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Governor Mutfwang procures trucks of fertiliser as palliatives

By PETER TITLE

The Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang has procured over 200 trucks of branded fertiliser for distribution to farmers

in the state as palliative.

Out of the said number of trucks, he revealed that 187 trucks of the assorted fertilizer have been received and off-loaded in a warehouse in Jos for distribution to farmers in

the state.

Governor Mutfwang disclosed this recently when he embarked on an on the spot inspection of the warehouse where the fertilizers were being off-loaded.

Accompanied by the

Executive Secretary of the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Hon. Abdu, the governor said they were strategizing on how to distribute them to ensure they reach the genuine farmers.

He thanked the Nigerian Airforce for obliging them the use of their facility for the storage and stated that immediately the remaining trucks were received, the government would start

distribution in earnest.

Meanwhile, the governor who also gave audience to the state chapter of PIDAN at the New Government House, Little Rayfield, recently saluted development associations for buildings schools and

Uncertainty looms as crude oil hits \$93.50

The continued rise in the price of crude oil at the international market has raised anxiety about a further petrol price hike in Nigeria.

Our correspondent reports that the product sold at \$93.55 per barrel on Monday,

The development comes in the face of the Naira depreciation at the foreign exchange window, exchanging at N980/\$1 on Monday at the parallel market.

However, the Independent Marketers

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Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, Hajija Hawwa Umar Aliyu, head of delegation, members of Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission, Abuja in a group photograph with members of the Plateau State Executive Council at the new Government House Rayfield, Jos
Photo: DANLADI DUK

FG not negotiating with Zamfara terrorists

The Federal Government is not negotiating with terrorists to secure the release of the abducted students of Federal University, Gusau, Minister of Defence, Mohammed Badaru, has said.

Our correspondent reported that the Zamfara State Government demanded urgent

investigation into alleged secret negotiations between some Federal Government agencies engaged in negotiations with bandits without seeking recourse from the State Government.

In a follow-up on Tuesday, the Zamfara State Government said it has enough facts to expose the agents of the Federal

Government behind the secret negotiation with bandits.

But in a statement through Hope Attari, Acting Director of Press and Public Relations at the Ministry of Defence, Badaru on Tuesday, described as misleading, allegations that the government was negotiating with the

terrorists.

He said President Bola Tinubu had given marching orders to the military and other security agencies to ensure the release of those abducted.

"The Federal Government is working assiduously round the clock to ensure that the girls and others return home", he said.

Badaru reassured

Zamfara residents and Nigerians at large of the progress being made for the quick return of the female students and others of Federal University, Gusau.

He expressed confidence that the joint security task forces was working discreetly round the clock to get the students

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Kyari

News

Governor Mutfwang procures 200 trucks of fertiliser as palliatives

Continued from page 1 hospitals saying if not so, the people would have been left in a poverty of knowledge.

Gov. Mutfwang urged them not to lose their sense of history and thanked them for the support accorded the government, assuring them that he would ensure he repositioned the state for the benefit of all.

Earlier, the leader of PIDAN, Professor Aboi

Madaki told the governor that they were at Government House to congratulate him over his victory at the tribunal. He said it was a judgment received with applause from the people of the state.

Prof. Madaki commended the governor for managing the crisis situation very well when he was elected as governor of the state and assured him of their unflinching support.

'FG not negotiating with Zamfara terrorists'



Continued from page 1 rescued.

The Minister also condoled with the families of the girls and others who were abducted, describing the incident as a reprehensible act.

Badaru noted that the order of the president had

started yielding results as 13 of the abducted students and 3 others regained their freedom on Monday.

"This feat was achieved through the professional efforts of the military", he said.

As part of efforts to address cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and other vices in the country, the Federal Government, through the Ministry of Women Affairs, has disclosed its readiness to introduce mobile courts.

The Minister of Women Affairs, Uju Kennedy-Ohaneye, at a briefing in Abuja, on Monday, said, "If we have a mobile court, it will help as we go for our advocacy against SGBV. We have been advocating, and spending money, to no avail.

She disclosed this part of reforms and targets she hopes to realise in her first 100 days in office.

"When victims report, police will come in for arrest, we will take the victim straight to the hospital to confirm and then the mobile courts come in to ensure justice is served."

She stressed the need for a different approach to interventions targeting grassroots women. She highlighted the importance of working with women cooperatives to implement empowerment projects that can be sustained by the recipients beyond the initial government support.

"The narrative has changed in this ministry. We have decided to forge ahead with more sustainable moves that will impact our women and children

Sanitary towels being given to girls in some schools from time to time is

FG to introduce SGBV mobile courts

not sustainable; therefore, we have decided that instead of giving them the sanitary towels, we set up sanitary pad production ventures. Sharing gas cylinders to rural women is also not sustainable; the ministry is concerned

about who refills the gas stove for the rural woman after the first refill. We have decided to, instead, give them charcoal burners and biogas stoves among others," she noted.

In a meeting with students' union

representatives on the sidelines of the briefing, the minister reiterated government's stand with Nigerian women, girls and boys, as well as her stand for justice on any case of sexual harassment in the country.



PLSG constitutes Visitation Panels for state

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

Executive Governor of Plateau State, Governor Caleb Mutfwang in his determination to revamp the education system in Plateau State, has recently constituted Visitation Panels to all state-owned higher

institutions with set terms of reference.

This was contained in a press release signed by the Hon. Commissioner, Ministry of Higher Education, Plateau State, Dr. Kachollom Pyam Gang and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD on Tuesday.

-Owned institutions

The statement added that the panels would examine the status and quality of programmes being offered by the institutions, the quality of management and staff utilization of resources, relationship with stakeholders, among others.

The commissioner is calling on all stakeholders to submit their written records or oral memorandum to enable the panels deliver on their mandate.

Gang added that the Visitation Panels have started work in earnest and currently they are in various institutions.

However, a memorandum should be submitted in three (3) copies to either the Chairman or Secretary of each of the Visitation Panels in various state-owned tertiary institutions on or before September 29th, 2023.

Uncertainty looms as crude oil hits \$93.50

Continued from page 1 Association of Nigeria, IPMAN, and the Major Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria have allayed the fear of a possible petrol price hike over the rising price of crude oil at the global market and the free-fall of the Naira at the forex window.

It is recalled that in the last three months fuel price has been increased twice.

Upon removing the fuel subsidy in June, the pump price was reviewed upward by 210 per cent to N546.83 per litre from N175/per litre. Less than a month later, the fuel pump price was increased to N617 per litre from N546.83.

Between July and September, no fuel increment has been affected despite the continued fall in the price of Naira at the forex market.

The development is sequel to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's assurance to Nigerians that there will not be further fuel pump price

increments, according to Ajuri Ngelale, Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity.

"We repeat, the President affirms that there will be no increase in the price of petroleum motor spirit," he said.

The Group Chief Executive of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited, Mele Kyari, reiterated Tinubu's assurance.

Except in July, when Emadeb Energy imported 27 million litres of fuel into Nigeria, NNPC limited has been the sole supplier of the product nationwide.

There are also claims that the Federal Government was indirectly subsidizing the commodity in order to avert a further increment in the pump price.

Speaking on Monday, the President of IPMAN, Chinedu Okonkwo said there is no cause for alarm over the fuel price increase.

He said the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited is the sole supplier of petrol

nationwide and has not proposed an increment plan.

Okonkwo explained that fuel marketers purchase their products in Naira.

He urged the federal government to speed up efforts toward ensuring the implementation of Compressed Natural Gas as a viable alternative to fuel.

"We are getting fuel products from our source, the NNPC Retail. NNPC has not told us that the price of fuel will change; I should not speculate on price increments.

"I think we have NNPC that solely gives us products. The market fundamental determines the price; if NNPC decides to increase the fuel pump, we will also change.

"For now, there is nothing to worry about. The same reason the price could go up, it can also come down. NNPC can do anything to remain in business. No marketer should complain of dollar scarcity because they are

not importing PMS. NNPC is the sole importer for now.

"Government should include stakeholders like IPMAN into the Compressed Natural Gas initiative; that is the way out", he said.

Also, a former Chairman of MOMAN, Tunji Oyeibanji explained that the country has a special fuel-deregulated market where NNPC sets the price as the sole supplier.

According to him, as long as NNPC remains the sole supplier and fuel importer, the product's price may likely remain unchanged in the interest of the generality of Nigerians.

"We are operating in a deregulated market in a peculiar situation, because the company importing fuel to Nigeria is only the NNPC.

"If I want to import, the landing cost may be higher than the prevailing market price. As a result, only NNPC can import at this time.

"That means that they indirectly set the price in the market since they are the sole importer.

"They are suppliers to the entire market and, at the same time, a retailer. So, NNPC's price is going to be an indication of what the market is saying today in the country.

"Because we are operating in a market with a single supplier, that supplier will determine the product's price. There may be a price increase if fuel importers other than NNPC enter into the supply chain market," he stated.



Mutfwang



CBN's perfect blend of economists and bankers

For the past tumultuous decade, Nigeria's economy has weathered concerns like spiraling inflation, a consistently weakened naira, tepid economic growth, and diminishing Foreign Exchange reserves, criticism of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has been rife. Accusations pointed towards a prevailing hawkish commercial bank mindset, emphasizing short-term gains over sustainable growth. AKINTAYO ODEWUNMI writes.

WITH the introduction of Dr. Yemi Cardoso and his assembled team, the narrative promises to change. These nominations herald a vital shift in the CBN's outlook, showcasing a harmonious blend of skilled bankers and distinguished economists. Such a mix suggests a reimagined strategy for the CBN, marrying financial prudence with holistic economic advancement.

Dr. Yemi Cardoso, at the forefront, is emblematic of this change. His dual experience as Chairman of Citibank Nigeria and Commissioner of Economic Planning and Budget for Lagos State fuses private sector financial acumen with public policy expertise. This confluence ensures that while financial prudence remains at the core, broader societal needs aren't relegated. In Cardoso, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has identified an ideal candidate ready to tackle high inflation, exchange rate pressures, and the broader challenges facing Nigeria today. His decades of experience in banking, including serving as Chairman of Citibank Nigeria during a period of unprecedented growth, provide deep insight into monetary policy tools and impacts.

Equally important is Cardoso's track record of improving lives through public service. As Commissioner of Economic Planning and Budget for Lagos State, he spearheaded initiatives that drove investment and job creation. And as Chairman of the Lagos Economic Summit, he brought stakeholders together to unlock the state's immense potential.

This rare combination makes Cardoso well prepared to deliver on the Central Bank's mandates. His banking background ensures he can nimbly manage interest



Cardoso

rates and liquidity to stabilize prices. His success devising economic strategies means he understands how to boost production and exports to strengthen Nigeria's currency.

Supporting Dr Cardoso is Muhammad Sani Abdullahi Dattijo, an accomplished development economist. With advanced degrees in development economics and public administration, Dattijo will bring a rare blend of academic excellence and real-world impact to the bank's critical decisions. His pioneering scholarship, including a recent book outlining governance reforms to uplift marginalized communities, has

won praise from leading thinkers.

Equally important is Dattijo's concrete success turning economic strategies into improved lives. At the UN, he helped design the Sustainable Development Goals to promote equitable growth globally. As Commissioner of Budget and Planning for Kaduna State, he implemented innovative policies aligned with the SDGs that expanded access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities.

Complementing Dr Cardoso's vision, Emem Usoro brings with her over two decades in banking, with a remarkable journey at the United Bank for Africa. Her

ascendancy, coupled with her ground-level expertise, assures policies that resonate with the banking sector's inflation and realities.

This union of economists and bankers marks a promising pivot. It hints at a CBN approach that confronts not just surface-level concerns – like currency value – but also the underlying systemic challenges

With the nomination of Mrs. Usoro as Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, President Tinubu has tapped one of the country's brightest financial minds to take on a pivotal economic leadership role. Mrs. Usoro brings over 20 years of rich experience spanning critical banking functions including retail, commercial, corporate finance and marketing.

Beyond exemplary industry credentials, Mrs. Usoro holds four certificates from Harvard Business School complementing her MSc and BSc degrees – evidence of the intellectual aptitude she will bring to monetary policy decisions. Mrs. Usoro's unique brilliance has been recognized through honors like inclusion in UBA's Superwomen 101 initiative for exceptional women leaders.

Philip Ikeazor's global banking acumen, having held roles across various continents, adds

a unique layer of expertise. His grasp on the intricacies of different financial systems positions him as an invaluable asset in this formidable lineup. Armed with over 30 years of experience across the highest echelons of finance, Mr. Ikeazor is set to bring steadfast leadership to the central bank. As CEO of Keystone Bank, he guided operations amid volatility. At Ecobank Kenya, he led regional expansion initiatives.

Equally valuable is his success leading major change programs that transformed organizational performance. Under his watch, efficiency and competitiveness dramatically improved. Beyond impressive industry credentials, Mr. Ikeazor holds an economics degree from the University of Buckingham and attended executive programs at Harvard and Wharton.

Lastly, Bala Bello, having shaped corporate strategy across various financial entities, offers a broad perspective, making him a versatile addition to the team. As Executive Director at the Nigerian Export-Import Bank, he provided strategic leadership in managing corporate services operations. Mr. Bello has also held critical roles at institutions including the Securities and Exchange Commission, Sigma Pensions Ltd, Marine Capital Limited and Apricot Investments. In these positions, he honed expertise across banking operations, treasury management, investment banking, strategic marketing and more. Mr. Bello is known for leadership acumen, communication skills and the ability to spearhead organizational change.

This union of economists and bankers marks a promising pivot. It hints at a CBN approach that confronts not just surface-level concerns – like inflation and currency value – but also the underlying systemic challenges. The diverse expertise ensures policies that are both robust and equitable. With Cardoso's steady leadership, bolstered by a team of adept deputy governors, Nigeria stands on the cusp of an economic renaissance. This new CBN chapter promises a more synchronized approach, emphasizing both fiscal stability and equitable growth. As the nation turns the page, it anticipates a Central Bank where sharp banking insights and expansive economic wisdom converge.

"With the nomination of Mrs. Usoro as Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, President Tinubu has tapped one of the country's brightest financial minds to take on a pivotal economic leadership role. Mrs. Usoro brings over 20 years of rich experience spanning critical banking functions including retail, commercial, corporate finance and marketing. Beyond exemplary industry credentials, Mrs. Usoro holds four certificates from Harvard Business School complementing her MSc and BSc degrees – evidence of the intellectual aptitude she will bring to monetary policy decisions. Mrs. Usoro's unique brilliance has been recognized through honors like inclusion in UBA's Superwomen 101 initiative for exceptional women leaders."



Business & Economy

Investors lose N39bn as trade volume increases

TRADING Exchange closed negative on Friday by 0.11 per cent week-on-week due to weak market momentum which saw investors losing N39bn.

Both the market capitalisation and the Nigerian Exchange Limited All Share Index closed trading lower at N36.847tn and 67,324.59 respectively compared to the previous week's figure of N36.886tn and 67,395.74 basis points.

However, the total turnover of shares was 3.911 billion units worth N30.38bn in 38,536 deals, higher than a total of 2.933 billion shares valued at N47.45bn that exchanged hands the previous week in 44,654 deals.

Measured by volume, the Financial Services Industry led the activity chart with 2.774 billion shares valued at N15.24bn traded in 16,379 deals; thus contributing 70.92 per cent and 50.17 per cent to the total equity turnover volume and value respectively.

This was followed by the Oil and Gas Industry which saw 438,508 million shares worth N5.20bn traded in 6,258 deals. The third place was the ICT Industry, with a turnover of 294.470 million shares worth N4.447 billion in 3,078 deals.

The top three equities traded in the review period were Universal Insurance Plc, Oando Plc and United Bank for Africa

Plc (measured by volume) which accounted for 2.212 billion shares worth N8.91bn in 7,593 deals, contributing 56.56 per cent and 29.32 per cent to the total equity turnover volume and value respectively.

The Insurance sector emerged as the top gainer in the week by 3.34 per cent week on week, followed by the Consumer goods (+2.98 per cent), Banking (+0.61 per cent) and the Oil & Gas sectors (+0.56 per cent) accordingly. On the contrary, the Industrial Goods sector closed the week negative by 4.80 per cent week on week owing price decrease in Dangote Cement.

Other indices which depreciated in value during the week were NGX 30, NGX Premium, NGX AFR Div Yield, NGX Lotus II, NGX Industrial Goods, NGX Growth and NGX Pension Broad which dipped by 0.13 per cent, 3.45 per cent, 1.72 per cent, 0.12 per cent, 0.36 per cent and 0.14 per cent respectively while the NGX ASEM index closed flat.

In the week under review, 48 equities appreciated higher than 32 equities in the previous week. Forty equities depreciated in price lower than 53 in the previous week, while 67 equities remained unchanged, lower than 70 recorded in the previous week.

Leading the gainers' chart was Sunu Assurances whose share

price rose by 32.91 per cent to N1.05, Ellah Lakes Plc's share appreciated by 28.79 per cent to N3.30, E-Tranzact International Plc gained 28.57 per cent to close at N9.45 per share, Chams Holdings' shares rose by 19.09 per cent to N1.31 and Abbey Mortgage Bank Plc took the fifth position on the gainers' table after gaining 17.65 per cent to close N2 per share.

On the losers' table, Tantalizers led with 21.05 per cent dip to close at N0.30, Guinea Insurance lost 20.69 per cent in its share value to close at N0.23, McNichols lost 13.33 per cent to close trading at N0.65, Unity Bank Plc's share lost 11.29 per cent in value to close at N1.10 and Secure Electronic Technology's shares depreciated by 10.34 per cent to close the trading week at N0.26.

Meanwhile, analysts are of the view that this week will see mixed sentiments in the market, with positive momentum counterbalanced by profit-taking activities.

Analysts at Cowry Asset Management Limited opined that the uncertainty in "the market will be further fueled by the half-year earnings reports from Access Holdings while investors are likely to continue in portfolio reshuffling in preparation for the quarter-end reporting season."

THE Cement Producers Association of Nigeria has warned that the ongoing plan of the federal government to introduce concrete roads will raise the price of cement to N9,000 per bag from the current price of N5,000.

It also called on the current administration to permanently address the perennial cement price hike problem by facilitating larger participation in the cement industry, noting that Nigerians have no business buying cement for more than N5,600 per bag.

The association, in a statement jointly signed by the National Chairman, Prince David Iweta and National Secretary Chief Reagan Ufomba, recently, commended the works Minister's position on cement-made roads but warned of dire consequences, if the supply end is not addressed properly.

As a solution, the cement producers urged the government to lay more emphasis on road design that allows both cement technology and asphalt pavement to run concurrently and provide ample time for a smooth transition that allows contractors to invest in commensurate and requisite equipment and retooling.

The statement read, "Our findings from various parts of the country show that cement sells for as high as N6000 per bag in the rainy season. Our prediction is that it will sell for over N9,000 per bag in the dry season, especially with the pronouncement of the Honourable Minister of Works on cement technology and the marching order on housing by Mr President if the government does

Manufacturers warn of imminent hike in cement prices



Iweta

not take proactive steps.

"While we commend the Honourable Minister's position on cement-made roads, we warn of the dire consequences if the supply end is not properly addressed. In fact, it would amount to dereliction of duty not to intervene. And the time is now. To do otherwise is to continue in a worsening pipe dream that prices would suddenly drop on this essential input that will continue to drain the purse of Nigerians, render them homeless, encourage chaos between demand and supply, and worsen the infrastructure deficit it sets out to cure, and lead to an unprecedented price hike.

"We also call on the Honourable Minister of Works to lay more emphasis on the design criteria of roads that allow both cement technology and Asphalt pavement to run concurrently, in turn, will provide ample time for a smooth transition that allows contractors to invest in commensurate and requisite equipment and retooling. We must also as a nation regulate static and dynamic load traffic by introducing weighbridges at access points on our highways. Working in sync with contractors, and allied Ministries of Trade and Investment, Transport, Environment and Finance on realistic policy on cement is most desirable at this critical time."

The association further requested the government to conclude the backward integration policy of the late Yar'adua administration that was already bringing availability and affordability of cement in the country.

It added, "There has been so much comment on cement and cement pricing of late. What our nation needs is cement that is available and affordable. And this cannot be achieved by mere wishes, faulty policies and programmes, without breaking the chain of monopoly and favouritisms. Nigerians are tired of waiting for a downturn in the price of cement and for decent and affordable housing.

"We call on the Tinubu government to permanently

solve this perennial cement price hike problem by expanding participation in the sector with companies who have verifiable evidence of local investment, including greenfield licenses and quarrying. As a matter of fact, we call on the government to more specifically conclude the backward integration policy of the late Yar'adua administration which was already bearing availability and affordability fruits.

"As patriots, it is our view that the government reintroduces backward integration policy and the conclusion of old ones. Consequently, the government cannot be seen to approbate and reprobate by deregulating issues of petroleum products and foreign exchange on one hand and regulating on pricing of cement, essential goods and services on another. There is a need for policy harmonisation and convergence between fiscal and monetary policies.

"Finally, we call on the government to urgently intervene in the foreign exchange market, intervene in restructuring bad loans of manufacturers, and review palliative modules. The cry for elusive FDI will be drastically reduced if all manufacturing concerns are revived. The government must be decisive in the kind of economic policies it intends to foist on the people," the statement concluded.

Reacting to the news, a contractor Tosin Adedapo told **Economic Confidential** that "the price increase will make it challenging for a lot of people to afford the cement, as well as the estate contractors who will find it more difficult to afford properties".

In the same vein, Mike John, added that if the hike persist, "we will end up having more foundation of buildings that are unstructured which will lead to more collapse of buildings, causing lot of lives and properties. For instance, in my location, about 3 building collapsed of recent due to poor construction and management of cement".

NCDMB, NNPC, IOCs sign agreement

WITH the goal of quickly ramping up Nigeria's flagging crude oil production, ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Nigerian Content Act, and timely approvals of documents, the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) on Monday in Abuja signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) cum Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Ltd (NNPC Ltd) and five international oil-producing companies. The SLA was conceptualised by the NCDMB and is intended to optimize the contracting cycle in the oil and gas industry and spur the speedy development of new oil and gas projects,

contributing to increased oil production and improved national economy.

The agreement was signed by the Executive Secretary of NCDMB, Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, while the new Executive Vice President Upstream of the NNPC Ltd, Mr. Oritsemeyiwa A. Eyesan signed on behalf of the national oil company.

Other top industry officials who signed the agreement included the Managing Director of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and Country Chair, of Shell Companies in Nigeria (SCiN) Mr. Osagie Okunbor, and the Chairman and Managing Director of ExxonMobil's affiliates in

Nigeria, Mr. Shane Harris. Others included the Director of Joint Ventures for Chevron Nigeria, Mr. Iweze Cosmas; the Managing Director, Nigerian Agip Oil Company Ltd, Mr. Fabrizio Bloomfield, and the Executive Director, Joint Ventures, Total Exploration and Production Nigeria, Mr. Obi Imemba.

The Executive Secretary stated that the overall goal is to conclude the oil and gas industry's tendering to contract award processes within six months, affirming his conviction that the target is realistic with all key parties now on board with the execution of the SLA. He expressed delight that NNPC Limited signed up to the MoU, being the senior partner of the joint ventures and concessionaire of the production sharing contracts (PSC) arrangements that govern the operations of the industry.

Wabote recalled that NCDMB first introduced the 15-day Rule to the industry in 2017, when it promised that it would respond within 15 working days to any formal request for approvals in relation to projects execution. He noted that the rule was later formalized with an SLA in May 2017 with Nigeria LNG Ltd pioneering the process and breaking approval records in respect of the NLNG Train7 project.

He added that "the industry found the outcome impressive leading to the Independent Petroleum Producers Group (IPPG) signing the SLA in 2018 and Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS) thereafter."

Wabote reaffirmed that NCDMB is a business-enabling regulator, hinting that "this is attested to by our being recognised and awarded as the most efficient amongst the MDAs in 2022 by the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC). "We are also rated PLATINUM by the Bureau for Public Service Reforms in recognition of the self-imposed reforms of our processes." The NCDMB boss assured the industry that the SLA would not be an exception, adding that the Board would deliver its own part of the deal.

The SLA signed with the Nigeria LNG in 2017 was the first of its kind to be entered between a regulator and another entity in the oil and gas industry. The template was adopted for managing documentation, contracting and expatriate quota applications between the Board and international and local operating companies.

The agreement obligated NLNG to submit to the NCDMB documents like the Quarterly Job Forecast, Nigerian Content Plan, Bidders List, Nigerian Content Evaluation Criteria, Nigerian Content Technical Bid among others, while the Board had to respond on specific timelines. Should the Board fail to respond in accordance with the provisions of the SLA, the company could proceed with its tendering process after informing the Board in writing or email.

NCDMB Corporate Communications September 25, 2023.



Wabote



Business & Economy

Nigeria must catch up with green revolution

Green or renewable energy refers to energy derived from naturally replenished sources with minimal environmental impact. These sources are considered "green" because they produce little to no greenhouse gas emissions or air pollutants when generating electricity or heat. **AYO AKINULI** writes.



SOME common forms of green or renewable energy include, solar energy, which involves capturing sunlight using photovoltaic cells (solar panels) to convert it into electricity or using solar thermal systems to produce heat for various applications. Then there is wind energy. Wind turbines capture the kinetic energy of wind to generate electricity. Wind farms can range from small installations to large-scale utility projects. Hydropower (Hydroelectric Energy) harnesses the energy of flowing water, typically through dams or river turbines, to generate electricity while geothermal energy power taps into the Earth's natural heat by using steam or hot water from underground reservoirs to generate electricity and provide heating.

Also, we have tidal and wave energy. These forms of energy capture the kinetic energy of ocean tides and waves to generate electricity. Fossil energy, also known as fossil fuels, refers to hydrocarbon-

based energy sources derived from the remains of ancient plants and animals that lived millions of years ago. These fuels are called "fossils" because they are formed from the fossils of ancient organisms. The three primary types of fossil fuels are: 1. Coal: This black or brownish-black sedimentary rock primarily comprises carbon and various other elements. It is the most carbon-intensive fossil fuel and is used for electricity generation and industrial processes. 2. Crude oil: Also known as petroleum, crude oil is a liquid hydrocarbon mixture found underground. It is processed in refineries to produce various products, including gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel, used for transportation and multiple applications. 3. Natural Gas: This is a naturally occurring gas composed of methane. It is often associated with oil deposits but can also be extracted separately. Natural gas is used for heating, electricity generation, and as a fuel for vehicles.

Fossil fuels have been the

dominant energy source for many decades due to their energy density and ease of use. However, their combustion releases carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change and environmental pollution. As a result, there is a growing global effort to transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources, such as renewable energy, to reduce the environmental impact of fossil fuels. Between 2010 and 2021, the amount of electricity generated in the U.S. from fossil fuels diminished by 13 per cent, while the amount of electricity provided by renewable resources other than hydro increased by about 250 per cent. EU fossil fuel generation fell by a fifth in the first half of 2023. Automakers have become the new renewable energy investors, with several of them making sustainability a core part of their business strategy.

According to the United Nations, Cheap electricity

from renewable sources could provide 65 percent of the world's total electricity supply by 2030, which could decarbonize 90 percent of the power sector by 2050, massively cutting carbon emissions and helping to mitigate climate change. Nigeria must invest in green and renewable energy for several reasons, First, it has environmental benefits. Fossil fuels contribute to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, leading to climate change and health issues. Transitioning to renewables can reduce these negative impacts. Then there is the issue of energy security. Relying on fossil fuels makes Nigeria vulnerable to global energy price fluctuations. Investing in renewables can enhance energy security by diversifying the energy mix. Another benefit is economic diversification. Nigeria's economy heavily depends on oil exports. Investing in renewables can diversify the economy and create new jobs in the green energy sector.

Sustainable development is

another factor. Green energy projects can provide sustainable electricity access to remote areas, improving the quality of life and supporting rural development. Again, we have to consider global trends. The world is shifting towards clean energy, and Nigeria should align with global trends to attract investment partnerships and meet international commitments like the Paris Agreement. And yet another factor is technological advancements: Renewable energy technologies are becoming more affordable and efficient, making them increasingly attractive options for power generation. Finally, there is the question of energy access. Millions of Nigerians lack access to reliable electricity. Green energy can help bridge this gap, leading to social and economic development. Nigeria must buy into green and renewable energy for a sustainable and prosperous future.

Politics

Tajuddeen congratulates conference of Nigerian speakers

From
JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja

SPEAKER of the House of Representatives Hon. Abbas Tajuddeen, has congratulated the newly elected leaders of the conference of speakers of state legislatures in Nigeria.

In a statement by his media aide, Musa Krishi recently, the speaker also congratulated the All Progressives Congress (APC) conference of speakers and the Northern Speakers Forum on the successful elections of new leaders at the just concluded Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, Hon. Adebo Ogundoyin, emerged chairman of the conference of speakers of state legislatures of Nigeria, while the Speaker of Katsina state House of Assembly, Alhaji Nasir Yahaya – Daura was elected as the Deputy Chairman.

The Speaker, Kwara State House of Assembly, Hon. Yakubu Danladi emerged as the chairman of APC conference of speakers while Hon. Yusuf Liman who is the speaker of Kaduna state House of Assembly was elected as chairman, Northern Speakers Forum.

Abbas, while applauding the state assemblies presiding officers for the manner in which they went about the electioneering process, also called on members of the conference to individually and collectively uphold the independence of the legislature which is the symbol of democracy at their various states.

He emphasized the

importance of legislature independence, pointing out the indispensable role of the law making arms of government at all levels and the need to ensure checks and balances, with a view to upholding democracy principles and ensuring effective governance.

While wishing the newly elected speakers a successful tenure, Abbas also tasked them to be above board in their



Tajuddeen

Governorship campaign: 2500 benefit from medical outreach

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

NO fewer than 2,500 people across Kogi State over the weekend, benefitted free medical check-up and treatment by Avoyi Team 4 Ododo Medical Outreach.

The medical outreach took place in Government House, Lokoja, as part of activities put in place during the sensitisation Town Hall Forum to package the APC candidate, Usman Ahmed Ododo to emerge victorious at the upcoming governorship election in Kogi.

The convener of Avoyi Team 4 Ododo, Mrs. Billie Avoyi Nwogu, said the programme was in support of the governorship

candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Alhaji Ododo Ahmed Usman in the coming November 11 Governorship election.

She noted that the Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello has done well for establishing Reference Hospital in Okene which is now providing services to the world.

"In his commitment to providing medical services to all, Governor Bello built ultra modern hospitals in Gegu, Kogi West, in Eganyin Ajaokuta LGA, respectively.

"He also built a teaching hospital in Prince Abubakar Audu University. This has allowed our medical students to get accreditation to study medicine and graduate in PAAU. That means they will not have to move to other universities to complete their courses. He also renovated and upgraded the cottage hospital Idah, to a zonal hospital with advanced medical equipment.

According to her, as the saying goes, "Success without a successor is merely delayed failure." This is why the New Direction family, under the leadership

and achievements of Alhaji Dr. Yahaya Bello, has unanimously thrown his weight behind Alhaji Usman Ahmed Ododo to assume leadership after his tenure ends on January 27, 2024 to consolidate on his achievements.

"As a united APC family, the national working committee has closely observed the success stories in Kogi. They have established a national campaign council to promote, project, and canvass for massive support and votes for our incoming governor, Alhaji Usman Ododo, and Joel Oyibo.

"Our selection of Ododo and Joel is not solely based on their handsome looks but on their seasoned professionalism and innovative leadership.

"They have played important roles in restoring order to the state's public service and finances over the years. Although you may know Alhaji Usman Ododo as the State Local Government Auditor-General, his contributions to refining the state's public service have been invaluable.

"He is a silent reformer and a key figure in the New Direction blueprint. He is poised to deliver even

By
EZEKIEL DONTINNA

PLATEAU State Chapter of the All Progressive Congress (APC), has appealed to its members across the state to remain calm, peaceful, law abiding and not to despair over the Governorial Tribunal ruling against their party and victory of their amiable candidate, Dr Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the state Publicity Secretary, Hon. Sylvanus Namang, and made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** in Jos, the State capital recently, following the ruling by the tribunal in favour of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

The statement said, "Though the Tribunal judgment did not turn out in our favour, as true democrats, we still believe and have strong faith in the judiciary. We urge our members and supporters never to lose hope as this is just the first leg of the process of a three- leg process.

"The APC in the state has never been under any illusion that the journey towards reclaiming its mandate at the Governorial Tribunal is going to be an easy task. We knew from the onset

greater accomplishments once he assumes the office of governor by God's grace after the November election.

Tinubu's campaign to boost confidence suffers setback

From
JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu's campaign to boost the confidence of the global investment community in Nigeria has suffered a setback as the United States of America (USA) Department of state government has warned its citizens to reconsider travelling to Nigeria due to increased risk of crime, terrorism, civil unrest kidnapping and armed gangs in the country.

The warning which was contained in a statement in Abuja recently, specifically mentioned 18 states in the country which include: Borno, Yobe, Kogi and Adamawa states due to terrorism and kidnapping. Adding that Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states due to kidnapping. Others are, Abia, Anambra, Bayelsa, Delta, Enugu, Imo and Rivers State (with the exception of Port Harcourt) due to crime, kidnapping and armed gangs.

While placing these states on level 4, the highest risk category, the U.S. warned that the security situation in

Plateau gubernatorial tribunal verdict: APC appeals for calm



Nentawe

that it would be a painstaking and torturous one.

"We are, through our very capable team of lawyers, just as they have already indicated, going to test the strength and veracity of today's judgment at the Appeal Tribunal which we believe we shall emerge victorious given the severity of the loopholes contained therein", it stated.

According to the Publicity Secretary, "We have several instances in our judicial system where judgments at the first instance in court, the tribunal are overturned by the Appeal Tribunals and Supreme Court respectively.

"Today's judgment by the Tribunal is therefore, a temporary setback which we believe we shall emerge victorious in the long run to continue to provide good governance to Plateau people based on rule of law, fairness and justice which is

totally lacking under the present PDP- led administration", he assured.

Namang called on our members and supporters to remain calm and ever hopeful that their victory was assured and thanked them for their patience and the maturity they exhibited throughout the period the Tribunal sitting lasted.

The Publicity Secretary advised the PDP government, "To the PDP in the state, we want to unequivocally state that it is not yet uhuru for the party but a temporary reprieve.

"We salute the patience, resilience and comportment of our gubernatorial candidate, Dr Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe and his Deputy, Hon. Pam Bot Mang, whom we strongly believe shall have cause to laugh last at the end of the judicial processes of the election", he enthused.

robbery, assault, car jacking, kidnapping, hostage taking, road side banditry and rape is common throughout the country.

Kidnapping for ransom occur frequently, often targeting dual national citizens who have returned to Nigeria for a visit as well as U.S. citizens with perceived wealth, kidnapping gangs have also stopped victims on inter-state roads."



Tinubu



Ododo

Politics

Deputy Governors: Spare or worthless tyres?

The innuendos, machinations, and underbellies among the political class most often cross the bars of sanity and reasonability. It confounds the uninitiated and unearths treacherousness, backstabbing, and sometimes the inexplicable destruction of lives and properties that characterize the insatiable appetites of some politicians to wrestle, seize, sustain power or ruthlessly dislodge their perceived enemies at the slightest provocation, whether within the party or opposition. DAVE BARO-THOMAS writes.

TRENDING, is the macabre dance and Bollywood blockbuster playing out in Edo State between His Excellency, Governor Godwin Obaseki and his one-time best buddy, Deputy Governor Philip Shaibu. On top of this is the returnee governor of Ondo State, His Excellency Arakunrin Rotimi Akeredolu, whose moves are rattling his deputy and causing him to run from pillar to post, as rumour is rife that the deputy lives in suspense and unaware when the axe will fall.

Not left out, the present Imo State governor showed his deputy the exit door long ago in preparation for his second stab at governance. In the same vein, the former deputy governor of Oyo State got brutally kicked out of office. And likewise, his counterparts in Zamfara in early 2022. The list is endless and cutting across the six geopolitical zones.

Unequivocally, succession contemplations invoke paralyzing and phobic reactions from most Nigerian office holders for self-conceit purposes, fear of the unknown, dictatorial tendencies, greed, institutionalizing a personal fiefdom, loyalty issues or just sheer wickedness. So, from the first republic to date, the war of calumny between the principals/leaders and their deputies is copious and well-documented, and over time, Nigerians were treated to the ugly, bad, and worst-case scenarios as far as the subject matter is concerned.

So, speaking to facts, among the hundreds of Deputy Governors produced since the fourth republic, only a few deputies have succeeded their bosses as anointed heirs, i.e. having the blessing of their governors. Rephrasing, after 24 years of this democratic experimentation, not more than five deputy governors made it to the exalted position as governors in their states. The obvious question here, is being a deputy governor tantamount to political suicide or sentence to the political grave? In some cases, these deputies are not even allowed to vie for the National Assembly, and of course, they have outgrown the State Houses of Assembly.

It is politically dangerous to be a deputy governor in Nigeria, and little wonder, where the governors have the latitude to pick their deputies, they shop for very senior citizens trudging the departure lounge who are grateful to become a deputy, or they lure candidates with very low political energies to fill up the space, especially in cases where the party hierarchy did not impose any one on them.

The latter scenario is another kettle of fish where a strong character is drafted by the party as a deputy to balance the political zoning, religious or ethnic equations because as soon as most governors assume office, they seize the party structures and resources, transform overnight into the lords of the manor, and ruthlessly call the shots without recourse to no other. Interestingly, with the benefit of hindsight, the plight of these endangered political



Shaibu

species called deputies is a constitutional framing/creation or failure, making a review or reform inevitable to correct these anomalies.

Chapter Six, Part Two, Section 193 of the 1999 Constitution, spelt out unambiguously the roles of the deputy governors and are intrinsically tied to the discretion, whims and caprices of the governors, which is a bad deal for an African leader whose proclivity for absolute power is not farfetched.

The position of the law abhors vacancy or truncation of governance occasioned by ill health, sudden death, removal, or impeachment of the chief executive, and where such unforeseen circumstance occurs, the deputy steps in to save the situation. It stated how powers would be transmitted to the deputies when the principals were on vacation or could not function. However, that constitutional conjecture does not sit well with the average Nigerian politician who produces horrendous drama.

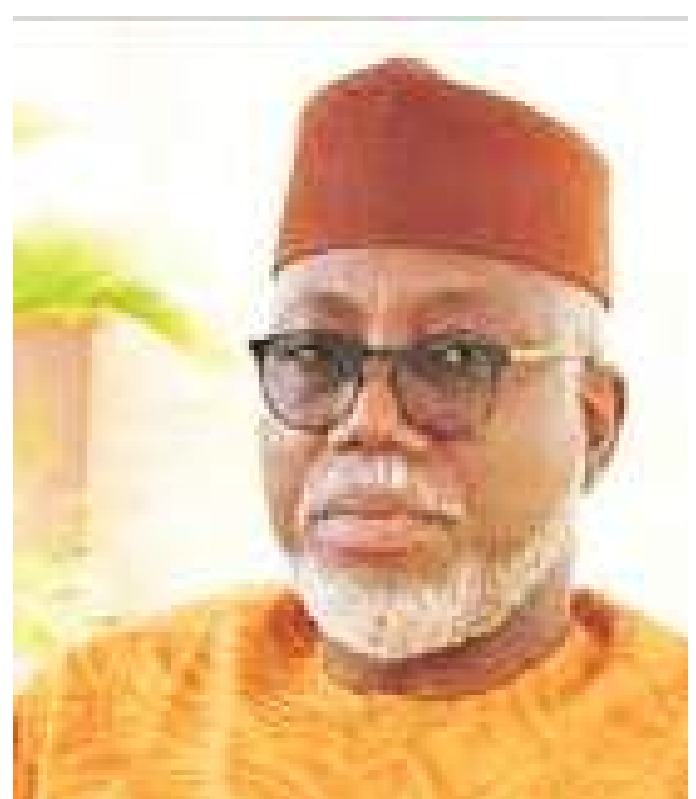
So, this is the graphic interpretation of the contemplation of section 193 – the deputies are drafted into the joint ticket, and after victory, at the polls, they assume office for four years without any clear roles but are waiting for that phone call – “please rush down to the State House fast, Mr Governor just had a stroke or a heart attack, and he is dead”. The deputy sheds a few tears and resumes his destiny immediately as governor, or for some strange and impossible reasons, the State House of Assembly impeaches the governor. But on the other side of the fence, Mr Governor looks at his deputy daily and wonders why a man will take up a job that entails waiting for the other to drop dead – a simplistic nonsense, right? These are not musing for the faint-hearted.

The rise and fall of the deputies are at the discretion and behest of their principals, courtesy of the law, except for a few strong characters like Senator Eyinnaya Abaribe, who took their destinies into their hands and rewrote the history of this sad tales of deputy governors, fought their governors to a standstill but not without a bloody nose.

This national dilemma also affects the office of the vice president. The former Vice President, the erudite and famed constitutional lawyer, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, one of Nigeria's finest, stepped in at the height of his principal's ill health and provided some sense of direction and leadership within that short period but was like eating the fruit in the garden of Eden and almost embarrassed after. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan almost ran out of luck when the cabals practically shot him out in the dying moments of his principal. How else can we describe the law but fittingly say the law is an ass.

If the governors work honestly and conscientiously with their deputies throughout the joint ticket, who better qualifies to continue the good work and legacy than the deputies who understood the blueprint, policies and programmes of the administration but suspicion, fear and indescribably devious thoughts overpowering the governors who transmute into vampires and seek to destroy these deputies, who most often worked tirelessly and honestly with them, like the case of Prince Eze Madumere and His Excellency Governor Rochas Okorochoa, former governor of Imo State, who preferred his daughter's husband.

Indeed, most of these governors, at the twilight of their tenures, shop for their nephews, cousins, political sons, and stooges in the lower rung of the ladder – but their yeomen or man-Friday turned the fangs and ended some of their political



Aiyedatiwa



Olaniyan

careers. The case of Comrade Adams Oshiomhole and his political son, presently distraught and persecuted by a similar disloyal governor to the same Osho Baba, is a Classic for keen observers and political historians.

How are deputies fit for the joint ticket but worthless to make any impact? You hear such submission that the deputies must be loyal to earn the trust – the governors are so powerful and overbearing that they can almost demand loyalty from God immediately they take power.

So, the only solution to this unnecessary problem is a constitutional amendment, and can that ever happen? Sadly, the answer is negative because the legal intricacies involved are

cumbersome. And trust me, the process can be bought by the governors. In practical terms, the roles and responsibilities of a deputy governor or Vice President should be deliberate, clearly affirmed and backed by law, or whoever takes the ticket of a deputy had just signed his political obituary.

In conclusion, Chief (Dr.) Chukwuemeka Ezeife, a former Governor of Anambra State and Special Assistant on Political Affairs to erstwhile president Olusegun Obasanjo at a seminar, invented and branded deputy governors as spare tyres! While it appeared vicious and denigrating, given section 193 of the 1999 Constitution, are these deputies spare or worthless tyres?

IMAGES

PIDAN CONGRATULATES MUTFWANG

The President Plateau Initiative for Development and Advancement of the Natives (PIDAN), Prof. Aboi Madaki on Monday led his executives to congratulate the Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang for winning at the Governorship Elections Tribunal recently



Prof. Madaki PIDAN President (right), delivering the congratulatory message to the listening of the Governor



Commissioners of Information, Hon. Musa Ashoms (left) with his colleague for Water Resources and Energy, Hon. Noel Nkup



Cross section of members of the State Executive Council



JMBD General Manager, Arc Hart Bankat (right) with the Governors Personal Physician, Dr. Daniel Meshak



Head of Service, Barr. Rauta Dakok (right) with the Commissioner for Water Resources and Energy, Hon. Noel Nkup



Director of Protocol, Mr. Jibrin Sule Dakup (left) with the Director of Press and Public Affairs, Gyang Bere



Governor Mutfwang (left) exchanging greetings with the President of PIDAN and other members



Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang in a group photograph with the PIDAN President and members

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Politics

'Tinubu's Nigeria is taking its rightful place'

Having hit the ground running at home, with a series of very bold and unprecedented reform decisions, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has gone ahead to seize the opportunity offered by the month of September 2023, to make a grand entry onto the global stage.

MOHAMMED IDRIS MALAGI writes.

IN what has been his busiest month on the global stage since he assumed office, President Tinubu traveled to India for the G20 Summit on the special invitation of Prime Minister Modi, made a stopover on his way back home for a crucial meeting with the leadership of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on lingering issues of concern between UAE and Nigeria, and then traveled to New York to make his debut at the most important annual gathering of Heads of State, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

At the UN, in a delivery reminiscent of the powerful and iconic 'Africa Has Come Of Age' speech by the late Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed, almost five decades ago, President Tinubu caught the attention of a listening world with his emphasis on an equal and mutually beneficial relationship between Africa and the world, instead of one defined by condescension, pity and greed.

The President spoke boldly for the entire African continent, tracing the history of the post-World War 2 global system, starting with a Marshall Plan that helped redeem Europe. Asking for a 21st century equivalent for that Plan, President Tinubu added, "We realize that underlying conditions and causes of the economic challenges facing today's Africa are significantly different from those of post war Europe. We are not asking for identical programs and actions. What we seek is an equally firm commitment to partnership. We seek enhanced international cooperation with African nations to achieve the 2030 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals."

At every engagement, he has taken the time to remind the world of just how significant his first four months in office have been, in terms of laying the foundation for unlocking levels of economic growth and prosperity that we have always been capable of, but have sadly remained a pipe dream.

He ended a costly and wasteful fuel subsidy regime that has, over the decades, deprived the country of tens of billions of dollars in potential infrastructure and human capital investments. He also commenced an overhaul of the Central Bank of Nigeria, (CBN) shaking up the leadership of the bank and supporting it to abolish an inefficient system of multiple exchange rates, which, like the petrol subsidy, has seen



Tinubu

a lot of abuse, and stifled domestic and economic confidence in the economy.

President Tinubu has also assembled a cabinet with an impressive representation of young people and women, while also creating new ministries and ministerial portfolios to reflect the pressing realities of the 21st century, as well as the priorities of the administration.

For example, we now have a Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, recognizing the unlimited potential of that sector to produce national prosperity. We also now have a dedicated Ministry for the Creative Economy. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture has been revised to include food security, underpinning the President's declaration of a national emergency on food security early on in his administration.

On the regional level, President Tinubu has, in his role as recently-elected Chairman of ECOWAS, shown great commitment to stemming the condemnable wave of military takeovers that have rocked the sub-region, and I expect his diplomatic efforts to yield enduring fruit in the months ahead.

The President is being supported in his many onerous assignments by a very energetic and committed Cabinet. In the

last few days, I joined some of my colleagues for events at the UN General Assembly, and can testify to the remarkable levels of determination within the cabinet, to solve Nigeria's problems with the support and cooperation of the global community.

I can boldly assert that we stand on the threshold of a Nigeria that is a true global giant, a country that is able to fully exploit its immense potential energy of demographics, culture, and entrepreneurial dynamism. I have no doubt that my colleagues and I, under the leadership of the President, will step boldly forward, not backwards, from this historic threshold.

We have a very busy last quarter of the year ahead of us. The administration will finalize and unveil its inaugural budget, which will set the tone for investors and other potential partners, about our priorities. Nigeria will take part in the annual global gathering for Climate Change, COP 28, in Dubai. We will push forward with work on the various reforms that the President has kickstarted, from tax policy reform to a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) transition for petrol- and diesel-powered vehicles, to the full implementation of a comprehensive relief package to cushion the effects of the fuel subsidy.

As the President has repeatedly said, most recently



Idris

last week in New York, "I am mindful of the transient hardship that reform can cause. However, it is necessary to go through this phase in order to establish a foundation for durable growth and investment to build the economy our people deserve."

He understands how important it is to engage with the world to achieve this. During this month of diplomatic shuttling, he has met with Presidents and Head of States from the United States, India, Germany, South Korea, South Africa, Angola, Jordan, among others.

From the global business executives he has held meetings with this month—Exxon Mobil, Bharti Enterprises, Oracle, Hinduja Group, Indorama, Skipper Seil, and others—he has received pledges amounting to several billions of dollars in new investments. This cannot be overemphasized: at the end of the day, one of our administration's overriding goals is to attract new investment that will create jobs and wealth for the people of Nigeria.

We will continue to finetune and amplify our narrative in this regard, a message that the President reiterated at every opportunity in New Delhi and New York, that Nigeria is open and ready for business, with partners who are equally open and ready for business with us, and who are not

looking to exploit us or treat us like junior partners. And we will follow up the talk with action.

My Ministry, the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation will be very critical to the success of our national messaging, and we will give it everything required for our narratives to succeed. We have a vision that includes redesigning how the Federal Government of Nigeria engages with the Nigerian people at home and abroad, and with the world.

As part of this, we will scale up our engagements with stakeholders, modernise our tools and platforms of information and communication, and work to craft credible and believable narratives that Nigerians will be proud of and delighted to share with the world.

In a few days, our dear country will celebrate its 63rd Independence Anniversary. It will offer an opportunity to further reflect on our nationhood journey, and the expectations of our citizens, and for us as leaders to rededicate ourselves to delivering on the bold and dynamic leadership that will enable Nigeria to fully assume its rightful place on the global stage. I have absolute confidence that success in this regard will be a defining legacy of this momentous era of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

News

Taraba gov. orders payment of ASUU salary arrears

From **VICTOR GAI, Jalingo**

TARABA State Governor, Dr Agbu Kefas has ordered the immediate release of three months salary arrears of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) branch of the Taraba State University Jalingo from July to September.

This was the outcome of the meeting between the governor and the management of the University and union leaders at the Exco Chamber, Government House, Jalingo on Monday.

Addressing the management of ASUU, Taraba State University Jalingo, other union leaders and representative of students union, Gov. Agbu Kefas condemned the threat of imminent strike from the unions and said the issue of outstanding salaries in the Institution was inherited and that he was going to address them all.

Kefas observed that addressing the outstanding payment was not only a matter of financial responsibility but a moral obligation to the educators.



Kefas

The governor explained that he understood the gravity of the situation and challenges confronting the Institution and acknowledged the contribution of the academic staff in shaping the future of the state through education.

He reiterated his commitment to prompt payment of salaries, pensions and gratuities and that he was committed

to the implementation of the minimum wage by October.

The Vice Chancellor, Taraba State University, Prof. Sunday Bako and ASUU branch Chairman, Dr M b a v e h G a r b a , commended the governor for convening the meeting, describing it as first of its kind and lauded him for agreeing to offset three months salaries of the staff.

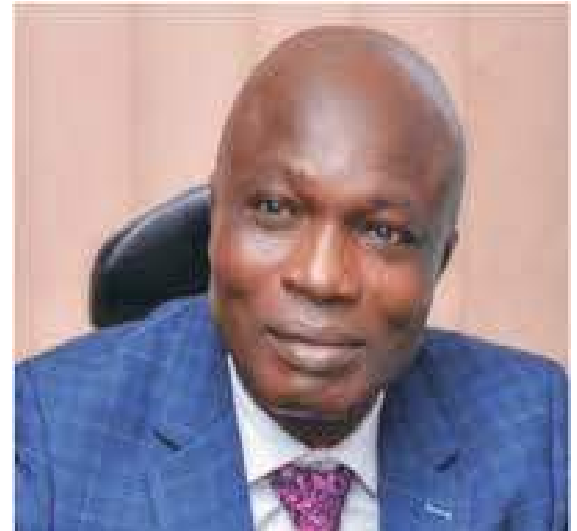
THE Rotary International District 9125, on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Blood Service Commission (NBSC) to increase awareness of blood donation among Nigerians.

The signing of the MoU which took place at the NBSC headquarters in Gwarimpa, Abuja was witnessed by Rotarians and staff of NBSC. While the governor of District 9125, Rotn. Sagab Sani Ahmed signed for the Rotary, Dr. Ayoola Abiodun Olufemi, a director, who represented the acting Director General of the Commission, Dr. Suberu Eneye Jimoh, signed on behalf of the NBSC.

Speaking during the event Ahmed, who described Rotarians as international citizens, said the organization was committed to breaking barriers to serve humanity. He said the MoU was aimed at complementing NBSC to achieve its mandate, and declare that 147 clubs under the district would

Rotary International signs MoU with NBSC

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG**



Jimoh

execute the project.

On his part, the DG commended Rotary International for its intervention in the health sector.

He said the MoU would help his commission to achieve its mandate in the 23 states to increase the blood drive in the

benefiting states.

Earlier, the District Chairperson, the special project on Blood donation initiative, Rotn Khadijah Toyin Musa, admonished all Blood Donation Zonal Coordinators to work effectively with all clubs across the 23 states and solicited the support

NURTW commends Labour Minister for release of members

From **VICTOR GAI, Jalingo**

THE National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), has appreciated the Minister of Labour and Employment, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, for securing the release of some of their members, who were



Olajide

arrested two weeks ago by government agents following the fracas that ensued in their headquarters leading to casualties.

This came in a press statement signed by the Director, Press and Public Relations Unit Officer, Olajide Oshundun, recently and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau State capital.

Alhaji Ibikunle Baruwa, who led a team of members of the NURTW on a thank-you visit to the minister, appreciated the efforts of both the Minister and Minister of State, Labour and Employment, in facilitating the release on bail of the affected members. The Minister appreciated the visit and sued for peace between the two factions of the NURTW.

Lalong maintained that industrial harmony remains key to the socio-economic development of any nation, and urged the union to work in synergy with the Federal Government in moving the country forward.

He said, "Securing the release of the detained NURTW members was one of

the demands of NLC at last week's meeting. And as Minister of Labour and Employment, it is incumbent on us to listen to the cry of our citizens.

"I would like to assure you that the processes leading to the fulfilment of the other requests of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), especially wage award, are on course and would be concluded soon", he assured.

The minister, therefore called on the NLC not to embark on their planned strike, and allow government work to resolve all pending issues.

On her part, the Minister of State, Labour and Employment, Nkeiruka Onyejeocha, appealed to the NURTW factions to maintain peace as the ministry wades into their dispute for amicable resolution.

CHANGE OF NAME MOHAMMED

I, formerly known as **YUNUSA NAFIU MUHAMMAD**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MOHAMMED NAFIU YUNUSA**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to take note.

2024 budget: LG pledges to execute 156 grassroots projects

From **WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe**

THE leadership in Akko Local Government Area of Gombe State has assured the implementation of no fewer than 156 projects conceived and presented by its rural communities during its citizens engagement with the people towards its 2024 draft budget.

According to Ibrahim Tafida, the treasurer of the Local Government, at a citizens' engagement programme on preparation of the 2024 budget for the LGA, "These projects include the construction and improvement of roads, health, education, water, security, power, social re-orientation, housing and environment.

Ibrahim Tafida stated that all the 156 projects already captured in the budget document, were submitted by different communities across the 11 political wards of the LGA.

He urged the citizens and other business

owners in the area to contribute by paying their taxes as at when due, to improve the revenue generation of the LGA and in turn aid the full implementation of the budget.

Chairman of the Local Council, Abubakar Usman-Barambu who gave the importance of citizens' contribution in the budget making process, added that the government cannot fully understand the needs and aspirations of the community without their input.

He commended the governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, for initiating the citizens engagement on budget preparation in the state, stressing that engaging citizens and having their inputs in activities, especially government's expenditure, is a sure way of promoting good governance and ensuring ownership of projects and programmes of the government.

Mr Ezra Sori, the Deputy Director, Planning, at the State's Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, commended Chairman of the council as well as other officials for organizing the programme.

Speaking on behalf of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Malam Ibrahim Yusuf, Chairman, Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in Gombe State, who was represented at the event by Malam Yahaya Muhammad, stated that the feedback from the stakeholders would allow the council to prioritize projects that would better serve the community's needs.

He said the citizens engagement programme is a demonstration of the government's commitment to inclusive governance, transparency, and accountability.

He said the citizens engagement programme is a demonstration of the government's commitment to inclusive governance, transparency, and accountability.

He said the citizens engagement programme

is a step in the right direction towards building a more responsive and effective government. "It is a template that other local governments can emulate in ensuring participatory governance and inclusive development", he stressed.

On his part, the Emir of Akko, Alhaji Umar Muhammad Atiku, who spoke on behalf of traditional leaders, stated that the programme is a laudable initiative by the the State Governor which fosters participation and collaboration between the government and the citizenry thereby promoting a mutual sense of ownership and responsibility towards the development of the community.

The programme was attended by various stakeholders from the local communities including traditional rulers, religious leaders, civil society organizations and representatives from

News

Taraba govt. provides free education, incentives for corpsers

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

The Taraba State Government has designed improved packages for youth corps members serving in government schools which include a 200% increase monthly allowance, medical and accommodation allowances to the tune of N125,000 and an automatic employment.

In a press statement signed by the Honourable Commissioner of Information, Barr. Zainab Usman Jalingo, the recent announcement by Gov. Agbu Kefas regarding the provision of free basic education had "yielded remarkable outcomes within a short span". And that "the surge in new enrollments witnessed in our primary and secondary schools over the past ten working days has necessitated immediate action".

She described the step as a "bold" measure towards the provision of free and improved basic education in the state.

"As an emergency response to the education situation, His Excellency has approved significant allowances for National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving in Taraba State schools.

"An additional ten thousand naira will be added to their monthly allowance. A one-time payment of fifty thousand naira as medical allowance.

"An accommodation allowance of twenty-five thousand naira per term,



Kefas

totaling seventy-five thousand naira for three terms.

"Exceptional youth corps members who distinguish themselves while serving in schools will be offered automatic employment opportunities," the statement read.

According to the statement, the Commissioner of Education has collaborated with the Commissioner of Youth and Sports in order to ensure the timely implementation of the new packages for youth corps members serving in Taraba schools.

Also, the commissioner mentioned other measures which include: the introduction of ICT-based registration for teachers as well as new and returning students, provision of uniforms and educational materials. Also, shoes, socks, and books will be made

available by January to support students in their pursuit of education.

Others are: the sponsorship for SS3 students which will cover their examination fees for both WAEC and NECO examinations. "Exceptional students will be eligible for sponsorship and scholarships," the commissioner stated.

The statement further added: "Adult learners seeking new enrollment should be directed to the various mass education centers, ensuring accessibility to education for all.

"Schools that have reached their maximum capacity in terms of facilities will implement a shifting system temporarily while additional buildings are provided to meet the increasing demand", the Commissioner explained.

Couples enjoined to build lasting relationships

By FWENJI GOAR

A call has been made for wives and husbands to build lasting relationships with their spouses, by ensuring they set the right foundation from the very beginning.

This formed part of the discourse in the special awards ceremony for senior couples above, with testimonies of an exemplary home, on Saturday, tagged "The Wife," a couples luncheon held recently at the Golden Gate Restaurant, Ikoyi, Lagos.

Arc Emma Okafor who was Chairman of the event, enjoined parents to train their children in the right way so as to have rest in their old age.

The Chief Coordinator, Pastor Mrs Ada Emeka in her opening address, appreciated the stakeholders of "The Wife", saying that their commitment

has helped a lot in shaping the journey of the organisation.

"The Wife," a faith based organisation that trains wives to excel in their marriages, and in their homes, celebrated 17 years of its existence and gave awards to couples who had been married for 25 years and above, with testimonies of an exemplary home, on Saturday, September 23, 2023.

Rev Damilola Sanni while addressing the couples, enjoined them to honour their marriage as it is an institution instituted by God Himself.

Rev Sanni charged members to be more committed saying at 17, "The Wife" is old enough to walk on her two feet with outlets spread over the nation and internationally.

"The Wife" poised to grow the love between husbands and

wives in order to achieve a fun filled marriage, gave award to immediate past National Secretary of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), one time Lagos State PFN chairman, and General Overseer of Guiding Light Assembly, Pastor Wale Adefarasin and his wife Pastor Mrs Laolu Adefarasin.

There were other recipients of the award, who include Pastor and Dr Mrs Sam Okoro, Rev and Mrs Ambrose Massaquoi, Rev and Dr Mrs Dimanzie, Arc and Dr Mrs Okafor, Chief and Olori Ifashegun Elegushi, and Rev and Pastor Mrs Falohun.

The Visioner and Founder of "The Wife", Dr. Mrs Nkem Okoro, in her speech gave more insight into the objectives of the organization which includes equipping and empowering wives to achieve their God given purposes in life, and to teach and take care of themselves.

"The Wife" couples forum luncheon 2023 had in attendance, Mrs Bridget Massaquoi, who spoke on "Building lasting relationship with your spouse", Pastor Ken Ezih spoke on "Love and discipline", Mrs Adunola Akinyemiju spoke on "Setting the right foundation from the beginning" and Dr Getrude Dike on "Guiding the next generation to make the right choice".



As Nigeria turns sixty-three

"You cannot curse the soil you plant your crop on and expect to reap bountiful harvest. May whatever we wish Nigeria start from us" - Dominion Mairiga

Nigeria just turned sixty- three, yes sixty - three years as an independent country. Going through the social media as a prelude to the celebration is some form of a nightmare. All that adorns most of the pages that has anything to do with the country are abuses by those who are supposed to be leaders of tomorrow. At the risk of being misunderstood, a lot of things are wrong with the contraption called Nigeria.

No sane person living in the country would claim to be happy with what is going on. Neither would one claim that everything will be alright in the next few years. Sixty-three years in the life of a human being is a significant milestone. Indeed, at that point, a normal civil servant would have retired and become a senior citizen.

It is expected that at that point too, one as a senior citizen would take time off and enjoy a deserved rest from the drudgery of life.

But can that be said of the lifespan of a country? Maybe yes. Maybe no. That we are a conglomeration of different nationalities is a pointer to the fact that it will take a longer time to weave us into a nation out of these disparate groups. No one region presents a common and formidable front to ease relationships. That weakness was taken advantage of by the elite who positioned themselves to take over at independence. Whenever it suits them, they play the regional card. And at other times, religion which is supposed to be a personal relationship with our creator, is banded as the unifying factor even when the elites know that that does not matter to them when it comes to sharing the spoils of office. At some other points, the

ethnic cards are played just so as to keep us all divided.

Yes, our leaders have not shown the resolve to lead the way but so too has the followership. They disobey laid down processes but so do the followers. They refuse to grow our institutions by starving them of funds, so too does the followership who flagrantly disobey these institutions by refusing to cooperate with them. Reading through the social media has been nightmarish. Insults are hauled at leaders for not doing what is right but no solutions are proffered by these critiques as a way out of the quagmire.

“ Sad enough, those who indulge in thuggery are the youth who are the masters at hulling insults at our leaders. They are the ones struggling to become SA's to these leaders and go around fighting for their principals destroying themselves in the process. We cannot, like Dominion said above, curse the grounds on which we plant and expect that same ground to yield bountiful harvest for us. We can change the course of our country if we want to by contributing our widow's mite in our little corners. ”

So where are we heading We blame leaders for doing wrong when we cut corners at every given opportunity ourselves. We can't queue, we can't wait for our turn, we drive against traffic. We mill around political office holders. We ask for all manner of favours from those appointed to offices. We do not follow basic rules yet we expect those up there to do the right. Are they not a product of our society?

Let us resolve to change in all the little things we do yet think nobody is watching. I saw on social media someone calling Nigeria "stupid and useless country" yet he makes a living out of the stupid and useless country. Some said they wish they were not born in Nigeria. To these set, I say you are wiser than God. At the risks of sounding religious, God put you in this goddam country to help change its fortunes. Let me ask you what you have contributed since you were born?

Government has not provided the enabling space? Do we all have to wait on government? Can we not change the narratives in our small ways?

Sad enough, those who indulge in thuggery are the youth who are the masters at hulling insults at our leaders. They are the ones struggling to become SA's to these leaders and go around fighting for their principals destroying themselves in the process.

We cannot, like Dominion said above, curse the grounds on which we plant and expect that same ground to yield bountiful harvest for us.

We can change the course of our country if we want to by contributing our widow's mite in our little corners.

News

PLSG to collaborate with France to generate employment

By PETER TITLE

THE Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has reassured the French Ambassador to Nigeria, Mrs Emmanuelle Blatmann of collaboration between the state and the French Republic in enhancing educational development, agriculture and solid minerals sector which would generate employment opportunities for the youths in the state.

Governor Mutfwang who made this known recently during a courtesy call by Mrs Blatmann and her delegation to the New Government House, Little Rayfield, Jos emphasized the state's commitment to fostering a productive partnership with the French Republic for the benefit of Nigerian citizens.

He noted with delight, some of the ongoing projects initiated by French Embassy in Plateau State, particularly in the fields of education, agriculture, and mining and alluded that they were aimed at revitalizing the state and ensuring quality education, food security and creating employment opportunities.

The governor acknowledged the global importance of the French language for international transactions, and announced plans to accelerate the growth of the center of Alliance Francaise in, which he said has been in existence for the past 20 years, serving the state in the area of education.

Mutfwang reassured the ambassador of his administration's commitment to providing the necessary counterpart funding to expedite the pace of development in the state.



Mutfwang

"We see potential collaboration opportunities in environmental and scientific fields as well. Rest assured, we are committed to strengthening our relationship with the French government and we eagerly anticipate a more robust partnership in the coming months and years," he emphasized.

Earlier, the French Ambassador to Nigeria, Emmanuelle Blatmann said she was visiting the state for the first time and appreciated the scenic landscape and weather of Jos.

Mrs Blatmann who spoke extensively on areas of collaboration, said they had supported the University of Jos, National Film Institute as well as the National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI), Vom and promised to

do more in that regard.

On the area of agriculture, the ambassador noted that they had pumped in a lot in support of the Potato Value Chain and the RAM and appealed to the governor to support these initiatives by releasing the counterpart fund so that the state would receive more development in different fields.

Fungal disease: FG allays fears of ginger farmers

From
ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

THE Federal Government has assured ginger farmers whose farmlands and produce were affected by the strange fungal disease in Kaduna State recently of its intervention.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari gave the assurance for succour after few weeks that over 200 Ginger farmlands and produce worth N10b were destroyed in the

Southern part of Kaduna State. The minister who was represented by the Assistant Chief Agric Officer; Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Mrs. Rita Agbogo, gave the assurance of the government's quick intervention during a visit to the affected farmlands in

Stop utterances capable of inciting violence - Sheikh Ibrahim

THE eldest son of a renowned Islamic Scholar in Africa, Sheikh Dahiru Uaman Bauchi, Sheikh Ibrahim Dahiru Usman Bauchi, has advised religious clerics in the country to stop utterances capable of inciting violence and threatening the peaceful co-existence among Muslims in the country.

Sheikh Ibrahim gave the advice when he interacted with journalists in his Bauchi residence recently in preparation for this year's Eid el Maulud celebration. He said hatred and acrimony between religious clerics is fueling verbal attack against one's understanding by clerics..

He particularly urged the Ulama to stop pointing fingers at people that practice and believe in their faith which is not on the same page with their own when preaching.

He said mutual understanding and living in the age-long culture of harmonious coexistence was necessary to ensure stability in the polity. Ibrahim enjoined Nigerians to stop cursing their leaders because of the current hardship in the country.

"Hardship or enjoyment are all from almighty Allah. What Nigerians should do at this trying moment is to return to Allah. He expressed optimism that things would change for the better.

"What is expected of us is patience and prayers, and we must stand up to make things better in our own way through



Sheikh Dahiru

legitimate ways.

"We must desist from abusing or cursing our leaders. Great Islamic scholars like Shehu Tijjani, Sheikh Ibrahim, and Shehu Othman Dan - Fodiyo did not deserve insults from any good Muslim due to their contributions towards the development of Islam. And secondly, they are among the exalted servants of Allah. And we should not involve

ourselves in corrupt practices and other atrocities because our religion preaches against it. We must change for the better and remain committed to the peace and development of our society," he said.

The scholar, while emphasizing on unity, appealed to Muslims to practice religious rights in accordance with Islamic teachings and avoid any action that would cause disharmony among Muslim ummah.

NHL sets record straight on malicious publication

By Dorcas Pankyes

NAVY Holdings Limited (NHL) has responded to a recent malicious publication that has been circulating on several online media platforms. The publication calls for

investigations into Commodore Gabriel Sunday Martins Aligwe, the Executive Director of Operations at NHL, alleging violations of public rules and abuse of office. NHL aims to set the record straight and clarify the situation.

This was contained in a statement signed by Blessed Nuhu Commander, Group Public Relations Officer on recently.

The company highlights that a new management team assumed control of NHL approximately two months ago. Since then, no contracts have been awarded by the new management. Instead, their primary focus has been on renegotiating contracts that have expired.

As part of this process, developers whose contracts have expired have been temporarily halted from working until the renegotiations are completed.

NHL emphasizes that it is a registered company with the Corporate Affairs Commission. The company operates strictly in accordance with the provisions of the

Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, as well as other relevant regulatory provisions.

The Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer is accountable to a Board of Directors for the implementation of policies and decisions. Therefore, no director or individual possesses the authority to award contracts without the proper approval of the Board.

In light of these facts, NHL requests the public to disregard the online publication in question. The company remains committed to transparency, strict adherence to regulations, and upholding ethical business practices.

NHL assures the public that any further updates or clarifications regarding this matter will be promptly communicated.

Southern Kaduna recently.

The representative of the minister who is the leader of a five-man delegate to Southern Kaduna, reiterated the commitment of the ministry towards finding a lasting solution to prevent further occurrence of the disaster, and to ensuring that the affected farmers are provided with adequate support.

"We are already feeling the pains of our dear ginger farmers, and that is why we are here on the mission for damage assessment. With our visit to some of these farmlands, we have seen to what extent the damage was. We are going to recommend to the ministry on what is the best way to help the affected farmers out of the present situation," Mrs. Agbogo explained.

When asked, what could be the cause of the fungal disease, she however, said: "As we speak now, we are yet to know

the cause of the damage, and that is why we are here with other relevant organisations. We will make research and continue to liaise with these organisations in order to know the cause and prevent future occurrence.

"The cause could be the type of seeds, soil, source of the seeds, and it could be any other factor. But for now, we can not say what really happened."

While fielding questions from journalists, the National President of the National Ginger Association of Nigeria, Nuhu Daudu, commended the minister for his quick response towards finding long-term measures to prevent future occurrence of what he described as ugly situation.

Daudu further explained that definitely, the damage will negatively affect the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



Aligwe



Kyari

Foreign Commentary

Has democracy fail in the African continent?

In August, when a group of Gabonese military officers deposed President Ali Bongo, whose family had ruled the country for nearly six decades, many ordinary citizens came out on the streets to celebrate. KENT MENSAH writes.

WHEN Bongo put out a call for the international community to "make noise" against the coup, it quickly turned into a meme mocking him, with dancers and content creators ridiculing his desire to stay in power.

Neither the military putsch in Gabon nor the street response to it are unique. Since 2020, there have been nine coups in West Africa, Central Africa and the Sahel region.

Mali opened the floodgates three years ago when the army staged a mutiny and subsequently undertook a coup led by Colonel Assimi Goita – who then followed up with another coup against an interim administration in May 2021.

Four months later, in September, Guinea followed with a military coup against President Alpha Conde. Sudan's civilian-military transitional government was overthrown in October 2021. Earlier that year, in April, Chad's army seized power after President Idriss Deby was killed on the battlefield while visiting troops fighting rebels in the north.

Burkina Faso joined this pattern of collapsing governments, with two military coups in 2022. Then, on July 26, 2023, the presidential guard in uranium-rich Niger overthrew democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum, before the Gabon coup a few weeks later. Since the beginning of last year, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tome and Principe have all witnessed failed coup attempts.

In many – though not all – of these instances, these uprisings and coups appear to have had significant popular support from civilians.

So, are people fed up with civilian-led governments even though they are often at least notionally democratic? Is Africa on the cusp of more coups? And how much of a factor are international players, whether former colonial powers like France or mercenaries from Russia, or regional groupings like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)?

The short answer: Weak democratic processes have often failed nations in Francophone West Africa and the Sahel in particular, resulting in deepening inequality, corrupt administrations and fragile ethnic and cultural accords, according to experts. Those conditions, in turn, attract paternalistic superpowers that are keen to extend their influence. This combination of economic, political and social challenges makes the region especially vulnerable to coups.

It's not just images and videos of people celebrating coups – hard data suggests a wide gap between the lived experience of democracy in large parts of the continent and the hopes people have pinned on the system of governance.

A vast majority of people from 34 African countries polled by the independent political survey outfit Afrobarometer in September 2022 said they believed regular, honest and open elections were the best guarantor of their interests. But only 44 percent said elections help voters remove leaders who don't do what the people want. In 19 countries polled regularly since 2008-09, sentiments against elections as enablers of change have risen 6 percent.

Overall, support for elections has dropped in 26 of 30 African countries surveyed between 2011 and 2021. That includes Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger – countries that have seen coups in the last three years.



Coup supporters cheering police officers in Libreville, Gabon

But even in a country like South Africa, which has had consistent, largely free and fair elections since the end of apartheid, the support for elections has dropped 20 percentage points over the past decade.

According to Jonathan Asante-Otchere, a political analyst and lecturer at Ghana's University of Cape Coast, citizens in many countries "are not seeing the dividends of democracy". That is a key reason, he said, "why the coup makers seem to enjoy that kind of support", though Asante-Otchere also cautioned that it is unclear whether that support will last.

Corruption, human rights abuses, ethnocentrism and the militarisation of civilian politics – with armoured cars and boots on the ground used to quell civilian protests – have long blighted democratic experiments on the continent. In Senegal and Ghana this year, soldiers have taken deadly measures in response to public unrest. Distrust of the political elite across the continent is growing, too. And increasingly, that is showing up in the form of mounting apathy or active support for military rule.

In a majority of the 28 countries surveyed between 2021 and 2022 by Afrobarometer, researchers found that most people would welcome a military government.

"What we are seeing is the product of dysfunctional institutions and the fact that democracy hasn't delivered the expectations of the local population," Mutaru Mumuni Muqthar, executive director at the Accra-based West Africa Centre for Counter-Extremism, told Al Jazeera.

At the heart of the discontent that has exploded into support for military rule are hard economic factors, suggested Daniel Amateye Anim, an economist.

In Mali and in Guinea, coup leaders cited corruption allegations that had long tainted the overthrown leaders of those nations to justify their actions. The cost of living has been

soaring in many nations: Inflation was at a five-year high when Guinea's Conde was removed from office in 2021.

"I think it's largely because of the economic situations within the sub-region, especially in those countries," Anim, of the Accra-based Policy Initiative of Economic Development Africa. "The reasons are a high cost of living and people not getting jobs but seeing their political elite living very well."

However, experts believe there are other reasons behind public support for coups, too.

In the case of Bongo in Gabon, or the longtime president of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaore, who was overthrown in 2014, popular sentiments in favour of the end of their rules helped legitimise military interventions.

In some instances, say experts, coups lead only to changes in rulers among the pre-existing elite that dominated the nation.

Sudan's 2021 coup saw the country's army, which had been part of a military-civilian coalition government since the 2019 revolution against former President Omar al-Bashir, grab direct power.

In Gabon, too, the main opposition leader has described Bongo's

overthrow as a "palace coup"; Brice Nguema, the military leader who led the uprising, is Bongo's cousin, and has allowed the removed president to travel without restrictions. It is an assessment with which Dave Peterson, senior director of the Africa Programme at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), said he agrees. Peterson told Al Jazeera the Gabon coup was "a change in hats", nothing more.

Yet, in other countries, regional instability has played a major role in creating the conditions that have allowed military takeovers to succeed – especially since 2011 and the violent overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.

"Clearly, if you want to go back in terms of events, the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in Libya began to exacerbate the insecurity in Mali and across the Sahel," said Peterson. The chaos and power vacuum in Libya led to a proliferation of weapons and armed fighters across the Sahel region, including into northern Mali.

Chad has also been significantly affected by the conflicts in Libya and Sudan. The government-backed Sudanese militia known as the Janjaweed, which in 2013 morphed into the Rapid Support Forces armed

group that is currently battling Sudan's military for power, has been active across the country's borders.

The fighting in Sudan has also forced hundreds of thousands of refugees to seek shelter in eastern Chad. Idriss Deby, Chad's longtime leader, was killed in fighting in 2021 with rebels who had crossed over from Libya: Deby's death precipitated the military takeover.

But whether it is domestic challenges or the ripple effects of wars in another country, federal governments across the region have responded with political violence that has further escalated tensions, claimed civilian lives and livelihoods, and made the pursuit of lasting peace harder, say analysts. It's symbolic of an administrative state that views itself as a hammer and any problem at all, a nail.

This conception of the state as a tool to force obedience and adherence is, however, limited by the fact that governments are often incapable of preventing rebels from acquiring the ammunition and logistics for full-scale wars.

And when that happens, they frequently end up seeking support from global powers like France, and in recent times, Russia.

Source: Al Jazeera.

"Corruption, human rights abuses, ethnocentrism and the militarisation of civilian politics – with armoured cars and boots on the ground used to quell civilian protests – have long blighted democratic experiments on the continent. In Senegal and Ghana this year, soldiers have taken deadly measures in response to public unrest. Distrust of the political elite across the continent is growing, too. And increasingly, that is showing up in the form of mounting apathy or active support for military rule. In a majority of the 28 countries surveyed between 2021 and 2022 by Afrobarometer, researchers found that most people would welcome a military government."

Foreign News

Trump to invoke federal law if re-elected

FORMER President Donald Trump said Wednesday that if re-elected, he would "immediately" invoke a federal law granting himself the unilateral power to detain and deport non-citizens in the United States who are older than 14 years old.

In remarks at a campaign stop, Trump pledged to use the Alien Enemies Act — part of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 — to target suspected gang members, drug dealers and cartel members.

"I'll...invoke immediately the Alien Enemies Act to remove all known or suspected gang members...the drug dealers, the cartel members from the United States, ending the scourge of illegal alien gang violence once and for all," Trump said from a campaign stage in here in front of more than 1,000 supporters.

Trump put forward his proposal in a speech intended to outline what would amount to his second-term immigration policy — one that foreshadows a greater use of executive branch powers and law enforcement resources, which the president could have a greater hand in directing.

He also told the crowd that he would also reinstate and "expand" the "travel ban" that he implemented during his



Trump

first term in the White House. The ban, which President Joe Biden ended on his first day in office, barred most individuals from seven countries — including five Muslim-majority countries — from entering the United States.

The Alien Enemies Act — meant to be a wartime measure — was notably used during World War II. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt invoked it following the bombing of Pearl Harbor to order the government observation and detention of thousands of Japanese, German and Italian nationals.

The law says a president may order non-citizens "to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed as alien enemies" when he or she "makes public proclamation" than

an "invasion or predatory incursion is perpetrated, attempted, or threatened against the territory of the United States by any foreign nation."

A number of Democratic senators and civil rights groups have pushed for the repeal of the Alien Enemies Act.

On Wednesday, Trump said that he would expand his travel ban to "deny entry to all communists and Marxists to the United States." The Republican front-runner provided no details or parameters for such a proposal.

Trump also promised to relocate thousands of troops presently stationed overseas to the U.S.-Mexico border.

"We guard other people's borders, but we don't guard our own," said Trump.

A growing stream of ethnic Armenian refugees are fleeing Nagorno-Karabakh following Azerbaijan's seizure of the disputed region last week.

More than 6,500 people have so far crossed into Armenia from the enclave, which is home to a majority of some 120,000 ethnic Armenians.

They left after the government in Yerevan announced plans to move those made homeless by the fighting.

There are large traffic tailbacks on the Armenian border.

The BBC has spoken to some of the refugees who arrived in the city of Goris on Sunday, close to the border between Armenia and Karabakh.

A woman, Veronica, told the BBC that this was the second time she had become a refugee. The first time was during the conflict in 2020.

The main square of Goris is crowded. The theatre nearby is turned into a base for the Red Cross.

Tatiana Oganesyanyan, doctor and head of a foundation of doctors and volunteers that's now helping refugees in Goris, told the BBC that people who come to the doctors

Thousands flee Armenia over ethnic cleansing



Armenians fleeing their country

are exhausted, malnourished and psychologically crushed.

In the nearby village of Kornidzor, refugees who were being processed said they did not believe they could be safe under Azerbaijani rule and did not expect ever to be able to return home.

The Armenian government said in a statement on Sunday that hundreds of the refugees had already been provided with government-funded housing.

But it has not released a clear plan of how it could cope with an influx of people. Prime Minister Pashinyan announced last

week that plans were in place to look after up to 40,000 refugees.

Armenians the BBC has spoken to have said they are prepared to take refugees into their homes.

Meanwhile, more than 140 people have been arrested in Yerevan on Monday following the latest anti-government protests, according to local media quoting the country's interior ministry.

Police were also stationed outside the main government building, which houses the prime minister's offices and which demonstrators have been trying to break into.

Philippines removes Chinese barrier in contested area

The Philippines says it has removed a floating barrier installed by China to block Philippine fishing boats entering a contested area in the South China Sea.

The Philippines coast guard said it had been instructed to do so by

President Ferdinand Marcos Junior.

Manila says China violated its fishing rights with the 300m (1,000ft) barrier in the Scarborough Shoal.

China claims more than 90% of the South China Sea and seized the shoal in 2012.

Beijing defended the actions of its coastguard, stating they were "necessary measures".

"The barrier posed a hazard to navigation, a clear violation of international law. It also hinders the conduct of fishing and livelihood activities of Filipino fisherfolk," the Philippines coast guard said in a statement.

Chinese coast guard boats were seen close to the floating barrier on Wednesday

Commodore Jay Tarriela of the coast guard said the barrier was discovered by a patrol on Friday.

Three Chinese coast guard boats and a Chinese maritime militia service boat installed the barrier when the Philippine vessel arrived, he said.

The Chinese coast issued 15 radio challenges and accused the Philippine ship and fishermen of violating international and Chinese laws, before moving away "upon realising the presence of media personnel on board the [Philippine] vessel", he said.

Japan has urged calm and said the South China Sea was central to regional stability.

The South China Sea is a rich fishing ground that is believed to hold vast oil and gas reserves. More than half of the world's fishing vessels operate in this area.

China's claims - which include sovereignty over plots of land and their adjacent waters - have angered not just the Philippines but also Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei.

China has backed its expansive claims with island-building and naval patrols.

The US says it does not take sides in territorial disputes, but has sent military ships and planes near disputed islands in what it calls "freedom of navigation" operations.

Beijing seized the Scarborough Shoal in 2012 and forced fishermen from the Philippines to travel further for smaller catches.

It later allowed the Philippines to fish nearby when relations improved under former President Rodrigo Duterte.

However, tensions have heightened since Ferdinand Marcos Jr became president last year.

President Marcos Jr restored security ties with the US and in early 2023 granted American troops wider access to Philippine military bases.

US writers/actors guild to end strike

THE WGA leadership and union members need to agree on a three-year contract with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) before they return to work.

The guild's message on the proposed deal said details still had to be finalised, and it was not yet calling off the strike, but "we are, as of today,

suspending WGA picketing".

Hollywood trade publication Variety reported that staff on late-night talk shows could return to work as soon as Tuesday following the announcement, adding broadcasts could resume as soon as October.

The next round of voting by the WGA's board and council is tentatively

scheduled for Tuesday.

During the WGA's last strike in 2007-08, it took four days after a tentative agreement was reached for the finalized contract to be signed by all parties, according to Deadline.

In its message to members, the union's negotiating committee asked for patience on details of the pact.

Many related areas of the entertainment industry have been hit by the strike, including caterers, costume suppliers, carpenters and camera operators.

In the last few days the bosses of Netflix, Disney, Universal and Warner Bros Discovery personally attended the negotiations, which provided new impetus.actors have been on strike since mid-July - they are represented by the 160,000-strong SAG-AFTRA performers' union.

The body congratulated the striking writers on the outcome and praised their "146 days of incredible strength, resiliency and

solidarity".

The statement added: "Since the day the WGA strike began, Sag-Aftra members have stood alongside the writers on the picket lines.

The governor of California, Gavin Newsom, said: "California's entertainment industry would not be what is today without our world class writers.

Writers and other figures in Hollywood warmly welcomed the news of a deal being struck.

US comedian, writer and chat show host Larry Wilmore, simply posted on X: "Finally!!!"

Alex Zaragoza, a writer on Amazon Freevee series Primo, wrote: "This strike has been so hard. Necessary and invigorating, and really hard. But we did it! We fought together.

Writer Caroline Renard of Disney's Secrets Of Sulphur Springs, was also among those celebrating



Protesting writers/actors guild

Feature

Depression: More citizens battle mental illness

In light of the prevailing socioeconomic circumstances in the country, more Nigerians are going into depression. In this report by VINCENT KURAUN, medical experts explained why many Nigerians experience mental health conditions that involve the continual feeling of sadness, irritability, hopelessness and recurring thought of suicide

DEPRESSIVE disorder (also known as depression) is a common mental disorder that involves a depressed mood, persistent sadness or loss of pleasure or interest in activities for a long period, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Its symptoms include a loss of energy, a change in appetite, sleeping more or less, anxiety, reduced concentration, indecisiveness, restlessness, feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness. These symptoms if left untreated could lead to thoughts of self-harm or suicide even though, there is effective treatment for mild, moderate and severe depression

Giving a breakdown of widespreadness of the disorder, the WHO in its report claims that globally, an estimated five per cent of adults suffer from depression with more women being affected than men. In Nigeria, for instance, a 2018 study conducted by the Mind, Behavior, and Development Unit (eMBeD) of the World Bank, gave a disturbing outlook of the health issue in the country. The report shows that one in every five Nigerians is depressed. This figure accounts for an average of 22 per cent of the Nigerian population who are chronically depressed.

"The first signal that tells us there is so much depression is when people become hypertensive, easily irritated, they are unable to control their emotions," a professor of clinical psychology at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Chuka Ifeagwazi, explained to Sunday Tribune while reacting to the question on why many Nigerians are going into depression.

According to him: "Wherever you look, you see people shouting at one another. Sometimes, they get into too many fights in a day over little things that could have been amicably settled.

"When you have these signals, you look at the people and you can tell that nothing interests them in life anymore. It is as if there is a dark cloud hanging all over the horizon. You are not able to picture the future; you are not able to find any reason to be cheerful and you don't want to celebrate.

"You look at every aspect of life and you don't seem to know where you can find solace. Not in the church, not in schools, not in the marketplace, not at petrol stations. The more you visit petrol stations, markets, or even church to commune with God, the more your depression heightens. It appears that there is no hope in sight.

"Life becomes a ritual of sleeping and when you wake up, you don't know why you are waking up, unlike some periods when you wake up and you picture the thing you would achieve during the day with energy and hope.

"Parents cannot explain to their children why they can no longer afford certain things they used to like, including the school fees. The youth who used to depend on family can no longer depend on their earnings or income when they set out on their own. They now look around for their younger ones to help. Your parents will now continue to feed you and your grandchildren," he

"How do they take it or tolerate this? How do they accept it? If some people lose their jobs as a result of an economic recession, they may not



take it easy. They may see it at the end of life. If the wife runs away from the husband or vice versa because things are no longer normal, how does the one left behind take it? The children are no longer going to school or the preferred school of the family, because the man lost his job, how do the individuals take it?

"So, in a nutshell, individuals differ in the way they perceive the economic recession. Some people will look at it as something they can easily overcome while others will look at it as the last bus stop they can't get out of.

"Many Nigerians also have suicidal thoughts and not just depression because things are not working out the way they have planned. And suicide is an offshoot of depression when the individual feels hopeless and sees a bleak situation ahead of them. And, of course, it is not only economic recession, there is also political instability. If you look at what is happening in Nigeria, people are becoming depressed because the political class is mounting unnecessary pressure on them.

"People's rights are violated while things are not working very well. People's votes are being taken away from them. A lot of other things are happening in Nigeria now that you may not look at depression coming from economic recession. We have also had a political recession; we have social recession, and it is all over.

"We come to a time where you have a parent who struggled to train all the children, maybe five of them, through the university system and none of them has a job. This can cause a lot of social distraction. The parent is hopeless and you know in Nigeria and Africa, our major investment is in our children. That represents a collapse, distortion and demolition of somebody's long-term investment.

"Parents have invested in their children, but when they are supposed to reap from their children or get a little peace or solace from their children, the children don't have jobs. So it is not only the youth who don't have jobs that can be affected, but also the parents who trained them, which can lead them into depression."

A consultant clinical psychologist at the Department of Psychology, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani, Enugu State, Professor Obiageli Omeje,

while speaking with Sunday Tribune, confirmed indeed all the causative factors listed by Uwaoma and Ifeagwazi are etymological roots of depression and include social, economic and psychological.

Confirming the claim that depression is becoming endemic among Nigerians, Chief Executive Director of Empower My Word Foundation, Ms Nwanda Oluka, cited a 2017 WHO report that stated that Nigerians are the most depressed people in Africa, noting that the report was quite surprising because Nigerians were once regarded as the happiest people in the world.

Ms Oluka said: "A lot of Nigerians are depressed as it is. Factors taken into consideration are insecurity, unemployment, drug abuse and high levels of poverty. All these factors contribute to depression in one way or another.

"We have our students graduating from various institutions across the country who have nothing to fall back on. People can barely afford to take care of their necessities and this, in a way, causes depression. We should also not forget that depression is a mental illness which affects one's mood and the severity of it differs from person to person."

Oluka added: "How you experience depression might not be the same way I experience depression, but the most important thing is that the mood is always the identifiable factor.

"So, you see someone having mood swings, loss of interest in basic life activities, constantly getting angry, having outbursts. All these triggers are the signs of one who is depressed and you see it everywhere.

"A point in case is when you take public transport in Lagos, you need to see the fight or hear the arguments between conductors/drivers and passengers. Everybody is actually at that very high level of aggression. Even when you are driving your car, you hear how drivers react to minor infractions and that is one sign of depression.

"Unemployment is another major factor. When you are not able to provide for yourself or your family and we live in a patriarchal society where it is expected that a man should provide for his family but now you have a lot of mother-driven homes where the mother has been the major provider in the family. This reversal of roles has led to this change and it is causing depression in women and studies have shown that women are more prone to

depression than men.

"And when a woman becomes the breadwinner in a home, the man will start feeling he's not being needed in the home while the woman on the other hand feels the weight of carrying too much of the burden of the home and this causes a whole lot of frictions that lead to depression among couples.

"Depression also varies. It could be mild, moderate or severe and when it becomes severe, it could lead to suicidal thoughts. Many Nigerians are committing suicide and it is very disheartening to lose lives for something that could be stopped but our economy doesn't help in any way. So, I agree that Nigerians are depressed."

Depression or sadness?

A lecturer in the Department of Mental Health at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State, Dr. Ola Ibigbami, told Sunday Tribune that there is a difference between somebody feeling sad when things are not going right with him or her and someone who has a depressive illness.

According to him: "There are two different things. That somebody failed an exam and is sad is not a depressive illness. It is just sadness to respond to an untoward life event. But when we refer to depression, we are talking about someone who is unusually sad and you can't even explain why the person is feeling unusually sad. It is a mood disorder.

"There are people that have this disorder, they are unhappy on one side but there are other people who are excited and are extremely happy for no justifiable reason. This is also a mood disorder.

"So, when you see somebody waking up in the morning and starting to feel tired, that could be a depressive illness. An instance where someone who just got married had some issues with the marriage and then decides to jump into a lagoon is more or less like a suicidal attempt in response to a crisis situation.

"Some people find it difficult to cope with the stress of life and feel that the way of escaping from that experience is by killing themselves. Though some of them might be depressed, a lot of them are not actually depressed, they are just having an unpleasant feeling that they cannot cope with.

"Generally, when we talk about mental health, we are talking about the health of the mind. Can that person realise his own potential? Can they work productively? Can the person also cope with the normal stresses of life? And can the person be able to contribute to anything going on around them? So, anybody who is mentally healthy can be able to do all these, but when there is a mental disorder, the person wouldn't be able to do all that." Children can also be depressed. They may not express depression like adults, because most of the time children cannot express how they feel, so they tend to act out their feelings of sadness.

"You might see a child becoming withdrawn, not interacting with other children or a child crying for no reason which is what we call weeping spars. You see a child who has issues with concentration, you ask a child a question in class and he or she may not be able to answer absent-mindedness, some will also refuse to go to school, and some will lose their appetite and have problems with sleep.

"One thing about sadness is that if one is sad but has support, people talking to them about the issues and they are able to think about it, they come out of the feeling of sadness, but a depressed person will not be able to come out unless something is done either through medications, support or psychological support."

How depression affects homes

Many experts believe depression affects family setups in no small measure. They noted that the onset or diagnosis of depression affects the cohesion that is naturally found among members of the family.

"But when your psyche is that of a taxi driver who bought fuel for the day, you don't sit down to have quality time with your children. You don't even sit down to have quality time with your wife. Everybody begins to live in isolation, and when the addiction to mobile phones comes in, everybody will be in the house, pressing their phones while trying to find some kind of entertainment or a way to shift the mind away from problems that are supposed to be considered. So, you've formed a crowd and you are still lonely in the crowd. No one talks to each other that much.

"When depression hits the family, parents no longer exercise that much control over their family, why? For you to be able to exercise that control over your children, you first of all must be able to provide. If you cannot provide, you cannot dictate for the children. They begin to look outside and that is when the peer pressure begins to take over the process of socialisation.

"Depression also causes sickness in the family and these are times that you don't even have money that much and you go to hospitals where you are being asked to pay deposits for this and that before anybody talks to you. This situation is critical."

Alluding to that, Professor Omeje, on her part said, "Just like other mental disorders, depression requires reorganisation of the family setup where activities and schedules are reorganised to accommodate the depressed."

Dr Ibigbami gave further insight into how depression could destroy the family, noting that someone who is depressed will lose interest in the pleasurable activities he used to engage in with his family members.

"The person loses interest in goals-oriented activities. So, if you have a mother in the family who is depressed, such a mother won't be able to take care of the children and also take care of herself. She won't be able to sexually satisfy the husband and will not even have the urge to express herself sexually.

"It would affect the children, the husband, her colleagues at work and every other person. The same happens if it is the man. Some men resort to substance abuse and alcohol which will equally affect their families, finances and relationships with their wives, children and colleagues at work. Depression, if not well taken care of, will affect their performances at work and they may finally lose their jobs. When that happens, it will have negative effects on their families.

"If it is a child that is depressed, the child will not be able to do well in school and will also not be able to relate well with the family and at the end of the day, a lot of negative things will begin to happen to the child irrespective of the gender," he noted.

THEY'RE SOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Ways social isolation affects your mental health

By **DAN BRENNAN**

FOR people of all ages, social connection is vital to survival. We're hardwired to depend on one another for support. When we don't get the connection we need, we're sadder, sicker, and more at risk of early death.

This lack of connection is more common than many people realize. According to a survey conducted in January 2020, more than three out of five Americans feel chronically lonely.

It's normal for anyone who feels socially isolated to struggle with mental health, but there are steps you can take to cope with isolation and feel more connected.

There is impact of social isolation on your mental health.

Social isolation can affect nearly every aspect of your mental health. Studies show that feelings of isolation can be linked to suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.

Less restful sleep, decreased ability to regulate eating, more stress, especially in the morning, greater difficulty paying attention and doing complex tasks, people of all ages are vulnerable to the effects of social isolation. If you experience loneliness as a pre-teen or teenager, for example, you're more likely to struggle with depression in adulthood.

Older adults are vulnerable emotionally and cognitively. Social isolation can cause up to a 40% increase in dementia risk.

Coping With Social Isolation.

No matter how old you are, it's important to recognize when you struggle with social isolation.



Noticing is the first step to developing healthy coping mechanisms. To cope with social isolation, try to acknowledge your feelings. Sometimes it seems easier to ignore your feelings when you're struggling, especially when it feels like you have no one to talk to. Take some time to acknowledge that things are hard. If you need to, reach out to a therapist.

Get outside. Being outdoors is beneficial to your mental and physical health. The natural light can help to boost your mood and the vitamin D in sunlight can ease symptoms of depression. Reconnect with your interests. If you find you have more time to

yourself, think about what solo hobbies you used to enjoy or always wanted to take up. Pursuing a new hobby can redirect your mind and give you something positive to think about.

Practice self-care. It's important to counteract the stress responses that come with social isolation. Stress can cause problems with your breathing, blood pressure, muscles, and more. Take the time to relax in a way that works for you, whether that's a warm bath and soothing music or a meditation program. Check in with people you know. When you've been isolated, it's easy to feel that people are doing

fine without you. It's a common self-fulfilling prophecy brought on by loneliness, and it's usually not true — unless it causes you to withdraw from others and treat them as though you know

a greater risk of isolation after retirement. But anyone can feel isolated and everyone benefits from community and group participation.

Choose the right living situation. Living alone isn't a guarantee of loneliness, just like living with others doesn't necessarily mean connection. It's important to find a living situation that gives you the right balance of connection and independence. You may find that balance through cohousing, which allows people to have their own private spaces as well as shared community areas where they can connect and spend time together. Research shows that this model can reduce feelings of isolation and improve mental well-being.

Develop friendships at work. Work relationships can help you to feel more connected to others. Overall, people with better co-worker relationships have lower self-reported loneliness scores, and those numbers get even better when there's a feeling of collaboration. For older adults, simply working outside the home can combat many of the feelings



they don't care.

Instead, challenge your assumptions and reach out. You may find that your friends and acquaintances need you just as much as you need them.

Some changes you can make include finding ways to participate in your community. Social groups like book clubs and church choirs can reduce the risk of death in older adults. The science has focused on older adults because there tends to be

of isolation that come with retirement.

Everyone has a different experience with social isolation, and what works for you may be different than what works for someone else. It may help to keep a journal and write about your social experiences. A therapist can also be a useful resource, helping you to process feelings of isolation and work toward a more connected lifestyle.



EYE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

8 bad habits that can hurt your brain

By **DAN BRENNAN and JENNIFER ROBINSON**

THERE are many habits that are harmful to your brain, just that you may not realise it. It is better to keep a healthy brain and avoid those things we do consciously or unconsciously that affects good brain health. Here is a list of some of our brain-damaging practices:

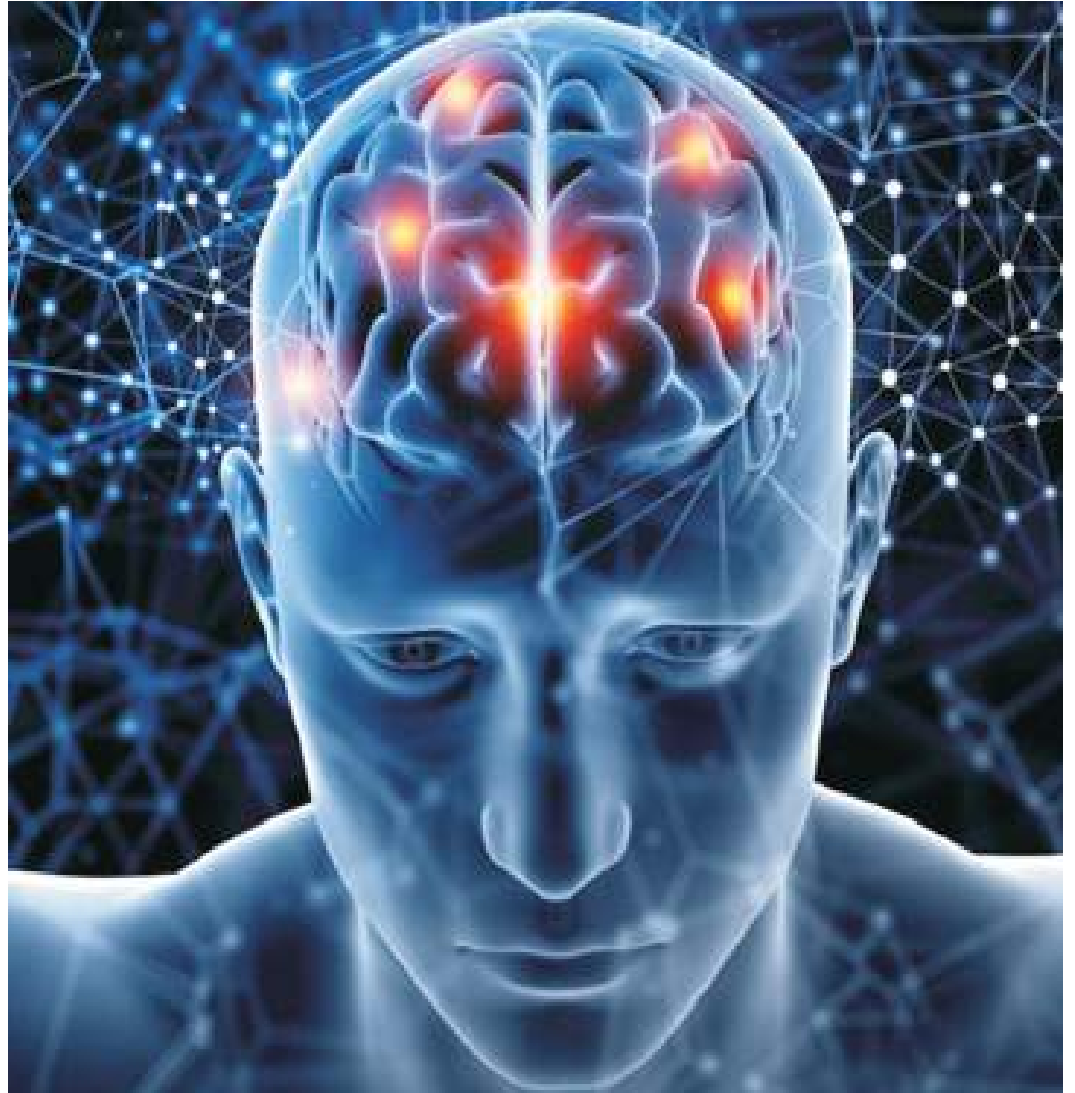
1. You miss out on sleep: You do a few things you know you shouldn't -- we all do. But some of those bad habits can take a toll on your brain. For example, lack of sleep may be a cause of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. It's best to have regular sleeping hours. If you have trouble with sleep, avoid alcohol, caffeine, and electronics in the evening, and start a soothing bedtime ritual.

2. You have too much alone time: Humans are wired for social contact. It's not about how many Facebook friends you have -

- what matters is a real sense of connection. People who have that with even just a few close friends are happier and more productive. They're also less likely to suffer from brain decline and Alzheimer's. If you feel alone, call some friends or start something new -- salsa dancing, tennis, bridge -- that involves other people.

3. You eat too much junk food. Parts of the brain linked to learning, memory, and mental health are smaller in people who have lots of hamburgers, fries, potato chips, and soft drinks in their diet. Berries, whole grains, nuts, and green leafy vegetables, on the other hand, preserve brain function and slow mental decline. So next time you start to reach for a bag of chips, grab a handful of nuts instead.

4: You blast your headphones: With your earbuds at full volume, you



can permanently damage your hearing in only 30 minutes. But it's not just your ears: Hearing loss in older adults is linked to brain problems, such as Alzheimer's and loss of brain tissue. This may be because your brain has to work so hard to understand what's being said around you that it can't store what you've heard into memory. So turn it down -- no louder than 60% of your device's maximum volume -- and try not to listen for more than a couple of hours at a time.

5. You don't move enough: The longer you go without regular exercise, the more likely you are to have dementia. You're also more likely to get diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure -- all of which may be linked to Alzheimer's. You don't have to start running marathons -- a half-hour in the garden or a brisk walk around the neighborhood will work. The important thing is to get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week.

6. You still smoke:

It can shrink your brain -- and that's not a good thing. It makes your memory worse and makes you twice as likely to get dementia, including Alzheimer's. It also causes heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and high blood pressure.

7. You overeat: If you eat too much food -- even the right kind of food -- your brain may not be able to build the strong network of connections that help you think and remember. Overeat for too long and you may get dangerously overweight, which can cause heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure -- all linked to brain problems and Alzheimer's.

8. You stay in the dark too much: If you don't get enough natural light, you may get depressed, and that can slow your brain. Research also shows that sunlight helps keep your brain working well.

Editorial

As National lawmakers resume plenary

THE National Assembly resumed plenary yesterday hosting President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's nominee for Central Bank of Nigeria Governor, Dr. Olayemi Michael Cardoso for confirmation. Cardoso who was in acting capacity since September 22, 2023 had other Deputy-Governors-Designate in acting capacities who also faced the apex chamber for clearance.

BEYOND this epoch event, many Nigerians are still expecting a lot from the members of the assembly owing to the numerous challenges facing the country. However, the Senate expectations can vary widely among different segments of the population and can change over time due to political, economic, and social developments. Some general expectations that are often associated with the resumption of the National Assembly in Nigeria include aspects in the likes of effective and efficient legislations that would promote sustainable good governance.

IN the light of this, Nigerians expect their elected representatives to prioritize passage of laws which address pressing issues such as security, the economy, healthcare, education, infrastructure, corruption, effective governance and policies that improves the quality of life for citizens.

NIGERIANS often demand transparency and accountability from their legislators not forgetting the yearnings for cutting the humongous cost of governance in the nation. They expect their representatives to be responsive to their constituents' needs and provide regular updates on their activities, including how they use public funds.

GIVEN the unpleasant unabated security challenges in Nigeria, there is high expectation that these Federal Lawmakers will work on strategies to address insecurity, including efforts to combat terrorism, banditry, and other forms of criminality.

CONSEQUENTLY, Nigerians expect our federal lawmakers to support policies and initiatives that promote economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction, and the diversification of the economy away from oil dependency to other lucrative areas of positive engagements with drivable dividends to show.

THUS, vital Infrastructure, including roads, electricity, water supply, and public transportation, is a key concern for many Nigerians and the citizens equally look up to their elected representatives to advocate for resource allocation for infrastructural development in their constituencies.

ACCESS to quality healthcare, education, and social services also remains a priority for Nigerians. Other expectations include increased funding and improvements in these sectors.

IN this regard, Nigerians often expect lawmakers to support and strengthen anti-corruption measures and institutions to tackle corruption at all levels of government.

CONSTITUENTS expect their legislators to be accessible, approachable, and responsive to their concerns. Effective representation at both the national and constituency levels is crucial. It's important to note that public expectations can vary widely, and not all Nigerians share the same priorities or views. Additionally, expectations may have evolved over time.

THEREFORE, we make bold to say that our National Assembly should employ pragmatic measures towards revitalizing all our sectors to stimulate substantial economic growth. This time around, the assembly must come to terms with the reality of the sufferings of many vulnerable citizens of this nation who cannot afford necessities of life.

WE must also encourage the citizens to be patient with these Federal Lawmakers knowing too well that finding lasting solutions to the daunting challenges facing the country cannot be solved overnight. While prayerfully hoping for another prosperous and historic session, the lawmakers must convince the entire citizenry that they are in the National Assembly to ensure the much desired change for the betterment of our country this time around.

SKILLS is said to be the capacity to do something well, technique ability it is usually acquired or learned.

While grade can be defined as the performance of an individual or a group or an examination or test.

I therefore admonish undergraduates in tertiary institutions to be experts or professionals in their various area of specialization, most especially students of mass communication.

Mass Communication is indeed a broad course which has lot of branches, firms and organizations are after undergraduates who are more specialized in their field of study which includes journalism, broadcasting reporting and so on. So they can improve on the growth of their organization.

However, grades are of top priority for students in tertiary institutions which can make their parents proud. But the truth must be told, nowadays

people tend to buy certificates due to unemployment in the nation, and can't perform effectively in their offices.

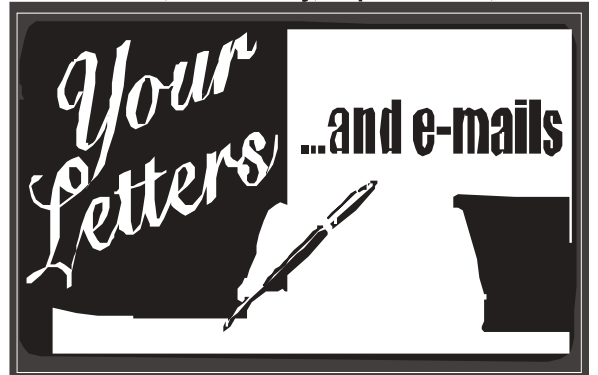
Meanwhile they do not have certain qualities of either a broadcaster, reporter or a journalist, and do not have the ethics of a professional media practitioner.

Undergraduates should have a thought on how they impact to the growth and development of their various organizations or place of

Enhancing skills amongst undergraduates

industrial training. Lecturers are advised to put more efforts in lecturing students on how to improve their writing reading and listening skills as they dream to be great media professionals or practitioners.

Lastly, critical thinking and problems should be well admonished by lecturers, whereby everyone experiences problems in their



daily life. Some may be small which can be solved in an easier way but some may be in a complicated stage.

From a student life, we should make our minds critically and for solving problems, which helps to make our challenges in a positive way in our future job.

Either in a job or in organisation exposure should

be given an is experiencing though situations with the task with our co-workers, and in working place are the main challenges in our routine life. Facing the tasks in a manner is a skill.

By Jonathan Rabo Jaimo Plateau State Polytechnic, Jos Mass Communication Department.

Depression and ways of tackling such ills

DEPRESSION is said to be the period of unhappiness or low morale which last's longer than several weeks and may includes ideation of self-inflicted injury or suicide.

However symptoms of depression include persistent sadness empty mood loss of appetite or eating too much (insomnia), irritability restlessness, anxiety and so on.

Some of the major contributing factors include, abuse, physical Abuse, sexual abuse, death or loss, substance misuse, relationship breakdown divorce etc. depression is indeed a mental illness and if not provided precautionary measures has psychological implications such as grieved, trauma stress and so on.

Victims of depression or those suffering from depression are further advised to talk to a psychologist for psychotherapy medications a loved one a religious leader for counseling on the issue at hand. For it is proverbially said "A problem shared is half solved."

Meanwhile losing a job or a source of livelihood can be so distressful especially when one has a family to cater for considering the economic instability. Nevertheless one has to move on for better days, for many victims of such circumstance have done more havoc to their mental health due

to excessive thinking, so also many have become pronounced.

In the case of death of a loved one which also triggers depression or a major contributing factor to depression one is expected to listen to music, "For music is food for the soul."

Research has proven that music can go a long way to boost your mood and improve symptoms of depression. It can also help you strength your reception of positive emotions.

In addition one is expected have fun recreational activities such as swimming playing games etc. in addition depression can push you to give in to your fatigue. Food that are good for helping depression include eggs, oily fishbeef, liver and so on.

Talk therapy programs should be organized most especially governmental and non organisations to help people with depression identify the negative thoughts and behaviours that result in depression and replace them with more positive strategies for building coping skills and psychological resilience.

Lastly a national study found out that the livelihood of having depression is higher in people withlow levels of vitamin and also research has proven that people whohad

symptoms of depression particularly those with seasonal effective disorder are tended to get better when the amount of

The effects of examination malpractice

EXAMINATION is regarded as the means of measuring the level of knowledge or cognitive ability of students within a specified period of time.

Unfortunately, examination at different levels have cause a lot of problems to some people due their various engagement in various corrupt and staff practices tagged; examination malpractice" This is indeed a problem that require urgent attention because the importance of examination in any other forms cannot be over emphasized. Such is the only way one's ability or capacity can be assessed for.

Today, the spate of examination malpractice seems to be a very very rampant in both primary, secondary and tertiary institution which to a large extend affects the standard of quality of education of our students in the country.

Some of the cause of examination malpractice include, poor preparation for examination, poor and conducive environment and bad parental and peers influence.

The implication of examination malpractice is that the student will loose the ability to depend on his or her personal knowledge acquired and therefore finds a shortcut to cheat which at the long run the certificate acquired may not be

vitamin of in their bodies went up as you would not expect it.

By Jonathan Rabo Dammo Department of Mass Communication Plateau State Polytechnic, Jos.

defended by the individuals. This trend affects not only the individuals involved but a complete draw back the society.

The adverse effect is the fact that the nations will have to depend of the quacks who may not actually be suitable for certain positions or responsibilities in life or in the society.

I wish to therefore, seize the opportunity to appeal to the government to review the present examination process by setting standard so an not to some the students sitting for examination.

Secondly, examinations must also understand that they are only testing the ability of the students and not just setting a trap for perhaps that may be a receipt for a better time ahead and a training point in our education system.

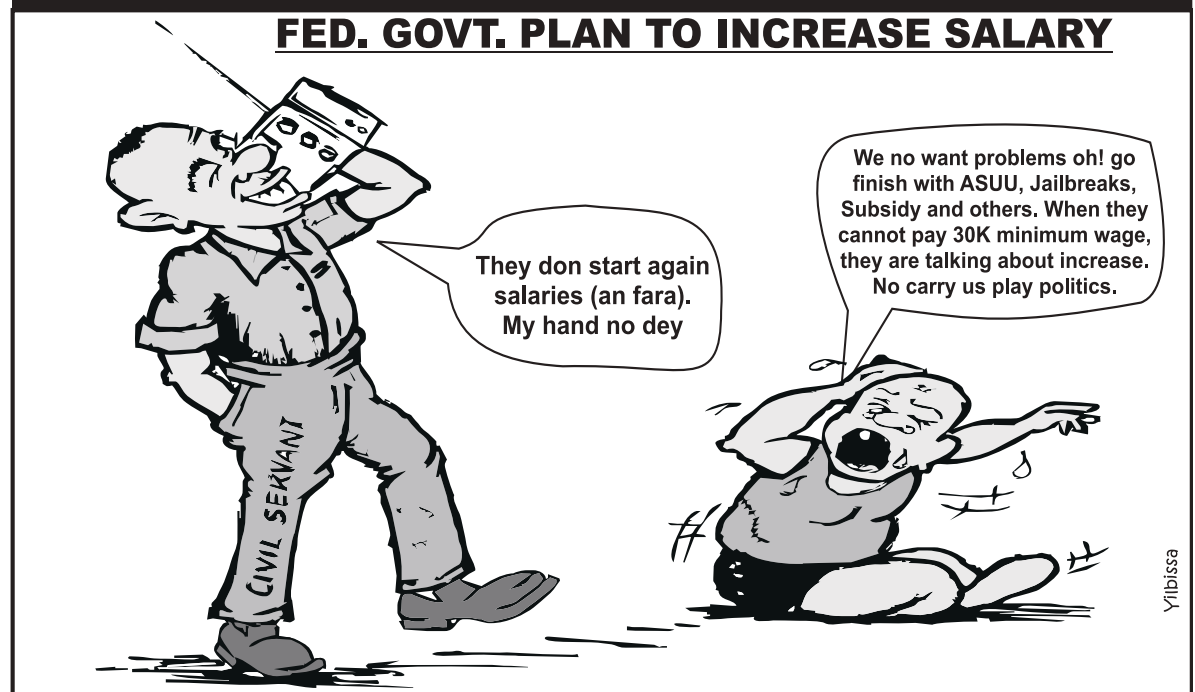
In my view attaching so much attention or importance to paper qualification may be the likely reason why there is the era pass examination at all cost.

It is time for government to also look at one's personal skills aptitude above certificate and there would in my opinion reduce or even do away with the negative trend of examination malpractice in our country.

Ezekiel James Nyam, I.T student of Plateau State Polytechnic, Jos campus.

Standard Cartoon

FED. GOVT. PLAN TO INCREASE SALARY



Yilbissa

Opinion

Restoring confidence in judiciary

BY
BOLAJI O. AKINYEMI

A democratic society should rely purely on the rule of law and its processes at achieving peaceful co-existence among its component parties! Nigeria is of course a country in practice of constitutional democracy on paper! Our reality speaks to the contrary!

Recently, in order to redeem the integrity of the police force, the new Inspector General of Police, Mr. Kayode Egbetokun, took the decision to withdraw all mobile policemen attached to VIPs!

The police before now had been so abused that some have become mere bag carriers for our oga madams as we call them!

Others are family errands men, in some cases these attached officers serve as bullies for their pay masters!

Lagos is the worst hit of all the states, where in a bid to fast track enforcements, tasks force are set up!

This however has proven to be counterproductive; a country that is under-policed is forced to pull out of the limited number of its officers to serve the special needs of the state on tasks considered special!

Truth be told, most task force operations are easy access to money and officers will do anything to head or be selected to be on the task force.

The existence of tasks force has made accountability of the Force on its men and officers difficult!

Officers attached to tasks force, in some cases, are ready and available tool of harassment for those who can afford to pay for such illegalities, as they are not easily traceable to a police station, area and command of the police where such nefarious activities are carried out.

There is the BRT track monitoring

task force operating in manners that suggests that they are given a certain amount to deliver on a daily basis. "Offenders" are at the mercy of these contractors, against the practice in the civilised state of a computerised camera system.

Task force is the only way for governors to have loyalty and control of police officers who by the infraction of our constitution are compelled to be loyal to the IGP and consequently the President.

Akinwunmi Ambode as Governor of Lagos State gave attention to the issue of land grabbers and set up a task force to that effect.

One would have thought that its existence will curb the menace of land grabbing, but a new twist is the brigandry of "Federal Police" disarming "State police" over land disputes.

I use the word Federal and State in context of the drama at 37A Ajisafe Street, Ikeja GRA, where a police team claiming to be acting on the order of the IGP came to disarm officers of Nigerian police on security duty!

A complaint written by Festus Ighagbon & CO, dated 2nd of August, 2023, and haplessly addressed to the Director of the Department of State Service (DSS) reads thus: "We refer to the above-mentioned matter as we write as Solicitors to Viagem Property and Investment limited 'our client.' We are aware that our client is the bona fide owner of a landed property situate and lying at No. 37A Ajisafe Street, Ikeja G.R.A. Lagos State.

"The said property was purchased

from Western Metal Productions Company Limited under the supervision of Access Bank Plc to which it was hitherto mortgaged as collateral. The history of the property and ownership dates back to 1962 when it was first assigned to Nigerian Enamel-ware Company Plc by the defunct Western Region Government.

"So, the property was assigned to Nigerian Enamel-ware Company Plc who in turn assigned same to Western Metal Productions Company Limited (Wemco). Wemco eventually assigned it to our client. All the parties mentioned have been in possession and are still in possession till date!

"The property is purely under Lagos State government which duly granted consent to the parties up to our client in the year 2019. The various documents of title are herein enclosed and marked as documents 1, 2, and 3. Our client's own is registered as 76/76/2625 and dated July, 2019, being the latest!

"But sometimes in the year 2021, the above-named persons i.e. Al-trade Agencies Limited, Julius Eshiet, Yemi Balogun, and some other unknown persons started to parade the vicinity of the property and made several attempts to invade the property with the aid of some fierce-looking men to take forceful possession of the property.

"Their attempts were warded off and this made them resort to Lagos State Task Force under the chairmanship of Shola Jeje Oloye! The said chairman invited the parties to his office with their relevant documents of title. He dismissed them when he noticed

that they were fraudsters. They procured the possession of the same. They were warded off. Next, they complained to the Commandant of MOPOL 20, Oduduwa Street, Ikeja, who, having gone through their forged documents, dismissed them. They went back to the site and attempted to abduct the security men thereon but failed. Still, in the bid to achieve their purpose, they complained to the Lagos State Task Force on Land Grabbers and later abandoned the case.

"Sometimes in July 2023, our client commissioned some workers to clear the site and demolish the dilapidated buildings thereon; they attempted to abduct the workers but were frustrated by them. They therefore went to lodge false complaints to the Ikeja Police Division who came to the site and arrested the workers and occupants found thereon. They were subsequently released on bail.

"As the investigation was ongoing, they abandoned the case and lodged further false complaints to the A.I.G. Office, Alagbon under the Escort Unit!

"The officers came to the site and arrested everybody found thereon numbering about 15 persons. Amid the confusion that ensued, some fierce-looking men suspected to be thugs, invaded the property and attempted to take possession and cause mayhem but were promptly arrested and taken to Ikeja Police Station. They were there and then released on the orders of officers from A.I.G. Alagbon's office.

As of the time of this petition, the suspects and their faceless men are still lurking around the property

waiting for the slightest opportunity to cause havoc," the petition stated.

But when land grabbers opt for a quick-fix approach and the civility of referring them to the judiciary process is intercepted by some police officers in the hope of gaining, then we are heading for a state of anarchy!

A call to the number of Yemi Balogun for his side of the story was picked up, I introduced myself but once I mentioned the address of the property, an uncomfortable tone intercepted me and claimed he was not interested in my inquiry and cut the call rudely.

Even at the risk of system failure, it is important that failure is properly defined and apportioned so we know where to lay the blame and which system to up to serve the greater good of Nigeria. The parties involved in this drama should know that the reasonable thing to do is go to court.

The attention of His Excellency, the Governor of Lagos should be called to this, same for that of the IGP and the DSS Director, Mr Yusuf Magaji Bichi.

Mr Nuhu Ribadu, Special Adviser to the President on National Security, needs to help us notify Mr President that the DSS is being pitched against Nigerian Police in his backyard in Lagos!

He may need to act fast to restore confidence in the Judiciary and restrain security agencies from meddling in cases where they lack constitutional jurisdiction before the peaceful serenity of GRA, Ikeja is turned into a needless battleground.

S Akinyemi is the convener, Apostolic Round Table (ART).

Nigeria: Why restructuring remains essential

By Cheta Nwanze

To address these structural flaws and improve governance in Nigeria, there is an urgent need for constitutional amendments that would allow for a fundamental reshaping of the national structure to create one that leaves Nigeria with presidents who gain enough votes to be legitimate and a devolution that allows for truly federal governance models.

The federal and state administrations ushered in via the recently held elections have been having their 100-day anniversaries. While the Lagos State government has tried to celebrate its controversial re-election with the launching of a Lagos Metro that took almost two decades to complete but has electric trains being pulled by a diesel engine painted to look like a metro train, it yet looked rather sophisticated in comparison to the endeavour of the Kano State Government, which recently approved a budget of ₦854 million for the first phase of the Auren Zaurawa — the Mass Wedding Initiative that offers financial assistance to young couples who cannot afford to pay for their own weddings. The budget will go to the wedding expenses of 1,800 couples who also get ₦20,000 to start businesses. But this grant amounts to a total of ₦36,000,000 — a measly 4.21% of the ₦854 million budgeted for the event that will take place at the Sani Abacha Stadium later this month.

One has to ask if a mass wedding of this nature and cost actually belongs on a list of the priorities of Kano State. A couple of years ago, the state had the most out-of-school children in Nigeria, on the basis of the research of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which stated that 1,496,736 children were out of school in Kano State at that time. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Kano State has 10.51 million people living in poverty, which is 66.3 per cent of its estimated population of 15.9 million people. The state had an unemployment rate of 26.8 per cent and an underemployment rate of 25.8 per cent in the second quarter of 2020, which means that more than half of the labour force in Kano State was either unemployed or

underemployed, and the economic downturn faced by Nigeria since then hasn't offered the opportunity for improvement for them. The state government has budgeted ₦1.2 billion to combat the deadly malaria scourge, and ₦500 million has been earmarked to complete the state's cancer treatment centre. These healthcare initiatives are of much greater importance and will serve the needs of people even into the long term, but the mass-wedding programme has a budget that is 50% of their combined budgetary allocation.

This bizarre wastefulness is a pattern seen with Nigerian state governments, and at this point, we have to accept that the only way to achieve a positive wholesale change in governance is to totally reset the national structure into a format that provides the different tiers with the appropriate motivation to act properly.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and largest economy, is facing a crisis of governance and legitimacy. The recent presidential election, which was supposed to usher in a new era of democracy and development, was instead marred by widespread irregularities, violence, and low turnout. Bola Tinubu was declared the election winner with only 36.61 per cent of the votes cast, far below the 51 per cent required by the constitution to avoid a runoff. His main challengers, Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi, rejected the results and filed petitions at the Presidential Election Tribunal, alleging massive fraud and manipulation. The court dismissed the petitions, but many Nigerians remain unconvinced by its verdict.

The presidential election was not the only source of controversy and discontent. The state and local government elections, which were held separately from the presidential poll, also revealed deep divisions and dissatisfaction among the electorate. Many state governors were accused of rigging the elections in their favour, using their control of the security forces, electoral commissions, and

public funds. Some governors even faced protests and legal challenges from their own party members, who felt sidelined or betrayed by their actions. While none of the gubernatorial results has been overturned, a few legislature results have been annulled, even if they go almost unnoticed. This relative silence regarding the state and legislature appeals is what has gotten to me.

The poor accountability, and thus the generally poor performance of state governments, can be directly tied to this overweening interest in the Executive in Abuja and it is one of the major problems facing Nigeria today. Despite receiving a large share of the country's oil revenues, most states have failed to deliver basic services and infrastructure to their citizens.

Before the general elections, SBM Intelligence partnered with the Enough is Enough Coalition to conduct a countrywide survey on the elections, and we found that most people were uninterested in the down-ballot elections. While all our respondents had something to say about the presidential election, only a third of them were interested in the governorship elections. It was further downhill from there, as interest in the Senate, House of Representatives and state assemblies saw one in five, one in six and one in seven respondents answering questions put to them about those polls.

The poor accountability, and thus the generally poor performance of state governments, can be directly tied to this overweening interest in the Executive in Abuja and it is one of the major problems facing Nigeria today. Despite receiving a large share of the country's oil revenues, most states have failed to deliver basic services and infrastructure to their citizens. The country also suffers from high rates of poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption, insecurity, and environmental degradation.

One of the reasons for this dismal situation is the lack of autonomy and incentives for state governments to perform better. The

current political system in Nigeria is highly centralised, giving the Federal Government enormous powers and responsibilities over a wide range of issues, including security, the economy, education, health, and justice. The Federal Government also collects most of the country's revenues from oil and taxes, and distributes them to the states and local governments according to a complex formula that is often contested and politicised.

This is not helped by the fact that people are so mindful of the Federal Government that they do not put enough attention and pressure on the facets that actually lie within the legal reach of the lower tiers of governance at the state and local government levels, which are actually in the best position to impact directly on the people.

This system creates a dependency culture among state governments, relying on federal allocations rather than generating revenues from productive activities. This is why Kano State would operate as it has opted. The current system also reduces the subnational units' accountability to their citizens, who have little say or influence over how their resources are spent or managed. Moreover, it fosters a winner-takes-all mentality among the political elites, who see control over the Federal Government as the ultimate prize and source of patronage.

My biggest disappointment in the Tinubu government thus far is not that they are in power, but that for so long, the South-West wing of the APC noisily talked about restructuring Nigeria and the devolution of powers and has gone completely silent about it now that it has the federal power. If this wing truly comprises of the progressives that they claim to be, they should know that it is important to grant more autonomy and fiscal responsibility to state and local governments...

Feature

Employee mental health and workforce productivity

MENTAL health is aptly understood as a state of well-being, the ability of an individual to realise his or her potential, adapt to the everyday stressors of life, work productively and fruitfully, and make a vital social and economic contribution to his or her society. The significance of employees' mental health in enhancing workplace productivity cannot be overruled.

Sensitization of employees on the importance of mental health and how they can avoid being a victim of mental illness is also important

Mental health is important because it allows individuals to cope with the workplace and setbacks in their lives by allowing workers to effectively balance home and work challenges. Positive mental health at work allows teams to remain agile during dynamic roles and responsibilities by boosting resilience as well as reaching the highest potential. With all these accolades, studies that examine workplace mental health and employee productivity are still in their infancy stage. Available evidence from organisational psychology noted that workers who experience positive mental health and outstanding psychological capital are more fulfilled, committed, and productive. This implies that negative mental health has a higher tendency to jeopardise workplace productivity.

Underpinning the above view, available findings from the World Health Organisation estimated that an average of US\$1 trillion is lost globally to mental health. In Nigeria, the subject matter of mental health is often culturally evaded as many individuals are less inclined to discuss it publicly. The reality however is that mental health statistics in Nigeria are alarming and worrisome. A report published by the Mental Health Leadership and Advocacy Program abounds that the prevalence rate of workplace mental illness in Nigeria is within the range of 30%-50%. Research has further implicated

HUMANS are a product of mental and physical elements, as the total health and well-being of an individual is ultimately premised on the interaction that exists between these two elements. Work is often conceived in African aphorisms as an antidote to poverty – a leverage for upward social mobility. It is also a primary determinant of socioeconomic position and plays a vital role in the mental and physical well-being of the individual. OLUSEGUN OLANIYAN wites.



that of the 174 million population, 64 million Nigerians suffered from one form of mental illness or the other. The above fact not only connotes that mental health is a complex social and psychological issue but also a critical issue for human resources managers and the workplace entirely.

The workplace as often conceived is a platform for different psychological experiences as it helps in providing a sense of time structure, developing a mutual social contract and sense of collective purpose, forging social identity outside the family, and maintaining a high level of consistent social and economic activity. This also implies that the workplace is a

place where most workers spend most of their daily activities. Despite the relative importance accorded to the workplace, it is pertinent to note that unrealistic and outrageous sales targets, unemployment, excessive workload and overstress have been observed as some of the major causes of depreciative mental and psychological disorders of many employees.

Another issue accounting for the high rate of employees' mental health is the lack of job security. While we cannot dispute the fact that organizations are constantly sourcing for employees that could move the vision and mission of the organization forward, it is also evident that

the consciousness/anxiety workers have in the course of their daily activities due to lack of job security could lead to mental distress and low productivity. The role of employee interaction is vital to the day-to-day activities of any organisation. Situations where interactions and interpersonal relations in the organization are problematic, particularly in terms of conflicts, exclusion by superiors or co-workers and lack of social support could potentially hamper an individual mental and social well-being.

In light of the foregoing discourse, promoting mental health means addressing those problems that impede the physical and mental well-being of employees. This begins with rationalizing the notion of mental health in the organisation not only as a 'use and dump approach' but also as a panacea against depression, burnout/stress, poor performance, workplace incidents, absenteeism, low motivation, poor decision making and poor relationship with colleagues.

Furthermore, sensitization of employees on the importance of mental health and how they can avoid being a victim of mental illness is also important. This comes with infusing mental health awareness day into the core values of the organisation. In addition to this, training managers and workers on how

they can cultivate a harmonious relationship with each other through flexible organization policies that give room for equity, diversity, inclusion, employees' voices, opinions, and feedback becomes a necessity. Furthermore, a re-examination of health insurance policies with a focus on employees' mental health is essential in safeguarding the mental health of employees.

Corroborating the above view, the use of soft human resources management which tends to treat employees as a resource and not a commodity is pivotal to employee's well-being. This involves empowering and allowing workers to pursue their professional interests and options to choose when and how they want to work. Though equipping employees with the necessary skills needed to manage their daily stress and ability to handle the inevitable challenges that affect their mental health comes with huge financial costs and energy, the cost of failing to support employees' mental and social well-being is often far higher than what organisations can imagine/quantify. This invariably means that employees with high levels of stress are more likely to miss work and show lower engagement and commitment while at work, which can negatively affect the general sustainability of the whole organisational structure.

"Another issue accounting for the high rate of employees' mental health is the lack of job security. While we cannot dispute the fact that organizations are constantly sourcing for employees that could move the vision and mission of the organization forward, it is also evident that the consciousness/anxiety workers have in the course of their daily activities due to lack of job security could lead to mental distress and low productivity. The role of employee interaction is vital to the day-to-day activities of any organisation. Situations where interactions and interpersonal relations in the organization are problematic, particularly in terms of conflicts, exclusion by superiors or co-workers and lack of social support could potentially hamper an individual mental and social well-being."

News

Taraba: Kefas admitted he inherited "empty coffers"

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

THE Taraba State Governor, Agbu Kefas has boasted that he was able to meet with salary and wages obligations in spite of the empty treasury he inherited from the immediate past administration.

Kefas made the disclosure on Monday in a speech at a five-day professional development workshop for secretaries of ministries, departments and agencies of Taraba State held in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital.

"Despite the empty coffers we met on the ground since taking office on May 29, 2023, I have made sure that employee salaries are paid on time.

"In addition to meeting our commitments to pay pensioners, we have also added those who had previously been off the payroll, allowing them to continue receiving their monthly pensions without interruption," Kefas stated.

The governor who was represented by the Head of Service, Susan Nathan, also promised to embark on an exercise to ascertain the true size of the workforce in the State.

"We will soon conduct a thorough biometric data capture to establish the true



Kefas

size of the workforce, its strengths and limitations, and where to improve through additional employment of our talented young men and women in a transparent manner. In the same vein, we will continue to prioritize employee promotion and welfare," he added.

According to him, the current training was "a component of the ongoing strategic roadmap to not only reposition the bureaucracy but also to get the staff, especially the Secretaries, on board with the objectives and

direction that this administration is moving towards to fully implement its development agenda without hindrance from any quarter".

Provost CHT inaugurates disciplinary committee

From POLYCARP ISHAYA Pankshin

THE Provost of Plateau State College of Health Technology, Pankshin, Dr. Francis Isah Fwangje has reiterated his commitment and determination to ensure proper discipline conduct of staff and students of the

institution towards academic activities.

He said, it is aimed for the educational upliftment and the enhancement of the productivity of staff in the college, to promote growth and development of the college.

Dr. Fwangje stated this at the official inauguration of a five (5) man disciplinary committee members held at the Joshua Dariye Auditorium Hall of the college. He said since his assumption of office in March 2019 and his reappointment in Feb, 2023, he has received series of complains from both the management staff and senior cadres staff, academic and non-academic staff on the behaviors of some junior cadre staff and students of the college towards their duties and learning/studies.

Fwangje said it has necessitated the immediate constitution of the five(5) man committee members by the college management recently, to handle such matters arising in regard to misconduct of staff and students henceforth in the college.

Dr. Fwangje however

Mutfwang condoles Ikeme family



Mutfwang

GOVERNOR Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang of Plateau State had commiserated with the family of late Professor Alfred C. Ikeme who died recently at the age of 93 years.

Condoling with the deceased family, at his Rantya residence in Jos South Local Government Area, Governor Mutfwang in company of some top government functionaries described him as a great grandfather in the medical field.

According to him, there was time for everything under the sun. The governor pointed out, at the end of it all, what matters is to serve God and humanity.

Mutfwang urged them to take solace in God as He is the only comforter to humans when death comes calling. He prayed that the children and grandchildren would emulate the footsteps of their patriarch.

The deceased son, Dr.Philip D. Ikeme who received the governor, thanked him and his

entourage who came to commiserate with them at this trying moment. Dr Ikeme said the visit has strengthened the family.

He described his father as a strict disciplinarian who served God diligently before his demise and looked after his children in all spheres of human endeavour.

Dr . Philip noted that his

father lived a fulfilled life which he said called for celebration.

Before his demise, Prof. Alfred was the Founder of Foundation Medical Centre and the First Dean, Medical School, University of Jos.

The deceased left behind a wife, Veronica N.Ikeme , Dr.Philip, Arc. Okechukwu, Barr. Chikelue and Barr. Ikenna, children and grandchildren.

PSN donates drugs, food items, to IDPs

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA



Pam

IN commemoration of the World Pharmaceutical Society Celebrations, the Plateau State Chapter of Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), has donated drugs, food items and personal care products worth over five million naira (#5m) to two separate Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Mangu and Riyom Local Government Areas of the state.

The State Chairman of the society, Pharm. Kaneng Pam, disclosed this recently, while in an interview with THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the state capital shortly after celebrating the World Pharmaceutical Society Day at the Bishop Court of Crest Hotel and Gardens Jos.

She said, "Actually, we were at Riyom Local Government

Area, where we made donations of food items, personal care products and drugs. We also did the same in Mangu Local Government Area as part of medical outreach to IDPs on the occasion marking the World Pharmaceutical Society Day Celebration.

"We donated drugs alone worth four point five naira (#4.5m) with food items, personal care products. I want to use this opportunity to appreciate the pharmaceutical companies all over Nigeria who sent these donations to us. I also want to appreciate our members here who contributed money from their pockets to make sure that we reach out to the indigent persons in our society.

"We are still hopeful that the pharmaceutical companies who made promises will be

redeemed shortly. We are expecting more drugs by God's grace to still reach out.

"We want to use this day to express what pharmacists have been doing. We will continue to render these services as we are in touch with pharmaceutical companies all over the country", Pam assured.

The Chairman congratulated her members on the Plateau for hosting World Pharmaceutical Conference in Jos and called on government at state and national levels to motivate the pharmacists by appointing them in respective government ministries so that professionalism could be maintained in the system.

On his part, the Commissioner for Health, Hon. Dr. Cletus Bako Shurkur, who was the Chairman of the occasion, congratulated PSN for celebrating yet another World Pharmaceutical Society Day, commending them for playing a major role in strengthening the health services in Nigeria especially, during Covid-19 pandemic.

Also, the state Chairman of Fellow of Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, Miskoom Lawrence Buyenen, FPSN, commended the state chapter for making them proud during the conference. He called on them to give Gombe State the needed support by participating in the forthcoming conference.

The Chief Medical Director of Plateau Specialists Hospital, Jos, Dr. Chris Yilgwan, said there was need for pharmacists and those from the medical field to join hands to fight policies that would hinder them from carrying out their professional services to people, hence the need for pharmacists to advance more research.



Fwangje

disclosed some of the reasons behind the constitution of the committee to include the following : To restore total discipline in the entire college system, address lateness to work by the staff, laziness during working hours, laziness on the part of students towards lectures, refusal to adhere to the college dress code by the students, staff leaving their work/duty posts without proper permission from their superior officers and unnecessary petitions by both staff and students without due process being followed in the college.

The provost was very optimistic that with the constituted disciplinary committee members, he believes that it will bring sanity into the college administrative system and it will also improve the standard of learning in the college.

He assured the committee members of the college management support and cooperation at all times, as long as they will discharge their functions according to the laid down regulations without fear or favour in order to curtail some of these menaces in the

college.

The five (5) Man disciplinary committee members constituted include: Barr. Paul Rabo, who is also the Registrar of the college as chairman of the committee, Mr Yakubu Dungse, College Librarian as member, Mr. John Sani as member, Mrs. Nenrot Binshak as member and Mr. Kingsley Dapiya as secretary to the committee.

Administering the oath taking on the committee members, the Oath Commissioner, Barr. Victor Gowalk said, to be a member of the college disciplinary committee, they should be seen to be disciplined themselves or else they may not perform their functions effectively.

Responding on behalf of the committee members, the chairman of the committee, Barr. Paul Rabo thanked the Provost and his management staff for finding them worthy to serve in that capacity in the college. He assured them that the committee will discharge her function without fear or favour.

Our sources revealed that the two major reasons which brought about unrest within the school were the recent face off between the Provost, management staff and the joint unions of Plateau State Tertiary Institutions, Plateau State College of Health Technology, Pankshin chapter. And also the issue of the reappointment of the provost for a second tenure in office, Feb, 2023, which according to the joint unions of the college was not done appropriately and due process was not followed in the appointment.

Secondly, the allegations of the diversion of the funds meant for pension and gratuity to other college projects. The issues led the unions to declare strike action that lasted for about three months in the college after series of negotiation between the union leaders and the management staff of the college, did not yield any result as of that time.

But at the time of filing this report, normalcy, peace, unity of purpose and agreement were already reached by the college management staff and the leadership of the joint unions of the college.

View Point

Nigerians expecting much from an ineffective legislature

A legislature that is alive to its roles and responsibilities is a symbol of hope, a shield and a voice for the people. It is marked by robust debates, strict commitment to checks and balances, and deliberate accountability to the people. Also, it confers legitimacy on the government because governance is productive and the citizens are fulfilled. Mon-Charles Egbo writes.

HOWEVER, in developing nations, the legislature is defined by weak institutional capacity. It faces the challenges of executive dominance, public trust deficit, poor democratic culture manifesting as a weak electoral system and disrespect to democratic tenets and then disruptions through elections, leading to a high turnover of legislators.

And, central to all these issues are a weak constitution, a low level of morality in politics as well as poor knowledge of the duties of the parliament.

To begin with, Nigeria's situation validates the assertion that any constitution midwived by the military is as faulty as it is anti-democracy. It does not offer the legislature the necessary support for true independence and effective supervision of the executive.

For example, mere legislative refusal of consent cannot stop the executive from borrowing and or engaging in non-budgeted expenditures. Equally, the much-touted powers to override the presidency on critical issues exist merely on paper in the same manner that executive appointees can hold offices without legislative confirmation. And again, legislative summons and resolutions are brazenly ignored because the legislature does not possess the instruments to effectively enforce compliance.

So evidently, the executive is already empowered by the constitution to dominate the legislature. And as noted earlier, institutional capacity is the missing link between an effective parliament and the rest. It is a product of a trained and motivated workforce supported by a favourable operating environment which in turn is a function of adequate funding.

But in Nigeria, the legislature is incapacitated and depends on the executive for operational existence. Beyond executive dominance and disrespect, lack of financial autonomy chiefly erodes overall legislative effectiveness. Among others, capacity building is stunted, the work environment is unconducive, representation suffers and legislative committees majorly rely on MDAs for logistics in the discharge of oversight functions. Meanwhile for over two years now, the national assembly chambers are closed down for repairs, restricting the lawmakers to a temporary arrangement for plenary.

Similarly, most bills passed by the legislature, especially the ones it originates are not accented to and the resolutions arising from motions are utterly disregarded. Even the legislative agenda, despite how fantastic, would always remain a dream except the executive offers the needed impetus. Yes, the executive determines the dimension of budget implementation which explains the perceived lop-sidedness in infrastructural development across the country.

Additionally, there are interferences in the affairs of the legislature by the political party. Either by way of promises of reward or threats of sanction, the legislators are readily blackmailed to influence their actions and conduct.

Buoyed by the weak electoral system, the state governors decide the political fates of the legislators using the party structures and



Tajudeen Abass

deployment of mob rule. Any lawmaker whom the governor does not endorse is as good as gone because the party will not nominate them as candidates for future elections. Re-election tickets, developmental project locations as well as appointment of relatives and loyalists into positions are employed as baits to keep the legislators in line. Also, despite the popularity of laws made by the national assembly regarding the matters on the concurrent list, the governors railroad the state assemblies into undermining the federal legislature, for political expediency.

Hence, when a legislator is confronted with the grim prospects of political extinction, they helplessly 'play along' to survive. And inferentially, the executive influences the choices of legislative leadership through this strategy. Now with these, why would ineffective parliaments not thrive?

Then again, the withholding of public support and cooperation which also undermines the effectiveness of the legislature, is traced to two major factors. While one is the personality of some lawmakers the other is misplaced public expectations sequel to limited understanding of the preserves of the parliament.

Whereas legislators are expected to be morally upright and beyond reproach, the actions and conducts of some account for the huge public trust deficit plaguing the legislature. There are those lacking in character, the ones reputed for underperformance and the others who embody politics with bitterness or bad-loser syndrome. This last category adopts desperation in their quest for power and would always seek to undermine every electoral outcome that does not suit their expectations, despite established credibility. In political contests, they 'must' either have their way or rock the boat.

Yet unfortunately, the legislature is corporately subjected to collective

labelling and the individual liberties of the entire legislators are serially violated, thus deepening the institutional ineffectiveness.

Furthermore, and exploiting the limited public knowledge of the workings of the legislature, the vulnerable are manipulated against the legislators. Driven by a self-seeking agenda including a narrow political mentality, the elites orchestrate subjective narratives aimed at lowering the public esteem of the parliament. The impression roundly created is that the legislature does little or nothing to justify its expenditure. Also, smear campaigns are sponsored against the legislative leadership of which the executive arm is principally complicit. Because they control the media, they determine what the people know. The media is made to focus mainly on the downsides to generate negative perceptions of the legislature. Again, the parliamentarians are visited with varied demands that are motivated by the sense of entitlement wherein the constituents assume that their personal needs must be met by the representatives irrespective of the magnitude. And instructively, this is sustained because the less informed masses rate the legislators based on projects or contracts attracted and the amount of money doled out among other direct socio-economic benefits.

Equally, there are assessments informed by the quantity of legislation rather than the quality, but factually, the advent of the internet has had a diminishing effect on legislative outputs. It has drastically affected policy formulation processes such that the core legislative duties are now shaped by external dynamics. Global trends, rather than the legislature, now determine governance policies. What happens in one country affects other countries. Borrowing and international trade agreements today dictate the pace of development. Consequently, there is



Godswill Akpabio

a prevailing dearth of home-grown socio-economic legislation, especially for a country like Nigeria that 'must' borrow to fund its budget. And by this again, the legislature is unarguably anything but effective.

Therefore in building our expectations, convinced that an effective parliament is fundamental to the legitimacy of government, we have to recognize the peculiar challenges confronting the fledgling legislatures. In our craving for a democratic institution that truly represents the interests of all citizens, there should be a corresponding clamour for a viable constitution drafted through an all-inclusive process. Again, there should be a reawakened consciousness for a long-term commitment to building a culture of democracy and political tolerance. We should acknowledge that past mistakes occasioned by bad leadership account for our present socio-economic and political predicaments. The problem of Nigeria is certainly not the legislature alone. Particularly, we should realize that a fair assessment of the overall performance of the legislature is achieved only when one considers the rate at which the executive respects legislative resolution and summons. A legislature that is roundly disparaged cannot be effective or deliver optimally.

Then importantly, if we cannot resist the temptation to compare, we should be objective by always acknowledging that the human and financial resources available to the executive far exceed those of the legislature. We should also admit that for each arm of government, there are statutory allowances, including vehicles, yet there is always an orchestrated public outcry trailing that of the legislature. We should be persuaded that de-marketing the legislature hurts the country and again that sensational reportage is a threat to democracy the world over. Rather, we should cultivate good

relationships with our representatives to truly guide them towards serving the national interest.

And now specifically, the legislators should be seen to be above board by truly representing the people and also shunning every unethical conduct notably traits of politics with bitterness. They should not take the people's mandate for granted. They should purge themselves of mutual suspicions and divisive tendencies. Every lawmaker should think of Nigeria first. Above all, they should realize that one does not need to hold a leadership position or be on a particular committee before one can make an impact in governance. It is not about ego or special recognition but about sacrifice and contributions to national development.

Thankfully and verifiably, the president of the senate, Godswill Akpabio, by his blueprint and actions so far has made firm statements of covenant about his passion for a regenerated Nigeria that works for all. A diligent review shows his clear understanding of Nigeria's immediate challenge. By his agenda, the arms of government should collaborate in the overall interest of the citizenry. Beyond his age-long sense of humour and friendly disposition, Akpabio demonstrates that it takes a united and bipartisan legislature to heal the country and oversight the executive without feeling that the government is being undermined.

Hence, with open minds, may we accept his extended hands of fellowship by giving him the right opportunities to walk the talk? May we champion strong institutional capacity in favour of the parliament and through our representatives, consciously shield it against any form of derailment. Otherwise, it is the height of hypocrisy to expect much from this 10th national assembly.

Egbo is a parliamentary affairs analyst



By Victor Ali

Covid 19 is still with us

knowledge of its hitherto existence nor any clinical solution to treat the "monster" pandemic, nothing could be farther from the truth for those who believed that comparatively, the HIV/AIDS pandemic was a child's play.

Without any empirically established evidence, some people believed it was the handiwork of some Chinese Scientists in the laboratory to scale down the world's population, while others believe, till this moment that it is simply a mysterious disease. Whatever be the case, the undeniable fact is that, the origin of the disease is not in doubt-China: Nonetheless the disease knows no borders, hence, it has killed people in their thousands if not millions all over the world.

The African continent nay Nigeria as a nation with their mystique believe also recorded its own share of deaths and is still ongoing. And with all the advances in science and technology, a cure for the disease has proved a mirage. However, in whatever difficult or horrific situation homo sapiens found themselves, there is always a leeway aimed at ameliorating the already bad situation if total cure is not found.

With the advent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, massive enlightenment campaigns were

carried out both in the print and electronic media for people to learn to abstain from indiscriminate sex behavior or in the worst case scenario, use condom as a protective weapon. Equally too the multiple usage of share objects were frowned at. With the rampaging Covid-19 around the corner, the advocated panacea for now seems to be the Covid-19 protocol -social distancing, use of face mask, personal hygiene via washing of hands amongst others.

The big questions at the moment are What is obtainable now? Are Nigerians observing these protocols? Or is there a tentative pronouncement that Covid-19 has bid us farewell? Is Covid-19 dead and gone? These questions become very pertinent looking at the turn-around attitudes of Nigerians at the moment. A visit to any gathering, whether social,



religious or otherwise will give one the impression that the pandemic has faded into oblivion.

Go to stadia, marriages, burials, soccer, viewing centres, churches and mosques, and even banks the story is the same. Simply put, Nigerians have forgotten about the Covid-19 pandemic. Even the elites who should be role models are caught in this vortex In every gathering of "big men," you see them recklessly shaking hands without even caring to wear face-mask. What lessons are they teaching ordinary Nigerians on protocols of Covid-19?

Perhaps, with the exception of hospitals, everyone else is behaving or believing that Covid-19 is dead and gone! Yet, every other day, Nigerians are being inundated by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) of new cases of discovery, fatality in deaths and recovery of patients. Who is fooling who? Nigeria and Nigerians should be careful because, caution is the watchword. Needless to say, even with the painstaking update from the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), many Nigerians are not only persisting but are fervent by living in self-denial.

"So fearsome was the covid-19 pandemic that many analysts postulated that the Human Immuno Deficiency virus otherwise known as the HIV/AIDS pandemic was a child's play. With no scientific knowledge of its hitherto existence nor any clinical solution to treat the "monster" pandemic, nothing could be farther from the truth for those who believed that comparatively, the HIV/AIDS pandemic was a child's play. Go to stadia, marriages, burials, soccer, viewing centres, churches and mosques, and even banks the story is the same. Simply put, Nigerians have forgotten about the Covid-19 pandemic. Even the elites who should be role models are caught in this vortex In every gathering of "big men," you see them recklessly shaking hands without even caring to wear face-mask. What lessons are they teaching ordinary Nigerians on protocols of Covid-19?"



By JENNIFER YARIMA

End time pickles and sufferings it brings

against each other. It has resulted in worsening and disturbing situations that ejected thousands of people from their initial abodes to unimaginable harsh condition of survival.

For instance, the Russia and Ukraine war seem to be an ongoing international conflict with Russia backed separatists and Ukraine which began in 24 February 2022. An Energy Damage Assessment from the United Nations Development Programme and World Bank, released in April 2023 estimated that Russian attacks from the invasion through December 31, 2022, had inflicted more than US 10 billion dollars in damages and cut off power to 12 million people. This dilemma has halted smooth transportation of wheat for consumption by global nations.

It's on record that six of these countries Eritrea, Egypt, Benin, Sudan, Djibouti and Tanzania, imported over 70 percent of their wheat from the region. The Russian invasion of Ukraine triggered a shortage

of about 30million tons of grains on the continent, along with a sharp increase in its cost. In Nigeria, the conflict has caused disruptions to the global supply chains as sanctions have affected the global market, sending oil prices to as high as 130 dollars per barrel. Its spillover effects include the surge in diesel price in Nigeria and the disruption in petrol supply.

In 2022, about 6.9 million people in Syria were internally displaced due to conflict and violence. Ukraine was second on the list and followed with 5.9 million newly displaced persons.

In Nigeria, Internally Displaced People have not crossed international borders to find safety as such. Unlike refugees, they have been forced from their homes inside their home country. These IDP's include, but not limited families that are caught between warring parties and having to flee their homes under relentless bombardments or threat of armed attacks.

Life at the camps is pathetic and regrettable as they are

surviving under harsh condition with little respite. These vulnerable people largely depend on the good will of either individuals or organizations who bring aid to these camps. The question is, do such assistance really meet the needs of the people? Some of the items are pilfered either by camp officials or are diverted by some heartless individuals saddled the obligation of delivering the items at designated places.

Food supply is grossly inadequate at such places which has left most children and women roaming the streets to make ends meet. This has exposed some of these vulnerable set of people to become prey in the hands of predators who pounce at them for the wrong reasons. In most cases, frequency of the food served largely depends on its availability. In worst cases, displaced people go hungry for days because they wouldn't know where and when their next meal would come from.

The horrible sanitary situation of such places need

not be over emphasized. Available facilities are mostly over stretched, giving rise to unhealthy environment. They lack medical care as they lived in compact residence where people are at risk of outbreak of diseases. It is indeed difficulty for pregnant and nursing mothers who are forced to give birth in such unhealthy conditions without adequate health care. Most infants barely survive the harsh conditions as most of them either sleep on bare floor of mats.

Another disturbing phenomenon is the non-availability of sanitary pads for young girls and mothers who would struggle to manage the flow of their menstruation at such place.

We need to step up our love for one another through generous giving that can put a smile on the faces of the needy among us. Deliberate efforts need to be taken to bring back the peace that unites us and try as much as possible to avoid all issues that tears us apart.

Have you carefully read the scripture in the Mathew 24:6-7 lately? As a quick reminder, it says "You will hear of war and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Verse 7: Nations will rise against nations and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places".

The end time revelation is near fulfillment as there are many frightening occurrences globally, ranging from war against nations, flood, famine, earthquakes, banditry, farmer/ herder clashes, religious intolerance and brothers taking arms

By JIDAUNA DARING

PEACE as the name implies in any given society is no doubt a state of security or order within a community provided by the law or custom of the land.

It therefore, means that the importance of peace cannot be overemphasized since it is also a state in which there is no war or fighting amongst the people. It is equally a known fact that what peace can bring for the people; violent or war cannot given to them.

It was as a result of the attention given to peace globally that the United Nations, (UN) thought it wise to declared every September 21 as World Peace Day. The significance of this declaration cannot be under-measured since it serves as a day people come together to celebrate in style, at different levels.

The theme for this year's celebration of the World International Day for Peace is Action for peace: "Our Ambition for the Global Goals". It was in view of this unique day that The Peace Action for Rapid and Transformative, Nigerian Early Response (PARTNER) thought it expedient to organize a stakeholders, meeting for Naraguta/Kunga Communities in Rigiza District of Jos North Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State in collaboration with the communities.

This important event was funded by USAID and implemented by Mercy Corps Nigeria, WANEP Nigeria with support from other partners such as the Plateau State Peace building Agency (PPBA), Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC), OSPRI, KUKAH Center, Kano Peace Commission, Katsina Peace Commission and Mambayya House among others.

Highlighting an the overview of PARTNER as an organisation during the epoch making event. Early warning, early Response Technical Advisor, Mr. Manji Mangrock said. the key stakeholders work together to create and sustain early warning signals to foster peace and tolerance in communities and mitigate banditry and criminality in areas currently affected by violent conflict.

Mangrock added that a diverse sets of key stakeholders have engaged themselves in community based efforts to promote communities, dispute

resolution, dialogue, and advocacy for peace and reconciliation. He also pointed out that they stakeholders work together to enhance trust and confidence among community members and between communities, security forces through social cohesion initiatives.

Mangrock applauded the efforts of invited stakeholders for coming to fashioned out ways that would further make them live in peace with one another irrespective of tribe and religious affiliations within their respective communities.

In their separate remarks,



When PARTNER treasures peace in Naraguta/Kungan communities



He added that the goals and objectives are to facilitate collaboration among PARTNER communities, government, security, and civil society actors to increase effectiveness, local ownership and sustainability of EWER system for improved violence prevention, while ensuring a sustainable transition of the programme being managed by Mercy Corps to WANEP.

Mangrock explained that the project is currently taking place in nine states which includes; Plateau, Kaduna, Benue, Kano, Katsina, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger and Zamfara.

He maintained that Naraguta/Kunga of Rigiza District is their intervention community area in Jos North LGA. He told the stakeholders that their over as far as the project was concerned; it was intended is to strengthen the community's efforts in promoting peace.

stakeholders from Naraguta/Kunga communities in Rigiza District in Jos North LGA of Plateau State promised to live in peace with one another.

They showered accolades on the organizers for choosing their communities as intervention sites for the projects. The stakeholders called on community members to carry the cross preach peace at all times, saying that what peace can bring; violence cannot.

They also emphasized the need for their various communities to initiate programmes things that would further promote peace amongst the people, such as football cultural events and other activities.

According to them, their coming together to celebrate the World Peace Day was to tell the World that peace had totally return to their respective communities after some skirmishes that bedeviled them sometimes

back. Religions leaders within the communities were also strongly advised to always use words that would promote peace in the while preaching to their followers.

Speaking separately, representatives of Divisional Police Officer (DPO) Angwan-Rogo and a local security outfit both said that for people to live in peace they must imbibe the spirit of brotherliness.

The representative of the DPO also told the community members not to take the work of the local security outfit for granted, saying that they are complementing the efforts of the conventional security in their respective communities. The representative equally cautioned youths against indulging in drug abuse and other social vices that are capable of causing breach of peace.

The representative of the

local security also sought for the community member's support and cooperation so that together they can fish out the bad eggs in the community.

Also in his remarks, Ward Head of Rigiza, Pozoh Luka Daku thanked donors and implementing partners for considering beneficiary communities as their intervention site for the peace project.

Pozoh, Daku their advised his people to bury tribal and religions differences, so as to collectively move their respective communities forward. He encouraged his people to bring back the culture or spirit of eating and dancing together, describing it as one of the unifying factor among the community embers, if put into practice.

Our correspondent reports that the event featured interactions, exchange of food and culture among Anagutas, Hausas and Fulanis among others.



IMAGES

MUTFWANG RECEIVES FEDERAL COMMISSIONERS FROM RMAFC

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang on Monday received a delegation from Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission Abuja (RMAFC) led by the leader, Hajiya Hawwa Umar Aliyu, Jigawa State Federal Commissioner at Government House Little Rayfield, Jos



Governor Mutfwang responding while Hajiya Hawwa Umar Aliyu listens



Cross section of members of the Federal Commissioners' entourage



Head of Service, Barr. Rautha Dakok (right) with the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Ephriam Usman



From left are, commissioners, Lands, Barr. Peter Nyam Gai, Agric, Hon. Bugama Samson Ishaku, Water Resources, Hon. Noel Nkup and Local Government Affairs, Hon. Ephriam Usman



TIC Chairman of Shendam LGC, Hon. (Dr.) Nicholas Kemi Nshe (right) with his colleague of Langtang North, Hon. Kumzhi Godwin



From left are, TIC Langtang North, Hon. Kumzhi Godwin, Shendam, Hon. Nicholas Kemi Nshe, GM JMDB, Arc Hart Bankat and Mikang, Hon. Daniel Kungmi



Permanent Secretaries Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Finance and the Accountant General of the State



Governor Mutfwang with the leader, RMAFC and members of her team

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

'My new tattoo might destroy my marriage'

THEY can divide families, tattooed nipple. If she had I split up relationships, and would not have done it. She despite more than a had only agreed with my quarter of Brits having initial thoughts that I them, tattoos are still wanted to avoid the area." divisive in this day and age. The tattoo in question is Not everyone likes them, an homage to his even though they can be daughter's birth. It incredibly meaningful for those who have them. involves his daughter's name and birthday with a For one couple, a tattoo red rose and a kitten might even destroy their cuddling her cat dad. His relationship. One man nipple is covered in black wanted to commemorate ink as background. becoming a father with a "She called me selfish and tattoo on his chest. "I said I don't think of her or wanted to avoid getting my our family when I make nipple tattooed because I decisions. That I acted like heard it was a pretty I was a bachelor without a painful spot", he explained family and I should have on Reddit. "The artist told called her immediately when the plan was being changed so she could give her input. She then told me how she wasn't going to be the tattoo look very off. attracted to me anymore Since this was for my because I'm uneven now daughter I opted to go with and just how much she his suggestion." hates tattooed nipples." He had originally told his Since then, their wife he wouldn't get his marriage has been "cold." nipple tattooed, but then While before their afterwards called her and relationship was "great and told her that while it wasn't full of laughter", the man initially planned, the artist explained he wasn't sure if there was anything he could do. "I even felt the biggest fight we ever awkward picking my baby had. She had never told me up this morning because how adamant she hated a the tattoo is for her."

Redditors decided to add their two cents to the debacle and advise the man about the uncomfortable family dynamic. One redditer questioned why it was so important to his wife that his nipple wasn't tattooed, explaining "I have never thought of my preference about tattooed nipples until this very moment." The man responded "she said she finds it really unattractive. I'm not sure if her OCD now sees me as "lopsided" and it's bothering her but we've never had a fight like this. I think she's more p*ssed that I called her after the fact." One person pointed out that they "think there's a bigger reason behind the outburst, most likely something else is bothering her or has been and she decided to let it all out over the tattoo." Likely, the fact that she had just given birth, another person observed, adding "new-borns are a lot of work. I bet she's tired and needs a break."

Source: The Mirror



Why are marriages evaporating?

I couldn't sleep last night after trying to save my friend's marriage from evaporating without any success. Though I will not disclose some vital information so as to protect what is left of the integrity of the family, I feel the pains this woman will go through if a miracle does not take place. To make matters worse, the woman had lost both parents, she is jobless but only engage in petty trading, living in a rented house which is due and she was suppose to be operated this week but with no money at hand. The husband after having three children together decided to add a second wife recently. He left their matrimonial home a couple of days ago and only gave the wife three hundred naira to feed the entire family, she told me. After my little discussion with him, the option he is giving her is to either join his second wife in a rented house or go back to her parents' house,(both of them are dead) As I kept encouraging her to remain strong facing this traumatizing predicament, I was heart full of tears wondering why should he abandon his three children together with his wife after all these wonderful years of togetherness. After investigations on this particular matter, I discovered that they both got married in a church accompanied with beautiful promises which is now gone with the wind and today, their marriage is about to hit the rocks. Please don't get me wrong as there is no marriage on earth which has no problems including mine of course. Sometimes, problems make us wonder whether it was the right choice we made of each other but the next minute, we are dying in love for each other. However, what beats my imagination is the excuse some people give to facilitate their marriage breakups. On several occasions, you hear the men folks say, "my wife is illiterate and I cannot cope, she does not dress to suit our contemporary times or she turns her back against me at night". These are some of the pertinent excuses which men give to do away with their wives. As my friend's wife sat across my parlour, left in this condition, I knew she was already in deep trouble. My prayer however is that she does not do anything stupid or hurt herself under any sort of imaginable pressure. On the contrary however, one is tempted to ask as to how do

women who snatch husbands of others feel each time they succeed in separating these beautiful homes? Are they really concern about these innocent children who are always left at the receiving end due to this unpopular and cruel decision of theirs? Where is the place of the church in the middle of these family problems if I may ask please? How can our women who fall victims of this unimaginable experience be taken care of by the church and or our society in the first place? Though I can never claim to be a saint, I am really torn apart that this particular woman is presently left in "hell" waiting for a redeemer to come her way. I have never experienced such a thing so close to me in my life though; I also came out of a near broken home before God took over things. I want to urge the church and anyone near any of such women who are going through such a horrible experience to provide a shoulder for them to lean on. We must do something on this issue to save many women who are presently traumatized as a result of this anomaly in our society. Left for me, the church is not doing enough to protect vulnerable women on this matter, at this period. Please I must beg you all to pray for this woman including many others who have been abandoned by their husbands for no fault of theirs. I feel the pains more because of what I saw my mother went through after my father left us for fifteen years unattended to. At a point, my mother had to surrender her portion of food for us to eat and survive. I had vowed not to have anything to do with my father not until my mother put her knees on the ground asking me to forgive her husband. Of course, I had long forgiven and forgotten about the bitterness I and by extension my other siblings went through and my father is today enjoying my benevolence more than my mother to her complete delight. However, with all sense of responsibility, women are really suffering in this country and some of us are left with no other option than to speak out against this unabated dehumanization meted them. All that I can say this moment is to pray to God to please restore broken homes and bring back all that the devil has stolen from our families in Jesus name.

Feature

How to boost living standards

The growing cost of living is having an effect internationally. In various ways, it is certain that costs and bills are continuing to climb sharply, including the number of Impoverished on the African continent. TIMI OLUBIYI writes.



THOUGH the cost of food, household products, and other necessities has risen widely in recent years, from Delhi to Shanghai, Rome, Manchester, Dubai, Houston, Mexico City, Belfast, Islamabad, Dublin, and Manila, to mention a few, the effect has been greatest in Africa.

Here, the standard of living and the quality of life continue to deteriorate. This price increase has been on the rise as a result of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) in some parts of the world and the conflict in Ukraine. It is continuing to reduce the population of those with accessible discretionary income. In Nigeria for instance, a quality loaf of bread that was N350 in 2020 is now over N1,000 which is a 300% increase in just three years. Similar percentage increases are in the cost of flight tickets, health care, rent and energy cost (fuel).

A bag of rice, a crate of eggs, a kilo of chicken or turkey and many other essentials have increased their prices due to inflation. Yet, income has remained the same or even less. Nothing is cheap, and everything is out of reach for the majority of people.

Given the country's current position, which is similar to that of many other African countries, and the fact that many individuals have not experienced an increase in their income, this has resulted in lower or no savings, increasing irritation, mental health difficulties, and unhappiness

with meeting basic needs among many.

Regardless of the length of service, experience gained, or available connection, there is always the chance and fear of losing jobs or firms closing down, and the effects may be more severe. Employers, in fact, are hesitant to implement any wage increases for economic reasons. Inflation continues to have a severe negative impact on man's mental, emotional, and physical well-being, as well as on marriages and livelihoods. Currently, even with a steady, regular salary, living has become costlier with heightened uncertainty, high inflation, and weak purchasing power. This impacts more the masses, including civil servants, entrepreneurs, and small business owners. As a result, one of the ways to have protection is by diversifying sources of income and having multiple streams at this time. You have multiple bills; why not have multiple streams of income to support the inadequacy?

Therefore, in addition to salary or business income, it is important to source other income avenues to satisfy the rising needs, poor business performance and inflation. Because if financial capacity is weak and daily expenses continue to rise, individuals, businesses, and even households will be threatened with sustainability. Therefore, there is a need to take action because having multiple streams of income has proven to be priceless.

According to my observations, the majority of people and homes on the continent rely solely on earned income, be it salary or daily income from a business, and they are always hoping that nothing bad happens. It is critical to understand that if salary is the sole source of income, you are on the verge of financial pressure.

With the high inflation, unemployment crisis, and unstable economy, having many sources of income may help spread the risk and guarantee that homes and businesses are stable and financially protected. We live in a world where one source of income is insufficient and becoming increasingly unsustainable. If you ask me, having multiple sources of income is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity.

To be safe, it is never rational to depend on a single income source, full-time job, or a single market. Remember, change is the only constant thing in life, and this change happens rapidly in this period and is always unpredictable. Living paycheck-to-paycheck, can severely affect mental health, and increase anxiety, depression, and stress and many are unaware of the implications on their health.

Consequently, having multiple sources of income is the best way to protect yourself, your business, and your family against drastic financial change at this time. The tools for generating these multiple streams of income are readily accessible on the internet or by engaging a

professional.

We have greater access than ever before to information, people, ideas, and opportunities with social media, so tap into this. If the average billionaire or millionaire has more than one way to make money, it is important for professionals and business owners to think the same way and have stable passive income streams to stay on top of financial and economic woes.

While active income will require your full attention and effort, like being available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, passive income is generated with no or insignificant effort and attention; it can work while you sleep. So, to complement active income, passive income such as investing can generate income through dividends, interest, and return on capital.

Depending on the market and your financial circumstances, investing in real estate might provide you with high returns and rental income. But if you cannot construct to generate rent, acquire a piece of land and protect it; no matter how far away it is, it will rise in value. If you have years of experience in your field, you can start giving paid advice and consulting services or giving lectures as a means to earn another stream of income from your regular job or business.

Another reliable way is by acquiring assets that can generate consistent and steady cash flow. Looking inward might

just help as well, talents, abilities, and passion can be used to create potentials that can give income streams.

Clearly, research has shown that having multiple streams of income as a plan aids retirement and provides the necessary comfort in old age. Hear this: if a solid retirement plan is your goal, savings alone will be insufficient; instead, the objective should include developing numerous streams of income sufficient to replace your principal active income (salary).

The main benefit or advantage of having multiple streams of income is that when one stream is challenged or things are very volatile, there is a backup for extra income to attain financial stability. That can give the necessary hedge against uncertainties in a business as well as during illness, and disability of the entrepreneur.

In conclusion, it is reasonable to live below your means to make room for savings and then investment, no matter how little it helps along with side hustle. Relying on a salary or daily business income alone is a danger at this time.

In an environment where job loss and unemployment are chronic, the decision to create multiple streams of income and secure financial stability is expedient. However, do not let your side-income streams put the primary and a full-time job or business at risk unless you can survive without it.

News

FG subscribes to free, secure internet for Africa

By DORCAS PANKYES

The Nigerian Government has subscribed to a free and secure Internet for Africa, which is capable of bridging the digital divide and creating innovative opportunities within the continent.

Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani, who canvassed this position at the just-concluded Africa Internet Governance Forum at the Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, said the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is committed to engendering necessary collaborations and international dialogues to achieve these objectives.

The minister, who addressed the forum virtually, said Nigeria, as the largest telecommunications market in Africa, is conscious of all the dynamics of emerging technologies around internet usage and would continue to work with countries in Africa on different fronts to ensure that the Internet is effectively governed so its innumerable resources can be leveraged for citizens and nation's growth.

"The need for our consistent collaboration to develop our economy collectively, is preeminent in the agenda of the current administration in Nigeria. It is through this kind of forum that we can bridge the digital divides, enhance cybersecurity, ensure digital rights and foster innovation.

"It is, therefore, our collective duty to ensure that the Internet remains open, safe and beneficial for all," Tijani told parliamentarians and other participants from Africa who attended the forum in Abuja.

The minister encouraged all the stakeholders to prioritise a collaborative approach to creating policies and strategies that will shape the future of the Internet in Africa. The future that will reflect Africa's shared values, aspirations and diversity.

Executive Vice Chairman of NCC, Prof. Umar Danbatta, at the opening and closing



Tijani

ceremony of the event as well as in panel discussions, provided insights on NCC's commitment to driving a secure Internet ecosystem in Nigeria through various regulatory initiatives. Danbatta stated that Nigeria has attained tremendous growth in broadband penetration, basic Internet usage, and voice subscriptions and recorded impressive contributions to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Chief of the Section on Innovation and Technology at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Dr Mactar Seck, said with a forum such as the AfIGF, African nations can continue to aggregate views that allow them to speak with one voice to get greater benefits for African economic development. Also speaking at the weeklong event, the Secretary of the African Parliamentary Network on Internet Governance, Honourable Samuel George of Ghana, called for free Internet "that is inclusive, safe and secured for all citizens of Africa." He said this can only be achieved through collaborative effort by coming together to build an inclusive Africa. "For Africa to be self-sufficient, it must create an enabling environment and laws and provide digital infrastructure for young innovators to thrive. This will, in turn, promote indigenous and local content development in technological development," George said. Meanwhile, after the event, a communique was issued detailing resolutions made at the event and concrete recommendations, based on which Danbatta urged participants to ensure effective implementations when they return to their respective countries ahead of next year's forum. Before the AfIGF, which started from September 19-23, 2023, the 11th Africa School of Internet Governance (AfriSIG), took place from September 13-18, 2023 and was facilitated by the Association for Progressive Communications, the Africa Union, Research ICT Africa, the Africa Parliamentary Track and the United Nations-IGF Secretariat and the Africa Youth IGF.

Rotary, NBSC sign MoU

FROM JIDAUNA YANUNG
Abuja

ROTARY International District 9125, on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Blood Service Commission (NBSC) to increase awareness of blood donation among Nigerians.

The signing of the MoU which took place the NBSC headquarters in Gwarimpa, Abuja was witnessed by Rotarians and staff of NBSC. While the governor of District 9125, Rotn. Sagab Sani Ahmed signed for the

Rotary, Dr. Ayoola Abiodun Olufemi, a director, who represented the acting Director General of the Commission, Dr. Suberu Eneye Jimoh, signed on behalf of the NBSC.

Speaking during the event Ahmed, who described Rotarians as international citizens, said the organization was committed to breaking barriers to serve humanity. He said the MoU was aimed at complementing NBSC to achieve its mandate, and declare that 147 clubs under the district would execute the project.

On his part, the DG commended Rotary International for its intervention in the health sector.

He said the MoU would help his commission to achieve its mandate in the 23 states to increase the blood drive in the benefiting states.

Earlier, the District Chairperson, the special project on Blood donation initiative, Rotn Khadijah Toyin Musa, admonished all Blood Donation Zonal Coordinators to work effectively with all clubs across the 23 states and solicited the support

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

In line with his commitment to improving business performance and enhancing viability, Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State has distributed business enhancement tools to over 300 Micro and Small Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in the state.

The empowerment, which was executed by the Kogi Enterprise Development Agency (KEDA) in partnership with the World Bank, was done in two batches.

Over 100 MSMEs benefited on Monday, while more than 200 benefitted in the first batch.

The Managing Director, KEDA, Hajiya Rekiya Onaiovo, said the beneficiaries were selected, out of the 60,000 registrations received by the agency, following a thorough screening in a bid to meet up with the very high evaluation conditions of the partners.

Some of the items given to the MSMEs to enhance their operations include laptops, desktops, tablets, internet devices, POS machines, projectors, printers, android phones and other ICT business enhancing devices.

The KEDA MD explained that the distribution of the equipment, under the Kogi Cares Result Area 3 "and specifically the Delivery Linkage Indicator (DLI) 3.3", were initially part of the Kogi government's response to the biting effects of the Covid-19 lockdown period on Micro and Small Enterprises.

She noted that ICT could facilitate connectivity and businesses could also maximise the internet space to conduct their business irrespective of their location and surrounding circumstances. But warned that beneficiaries must not dispose of the tools as they had signed a contract in that regard.

Onaiovo added that KEDA, under the leadership of

Kogi govt distributes business enhancement tools to MSMEs



Bello

Governor Yahaya Bello, had ensured even distribution of the tools across the 21 local government areas of the state.

She assured that the agency would further expand the scope to capture more beneficiaries in its subsequent programmes.

While clarifying that beneficiaries under the KG Cares DLI 3.3 would not receive cash unlike the DLI 3.1, 3.2, the KEDA MD, she said that the agency had received the approval of the World Bank for current beneficiaries to get a scale-up grant to fund their respective businesses, owing to their performances after evaluation by the World Bank.

She clarified that the initiative was not a political empowerment but was borne out of the stern desire of the Kogi State Governor to empower small businesses in the state and create the enabling environment for them to thrive.

Governor Bello, who was represented at the event by the Secretary to the State Government, Dr. Folashade Arike Ayoade, noted that his

administration was truly concerned about small business owners in the state and was making every effort to create an enabling environment for them to thrive.

Governor Bello added that the ICT tools distributed to the beneficiaries must be used judiciously to improve their businesses and ultimately contribute to the economic advancement of the state and reduce poverty.

He noted that the state, alongside the partners of KEDA, would jointly ensure robust monitoring of the proper utilisation of the tools distributed, pointing out that the state government would be willing to do more when commendable feedbacks were received.

One of the beneficiaries, Mr. Ali Yakubu Umar, CEO Kakanda TV Prime Production, appreciated the kind gesture of the state government.

He said the process, although rigorous, was transparent. Adding that the equipment, which he had been given would enhance his business, facilitate efficiency and service delivery.

PIC shuts down illegal medicine stores

FROM AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

The Pharmaceutical Inspectorate Committee in Kogi State, on Monday, hinted that over 100 medicine stores operating illegally in the state between January to September this year have been shut down.

The Kogi State Vice Chairman of PIC, Dr Lawal Muhammed Omuya, disclosed this on Monday in a statement to mark this year's World Pharmacists Day with the theme "Pharmacists, Strengthening the Health System".

Dr. Omuya, who doubles as the State Chairman Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) noted that PIC in Kogi State draws her membership from Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, (PSN), Pharmacy Council of Nigeria, (PCN) and staff of State Ministry of Health using the instruments of PCN.

He explained that the body carried out the operation between January to September 2023. And added that the body is working round the clock to put an end to quackery in Kogi State.

"Quackery in pharmaceutical practice can be looked at from professional and facilities angle. The professional angle has to do with people who are non-pharmacist both educated and

non-educated, presenting themselves as pharmacists in the society and thereby carrying out attempting to carry out the role of a pharmacist.

"On the second hand, we are also looking at facilities that exist in the community that are illegal, not in good standing with the pharmacy practice. These are drug stores that are stocked to the brim, giving an erroneous impression of a pharmacy, as people patronize them, thinking that these are registered pharmacies where they could get quality drugs and pharmaceutical services.

"We are currently addressing quackery on these two bases. The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria in collaboration with Pharmacy Council of Nigeria, through the Pharmaceutical Inspectorate Committee, established in all the 36 states of the federation including FCT, go out routinely for monitoring and inspection, to ensure that we tackle this problem of quackery we have in our society. You will agree with me that this will require a lot of resources.

"When we go on routine monitoring and inspection, and we discover that a facility is existing illegally, it is outright shut down and sealing. Then those that are not existing illegally which are licensed by the Pharmacy Council

of Nigeria for the purpose of providing pharmaceutical service to the community, but are falling short of the standard they are expected to operate, those facilities will be given what we call "compliance directive" within a specific time frame for them to meet up.

"If they are unable to meet up, we shut them down too. These are measures that we put in place to ensure that we have sanity in healthcare delivery.

For individuals that are not supposed to be involved in pharmaceutical practice, they are made to face the full wrath of the law when they are caught. This is what led to shutting down of over 100 medicine stores operating illegally and also arresting those who are quacks in the system within the year".

He used this medium to appeal to the Kogi State Government to collaborate with PSN and PCN to ensure that their activities can be carried out more effectively and efficiently by providing security, means of transport and other logistic needs for their operations.

World Pharmacists Day which is observed on 25th September annually, marks the anniversary of the inception of International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) in 1912 and was adopted by the FIP Council in 2009.

Sports

As lone away fan leads club to glory

By PHIL DAWKES

TIAGO Rech has watched Santa Cruz for as long as he can remember, even when he was famously the only one. But right now, on the final day of the 2023 Campeonato Gaucho Serie A2, he can hardly bear to do so.

The Brazilian club's season has all come down to this: one kick, one penalty to settle a shootout and send the club back to the state top flight for the first time in a decade.

For Tiago, though, this is the culmination of something far greater - a lifelong love affair that has taken him in directions he could not possibly have imagined.

It has brought him a brief moment of global fame, a remarkable Football Manager-esque rise to becoming president of the club in his 20s before suffering near financial ruin and depression as they slipped to relegation and near oblivion.

But this is not a story that deserves an unhappy ending. All midfielder Mauricio has to do is score and the fairytale is complete. In the stands, Tiago Rech watches and waits.

It was an act of watching and waiting that brought Tiago the 15 minutes of fame to set this whole ball rolling 21 years ago.

Born just five blocks from the club's 5,000-capacity stadium in Santa Cruz do Sul, he was a regular on the concrete steps of Estadio dos Platanos from the age of 10, eating a hot dog and watching his team play with his father.

As he entered his teens, school, university and then a job on a newspaper eventually led him to a life in state capital Porto Alegre 120km away and a reduced diet of games.

In 2012, though, Santa Cruz had an away match against Gremio in his new resident city - a golden opportunity to be in the away end with his fellow *Galo* fans to witness their side take on one of the state's biggest teams. It didn't quite work out how he planned.

"The game was due to start at 9pm and I left work around eight and went alone, on foot, with my Santa Cruz T-shirt stuffed in to my jacket just because there would be lots of Gremio fans around and I didn't want any trouble," explains Tiago to BBC's World Service.

"When I got to the stadium I went to the space reserved for our side and I went up to the ticket office and asked if any of the Santa Cruz fan base had arrived yet. This was 20 minutes before the game.

"The security said no, but I thought it's still early it takes two hours from Santa Cruz, maybe they were late so I went in and sat down, waiting for the game to start and for the rest of the fans to arrive.

"Then the game began and no one came. Five minutes went by, then 10 and then at 15 minutes in, Santa Cruz scores the first goal. And I'm there celebrating, I mean, slightly embarrassed because I'm the only one there."

The television team watching the game soon noticed the lone figure in the away end and picked him out. That was when Tiago's phone started buzzing with calls and texts from his parents and friends.

"The game went on and Gremio scored so then it was one all then 2-1 then 3-1 and in the end they won 4-1. And I'm just there on my own, the whole time," continues Tiago.

The next morning, an image of him sat alone in the stand, a half-drunk plastic cup next to him, was on the front page of the paper at which he worked. "Don't Leave Me Alone" read the headline.

Soon, the image and story were heading around the world and



Taking FC Santa Cruz to Qatar - Tiago Rech holds up a club flag at this year's World Cup

drawing comments courtesy of online coverage and a YouTube clip that quickly rocketed past 1m views.

That wasn't the end of the story, though. It was barely the beginning.

A year later, at the end of a dire campaign, Santa Cruz had just been relegated to the second tier. Tiago was living back at home having left his job.

But a chance meeting with the then club president gave him the chance to turn his hobby into something more. They got chatting, Tiago told him he was out of work and a job offer was made in return.

With players operating to season-long contracts, there were only four people employed by the club at that time - the president, manager, a supervisor and secretary. Tiago became the fifth, operating ostensibly as their communication and marketing man, but eager to branch out into every area possible.

"I would look for sponsors, I would talk to the fire brigade about security and to the police. So I did much more than just communications," he says. "I joke that that I would end up taking the corner, heading the ball in the box, and then racing to the back to defend."

This was a crash course in football administration, one that enabled Tiago to marry his passion-driven ideas to the practical reality of achieving them.

"When I was just a fan I would always be criticising from the stands," he says. "Why didn't the team grow? Why were we such a small club?"

"But now I could see the difficulties of being a little football club, trying to survive - you're dealing with a lack of money, lack of resources, lack of sponsors, just a general lack of support."

He attended club dinners on a Friday - a tradition since the 1980s - to rub shoulders with directors and political figures of the city, including the mayor.

Relationships were built and ideas shared. Tiago's revolutionary plan was for the club to move away from the constant churn of contracting players and a manager for one short season and then starting all over again the following year. He felt they should play all year round, with a more consistent playing staff.

It intrigued the Santa Cruz

advisers, so much so that when the time came to elect a new president there was only one man for the job - the 27-year-old fan turned club employee.

"I had dreamed for a long time about the idea that one day I would be president of the club," admits Tiago.

"I always say it's not an accident that I became president at 27. The club wasn't doing well, the directors were very old, we needed new people and they could see I wanted it so I got elected."

His father took more convincing, having seen the negative impact the role had taken on friends of his, but ultimately backed his son's dream.

It quickly became a nightmare. "To begin with it was great," explains Tiago. "We got some good players, I got some new sponsors, we started winning but by the third month things were going wrong

"We started to run out of money, the games were happening in the winter and it gets very cold here, it rains, so there weren't so many fans coming to the matches which meant we were selling fewer tickets and in the end it got very hard."

Debts began to pile up. Tiago asked his father for a loan to pay players, he maxed out credit cards

and put all of his savings into the club - money his parents had helped him amass to use to buy an apartment.

Santa Cruz avoided relegation but Tiago's one year of presidency had taken a heavy toll.

"I got very depressed," he says. "When the championship was over I would stay in bed all day. I was just sad and so down, to the extent that I had to go to the doctor and get medication to try and get better.

"In the end the doctor and my dad came to the decision that I needed to stop running the club that I needed go back to my old life."

So that is what he did. He got treatment for his depression, moved back to Porto Alegre, returned to journalism and became just a humble fan of Santa Cruz once more.

Unfortunately, the club's fortunes did not improve. After seasons of struggle, they were relegated to the third tier in 2018, prompting suggestions they may have to fold.

It was around this time that Tiago returned to his home town and bumped into an old friend, a local business owner, who made a crazy but desperate plea to him - that the club would close unless he came back as president.

Despite all that had gone before, he

decided to take up the challenge, but this time armed with lessons from the past. They built slowly, accrued sponsors, paid off debts.

"It really helped that our players came from the city, so the community supported us - families would come to the game so we had fans and an income and we started to be able to pay off our bills," says Tiago.

It is a testament to the work done that even a global pandemic that interrupted two seasons was unable to halt their progress. In fact, it may even have helped the club to a degree.

In September 2020, it was decided that a shortened championship season would take place, with only 10 teams participating. The absence of some of the bigger clubs enabled Santa Cruz to convince members of their squads to come and play for them.

With their help, three months later the club won their first-ever title - the Copa Federacao Gaucha de Futebol.

"It was incredible, fantastic, sensational, I cried, I celebrated," recalls Tiago. "The games were a bit strange because there was no crowds, just a few people were watching." It is a feeling Tiago knows well.



The shot that went around the world - Tiago alone in the away section to watch FC Santa Cruz play Gremio in 2012

Sports



'Postecoglou has Spurs heading in right direction'

Tottenham Hotspur's guarded optimism in the heady early days of the Ange Postecoglou era was always going to be largely measured by whether it survived a visit to Arsenal intact.

Spurs have only won twice away to Arsenal in the Premier League's three decades, so this is a fixture that is approached with trepidation, even after the expert manner in which the charismatic Postecoglou has navigated the club through the departure of their great goalscoring talisman Harry Kane.

If not quite the acid test of their aspirations under the Australian, everyone connected with Spurs knew this visit into enemy territory would provide the sternest examination so far.

And while they have still not won here in the league since a 3-2 win almost 13 years ago, the reaction of players, manager and supporters at the end of a gripping 2-2 draw confirmed the early impression that, after the entertainment-free zones provided by the loveless reigns of Nuno Espirito Santo, Jose Mourinho and Antonio Conte, Spurs might just be on to something with Postecoglou.

Every analysis of Spurs must be viewed through the prism that this season is still in its infancy, but Spurs showed here that they have taken big strides already under Postecoglou and they were all on show at Emirates Stadium.

Spurs, as was always going to happen, came under stress from an Arsenal side and supporters who always relish this fixture.

Indeed, the game's big moment arguably came when Arsenal striker Gabriel Jesus robbed James Maddison in the area in the first half with the score 1-0 to the Gunners, only to blaze wildly over the top with the goal at his mercy.

Postecoglou will not be sacrificing his principles, even though that Arsenal chance came from his insistence that Spurs play out from the back on the basis that the risk might reap great rewards.

It almost brought a nightmare for the outstanding Maddison, with Arsenal already ahead through Cristian Romero's own goal - but better moments lay ahead

for a player who looks a perfect fit at Spurs.

With Kane gone, Spurs had to find other avenues of creation to compensate for his cast-iron guarantee of goals and Maddison's link with Son Heung-min already looks a fruitful route.

Maddison crossed for Son to equalise before half-time then robbed Arsenal substitute Jorginho, on for the injured Declan Rice, to set up the South Korean for another leveller after Bukayo Saka's penalty, given following the intervention of the Video Assistant Referee on Romero's handball.

Maddison is a superb addition but great significance must also be attached to how Postecoglou has rejuvenated players such as Yves Bissouma, who had a lost year under Conte following his move from Brighton. He was outstanding in midfield. This is

what the good coaches do - they improve players.

Spurs not only threw bodies on the line but there was no sense of panic, all bolted on to a willingness to attack when the chance presented itself, Postecoglou throwing his hands in the air in anguish when Richarlison's shot in the last seconds took a deflection wide.

This was all acknowledged when Postecoglou joined the Spurs players in front of visiting fans, a low-key clenched fist, a quiet smile and applause reflecting his satisfaction. The deafening response revealed which set of fans were happier with this outcome.

Postecoglou is still finding his way at Spurs but everything about this performance - apart from the fact it did not end in a win - suggests he knows the right direction for a club that had lost its way.

Jermaine Jenas apologises to Rob Jones

Football pundit Jermaine Jenas has apologised for criticising referee Rob Jones, saying he "got it wrong".

Jenas used an abusive term on X, formerly Twitter, and added "they're [referees] all ruining our game" after Jones awarded Arsenal a penalty in Sunday's north London derby draw.

The former England midfielder had been criticised by refereeing bodies.

"My emotions got the better of me and I apologise to The FA and to all match officials," Jenas posted on X.

Ex-Tottenham player Jenas was part of the Football Association's 'Love Football, Protect the Game' campaign prior to the start of the 2023-24 season.

Jenas also hosted a Channel 4 documentary in 2021, tracking the rise in online abuse of black players and he spoke with an online troll.

In a post on Monday afternoon, Jenas, who co-hosts The One Show, added: "I hold my hands up, I got it wrong yesterday. I should know, more than most, the responsibility we have as fans, players and pundits and the impact our words online can have as it's an area I've been vocal in."

Referee Jones did not award

a penalty when the ball hit the arm of Tottenham defender Cristian Romero, but the Video Assistant Referee advised him to take another look on the pitchside monitor and he overturned his initial decision.

Referees' Association president Paul Field said he was "very disappointed" with Jenas' initial comment - which has not yet been deleted.

Field added: "It's this type of thing that makes a referees job much harder at grassroots. Mr Jenas has a responsibility to the game and we look forward to seeing an apology in the near future."

In response to Jenas' original social media post, charity Ref

The Honourable Minister of Sports Development, Senator John Owan Enoh will be attending the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Executive Committee meeting in Cairo, Egypt, as the nation solidifies its bid to host the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournament for the second time since 1980. Nigeria and the Republic of Benin presented a joint bid to host the tournament.

The Minister and the leadership of Nigeria Football Federation, (NFF) will be attending the meeting as representatives of the Federal Government of Nigeria. During the meeting, Nigeria will make its presentation to the Executive Committee of the Confederation of African Football, (CAF) in Cairo, Egypt. Senator Owan Enoh is attending the meeting alongside top members of Nigeria Football Federation.

All countries who submitted bids to host the AFCON tournament in 2025 and 2027 respectively are expected to attend the meeting during which the Independent

FG backs Nigeria's AFCON 2027 bid



Assessment Committee of CAF will submit their reports for assessment and discussions by CAF EXCO. The CAF team had previously visited Nigeria to assess facilities at different proposed host venues around the nation.

The Nigerian delegation includes the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Sports Development, Alhaji Ismaila Abubakar, President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Alhaji Ibrahim Gusau, General Secretary of the NFF, Dr.

Mohammed Sanusi and Bid Coordinator, Mallam Mainasara Ilo, Dr. Richard Orim, Special Assistant Admin to the Sports Minister.

Nigeria will make a ten (10) minute presentation to the CAF EXCO, and thereafter will be allocated time to answer questions from its presentation.

The meeting will hold on today, September 27, 2023.

Meanwhile, the Federal House Committee on Sports says the current economic hardship facing Nigerians owing to subsidy removal,

Lagos National Stadium wears new look

One of Nigeria's iconic sporting facilities the National Stadium in Surulere Lagos is finally returning to its glory days with the completion of rehabilitation work on its decayed facilities, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The Lagos stadium has been abandoned for so many years before the immediate past Minister for Youth and Sports Sunday Dare took it upon himself to ensure the revival of

the edifice that was once Nigeria's home of Sporting Glory.

Months after leaving office, Dare can be proud after ensuring that the job he started when he was at the helms has now been completed.

The National Stadium Surelere can now boast of a world class football pitch and tracks with a functional scoreboard.

The level of damage of the Lagos stadium was so huge that previous Sports Ministers only made promises but was never able to do anything to give the facilities a facelift.

But Dare's Adopt-a-Facility initiative was a public private model which was able to deliver some critical sporting infrastructure across the country.

In the case of National Stadium Surulere, Dare was able to parent with Sir Adebutu Keshington, the founder of Premier Lotto to renovate 3 critical components of the Surulere stadium in Lagos.

The success of a similar partnership was achieved with the Dangote Group under Dare and it delivered critical renovations at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium Abuja.

When some negative stories were reported in the media in April about the Lagos Stadium, Dare maintained that work might be slow but it will be completed as promised.

In 2019, Dare embarked on an inspection tour of the Lagos stadium alongside the Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo Olu and gave his assurances to revamp the stadium and today he has put to action those promises.

Built in 1961, the stadium hosted the 1963 All Africa Games and in 1980 Nigeria lifted their first Africa Cup of Nations title at the same stadium.

2004 was the last time the stadium hosted a football tournament but with the latest rehabilitation, sports fans can now look forward to a return of sporting activities in Surelere.

Jermaine Jenas apologises after posting criticism about referee Rob Jones



Sports

Asaba 2023: Tinubu sues for sports unity

From ANDRE BISYIT, Asaba

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has sued for greater unity of the country which he said can be achieved through sports.

The president was speaking during the opening ceremony of the seventh National Youth Games in Asaba, Delta State.

The National Youth Games was conceived in 2013 by the Federal Ministry of Sports Development under the then National sports Commission, as part of its strategic plan to reposition sports at the grassroots level and to facilitate the discovery of young talents in the country.

It also serves as an effective platform for talent identification and development as well as a level playing ground for

young athletes to achieve excellence in sports.

Declaring the games open, President Tinubu, represented by Minister of Sports Development, Senator John Enoh, assured that the games will stand as a testament of the country's commitment to fostering Unity among the great states.

The President underscored the pivotal role of the National Youth Games in nurturing sense of togetherness and unwavering dedication to the nation's interest.

"The importance of the Games is national unity, patriotism, mutual love and Understanding among the youths"

He urged all participants including officials and athletes to compete with fairness and spirit of national pride.

Delta State Governor,

Sheriff Oborewori, who reaffirmed the status of his state as a sports hub, commended the National Youth Games for the consistent contribution in talent discovery and national unity

The governor pledged a peaceful and thrilling competition just as he assured participants of a comprehensive arrangement to ensure a seamless movement within the city.

The event is expected to be a platform for young talents to shine and for the nation to come together in the spirit of sportsmanship.

With thirty five sports disciplines on the agenda and 5,742 athletes from across Nigeria, the National Youth Games is set to captivate the nation and celebrate the boundless potentials of its youth.

From ANDRE BISYIT, Asaba

Plateau State contingent to the seventh National Youth Games in Asaba Delta State have been told to give in their best to justify Governor Mutfwang's commitment to sports development.

State Commissioner of Youth and Sports, Lawandi Datti, gave the advise while addressing the contingent at the Stephen Keshi Stadium Asaba Delta State.

The Commissioner who Confirmed that athletes were in high spirit and good condition to compete and win laurels for the state and thanked Governor Mutfwang for the support.

He stress that the Governor has really shown that the time is now for athletes and official to enjoy better welfare.

The Commissioner is Optimistic that with the

Plateau contingent urged to sit up



Plateau contiigent in Asaba

kind of encouragement and support the athletes got from the Government, they will return home victorious

"Our Expectation is that let them give us the best, we have given them the best, so Let them give us the best too".

State Director of Sports Ezra Gunen, said since the contingent arrived Delta, everything has been

normal. Gunen explained that they went through the screening process and scale through by ninety eight percent with only four athletes who could not scale through.

"By the Grace of God we are going to perform well, the coaches are highly motivated and as far as I'm concerned the sky is the limit we will leave for the competition Venues highly motivated".

Most sports have reserve Sunday 24th September for their technical meetings while others have commenced competition.

'NIN adoption will mitigate age cheating'

By ANDRE BISYIT, Asaba

MINISTER for Sports, Sen. John Enoh, has said, adoption of the National Identification Number (NIN) in screening athletes at the National Youth Games was to checkmate age cheats at the Games.

The minister made the explanation in Asaba, the Delta State when he met with journalists at the media center.

Sen. Enoh said his directive to the officials on the compulsory presentation of National Identity Number at the screening venue of athletes was irreversible as government is determined to get it right from the grassroots.

On the issue on facial screening, NIN must be used to resolve it, and athletes must insist on it, adding that the system may not be perfect for the moment but will improve on the process for the purpose of sports development".

He noted that age cheating in the Games which is meant for the discovery and development of budding talents for the

country has become a cankerworm which, if not completely checked, is capable of destroying government's efforts at developing grassroots sports.

"The issue of age cheating in sports is an area in which the ministry requires the support and collaboration of all stakeholders, including the media. On our part, one of the innovations at this year's edition of the Games is the introduction of the National Identity Number (NIN) as part of the verification process for athletes. Working with other stakeholders, we shall keep improving the process as we move along until we reduce to the barest minimum the issue of age cheating in sports. We have to get this right as a nation if we hope to achieve sports excellence. I have directed that NIN presentation is a compulsory requirement for screening and the directive has not been reversed".

Sen. Enoh insisted that his focus on sports development is grassroots and elite sports.

Government, he said, will continue to support

grassroots sports through the provision of infrastructure upgrade using the National Sports Industry Policy (NSIP) provisions when it fully becomes implemented.

He noted that this year's edition of the Youth Games provides a unique opportunity for us to rewrite the story of our sports in the country as it is coming at a time when we have a president who is interested in uplifting the sports sector to the next level with the creation of a ministry solely responsible for sports.

"I can assure you that the present leadership of President Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu shall pay undivided attention to the development of the abundant talents in the nation. We do this, not just with an eye on podium performances, but for creating a career pathway for our youth and millions of job opportunities in the sports value chain, reduce poverty amongst our youth and encourage inclusiveness of women participation in sports with a view to improving security," he said.

He said that government will continue to ensure early exposure of athletes to necessary infrastructure that will equip them not only to

exhibit their sporting talents.

Plateau wins first gold medal

From ANDRE BISYIT, Asaba

Plateau State is gradually picking up its pieces after a disappointing start at the ongoing National Youth Games holding in Asaba, Delta state.

Results after day 3 of the competition indicate that a gold medal was salvaged in gymnastics.

Ruth Pullong Madaki took the Games by storm to claim the gold in artistic gymnastics: apparatus vault

Horse.

The gymnast, tutored by the youngest coach in Plateau, Micheal Adamu, will set sail for more medals as events continue.

It was a nervy encounter between Plateau and Bayelsa as the male football teams locked horns earlier on Monday.

Ebuka Nsofor converted a corner kick with a header to put the

ball behind the net. The win was enough to seal qualification for quarter finals match with Kano state today.

In Female Basketball, the losing streak continued as the ladies lost two straight matches to Bauchi and Rivers, 2 - 3, 5 - 10, respectively, and if the team could overcome Oyo and Bayelsa on Tuesday, chances are that she may progress to the next round.

Events in Weightlifting were rounded up on Monday with Plateau, for the first time, leaving empty handed. Christopher Joseph ended with no lift in the 55kg category to seal a disappointing outing for Plateau Weightlifters.

Samuel Johnson of the 35kg class in Judo was eliminated in the first round by Anambara.

In Cycling, Hosea Danjuma put up a resilient fight in the individual time trials but his efforts was not good enough for silver ware. He came fourth in a pulsating ride towards the finishing line.

Plateau athletes in scrabble and Chess are making progress in their respective matches and only time will tell if they are good enough to mount the podium.

Sports events continued Tuesday, as Karate, Badminton Taekwondo, Athletics and Squash also joined the fray on the day.

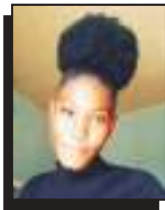
So far, Plateau has won one gold and one bronze in the current campaign.



Plateau cyclists at the National Youth Games in Asaba, Delta state



Quest



writer

LEJI DAGUS

FRAGMENT

"Even though the argument about who controls the police stands, Chris Akor, a columnist with business day in May 2022 postulate that 'especially since the 1979 and 1999 constitutions stripped state governors of the powers to appoint and expressly control commissioners of police, a nuanced reading of the constitution and established practices since 1999 shows a different picture altogether. Governors are indeed the chief security officers of their states and they have the powers and the wherewithal to mobilize security agencies to provide all-round security in their states.'"

LEJI DAGUS

Tinubu: What matters most to Nigerians

SINCE the end of military rule in 1999, Nigerians went to the polls every four years to cast the ballot for their most preferred presidential candidates.

February 25, 2023 was the seventh election since the start of the fourth republic and 93 million people registered to vote ahead of the keenly contested elections. 18 political parties fielded candidates but three aspirants stood out therefore it was tagged a three-leg horse race.

By and large, Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressive Congress APC was declared winner of the elections having secured the highest number of votes. He gained more votes than his rivals in three out of the six geopolitical zones. He won the south west, North west and North central. This gave him the spread to be the only candidate that gained 25% of votes in 29 states and at least one state in each of the regions except south east.

Bola Tinubu is taking over the leadership of the country at a time when more than ever Nigerians are divided across religious and ethnic lines, lack of trust between government and its populace, bold face insecurity manifested as banditry and kidnapping in the north west continue unabated, Boko haram / ISWAP activities in the north east, land grabbing by foreign invaders and farmers herders' clashes in the north central, and separatist agitation in the south east, yahoo-yahoo and cultism in the South West and agitation for improved development in oil rich South-South region of the country. In all kidnapping for ransom is gaining traction seemingly unabated. Engraved corruption in all system of government and annoying dawdling economic growth.

Nigeria is in dire need of national integration, a concise plan for fighting insecurity head on before we lose our kinsmen to unscrupulous elements who do not value human lives, family, brotherhood and a sense of shared prosperity.

A Swahili proverb says unity is strength, division is weakness. It matters to Nigerians that every tribe, religion and region is carried along in the affairs, leadership and programs of the country that concerns them, in other to have a sense of belonging so that they can co-exist without strife, contention, agitation, and suspicion. Little wonder Nigerians resisted Bola Tinubu's Muslim-Muslim ticket.

Hon. Yakubu Dogara then speaker of the house of representative five months ago said 'the Muslim Muslim ticket of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) would polarize the

country along religious and tribal lines.'

Chief Nduka Iya former Secretary General of Ohaneze Indigbo and former resident electoral commissioner of INEC in an interview with the Guardian newspaper in July 2022 posited that 'Nigerians are fighting and opposing the Muslim-Muslim ticket because of what has happened in the last seven years that Buhari has run the country. He has ensured that only one region and his religion dominate in every aspect of the country'.

Other reason for the rejection was a speculated Islamization of Nigeria which he has since denied.

Whether there is such agenda or not Bola Tinubu must not allow even the slightest of such speculation manifest in his administration at least for posterity's sake. Even though I fear just like Rev Yunusa Nmadu, CEO of CSW Nigeria and Current General Secretary of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) who said "Tinubu has stated that he will not Islamise Nigeria. But is there any more effective means of doing so than through a continuous Muslim presidency?"

Tinubu knows he has a lot to prove to Nigerians hence his stand on the unity of the country in his inaugural speech. he said "as long as the world exist Nigeria will remain." Tinubu must take this decision further by ensuring that Christians occupy significant positions in the higher echelon of things in his administration.

Nigerians have since hailed the appointment of new service chiefs especially the appointment of Rear Admiral Ikechukwu Ogalla as the Chief of Naval Staff from the Igbo extraction. Without minimizing words, the Igbo extraction has been relegated to the back seat especially in the helm of affairs in the past administration of former President Mohammedu Buhari. Hence the separatist agitation for Biafra, which has led to the detention of Nnamdi Kanu. This has led to the enforcement of sit at home in all the south eastern state of Nigeria which has also hampered on economic activities in the state. International center for investigative report (icir) reports that over \$12.215 billion or N5.375 trillion has been lost to sit at home since September 2021.

It will matter to Nigerians that Tinubu ends the back and forth in the court case still keeping Nnamdi Kanu in detention by chairing the discussion to address their grievances in other to address the insecurity in the region. Chukwuma Soludo, Governor of



Tinubu

Anambra state said "I am making a passionate appeal to the Federal Government to release Mazi Nnamdi Kanu unconditionally. If he cannot be released unconditionally, I want him released to me and I will stand surety for him," he said.

"We need Nnamdi Kanu in the roundtable conversation to discuss the insecurity in the South-east. We must end insecurity in the South-east and we need Nnamdi Kanu to be around.

To crown the issue of inclusivity, it will be of utmost importance to Nigerians that Tinubu's ministerial list cuts across every divide of the country. The excuse of if a section voted for him or not would determine if they get appointed should not be allowed to fly. Political patronage, tribalism and nepotism should be trashed completely. Nondiscrimination and Federal character principle should be the number one criterion for any appointment.

In an interview by punch newspaper with Dr Kabir Adamu, Managing Director of Beacon consulting limited he advised Tinubu on what to do differently to address insecurity he said "reduce the availability of the perpetrator to commit the act. In other words, it is human beings that they are going after to kidnap.

So let it be difficult for them to have access to those human beings by improving security deployment; take away security from all these VIPs they are protecting all over. Make sure security deployment is done adequately in concentric circles,

along the roads and in rural areas, and make sure there is security deployment."

In Nigeria, statistics show that, by the annual ranking in 2016, 2017, and 2018, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), is reported to have the greatest police-to-population ratios of 1:121, 1:90, and 1:181, respectively. In contrast however, Bauchi had the lowest police-to-citizen ratio in 2016.

On June 30th through a communique, Acting Inspector-General of Police, Ag. IGP Olukayode Egbetokun took the right step in the right direction in other to bridge the inadequacy of the police by ordering the withdrawal of Police Mobile Force (PMF) personnel from Very Important Persons (VIPs) and establish a Special Intervention Squad.

He further stated that the Special Intervention Squad aims to enhance Nigeria's security framework and provide equal protection for all citizens. The team will swiftly respond to security challenges nationwide.

If this report is anything to go by, Nigerians will expect that state governors will take advantage of the presence of the intervention squad by mobilizing them to secure troubled communities and villages.

Even though the argument about who controls the police stands, Chris Akor, a columnist with business day in May 2022 postulate that 'especially since the 1979 and 1999 constitutions stripped state governors of the powers to appoint and expressly

control commissioners of police, a nuanced reading of the constitution and established practices since 1999 shows a different picture altogether. Governors are indeed the chief security officers of their states and they have the powers and the wherewithal to mobilize security agencies to provide all-round security in their states'.

This postulation can become reality if state governors judiciously make use of their monthly security votes in mobilizing, empowering the police and other security agencies and provide them with all the logistics and equipment needed to adequately protect the state.

Above all, an excerpt from Adebile, Oluwaseyi Paul's paper on 'National Integration: A Panacea to Insecurity in Nigeria' states that "the ideology of shared responsibility in tackling insecurity needs to be expanded by preaching the creed of patriotism, tolerance, impartiality and honesty, as well as discouraging all vices capable of engendering terror and disruption in the society which should involve all strata (Bourgeoisie, Middle class and Proletarian) and groups (Religious, Cultural, Unions, Clubs, Parties, etc.) of the society".

The economy seems to be top priority for Tinubu hence the unexpected announcement of the removal of subsidy on his inauguration day. Subsidy was costing the government over N400bn monthly and its aim of helping poor Nigerians was merely on paper as bulk of the money was syphoned into private pockets. It was a shock without absorber hence the ripple reaction of hardship and pains from Nigerians. Even though experts and international economic institutions have continued to doff their hats to Bola Tinubu for taking the step that hitherto eluded previous administration.

Some of the reactions from prominent Nigerians like Peter Obi, presidential candidate of the labour party reacted saying he would have adopted the "tooth pain" removal analogy to provide succor to Nigerians as prices of petroleum products rise.

Tinubu has set up a committee to look into various degree of measures that can cushion the effect of the removal which in few weeks' times we will get their recommendation. Moving forward it will matter most to Nigerians that Tinubu interacts with them on decisions that will impact on them so as to have their good will and support.