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Editorial

FG must improve strategies on distribution of palliatives

RECENTLY, the Federal Government announced the approval of N5 billion to each of the 36 states of the federation as a palliative measure to cushion the effects of the petroleum subsidy removal.

ALTHOUGH such could be seen as a commendable development, yet the decision has raised more questions on the modalities to be used in ensuring effective monitoring and distribution of the palliatives across the country with a huge population of over 180 million of its citizens living in abject poverty.

In time past, especially during the Covid-19 palliatives distribution, there were challenges of logistics, administrative bottlenecks and wild allegations of sharp corrupt practices which became a largesse for family and friends of some of the people saddled with the responsibility to distribute palliatives in different parts of the country. This was on a larger scale seen as an abysmal failure. It has now cast a shadow of doubt as to whether this one could be anything different.

UNFORTUNATELY, the palliatives are coming at a time when the pains of the subsidy removal has already spread into every fabric of the Nigerian society with dire consequences like a cancerous tumor that is life threatening and deferring any meaningful solutions.

SUFFICE IT TO SAY, it is like providing medicine to a dying patient because, the announcement came without first laying the proactive measures that would have eased the ripple effects of the petroleum subsidy removal. For instance, fixing the ailing refineries back on stream, putting necessary economic policies that would absorb the chain effects on the living conditions of the entire populace. For instance, coming up with social security policies to take care of the vulnerable and less privileged as well as ensuring general food sufficiency nationwide.

RATHER, the haste by the federal authority to gain political capital out of the mess created by the subsidy regime and its ugly past should have been handled with utmost caution. Going by the trend of events necessitated by anti-people policies in the past, coupled with the hash economic realities unleashed on the citizens, going by the Naira scarcity that paralyzed the economy, as well as the torment caused by terrorists activities, kidnapping and banditry to the extent of bringing the entire country on its knees.

THE SHAME Is, Nigeria with its vast human and natural resources is now a full member of comity of poverty stricken nations who share grains and petty cash to its people not because it is poor, but because a negligible number of the nation's elites have decided that nothing good will come out of this nation.

HOWEVER, and going forward, the Federal Government must as a matter of serious concern, with the pains caused by the fuel subsidy removal, come up with new strategies that would effectively monitor the distribution of the palliatives in collaboration with stakeholders such as Civil Society Organisations, religious organisations and traditional institutions in partnership with relevant government agencies in all the states. This is so that the impact can be felt by the intended beneficiaries.

Our stand is, governments at all tiers must resist any attempt to divert the allocated funds for other projects outside this area of priority. States must therefore be guided by good conscience, backed by a strong political will to walk the talk for the common good of humanity, sacrifice, display of empathy and good governance in the interest of all.

NEWS

NLC declares two-day warning strike

Plans are underway by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) to embark on a nationwide strike over the lingering hardship on the citizens within the next three weeks.

Congress said this at the end of its National Executive Council (NEC) meeting held in Abuja. At the meeting, the NLC said it deeply analysed the prevailing national sentiment, taking into account the extensive hardships and deprivation afflicting the citizens across all states of the federation.

It said the council scrutinised the Federal Government's failure to establish essential structures to address the widespread suffering in the nation and has refused to engage and reach an agreement with organised labour on the critical issues of the consequences of the unfortunate hike in the price of petrol, which has unleashed massive suffering on Nigerian workers and masses.

In a communique jointly signed by its President, Joe Ajaero and General Secretary, Emmanuel Ugboaja, Congress resolved: "To embark on a total and indefinite shutdown of the nation within 14

working days or 21 days from today (yesterday) until steps are taken by the Government to address the excruciating mass suffering and impoverishment being experienced around the country."

NLC also disclosed that it will embark on a two-day industrial action to protest against the occupation of the national headquarters of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW).

"To commence a 2-day nationwide warning strike on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 5th & 6th of September, 2023 to demonstrate our readiness for the indefinite strike later in the month and to also demand that the State vacates the illegally occupied National Headquarters of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)," Congress stated.

The national umbrella body of Nigerian workers also hinted that its protest march will berth in Imo state later in September for what it described as a major shutdown of the state to compel the state government to stop the abuse and violation of the rights and privileges of workers and trade unions in the

state.

Also, the NLC stated that it will begin the shutdown of the operations of Airpeace Airline and other companies in the Aviation sector that are involved in serial violation of the rights of workers in the sector to freedom of association and to collectively bargain and organise.

Congress also called on communities around the nation to stop taking laws into their own hands but report to the authorities for amicable resolution of any matter involving members of the Amalgamated Union of Food Stuffs and Cattle Dealers of Nigeria (AUFCDN), which is one of our affiliates.

It also urged the new Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike to desist from threatening poor masses in the FCT with demolition of their properties built from their years of toil but should focus on making houses available to the people.

"He is not a Minister of Demolition and should be prepared to meet Nigerian workers and citizens on the street if he carries out his insensitive utterances," it said.

FG to negotiate on tuition fee hike

The Minister of State for Education, Dr Yusuf Sununu, has said the Federal Government will set up a formal negotiation team between the Parent-Teacher Association and other relevant stakeholders to meet on the recent increase in tuition fees for schools across the country.

Speaking at a news conference in commemoration of the International Day to Protect Education from Attack in Abuja on Friday, the minister said the hike in school fees could be the major cause of the various attacks happening across schools, adding that there was a need to find a solution to the problem.

Sununu also said that the Federal Government had ratified the Safe School Declaration in December 2019 and developed a safe school policy to uphold the right to education in emergency situations.



Sununu

He said, "So many areas that require finances are being attacked but we must also look at the constitutional provisions. The constitution expressly states free education but with a caveat, 'when government can afford' and that is why it also comes as voluntary contributions by all stakeholders. When we say

safety in schools, it is a collective responsibility. So, we are going to encourage formal negotiations.

"Where we cannot provide, it is to encourage PTA and relevant institutions so that we can agree to a term that is acceptable to all of us. Also, we will encourage a lot of partnerships as part of areas that can bring peace. Whether we agree or not, we must appreciate the role of PTAs in sustaining services in lots of our schools at both local and federal levels.

"So, while we do that with scarce resources at the ministry level, we try to see how we can block leakages and see how more funds can be available to schools to ensure that quality education is affordable, acceptable to every Nigerian without decreasing the quality of education."

DSS arrests CBN Deputy Governor Obiora

Deputy Governor of the Economic Policy Directorate of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Kingsley Obiora, has been detained by officials of the Department of State Services (DSS).

His detention has thrown the CBN into a state of anxiety as many staff of the apex bank are confused.

A security source confirmed Obiora's detention, according to our correspondent

While confirming the arrest, the source also confirmed he is not the only CBN official with the DSS but he refused to disclose the identities of the others.

It is being widely reported that Kingsley Obiora is in the DSS detention at the behest of the Special Investigations Panel set up by President Bola Tinubu, to investigate the

tenure of the suspended Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, Mr Godwin Emezie.

It was alleged that the Jim Obaseki-led Special Investigations Panel "is mounting pressure on Obiora to stand as a witness against the suspended bank chief.

The panel is pressuring Obiora, a previous adviser, to testify against Emezie.

While authorities have been questioning other senior officials of the bank, Dr Obiora is not accused of fraud or theft.


However, sources suggest the panel is insisting he knows more than he is sharing regarding Emezie's tenure, though he has apparently been highly cooperative despite their frustrating efforts.

Obiora was a policy chief at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and advised former




Obiora

finance minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Godwin Emezie until March 2, 2020, when he was confirmed to his current position as one of CBN's four deputy governors.



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum
On Sunday**

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"Alex is a result oriented and insightful leader who sees and encourages teamwork as the basis for continuous result and empowerment. He is renowned for high ethics, intelligence, handwork and fun to be. He has positively touched an appreciative generation of young trade and consumer teams, marketers and managers' says Danjuma (Danjay) John-Ekele. With all the recommendations built around his person and skills, it is little wonder he has risen to contribute by adding value in the tasks assigned to him. To serve as a link to encourage, Build Courage to Be Free to succeed authored by him is one of the tools left in print to mold young persons."

Sometimes at the tail end of year 2022, a piece of news that took the corporate world by storm was the appointment of Mr. Alexander Goma as Ag Chief Operating Officer of Nigeria's telco giant, Globacom.

This is not to limit him to a space, however to think that he is from Kanke in Plateau State, was heartwarming and a challenge to many who wanted a role model. Those who are privileged to have followed the track record of his career can only but marvel at the trajectory and breadth of his experience.

His rise may not be surprising; it is the quality of what he offers that has endeared him severally. But even more revealing is the number of corporate organizations he has worked for over the years. This is not to forget those he has mentored in the course of his tour of duty across the globe.

He scarcely had retired from Grand Cereals as its Managing Director than he couldn't be allowed to take the deserved rest he needed, after he had created a niche in the corporate world. From his antecedence, people in his mold hardly have time for retirement; they are always figuring that enough may have been conquered; as such, he needed the test from other worlds.

He had reiterated this way, when I sought to talk with him sometime in September 2022 in a chat: I am retiring from Grand Cereals but might still be active for a while'.

The telecom industry may be entirely a different piece of cake altogether. But, if he has much to prove that he had a lot to offer yet, coming to Globacom was not an addition to his rich resume, it is evident that he has a lot to offer yet.

His stint in Globacom was short-lived, as he resigned within 6 months. He hasn't spoken about why he chose to resign, but from those who know him, Alex they say, will not stay if there is a conflict of values.

Those who have worked with Alex Goma refer to him as the 'General' or 'Professor'. Yours sincerely tried to get to the bottom of their reverence of him. The various assertions are revealing, as they tell a story to those meeting him for the first time what they stand to gain if they took after him.

Indeed, they are many and scattered in various organizations adding value to productivity, but particularly to the development of the nation's economy. Why won't they be rubbed of the same tendencies? It is said that, those who accompany loaders of cement bags will always have grey hairs also.

It is possible, you may want to know what has made Alex Goma become a General and also Professor while he lasted. The answers available in the thread of recommendations are instructive as they paint a picture of a man that has made the needed impact in the corporate world.

He has brought the necessary rigour and discipline meant to achieve huge success to tasks and of those working with him. Therefore, they always look forward to any assignment that he was involved in order to learn something from his experience.

For him to have flown the flag of success atop the corporate world in six countries that include: Egypt, Senegal, Ghana, Mauritania, Gambia and Nigeria couldn't have been less tasking. He was prepared right from the day he set foot at his first work place: Highland Bottling Company Ltd as Quality Control Assistant in October 1991.

Alex Goma: How he navigated Nigeria's corporate landscape



Goma

Determined to carve a niche and be the best in the corporate world, he reckon it won't be a tea party; neither was he going to be given on a platter of gold. He was armed with the requisite education having attended University of Port Harcourt and the University of London for a degree in Biochemistry and Law in 1989 and 2016 respectively.

The door of success was opened soon after while transferring his capacities for excellence to Leventis Store as Store Manager in 1992. No wonder, Alex has straddled Nigeria's corporate landscape and left his mark of success in companies like Guinness, PZ, Procter and Gamble, UAC etc.

Over the years, Alexander Goma's expertise in general management, sales and trade marketing, customer service/logistics spans 6 countries in Africa, with dedicated 'interest in building sustainable organizations that deliver results on a consistent basis'. This expertise resulted in him becoming a specialist in commercial strategy, customer marketing, customer service and logistics, distributor management, route to market planning.

You may say it is quite mouthful to have built and managed result oriented multi functional teams. Such have without doubt enabled him launch new brands, grown sales volume, market share, enhanced profitability and created leadership organizations over the years.

Above all, Goma has, without doubt 'played major roles in developing sales capability programs and management trainee schemes to build a pipeline of future talent'. That experience in the development of distributors and their infrastructure is focused on direct retail selling, secondary supply chain and demand management'; apart 'from enormous experience in retail chain stores operations as well as

quality control in the beverage industry'.

It is possible he may have been asked severally on what he feels about constant job mobility and a long-term commitment to an organization by employees. Consider his ardent view about it: I personally feel staying with a company for a longer period can indeed offer several benefits compared to frequently switching jobs'.

That is true as there are some potential advantages attached to such a decision: Apart from job security, by staying with a company for an extended period, you establish a sense of stability and job security. You become familiar with the company culture, work processes, and expectations, which can lead to reduced stress and a greater sense of belonging'.

Secondly, he avers and truly so that 'deep industry and company knowledge enables long-term employees often give them the opportunity of having deep knowledge of their industry and the specific workings of their company; particularly so, as one is able to 'develop specialized skills, become a subject matter expert, and provide valuable insights and guidance to colleagues and management'.

Again, the facts that companies prioritize internal promotions and career developments for their loyal employees, opportunities such as these are most often pronounced. Those who are willing to stay for long 'may have the chance to take on new responsibilities, lead projects, and advance their career within the organization'.

The above may not be all, they also include: Strong professional network, building strong relationships within a company over an extended period, enhanced benefits and perks for their loyalty, reputation and trust: One's commitment and dedication to the organization can enhance credibility and open doors for future career

opportunities.

Whether as the Ag Chief Operating Officer of Globacom or Managing Director in Grand Cereals; Corporate Strategy and External Affairs Director; Managing Director PZ Cussons Consumer SBU, Sales Director; Guinness Nigeria PLC (A Diageo Company), Head of Trade Marketing and Distribution; Country Manager Senegal; Gambia, Mauritania, Trade Marketing Development Manager; Regional Sales Manager; Customer Service and Logistics Projects Manager; District Manager North & West Nigeria; District Manager Ghana; Category Mgr Fabric and Homecare P&G Egypt; Customer Marketing Manager West Africa; Unit Sales Manager (North Nigeria); Sales Representative (Plateau, Benue, Nassarawa States); Store Manager Leventis Stores; there is no doubt that he has paid his dues and should be counted in the 'A League' without questioning.

For a man that is imbued with great and abundant skills that are capable of changing lives, since 2010, he has facilitated a number of programs focused on building capacity of fresh graduates and Mid career professionals, from the Lagos Business school, Afterschool Graduate Development Program(AGDC) to the LACE Foundation and a wide number of programs across the country.

There have been great recommendations that have come from numerous persons who are today shining lights in different fields of human endeavours across Africa. For instance, Ademola Olugbenga Adeoye, Sales Director at Flour Mills of Nigeria had this to say of Goma: Alex led a demotivated and weather beaten 200 man Guinness Nigeria Plc sales team through one of the most turbulent phases in the business history. His resilience, focus and unrepentant belief in people and basic commercial fundamentals returned the business back to the Golden Era'.

He is, according to him, 'a great leader who takes you to the trench and equally fights with you from the trench with an unusual gift for "Tasks Simplification" to deliver business objectives. He is one of the best I've ever worked with in my career'.

Omare-Ogah Ejiro had this to say about him: 'Alex is a motivational leader who demonstrates uncommon insight in resolving business challenges. He engenders the qualities of courage and integrity within the organisation, as enablers of business growth.

He has a reputation for driving the fundamentals to deliver exponential results, and his genius is manifested in his ability to define those fundamentals. It is my wish that every upwardly mobile professional and aspiring business, finds the opportunity to experience the brand-Alexander Goma'.

Across the shores of Nigeria, Assante Tidiane, Business Unit Manager Ivory Coast Cluster at BIC said he 'first met Alex during a workshop in Ghana on brand proposition statement development; he is such an amazing guy, very charismatic and knowledgeable in business management cutting across all areas such as consumer marketing, channel development and sales management. He is a mentor anyone who would want to sharpen his skills in the areas of consumer marketing and trade marketing should go after. I was impressed by the accuracy of his

guidance'.

Muktar Ibrahim, a Trade Marketing & Distribution Specialist first met Alex in BAT; he sees him 'as that kind of leader that can create a stunning transformation in an organization. He is very passionate at work and supportive; a self-effacing individual that always displayed a fierce resolve to do what needs to be done to move the business forward no matter how difficult.

'Apart from encouraging teamwork, he is humble, selfless, and fearless. Alex carries no air of self-importance, yet creates superb results. I benefited a lot from his wealth of experience and would love to work with him again and again.

'I knew Alex in the two years I worked for Procter & Gamble in sub-Saharan West Africa. He was result oriented, a team player who had an open-door policy, allowing younger colleagues to learn from his vast experience, work ethics and remarkable analytical/problem solving skills. He is intelligent, focused, driven, showed an enviable work-life balance and always had a healthy dissatisfaction for the status-quo (always wanting to step-change things for the better). Alex would no doubt prove to be an asset to any organisation he chooses to work for and I recommend him unreservedly to any work team', so says Emeka Anene of Shell.

Mr. Goma Alex 'is passionate at work. He is very willing to support and give advice to new joiner like me at that time in Nigeria. On one case during the launch of the project, i was very impress by his leadership and the way he push us to achieve our goals. His performance during the program was quite remarkable and that impressed us all.

'I'm totally confident that Mr. Alex Goma shall definitely become a very valuable asset to any company in the World' is the opinion of Serge Patrice Bossom, a sales director from Cameroon.

'Alex is a result oriented and insightful leader who sees and encourages teamwork as the basis for continuous result and empowerment. He is renowned for high ethics, intelligence, handwork and fun to be. He has positively touched an appreciative generation of young trade and consumer teams, marketers and managers' says Danjuma (Danjay) John-Ekele.

With all the recommendations built around his person and skills, it is little wonder he has risen to contribute by adding value in the tasks assigned to him. To serve as a link to encourage, Build Courage to Be Free to succeed authored by him is one of the tools left in print to mold young persons.

Currently, he is engaged in business consulting and training for organizations around business strategy, sales, marketing, and leadership.

Apart from that, he has accepted a role as Chairman of Tomato Jos Ltd, a tomato processing company based in Kaduna; as well as engaging in a part-time role as an Executive in Residence at the Lagos Business School.

Being engaged in all his official engagements over the years, one would wonder if he has time to relax. They say, all works without play, makes Jack a dull boy. His day is said to be made when he relaxes either playing golf, watching his favourite clubs Arsenal and Plateau United play to win. It is still surprising that he still plays football actively and is a member of Pro Leisure FC Jos, Belle United FC Lagos, Naija Gunners Lagos and Crest



Our eurocentric craze

ONE of the worst traits Nigerians possess is that they like copying anything European. It doesn't matter if what they're copying is wrong as far as its root can be traced to anything European. Take for instance, our dressing, we still hold in high esteem the European dress code. That is why formal dressing is nothing African. The only respect accorded African dressing is one day out of the 5 working days, for bankers which is Friday. What a shame!

The copy cats that we are saw prisoners in foreign films doing ass-down and we have joined them. We thought it was fashionable not realising that prisoners pull their trousers down, exposing their boxers because their trousers are usually short for them.

We like answering their names even when we can't pronounce them. A good example is my name which is spelt: Yvonne but in the pronunciation the 'y' is pronounced as 'ee' sound. But because it is alien to us, my name is one of the names that has suffered on the lips of my country men. I have been called Evon, Vonne, Ibon, Weavon, Iwon. This can be very annoying but do you blame them, it is not their language. It is a French name adopted by the English. If one was called Shitnaa, that could have been pronounced easily.

I once overheard a mother calling her daughter Charon instead of Sharon. My dad's name was James but my grandmother, his mother used to call him Zhemis. My sister Helen used to be called Helin, the intonation also very wrong making it sound very different from how the white men pronounce it.

Why go through all these troubles when you can easily name your child in your local dialect and save yourself the tongue twisting. A lot of humiliation can be avoided if we accord our local dialects half the respect we accord English. What is wrong with the name Naanzem, Zemyen, Kemi, Funke, Godiya, Simi, etc. These are beautiful names with beautiful meanings.

It is fashionable for us not to speak our local dialect or even understand it. But it is an offence to our ears for one to use the wrong English tenses when speaking. Meanwhile, we can comfortably murder our local dialect and laugh it off. As far as it is not English, we are ok.

On top of all this, we believe the ultimate achievement is to relocate one's family abroad to USA or Europe. Or to go to these countries and school. We see nothing good in

what is ours. That is why the horrid stories about Nigerians going overseas by crook or by chance still abound. Even their stories of woes in these countries is a disgrace to our claim as the giant of Africa.

One could say that these countries are developed. But when will we ever have the will to develop our country if our best hands are leaving the shores of our land in droves. Our case is so bad because those at the corridors of power think more of oiling their pockets than making the country better for all of us.

Another issue of grave concern is that of medical tourism. Our government and those at the helm of affairs and their family members fly abroad at the slightest hint of headache. This action, more than anything tells us that our government has no confidence in our health institutions. They know what they have deposited in Nigeria and what it translates to. Garbage in, garbage out. You can't give what you don't have.

One would think, since we idolise European way of doing things, we would emulate their way of doing things. For example, they are timely, orderly, keep their streets very neat. They frown at corruption, and expose crime instead of aiding it.

This is not to say the white man's society is without faults.. There are but they fight it collectively. They love their country and can die for it. They are our opposite.

They are not religious but try to do their best. . Nigerians on the other hand, are very religious, but the atrocities we commit in the dark, forgetting that God knows everything. He rewards us according to the cleanness of our hands.

More than ever before, the challenge of security has taken centre stage. Where the countries we are copying fight insecurity collectively, ours is handled with kid gloves. We are yet to prioritise security and spend more on the necessary gadgets. As far as security is concerned, we are sitting on time bomb. Our security outfits are yet to move ahead of our insurgents. Somehow, they beat them at the game.

Their institutions are strengthened but ours are still going in circles because of corruption and lack of political will. Nigerians need to change the way they do things in order to get it right. That also involves changing our mind-sets. The change begins

NEWS

PLSG calls on Canadian Government for assistance

By PETER TITLE

GOVERNOR Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has sought the assistance of the Canadian Government in areas of peace building , agriculture, gender equality and capacity building.

He made the appeal at a meeting with the Canadian High Commissioner in Nigeria, Jamie Christoff at the Canadian Embassy in Abuja recently.

The Plateau State Governor expressed concern over the escalating security challenges that have negatively impacted the state, leading to deaths, displacement of innocent villagers, particularly women and children. He stressed that addressing these issues was crucial in tackling the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the state.

According to him, the Canadian Government intervention would facilitate the state's recovery and propel it towards sustainable growth and development. Mutfwang stated that the gesture would empower rural communities to contribute significantly to the state economy.

Highlighting the historic bond between Nigeria and Canada, Governor Mutfwang underscored Plateau State's intention to leverage on the partnership to improve the well-being of internally displaced people (IDPs), and promote gender equality.

He revealed that he intentionally appointed a woman as Deputy Governor and has also incorporated a significant number of women into governmental roles to advance gender equality within the state.

Gov. Mutfwang therefore requested for collaboration in the fields of health, education, and mineral exploration and urged the Canadian Government to leverage its extensive network to transform the current situation in Plateau State.

Canadian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Jamie Christoff in response, welcomed the governor and praised his efforts in



Mutfwang

fostering peace within the state. Hebacknowledged Mutfwang's commitment to gender inclusivity as exemplified by the appointment of women into key positions

Mr Christoff briefed the governor on the collaborative initiatives between the Canadian and Nigerian Government which he said focuses on human dignity, health and education, gender equality and women empowerment.

Others, the high commissioner noted are inclusive governance, environmental sustainability as well as humanitarian support. And affirmed Canada's steadfast commitment to promoting peace and security in Nigeria. He pledged to collaborate closely with the Plateau State Government to improve the lives of its citizens.

Sympathizes with Shendam people

Governor Caleb Mutfwang has conveyed his heartfelt sympathy and unwavering solidarity to the people of Shendam Local Government Area over the collapse of a bridge that affected Shendam and environs.

Disclosing this in a release signed and made available to journalists in Jos by the Director of Press and Public Affairs (DOPA), Gyang

Bere, he said the governor expressed deep sorrow over the distressing incident, emphasizing the significant challenges it has imposed on the communities that rely on the bridge for seamless conduct of their farming and other commercial activities.

According to the statement, Mutfwang affirmed his unwavering support for the people of Shendam and the neighbouring communities and described the incident as unfortunate.

He assured them of government's commitment to reconstructing the bridge and restore connectivity to the impacted communities, thereby fostering economic activities.

The governor observed with concern the unfortunate reoccurrence of the collapse of the bridge, which he reiterated originally was built in the 1970s.

He called for urgent need to ensure efficiency in government contracts in order to deliver value to the populace and local communities.

Mutfwang however expressed gratitude that the incident did not result in any loss of life, while also cautioning the citizens in anticipation of predicted flooding

POLITICS

PLHA constitutes additional standing committees

By PAULINE DALLONG

In order to effectively manage activities of the Tenth Assembly, the Plateau State House of Assembly (PLHA), has constituted additional nineteen (19) House Standing Committees, bringing the number of its committees to twenty four (24).

The House Standing Committees and their respective chairmen were announced by the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule, during plenary.

Recall that the Speaker had in July, constituted five (5) House Standing Committees which included that of Selection, Rules, Business, Inter-governmental and Inter-parliamentarian, Services and Welfare, Labour and Security and that of Fund Management.

Shortly after pronouncing the committees, he directed the clerk of the House to prepare the list of those who will serve as secretaries to the respective committees and submit to his office within the shortest possible time.

While issuing a warning, Rt. Hon. Sule directed that no director should be appointed to serve as secretary of any committee for whatever reason, adding that no committee should also embark on an oversight function without the approval of the Speaker.

Some of the constituted committees include the following: Education,



Moses

Science and Technology which is to be chaired by Hon. Philip Jwe with the deputy as Hon. Nanbol Rimvyat, Health has as chairman, Hon. Salome Wanglek while the deputy chairman is Hon. Cornelius Doeyok.

For the committee on Culture and Tourism, Hon. Samaila Bala is the chairman and Hon. Danjuma Azi is the deputy chairman. Appropriation has as chairman, Hon. Danjuma Azi and Paul Datugun as deputy.

Women Affairs and Social Development has Hon. Happiness Akawu as chairman, her deputy is Hon. Salome Wanglek, while that of Youth and Sports has Hon. Joseph Gokum as Chairman, to be

deputized by Hon. Philip Jwe. The Committee on Housing and Urban Development is to be chaired by Hon. Nanbol Rimvyat, with Hon. Adamu Aliyu serving as the deputy chairman.

Others are Environment and Solid Minerals which has as chairman, Hon. Kalamu Idris and Hon. Danjuma Azi as deputy chairman, while that of Judiciary, Ethics and Privileges is to be chaired by Hon. Adamu Aliyu with Hon. Nannim Joseph as deputy chairman.

A chieftain of New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP), Ambassador Olufemi Ajadi Oguntoyinbo has described the purported suspension of the 2023 Presidential candidate of the party, Senator Rabiu Kwankwaso by some people within the party as null and void.

Oguntoyinbo, who spoke recently said that those who carried out the purported suspension had earlier been expelled by the party's National Executive Committee.

He described the alleged suspension as illegal, null and void.

Recall that some people within the party had on Tuesday announced that Kwankwaso, a former governor of Kano State and some other members had been suspended by the party.

Oguntoyinbo in his reaction, explained that the party at its National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held in Abuja recently, had accused the BoT Chairman, Dr Boniface Aniebonam and the National Publicity Secretary, Agbo Major and others of anti-party activities.

He added that the duo had been expelled from the party and had no moral justification to suspend anyone in the party.

He maintained that Kwankwaso remains a formidable leader of the party.

Oguntoyinbo, who was the

Suspension of Kwankwaso is null and void - NNPP chieftain

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO, Ibadan



Kwankoso

gubernatorial candidate of NNPP in the March 2023 election in Ogun State said any purported suspension of Kwankwaso is null and void.

He added that Aniebonam particularly, was accused of creating a parallel group within the party with a view to causing disaffection in the NNPP.

Oguntoyinbo, in the statement made available to journalists recently said, "It is a huge joke. According to him, Kwankwaso remains a formidable leader of the party. Any purported suspension of Kwankwaso is null and void.

"Following the National

Working Committee (NWC) dissolution of seven state executive committees as well as suspension of the founder and Chairman of Board of Trustees, Dr. Boniface Aniebonam and the National Publicity Secretary, Dr. Agbo Major, the NEC ratified their expulsion from the party.

"Therefore the meeting which had in attendance the Governor of Kano State, Engr. Abba Kabir Yusuf, and the Speaker of the Kano State House of Assembly, Alhaji Jibrin Falgore in attendance at Bolingo Hotel, Abuja expelled Boniface, Major and their cohorts from the NNPP".

... Calls for reconstruction of collapsed bridges

By PAULINE DALLONG

which was destroyed by heavy rainfall recently.

This was contained in a motion moved during plenary by Hon. Joseph

generating revenues through the utilisation of the state's vast mineral resources, healthcare, education, infrastructure, and economic development, have placed him far ahead of his competitors.

"He has successfully cultivated broad-based public support across diverse ethnic groups, resonating with voters from various backgrounds. His ability to unite these communities under a common goal reflects his strong leadership qualities and positioned him as the candidate to secure victory at the polls," he hinted.

While stressing that the participants showed degree of excitement and expectations in assuring the electorate to come out enmass to vote for Muritala Ajaka, he urged the people to eschew actions that will ignite violence and breach of security before, during and after the election.

THE Plateau State House of Assembly (PLHA) has, in a matter of urgent public importance, called on the state government to immediately reconstruct the Total Bridge in Shendam

Bukar, the member representing Shendam constituency and also House Minority Leader and seconded by Hon. Nannim Joseph Langyi, member representing Langtang North North constituency.

In their separate contributions, Hon. Langyi and his Wase counterpart, Hon. Adamu Galadima, revealed that besides the bridge in Shendam, the Langtang- Wase Bridge which has been destroyed for years, also needs reconstruction.

Other members who supported the motion, laid emphasis on the importance of the road which links Plateau with other states, adding that the social, trade and business benefits cannot be overemphasized.

To this motion, the Speaker Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule resolved among other things, to call for the holistic reconstruction of the two bridges in order to allow for normal activities within the affected communities.

The House in another motion, also resolved to mandate its Committee on Works to check with the state Ministry of Works,

Transport and that of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs to ascertain which contractors left uncompleted road works so they can be mandated to get back to site.

This was arrived at following the motion moved by Hon. Ibrahim Agbalak, the member representing Rukuba/Irigwe constituency and Deputy Majority Leader who called for the urgent intervention and reconstruction of the Jebbu Bassa- Binchi road and Jebbu Miango- ANAN, Kwall road.

Members were unanimous in their support for the motion, while calling for the re-award of notable uncompleted projects, including the rehabilitation of deplorable roads across the state.

Meanwhile, the bill for the establishment of Plateau State International ICT Institute, Assak in Bassa Local Government Area sponsored by Hon. Ibrahim Agbalak, representing Rukuba/Irigwe constituency, scaled through the second reading stage.

Kogi guber: CPDD mobilises support for candidate

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Adejoh explained that based on the antecedents and track records of the SDP candidate, it has become imperative for the electorate across Kogi, irrespective of ethnic, class and religious sentiments, to mobilise total support for him, to launch the state into social and economic hub of the country.

He said with the rising profile and acceptability of the SDP candidate, concerted efforts by the people of the state is needed to translate the momentum into actual votes.

He said both commentators and analysts on the programme have tacitly predicted that Muritala Ajaka, if all things being equal, the outcome of the election will swing to his favour.

According to Adejoh, "With the election in Kogi drawing near, the political landscape has been marked by intense

competition among various candidates. Alhaji Muritala Yakubu Ajaka, of the SDP has consistently stood out, drawing an organic and infectious followership due to his experience and well-articulated vision and mission for the state.

He said his popularity was heightened by both the panelists and contributors to the programme, who acknowledged Alhaji Muritala's roles in providing relief to 2022 flood-ravaged victims, personal sacrifices and community development to be of significant contributions to his success at the poll.

"His track record is seen as a testament to his commitment to the welfare of the citizens, instilling trust in his ability to effectively address the state's most pressing issues.

"Ajaka's comprehensive vision for the state, which encompasses vital areas such as providing employment and

SUNDAY POLITICS

Presidential Villa: 90 days after Tinubu's inauguration

It is not uncommon to hear such sayings like "he is one of our own" "Our man is there now" and the latest in Nigeria's political lexicon "Emilokan" or better still "awa lokan" literally meaning "it is my turn" or "our turn." ANTHONY AILMEN writes.



NIGERIA's fragile federal structure is characterised by lopsided and imbalanced access to the "commonwealth."

But to check this, Section 14(3) of the 1999 constitution as amended, prescribed and established the federal character system.

According to that section, "The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and to promote national unity and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies."

Based on the above, the purpose of the federal character was to prevent the dominance by any sectional group, be it ethnic, geographic or religious, in the country's political governance.

Also, Section 147 [3] of the Nigerian Constitution, mandates the federal government to ensure that appointments of Ministers reflect the number of states of the federation and FCT, to satisfy the federal character of Nigeria in appointments to public offices.

An assessment of the President's appointments so far, however, indicates that there has been no clear departure from the old order, a system that almost allows for a "winner

takes it all" approach

Expectedly, President Tinubu's programme in his early days in office was controlled by a team of personal aides, close friends and family members who constituted a small "cabal" headed by Wale Edu, now Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy; Dele Alake, now Minister of Solid Minerals Development and later, Femi Gbajabiamila, the Chief of Staff (CoS) to the President

Until the recent appointment of Ajuri Ngelale as the President's Spokesman, his retinue of aides were largely made up of those from one ethnic group; that is in the President's appointment of senior special assistants (SSAs), personal assistants (PAs), personal physician, and photographers.

In an effort to have full grip of the security forces at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, the President appointed his kinsman, Adebisi Onasanya, a Colonel, as the Commander, elite Guards Brigade, that provide personal protection for the President.

He also appointed Moshood Yusuf, a Lieutenant Colonel, as Commander, 7 Guards Battalion, Asokoro, Abuja.

The Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Health, Olufunso Adebisi has been redeployed to the State House and has assumed duties after handing over ceremony at the Ministry on Friday 11 August 2023.

Bisoye Coker-Odusote is the general manager/CEO of the Lagos State Infrastructure

Maintenance and Regulatory Agency (LASIMRA) who has been appointed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as Director General (DG) of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC).

Coker-Odusote had previously worked as a Special Adviser on Technology to President Tinubu, when he was the Governor of Lagos, from 1999-2007.

The strength of South West lobbying power also reflected in the recent appointment of Ministers, as they got nine Ministers

This includes; Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Bosun Tijani, Minister of State, Environment -Ishak Salako, Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of The Economy Wale Edun, Minister of Interior, Bunmi Tunji-Ojo.

Others are the Minister of Power, Adebayo Adedun, Minister of State, Health and Social Welfare, Tunji Alausa, Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, Minister of Tourism, Lola Ade-John, Minister of Marine & Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola

Others include Minister of State, Housing and Urban Development Abdullahi T. Gwarzo, Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Atiku Bagudu, Minister Of State, Federal Capital Territory, Mairiga Mahmud, Minister Of State, Water Resources and Sanitation, Bello M. Goronto and a yet-to-be allocated Minister of Youth Development.

Similarly, the North East has the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Abubakar Kyari, Minister of Education, Tahir

Maman, Minister of Transportation, Sa'idu A. Alkali, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf M. Tuggar, Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Ali Pate; Minister of Police Affairs, Ibrahim Geidamand; Minister of State, Steel Development, U. Maigari Ahmadu.

The North Central got the Minister of State, Steel Development, Shuaibu A. Audu; Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi; Minister of Information and National Orientation, Muhammed Idris, and Minister of Labour and Employment, Simon B. Lalong.

Others are Minister of State, Police Affairs, Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim; Minister of Special Duties and Inter-Governmental Affairs, Zephaniah Jisalo; Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, Joseph Utsev, add Minister of State, Agriculture and Food Security, Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi.

These appointments were seen as a likely repeat of the former President Buhari's era, which completely negated the expectations of a cross section of Nigerians that the President Bola Tinubu administration would have first initiated a broad-based policy for national reconciliation to strengthen unity and gain acceptance.

They also believe that the place to start is not by "wishing away" the election and asking for Nigerians' support.

Audu, in his analysis, believes that the APC government and in particular, President Bola Tinubu, will however face a herculean task, given the process through which he

emerged.

"There is no doubt that globally, many of Nigeria's trading partners will be very cautious in dealing with him, based on the opinions of international observers on the outcome of the 2023 general election.

Audu, who believes that the world is now a global village, noted that only a strong policy initiative to revive the economy will help create the needed confidence in his administration "He must also not make the mistake of bringing in those crooks who helped him to rig the election in the name of rewarding them."

According to him, Tinubu should have distanced himself from those he described as political "crooks and criminals," adding that "the government must not be used as compensation platform for political thugs and miscreants in the name of rewarding political associates and who helped him to win the election."

He declared that these would ensure that his government has legitimacy and would attract the necessary support.

"He needs to ensure that whoever he appoints also declares his/her assets, immediately they take over offices, as well as carry out strong judicial reform and ensure a proper separation of powers between the three arms of government.

"Others will include carrying out deep-rooted security reforms, because we cannot continue to allow our policemen to guard crooks and criminals," he said.

SUNDAY POLITICS

The high cost of Buhari's infrastructure neglect

Improper monitoring and poor funding structure affected the successful execution of the programme according to Lanre Elatuyi, an energy analyst. He says, the changes that occurred in the leadership of some distribution companies also affected the programme because most could not continue with the payment plans, writes ONYINYE NWACHUKWU.

FOR him, even though it was a good initiative, stakeholders, especially meter producers, are not satisfied with the government's funding plan.

He said: "The programme faces several challenges, including funding.

"The meter producers do not agree to the unit cost that the federal government is willing to pay per unit of the meter; some of the meters supplied at the first phase were not fully paid for. So this disagreement has affected the continuation of the programme. Many meter producers engaged in the first phase have yet to get back their money."

Elatuyi said, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) would need to wake up to its responsibility of adequately regulating the sector.

However, Usman Abba Arabi, general manager/head of the public affairs department, NERC, insists that the NMMP remains in progress. BusinessDay gathered that most of the DisCos have returned to the Meter Asset Providers (MAP) scheme following the failure of the NMMP.

Functioning as the pillars of any healthcare system, PHCs are the first port of call for healthcare delivery and closer to the most vulnerable groups of Nigerians and reportedly make up 82.5 percent of the total health facilities across the country, according to the Nigeria health facility registry.

The revitalization pledge aroused so much expectations and was hoped to renew Nigeria's ailing health sector. However, the Buhari-led government failed to deliver this crucial promise before leaving office.

So far, no PHC have been revitalized, as authorities confirm to BusinessDay. However, the government managed to renovate only a



Buhari

little over 4,000 – with the support of donor partners.

In April 2019, the then-minister of health, Isaac Adewole, claimed that the government revived over 4000 PHCs. However, Olayinka Oladimeji, the then director of Primary Health Care Systems Development at the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), revealed that only "plaster and paint" renovations were done, as these facilities grossly lacked in even the most basic facilities.

"Citizens crowd secondary and tertiary centres and exert much pressure on available facilities, doctors become overburdened, quality of care reduces, and due to poor welfare services, these overworked doctors and nurses seek better opportunities abroad, that's brain drain. The consequences are just too heavy", she lamented.

In 2018, Buhari promised to overhaul the education sector if

re-elected as President the following year. He further pledged that his administration would remodel and equip 10,000 schools annually.

Buhari made the promise during the public presentation of his campaign manual and a "Next Level" in Abuja.

"Perhaps our biggest ambition yet is the overhaul of our education sector. Every child counts – whatever it takes to prepare our teachers, curriculum and classrooms to attain the right educational goals that grow our country will be done. We will remodel 10,000 schools every year", he had said.

Perhaps the lofty Siemens Power deal could have helped Nigeria solve its enormous electricity challenges to a great extent, but unfortunately, it has not made any meaningful impact.

In 2019, President Buhari signed the Presidential Power Initiative (PPI) agreement with

German-based Siemens Power to modernize Nigeria's national grid and achieve 7,000 megawatts by 2021, 11,000 megawatts by 2023 and 25,000 megawatts by 2025.

The \$2.3 billion Nigeria-Siemens network improvement deal, which was hugely applauded, addressed the perennial challenges in the Nigerian power sector, covering transmission, distribution, generation, and financing.

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) had allocated €62.9 million and \$1.9 million in December 2021 for the Presidential Power Initiative's first phase (PPI) to drive the project.

Phase 2 targets expanding the capacity of the transmission and distribution systems to enable evacuation of up to 11,000 MW of electricity to consumers, whilst Phase 3 targets expanding the power grid to 25,000MW capacity through further expansion of generation, transmission, and distribution systems."

In 2021, the federal government and Siemens AG signed a six-year roadmap agreement to develop the power sector in Nigeria, targeting 11,000MW by 2023.

But Businessday findings revealed that the grid power generation only peaked at 4,329.80 MW on the 28th of August, 2023.

In May, Kenny Anuwe, the Managing Director of FGN Power Company, the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for the execution of the project, reiterated that Phase 1 was underway and has

recorded notable successes.

He explained that the pilot project remains a quick-win intervention strategy, which will unlock immediate constraints in the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI) by deploying ten power transformers and ten mobile substations nationwide.

"When we conceptualized this project in 2018, we planned that we should be done with phase one within two years, but then Covid happened," disrupting supply chains, which meant getting raw materials took longer than before."

"Some raw material components costs have been doubled, some are still close to where they used to be, some are just marginally higher," he said. In 2020, phase one was projected to cost about €2 billion," he was quoted to have said in a recent interview.

After the December 2020 launch, Nigeria's Autogas project, which had planned to reduce the country's high reliance on petrol and promote the use of gas as a cleaner and cheaper energy source for vehicles, has practically failed to make meaningful progress.

The federal government initially planned to convert up to one million vehicles – mainly passenger and haulage vehicles that run on Nigerian roads- by the end of 2021 as pilots, but that did not happen.

Ayodele Oni, Partner of the energy practice group at Bloomfield Law Practice, described the project as a brilliant idea that commenced with excellent intentions and could have revolutionized the usage of Nigeria's abundant gas resources. However, it was challenged with its implementation, which has primarily decentralized the Project.

"The Project has not been able to deliver on its set targets so far for varying reasons such as lack of decisive implementation, inadequate infrastructure (gas development infrastructure and vehicle capacity infrastructure), lack of sufficient investment in Nigeria's petroleum sector, inadequate funding and tough economic realities, increasing cost of gas, amongst others," he tells Businessday.

Just recently, President Tinubu approved the establishment of the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (PCNGI), having understood how the project could ease the current burden of subsidy removal on Nigerians by cutting down energy and transportation costs.

Businessday

"In 2018, Buhari promised to overhaul the education sector if re-elected as President the following year. He further pledged that his administration would remodel and equip 10,000 schools annually. Buhari made the promise during the public presentation of his campaign manual and a "Next Level" in Abuja. "Perhaps our biggest ambition yet is the overhaul of our education sector. Every child counts – whatever it takes to prepare our teachers, curriculum and classrooms to attain the right educational goals that grow our country will be done. We will remodel 10,000 schools every year", he had said."

SUNDAY PEOPLE

2023 NUJ PLATEAU COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Trust Team Campaign led by the Co-DG, Mrs Lucy Chindaba visited the State Information Chapel campaigning for Ayuku Pwaspo, Chairmanship, Kenneth Dareng, Secretary, Pam Musa, Vice Chairman and Danjuma Dickson Auta, Financial Secretary



Trust Campaign Council Director General, Mrs Chindaba (right) presenting posters to the NUJ Information Chapel Secretary, Mr. Daju Payi



Chairmanship candidate, Mr. Ayuku Pwaspo (right) with other candidates showing their appreciation with smiles for the assurances from the State Information Chapel.



Campaign team in a group photograph with Information Chapel EXCO and candidates of the Trust Campaign team



Ministry of Information Directors with the Ministry's EXCO of the Chapel to receive the Trust team Campaign.

Photos: DANLADI DUK

CAMPAIGN FOR NUJ ELECTIONS 2023

The New Vision Campaign team made up of Ralph Madugu for Chairmanship, Murtala Sani Hashim Vice Chairman and Mary Replong Domtur Secretary were at the NUJ, PPC Chapel, led by its Campaign DG. Mr. Bulus Gambo



New Vision Campaign Director General, Mr. Bulus Gambo flanked by candidates presenting posters to the NUJ, PPC Chairman, Mr. Israel Nanjul Lar



Mr. Victor Ali, Editor, Sunday Standard, Mrs Henrietta Gonzuk and others.



Cross section of PPC Chapel and NTA Chapel members during the visit.



Ralph Madugu for NUJ Chairman, DG of the team, Mr. Bulus Gambo in a group Photograph with NUJ, PPC Chapel members

Photos: DANLADI DUK

With the quest to effectively manage activities of the tenth assembly and ensure optimal performance for the good and benefit of the people of Plateau, Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule has announced the constitution of nineteen (19) more House Standing Committees, making it a total of twenty four (24) committees altogether.

You would recall that the speaker had earlier in July, constituted five (5) House Standing Committees which included that of Selection, Rules, Business, Inter-governmental and Inter-parliamentarian, House Services and Welfare, Labour and Security and that of Fund Management.

After the pronouncement during plenary of Tuesday 29th August, the Rt. Hon. Speaker instructed the clerk of the House to expeditiously prepare and submit to his office the list of members who will serve as secretaries to the respective committees. He however, instructed that no Director should be appointed secretary of any committee, adding also that no committee should embark on an oversight function without his consent and approval.

The committees and portfolios assigned are as follows: Education, Science and Technology: Hon. Philip Jwe - Chairman, he is the member representing Barkin Ladi constituency. Hon. Nanbol Rimvyat - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Joseph Gokum - Member, Hon. Kalamu Idris - Member, Hon. Ishaku Maren - Member.

Health: Hon. Salome Wanglek representing Pankshin South constituency - Chairman, Hon. Cornelius Doeyok - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Ibrahim Agbalak - Member, Hon. Sani Shilak - Member and Hon. Adamu Aliyu - Member.

Culture and Tourism: Hon. Samaila Bala member representing Kantana constituency as -Chairman, Hon. Danjuma Azi - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Isa Madaki - Member, Hon. Nimchak Rims - Member and Hon. Adamu Aliyu - Member.

Appropriation: Hon. Danjuma Azi member representing Jos North West is the Chairman, Hon. Paul Datugum - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Joseph Bukar - Member, Hon. Bala Fwangje - Member and Hon. Timothy Dantong - Member.

Women Affairs and Social Development: Hon. Happiness Akawu, member representing Pengana constituency as Chairman. Hon. Salome Wanglek - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Isa Madaki - Member, Hon. Sani Shilak - Member and Hon. Paul Datugum - Member.

Youth and Sports: Hon. Joseph Gokum, the member representing Kanke constituency is Chairman. Hon. Philip Jwe - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Gabriel Dewan - Member, Hon. Happiness Akawu - Member and Hon. Nannim Joeseeph - Member.

Housing and Urban Development: Hon. Nanbol Rimvyat, representing Langtang North Central, Chairman Hon. Adamu

Aliyu - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Timothy dantong - Member, Hon. Danjuma Azi - Member and Hon. Gabriel Dewan - Member.

Environment and Solid Minerals: Hon. Kalamu Idris representing Dengi constituency is Chairman, Hon. Danjuma Azi - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Sani Shilak - Member, Hon. Rims Nimchak - Member and Hon. Joeseeph Gokum - Member.

Judiciary, Ethics and Privileges: Hon. Adamu Aliyu representing Jos North North Chairman, Hon. Nannim Joseph - Deputy



As PLHA constitutes standing committees



Shilak

Chairman, Hon. Happiness Akawu - Member, Hon. Danjuma Azi - Member and Hon. Gabriel Dewan - Member

Parastatals and World Bank Projects: Hon. Paul Datugum member representing Qua'an Pan North

Chairman, Hon. Nanbol Rimvyat - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Happiness Akawu - Member, Hon. Aliyu Adamu - Member and Hon. Kalamu Idris - Member

Water Resources and Energy: Hon. Nannim Joseph representing Langtang North

North Chairman, Hon. Danjuma Azi - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Saloma Wanglek - Member, Hon. Adamu Bala - Member and Hon. Cornelius Doeyok - Member

Commerce and Industry: Hon. Galadima Adamu member representing Wase constituency Chairman, Hon. Cornelius Doeyok - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Salome Wanglek - Member, Hon. Timothy Dantong - Member and Hon. Joseph Bukar - Member.

Agriculture and Natural Resources: Hon. Sani Shilak member representing Mangu North East Chairman, Hon. Samaila Bala - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Nannim Joseph - Member, Hon. Joseph Gokum - Member and Hon. Ibrahim Agbalak - Member.

Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs: Hon. Timothy Dantong member representing Riyom constituency is to serve as Chairman, Hon. Rims Nimchak - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Salome Wanglek - Member, Hon. Philip Jwe - Member and Hon. Kalamu Idris - Member

Finance: Hon. Cornelius Doeyok representing Qua'an Pan South Chairman, Hon. Bala Fwangje - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Ibrahim Agbalak - Member, Hon. Ibrahim Adamu - Member and Hon. Danjuma Azi - Member

Information: Hon. Agbalak Ibrahim member representing Rukuba/Irigwe is the Chairman, Hon. Timothy Dantong - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Cornelius Doeyok - Member, Hon. Joseph Bukar - Member and Hon. Gabriel Dewan - Member

Works and Transport: Hon. Nimchak Rims representing Langtang South Chairman, Hon. Philip Jwe - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Maren Ishaku - Member, Hon. Joseph Bukar - Member and Hon. Paul Datugum - Member

Public Accounts and Petitions: Hon. Isa Madaki member representing Jos East constituency Chairman, Hon. Ishaku Maren - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Paul Datugum - Member, Hon. Gabriel Dewan - Member, and Hon. Nimchak Rims - Member.

Lands, Survey and Town Planning: Rt. Hon. Gwottson Fom Dalyop the Deputy Speaker and member representing Jos South constituency Chairman, Hon. Gabriel Dewan - Deputy Chairman, Hon. Nimchak Rims - Member, Hon. Ishaku Maren - Member and Hon. Paul Datugum - Member.

Selection: Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule the Speaker and member representing Mikang constituency Chairman, Rt. Hon. Gwottson Fom Dalyop Deputy Chairman.

Rules Business and Inter-governmental: Hon. Ishaku Maren the House Majority Leader and member representing Bokkos constituency Chairman, Hon. Agbalaka Ibrahim - Deputy Chairman.

House Services and Welfare: Hon. Bala Fwangje representing Mangu South constituency Chairman, Hon. Kalamu Idris - Deputy Chairman

Labour and Security: Hon. Joseph Bukar the Deputy Minority Leader and member representing Shendam constituency Chairman, Hon. Timothy Dantong - Deputy Chairman.

Fund Management: Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule Speaker and member representing Mikang constituency Chairman, Rt. Hon. Gwottson Fom. - Deputy Chairman.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Tinubu



Biya



Terlumun

Impending flood and Nigeria's preparedness

There is palpable fear, apprehension and anxiety of an impending flood in some states of Nigeria following the release of water from the Lagdo Dam in Cameroon. Such fears cannot be said to be misplaced because, in recent times, flood has caused unpalatable conditions to people in some states of the Nigeria federation. Several states have placed on the alert. VICTOR ALI examines the issues.

WATER, the popular saying goes, is life. In all ramification, the usage of water in human existence can be said to be the most singular assurance or even insurance of human existence, therefore, its importance to humanity cannot be over-emphasized. Incidentally, even lesser creation like animals depend on this all important creation of the Almighty. The Holy book teaches that God said let there be waters in the midst of the firmament. Therefore, it is a divine creation. Be that as it may, water equally has its flip side.

Both man-made and natural disasters have dwarfed the very importance of this God-given commodity. Water pollution, flood amongst others have become humanity's greatest

undoing leading to wailing, grief and death. What supposedly should be a thing of joy, sometimes result in sadness. It may be deemed the contradiction of life itself. On introspection, most often than not, humanity witnesses both positive and negative impacts of existence.

However, science and technology have advanced the human cause leading to discovery and forecast of event or incidences yet to occur. Recently, the media has been awash with reports of impending flood in some Nigeria are likely to witness massive flooding any moment as Cameroon is set to open the Lagdo Dam-The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) as listed Adamawa, Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa, Kogi, Plateau,

Gombe and Bauchi.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a memo dated August 25, 2023, alerted NEMA of a note verbal from the Cameroonian High Commission that officials had resolved to open the floodgates of the Lagdo Dam in days ahead due to the heavy rainfall around the dam's catchment area in Northern Cameroon. (**Daily Trust**, Monday August 25, 2023.)

According to the paper, "it is pertinent to note that, when the release of water becomes necessary the authorities of the Lagdo Dam will be releasing only moderated variable small amount of water at a time in order to mitigate and avoid damages that released water may cause along the river Benue basin in both Cameroon and in Nigeria. In view of the above, it would be appreciated if the esteemed agency takes all the necessary proactive steps and actions that will mitigate the damage as well as sensitize the populace living in such areas for vigilance and all necessary precautions", the ministry stated.

It would be recalled that, the Federal Government had said that, 3,219,780 persons were affected by last year's flood which as of October 24, left 1,427,370 persons internally displaced, 2776 injure and 612 killed. Stakeholders have always attributed recurring threats of flooding from the Lagdo Dam to Nigeria's failure to construct the Dasin Hausa Dam along the River Benue that would absorb water from the Lagdo Dam as jointly agreed in 1982.

Again, the aforementioned media outlet stated that, the immediate past Minister of Water Resources, Suleiman Adamu, had last year, alleged that Nigeria was not informed by Cameroon on the annual release of water from the Lagdo Dam. Hear him. "The Dam released water, sometimes it releases water without notice and when they do that, it has impact on communities downstream. It took a lot of efforts for us and them to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for them to be informing Nigeria about releases. It was sign in 2016. Since then, every year, when the flood season comes, it is the Nigeria Hydrological Services that calls them to know their level of water. We cannot blame the flood this (last) year on Cameroon. We can only blame them for violating the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)", Adamu said during a budget defence at the Senate.

Furthermore, the newspaper quoted the then minister as saying that, whether the government was able to construct the Dasin Hausa Dam or not "we'll continue to have floods on the Rivers Niger and Benue Basins. Again, hear him: "There was a consultant that had been appointed by the previous administration to work and the terms of reference. I was not satisfied that justice will be done to that design. I disengaged the consultant in 2016. It was one of the 116 projects that we had. In our roadmap, we made a decision that going forward, we have

enough dams, 37 ongoing. We cannot take any new dam, lets complete what is ongoing. We appointed a consultant to do the required diligent feasibility study and engineering, design for the project", Adamu had said.

Facing the reality of the imminent flood disaster, states across the country have started taken proactive measures to avert the impending disaster. According to a media report, (Vanguard, Monday August 28, 2023, while reacting to the alert) from Cameroon, the Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Emergency Management Authority, LASEMA, Dr. Femi Oke Osanyintolu, assured of the state government's preparedness to promptly tackle any possible emergency that could arise from the impending flood in the state. According to him, the state government has provided LASEMA with 144 units of facilities that could accommodate 5,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the event of any emergency.

Hear him: "Lagos is well prepared. As you see, LASEMA has changed from management to holistic emergency management. What we mean here is that we have moved into improved strategy of clearing canals and ensuring local governments have their local response, called Environmental Guard. The purpose is to ensure effective clearing of tertiary drainage and environmental gang clearing the secondary drainage, thereby complementing each other

Continued on page 31

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NEWS

Mutfwang calls for cross fertilisation of ideas

From
**TERESE TUHWA,
Makurdi**

The Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has emphasized the importance of cross fertilisation of ideas, noting that it was the only path towards propelling Africa's progress and development.

Governor Mutfwang shared his thought at the conclusion of the Executive Leadership Retreat, a collaborative effort between the Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), held recently in Kigali, Rwanda.

This was made known in a statement signed and made available to The Nigeria Standard by the Director of Press and Public Affairs (DOPA), to the Governor, Gyang Bere. He further said that the retreat's primary objective was aimed at fortifying the governance framework to

enhance effectiveness and efficiency in leadership within Nigeria's sub-national government.

According to the statement, Governor Mutfwang and his counterparts engaged in a fruitful dialogue with Rwanda's President, Paul Kagame which was aimed at redefining leadership as well as reshaping Nigeria for a stronger and more unified nation.

"As Africa strives for progress, the exchange of ideas and the sharing of valuable lessons are increasingly vital in making significant strides to enhance the well-being of our people", he asserted.

Recalling that the retreat drew participants from amongst Nigeria Governors and Rwanda. The theme was "Rethinking Leadership and Leading Systems" with some range of sub-themes including "Reimagining Nigeria: Exploring the



Mutfwang

Future of the Nation" among others.

The Nigeria Standard reports that Governor Mutfwang who is a staunch advocate for value-driven

governance, would replicate and bring to bear the outcome of the retreat on good governance on the Plateau and Nigeria as a whole.

Government ready to revamp media organisations - Ashoms

By **HOSEA NYAMLONG**

AS part of the government efforts to strengthen the Ministry for Information and Communication of the State, the Commissioner for Information and Communication, Plateau State, Hon. Musa Ibrahim Ashoms has assured of government's readiness to revamp the media organizations of the state

Ashoms stated this during a familiarisation tour at the headquarters of the Plateau Publishing Corporation (PPC), publishers of **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** and **SUNDAY STANDARD** recently.

He said that the Government of Barr. Caleb Mutfwang has the political will to turn around the situation of

the Corporation for the better. He added that **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** Newspaper "is a legal project that would not be allowed to die during our time. The Plateau story must be first heard from us, and not by other people telling our stories".

Ashoms maintained that we have to sustain the vision of late J.D.Gomwalk dreams, through our efforts in ensuring that we publish our news daily".

He assured the staff of the corporation that the Executive Governor was ready to bring significant change to the corporation.

According to him, "He believes that by the end of the tenure of this present

government, "the Plateau citizens would remember us in the development change of the state and the vision of late J.D.Gomwalk, who has put Plateau State on the greater map of states in the world.

Earlier in a welcome speech by the Acting General Manager of the Corporation, Mr. Paul Jatau, he appreciated the commissioner for his visit, believing that good things would come for the turnaround of the organization

Jatau said that **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** was not only the flagship of the Middle- Belt, but the entire Nigeria and the world at large.

He prayed that the commissioner's visit would mitigate to bring the

newspaper to life.

However, the Commissioner and his entourage went around to inspect various Directorates of the organization, including the City Line Expresses Machine.

In an interactive section with the staff of the corporation during the visit, the commissioner gave the assurance that the government would do the needful to provide a conducive working environment. And he urged staff to take their work seriously.

He added "that the government is going to employ more hands, but when it is time, we would first consider the casual staff before others".

Accolades continue to pour for Movel Library initiative

By **POLYCARP ISHAYA from Pankshin**

Hon. Amb. Gabriel Kudangbena Dewan, the member representing Pankshin North constituency in the Plateau State House of Assembly has committed himself to continue to collaborate with the management of Plateau State Library Board to promote areas that will ensure that the library in Pankshin town continues to enjoy the necessary facilities that will stand the test of time. This is aimed at modeling the younger generation in his constituency and Pankshin Local Government Area in the upliftment of the standard of education.

Hon. Dewan made this known while commending the sponsor of the renovated Plateau State Library in Pankshin, Mr. WokritFavourMovel, during the commissioning of the renovated library and for his patriotic effort of paying back to his community what he has achieved through the library in his early school days when he was a child.

He pointed out that this library, which has been renovated and is being commissioned, was built some forty years ago but it has been in a dilapidated condition with no books and information materials for use by the public. And to the dynamic young undergraduate student at the Vassar College in New York, United States of America (USA) who could think of this laudable initiative to renovate the library, he expressed confidence that this outstanding project will surely advance the cause of education, serene environment for research works and information sharing among the people, especially the young ones in the area.

Dewan was quick to say, it's a fact that such project embarked upon by Movel as a student in the United States, should have been done by an elected and appointed officer like him, as such, he is ashamed but however he is also honored by what his younger brother, Movel, has done.

He called on other illustrious sons and daughters of Ngas land to see this as a challenge and to ensure that they do the same in adding value to their people's lives.

Earlier, the National President of Ngas Development Association (NDA), NdeGonetGofwen has disclosed that the Ngas nation is working towards supporting the initiative of Mr. Wokrit Favor Movel by ensuring that the library is well equipped with some essential books and information materials to help the younger ones to achieve their educational pursuits. He advised the general public, especially the library users to jealously guard and protect the library facilities provided by WokritMovel to stand the test of time.

Gofwen said, though the Ngas nation has had and produced prominent sons and daughters in the past who have also excelled in various endeavours and have in one way or the other touched lives but the youngest one that is coming up in Ngas land now is Mr. Wokrit Favor Movel.

He pointed out further that it was not the first time the Ngas nation is celebrating Wokrit. Movel is the same young man who made the Ngas community very proud by clearing his WAEC examination with straight 'A's in 2019. The best result in the country. And it will also interest this gathering to know that the Ngas Development Association hosted this young man Wokrit Favor Movel sometime in August the 17th 2019 to a grand reception for that feat.

On his part, the Chairman of the occasion, Elder Caleb Luka Mbwas thanked God for the life of Wokrit Favor Movel who has remembered where he used to read his books when he was still a primary/secondary school student.

The chairman called on government to always prioritise provision of libraries because that is the only place accessible to the common man for research.

The Majority Leader of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Hon Ishaku Maren and the Deputy Majority Leader, Hon Ibrahim Arlam expressed delight that the young man, WokritMovel has set a legacy worthy to be praised and emulated by his contemporaries within the local government and the state at large. According to them, they would do everything humanly possible to ensure that the State Government gives adequate attention to all the libraries in the state.

Speaking also, the Director, Plateau State Library Board, Chief librarian Simon Mwanti appreciated the sponsor of the project, Mr. WokritMovel for having a rethink to pay back to his community.

In his speech, the sponsor of the project, Mr. Wokrit Favor Movel who was represented by his mother, appreciated everyone. He added that let us remember this library is not merely a collection of books. It is a symbol of hope, inspiration and unity for everyone who enters it. Movel thanked the Davis hundred (100) project, peace team, for believing in his vision. He also thanked the Ngas Development Association for their support which has been valuable to where he is today in the United State of America as a student of Vassar College in New York.

Lastly, he said his family contributions have been integral to this achievement. He however, thanked all those that witnessed the commissioning of the renovated library in Pankshin.

Another highlight of the event was the presentation of wutang prizes to 4 Ngas sons and daughters who did very well in the Ngas literacy competition. The winners include: Mr. SongyellaFwenshinen Solomon, Miss. Sarah Bewarang, Mr. DajongWudunweKiwtok'a and Miss. Ritshinen Emmanuel.

There were cultural dance displays to put colour to the occasion.



Commissioner, Hon. Ashoms, General Manager, Mr. Jatau, Management of Mol and PPC in group photograph with staff. - Photo: Danladi Duk

SUNDAY FEATURE

Challenges of land degradation in Nigeria

IT would not be out of place to assert that our inability to maintain existing foundations laid by our past leaders in the area of manning our environments is what turns out to hunt us today. Our cognitive ability to imagine how we first came to settle on where we so claimed to be our ancestral land, never occurred to us that managing this free gift of God is a gap between life and our corporate existence. EZEKIEL DONTINNA writes.

It is quite unfortunate that, our attitudes toward the environment in this part of the world is so poor that its ripple effect is gradually consuming us. We freely soared high without trying to understand the composition there in the beautiful God-given vegetations we live and feed on.

We became so comfortable and complacent to the point that, we pay less attention to the consuming wave of climate change that started like a distant drone decades ago. This is because of our poor land use attitude which has generated serious ecological and security problems in our communities, which we unknowingly blamed it to natural occurrences.

Before now, we used to hear from a distant on air, some of these climatic change challenges happening across the shore of Africa and we thought their case was a peculiar one or rather, assumed to be some kind of sin committed by their ancestors and never dreamed that could come this close some day.

However, when we hear other countries crying of environmental challenges arising from climate change and land degradation, we thought it was not a sub-Saharan African problem because we so pride in how green our land is, believing that none of such problem would come any near us and we ignorantly keep resting on our oars comfortably.

It may interest you to know that, way back in the early 70s and late 80s, conscious plans and arrangements were put in place to avert any possible land degradation that might arise through climate change challenges. Yes, our forefathers were predominantly farmers and have better understanding of what it means to temper with their farmlands and never took chances.

They set up programmes that would help address such possible occurrences. Infact, there were earth dams constructed by previous governments specifically for agricultural purposes, but that later was not taken seriously and we lost it along the lines.

Unfortunately, our forests were turned into money making centres where fire woods are extracted, exposing our forests to all manners of negative human activities. Our beautiful forests became so porous as a result of indiscriminate felling of trees for charcoal and fire woods without recourse to the ravaging effects on our existence as a people.

It is sad that authorities saddled with safeguarding our forests were not empowered to sustain the old practice of employing Forest Guards. Of course, there used to be Forest Guards under the Ministry of Environment and that of Agriculture, who inspect or monitor human activities around our Forests and Reserves to make sure that, serious penalties are meted on whoever fell down trees without licence and it was well coordinated, but the story is quite different today.

What went wrong along the lines is what craves for answers from those in authority before now. Where are those Forest Guards or Foresters who used to man our Forest Park and Reserves? Where are those Extension workers who arrest people who fell trees illegally? Where are those agencies and institutions



known from grooming landscape architects and gardeners who later enrolled in the system? All are today stories!

Today, millions of hectares of our beautiful forests are destroyed yearly and we can no longer see the forest for the trees anymore, because of how reckless we have been to our environments. We have as well, been careless to the point that, we fell trees and do not see the need to plant as a replacement or fall back mechanism, to help protect our land for agricultural activities that happened to be our mainstay as northerners.

It is no longer news that, the consuming impacts arising from this carelessness is now knocking at our doors. There is no much manpower these days to monitor our forests again, leaving our forests at the mercy of criminal elements who turned them into hubs for terrorism, kidnapping and banditry.

Apart from the activities of these criminal elements, it has also given rise to massive migration from desert prone areas toward the north central part of Nigeria and it has become a serious security challenge. There now exists herders/farmers clashes, unprovoked attacks, destruction of farm produces and lands grabbing, generating series of reprisals with reports of bloodshed in rural communities.

However, the intervention by the World Bank through the Agro-climatic Resilience in Semi Arid

Landscapes (ACReSAL) Project, was a welcomed one. The project is a World Bank assisted one aimed at addressing challenges of land degradation and climate change in Northern Nigeria on a multi-dimensional scale.

The vision, mission and Project Development Objective of ACReSAL are to address environmental challenges arising from climate change and poor land-use practices in Northern Nigeria and to also have a strong practices and policies on ecological restoration and climate change resilient community.

It was approved by the World Bank Board of Directors December 16, 2021 with a slogan; "GREENING THE ENVIRONMENT, SAVING LIVES", and it became effective in June 2022. The project duration is set for six (6) years and will be closed March 31, 2028 where states of implementation will be in the 19 Northern States of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja respectively.

According to the ACReSAL FAQ, the World Bank has air marked and approved over seven hundred million dollars (\$700m) for this intervention and the project will help restore 1 million hectares of degraded land in the northern part of the country.

"This will contribute to the Federal Government of Nigeria's objective/commitment of restoring four (4) million hectares of degraded land set for broader landscapes restoration by 2030. The Project will

also help reduce the vulnerability of millions of the extremely poor people in northern Nigeria and strengthen their own role in line with achieving environmental sustainability", it disclosed.

Ironically, what supposedly should have gulped less money to recover or maintain has caused us hugely to the extend that, it affects both human and physical resources. If not for the World Bank magnanimity and intervention, what would have been our case in the near future, since all we do is paying lips service to even issues of great importance?

This ACReSAL Project according to information available, has four (4) Components which include: A- Dryland Management that deals with integrated watershed management planning and addresses challenges of large-scale watershed degradation in northern Nigeria. It will support the following sub-components: Strategic Watershed Planning, Landscape Investments and Special Ecosystems restoration.

Some of these components to be implemented were, B- Community Climate Resilience; C- Institutional Strengthening and Project Management and Component D- Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) which has the financing mechanism available to Borrowers in Investment Project Financing (IPF) operations to enable quick deployment of uncommitted funds to respond to an eligible crisis

or emergency.

However, the proactive steps taken by the National Project Coordinator, Abdulhamid Umar, was a pointer to the fact that, respite has come to the communities affected by these land degradation and climate change. He, has since inauguration, swung into action by reaching out to all necessary corners to formally kick start the project, as he engaged the National Space Research Development Agency (NASRDA).

The engagement was a Four-Day Training on the Application of Geographic Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing Technology for Sustainable Landscape Management involving all critical stakeholders and Project Coordinators drawn from the 19 Northern Nigeria States and FCT, organised by the National Centre For Remote Sensing (NCRS) Jos, in collaboration with Agro-climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscape (ACReSAL), held at Steffans Hotel and Suites, Rayfield Jos, Plateau State.

As if that was not enough, the ACReSAL National Project Coordinator, alongside the World Bank Representative and ACReSAL Project Task Team Leader, Dr Joy Iganya Agene, and the host Project Coordinator of Plateau State, Mr. Gabriel Gwon Gonkol, saw the dear need to embarked on a deep-dive Component B capacity building training for over 250 participants drawn from the 19 northern Nigeria states.

All these engagements and trainings were held in Jos, the Plateau State for almost two weeks ahead of the grand "Project Launch" last Thursday July 27, 2023 which witnessed the presence of the Nigeria Country Director of World Bank, Shubham Chaudhuri, and the Executive Governor of Plateau State, His Excellency, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, at the occasion with both rural and urban communities participating.

Considering the important roles the Traditional Institutions will play in the smooth take off of this project, the team first paid homage to the Chairman, Plateau State Traditional Council and Gbong Gwom Jos, His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyom Buba, in his Palace at Jishe Jos, where that Paramount Ruler encouraged them to take advantage of this great opportunity to bring back the lost glory of an agritarian nature of northern Nigeria.

Meanwhile, as part of their continuous oversight programme, the workaholic Abdulhamid Umar, who is the National Project Coordinator, did not see it as enough after the hectic Grand Project Launch, but embarked on a fieldwork to degraded sites in Plateau State Friday.

It is our prayers that this project will help address some of the avoidable challenges that we have been facing. There is no part of these 19 States that has not been affected by land degradation and climate change and should be taken seriously.

This is because of the numerous mining activities that took place in the past and other natural occurrences the region found itself in, hence the need for the respective front tires to operate an all inclusive policy where all will benefit so that, no part of the north will be left behind. God bless Northern Nigeria! God bless Nigeria!

SUNDAY FEATURE

Gabon: Yet another blow to democracy

We woke up Wednesday, 30th August to the news of a military putsch in Gabon. The coup, quite reminiscent of what happened in Niger about a month ago, was celebrated by the citizens who gathered in groups to soak the moment. Even the ranks and files of the military were also seen in energetic holleration and cheers. OBOLI AUGUSTINE writes..

COMING on the heels of flawed elections that took place just a week ago in which Ali Bongo was purported to have won, the coup was an expression of disapproval of electoral gangsterism and rape of democracy. The elections were marred by violence and tense vote that was set to extend the Bongo family's more than half-century grip on power. Not surprisingly, therefore, the first act of the junta was the cancellation of the election results, the closure of borders and the dissolution of state institutions.

Hitherto, there was an attempt to retire the Bongos from power in 2019 by aggrieved young officers, but that move was quickly arrested and contained. And the Bongo dynasty survived. Yes, dynasty I said. Starting from 1967 when the late older Omar Bongo took the reins of power from President M'ba, he reigned as President for life and succumbed to death in 2009, after over four decades in power. With his demise, political power was inherited by his son Ali, through a phantom democracy. And like father-like son, Ali was poised to rule for life, even when he was decapitated by failing health. A typical political dynasty, whatever a Bongo holds, he holds for life.

The military and indeed the Gabonese people have tolerated the family, but they abused the privilege by refusing to leave the stage when the ovation was loudest. Most Gabonese from fifty-five years of age and below knew no other name than the Bongos. Gabon has become the family inheritance, as they wallowed in unconscionable corruption, sustained by outside interests of France.

Expectedly France was the first country to condemn the coup in Gabon. Yet it is not strange that most of the recent coups in Africa are taking place in francophone countries. France has not done well in reinvigorating democracy in her former colonies. When democracy came under civilian threat in Gabon, with the change of the constitution to pave the way for a third-term agenda for Ali Bongo, France was criminally silent.

Gabon is an oil-rich nation with a host of other mineral resources to ensure a better life and living for the citizenry. However, the wealth of the nation was not felt by the ordinary people because the ruling family and their cronies had appropriated it for themselves. It was right for them to live in all the comfort associated with wealth while others languished in wants.

Ali Bongo has been accused of wastefulness and is on the cusp of driving the country into crisis and jeopardising peace. The visibly unstable Bongo, who is under house arrest, was seen in a viral video appealing to his friends around the world and the oppressed Gabonese people to come to his immediate aid. He urged them not to acquiesce but to make noise to challenge the military.

A drowning man it is said, will hang on a straw. Like a religious leader, the ousted Gabonese leader is trading on hope: hope that a miracle will happen to return his lost crown. He is now courting the people he never really reckoned with since 2009 when he became the lord of



Tinubu

the manor. A people treated badly and held in subhuman bondage by his family. The Gabonese proletarians, seemingly exist only during the election period, and once elections are over they are forgotten for good and remembered again with bags of rice, salt, and bales of clothes in a new election circle. His family's faux concern for the well-being of the voters didn't fool many. Too bad. A genuine pastor or Iman trades in practical and realistic hope. In this instance, Ali Bongo is an impostor.

While I am not an apostle of military governance, I believe that Ali Bongo's hope is forlorn because he is a good riddance to bad rubbish. He may have been delusional or in a delirious fantasy, unfortunately, his present reality is different: he has been toppled.

General Brice Oligui Nguema has been named by the junta as the transitional leader.

I put this poser in my last piece on the Nigerien situation: Why are coup de tat coming back on the continent? What is the root cause? Which country will be the next? How do we curb this growing cancer from spreading indiscriminately and ravaging the body? And the same posers ring in my head right now. Have we lost or are we losing faith in democracy? Are military regimes credible alternatives to democracy?

In my view, I think the problem stems from the bastardization of the concept of democracy by the political operators, so much so that it has lost its meaning and appeal to the masses who bear the brunt of its theatrical imitation by African leaders.

A political philosophy gifted to the world by the Greeks, democracy is derived from the word *demos* '(common) people' and *kratos* 'force/might'. It means a government in which people have a say in their governance affairs

either directly or through their representatives to ensure that the common patrimony is efficiently and effectively managed through the instrumentality of government for collective well-being.

The 16th US President -Abraham Lincoln, gave an operational definition of the concept as "government of the people by the people and for the people" Embedded as a critical ingredient of democracy is the rule of law which delivers four universal principles: accountability, just law, open government, and accessible and impartial justice.

I went through this elucidation to show that democracy ordinarily is a beautiful thing to practice, but there is always a wide gulf between theory and practice. That is the problem in the African continent. Democracy is turned on its head at the level of praxis and the people are disillusioned. Those elected and tasked to represent the people are only interested in democratic dividends for themselves and their families. The people are abandoned. When their time is up and another is to be tested, they hang on for a lifetime through a rigged process with their accumulated war chest, and people's hopes are dashed.

Thus, when democracy becomes a mockery, a military coup becomes appealing. This is the sorry situation across Africa as the junta appeal continues to load. Sadly military regimes are not agents of development. But when the people are fooled by phantom democracy, the military usually finds the objective condition to seize the reins of power.

Perhaps African leaders should tell themselves the truth about self-serving agenda of tenure elongation which constitutes a civilian coup, and for which a military coup is the only feasible way to push them out to correct the situation. Sticking to the rules of the game by our leaders is the only way the issue of a military



Bongo

coup will be eliminated or drastically reduced.

With the benefit of hindsight, one can say without equivocation that the aura and messianic mentality exuded by the military on taking power is nothing but a smokescreen. More often than not, even the 'Khaki boys' are more guilty of governance failures than the 'men in Agbada'. Because they usually suspend the constitution and reign supreme, the rule of law takes a back seat or is virtually non-existent, and fiat governs. Their word is law, no one dares challenge their authority.

They engage in all forms of malfeasance without accountability. Abacha loot in mind.

Though Nigeria was made a pariah state during that inglorious era, Abacha still managed to steal Nigeria dry and warehoused the loot in territories that were most vociferous against his regime.

Weighed on a balance, civilian governance is worlds apart from a military government in terms of delivery and engendering development. Even with its known failures, an elected government has a contract with the people and is duty-bound to perform, whereas the military men take a risk, shoot themselves to power, and once at the helm, consolidate their grip and enjoy the sweet rewards of power. A military government stays put and

only returns power to the civilian authority out of their benevolence or pressure.

By every measure, a democratic government is the best. A philosopher once wrote that all existing forms of government are evil, but that democracy is the least evil. And I cannot agree anymore. In a democracy, at least, the constituents have access to their representatives to make demands, whether fulfilled or not. For the military, however, it is power without responsibility. There is closed access and they operate in a silo, cutting everybody off.

The way forward is to engage the military in a continental dialogue on the need to give constitutional rule a chance with a pledge of good governance because the waning interest in democracy is fostered by the inherent abuse of the system by the political gladiators. Then, the military should concentrate on delivering their constitutional responsibility of managing internal violence and defending the state against external aggression, and stop dabbling into politics. Politics is a learning curve, the civilians hopefully will get better at it with the passage of time and practice, as the democratic project should be supported by all and sundry. Coups only achieve one thing: set back the clock of our developmental strides.

Expectedly France was the first country to condemn the coup in Gabon. Yet it is not strange that most of the recent coups in Africa are taking place in francophone countries. France has not done well in reinvigorating democracy in her former colonies. When democracy came under civilian threat in Gabon, with the change of the constitution to pave the way for a third-term agenda for Ali Bongo, France was criminally silent.

LOUIS Farrakhan, the Great American, once said that Africans should not be poor because our wealth lies beneath our feet. Today I would like to write about the wealth beneath our feet.

I will start with a little true story. Late last week, I was listening to the radio. Human rights radio to be specific. A gentleman had reported to the station to complain about some Chinese miners who had rented his land for a sum of 50,000 naira per year. However, they paid him and others for only one year.

He told the story. He explained that a few community leaders had brought the Chinese around to introduce them. Some members of the community where not using their land for any activity and so the community leaders asked them to rent out these plots of land to the Chinese people for a sum of 50,000 naira per land per year to the Chinese people.

The deal was sealed, and the first payment was made. However, after a year, the Chinese reneged on the contracts. The gentleman said that all efforts to get the chief of the village to address the issue where futile. Consequently, he came to the human rights radio to see if he could get justice. The Chinese people where mining on the rented land even after refusing to pay or to renew the rent on the land. The ordinary president, Ahmed Isa, advised the gentleman to go to the palace of the higher Chief.

I was beyond astounded by this story. I was angry. Well, we were asked to focus on agriculture while other countries are coming into ours to mine our mineral resources illegally. When are we as a people going to fully enjoy the wealth beneath our feet? Is it after our land has been plundered and our mineral resources taken away? I think that it is time to change our focus. It is time to diversify from agriculture to the wealth beneath our feet.

In a society where poverty is prevalent, our focus has remained on growing food for our local consumption. With some luck, we are able to export but the foreign exchange comes majorly from the export of crude oil. My question is how can we continue to remain in poverty while there are resources that are found in large commercial quantities under our feet?

The mantra about agriculture should be slowed down and more focus should be given to the mining and exporting of our resources as a way of raising the much needed foreign exchange for our economic stability. Providing raw materials markets has never been of any advantage to our economy. As such, we should do all we can to put in place the necessary infrastructure for mining, starting with efficiency in the area of electricity and other forms of energy such as solar and wind energy. The rail infrastructure should also go from north to south and east to West. This should become the major transportation for the mining industry. Furthermore, applying for and acquiring mining licenses should be made easier so that anyone who wishes to go into mining and has the capital and the infrastructure to do so can participate.

There are so many mineral resources under our feet in Nigeria. Let us look at a few and where they are located in Nigeria from the excerpt below: Over 40 million tonnes deposits of talc have been identified in Niger, Osun, Kogi, Ogun and Kaduna states. The Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC)'s 3,000 tonnes per annum catalytic plant is the only talc plant in the country. The talc industry represents one of the most versatile sectors of the industrial minerals of the world. The exploitation of the vast deposits would therefore satisfy local demand and that for export.

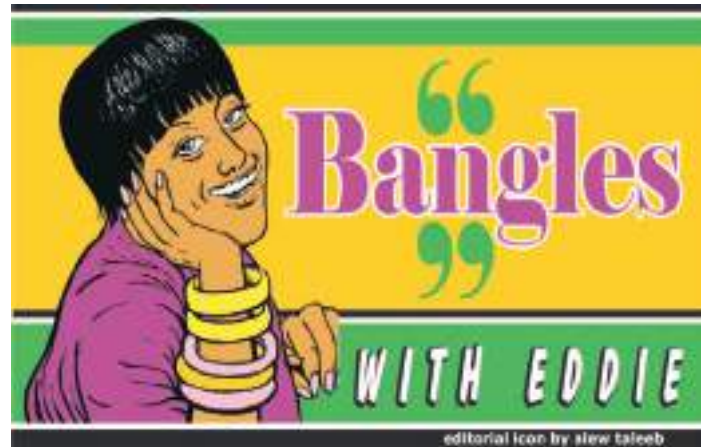
Gypsum: Gypsum is an important input for the production of cement. It is also used for the production of Plaster of Paris (P.O.P) and classroom chalks. A strategy for large-scale mining of gypsum used in the cement

industries is urgently required to sustain the existing plants and meet the future expansion. Currently, cement production is put at 8 million tonnes per annum while the national requirement is 9.6 million tonnes. About one billion tonnes of gypsum deposits are spread over many states in Nigeria.

Iron Ore: There are over 3 billion metric tonnes of iron ore in deposits found in Kogi, Enugu and Niger States as well as the Federal Capital Territory. Iron Ore is being mined at Itakpe in Kogi State and is already being beneficiated, up to 67 per cent of iron. The Aladja and Ajaokuta Steel complexes are ready for consumers of

those in food and beverages, paper and pulp, bottling and oil sector. There are salt springs at Awe (Plateau State), Abakaliki and Uburu (Ebonyi State), while rock salt is available in Benue State. A total reserve of 1.5 million tonnes has been indicated, and further investigations are now being carried out by the Government.

Gemstones: Gemstones mining has boomed in various parts of Plateau, Kaduna and Bauchi states for years. Some of these gemstones include sapphire, ruby, aquamarine, emerald, tourmaline, topaz, garnet, amethyst, zircon, and flourspar which are among the world's best. Good prospects exist in this area for viable



Our wealth beneath our feet



billets and other iron products for down-stream industries.

Lead/Zinc: An estimated 10 million tonnes of lead/zinc veins are spread over eight states of Nigeria. Proven reserves in three prospects in the east-central area are 5 million tonnes. Joint venture partners are encouraged to develop and exploit the various lead/zinc deposits all over the country.

Bentonite and Baryte: These are the main constituents of the mud used in the drilling of all types of oil wells. The Nigerian baryte has specific gravity of about 4.3. Over 7.5 million tonnes of baryte have been identified in Taraba and Bauchi States. Large bentonite reserves of 700 million tonnes are available in many states of the federation ready for massive development and exploitation.

Gold: There are proven reserves of both alluvial and primary gold in the schist belt of Nigeria located in the south-western part of the country. The deposits are mainly alluvial and are currently being exploited on a small scale. Private investors are invited to stake concessions on these primary deposits.

Bitumen: The occurrence of bitumen deposits in Nigeria is indicated at about 42 billion tons; almost twice the amount of existing reserves of crude petroleum. Analytical results suggest that this potential resource can be used directly as an asphalt binder. Most bitumen used for road construction in Nigeria is currently imported.

Coal: Nigerian coal is one of the most bituminous in the world owing to its low sulphur and ash content and therefore the most environment-friendly. There are nearly 3 billion tonnes of indicated reserves in 17 identified coal fields and over 600 million tonnes of proven reserves.

Rock Salt: The national annual demand for table salt, caustic soda, chlorine, sodium bicarbonate, sodium hydrochloric acid and hydrogen peroxide exceeds one million tonnes. A colossal amount of money is expended annually to import these chemicals by chemical and processing companies including tanneries and

investments. Kaolin: An estimated reserve of 3 billion tonnes of good kaolinitic clay has been identified in many localities in Nigeria. Lift from page 4 and 5 of Local Sourcing of Raw Materials.

The forgoing was culled from <https://nigeriahattcattawa.ca/nigeria-solid-minerals/>

The following are more of the mineral resources in states- Abia: Gold, Lead/Zinc, Limestone, Oil/Gas & Salt, Abuja: Cassiterite, Clay, Dolomite, Gold, Lead/Zinc, Marble & Tantalite. Adamawa-Bentonite, Gypsum, Kaolin & Magnesite. Akwa Ibom: Clay, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Oil/Gas, Salt & Uranium, Anambra: Clay, Glass-Sand, Gypsum, Iron-ore, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Phosphate & Salt. Bauchi: Gold, Cassiterite (tine ore), Columbite, Gypsum, Wolfram, Coal, Limestone, Lignite, Iron-ore & Clay, Bayelsa: Clay, Gypsum, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Maganese, Oil/Gas & Uranium. Benue: Barite, Clay, Coal, Gemstone, Gypsum, Iron-Ore, Lead/Zinc, Limestone, Marble & Salt. Borno: Bentonite, Clay, Diatomite, Gypsum, Hydro-carbon, Kaolin & Limestone. Plateau: Columbite, ruby, topaz, sapphire.

This is just about eight states in Nigeria. For the other states: <https://nigerianembassythe Hague.nl/about-nigeria/natural-resources/>.

More sources such as Value Chain, an energy magazines, says that Nigeria has 44 mineral resources found in 500 locations across Nigeria in commercial quantity. The former minister of mines and steel development, Olamilekan Adegbe, says and I quote: "this clearly demonstrates the wide mineral spectrum we are endowed with, which offers limitless opportunities along the value chain for job creation, revenue, growth amongst others." He added "Nigeria provides one of the highest rates of return because it's minerals are closer to the surface".

Many of our embassies abroad have a long list of our solid minerals. I think that the harvest is plenty, but the

harvesters are few. Do we have many mining training institutes where people who desire to become miners go to for training on how to mine different solid minerals, how to process them, grade them and export them? Do we have enough experts and professionals to man this industry or are we sitting down to watch other countries pilfer our resources? We should have a mining cooperation institute at every state and local government level and also have the complementary law that protects the environment.

Let us now take a look at a few of the prizes of solid minerals on the international market from ACA international and ministry of mines and steel development - Iron Ore: 77.37, Gold: 1335.5, Limestone: 11.05, Baryte: 150. These compete with crude prices.

Having read this, let me invite you to read from two more local newspaper so that you may juxtapose and determine our solid mineral situation in Nigeria. The following excerpt is from Punch of 6th July. It details solid mineral imports into Nigeria:

The value of solid minerals imports rose by 74.39 per cent from N23.56bn in the first quarter of 2021 to N41.09bn in the same quarter in 2022. This is contained in the Q1 2022 Foreign Trade Statistics report of the National Bureau of Statistics. According to the report, solid minerals are elements found on the earth, and they include naturally organic substances that are solid like precious stones and kaolin. The report read in part, "The value of solid minerals imports in the first quarter of 2022 stood at N41.09bn, this value was 37.84 per cent higher than the value recorded in Q4, 2021 (N29.81bn) and 74.39 per cent of the value recorded in Q1, 2021 (N23.56bn)." Solid mineral imports were dominated by plasters of calcined gypsum or calcium sulphate imported from Turkey worth N6.87bn and China valued at N1.87bn. Other products imported under this category were salt for human consumption from Namibia (N5.87bn) and Tunisia (N1.14bn),

and Gypsum anhydrite (N5.72bn) from Spain. The Minister of Mines and Steel Development, Olamilekan Adegbe, recently described Nigeria as a blessed with 44 different types of minerals in commercial quantity in over 500 locations in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Some of the minerals include baryte, kaolin, gypsum, feldspar, limestone, coal, bitumen, lignite, uranium, gold, cassiterite, columbite, iron ore, lead-zinc, copper, granite, laterite, sapphire, tourmaline, emerald, topaz, amethyst, and garnet.

Now, let us also read the following excerpt from Business Day Newspaper of February 2019 and Juxtapose the two: In all ramifications, Nigeria is immensely endowed with numerous mineral resources. Every state in the country has some form of mineral deposit, waiting to be tapped for economic prosperity. According to Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), Nigeria has 45 different solid minerals buried in various locations across the country. But these minerals are largely untapped. Both local and foreign investors can leverage on this multi-billion-dollar market. In its Economic Recovery and Growth Plan 2017 to 2020, the Federal Government of Nigeria declared that solid mineral sector is one of the fast-growing sectors of the economy. The recognition of this is a window opening for investors to tap into the promising sector in Nigeria. The solid minerals deposits in Nigeria are worth several trillion-dollar market, yet Nigeria loses billions of dollars every year for importing things that can be produced locally using these items. "The commercial value of Nigeria's solid minerals has been estimated to run into hundreds of trillions of dollars. The domestic mining industry is underdeveloped, leading to the importation of commodities that can be produced locally," NIPC says in its document.

In conclusion, it is time to actually diversify our economy by actively diversifying our economy. It is time to massively mine the wealth beneath our feet for our growth and development. It is time to move from agriculture to our mines now in dove.

I bring you greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am trusting that the thoughts we will be sharing from the word of God today will be life changing to you; inspire faith in you and help you live the quality of life that God has ordained for you to live.

I will be starting a new series today which I have entitled, "Fear not, Trust God". We are going to be talking on the subject of fear. This is a subject matter which I believe is very pertinent to every believer because fear is something that has visible expression in our world today.

We are interested in talking on this subject because of the crippling effects that fear has on human beings; on nations; basically on everyone that lives under the sun.

I am sure dear reader that you are no stranger to the fact that over the past few years, our world has been attacked by all kinds of frightening things such as the Corona Virus pandemic which has affected the quality of life on the earth as we know it and has brought many people's hearts into a state of panic. This pandemic has affected all world economies and has made people rethink and be full of anxiety concerning their future.

But thank God almighty we have a word from heaven. It does not matter what is going on in the world today, God has a word for his people. I tell you the truth that it does not matter what the devil is doing because what God is doing is always infinitely greater. It does not matter what the devil is saying or what circumstances or things in the world are suggesting, God always has something to say.

And that which God has to say to us is our safety net in this world. The Bible says in Rom. 10:17 as we pay attention to God's word and allow faith to be built in our hearts, then we can rise to the place where no matter what is going on in the world today, we will find God's provisions, preservations and protection. We will find that God has made available all that is required to live a blessed life upon the face of the earth in spite of what is going on.

Now I want to take my text from Isaiah 12:2. There, the prophet Isaiah was speaking and he said, **Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.**

Now this verse is going to be our foundation text for this series. Isaiah is saying here that, behold, God is my salvation. In the Hebrew, the word translated salvation here is actually Yeshua. This is actually the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in Hebrew.

The name Yeshua talks about welfare, prosperity, deliverance safety and wellbeing. So Isaiah choice is yours and you always have a choice whatever the matter is.

is saving Jesus is my salvation therefore **I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.**

So we find, according to this scripture, there are two choices every human being on earth have to pick from in the face of daunting and challenging circumstances. The first choice is you chose to trust God and in the name of Jesus or you can chose the path of fear. The

of power and of love and of a sound mind. The Bible makes it clear to us from this verse that fear is not just an emotion but a spirit. Now I understand that the world has classified all kinds of fear and have called them phobias. For example the fear of flying; the fear of heights; fear of insects; fear of animals; fear of the dark and so on are named phobias. Phobias is the name that the so called intellectuals of our day have named these fears and so



Fear not, trust God



God has made every human being a free moral agent who can decide to chose what you are going to believe because the choices you make determine the outcome of your life.

In this series we are going to examine these things and find out what fear is. Many people think that fear is only an emotion that overcomes a man and we have no control over it but the word of God tells us exactly what fear is.

2 Tim. 1:7 **For God has not given us the spirit of fear but**

order to help them overcome fear. But we have got to what the Bible says about fear. The Bible says that fear is not just an emotion, a thought or a feeling that comes upon people but a spirit.

Again 2 Tim. 1:7 **For God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.** When you understand the source of fear you can make your choice. Of course fear manifests itself in many ways; many times it comes as thoughts which ust understand that the source of fear is spirit called the spirit of fear.

trigger off emotions but we must understand that the

source of fear is spirit called the spirit of fear.

It is when we understand this that we can learn to take authority over that spirit and stop it in its tracks. This is good news. If you are a child of God, the spirit of God does not have to dominate you.

Now it is true that fear begins to manifest in our lives by a thought. It is a thought implanted in our minds concerning something; perhaps an experience that we have had or concerning something that we are anticipating which as we brood and meditate on will eventually translate to a feeling that can cause a lot of anxiety and even physical reactions.

eventually translate to a feeling that can cause a lot of anxiety and even physical reactions.

We have seen where fear reaches such height where people almost get paralysed in the sense that they cannot move or run or they begin to stammer or stutter and their vision gets blurred. In some cases the person in fear experiences a spike in adrenalin while in other cases the person experiences weakness in the muscles and joints. All of these things are manifestations or reactions to fear.

Understanding that fear is a spirit will enable and put you in a place where you can deal decisively with it.

Isa. 41:10 **Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.**

From the beginning of this verse we learn a huge lesson: God says **Fear thou not;** God will not tell us not to fear if we did not have a choice in the matter.

This verse is God's solemn promise to all His children. Even though there may be cause to be afraid in the natural, no matter what is going on refuse to be afraid because God says He is with you.

In Rom. 8:31 the apostle Paul wrote saying, **what shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?** This is a comforting thought! No matter what is going on in your life right now; no matter what the circumstance, understand that God is with you if you are His child. I tell you that God with you is infinitely bigger than anything that is against you. Glory to God.

We look at our world today and we see horrible situations. There is no place on the earth today that is safe. Everywhere has been invaded by one form of calamity or the other. If it is not terror or terrorism it is banditry or all kinds of natural disasters and diseases. But the good news is that if you are a child of God there is absolutely no need for you be afraid. Not because we are denying the circumstances or the severity of the situation but because we are acknowledging the God that is with us.

God with you is bigger than any circumstance that you can ever face.

...to be continued

"We have seen where fear reaches such height where people almost get paralysed in the sense that they cannot move or run or they begin to stammer or stutter and their vision gets blurred. In some cases the person in fear experiences a spike in adrenalin while in other cases the person experiences weakness in the muscles and joints. All of these things are manifestations or reactions to fear. Understanding that fear is a spirit will enable and put you in a place where you can deal decisively with it."

INTERNATIONAL

Johannesburg fire 'wake-up call', President Ramaphosa says

A deadly fire in Johannesburg's inner city was "a wake-up call" for South Africa, says President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Seventy-four people were killed - including 12 children - after a blaze in a five-storey building, which was being occupied by homeless people.

More than 50 others were injured.

Earlier, the city of Johannesburg confirmed it owned the building, but said cartels had taken it over. Officials say the cause of the deadly fire is unclear.

In a news conference at the site of the fire, Mr Ramaphosa said the incident needed to be investigated and lessons learnt to prevent future tragedies.

"It's a wake-up call for us to begin to address the situation of housing in the inner city," the South African leader said.

The building used to be a home for abused women and children, but once the lease expired, it was "hijacked", President Ramaphosa explained to reporters.

Many properties around the area where the blaze happened have been deemed unfit to live in.

Yet these old blocks, abandoned by their owners or the city authorities, are full of families, often paying rent to criminal gangs who run them.

Some of those who use the buildings include undocumented migrants, mostly from other African countries.

The buildings, which lack running water, toilets or a legal electricity connection, are then said to have been "hijacked".

South Africa faces a chronic housing shortage, with an estimated 15,000 people estimated to be homeless in Johannesburg.

"Others jumped too, but didn't make it"

South Africa fire: What is a hijacked building?

"We need to get on top of this and find effective ways of dealing with problems of accommodation, of housing, and services in the inner city," Mr Ramaphosa added.

He also commended emergency services, who arrived at the scene 10 minutes after the fire was reported.

Johannesburg city manager Floyd Brink said 200 families were affected by the fire and "all efforts" were taken to provide accommodation.

A spokesman for the emergency services, Robert Mulaudzi, told the BBC that the fire had gutted the building but firefighters had been able to bring out some of the occupants.

He explained that because the building was not properly looked after, makeshift structures and debris had made it hard to search for and rescue people.

A video posted by Mr Mulaudzi to the platform X, formerly known as Twitter, showed fire trucks and



ambulances outside the building with burnt-out windows.

One woman told journalists she was outside the building searching for her 24-year-old daughter.

"As soon as I heard the building was burning down, I knew I had to run here to come and look for her," she said.

"Now that I'm here, I'm kept in suspense because I really don't know what is happening. I don't get any direction - so I'm actually very anxious, I

don't know if my daughter is alive."

In a visit to the scene, Johannesburg mayor Kabele Gwamanda said Johannesburg officials would relocate people living in similar "hijacked" buildings in the city, and turn those buildings into social housing. "We are not going there with brute force," he told reporters, "we are trying to apply a sensitive strategy."

Asked whether his administration would take

Canada to send warships to Haiti

NORTH Korea says it simulated nuclear attacks on South Korea and rehearsed occupation of its rival

North Korea says its latest missile launches were a simulation of "scorched earth" nuclear strikes on South Korea

North Korea said Thursday its latest missile launches simulated "scorched earth" nuclear strikes on South Korea and that it's also been rehearsing an occupation of its rival's territory in the event of conflict.

Pyeongang has previously

tested nuclear-capable missiles and described how it would use them in potential wars with South Korea and the U.S. But the North's disclosure of detailed war plans reaffirmed its aggressive nuclear doctrine to intimidate its opponents, as it escalates its protest of the ongoing South Korean-U.S. military exercises that it views as a major security threat, observers say.

North Korea's military said it fired two tactical ballistic missiles from the capital on Wednesday night to practice "scorched earth strikes" at



Moise

Samuel Newey, here pictured in 2019, was killed in combat on Wednesday.

A British volunteer has been killed fighting alongside Ukrainian forces, his family have said.

Samuel Newey, 22, had been in the country for over a year, his brother Daniel said.

Posting on social media he wrote: "My little brother Sam was killed in action yesterday in Eastern Ukraine. I cannot put into words how broken I feel."

"Sam you gave your life for people you never knew and acted with courage, morality and honour."

Samuel Newey, from Solihull, had just turned 21 when he decided to travel to Ukraine "to push back against Russian Imperialism", his brother wrote in a Facebook post.

"Not only are you my little brother, but you're an exceptional man, a good soldier and one of the bravest people I ever had the privilege of knowing," he said.

"Thank you so much for being part of my life for these 22 years. I love you always brother."

Samuel Newey (centre, wearing suit) was accused of

US President Joe Biden is healthy



Zelensky

terrorism offences in 2020

In 2020, Samuel Newey and his father Paul, were charged with terrorism offences in relation to Daniel's decision to join the Kurdish YPG militia to fight the Islamic State (IS) group.

The father denied one count of funding terrorism with Samuel also denying a charge of assisting his brother to prepare for acts of terrorism.

At the time, the Kurdish YPG were the main component of the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Western ally against IS and supported by the UK government.

Ukraine gains on southern

front could open way to Crimea, says Kyiv

Nerves and patriotism in Moscow after 18 months of war

Russia's kamikaze drones raining down on Ukraine's east

All charges were eventually dropped, and no further action was taken.

Paul Newey posted on his Facebook page his son had been killed on Wednesday morning "in combat fighting for the Ukraine".

A spokesperson for the UK's Foreign Office said it was providing support to the family of a British man following his death in

France monitoring Gabon coup

FRENCH Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne has announced that France is monitoring the coup d'etat underway in Gabon "with the utmost attention", and her

government has condemned the uprising against Paris's ally, President Ali Bongo.

These statements are hardly surprising, but they come

laden with colonial baggage.

Gabon is the second former French colony in Africa to have faced a military coup in as many months, and the sixth in three years - following on from Mali, Chad, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and most recently Niger, whose new installed junta may yet meet with an intervention from the country's West African neighbours.

In all these cases, the former coloniser has been called to play a role of one kind or another, and the question of its influence in each country has been a major issue.

This is not necessarily how the French government wants to be seen, even as it is perfectly clear who its allies are. On a tour of several Francophone countries this spring, Emmanuel Macron promised that the era of French interference in Africa - sometimes derisively termed "Françafrique" - was over.

"Sometimes I get the feeling that mindsets haven't moved along as much as we have, when I read, hear and see people ascribing intentions to France that it doesn't have, that it no longer has," he said after arriving in Gabon.

"People also still seem to expect France to take positions that it refuses to take, and I take full responsibility for that. In Gabon as elsewhere, France is a neutral interlocutor that speaks to everyone and whose role is not to interfere in domestic political exchanges."

major command centers and operational airfields in South Korea, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

The North's military said the missiles carried out their simulated strikes through air bursts, suggesting it confirmed the explosions of dummy warheads at a set altitude.

North Korea said its missile tests were response to the United States' flyover of long-range B-1B bombers for a joint aerial training with South Korea earlier Wednesday as part of the allies' field exercises.

"(The aerial drill) is a serious threat to (North Korea) as it was just pursuant to the scenario for a preemptive nuclear strike at" North Korea, the Korean People's Army general staff said. "The KPA will never overlook the rash acts of the U.S. forces and the (South Korean) military gangsters."

The missile launches Wednesday were the latest in the North's barrage of weapons tests since last year.

According to South Korean and Japanese assessments, the two short-range missiles travelled a distance of 360-400 kilometers (225-250 miles) at the maximum altitude of 50 kilometers (30 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff called the launches "a grave provocation" that threatens international peace and violates U.N. Security

Council resolutions that ban any ballistic launches by North Korea. The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the U.S. commitment to the defense of South Korea and Japan remains "ironclad."

South Korean and Japanese authorities said their warplanes conducted combined aerial drills with U.S. B-1B bombers respectively on Wednesday. South Korea's Defense Ministry said that Wednesday's B-1B deployment is the 10th flyover by U.S. bombers on the Korean Peninsula this year.

North Korea is extremely sensitive to the deployment of U.S. B-1B bombers, which can carry a huge number of conventional weapons. The North describes the bombers as "nuclear strategic" although the planes were switched to conventional weaponry in the 1990s.

On Aug. 21, the U.S. and South Korean militaries kicked off their summer Uichi Freedom Shield computer-simulated command post exercise. During this year's training, slated to end later Thursday, the allies have included more than 30 kinds of field exercises, such as Wednesday's joint aerial exercise involving the B-1B aircraft.

North Korea calls major U.S.-involved military drills on and near the Korean Peninsula preparation for invasion. Washington and Seoul officials maintain their

INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine's months-long counteroffensive at the crossroads

A critical juncture has been reached in Ukraine's months-long counteroffensive. After weeks of difficult battles, Ukrainian forces have slowly edged south in the Zaporizhia region, taking hamlet after hamlet as Russian forces try to keep them at bay. Alex Gatopoulos Writes.

The counteroffensive in the south is just one part of a significant push along a vast front line, stretching from Vasilivka in Zaporizhia to the city of Donetsk in the eastern region of Donbas and up to Bakhmut, a city north of Donetsk to the outskirts of Kupiansk in northeastern Ukraine. This does not even include the strikes and raids on Crimea and from across the Dnipro River from the city of Kherson to the Black Sea.

There has been widespread speculation that somehow Ukraine's advance in the south has stalled or at the very best been limited. In reality, its soldiers have had to make their way across open ground through a maze of well-placed fortified positions and trenches.

The surrounding area is heavily mined and likely approaches are covered by Russian heavy artillery and missile batteries.

Movement can be easily spotted in the distance as drones tirelessly monitor the battlefield.

This interlocked, carefully prepared fortified line is what Ukrainian forces have been deliberately advancing through for months.

Casualties have been high on both sides but would have been far greater on the Ukrainian side if its commanders had rushed it.

Now, finally, these first defensive lines have been breached. The Zaporizhia village of Robotyne has been taken, and the next hamlet, Novoprokopivka, is in Ukraine's sights with Tokmak, one of its strategic objectives, now within reach.

Tokmak is a vital railway junction and the key to taking the city of Melitopol at the neck of the Crimean Peninsula. It is less than 20km (12.4 miles) behind the front line and surrounded by its own defensive ring. Approaches to the town are heavily fortified, the Russians proving adept at making Ukraine pay for every kilometre taken.

Russian military logistics depends heavily on the rail system, but this network is under increasing attacks not just from Ukrainian artillery but also from precision strike by HIMARS rocket batteries and Storm Shadow cruise missiles.

The Russian military realises Tokmak's importance and has heavily reinforced its units there. Ukrainian forces can choose to directly assault the town, with its implication of high casualties, or go around it, which would result in it being surrounded and cut off. Either way, the town's rail line would be cut.

Ukrainian forces this far south will then be able to destroy targets round Melitopol, putting pressure on Russian troops there and threatening Russian units protecting the near bank of the Dnipro with encirclement.

Cut off from the rest of their logistics supply chain, these units would quickly run out of ammunition and fuel as all storage dumps are being



Zelensky

systematically destroyed by Ukrainian long-range precision fire.

Ukrainian military planners have been thinking further ahead and methodically targeting bridges and railway depots much farther away from the battlefield in Crimea itself.

The Kerch Strait Bridge, which connects Crimea with Russia, was attacked and damaged in July, and weeks later, the road and rail bridges at Chonhar, joining Crimea to the Ukrainian mainland, were badly damaged by missile strikes.

While the southern front is the most important for Ukraine, its military has been adept at keeping Russian high command struggling to guess where the decisive assault will come from. In the east, Ukrainian units easily retook the areas round Bahmut, which cost the Russians so dearly over the previous 18 months.

The city of Donetsk, the linchpin for the southern and eastern fronts, is being pressured by Ukrainian forces on two sides while farther west, Ukraine has made gains pushing south, taking Staromayorske.

Extensive raids have been conducted on the near bank of

the Dnipro, and even a daring commando raid successfully attacked targets in Crimea on August 24, Ukraine's Independence Day.

All this serves to muddy Russia's strategic picture, allowing Ukraine to pick where and when it wants to fight and keeping Russia on the defensive.

While this pattern of tactical and strategic deception is working for Ukraine, Russia has made some strategic moves of its own. Russia's military has massed more than 100,000 troops behind the front line in the northeast, opposite Kupiansk in the Kharkiv region.

The Ukrainian military ordered civilians to evacuate the area ahead of expected heavy fighting although many war-weary villagers refused. So far, the expected Russian assault has been only piecemeal, but it forces Ukraine to keep large forces in the northeast when they are badly needed elsewhere.

Russia's ally Belarus keeps its strategic intentions deliberately unclear, also forcing Ukrainian high command to factor in a possible attack from Belarusian soil into its calculations –

calculations that help further drain Ukrainian reserves and supplies.

Not all Ukrainian attacks have been successful with several early armoured advances being destroyed, forcing its planners to rethink their tactics.

In late August, an attempted amphibious raid on Crimea, following on the success of the Independence Day raid, ended in disaster as Russian aircraft intercepted the squadron, sinking all four boats and killing 50 highly trained Ukrainian special forces.

Russia's air force dwarfs that of Ukraine, and despite promises of F-16 fighter jets from its allies and donations of Soviet-legacy aircraft by former Warsaw Pact countries that are now NATO members, like Poland and Bulgaria, Ukrainian losses have mounted.

Russian aircraft operate freely near the front line. Ukrainian infantry accounts of the fighting in the south say, of all the horrors that lurk there, their greatest fear is [Russian air force precision-guided KAB glide bombs](#), which can deliver up to 1,500kg (3,306lb) of high explosives with an accuracy of 4

to 8 metres (13 to 26ft).

Ukraine's air force still makes Russian incursions a costly affair, but screens of Russian fighter aircraft, helicopter gunships and air defence systems guarding front-line positions rule out the use of Ukraine's air force to support the army's ground attacks.

The Ukrainian counteroffensive operates with almost no supporting air cover, turning conventional military thinking on its head.

It is this kind of new tactical thinking – total drone surveillance coverage by both sides and extensive use of long-range, precision-guided munitions while both air forces are not taking, or are unable to take, the strategic role favoured by Western militaries – that has been the source of friction between Ukrainian generals and their allies.

The frustration cuts both ways as Russia and Ukraine know this counteroffensive is key to the war.

For Ukraine, time is running out as it constantly fears the eventual fading of goodwill, and with it, Western military support.

For Russia, time is also a factor, as even small victories are needed to boost plummeting Russian morale in the hopes of stemming what could easily become a rout if morale collapses altogether. Victories are also needed to boost domestic support, once guaranteed but now on shaky ground, along with support for the presidency of Vladimir Putin.

For now, the kind of massed, fast-paced, armoured thrusts backed by Ukrainian close air support that Western military trainers had envisaged are being shelved for a different style of warfare, one that benefits the Ukrainian military and the lives of the soldiers fighting it.

This slower "advance, wear down, strangle and strike" methodology is working well, especially on the southern front.

The wild cards here are the increasing possibility of a Ukrainian riverine assault across the Dnipro and the fate of the Zaporizhia Nuclear Power Plant at Enerhodar.

Ukraine's forces seem like they are now on the cusp of a breakthrough. Russia's task is to keep building fortifications and using its dwindling reserves to bolster its defences in the hopes that Ukraine wears down before Russia does.

Both sides are pushing for a decisive win before the onset of heavy rains in late autumn and the snows of winter. **is Al Jazeera English's Defence Editor.**

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA



'I am studying journalism's future'



WHAT books or kinds of books did you read growing up?

My diet growing up was full of school-mandated books. Some required for me, others for my siblings. Those books often transported me to hamlets, towns, histories, customs literature, and a richness—usually but not always in southeast Nigeria—that I still haven't visited till date. Yet I have lived them, in a way. When I read Eddie Iroh's *Without a Silver Spoon*, or Chukwuemeka Ike's *The Bottled Leopard*. Or what I consider to be the most compelling piece of literature I have ever read: Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*. Or Festus Iyayi's *Violence*. J. P. Clark's deliciously mischievous *The Wives' Revolt*.

I would eventually find young adult novels—usually British or American—which, in hindsight, were what I should have been reading all along—for their lightness. *The Baby-Sitters Club* and *Sweet Valley High* series. *Archie Comics*. And a little-known serial called *Harry Potter*. I should have been reading these and Nigerian young adult novels, if they existed and I knew about them. I say this because the heart-breaking story in *The Concubine*, of Ihuoma, possessing a beauty and grace that would attract many that could come close but only so her—that told of how she was doomed to never love—else fatal consequences—was really quite heavy for a twelve-year-old! But I regret nothing. That book moulded my mind in ways I can't articulate.

If your life so far was a series of texts, which text (fiction or non-fiction) represents you at this moment?

All the chapters in bell hooks' *All About Love*, which are collectively a guide, an enduring attempt to try and be better at love. I think it might be a 30 thing, but I often think a lot about love these days: not necessarily the romantic kind but what it means as a daily, active service. What it means between friends: what it can mean in a power dynamic (we recently saw an astonishing lack of love or compassion in employer-employee relations when the TechCabal story on #HorribleBosses broke). What it can mean between those elected to serve and the people they reliably disappoint. *All About Love* doesn't necessarily go this far in scope but it's definitely a take-off point and fuel for my thoughts.

What's the last thing you read and disagreed with?

Every comment on Twitter over the last two or three years that shows an increasing and disturbing lack of grace or compassion for women, for children, for queer people; for inventive citizens who have responded to a lack of housing by creating theirs on lagoons (branded 'slums' for people of faith who protest the detention of their leaders, for people who don't have any faith at all; for people who protest police brutality, women's rights; for nursing mothers.

There's a lot of punching down going on Nigerian social media these days. It's not like it hasn't always happened but I do think there is a particularly wicked edge to the 'opinions' shared these days. In them, to my mind, there is barely concealed hate. There are too many absolute hard lines and a truly stunning intolerance. Someone said once—I can't remember who—that people keep planting flags instead of building bridges. It's true.

There's a lot of punching down going on Nigerian social media these days. Someone said once—I can't remember who—that people keep planting flags instead of building bridges. It's true.

What's the last thing you read that changed your mind about something?

I used to think it was a given that African Americans and really anyone of African descent, should automatically, be in fellowship with Africans since we share an ancestry; and I would be cross and disappointed when I saw instances when the opposite was the case, convinced that African Americans, Afro-Latinos, Afropeans were in the wrong.

This incredibly well researched, argued, nuanced piece by Alden Young, 'How Black America Fell Out of Love with Africa' put paid to my assumptions and makes a case for

how and why there is little ground for solidarity between both groups. I would highly recommend this read.

What is your writing process: edit as you write or draft first, then edit?

The more I write, even in writing responses to this interview, I edit as I write. It's certainly a more tiresome process, but it's a good exercise, working at clarity in real time. Sometimes I find when I have finished drafting, I am so drained. I don't want anything to do with the piece for a few days or weeks. If you are a writer/author, this might fly but not when you're a journalist with a deadline; so, I edit as I write.

What's the greatest story /piece of journalism you've ever read?

Should caveat this by saying this changes every few years and protest that I have to choose one. Journalism can do different things, in different moments, and in different ways. A great piece of journalism can be called so sometimes for its timeliness, and not necessarily its content or application; or for its interrogation of something, and not necessarily the way it was interrogated.

One of the greatest pieces of journalism I have read is Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah's Pulitzer Prize winning, 'A Most American Terrorist' I don't know if I could describe it better than the Pulitzer Prizes itself, which said the piece is: 'an unforgettable portrait of murderer Dylann Roof, using a unique and powerful mix of reportage, first-person reflection and analysis of the historical and cultural forces behind his killing of nine people inside Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.'

For context, Roof is white. The folks he killed in the church were all Black. Ghansah is African American. So, the piece is, in some ways, righteously personal. It is a long read too, about 10,000 words if not more. What gives the piece its power is both the compelling, visual, resonant style in which Ghansah writes it and the deep, painstaking reporting that involved bringing many pieces, as told by Roof's family, friends, former teachers and the surviving members of those killed. It had many intersections: racism, gun violence, hate crimes, mental health.

Another piece of journalism I've loved and has stayed with me a while is Nanjala Nyabola's sound analysis on the fate of Rafiki, a Kenyan film featuring queer love interests and leads, that faced cultural, social and constitutional battles in Kenya. Nyabola's piece was quite breathlessly argued, and again, intersectional, drawing on distinct but interconnected factors as to why this film was so fraught with risk.

What's a common misconception about African journalism/African storytelling?

That there's such a thing as African journalism or storytelling.

A great piece of journalism can be called so sometimes for its timeliness, and not necessarily its content or application; or for its interrogation of something, and not necessarily the way it was interrogated.

You're Deputy Editor at African Arguments. What makes a pitch good?

Clarity. I see too many pitches where the writer or journalist is unsure of what exactly they might cover or focus on; or can't speculate convincingly on what they might discover. Sometimes, you could have a hunch, and not have all the answers—and seek to find those answers in your reporting. But then said hunch has to be communicated. Also, every piece needs to answer the question: Why? Why does it matter? Why should anyone care about this? And this answer needs to be clear in the pitch.

Competence. When you make a case for or prove why you are the best placed person to write a particular story, as an editor, you are more comfortable, more inclined to trust the writer—especially when it's one you haven't worked with before.

Access. Tell us: who are your sources! Who do you have access to? What do you hope to learn from them?

This isn't a definitive list but some of the top considerations, I would say.

What is more important to you: the story or how it is written?

How it is written. I am a stickler for style. Even the densest topics—the most restless to tame—can be solved with stylistic writing. I am particularly partial to literary journalism anyway because my entry point into any writing at all was fiction.

I have seen too many juicy, rich stories with plenty of opportunities to do wonders on the page—to inform, illuminate, trigger thinking, as well as entertain—squandered with bad writing.

In what ways can African art contribute to political activism?

African art can make political activism more digestible. Unfortunately, for some inexplicable reason, some of us don't respond to protests, placards, rightfully angry op-

Continued on page 26

Where do the richest Americans live?



L - R: Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg and Michael Bloomberg.

Have you checked the newest "Forbes 400: The Full List of The Richest People in America" yet?

Surprise, Bill Gates, with a net worth of \$81 billion, is ranked No. 1 for the 23rd year running. Meanwhile, his friend Warren Buffett fell to third place for the first time in 15 years with a net worth of \$65.5 billion.

Thanks to soaring stock prices of hot tech firms, CEOs at the helm of those companies seem to have been accumulating wealth at a much faster pace than others. Amazon.com CEO Jeff Bezos gained \$20 billion to boost his net worth to \$67 billion, making him the second-richest person in the U.S.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg jumped into fourth place, his highest rank ever, with a net worth of \$55.5 billion. However, Oracle founder Larry Ellison landed at No. 5 for the first time since 2007. His net worth is \$49.3 billion.

Standing on the No. 6 spot is former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, CEO of the eponymous firm Bloomberg L.P., who has a net worth of \$45 billion.

These six richest multi-billionaires have a combined \$363.3 billion at their withdrawal, most of which is still held as stakes in the companies they founded. However, part of their fortune is vested in real estate. Mr. Gates, for one, owns a Washington mansion worth about \$170 million, several horse ranches across the U.S. and shares in some luxury hotel chains through his private investment firm, Cascade.

Here, take a look at the residences the six richest moguls call home:



Bill Gates Worth: \$81 billion Home: Medina, Washington

Mr. Gates, 60, spends most of his time at his 66,000-square-foot Medina, Washington, mansion, nicknamed Xanadu 2.0 after the title character's estate in *Citizen Kane*. The mansion overlooks Lake Washington. It took Mr. Gates seven years and \$63.2 million to build this house, which is filled with lots of high-tech features. He purchased the lot for \$2 million in 1988, but it's now worth an estimated \$170 million, according to public records.



Jeff Bezos Worth: \$67 billion Home: Medina, Washington

Mr. Bezos, 52, in the process of building his e-commerce empire, scooped up a vast amount of real properties over the years,

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EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

What's the Best Sleeping Position for Your Health?

By **BETH HOWARD**

How you snooze can affect sleep quality, plus brain, heart and stomach health.

You need to find your best sleep position. You know how important sleep can be to your health — seven hours a night was recently deemed the ideal in one study. But it turns out that the position you sleep in — on your side, flat on your back or prone — can also make a difference in your health and well-being. Considering that you spend a third of each day in bed, that difference could be significant.

Although the experience of individuals varies, experts say some sleeping positions may improve or prevent certain health problems. Here are the preferred ways to sleep for specific concerns.

Sleep on your side to breathe better

You (or your partner) may have noticed that snoring is worse when you are lying on your back. "It can be significant if you have untreated obstructive sleep apnea," says neurologist Rachel Marie E. Salas, M.D., assistant medical director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Sleep and Wellness in Baltimore.

Obstructive sleep apnea happens when the tissues at the back of the throat relax and close, briefly starving you of oxygen. This leads to multiple awakenings during the night as you sputter or gasp for air. The result: fragmented sleep and fatigue.

Snuggling on your side often takes care of the snoring, but Salas recommends getting tested for sleep apnea, which is commonly treated by wearing a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) device. "Eighty percent of people that meet the diagnostic criteria for apnea are not diagnosed," she



says. "But it increases your risk for heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure and heart arrhythmias." Sleep apnea is also linked to an increased risk of dementia.

Sleep on your back for back pain

If you're one of the 80 percent of people in the U.S. who has battled back pain, the position you sleep in can mean the difference between waking restored or so stiff you want to crawl back into bed.

"Sleeping on your back in the neutral position is the gold standard," says Shaleen Vira, assistant professor of orthopedic surgery and neurosurgery and director of spine surgery research at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. A neutral stance means maintaining the natural curves and alignment of your spine.

To do that, place a pillow roll or rolled towel under your knees, and choose the "just right" bed pillow. "Sleeping with too big of a pillow will put

your neck in kyphosis, meaning it's leaning forward and causing strain," says Vira. "And sleeping without a pillow or too small of a pillow can cause you to be hyperextended," causing other body stresses.

Savings on eye exams and eyewear at national retailers

Sleeping on your side — preferably with a pillow between your knees to align your back — is the next-best option, Vira says. But sleeping on your stomach, which requires you to turn your head to one side or the other to breathe, is the worst position for your spine because it flattens the natural curve of your back. It also stresses the back and neck to boot.

Sleep on your side to boost brain power

Concerned about your brain health? Side sleeping could help keep you sharp and possibly reduce your dementia risk.

Here's why: During the day, toxic byproducts of the brain's activities accumulate in the central nervous system and are flushed away during sleep via cerebrospinal fluid, which surrounds the brain and spinal cord. The brain waste includes beta amyloid, a substance found in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease.

Research from the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) found that this waste clearance system works best when people sleep on their side, particularly the right side, says study coauthor Maiken Nedergaard, a professor of neuroscience and neurology at

URMC, who discovered the brain's cleaning system.

The reason it's beneficial for brain clearance is that the heart helps pump cerebrospinal fluid. "The pumping of blood initiates pulsations of the blood vessel walls that drive cerebrospinal fluid into the brain," Nedergaard explains. This process works more efficiently when people lie on their sides, boosting the cleaning process.

Sleep on your right side to protect your heart

Data has shown that when people lie on their left side

during sleep, the position of their heart shifts due to the pull of gravity. That causes changes in the heart's electrical activity that show up on electrocardiograms (ECG). When they're sleeping on the right side, however, tissues and structures between the lungs hold the heart in place and ECGs remain normal.

Sleeping on the left side isn't a problem if you don't have underlying heart issues. But for people with congestive heart failure and other heart issues, it can cause discomfort and even breathing difficulties. If that sounds familiar, try turning to your right when you hit the sheets.

Sleep on your left side for better digestion

The discomfort of heartburn, indigestion and acid reflux disease — officially known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) — can ruin a good night's sleep. But "sleeping on your left side tends to make it a little better," Salas says. "It takes some pressure off your stomach." In fact, research shows that not only do GERD sufferers who sleep on the right side experience more instances of heartburn than when on their left side, but these episodes also last longer.

Slightly elevating the head of the bed or using a foam wedge to keep your head higher than your chest can also be helpful. "Although it's not treating the reflux, it can reduce the symptoms," Salas says.



THEY'RE SOWORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Ways that Modern Technology is ruining your health

By **GENEVIEVE CUNNINGHAM**

MODERN technology is amazing. We have massive amounts of information at the tips of our fingertips, and we walk around with tiny computers in our pockets. What could possibly be better?! Even though this question is meant to be rhetorical, it has an unsettling answer. You know what could be better? Our health. With the rise of technology, our health statistics have taken a serious nosedive. Are these related?

Perhaps they aren't in all cases, but it's hard to ignore some of the links between more technology and bad health. Here are three ways in which modern technology may be contributing to poor health.

It Encourages Massive Amounts of Sitting

While some forms of technology such as TV and the like can be done at the same time as a great workout, many other forms simply don't work that way. You want to run while surfing the internet? Yeah, that's probably not going to happen. Because of this, many people do a whole lot of sitting. We sit and play on our phones. We sit in front of the computer. I'm even guilty of sitting in front of the TV glued to my phone with an open laptop beside me. This increase in sitting in recent years has led to weak muscles, back pain, and even heart problems. While technology is a great thing for many, it can also be a problem for motivating you to move.

It Strains the Eyes and Causes Headaches

So much time spent staring at a screen is hard on the eyes. Our eyes were simply not made to do that. Over time, this can cause significant strain, even resulting in long-term wearing of glasses. This tends to be worse for those who sit in front of a screen all day. The eye strain also contributes to an increase in headaches. If you find yourself squinting when you haven't always or you're experiencing more headaches than usual, you may look to your technology habits to discover the culprit.

It Stunts Mental and Emotional Health

While having a ton of information readily available can be wonderful, it can also be a hindrance. In a recent study conducted on social media and its users, those who spent a lot of time on sites such as Facebook and Twitter were more likely to exhibit signs of depression. The consensus was that these forms of media only give us snippets into others' lives. These snippets are often a facade into reality, and as a



result, it harms the mental and emotional health of many young people. Our minds and bodies were meant for real face-to-face interaction, and when we deprive them of that, it can do significant damage long-term.

Technology can be great, and we all know it. It can open us up to a world that we may not ever experience otherwise. When it comes to health, however, it may be doing more harm than good in many cases. Take a good long look at your technology habits, and make changes where necessary. It may very well save your health and your life.

How the Internet affects your mental health

According to medical professionals on piedmont.com, these days, it seems like we live

our lives on the Internet, but can excessive Internet and social media use impact your mental

health? While it's a helpful tool for education, work, social interaction and entertainment, overuse can take a toll on your health, says Saju Mathew, M.D., a Piedmont primary care physician.

Internet use and anxiety

Whether it's from reading too much negative news or researching your symptoms online – something Dr. Mathew says he sees frequently among his patients – too much computer time can increase your anxiety.

"Generally, it's not a good idea to research your health symptoms online because the final outcome is a lot of unnecessary anxiety and worry. My overall advice is not to research your symptoms, but to see a doctor first," he says.

On Social media and your social life, he says "Some social media use can be a good thing because it helps us keep up with family and friends, but we need to be careful about how it affects our psyche," he says.

Studies have shown excessive social media use can lead to feelings of depression and dependency in some people.

"When we get on social media, we are looking for affirmation, and consciously or not, we are comparing our life to the lives of others," he says. "As a result, we may not enjoy what's in the moment."

Rather than get wrapped up in comparison, try this: Each day, write down five things for which you are grateful. Focusing on the good in your life helps you combat feelings of low self-esteem and envy.

Technology and your sleep: Excessive smartphone, computer and tablet use can disrupt your sleep. Bright lights from these devices block melatonin secretion, the hormone that regulates sleep.

"I recommend to my patients that they set a bedtime, cut off their phones and stop using social media for the night," he says.

Problematic Internet use: If you feel the need to constantly check your social media accounts for updates or respond to emails right away (even in the middle of the night), you may be experiencing what some experts call "problematic Internet use." If you feel like Internet use has taken over your life, talk to your physician. He or she can help.

Drawing boundaries for social media use: "At the end of the day, there has to be a line we draw when it comes to accessing social media," says Dr. Mathew.

Perhaps you set a limit on your screen time each day or turn off your devices at a certain time every night. Whatever you do, carve in plenty of time for "real life." You'll be happier and healthier for it.





Reality Bites

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Facebook scams and how to spot them

SCAMS offering jobs, grants, loans, giveaways and easy ways to make money are common on Facebook. They lure sometimes desperate people with a way out of financial difficulty – but may end up costing them instead.

How can you avoid being conned? Here are some tips to help you spot Facebook scams.

Badly written posts

Poor writing, spelling and grammar is a good sign of a scam.

Mistakes happen, but a post that tells you to send a message "via send message button below" or says you can win something "withing 10 seconds" is probably not legit. Also suspicious are posts written in all caps with lots of exclamation marks.

Posts that ask for money

Scams that directly ask for money are the easiest to spot. This is common in job scams, where to apply for the job you have to pay an "application" or "registration" fee. Some giveaway scams that offer, say, free gas cylinders ask for a "booking" or "delivery" fee. The fee is relatively small, usually about US\$3 to \$5. But the scammers can make a large sum if enough people are fooled.

Payment is usually required through a mobile money transfer app, like M-Pesa. The scam normally tells people to send the money to an anonymous number – not to the company's legitimate bank account.

Being asked to pay upfront is a clear sign that something is fishy. Job offers and giveaways from legitimate companies don't come with a fee.



Posts that link to an unrelated website

If a scam that uses the name of a real company links to a website, you can be sure it won't be the company's legitimate website. It will be a site set up by the scammers.

Job scams often link to Google Forms, a free service where pages are quick and easy to set up but look official. Google Forms is also popular with scams that steal people's personal information.

Then there are scams that make false offers to lure users to websites that earn advertising revenue for their owners.

Say you're browsing Facebook and see a post advertising flash sales at an appliance store. Interested, you click on the link. But instead of going to the store's



LINKTREE
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 Linktree. Make your link do more. [Learn More](#)

official website, it takes you to a basic-looking website, usually run by a free or easily set up content management system such as Wordpress or Webflow. These websites are filled with colourful banners and pop-up adverts that website owners use to earn money from views and clicks.

The tactic is also used in job scams. Whenever you click a link on Facebook, be sure to check whether the URL or web address matches the company named in the post.

Posts that tell you to like, share, comment and inbox

A recent Facebook post claimed that global technology firm Nokia was giving away new phones to students. To win,

users had to post the letter 'N' in the comments. Other "competition" posts tell users to quickly spell out a certain word in the comments before anyone else.

These are examples of engagement bait – posts that ask people to interact by liking, commenting on or sharing. The more people do this, the greater the Facebook page's reach. Some genuine competitions will ask Facebook users to like and share. But be wary of strange requests to comment and send inbox messages – especially when you are asked to share personal information.

What can you do?

You've come across a Facebook post that you're pretty sure is a

scam. What can you do? Importantly, don't hit share! Facebook scams thrive on reach so, instead of spreading the dodgy post further, just keep scrolling.

Report the suspected scam to Facebook by clicking on the top right of the post. Click "report post" and choose the option that best describes the issue. Facebook will review it and remove anything that violates its community standards.

You can also send the link to Africa Check, in a tweet or email, for investigation.

Trust your instincts. If a post looks fishy, it's probably a scam. And remember the golden rule – if something seems too good to be true, it usually is.

Source: Africa Check

THEY'RE SLOWLY WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Lifestyle

Signs It's Time to Leave Your Job

By **JOHN COLEMAN**

AT some point, all of us experience moments when we must face the difficult decision to let go of something that formerly...more

Over the last two years, record numbers of people have voluntarily left their jobs.

The movement is now so broad it has a name: The Great Resignation. Some of these people have left for more flexible work in the gig economy. Some are seeking a change in lifestyle. But many have been spurred by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated social upheavals to take a deep look at their lives and what gives them purpose.

Does this describe you? Are you feeling stagnant and in need of a change that can offer you greater purpose and engagement? This is entirely natural. Your purpose will shift and change over time, and it's right to constantly find new ways to reinvigorate it. But those periods of transition are challenging to navigate.

All of us experience moments when we must face the difficult decision to let go of doing something that formerly offered us purpose, as I highlight in the HBR Guide to Crafting Your Purpose. But big decisions, like a career change, should be approached thoughtfully. I always advise people to be thoughtful about reinventing their current work before moving on to something new, there are times where the right choice is to strike out on a fresh path.

As you consider whether to join the Great Resignation or take on a career transition, here are a few signs you might use to evaluate whether it's time to truly move on from work that previously provided you with meaning:

It's no longer encouraging your growth.

The best athletes will often diversify their physical training or dramatically change their routines. This is because, at some point, everything we do too consistently ceases to be a source of growth. When you notice a source of purpose is no longer helping you grow, look to reinvention or some other change. Leaving a job is a big decision, so I always encourage people to first see if there are ways to craft their work or make changes within their current professional environment before moving on. Often, reinvigorating your work can be



as simple as seeing it differently and modifying it in small ways, something often referred to as "job crafting." But if you've exhausted that path and can no longer grow in your profession, it might be time to move on.

You've achieved what you set out to achieve.

Sometimes, you may lack growth in your current position because there's nothing left to aspire to. A former colleague of mine played in the NFL. The first phase of his life was all about football. But after he retired, he found he was satisfied with that period of his life, which had been an incredible source of meaning, and was ready to leave it behind. Sometimes we simply accomplish what we set out to achieve and are ready to move on to new challenges.



You actively look for ways to avoid your job: I had a friend who loved writing. But at some point, she had grown tired of it and began seeking ways to avoid it — procrastinating, choosing almost any activity from laundry to yard work over putting words on a page, and getting lost on social media when she'd finally sit down to write. She realized, ultimately, that she needed a long break from writing if she was ever going to fall in love with it again. Sometimes, you need to power through

something to develop a positive habit (all of us should exercise, for example, but it can be hard to get started); but other times it's necessary to take a temporary or permanent break. A profession should be something we approach with curiosity and anticipation, not avoidance.

You regularly approach work with exhaustion, burnout, or dread: I previously had a job that I had once enjoyed but had truly begun to wear on me, so much so that it was hard for me to leave the house to go to work in the morning. This wasn't because the company or its people were bad; the fit just wasn't there anymore. If you regularly feel dread at approaching your work, it's time to seriously consider changing it or leaving it behind. Your life is short and precious, and your work should enrich it.

It's causing you to develop bad habits:

Another friend of mine worked at a company whose culture was toxic, and he found himself — even when away from work — behaving in ways he would have previously found unethical or inappropriate. He found himself being untruthful, for example, and misleading colleagues and clients. When he recognized this, he immediately left the firm. When something you look to for purpose begins pulling you further from it and from your values, you need to let it go. Never let a professional environment change you for the worse — particularly on matters of character.

Your workplace has become unhealthy.

Workspaces with colleagues who scream at or personally insult you, for example, or where you are worked to the point of physical collapse should, of course, inspire you to seek something new (if not pursue more serious action). Some workplaces are consistently harmful to your physical or emotional health. If you find yourself in that unenviable position, it's time to move on.

There are, of course, other signs. And again, trying earnestly to reconceive of your work and craft it to be more purposeful is always the best first course if you are feeling stagnant. But letting go of the old is part of keeping life fresh and allowing purpose to change over time. Your life is in your hands, something more and more people seem to be realizing. And the Great Resignation may be just the opportunity you need for a great reinvention.

BUSINESS WORLD

Chinese counterfeit cotton fabrics

I recently watched a popular video in which Adejoke Ewaede, a Nigerian young woman, raises attention to Chinese counterfeit cotton fabrics by spreading awareness about the abundance of 'Adire' clothing made in China that is sold in Nigeria. The core issue is that Chinese importers are conspiring with Nigerian vendors to seize control of and destroy domestic batik and tie-dye production, just as Chinese vendors are collaborating with Nigerian vendors to seize control and destroy domestic textile production. BELLO IBRAHIM writes.

THE government is largely to blame for the state of the textile factories, which may not absolve Dutch disease sufferers. The Kakuri district of Kaduna State was formerly a hub of activity before the military era's privatization drive. According to Tom Burgis, one of the facilitators who made significant contributions to the demise of the Nigerian textile sector through cross-border negotiations for the importation of textile supplies was a powerful Nigerian businessman from Katsina State.

Looking back, it was said that by the middle of the 1980s, Nigeria had 175 active textile mills and 350,000 workers employed across the whole textile industry. Nigeria's textile industry is now operating at low capacity, with 25 textile mills operating at an average sector capacity of 40% and employing a total of about 25,000 people. Unfortunately, as the nation's production capacity declined, there was a rise in demand for textile materials imported into the country. An entirely new class of importers—businesswomen and men—were created as a result of the unquenchable need for goods. Fake batik and tie-dye textiles from China may have both beneficial and negative effects on the Nigerian economy. Here are some possible effects:

Negative effects on local businesses: Nigeria's domestic textile industry may suffer from an invasion of cheap, fake batik and tie-dye fabrics from China. The lower pricing of the fake goods may make it difficult for local manufacturers and craftspeople to compete, which would result in job losses and



lower sector revenue. As the lady rightly said, a lot of local 'Adire' makers are losing their job on a daily basis to the China-made fake 'Adire' clothes. Similarly, this was how thousands of Nigerians lost their jobs and sources of livelihood to the importation of textile fabrics to China.

Loss of Revenue and Trade Deficit: Nigerian textile

companies may see a fall in sales if Nigerian consumers choose the less expensive Chinese counterfeit fabrics over locally manufactured ones. As more money leaves the country to buy Chinese textiles, the government's tax revenue may decline, which may also increase the trade deficit.

Threat to Cultural Heritage: Nigerian textiles of

historical and cultural value include batik and tie-dye. The creation and sale of knockoff products can diminish the quality and worth of these traditional crafts. A loss of cultural identity and legacy could result.

Quality and safety issues: Fake fabrics frequently have lower-quality components than real ones. Customers may become unsatisfied as a result, and they can eventually stop believing in the local textile industry as a whole. Additionally, fake goods cannot follow safety standards and put customers' health in danger.

Consumers' price advantage: On the positive side, the availability of cheaper Chinese counterfeit fabrics can benefit Nigerian consumers, who may have limited purchasing power. Affordable clothing can allow a broader section of the population to access fashionable clothing at lower prices.

Opportunities for Collaboration: Nigerian textile companies can investigate partnerships with Chinese producers to advance production methods, strengthen quality assurance, and create affordable manufacturing procedures. This can help the local industry compete more effectively with imports.

The Nigerian government should take measures to safeguard local sectors, such as raising tariffs or limiting imports of fake fabrics, to lessen the detrimental effects. Investing in the growth of the local textile industry can also help increase

competitiveness and protect the cultural legacy connected to traditional textiles. These efforts can be made through training, modernization, and marketing campaigns. As Gandhi rightly said to the Indians, 'Foreign cloth must be totally banished from the Nigerian market if Nigeria is to become an economically free nation if her peasant cotton farmers and textile workers are to be freed from chronic pauperism'.

Invariably, the PBAT's economic experts and policymakers should constantly work to develop workable protectionist laws to safeguard domestic companies within our borders. Altruism and impartiality should be the driving forces behind this. To help their domestic firms, almost all nations have established some kind of protectionist trade policy. According to reports, China has 200 to 300, the US has around 800, and the UK and Germany each have 300. The information at hand demonstrates that China is the target of the majority of protectionist policies internationally. This is due to the Chinese, who, through their soft politics of railway and infrastructure diplomacy, are the arrogant pseudo-imperialists seducing the global south into their zones of influence. Chinese people possess a strong sense of humour. They are like squirrels in that they have a strong association with planning and resourcefulness, strong adaptation, and the capacity to withstand any adversity.



BUSINESS WORLD

CBN, FG to revisit new regulation on bank customers

THE National Commissioner of the Nigeria Data Protection Commission, Dr Vincent Olatunji, has disclosed that the commission has formed a joint committee with the Central Bank of Nigeria to review the regulation mandating financial institutions to obtain social media handles, among other data, of customers.

He disclosed this at a two-day sensitisation workshop on Data Privacy and Protection in Abuja on Thursday.

Earlier in June this year, the CBN mandated financial institutions to obtain the social media handles, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, residential addresses, and more of their customers.

This formed part of its new customer due diligence regulations and is in a bid to further deepen the identification process in the banking system.

The apex bank disclosed this in its 'Central Bank of Nigeria (Customer Due Diligence) Regulations, 2023' document.

The CBN stated that its new regulation was created to provide additional customer due diligence measures for financial institutions under its regulatory purview.

However, the NDPC had kicked against the regulation, describing it as unnecessary.

Cameroon dam opening: N700bn CBN farmers' loan under threat in flooded states



Shonubi

Olatunji said, "When there was an issue with CBN asking for CBN handles, we actually went to the CBN and we set up a joint committee to see the best way to resolve this. We told them that was not necessary and they agreed with us."

Also, he said the commission is engaging in rigorous sensitisation on the Nigeria Data Protection Act and capacity building of Data Protection Officers and Nigerians.

Olatunji decried that the country requires over 500,000 certified DPOs because the skill is lacking.

The Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr Bosun Tijani, during the

event, expressed the Federal Government's commitment to the protection of digital platforms to build the confidence of citizens while online.

Tijani said the government is building a structure around regulation of data privacy and protection, which is important to the journey of the nation towards digitalisation.

"Data privacy is not just a matter of convenience, it is a fundamental human right and we should care about the data we generate and what it is being used for. As we embrace the digital age, it is crucial that the personal and sensitive information of our citizens is maintained under the eyes of confidentiality.

THE low supply of Premium Motor Spirit, popularly called petrol, being experienced in parts of Lagos and South-Western States may drag till the end of September, and might spread to other locations if not addressed in earnest.

It was gathered on recently that the situation may linger till month end because the System 2B pipeline in front of Good Luck Estate at Idimu, Alimosho Local Council Development Area of Lagos, is going to be ready for use by September ending.

Oil marketers had attributed the cause of the recent fuel queues experienced in many parts of Lagos and some states in the South-West to the disruptive activities of vandals.

They explained that the shutdown of the System 2B pipeline, which supplies large volumes of products to the region, had impacted negatively in the flow of PMS in Lagos and neighbouring states.

"From our end, the issue has been with the pipeline vandalism which we raised an alarm over since July. Satellite depot has not loaded any product in the last three weeks, and whenever there is a problem here, it is going to affect Lagos and the whole of South-West," the Chairman, Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria, Satellite Depot, Akin Akinrinade, had told reporters on Tuesday.

Akinrinade had further explained, "Although I don't know what has been happening in other depots, from what we gathered yesterday, even NNPC Retail has been operating skeletal product dispatching. The NNPC Retail loaded just three to four trucks to Ikoyi on Monday. No product was dispatched to other places. I don't know about other depots."

But on Thursday, the Chief Corporate Communications Officer, Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, Garba-Deen Muhammad, said the vandalised pipeline was being worked on by the NNPC.

NNPCL set to fix vandalised pipelines



Kyari

Commenting on the development the President, Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association of Nigeria, Billy Gillis-Harry, said there was already a drop in the supply of petrol nationwide.

He also stated that the foreign exchange crisis in Nigeria had discouraged more marketers from implementing their PMS importation plans.

"There's already short supply of products and the reasons are not far-fetched. In the beginning of the subsidy regime most of our marketers decided to pull resources and import.

"They were to import about 25,000 metric tonnes each. But somewhere along the line they could not meet their cash calls because dollar jumped from the official rate of about N450 to over N700.

"So it was no longer accessible and marketers needed to depend on the parallel market for it, even when the government promised to create opportunities in the I&E window. So clearly, the issues at stake are very simple. Supply is not there as before and it is a problem." Asked whether this means the NNPC, which prides itself as the supplier of last resort, was not importing enough products, Gillis-Harry replied, "Well, as it is today, we cannot say they are not importing. But we need to see results. If there are enough imports, we need to see the result of the imports."

The National Controller Operations, IPMAN, Mike Osatuyi, had told The PUNCH earlier that there was no cause for alarm with respect to product availability.

"Yes, there are still queues but NNPC has assured us that there is no cause for alarm. So, let us rely on their statement for some days before we know what to do," Osatuyi had stated on Wednesday.

Also, the President, IPMAN, Chinedu Okonkwo had said he had a meeting with NNPC Retail on Wednesday on the concerns raised by marketers.

"I just left NNPC Retail, and they assured us that they have plenty of products. Go to the depots, they are loading," he said on Wednesday.

According to the official, a total of 200,000 metric tonnes, equivalent

to about 540 million litres of fuel, is currently at various depots in Lagos.

"We are taking concrete steps to close the gaps in product distribution, and I can tell you that there is no significant difference in what was trucked out last week and this week," he said while declining to state what quantity was distributed last week.

"The depots are not dry. Everywhere is wet. There are two vessels discharging PMS at Apapa jetty, one at Ijegan, one at Coconut, Ibafo, and one at MRS, Tincan. Cumulatively, we are talking about 200,000 metric tonnes of PMS, equivalent to about 540 million litres in various shore tanks in Lagos. So, we are taking time to close the supply gaps, and I can assure you that the queues would disappear just as they came," the source stated.

Meanwhile, when told on Thursday that other states outside the South-West had no queues and whether they would experience such in due course, the PETROAN president explained why this was so.

He said, "First of all, don't forget that buyers are also having issues with their pockets. So vehicles are not buying are not buying as much petroleum products as they used to buy."

"Right now there are different modalities that Nigerians are managing to get through. You have families that are dropping several cars in their fleets, you have neighbours that are joining resources, trying to pass through the same area where they can get closer enough to their offices and business places."

"So with that kind of situation in several parts of Nigeria there will be not so much pressure on PMS. That is why it has not been pronounced as such outside Lagos."

"But it is pronounced this much in Lagos because the state is an entire city that has over 15 million residents and every day, whether subsidy or no subsidy, people must move in Lagos. So that is the reason."

Gillis-Harry, however, stated that if the low supply situation should persist for long, the queues would spread to other regions of the country.

Solid mineral, new petroleum for Nigeria, Alake

THE Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake has hinted on strategic measures proposed by the Tinubu-led administration to tackle the menace of illegal mining, as it seeks to make solid mineral sector the new petroleum for Nigeria.

According to the minister, the menace of illegal mining that has

eroded and deprived the country of substantial revenue will be nipped in the bud under the political will and firmness of the administration of President Ahmed Tinubu.

He said: "the solid minerals sector is now the focal point of generating revenue for the country, it is now the next petroleum of Nigeria."

A recent KPMG report said Nigeria currently boasts

over 44 priced solid minerals in the mining space, with huge deposits scattered over different parts of the country.

It called for the provision of accessible and affordable funding, expediting amendments to mining laws, regulations, and policies, access to reliable geodata, provision of tax incentives and/or rebates, and enhancing security measures to safeguard mining operations.

The minister, in a statement issued by Alaba Balogun, head of the ministry's public relations department, hinted on the government's plan to partner security agencies in tackling cases of illegal mining across the country, stating that it will no longer be business as usual barring the identity of whoever is involved in economic crime.

Alake who addressed participants in a capacity building programme on Jewelry making and design, said "it is a known fact that Nigeria with its large population has a huge potential for

jewellery and it is imperative to create a local jewellery industry that would substantially meet local demand for jewellery products, increase import substitution, create jobs and boost the export value of Nigeria's gemstones and jewellery.

"It is my belief that the Jewellery industry when fully harnessed could contribute significantly to national economic growth by creating massive job opportunities.

Commenting on the program, which was conceived as part of ongoing minerals sector support for economic diversification, Alake stated that Nigerians has no business going abroad to buy jewelry in view of her potential to contribute immensely to jewelry-making



Alake

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Understanding entrepreneurship

After security, if there is anything that the world badly needs, it is wealth creation through value creation or addition. As the world's population approaches 7 billion people, the world system correspondingly gets more and more complex with the need for sharp and apt solutions in the areas of production technologies; increased food supply as well as organised governance structures. AYUBA YILGAK'HA writes.

ONE of the composite solution to multi-dimensional human problems is entrepreneurship which is the fundamental catalyst for cracking human capabilities in wealth creation. Most often, people hold the erroneous assumption that Motivational Speaking (MS) and Entrepreneurship (E) are the same but they are not.

While MS is basically about spiking or stimulating the passion of someone into doing something he would have done otherwise if left alone through the power of speech; E concerns the cracking of human ingenuity, creativity and innovative power towards the invention and exhibition of a new product(s), new method(s) of production or valuable and practical idea(s) that can be bought at a price.

Motivational speakers are ambitious hope and action promoters; entrepreneurs are ambitious and adventurous problems solvers through practical actions.

Motivational Speakers idea driven incubators who encourage people without necessarily having a product while entrepreneurs are product centred persons who stimulate people into production or business using their products.

A motivational speaker awakens the people about the existence of an opportunity or opportunities; entrepreneurs, spot such opportunities and seizes them without delay.

Motivational speakers teach people how not to fear risk; entrepreneurs are adventurous risk takers who take calculated risk in the process of creating a value or market for their product.

Motivational speakers are words-driven social reengineering agents; entrepreneurs are action-driven wealth creation agents.

Motivational speakers or books are encyclopedia of ideas which might not, necessarily, be applicable under all circumstances; entrepreneurs have practical solutions that address contemporary problems as they unfold.

Motivational speakers sell their speech or books mostly to lazy thinkers who might not even read or apply them; entrepreneurs sell their products to customers needing practical solutions.

Motivational speakers index and share old or new ideas in a most convincing manner; entrepreneurs create or modify and sell their product or service in the most satisfying manner.

Motivational speakers end a living by the weapon of speech; motivational speakers end a living by the quality of their product or service.

It takes an orator to make a motivational speaker; one does not need to be an orator to make



an entrepreneur but functional talent and skill power.

Motivational speakers thrive on dormant conditions or ideals demanding awakening or reawakening; entrepreneurs thrive on chaotic situations demanding solutions.

Motivational speaking can be imitated; entrepreneurship can only be demonstrated. In entrepreneurship, it is argued that 'when you teach a man something, he will never learn it'. The entrepreneur rather learns by doing; not doing by learning!

Motivational speakers diagnose and encourage their public to take drugs; entrepreneurs provide the drugs these public take.

Motivational speaking is theory based; entrepreneurship is evidence based. In other words, motivational speakers tell ideal stories; entrepreneurs show ideal products.

Motivational speakers are like sign posts which guide people to a destination; entrepreneurs are the destination.

Motivational speakers produce the 'what' and how manuals; entrepreneurs show the product manual.

Motivational speakers are all round stimulators of human action including entrepreneurial actions; entrepreneurs are action packed and specific problem solvers.

Motivational speakers are like doctors who diagnose and prescribe drugs for cure from pharmaceutical companies; entrepreneurs are the owners of pharmaceutical companies who make these drugs that cure.

Larry King was a motivational speaker who blessed the world with the book, "How to speak to anyone anywhere"; Thomas

Edison was an entrepreneur who blessed the world with light bulbs that illuminates the world even today.

Nick Vujicic was a motivational speaker who gave the world a book "Life without limit: Inspiration for ridiculously good life"; Henry Ford was an entrepreneur who cracked the world of automobiles.

Dale Carnegie was a motivational speaker who wrote, "How to win friends and influence people"; Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright (Wright Brothers) were entrepreneurs who invented the first aeroplane.

Fela Duritoye who wrote the book ideas are gold is a motivational speaker; Elon Musk is a programming entrepreneur who has carved a niche for himself in world of automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Napoleon Hills who wrote, "Think and grow rich" was a motivational speaker; Steve Jobs is an entrepreneur who has fascinated the world with Pixar, NeXT and Apple computers.

Mike Monroe of blessed memory was a motivational speaker; Jack Ma the Chinese legend is another success story in entrepreneurship who founded Alibaba, a famous online trading platform that is revolutionising online trading in china.

Anthony Jay Robbins is a motivational speaker who wrote books like "Unlimited Power" and "Awaken the power within"; Mark Zuckerberg entrepreneurial acumen gave the world facebook which has changed the world's communication system today.

Eric Thomas is a motivational speaker; Satoshi Nakamoto entrepreneurial power creates cryptocurrency Bitcoin is

catalysing cryptocurrency markets worldwide.

Avran Naom Chomsky is a motivational speaker, political activist and social critic; Bill Gates through entrepreneurial prowess Co-founded Microsoft that driving the digital age.

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani motivational speaker who earned herself a Nobel Peace prize laureate at the age of 17; Jeff Bezos is an entrepreneur who created Amazon, a major shipping platform in the world.

Barrack Obama is a motivational speaker who against all odds became the president of the USA Sergey Brin is an entrepreneur who co-founded Google which has simplified access to information globally.

Leslie Calvin Brown is a motivational speaker who has influenced and is influencing many worldwide; Sheldon Adelson is an entrepreneur with the largest casino in the United States and making big fortunes. Gustaf Hagman and Robin Ramm-Ericson also founded the largest online casino and are making fortunes from it.

Deepak Chopra is a motivational speaker who is making advocacy waves alternative medicine; Anthony Werkman is one of the world's legendary entrepreneurs who created "Betway", one of the biggest betting sites that are changing the world of gambling.

The world has no short of motivational speakers but entrepreneurs who are always right on target. It is important to note that motivational speakers can make entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs could make motivational speakers but this is not automatic. For instance, writing a book on wealth creation

does not automatically make the author of such book an entrepreneur but translating those ideas into practical or tangible wealth creating solutions.

Books are mere rhetoric but entrepreneurship is a reality.

Entrepreneurs who combine the gift of motivational speakers are rare breed that can influence and change the world with ease. Such breeds do not only influence but add value to the well-being and welfare of societies. Mike Zuckerberg, Bill Gates and Jac Ma are typical examples.

The 21st century is the century of entrepreneurs. Because the century is chaotic, it needs deliberate risk takers; because it is highly populated and complex, it needs innovative organisers and producers; because it is speeding, it needs visionary thinking can create today solutions with the future in mind; because it is interconnected, it needs networking prowess. All these needs are entrepreneurship related.

It is instructive to note that even though motivational speaking and entrepreneurship differs, the one thing that makes them similar is that it takes self development to make any of them. A man who is committed to self-development towards entrepreneurship will become an entrepreneur while those committed to self development towards becoming motivational speaking will be motivational speakers. Point is, both motivational speaking and entrepreneurial skills can be acquired through learning and self development.



With **BULUS GAMBO**



'I am studying journalism's future'

Continued from page 18

eds, Twitter threads, people movements making good trouble and disturbing the peace. We don't like things that startle. Too on the nose, maybe. Art can take the edge off.

When we sit in a cinema, or in front of my TV at home, and we see love between two queer people is humanized; or we watch a play, in which women are the authors of their own fates and destinies, with impressive results; when we see a sculpture that unusually centres little children at play, and creates a world in which they can escape from child labour, abuse; when we read satire that makes plain, humorous and ridiculous the state of political affairs...we may be more easily convinced of activists' ambitions. Through aesthetically pleasing, experiential means, we may be encouraged to join a cause.

What is the most meaningful piece of writing advice you've ever received?

'Don't say purchase, when you can say buy.' — Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Farafina Creative Writing Workshop, June 2015.

Who's an author you wish you had discovered earlier?

bell hooks. I only started reading her after she passed but, my God, what a woman. What a writer. What a gift. I am catching up and I will. I have been sitting with *All About Love* for a few weeks and it has completely turned me inside out on my thoughts on love, compassion, trauma, hurt, living? May she continue to rest with angels.

Who are the journalists you're most excited about today?

This is a shameless plug—but I am very excited about the young journalists in the African Arguments Fellowship for Young Freelancers whom I have the privilege to work with closely: Ope Adetayo, Immaculata Abba, Yared Tsegaye, Lara Reffat, Nicolas Nhalungo and Wyban Kanyi.

The reason is a little selfish: I have a front seat to watching them grow and get better in real time but, more importantly, they are producing compelling journalism. Have you read Abba's breathless review of a Nigerian work installed in St. Paul's Cathedral, positioned as 'challenging British history' Or Adetayo's timely, lucid reporting on the plight of African students trying to flee war in Ukraine? Or Reffat's visual, resonant telling of women in Egypt taking back their power and flipping the finger to Egyptian patriarchy by riding bikes? You should!

Figurative works of the 'black body' are very popular in the West at the moment, triggered by some guilt post the murder of George Floyd and the racial reckoning that followed.

What is your favourite topic to write or read about these days? (Please include the names of articles and books, if possible)

My favourite topic to write about these days is restitution. We are seeing a slow, yet maddening, but somewhat exhilarating paradigm shift in the relations between Western museums and governments and our ancestral, spiritual, cosmological, religious artefacts, they pillaged by military conquest or 'bought' in contexts of power imbalance.

It is fascinating to see countries like Benin find some success in getting sacred royal treasures of Abomey returned through pragmatic diplomacy; Nigeria's Benin Bronzes, ivories, wood, returned through relentless advocacy; countries like Germany having a come to Jesus moment after having been glib about these works for so long; countries like Britain maintaining a retentionist stance; France giving works back piecemeal to Benin, Senegal and soon, Ivory Coast and the Seychelles, on a case by case basis. France does this, maintaining that this return is not an act of repentance for the violence visited on their former colonies and subsequent theft, but rather 'friendship' A really interesting time in cultural geopolitics.

I write about all of this not only because it is topical but also because restitution is still perceived to be an elitist pursuit by (some) African observers—when it should be everyone's interest. There's a good reason why. Pitt Rivers Museum curator and author of *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*, Dan Hicks, once told me in an interview that what colonizers did in pillaging these works from us was 'seeking to undertake a cultural dispossession, seeking to destroy sovereignty, seeking to destroy religion' and most importantly to my mind, the 'destruction of knowledge.'

Of course, restitution seems abstract and unrelatable, because we have been separated from our heritage, no longer able to understand or appreciate our history, ancestry, our pride, religions, which some of these artefacts—and the customs around their use, were vessels of propagating. If these works weren't valuable proponents of all the aforementioned; and if our histories and religions weren't powerful, they would not have been so painstakingly taken apart.

And so, I write about this mainly to mainstream the idea of restitution for Nigerian readers—and at large African

readers, should the work reach them. I hope to express the importance of these works, how they tell our story as a people, how they are markers of identity, of pride; to recall their positions as works of truly—and I



must borrow this cliché—immaculate conception.

And if you are not even compelled by the cultural, historical, historical significance—consider that they are works of wonder, who in today's capitalist world invite curious eyes and paying hands. Western museums have put on exhibitions, displays with a Cameroonian wood sculpture of the Bangwe Queen, Sossa Dede's life-size, anthropozoomorphic statues of past Benin kings, Glèlè and Béhanzin, or Mukanda masks from southern Congo or North-East Angola. And they have charged visitors handsomely for it. While we may not have a culture of monetizing sacred objects, who does this windfall really belong to?

I also fully realize that writing with this kind of intention, I can be easily branded as not being objective as journalists should. I welcome any questions or debate in this regard.

What are you currently working on?

I am currently working on understanding or studying what the business and future of journalism, and media sustainability looks like in the Nigerian context. I am interested in what new business models will be—particularly as it concerns coverage of arts / culture / history, or even more traditionally successful beats like politics, business. The ads-based, patronage revenue model still works for most traditional print publications now—but not for much longer as the reading audience evolves and even the way they want to consume media changes too.

For folks who want to produce compelling, independent journalism free from political influence or private interests, they must start thinking of alternative business models to the ads-heavy one. We have seen what happens to publications when they hold power to account. (hello, 234Next?). They can be needed by the government, who, by extension, can exert pressure on private companies who can starve them of ad money. This could be an exaggeration, but it seems to me that there is no way to be a journalist in this country—working in a traditional, legacy print publication, without serving political interests somehow. So, we must explore alternative revenue streams, some of which directly collect from the audience: subscriptions, paywalls, live events, merchandize, consulting services, more. We must also interrogate the audience culture and ease of paying for media content—which is still problematic.

David Adeleke analyses these issues beautifully in his newsletter. Particularly on the South African example, investigative publication, *Daily Maverick* and their membership model, challenges of the subscription model in Africa and the cost of good journalism in Nigeria. I'm invigorated by the promise of the likes of Big Cabal Media and Stears Business who've fundraised recently and are exploring interesting revenue models and mixes: paywalls, donations, consulting services, etc. They are yet the exceptions to the rule. I am deeply invested in thinking out what similar ambitious media ventures could look like: how engaged journalism or membership programmes can work here, how product thinking can be applied, how journalism can be more responsive, service-oriented, how or if it can be paid for; and how culture, internet penetration, language, social media behaviour, play a role in all of this.

Restitution seems abstract and unrelatable because we have been separated, no longer able to understand or appreciate our history, ancestry, our pride, or our religions.

If your work would never be published, would you still write?

Probably not. I—perhaps hubristically—see, hope, and work hard at my work being a service to those who encounter it: that it informs, that it illuminates, that it humanises, it deepens knowledge of something, that it questions, that it breaks stereotypes. There's a satisfaction I get from knowing when I have succeeded in doing any of these things. That satisfaction is facilitated by the world seeing the work...published. Although that is my journalism.

Where do the richest Americans live?

Continued from page 18

earning him the No. 26 spot on The Land Report's list of America's largest landowners last year. In terms of residences, he has a 165,000-acre ranch in West Texas, a waterfront house in Washington state, three linked apartments in Manhattan's Century Tower, and a 12,000-square-foot Beverly Hills estate that boasts Tom Cruise as a neighbor, according to Forbes.

His home at Medina, Washington, close to Amazon's headquarters, boasts 5.35 acres and about 29,000 square-foot of living space. Aside from the main home, there's also a caretaker's cottage and a 4,500-square-foot boathouse on Lake Washington.



Warren BuffettWorth: \$65.5 billion Home: Omaha, Nebraska

Although the shrewdest investor on earth holds multiple real estate investments, Mr. Buffett, 86, is known for living humbly.

His home sits on a corner in Omaha, Nebraska, which he bought in 1958 for \$31,500. Mr. Buffett has lived there ever since. The house, originally built in 1921, underwent several expansions to make it a cozy and comfortable 6,500-square-foot home for the man who has a net worth of over \$65.5 billion.



Mark ZuckerbergWorth: \$55.5 billion Home: Palo Alto, California

The youngest richest entrepreneur docks most of his wealth in schools, health and other philanthropies. His real estate portfolio include his home in Palo Alto and a 9.9-million pied-a-terre near Dolores Park in San Francisco.

Mr. Zuckerberg, 32, purchased his first Craftsman-style 5,000-square-foot home in Palo Alto in 2011 for \$7 million. He snapped up four of the houses surrounding his home in the following years for about \$43.8 million to better keep his privacy. But his plan to tear down and rebuild those four homes has been stalled.



Larry EllisonWorth: \$49.3 billion Home: Woodside, California

Oracle executive chairman Larry Ellison, 72, has an extensive real estate portfolio. He has bought up large parts of whole neighborhoods in Malibu and around Lake Tahoe. He owns a \$70-million Beechwood Mansion in Newport, Rhode Island; a garden villa in Kyoto, Japan; and 98% of the land of Lanai, Hawaii's sixth-largest island, which he purchased in 2012 for \$500 million, according to published reports.

His estate in Woodside, California, with an estimated value of \$110 million, is modeled after 16th-century Japanese architecture, complete with a man-made 2.3-acre lake.

Source: **Mansion Global**

SUNDAY FEATURE

Gov Bello's footprints in ensuring food security

It is no longer news that Nigerians are currently being faced with untold hardship as a result of alarming hunger associated with the dwindling economy in the country as a whole. Following this ugly development, Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi state since he came on board close to eight years now, strived to put in his best in ensuring food security and revamping the dwindling state's economy. AMEDU JOSEPH, writes.

AGRICULTURE being the backbone of Nigeria's economy, is regarded as one of the most significant sector of any nation as it provides millions of job employment opportunities.

Successful agricultural sector comes with greater maximum security by increasing national income and improved standard of living, because 100 per cent of raw materials come from agriculture. Nigeria cannot live without the existence of Agriculture, but people are not more involved in agricultural practice like before, due to impatience, quick money with less hard work.

Kogi State is blessed with abundant natural resources as well as vast arable land suitable for farming activities, which are being maximally utilized by the present Administration of Governor Yahaya Bello. Governor Yahaya Bello's led-administration which came on board on January 27, 2016, had made tremendous achievements in all sectors of the economy, especially in Agriculture.

In spite the general economic challenges in the country and the Covid-19 pandemic the present administration under the able leadership of Governor Bello has made giant strides in creating food security through agricultural intervention programmes. Gov. Bello being agriculture friendly, declared a state of emergency in the agricultural sector immediately he took over the mantle of power in Kogi.

In his bid to ensure food sufficiency in the state especially staple food, the governor, established a 50 ton-per-day Rice Mill, sited at Ejiba in Yagba West Local Government Area.

The Project gigantic rice mill has since been completed and currently producing Confluence Rice which is one of the best Rice in the Country. Over 800 hectares of Rice farms had also been cultivated to provide paddy for the mill.

Development of Agriculture and Cassava Production. The State Government through Ministry of Agriculture, also keyed into the Accelerated Agricultural Development Scheme (AADS), powered by the Central Bank of Nigeria for youths and women empowerment, in the development of Aquaculture and Cassava Production.

Under the Scheme, the Kogi Government constructed 600 earthen ponds evenly distributed in the State's three Senatorial districts; 200 in Idah for Eastern senatorial district, 150 in Ejiba for West, and 83 in Adavi-Eba and 67 in Geregu for Kogi Central. Some of the ponds have been allocated to the beneficiaries. In addition, a Hatchery at Aiyetoro-Gbede in Ijumu Local Government has been completely rehabilitated and has commenced the production of fingerlings/Juveniles. Four Fish Feed Mills was established at Geregu, Idah, Ejiba, Adavi-Eba.

The AADS programme also have 100 hectares of land each in Ojapata, Osara 1 and Osara 2, which have been cleared and tractorised and allocated to Kogi youths for Cassava production. This necessitated the establishment



Bello

of five cassava processing mills, at Ogbadu in Dekina, Osara in Adavi, Ageva/Achoze both in Okene, and Aiyetoro-Gbede in Ijumu Local Government Areas, to serve the cassava farmlands.

The state government is also working in conjunction with some World Bank funded Programmes such as: The Agro-Processing, Productivity Enhancement and Livelihood Support (APPEALS) project, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development/Value Chain Development Programme (IFAD/VCD). Procurement of Farm Machinery and Farm Inputs

The state government under the Agricultural Mechanization Policy (AMP) of the Bello's administration, secured approval and procured: 40 MF 375 2-Wheel Drive 75 Horse Power Tractors with full implements. Implements such as three Big threshers; Power tillers, Boom Sprayers; Rice Reapers; and Planters with fertilizer application attachment, as well as Hubs and 10 Ploughs to complement the existing tractors, while accessories for nineteen 6-inches Water Pumps were purchased for the irrigation activities of the ministry. Bello, being a governor who is highly sensitive to women and youth inclusion in governance, also distributed 1000 power tillers to women farmers across the 21 local government areas of the State. Gov. Bello's administration also procured N59.8 million worth of Organic (Geo Plus NPK, Geo Green Urea) fertilizer, handed over to the Agro-Processing, Productivity Enhancement and Livelihood Support Project (APPEALS) which were distributed to farmers.

The government also approved funds to procure agricultural inputs such as agro-chemicals, seeds, seedlings, herbicides, knap sacks and liquid fertilizers which were sold

to farmers at highly subsidized rates, as well as the repair of abandoned five Bulldozers, 1 Low Bed, 1 Excavator. The administration of Alhaji Yahaya Bello, has also made giant strides in green house farming through the establishment of a Green House at Osara for the cultivation of vegetables such as Pepper and Tomatoes. Over 1,000 hectares of land was also cleared for farmers at Ejiba, and in Olamaboro and Dekina LGAs, for agricultural production.

The administration also engaged a Consultant for the Anchor Borrowers Programme and collaborated with the Central Bank of Nigeria to facilitate the empowerment of 4,955 farmers.

Under the same anchor borrowers' programme, the Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria (RIFAN) partnered with the state government and enrolled 13,000 farmers across the State. The government also released fund for the engagement of a Consultant to carry out Study, Design and Production of Bill of Engineering Measurement and Evaluation (BEME) Document on Omi Irrigation Project spread on 571 Hectares of land.

Nursery sites at Kabba, Lokoja and Ochaja, were resuscitated so that Cocoa, Cashew and Oil palm seedlings could be raised for farmers across the state. The state government also sunk borehole in the ministry's premises to provide water for the demonstration of Nursery and Fish Farm sites, while earthen ponds were constructed and stocked with about 3,000 fingerlings to enhance the demonstration of Aquaculture activities in the Ministry. The Hatchery in Aiyetoro-Gbede was rehabilitated and it has commenced the production of fingerlings and juveniles.

Speaking recently to a team from Armed Forces Command and staff College, Nigeria, who were on Study Tour to Kogi, the State Commissioner, Mr David Apeh, said Bello, being agriculture friendly governor, had ensured that food security is guaranteed in the state through procurement of 40 Tractors, establishment of Rice Mill at Ejiba, increased crop production and its value chain development through regular payment of counterpart funds for all World Bank's assisted funded projects. He added that the governor had graciously approved the recruitment of 25 Veterinary Doctors in order to ensure good health and welfare of his citizens in the 21 local government areas of the state. He said the ministry also Constructed/Rehabilitated Poultry Pens for Poultry Production and organized Ram fattening in the Ministry for demonstration and to generate revenue.

"The ministry flagged off the vaccination of 60,000 cattle against contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (C.B.P.P) across the state, and against Peste de Pestit Ruminants PPR. The exercises were done free of charge for herders/farmers in the State.

"A modern Abattoir was constructed in Lokoja (Felele), while a Slaughter-Slabs-and-Meat-shops-Implementation-and-Enforcement Committee was set up. The Committee has commenced the registration and regulation of Veterinary Premises, Abattoirs and Meat Shops to ward off quacks. "The Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) on the establishment of a Bio-fuel factory and Sugarcane Plantation at the Alape Staple Crops Processing Zone.

"His Excellency released money for the survey of 20,000 hectares of land in the zone. This will create about 2000 jobs for our teeming youth in the State.

"On Alape Special Crops Processing Zone a stakeholders' meeting was held in Kabba where consultants carrying out Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) were conducted and forwarded to the African Development Bank (ADB) for approval; we await the take off of the project.

"The World Bank Assisted Project "Agro Processing and Productivity Enhancement Livelihood Scheme (APPEALS), has empowered 1,700 Youths and Women in Cassava, Rice, Cashew production and its Value Chain, Poultry and Fish production and its Value Chain," Apeh said.

The commissioner added that the APPEALS had constructed Agro Processing Centres across the state, and assisted about 2,000 farmers in cashew, cassava and rice Production.

Apeh said that Kogi CARES (FADAMA), also a World Bank assisted project, was integrated to cushion the effect of COVID-19 in the areas of rice and cassava production as well as poultry farmers by giving them inputs across the state.

"The IFAD-VCDP, a World Bank assisted Project, is also assisting farmers in area of rice and cassava production, processing and its Value Chain in five local government areas.

According to him, Mini Processing Machine for Rice and Cassava were installed in the five benefiting local government areas of Lokoja, Ajaokuta, Ibaji, Kabba/Bubu and Olamaboro. According to Media reports the IFAD-VCDP Country Director, Ms. Dede Ekoue, who led a delegation on a courtesy visit to the Government House, Lokoja, thanked the state government for all the support given to VCDP activities, especially the prompt payment of its counterpart funding. Ekoue said the team was in the state for a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of IFAD-VCDP activities being implemented in nine states including Kogi.

According to her, the objective is to access all the progress made, look critically at challenges to be addressed, and opportunities to further leverage on to scale up the impacts.

"We want to do our work based on evidence which shows that youths are priority for Kogi State. We salute your dedication to gender equality as well as youth inclusion.

"We already known that your leadership had been instrumental for the results we have achieved in Kogi and we want it sustained," she said.

The country director disclosed that about 6000 farmers had benefitted from various programmes under the IFAD-VCDP in the state.

Ekoue sympathised with the government and people of Kogi over the recent flood that ravaged the state, saying that IFAD-VCDP was already given its support to farmers' victims through the distribution of inputs to boost dry season farming activities.

NEWS

Kaduna govt allocates N3b for PHC

By John FWAH

The Kaduna State Government has set aside approximately three billion Naira to procure advanced medical equipment for 290 primary healthcare centers situated in the 255 wards across the state.

A statement signed BY Muhammad Lawal Shehu, Chief Press Secretary to the Governor has said.

The state governor, Senator Uba Sani announced this recently at the official ceremony where the State Government, through the Kaduna State Health Supplies Management Authority (KADHSMA), launched the distribution of medical equipment to primary health centers in Kakuri, Kaduna.

During the event, the Governor emphasized the government's commitment to expanding access to quality healthcare, stating that it is a fundamental human right, not a luxury. He assured Kaduna residents that the administration is committed to ensuring their rights are upheld.

He further disclosed that the government aims to ensure that no individual would need to travel more than a kilometer from their residence to access a primary healthcare center.

"We aim to establish an additional center in each ward, resulting in approximately six hundred (600) centers throughout the state, all equipped to meet standard requirements. This initiative aligns with our steadfast commitment to strengthening healthcare



Sani

delivery.

It marks a significant step towards equipping our primary healthcare system with the necessary tools to provide our people with the highest level of medical care," he proclaimed.

Governor Sani explained that the Kaduna State Government, with its resilient population of approximately 10.2 million individuals, is committed to providing accessible, efficient, and quality healthcare services to the residents of the state.

"As we stand at the forefront of progress, we acknowledge the crucial role that primary healthcare plays in ensuring the well-being of our citizens. These centers, strategically located across our 255 wards, serve as the first line of defence against illnesses and diseases that could affect any one of us."

"The distribution of this state-of-the-art medical equipment to our primary

healthcare centers underscores our commitment to creating a healthcare system that leaves no one behind," remarked Governor Sani.

The Governor emphasized the administration's plan to equip health workers with the necessary tools for making informed decisions, delivering accurate diagnoses, and administering effective treatments.

"To our healthcare workers, your dedication and service do not go unnoticed. You are the heart and soul of our healthcare system. These investments are a testament to our faith in your abilities."

Governor Sani expressed his appreciation for the support and collaboration received from both the public and private sectors in turning this vision into a reality. He stated that their partnership is a clear example of how collective action can lead to

By Dorcas Pankyes

UNICEF Nigeria has announced the appointment of renowned music producers, musicians, and film actors as UNICEF Champions for a 12-month period.

The appointed champions include Cobhams Asuquo, WAJE, Kate Henshaw, and Ali Nuhu. Their role will be to raise awareness and advocate for child rights issues in Nigeria.

A statement by UNICEF pointed that the champions will address various concerns related to children's well-being, including health, education, nutrition, child protection, water sanitation, and hygiene. The aim is to use their influential voices and platforms to bring attention to these important issues.

The UNICEF Representative in Nigeria, Ms. Cristian Munduate, expressed her excitement and appreciation for the commitment and influence these champions bring. She highlighted the value of partnering with influential figures in the entertainment industry and acknowledged their dedication to fighting for

UNICEF Nigeria appoints entertainers as champions



children's rights.

Munduate emphasized the significance of this collaboration as a bridge between the commitment to child rights and the power of art and storytelling. Through their involvement in music, film, and public engagement, the champions hope to inspire action and create a lasting impact on child

rights in Nigeria.

As UNICEF champions, Cobhams, WAJE, Kate Henshaw, and Ali Nuhu will participate in various initiatives and campaigns. Their aim is to ensure that every child's right to survival, growth, development, and protection is upheld and championed.

Kaduna, charting direction for peaceful, prosperous state

By JOHN FWAH

Governor Uba Sani says Kaduna State Government is charting a new direction that would lead to a safe, peaceful, and prosperous Kaduna State.

Uba Sani who said this recently, added that he promised to run an all-inclusive government that would allay the fear of being marginalised by some individuals and groups in the state.

He stated this at a one-day reflection meeting on

Kaduna's direction on peacebuilding organised by the Kaduna Peace Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He gave the assurance of charting a new direction that would lead to a safe, peaceful, and prosperous Kaduna State.

Uba Sani noted that the state has had its fair share of ethnic and religious conflicts, the intensity of which has drastically reduced while fear of escalation due to tussles for land remains strong.

"Apart from ethnic and religious tensions, we now face the destabilizing activities of bandits, terrorists, kidnappers, armed robbers, and other criminal elements", he said.

He said the State Government has been working closely with Federal Security Forces to degrade the criminal elements and make Karuna communities safe for living and business as the battle has been taken to the criminals' abode.

"As your Chief Servant, I am deeply worried by the ethnic and religious divisions in Kaduna State. I am the Governor of a state where all government actions or inactions are viewed from the lenses of religion and ethnicity.

"I manage a state where

emotions run high at the slightest provocation or perception of injustice. We are captives of our past. A past marked by incessant conflicts, bloodletting, hate, and distrust.

"But we must break loose from our unpleasant past. We must collectively free ourselves from the grip of conflict merchants and agents of retrogression. We must change the narrative and bring development and progress into the discourse.

The starting point is for us to recognize the fact that our state is diverse, with its complexities and possibilities. We must harness our diversity and turn it into an asset.

"If Rwanda, which experienced ethnic cleansing that shocked the world, can become an "oasis" of peace and ethnic harmony, we have no excuse to remain captives of our past. We can replicate the Rwandan Example in Kaduna State", he said.

"We are however determined to ensure that there is even development in our dear state. Wherever you come from or wherever you reside, be assured that development will reach you. You will feel the impact of the government.

Bauchi launches guidelines for family planning commodities

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

In its determination to strengthen actions against maternal and newborn mortality across Bauchi State, Governor Bala Mohammed, has officially launched the National Guidelines for State Funded Procurement of Family Planning Commodities.

The intention was aimed at domesticating the global policy on family planning system through making the commodities available in all the health care facilities in the state.

The programme is a collaboration between the

state Ministry of Health and United Nations Population Fund.

In his speech while inaugurating the programme at the Old Banquet hall of Government House Bauchi, the state Governor Bala Mohammed, informed that the development is an opportunity for state to address the alarming rate of maternal and newborn mortality.

Governor Bala, who was represented at the occasion by the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Abubakar Sulaiman,

stressed the need for effective synergy with Development Partners in universal health coverage and readiness to sustain adequate budgetary provision in the health care sector.

He expressed optimism that if properly implemented, the move would go a long way in improving the quality of lives of the citizens.

In their separate remarks, the representative of the United Nations Population Fund, Mrs Loide Okomgo and the Executive Chairman of the State

Primary Health Care Development Agency, Dr. Rilwanu Muhammad, advocated for timely release of funds towards achieving the desired objectives.

They however called for increased awareness on the importance of birth spacing in both urban and rural areas to guarantee the well being of people.

The event also featured formal inauguration of the State Technical Committee on family planning and goodwill messages from Development Partners.

NEWS

Anti tobacco law: CISLAC set to domesticate

WILLIE ATTAH, GOMBE

THE Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has met with some line ministries in Gombe State to advocate on the need for the domestication of the anti tobacco law in the State.

The ministries visited are, the State Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources; State Ministry of Health and the State Ministry of Justice.

Solomon Adoga, Senior Programme Officer, CISLAC, during the visits, stressed the important roles the ministries would play in ensuring that the law is domesticated in the state and rid it of the public health challenges that tobacco has caused the society.

He tasked the Permanent Secretaries of all the three ministries to take the lead in seeing that the policy or bill on the prohibition of smoking cigarettes in public among others, comes to reality so as to improve on the public health of the citizenry.

He said the World Health Organization has alerted that tobacco has remained one of the single cause of most deaths globally, stressing that there is therefore the great need to discourage its use by the populace, especially the youths.

Among measures in the bill that seek to discourage the usage of tobacco are, placing stringent taxation on tobacco products especially cigarettes, banning cigarette smoking in public, strict advertising regulations for cigarettes and other tobacco products among many others.

He called for collaboration between the ministries in taking the lead in ensuring the domestication of the bill in Gombe State, while assuring that CISLAC will provide all the necessary push to ensure that the law comes to reality.

In their various responses, the Permanent Secretaries of the ministries thanked CISLAC for their intervention. They promised to partner with it for the betterment of the public health of the state.



Yahaya

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources, Alhaji Hassan Abubakar, assured of beginning the process of domestication by reviewing the law to suit their environment, consult the Ministry of Justice and work in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. Abubakar stressed the need for massive enlightenment and sensitization of the public.

On his part, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Mohammed Ibrahim Jallo, promised to constitute a committee to study the document (draft bill), assuring that the ministry's doors will remain open for such collaboration aimed at helping the state.

He assured that the law, if implemented, will seriously help Gombe State as it will be a win-win for it considering the issue of taxation.

For the State Ministry of Justice, the Acting Permanent Secretary, Mr. Musa Saidu, revealed that the state had many years ago, sued seven tobacco companies over the public menace it had caused in the state. The suit which was instituted since 2007, is currently at the Supreme Court even when the state had won in the lower courts.

While expressing happiness that CISLAC has come over to help the state, Mr. Musa

assured that this time around, the ministry will push harder for the domestication of the anti tobacco law in Gombe State.

The Gombe State Ministry of Finance as well as the Gombe State House of Assembly are other important institutions

Flooding: Victims commend VCDP intervention

By John FWAH KADUNA

THE National Ginger Association of Nigeria (NGAN) in collaboration with Non Farmer Initiative have empowered 18 farmers with the sum of fifty thousand naira each.

The action followed the broad spectrum of fungal diseases, causing ginger pandemic in Southern part of Kaduna State,

This is just as the 2023 Ginger season in Southern Kaduna suffered a serious setback due to the pandemic, counting loss of over 10 billion naira to the state economy.

The National President of the Ginger Association, Squadron Leader, NB Daudu (rtd.), while addressing journalists in Kachia recently, called on both the Federal and Kaduna state government to provide some antidotes to curb the menace of the disease.

While speaking, he further said: "Government should provide palliatives, so as to reduce the pandemic currently being experienced by the ginger farmers in Southern Kaduna.

On the output of the product, the National President explained that due to lack of ginger processing plant, Nigerian ginger is unable to attract competitive

Farmers lose N10bn to disease, 18 get empowered



Sani

prices in the world market.

"It is therefore logical to set up a ginger processing plant in order to meet the international quality standard. The quality of our processed ginger and its packaging have made our dear nation perform far below expectations in the ginger export around the world", Daudu said.

In their separate remarks, the Chairman of Kachia Local Government, Hon. Aaron Bako and Director of Agriculture and Forestry, Queen Victor Saidu explained that ginger is mainly the major source of the people's livelihood in the LGA.

"These impoverished ginger farmers have equally

contributed to the GDP of Nigeria. So, it is on this note that we are calling on the government to come to the aid of our people who have been badly affected by this strange disease," they said.

In his part, the representative of the Non Farmer Initiative, Captain Maikano Abdullahi Sara (rtd), disclosed that the empowerment programme is aimed at cushioning the effect of the pandemic.

One of the beneficiaries, Rita Asabe, who spoke on behalf of others, expressed happiness, saying: "We are appreciative of the gesture, and we are also calling on the government to please come to our aid."

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

destroyed his farmland, had enhanced his wellbeing and livelihood.

"I was one of the Kogi farmers who the VCDP had earlier supported, because my farm land was destroyed by flood and I lost everything. In fact, it was a terrible moment for me and other farmers that period of time. It was so bad that some farmers ended up in the hospital because we lost everything then.

"The IFAD/VCDP team came and inspected the devastated farmland by the flood, and supported me again through its 'Flood Recovery Inputs' with rice seeds, fertilizer, chemicals, water pump and other farm inputs," Abdullahi said.

He added that through the VCDP's intervention, he was able to cultivate another farmland which resulted in a bumper harvest for him. As a determined youth farmer, I did

not give up because I was properly trained by VCDP to be focused in all situations.

"I engaged in dry season planting and by the special grace of God, I was able to come out with something very great. I harvested almost 89 bags of 100 kg of rice paddy, so I

increased my farmland from one hectare to about five hectares.

"We are happy that the VCDP came to our aid, we are going home with gladness and good development in our community.

"We thank the VCDP for giving us the opportunity to cover up for our losses. Our hope is renewed!" he said

Abdullahi added: "From the sale of the farm proceeds, I was able to establish a mini supermarket for my wife where she sells commodities, which is now another source of income for my family.

"I have also, from the

remaining money realized from the farm proceeds, bought more rice seeds as plough back, and I have been engaging in both wet and dry season rice farming.

Another flood victim, Mrs Asibi Omale from Ibaji Local Government Area, commended the VCDP for their immediate intervention when her farmland was destroyed by flood.

According to her, she lost everything to the flood including all their properties, houses and farmlands were submerged and destroyed by the flood.

"We were hopeless and devastated because we lost everything. We had nowhere to stay but inside the water. We almost lost our lives.

"But we are very grateful to the VCDP for coming to our rescue. We thank them for giving us hope and wiping away our tears by supporting us with other inputs to engage in dry season farming.

Allow LG provide PHC services to reduce self-medication

From Musliudeen Adebayo, Ibadan

THE Muslim Association of Nigeria (MAN) has charged governors across the country to allow local governments to provide primary healthcare services to people at the grassroots.

MAN noted that this is necessary in order to avoid rampant cases of self medication, minor illnesses and diseases among the people at the grassroots.

The association noted that some illnesses and diseases could be handled and prevented when primary healthcare centres are run and handled by the local government.

MAN National President, Alhaji Tajudeen Ojikutu made these disclosures while addressing journalists during

the commissioning of a 20-bed primary healthcare centre donated to MAN, Ibadan branch by the family of a former permanent secretary in Oyo State, late Alhaji Jimoh Adedigba.

The event which took place recently, had in attendance the widow of the deceased, Alhaja Ranti Adedigba, Commissioner for Land, Housing and Urban Development, Mr Williams Akin-Funmilayo, Executive Secretary, Oyo State Primary Healthcare Board, Dr Muideen Olatunji, Director of Public Health, Dr Bunmi Ayinde, Chairman, Oyo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, Alhaji Hashim Atere and MAN Ibadan branch Chairman, Alhaji Abdul-Rahman Abdulganiy.

Ojikutu, while addressing the journalists, said that primary healthcare is under the purview of the local

government to provide care for people at the grassroots, hence governors should allow them to function effectively because they are the closest to the people.

He added that the facility was built in order to provide healthcare services in the areas of preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative medicine.

"Primary healthcare is under the purview of the local government to provide care for people at the grassroots. But the gap is so wide in Nigeria. There is a gap within the health sector especially at the primary level.

"State governors can stand as supervisors. If they do this, minor illnesses and diseases and the issue of self medication will reduce.

"It may be important to remind ourselves that the P.H.C is established to provide

- MAN

health care services in the areas of preventive, promotive, curative and

rehabilitative medicine. It is very important as a first or basic health care. However, a P.H.C like this is of tremendous advantage to the residents at the grassroots. I therefore call on our primary constituency to utilize it very well".

"This Healthcare facility stands as a beacon of hope, not just for the Muslim Ummah but for every individual in and around this area Joyce B, NTC Road Oke Ado, Oke Bola, Itamaya, Foko, Ososami and to the extent of Molete.

Mrs Mulikat Hussein Giwa, who spoke on behalf of the family, said that the health centre will be of benefit to humanity.



BELLO

NEWS

There is no ministry that is not important— Gov Bala

From **ABBAS GUNGURA**

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State, has made it loud and clear that his administration in the second tenure will focus much on security.

The governor made it clear when speaking recently at the inaugural State Executive Council meeting held at the Government House.

He assured that community engagement will be the key to the fight against insecurity in the state, pointing out that, "We must be able to partner with our stakeholders. We must get feedback so that they can bring back useful information to us.

"Certainly, what is happening in other states is negatively affecting us. We are a gateway to about 7 states, to all the 3 subregions in the North. And so everything in the country is passing through Bauchi. Definitely, we will be at the receiving end.

"So, it is going to be security, security, and security. With that population and migration, demographics are not in our favour. Our services and infrastructure have been overstretched. Most of our towns and cities are not connected either with electricity or roads and so on.

"We have to really do something because we have a population relatively less educated but we have a responsibility to get them engaged. The minimum requirements for engagement are the agricultural sector and other sources of employment.

"Over the years, they have raised the GDP by bringing a lot of projects and programmes to Bauchi which made people to be working, to be employed. We have been



Bala

paying salaries and wages and we have been paying pension at least to put food on the table.

"And that is why we have minimal restfulness among the states because at least, labour has integrity but it is coming with a cost. Whatever we are getting from the Federation Account, is going into paying people their dues which is less than 2 percent of the population. The rest are looking up to us to look inwards, use the little resources to develop our school, health facilities.

"Most of our people live in the rural areas. We have to make sure we encourage them, we have to make sure they are safe and secure. They must be able to eat, so it is not easy. Some of us think that the position of commissioner, advisers is for enjoyment. It is not so, it is a responsibility. It is for you to make sure you make a difference."

"As I said during your inauguration, every Commissioner is very important. You can make a difference where you are assigned, There is no ministry that is second class, and there are a lot of responsibilities in all the MDAs. All of you should respect each other." he

Kaduna State Government, open to criticisms

From John FWAH KADUNA

Kaduna Maternal Accountability Mechanism (KADMAM) held at a hotel in Kaduna.

According to her, all the areas of concern evidently raised by the Health Accountability Mechanism would be conveyed to Governor Uba Sani to ensure they are looked into in line with his campaign promises.

"As Commissioner of Health, I stand here today to reaffirm our determination to work hand in hand with KADMAM and all stakeholders present.

The Kaduna State Government has said that the Governor Uba Sani's administration is open to constructive criticisms geared towards improving maternal and newborn health across the state.

The Commissioner, Ministry of Health, Umma Ahmed, stated this recently while delivering her keynote address at a one-day Open Kaduna Health Sector with the Theme "Driving Evidence-based Advocacy for Improved Health Care Delivery Services In Kaduna State", organised by

of vocational training to enhance the industry's workforce.

The expo provided a platform for telecommunications companies, government institutions, industry experts, and other stakeholders to deliberate on the way forward for indigenous content development. Various discussions and panels were organized, focusing on crucial topics such as local content policies, infrastructure development, and job creation within the sector.

Furthermore, the event showcased innovative solutions, products, and services developed by local telecommunications companies, igniting hope for the potential growth of Nigeria's telecom industry.

The 2023 Nigerian Telecommunications Indigenous Context Expo organized by the NCC proved to be an important milestone in driving indigenous content development and addressing the skills gaps in the country's telecom sector.

The speeches by the Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC,

By **DORCAS PANKYES**

speech, further underscored the NCC's commitment to bridging the skills gaps within the telecoms sector. He acknowledged the significance of equipping Nigerian professionals with the required skills to fully participate in the rapidly evolving telecommunications industry. Maska stressed the commission's dedication to providing necessary training and capacity-building programmes to enhance the workforce's knowledge and expertise.

Addressing the skill gaps within the telecom industry, Engr. Babagana Digima, the Team Lead of the Nigeria Office for Developing the Indigenous Telecom Sector (NODITS), delivered an insightful presentation.

Digima shed light on the current skills gaps in the telecom sector and proposed strategies to bridge these gaps effectively. He emphasized the need for continuous professional development, collaborations with academic institutions, and the promotion

NAF climate change, Nation addresses AI Security

THE Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has recently taken significant steps to address the issue of climate change and its impact on national security, according to the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar.

The CAS expressed concern over the role of climate change in exacerbating existing security challenges during a virtual lecture titled "Industrialization, Energy, Security and Climate Change: The Role of the Nigerian Air Force," delivered to participants of the Senior Executive Course 45 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS).

While climate change itself may not directly cause conflicts, it tends to amplify the existing triggering factors, leading to a reduction in people's ability to cope, ultimately resulting in more conflicts. For instance, the irregular



Abubakar

and extreme weather conditions around Lake Chad have devastated traditional fishing and farming practices, affecting the economic prospects of young men in the region and making them susceptible to recruitment by extremist groups. This vicious cycle of conflicts

significantly hampers national security, leading to humanitarian crises, terrorism, and insurgency.

In response to this urgent issue, Air Marshal Abubakar highlighted that the Nigerian Air Force has implemented various measures to mitigate the effects of climate change on national security. One of the key initiatives has been the NAF's kinetic operations, which have systematically created conducive conditions for ground forces to recover territories from terrorists and insurgents. These operations have also succeeded in weakening the capabilities and resolve of terrorists, bandits, kidnappers, and oil thieves, fostering a safer environment for economic activities to thrive.

Additionally, the NAF has incorporated climate change considerations into its planning and operations, participating in global initiatives such as the 2021 Global Air Forces on Climate Change organized by the Royal Air Force in the United Kingdom. The NAF is also proactively exploring the use of low-carbon emission fuels, such as compressed natural gas and liquid petroleum gas, to power its vehicle fleets. The implementation of environmentally friendly projects, including the installation of solar panels, waste recycling, and a tree-planting campaign across all NAF units nationwide, demonstrates the force's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

Furthermore, the NAF recently introduced an innovative paperless system at its headquarters, effectively reducing paper consumption by approximately 300 cartons since its initiation in May 2023. This move highlights the force's dedication to embracing sustainable practices and staying at the forefront of environmental conservation efforts.

Earlier, Secretary of KADMAM, Isa Gidado said his accountability platform had visited health facilities and users alike to generate evidence-based demand which is used to engage the government.

"We have been working in the health sector as a civil society group which includes media specialists to ensure we constructively engage the government.

"Our interest is to see improvement in the health sector in such a way that our children and reproductive-age women can have unhindered access to their basic health needs," he said.

A member of KADMAM and a former Co-Chairman, Open Government Partnership, the citizens' arm, Alh Mustapha Jumare highlighted inadequate health workers and poor cash backing of health budget releases as top issues hampering improved health service delivery in the state.

"Our dedication extends to ensuring timely and adequate budgetary releases for maternal and child health services.

"We will remain receptive to feedback, open to constructive criticism, and proactive in addressing the gaps that may hinder the realization of our shared vision.

"Together, we can pave the way for a healthier future for our mothers and children, and by extension, for the prosperity of Kaduna State", she said.

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The Ministry of Health, agencies and departments in the health sector, development partners including Save the Children International, UNICEF, Option, Partnership to Engage Reform and Learn and other accountability platforms were represented at the event.

NCC concludes 2023 Nigerian Telecommunications Indigenous Context Expo

THE Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) recently concluded the 2023 Nigerian Telecommunications Indigenous Context Expo, an event dedicated to fostering the development of indigenous content in the country's telecommunications sector.

The expo brought together key stakeholders to engage in discussions surrounding indigenous content development, skills gaps in the telecoms sector, and other pertinent issues.

During the expo, the Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC, Prof. Umar Danbatta, who was represented by the NCC's Executive Commissioner of Technical Services, Engr. Ubale Maska, delivered a thought-provoking speech. Prof. Danbatta emphasized the importance of indigenous content development in the telecom industry, highlighting its potential to drive innovation, create employment opportunities and enhance the economy. Engr. Ubale Maska, in his



Danbatta

Prof. Umar Danbatta, and Engr. Ubale Maska, as well as the presentation by Engr. Babagana Digima, emphasized the significance of these issues, highlighting the NCC's commitment to fostering growth, innovation, and inclusivity within the Nigerian telecommunications industry.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Impending flood and Nigeria's preparedness

Continued from page 10

simultaneously. We have met with the 57 local government chairmen on the need to put all primary emergency respondent alert. We are fine-tuning and strengthening our local responses mechanism.

"We have carried out risk analysis, resource mappings, opened directories in each council to know the vulnerable people interms of emergency situation. All these measures are geared towards ensuring swift, prompt and effective response. We are carrying out enlightenment and sensitization programmes to get residents prepared across the councils. This type of flood we have in Lagos called flash flood disappears within 30 minutes and one hour due to improved infrastructure and machinery in place. We are prepared".

On its part, the Benue State government has directs residents to vacate flash plains and evacuate block drainages. Reacting to this development, the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) directed all those living on flood plains across the state to vacate such places to safer areas. Executive Secretary of the Agency, Sir James Iorpun issued the warning while reacting to the alert from the Federal Government to states on the impending flood, following notification from the Cameroon authorities on the release of water from the Lagdo Dam on Benue River due to

heavy downpour in Northern Cameroon.

Hear him: "what we are doing now is to intensify the awareness campaign across the state to ensure that all those on fold plains vacates such areas. We also have plans to take steps to mitigate the effects of the flood on the people but for now, the priority is to get the people to safer places. Though we also have contingency plans and we will not allow our people be subjected to untold hardship following the flood. All stakeholders on the matter would be mobilized to ensure that all hands are on deck to take actions to mitigate the impact of the impending flood".

In Plateau State, about four local government areas including Jos North, Shendam, Langtang North, Langtang South are flood-prone areas and every year communities there are affected. Residents of Tudun Osi of Jos North Local Government Area (LGA) said they were not told about this year's flood. (**Daily Trust**), Wednesday of August 30, 2023). Babangida Abumusaba, resident have not seen anyone coming to either relocate or evacuate residents of the community". Another resident too, Umar Ashiru said, "we haven't seen anything for now but we don't know if the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) would come at a later time". But the secretary of SEMA, Sunlay Audu said, "we have already told people about it. Although Plateau is not

among the states, all flood-prone areas are aware and everybody should take measures.

Already, some communities across the country have started registering loses even before the impending flood swings into action. There is flood in 204 Niger communities, 17 displaced, while there is panic in Benue and Anambra. In Anambra, people in local government areas such as Ogbaru, Ayamelum, Anambra East and West, Onitsha North and South, Awka North, Idemili South, Ekwusigo and Ihiala, located along the River Niger coastline are always the worst hit during the annual flooding. **The Punch**, Wednesday, August 30, 2023).

There is no denying the fact that, farmers are the worst hit in perilous moments like this. A

farmer in Anambra West Local Government Area, Celestine Nwokedioko said, "we have started harvesting our yams, cassava and vegetables as well as other produce we can lay our hands upon, no matter how small so as to save the little we can afford instead of them to be completely destroyed as it happened last year. The 2022 flood came to us unaware. So we could not salvage anything and when we came back after the flood, nothing was left for us on our farms, now that we have been alerted of the impending flood from the Lagdo Dam in Cameroon; we have to start harvesting what we can save instead of being left with nothing. Every year, the government will tell us that flood is coming and there is nothing to offer to save our

farms. After the flood, the government will do nothing and the flood victims and wait for another year. It is high time they start putting measures in place in form of palliatives to assist the farmers who are always the worst hit".

Indeed, it is quite worrisome that the issue of flood has become a recurring decimal every year in Nigeria. This has translated into loses of lives and properties. There is need for concerted efforts to be made to halt the ugly situation. Definitely, government is not bereft of ideas geared towards solving this problem. The political will to execute this is the panacea. Again, citizens must observe environment codes like not building on water ways, drainages and proper waste disposal to avert disaster.

There is no denying the fact that, farmers are the worst hit in perilous moments like this. A farmer in Anambra West local government area, Celestine Nwokedioko said, "we have started harvesting our yams, cassava and vegetables as well as other produce we can lay our hands upon no matter how small so as to save the little we can afford instead of them to be completely destroyed as it happened last year. The 2022 flood came to us unaware. So we could not salvage anything and when we came back after the flood, nothing was left for us on our farms, now that we have been alerted of the impending flood from the Lagdo Dam in Cameroon; we have to start harvesting what we can save instead of being left with nothing. Every year, the government will tell us that flood is coming and there is another to offer to save our farms. After the flood, the government the flood victims and wait for another year. It is high times they started putting measures in place in form of palliatives to assist the farmers who are always the worst hit".

METRO-FOCUS

Sugar cane: The health, financial booster

By JIDAUNA DARING and MAKOPSON E.JOHN

The highly nutritious root fruit called sugarcane is a tall tropical grass plant that grows with thick stems from which sugar is made for people's consumption as it serves the purpose of adding value to one's health and giving taste to any drinkable thing that is tasteless to have a good taste.

Therefore, the importance of sugarcane which remains the major source of producing sugar cannot be under measured since sugar is a sweet substance often made in form of white or brown crystals which is obtained from the juices or of various plants.

In this order, one may wish to know the process involved in making sugarcane juice its involves using of a clean chopping board, chop it up into little pieces.

These little pieces of the sugarcane have to be transferred to a blender where it is expected to be blended together.

What one may also care to know further is to add some water so as to make the blending process easier and make sure it's properly blended for consumption.

Interestingly, the importance of sugarcane juice cannot be over emphasized since it gives a short of instant energy, it enhances liver function, help the body

to fight cancer, it eases the digestive system and also helpful for people with diabetes.

Also worthy of mention on the benefits of the sugarcane juice is that it helps in maintain kidney health it aids in the development of bones and teeth. It can help curb and keep bad breath and tooth decay at bay.

In view of this sugarcane farming which falls under agricultural sector in Nigeria should be give the needed attention from the government at all levels by providing the sugarcane farmers with the modern farming tools so as to boost their production.

Speaking with Metro Focus, a sugarcane farmer from Samunaka Local Government Area LGA of Kaduna State , Tukur Ahmed said it was because of the interest he makes in sugarcane farming that made him to key into it despite it tediousness right from its cultivation to planting period.

Ahmed added that he had also been in the farming for over 15 years. He maintained that sugarcane farming has remained the major source of

his livelihood.

He said that Samunaka sugarcane remains the best in the country when it comes to making of juice.

Ahmed attributed some of the challenges faced in the farming to high cost of labour, lack of sufficient water during dry season and high cost of fertilizer among others.

Also speaking with a sugarcane seller from Jenta Adamu in Jos North LGA of Plateau State, Mrs. Lami Williams she said that the choice of the business was her area of interest looking at its function healthwise.

Williams maintained that for her, the business is currently booming well with good patronage. She maintained that since she keyed into the business the price has never gone up like this until this time.

She also attributed some of the reasons for high price of the sugarcane to include high cost of labour and fuel scarcity among others.

According to Williams, the business helps her in training her children in school and equally brings food on the table.



Photo: Danladi Duk

SUNDAY PEOPLE

COMMISSIONER VISITS PPC

The Commissioner for Information and Communication Plateau State Hon. Musa Ibrahim Ashoms led his Management Staff on a visit to Plateau Publishing Corporation, Jos Publishers of The Nigeria Standard Newspapers



PPC Acting General Manager, Mr. Paul Jatau, Directors of the Corporation taking the Commissioner, Hon. Musa Ashoms round facilities at PPC



Acting General Manager, Mr. Jatau (left) Commissioner for Information, Hon. Ashoms, PPC Management and MoI team going round premises of the Corporation



Director of Admin, Ministry of Information (right) flanked by PPC Management Staff during the visit



Commissioner at the Generator room of PPC listening to the Director of Technical Service, Elder Dapas Elkana



From left are, Acting General Manager, Mr. Jatau, Commissioner, Hon. Ashoms, Director of Production, Mr. Kangha listening to explanations from Mr. Timothy Turu Tsi at the CTP room



Acting Director Admin of PPC, Mrs. Martha Arin (right), with the MoI Management Staff that accompanied the Commissioner



Commissioner of Information, Hon. Musa Ashoms (right) Citiline Operator, Mr. Mamman, Acting Perm Sec, Ministry of Information, Mr. Wulime Goyit and Acting GM, Mr. Jatau at the Citiline section



Commissioner Hon. Ashoms (middle) Acting GM PPC Mr. Jatau management Staff of MoI and PPC in a group photograph with Staff of the Corporation

Photos: DANLADI DUK



Road Runner
 Michael Agada
 SAFER TOGETHER
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How to maintain your car brake system

THE braking system is a vehicle's most important safety item. It is therefore important to know how it works and how to maintain it in order to prevent road crashes. A quick guide will help you understand the working of your car brake system and maintenance tips for your brakes.

How your car brake system works

Cars have brakes on all four wheels that are operated by a hydraulic system. The brakes are either a disc type or drum type. Many cars have four-wheel disc brakes although some have discs for the front wheels and drums for the rear. Since the lion's share of stopping a car's forward momentum relies more on the front brakes, the more effective disc brakes are deployed on the front wheels. Less expensive drum set up provides adequate but more cost-effective assistance in halting a car's motion.

The car brake system works specifically in this manner:

Your foot pushes the brake pedal and the force generated is amplified several times by mechanical leverage. It is then amplified further by the action of the brake booster.

A piston moves into the cylinder and squeezes hydraulic fluid out of the end. Hydraulic brake fluid is then forced around the entire braking system within a network of brake lines and hoses.

Pressure is transmitted equally to all four brakes.

The force creates friction between brake pads and disc brake rotors which is what stops your vehicle eventually.

How to maintain your car brake system

Routine and preventive maintenance can help you save money. You do not have to visit something goes wrong before visiting professional mechanics for routine checks. When your vehicle undergoes the annual state inspection, your brakes are reviewed for roadworthiness. Here are some steps in maintaining your car brake system that will enhance its performance and longevity:

Monitor your brake fluid levels and carry out a check once in every three months. Brake fluids should be replaced every two

years or after every thirty thousand (30,000) to forty thousand (40,000) miles.

Brake discs should be changed when necessary depending on your driving style and environmental conditions. Change your brake discs at similar intervals for a normal car. Sports car brakes should be changed after every twenty thousand (20,000) miles.

❖ Bleed your brake lines to get any air out of your system. This means that your brakes will be pumped while someone watches the bleeder valve and closes the valve when brake fluid begins to flow through.

Have your brake pads and rotors inspected to ensure that they are in optimum working condition. If your brake is worn down badly, it is time to replace the brake pad without delay.

Testing your brakes

Every time you use your vehicle, you should check that your brakes are working. Check them when the vehicle is stationary before you move off and check them again when the vehicle is moving.

❖ The stationary test: Check that the brake pedal moves freely and gives a firm positive pressure. Check that the handbrake fully secures the wheels.

❖ The mobile test: make sure that the brake system is working under running conditions. Test the foot brake as soon as you move off. You only need to do this test once if you are in the same vehicle all day, provided you have no reason to suspect the performance of the brakes. Always consider the safety and convenience of other road users before doing a mobile test

Normal braking

Braking should normally be progressive and increased steadily:

Gently take up the initial free movement of the pedal.

Increase the pressure progressively as required.

Relax pedal pressure as unwanted road speed is lost.

Release the pedal just before stopping to avoid a jerking halt.

Note. A vehicle with a faulty braking system is a crash looking for where to happen. A stitch in time saves nine.



NEWS

Army records success against oil thieves

From **DORCAS PANKYES, Jos**

TROOPS of the Nigerian Army have continued to crack down on saboteurs of Nigeria's oil sector in Southern Nigeria.

This was made known to newsmen in a press statement signed by Brigadier General Onyema Nwachukwu, Director, and Army Public Relations.

The statement stated that troops of 343 Artillery Regiment conducting anti oil theft operations recently cracked down on an oil thieves' camp in Obokofia community in Imo State. In the crackdown, the vigilant troops intercepted 15 sacks and 13 jerry cans of illegally refined Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) concealed in the camp. The troops also recovered two pumping machines, three power generators, one hose and a tool box used for hacking into oil pipelines.

In a similar operation, also conducted recently, troops of 3 Battalion clamped down on an active illegal oil refining site containing three cooking ovens and six reservoirs at Enokora community in Burutu Local Government Area of

Delta State. Acting on credible information, troops conducting anti oil theft operations, on 29 August 2023, intercepted a wooden boat loaded with 110 sacks of illegally refined AGO concealed in the creeks of Egbema West in Ohaji Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State. The vigilant troops

equally intercepted two vehicles loaded with 18 sacks of illegally refined AGO within the same general area.

According to the statement, members of the public are please implored to report any suspected act of sabotage or criminality to security agencies to enhance ongoing operations to curb economic sabotage in the country.



Musa

Intervene in power struggle between Ministry, doctors

From **MUSLUDEEN ADEBAYO - ACPN**

ASSOCIATION of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) has enjoined Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State to prevail on the Ministry of Agriculture and veterinary doctors in the state to wait for the court judgment for determination of who controls veterinary clinics in the state.

The association noted that this is necessary in order to avoid an impending crisis in the state. Recall that Oyo State government through the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Olasunkanmi Olaleye, in a statement issued recently, had claimed that FinRel Pharmacy Supermarket and Bakery in Ibadan was sealed because it was operating an illegal veterinary pharmacy.

But, ACPN in an open letter addressed to the governor advised him to prevail on the ministry and veterinary doctors in the state to wait for the ongoing court judgment before further action is taken over who has right to control veterinary clinics in the state.

The association in the petition signed by its chairman in the state, Pharmacist Adebayo Gbadamosi, insisted that there is an ongoing court case filed by the association at the Federal High Court in Ibadan over who has right and who controls veterinary clinics in the state.

Gbadamosi, in the petition, a copy of which was made available to journalists, said that in the recent past, there were litigations between Nigeria Veterinary Medical Association and Pharmacy Council of Nigeria under whose purview is the regulation of animal drugs and biologics.

He maintained that judgment delivered by Justice Nnamdi Dimgba of the Federal High Court of Nigeria in the Abuja Judicial Division of Friday March 24, 2017 affirmed that Pharmacy Council of Nigeria is the legal entity for the regulation of animal drugs and biologics and have the mandate to

determine who is charged with responsibility of storage, sale and dispensing of animal drugs and biologics.

Gbadamosi, who said that Nigeria Veterinary Medical Association in the state sponsored a bill at the State House of Assembly and the bill was subsequently passed into law with the sole aim to attack Community Pharmacists registered by Pharmacy Council of Nigeria, explained further that the move was resisted by ACPN through a case filed at the Federal High Court in Ibadan.

He said that the case is still pending at the court, insisting that it was unfortunate that the ministry and the veterinary doctors did not wait for the court judgment before it went ahead to seal the pharmacy.

He called on Makinde to prevail on the concerned individuals to wait for the court judgment before further action is taken.

"The judgment delivered by Hon. Justice (Dr) Nnamdi O. Dimgba of the Federal High Court of Nigeria in the Abuja Judicial Division of Friday March 24, 2017 affirmed that Pharmacy Council of Nigeria is the legal entity for the

regulation of animal drugs and biologics and have the mandate to determine who is charged with responsibility of storage, sale and dispensing of animal drugs and biologics.

"Not satisfied with the outcome of the courts, Nigeria Veterinary Medical Association through their agents in the Oyo State Ministry of Agric and Natural Resources smuggled a bill into the Oyo State House of Assembly without due process, required public hearing and inputs from various sectors of the state. The bill was subsequently passed into law with the sole aim to attack Community Pharmacists registered by Pharmacy Council of Nigeria who undertake the sale and dispensation of human and animal drugs in Oyo State.

On the premise of this law, staff of Ministry of Agric and Natural Resources with their Veterinary Medicine practitioners began onslaught against pharmacists by sealing their premises on the pretense that they deal in animal drugs and biologics.

"The move was resisted and the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria, Oyo State branch filed a case at the Federal High Court, Oyo State Division against them for interpretation of the law and harmonization with previous judgments of the Courts of competent jurisdiction in the land. Unfortunately, while the case is in the court, Oyo State Ministry of Agric and Natural Resources trumped up a media trial against one of our colleagues; FINREL PHARMACY through a video purporting animal handling in his premises.

*It is noteworthy that the video upon which the action was predicated was not taken within the Pharmacy and its operational areas. We believe in your usual and timely response to issues bordering on security and peaceful co-habitation of the residents of Oyo State and we hope this ugly situation would be finally resolved speedily".



Makinde

SUNDAY FEATURE

Nigeria's future and the danger of intolerant youths

It is often said that if any country should have the taste of per minute troubles like Nigeria, it will collapse with a speed of light. That being said, the future of Nigeria is still dark. writes. Oguntoye Opeyemi

HAVING access to information ought to be an added advantage to a number of people but unfortunately, that has caused a seamless trouble for people of this country. In 2020, when some citizens in the course of a protest demanded for the reformation of the Nigeria Police, the level of heat received by the Nigerian government was so enormous. This ranged from the rigorous physical protest to online campaign in and outside the country.

While those campaigns were ongoing, a frontline EndSARS influencer (Doctor) who is based in UK wrote on his twitter page 'I heard according to UN Constitution any protests that reaches 30days will make UN intervene in that country' and that tweet with nearly twenty thousand retweet, contributed to the continuous and aggressive protest in Nigeria.

Surprisingly, none of the educated folks with access to the tweet could paste the message on google to authenticate the post. Although that wasn't the first time misinformation and fake news would be spread in the country, the truth is that the magnitude of attacks the nation witnessed during the EndSARS protest and yet, survived was huge.

There is no law to the effect that one cannot choose or pick a side, be it at work, family or political gatherings, neither is this freedom of choice a crime

The question therefore is, can the nation continue to survive the numerous attacks from its citizen who are hell bent on enforcing their unfounded personal opinion on it?

In 1932, Bonnie Eizabeth Parker and Clyde Chestnut Barrow, well-known criminal couple started terrorising the towns in the United States of America by robbing, killing and maiming. They headed the popular gang robbery, stealing money and foods from banks, restaurants, gas stations etc.

They told the people a version of their story, convinced them that they robbed only from the rich and not the poor. Their activities and mayhem continued for two years and during that period, the people of America worshipped them, which made it more difficult for the government's Special Task Force to locate them.

As a matter of fact, on a particular occasion when the couple went for shopping in one of the cities, the whole town came out rejoicing and hailed them until they left the town. Eventually, when the law caught up with them and they were killed, over fifty thousand American citizens attended the burial ceremony of the couple.

Clearly, Bonnie and Clyde were able to garner pity and fame from the people by taking advantage of the fact that America was going through depression in those years. This is similar to the situation in Nigeria which went through series of economic crisis from 2019 till earlier this year.

From a serious rise in inflation,



Covid-19 pandemic to EndSARS protest, the country had battled with a whole lot of issues which made certain persons come out like saviours as Bonnie and Clyde did in America. One among many is the product marketing of the Labour party presidential candidate, Mr Peter who was sold as a new kid in the block. No doubt, Mr. Obi is eligible to contest the last general election.

However, if history is well researched, some of the quality ascribed to him should have been trashed. We should not forget that he was a two-term Governor of Anambra state under APGA before he cross-carpeted to the Peoples Democratic Party, where he was appointed as an Economic Adviser by the Goodluck Jonathan led administration.

Also, as at the time he indicated interest in the race, his name had not been cleared from the Pandora Paper. More interesting, at the one-year anniversary of Mr Charles Soludo, the Executive Governor of Anambra State, he mentioned that the same Anambra State which Mr. Obi governed is the erosion capital of the world and the state is shrinking due to the previous governments' inability to construct perfect roads with drainages.

It should only be obvious to even a blind man that Mr. Obi appears cool and perfect on a face value whereas in reality, he is more like bad goods packaged and sold.

In the build up to the presidential election, some of the prominent religion leaders lend their voices in the campaign, for or against the current government. Pastor Poju Oyemade who happens to

coordinate the yearly political discuss in the country via 'The Platform' had invited the candidate of the Labour Party, Mr. Obi on countless occasions which made him a bit popular as some of his usual magical solutions to Nigeria penetrated the heart of his audience. In one of the events, Mr. Obi claimed that he wears only one wristwatch, which portrayed him as being economical and frugal.

The Platform afforded him a great deal of image branding for Mr. Obi but unfortunately, this could not continue late last year when the pastor made a personal observation on the political dynamics of Nigeria. Some of the pastor's choice of words didn't go down well with the uncontrolled mob garnered by the leading candidate.

Pastor Poju was verbally attacked, threatened and eventually bullied to delete those statements from his official twitter handle. Questions started to well up in the hearts of people who could think for themselves and those who aren't swayed with the online rhetoric's and biases on why people should be bullied for having a diverse opinion on issues.

Then, it went far more with various online attacks on the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Pastor Adeboye whom they insisted must make his political stance known otherwise he is automatically one of those responsible for the problems of the country.

Notwithstanding that the General Overseer ignored all the threats, the one of 20th February

2023 by a Jnr. Lambo who demanded that if the church doesn't make a bold statement, he would remove sound equipment and lighting he donated to the church caught the attention of many.

Oftentimes, you will wonder if truly the country is a religious nation as being portrayed in the world. Research shows that the country has over 85 million Muslims and 80 million Christians, (that's more than 82% of the country) worshipping God every weekend.

In about a week to the election, many Nigerians decide to come to the country to exercise their civil responsibility to vote since the National Assembly hasn't passed the law to enable Nigerians in the diaspora to vote from their end. As Nigerians trooped into the country from different destinations to vote for their preferred candidates, many supporters of Mr. Obi went on to attack those who indicated on their page to vote for another candidate, wishing them bad luck on their journey etc. Celebrities like Olawale Brymo and Toyin Abraham were made to go through hell.

Then, you start questioning if

the holy books teaches us to be vile and wicked against another. One can truly say if some citizens of this country aren't anarchist, with the bad manners they address. Amazingly, there is no law effect that one cannot choose or pick a side, be it at work, or political gatherings, is this freedom of choice a

crime as it may sound, the foolishness and flagitiousness of the young people can be said but what could be said of the statesmen? It was a bit surprising to everyone when Chief Chuckwuemeka made a statement on Arise TV that President-Elect won't be sworn in by 29.

It took the intervention of the host for him to retract his statement. We cannot continue to live in a country where everyone is threatened on issues they feel dissatisfied with, when traditional methods are no longer sufficient.

Ultimately, we can't have a nation when the elders in society who ought to direct the young ones on a better path are entrenched in bigotry and prejudice, the anger in the land is systematically built over time upon, which is like holding a powder keg from exploding from

william.

The question then is, if our citizens ignore the message from the revered men of God and other sane elders but only listen to the hate poured out from some elders, where do we go from here? The painful part is that the hate inside some Nigerians within and outside the country continues to fester because how do you explain the cases of citizens of this country who had relocated more than a decade and are happy funding insurrection in the country?

Where do we go from there? What are the chances that Nigeria will continue to survive this internal attacks from its unpatriotic citizens who are hell bent on seeing things only through their prism but none other person. How do we wake up the brilliance and curiosity of every Nigerians to verify fakes news which they can smell on their own.

One would think that the 'Change Begins with Me' campaign introduced by the Ministry of Information in 2016 would go a long way in addressing this. However, the implementation was a bit shoddy. It therefore seems the government needs to get back to the drawing table, to enlighten its citizens on crucial responsibilities for a greater Nigeria.

CHANGE OF NAME

EMMANUEL

I formerly known address as **LINUS DASHE**, now wish to be known address as **EMMANUEL LINUS DASHE**. All formal document remains valid, All concerned authority and general public to please take note.

DAMULAK

I formerly known address as **DAMULAK SOEKAATNAAN**, now wish to be known address as **DAMULAK JACINTA SOEKAATNAAN**. All formal document remains valid, All concerned authority and general public to please take note.

SUNDAY SPORTS

Lukaku unfulfilled in Premier League?

ROMELU Lukaku has left Chelsea to return to Serie A on another season-long loan deal, this time with Roma, and it means he remains one of the Premier League's great enigmas.

The Belgium striker's 121 goals puts him 20th on the list of top scorers in the Premier League's 31-year history, just shy of Dwight Yorke and Nicolas Anelka but above Cristiano Ronaldo and Didier Drogba.

Lukaku's latest Stamford Bridge departure comes 12 years after he first joined the Blues from Anderlecht as an 18-year-old, and it follows two summers on from him becoming Chelsea's then-record signing for £97.5m.

While his move to Roma is only on loan, he is already cumulatively the most expensive player ever, with his career transfer fees totalling nearly £300m.

The 30-year-old was more prolific - in a goals-per-game sense - than Wayne Rooney, Robbie Fowler and Jermain Defoe in the English top flight, scoring at a rate of 0.44 goals per game across 278 appearances.

Yet some critics suggest Lukaku was not a success in English football.

So was he underappreciated or, considering sheer potential and money spent to acquire him, a precocious talent unfulfilled?

Plucked from Anderlecht as a teenager, with his time on the Blues' payroll overlapping that of Kevin De Bruyne, Lukaku played 15 times across all competitions over his first two seasons for Chelsea without getting off the mark.

Instead he impressed on loan at West Brom, netting 17 times in the Premier League - more than any Chelsea player in that 2012-13 season. The haul included a famous hat-trick in a 5-5 draw against Manchester United in Sir Alex Ferguson's last match as a manager.

Lukaku's stock continued to rise on loan at Everton in the following season and he signed permanently at Goodison Park for what was a club record £28m in 2014.

The forward repaid that with 68 goals in 141 Premier League games, becoming the Toffees' top scorer in the competition and only the fourth player to score 80 career goals in the competition before turning 24 - after Michael Owen, Fowler and Rooney.

The 25-goal haul Lukaku netted in 2016-17 remains his highest total in a single league campaign. It was the first time an Everton player had scored more than 20 goals in a league season since Gary Lineker in 1985-86.



Lukaku

After criticising the Toffees for lacking ambition and then turning down a new contract, Lukaku was signed by Jose Mourinho's Manchester United for an initial £75m.

"Lukaku is a different player now to when Mourinho sold him at Chelsea. He's a better player and his record is sensational," said former Everton and United defender Phil Neville at the time.

"He plays on the shoulder of defenders, he likes to run over the top of defenders," added ex-Everton midfielder Leon Osman. "I don't think I've seen a better one-on-one-type finisher with the goalkeeper than Lukaku."

Lukaku's hot streak continued, scoring 10 goals in his first nine games in all competitions to better a club record set by Sir Bobby Charlton, who managed nine in nine, and the Belgian ended his debut season at United with 27 goals, including 16 in the league.

Lukaku was unable to maintain that form and his downfall at Old Trafford coincided with Mourinho's, who later said the forward "needs to be loved".

Criticised for his weight - and subsequently diagnosed with a digestive problem by Inter's medical staff - Lukaku went on a 12-game drought in 2018 and found himself out of the team under Mourinho's successor, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

Speaking later to the LightHearted podcast, Lukaku suggested he, Paul Pogba and Alexis Sanchez were being made scapegoats at United.

He was bought by Inter for a club-record £74m and entered the most productive period of his club career, equalling Brazil great Ronaldo's club-record 34 goals in all competitions in his first season.

He also became the first player to score in 10 successive Europa League games, though the forward's own goal in the final - having earlier scored a penalty - helped Sevilla win 3-2.

Lukaku got the silverware he sought the following year - his first trophy since the 2010 Belgian league title with Anderlecht, where he won the golden boot aged 16 - when he scored 24 times as Antonio Conte's side won Serie A for the first time in 11 years.

"He always had immense physical and athletic qualities, but during the two years together we saw him grow even more in terms of presence on the pitch, teamwork, and composure in front of goal," Conte told L'Equipe.

Two years after leaving the Premier League, however, Lukaku was back at Chelsea, becoming a team's record signing for the third time in his career.

"I came here as a kid who had

a lot to learn, now I'm coming back with a lot of experience and more mature," Lukaku said.

"It's a slam dunk," said the Athletic's Italian football writer James Horncastle on 5 Live's Football Daily podcast at the time.

Blues striker Chris Sutton added: "If there was a criticism of Chelsea last season, it was that they possibly weren't ruthless enough and now they have a guy in who is an absolute glutton for goals."

That never materialised. Lukaku's return yielded eight Premier League goals in 26 games and he struggled to fit into boss Thomas Tuchel's system.

During a 1-0 win at Crystal Palace in February 2022, Lukaku touched the ball only seven times - the lowest number any player has managed in a 90-minute Premier League appearance since at least 2003, when that

data was first recorded.

"Of course it's not what we want and what Romelu wants, but it's also not the time to laugh about him and make jokes about him," said Tuchel afterwards.

"How can you pay that much money and not play to his strengths?" asked former Arsenal striker Ian Wright on Match of the Day.

Lukaku was also not helped by an interview conducted earlier in the season with Sky Sport Italia, in which he said he wanted to return to Inter in the near future.

That wish was granted when he returned to the Nerazzurri on loan last season, while his latest temporary move to Roma reunites him with former Chelsea and United boss Mourinho.

Perhaps it is in Serie A where Lukaku feels his qualities are most suited.

He scored 10 league goals last season, as he was blighted by injuries, but has 76 goal contributions in 97 Serie A games, meaning a goal or an assist on average every 99 minutes over three seasons in Italy, compared with every 132 minutes in his Premier League career.

That is complemented by a remarkable 75 goals in 108 appearances for Belgium, and Lukaku feels his record does not get the credit it deserves.

"When people talk about Lewandowski, [Karim] Benzema or [Harry] Kane, they call them world class," Lukaku said during Euro 2020.

"But when it comes to me, it's just considered good form. That motivates me to work harder and get stronger.

"I belong in that list of world-class players."

SOURCE: BBC SPORT



Ronaldo Koeman, Everton boss at the time, was not happy with a 2017 interview in which Lukaku suggested the club lacked ambition

SUNDAY SPORTS



Wiegman

Wiegman dedicates award to Spain players

ENGLAND manager Sarina Wiegman dedicated her Uefa Women's Coach of the Year award to World Cup winners Spain, as Fifa president Gianni Infantino said their success had been "spoiled".

BBC SPORT said that, Spanish football federation president Luis Rubiales has been widely criticised for kissing forward Jenni Hermoso on the lips after the final.

Wiegman said the victorious Spain players "deserve to be listened to".

And Infantino wrote on social media: "This should never have happened."

Hermoso said the kiss during the presentation ceremony after the World Cup final win over England in Sydney on 20 August was not consensual.

Rubiales was suspended by world football's governing body Fifa on Saturday but has repeatedly refused to resign.

Wiegman led the audience at Thursday's ceremony in a round of applause for Spain, stating they "deserve to be celebrated".

"We all know the issues around the Spanish team," she said.

"It really hurts me as a coach, a mother of two daughters, as a wife and human being. And it shows, the game has grown so much, but there is a long way to go in women's football and society."

"I would like to dedicate this award to the Spanish team, the team that played such great football that everyone enjoyed."

Infantino later posted a photograph of himself with the world champions on Instagram, writing: "Sadly, the well-deserved celebrations for these magnificent champions were spoiled by what happened after the final whistle."

"Fifa's disciplinary bodies immediately assumed responsibility and took the necessary actions."

"On our side, we should continue to focus on how further to support women and women's football in future, both on and off the pitch."

Infantino was criticised for a speech he gave at the World Cup where he said women who

"pick the right fights" can "convince us men what we have to do" to bring progress in women's football.

The incident has sparked a global conversation about consent and power, with widespread protests taking place across Spain in support of Hermoso.

The forward's international team-mate Aitana Bonmati also spoke about the incident as she accepted her women's player of the year award at the Uefa event.

"Thanks to Sarina for her words. These are not very good times just now for Spanish football," the 25-year-old midfielder said.

"We have just won the World Cup but that is not really being spoken about because things have happened that I wish were not happening."

"As a society, we must not allow such abuses of power in a working relationship or such a lack of respect."

Spanish football federation regional leaders have called on president Rubiales to immediately step down, while Spanish prosecutors opened a preliminary investigation into whether the incident amounts to a crime of sexual assault.

Spain's Sports Tribunal (TAD) also met on Monday to discuss the Spanish government's request to suspend Rubiales, with a decision yet to be announced.

Meanwhile, Chelsea women's manager Emma Hayes says she is hopeful the situation will prove to be a "huge wake-up moment" in Spain.

"This is not just an isolated incident," said Hayes, speaking on Woman's Hour on BBC Radio 4.

"It is about a systemic problem over a number of years where the women's national team have complained on more than one occasion about the level of treatment and equality of opportunity and access for all of them."

"I hope that it will bring seismic and systemic change and you can see with the reaction across Spain it is certainly in support of Jenni Hermoso and the entire Spanish team."

"This is a huge wake-up

moment for Spanish society and it goes beyond Spanish football about how women feel they are treated or mistreated.

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The Saudi Pro League has been dismissed as a competitive threat by Aleksander Ceferin, president of European football's governing body Uefa.

The league has lured many high-profile players to Saudi Arabia over the last year, offering lucrative contracts and paying substantial transfer fees.

Ceferin feels the Chinese Super League made the same mistakes and said "that's not the right way to do it".

"It's not a threat, we saw a similar approach in China," he told L'Equipe.

"They bought players at the end of their careers by offering them a lot of money. Chinese football didn't develop and didn't qualify for the World Cup afterwards."

"That's not the right way to do it. They should work on

LIVERPOOL have agreed a deal worth £34.3m (40m euros) to sign midfielder Ryan Gravenberch from Bayern Munich.

BBC SPORT said that, the 21-year-old Netherlands international joined the German champions from Ajax last summer but has struggled for first-team football.

Gravenberch has made just one substitute appearance this season.

Liverpool have been linked with him for much of the summer and will now aim to conclude a deal before Friday's transfer deadline.

The Reds have already signed Alexis Mac Allister, Dominik Szoboszlai and Wataru Endo this summer in a refresh of their midfield.

Key midfielders Jordan Henderson and Fabinho have left Anfield to join Saudi Arabian clubs, while James Milner, Naby Keita and Alex Oxlade-

Liverpool agree £34m deal for Netherlands midfielder



Ryan Gravenberch has 11 caps for the Netherlands

Chamberlain also departed on free transfers.

Gravenberch came through the Ajax academy and made his debut for the club in September 2018 against PSV Eindhoven.

In all, the box-to-box midfielder played 103

matches for the Dutch club, scoring 12 goals, before joining Bayern for an initial 18.5m euros.

Last season he started just three games in his 24 Bundesliga outings for Bayern, and made his one appearance this season as a

'Saudi Pro League' not a threat



Saudi

player and coach development, but that's not my problem."

Spending by Chinese Super League clubs was curbed by a transfer tax in 2017 but the Saudi Pro League has a long-term investment plan, with Michael Emenalo appointed as director of football to lead its acquisition and youth development strategy.

Why is Saudi Pro League signing Premier League stars?

SPL: Who's who guide to the league making headlines

Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola, who saw Riyad Mahrez and Aymeric Laporte leave for Saudi Arabia this summer, said the country's

financial clout has "changed the market" for transfers and elite European clubs "need to be aware of what is happening".

However, the Premier League's chief executive Richard Masters has said he "wouldn't be too concerned" about Saudi Arabia's growing influence in football.

Richard Masters: Premier League chief not worried about Saudi Pro League 'Mbappe & Haaland don't dream of Saudi Arabia'

The country's Public Investment Fund (PIF) has taken over four leading Saudi clubs including Al-Nassr, who signed Cristiano Ronaldo in December.

Karim Benzema and Neymar have been the biggest of many signings this summer while Al-Hilal made a world record £259m bid for Kylian Mbappe.

Benzema and Neymar are aged 35 and 31, respectively, while 24-year-old France forward Mbappe has decided to stay with Paris St-Germain.

Ceferin added: "There are players at the end of their careers and others who aren't ambitious enough to aspire to the 'top' competitions."

"As far as I know, Mbappe and [Erling] Haaland don't dream of Saudi Arabia. I don't believe that the best players at the pinnacle of their careers would go to Saudi Arabia."

"When people talk to me about the players who went there, nobody knows where they're playing."

Ceferin also dismissed speculation that some Saudi clubs could join future editions of the Uefa club competitions or stage the competition finals.

"Only European clubs can participate in the Champions League, Europa League and Conference League," he said.

"Only European federations can apply [to host] a final, not even clubs. We would have to change all our rules, and we don't want that."

Fulham agree £22m deal with Everton midfielder

EVERTON midfielder Alex Iwobi is set to join Fulham after the two

clubs agreed a deal which could reach £22m.

The Nigerian, 27, will

now travel to London for a medical with a view to completing the move before the transfer deadline at 23:00 BST.

Iwobi has played in two of Everton's three Premier League games this season, with the Toffees yet to pick up a single point so far.

Injury kept him out of Saturday's home defeat to Wolves.

He joined the club from Arsenal in the summer of 2019 and has made 123 league appearances, scoring six times.



Iwobi has scored six league goals in four years at Everton.

SUNDAY SPORTS

Murray loses to Dimitrov in New York

ANDY Murray says he "might need to accept" a long-awaited deep run at a Grand Slam may not ever come after his latest effort was ended in the US Open second round.

Former world number one Murray, 36, lost 6-3 6-4 6-1 against 19th seed Grigor Dimitrov in New York.

Murray, ranked 37th, has not reached the last 16 of a major since resuming his career after hip surgery in 2019.

"It's unbelievably challenging to play at the highest level," he said.

"It's obviously disappointing to not play how you would like.

"Maybe I need to accept the deep runs and everything that I felt I'm capable of, they might not be there."

Putting together a run at a major was Murray's prime target this season as the three-time Grand Slam champion continues in the twilight of his career.

The Scot reached the Australian Open third round in January and, after skipping the French Open, lost in the Wimbledon second round last month.

Despite these setbacks at the majors, Murray has continued on an upward trajectory and recently moved up to his highest ranking since his comeback four years ago.

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"I still enjoy everything that goes into it. I enjoy the work, the training and trying to improve and trying to get better," said Murray, who reached the Doha final in February and has won three titles on the second-tier ATP Challenger Tour this year.

"That's what keeps me going.

"If I stop enjoying that - or my results, my ranking and everything starts to go backwards, if in a few months' time I was ranked 60 in the world or whatever instead of moving up - things might change."

Going into the four Grand Slam events with a seeding would, on paper, make going further at the majors a stronger possibility.

Those ambitions were hindered by the Scot pulling out of tournaments in Toronto and Cincinnati this month because of an abdominal injury.

Falling narrowly short of the top 32 going into the US Open did not help his chances in New York.

Having recovered from the injury, Murray played well in his opening-round win over France's Corentin Moutet but his level dropped considerably against the wily Dimitrov.

"If I want to have deep runs in these tournaments, I'm going to have to come up against players like Grigor," said Murray, who lost to fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in the Wimbledon second round.

"Whether I was seeded or not here in the top 32, I don't think that guarantees I'm going to have a deep run either."

A lot of credit must go to



Murray

former world number three Dimitrov - coached by Dani Vallverdu, who used to work with Murray - for executing a clear gameplan which set out to frustrate the Briton.

Dimitrov's backhand slice regularly took the pace out of the rallies, forcing Murray to trade from the back of the court and making the contest physical with some long duels.

Murray was always chasing after being broken in his first service game of each set, while he was only able to convert two of the nine break points he created.

It became a tough watch for those on Arthur Ashe Stadium supporting Murray, who remains a popular figure at the place where he won the first of his three major titles.

After falling a double break behind in the third set, Murray gave a gesture towards his

team indicating he was finished and his troubles were encapsulated by a double fault on a third match point for 32-year-old Dimitrov.

Dimitrov, who reached the US Open semi-finals in 2019, will play German 12th seed Alexander Zverev in the last 32.

Murray, meanwhile, said he will fly home to the UK as quickly as possible and indicated he might not play for Great Britain in next month's Davis Cup tie in Manchester.

"If I'm being honest, the other guys deserve to play ahead of me," said Murray, who suggested Jack Draper should play instead.

"I think there is probably a chance that I'm not on the team. I'll try to get home this evening or tomorrow morning, then see where I go from there."

DAN Evans set up a US Open meeting with Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz on a day where four Britons reached the third round of the singles in New York.

Evans, 33, fought back to beat Dutch opponent Botic van de Zandschulp in a 1-6 6-1 6-3 6-3 victory in round two.

Evans followed Katie Boulter, Jack Draper and Cameron Norrie in recording wins on another action-packed day for the British contingent.

Boulter, who is Britain's top women's player, maintained confidence and composure to beat China's Wang Yafan 5-7 6-1 6-4.

Draper put his injury problems behind him with a statement 6-2 6-4 7-5 victory over Polish 17th seed Hubert Hurkacz, while Norrie won 7-5 6-4 6-4 against Taiwanese qualifier Hsu Yu-hsiou.

Former world number one Murray lost 6-3 6-4 6-1 to 19th seed Grigor Dimitrov, while Burrage - who was in the main draw at Flushing Meadows for the first time - was beaten 6-3 6-2 by Belarusian world number two Aryna Sabalenka.

Evans was the final British player in action and rounded off another successful day for the nation as he reached the last 32 for the sixth time in seven appearances.

It has been a strange season for Evans, who had a dearth of wins either side of a surprise title triumph in Washington last month.

Against Van de Zandschulp, he struggled on serve and returned poorly in the first set before considerably improving in each department as the

Boulter, Evans win in New York



Evans

match wore on.

"It took a bit of time to get myself in the match and I played pretty sensible tennis," said Evans.

"I wouldn't say it was my best match level-wise but I did what I had to do".

It has taken her time to rebuild confidence and regain her ranking since dropping out of the world's top 100 as a result of a back injury which derailed her career in 2019.

But she has climbed to a career-high ranking this year on the back of winning her first WTA title in Nottingham and reaching the Wimbledon third round.

Now she has matched her Wimbledon performance at the hard-court Grand Slam in New York, having never previously won a main-draw match there.

"I'm super happy, I'm really proud of myself. I had to dig really deep," said the world number 61.

"I had to battle and go for it at the same time. Tactically, I was trying to be very aggressive, I got a bit tight in the first set and managed to loosen up in the second.

"I found ways to win points and it made it a little bit easier for me."

Boulter's win set up a meeting with American world number 59 Peyton Stearns on Saturday.

With his easy power from the baseline, 21-year-old Draper is a hugely exciting talent but his progress has continued to be stalled by a series of injuries.

A small muscle tear in his shoulder ruled him out of Wimbledon and, after a similar problem at the recent Winston-Salem Open, he feared it could stop him playing at Flushing Meadows.

But after what he described as a "mentally challenging" year, Draper is trying to put the problem "out of his mind" in New York.

He responded with another strong performance against Hurkacz, putting plenty of returns into play and drawing errors from his opponent.

Draper broke Hurkacz's usually reliable serve twice in the first set, doing the same in the second as it became increasingly apparent the Pole was struggling physically.

Slumped on his chair during a changeover in the third set, Hurkacz called to see the doctor and it looked as though he might have to retire.

The former Wimbledon semi-finalist gamely battled on, playing what Draper said was "some of his best tennis", and the British number five focused purely on his own side of the court to seal his progress.

Draper will play American wildcard Michael Mmoh, whose win ended the singles career of the retiring John Isner, in the third round.

Fitzpatrick makes strong start to boost Ryder Cup

ENGLAND'S Matt Fitzpatrick and Germany's Yannik Paul made ideal starts in their final attempt to qualify for the Ryder Cup in the European Masters.

Fitzpatrick, the 2022 US Open champion, opened up with a seven-under 63 to share a six-way tie for the lead.

Paul was one shot behind on six under par alongside Sweden's Ludvig Aberg, who is hoping to earn a wildcard after turning professional in June.

"That's as good as I've played for a while," said Fitzpatrick.

"I played brilliant. I think I only hit two bad shots - one I

got away with and one I managed to get up and down."

Fitzpatrick's bogey-free round at a tournament he has won twice comes with him needing to finish tied seventh with one player or better to overhaul fellow Englishman Tommy Fleetwood on the world points list.

A victory for Paul would see him replace Robert MacIntyre in the final berth on the European points list.

Scotland's MacIntyre, who played in the same group as Paul, is five shots adrift of the leaders after carding a two-under 68, while another Ryder Cup hopeful, Poland's

Adrian Meronk, is one shot better off on three under.

At present, only four European players are currently confirmed for the biennial men's golf competition against the United States.

Rory McIlroy, Jon Rahm, Viktor Hovland and Tyrrell

Hatton have all come through the European and world points lists, with captain Luke Donald set to name his six wildcard picks on Monday.

Fleetwood is certain to receive one if replaced in the automatic qualifying places by Fitzpatrick for the 29 September-1 October match

Farah runs in London for final time

MO Farah will race for the final time in his home city of London at The Big Half on Sunday.

Farah, who has won four Olympic gold medals and six world titles, will retire after competing at the Great North Run on 10 September.

The Briton, 40, has won the Big Half three times, but has



Farah won The Big Half in 2018, 2019 and 2022.

not competed since finishing in ninth place at the London Marathon in April.

You can watch Big Half live coverage on BBC iPlayer and online from 08:10 BST.

"I'm excited to run my last ever London race at The Big Half," said Farah.

"It will be bittersweet, knowing it will be the last time I race competitively in my home town, but it's always such a great day and I know the London crowds will be cheering me on, as they always do."

There is a strong domestic field, with British athletes bidding to win places in Great Britain's half-marathon team for the World Athletics Road

Running Championships in Estonia on 1 October.

Jonny Mellor and Andy Butchart are the leading domestic entrants in the men's race, while Samantha Harrison and Calli Thackery are the two fastest in the women's field.

David Weir heads the men's wheelchair field while there is an intriguing match-up in the women's wheelchair race where defending champion Eden Rainbow-Cooper faces former world 100m champion Samantha Kinghorn.

More than 15,000 people will join Farah on a route that starts near Tower Bridge and finishes at the historic Cutty Sark ship in Greenwich.



Fitzpatrick

SUNDAY FEATURE

Six questions to emerge from record transfer window



Will Al-Ittihad return with an improved bid for Mohamed Salah?

The transfer window has closed until January with the usual rash of big money deals and even some headline-grabbing moves that did not happen.

Liverpool and Manchester United made significant efforts to strengthen while Tottenham could not resist their traditional deadline day foray into the market.

In moves that did not materialise, Saudi Pro League side Al-Ittihad failed with a £150m bid for Liverpool's Mohamed Salah while Fulham's Joao Palhinha had a medical at Bayern Munich but had to return to Craven Cottage after the transfer collapsed.

So what are the big questions left to answer once the dust has settled on another hectic deadline day?

Will Salah saga drag on?

Liverpool made their position crystal clear that Salah was not for sale with the instant rejection of an offer that could have brought them £150m from Al-Ittihad.

The club's stance was that the 31-year-old was untouchable and the matter was considered closed at Anfield - but the complication may be that it is not considered closed in Saudi Arabia.

And with the Saudi transfer window not shutting until 7 September, there was immediate talk that Al-Ittihad were likely to return with an offer nearer to £200m in an attempt to make Liverpool blink.

Liverpool have no intention of blinking as they would not be able to re-invest any money until January at the earliest and manager Jurgen Klopp has also made it clear the brilliant Egyptian, who has 187 goals in 308 games for the club, would not be sold.

Salah has remained silent but his agent Rami Abbas Issa wrote in a social media post on 7 August, when speculation of Saudi interest started: "Mohamed remains

committed to Liverpool. If we considered leaving Liverpool this year, we wouldn't have renewed the contract last summer."

There is nothing to suggest anything has changed - but that may not stop Al-Ittihad making another even more eye-watering offer for Salah. He would be the biggest coup of all for the Saudi Pro League and further evidence of the existential threat posed to the Premier League.

Have Man Utd done enough?

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag declared himself happy with the club's transfer window - but it was not necessarily a view shared by many of his followers. Mason Mount arrived from Chelsea in a £60m deal while £72m striker Rasmus Hojlund is finally ready to make his introduction after injury against Arsenal on Sunday. Andre Onana was signed as the goalkeeping successor to David de Gea.

It led to a flurry of transfer activity on deadline day with Tottenham outcast Sergio Reguilon joining to cover for injured Luke Shaw while veteran former Old Trafford defender Jonny Evans, now 35, returned on a one-year deal as an emergency reinforcement.

What this means for former captain Harry Maguire remains unclear, with Ten Hag perfectly willing to offload him to West Ham United only for the deal to fall down over personal terms.

If the situation arises where Evans gets in ahead of Maguire, and Raphael Varane is currently injured, then that would be an embarrassing blow to the England defender.

The big move was the loan deal for Fiorentina's Sofyan Amrabat, so impressive for Morocco at the World Cup, which finally ended United's search for another

holding midfielder.

Ten Hag's side have looked sketchy and unimpressive despite winning two of their first three Premier League games but if Amrabat and Hojlund hit the ground running, things will start to look a lot better.

Hojlund will be under heavy scrutiny as the 20-year-old Denmark striker is earmarked to provide the natural goalscoring threat United have been missing.

Evolution not revolution for Spurs under Postecoglou?

Nottingham Forest's exciting winger Brennan Johnson was a signing new Spurs manager Ange Postecoglou will have been delighted to secure as the 22-year-old arrived for a fee in excess of £45m.

Postecoglou was very keen to spend some of the cash received for Harry Kane from Bayern Munich on Johnson, whose pace and positive approach sits nicely with the attacking style the Australian is already adopting. He was a priority signing.

James Maddison is already providing creative flourishes and Johnson will offer width, while the Spurs central midfield has already shown promising signs in the shape of the revitalised Yves Bissouma and Pape Matar Sarr.

It has been steady progress in the window but Postecoglou has arguably been left with too many fringe players who are clearly not in the forefront of his thoughts such as Eric Dier, Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg, Bryan Gil and Davinson Sanchez.

Much work remains to be done and another central defender would have been on Postecoglou's wish-list - but a start has been made.

Will Klopp's midfield rebuild work?

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp accepted the engine room of his side needed a reboot after last

season's disappointing campaign, but the process was accelerated by the Saudi Arabian raid for captain Jordan Henderson and Fabinho.

Brighton's Alexis Mac Allister and Hungarian Dominik Szoboszlai were the first arrivals then - after losing out to Chelsea for Moises Caicedo and Romeo Lavia - Liverpool launched a surprise swoop for Stuttgart's 30-year-old Japan captain Wataru Endo.

Klopp was keen to complete a serious overhaul and the final piece was Bayern Munich's 21-year-old Netherlands international Ryan Gravenberch, who signed on deadline day in a £34m deal.

Klopp will hope his new quartet provide a combination of defensive solidity and creative spark to not just protect his back line but also supply a stellar attack containing Salah, Cody Gakpo, Diogo Jota, Luis Diaz and Darwin Nunez, whose double inspired the dramatic late comeback at Newcastle United last Sunday.

In an ideal world, Liverpool would have added another central defender but, on first evidence, the large scale reshaping of the midfield looks impressive.

Will Everton fall short?

Everton raked in cash on deadline day with the sale of Alex Iwobi to Fulham for £22m and young striker Tom Cannon to Leicester City for an initial £6m potentially rising to £7.5m with add-ons, while Neal Maupay went off the wage bill in a loan move back to former club Brentford.

The money will be staying in the bank as Everton failed to add any new additions before the window closed, with time in the build-up once more spent on attempting to convince Leeds United to sell Wilfried Gnonto - despite being told on several occasions there was no deal to be done.

The Toffees' new £25m striker Beto made a good impression against League Two Doncaster Rovers in the

Carabao Cup, at least hinting he could fill a goalscoring gap that has been left vacant in a strategy bordering on negligence for more than a year.

This means Everton's incoming business has seen 38-year-old Ashley Young signed on a free transfer, Arnaut Danjuma and Jack Harrison join on loan - the latter injured on arrival from Leeds United - with Beto and teenage striker Youssef Chermiti brought in from Sporting Lisbon for £14m.

Given Everton's abysmal start to the Premier League season, three losses and no goals scored, there will be understandable consternation and concern that there were no deadline-day signings for a squad reduced in numbers from last season and already looking desperately short of quality.

Everton's squad is threadbare and vulnerable, with real concerns in central defence, where numbers are low after the departures of Yerry Mina and Conor Coady, who figured last season.

This, sadly, is also a reflection of the desperate financial reality Everton now face after years of mismanagement and money squandered which has led to fan revolt against owner Farhad Moshiri and chairman Bill Kenwright as many continue to call for change at boardroom level.

Will Forest's revolving door keep them safe again?

Nottingham Forest manager Steve Cooper did brilliantly to mould an unprecedented number of new arrivals into a squad that stayed in the Premier League last season - and will hope a busy deadline day sets him up for something similar this term.

Johnson's move to Spurs may have been painful for Forest, but Cooper was certainly allowed to beef up his squad on a frantic day at the City Ground.

Forest brought in Chelsea's former England winger Callum Hudson-Odoi - a real talent who lost his way - and Bologna captain Nicolas Dominguez on permanent deals plus Arsenal full-back Nuno Tavares on loan.

Greece international keeper Odysseas Vlachodimos was also signed on a four-year deal from Benfica.

The most significant announcement may have come after midnight with the signing of PSV Eindhoven midfielder Ibrahim Sangare in what is understood to be a club record deal worth about £30m.

The 25-year-old Ivory Coast international was a key member of the PSV side who thrashed Rangers 7-3 on aggregate to reach the Champions League group stage - he scored in the first leg at Ibrox - and has caught the eye of many of Europe's top clubs.

Forest have pulled off a coup to sign a player who could have been looking forward to Champions League football but instead came to the banks of the Trent.

Former Liverpool striker Divock Origi has signed on loan from AC Milan to add vast experience and there was also a late addition of Norwich City defender Andrew Omobamidele, the 21-year-old costing £11m.

They arrived in addition to six previous signings - Anthony Elanga, Matt Turner, Ola Aina, Andrey Santos, Gonzalo Montiel and Murillo.

It means Cooper has to perform his mix-and-match act again - but he has shown he is capable of doing it.



FIFA Ban: I Have Learned My Lessons - Siasia

AFTER staying out of football for quite some time, former Nigeria's Super Eagles coach Samson Siasia has confirmed that he has learned a lesson, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

World Soccer governing body in 2019 slammed a life ban on Siasia after he was found guilty of match-fixing and besting purposes.

The former Dream Team coach made the statement during an interview on Kennis Radio 104.1 FM in Lagos.

"Irrespective of what happened, I have learned my lessons, but FIFA, who initially gave me a life ban in football, could not prove anything wrong with what they claimed I did.

"But they had to reduce it to a five-year ban, and it will expire next year. I thank God for that.

"It has been terrible to be away from football for five years, but I am preparing myself to come back to football, so I have to prepare myself so I can start 'running' once I resume by next year", he stated.

For Samson Siasia, there is still nothing to celebrate despite the Court of Arbitration for Sport's (CAS) decision to reduce his sanction by FIFA from all footballing activities for life to five years.

In 2019, FIFA banned Siasia from all football related activities for life over an alleged plot to fix matches. In addition, the world body also imposed a CHF 50,000 fine on the former Super Eagles' striker.

FIFA based the sanction against Siasia on his liaison with Wilson Raj Perumal, a convicted match-fixer from Singapore. FIFA said it tried to contact Siasia via email, adding, however, that the coach never replied any of its messages.

FIFA had said in 2019 that Siasia was "guilty of having accepted that he would receive bribes in relation to the manipulation of matches in violation of the FIFA Code of Ethics" and also fined him 50,000 Swiss francs (\$54,000).

Shocked by FIFA's judgment, Siasia ran to CAS to seek justice. CAS earlier scheduled hearing on the case on March 19, 2020, but later postponed it severally owing to the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus and the travel restrictions that came with the virus.

The world adjudicatory body recently held the session virtually, giving Siasia the chance to answer to the charges.

In its verdict last week, CAS said the imposition of a life ban was 'disproportionate for a first offence, which was committed passively and which had not had an adverse or immediate effect on football stakeholders.'

CAS said: "The panel acknowledged the need for sanctions to be sufficiently high enough to eradicate bribery and especially match fixing in football.

"However, the panel considered in the particular

circumstances of this matter that it would be inappropriate and excessive to impose a financial sanction in addition to the five-year ban since the ban already incorporated a financial punishment in eliminating football as a source of revenue for Mr. Siasia."

Ordinarily, the CAS verdict would have elicited some form of joy and/or hope from the former national team coach, but that is not the case. Instead, Siasia still feels that justice was not done in his because "I am innocent."

Speaking during a media briefing in Abuja on Friday, Siasia said he expected CAS to discharge him of all the charges because he did not do anything wrong. He also lamented the attitude of some of his friends, his colleagues and players, who went through him as a coach, saying 'people I trusted distanced themselves from me.'

Narrating his experience, Siasia said it was unfortunate that FIFA did not give him the opportunity to answer to the charges, which forced him to approach CAS for redress.

He said being absent from football, the only trade he knows has not been easy on him, lamenting that being out of the game for another two and half years would not be an easy task.

"I just have to find a way of spending the time before I get back to what I like doing.

"This case has taught me so much. Some of my friends and former playing colleagues did not look at me this period.

"My colleagues never called me to find out what was happening. They have stopped inviting me to All Stars and Legend games.

"The worst is that most Nigerians actually think I took money to fix matches, but it is now clear that I didn't take any bribe. And FIFA did not look at what I told the agent when he came to offer me a job.

"I was told that my offence was that I did not report my conversation with Perumal to FIFA."



Siasia

Siasia, who thanked Rivers and Bayelsa state governments for helping him to fight his case, said he would still have to meet with his lawyers to know the next step to take.

He added: "I worked with four lawyers, two in Nigeria and two in Switzerland, and they cost a lot of money.

"To appeal CAS ruling, I need 100,000 euros. That is why we are looking at it to know what would be the possible outcome of another appeal."

The coach, who led Nigeria to silver and bronze medals at the Beijing 2008 Olympics and

Brazil 2016 Olympic Games respectively, said the Federal Government's attitude to him during his trial was not encouraging.

"The sports minister just told me there was no money. I expected him to take my case to President Buhari... I am not happy the way I have been treated by Nigeria."

Siasia is also not happy with the attitude of some of the players he took to limelight, saying it was unfortunate that none of them cared to find out what was happening to him.

"I trained players like Mikel

and others from the U-20 World Cup to the Olympics. I know without that some of them would not have reached the height they attained in football.

"In 2005, I went to Bayelsa State government and got \$50,000, which I used to take my team to a training tour before the U-20 World Cup in Holland. This is just one of the sacrifices I made for Nigeria, but nobody cares."

Meanwhile, the GMD of strategic partners to the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), GTI Asset Management & Trust Limited, Abubakar Lawal has joined other well-

meaning Nigerians in congratulating Senator John Owan Enoh on his appointment as Minister of Sports Development, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, last Wednesday appointed Senator Enoh, a two-term Member of the House of Representatives and one-term Member of the Senate of the Federal Republic, as the new Minister of Sports Development.

Lawal sent the congratulatory message in a press statement made available to journalists in Lagos on Friday.

"I want to congratulate Senator Enoh on his appointment as Sports Minister and we hope he hits the ground running because of the enormous challenges facing the sports ecosystem," Lawal began.

"GTI as a strategic partner to the NPFL is neck-deep in ensuring that our football is well restructured and repositioned in line with international best practices and our efforts are already bearing fruits.

"I pray with the support of Corporate Nigeria and other well-meaning stakeholders in the sports industry, the new sports minister should be able to take Nigerian sports to enviable heights."

"From GTI, we will continue to work closely with the newly inaugurated Board of the Nigeria Premier League (NPL) led by Hon. Gbenga Elegbeleye towards a successful and seamless execution of the upcoming season."

Lawal charged Senator Enoh to ensure that the government continues to complement the efforts of corporate bodies to provide an environment that is safe and conducive for sports development to thrive in the country.

The GTI boss further stated with a tinge of regret that the country is well blessed with talented sportsmen and women at the grassroots, but how to unearth these future superstars remains a herculean task that must be surmounted.

Infrastructure, facilities key components for Our Athletes'

MINISTER of Sports Development Senator John Owan Enoh has stated that his administration will prioritize infrastructure and facilities development, as they are key for Nigeria to achieve success in sports, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

Enoh made the statement known to his media team in Abuja, capping off his first week in office.

"Facilities and infrastructures are a key component of sports, as they are variables that drive both elite performance and grassroots development", Enoh said.

The minister described the Abuja stadium as a national monument that can stand toe to toe with contemporaries across Africa when completely turned around.

"It is very important that we get it right with our facilities. We must maintain the current

infrastructures that we have, and look towards making them better to match what we have across the world."

The minister said that he will assess the state of other facilities and infrastructure across the country and ensure they are elevated as needed.

While Nigerians continue to adapt to the new normal in the sports ministry following its divorce from the Youths Development sector, the Honorable Minister of Sports - John Owan Enoh, has lauded the passion shown by Nigerian sports fans, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

Hon. John Enoh resumed his office in the sports ministry on Tuesday where he met with all Heads of Department within the sports sector, and embarked on a tour around the National Stadium on Wednesday.

While hitting the ground running, the Sports Minister

was amazed by the reactions from Nigerian fans to his appointment plus the attraction and incitement that comes with the sector.

"It is amazingly, myself heading a ministry that incites so much passion and input from Nigerians," Hon. Enoh said when asked about his remarks on public opinion.

"This makes the job more significant after H. E. President Bola Tinubu separated the Sports sector from the Youth development ministry, to help streamline focus."

Hon. Enoh was privileged to get reports and briefings from all the departments within the sector on Tuesday while alluding that the ministry is a peculiar space with its language.

"I have been able to assimilate the language of sports between yesterday

and today due to my commitment and passion for the ministry.

"Life is all about the good, bad, beautiful, and the ugly. And with the much I have seen today, it is important to note that the national stadium is a national monument that must be preserved," he added.

Recall that social media and other digital platforms went agog following the appointment of the incumbent minister, citing his qualifications and experience for the job.

However, after two days on the job, Hon. John Enoh is feeling the music and dancing to the tune, with the



Enoh