Bazoum's detention conditions are deteriorating."

"Any further deterioration to his well-being status will have grave consequences."

Mutfwang charges appointees to key into his vision

By DUMAH RANDONG

Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang has charged all political appointees to deliver effective service to the people of Plateau State in line with the mission and vision of his administration.

The governor was represented by his deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo at the closing ceremony of the retreat and on-boarding of political appointees in Kuru, Jos on Friday.

He stated that by moving in tune with governor Mutfwang's developmental agenda, policy, goals, objectives and key priorities, the appointees would make the administration deliver its campaign promises to the people.

The governor added that the officials should see their appointment as an act of service to God and humanity, charging them to put in hard work and dedication in the discharge of their duties.

The governor said that the retreat and onboarding activities have imparted effective leadership qualities, ethical principles and transparency on the participants and as such should meet expectations.

He charged the appointees on the importance of engaging stakeholders, ensuring effective communication, public relations techniques and building partnerships for inclusive development in the state.

CBN Announces Resumption of sale of dollars



Shonubi

The Central Bank of Nigeria has announced measures to reintroduce Bureau de Change Operators in Nigeria into the foreign exchange market a few days after threatening speculators.

The bank announced its reintroduction in a circular addressed to BDCs and the public titled, 'Operational Mechanism For Bureau De Change Operations In Nigeria.'

The development is coming amidst efforts for the naira to trade in fair value. The naira had traded around N955 per dollar on Monday before the CBN began the policy that crashed the price to N845 as of Friday.

In the new regime, the CBN said BDCs must submit periodic accounts of the activities through the Financial Institution Forex Rendition System (FIFX).

The CBN said, "In support of the drive to improve the efficiency of the Nigerian Foreign Exchange Market, the Central Bank of Nigeria hereby announces the underlisted operational mechanism for the Bureau De Change (BDC) segment of the market.

The spread on buying and selling by BDC Operators shall be within an allowable limit of -2.5% to +2.5% of the Nigerian Foreign Exchange market window weighted average rate of the previous day.

"Mandatory rendition by BDC Operators of the statutory periodic reports (daily, weekly,


monthly, quarterly and yearly) on the Financial Institution Forex Rendition System (FIFX) which has been upgraded to meet individual Operator's requirements.

"Operators are to note that with effect from the date of this circular, non-rendition of returns would attract sanctions which may include withdrawal of operating license. Where Operators do not have any transaction within the period, they are expected to render nil returns."

Reports say BDCs were terrified about the recent threat of the acting CBN governor, Folashodun Shonubi.


Bureau de Change dealers in Zone 4 in Abuja revealed that the CBN had asked for their financial records and threatened to withdraw their licences.

The intervention would be possible with the \$3bn dollars deal signed by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Ltd with the African Import-Export Bank.



OTHER SIDE

With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum**
On Sunday



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"To be fair, the military is overstretched beyond its limits. They are ill-equipped as their fighting power has been described as less than what the insurgents have. While many had thought the helplessness of the Nigerians should bring us back to the drawing board as well as deploying so much resource to execute the war. There are more questions than there are answers".

Let us make Nigeria safe for all

TO be fair, Nigerians have since been dissatisfied with the way the issue of insecurity has been handled here. We are in a state of war and Nigerians are not speaking except a few of those that believe we have got to the stage that something urgent must be done.

Wherever we turn to, one form of criminality has not only reared its head, it has spread in more areas than one and causing colossal that its protagonists had envisaged. We are indeed heading to the stage that it may likely be consumed if the right actions are not taken by government.

There is no need to wait until the worse of the situation hits us. There are sufficient and credible voices which have risen to condemn the continuing scenario; while advising for options that should be taken which could resolve the predicament. Such voices have been reprimanded and reported to have been invited for questioning by the security (?). They should not be silent; they are credible enough to be listened to.

Whatever that is, we have a difficult situation at hand. However we view it all of us are not safe in the country that has defended itself from terrorism several years running. The military has suffered the heaviest casualties; this is not to forget the humongous amount of money that has been sunk to buy equipment to be deployed for use in combating terrorism.

We cannot forget in a hurry how government officials turned that into personal use. Some of them are still facing charges; while many others could well be on their way to be incarcerated on account of sleaze. It is reason enough that some of our countrymen think are of the opinion that the number of Nigerians waiting to steal from government tills are more than those who may have been caught or even escaped the searchlight.

It should no longer be seen as politics to be asked to declare an emergency on security; even as others see it as not the solution to the current debacle. It is beyond

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Those who do not see the situation as disturbing, what other name can we refer to them? It is not a joke in a difficult situation able to consume all of us including those who created the Frankenstein monster for which we are all slaves waiting to be saved. There is a palpable fear which has gripped communities across the land. Whoever is safe has not thought of the hellish situation we have been put into. We can only expect a reprieve if the security agencies are adequately funded to prosecute the war. That is what they have continuously asked for years running.

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partisanship as it is a matter of concern for all who value the existence of the country. The responsibility of securing Nigeria for all of us to be engaged in.

To be fair, the military is overstretched beyond its limits. They are ill-equipped as their fighting power has been described as less than what the insurgents have. While many had thought the helplessness of the Nigerians should bring us back to the drawing board as well as deploying so much resource to execute the war. There are more questions than there are answers.

'Evidently, the national security architecture has collapsed like a pack of cards in the face of rampaging terrorist who are emboldened by their belief and the apparent helplessness of the Nigerian Army to curtail them.

'The pertinent questions begging for answers now are: How could the insurgents have superior fire power than an established army like Nigeria's reputed for international peace-keeping operation in the past? How could they have superior intelligence than the Nigerian Army? How come the government has not been able to track their source of funding and block it? What exactly has gone wrong with the polity? Is there any hope for the embattled nation called Nigeria?'

As it has been observed severally, 'indeed, we cannot rule out official complicity and negligence, insidious collusion, lack of will power, incompetence, lack of patriotic zeal in this matter, all boils down to failure of governance, mediocrity, misconception of role, corruption and abuse of office. There is the ethical dilemma of sectional interest and general interest. Our present government seems to pander of sectional interest as against public interest and that accounts for the escalation of insurgency and terrorism', so says one Hajia Hadiza Mohammed.

The nation has been told that the

sum of N198.84 billion has been released to the military to prosecute insurgency war from 2019 till date by the federal government, while on the funding of Operation Lafiya Dole in Maiduguri is claiming that they have a shortfall of N50 billion as requested. It is doubtful if any progress will be made if the army is not supported with funds.

As at the time of writing this piece on Friday, April 30, 2021, the president was holding a crucial meeting with security chiefs and other top government officials which included Vice President, Prof Yemi Osinbajo, National Security Adviser, and General Babagana Monguno among others. It was not concluded; hence it was shifted to Tuesday, May 4, 2021.

Nigeria is not fighting a conventional war with any country today but the security situation calls for urgent and revolutionary/innovative measures because, as President Muhammadu Buhari himself has said, "we cannot continue like this." Like drones, spy planes are expensive. But there are already existing facilities that can perform the same function as spy planes without fear of discovery or being shot down and then sparking off a diplomatic row.

What stops the government from insisting that the issues that have been raised and which are thought to be sufficient grievances by those involved in some of the criminalities be examined. For instance, the issue of marginalization has been raging for decades; and it does appear it has been treated as a non-issue as well as several issues. What can be gleaned from all of these is that, time has come for the state to be restructured. For long, sufficient reasons have been adduced for that, yet the state keeps running from pillar to post while the states are being burnt; while lives and properties are destroyed with reckless abandon. The people can't ask for less; they feel what they are going through.

A few days ago the Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom was on national television and as well as a Senator was also seen on the floor of the Senate shedding tears on account of what has been going on in the nation. In the case of Ortom, he spoke as he stood before

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The pertinent questions begging for answers now are: How could the insurgents have superior fire power than an established army like Nigeria's reputed for international peace-keeping operation in the past? How could they have superior intelligence than the Nigerian Army? How come the government has not been able to track their source of funding and block it? What exactly has gone wrong with the polity? Is there any hope for the embattled nation called Nigeria?

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corpses which were cut down by terrorists.

As many have asked: Is there anyone in charge here? We have a government that may have been feeling inebriated for certain projects which have been executed over the years; but those cannot make Nigerians lose their voices not to speak. It is speaking that we can make progress as a nation.

Those who do not see the situation as disturbing, what other name can we refer to them? It is not a joke in a difficult situation able to consume all of us including those who created the Frankenstein monster for which we are all slaves waiting to be saved. There is a palpable fear which has gripped communities across the land. Whoever is safe has not

thought of the hellish situation we have been put into. We can only expect a reprieve if the security agencies are adequately funded to prosecute the war. That is what they have continuously asked for years running.

Even though some members of the National Assembly have spoken, many others are still sitting on the fence. They feel the war is being fought in far away Afghanistan; it is at our door steps, and the doors may not be opened when they descend on us. But God forbid that we get to that. The grim situation will need their intervention, and quickly too as the signs for a failed state are indeed staring us in the face.

There have been suggestions to invite the international community to help us. While that may be a welcomed development, the question to ask is: Internally, what have we done to engage ourselves to stem the tide? Haven't the elite been accused a lot of keeping quiet in the face of evidences that we are on the precipice? Have they not been the ones engaged in orchestrating others into doing things which tend to divide us? Don't they know that we have since taken the road to Armageddon? If they know that we are on the brink of falling into the pit, pray, tell us. What they have done to stop the slide?

'The sad reality', as one Obinna Nwosu recently noted, is that 'God is speaking to us in actions now; God may have lost his patience and is putting samples of illustration for clarity and yet folks live in clubbed indifference and aloofness chasing and dreaming conquest. The precipice is looming'.

Even President Muhammadu Buhari himself declared that "we cannot continue like this," while making reference to the recent abduction and release of 333/ 334 students of Government Science Secondary School, Kankara in Katsina State. As soon as they were released, 'the students were surprised with a presidential visit. Encouraging them to concentrate on their studies and put the abduction behind them, Buhari used the opportunity to express his grave concern about security in a country under his watch'.

The situation is grim. If you are not worried about it, several Nigerians are. It is shameful that 'we have people who have used this to run a proxy government for their own benefit and our elites are aware and have sworn an oath to be silent'. The time to save Nigeria is now; let's not wait until it is late.

Note: This material was published some time back. On account of the fact that certain indices have continued to abate, it is important we republish it without editing.

It is hope that government will take conscious effort to arrest our drift as many Nigerians have continued to lose their lives without let. As much as it is expected, Nigerians would want a situation where the drift will be addressed.



Irresponsible parenting and the victims' plight

DURING my secondary school days, I used to know a girl, a year my junior who looked all wrinkled and a little bent. She looked so much older than her age that she had very few friends. Girls avoided her and labelled her as wicked due to her looks. It was not until I came close to her that I thought differently. Nevertheless, this young girl housed in an old body had to deal with inferiority complex all her years in school.

And what was her problem? This lady had begun cultivating a very big farm since she was just a child. She did too much laborious job for her age coupled with the fact that her nutrition was poor.

At one point, she preferred school to her home because as she said, 'at least I can rest and eat 3 square meals.'

Ten years down the line after leaving school, I met her and I could barely recognize her. She looked younger than she looked while in school. By that time, she was a certified nurse and married. Her looks testified against her parents.

I used to have this friend who used to resume school late after each holiday. As we advanced in class, it started having negative impact on her education. Any time she resumed school, there was always a lot of notes to copy, and make-up tests to write. The burden was too much on her and it started telling on her grades.

Unable to sit and watch, one fateful day, I asked her why she never resumed the first week of resumption until the 3rd. She looked at me sadly and explained that every time school resumes, her younger sister and herself have to get a cite that will employ them to work as mason's assistant, supplying the mason with mixed cement and or blocks. It was very tasking but they had to do it to enable them pay their school fees.

“ While in school, she used to top her class. She also had big plans for herself until she found herself in that hopeless village. One day, a pick up van came to offload goods in the village. This lady vowed that she must find a way to get into the pickup van. That was what she did.

In the case of my cousin, it was either she embraced burkutu business wholeheartedly or she remained an illiterate who would be married off to the first suitor that came for her hand in marriage.

Ladi was schooling in a private secondary school in Bukuru. Her only problem was that her school was quite a distance from their home. She lived with her elder sister at Angan Rogo because she had lost her parents when she was still a baby. Anyone familiar with Jos knows that that it is quite a distance. Ladi was lucky, her sister always paid her school fees but that was all. She would not lift her finger to do anything further. That meant Ladi had to trek to school any day she was going to school.

The school had to give her double promotion for her trouble to reduce the years of stress. The school authority knew that Ladi had to roast corn or cook it and sell to enable her buy books and take care of transportation whether to or from but not to and fro. Ladi's uniform was an eyesore because she could not afford to buy uniform. That meant Ladi's education was very tasking to her.

Jummai lived with her aunt in Jos to help out with house chores and the children. However, her aunt had no respect for her niece's education. Jummai was a regular late comer. She came to hate school because it was synonymous to beatings and punishment. After her primary education, she dropped out. Today she is a petty trader and regrets ever leaving school.

A very good friend developed a kind of hatred for her father because after her primary education, he forcefully married her off to a total stranger. The man was a crude villager who didn't even change his lifestyle for his bride. They ate once in a day then take off to the farm with a jug of gruel.

It was only God that kept her grand pa husband from deflowering her. She was an unwilling bride and was just 12 years old. Maybe he was saving her for the future.

While in school, she used to top her class. She also had big plans for herself until she found herself in that hopeless village. One day, a pick up van came to offload goods in the village. This lady vowed that she must find a way to get into the pickup van. That was what she did.

The above lady realized her dreams and became her family's shining star and solution to their problems. The list is endless. It includes parents who send their children into prostitution, those that deny them their rights, those that abuse the children in any way, etc.

The family has failed in its duty to mold the character of the younger members of the society

We need to retrace our steps or the future of our children will be bleak.

NEWS

Plateau SEC, appointees converge for retreat

BY PETER TITLE

Plateau State Executive Council and appointees recently converged at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru for a five day retreat.

The Executive Governor of the state, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang charged them to explore all avenues and bring their wealth of experience to bear in order to leave a positive legacy for the betterment of the state.

According to him, they should see themselves as a united unit rather than competitors and stressed the importance of bonding, shared objectives and working together. Mutfwang said that by doing that, they would leave a remarkable landmark in the state.

The governor said that the aim of the workshop was to address the high expectations of the people of the state and to ensure effective and good governance in the state.

The retreat aptly tagged "Onboarding the Appointees", due to the importance of the different offices, presented another opportunity for the Executive Governor to thank the people of the state for the trust bestowed on them and to also congratulate the appointed officials. He urged them to use their good offices for the betterment of the people.

Mutfwang also highlighted the significance of their roles in shaping the future of the state, especially seeing the overwhelming jubilation that greeted the announcement of the election results as well as the historic inauguration of May 29th, 2023.



Mutfwang

According to him, the future of lives of the people of the state depended on the outcome of the appointees' collective work. The governor cautioned them not to squander opportunities, but to view their appointments as a stepping stone to higher achievement.

"Our duty at this critical time presents an opportunity to make history and leave a positive legacy for the betterment of Plateau State. The workshop and retreat, we begin today are not just symbolic events, but an opportunity to bring glory to God and benefit the people of Plateau State", Governor Mutfwang declared.

He further urged the participants to focus on implementing government programmes and policies that would positively impact on the state development. Mutfwang explained that it is only through collaboration and dedication that the officials would be able to leave a

lasting mark in the state and to fulfill the trust bestowed upon them by the people.

Earlier, the Director - General of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), welcomed the participants and urged them to support the dreams of the governor which he said was aimed at bringing developmental strides to the state.

Represented by Brig - General Chukwuemeka Udaya (Rtd), he revealed that NIPSS was a conducive learning, training and meditation environment which they should take advantage of to support their research and growth in the field of their focus.

The Retreat which ended on Friday had seasoned clerics like the Chaplain of NIPSS, Rev. David Pofi, Rev. Prof. Para Malam, and Gbille Akanni presenting papers on how to move the state to an enviable heights using the Bible as a panacea.

NUJ president tasks political gladiators on divisive tendencies

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

those in this category are pretenders and not contenders in the forthcoming November 11 governorship election in the state.

Comr. Isiguzo described the forthcoming Kogi Governorship Election as one that would enthrone a leader that would govern the whole state and not a section of the state. He said this was the reason promoting sectional interests would not do the state any good.

He cautioned journalists to be professional and unbiased in the reporting of the governorship election, pointing out that the Kogi election was about the people and not a section.

The NUJ President lauded the unwavering dedication and professionalism that defines the journalism profession in the state and congratulated the Kogi State Council for orchestrating an exceptional Press Week.

Isiguzo also praised the Kogi NUJ for their commitment to promoting excellence, fostering growth and upholding the highest standards of journalism. He described the launch of the book, "Media Development

in Kogi State, 1999-2023," as a remarkable literary endeavour that captures the evolution of media in the state over a span of 24 years.

The National President described the book as a transformation of media from traditional platforms to the dynamic and interconnected digital landscape of the state.

He described the book as a collective wisdom, insights, and experiences of generations of journalists who have tirelessly pursued the truth, challenged societal norms, and strived for a more transparent and accountable society.

The NUJ President lauded the leadership of the indefatigable Adeiza Momoh Jimoh as chairman of the Kogi State Council, saying he had demonstrated exceptional commitment and visionary leadership in repositioning the council by igniting a new era of progress and unity.

The National President urged the media in the state to recommit themselves to the noble principles of journalism by embracing the spirit of inquiry, the pursuit of truth, and the relentless quest for transparency and accountability.



Isiguzo

SUNDAY POLITICS

Governor Mutfwang's strides in the fight against insecurity

There is no denying the fact that there has been no let on the strangle hold on Plateau communities by enemies of the state for about 22 years running. GYANG BERE writes.

WHATEVER view one holds as to the reasons for the attacks, one thing resonates: The blood spilled and wastages incurred are lamentable and unacceptable.

Since 2001 when Jos, the state capital, witnessed a violent clash, every successive government has had to deal with one form of crisis or another.

From the administration of Governors Joshua Chibi Dariye, Jonah David Jang, Simon Bako Lalong and, now, Barr Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, what has been witnessed can be described as planned and orchestrated to annihilate the people of the state.

If this is not genocide, as rightly described by Governor Caleb Mutfwang, pray, what better tag can be given to acts perpetrated by the attackers after an invasion?

Their uncharitable crudities are well documented to those who have followed their activities over the years as they are condemnable by men and women of goodwill.

What the people of BarkinLadi, Bassa, Bokkos and Riyom cannot forget in a hurry is how their ancestral lands were taken over by bandits that attacked communities in these areas.

Land grabbing by the attacking forces easily became normal and intensified with thicker consistency, as they tried to obliterate the memories of the owners of the lands.

It is reason why scattered in many local government areas in the state are internally displaced persons, even as the humanitarian challenges have continually made headlines. These have certainly been some of the major planks of worry for the owners of the lands as well as government.

Since becoming Governor of Plateau State about 53 days ago, apart from ensuring that the state is put on the path of recovery on several fronts, Barr Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has remained an unrepentant advocate of the need for the state to remain peaceful, which will enable his government pursue the course of the much needed development.

You may recall that even before his inauguration on May 29, 2023, bandits had attacked several communities in Mangu, the governor's local government area of birth in April 2023, leaving in their trail about 300 deaths or even more of the locals. The conflagration is the most unfortunate development on a people.

Apart from the harvest of deaths, the quantum of property lost can only be imagined; just as it is painful that most farmers are not able to access their farms. In an economy where the mainstay of the people is mainly subsistence farming, is it not painful that each year they live on the mercies of government, organizations and people whose rations barely sustain them?

Unfortunately, no one has been apprehended to face the law, even as the prevalence of attacks has increased in some other communities in the area as well as in Bokkos, BarkinLadi, Riyom and Jos South.

The sad but almost daily occurrence has left much to be



Mutfwang

desired, even as the cry is for the security to bring the madness to an end.

Every sane man or woman desires an end to the attacks. The humanitarian crisis being faced in Mangu and other local government areas of the state where marauding bandits have attacked is beyond comprehension.

The state is sadly at the tipping point, which, in many respects, has aggravated more of Plateau citizens; just as government is desirous of bringing it to conclusion.

It is in the desire of Governor Mutfwang to get to the root of the insecurity in the state that his efforts can be perfectly situated and appreciated.

From day one, he made no pretence about what he needed to do in order to end the dastardly attacks on communities in the state.

The search for solutions, are in themselves, a reflection of the seriousness by the governor to put the pains behind the state.

Apart from receiving briefs from security chiefs in the state, he did what many governors had not thought of immediately when a situation like this occurs: He visited internally displaced persons in Riyom and Mangu to give them his government's

shoulders to lean on.

How pro-active could the governor have been by also visiting the Director General, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mustapha Habib Ahmed; where he called for support from the agency in aid of victims who have been made to go through the unfortunate humanitarian crisis.

If receiving the briefs meant anything, meeting the President was, in many respects, symbolic of a governor that is dedicated to redesigning the security architecture of the state for good.

We may not be privy to knowing what was on the agenda for the visit to Aso Rock; but it cannot be unconnected for him to solicit the cooperation of the Presidency in restoring peace to the beleaguered state.

The President gave matching orders on the insecurity situation in Plateau State to the security chiefs to bring to book all those involved in the carnage.

The orders, without any iota of doubt, brought security forces on their toes, as the tension in Mangu remains palpable, and the challenges remain the major concern of the government and of the communities.

While some may have wrongly accused him of not working to set the agenda for peace, little did

they know of the governor's strategic but deft moves to get on board those who can plan for him how security can be utilized for a workable architecture.

The appointment of Brig-General GakjiShipirt as Security Adviser was applauded by those who know his worth in such matters.

That done, Governor Mutfwang could not have rested on his oars as he took time to visit the Defence Headquarters to parley with the new Chief of Defence Staff, Major General Christopher Musa, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Major General TaoreedLagbaja and Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshall, Hassan B. Abubakar with the need to strengthen the resolve to end the killings in the state.

He has also taken time to visit Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Sen. Gorge Akume, where he solicited for strategic collaboration to deliver the dividends of democracy to Plateau citizens and the people of North Central Nigeria.

Coming shortly after President Bola Ahmed Tinubu directed security forces to bring to book those responsible for the continued attacks in the state; the renewed efforts to tackle insecurity challenges in the state remain on the front burner of

curbing the attacks in more ways than one.

What Governor Mutfwang returned home with are revealing and reassuring to the people of Plateau State. The COAS told the governor to be rest assured that he came to the right place to seek for solution on the security challenges.

"We have taken some measures and we believe those measures will yield the desired results quickly."

"We are looking at other areas of intervention that can bring lasting peace to the troubled local governments and even the entire Plateau."

"We will stop at nothing in providing the combat enablers and other interventions that are required to bring lasting peace to the state."

It is gratifying to note that in each of the office of the security chief visited, a large retinue of officials, including members of the National Assembly, accompanied him.

This was to show their buy-in for the efforts to recreate a peaceful state. The Governor is working round-the-clock to convene an expanded stakeholders' meeting where issues would be discussed to address the carnage and foster unity in the state.

He has always believed that he cannot jettison the views of others, as they will help proffer solutions arising from such a meeting. Such persons will include traditional rulers, clergymen; and critical opinion moulders in the communities who are able to jaw-jaw towards finding lasting solutions to the debacle.

All are aware that the state-controlled security outfit, code named, Operation Rainbow, has remained moribund for years. The need to streamline its activities and make it functional is to avoid working at cross purposes in the overall interest of the state.

Governor Mutfwang is aware and has not hidden the fact that Plateau at the moment is at a very challenging junction and we know that we will not be able to get out of the woods without the adequate support and involvement of the armed forces.

Continuing, the governor told the Chief of Army Staff, 'Plateau, as you all know, is known to be the Home of Peace and Tourism and we are determined to ensure that that status is not lost'.

More importantly, and as always, 'we want to ensure that Plateau remains home to every Nigerian and a compelling destination where every Nigerian that wants to find a place of refuge and a place of rest will go' there.

How better said, for there is no doubt in Governor Caleb Mutfwang's determination to return Plateau to its former status. While he is on the trail, what the citizens must do is to offer their support and encouragement in the best possible ways they can.

This is all for the good of the state and its development. The Time is Now for us to put aside our differences and unite for peace and development of our State.

Bere is the Director of Press and Public Affairs to Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang.

POLITICS

Sokoto governor requests appointment of more commissioners

FROM ANENE AIKE, SOKOTO Sokoto

State Governor, Dr. Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto requested for the appointment of 9 (nine) more persons as Hon. Commissioners to the Sokoto State House of Assembly. During the plenary seating recently, the Assembly confirmed the 9 personalities to serve the state as commissioners after screening them as submitted by Dr. Ahmad.

At a Committee of the Whole House, following a request to that effect by Bello Idris (APC-Gwadabawa North), the Majority Leader moved the motion and was supported by the whole house.

Our correspondent also reports that with the new nominees and 16 others confirmed by the Assembly on Aug. 2, the governor has appointed 25 commissioners for the state.

The Nigeria Standard newspaper correspondent also reports that those confirmed include: Aminu Bodai, Ibrahim Adare, Nura Tangaza, Shehu Chaco, Sanusi Umar, Haruna Bashar, Nasiru Binji, Sambo Danchadi and Sharehu Kamarawa.

Presenting the request, the Majority Leader said the governor's appointment was in line with the provision of section 192 and other relevant sections of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended.

The persons so recommended for the



Aliyu

appointment are persons of proven integrity and dedication, who have served the state and the nation in various capacities.

"The nominees when confirmed would assist the governor in the discharge of his statutory responsibilities," he said.

The Speaker, Alhaji Tukur Bala, after the screening of the nominees, put the question into a voice vote and was unanimously adopted by the lawmakers.

In a related development, the Assembly has confirmed Aliyu's request for five additional Special Advisers (SAs).

It could be recalled that the House at its plenary on July 11

and 25 confirmed the governor's request to appoint 17 and 10 SAs respectively, putting the number at 27 even as with the additional five confirmed SAs by the lawmakers, their number has increased to 32 at the moment.

Planned attack on APC guber campaign spokesman uncovered

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Plateau State Chapter of All Progressive Congress (APC), has uncovered plans by supporters of a political party to attack the spokesman of the Gubernatorial Campaign Organisation, Alhaji Shittu Bamaïyi, for being uncomfortable with his coverage of events at the

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Ahead of the November 11 governorship election in Kogi State, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) has constituted its Campaign Council.

Membership of the Campaign Council which cuts across the three senatorial districts and the 21 local government areas of the state, was announced recently.

Faruk Adejoh-Audu confirmed this in a statement.

Adejoh-Audu is appointed as the Director Communications/ Campaign spokesman.

"Today, we want to announce our State Campaign Council which has been constituted and to inform the general public that we are ready to kick off.

"Campaign has already started at the grassroots level at the various council areas of the state".

"In furtherance of its plans towards the November 11, 2023 Governorship Elections in Kogi State, The Murtala Ajaka Gubernatorial Campaign Organization of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) aka Muri/Sam Campaign has announced the composition of top hierarchy of its State Campaign Council

Kogi guber : SDP constitutes Campaign Council

"The Campaign Council which is made up of top-rate technocrats, seasoned professionals and sassy politicians include :STATE CHAIRMAN :Col. Suleiman Babanawa (Rtd), STATE CO-CHAIRMAN : Hon. Peter Moses,

State Director-General : Sheikh Ibrahim Jibrin, STATE SECRETARY : Hon Abdulrahman Wuya

Mohammed, DIRECTOR, Security and Intelligence : Brig-Gen Benjamin Ipinoyomi, Deputy Director : Hajiya Aisha Asabe Yusuf (ACP).

Others include: Director, Communications/ Campaign Spokesman : Hon. Faruk Adejoh-Audu, Deputy Director Spokesman : Pastor Dayo Thomas, Director, Youth Affairs : Hon Ahmed Attah, Zonal Officers.



Gabam

election tribunal.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the State Publicity Secretary, Hon. Sylvanus Namang, and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau State capital recently.

The statement said "The attention of the APC in Plateau State has been drawn to an orchestrated and well-coordinated plans by some desperate supporters of a political party in the state to attack the spokesman of the APC Gubernatorial Campaign Council, Alhaji Shittu Bamaïyi.

"We have it on good authority that members of the political party are very uncomfortable with his coverage of events at the tribunal and have drawn out elaborate plans on how to silence the campaign spokesman." "We are reliably informed by insiders that they are greatly worried and afraid of the wide readership and followership attracted by the coverage given by Alhaji Bamaïyi who apart from being a veteran journalist is also a lawyer.

"The public rely more on his reports which are as credible as they truly reflect what transpired at the tribunal rather than the slanted reports by the Judiciary correspondent of a government owned electronic media. We are further informed that given the foregoing, the party felt that it needs to do something urgently to discredit and embarrass him, moreso, when they are about to enter defense as the tribunal resumed sitting", it stated.

According to the statement, "to carry out the hatchet job, a one time commissioner who is part of the defense counsel is planning with a leading senior lawyer to trump up allegations against Alhaji

misleading the public by writing what did not transpire at the tribunal", it stated.

They categorically stated that they have absolute confidence in Alhaji Shittu Bamaïyi's ability to carry out his function as expected and would therefore resist any attempt to ridicule him at the tribunal.

He, said, "It may be recalled that at the last adjourned sitting of the tribunal, there was a serious attempt to attack Alhaji Shittu Bamaïyi, who based on security tips, had to be rushed out of the tribunal premises.

"We call on the security men at the tribunal to ensure that Alhaji Shittu Bamaïyi and every other person attending the tribunal sitting as free citizens are fully protected. The All Progressives Congress in Plateau State wishes to restate its full support and confidence in the Gubernatorial and other Tribunals sitting in Jos", Namang emphasized.

Kaduna governor makes fresh appointments

From John FWAH Kaduna

Governor of Kaduna State, Senator Uba Sani, has approved more appointments to deliver on the administration's SUSTAIN manifesto of his administration as the administration approaches its first 100 days in office.

This was contained in a Press Release signed by

Muhammad Lawal Shehu Chief Press Secretary to the Governor and made available to our correspondent.

Consequently, the following are appointed into various positions:

- Umar Waziri - Special Adviser, Revenue Matters,
- Umar Baba Bambale - Special Adviser, Drugs and Narcotics Control, Prof. Aminu Ladan Sharehu - Chairman, Local Government Service Board,
- Arc Abubakar Rabiu Abubakar - Managing Director, Kaduna State Development and Property Company Ltd (KSDPC), Hadiza Yahaya Hamza - Managing Director, Kaduna Industrial and Finance Company (KIFC), Engr. Inuwa Ibrahim - Managing Director, Kaduna Line, Dr Iliyasu Neyu -

- Executive Secretary, Kaduna State Aids Control Agency (KADSACA), Dr Usman Abubakar - Director General, Kaduna State Quality Assurance Authority (KSSQAA), Dr Bello Jamo - Executive Secretary, State Primary Health Care Board (SPHCB), Joseph O. Ike - Executive Secretary, Kaduna State Bureau for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (KADBUSA), Mohammed Rili - General Manager, Kaduna State Agricultural Development Agency (KADA), Rakiya A. Umar - Executive Secretary, Kaduna State Disability Affairs Board, Usman Hayatu Mazadu - Executive Secretary, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Muhammed Mu'azu Mukaddas - General Manager, Community and Social Development Agency, Dr Jamilu Haruna - Permanent Member, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Maryam Abubakar - Executive Director (Corporate Services), Kaduna State Development and Property Company Ltd (KSDPC).

While congratulating the new appointees, Governor Sani urged them to excel by creating initiatives and programmes that will benefit the people of Kaduna State. He added that they must serve the people of Kaduna State with the utmost diligence and discipline.



Sani



Bature

SUNDAY POLITICS

A look into Governor Alia's cabinet

Barely three months after his inauguration as the 6th democratically elected Governor of Benue State, Governor Hyacinth Alia a fortnight ago submitted a list of seventeen commissioner nominees to the Benue State House of Assembly for screening. The commissioner nominees have given an insight into what the future looks like given the calibre of people that have been nominated. TERESE TUHWA interacted with some of the nominees after their screening at the new Banquet Hall of Government House, Makurdi.

The prolonged silence and suspense arising from the non-constitution of the state executive council by Governor Hyacinth Iormem Alia were a fortnight ago brought to an end following his submission of a list of seventeen commissioner nominees to the Benue State House of Assembly for screening.

The Assembly which has been on recess since 26th July, 2023 convened an emergency sitting between August 10th and 11th, 2023 to perform one of its major constitutional requirements.

The array of men and women that have been nominated to form the next state cabinet is a testament of what the future holds.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD had an interaction with some of the nominees whose submissions pointed to the direction that they are seasoned technocrats in their respective fields of endeavours.

First to speak was the former speaker of the 8th Benue Assembly, Rt Hon. Terkimbi Ikyange who said the people should expect service.

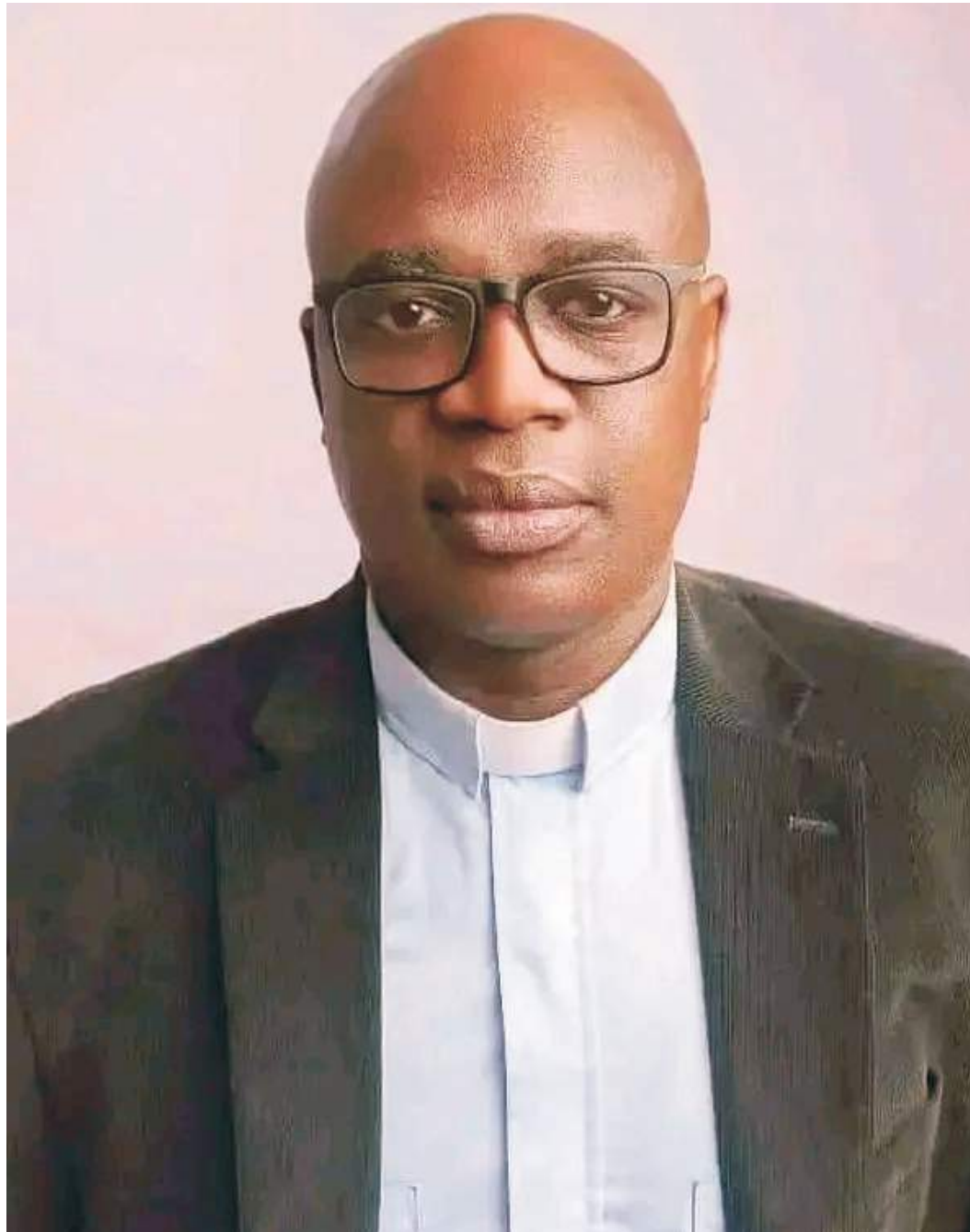
He said when he had the opportunity to serve as a legislator, first as Minority Whip and later as Speaker of the House, he alongside his colleagues did their best to ensure that they made good laws that will promote good governance in the state.

Hon. Ikyange averred that now that he has been given another opportunity by the governor to serve as Commissioner, should the House confirm him, there is nothing he will do other than service to people of the state in whatever capacity he would be asked to function.

The former Speaker says he believes that through their individual experiences over the years, they will support the governor with the best ideas they have.

Rt Hon. Nick Eworo, another former member, Obi state constituency said the state should expect from him nothing but absolute service. He maintained that Governor Hyacinth Alia has come with a new pact and things will be done differently. The masses and Benue citizens will reap from the dreams of Rev Fr Alia and he is very happy that he is going to be part of the forces that are going to drive the ship to reality.

A clergyman, Rev Pastor Dr Frederick Ikyaan, on his part said his nomination is in line with his expectation which has been his desire to find a platform, an opportunity where he can express his belief. According to him, "My aspiration has been that of improving on the standard of the society,



adding value to society. I have spent the last twenty years in public life in church. I have been mounting the pulpit, the formal pulpit but within the last four to five years, I have shifted direction to another aspect of the pulpit.

By this I mean that the pulpit is not the wooden or plastic material in the church building. The pulpit is the life. Therefore, I have succeeded in shifting my pulpit from the four walls of the church building to the church without borders".

He says his life of the pulpit is still the same but he has expanded the boundaries of the pulpit beyond its traditional limits. He asserts further that the marketplace can be a pulpit.

The civil service is a pulpit, politics is a pulpit. So, whatever position he occupies, it is simply the pulpit that he has taken there.

Rev Ikyaan told Sunday Standard that he has joined forces with the governor, Rev Fr Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia to give the insinuation making the

rounds that they have left the pulpit, a better understanding of the pulpit.

He stated that the church is therefore more connected and involved at the centre of the running of the society. "We are therefore looking forward to an improved approach to issues of life", he stated.

According to the former governorship candidate of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) in the 2019 governorship election, quite a number of people have been blinded by this materialistic culture of politics. Once somebody finds his or herself in politics, they think that person is going to look for mere food to satisfy the human appetite.

He argued that politics is beyond mere food, adding also that, "I have continued to quote Plato, the philosopher of old who said that politics is the science of human welfare and happiness and this is the approach of the Western world. That is why in the Western world, you see

individuals adding value to society and society developing beyond individuals".

The commissioner designate laments that "here in Africa, in Nigeria and in Benue State, they tell us that politics is a game of personal interest and that is why individuals can rise above the society. It is not correct. So, I and the Rev Fr being clergy men in this dispensation of politics, we are bringing something new to the table".

The academician revealed that some people may be laughing at them, even making fun of them both within and outside the church. In church, he says some may have felt that they have even left their callings but maintains that there is no other call other than improving human lives. So, they have not left their calling, they have not come to advance terrorism, they have not come to destroy, so they have not left their calling, that of improving the dignity of humanity.

He then assured that they have come as a model, they have

brought something new to the table and they will guard it jealously, and appealed to Benue society to expect a new approach to issues of governance.

On whether he will go back to the pulpit after leaving the political stage, the clergyman said there is no question of returning because they have not gone anywhere. Saying, "Like I said before, it is an extension of the pulpit. I have only moved it from the four corners of a building to a place where there are no borders."

He averred that because of his background which is academics over the years, he will love to be in the ministry of education where it reflects his orientation, disposition, concern and aspiration in the last few years.

On his part, Barr Fidelis Mnyim, another commissioner designate, told **SUNDAY STANDARD** that having been screened, if at the end of the day he is given the opportunity to serve, he will bring his wealth of experience as a lawyer to bear.

He revealed that by appointing them, the governor has considered them as his lieutenants and the ball is now in their court in making sure that they deliver on the mandate placed on them.

"If you look at the array of his appointees, they are mostly young persons. This speaks volumes that if youths have been crying that they have not been carried along, an opportunity has now been given to the youth in Benue, we have a defense to make whether what the youth have been crying about is actually true, whether they have the stuff to offer to the people of Benue or not".

A financial expert, Mr. Michael Oglegba who told our correspondent how the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of the state can be improved says basically, IGR is a major component of what determines state inflow from the federation account. So if the state has low IGR, it is going to have a multiplier effect of low income from the FAAC. The system according to the commissioner designate needs to be automated so that it is tamper proof, human beings can't manipulate it from tax assessment and tax collection. On revenue from untapped sources, Mr. Oglegba fingered unnamed streets, houses and high cost of governance. He added that there are people on government payroll that are not supposed to be there, people earning what they are not supposed to earn and those supposed to have been retired still on payroll, amongst other leakages.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

WORLD BREAST FEEDING DAY 2023

Plateau State First Lady, Barr. Mrs. Helen Mutfwang in commemoration for this years' World Breast feeding Day held press briefing and flagged off the day at the Primary Healthcare Bukuru, Jos South LGA



First Lady, Barr. Helen Mutfwang (left) putting heads together with the Executive Secretary, Primary Health Development Board, Dr. Raymond Juryit



Barr. Mrs. Helen Mutfwang during presentation of gift to a nursing mother



Wife of the SGS, Mrs. Ulan Jatau (left) with the PDP Woman Leader, Mrs. Martina Dakur



Cross section of top government functionaries



From left are, wife of Kanke LGC TIC, Mrs. Monica Caleb Shikir, Hon. Vincent Bot Dung, a stakeholder and wife of Jos South LGC TIC, Mrs. Lyop Vwang Dung



Wife of Speaker, PLHA, Mrs. Maria Moses Sule and Mrs. Rose Fom, wife Dep. Speaker (middle) presenting gift to one of the nursing mothers



Cross section of wives of top government officials



A cross section of breast feeding women at the occasion

Photos: JOHN LAR

THE legislature can be described as a democratic structure which besides handling the lawmaking responsibility, operates within the confine of its constitutional roles and House rules.

As an instrumental arm of Government which largely promotes the ensurity of doctrine of separation of power and check and balances, the legislative arm sits only within week days and upon inauguration of a new assembly, principal officers to pilot affairs of the institution are elected.

The tenth Plateau State House of Assembly like its counterpart at the National Assembly was inaugurated on Tuesday, 13th June 2023 and has since elected its presiding officers. Interestingly, a first timer and member representing Mikang constituency, Moses Thomas Sule emerged as the new speaker while a returning member Gwottson Fom Dalyop representing Jos South constituency, was elected as the deputy speaker.

The Speaker Rt. Hon. Moses Sule, whose role as leader of the state legislative arm also being the number three citizen of Plateau and the cynosure of all eyes, is a seasoned grassroot politician who has a vast experience working both in the private and public sector.

It won't be out of place to say that the new speaker and his deputy rode on the trust and magnanimity of their colleagues who unanimously voted them to lead the institution, giving the believe they have in their capacities to revolutionize the House to a 21st century peoples' oriented assembly.

Though a first timer, Moses Sule is expected to leverage on the vast legislative experience of his Deputy, Fom Gwottson Dalyop, a returning lawmaker whose rich expertise provides a guide that aids the helmsman settle in the revered position.

This time around, the House in its wisdom brought in middle aged men while also leveraging on the nexus between the new and the returning members into leadership as the combination of Moses Sule and Fom Gwottson is to foster quick adaptation to legislative practices, not forgetting that their intellect, industry and energy in the pursuit of good governance to citizenry is also an added advantage.

The Tenth State Assembly may have inherited a near dysfunctional institution practically ravaged by leadership crises pitching the lawmakers along camps and

carrying out questionable functions in the court of public opinion. However, when compared with the Federal House of Representatives which sponsored two thousand two hundred and thirty two bills (2,232), out of which five hundred and ten (510) were passed and two thousand (2,000) motions in total considered in four years. In view of this, it can be said that the performance of



Expectations and tasks before Sule, Gwottson



Sule

Dalyop

Plateau State ninth assembly is abysmally unacceptable, given its record of seventy five (75) bills which are both executive and private member sponsored. Out of this number, twenty five (25) were passed and seventy four (74) motions considered within its lifetime.

The data revealed here accounts largely to the rationale behind the ninth assembly's under-performance, derogatory assessments in the public space and supposedly inordinate representation to speak for the people.

What is therefore expected of the leadership in the tenth assembly is to quickly settle down to unite all structures within the House, with a view to setting a pace for optimal legislative impacts.

Although autonomous and independent in its dealings, the new leadership of the tenth assembly should equally leverage on the initiative of building a working and collaborative synergy

with other arms of Government; a panacea for all round achievements but not forgetting its constitutional roles.

It is therefore, worthy of

note to state that the tenth state assembly is the beautiful bride in the eyes of the storm.

Citizens are not only expectant of smart changes

in governance style capable of bettering their livelihoods but are also tired of frequently hearing the House in the news for the wrong reasons.

The data revealed here accounts largely to the rationale behind the ninth assembly's under-performance, derogatory assessments in the public space and supposedly inordinate representation to speak for the people. What is therefore expected of the leadership in the Tenth Assembly is to quickly settle down to unite all structures within the House, with a view to setting a pace for optimal legislative impacts. Although autonomous and independent in its dealings, the new leadership of the tenth assembly should equally leverage on the initiative of building a working and collaborative synergy with other arms of Government; a panacea for all round achievements but not forgetting its constitutional roles. It is therefore, worthy of note to state that the Tenth State Assembly is the beautiful bride in the eyes of the storm.

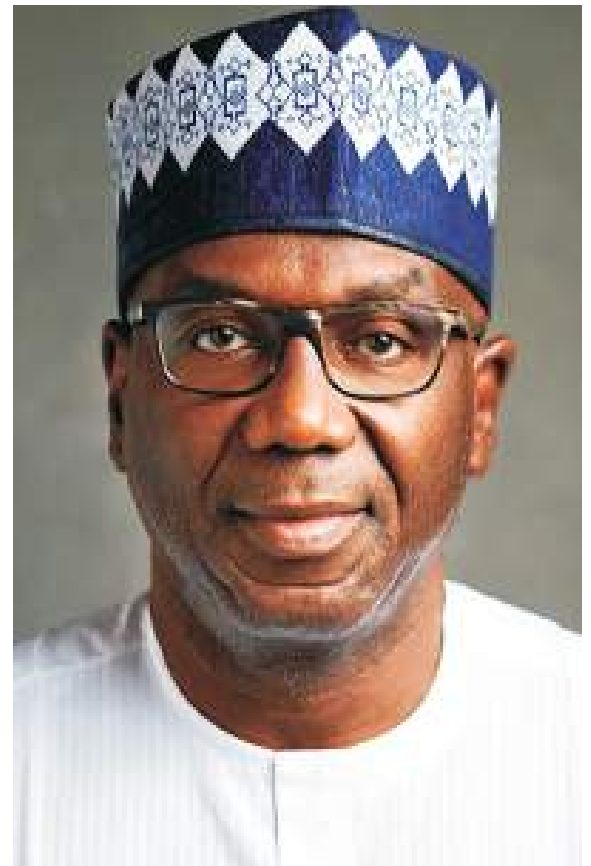
SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Tinubu



Shettima



Abdulrazaq

Anxiety trails relief package for states

The National Economic Council [NEC] on Thursday at its meeting in Abuja approved the release of N5 billion to each of the 36 States of the Federation to cushion the pain being caused by the Petroleum subsidy removal. The money is to be used to buy rice, maize and fertilizers to farmers will also cover other measures as may be deemed necessary by the states. KENNETH DARENG writes.

THE NEC meeting which was presided over by its Chairman, Vice President Kashim Shettima had in attendance State Governors or their Deputies deliberated over the implementation of the N180 billion subsidy pain relief package which is expected to reach the door step of Nigerians across the country.

Briefing the media on the outcome of the meeting Governor Babagana Zulum [Borno] with his counterparts, Governor Uba Sani [Kaduna], Yaya Bello [Kogi], Charles Soludo [Anambra] and Seyi Makinde [Oyo].

The Governors agreed to share the World Bank's 800million dollars fund through cash transfers to the poor. They also agreed that a negotiation panel should interface with the Nigerian Labour Congress and other affiliates to resolve the conflict arising from the fuel subsidy removal.

"To cushion the effects of subsidy removal, the Federal Government last week released five trucks of rice to each state. Furthermore, to cushion the

effects of food shortages across the country, the Federal Government has approved the sum of N5 billion to be given to each state for the procurement of 100,000 bags of rice, 40,000 bags of maize and fertilizers.

"This funding has to be shared with a formula as follows; 52 percent of the money will be given to states as grants, while 48 percent of the N5 billion is to be paid back on installment basis within a period of 20 months between the states and the Federal Government.

"The Council commended the efforts of the Federal Government under the leadership of President Bola Tinubu as well as the Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN].

"We have also commended the efforts of the National Emergency Management Agency [NEMA] in cushioning the effects of the subsidy removal. Furthermore, Council has taken bold decisions to ensure speedy release of grains and other items to cushion the effects of subsidy removal on the less privileged in the society.

Zulum added that NEC insisted that the Federal Government

should deploy the 800million dollars loan from the World Bank the way it was initially planned through conditional cash transfers, using the registers to be provided by the states.

The Borno State Governor said, aside from mitigating the immediate effects of the subsidy removal through food reliefs, the Council took notice of the Federal Government's wider plan to deploy the N500billion approved by the National Assembly towards strengthening Agriculture, transportation and industry.

Zulum said, "Furthermore, the Council has noted the package that was announced by the President to cushion the effects of the subsidy removal, amounting to about N500billion.

"This fund has to be distributed to the MSME's and the Industrial sector, About N125billion will go to cash transfers, the Agricultural sector as well as gas expansion for buses. Because of the increasing costs of fossil fuel, the Federal Government intends to establish more gas stations across the country, as well as

procure more gas powered buses, compressed natural gas [CNG] buses as well as electric buses to cushion the effects of the subsidy removal."

He said the NEC agreed that the frontier states bordering Niger Republic are to be assisted with more palliative materials than other states, considering the influx of refugees into their domains due to the economic sanctions placed on the Nigerian Military Junta who came into power weeks ago via a coup.

Zulum added that the Council has set up a committee consisting of the Chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum [NGF], Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq, Governor Charles Soludo and others to interface with Labour on the current situation.

"Furthermore, NEMA will also liaise with states to distribute foodstuffs to the less privileged as well as dialogue with Labour unions leadership over the current situation. All these palliatives are temporary solutions and Council has decided to invest in medium and longer term sustainable solutions that will ensure availability of food and non-food solutions in Nigeria, especially investing in commercial agriculture and also investing in irrigated agriculture.

"NEC is calling on Nigerians and Labour to be calm and law abiding as the President is determined to address the issues at hand."

Also in his remarks at the briefing, Governor Soludo said

the review of the social register was in progress adding that the influx of refugees from Niger Republic has affected the distribution of palliatives in some northern states of the country.

Also contributing, Governor Yaya Bello of Kogi state said a sub-committee was constituted last year to propose modalities to address the eminent food crisis due to flooding, He said, "The sub-committee was to be chaired by the Executive Governor of Kebbi State and other members consisting of Federal Ministries of Agriculture, Humanitarian and disaster Management, Finance, NEMA and CBN.

"NEC Secretariat is to develop and forward a template with an accompanying letter to all the affected states to collect data on preliminary assessment of the impact of flood in the affected states, harmonise the data obtained from those communities and produce a report of their findings to the Committee.

"The exercise would have been more successful and effective if all the affected states had responded at when due according to the provision of the template.

Meanwhile, SUNDAY STANDARD sources gathered that there is anxiety and fear among Nigerians that politicians might hijack the process as in the time past, especially with the Covid-19, Sure-P and other interventions.

According to Gbenga

This funding has to be shared with a formula as follows; 52 percent of the money will be given to states as grants, while 48 percent of the N5 billion is to be paid back on installment basis within a period of 20 months between the states and the Federal Government. The Council commended the efforts of the Federal Government under the leadership of President Bola Tinubu as well as the Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN].

Continued on page 31

NEWS

German envoy tasks Benue warring communities on peace

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

THE German Ambassador to Nigeria, Her Excellency Annett Gunther has charged the Bonta and Okwute communities of Benue State to live in peace.

Gunther made the appeal at the "Konshisha - Oju Natural Resource Peace Agreement" signing ceremony organised by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) held at the Benue Hotels, Makurdi, the Benue State capital, recently.

The diplomat who was represented by the Head, Political Section of the German Embassy, Mathias Dold, cited competition over land and resources due to bludgeoning population and faulty borders by colonialists, as some of the causes of conflicts in communities.

Gunther said the factors that give rise to communal conflicts notwithstanding, peace was "possible if both sides are committed to it".

Ambassador Gunther also lauded women whom she

said she has observed from experience, achieved more enduring peace when they were involved in any peace process.

The Och'Idoma, His Royal Highness OdogboElaigwu pointed out in his speech that killing people and destroying properties in the community, eventually amounts to nothing. "Nobody", he said, "can give you peace until you decide to live in peace".

Similarly, the Tor Tiv, His Royal Majesty OrteseAyatse noted that conflicts will always continue to be with us as humans, but maintained that it was how to manage it that was important.

The Chairman, Benue State Council of Chiefs noted that if the concerned parties "are prepared to sit together and discuss, there should be no crisis".

Brokered by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), the Natural Resource Peace Agreement in the Tiv speaking Konshisha Local Government Council and the Igede speaking Oju Local Government Council



Gunther

cover the free movement of people in the two councils, open access to markets and amicable resolution of issues over boundaries from colonial era maps that have resulted in friction.

The two communities also agreed on the sharing of water, farmland, forests and other resources.

Governor Hyacinth Alia thanked both parties for

their resolve to live in harmonious coexistence.

Represented by his Deputy, Barr Sam Ode, the governor charged Bonta and Okwute communities to sustain the peace as his government was committed to resettling Internally Displaced Persons which will be possible only when there is peace.

Police IPO confirms allegations against prophet

BY **EZEKIEL DONTINNA**

OFFICER of the Inspection Police Operatives (IPO) Unit, Plateau State Command, Inspector Nanzing Mallam, has confirmed before the court that all the allegations earlier labeled against Prophet Moses Essessein, of former Mount Zion Ministry Bassa, now Miracles Prayer Ministry, as the truth.

Recall that the allegations border on the prophet hypnotizing and having carnal knowledge of a married woman, MrsAbayomiAdewomi.

It was earlier reported that a friend of Abayomi's wife, Cecilia Joshua, and others including the landlady of the room rented at KarshenJenta and other witnesses before Justice Dung, of Area Court West Of Mines Jos, testified to the same allegations.

The IPO said, based on privileged information given by Mrs. Adewomi through his colleague, SPL Abbu Clement, their team swiftly embarked on a fact finding investigation to Omega Hotel where the prophet took her to and requested



Oyenka

for hotel manifest and was able to discover that the prophet registered with the name John instead of Moses as revealed by Mrs Adewomi.

He disclosed that they have proof of how the prophet got her pregnant and rented a house for her around KarshenJenta and also evidence of how the pregnancy was aborted through drug administered by one Paul Nimmyel, the prophet's Personal Assistant.

The Inspector added that there were nude pictures of MrsAdewomi, in their possession as an

exhibit snapped by the Prophet which he used in intimidating her not to tell her husband or he would expose it on social media. "We have recorded statements of the prophet, witnesses and the victim.

Identifying some of evidence which included the anointing oil given by Prophet Moses to be used by Abayomi's father which later died, Mallam said the anointing oil has the picture of the prophet on the label.

However, the Prosecuting Counsel presented documents in

evidence before the Court including a CD plate containing video messages recorded which were labeled in evidence as U-1 to U-11 respectively. Although, Counsel to the Prophet objected the receipt of the CD video message, but it was overruled.

Earlier, one MrsHanatu Musa, of All Denominations Church 3- Armoured Division Jos, appeared before the court testifying that, Prophet Moses Essessein collected #500,000 from her when she went to him for prayers.

She said, "I was not in my senses when the prophet together with his wife, took me in his car to the bank and transferred five hundred thousand naira (#500,000). When I reported the case to the Police in 2021, he promised to pay me back in installments. In essence, by November 2021, he would have paid me #200,000, January 2022 #150,000 and February 2023 the sum of #150,000, but to no avail and an agreement is written before the Police".



Marketers Mull N720/Litre, NLC Warns strike

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), decried high diesel price, want 7.5% tax withdrawn Lament bad roads, said over 1,000 trucks stuck, members killed

They warned that its members would commence a nationwide strike without any formal notice if the federal government approved another increase in the pump price of petrol without conclusion of ongoing negotiations.

NLC President, Joe Ajaero, gave the warning at the ongoing African Alliance of Trade Unions meeting in Abuja on Monday He said that the National Oil andGas Suppliers Association of Nigeria (NOGASA) called for the removal of the 7.5 per cent tax on diesel fuel.

Bandits kill many soldiers in Niger

AT least 20 soldiers were killed in an ambush by bandits along the Zungeru-Tegina Road in Niger State late Sunday night

It was learnt that seven other soldiers and five vigilantes sustained varying degrees of gunshot injuries and were taken to the IBB Specialist Hospital, Minna, the state capital.

Sources said the soldiers were on their way to some communities recently attacked by bandits in Wushishi Local Government Area.

The bandits had, on Friday, invaded several villages in the area, forcing dozens of farmers to flee to Wushishi and Zungeru.

A military source, who spoke to our correspondent on Monday, put the number of the slain soldiers at 20.

ECOWAS angered by junta's threat to prosecute Bazoum

THE West African bloc ECOWAS, on Monday, lashed threats by Niger's military rulers to prosecute ousted president Mohamed Bazoum, saying this contradicted the regime's declared willingness to resolve the crisis peacefully.

The coup leaders who toppled Bazoum said late Sunday they had gathered evidence enabling them to prosecute Bazoum for "high treason and undermining the internal and external security of Niger."This, it said, was based on "contacts" Bazoum had had with "nationals, foreign heads of state and officials in international organisations."

In a statement on Monday, ECOWAS said it had learned of the threats "with stupefaction"."It represents yet another form of provocation and contradicts the reported willingness of the military authorities in the Republic of Niger to restore constitutional order through peaceful.

University of Ibadan reduces working Days

THE management of Nigeria's premier University , the University of Ibadan (UI),on Tuesday directed its lecturers and other staff to work for three days a week.

The institution made this disclosure via a special release number 4642, dated 14 August 2023 and signed by the Registrar

and Secretary to Council, Mr. G.O. Saliu.

The release explained that the decision was taken given the recent removal of subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), also known as petrol and its attendant difficulties being experienced by staff of the university.

The authority of the institution lamented that salary earners who have to commute to work every working day are faced with an aggravation of the condition, given the attendant hike in the transport fare and cost of living.

We'll maintain petrol price without subsidy.

PRESIDENT BolaTinubu, declared that he was not contemplating reversal of the decision which removed fuel subsidy in the country,describing threat by NigerianLabour Congress (NLC) as premature, and urging Nigerians to hold their peace.

This came as he assured of a stabilised pricing regime for Premium Motor Spirit (PMS),also known as petrol. The President said his government is poised to take measures to maintain the current pump price of PMS without reversal of its policy.

Compiled by **HOSEA NYAMLONG**

SUNDAY FEATURE

Niger: A fly on the scrotum

One would have thought that the inglorious era of the military in our political governance development phase has been consigned to the dustbin of history. But here we are, and the reality of our failings to improve our democratic credentials and deepen the practices of free and fair elections through unhindered citizens' participation in the election process has come home to roost. The return of the military in West African politics through coup de tat after a long hiatus is now a new normal. Oboli Augustine writes.

Starting from Burkina Faso, Mali and now Niger, it appears the genie has somehow escaped from the corked bottled. Indeed an unsuccessful putsch was carried out just recently in Sierra Leone. And no one knows where the next is going to occur. Worried by this sad retrogressive development, the subregional group, ECOWAS under the leadership of President Bola Tinubu has been talking tough against coups and coupist in the subregion. At a meeting of the group in Guinea, just before the Niger episode, the idea of setting up a counter-coup brigade was mooted and it enjoyed wide appeal and acceptance among its leaders.

It is therefore not surprising that ECOWAS has been threatening fire and brimstone over the Nigerien coup that toppled President Mohamed Bazoum. Ultimatum has been given to the coupist to release the held leader and relinquish power to the civilian authority. Pressures have also been mounted by the US and the European Union.

Nigeria, the closest neighbour to Niger piqued by this action at her doorstep, knowing the implication of inaction to her faltering democracy, has also applied maximum pressure to get the military to rethink their course of action. As I write electricity power supply to Niger Republic has been cut off.

In my days in the university as a student of political science, there was a course titled Military in Politics. The course was probably introduced because military intrusion and seizure of organs of government in West Africa were rife then, and their role in governance needed a close rigorous study. I learnt over time that the course has changed to Civil-Military Relations because military governance is regarded as an aberration. And it remains so, though this is in contradistinction to the



extrapolations of a political thinker who charged: for forms of government, let fools contend, whatsoever is administered best is the best. The question is: what are the pull and push factors for military interventions in politics? Perhaps, the reasons are not far-fetched. Bad government, malfeasance and maladministration of the civilian authorities. When political leaders become lords of the manor and turn their countries into George Orwell's Animal Farm where some animals are more equal than others, the citizens groan and practically invite the military to take power. When elections are predetermined and the votes of the people are not allowed to count, the military act as a messiah, which explains why most of the coups in West Africa enjoy huge public support. When 'sit tightism' overcomes common sense, the worst happens. When constitutions are changed like toilet paper to accommodate a lifetime

leadership agenda of some political mavericks, military intervention is invited. When the social contract with the people is taken for granted and leaders live in opulence with their families, friends and associates at the expense of the people, coups are engendered. When leaders live in silos, divorced from the reality of their countrymen, the event of Niger gets leverage. I can go on and on to catalogue the road of events that are precursors to military intervention in politics. While the idea to institute anti-coup force is entertained, the leaders should do a self-introspection on the root cause of coups and develop a strategy to ensure good governance since the fundamental guiding principle of every government is the security, peace, welfare and wellbeing of the people. West African leaders should put their house in order, to have the moral armament to sermonize against coups. The greatest anti-coup medicine is good governance and not

necessarily a military brigade that is merely self-serving and inspired to protect corrupt and incompetent leaders. Yes, the military should be told in clear terms that coming to power through the barrel of the gun is anachronistic and no longer fashionable. Yet the right things should be done always by the political class to keep the military at bay. The threat to invade Niger and flush out the coupist is real but it has also divided the subregional group. The military regimes in Burkina Faso and Mali are at variance with the thought process of their fellow ECOWAS members. They have warned of their preparedness to support Niger if invaded. With cracks in its ranks, it remains to be seen how the ECOWAS group will find unity moving forward to collectively tackle the security challenges from the Sahel that are tormenting the region. Nigeria has not known peace since Boko Haram and the collapse of the Libyan state, so also are Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and a host of others. Without a doubt, the problems facing the region go beyond military coups. A military coup is simply a symptom of the economic health, social dysfunction, ethnic tensions and security morass of the region. Period!

The fallout will be too much for our suffering masses. Have we considered the economy of war and the fact that you cannot predict how it will pan out? Russia started a military operation with the hope to overrun Ukraine in a matter of days, that war is now in its second year and has no end in sight. It is no more domiciled on Ukrainian soil but presently exported to Russia as a theatre. The Russians now feel what it means to have missiles fly over your home and scamper for the underground bomb shelter. War is not a tea party. It is a game of death. Putin in his closet would be wondering why he miscalculated so badly. You don't underestimate your enemies in war. How much has the Nigerian military degraded the ragtag Boko Haram after over a decade of war of attrition? That is a warning and a learning moment for us. Any action being contemplated with other ECOWAS member states should be well thought out and the fallout too. Acting in haste will only secure a pyrrhic victory with huge cost burden in the final analysis.

A war in Niger means the mass movement of refugees into Nigeria and more burden for the comatose economy. The conterminous international boundary states of Kebbi, Katsina, Sokoto and Jigawa will bear the brunt. Are we prepared for this? Certainly not. So let's apply wisdom in killing the fly that perches on the scrotum, or else we may miss the fly and injure the scrotum.

"West African leaders should put their house in order, to have the moral armament to sermonize against coups. The greatest anti-coup medicine is good governance and not necessarily a military brigade that is merely self-serving and inspired to protect corrupt and incompetent leaders. Yes, the military should be told in clear terms that coming to power through the barrel of the gun is anachronistic and no longer fashionable. Yet the right things should be done always by the political class to keep the military at bay."

SUNDAY FEATURE

Nigeria's past shouldn't be today's burden

The post-election conversations have been a putrid salad of prejudices, recriminations, and elevated provincialism. Our wits, resolve, temperance, capacitance, and stability threshold as a nation are being tested, and they will be tested further in the months and years ahead. FREDRICK NWABUFO writes.

OUR history is always ready ammunition to be dispatched in any ethnic combat in that ungoverned social media neighbourhood. Contending sides launch missiles from the war rooms with their own "droppings" of history. I will not be a soundboard for those tiresome and unyielding conversations here. The duty of the citizen is to be a dispassionate arbiter, divining truth from untruth, and staying irrepressibly on the side of the nation's interest. I believe instead of these contentions which re-emerge in our public discourse every now and then, we can learn from our past and forge a better country.

The truth is, history is subjective. Every group has their own version of history — as regards their social and political existence in Nigeria. But we cannot keep recycling the epics of woes that have bogged us down as a people. We must move forward and look forward.

Nigeria's past is not a very glossy one, yes. It is replete with tales of pain, sorrow, and blood — depending on who is telling the story. Fatal mistakes were made, but must we keep reliving the errors of our past? Are we doomed to remain a rendition of our past? Can we not move forward — beyond our past?

Nothing changes because the old ways remain the same. We must think a new Nigeria, and a new Nigeria begins with new progressive thinking. We cannot take a leap into a glorious future while we are still stuck in the rut of the past. Our past has become today's pain, and tomorrow's burden.

But does this imply we must abandon our history? Absolutely not. We embrace it, but learn



from it as well, and stop repeating the same mistakes. The current confusion shows we have learnt nothing from our chequered history.

Our past should teach us to be respectful of one another; it should teach us caution; it should teach us tolerance; it should teach us understanding; it should teach discipline, and it should teach us the very essence of unity.

Like Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, said to Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe: "Let us understand our differences. I am a Muslim and a Northerner. You are a Christian, an Easterner. By understanding our

differences, we can build unity in our country."

We must manage our diversity with "care, mutual respect, understanding, caution and trembling". We cannot discount our points of divergence, but we must also recognise that we have solid arcs of convergence. What unites us should be stronger than what divides us.

It is unfortunate that to reinforce prejudices, some deploy self-archived ahistorical accounts. Our past as a country should not be a springboard for hate exchanges, but a source of learning to forge a better country. We hold on to "history", whether manufactured or inverted, to

accent our biases. Evolving means we are better than yesterday.

No one can hold their own version of history as truth everyone must chow down. There are villains and heroes in every story. It is depressing that our much-vaunted past has become stuff of propaganda passed down from one generation to another. Hate transitioning from one generation to another. We must break this circle of hostility.

Really, we cannot make progress as a country if we remain on this treadmill. We must sanitise our conversations, discard epithets, and evolve into a wholesome whole.

We must deconstruct revisionist fabrications and pretensions to make good of the future. Knowing that we started off on a shaky foundation should thrust us into consciously working out our destiny. We cannot hold on to an acrimonious past as a precedence for the present and the future. As I said previously, we take the lessons from the past and forge a new path.

We dissipate so much energy on ethnic bouts of supremacy but leave very little to interrogate fundamental issues of governance. We must make our existence as a nation about jutting issues that

govern our lives as citizens — economy, security, education, and health.

In conclusion, it is insalubrious to ascribe the actions of deviants within a certain pool to any group. I have maintained this position since the wave of baleful propaganda against the Fulani. I will not deviate from the path of unity and peacebuilding no matter how perilous the road becomes.

The invidious and menacing enterprise of Peter Obi's "Obidients" has driven the dagger deep into the national umbilicus. Sore points quickened, passions inflamed, and bottled-up emotions unclashed.

First, we need to address the "Obidient" menace full-frontal, and we need to strengthen national and community concord. We need new ententes brokered for national cohesion or unity. We need to talk. We need to have those difficult conversations in civilised and decorous fora with a view to healing our nation. We need to talk with one another, not at each other.

We need new alliances cementing the north with the south, and the east with the west in holy matrimony. But to achieve this, we need to talk.

Fredrick Nwabufo aka Mr OneNigeria is a media executive.

"We must manage our diversity with "care, mutual respect, understanding, caution and trembling". We cannot discount our points of divergence, but we must also recognise that we have solid arcs of convergence. What unites us should be stronger than what divides us. It is unfortunate that to reinforce prejudices, some deploy self-archived ahistorical accounts. Our past as a country should not be a springboard for hate exchanges, but a source of learning to forge a better country. We hold on to "history", whether manufactured or inverted, to accent our biases. Evolving means we are better than yesterday."

WHEN I was young, cab drivers were the unskilled or uneducated. These days cab drivers are jobless university graduates who are trying to make ends meet. It is a worrisome trend. This week alone, I have been driven by a graduate of chemistry and a graduate of animal and environmental biology. The biologist was a very young lady who graduated in 2018. The physicist graduated ten years ago. He is 32. These are young professionals who should be creating value for their country but are unable to do much for themselves and the families who made sacrifices to send them to school.

When I asked the young man how he was coping emotionally, he told me that he was always thinking and that he thought that he was depressed because his entire family looks up to him and he could not do much to help them. The young beautiful lady looked quiet stressed. She drove very carefully and calmly. I encouraged her, I told her that I was very proud of her for embracing hard work instead of looking for a man to sleep with for money. We got talking and I shared a couple of ideas with her on how she could translate her knowledge into money outside a job. I did the same for the young man. This is the story of so many young men and women who are professionally trained to drive the development and industrialization process of this country but who have been relegated to doing unskilled work to put food on their table. Some of them have turned to crime and are very unrepentant about it.

For a country that desires to become industrialized, we need critical components. The first is energy, the second is water, the third is road and rail infrastructure, the fourth is raw material and the most important is human capital. If we have all in place and our human capital is not sound or is not put to good use, we are going nowhere.

I often wonder. What is all this hype about agriculture for a country that is so richly endowed with mineral resources? Why are we importing fuel when we can refine our crude and use the derivatives and by products to create jobs for our young graduates? Why are we creating jobs for other nations when our young graduates could be recruited in our oil refineries? Are we serious about industrialization or are we just talking? The Americans say talk is cheap. How can a graduate of petroleum engineering be a cab driver? Our youths are so frustrated and we do not understand why.

Let us talk about our young professionals who are majorly affected. Those of them who read courses that are science based are the worst hit. Why? because we do not have industries that would absorb them. What is an electrical engineer doing on the streets in a cab? What is a geologist doing on the street or on the farm? We cannot create jobs for them, so we turn them into farmers and cab drivers. They cannot all be farmers. In fact, it is time to stop this agriculture mantra. This agrarian culture. The world has electric trains. We are still practicing manual farming. The world is going into its 4th industrial revolution and we are still talking farming? Is that the route to industrialization?

Let us even talk about agriculture. How many of our young have we taught how to add value to farm produce, how to preserve, package and ship for export?

How many of them have we given the agriculture-for-export value chain training and grants to start their own agro business geared towards exports? Every farming season, we still lose perishable crop. How many of them have been taught how to make and package tomato paste and orange juice for the international market? If they have, how much is the cost of energy and transportation?

There is no industrialization without human capital development. Our mechanical engineers do not produce cars, our steel rolling mills do not make

Industrialization and our unemployed youths



machines for big industries for manufacturing and processing. We import from China. There is no time for Chinese youths to do social media because every media is for learning in China. Their hands are full with creating, processing and manufacturing, because they have government backing. They are relevant to their country's growth.

What really is industrialization? According to Investopedia, "industrialization is the process of transforming the economy of a nation or region from a focus on agriculture to a reliance on manufacturing. Mechanized methods of mass production are an essential component of this transition. In other to deepen our understanding of industrialization, let us read this excerpt from the Investopedia:

Understanding Industrialization: Industrialization can be driven by a combination of factors including government policy, labor-saving inventions, entrepreneurial ambitions, and a demand for goods and services. It has profound implications for the population, causing a wave of migration from small farms to cities and towns where jobs can be found.

The most dramatic example in recent history is that of China, where government policy changes in the late 20th century led to the nation's transition from an economy based on subsistence farming to a global manufacturing powerhouse. The Industrial Revolution: In the western world, industrialization is most commonly associated with the



Industrial Revolution in Europe that began in the late 18th century and the subsequent burst of industrialization in the U.S. through the 19th century. In Europe, the era was characterized by a surge in local manufacturing of goods for export, made possible by a growing population of consumers. Great Britain played an outsized role in the process through technological innovations such as steam-powered machinery. Industrialization quickly spread to the United States, the epicenter of laissez-faire capitalism. Inventions including the cotton mill and steam power made possible the establishment of mill towns such as Lowell, MA, and Pawtucket, RI.

Later Periods of Industrialization: World War II created an unprecedented demand for certain manufactured goods, leading to a buildup of production capacity. Post-war prosperity provided further catalysts that kept capacity utilization high and stimulated further growth. Innovation, specialization, and wealth creation were the causes and effects of industrialization in this period.

The Asian Tigers: The late 20th century was marked by rapid industrialization in other parts of the world, notably Asia. The Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore) all participated in economic growth based on manufacturing for global customers. China experienced its own industrial revolution after moving away from a strict communist model.

Effects of Industrialization: The innovations of the 19th century allowed

for the mass production of commercial goods. As manufacturing activities grew, transportation, finance, and communications industries all expanded to support the new production capacity. It also led to increased labor specialization and allowed cities to support larger populations, motivating a rapid demographic shift. People left rural areas in large numbers, seeking jobs in budding industries. The Industrial Revolution led to unprecedented expansion in wealth and financial well-being for some. A larger middle class emerged as consumer demand for more goods and services grew and business creation boomed to feed the demand.

Modes of Industrialization: Different strategies and methods of industrialization have been followed over time, with varying degrees of success. The Industrial Revolution in Europe and the United States initially took place under mercantilist and protectionist government policies that fostered the early growth of industry. These later adopted a laissez-faire or free-market approach that encouraged foreign trade, providing new outlets for industrial output.

In the post-Second World War era, developing nations across Latin America and Africa adopted a strategy of import-substituting industrialization, which involved protectionist barriers to trade coupled with direct subsidization or nationalization of domestic industries.

To be concluded

IN the last installment we stated that the first reason for the coming of Jesus was to save and the we left off where we began to introduce the second benefit which is that Christ removed you from the authority of darkness; Satan has no right to afflict you. As you believe these things, they are activated in your life. Philemon 1:6 says, **"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus"**. There is no more spiritual death for any man that is in Christ Jesus.

Today I want you to know that in this life, Satan has no right to cut short your life. I am not saying that anybody that is born again will live forever, but God will fulfill your days. He can preserve your life, and He will preserve your life until you are good and ready to go; until you have finished your assignment on this earth, then you will sleep in God when you are full of age and of good days. You will live life on this earth full of the blessings of the Lord and when you are ready to go to be with the Lord, you will not go on the devil's terms but on your own terms.

This means that sickness does not have to take you out. Accidents do not have to take you out. Satan's vices do not have to check you out of this earth. The anointing will preserve you if you learn to yield to it, and will keep you in a state of wholeness. The anointing will help you to discover and fulfill your life's assignments and you will not leave this earth until when you are good and done. This is good news to all believers in Christ Jesus!

That is God's plan for your life, dear ones, that as you are connected to this anointing and learn to walk with Jesus, He will instruct you, teach you, educate you, preserve you, protect you, provide for you all the days of your life. He will help you fight every battle of your life and you will win. He will move you into the fullness of your destiny, and safely guide you into glory.

Proverbs 12:28 says, **"In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death"**. When you become born again, you become the righteousness of God in Christ according to 2 Corinthians 5:21. God looks at you and credits all of Jesus' righteousness to your account, because you have accepted Jesus and the work of redemption which He has done

for you. Jesus stands as your righteousness. And in that place there is no death.

This anointing is there to preserve your life literally and spiritually; to cut you off from eternal damnation, spiritual death, and to cut you off from premature death and any other manifestation of death such as sickness in your body, poverty, and lack. All of these are manifestations of spiritual

"Treasures and wickedness profit nothing; but righteousness delivereth from death". Then Proverbs 12:28, says, **"In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death,"** meaning it is a pathway of life. And I say to you, in the name of Jesus, there is no death in your path. Your eternal future is bright and your future in this world is bright because of



In the way of righteousness is life



This anointing is there to preserve your life literally and spiritually; to cut you off from eternal damnation, spiritual death, and to cut you off from premature death and any other manifestation of death such as sickness in your body, poverty, and lack. All of these are manifestations of spiritual death. The spirit of death has no right of dominion over your life. The blood sacrifice of Jesus has tamed the spirit of death. The Bible says, in the way of righteousness is life and in the pathway thereof, there is no death (Prov. 12:28). You will live out your days and fulfill your years. You will live out your life and then go to be with Jesus when your earthly work is done, free from sickness and disease.

death.

The spirit of death has no right of dominion over your life. The blood sacrifice of Jesus has tamed the spirit of death. The Bible says, in the way of righteousness is life and in the pathway thereof, there is no death (Prov. 12:28). You will live out your days and fulfill your years. You will live out your life and then go to be with Jesus when your earthly work is done, free from sickness and disease.

You will sleep in Jesus, after having fulfilled God's great plan for your life. You will also pass this legacy of the anointing to your family; to your lineage and to your generations. This is God's plan for you and understanding how to walk with this anointing will guarantee that.

Proverbs 10:2 says,

that anointing. That anointing will preserve you. He will protect you; He will guide you; He will lead you; He will protect you.

We see another companion scripture in Proverbs 11:4, which says, **"Riches profits not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death."** When the Bible repeats certain things, it means that God wants us to take note of it very seriously. This part of knowing Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, and sharing, and partaking in the anointing He carries will preserve you in this life, and deliver you from eternal death, and from Satan cutting your life short on this earth, and manifesting anything that the spirit of death has to offer. You can live your life free from the mark and terror of spiritual death. That's the anointing that

Jesus carries. He redeems our life from destruction.

Open your mouth and boldly declare that, **"The Lord Jesus Christ redeems my life from destruction. I have no fear"**.

Now, the third benefit of the anointing that Jesus carries is that it delivers mankind from the curses of life. Galatians 3:13 says, **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree,"** verse 14 adds, **"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."**

We have to understand that the scripture teaches us that when Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, he brought a curse upon all mankind. God told Adam in Gen.2:17, **"...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** Now, Adam, did not physically die, but the death the Bible was talking about is that his nature was corrupted. Sin, which is spiritual death, came into him. And sin carries a curse.

The word "curse" means "to be empowered to fail", "to be energized to fail", just like the word "blessing" means "to be

empowered to prosper, succeed and do well in life, to make progress in life". Now, Jesus and the anointing He carries is the blessing- the blessing of righteousness, the blessing of eternal life. He carries that anointing to prosper men; to cause you to excel and succeed in life.

The curse which comes with sin is the empowerment to fail. But blessed be God, the Bible shows that Christ in His office as the Anointed One delivers us from the curse - the curse that came with man's sin. Christ, the anointed One and His anointing **has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. For it is written, cursed (empowered to fail) is everyone that hangeth on a tree** (Gal. 3:13). So Jesus fulfilled this scripture, on our behalf. He was put on a physical tree, which is, the cross. Remember that the cross was made out of wood. it came from a tree.

The word "curse" means "to be empowered to fail", "to be energized to fail", just like the word "blessing" means "to be empowered to prosper, succeed and do well in life, to make progress in life".

☞ Now, Jesus and the anointing He carries is the blessing- the blessing of righteousness, the blessing of eternal life. He carries that anointing to prosper men; to cause you to excel and succeed in life.

INTERNATIONAL

US-Japan-S Korea summit a coup for Biden

The United States and China have achieved what many deemed impossible - a historic meeting between US President Joe Biden, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol.

Mr Biden hosted the first stand-alone meeting among the three countries at the Camp David presidential retreat in the US on Friday. It's a diplomatic - but still tenuous - coup for the American leader.

South Korea and Japan are neighbours and old US allies, but they have never been friends.

Now, however, an increasingly assertive China has renewed US interest in East Asia. And it has brought together two countries who for decades have struggled to overcome deep historical grievances.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, Mr Biden praised the "political courage" of the South Korean and Japanese leaders.

They also agreed to hold regular joint exercises, consult each other during crises, share real-time data on North Korea and hold summits every year.

"I find the meeting at Camp David mind-blowing," Dennis Wilder wrote on X, formerly Twitter. A professor at Georgetown University, he managed the Japan and South Korea relationship under former President George W Bush.

At that time, they could "barely get South Korean and Japanese leaders to meet with us in the same room," he said.

In recent months, Mr Kishida and Mr Yoon have taken tentative steps to resolve their hostilities, and strengthen ties with Washington. This once-inconceivable alliance is driven by shared concerns - the biggest of which is China.

The meeting at Camp David - also the first time foreign leaders have visited the presidential retreat since 2015 - is an attempt to "signify and to demonstrate how seriously" Mr Biden takes the relationship between Japan and South Korea, according to a White House spokesman.

Why has it taken this long? For one, the wounds are old.

Some may describe the two countries as "frenemies", but it's too trite a term to describe the deep hurt among South Koreans, including the thousands of so-called "comfort women" who were abducted and used as sex slaves by the Japanese army during World War Two.

South Koreans believe the Japanese never properly apologised for the colonisation of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945. Tokyo, however, argued that it had atoned for its historical sins in several treaties.

Any détente has always been fragile, almost akin to a game of Jenga. Even when the East Asian bloc appeared solid, a single wrong move could bring the whole edifice down.

In 2018, a long-running court case in Seoul over Japan's use



President Biden may have pulled off a diplomatic coup - but will its effect be long-lasting?

of forced labour during WW2 started a trade dispute which plunged relations between the neighbours to their lowest since the 1960s.

But there has been progress recently, including a milestone meeting in March, offering Washington a new window of opportunity.

But there is a good reason for the two new administrations to put their differences aside, even at

the cost of political capital on the domestic front.

This is, after all, the era of pragmatic politics - and they see a bigger threat looming.

China's assertive posture in Asia has alarmed its neighbours. Beijing claims Taiwan, a democratically governed island, and has not ruled out the use of force to "unify" it with the mainland. Incursions into Taiwanese airspace and major military drills are now the so-called "new normal".

British Columbia declares emergency as 15,000 homes evacuate



About 15,000 households have been ordered to evacuate in Canada's British Columbia, as firefighters battle raging wildfires that have set homes ablaze.

Officials said a "significant" number of buildings caught fire in West Kelowna, a city of 36,000 people, and more than 2,400 homes were evacuated.

A state of emergency has been declared for the entire province, where hundreds of separate fires are burning.

Hundreds of miles north, a huge fire edges towards the city of Yellowknife.

An official deadline to evacuate the city - the capital of Canada's Northwest Territories - has lapsed and a local official said nearly all of the people that lived there had left, either by car or plane.

About 19,000 of the city's 20,000 inhabitants had evacuated, the territories' environment and communities minister Shane Thompson said.

"Some are choosing to shelter in place. If you are still

in Yellowknife and you are not essential to the emergency response, please evacuate," Thompson said.

Mr Thomson warned that the highways and airport could be impacted by the wildfires.

In British Columbia, evacuation orders grew from covering 4,000 homes on Friday afternoon to about 15,000 in the space of an hour. Another 20,000 homes are under alert.

"This year, we're facing the worst #BCwildfire season ever," Mr Eby wrote on Friday in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter. "Given these fast-moving conditions, we are declaring a provincial state of emergency."

The premier said this would ensure "that we're in a position to rapidly access any tools we need to support communities".

He said that more and more people were being evacuated, warning that "emergency orders could include travel restrictions to specific areas if people do not respect our calls to avoid non-essential travel".

As tens of thousands of Israelis continue to join weekly protests over the government's highly controversial plans to change the justice system, as many as one in three citizens is thinking of leaving the country, according to a poll.

Professor Chen Hofmann is one of them. Together with his wife and their children, they start the Jewish Sabbath with a meal together every Friday evening. Nowadays they end it at a huge anti-government rally.

"It's not our ritual to go and protest in the streets but we're forced to because we're losing our country, that's how we feel," says the doctor, while attending the weekly Saturday night demonstration in central Tel Aviv.

The leading Israeli radiologist is now in the process of moving to a hospital in the UK. Moreover, he is trying to persuade other members of his family, who all have European passports, to consider leaving too.

"I'm going to London for a sabbatical, and this will be my laboratory to see if I can live outside Israel," he explains. "If the situation will be so bad - and it's worsening every day - we'll find a new place to live."

Among the crowds blowing horns and waving Israeli flags

Israelis seek opportunities abroad amid unrest at home



Chen Hofmann and his family have joined the weekly anti-government rallies in Tel Aviv

on Tel Aviv's Kaplan Street, there is fury at legislation being passed to limit the power of the Supreme Court.

Protesters believe it endangers democracy. However, Israel's hard-line governing coalition argues that its actions enhance democracy, by fixing a judicial system in which elected politicians are too easily overruled.

While the demonstrators still hope new laws can be overturned, many admit that emigrating is something they, or those close to them, have thought about.

"It would be heart-breaking but I will not raise my kids in a country which is not

democratic," says Sarah, a mother at the protest.

"If I can't be sure that my daughter's rights as a young woman are guaranteed, we will not stay here".

Israeli relocation experts say that in the past few months they have witnessed a spike in business. The expected negative economic fallout of the government's judicial changes and rising living costs are also push factors for those seeking to leave.

"We have seen a dramatic increase in the demand for information: we want to move to another country, how do we start the process?" says Shay Obazanek, a manager at one major firm, Ocean Relocation. "People with foreign passports who are able to move, ask for advice."

Ruth Nevo, a Portugal-based relocation specialist, has begun to see Israeli customers for the first time. "It's been absolutely insane, from none for years to, like, 25 enquiries a day," she says.

"And the people who are enquiring are very well-educated. I'm talking about lawyers, judges, policemen, university lecturers, IT people; they're just very concerned about what's going on."

destruction" and how some on the Trader's Cove side jumped into the lake as the fire spread and exit routes were blocked.

Her brother and grandmother fled to her house after "the fire jumped very quickly from one tree to an entire area, threatening an entire residential community".

The airspace around Kelowna International Airport has now been closed to everything other than aerial firefighters.

US allows transfer of Danish and Dutch F-16 war planes

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SUNDAY FEATURE

Infographic: How do the Zimbabwe elections work?

The August 23 general election, Zimbabwe's ninth since independence in 1980. Here's a simple guide to the entire process. CHRIS MURONZI and ALIA CHUGHTAI writes.

On August 23, Zimbabweans head to the polls to choose the country's next president in what political pundits believe will be a tight race.

Eleven candidates are vying for the top position.

But the race is largely seen as a rematch between Nelson Chamisa, the 45-year-old opposition leader and the man who defeated him in the 2018 presidential election, Emmerson Mnangagwa, the incumbent president.

Mnangagwa, 80, who took over the reins from Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's first president, after a November 2017 coup, is the leader of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF).

Chamisa has led the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) since it was formed in January 2022 after a split from the Movement for Democratic Change - Alliance, previously the leading opposition party.

The field also includes activist and constitutional law professor Lovemore Madhuku of the National Constituent Assembly. Douglas Mwonzora, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) withdrew his candidacy on August 8 saying the election is a farce, but the electoral commission has said the ballot papers had already been printed.

A total of 6.5 million people have registered to vote across the 12,340 polling stations in the country's 10 provinces.

This is the ninth election since independence in 1980 for the country of an estimated 15.5 million people.

According to the 2013 Constitution, Zimbabwe must hold general elections after every five years. The last election was held in July 2018.

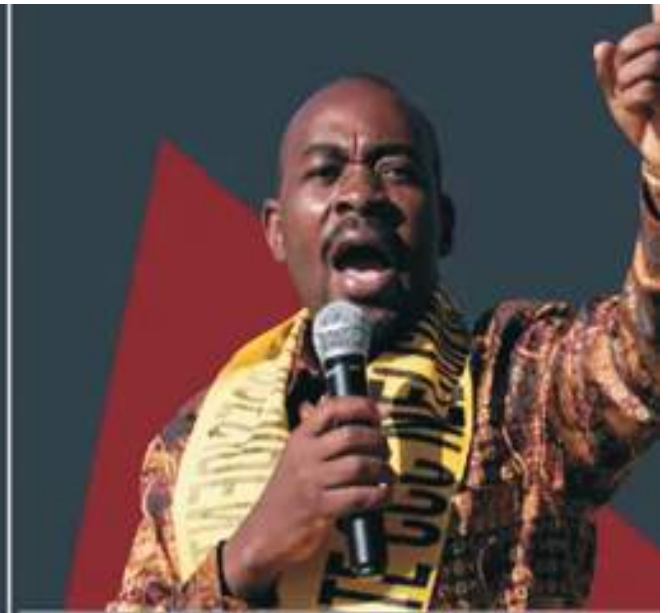
Political parties and independent candidates can participate in the elections. Candidates are required to pay a nomination fee; for 2023, the fee was set at \$1,000 for parliamentary candidates and \$20,000 for presidential candidates.

The state of the country's economy is likely to be a core concern for voters. Zimbabwe continues to face significant economic challenges, including high unemployment rates, hyperinflation, and the currency's loss of more than 80 percent of its value to the dollar just this year.

Corruption has been a longstanding problem in Zimbabwe, eroding public trust in the government. Earlier this year, a [four-part](#) Al Jazeera documentary series with shocking revelations of gold



EMMERSON MNANGAGWA, 80
Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)



NELSON CHAMISA, 45
Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC)

smuggling by individuals linked to the government, triggered outrage in the country.

Inadequacy of quality healthcare, education, energy and basic services is often a pressing concern for citizens in Zimbabwe.

Besides the presidential election, Zimbabweans will also elect local council representatives and members of parliament.

Since the 2013 Constitution, the National Assembly of Zimbabwe, the lower house of Zimbabwe's parliament, comprises 270 members. Of those, 210 representatives are elected through single-member constituencies.

The remaining 60 seats are specifically designated for women and are allocated using proportional representation across 10 constituencies, each containing six seats. This proportional representation was based on the geographical divisions of the country's provinces. On the day of the election, each voter casts a single ballot, a decisive factor in the distribution of seats to the respective parties for both categories of seats.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), the constitutional body that runs the country's elections, oversees the voter registration process, where eligible citizens aged 18 and above can register to vote. Registration centres are set up across the country, and citizens are required to provide proof of identity and residency to be included in the voter roll.

On election day, polling

stations are set up across the country. These stations are staffed by polling officials who are trained to manage the voting process. Each station caters to a specific number of registered voters, and the location of polling stations is made public in advance.

On arrival at their designated polling station, registered voters present their identification, and their names are checked against the voter roll.

They are then given a ballot paper, which they mark in secret to indicate their preferred candidate. The ballot papers are then placed in a secure ballot box.

After voting, a voter dips his or her finger in indelible ink. After voting ends, the ballot boxes are transported to designated counting centres.

The ballot papers are carefully counted, usually in the presence of political party agents and observers to ensure

transparency. The results from each polling station are recorded and tallied. The ZEC collates, verifies, and aggregates the results from all the polling stations to determine the total number of votes received by each candidate. This process is overseen by the ZEC and observed by political party agents and independent observers.

The winning candidate is determined based on the highest number of valid votes cast.

For a presidential candidate to be declared winner, he or she must receive more than 50 percent of the vote.

If no candidate receives more than 50 percent of the vote, a runoff election is held between the two candidates with the highest number of votes.

By law, the runoff should typically be held within 28-42 days after the initial election.

According to Zimbabwe's Electoral Act, results for any of the elections should be announced within five days from the close of polling.

If a presidential candidate is unhappy with an election outcome, they can seek legal recourse by appealing to the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe. The candidate or their representatives can approach the court within seven days after election results are announced and after exhausting all available legal remedies to address their grievances.

The court will then hear and determine the election dispute, and its decision will be final and binding. According to the Electoral Act, any election challenge or petition must be lodged within seven days after the announcement of the election results. The Constitutional Court then has a maximum of 14 days to hear and determine the matter.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA





My hat is my trademark

– Chioma Jesus



Is it true that you waited for 15 years before you gave birth to your daughter?

Yes it is. I had a son before I gave birth to my daughter. He is about 22 years old. After him, I had to true for about 15 years before my daughter came.

How did you get the name Chioma Jesus?

The name Chioma Jesus came to me as a divine inspiration from the Holy Spirit. My hit track on my first album was titled, 'Chioma,' which means my good God. I prayed and asked God for the name of the song and he said I should title it 'Chioma,' then add Jesus to it. That was how the name stuck after the success of the song.

Has it always been your dream to be a singer?

It was never my dream to be a musician. My goal was just to love and serve God. I was into business when God called me but it took me some time before I answered the call.

What do you mean by God called you?

I was a business woman but during that time, I had visions where I saw myself singing and churches were inviting me for ministration.

Are you the first musician in your family?

No. I learnt that my father was also a singer when he was a young man. During their youth meetings in the village, my father used to entertain his peers through music but it was not gospel music.

Why gospel music?

I chose gospel music because I belong to that clique. As a born again Christian, I can't sing highlife or hip-hop music. I know that by singing gospel music, I am winning souls to the kingdom of God so I have to propagate the gospel by singing Christian music.

What challenges have you faced in your career?

The challenges have been many and tough but the grace of God has been with me. When I was about releasing my first album years ago, there was no money. I prayed and God connected me to a woman that helped me. After the album was released, people loved my hit song, 'Chioma,' but the marketers squandered my money. I did not get any royalty from it. The marketers really pirated my songs. The name became popular and the song was booming but no income, money was not coming my way. It was a very challenging period, so I had to pray and seek the face of God.

When the marketers did not pay your royalty, didn't you feel like quitting music?

As a human being, I felt like giving up but whenever I went to God in prayers, He always told me that promotion does not come from men but from Him, so I should hold on to Him. God further told me that when His presence and glory abounds by me, men would look for me and the value of my life and ministry would go high and that is what I am experiencing today. I thank God that I did not give up.

All through the time, did you lose hope of having another child?

No, I believed God that other children would come because in one of my songs, I exalted God and described Him as the one who gives children. Whenever you try to propagate the gospel of God, the devil would always want to frustrate you to know if you believe in what you are saying. So whenever I prayed to God, He always told me that He would bless me. Back then, I would go out for inspiration and pray for other women to conceive and it normally came to pass but I was there waiting until when God's appointed time came. He wanted to use me as a testimony.

How lucrative is gospel music in Nigeria today?

It is very lucrative and you can see that most of those singing hip-hop music are switching to gospel songs. Gospel songs can never fade out. My song 'Chioma Jesus,' is about 14 years old but if I go for ministration anywhere and I do not sing that song, people could go as far as throwing pure water sachet at me.

It is still a very relevant song. But all these hip-hop songs don't last more than six months. Gospel songs are so wonderful that you can listen to

them when you are dying, losing hope, depressed, and it would lift up your spirit. The songs would remind you that God would answer you soon. Gospel music is very lucrative around the world.

Has your career as a gospel singer influenced your style?

Not really. Since I gave my life to Christ, I have been very conscious of what I wear; that is my lifestyle. It is not as if somebody preached to me. As you grow older, you decide on how you want to live your life and how you want to dress. I have been dressing this way before I became a popular gospel artiste.

Is that why you always wear flowing gowns?

Yes. I feel so happy when I wear flowing gowns. I also believe in the word of God that says a child of God should dress moderately in a way that would please God and men. As a gospel artiste, you showcase yourself in a crowd of about 300,000 people, you don't have to expose your body because people would not pay attention to the song anymore but your body. I have noticed that through my dressing, I have won so many women to Christ. I have changed so many women's life through my style. There was a time I saw a



Kick-ass women in Nigeria's music industry



Jay Breeze and Tiwa Savage perform during the Global Citizen Festival

In March 2021, Burna Boy's Twice As Tall won the Best World Music Album award at the 63rd Grammy Awards following a second consecutive nomination, highlighting how Nigerian music has continued to garner international appeal in leaps and bounds over the past decade. With Wizkid and Tems' Essence breaking into the Billboard charts in July, Nigeria's music scene is enjoying yet another moment in the global spotlight. But while many of the men behind these successes have been celebrated, their female counterparts have not enjoyed as much applause.

The reason is simple: the Nigerian music industry is still heavily dominated by men — both for the fans and behind the scenes. From music executives to artists themselves, there are fewer women in the Nigerian music space compared to men. Over the years, harmful cultural stereotypes, patriarchal practices, and a highly-gendered work culture have increased the barrier to entry for most women who dream of pursuing careers in the Nigerian music industry. "To be honest, some of the things I've experienced — specifically as a woman — in this industry. They will try to pit you against other women; try to redefine your value, try to get in your head and remodel your self-esteem. And I have even had it easier than many," The Headies Best Songwriter artist and singer-songwriter Simi tweeted in March.

"It comes from all sides. That's why I am with any woman that is winning in this industry — because [there are a lot of hurdles]. Women can hardly get away with the kinds of things many men in the same industry get away with on a [regular basis]." For every global female superstar like Tiwa Savage, who will perform at Global Citizen Live in Lagos, who have emerged from Nigeria, there are other women behind the scenes who have contributed, and are still contributing, to the global appreciation Nigerian music now enjoys.

In this piece, Global Citizen highlights these women who #ChooseToChallenge and the incredible contributions they have made within the space.

Queen Nworisara-Quinn (Board member, Mavin Global)



Queen Nworisara-Quinn is a cofounder of Kupanda Capital, an investment and advisory firm that supports pan-African companies. In 2018, the firm invested in Mavin Records, one of Nigeria's biggest record labels founded by powerhouse Nigerian producer Don Jazzy, transforming the label into an end-to-end commercial and creative business.

Nworisara-Quinn was previously an Investment Officer at the African Development Bank's (AfDB) Private Sector

Department and is a cofounder of Fraym, a Pan-African analytics & business intelligence company; and Nithio, an Africa-focused energy finance company.

She also has a PhD in innovation, strategy and organization from the University of Cambridge and was a Gates Cambridge scholar.

"I think it is important for women to feel comfortable trusting their instincts in the workplace. Often, we may identify issues or raise questions that may be unpopular but could be incredibly important. We have to feel comfortable trusting our gut and begin to take risks," she told the Financial Times in 2013.

THE EYE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

How to handle stressful situations

By **ELIZABETH SCOTT**

YOU can't always avoid stress, which is why it is important to know how to handle stressful situations. Getting better at managing stress is a great way to become more resilient and able to confront future challenges.

Often when people face a new and stressful situation—a job that's a bit too challenging, a thorny relationship hurdle that will take a while to sort through, a change in lifestyle that feels like a step down from what they had—they feel overwhelmed at the thought that they may have to deal with this stress for an extended time.

People who worry about long-term stress have reason to be concerned: chronic stress, the type of stress that is continual and unchanging, can take a heavy toll. It can negatively impact both physical and mental health.

1. The good news is that you can mitigate the stress of virtually any situation, even if it is there to stay for a while. If you are facing a challenging life situation, or wondering if it gets easier and how to speed the process, try stress relief strategies that can help.

These techniques can help significantly if you face a life crisis or overwhelming stressor. But if your stress feels unmanageable, seek help from a mental health professional.

Identify the Source of Your Stress
The first step toward handling stressful situations is to figure out what it is that is stressing you out. Understanding which aspects of the situation make things difficult for you can help you develop strategies to manage these feelings.

Identifying the cause isn't as always as easy as it sounds. While you might recognize that starting a new job or moving to a new area is stressful, being able to point to the specific aspects of the situation that are difficult for you is important. For example, knowing you are stressed about meeting new people at your new job can help you cope with the social aspects of work.

Writing in a journal can often



effectively decrease stress and anxiety.

2. It can also be a useful tool for learning more about your stress sources and how you typically cope with stressful situations.

How to Keep a Stress Journal
Consider situations where you might feel anxious, stressed, or overwhelmed, and ask yourself:

What was it about the situation that caused you to feel stressed?

What did you think about the situation?

How did it make you feel? What did you do in response to the stress? What did you do to relieve the stress? Have the Right Attitude. You can't always control what you are facing, but you do

have a choice in how you face it. You can choose the attitude you take, which can help determine whether you view each situation as a threat or a challenge.

Research shows that viewing something as a challenge helps you mobilize resources and bring your "A game" to the situation more easily. Viewing the same situation as a threat can lead to greater stress and worse performance.

3. There are a number of problems associated with avoiding the source of your stress. This approach is known as avoidant coping and while it provides temporary relief, it can actually make stress and anxiety worse in the long run.

4. Understand the Role of Attitude
Your attitude can help to determine how stressful a situation feels for you, and how you approach your options. In fact, attitude can affect which options you see and do not see, which can also affect your stress levels and the outcome of your actions.

5. Examine Your Thought Patterns
Your thought patterns may feel automatic, but you can choose where your focus lies. Research has found, for example, that thought patterns can contribute to increases in the stress hormone cortisol.

6. To begin to make that choice, it helps to become aware of your habitual thinking patterns. This exercise can help you to see these patterns more clearly and can help you to relieve stress in the process.

Practice Positive Self-Talk: Positive self-talk means using more optimistic language in your head, and focusing more on possibilities. It involves more than merely trying to look on the bright side, although that is part of it.

Learning how to shift your focus can help alter what is possible for you. For example, instead of focusing on the negative aspects of a situation that are out of your control, you might instead focus your attention on areas where you can make a positive change.

Change What You Can
Sometimes there are certain aspects of a situation you can change,

even if you cannot change the overall situation. Focusing on what you can control can help you feel more empowered and less helpless when you are handling a stressful situation.

For example, you may, for financial reasons, be unable to quit a job you don't enjoy. However, you can connect with co-workers more, alter your attitude while you're at work, and use your break time for stress management activities. All of these can alter how you feel when you are at this job.

Try Solution-Focused Coping: Solution-focused coping means taking action to change your life where you are able.

Examples of solution-focused ways to handle stress include: Finding ways to manage your time more effectively to make a stressful situation easier to handle. Taking steps to minimize aspects of the situation to make it less anxiety-provoking.

Relying on conflict-management skills to deal with difficult interpersonal relationships that contribute to stress. These changes can be large in scale or small but targeted. Change can bring stress, so it's important to choose the changes that matter most.

Find and Eliminate Tolerations: Tolerations are those nagging stressors in your lifestyle that you put up with almost without realizing it, but which bring you constant low-grade stress. The thing about tolerations is that they add up to bigger stress.

Cutting out tolerations can relieve stress so you can tolerate more things you can't change.

Create a New Life Plan: Knowing where you want to go and having a plan for the future, can help to minimize stress in the present. Planning changes according to your values and priorities can be helpful and inspiring, even if you can't bring those plans to fruition for a little while longer.

One study found that people who balance living in the moment and making plans are the most resilient in the face of daily stress and stressful situations.

8. Build Resilience

If you can't do any more to change your situation, you can still reduce the stress you feel as you manage your daily life. Certain activities can promote resilience, help you feel less stressed overall, and help you be less reactive to the stressors you face when they rear their ugly heads. Resilience-building activities can help you develop new skills for managing stress. The more they become an automatic habit, the less your stressors will bother you.

Self Care: Everything feels more stressful when you are tired, hungry, and run down. It also means that you have fewer coping resources at your disposal. This means that you are more likely to react to stress rather than respond to it. Or you might let things snowball until things become even more overwhelming.

Focus on taking care of your body, and you will have a greater ability to handle frustration and stress in your life overall. Do things that make yourself feel good and cared for, whether that's getting a massage, reading a book, or enjoying a relaxing spa day at home.

Exercise: Exercise is one of those wonderful stress relievers that can build resilience by helping you to blow off steam. Better still, regular exercise can help you to become less reactive toward stress.

9. Because of that and the obvious health benefits of exercise, this is a powerhouse of a stress reliever that should be worked into your schedule when at all possible.

Meditation: Meditation can help you to remain centered in the face of stress and can help you to regain a sense of peace when you are feeling off-balance. Many meditation techniques work well, so try a few and stick with a favorite technique that feels right.

10. Over time, you should find yourself reacting to stress with less intensity and more able to remain calm and peaceful.

It would be great if you could simply avoid or eliminate the stressors in your life. Unfortunately, that's only possible to an extent. There will be times when you are all faced with unpredictable or unavoidable stressors when you need to rely on resilience. You may not be able to change everything in your life, but these tips can help you handle stressful situations.



EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

How to end sibling rivalry

WHY can't they just get along? Let's face it—no matter how nicely your kids are playing one minute, the next minute might bring tears, name-calling and even fights.

If you have more than one child, it's a guarantee—sibling rivalry will happen. But even though sibling fighting is a common occurrence in families, it can be difficult to manage if parents don't have the right tools.

I've been a parenting educator for 15+ years and have helped thousands of families resolve their sibling rivalry issues once and for all.

There's nothing more rewarding than seeing your kids playing nicely together, and with the right tools, you can end those sibling feuds for good. (Well mostly for good, anyway!) After all, if the siblings are happy, mama is happy!

Why Does Sibling Rivalry Occur?

Try to see it from your kids' perspective...your oldest child was once the sole focus of your attention. His requests were answered with haste and he didn't have to share his time or toys with anyone. Then, his sister came along—a stranger to him, for all intents and purposes—and now mommy is slower to pour his milk because she's feeding baby and he has to wait for daddy to finish changing baby's diaper before they can play with Legos together.

As the kiddos get older, they vie for the same toys and as younger sister becomes more independent, she gets tired of being bossed around by big brother. To put it another way, how would you feel if your spouse brought home someone else and expected the two of you to get along?

Because young children aren't able to express these frustrations verbally, they do so by misbehaving, refusing to share, hitting, pushing, yelling, etc.

How Can I Stop Sibling Rivalry from Happening?

While you can't stop sibling rivalry entirely, you can reduce its frequency. This means less yelling from the next room and more peace in your home!

Here are 6 steps you can take today to reduce overall competition between your kids, prevent future sibling rivalry episodes and put an end to the brawls once they start:

1. Lose the Labels

We live in a society that thrives on categorizing people—we want to know who's smart, who's popular, who's successful, who's athletic, who's musical, who's talented, etc. Labels help us categorize things.

But when it comes to our kids, labels (intentional or unintentional) dramatically increase the competition between siblings. Think about it, when we talk about our "athletic one," "the good eater," "smartie," or even our "wild child," we inadvertently draw comparisons between our kids. When we refer to one child as the "athletic one" the other child automatically thinks "I'm not the athletic one" (so why even try) or when one child is a "good eater" the other assumes she must not be. If dad refers to you as the "smart one," I can only assume I'm (a lot) "less than smart."

If I wear the "wild child" crown, you can feel very superior as the "well behaved" or the "easy going" kid. By



labeling our children, we unintentionally shelve kids into one role or another—whether they like it or not—and create comparisons between siblings.

The good news is, when we ditch the labels, we give our "not-so-athletic" child a chance to shine even if she's not a star. We give the straight-B student the opportunity to be proud of her hard work. And we give the "wild child" a chance to do the right thing.

The key is to cheer on positive attributes, such as teamwork, persistence, and kindness. Siblings can then root for each other instead of competing for their parents' approval.

Cheer on Positive Attributes

2. Arrange for Attention

One of the key reasons kids fight is to gain their parents' attention—in their eyes, even negative attention is better than nothing.

To satisfy your kids' need for attention, plan on giving each child at least 10-15 minutes of kid-centered, intentional attention every day. Here at Positive Parenting Solutions, we call this Mind, Body and Soul Time® togetherness because it has incredible effects on the health of your child's mind, body, and soul.

By kid-centered, I mean your child is in control of the 10 minutes—they call the shots. A tea party? Lego building?

Dressing up daddy?

Sidewalk drawing with chalk? Listening to their favorite music with your teen?

Whatever the kid chooses, you oblige. (As long as it's an activity that can reasonably be accomplished in 10-20 minutes.)

By intentional, I mean no distractions—put down your phone, don't answer that email, turn off the show you're watching.

Your child is the center of your

universe for these 10 minutes and it's critical you are fully present for your time with her.

Lastly, be sure to label Mind, Body and Soul Time® activities at the outset (you can call it whatever you want) and when it's finished, say, "I sure enjoyed our special time today! I can't wait to do it again tomorrow!"

Your child will benefit from knowing you're committed to your time, plus you'll get credit in his mind for time well spent.

By giving each child this special time, you will increase feelings of emotional connection and proactively fill her attention bucket with positive attention so she doesn't have to resort to fighting with her sister to get your (negative) attention.

3. Prepare for Peace

When sibling fights occur, many parents use time-out as a way to diffuse the situation. While sending kids to separate corners might give them an opportunity to calm down, time spent in the corner will not teach the child how to resolve conflict.

To teach kids conflict resolution skills, I recommend parents use role-playing once the dust has settled and everyone has calmed down. Here are just a few scenarios you can role play to help build those conflict resolution skills:

Taking turns: Give children the words to use ("May I please play with...") and also give them language for responding ("I'm not quite finished playing with it, but I'll let you know when I'm finished.")

Using "I feel" statements: It's important children know it's OK to have big feelings, but there are appropriate ways to express them. Teach them the language to use when they are frustrated ("I feel mad



when Sam doesn't let me play with the car" or "I feel hurt when Alison hits me...")

Controlling their temper: Kids aren't always ready to discuss their feelings immediately after a fight, so teach them coping skills to diffuse the situation until they are ready to talk—walk away, count to 10, take deep breaths, etc. By giving your children the tools and strategies to resolve conflict on their own, you'll notice a drastic decrease of sibling arguments in your home.

4. Stay out of Squabbles

This one might surprise you, but do you know the best thing you can do when a disagreement starts to brew? Ignore it. That's right, go find something else to do in another room. Don't give the squabble any attention.

By ignoring the tussle, you don't reward negative behavior with your attention and most importantly, you give them a chance to work it out on their own.

If the fight escalates into a physical throwdown or you really feel like intervening is necessary, you can use the next two steps to guide your interactions when you do get involved.

5. Calm the Conflict

If your kids clearly can't reach an agreement, or if the fight escalates, you might have to step in. Whatever you do, don't take sides. You might think you heard or saw what started the argument, but don't place any judgment on either party.

Instead, once everyone is calm, listen to each child's version of what happened and encourage them to use "I feel" statements as they tell their

story. Then, without placing blame or taking sides, ask them to come up with some solutions together. If no one is able to come up with a workable resolution, suggest a few yourself, and help them reach an agreement. Whatever you do don't take sides.

6. Put them all in the same boat. If, after hearing both sides and attempting to find a solution, your kids still can't agree, it's time to put them "all in the same boat." That means everyone involved in the argument experiences the same outcome or consequence.

An "All in the Same Boat" statement would sound like this: "Either you can take turns with the game, or I will put it away for the rest of the day." Then follow through. There will likely be some complaining and negotiating at first, but your kids will quickly realize it's in THEIR best interest to agree on a solution together before you "put them in the same boat."

Be patient with your kids as they're learning these new strategies. Remember that conflict resolution is a very advanced skill set. (You probably know adults who still struggle in this area!) But rest assured, with these strategies in place, you'll be able to keep sibling rivalry and fighting to a minimum.

And, don't be surprised if other issues pop-up after sibling rivalry is under control. The truth is...kids are constantly looking for ways to get your attention and assert their power, so you might notice mealtime drama, tantrums, backtalk and homework battles flare up even while the siblings



Reality Bites

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Don't give your children to traffickers - MDA Sec cautions IDP's



Gora

AS the World marks the 2023 Day Against Trafficking in Persons on

30 July, the call for an end to human trafficking remains at the front burner. Stakeholders including governments, religious and social leaders, organisations, and individuals have been called upon to give their support to ending the dehumanising practice.

"Leave no one behind" is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2023 Theme of the World Day against human trafficking is "Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind".

According to the United Nations "Global crises, conflicts, and the climate emergency are escalating trafficking risks. Displacement and socio-economic inequalities are impacting millions of people worldwide, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers".

"Those who lack legal status, live in poverty, have limited access to education, healthcare, or decent work, face discrimination, violence, or abuse, or come from marginalized communities are often the primary targets of traffickers".

The Humanitarian crisis in parts of Plateau State, in Mangu, Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Area (LGA) as a result of crisis, killings and attacks on communities has left many Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) who are seeking refuge in temporary camps because most of them have lost their homes, and means of livelihoods. This situation makes them prone to falling victims of trafficking.

According to Mrs Grace Gora, National Secretary, Mangu Development Association (MDA), Women Wing, the humanitarian crisis as a result of attacks and killings in Mangu Local Government Area, and other parts of Plateau State is worrisome as she calls on well spirited individuals and bodies to come to the aid of persons affected.

"The situation has created a social crisis, there are Internally Displaced Persons Camps (IDP) where people

are seeking refuge because their homes were burnt by attackers".

The MDA Secretary disclosed that many children in the IDP camps are out of school. People in the camps cannot afford sanitation and eating their daily three square meals is a challenge to displaced families.

She cautions parents in the IDP camps to be very careful and weary of child traffickers who come to take advantage of the situation by carting away their children, with fake promises of giving them jobs, or a better life.

"Child trafficking is real and I advise that as parents, you should watch over your children and make sure you do not give them away to people without proper documentation with IDP Camp Leaders, and the appropriate authorities".

"No matter the promises offered,



whether from relations or other unknown individuals, to take your child to their homes for school or to work, I urge parents and guardians to be cautious before signing into such offers. This is because many children have ended up as slaves, sex-slaves or domestic servants".

Gora advised further: "While at the IDP camp, parents should watch over their kids and protect them against rapists because they are lurking at the corner, trying to take advantage of them".

The UN says "Globally, national responses, particularly in developing States, appear to be deteriorating. Detection rates fell by 11% in 2020 and convictions plummeted by 27%, illustrating a worldwide slowdown in the criminal justice response to trafficking. The COVID-19 pandemic also changed the characteristics of trafficking, pushing it further

underground and potentially increasing the dangers to victims by making the crime less likely to come to the attention of the authorities".

"In fact, 41% of victims who manage to escape their ordeal reach out to the authorities on their own initiative - another clear sign that anti-trafficking responses are falling short".

"In the context of trafficking in persons, leaving people behind means: Failing to end the exploitation of trafficking victims, failing to support victim-survivors once they are free from their traffickers, and, leaving identifiable groups vulnerable to traffickers".

"The campaign for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2023 aims to raise awareness of disturbing developments and trends identified by the latest UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons and calls on governments, law enforcement, public services, and civil society to assess and

enhance their efforts to strengthen prevention, identify and support victims, and end impunity".

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EVERYONE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Signs a person is toxic

By **LUCY GORNARLLUP**

WHETHER it's a partner, a friend or a colleague, it helps to understand the red flags.

The word 'toxic' is branded around a lot these days. In fact, give the term 'toxic people' a search on Instagram and you'll be bombarded with over 637,000 posts.

It can be difficult to know if you're involved with someone who is toxic - whether that's a romantic relationship or non-romantic. Often, it can feel confusing. However, Caroline Strawson, Trauma-Informed Therapist and Coach says that the warning signs that either your friend or partner is toxic can show up in many ways. "You just need to know what to look for and feel. When you listen to your body, it can give you many clues," she says.

"Recognising that the relationship is unhealthy is the first step," says Caroline. "Doing so may mean that the friendship ends or changes, with breadcrumbs of friendship seeming better than none. This is because we need connection as human beings, especially after the last few years."

Caroline adds that toxic relationships become addictive with a cycle of a serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin rush when the relationship feels good and the cortisol and adrenaline rush when it's toxic. "We can literally become addicted to this cycle of hormone release, as the body craves these types of friendships. Caroline adds that if you spot any of the common signs of toxic behaviour, you should choose an appropriate time to speak to your friend or partner about how you feel. You could even do this through couples therapy. "If they respond by projecting onto you, because it can be a difficult conversation, you will need to set some clear boundaries and decide whether you want this person in your life anymore," Caroline says.

Is your friend or lover displaying any of these toxic symptoms? Here's what to look out for and how to handle it, according to the experts.

1. They are judgemental and critical
"Friends who continuously judge and criticise you on your clothes, your music taste, your romantic relationships, your hair, your makeup (the list goes on), is a sign that your friend simply doesn't like you for being you," says Caroline. Although it can make you feel pretty down, Caroline explains that this is actually a sign of their deep insecurity.

"They print this onto you, so it makes them feel superior and in power but is not a healthy relationship dynamic. It can leave you second guessing every decision you make for fear of being judged by them. A true friend will love you simply for being the beautiful person you are."

Dr Meg Arroll, Healthspan Chartered



Psychologist says that we all say thoughtless or insensitive things from time-to-time, but if you find yourself becoming smaller and wilting in your friend or partner's company, this is often a sign of a toxic dynamic.

Dr Arroll explains that the approach to tell if someone else's behaviour is toxic, as opposed to triggered reactions related to deeper anxieties within the self, is to have an open conversation about the behaviour that is troubling, such as the critical comments. "Use first person terminology to avoid defensiveness such as, 'when you said X it shut me down and made me feel that I couldn't be myself with you', and if your friend or loved one takes this on board in a genuine manner, rather than dismissing your concerns, it's likely that the comment was simply careless rather than malicious and toxic."

2. They gossip a lot

"A big red flag for toxic friendships is when your friend is constantly gossiping about everyone else to you, yet being nice as pie to their face," says Caroline. "You can bet if they gossip about them, they will gossip about you. This can feed into your feeling of insecurity and needing to constantly be nice to this person for fear of them saying something mean about you."

Caroline adds that this is a classic trait of a manipulative bully, subtly drawing you into their "web of toxicity" and it becomes a friendship based on fear, rather than love and kindness.

3. They gaslight you

Gaslighting, a form of manipulation, can be used to isolate you from other friends, by repeatedly making you feel like you are the one at fault, Caroline explains. "If you have a friend (or partner) that denies things that have



happened and says sentences to you like 'I never said that', 'you are too sensitive' or 'I was only joking', the sirens should be going off," she adds.

Essentially, it's a big red flag if you can't totally be yourself around your friend or lover, for fear of how they will react, as they will always turn it back on you. Caroline says you can feel like you are completely losing who you are. Again, an open conversation is needed, which can then help you decide if this person is worth keeping in your life.

4. They are dishonest

As Caroline says, any relationship based on dishonesty is not a healthy relationship. Whether it be a friend or a lover, consistently being dishonest can lead you to always wonder whether they are telling the truth or lying. "It can make you want to isolate yourself because you can start to feel that there must be something wrong with you if they aren't telling the truth," adds Caroline.

But you must remember that there is nothing wrong with you. "This is a sign of a toxic relationship; you must slowly start to extricate from this safely because until they do inner work, they will continue to lie and keep secrets."

5. They are often angry

Anger is a normal emotion that many of us experience from time to time. However, as Caroline explains, a friend who is angry all the time can be totally energy-draining.

"If you find yourself feeling like you are walking on eggshells all the time in your relationship, this is a huge red flag. You can start to feel on edge all the time and not just with them, as it can spill out into the rest of your life as you become conditioned to try and

encourage you and make you feel uplifted.

8. They guilt trip you
It's important to have a life away from your friend or lover. In fact, it's part of a healthy relationship. However, Caroline says that if you have a friend that is guilt tripping you about seeing someone else, and this makes you feel guilty and bad for them, this is not a healthy relationship dynamic.

"Healthy people don't feel threatened by others having other friends and seeing other people. They understand this is no reflection of them as a person," Caroline explains. "A toxic friend will try and make you feel guilty with subtle remarks like, 'don't you want to see me then' or 'I thought I was going to do that with you!'"

Eventually this can make you start to feel like second-guessing accepting invitations for fear of offending your friend or partner. Choose a good time to sit down, talk and explain how you feel and why this balance is healthy for any relationship.

9. They're very negative

Perhaps a friend or lover is always negative about everything. "This can lead you to feeling drained and you can even start to mirror their negativity as you spend time with them," says Caroline.

She adds: "We start to notice other friends and family don't want to be around us because we are perpetuating that negative energy. They are negative because they have deep wounds of insecurity, and they see the world through a negative lens. It highlights the work they need to do as we are not born like this."

To help deal with this toxic trait, Caroline explains that boundary setting is very important, "with the time you choose to spend with them and how you can direct the conversation".

"Slowly but surely, remove yourself from these types of toxic relationships because until they acknowledge and take responsibility, nothing will change, and it is not your responsibility to try and make them see the positive. This will leave you exhausted and can even start to lead to illness as you remain hyper-vigilant, producing excess cortisol which is the stress hormone."

Can a toxic person ever change?

Dr Arroll says that people exhibiting signs of toxic behaviour can indeed change, but they must be aware of their actions and words first. "They have to truly want to change, as this requires work - often difficult psychological work - and they must have the confidence that they can change and overcome toxic patterns that they have observed and modelled, often in early life when our relationship templates are formed."

Meg adds that if you love this person, you can support them in their change, but we cannot change others. "Acceptance is key here - whether someone wants to change is their own decision; ours is whether to stay in this environment or make room for something that may be more nurturing."

Caroline adds that "it's OK to have a 'friend cleanse' as we evolve and grow as we get older".

However, she says that if you keep attracting toxic relationships, some inner work may be needed to explore this cycle of attraction and why you feel the need to physiologically be in these types of relationships. "It is likely you will need to disconfirm past experiences and have corrective attachment experiences to relearn your sense of worth and how to create strong boundaries and stick to them."



BUSINESS WORLD

Towards sugar self-sufficiency in Nigeria

Nigeria was once on the enviable list of leading sugar producing nation's within the continent. It is safe to say that the 60s and 70s was Nigeria's golden era as far as sugar production was concerned. Nigeria took advantage of its sheer productive human population, large arable land, large body of water flowing from Rivers Benue and Niger, and It relied on the competence of expatriates and local sugar experts to become a top player in the sector in the past. Writes ABDULLAHI W. YUNUSA

WE recall with profound nostalgia, but with a scintilla of regret the glorious days of the foremost and premier sugar company, Nigeria Sugar Company (NISUCO), Bacita, Kwara State, Lafiagi Sugar Company (LASUCO), Kwara state and the Savannah Sugar Company located in the agrarian community of Numan, Adamawa state. These companies were then the pride of the nation and the most sought after by young graduates desirous of building their careers. The sugar sector of that era contributed greatly to Nigeria's industrialization policy, especially as it relates to growing what we eat and eating what we grow. Sadly, like every other sector in the county in the succeeding years, the sugar industry became a victim of maladministration and bad governance.

But the sad story in the sector changed for the better and showed some flashes of rebirth with the launch of an ambitious, progressive, well-thought-out and brilliant 10-year-long policy to drive, revive, reposition, revamp the sector and restore Nigeria's lost glory as far as sugar production with the continent was concerned. The policy, code named, the Nigeria Sugar Master Plan (NSMP) was birthed in 2012, but actual implementation began in 2013. With the launch of the NSMP, the once comatose, moribund and neglected sugar sector roared back to life as local and international investors picked interest in it.

The sugar policy is anchored on four broad, but distinct standpoints or cardinal objectives which are; for Nigeria to attain self sufficiency in sugar production, stem the rising tide of sugar importation, create job opportunities, generate electricity and produce ethanol for industrial purposes. As captured in the master plan, Nigeria's annual sugar consumption of 1.7 million metric tonnes would be met after 10 years. A total of 250,000 hectares would be required for cane cultivation, 28 factories would be established and over 100,000 direct and indirect jobs would be created for Nigerians. A total of four companies signed into the Backward Integration Programme (BIP) of the NSMP. The companies are Dangote Sugar Refinery, BUA Sugar Refinery, Golden Sugar Refinery and KIA Africa Group. These BIP operators have their sites located in states across Nigeria where there are providing jobs for Nigerians and contributing and changing the economic fortunes of their host communities. The Dangote Sugar Refinery has its BIP sites in Numan Adamawa state and in Tunga in Nasarawa state, while the BUA Group has hers in Lafiagi, Kwara state, Golden Sugar BIP is located in Sunti, Niger state while that of



KIA Africa is in Bacita, Kwara State.

With the Phase 1 of the master plan which began in 2013 reaching its crescendo in the first quarter of 2023, the Federal government in a rare show of commitment to its economic diversification policy through the promotion of industrialization has graciously approved Phase 2 of the policy, with actual implementation to begin in 2023 through 2033. Briefing newsmen at the end of the Federal Executive Council meeting, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Otunba Niyi Adebayo said, "Today, Council approved the extension of the sugar master plan from 2023 to 2033. That's for another 10 years. And the whole idea of the sugar master plan is

for the development of the sugar industry in order for Nigeria to attain self sufficiency in sugar production".

"The plan has several policy measures or fiscal incentives to stimulate demand and attract private sector investment in the sugar industry. And part of the benefits of the sector is the local production of sugar. We have under phase 1 four major investors, investing in the industry. These are Dangote Sugar, BUA Sugar, Golden Sugar and KIA Africa Group which bought the Bacita sugar mill. They have jointly created 15,000 jobs and they have over 200,000 hectares of land that has been acquired for the production of sugarcane to enable them

produce sugar locally. So, Council approved Phase 2 of the Nigeria Sugar Master Plan".

Speaking with newsmen on the current status of the NSMP Phase 1 and what the NSMP Phase 2 holds for the country while on a scheduled inspection visit to the various sugar BIP sites, the Executive Secretary, National Sugar Development Council, Mr. Zacch Adedeji said, "like I've said elsewhere, the granting of the NSMP Phase 2 by President Muhammadu Buhari is a reconfirmation of the trust and confidence that he has in the sector. This singular act points to the fact that Nigerians are pleased with what the Council, our supervising Ministry and operators have been doing with regards to the meaningful revitalization of the sugar sector.

"The plan has several policy measures or fiscal incentives to stimulate demand and attract private sector investment in the sugar industry. And part of the benefits of the sector is the local production of sugar. We have under phase 1 four major investors, investing in the industry. These are Dangote Sugar, BUA Sugar, Golden Sugar and KIA Africa Group which bought the Bacita sugar mill. They have jointly created 15,000 jobs and they have over 200,000 hectares of land that has been acquired for the production of sugarcane to enable them produce sugar locally. So, Council approved Phase 2 of the Nigeria Sugar Master Plan".

To whom much is given, expectedly, much would be expected. We are quite optimistic that a lot would be achieved in this Phase 2 of the NSMP".

Mr. Adedeji further hinted that, "in line with the expectations of Mr. President and Nigerians, we shall in the shortest possible time attain self sufficiency in sugar production, and subsequently export to countries within the continent. But you know that one of the things that we have in the mandate to do is to assess what has happened in the last 10 years, what are the lessons that we need to include as we begin a new journey come 2023. We shall tinker a bit with what we had in the past. Essentially, our next phase of activities would be anchored on verifiable data and innovation to make our work seamless".

Meaningful implementation of the master plan cannot be achieved without the inputs of critical stakeholders in the sector. It was in full realization of this fact that the NSDC helmsman, Mr. Adedeji led a delegation from the Council, recently on a courtesy visit to the Governor of Nasarawa state and Chairman, Forum of Governors of Sugar Producing States, Engr. Abdullahi Sule in Lafia, Nasarawa state. He said the guidelines for the implementation of the Phase 2 of the NSMP require the inputs of critical stakeholders like state governors for it to succeed.

"Your Excellency, sir, we are quite pleased with the invaluable contributions of the Forum you chair to the faithful implementation of the Nigeria Sugar Master Plan. We've made considerable progress in critical segments of the NSMP, especially as it relates to the refining component of the plan. Our next plan of action is how to replicate the successes recorded in the area of sugar refining in our field and agricultural operations".

"As you rightly know, the NSMP isn't about sugar production alone, we count largely on its ability to take millions of our people out of poverty, develop infrastructure and improve the economic status of communities hosting sugar projects. We are quite optimistic about our projections in the sugar industry. We shall rely heavily on the use of verifiable data and modern technology to drive the Phase 2 of the master plan. The sugar sector holds tremendous opportunity for Nigeria and Nigerians in terms of job creation for our youths, increased revenue and general economic prosperity for the nation".

Without doubt, the journey to self-sufficiency in sugar production isn't without some bottlenecks, but the NSDC boss, Mr. Adedeji remains optimistic and upbeat that the Council under his watch would put necessary measures in place to ensure that all the lofty economic goals captured in the NSMP are manifestly realized for the overall benefit of Nigerians.

Source: Economic confidential

BUSINESS WORLD

Finally, Nigeria set to join continental trade initiative – AfCFTA's boss

THE Executive Secretary, National Working Committee, African Continental Free Trade Area, Nigeria, Segun Awolowo, has expressed the readiness of the country to join the second phase of the Guided Trade Initiative.

The initiative by AfCFTA is a solution-oriented approach that aims to facilitate trade between interested state parties by connecting businesses and products for export and import.

In a statement on Thursday by the Head, Strategic Communications Directorate of the National Working Committee, AfCFTA, Mabel Aderonke, said Awolowo disclosed this during a meeting with a delegation from AfCFTA Secretariat.

Economic Confidential had reported Nigeria's Absence at the AfCFTA in July where participants were informed on how to best position their businesses under the AfCFTA.

Awolowo noted that Nigeria's commitment to AfCFTA is very crucial in boosting the nation's economic growth, noting that the alliance will make Nigeria's economic goals and objectives broader.

It partly read, "We reached a milestone in the first phase of the GTI. This successful pilot project has brought about positive development changes, capacity-building initiatives, and growth in the economy by impacting trade between Nigeria and other AfCFTA member-states.

"As we prepare to join the second phase, it is to demonstrate and strengthen specific objectives and trade relations, particularly reducing trade barriers, streamlining customs procedures, ensuring infrastructure, and promoting value-addition with key industries.

"The new administration with its Renewed Hope agenda, is focused on addressing challenges that hinder trade, such as improving logistics and transportation infrastructure. Simplifying customs procedures and strengthening trade-related institutions.

"The checklist received from Ghana after the completion of the first phase requires the fulfillment of certain obligations, which Nigeria has begun to process vigorously."

MAN trains exporters in AfCFTA. On his part, Director, Trade in Goods and Competition, Mohammed Ali, stated that the AfCFTA is a big train on a journey with the biggest economy in Africa, which is Nigeria.

"The Heads of state and governments met virtually in 2021 and announced the commencement of the



Akpabio

AfCFTA agreement. The AfCFTA is a very big train and it is a journey and this journey has leaders. The biggest leader is Nigeria, with the biggest economy in Africa. So any effort or step taken by Nigeria towards AfCFTA is two steps, one step for Nigeria, and one for the rest of the world. So that is important.

"We have concluded that trade agreement and opinion market is not the end goal. The end goal is to have economic advancement and industrialisation. We use the market access as a tool to attract more funds and relations to build our economies," he said.

In his address, Dr. Evelyn Ngige, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment who was represented by Mr. Suleman Audu, disclosed that GTI will integrate Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises into a bigger supply chain as they don't have to start going through the process of obtaining facilities beyond their reach.

"As being part of a larger

supply chain, MSMEs will grow and move from micro to big markets that many people would want to be a part of."

Also speaking at the meeting was Mr. John Nwajumogu, Special Adviser to the President on Industry, Trade, and Investment.

He stated that while it is an ambitious target, "we understand the complexities around it, but they are surmountable."

THE President told the NLNG delegation, led by NLNG Board Chairman Edmund Daukuru, the natural ruler of Nembe Kingdom and the NLNG Managing Director, Philip Mshelbila.

President Tinubu affirmed the position of natural gas as Nigeria's gateway to sustainable development and prosperity, pledging to build a partnership with investors that will guarantee job opportunities and skill development for Nigerian youths in the overriding best interest of the oil and gas producing environments.

"It is all about growing the pie so that Nigerians will benefit," the President said, adding that "skill development will help the many restive youths who need to be carried along and employed. Their lives need to be more predictable and prosperous.

President Tinubu appreciated the difficulties faced by the NLNG, particularly on security, affirming that stakeholders, including the host communities and security agencies, will play more central roles in

Tinubu turns to gas to improve Nigeria's economy

resolving troublesome points of contention for more peaceful and profitable operations on a sustainable basis.

In his remarks, the Chairman of the Board told the President that the frustrations faced by non-government stakeholders in operations were being

collectively shared with the Government and that the communities should play a more significant role in facilitating the situation, noting that issues of trust between investors and host assemblies must be adequately handled with an emphasis on end-to-end process inclusivity.



Tinubu

CBN moves to reduce dollar exchange rate

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has announced additional guidelines for Bureau De Change (BDC) operators in a bid to improve efficiency of the Nigerian foreign exchange market.

The decision comes two years after the apex bank banned the sale of dollars to BDCs amid efforts to stabilize the market. However, the latest directive does not state that the central bank will resume the sale of dollars to the BDCs.

The new operational mechanism, contained in a circular dated 17 August, stated that the spread on

buying and selling by BDC operators will be within an allowable limit of -2.5 percent to +2.5 per cent of the Nigerian Foreign Exchange market window weighted average rate of the previous days.

In the circular, signed by O.S Nnaji, the Director of Exchange Department, the bank ordered a mandatory rendition by BDC operators of the statutory periodic reports (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly) on the Financial Institution Form Rendition System (FIFX) which it said has been upgraded to meet individual operators requirements.

The apex bank warned that non-rendition of

returns would attract sanctions which may include withdrawal of operating license with effect from the date of the circular.

"Where Operators do not have any transaction within the period, they are expected to render nil returns. Please be guided accordingly and ensure compliance," the circular said.

In August 2021, the CBN ended the sale of forex to Bureau De Change operators, saying the parallel market had become a conduit for illicit forex flows and graft.

The bank said it would no longer process applications for BDC licences in the

country. Weekly sales of foreign exchange by the CBN was thereafter designed to go through commercial banks, the suspended governor of CBN, Godwin Emefiele, said at the time.

"We are concerned that BDCs have allowed themselves to be used for graft," Mr Emefiele said.

He argued that international bodies, including some embassies and donor agencies, had been complicit in illegal forex transactions that hindered the flow of foreign exchange into the country.

The directive was issued a few days after the acting central bank governor, Folashodun Shonubi, met with President Bola Tinubu during which he blamed the high exchange rate of the dollar to the naira at BDCs on speculators. He said the government would put measures in place to check the activities of currency speculators.

"We do not believe that the changes going on in the parallel market are driven by pure economic demand and supply but are topped by speculative demand from people," he told journalists after the meeting.

The bank chief said he briefed President Tinubu on some of the plans to address the challenge.

"Some of the plans and strategies, which I'm not at liberty to share with you, means sooner rather than later, the speculators should be careful because we believe the things we're doing when they come to fruition may result in significant losses to them."

CBN monetary policy: TETFund to suspend foreign scholarships – ES

THE Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has said that the recent Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) policy had created difficulties in the payment of foreign scholarship tuition fees and stipends.

Sonny Echono, the executive secretary, TETFund, made this known at a One-Day Stakeholders' Engagement on Emerging Issues with the TETFund Intervention in Abuja on Wednesday.

Echono said since the funds' allocation was barely enough to service programmes under its Tertiary Scholarship for Academic Staff (TSAS), the fund was considering suspending foreign scholarships while also considering an upward review

of local scholarships.

"The fund at this material time is also discouraging beneficiary institutions from initiating new Benchmark programmes.

"Additionally, there are issues related to scholars not returning to serve their bonds at their home institutions upon completion of their programmes.

Maiyaki advised the fund to revamp its monitoring mechanism for quality assurance so as to have a better return on investment in its projects.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the House Committee on TETFund, Miriam Onuoha said in making essential infrastructure available in tertiary institutions, there was

a need to ensure inclusivity, especially with Persons Living With Disabilities (PLWD).

"In our physical planning, we must make accessible the building to be accommodating to the needs of PLWD," she said.

In the same vein, the former executive secretary of NUC, Peter Okebukola, called for a monitoring and implementation system to ensure that the academic calendars of universities were adhered to.

Okebukola who spoke on TSAS, emerging issues and possible solutions, clamoured for reduced TETFund overseas scholarships while encouraging in-country training in TETFund strengthened PG

programmes.

He said that rather than continuously spending a lot of funds on foreign training, local universities should be provided with state-of-the-art facilities while carrying out accreditation of postgraduate programmes.

"In offering solutions to these challenges, there is a need to offer TETFund support to top-rate lecturers from overseas universities to come to Nigeria to join local PG training by Nigerian professors.

"We must send professors (of at least 10 years standing) for capacity building to top-rate overseas universities in carefully selected programmes on return to bolster doctoral education and supervision," he said.

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Mistakes entrepreneurs make when scaling their businesses

After scaling several businesses to seven figures and beyond, this entrepreneur has learned what to do and not to do during a period of growth. There are the steps you should take and the mistakes to avoid. SCOTT OLDFORD writes.



SCALING your business to seven figures is not that hard. But it also isn't easy. At least, it's not easy to maintain a seven-figure business and continue to scale it.

I've learned this the hard way after building and growing several businesses to seven figures and beyond — as well as mentoring and investing in dozens more. It's strange how easy it can feel once you build some momentum. Growth leads to growth and everything seems to be okay. Until all of a sudden, it isn't.

Having gone through this cycle myself, I've discovered a few common mistakes most of us make when in a period of growth. I share these in the hope they not only inspire you to scale your own business to new heights but maintain these levels so you can continue to smash through one glass ceiling after another.

You hire too fast

No matter what industry you're in, it's important to expand your team when growing your business. You can only do so much. You must delegate and work *on* the business instead of trying to do everything on your own. However, the timing around all this has to be right. If you push too hard too soon, you can overwhelm and halt all momentum.

So although you need to grow your team — and constantly think about the different types of roles you need — it's essential that you

get clear on your priorities. By honing in on the roles that offer the most return, you ensure you maintain your momentum without putting too main strain on yourself, your existing team members, and, most important of all, your cash flow.

You create too many offers

I see this mistake all the time, often because an entrepreneur gets caught up comparing themselves to other business owners. You've heard the advice before, to diversify your portfolio and add multiple income streams. It's good advice, in part. Yet you have to tread carefully because launching too many offers too soon places far too much pressure on your shoulders. Worse than that, it creates a disconnect between you and your audience because they don't know what they should do next.

Should they buy your course? Maybe hire you to coach them? How about that membership they can subscribe to? Or that other course, program or product?

The last thing you want to do is overwhelm and confuse. Adding new income streams is important, but you don't have to do it all now. Make sure you become a "go-to" authority in one or two areas and provide huge value to those you serve.

You increase your expenses

This mistake is a byproduct of the previous two because as you grow your team and add new income streams, your expenses rise exponentially. It can seem

manageable at first, but before long it can spiral out of control. I've experienced this firsthand as my monthly expenses practically doubled month-on-month. It's a disaster waiting to happen unless you get crystal clear on your finances.

This is a continuous habit you need to nurture, ensuring you check in on your revenue and expenditure each month. It's not that you shouldn't spend more as you make more, but you have to give everything you invest in purpose. Whether that's a new team member, improving your lifestyle or placing new resources into the business, you always have to have a reason for spending your money. If not, you can quickly run out of it.

You don't reinvest in your business

This is a huge mistake and once again it's one I used to make. There's so much advice out there about how to invest your money.

The problem is, most of it isn't relevant to an entrepreneur because most of it encourages you to take money out of your business and place it somewhere else (stocks, shares, bonds, pensions, etc.). That makes sense for someone with a predictable income. But for an entrepreneur? No way! The best thing you can invest in is your business because this is what you have the most control over. So before you give your money to someone else to invest, make sure you fully support your business with the time, money and resources it needs.

You don't take money out of your business

It's important to constantly invest in your business, but you have to continue to invest in your own life, lifestyle and personal growth. In the early days, I also recommend entrepreneurs take as little as they can and reinvest as much of it into their business.

Yet this can only last so long. Once you build momentum and step into a period of growth, you have to embrace this yourself — not just as a business owner, but as a human being.

I see this mistake play out too often as successful entrepreneurs struggle to step back and enjoy life. It's a fine balance, yet it's an important one if you want to find harmony. The alternative soon turns toxic as you begin to resent your business. It's an easy fix because all you have to do is commit to growing as a person as you grow your business. This means you too require (and deserve) investment: money, time, energy and attention.

The rollercoaster ride you're on is full of ups and downs. Just because you're scaling and on the fast track to seven figures and beyond doesn't mean there aren't obstacles in your way. Avoid and overcoming these five mistakes will help you navigate your way to success.

"Yet you have to tread carefully because launching too many offers too soon places far too much pressure on your shoulders. Worse than that, it creates a disconnect between you and your audience because they don't know what they should do next. Should they buy your course? Maybe hire you to coach them? How about that membership they can subscribe to? Or that other course, program or product? The last thing you want to do is overwhelm and confuse. Adding new income streams is important, but you don't have to do it all now. Make sure you become a "go-to" authority in one or two areas and provide huge value to those you serve."



My hat is my trademark

- Chioma Jesus

Continued from page 18

commercial sex worker whotold me she loved how I dress and I should keep it up. She said that they are trying to be like that. I believe that through my dressing, I am ministering to people especially women. I learnt that some men tell their wives that they love the way I dress. My son lived in Asia and got married. He recently brought his wife home and when he introduced his wife to me, I noticed that she was wearing a flowing gown. I was curious so I asked her and she said that she decided to be like me. She said she took her clothes to the tailor and told them to do flowing gowns like Chioma Jesus dresses because I am her spiritual mother. I am touching lives with my dressing. If I am doing something that I know is changing people's lives for the better, I have to continue doing it.

You wear a unique hat that has become your trademark. How did you stumble on the hat?

It is not that I love hats. If you are familiar with my style, you would notice that it is only that particular hat that I wear. It was the same year I released the 'Chioma Jesus' song that I began



wearing the hat. Like I said earlier, before I do anything I pray. I asked God how he would want me to appear; the kind of headgear I should wear and when I went to the market and saw that hat, the spirit of God told me to pick it. After my first album, I began to wear the hat and I noticed that people really loved it. That is how it became a part of my brand. I looked for the people that made the hat and I began to buy it. Sometimes I would enter a room without the hat but people would not recognise me but once I wear the hat, everybody knows that Chioma Jesus is around.

How many do you own?

I have about 20 different colours of that hat.

It seems you do not like applying make-up on your face...

No I don't like using it. If I must, it would be a very light one. It is



just my lifestyle. I don't feel comfortable with them.

Also, you hardly wear accessories...

No, I don't put on those things.

When was the last time you wore a necklace?

I wore necklaces last when I was about 15 years old because my mother loves gold. She always bought gold for me but when I gave my life to Christ, I decided not to wear those things again. I don't wear earrings as well.

You seem to have a flare for African fabrics, why?

I am proud to be an African. I try my best as a gospel artiste to showcase the African style to the world. I am trying to make Africa proud and also to let people know that we love our culture as Africans. There was a time I was in Germany and I wore our African attire. As I was walking into the venue of the programme, I saw the way the Germans were admiring me. Some even went as far as touching the cloth. I am so happy that I am an African and I try to portray the image of Africa abroad.

What would you never wear?

I would never wear trousers, spaghetti tops and gowns. I would never wear anything that would expose my body. I can never be seen wearing mini-skirt and no one would ever see me walking half naked on the road.

What do you have against trousers?

I am not condemning people that wear trousers but I am not used to it because I never wore it while growing up. It would be too late for me to start wearing it now and my fans would not even like it. Even those that wear it would condemn me when they see me wearing it now because they know it is not part of my lifestyle.

If you had a chance to alter any part of your body, what would it be?

I would not change any part of my body and I thank God for how He has made me. Some days back, I saw a physically challenged lady dancing with her husband on Instagram; it was her wedding day and she was so happy. She was on the wheelchair while her husband was dancing next to her.

I have two legs, hands, why would I go to the doctor to change anything? What would I do if I was blind? I have to thank God for the way He has created me for the Bible says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. We are made in the image of God, so any how you see yourself, you have to thank God and glorify Him.

What's your opinion on skin bleaching and tattoos?

It really irritates me; tattoo is not from God, it is demonic. You see some women bleach so much that their skin begins to have different colours. It is not good. You see some women's body would shrink before they clock 50; it is because of all the chemicals they have been applying on their skin. It really irritates me and I don't like it.

Source: Kemi Filani



Kick-ass women in Nigeria's music industry

Continued from page 16

Ibukun Aibee Abidoye (Executive vice president, Chocolate City Group)



Abidoye has been at Chocolate City Group since 2012 when she joined as legal and content manager and worked her way up, supporting the many artists that have come through the label. Now, she is responsible for managing the overall operations and resources of Chocolate City's music business, including strategy, development and implementation.

Chocolate City Music is one of the prominent record

labels in Nigeria with artists like legendary rapper M.I. Abaga, Dice Alles, Blagbonez, DJ Lambo among others on its roster.

She was instrumental in initiating and formalizing the landmark partnership between US-based Warner Music Group, and the Chocolate City; the first of its kind in Nigeria.

Before joining Chocolate City, Abidoye worked as a summer law clerk for Hon. Sterling Johnson Jr. (US District Court), and at the Johnny Cochran Law Firm.

Bose Ogulu (Executive, Spaceship Collective)



"Mama Burna" as she is affectionately known, Bose Ogulu is not only Burna Boy's manager, she also heads Spaceship Collective, which includes record label Spaceship Entertainment and a publishing arm.

Before joining her son's team, Ogulu had a successful career working as a translator for the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and taught French for 10 years at the University of Education in

Port Harcourt, retiring in 2018. She can speak French, Italian, German, English and Yoruba fluently.

Apart from Burna Boy, she also manages his sister Nissi Ogulu (aka Nissi), a visual artist and musician; and her father, author Benson Idonije (he is also Fela Anikulapo-Kuti's first band manager).

At the 2019 BET International Awards, she made a speech: "Thank you, Africa, because that is the constituency for which we got noticed in the first place, and the message from Burna I believe would be that every person should please remember that you were Africans before you were anything else, thank you."

The last part of that speech made it onto Burna Boy's Grammy-nominated album *African Giant*.

Janet Nwose (Manager, Asa)



Janet Nwose has managed Asa, one of Nigeria's most critically acclaimed singers, for more than 17 years.

Together, they have created a distinct sound and brand for Asa through four albums, several tours and many performances. With Nwose's guidance and support (she sings backup sometimes too), Asa has grown to occupy a unique space among the greats of Nigerian music.

"Janet is not only a manager, she is my sister and my family on the road and in addition to coordinating labels, publishers, agents and musicians, she wears many hats. She is my make-up artist sometimes, stylist and she has a good eye for photography. She is a really talented person who knows when to switch hats and I respect that," Asa told PUNCH in 2016.

She added: "Sometimes, it is hard when people do not understand you; they don't know where you are coming from or where you're going. Loyalty is really hard to come by in [the] music business."



Plateau State Internal Revenue Service

Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria



ADVERTORIAL

PLATEAU State Internal Revenue Service (PSIRS) is pleased to announce an exciting opportunity for Tax Firms to submit proposals in conformity with the PSIRS guidelines for the engagement of Technical Consultants and in accordance with the Plateau State Government's Executive Order No. 001 of 2023 issued on the 10th July 2023.

Are you a Tax Consulting Firm with a passion for excellence in providing innovative solutions? This is your chance to showcase your technical expertise and join forces with PSIRS in shaping Plateau State's taxation future.

PSIRS is committed to transforming its tax administration system to enhance efficiency, transparency, and revenue generation. To achieve this goal, we seek proposals from qualified Tax Consulting Firms to collaborate with us on various initiatives.

Key areas of focus include:

- Tax Liability Audit in Telecommunications, Manufacturing, Processing, Banking, Small and Medium Businesses, etc.
- to establish back years liabilities on non-remittances of withholding taxes on interests and dividends for individuals, enterprises, corporate entities, and statutory bodies. Companies and other organizations.

If your firm possesses the requisite expertise, experience, and a track record of success in these areas, we encourage you to submit a proposal to PSIRS. This is an exclusive opportunity to collaborate with us in driving positive change and contributing to the growth and development of Plateau State.

Your proposals should be addressed to The Executive Chairman, Plateau State Internal Revenue Service, No 6 Bank Road Jos, Plateau State. The submission deadline for proposals is August 31, 2023.

Join us in building a more robust and dynamic tax administration system in Plateau State. We can create a brighter future for our state and its citizens.

MR. JIM PAM WAYAS
Executive Chairman
Plateau State Internal Revenue Service



Office of the Executive Governor,
Plateau State, Nigeria

Government House, Little Rayfield, Jos. www.plateaustate.gov.ng

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 001 OF 2023
TO IDENTIFY, TRACE AND RECOVER PROCEEDS OF CRIME
RELATED TO OR CONNECTED WITH PLATEAU STATE
GOVERNMENT FUNDS AND ASSETS.**

WHEREAS relevant Statutes impose a duty on Persons, Corporate Entities and Statutory Bodies to account for the common wealth of the citizenry which they hold in trust for them as stipulated in the Freedom of Information Act;

AND whereas every resident of Plateau State has a right to know what State actors, Corporate Entities and Statutory Bodies have done with the resources available or paid to them being under obligation to voluntarily declare their income and expenditure from all sources within and outside the State;

COGNIZANT of the duty of inculcating in all citizens, the ethics of responsibility to the State, accountability, and honesty;

AWARE that Plateau State Government owes citizens the duty of providing security, welfare and development; and

CONSEQUENT upon the determination of Plateau State Government to provide an opportunity for all Persons, Statutory Bodies and Corporate Entities to be accountable to the people they hold money in trust, under all relevant Statutes to voluntarily declare their Assets and Income and pay or remit taxes due on them and in return obtain some benefits.

**NOW THEREFORE, PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME
BY THE CONSTITUTION AS THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF
PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA, I HEREBY ORDER THUS FORTHWITH:**

1. Plateau State Government shall engage Technical Consultants to develop a database and establish back years liabilities for all companies in the Telecommunications, Manufacturing and Processing, Banking and other Industries, which includes Small and Medium Enterprises.
2. Plateau State Government shall engage Technical Consultants to establish back years liabilities on non-remittances of withholding taxes on interests and dividends for individuals, enterprises, corporate entities, statutory bodies, companies and other organizations.
3. The Plateau State Government shall engage Technical Consultants to establish back years liabilities on Bank Account Inventories domicile with all banks in the State, unreported revenues and reconciliation of External and Internal Debts for the Government.
4. The Technical Consultants or designated Audit Firms shall ONLY Audit the Statutory Remittances by way of taxation from the people, Statutory Bodies and Corporate Entities and thereafter submit its findings to the Ministry of Justice.
5. The Ministry of Justice shall IDENTIFY, TRACE, PROSECUTE and RECOVER all proceeds of crime relative to this EXECUTIVE ORDER which are due and payable to the coffers of Plateau State Government upon terms to be determined by the Governor.
6. This Executive Order shall be read in conjunction with all extant Tax Laws and Regulations.
7. This Executive Order shall come into force on the day and date it is signed by the Executive Governor and deemed spent on the 29th day of May 2027.

Dated this 10th day of July 2023

SIGNED:


Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang

Executive Governor of Plateau State, Nigeria.

NEWS

Subsidy removal: Gombe to reach 450,000 with palliatives

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

Gombe State Government says it targets no fewer than 450,000 beneficiaries as it commences the distribution of food items and agricultural inputs to cushion the effects of the oil subsidy removal on its people.

State Governor, Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya, stated this at the Palace of the Emir of Yamaltu, in Dadin Kowa, Yamaltu-Deba LGA of at the kick-off of the distribution for the first batch of 30,000 beneficiaries.

Governor Inuwa, who promises more social interventions to the people to stimulate growth and counter the economic challenges, said each beneficiary would collect one bag of five kilogram of rice, one carton of macaroni, two bags of fertilizer and two litres of pesticides.

According to him, "What sets this initiative apart is the strategic inclusion of agricultural materials in the palliative distribution. This decision resonates deeply with the reality that a significant proportion of Gome's population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods.

"The provision of agricultural support not only guarantees bountiful harvest, but also fortifies food security, especially in the imminent dry season", he explained.

He said the insightful approach to the palliative programme reflects his deep understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by individuals and households in Gombe State due to the ongoing economic downturn.

More than just a distribution of goods, Governor Inuwa said the palliative programme also exudes a sense of hope and solidarity and demonstrates his unwavering dedication to the welfare of every citizen of Gombe State.

He urged the people of the state to embody the values of compassion and solidarity in their interactions, stressing, "Let us reach out to our neighbours, offering a helping hand to those in need and continue to uplift one another through a united spirit of communality."

The governor called on the distribution officials and volunteers to carry out their roles with integrity and responsibility to ensure transparency and



Inuwa

efficiency.

Earlier, chairman of the State Steering Committee on the distribution of palliatives, Abdullahi Haruna Abdullahi, assured the governor that the committee will discharge its assignment with the fear of God and to the benefit of humanity.

Abdullahi, who is also the Executive Secretary of Gombe State Emergency Management Agency, SEMA, revealed that sub-committees have been formed at the local government and ward levels to ensure effective delivery of the items to the most vulnerable in the state.

Governor Sani reiterated in his remarks. While commending Governor Uba Sani for his support and

cooperation towards the success of the Qatar Sanabil Project in Kaduna State, Qatar Ambassador to Nigeria, Dr. Ali Bin Ghanem Al-Hajri stated that the Qatari Charity had also pledged various interventions and empowerment programmes for Kaduna's poor and underserved.

These include: scholarships for orphans and children of the poor, distribution of sewing machines, welding machines, irrigation pumping machines, salon kits, and drilling of hundreds of boreholes across the 23 local governments of Kaduna State.

The Qatar Sanabil Project is a multi-million dollar project that will impact positively on the lives of over 500,000 poor, underserved and vulnerable

Brace up against security challenges - Bishop Kukah

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

The Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Mathew Hassan Kukah, a proponent of justice, fairness and peaceful coexistence, urged northerners to brace up against the raging insecurity that is threatening the communities within the area.

He stated that in line with the adage, "Security is everybody's business", the northerners need to gear up against the raging insecurity that is threatening the North.

The Southern Kaduna born cleric who over time has been at the forefront for peaceful coexistence in the region, said northerners should join hands to fight the demon head. This, he said, is the way forward to guarantee confidence in unity between and among communities and the different sects, as a measure to further promote peace in the northwest and the entire northern Nigeria.

The Catholic Bishop made

the call while speaking during a high level extraordinary town hall meeting for the promotion of peace and security held at Command Guest House, Sokoto in collaboration with Global Rights and other International support groups.

According to the cleric, the initiative was driven for implementation by the two bodies to deploy strategies for increasing access to justice, promoting peace and democratic processes in the northwest sub-region as well as strengthening civic participation and peace building with emphasis on Kaduna and Sokoto states.

He explained that the project's drive was being implemented by Global Rights and the Kukah Centre with support from CSSF, Nigeria Stability Programme of the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The religious leader remarked that in the past, the northwest sub-region was being noted and considered for its relative

By DORCAS PANKYES

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has called on Niger to shun a video circulating on social media platforms allegedly depicting the wreckage of the crashed MI-171 helicopter with bodies of victims at Chukuba Village in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

In a statement issued by Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, Director of Public Relations and Information Nigeria Air Force recently, it stated that it is not in the character of the NAF to respond to such claims, particularly one peddled by terrorists. However, concerns expressed by well-meaning Nigerians on the need to address the propaganda becomes imperative.

According to the statement, like all military organizations involved in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, incidences of fatalities, mishaps and crashes are sometimes inevitable. It further said that the NAF, in the last 8 years, has seen an increased level of air operations in efforts at checkmating the nefarious activities of terrorists and criminal elements in the country.

The statement noted that with heightened levels of air operations, occasioned by an enhanced fleet, the likelihood of air mishaps and accidents at times become unavoidable and inevitable due to various reasons.

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar said this when he hosted Governor Umaru Bago of Niger State, at his office recently, where he noted that the rates of aircraft accidents/incidences are directly proportional to the

Shun terrorists propaganda, NAF tells Nigerians

heightened level of air operations.

While the NAF regrets such unfortunate incidents, especially as they involved the loss of lives of our colleagues, the Service will never shy away from unraveling the probable cause of the crash with a view to drawing lessons.

He added that those aiding and abetting the propaganda tendencies of terrorists, deliberately or inadvertently, by spreading the videos of the alleged crash site with gory pictures of dead military personnel, need to rethink the consequences of their actions. They should consider what it does to the morale of troops, families of deceased personnel as well as Nigeria's national security.

The NAF and the entire

members of the Armed Forces' resolve and determination to bring the current security situation in Niger State and indeed all troubled spots in the country remain unshaken, the statement said. "Infact, if anything, we are determined more than ever before, to take on the enemy frontally until they are brought to their knees".

While calling on all Nigerians to continue to support the Armed Forces of Nigeria and other security agencies as we all jointly confront our common enemies, the NAF appreciated the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, for his message of condolence and words of encouragement to the Armed Forces and also to other well-meaning Nigerians for their support.



Gabkwet

5 million poor to benefit from housing project

From JOHN FWAHP, Kaduna

The Governor of Kaduna State has lauded the Embassy of Qatar and the Qatari-owned Sanabil Project for keying into the business-friendly environment inherent

in Kaduna State and also choosing Kaduna to be the location of its Mega Economic City and a Mass Housing Project for vulnerable and underserved citizens.

In his remarks during the ground breaking ceremony at Millennium City recently, the governor detailed the objectives of the partnership between KDSG and Qatar. He said, "The Economic City will provide world class infrastructure and make Kaduna a reference point in modern and affordable accommodation with adequate security and a conducive atmosphere for business activities."

"The Economic City will facilitate international trade, while serving as a platform for local entrepreneurs and traders. It will also harness product value chain opportunities and improve economic growth."

"In the Economic City, there will be houses for the poor, clinics, shops, poultry farms, farmlands for rainy season and irrigation farming," he said.

Governor Sani added that the Mass Housing Project was a major contribution towards providing shelter for the poor, underserved and vulnerable in Kaduna State, as it supports KDSG's interventions in the housing sector over the years.

The choice of Kaduna State as the location for such a mega project is an indication that this administration's drive for investments is yielding results. "Our vision is to make

Kaduna the leading economic hub in the North. We want to create a business cluster that will drive competition in the Northern Region.

"Kaduna State is rich in natural and human resources. It is the gateway to many parts of Nigeria. It is a transportation hub. The immediate past government worked assiduously to upgrade the infrastructure in the state. We are determined to build on that legacy to fast-track the economic development of the state." Governor Sani reiterated in his remarks.

While commending Governor Uba Sani for his support and cooperation towards the success of the Qatar Sanabil Project in Kaduna State, Qatar Ambassador to Nigeria, Dr. Ali Bin Ghanem Al-Hajri stated that the Qatari Charity had also pledged various interventions and empowerment programmes for Kaduna's poor and underserved.

These include: scholarships for orphans and children of the poor, distribution of sewing machines, welding machines, irrigation pumping machines, salon kits, and drilling of hundreds of boreholes across the 23 local governments of Kaduna State.

The Qatar Sanabil Project is a multi-million dollar project that will impact positively on the lives of over 500,000 poor, underserved and vulnerable citizens of Kaduna State.

NEWS

Karl Kumm VC solicits support of College

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Vice Chancellor, Karl Kumm University Vom, Professor Nanven Audu Gambo, has solicited the support of Federal College of Veterinary and Medical Laboratory Technology towards upgrading the educational capacity of his students on assumption of academic activities this forthcoming session.

The VC who was on courtesy visit to the provost of the institution, expressed readiness of Karl Kumm University to go to whatever length to ensure that the best educational standard was enjoyed by his students.

He however, disclosed that since his appointment alongside the team, they have ensured that no stone was left unturned as far as the university's desire to create an enabling environment for offering educational services based on global standard was concerned.

The VC also solicited support in one of his scientific research and usage of laboratories to enable students gain consistent development of the nation. "Karl Kumm is ready to pay for the students' intellectual engagement which if properly done, will help them to excel in their respective careers of studies".

Responding, the Provost of Federal College of Veterinary and Medical



Gambo

Laboratory, Dr. Chukwu O. O. Chukwu, welcomed the Vice Chancellor and his Management Team of Karl Kumm University and that he was anticipating the synergy which would go a long way in ensuring better understanding in research, studying and equipping them in the great task ahead.

The Provost recalled with great nostalgia his involvement in Karl Kumm staff recruitment where he served on the panel of selecting scholars as interview prospective workers for the institution in a transparent manner.

He expressed his readiness to assist the

university students in whatever way necessary. "As our future leaders, we must set it right for the beginning of their studies.

Highlight of the visit include a walk to various significant research facilities, laboratories in the college.

VCDP develops 50 hectares of land for farmers

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

NO fewer than 300 police personnel attached to the Police Command in Kogi State, comprising 168 Inspectors and 153 Assistant Superintendent of Police who were promoted to their new rank have been decorated with their ranks.

The Commissioner of Police in the State Police Command, CP Onuoha Bethrand C, who decorated the officers, congratulated them for the well deserved promotion.

He warned the promoted officers to remain disciplined, reminding them that "It is the bedrock of their Job."

According to a statement by the Command's Police Public Relations Officer, SP William Aya, the decoration is sequel to the promotion released by the Police Service Commission for the 14,052 Inspectors to the rank of ASP II and 9,016 ASP II confirmed to substantive rank of ASP1.

The CP said that the promotion was done in conjunction with the Nigeria Police Force under the amiable leadership of IGP Kayode Egbetokun to

CP decorates newly promoted officers



Alkali

the deserving officers.

"The Inspectors who benefited from the promotion were those who attended the last Departmental Selection Board promotion interview while the ASPs were those who passed the confirmation examination," the police boss said.

Speaking on behalf of the newly promoted

officers, ASP. Momoh Aminu, appreciated the Ag. IGP Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, the Police Service Commission as well as the Commissioner of Police, Kogi State Police Command for the promotion.

He promised that his colleagues would remain more committed to their duties.

IN a bid to support small and medium holder farmers to achieve the development objective of the International Fund for Agriculture Development and Value Chain Development Programme IFAD/VCDP, no fewer than

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

50 hectares of land have been developed for farmers under the VCDP programmes in Kogi State.

This was disclosed during the visit of the National Environmental and Climate Change Advisor, Mall. Nura Daura; National Infrastructure Advisor, Mr Felix Ohibiokpa; and the State Programme Coordinator (SPC), Dr Stella Adejoh, to the site of the land being developed at Ochekwu community in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Speaking during the visit, Mallam Nura Daura and

Felix Ohibiokpa, explained the status and benefits of the job done so far.

Daura expressed satisfaction on the siting of the land development and the extent of the job done so far.

He noted that the essence of the project was to achieve the clustering of several Farmers' Organisations (FOs) on a developed land.

According to him, it is also intended to promote synergy and provide opportunities for clusters to learn from one another, most especially the good agronomic practices.

On his part, Ohibiokpa expressed his happiness over the land clearing

exercise, saying the bulldozers were functioning effectively and none had stopped working.

The National Infrastructure Advisor commended the contractor for his commitment to execute the job within the expected time frame.

In her remarks, the State Programme Coordinator, Dr Stella Adejoh, expressed her joy over the gesture, saying, "Service to humanity and fight against poverty remain the best service any one could render".

The coordinator described IFAD/VCDP as a programme laden with milk of kindness to reduce poverty and enhance the livelihoods of the rural farmers.

She emphasised that the essence of the land clearing was to make monitoring and data collection of farmers easily accessible.

According to her, the mechanisation and off-taking will be easy because the farmers are located within the same environment, and produce the same product which is cassava.

Dr Adejoh thanked the State Government under the leadership of His Excellency, Alhaji Yahaya Adoza Bello, for his support to the programme so far.

Bauchi Police confirm suspected armed robbers arrest

From ABBAS GUNGUA, Bauchi

BAUCHI Police Command has confirmed the arrest of nine suspected armed robbers through the combined efforts of Operation Restore Peace (ORP) and Rapid Response Squad (RRS). Confirmation was contained in a press statement made available to journalists in Bauchi, signed by the Command's Public Relations Officer (PPRO) SP Ahmed Wakili.

Wakili explained that the joint efforts of ORP and the RRS of the Command have led to a significant breakthrough in the fight against criminal activities within the state.

According to him "On August

13, 2023 hours, operatives of Operation Restore Peace apprehended three suspected armed robbers who had been allegedly causing havoc in the Bauchi metropolis."

"Acting on credible intelligence regarding the activities of a robbery syndicate in the area, the operatives swiftly took action to arrest members of the syndicate who had been under the Command's watchlist due to their involvement in several armed robberies".

"Most recent criminal activities occurred in the Bayan Gari and SabonLayi areas of Bauchi State, respectively. Following relentless intelligence gathering, the following suspects have been successfully arrested:

Abdulrahman Yusuf (alias AudunKauye), 21 years old, of Kobi Street, Bauchi; Hassan Adamu, 24 years old, of Kobi Street, Bauchi; Usman Samalla (alias R-kelly), 25 years old, of Kobi Street, Bauchi and Usman Abubakar (alias Galati), 19 years old, of Kofe Gombe area, Bauchi.

"Exhibits recovered include one KekeNapep, three phones, and one laptop. The investigation is ongoing, and efforts are being intensified to apprehend the remaining accomplices who are still at large".

"During the operation, one suspect, Abubakar Yahaya of Unguwar Gwallaga, Bauchi, was apprehended and revealed during interrogation that they were invited by a neighbour named Oba.

According to Wakili, the Commissioner of Police Bauchi State Command, Auwal Muhammad had ordered an investigation to recover additional stolen properties and apprehend the remaining culprits.

He further expressed his gratitude to the general public for providing credible intelligence that has helped the Police in achieving the successes recorded so far.

During interrogation, the suspects confessed to being responsible for nighttime house burglaries and robberies. They also confessed to having targeted three different houses in the UnguwarSabonLayi area, stealing items including a keypad



Mohammed



Adejoh

NEWS

Dongkum promises open door policy

By JIDAUNA DARING

NEWLY sworn-in commissioner of Finance Plateau State, Hon. Grace Shwarta Dongkum has expressed her readiness to operate an open door policy so as to enable the staff to contribute their quota move the state forward.

Dongkum stated this while receiving handing over notes from the permanent secretary of the ministry, Rosaline Kefas Dakwar, held at the conference hall of the ministry, J.D. Gomwalk Secretariat Jos, recently.

This was contained in a press statement signed by ministry's information officer, Timonthy Zitta Joseph and made available to **SUNDAY STANDARD** in Jos.

The commissioner expressed delight and thanked Governor Caleb M. Mutfwang of Plateau State for finding her worthy to serve in his cabinet and promised the captain of "the time is now" that she would not disappoint him as far as the task before her is concerned. Dongkum called on the staff of the ministry from departments and units to bring their wealth of experience gathered over the years to bear, which she emphasizes that doing so would be of great benefit to her.

She also solicited the support and cooperation of the staff of the ministry and equally promised to carry every staff along, saying that, to achieve



Dongkum

that, all hands must be on deck at all times.

Dongkum told the Directors of the ministry that, what government needs now was nothing but optimal and prudent management of state's scarce resources for the benefit of all and sundry in the state.

Earlier in her welcome remarks, Permanent Secretary of the ministry of finance Rosaline Kefas Dakwar on behalf of staff congratulate the commissioner over her appointment and posting to the ministry.

She expressed confidence

that the commissioner would deliver on the mandate given to her, considering her loaded knowledge and experience from the field.

Dakwar assured the commissioner of the staff readiness to work with her, saying the staff of the ministry believes in working as a family or team with sincerity of purpose.

Permanent secretary who had overseen the ministry about six weeks ago, enjoyed tremendous support from staff and enjoined them to extend same to the new commissioner.

THE implementation of a World Bank project in Gombe State has commenced its activities with sensitization tour of Gombe Local Government Areas by the State Project Coordinator, Engineer Usman Aliyu.

The Project Coordinator was received by the Caretaker Chairman of the LGA, Alhaji Aliyu Usman Haruna who pledged his support and cooperation for the success of the project which he said will impact positively on the lives of his people. The tour will also take the coordinator to the other ten LGAs of the state.

The six year innovative project (2021-2027) known as: Gombe State Sustainable Urban and Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (SURWASH), is targeted at improving water supply, sanitation and hygiene services for communities in the state.

Though some of the components of the projects have already been completed in four pilot Local Government Areas of Yamaltu-Deba, Kwami, Gombe and Akko, the Project Coordinator said, the projects are to be implemented in conjunction with three agencies of the State Government.

The agencies are, Gombe State Water Board, Gombe State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASSA) and Gombe State Sanitation and Environmental Protection Agency (GOSEPA).

Engineer Usman said, six

World Bank project kicks-off in Gombe

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

motorized boreholes have already been rehabilitated in Idi, Kamara and the Specialist Hospital areas of Gombe LGA while toilet facilities have been constructed for the public in Karangada, Doma and Barunde areas in Akko, Yamaltu-Deba and Gombe LGA's. There is also a rehabilitated toilet facility in the Specialist Hospital and Science Secondary School Gombe.

He stated also that nineteen boreholes have been rehabilitated with about fifty expected to be drilled this year alone. He added that most of the projects executed under RUWASA are in the rural areas.

"We are targeting the construction of about 2,000 toilets for the poorest of the poor in the state. We've selected communities for Gombe municipal and very soon, in the next one or two weeks, activities will commence", he stated.

He called on the people to utilize the facilities properly by owning and maintaining them so that the government will be encouraged to construct and rehabilitate more. "It is not about having the toilets, but utilizing them effectively", he advised.

The SURWASH project is a financing state-led loan intervention initiated by the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Water Resources in collaboration with the World Bank.

It is designed to support the implementation of the national action plan for the revitalization of Nigeria's WASH sector in seven states of Delta, Ekiti, Gombe, Imo, Kaduna, Katsina and Plateau after fulfilling the eligibility and readiness criteria set out by the World Bank and the federal level.

Under its Programme for Results Components, participating states are expected to fund projects from their state budgets before reimbursement by the World Bank.



Yahya

Fulani herder arrested for attacking farmer

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

PLATEAU State the Command has arrested a twenty-four (24) year old Fulani herder by name Abdulrahman Kaila, who attacked and cut-off a farmer's left hand at Sabonlayi Lakuahi in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The suspect was arrested by the Shendam Divisional Police Officer following a swift directive by the State Police Commissioner, CP Julius Okoro, to hunt the suspect and bring him to face the full wrath of the law.

The State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) DSP Alfred Alabo, disclosed this to journalists at the State Police

Headquarters in Jos, the state capital while parading the suspect.

Responding to questions from journalists, the suspect said, he acted in self-defense because the farmer was chasing him with dangerous weapons attempting to injure him. He claimed the farmer had a catapult and hoe, and was chasing him even though his cattle did not come close to his farm, hence his reaction for self-defense and in a process, his cutlass cut-off the farmer's hands.

Earlier, the State Police Commissioner said, "Upon

assumption of duty, I have painstakingly studied the security architecture of the state and outlined the prevalent crimes that are committed on the Plateau. These include kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery and arm running, theft, farmers/herders clashes, cattle rustling, attacks on villages, etc which are more prevalent in Barkin Ladi, Riyom and Mangu LGAs respectively.

"I have re-strategized and deployed new operational methods to tackling these security challenges in the state. While designing a workable security template for effective policing of the state, I noticed that there are certain local government areas that need more police stations and security presence.

"My management team and I have come up with modalities to help these communities by opening more police stations where there are none. Some Police Posts and Out Stations which were previously closed down will also be reopened and due to development and increase in population size of some communities in the state, we will soon upgrade some Out Stations to Police Stations", he disclosed.

Okoro therefore, appealed to the good people of Plateau State to afford them all useful, accurate and timely information to assist them in tackling criminal situations in the state as policing was everyone's business and promised to work hand in glove with other security agencies on the Plateau to

enhance peace in the state.

"I am also using this medium to call on all my sister agencies to support and complement our efforts in making the state safer for all, as it is our responsibility to protect lives and properties of the citizenry which is the primary goal of all security agencies in the country", the Police Commissioner also appealed.

NGO donates clothings, cash to Mangu IDPs

MOVED by the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mangu Local Government Area, a Lagos-based non-governmental organization, the Christopher Nnadozie Foundation has donated clothings and cash to the Mwaghavul Development Association (MDA) to be distributed to the affected people.

It will be recalled that scores

of people were killed and their houses, farms, and properties destroyed by Fulani militia in the LGA in recent times.

Presenting the items at the Bungaha, Mangu IDPs camp recently, chairman of the NGO, Christopher Nnadozie, who was represented by the vice chairman, Omeh Onoja said that his organization's main focus was poverty alleviation and improving the

quality of life of the people.

He sympathized with the Mwaghavul people over the calamity that had befallen them and called on the government to do more in order to protect its citizens.

Receiving the items, the secretary of MDA, Dr Solomon Mangwvat, thanked the NGO for their kind gesture, assuring that the donated items would be equitably distributed among the 17 IDPs camps in the LGA.



Onoja



Egbetokun

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Anxiety trails relief package for states



Continued from page 10

Babawibe

It is a bad economic decision. The monetary palliative would not do any good economically. Rather, the government should look at how to intervene in public transportation and alleviate the scourge of subsidy removal. The palliative is another subsidy in disguise. You cannot declare subsidy a conduit and create another one in its place. The president should come up with policies that could be theorised and replicated anywhere in the world. The palliative would breed corruption and end up like TraderMoni.

This should ordinarily be commended, but the fear of the 'Nigerian factor' comes to mind — which is, the modalities to get the money to the rightful beneficiaries. I would suggest two methods of enrolling beneficiaries for the palliative, which are online and offline. Those who have access to the internet should apply online while those who do not should be registered using the National Population Commission platform. Again, while the six months palliative is a short-term relief, the government should immediately embark on a long-term relief which is to revamp our

moribund refineries for local production, consumption and exportation.

N8,000 palliative is small compared to the average cost of living in Nigeria, though locations differ. The government should encourage local modular refineries to boost domestic production and eliminate dollarisation of the exchange of crude oil for local refineries. Long-term support should also be provided to local companies that can refine crude oil in the country.

The president should first define what a household is, then tell us the number of households we have in Nigeria from credible sources. He should also tell us the percentage of such households that have bank account numbers and/or mobile phones. Then I could say he had done the necessary background work and likely have good intentions.

Ogunneye Olaniyi

We have nonfunctional refineries. The president should take a bold step to make one or two of them work at their maximum capacities. It would be a mistake if the government decides to give palliatives in monetary terms. If refineries work, the economic effect would

benefit the entire country. The government could also identify and fix some major federal roads in 36 states. Even with the tightest and strictest policy or processes in giving out this cash to the most vulnerable in our society, the majority of these palliative money would still find its way into the hands of greedy politicians.

Olanshile Lanks

The president's first weeks in office must have been tiring due to the tedious work he must have engaged in strengthening our economy. However, empowering the youths with verifiable small-scale businesses would be better compared to the disbursement of

N8000 to poor households. Supporting small businesses is capable of building our economy as well as fighting terrorism and criminality. Moreover, providing funds as grants to schools is greatly advisable as it tends to reduce the rate of dropouts, out-of-school children, and related problems facing the country.

Elovichi Henry

This is a waste and would not add any positive value to any family — that is if the money gets to the poor masses and is not hijacked by corrupt government officials, just like TraderMoni and COVID-19 palliatives. This money cannot buy a bag of rice nor fill a 12KG gas cylinder, not to talk of

buying a pack of noodles.

Aniekpeno Akpan

It is a nice idea to cushion the effect of fuel subsidy removal. I commend Mr. President for that decision. However, the scheme should not be handled by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development because the cash transfer programme, during ex-President Buhari's regime, was not handled well by that ministry. Poor masses were suffering while they transferred it to other individuals. Artificial intelligence should be adopted in identifying the poor in the course of implementing the palliative scheme.

N8,000 palliative is small compared to the average cost of living in Nigeria, though locations differ. The government should encourage local modular refineries to boost domestic production and eliminate dollarisation of the exchange of crude oil for local refineries. Long-term support should also be provided to local companies that can refine crude oil in the country. The president should first define what a household is, then tell us the number of households we have in Nigeria from credible sources. He should also tell us the percentage of such households that have bank account numbers and/or mobile phones. Then I could say he had done the necessary background work and likely have good intentions.

METRO-FOCUS



Vegetables vendors and the price of cash crunch

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

FEAR due to the earlier ban on the use of Nigeria's old money which brought monumental loss to vegetables vendors due to the Naira redesign policy of the Federal Government, is still pinching them. Most of them seem not to be investing much in the business like it used to be.

Majority of them could not pick up in the aftermath of the cash crunch because they had earlier invested huge amounts in the business without commensurate profit. In most cases, money sunk into the business was not recovered, talk more of profit.

Their case was very pathetic because their goods are perishables that lose freshness or value after a day or 2. Goods like cabbage, spinach, lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, peas, green beans, green pepper etc. have a very short lifespan. After a few days, they become spoilt and stink horribly. While the cash crunch lasted, most of these women who are small holder business women, watched as their hard earned money wasted because of lack of patronage.

It adversely affected the vendors in no small measure because customers no longer trooped in to buy tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, spinach, green peppers and lot more of these perishable

commodities like it used to be due to the lack of cash.

Truly, there was limited cash in circulation and only few of these women had bank accounts or POSs to follow the new business trend. Most of them were left with no option than to carry home their commodities and bear their losses.

However, for the fear of the unknown, most of them have refused to invest hugely in this vegetable business and hardly would one see the usual fresh vegetables spread on tables these days. Most of the vegetables you see are not always the fresh ones from the farms.

Our correspondent visited some of these vegetables markets in Jos, the Plateau State capital and reports that perishable commodities like spinach, cabbage, tomatoes, bananas etc, are no longer purchased in large quantity. Probably, because the vendors are still nursing the pains of their past experience and would want to play safe to make sure they were not dreaming this time around.

It was discovered that some of them who were into the business in small scale had to back out and are completely out of the business. These are women whose daily bread comes from these petty business. And for them to be out of the business,

only God knows how they are faring now.

Speaking to one of the vegetables vendors, Mrs. SarayahGokir, who sells at the Kabong (GadaBiyu) Market, she said, "this is not as if the market is not selling, but what we encountered at the introduction of this cashless policy has dealt us hard blows. I lost almost a hundred thousand naira (#100,000) in three days because there was no cash in circulation. And you know, we do not use POS to transact business with customers, which became the order of the day.

"Now that things seem to have normalised, I have decided to be conscious of what happened last time and I only buy in small quantity so that I will be able to bear the loss that may come. I don't want a repeat of the past. We understand that at the end of this December, this policy will recommence and we are trying to be careful", she bared her mind.

On her part, one Mama Innocent Onyecha, of Tudun-Wada, narrated that she had earlier backed out of the business because of the loss she had incurred during this cashless policy. But she was able to come back because one of her customers gave her money to continue. "I was at home one day thinking of where to start

when my brother came in and broke the news to me that one of my customers came looking for me. He said he told the man what happened and the man came back the following day and met him because his shop is next to where I used to sell.

"The man said to my brother that if I must stop selling anything, it should not be lettuce and cabbage because I used to bring fresh ones directly from the farm. In fact, this man gave my brother fifty thousand naira (#50,000) to give me and that he did not disclose his name. As I am talking to you now, I don't know who this man is oh!", she stated.

Mama Innocent disclosed that there are many women like her who are out of this business and are still at home doing nothing. She prayed that good Samaritans like the man who came to her help would show up one day and help them. "I want to use this opportunity to express my appreciation to whoever this man is and pray that whatever he touches, God will replenish it double".

Considering the importance of these vegetables to our health, we would like to call on government and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to come in and reimburse these women's

businesses, because health is wealth and more so that, Plateau State is blessed with this wonderful nature for this business to thrive.

It may interest you to know that some people purposely visit Plateau State from different states to purchase some of the rare vegetables that are only found in Plateau State. A visit to parks is a testimony to the number of way bill that transport these products out of Jos to other parts of the country.

We want to appeal to government through its Social Investment Programme to reimburse these women by giving them soft loans to start again. The health of the citizens is at stake now, because we do not eat balanced diet like we used to do before.

It would be good for government to revisit what the past administration did in and outside the state capital, where shops were built specifically for vegetables sellers around the roadside. This will generate revenue for the state and also put food on the tables of these women. The health advantage of vegetables cannot be overemphasized!

SUNDAY PEOPLE

ASHOMS ASSUMES OFFICE

The newly sworn-in Commissioner for Information and Communication, Plateau State, Hon. Musa Ibrahim Ashoms recently took over the affairs of the ministry at the J.D. Gomwalk State Secretariat, Jos



Hon. Musa Ibrahim Ashoms (left) receiving the handing over notes from the most senior of the Ministry, Mr. Wulime Goyit



Council Chairman of NUJ, Nr. Paul Jatau (middle) flanked by other well-wishers at the brief ceremony



Commissioner for Information and Communication (backing camera) during a special prayers in his office



State Commissioner for Information and Communication, Hon. Musa Ashoms, his wife and Directors of the Ministry in a photograph



Hon. Musa Ashoms (middle) making some remarks



The celebrant in a group photograph with NUJ Chairman and some members of the pen profession



Commissioner Musa Ashoms, wife and senior officials under the Ministry of Information in a photograph



Hon. Musa Ashoms in photograph with his wife and some dignitaries that witnessed the ceremony



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SAFER TOGETHER

Night driving (iii)

MAKE sure your lights, indicators, reflectors and number plate lighting are clear and in good working order to enable you see clearly and be seen at all times. A clean windscreen is of equal importance when driving at night.

Drive at a speed that allows you to stop within the distance covered by your lights. Assuming good driving conditions on an unlit road, the headlights of a typical car let you see for about 100 metres. Dipped lights will let you see for about 30 metres and a car travelling at 100 km/h will cover this distance in approximately a second. Keep your headlights adjusted properly. If they are out of line they may dazzle oncoming traffic, even when dipped.

Even with the best headlights, you can see less at night than during the day. Pedestrians and unlit bicycles are extremely difficult to see in the dark, particularly if you have to deal with the glare of oncoming lights.

When to use headlights

If conditions require you to use headlights to drive safely, you must use them. Use dipped headlights at night or main beam headlights as appropriate. When in doubt turn on your full lights to see clearly and clear your doubts. Ensure that the red lights and the number plate lighting at the back of your vehicle are working properly.

Reflections may help you confirm if they are but the sure way is to turn them on, alight, go to the back and check for yourself. In the case of reverse and brake lights, you can get someone to help you check while you engage your reverse gear and press your brake pedal. That way you can be sure your rear lights are functional. As for your indicators if any of the sides blinks too rapidly it is an indication that either the rear or front indicator is not working.

Use dipped lights:

just after the beginning (dusk) and before the end (dawn) of lighting up hours,

as long as they are need to let you see clearly,

when stopped in traffic,

in built-up areas where there is good street lighting, on continuously lit roads outside built-up areas,

when following behind another vehicle,

where there is dense fog, falling snow or heavy rain,

when daylight is fading, and generally, to avoid inconveniencing other traffic.

It is good practice to use dipped headlights or dim/dip lights, where fitted, instead of only sidelights (parking lights) in built-up areas where there is good street lighting.

Use main beam headlights in situations, places and times outside of those listed above.

Use fog lights only during dense fog and falling snow. You must turn them off at all other times

What to do if you are dazzled by another vehicle's headlights

Slow down and stop if necessary.

Always watch for pedestrians or cyclists on your side of the road.

If the dazzle is from an oncoming vehicle, avoid it by looking towards the verge (edge of your side of the road) until the vehicle has passed. If on the other hand the dazzle is from a vehicle behind you and reflected in your mirror, operate the night - driving mode on the mirror

At night, your peripheral vision is not as sharp as it could be and darkness makes it more difficult to gauge distance and movement. From safety perspective, it is important that lights are switched on as soon as dusk appears. That way you will see more and be seen sooner. Researches have shown that crashes are relatively low in areas with policies of driving on dimmed lights during daytime hours. If dazzled by oncoming vehicle's lights, do not be tempted to dazzle back as two wrongs do not make a right. Instead do the needful by heeding to the guide given earlier. You can reduce the glare by concentrating on your side of the road.

The condition of your vehicle is of great importance. If you notice a reduction in the strength of your lights or if they go dim, clean the outer glass. A file kilometres in muddy conditions dulls the lights more than you might imagine. It is also important to have lights properly focused and windscreen well cleaned. Cracks or scratches may mean you should consider replacing them. Even your own glasses, if you wear them should be cleaned before setting out on a journey.



NEWS

NYP commends Tinubu's son for donating 50 wheelchairs

From **WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe**

THE Nigerian Youth Parliament NYP, has commended Seyi Tinubu, son of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for the distribution of 50 wheelchairs to some physically challenged persons.

Speaker of the Parliament, Dr. AzezatYishawu, made the commendation in a statement made available to newsmen. She said Seyi has distinguished himself by his continuous engagement and consultations with youths across Nigeria.

Yishawu said, Seyi has visited many states in the country, meeting various youth groups, mobilizing and canvassing heavily, giving a listening ear to aggrieved members of almost all groups and creating a balance where all members can be brought to the same table to work together.

She described him as a strong influencer saying, "SeyiTinubu is not an average individual or just a member of the first family. Series of activities he has engaged himself in have depicted him to be a bridge between the powerful political class and average young Nigerians.

"SeyiTinubu has now been taken as a role model to so many young people for taking young people along and always working to ensure youth inclusion through his



Yishawu

influence.

"He has shown a strong desire to ensure the younger generation gets a good bargain in the current administration and the results are already here.

"He has become the lens and voice through which the yearnings of the Nigerian youth can be seen and heard, a role that goes beyond just being a first son. We have seen many sons of presidents in the past but SeyiTinubu is bringing humility and selflessness into the game.

"This has made many young minds to repose a level of confidence in him to be a catalyst for the growth and development of the Nigerian

youth. We have seen his continuous engagement of various youth and student stakeholders in his active political participations",she said.

She also recalled SeyiTinubu's pre- Inauguration youth concert and donation of six brand new buses and multiple Android phones and other forms of empowerment in just one night, assuring that it is an indication that the tides in the next four years will be good.

"Seyi is changing the narratives and ensuring young people are involved in politics, governance and administration. Nigeria is ours, Nigeria we serve", she applauded.

Ibadan residents protest over alleged forceful eviction

From **MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO, Ibadan**

SCORES of residents of Alaja Phase one, Alaja Phase two, Isagunna and Aponmode communities in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State have staged a protest over alleged forceful eviction from their property by some individuals.

The residents who are landlords and landladies in the communities recently stormed the premises of State House of Assembly to register their grievances.

The protesters, while speaking, explained that their homes have been invaded by someone who claimed to be the real owner of the lands in the communities.

The residents alleged that Mogaji of Akinsola family compound in Ibadan, Chief Wale Oladoja has invaded their communities in a bid to evict them.

The residents said they have been occupying the said lands for decades.

They added that they were surprised to hear that someone has got a court injunction to evict them from their properties.

The protesters, who took a save-our-soul message to the entrance of Oyo State House of Assembly Complex, appealed to the lawmakers to rescue the people of the

communities from Oladoja who had sealed off their houses since Wednesday.

A community leader, RaufAdeogun narrated that they were summoned to a meeting that those who bought land from our forefathers, would buy the land again from the original owner which is one of the lineages of Akinsola family.

He said, "And our father had warned us not to forcefully take back land already sold because Labi was owned by four lineages of Akinsola which are: Oju-Oyo, Oje, Idi-kan and Labiran, so the Labiran family is now the one disturbing the residents.

"We had been to the Olubadan to seek for the resolution of the matter and Olubadan had warned the 'land grabbers' not to forcefully take the land from the owners".

A member of the state House of Assembly representing Akinyele constituency 1, LekanAbiola in his reaction, promised to call Oladoja to hear his own side of the story.

The lawmaker representing Akinyele constituency 2, KehindeOlatunde said that the 9th Assembly

promulgated anti-land grabbing law which indicated the interest of the State Government in stopping land grabbing, noting that this present Assembly will not allow land grabbers in the state and will make sure they face the full wrath of the law.

"The 9th Assembly was the one that promulgated the law of anti-land grabbing and the House is not taking it lightly at all. Because we found out that the land grabbers migrated from Lagos State to Ogun State and from Ogun State to Oyo State. And we are not going to take it, even the governor will not take it.

Oladoja, in his own reaction, said that the family acted on the court judgment obtained in 2001 by the Akinsola family who is the real owner of all the lands in Labi to take back their land.

"My Family acted according to the law of the land, because we have four to five judgments in respect to the land they are talking about.

We had held peaceful meeting with the residents of the community several times, even our respected Imperial Majesty, Olubadan of Ibadan land, Oba Mohood Olalekan Alli Okunmade II had scheduled a meeting with us for the resolution of the same matter".34

SUNDAY FEATURE

Addressing the challenges of estimated billing system in Nigeria

Estimated billing occurs when a customer does not have a meter, generally, no electricity distribution company (Discos), makes estimated billing its default billing system however, a review of electricity billing practices worldwide indicate that estimated billing is a standard and conventional tool even in advanced economies. TIMOTHY JOSEPH, Writes.

NIGERIA is one of the largest economies in Africa despite this great feat, it has one of the most significant energy deficits in the world. Although government aims to achieve and boost electricity access from 45% to 90% by 2030, which has been approached by using different techniques to achieve this boost. One of such approaches is the privatisation of the power sector in 2013, which aims to improve the power sector efficiency, attract investment and increase the total amount of electricity power generated, however, due to misaligned incentives, this approach has produced results of varying degrees. Some of the challenges which inhibited the privatisation of the sector include unreliable gas supply, vandalism, insufficient metering among others.

In the Nigerian power industry, many consumers are unmetered and the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) has attempted to reduce the metering gap in recent years through various means such as the banning and criminalization of estimated billing, which has done very little in closing the gap as metering issues still persist.

In another attempt to fix this challenge, the Federal Government launched the National Mass Metering Program (NMMP), an initiative geared towards mass Metering of Nigerians by providing loan facility from the Central Bank of Nigeria to the Discos for the procurement of meters for customers, and the local manufacturers. This is to ensure that it provides over 4 million meters as estimated billing encourage a lack of transparency and accountability, worsening tariff collection. In the first phase of the NMMP called (phase 0) over 1 million meters were estimated to be deployed in about 6 months but the process was delayed as prevailing challenges crippled the roll out of the assets. At the end of the phase, over a million meters were reportedly distributed. Data from the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) has shown that at least 8.1 million of the country's 12.1 million customers are unmetered. NERC said that only about 4.66 million end-users, representing 36% of the entire pool had been fully metered at the end of November 2021.

Consequently, the huge metering gap in Nigeria presents a Herculean challenge for the Discos when it comes to measuring the unmetered customers significantly, there is no more interested party in the comprehensive metering discussion than the DISCO's. And this is because it is estimated that metering alone reduces collection losses by 30%. Additionally, it minimizes the alienation of consumers who, often underpay or do not pay their electricity bills, based on the disputed bills. In recognition of impossibility of comprehensive metering within the near mid-term period, the regulator, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) enacted a regulation on estimated billing methodology to guide the DISCOs in their billing. Nonetheless, application of the methodology remains a very contentious process, as we have seen cases of overbilling and cases of under billing which, the consumers never talk about. Understandably estimated billing is a vexing issue to un-metered customer,



due to the perception of overbilling situations.

Estimated billing is a major contributor to non-technical losses as customers have resulted in illegal and corrupt practices to get out of paying those bills, they considered Exorbitant, which has led to constant and frequent clashes between the DISCO's employees and customers. These exorbitant bills have been linked to DISCOS trying to recover or improve their profit due to loss of revenues, this is due to lack of transparency and accountability between the DISCO's and their customers. About eighty percent of consumers grievances received by NERC is related to exorbitant bills, estimated billing, and poor metering infrastructure this practice has continued to be a thorn in the flesh of Nigerians as some non-delivery of paid prepaid meters and are forced to continue to pay for electricity not consumed.

It is not misinformation that the Discos are billing unnecessarily and even arbitrary to meet target. Imagine for instance even with the epileptic power supply across Jos and its environs the Jos Electricity Distribution Company (JED), has continued to give out exorbitant bills to consumers for power never consumed. Estimated customers in Jos pay between 15,000 to 22,000 monthly as the case may be while his neighbor who feeds from the same feeder/transformer but has prepaid meter spend between 5,000 to 10,000 on buying units in a month, where is the justification in estimated billing? The company also charge consumers to replace melted fuse in transformers, buy cables, buy poles if not the community will remain in perpetual darkness and at the end, the company will immediately come in and claim that this equipment belongs to them. And anytime this exploitations, takes place and you complain or take any action not in tandem with the policy of

electricity company their personnel will come and disconnect and sometimes remove what you bought.

The scam in estimated billing had previously caught the eye of the national assembly in 2018, the house of representatives moved to criminalize electricity estimated billing system except where a consumer's meter cannot be accessed by the service provider. The bill was introduced when Gbajabamila was the house leader and was passed into law, but was not assented by the president. However, it was introduced again in the 9th assembly.

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) has not lived up to its expectations with respect to estimated billing. The commission tend to work with the Discos to exploit consumers. Even after issuing policy guidelines for conduct of business in the power sector, it ends there, the commission does not care if Discos adheres to the rules or not, how many time has NERC issued statements to the effect that customers who are not metered should not pay estimated billing? How many times did NERC direct Discos to meter certain customers annually without results?

Discos have flagrantly abused the procedures for estimated billing of electricity consumers; therefore, one thinks there is no justification for estimated billing of electricity customers. Although in some cases estimated billing is calculated based on the level and quantity of supply in an area and not necessarily driven by collection of targets as it is widely believed.

The Federal government through the Minister of Finance, Zainab Ahmed, had earlier announced that the federal government had quietly removed all subsidies in the power sector. by implications, consumers may be

compelled to pay more for energy not consumed. The federal government should not only stop at removing subsidy, it should find a way of addressing this issue because this exorbitant charges with minimum electricity supply if not addressed may lead to chaos in communities as many have started protesting the issue.

Nigerians are ready to be metered and would readily accept prepaid meters, as this would give them control over their consumption and help install them energy management. This will in turn improve efficiency, utility operational cost, revenue collection and reduce energy wastage. In a recent report by the Punch, the Executive Director, Research and Advocacy Association Nigeria Electricity Distribution Company (ANED), Sunday Oduntan, revealed that as at the last quarter of 2021, the total shortfall in the power sector is about 1.6 trillion. Shortfalls result in debt, which inhibit further investment and development in the sector.

It is on record that consumers are mostly at the receiving end of the general inefficiency of Discos. Therefore, it is our obligation as Nigerians to speak up and ensure that the right things are done. However, consumers on their part need to rise up to their responsibility of prompt payment of electricity bills, which will enable the industry to have the revenue requirement for efficient service delivery.

It should be noted that with the privatisation of the power sector in Nigeria, it has become personal business which the companies need to provide the necessary equipment to consumers before they start billing them and in situations where consumers invest in the company's supply chain the company should compensate them.

Timothy Joseph is of the Ministry of Information and Communication

SUNDAY SPORTS



How Real Madrid's 'glamour' gives transfer advantage

At Jude Bellingham's unveiling as a Real Madrid player following his initial £88.5m move from Borussia Dortmund, one quote stood out more than any other. HARRY DE COSEMO writes.

IT was a bit of a surprise when my dad sat me down and said: 'You've had a bit of interest from Real Madrid'," said the 20-year-old midfielder. "I had goosebumps, my heart was close to stopping. It's something you don't expect growing up - being able to play for a team like this." Bellingham has joined talented young players Eduardo Camavinga, Vinicius Junior and Aurelien Tchouameni in helping propel the club into the next generation. France striker Kylian Mbappe, widely regarded as the world's best player right now, is expected to join them next year.

Real Madrid are no longer the biggest player in the transfer market, but why do they remain such a force?

"Madrid know how glamorous the club is and they are able to use that, but I've seen it with Barcelona as well," Dermot Corrigan, Spanish football journalist for The Athletic, tells BBC Sport.

"It has always been the case that foreign players, if they could choose where they wanted to go, the big two in Spain have been a step above in terms of stature and the self esteem of the players themselves, the very elite.

"A decade ago when El Clasico [Real Madrid against Barcelona] was [Lionel] Messi v [Cristiano] Ronaldo, Pep [Guardiola] v

[Jose] Mourinho, it was kind of like the world select. The World XI would come out and it would be like a Madrid/Barca combined team.

"For the players who did manage to sneak in, like Gareth Bale or Luis Suarez, the next step for them was Real Madrid or Barcelona, who at that stage paid better than the Premier League.

"Now, Paris St-Germain, Manchester City, Manchester United, we'll see about Newcastle, are financially stronger than both."

Across two terms, Real president Florentino Perez has broken the world transfer record five times to sign Luis Figo, Zinedine Zidane, Kaka, Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale.

Other superstars such as Brazilian striker Ronaldo, David Beckham and Eden Hazard signed for huge fees during what became known as the 'Galactico' era, with marketing a central point to their approach.

Michael Owen and Jonathan Woodgate also moved there, risking comfortable Premier League careers just to experience playing for Real Madrid, a club which has now won 35 La Liga titles and 14 European Cups.

"There's a sense of status," Corrigan continues. "For Bellingham, his earliest memories are probably that era

with Mourinho, whereas Bale will remember Ronaldo and Zidane. The financial level of the team has changed but there is still a mystique, a glamour.

"You have a good chance of winning the Ballon d'Or and the Champions League, which you don't get at other clubs."

There has been a change of approach, though, on and off the pitch. Perez remains keen on the biggest names, but is instead looking to strike for players who are running down their contracts as well as persuading the best prospects with all they can achieve.

"Madrid had a reputation from 20 years ago for spending crazy money on the flashiest players,

but they learnt from experience," Corrigan says.

"They got Thibaut Courtois on a cut-price deal from Chelsea because he ran his contract down, David Alaba on a free, [Antonio] Rudiger as well,

"They all get well paid, but they could get paid better elsewhere. Madrid are good at keeping in touch with agents, but using the allure of the club to let players know of the opportunities, getting to play in Madrid, winning trophies and all the sponsorships that can come from it as well."

Bellingham scored on his debut for the club in a 2-0 win at Athletic Bilbao last week, so his start to life in Madrid could not have been better.

But what of the future? Mbappe is earmarked, and Corrigan says the club believes no rival is safe when their interest is piqued.

"There's not many people who turn down Real Madrid," he concludes. "Did Erling Haaland? That depends on whether you talk to people around Manchester or Madrid.

"In Madrid there is a feeling that if they pushed out the boat they'd have got him, but they are saving money for Mbappe, who is Florentino's number one target.

"They didn't push as hard as they might for Haaland and they might get him in the future.

"When Madrid come calling, it is very difficult for clubs to keep their players."

"Madrid know how glamorous the club is and they are able to use that, but I've seen it with Barcelona as well," Dermot Corrigan, Spanish football journalist for The Athletic, tells BBC Sport. "It has always been the case that foreign players, if they could choose where they wanted to go, the big two in Spain have been a step above in terms of stature and the self esteem of the players themselves, the very elite. "A decade ago when El Clasico [Real Madrid against Barcelona] was [Lionel] Messi v [Cristiano] Ronaldo, Pep [Guardiola] v [Jose] Mourinho, it was kind of like the world select. The World XI would come out and it would be like a Madrid/Barca combined team.

SUNDAY SPORTS



Lavia

Chelsea sign Lavia from Southampton in £58m deal

CHELSEA have completed the signing of Belgium midfielder Romeo Lavia from Southampton for an initial £53m.

BBC SPORT said that, the 19-year-old has signed a seven-year contract in a deal which could rise by a further £5m with add-ons.

Lavia made 34 appearances in all competitions last season but could not help prevent Saints' relegation from the Premier League.

"I'm really happy join Chelsea and be a part of this exciting project," said Lavia.

"It's an amazing football club with a great history and I'm really excited to get started.

"I can't wait to meet all my new team-mates and build a chemistry to achieve great things together."

Liverpool were also keen on Lavia, but the Reds had a third bid - believed to have been for around £46m including add-ons - rejected by Southampton earlier this month.

Lavia becomes the second player this week to have opted for Chelsea over Jurgen Klopp's side, following in the footsteps of Moises Caicedo, who joined the Blues from Brighton for a £100m fee which could rise to a British record £115m.

Having come through the youth system at Anderlecht, Lavia moved to Manchester City in 2020 after being spotted at a tournament in Belgium attended by Pep Guardiola. The youngster made just two senior appearances at City - in the FA Cup and Carabao Cup - as he struggled to break into the club's first team and joined Saints in July 2022 for £10.5m.

City will collect 20% (£10.6m) of the initial £53m fee received by Southampton because of a sell-on clause.

Lavia made his debut for the Belgium national team earlier this year, coming on as a substitute with ten minutes to play in a friendly victory over Germany.

In a statement, Southampton paid tribute to Lavia for his "efforts and professionalism" during his one season with the club,

wishing him "every success in what [they] are sure will be a fantastic career".

Lavia thanked Southampton fans for their support in a goodbye message on Instagram.

"I've instantly felt the love for you all despite us not achieving our shared goals," Lavia wrote.

"I'll never forget the belief the club and Saints all around the world showed me and I hope I was able to repay the faith you put in me.

"I would especially like to thank all my teammates and staff members within the club. You have all played a massive part in making my integration into real professional football easier.

"For those reasons, this club will always remain close to my heart. Good luck this season and I look forward to seeing the club marching back to the Premier League where it belongs very soon!"

Lavia becomes Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino's ninth signing of the summer, following

Caicedo, Axel Disasi, Christopher Nkunku, Nicolas Jackson, Lesley Ugochukwu, Angelo Gabriel, Robert Sanchez and Diego Moreira to Stamford Bridge.

New manager Mauricio Pochettino has been tasked with overhauling the squad and vastly improving on last season's 12th-place finish in the Premier League.

Mateo Kovacic, Edouard Mendy, Kalidou Koulibaly, N'Golo Kante, Mason Mount, Kai Havertz, Christian Pulisic, Ruben Loftus-Cheek, Ethan Ampadu, Pierre Emerick-Aubameyang, Abdul Rahman Baba and former captain Cesar Azpilicueta have all departed so far this summer.

Chelsea opened their Premier League season with a 1-1 home draw against Liverpool on Sunday.

Lavia also becomes the 23rd player signed by Chelsea for a fee since American investor Todd Boehly and his Clearlake consortium took over in May 2022, with the owners' total outlay on new players totalling over £900m.

England manager 'has no plans to leave' role

Sarina Wiegman says she has "no plans to leave" her job as England manager and intends to see out the rest of her contract, which lasts until 2025.

BBC SPORT said that, Wiegman, who will lead England in Sunday's Women's World Cup final, has been touted as a candidate for the USA job after Vlatko Andonovski's exit.

Football Association chief executive Mark Bullingham said any approaches for Wiegman would be "100% rejected".

"I'm really enjoying my job," said Wiegman, who joined in September 2021.

"I have the impression that

people still like me doing the job. I have no plans to leave. I'm staying out of [speculation regarding the USA job]. I've heard it.

"I'm with England, I'm really happy with England and I have a contract until 2025."

Since arriving in England Wiegman has won four trophies - the Euro 2022 title, two Arnold Clark Cups and the Women's Finalissima.

She is the first coach to take two countries to a World Cup final, having led the Netherlands there in 2019.

The former Netherlands player said "ambitious and talented



Wiegman

Theo Walcott has announced his retirement from professional football at the age of 34.

BBC SPORT said that, the ex-Arsenal, Everton and Southampton winger told Gary Neville on The Overlap podcast the decision is "scary" but he "wants to try new things".

Walcott hangs up his boots following a 23-year career in which he made 397 Premier League appearances.

"I'm officially going to be hanging up my boots. It's very scary, I can't lie," said Walcott.

"It's scary because football's all I've known from the age of 16 or even younger. I want to try new things I never experienced as a kid - I missed out on a lot.

"I just feel like I want to experience life - things [usually] revolve around football for me."

16-year-old Walcott nets first FA Cup goal as Saints beat MK Dons

In his 13-year spell with the Gunners, Walcott won three FA Cups as well as two Community Shields.

He shot to fame in 2006 as a 17-year-old when he was surprisingly selected in Sven Goran Eriksson's England World Cup squad.

Walcott appeared 47 times for England, scoring eight times in a decade-long international career.

Twin son of Amokachi snubs Enyimba, Kano

The twin son of former Super Eagles forward Daniel Amokachi, Nazim Amokachi, has made an exciting move by opting to join Zambia's NAPSA Stars, Soccer.net.ng reports.

The forward, instead of continuing his career in the Nigerian league by joining sides like the Enyimba FC who are currently the reigning champions, Kano Pillars, Bendel Insurance and a host of others, has chosen to pursue his career outside of Nigeria's borders.

Walcott retires from professional football



Walcott

Walcott, who was a free agent but made 20 Premier League appearances and scored three goals for Southampton last season as the club suffered relegation, says he received offers from various clubs to keep playing but his "heart isn't committed" to it.

"I've had offers abroad and from some very good Championship teams. There's been some Saudi offers but it's not where I see myself playing, to be honest," said Walcott.

Watch: Walcott's FA Cup final strike for Arsenal

"Nothing against the money or the league but if my heart isn't into playing football it's not fair on the clubs, not fair on me."

Walcott played for Newbury and Swindon Town as a youngster before being signed by Southampton in 2000.

He made his debut for the Saints in 2005 as a 16-year-old and soon became the club's youngest ever goal scorer when he found the net against Leeds United.

Walcott made 21 appearances and scored four goals for Saints before joining Arsene Wenger's Arsenal in 2006.

He played 397 games for the Gunners, scoring 108 goals, before departing for Everton in a £20 million deal in 2019.

Walcott played 85 games for the Toffees, scoring 11 times, before re-joining Southampton two years later.



Amokachi

Following in his father's footsteps as a forward, Nazim has signed a two-

year contract with NAPSA Stars, departing from his previous club Lobi Stars in the NPFL.

A press release from NAPSA Stars introduced Nazim alongside Zambia striker Saith Sakala. Ponga Liwewe, the club's CEO, expressed confidence in these new acquisitions,

"We believe that these two exceptional players will make a big impact on and off the field, contributing to our success in the upcoming season." He said.

Nazim, originally from Liverpool, along with his younger brother Kalim, has prior experience playing for clubs in various countries, including England, Besiktas U21 in Turkey, and JS Hercules in Finland.

This move marks an exciting new chapter for Nazim, who also holds Tunisian citizenship. His journey with NAPSA Stars in Zambia promises to be an intriguing development in his football career.

people" give her "energy" to keep chasing success.

"What's really nice for example is Katie Zelem. In April, I wanted to try out other things and then she came back in and makes the World Cup squad," added Wiegman.

"She [then] plays a very good game against China [in the group stages]. That gives me energy. I could give plenty of examples of that. That's what I enjoy so much."

Wiegman has praised her players' adaptability throughout the World Cup, as they have had to deal with injury to midfielder Keira Walsh and a two-match suspension for Lauren James.

Those complications led to a rare change in formation, but England's switch to a back three has paid off.

"We were trying to find ways to be unpredictable for the opponent. We mentioned it [in April]. At that time the squad had lots of wingers still and we thought 'no, we will stick with what we want to do,'" said Wiegman.

"In the first two matches we were struggling a little bit. We had moments where we played really well, but we also had

moments where we were a little bit vulnerable.

"After the second match, [England assistant manager] Arjan Veurink came to me and said, 'Sarina let's sit down, isn't this the time to go to 3-5-2?'"

"I said, 'you're completely right, this is the moment that now, with how the squad is built, and the players available, we can get more from the players and their strengths in this shape.' So we changed it."

Her sister passed away three weeks before the start of Euro 2022, which the Lionesses won on home soil, and Wiegman celebrated in the final by kissing a bracelet in tribute.

England have since suffered injuries to key players Leah Williamson, top scorer Beth Mead and playmaker Fran Kirby.

"I'm a pretty positive person but of course I also have feelings," said the 53-year-old.

"Firstly, I feel very privileged to work with this team. You have some setbacks with some players that got injured but then you have to switch and say 'OK, this is the group of players we think are the best and this is the team now. We are going to go to the World Cup with them.'

SUNDAY SPORTS

Amusan cleared to compete at World Championships

Amusan's case was argued before the AIU panel on Wednesday, and after an exhaustive session, the world record holder in the 100m hurdles event was able to prove her innocence.

Nigeria's **Tobi Amusan** has successfully secured the overturning of the provisional ban slammed on her by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) for missing three whereabouts tests within 12 months.

The AIU had on 19 July announced Amusan's provisional ban, but the athlete vowed to challenge the decision along with her legal team, having insisted she was clean and had nothing to hide.

PREMIUM TIMES gathered Amusan's case was argued before the AIU panel on Wednesday. After an exhaustive session, the world record holder in the 100m hurdles event was able to prove her case.

A statement was issued on Thursday night by the AIU, which read:

"A panel of the Disciplinary Tribunal, by majority decision, has today found that Tobi Amusan has not committed an Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV) of three Whereabouts Failures within a 12-month period.

"AIU Head Brett Clothier has indicated the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is disappointed by this decision and will review the reasoning in detail before deciding whether to exercise its right of appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) within the applicable deadline. The decision is currently confidential but will be published in due course."

"Amusan's provisional suspension has now been lifted with immediate effect," the statement concluded.

This development means Amusan has the go-ahead to defend her world title at the World Athletics Championships billed for Budapest, Hungary, from 19-27 August

Many had feared the worst following many days of silence from both the AIU and Amusan's camp, but they were a great sense of relief after the decision from the AIU panel was made public on Saturday.

At last year's World Championships in Eugene, Oregon, Amusan stunned fans and opponents alike when she broke the world record in the 100m hurdles semi-finals in a time that was the largest improvement for a world record in the event in 42 years.

She then ran a faster time in the final 90 minutes later, only for an illegal wind to make it illegible.

Interestingly, Amusan has suggested that it's not impossible to break her



Amusan

100m Hurdles World Record (WR) again.

In a post in June 2023 on the World Athletics Instagram page, where she was seen training and preparing for the Golden Spikes meet in Ostrava, Amusan declared she could still break her WR.

"I'm a big believer in the Bible; nothing is impossible, and 11 seconds? Most definitely," it read.

If she successfully does this, Tobi Express, as fans call her, will become the first woman ever to run a sub-12s time in the women's 100m Hurdles, which would be an unarguable claim to the

greatest of all time in the event.

It is, however, not sure how the initial provisional ban would have affected the preparations of Amusan in the build-up to Budapest.

While some feel the uncertainties in the past days are capable of negatively affecting her, some others feel it could even be the needed tonic for Amusan to shame critics and those hoping for her downfall. Nigeria entered one taekwondo athlete at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, with Elizabeth Anyanacho defeated at the round-of-16 stage in the women's under-67 kilograms category.

WORLD Championships' silver medallist, Ese Brume, arrived in Budapest, Hungary, on Wednesday, with a promise not to disappoint Nigerians in the 19th edition of the competition.

The Guardian said that, the Budapest 2023 World Championship will begin at the National Athletics Centre in Budapest tomorrow and Brume is one of the athletes scheduled to open Nigeria's campaign for medals.

The Delta State-born long jumper is making her fourth straight appearance in the championships since her debut in London in 2017.

Speaking with The Guardian from Istanbul, Turkey, while waiting to connect a flight to Budapest, Brume said: "I am going to the championships to give my best. I won't disappoint Nigerians, and I pray that God should give me the strength to achieve my goal in Budapest."

At the last edition of the championship in Oregon, United States, Brume captured a silver medal to make it double celebration for Team Nigeria after Tobi Amusan had set a new World Record and took a gold medal in the 100m hurdles.

The silver medal at Oregon made Brume the first Nigerian to win in two straight World Championships' medals, after grabbing a bronze medal at Qatar 2019.

With Nigerians still waiting for

Brume promises excellence as Team Nigeria begins quest in Budapest



Ese Brume

Amusan's clearance by the Athletes Integrity Unit (AIU) to enable her to compete in the Championships, Brume remains Nigeria's best bet for a podium appearance.

The African long jump record holder, with a Personal Best of 7.17m, has been battling to regain full fitness after an indifferent outdoor campaign leading to the Championships.

If Brume rises to the occasion like she did in the past and strikes gold, she will become the first Nigerian track and field star to win in all three categories of medals at the championships.

Another Nigerian long jumper, Ruth Usoro, will also compete on the opening day, just as sprinters, Seye Ogunlewe, Ushoritse Itshekiri and Favour Ashe.

Three-time Nigerian and reigning African Shot-Put king,

Chukwuebuka Enekwechi, will also be on parade for medals on Saturday.

Enekwechi, who is making his third appearance at the Championships, will be looking forward to a podium finish, and also the history books, as the first Nigerian to do so in the Shot-Put event.

In Doha, Qatar 2019, Enekwechi made history as the first to make the final of the event, finishing eighth in the final classification and went home with a cash prize of \$4,000. But at the last edition held in Oregon, he finished three places lower.

Ranked 14th best so far this season, the 30-year-old Enekwechi knows he needs to break the 22m mark and become the 10th man to hit above that mark this season to stand a chance of winning a medal in Budapest.

'I'm exactly where I'm meant to be'

SUPER Falcons defender Ashleigh Plumtre has revealed that she doesn't have any regrets playing for Nigeria at the World Cup, SoccerNet.ng reports

The 25-year-old was born in Leicester and has spent most of her life in the United Kingdom. She has represented England in the age group football, from under-15s to under-23s.

However, a decision with its roots beyond football encouraged her to stake her international future to Nigeria with whom she qualified through her paternal grandfather.

She got the chance to make her World Cup debut when she was named in the West African country's 23-woman list for the 2023 edition of the tournament in Australia and New Zealand.

Plumtre started all four matches Nigeria played at the tournament, keeping clean

sheets in all but one, as the Super Falcons scaled through a group which contained hosts Australia and Olympics champions Canada to set up a last-16 tie with England in Brisbane.

Nigeria had a better chance to win the game and created more opportunities than the European champions before they eventually lost 4-2 in a penalty shootout.

Having played against her country of birth in the last-16 tie, the 25-year-old does not have any regrets she lined up on the side of the nine-time African champions.

"I've had people ask me 'do you have any regrets, you could still have played for England' and I understand why people say that, but I'm exactly where I'm meant to be on my journey, She told BBC.com.

I made the decisions I made for a reason and the fact I was lining up against these players

I used to play with, now with a different badge – another part of who I am – on my chest was really hard to put into words but was really special.

Plumtre also revealed that the team has set a standard for itself for future endeavors after its stellar performance at the 2023 Women's World Cup, and she is looking to fulfill another ambition and represent the Super Falcons at the Olympics in Paris next year.

The Nigeria International is set to move to another club for her next challenge after spending the last three-and-a-half years with Leicester City.

Having decided to represent Nigeria due to personal reasons, Plumtre's next club, to be announced in the coming weeks, was motivated by reasons personal to her belief.

Being with Nigeria, the most fulfilling part isn't just football, it's the whole experience and what it means for me, and it's the same thing when I played

for Leicester, She disclosed Plumtre will get the chance to help the Super Falcons begin their road to Paris 2024 on a

positive note when they square off against Ethiopia in the first round of the qualifiers in October.

D'Tigers coach takes blame for Olympic miss

D'Tigers' Olympic dream was dashed on Tuesday when the Nigerian men crumbled in the presence of their home fans, losing 77-68 to their Malian counterparts.

Premium Times said that, Nigeria's ouster from the qualification race for the men's basketball event at next year's Olympic Games in Paris, France, has continued to generate diverse reactions.

While the team's coach, Ogoh Odaudu, has bravely accepted the blame for the failure, one of the D'Tigers' star players, Uche Iroegbu, has given suggestions on how things can be better in the days ahead.

D'Tigers' Olympic dream was dashed on Tuesday when the Nigerian men crumbled in the presence of their home fans, losing 77-68 to their Malian counterparts.

Having got off to a disappointing start, losing their first game 93-87 to Senegal on Monday, D'Tigers' win in their second game on Tuesday was expedient.

D'Tigers initially appeared to be on track in the game against Mali, but they capitulated in the fourth quarter of the encounter. With their hope of playing at the Olympics now up in smoke, Uchenna Iroegbu, who made the highest points for D'Tigers, has said the team and its federation need to reflect on the errors that cost the chance of making it into the Olympic Games for a third consecutive time

"When you lose, sometimes

stats kind of feel empty cause you feel like it could have been more, and in this game, winning is everything. Winning is how you advance, not your individual stats, so, unfortunately, it hurts. I think all of us, especially how we performed in this competition, all of us can do better." Iroegbu, who recorded 26 points, five rebounds and four assists against Mali, told journalists during the post-match conference, The Guinean club side SLAC point guard further added there is a need to readdress the errors and drawbacks to avoid future disappointments.

"Players, coaches, whether it's federation and everybody when you lose, has to look at themselves in the mirror and think about what they can do to improve, so I think as a country and especially as our basketball organisation federation, players included coaches included, we all have to look ourselves in the mirror and say what can I do to improve the next time."

With the defeat becoming a shock to Nigerians, especially losing on home soil, the Coach of the team, Ogoh Odaudu, has taken full responsibility for his boys' double defeats at the qualifiers.

Odaudu, a former player who became a title-winning coach for Rivers Hoopers, failed to transmit his winning mentality to his boys, who lost by whiskers to their opponents.



Ashleigh Plumtre featured in all Super Falcons matches at the 2023 Women's World Cup

SUNDAY SPORTS

Miami move 'opposite' of PSG, says happy Messi

Lionel Messi said Thursday he has refound happiness since joining Inter Miami, describing his move to Major League Soccer as the "opposite" of his transfer from Barcelona to Paris Saint-Germain.

Messi, who has scored nine goals in six appearances since joining Miami, joined the MLS club after two seasons in France with PSG.

Speaking to local media for the first time since arriving in Miami, a relaxed Messi talked positively of his life in South Florida and contrasted it with his time in the French capital, which drew to a close earlier this year with sections of PSG's fans booing him.

"As I said at the time, my departure to Paris was not something I wanted, it was not something I wanted to leave Barcelona and, so to speak, it was from one day to the next," he said.

"And, well, I also had to get used to a place that was totally different from where I had been living all my life, both in terms of the city and in a sporting sense, and, well, it was difficult, but the opposite of what is happening



very happy with the decision we made, not only for the

decision had made together with his family.

and to win our first title would be great for all of us," he said.

said.



to me now here," he said.

Messi had been with Barcelona from the age of 13, when he moved from Argentina to join the Spanish giants and his move, after years of success, was primarily the result of financial difficulties at the club.

There had been speculation that Messi might return to Barcelona or join the wave of players heading to the Saudi league but Messi said he was pleased with his decision.

"I can tell you that I am

game, for how it is going, but for my family, for how we live day by day, for how we enjoy the city, for this new experience and the reception of the people that was extraordinary from the first day, not only in Miami," he said.

"I made two away trips with the team and the treatment of the people towards me was spectacular. So I am grateful and happy for the moment I am living and above all to be able to continue enjoying what I liked all my life, to play and to be able to do it in this way with joy," he said, stressing his

The seven-times Ballon d'Or winner has the chance to win his first trophy when Miami take on Nashville on Saturday in the final of the Leagues Cup.

It would also be his club's first triumph in just their third season of existence. ;

"It would be amazing, wouldn't it? Both for me and for all the people who are fans of the club, for the club itself," he said.

"We want to be a point of reference and winning a title would help a lot in that. It is a very young club, it has been around for a very short time,

Despite huge expectations and the hope that the Argentine World Cup winner will lead the sport to new heights in the United States, Messi said he was simply enjoying the game and his life.

"The truth is that I don't think about all those things, I simply came here to play, to continue enjoying football, which is what I have liked all my life and I chose this place for that reason, above all things," he said. ;

Messi said his family had settled in well, despite them not yet having found a permanent home in the area and he said that he enjoyed to be part of the Spanish-speaking community in South Florida.

"From the beginning, since my arrival, the welcome was impressive, it is a city with many Latinos, and that makes everything much easier too," he

"The Latinos are much closer, much more demonstrative, always showing affection, closeness, and I think that is the most important, the healthiest and the most beautiful thing in order to be able to settle in and enjoy what you do," he said.

"I already knew the city pretty well, how the people were. I already loved it...but to be living here every day and passing all of my time here has let me get a lot closer to the city and the people here.

"I'm happy, I'm enjoying this new chapter of my life, the experience of living in the United States, which was something I always had in mind to do." ;

Provided by SyndiGate Media Inc. (Syndigate.info).





Women's World Cup final: Spain battles England today

THE scene is set: La Roja and the Lionesses, two European heavyweights, will play the Women's World Cup final in Sydney on Sunday.

It marks the end of a remarkable tournament that's encapsulated all the beautiful game has to offer; from the group stages that oscillated between high-scoring mismatches and tight, cautious defensive displays to the high-quality knockout stages peppered with upsets, penalty drama, and the displays of joy and heartache that accompany such high-pressure stakes.

La Roja have notched up an eye-watering 17 goals in the tournament.

After a dominant first two matches and already qualified for the knockout stages, they even afforded themselves a drop in focus and were beaten 4-0 by Japan.

In the knockout stages, they had a more difficult time, scraping past the Netherlands 2-1 in the quarterfinals with a 111th-minute winner. In the semifinal, Sweden and Spain served up a thriller, with Olga Carmona scoring the winner in the 89th minute with a

delightful long-range shot that bounced off the

crossbar and over the line. The Lionesses have not

lost a game in the tournament and notched

up some impressive results, not least their 3-1 win over co-hosts Australia in the semifinal.

However, they have sometimes shown some vulnerability, particularly

against Nigeria, who could have beaten England in the quarterfinal had it not been for some wayward finishing.

If the last time the two met is anything to go by, then we are in for a treat. In last year's European Championships quarterfinals, England came from behind to win after Esther Gonzalez's first-half strike had given Spain the lead.

Georgia Stanway's long-range strike in the final minutes to win it for the eventual champions will no doubt be replayed plenty of times in the England dressing room ahead of Sunday's final.

Full-back Olga Carmona is expected to retain a place in the starting XI, having impressed in the absence of Oihane Hernandez, who is available for the final after serving a suspension.

England's coach Wiegman will have to decide whether to start Ella Toone, who scored in the semifinal or breakout star Lauren James, who is available again after a two-match suspension.



England's Rachel Daly celebrates beating Australia in the semifinal [Asanka Brendon Ratnayake/Reuters]

... Wiegman insists England women are 'feeling the support'

HHEAD coach Sarina Wiegman thinks England women are feeling buoyed by the levels of support for the team ahead of the World Cup final vs Spain.

The Lionesses face Spain on Sunday as they attempt to win the major trophy for the first time in their history

Wiegman told reporters: "It's incredible what

happened. We felt the support, we felt the support here, but also from the other side of the world in the UK. That's something that we dream of.

"I feel privileged. I'm very

happy in the place where I am now. There's a lot of support, we have everything we need to perform at the highest level. It is a pleasure to work with these incredible people."

Wiegman was concise when asked how the team had reintegrated Lauren James, who could start on Sunday after serving a two-match suspension following her red card against Nigeria in the last 16.

She said: "Of course she kept training and it's really nice to have 23 players available for tomorrow."

Former Netherlands boss Wiegman took over as England manager in September 2021 and led the team to Euro 2022 glory on home soil last summer.

Asked whether the bond between the players and Wiegman had grown, captain and centre-back Millie Bright said: "The

longer you work together, the better the connection.

"The better you can be off the pitch, the better the conversation can be and then we can translate that to the squad.

"As much as people don't want to face challenges, it's part of the game, it's part of life, and without those challenges we wouldn't be where we are today."

He told reporters: "Just look at the job she has done - I think it's been remarkable. She's very calm. I actually really enjoy watching her on the sideline. She never gets flustered, always calm.

"I'm always looking at her thinking she's thinking and analysing what to do next. A lot of the time when I'm watching games, I'm trying to put myself in the manager's shoes. I think she's done an incredible job."

Awoniyi celebrates new Premier League record

Nigerian striker Taiwo Awoniyi is enjoying a blistering start in the Premier League this season and he is understandably excited about it.

After emerging as Nottingham Forest's first goal scorer of the new campaign in the away game at the Emirates last weekend against Arsenal,

Awoniyi set the tone on Friday night again, scoring the first goal in the 2-1 win over newly-promoted Sheffield United.

The goal, which is his eighth in six consecutive EPL matches, is a new record as no player from the country has ever scored in that number of consecutive games.

According to Opta, only Mohamed Salah and Emmanuel Adebayor who both scored in seven consecutive games are the only Africans that presently have a better run than Awoniyi.

"Taiwo Awoniyi's run of scoring in six consecutive Premier League appearances is now the longest of any Nigerian player and is surpassed by only two African players in the competition's history - Mohamed Salah and Emmanuel Adebayor (seven-game runs). "The sports data company wrote on Twitter.

Reeling with smiles and happy with his new feat, Awoniyi, on his social media pages, appreciated God's grace and thanked his fans

for their support.

In his characteristic way, Awoniyi quoted bible scripture and ended his post with: Thank you city ground....we keep going, You REDS

With the three points from Friday's outing, Forest are comfortably occupying the eighth spot on the league standings.

Forest, however, have a difficult task ahead of them as they travel to face Manchester United at Old Trafford on 26 August for their next Premier League game.

If Awoniyi gets to score, he will be joining the duo of Salah and Adebayor as Africans that have enjoyed the longest goal-scoring runs in the Premier League.



Awoniyi