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Blame Buhari for current economic crisis, not Tinubu

The 14th Emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II, has said former President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration was to be blamed for the current economic crises being experienced by Nigerians and not his successor - President Bola Tinubu.

He, however, added that this was not the right time for him to speak on the difficulties Nigerians were experiencing.

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The traditional cum religious leader of Dariqa Islamic sect said the Buhari government in its eight years mismanaged the country's economy without listening to experts.

Sanusi II, who is a former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), spoke in an undated viral video while addressing his students at his regular Islamic teaching sessions.

He said government apologists or sycophants called the shots under

President Buhari administration, adding that an "inexperienced boy" can own a private jet under the immediate-past administration because he gets Dollar at the official rate and take it to the black market for round tripping.

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Sanusi II also said excessive borrowing by the Buhari government crippled Nigeria's economy, the negative effects of which Nigerians are now facing, including loss of Naira value. He, therefore, urged the citizens to be patient with the current administration of President Bola Tinubu, who took over barely three months ago.

He stated that all that is currently happening in Nigeria had been foreseen and foretold by him, saying some Nigerians criticised him and dubbed him as an anti-government critic at the time.



Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang of Plateau State (left) receiving the frame of 7 Point Policy Thrust of Government from Commissioner, Budget and Economic Planning, Hon. Chrysantus Dawam and Perm-sec at the opening ceremony of 5 Day Retreat and Training, Organized by Olive-Edge, Consulting Group and Plateau State Government at the Carter Conlon Conference and Retreat Centre, Laminga, Jos on Monday Photo: DANLADI DUK

PLASU programmes soar to 48 with ten faculties -Prof. Matur

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

The academic programmes of Plateau State University Boko is set to soar from seventeen to forty eight courses this year as its faculties have been increased from four to ten, the University's Vice Chancellor has said.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the University's Public Relations Officer (PRO), John K. Agam, and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau State capital recently.

The Vice Chancellor, Plateau State University Boko, Professor Bernard Malau Matur, stated this when he played host to the Commissioner for Higher Education, Dr. (Mrs.) Kacholom Pyam Gang, in his office while on a familiarisation visit to the university.

The VC who used the occasion to commend Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, for approving the release of over #375 million naira for the re-accreditation of existing programmes, said the National Universities

Commission would soon embark on a resource verification visit with a view to adding the Faculty of Education to the list of programmes of the university.

This, he said, was in addition to the proposed School of Business Studies beginning early next year and the School of Postgraduate Studies. He said "The University will continue to improve on its facilities and academic standards in order to attract more students.

"The university is also

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Matur

News

Blame Buhari for current economic crisis, not Tinubu -Sanusi

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He, however, added that this was not the right time for him to speak on the difficulties Nigerians were experiencing.

"The last eight years, Nigeria lived a fake life, the government borrowed from within and without. About N30 trillion was borrowed from the Central Bank.

"All the revenue the country generated in the last few years couldn't cater for debt servicing. Debt servicing exceeded 100 per cent. Government borrowed to service debts. No country can grow this way. Time will come when one cannot even borrow any more. Additionally, there will be nothing available to pay the debts.

"Those writing, demanding that we speak on the current situation in the country; this is not the right time for me to speak. It was like a driver on the road driving recklessly despite repeated warnings about potholes ahead. What will you tell after plunging the car into the hole?

"People refused to listen to us then. We will only now advise them to be patient. I will never say Tinubu has pushed Nigeria into difficulty. I am not saying he is flawless yet. We will speak when he



Sanusi

goes astray. The government can't pay subsidies since it doesn't have the means.

"If they increase tax, we will have to pay since borrowing is impossible. If the CBN printed more Naira, the Dollar would jack up to N1,500. We must suffer. When I was the CBN governor, Naira was about N150 to a Dollar. Today it's somewhere around N900.

"They treated the economy the way they wanted and refused to listen to experts. In the last eight years, only sycophants succeeded. The sycophants bought Dollars at N400 and sold N540. Even an inexperienced boy who had never worked anywhere can own a private jet," Sanusi II stated.

He, therefore, urged wealthy Nigerians to assist the needy in the present circumstance even as he admonished ordinarily Nigerians to also be financially prudent and disciplined.

Plateau State Command of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), has arrested one Patience Solomon, also known as "Chioma" for absconding with a baby belonging to one Annabel Godfrey "f" to Lagos State without the knowledge of the parents since August 2, 2023 at about 1400hrs.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the Command's Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) as read by the state Commissioner of Police, CP Okoro Julius Alawari, psc, at a press briefing organised for journalists by the Command while parading various criminals and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the State capital recently.

The commissioner said, "We are pleased to announce to you that through intensive investigation which extended to Lagos State, one Patience Solomon also known as "Chioma" has been arrested in possession of a baby she disappeared with on 2nd August, 2023 at about 1400hrs.

"The baby was found in very good condition and was taken to the hospital for medical examination before being handed over to the mother, one Annabel Geoffrey "f" in good health. It would be recalled that Godfrey's family raised an alarm over the disappearance of their baby", he highlighted.

The Command also arrested and paraded one suspected Isaac Dung, "m" of adjacent Open University Jos, for vandalizing JED property/theft of armored cables on August 21, 2023

Police arrests woman for stealing a child

BY
EZEKIEL DONTINNA

at about 0230hrs after receiving a distress call at the Rantya Divisional headquarters that gunshot sounds were heard around.

According to the information made available to journalists, the commissioner disclosed that the gunshot sounds heard around the transformer, immediately alerted a team of agile men led by the DPO Rantya Division, SP Iliya Akawu, who rushed to the scene and arrested one Isaac Dung 'm' of adjacent Open University Jos.

The suspect was arrested after he vandalized and stole armored cables of the JED transformer in the area and as investigation still continues, future developments would be communicated in due course.

When interrogated by team of journalists, the suspect denied having any link to JED.

Okoro, therefore said, "I would like to on behalf of the officers and men of the

Command express my heartfelt gratitude to the Government and the good people of Plateau State, for the support given to me from the moment I assumed office as the Commissioner of Police in the state.

"We would not have achieved such tremendous successes without the cooperation and intelligence we have been receiving from the good and peace loving citizens of Plateau State. For this, we are grateful. We have put in place a series of strategies in order to prevent crime and ensure the security of all lives and properties within the state", Okoro stated.



Egbetokun

Why Nigeria's Refineries will never work -Obasanjo

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo has said the four oil refineries in Nigeria will never work.

The four refineries are located in Warri, Port Harcourt and Kaduna states.

Obasanjo said the refineries will never work as long as the government continues to hold onto them.

The former president who stated this in an interview with The Cable Online Newspaper, said Shell Oil Development

Company turned down his offer to them to run the refineries.

He disclosed that after much persuasion the managing director of Shell, at the time, listed four reasons why the oil company wouldn't get involved in running Nigeria's refineries, including "too much corruption in refineries."

Recall that President Bola Tinubu last month assured that the petroleum refinery in Port Harcourt will start working by December 2023.

Tinubu, had in a statement by former presidential spokesman, Dele Alake, in August, said the "Port Harcourt refineries will start production by December 2023 after the completion of the ongoing rehabilitation contract between NNPC and Italian firm, Maire Tecnimont SpA."

The President stated this when he met with labour unions at the State House in Abuja to halt the last nationwide protest.

Labour, had among other things, and demanded the government's commitment to getting local refineries to work, an objective that has gulped about N11.35 trillion in the last 10 years.

But responding to a question on the state of Nigeria's refineries in the interview, Obasanjo said, "They will not work as long as the government is keeping hold of them. When I was president, I invited Shell to a meeting. I told them I wanted to hand over the refineries for them to help us run. They bluntly told me they would not. I was shocked.

"I repeated the request and

they stood their ground. When the meeting was over, I asked their big man (MD) to wait behind for a little chat. Then I asked him why they were so hesitant on not taking over the refineries. He said did I want to hear the truth? I said yes. He listed four reasons. One, he said Shell makes its money from upstream and that is where its interest lies. Two, he said they only do downstream or retail as a matter of service. Three, he said our refineries would be bad business for them, that globally, companies are going for bigger refineries because of the economics of refineries. Four, he said there is too much corruption in refineries.

"I thanked him for his honesty. I knew we had a big problem in our hands. I had virtually given up hope on the refineries when God did a miracle. Aliko Dangote and Femi Otedola approached me and said they would be interested in buying two of the four refineries. They said they would buy 51 percent stake in Port Harcourt and Kaduna. I was over the moon. I said, finally, this burden would be taken off the neck of the government. They offered \$761 million and paid in two instalments. Unfortunately, Umaru (President Yar'Adua) cancelled the sale and returned the refineries to NNPC. Today, we are still where we were. Someone told me Tinubu said refineries would work by December. I told the person the refineries would not work. This is based on the information I received from Shell when I was the president."

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Continued from page 1

diversifying its sources of power supply to include clean energy which will be vigorously pursued through the university's solar farm initiative for cost effectiveness and in ensuring programmes and activities of the university run unhindered", he assured.

Professor Bernard Malau Matur, thanked the staff of the university for their understanding in spite of the challenges being faced by the university by not participating in the recently called off strike embarked upon by workers in the state even with the existing arrears of unpaid salaries.

He also commended Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutwang, for working to offset the arrears of salaries and for collaborating with the university in strengthening external partnerships to ensure the development of the university. The VC added that the university would scale up efforts in its skills acquisition training to make its graduates less dependent on government for employment.

He then appealed to the government to scale up the development of capital projects in the university through the provision of

hostel accommodation that could accommodate 5000 students as this would serve as a source of revenue in addition to securing the university through the completion of its perimeter fencing.

Speaking earlier, the Commissioner for Higher Education Dr. Kachollom Pyam Gang, urged the university community to support the state government in driving the education industry in the state to higher heights because the school's standard has degenerated and has taken Plateau State to the backseat position in the country.

She said the state government was working hard to address the debt burden inherited and also address the security situation in the state and decaying infrastructures which have led to the mass exodus of investors from the state.

Dr. Gang, however, encouraged Plateau State University to scale up its performance in order to retain its students and attract new ones as more universities were being established, making the education environment highly competitive.

She also urged the university management to operate an open door policy as the ministry strengthens its supervisory role.



Business & Economy

Enhancing public transport, security in the FCT

There is the need for modernisation, efficiency and environmental impact assessment as the new FCT minister, Nyesom Wike, has been presented with a unique opportunity to shape the future of Abuja's public transportation system. Among the many challenges facing the city, the issue of vehicular age and its impact on both transportation efficiency and security have come to the forefront. A bold move to limit public transportation vehicles to those that are not older than 5-10 years could have far-reaching benefits for the city's residents, the environment, and overall urban security. Writes Ahmed Yahaya Alhassan

ABUJA, as the political and administrative hub of Nigeria, deserves a world-class public transportation system that promotes efficiency, reliability, and sustainability. With an increasing population and traffic congestion, the existing transportation infrastructure often falls short of meeting these demands. By implementing a policy that restricts public transportation vehicles to a maximum age of 10 years, Minister Wike can lay the foundation for a modern and efficient transportation network.

Older vehicles tend to have higher maintenance costs and are less fuel-efficient, contributing to higher operational expenses for transport operators and leading to elevated fares for passengers. Introducing newer vehicles will not only reduce maintenance costs but also minimize emissions and support the government's efforts to combat air pollution and environmental degradation. A fleet of well-maintained, fuel-efficient vehicles will not only benefit passengers but also contribute to a cleaner and healthier Abuja.

The security of residents and commuters is of paramount importance in any thriving city and this can be enhanced through vehicle regulation. Older vehicles are more prone to breakdowns and technical failures, leading to traffic congestion, delays, and potential safety hazards. By mandating a maximum vehicle age of 5-10 years for public transportation, Wike can significantly reduce the risks associated with breakdowns and enhance overall passenger safety.

Furthermore, newer vehicles are equipped with advanced safety features such as airbags, anti-lock braking systems (ABS), electronic stability control (ESC), and rear-view cameras. These features provide an added layer of protection for both drivers and passengers, reducing the likelihood of accidents and injuries. By modernizing the public transportation fleet, the minister can contribute to a safer commuting experience for all.

The introduction of a policy to limit vehicle age for public transportation can also stimulate economic growth and job creation. As older vehicles are phased out, there will be an increased demand for newer vehicles, which will encourage investments in the automotive industry. This, in turn, can lead to the creation of new jobs, both in manufacturing and in related services such as vehicle maintenance, repair, and technology installation.

Abuja, like any major city, has faced its share of security concerns, including those related to taxis. While taxis are generally a convenient mode of transportation, there have been instances of security risks associated with them from incidents of 'one-chance' kidnapping, extortion, terrorism, rape, robberies, scams, harassment, violence and even cases of passengers being targeted by criminals posing as taxi



Wike

drivers. In Abuja, as well as in other cities in Nigeria and globally, there have been reports of security incidents involving taxis. Passengers have been advised to exercise caution when using taxis and to take certain precautions to ensure their safety some of which include but are not limited to:

- Using licensed taxis: Whenever possible, opt for registered and licensed taxis. These taxis are often subject to regulations and oversight, which can enhance passenger safety.
- Verifying Identity: Before entering a taxi, verify that the driver's identification and license are prominently displayed. Ensure that the vehicle has proper markings and identification as well.

- Sharing ride details: When taking a taxi, share your ride details with a friend or family member. This can include information about the taxi company, the driver's name, and the vehicle's license plate/plate number.
- Avoiding unmarked taxis: Avoid taking unmarked or unofficial taxis as they may not adhere to proper safety standards.

- Using ride-hailing apps: If available, consider using reputable ride-hailing apps that provide information about the driver, the vehicle, and the estimated fare.

- Sitting at the back: Whenever possible, sit at the back seat of the taxi. This provides some distance and security from the driver.

- Staying alert: Pay attention to the route the driver takes. If you suspect that you're being taken on an

unnecessarily long route, voice your concern.

- Trusting your instincts: If something doesn't feel right, don't hesitate to ask the driver to stop and exit the vehicle in a safe location.

It's important to note that security concerns can vary over time and in different areas of the city. The minister should ensure that local authorities, law enforcement, and transportation regulators take measures to address these concerns and ensure the safety of residents and visitors.

Ensuring the safety of passengers riding in Abuja green taxis, or any taxis for that matter, requires a multi-faceted approach that involves a combination of technology, regulations, public awareness, and cooperation between relevant stakeholders. Here are some potential solutions to guarantee the safety of passengers:

- Regulation and licensing: Strengthen the regulatory framework for taxi services in Abuja. Enforce strict licensing requirements for taxi drivers and vehicles, ensuring that all drivers undergo background checks, psychological tests, driving tests, and have valid licenses. Licensed taxis should display clear identification, including driver names and license numbers.

- Use of technology:
 - * GPS and tracking: Implement GPS technology in taxis to enable real-time tracking of routes and locations. This ensures that drivers are following safe and efficient

routes.

- * Emergency buttons: Integrate emergency buttons or panic alarms in taxis that passengers can use in case of emergencies or suspicious situations.

- * In-car cameras: Install cameras inside taxis to record both the driver and passenger areas, providing a record of the ride and acting as a deterrent against potential misconduct.

- Ride-hailing apps:

- * Encourage the use of reputable ride-hailing apps that provide passengers with detailed information about the driver, vehicle, and estimated fare before the ride begins.

- * Enable features like sharing ride details with friends or family members, as well as providing real-time tracking and SOS options through the app.

- Driver training:

- * Mandate comprehensive training for taxi drivers on customer service, safety protocols, and how to handle emergency situations.

- Provide education on appropriate behaviour and respectful treatment of passengers.

- Public awareness campaigns:

- * Launch public awareness campaigns to educate passengers about safety precautions they should take when using taxis. This includes sharing information about licensed taxis, using apps, and trusting their instincts.

- Law enforcement and monitoring:

- * Increase police presence and monitoring at taxi stands, major pick-up points, and high-traffic areas to deter criminal activity and ensure compliance with regulations.

- Feedback mechanisms:

- * Establish a feedback mechanism for passengers to report both positive and negative experiences with taxi services. Use this feedback to improve service quality and address safety concerns.

- Collaboration with taxi associations:

- * Work closely with taxi associations and unions to ensure that their members adhere to safety regulations and standards.

- * Involve associations in safety initiatives and campaigns to foster a sense of collective responsibility.

- Emergency response infrastructure:

- * Develop a robust emergency response infrastructure that enables quick response to distress calls or panic alarms from taxis.

- Public-private partnerships:

- * Foster collaborations between the government, law enforcement agencies, taxi companies, and technology providers to create a comprehensive safety ecosystem.

The FCT minister should remember that safety is an ongoing effort that requires continuous evaluation and adaptation. Regular assessments of the effectiveness of safety measures, along with adjustments based on emerging technologies and changing circumstances will be crucial to maintaining a safe environment for passengers using green taxis in Abuja.

As the FCT minister embarks on his journey to transform the Federal Capital Territory, the revitalization of the public transportation system must remain a priority. Restricting the use of vehicles for public transportation to those not older than 5-10 years is a visionary step that aligns with the city's aspirations for efficiency, security, and sustainability. By fostering a modernized fleet, Minister Wike can leave an indelible mark on Abuja, elevating it to the ranks of world-class cities with thriving public transportation systems.

With this crucial policy, Abuja has the potential to set an example for other cities in Nigeria and across the African continent. By embracing innovation, efficiency, and security, Wike can lead Abuja into a new era of urban mobility that benefits all its residents.

Alhassan, a concerned citizen, writes from Abuja.



Business & Economy

Summit: Africa's wealth must be revalued to reflect continent's true GDP

THE President of the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), Akinwunmi Adesina, has said the natural wealth of Africa must be revalued and reflected in its Gross Domestic Growth (GDP) to show the true wealth of the continent.

This is as Mr Adesina called on the developed countries to meet their climate financial commitments. He said it is the basis for conversations around climate change.

Mr Adesina, who listed the continent's natural resources including its vast forest, especially the Congo Basin and the renewable energy potential, said this on Tuesday at the opening of the Presidential Day Programme at the ongoing **Africa Climate Summit** in Nairobi, Kenya.

The AfDB President said adequately valuing the continent's wealth would determine its relationship with the developed world, especially in relation to their financial strength and capacity for transactions.

He said: "We must reevaluate the wealth of Africa; the need for reevaluation of the abundant resources of Africa including its vast forest such as the Congo Forest Basin which is worth a magnificent carbon market is very important.

"Africa's rich natural wealth is not accounted for in the estimation of its GDP. It is therefore not enough to praise Africa for its rich natural wealth, the GDP must take that into consideration. Therefore Africa's GDP must be revalued to capture its carbon deposit and biodiversity."

According to Mr Adesina, the developed countries pledged to commit \$100 billion annually for climate finance on the continent but he noted that the pledges have not been fulfilled.

"At the global level, the developed economies must meet their commitment to provide \$100 billion annually in climate finance. The global climate change finance architecture must be changed to prioritise the needs of Africa. At the national level, we must have real action for climate adaptation," he said.

Meanwhile, as part of the bank's efforts to mitigate the climate change consequences, especially for the youths of Africa, Mr Adesina announced a pledge of \$1 billion commitment to its Africa Youth Adaptation Programme.

He said the facility is provided in partnership with the Global Centre for Adaptation, noting that the gathering of the world leaders in Nairobi for the summit will make Africa's voice on climate change resonate across the world.

"The Africa Climate Summit will shape the future pathway of Africa's Development. We gathered here because the people of Africa want us to act; because the future of the youth of Africa is at stake, and because we must galvanise the global actions on climate change..."

Announcing the commitment, Mr Adesina said the \$1 billion facility will be for the bank's Youth Adaptation Programme,



Adesina

which he noted, is aimed at supporting the African youth's efforts at combatting the climate change crisis on the continent.

He said: "We must put the youth and the women at the core of climate financing. That is why the AfDB and the Global Climate Adaptation (GCA) are announcing here today \$1 billion for the Youth Adaptation Programme to accelerate access to financing for the youths. The youth are not just the youth of Africa but are the present of Africa."

Mr Adesina said AfDB is also rolling out the establishment of the Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank, for the businesses of the youth across Africa.

He also noted that AfDB is committed to providing \$25 billion towards climate Finance by 2025.

He said: "Africa must develop with what it has, not what it doesn't have. Africa is blessed with large resources for renewable energy in the world-solar, wind, etc. But we cannot power Africa with potential. We must be practical. That is why AfDB is investing \$20 billion in the African Power Programme to provide electricity for 250 million people of Africa."

He said Africa must use its natural gas and combine it with renewable resources, saying "The international energy agencies must ensure that by doing so, we will only add 0.5 per cent to global emissions."

He said Africa must ensure that African food and agriculture are climate-resilient, noting that AfDB's Agricultural Technology Finance Programme has provided 12 million farmers in 21 countries with climate-resilient agricultural technologies.

"Following the January Africa Food Summit in Dakar, AfDB has mobilised N72 billion to support African countries to deliver these food and agricultural deliverable components, to ensure food security and food sovereignty within five years," Mr Adesina said.

The Africa Climate Summit, which is themed: "Driving

Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World," is the inaugural effort by the African leaders to mobilise global leaders "with the crucial objective of delivering green growth and climate finance solutions, for Africa."

Throughout the event, heads of state who are joined by world leaders including the President of the European Union Commission, Ursula Leyen; representative of the American government and Special Presidential Envoy on Climate USA, John Kerry, among others, are expected to join forces to develop a united "stance on vital issues such as adaptation and resilience, renewable energy, sustainable development, food and water security, and financing for climate action on the African continent."

We'll deploy technology for civil service reforms – Tinubu

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu, on Monday, expressed his support for new partnerships with global technology companies to ensure that data from public institutions are accurate and transparent in providing templates on which proper public sector planning and accounting can occur across sectors.

Speaking at a meeting in the State House with the Global Vice President of Oracle, Andres Garcia Arroyo, Mr Tinubu welcomed the company's commitment to Nigeria's civil service reform process and data management sector, even as he emphasised the need for greater knowledge transfer through the establishment of academies and training institutions in the country.

Aiming to promote the ease of doing business, digital innovation, effective identity management, efficient payroll administration and qualitative citizen-centred service delivery, the President cited Oracle's proven success in the automation of the Lagos State payroll system during his

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Obasanjo

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cancelled the sale and returned the refineries to NNPC. Today, we are still where we were. Someone told me Tinubu said refineries would work by December. I told the person the refineries would not work. This is based on the information I received from Shell when I was the president."

On the power sector, Obasanjo said "You can only get the power sector right when you get all the fundamentals in the power sector right. In 2006, we ordered 42 turbines that should have been completed if not by 2007 then in 2008. My target was 10,000 megawatts of power by 2007."

"Up till today, I understand that five of the turbines have yet to be installed. I have been out of the office for 16 years. If after 18 years when those turbines had been ordered, five have still not been installed, what are you talking about?"

He said his administration did all it could do in the sector he left office, adding that it is still struggling with 4,000 megawatts since he left office.

the states of the Federation. We can only build our institutions with accurate.

"The transfer of knowledge is essential for our nation and the continent. In this government, we believe the only way to build our country is a bottom-up approach. From one single sheet of paper, we can create an end-to-end solution for public administration that will rid our service of its worst tendencies in favour of effectiveness and reliability," the President declared.

Expressing concern about Nigeria's bloated civil service payroll at the national and sub-national levels, the President stated: "Each time they give me the payroll number, I get so frightened. Where am I going to get the capital to develop the infrastructure we desperately require if the payroll of 1% – 2% of the population is consuming all the revenue? I think we need tight technological control that can check and balance all necessary control points of our transaction processes. I'm

looking forward to working with Oracle because I have the belief and confidence that you can do it as you have in the past."

In his remarks, the Global Vice President of Oracle proposed a comprehensive digital transformation of the work process at the federal level of administration to achieve greater macro-economic visibility, streamline government processes for cost and time savings, and provide the desired skills development opportunities for Nigerians.

"You have shown tremendous practical leadership throughout your career, Mr. President. We have partnered with you, and we know how determined you are to achieve all that you set out to achieve. This is why we are offering Nigeria a free national diagnostic of the present situation in the public service with a view to dimensioning across sectors the scale of solution required. We look forward to partnering with you again," the Oracle VP concluded.



Tinubu

tenure as the Lagos State Governor and lauded the positive impact of technological solutions in enhancing accountability and expediting timelines for service delivery without sacrificing quality in the process.

"I have tested Oracle, and it has worked for our success. In Lagos State, what we did in effective collaboration with you has been copied across



Business & Economy

NBS and the unemployment rate controversy

The other day, I was invited alongside some other economists, to a parley with the Statistician General (SG), to help critique their new methodology for labour-related statistics for Nigeria. The SG noted that this new framework was informed by the best practices of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). He informed the audience that in the past, they had considered anyone who worked less than 40 hours a week and was willing to take on more work as unemployed. Tope Fasua writes.

THIS led to several tens of millions being reported as unemployed in Nigeria, even as sheer hours of work became less relevant and the emphasis shifted to productivity, aided by technology. Later, they reduced that number according to international best practices, to 20 hours a week, with similar results. Nigeria's unemployment figures were always alarmingly high. And of course, that fits into the narrative that most Nigerians would desire. Whereas many Nigerians are suffering but it looks like we love to over-exaggerate our predicament at every turn – and this itself is a major problem because except a people feel positive about their country, they may not evolve to a better place. The 'doom and gloom' scenario to which we have become addicted needs to be ditched at some point. Nigerians must have to be convinced away from the idea that the country will only get worse. That is not a winning attitude.

It must be said that our expectations in this country especially – more than even any other black African nation I know and/or have been to – diverges a lot from the expectations of say the western societies whom we try to benchmark with our economy. Nigerians are generally very aspirational. But unfortunately, our actions are usually about self-aggrandisement and not the collective. This is what plays out in our politics and why some politicians see nothing wrong in appropriating what belongs to the commonwealth. But down the rank and file, it is basically a case of me, me, me! Many Nigerians have this migrated abroad, only to find that beyond the façade, many citizens of those countries are passing through sheer hell as well, only saved by the products of centuries of collective thinking and provisions! But here, we talk about our glorious past. We have so many princes of different royal ancestries, many of whom carry on like they should be served. Our religiousness emphasizes how we should get favours from God and how we should be the richest in our society. Some sects emphasise getting so much money and riches for little work, or for nothing. All these nuances need to be figured out in our quest for collective socioeconomic development – whenever it starts in earnest. I'm afraid that successive governments often focus on the hard numbers but often totally ignore the softer side of things – without which they labour in vain until the tide turns against them. I am advising the current administration not to make the same mistake. There has to be immediate plans to engage the public on some of the issues I mentioned above, as most Nigerians may miss that point when the country actually begins to make progress – with the suffusing pall of negativity that chokes the land and those who dwell therein.

I read quite a few commentaries that are dismissive of the new methodology which dropped Nigeria's unemployment rate to 4.1 per cent. But I think we should understand that there are merits and demerits. And the methodology forces us all to think about critical issues in the labour space today.

First, the ILO is the United Nations body supervening labour issues worldwide, so at some point we must



Adeyemi

adhere to their improving standards. The NBS further says many countries have internalized these new guidelines. However, the NBS is basing its survey on 35,520 households. It is unclear whether the NBS has been using same database for a while or if it shifts its surveys spatially and geographically to get new perspectives. Also, the NBS has to explain to the public why it chose to survey only 35,520 households. Is that number representative enough for 200 million+ people – depending on whom you believe? I have personally not been surveyed by the NBS and honestly don't know anyone who has. Again, this throws up the usual cynicism, among ordinary Nigerians – just as happened when we heard that the Buhari government (working with the World Bank) came up with a list of 60 million Nigerians who live in poverty. Don't blame us if we disbelieve, work on your methodology.

Now, the NBS says that three-quarters, or 73.6 per cent – 76.7 per cent of working-age Nigerians were employed because they did more than 1 hour of paid work (or for profit) in a week. People are asking if one hour of work in Nigeria is good enough even if someone chooses not to do more work. The amount earned by people who work for one hour a week will differ considerably, with techies earning a lot but casual workers being unable to survive on their earnings. A high-flying executive in many industries does not need more than one hour of work in a week, but an artisan who says one hour of work in a week is enough surely needs help. The NBS report also says that 36.4 per cent and 33.2 per cent of working-age Nigerians worked for less than 40 hours in the period under survey (Q4, 2022 and Q1, 2023) but did not seek more work. "Underemployment rate (which is a share of employed people working less than 40 hours per week and declaring themselves willing and available to work more) was 13.7 % in

Q4 2022 and 12.2% in Q1 2023", the NBS declared. The bureau further stated that wage employment accounted for only 13.4 per cent and 11.8 per cent in Q4, 2022 and Q1, 2023 respectively while a whopping 73.1 per cent in Q4, 2022 and 75.4 per cent in Q1, 2023 were operating their own businesses or into farming! The balance of 10.7 per cent in Q4, 2022 and 10.6 per cent in Q1, 2023 were either "engaged helping in a household business" or serving as apprentices/interns (2.6 per cent in Q4, 2022 and 2.2 per cent in Q1, 2023). This means that of all the people 'working' in Nigeria, roughly 85 per cent were engaged 'on their own', hustling, serving as apprentices, doing 'buying and selling', or generally in the informal sector. This is shameful, sad, and scary. This leaves a balance of 5.3 per cent in Q4, 2022 and 4.1 per cent in Q1, 2023 that could be considered as truly unemployed, according to the NBS. But obviously, Nigeria is in deep trouble.

The NBS concluded that "22.3% of the working age population were out of labour force in Q4 2022, while it was 20.1% in Q1, 2023". This may mean that this category is not looking for employment. Why? Could they all be infirm? Or for some reason zoned out and unwilling to work? I think this is where the real work is. We should have a much smaller percentage of young or working-age people who are unwilling to work in a country with so much problems and pining for labour.

Again, providing for the shortcomings of a small sample size, this survey by the NBS tells a story.

1. The face of work has changed the world over. Young people these days no longer think of work as some 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. or 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. place to go. And oftentimes, the old format is inefficient.

2. Perhaps many young Nigerians are simply no longer

interested in work. Why? They are now exposed to the 'developed' world and all the glitz via the internet and the plethora of social media handles. Leaders too have not done much work in psychoanalysing the youths of today in designing policies. Nigerian youths can no longer be bothered to do the heavy lifting of building a nation from scratch. Many have stopped trying and are just waiting to 'japa' through any means. Many are also deluded about what it takes to become successful in life and many think 'abroad' is a place of enjoyment. Many would also rather be pranksters, bloggers or Big Brother 'soft porn' stars – anything for a big haul of money. Even the children of the rich, sponsored to very expensive schools home and abroad would rather be musicians or Deejays (who work at night or never have to work at all since their work is also their play).

3. A recent report in **The PUNCH** details how there is a drastic drop in apprenticeships and skills learning in Nigeria. This is a scary prospect because the skills we are talking about play very critical role in society – carpenters, mechanics, tailors, welders, technicians, electricians, plumbers etc. Most of the workers (bosses) interviewed say they no longer have young people coming in as apprentices. Most say that less than 2 per cent of those who come bother to learn the work before leaving. For most boys from poorer homes in the south of Nigeria, the allure of yahoo-yahoo is way too strong. For the rich or middle-class ones, learning such skills does not even come up as everyone desires a degree. Even the world-famous Igbo apprenticeship system is waning out. Fewer and fewer boys remain in the villages to be picked up by big men for training. Most are already hardened and searching for big bucks in their teenage years. And for those who bother to sound savvy in and out of

government, the focus is on technology. Can we focus on technology and abandon these core skills? Who will repair our cars and plumbing in the future? Are we deluding ourselves that we can leap over into the tech future without taking care of these 'dirty jobs'? The future is bleak in this regard. We are rudderless and rootless.

4. Roughly 85 per cent of the Nigerian economy is informal – full of hustlers. Yet Nigeria is pushing more of her youths into 'entrepreneurship'. Our understanding of 'entrepreneurship' here is shallow and used as an excuse for successive governments to shirk their responsibility of organising society, creating adequate public sector jobs to ensure proper manning of public amenities. We cite the example of small-scale industries in China being the fulcrum of their economy, but deliberately ignore that small scale industries in China, Germany, USA and elsewhere are capacitated to produce tangible things and engage in massive exports. Most of our biggest businessmen/entrepreneurs (who are mere agents of the industries in these countries), only go as far as dealing with small scale players out there. We should not deceive ourselves.

5. If the NBS intends to use this one-hour-per-week benchmark, it should remember that we are comparing apples with oranges at some level. A majority of Nigeria's workforce are stuck at subsistence level – as maibolas, chewing gum sellers inside traffic and so on, until they get tired and become liability upon the country. Whereas the NBS report has presented the data from a global angle, same data needs to be discombobulated to allow for Nigerian nuances. A youth working in MacDonalds in the US for example has many opportunities to grow even in the same sector, and to live a fulfilled life. I am speaking here about the fundamental and foundational damage to our social system which render most of our youths as illiterate, unemployable, despondent and unable to scale their usefulness to society beyond that petty hustle they do. So, as I advised the SG in that parley, perhaps we don't want to use 1-hour as benchmark. Perhaps we want to make that like 10 hours a week (two hours a day), in determining who is fully employed. Or we want to evolve more granular data that separates top earners as fully employed, but those earning meagre amounts with no prospects for bettering themselves, as unemployed. It is indeed unfair to consider everyone working for one hour as fully employed. Also, we need to look into the kind of survey questions that make such a large number of people say they don't need more work!

I expect a lot more acerbic reaction in the next few days... But at least this strikes up a good debate that allows us to dissect our many problems with our population, productivity, youth engagement, job creation, government responsibility, private sector contributions, artificial intelligence, technology in general, our several experimentation with petty entrepreneurship, and what the future holds for our dear nation. These are crucial times indeed.

Politics

NNPP's "petition is not well founded" - INEC

From **VICTOR GAI, Jalingo**

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), claimed the petition of Professor Sani Yahaya of the NNPP at the Taraba Governorship Election Petition Tribunal was not well founded because they did not do enough in challenging any irregularities during the election.

Professor Sani Yahaya of NNPP is challenging the election of Agbu Kefas of the PDP in the March 18 governorship election.

In the sitting recently at the Magistrate Court, Jalingo, venue of the tribunal, parties to the suit have adopted their written addresses, preparatory to passing of judgment by the tribunal.

Counsel to INEC, Emeka Okoro said: "Lawyers to the various parties adopted their written addresses and adumbrated as to why, on the part of the respondents, the petition should be dismissed and the petitioners have adopted and adumbrated as to why the petition should succeed.

"And the position of INEC is that the petitioners did not do enough to challenge the presumption of irregularity that the petition enjoys. In addition, the petitioners substantially abandoned their petition, like what they are asking the tribunal to grant, is alternative reliefs. In other words, they have expressly abandoned the main reliefs they are claiming. That one on its own shows that the petition



Yakubu

is not well founded".

In his submission, Lead Counsel to Agbu Kefas, Kanu Agabi SAN said the petition challenging the election of Agbu Kefas as Governor of Taraba State should be dismissed.

He pointed out that the petition was not supported by valid witnesses and facts that are authentic.

On over voting, Agabi agreed that it was a corrupt practice which the petitioners were unable to establish.

Counsel to the petitioner, Ibrahim Isiaka stated that they relied on non accreditation of voters, improper accreditation and alteration of form EC8A as grounds for their petition.

He added that evidence from BVAS showed that the number of accredited voters were far less than votes cast for the PDP.

Isiaka said INEC ought not to have declared the governorship result in Taraba State since there were cases of shooting between the army and the police around the INEC office in Jalingo.

Governor Agbu Kefas witnessed the session accompanied by his deputy, Aminu Alkali, Speaker of the Taraba State House of Assembly John Kizito Bonzena, Secretary to the Government of the State (SGS) Gebon Kataps, Commissioners and party supporters.

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

KOGI State Commissioner of Police, Bethrand Onuoha has asked the general public to disregard allegations of planned attack on supporters of the SDP Governorship candidate, Muritala Yakubu Ajaka as insinuated by the Director of Communications of his campaign organization.

The Police boss in a statement issued by the Command's spokesman (PPRO), SP William Aya and made available to newsmen in Lokoja recently, described the purported claim as perfidious and malicious.

The statement reads as follows: "The attention of the Kogi State Police Command has been drawn to a fake, incendiary, perfidious, malicious and misleading allegations making the rounds by one Faruk Adejoh-Audu, Director Communications Muritala Yakubu Ajaka, Gubernatorial Campaign Organization to the effect that, the Commissioner of Police Bethrand Onuoha plans attack on Ajaka supporters in Kogi LGA.

"The Command wishes to emphatically and categorically state that, the statement is not only the figment of the imagination of Faruk Adejoh-Audu and his political candidate, Yakubu Ajaka who has mastered the art of political gimmickry and brigandage, but totally false, malicious, pretentious, and highly mischievous.

"The Commissioner of Police who upon assumption of duty one month ago has

'Disregard allegations of planned attack on SDP supporters'



Egbetokun

so far demonstrated a high level of professionalism by providing a level playing ground for all political parties and their candidates to operate in the state should not be dragged into politics.

"The SDP candidate and his campaign organization should leave the Police alone and focus on issues-based campaigns and soliciting for support from the electorate instead of resorting to cheap blackmail, bullying and arm-twisting for political sympathy from the public who already know their tricks, gimmicks and antecedents. The entire narrative to injure, assassinate and malign the hard-earned reputation and integrity of the Commissioner of Police is the height of insensitivity, callousness, self-serving and emblematic of desperation, vindictiveness, a propensity for destructiveness and to

salivate the insidious and vaulting political ambition of a psychopath.

"It would be recalled that, on 3rd June, 2023 along Abuja-Lokoja road, the SDP candidate, Muritala Yakubu Ajaka and his supporters blocked and attacked the convoy of the Executive Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello at Bandar, some kilometers away from Lokoja. During the attack, some of the governor's aides sustained varying degrees of injuries. All efforts, invitations and entreaties to come and give his own side of the incident has come to nought. Yet he has been moving around the nooks and crannies of the state without any molestation even when he has no immunity. The case is still under Investigation.

"In a democracy, freedom of expression is a right, but it must be accompanied by responsibility, not to hide under its guise to spin out lies, falsehood, innuendos and sensationalism. It shows the writer and his sponsors have no decorum, decency, intellect, and are oblivious of the legal consequences of defamation and assassination of character.

"The Commissioner of Police hereby appeals to Muritala Yakubu Ajaka and his campaign organization to leave him alone, stop all the negative write-ups and incompetent. Adding that, it is a frivolous allegations aimed at under-mining the spirited crime-fighting efforts of the Police in Kogi State and whipping up sentiment against them and heating up the state for no just cause.

"And to the good and peace loving, highly enlightened, Politically sophisticated citizens of Kogi State, the Commissioner of Police urges you all to disregard and discountenance such mischievous and malicious information, and to be wary of being hoodwinked by merchants of violence, but instead gravitate towards issues that unite the state rather than those that divide you, please," the statement concludes.

Gov. Alia swears-in commissioners, special advisers

GOVERNOR Hyacinth Alia of Benue State has charged the newly sworn-in commissioners to work tirelessly to ensure that they add value to the lives of the people they serve.

Governor Alia gave the charge recently during the swearing-in ceremony of 17 commissioners and 23 Special Advisers held at the new banquet hall, Government House Makurdi.

The governor who congratulated the commissioners on their appointments, charged them to quickly familiarise themselves with their various ministries, adding that their appointment marks the beginning of a new Benue.

Alia promised to introduce key performance indicators which will be used in monitoring performances of the Commissioners. And reminded them that their appointment was not a mere title or position of power but a sacred contract forged between them and citizens of the state.

Governor Alia told the commissioners to anticipate challenges while carrying out their duties, he however implored them to face such with courage, determination and resilience thereby making lasting and meaningful impacts on the lives of people of the state.

While calling on people of the state to embrace peace, the governor cautioned those making inflammatory statements with the motive of dividing the state, to desist forthwith, insisting that the

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

people must show love to one another as well as to constituted authorities.

Responding on behalf of the new appointees, Rev. Dr. Fredrick Ikyaan for commissioners and Dr. Dennis Akura for special advisers in their separate remarks thanked people of Benue and the governor for trusting them to serve the state and promised to do their best to support the governor to move the state forward.

The new commissioners and their portfolios are Mrs. Joy Luga - Cooperatives, Urban & Rural Development, Barr. Oga Matthew Omale - Power & Transport, Rev. Dr. Frederick Ikyaan - Education & Knowledge Management, Hon. Ugwu Ameh Odoh - Water Resources, Environment & Climate Change, Hon. Kwaghba Amande - ICT & Digital Economy and Aboh Matthew Mnoh - Information, Culture & Tourism.

Others are Hon. Tiza Orya Imojime- Works & Housing, Hon. Kunde Aondowase - Humanitarian Affairs & Disaster Management, Prof. Ogbaji Moses Ikape - Agriculture, Barr. Martins T. Shaager - Lands, Survey & Solid Minerals, Hon. Michael Oglegba - Finance, Budget & Economic Planning, Mrs. Ann Itodo - Women Affairs & Social Welfare, Barr. Fidelis Mnyim - Attorney General & Commissioner for Justice &

Public Order, Rt. Hon. Terkimbi Ikyange - Youths, Sports & Creativity, Rt. Hon. Nick Eworo - Science, Technology & Innovation as well as Hon. Orpin Manasseh Alumo - Commerce & Industries.

Meanwhile, separate

Kaduna Guber Election: Conflicting results emerge from INEC - Ashiru

By **JOHN FWAH, Kaduna**

GUBERNATORIAL candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) for the March 18, 2023 general elections, Hon. Isa Ashiru, has revealed that two conflicting election results emerged from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Kaduna State.

The guber candidate made this known at the tribunal sitting in Kaduna recently. He further emphasised that election results were changed in favour of the ruling All Progressives Party (APC) in the state.

After adopting his final written addresses before the three-man panel of the tribunal, Ashiru through his Lead Counsel, Oluwoleyamu explained that INEC is responsible for the manipulation of election results.

In his final written addresses, Ashiru also alleged over-voting and abuse of electoral processes, while calling for the reversal of the INEC

retreats have been scheduled for both Commissioners and the Special Advisers slated for Monday and Tuesday 5th and 6th September, 2023 during which portfolios will be assigned to the Special Advisers.

declaration that produced the incumbent Governor of Kaduna State, Dr. Uba Sani.

On the issue of not being able to call polling unit agents as one of the witnesses, Ashiru's

Lead Counsel further explained that manipulation of election results were not done at the polling units but within the ambit of INEC. Therefore, there is no need for calling any agents as a witness.

"Election results were not changed at the polling units, but that was done outside the polling units before they were declared at the INEC office in favour of APC. Our agents at the polling units of other parties were all given their duplicate copies from which we confirm that the petitioners actually won the election.

"Neither INEC nor Uba Sani produced contrary original or duplicate copies respectively to disprove our agents' certified duplicate copies. We have conflicting results both from INEC, and all were

Politics

NNPP crisis: Only Kwankwaso has the solution

As the crisis in the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) rages on, key stakeholders of the group say that Sen. Rabiu Kwankwaso, its presidential candidate, is in the best position to restore order.

SOME of them, who spoke with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), said Kwankwaso was the party's leader who could easily end the raging bad blood by calling a family meeting.

NAN reports that the party recently got enmeshed in a crisis with one faction suspending Kwankwaso and many other top notchers over alleged anti-party activities.

The group specifically accused him of hobnobbing with opponents of the NNPP.

Another group, while reacting to the reported suspension of Kwankwaso, expelled Dr Boniface Aniebonam, founder of the party and former Chairman, Board of Trustees.

With the party swimming in such confusion, stakeholders have suggested a meeting to iron out the issues and chart a way forward.

One such stakeholder is Mr Mordecai Ibrahim, a House of Assembly candidate in Kaduna State.

"Sen. Rabiu Kwankwaso as the leader of the party should call a meeting where we can carry out a post-mortem on the 2023 general elections.

"All factions must sheathe their swords and allow internal democracy.

"The party must put an end to all forms of highhandedness. We must tolerate each other's excesses.

"No one is fighting Kwankwaso in NNPP. He must call a meeting quickly because we are loosing members in droves," he said.

A national official of the party, who pleaded anonymity, spoke in the same vein.

"Sen. Kwankwaso should say something. His silence is too loud. His silence is affecting the party's breath," he told NAN in a telephone interview.

Contacted, Dr Aniebonam said that the subject matter is a family issue.

"It is my hope that Senator Kwankwaso will recover quickly from avoidable circumstances.

"I have not made any public statement over what is going on in the party, neither has Kwankwaso.

"The party has boys that are merely struggling for

relevance and stomach with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), said that Kwankwaso was the party's leader who could easily end the raging bad blood by calling a family meeting.

"I am aware that Sen. Kwankwaso may be really very angry because he had advised over the rascality of the illegitimate group.

"But, I can assure you that whatever happens, NNPP shall come out stronger after these avoidable circumstances.

"It is just part of politics and society. What is most important to me and Sen. Kwankwaso at the moment is the Kano State standoff and enthronement of good governance," he said.

Aniebonam urged Nigerians to put his people in the NNPP into prayers.

"I particularly want Nigerians to pray for Kwankwaso and the governor of Kano State to overcome challenges of good governance and envy," he said.



Kwankwaso

... terminates deal with Kwankwasiya movement

THE new national leadership of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) has announced the withdrawal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that the former leaders of the party signed with the Kwankwasiya Movement.

It noted that the principles of the Kwankwasiya Movement were targeted at massaging the ego of its sole owner and not in line with the party's policies of openness and inclusivity.

The new leadership under the chairmanship of Dr Agbo Gilbert Major, also announced its resolve to overhaul the party's structures across all levels nationwide.

These disclosures were contained in a statement signed by the acting national publicity secretary of NNPP, AbdulSalam AbdulRasaq, a copy of which was made available to Blueprint in Ilorin, Kwara state, recently.

The new leadership of NNPP has, therefore, called on its

numerous members and supporters to remain calm in the face of "this brazen assault of the Kwankwasiya movement whose members were erroneously made to believe the party is sold to them and called on all aggrieved and displaced members who left for whatever reason to return home."

The statement reads: "The new leadership of New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) under Dr Agbo Gilbert Major, its maiden meeting at the Abuja National Secretariat and after a review of the situation resulting from the gross mismanagement of the party in the past one year came out with the following resolutions:

"To conduct a thorough probe into the mismanagement of well over one billion naira (N1b) raised from the sale of forms to aspirants between March 2022 and today. The meeting resolved to invite relevant security

agencies to properly examine the accounts of the party with a view to demanding explanations from the party's presidential candidate, the party's chairman who left in March 2023, the sacked acting chairman and the national secretary. This is to restore confidence of party members/candidates who came forward with their hard earned money to purchase forms.

"The party queried the rationale for location of the Situation Room to the presidential candidate's personal residence. It noted that the illegal location created room for the massive corruption and manipulation leading to imposition of candidates by Buba Galadima and his co-travellers and resolved to set up a committee to launch a probe into it. It therefore called for written complaints from aggrieved candidates who were shortchanged after making

payments for forms into the party's account.

"The party resolved to query the rationale behind the denial of other presidential aspirants the right to purchase form and participate in the primary election that illegally produced Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso insisting that it was against the spirit of fairness and equity which our great party preaches.

"The party confirmed its withdrawal from the Memorandum Of Understanding signed by it with the Kwankwasiya Movement and TNM insisting that the principles of these two groups are targeted at massaging the ego of its sole owner and so not in line with the party's policies of openness and inclusivity.

"The party called on its numerous members and supporters to remain calm in the face of this brazen assault of the Kwankwasiya movement whose members were erroneously made to believe the party is sold to them and called on all aggrieved and displaced members who left for whatever reason to return home.

"The party resolved to overhaul its structures across all levels nationwide in the coming days and weeks.

Source: Blueprint

The new leadership under the chairmanship of Dr Agbo Gilbert Major, also announced its resolve to overhaul the party's structures across all levels nationwide. These disclosures were contained in a statement signed by the acting national publicity secretary of NNPP, AbdulSalam AbdulRasaq, a copy of which was made available in Ilorin, Kwara state, recently.

IMAGES

GOVERNOR MUTFWANG UNVEILS PLSG 7 POLICY THRUST

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang on Monday declared open a Five Day Retreat and Training for the State Ministry, Budget and Economic Planning with the Theme. "The Green Cap Vision and Seven Point Policy Thrust for inclusive Budgetary Engagement the Time is now for Good Governance on the Plateau. His Excellency also unveiled the 7 policy thrust of his administration at the Carter Conlon Conference and Retreat Center, No.1 Laminga Drive, Liberty Dam road, Gwafan, Jos



Governor Mutfwang (left) unveiling the 7 Point Thrust of the Green Cap Administration, flanked by the Commissioner, Budget and Economic Planning, Hon. Chrysantus Dawam, FCNA, HoS, Barr. Rautha Dakok and Permanent Secretary, Mr. Peter Lamba Bot



Head of Civil Service, Barr. Rautha Dakok (right) Yilritmwa Goyol of Olive-Edge Consulting Group Nigeria Ltd, at the hightable



Cross section of members of the state Executive Council



Dr. Uzochukwu Amakom from Nigerian Governors Forum Secretariat presenting Power Point on Untapped Opportunities and Areas of Linkages



Cross section of Permanent Secretaries in the State Civil Service



Governor Mutfwang, Commissioners, Permanent Secretaries and Chairmen Local Government Service Commission, Hon. Simon Tangni (right) displaying the 7 Point Policy Thrust on flex



Cross section of Resource Persons at the opening ceremony



Perm-Sec, Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Mr. Peter Lamba Bot (right) making some remarks before the launching of the Policy Thrust

Photos: DANLADI DUK

Politics

Imo: Many off-cycle governorship troubles

Imo state, often referred to as the Eastern Heartland, has come into sharp focus again as the November 11 off cycle governorship election draws near. Before the preparations for the governorship election, the state had been in the news for the wrong reasons, considering the spate of insecurity in the land to the extent that observers are worried that "the state is gradually becoming a Boko Haram state. EMEKA NZE writes.

THE state capital and environs hitherto known for its conviviality due to flourishing hospitality industry has become a nightmare not only to tourists but for the natives. Consequent upon this, investors have taken flight from the state in their large numbers.

On the faces of the people is palpable fear, the fear of being killed by those known as "unknown" gunmen. Many people/citizens have been victims of the unknown gunmen which not only affected the free movements in the state by citizens but also reduced Diaspora visits", an Owerri indigene said.

Worse still, the Mondays observed as sit-at-home due to order by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has crippled the state's economy.

Rather than find a lasting solution to the problems politicians in the state have stoked tension and promises by the state government to route out the menace has been observed in breach.

When Governor Hope Uzodinma sometimes ago promised to name the masterminds, people had had a relief but up till now, nobody has been fingered.

He had told Channels Television "In a few weeks' time – what we have deployed now, we will soon unravel those behind the killings and insecurity in Imo state."

Uzodinma has repeatedly attributed insecurity in Imo state to politics. But when quizzed about the possibility of unveiling the culprits, he vowed to tackle the menace, saying he has charged security agencies to fish out those responsible for the menace.

However, as the governorship election draws near, things seem to have returned to normal except for the obvious disruptions of peace by the politicians.

Many politicians have rolled their sleeves and tend to defy the fear of the unknown. The state once again is bustling with activities as the politicians are moving freely to do their campaigns.

Three major candidates and their parties are the cynosure of all eyes. Hope Uzodinma of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) is seeking for reelection even though he was declared governor by the Supreme Court; National Secretary of the party Senator Samuel Anyanwu (Sam Daddy) is flying the flag of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) while the Labour Party (LP) is fielding Senator Achonu.

Opinions are rife that if there is any tension in the state now, it is only masterminded by the politicians and their supporters who in their intrigues to outsmart one another allegedly



Yakubu

unleash arson, mayhem and killings.

Just few days ago, there was an outcry by the Labour Party faithful who came out in large numbers in protest of alleged intimidation by the state government. According to the group, agents working for the state government attacked the Labour Party office in Owerri.

The spokesman of the group was quick to say, "We want the world to know that Labour Party is under attack in Imo state. Hope Uzodinma sent his thugs and policemen to attack the office of Labour Party, Let it be known that Hope Uzodinma has declared war on Labour Party, He has declared war on Imolites, he has declared war on Ndi Igbo."

Last Wednesday at an interactive meeting with some journalists in Abuja, the governorship candidate of the

Peoples Democratic Party, PDP in the November 11 governorship elections in Imo state, Senator Samuel Anyanwu acknowledged that "the state is gradually turning to a Boko Haram state."

The PDP governorship hopeful noted with dismay that the level of insecurity in Imo state "has driven away investors and thrown some young people into labour market."

Senator 'Sam Daddy' Anyanwu, warned the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) against acts that may tilt the outcome of the poll against the expressed will of Imo people.

He vowed to resist any ploy to use thugs or any untoward means to rig the November 11 election.

The PDP candidate also vowed not to compromise or rig the poll, saying that the choice of Imo people must be allowed to prevail to guarantee good governance of the state.

Anyanwu made a passionate appeal to security agencies to heed the cry of Imo people and allow them choose their governor in a violence free environment.

Anyanwu lamented, "Imo has for sometime witnessed so much mis-governance by successive administrations and needed conscientious leaders to pull it out from the brink", urging all people of good will to join hands and confront the steady decline of the state and restore its lost glory.

"The state has been tethering on a N207 billion debt burden and with nothing to show for it in terms of infrastructure, investment in education and health with other development indices now in total comatose.

The PDP National Secretary promised to revamp the economy, ramp up investment in education and health sectors while allowing the local government to function without interference from the state governor.

He observed that a situation where only 23 doctors are currently working in the state health institutions and general hospitals tells a lot about the decay of the sector and the healthcare needs of Imo people.

Anyanwu, who harped his pedigree as two-term local government area chairman, senator and national secretary of a big party, maintained that he stands head and shoulders above other competitors.

Senator Anyanwu, who is also the National Secretary of the PDP, debunked the insinuation that he is a placeholder for the state governor, Senator Hope Uzodinma in the forthcoming elections.

He urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to use the Imo governorship elections to redeem its image that was allegedly

battered in the 2023 general elections.

"Imo people voted for the PDP, in the 2019 governorship election which was upturned by the Supreme Court in favour of Uzodinma, and we will resist such unfortunate scenario repeating itself if I'm declared winner.

"The opposition political parties in the state participating in the forthcoming elections have resolved to resist any form of rigging by anybody, no matter the person's political party.

He further said, "My interest is having served as two time LGA Chairman, two time House of Assembly member and a senator, I understand the pains of Imolites and no every nooks and crannies of Imo state.

"My aim is to bring back Imo state to its past glory. I know the perception Imo state has out the state and Imo is gradually becoming Boko Haram State. I believe that men if good wills, should rise up to say enough is enough."

On the allegation that he is a placeholder, Senator Anyanwu said, "People said I wanted go and be a placeholder for someone, I can't be a placeholder for a colleague of mine, somebody I dwarfed in the senate.

Among all the candidates, I understand Imo better because all those who have ruled Imo from 1999 gave not lived in Imo."

On any attempt to rig the election, he said, "I will not rig this election, I want Imo people to vote their conscience, let every vote count because I am going to resist any attempt to rig the November election in Imo

"I am ready for free and fair election, if I contest and lose, I will take it and go home but I will resist every attempt to use thugs to cart away results.

"I urge INEC to use this opportunity to redeem itself and to security agencies to help Imo recover from this ugly situation we are in now."

On how he intends to stop court from upturning his victory like what happened to the former governor Emeka Ihedioha, he said, "That is what we are doing now at the tribunal. Imo is a PDP state.

"With what is going on now, Imo people want PDP back, the APC government we have now is an aberration. Imo people never voted APC. It was Supreme court that voted for APC.

"This is the first time APC is going to contest for governorship election in Imo. I know that when I win and I know I. Will win, supreme court will not take it from me."

News

Gov. Bala goes tough on charcoal dealers

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State has vowed to go hard on enemies of the state's environment, the illegal charcoal business men and women in Bauchi.

Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, made this known recently while launching the 2023 Tree Planting campaign at Dungal village in Bauchi LGA.

Mohammed lamented that the state government is overwhelmed by activities of such criminals who are bent on illegal felling of trees despite efforts to stop them. The governor explained that the problem is aggravated by members of the traditional council in the villages who collaborate with the criminals to do charcoal business.

"This is a great day to accentuate and reaffirm our commitment to our environment. Our dedication to fight and survive as a people, irrespective of climate change."

The governor laments a situation where a number of people care less but continue doing things that will lead to drought, deforestation, flooding, hunger amongst others, which are attributed to climate change.

"We have to work on our ecosystem, it is a harmonious call. It is an organism. We are all part of the system. The universe is devastated by our activities, but certainly we appear to be overwhelmed by the activities of criminals, those who don't want to listen, those who wish to disobey and cause problems for all of us."

"Our trees are being felled. Charcoal business has become the business of the day. We have been arresting them everyday. Somehow, we have willing collaborators in our leaders, political leaders like me and you and members of the traditional institution in the villages who give the right of way to do charcoal."

"Even in our towns, people are allowed to build in the flood drain, constituting dangers to themselves and others. Definitely, this day, we are coming to this extent to show that tree planting is the way to go for sustainable development."

"We need to come together to fight for our survival. We need to take back our environment. We need to assure our future generation that we want to live, that we want to survive. We have to go by a legislation, by persuasion and enforcement. We will not close our eyes and leave anybody, no matter how highly placed to devastate our environment. From today, we have declared war against charcoal business in Bauchi State"

He called on all the stakeholders in the state to cultivate the culture of planting trees, saying that the government is working with a lot of organizations globally to plant more trees that will



Bala

become a big forest, thereby safeguarding the environment.

In his welcome address earlier, the Bauchi State Commissioner of Ministry of Housing and Environment, Danlami Ahmed Kawule, said that planting trees will help in

securing the future of the unborn generation.

He said that planting trees is not only majestic and beautiful but is essential for human survival in order to provide people with oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide and regulate the climate for our good.

SFH/DISC train providers on DISC empathy counseling skills

BY **EZEKIEL DONTINNA**

THE Society for Family Health (SFH) and Delivery Innovation in Self-Care (DISC), have trained various providers from the six (6) Northern Senatorial District Local Government Area of Plateau State, on DISC empathy counseling skills towards supporting clients on their SI journey.

This, they did in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health, Plateau State Ministry of Health and the State Primary Health Care Board with Implementing Partners to increase participants' capacity on proper recording of Family Planning Services using the NHMIS and NLMIS tools to help address challenges with data quality in FP reporting at facilities, LGA and state level reporting.

Speaking shortly after the training, Lola Raji, of Society For Family Health and DISC Project, said, "What we are doing is to have a core creation workshop. The core creation workshop happened

on Monday where we sat with all the State Actors to look at the implementation of DISC Project in the state and be able to discuss and identify sustainable plans.

"When I said sustainable plans, we are looking at the interventions that DISC is doing to rescue it and be able to take it forward. So, we actually identified the cost effectiveness of the intervention that the State Government through the Ministry of Health and the Primary Healthcare Agency can be able to do at little or no cost that is at very cost effective rate.

"So, we are doing what we call the Data Strengthening Capacity Building Support for the state where we have all the 17 LG M&E Officers and SP Supervisors. We are using this opportunity to provide them with what we call Empathy Based Counseling Training to give providers the knowledge, skills and confidence for them to be able to support women to soft inject", she highlighted.

Raji, further explained that they were also looking at



By **DORCAS PANKYES**

THE Nigerian Army (NA) has announced its partnership with the United Nations Office for Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) in an effort to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) of the Nigerian Army, expressed the army's willingness to collaborate with UNOCT during their meeting at the Army Headquarters in Abuja recently.

Lieutenant General Lagbaja emphasized the importance of this partnership as Nigeria takes the lead in regional counter-terrorism efforts. The COAS highlighted the Nigerian Army's success in capturing large numbers of surrendered Boko Haram terrorists through both kinetic and non-kinetic operations.

The army has also been conducting disarmament and demobilization processes in line with international best practices. Lieutenant General Lagbaja stated that the visit from UNOCT will further enhance global, regional, and national responses to terrorism by promoting partnership and capacity building.

During the meeting, Mr.

HMRS Register for M&E and SP Coordinators to understand the indicators and be able to report properly. "As it is, we are trying to bridge the gap between the programmatic based data and we are picking from the HMRS," she explained.

"We went into the facility and saw that the facility is doing so much, but all the records and art works are not showing in the National Data Based which is HMRS. What we are doing is use this opportunity to look into register and the monthly summary form, identify the teething challenges so that we will be able to bridge that gap", she explained.

The SFH/DISC Officer assured participants from the six Local Government Areas that they would showcase the good work that Plateau State was doing and provide a data for better decision making at all levels- be it at local government, state and at the national levels respectively.

However, the AP Coordinator of the Plateau State Primary Health Care Board, Mrs Asabe Mwansat, commended the training done to them on data capacity strengthening and that it has helped them to understand the importance of data keeping because it would enable their sponsors to know what they are doing and also helped reduce the maternal morbidity rate.

There were presentations by Mr. Fidelis on DISC Empathy - Based Counseling/Data Reporting using the NHMIS and NLMIS Tools and Mopelola, on Data Quality: Addressing Data Issues as it was moderated by Joyce respectively.

Nigeria Army partners UNOCT to combat terrorism



Lagbaja

Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary General of UNOCT, expressed the office's commitment to deepening its partnership with the Nigerian Army. Mr. Voronkov emphasized the need for increased multilateral collaboration to address the evolving terrorism threat in Africa.

In a separate development, the COAS also received a delegation of 27 accredited Defence Attachés and Advisers (DA) to Nigeria. Led by Major General Emmanuel Undiandeye, Chief of Defence Intelligence, the DAs visited the Army Headquarters on the same day.

Lieutenant General Lagbaja acknowledged the cooperation between the Nigerian Army and the armies of the represented nations in areas such as training, operations, and defense procurement. He expressed his desire for further engagements and assured the DAs of a conducive atmosphere for interaction, idea sharing, and experiences to sustain existing bilateral relations between the Nigerian Army and their

respective countries.

The Chief of Defence Intelligence, Major General Emmanuel Undiandeye, highlighted the significance of the DAs' interaction with the COAS, as it provided an opportunity to address concerns and other matters of interest. Colonel Legha Romi, the Doyen, Defence Attaché from India, thanked the COAS on behalf of the DAs for the chance to interact and requested further engagements that would facilitate mutual benefits and experiences for Nigeria and each represented country.

The meeting between the COAS, CDI, and the DAs included an interactive session, allowing for fruitful discussions and exchange of ideas.

This partnership between the Nigerian Army and UNOCT, as well as the ongoing engagement with Defence Attachés from various countries, showcases Nigeria's commitment to global counter-terrorism efforts and its dedication to establishing lasting bilateral relationships to strengthen security measures.

Makinde approves selection of new Soun of Ogbomoso

From **MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO, Ibadan**

GOVERNOR Seyi Makinde of Oyo State has approved the selection of Prince Afolabi Ghandi Olaoye as the new Soun-elect of Ogbomoso land.

Makinde made this announcement on Saturday.

The position of Soun of Ogbomoso land is currently vacant.

The stool became vacant as a result of the transition of the immediate past Soun of Ogbomoso, Oba Jimoh Oladunni Oyewumi.

The monarch joined his ancestors on Sunday, 12th December 2021.

Makinde has however approved the selection of the Soun-elect.

The governor made this announcement through a statement signed by the Commissioner for Local Government and

Chieftaincy Matters, Olusegun Olayiwola.

He appealed to the indigenes of the city to work with the monarch to consolidate the successes of his forefathers.

"His Excellency congratulates the new Soun-elect on his ascension to the throne of his forebears".



Makinde

News

BSPHCDA salutes NGO, recommends local solutions for problems

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

A Non -- Governmental Organization known as Alive & Thrive, has been commended by the Bauchi State Primary Health Care Development Agency (BSPHCDA), for engaging in activities that promote Maternal, Infant and Young Children Nutrition (MIYCN) in the state.

The commendation was made by the Director, Disease Control of the agency, Alhaji Dahiru Ibrahim, at a one day orientation meeting held for media practitioners at the Hazibal Hotel recently, where he stated the need to embrace local solutions to address malnutrition.

The director who ably represented the Executive Chairman of the agency, Dr. Rilwanu Mohammed, said Alive and Thrive has always been proactive on issues that have to do with nutrition, even during conditions that Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) is required to treat malnutrition cases.

According to him, "We know RUTF is not a sustainable approach because of the cost attached to it and the number of patients we have that whatever is donated to us will not go round".

"What we need to be doing is to ensure that we engage the communities for them to know the dangers associated



Bala

with inadequate nutrients, from the mother conceiving, childbirth and of course allowing the children to survive and thrive", he added.

The director said by embracing the intake of required nutritional food produced locally as a replacement for RUTF, mothers and children will live a healthy life.

Dahiru assured that local problems are solved locally, adding that waiting for people outside the country to bring solutions that will treat our problems in Nigeria will not augur well for the society.

"We are the people that know our peculiar problems and we should be the ones to solve such problems. What we need

to do within ourselves that will work should be done", he emphasized.

While describing the meeting as a very important one, the Director urged the media practitioners to disseminate the information that revolves around MIYCN to the larger society to stimulate behavioral change.

On his part, Bauchi state Focal Person of the NGO, Asimobi Chidiebere said 103,742 Nigerian children can be prevented from dying if they are exclusively breastfed for six months.

According to him, the country can save 11 billion Naira by not patronizing breast milk substitute and use the funds for other developmental purposes.

Governor Sani approves 2014 CONMESS for resident doctors

By John FWAH, Kaduna

THE Kaduna State Governor, Sen. Uba Sani has approved the full implementation of the 2014 Consolidated Medical Salary Scale (CONMESS) for the Association of Resident Doctors working under the Kaduna State Ministry of Health.

The governor, according to a statement by the Chief Press Secretary, Muhammad Lawal Shehu, made this announcement during a media chat recently, as part of activities marking his first 100 days in office.

He used the opportunity to address a wide range of issues across different sectors, notably health, security and infrastructural development issues among other concerns.

Following the recommendations of a committee led by the Kaduna State Head of Service, negotiations were held with striking doctors in August 2023 where it was revealed that resident doctors in Kaduna State Ministry of Health receive 75% of the 2014 CONMESS, while their counterparts working at Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital receive 100% of CONMESS.

Consequently, commencing from September 2023, the approved 100% CONMESS will bring resident doctors in

the Ministry of Health at parity with their counterparts at Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital. This step, the Governor added, will further boost productivity and attract more doctors to the state.

Similarly, the Governor announced during the live media chat broadcast across major radio stations in Kaduna, that approval had been granted for the continuation of the recruitment of 89 medical doctors to address the staffing gap identified in 2017, as recommended by the committee.

"This initiative, amongst others was designed to enhance doctors' morale and improve access to quality healthcare for Kaduna residents. You will recall that we recently flagged-off the distribution of advanced medical equipment to our upgraded primary health care centres. This reflects our administration's commitment to ensuring that every citizen/resident has access to a primary healthcare center within a kilometer of their residence," the Governor added.

During the media chat, Governor Sani also responded to questions from Kaduna residents, submitted via phone calls. He underscored

the positive results of his interactions with development partners, noting that the increase in investors attracted to Kaduna was due to the business-friendly environment created by his administration.

Addressing the issue of uncompleted projects inherited from the immediate past administration, Governor Sani reassured the people of Kaduna State that all projects will be completed. Adding that this time around, there will be a renewed focus on transforming the rural areas in the coming months.

Speaking on security, Governor Sani expressed his appreciation to the security agencies in Kaduna State for their support in training old and newly-recruiting 7000 men and women of the Kaduna State Vigilance Service.

He also stressed the urgency of effective policing and recognized the necessity for State Police Force to complement the efforts of national security agencies.

The governor thanked the good people of Kaduna State for the trust and confidence reposed in his administration and called for their continued support and cooperation as the administration moves into top gear in its quest to leave a legacy of peace, ethnic and religious harmony, and even development.



Making education a priority

RECENT events in Nigeria have given the impression that the country is not serious about education. The primary school which is the foundation that makes or mar the education has been given scant regards by those who should have put in place deliberate policies to strengthen the sector.

Public primary schools have been left to whims of quacks and the needed infrastructure to drive the process has been left to decay to such a manner that it is no longer convenient for use by the children. To be sure, not only are the infrastructure left to decay and become decrepit but the manpower to effectively run these once revered institutions have been neglected.

Primary school teachers who were once the standard of measurement of success, have become the subject of scorn and neglect. Their starched clothes which used to be the envy of a lot of people, no longer hold any attraction to would-be teachers. As a matter of fact, their salaries which refused to grow meant that new entrants considered it too meagre to waste their precious time engaging in a profession which had no place in a changing and dynamic world. Other countries that placed premium on primary education have shown the tendency to attract growth and development to their country. Japan for example, gives priority and attracts the best to its primary schools and that has been responsible for the monumental growth the country has recorded in times past.

In our own case, primary schools have been left to the third tier of government which seems not to know how to navigate the landmines of the sector and make it the envy of others. This has resulted to primary schools being left to private individuals who prioritise making money over ensuring quality in these institutions. They

employ half-baked teachers who themselves know next to nothing and, therefore, cannot guarantee imparting knowledge to their students.

The vogue now is to establish any mushroom school, levy desperate parents who want the best for their children, make cool money and zoom off to enjoy the loot. Those entrusted with ensuring quality is maintained have compromised because of a system which does not recognize hard work and therefore, is open to manipulation.

Secondary education is not faring any better. A lot of our schools are a shadow of their former selves. They can longer compete with their peers in other climes. Hardly can a public owned school

Government needs to look again at the plight of these teachers as a source of encouragement. They need to have very conducive atmosphere under which to teach and impart knowledge to our children. The welfare of the workers, especially teachers should not be toyed with no matter the circumstances. And, infrastructure development must be carried out periodically so that the space for learning will be comfortable for all and

boast of anything tangible in terms of infrastructure or academic prowess with private owned schools. They have very qualified staff yet these scarcely translate into tangibles, leaving students to engage in all manner of activities that add no value to all and sundry. At the slightest opportunity, they embark on unending strikes, leaving students to loiter around like sheep without a shepherd. But they are not entirely at fault as their pay cheques can hardly take them home.

Government needs to look again at the plight of these teachers as a source of encouragement. They need to have very conducive atmosphere under which to teach and impart knowledge to our children. The welfare of the workers especially teachers should not be toyed with no matter the circumstances. And, infrastructure development must be carried out periodically so that the space for learning will be comfortable for all and sundry.

On the other hand, public universities must be catered for. A situation where these institutions are neglected is unacceptable and should be discountenanced. Private universities have taken over the landscape and the children of the poor are left at the mercy of Shylock owners. School fees for these institutions are not only over the roof, but they are suffocating. These alarming fee regimes have left parents with no option but withdrawing their children and leaving them to the streets, adding to the growing number of street urchins.

If the government means business, then it must refocus and ensure that, education, which is the bedrock of all development regains its pride of place. This would mean devoting huge budgetary allocation to the sector. Not only that but adequate and effective supervision must be carried out to ensure that all is down well.

News

FG encourages large scale farming of cowpeas

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

In an effort to encourage farmers to go into large scale farming of cowpeas in Gombe State, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has distributed farm inputs to forty-one (41) cowpeas farmers in Gombe State.

It was also intended to make the cowpeas farmers see cowpeas not only as a source of food for consumption, but as an income generation venture to mitigate the index of poverty in the country.

The distribution which was done with the support of the Gombe State Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, saw 28 male and 13 female farmers taking fertilizers, seeds and other agro chemicals.

The farm inputs distribution is targeting farmers in the North east, North west and North Central regions of the country.

During the distribution exercise at the Gombe



Yahaya

State Agricultural Development Programme (GSADP) office, the Agric Extension Officer (FMARD) Mr. Tambul Halilu, said the farm inputs were distributed to cushion the devastating effect of climate change on farms being experienced by farmers over the years.

He stated also that the distribution was a follow-up to the recent training the farmers received on resilient practices on climate change by the

Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD).

Overseeing Programme Manager, Gombe State Agricultural Development Programme (GSADP), Alhaji Munkaila A Musa, charged the beneficiaries to use the inputs provided for the purpose of improving their standard of living.

He appreciated FMARD for coming to the aid of farmers in the region and the nation as a whole.

Violators of breastmilk substitutes code will be jailed

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

Bauchi State Coordinator of National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Mrs. Josephine Dayilim, has reprimanded violators of International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (MBS), in Nigeria to desist or be jailed.

Mrs. Josephine made the pronouncement while presenting a Paper titled overview of the BMS Code/Role of the Media in promoting Code compliance, in a one day orientation meeting organized for media practitioners and social media producers on Maternal, Infant and Young Children Nutrition (MICYN) by an NGO known as Alive &

Thrive held recently at Hazibal Hotel, Bauchi.

She reiterated that any company or individuals who go against the international Code would be forced to forfeit the offending items on conviction no matter the quantity or its cost.

The NAFDAC Coordinator therefore, appealed to the participating journalists to report the violation of BMS by vendors and manufacturers across the country particularly in Bauchi State.

She emphasized that the agency needs the support of journalists in Bauchi State to effectively monitor and report violators of national regulations by manufacturers of BMS products Code.

According to her, "The implementation of the Code was designed to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and prevent health caregivers from aggressive marketing of breastmilk substitutes by infant food manufacturers".

"Lack of awareness of stakeholders, including the media, had also contributed to the gravity of violations currently being practiced by the offenders", she said.

"The aim of the Code is to contribute to the provision of safe and adequate nutrition for infants, by protection and promotion of breastfeeding, and by ensuring the proper use of breastmilk substitutes", she explained.

The scope of the Code applies to the marketing, and practices related thereto, of the following products: breastmilk substitutes, including infant formula; other milk products, foods and beverages.

It also includes bottle-fed complementary foods, when marketed or otherwise represented to be suitable, with or without modification, for use as a partial or total replacement of breastmilk; feeding bottles and teats. It also applies to their quality and

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO

The federal government has declared that the Nigerian government is yet to find a replacement to what late Pa. Taiwo Akinkunmi did for the country.

Akinkunmi was the one that designed Nigeria's flag.

He designed the flag while studying abroad prior to independence in 1960.

Akinkunmi, a native of Ogun State, died a few days ago in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

The Federal Government has however declared that the Nigerian government is yet to find a replacement to what the deceased did for the country.

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Muhammad Idris made this disclosure recently in Ibadan.

He spoke when he led a delegation of the Federal Government to visit the family of the deceased.

Idris, while speaking on behalf of the federal government, noted that the federal government appreciated the efforts of the deceased.

All is set for 2023 Afro Awards

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Mr Taiwo Oduala, USA based Film Director has said that all is set for the Oduaraj Foundation and Production/Entertainment

FG pays tribute to deceased Nigerian flag designer



Tinubu

He said, "We are here to console the family on behalf of Mr President. Pa Akinkunmi's roles cannot be forgotten.

"It is a symbol that we are yet to find a replacement for. He designed it when he was in his 20s and he lived for more than 60 years after he designed it. Mr. President received the news of his death. We want to identify with the family and the people of Oyo State

"We came to tell them that the federal government identifies with them and the people of Oyo State and to say that the Nigerian government will stand by them.

Remi Akinkunmi, who spoke on behalf of the family, thanked the delegation for their presence.

She said that the family expresses their gratitude towards the visitation.

2nd Annual Afro Awards 2023 Los Angeles, California, USA.

The film director, in a statement issued in Nigeria recently said the award ceremony would be held in Sept. 16 via an invite when distinguished personalities from Africa's and America's communities would be honoured.

The report said that the Annual Afro Awards is a non-profit event that honors outstanding individuals and organizations for their significant contributions across various fields, with the aim of establishing a unique Afro-centric excellence award.

Oduala, who is the founder and Executive Producer, said the Humanitarian and Excellence Award recognised the contributions of persons like the Chairman of Air Peace Airline, Chief Allen Onyema, Mayor Karen Bass, Mayor of Los Angeles and HIM. Oba Dr Moshood Olalekan Balogun, Olubadan of Ibadan.

"Allen Ifechukwu-Onyema of Air Peace Airline, has made an impact in the lives of many with his free evacuation philosophy just as the Olubadan of Ibadan, who has distinguished himself as Royal Father.

"Air Peace Airline has painstakingly evacuated Nigerians from South Africa during the Xenophobia attacks, in Sudan and China besides Indians and Chinese evacuated from Nigeria back to their countries.

"Likewise, Sen. Dr Moshood Olalekan Balogun has been officially installed as the 42nd Olubadan of Ibadanland after 33 years of ascendancy protocol for his outstanding achievements as a patriot," he said.

Oduala explained that the main focus of the award was to demonstrate Afro Awards' recognition and support to people who have shown exceptional humanitarian excellence in various fields and endeavours.

The film director disclosed that since inception, the Afro Awards has hosted and honored more than 5,000 individuals at the forefront of humanitarianism and philanthropy in American and

African communities.

He noted that Nigeria, as a nation, has produced men and women of high degree of patriotism and impact, both in and outside the country, as in Monica Omorodion Swaida, known as Monicazation, a Nigerian/American singer, actress, movie producer and CEO of an insurance company," he said.

The founder further disclosed some of 2023 awardees to include Calvin Cordozar-Broadus Jr, known as Snoop Dogg, an iconic American rapper, songwriter, and actor (Lifetime achievement)

Also to be honoured are Africa Magic TV Network (Multichoice Nigeria Limited), Chief Diran Alabi

(Agic Energy North America/ TAG The Agic Group Holdings), Ose Oyamendan (Founder/CEO Nollywood in Hollywood) and Innocent Ekakitie (Nigerian/American kid star actor).

"We have Yung Musik (Recording artiste /Singer/ Song writer /Model/Actor, Danielle Crawley (Casting Director), ISO Kenny (Artiste/ Song writer/ Performer), 19 Keys (Community Activist/ Global. Though Leader and Tarek Stevenson, Entertainment Executive/ Influencer Oscar Brunch as some of the honourees.

"Nyakim Gatwek (Fashion Model/ Founder BalangNyal foundation), PhillWestbrooks, (Entrepreneur/Model/ CEO Spectrum Solution), Rachel Mbuki, (TV Host/ Journalist/Actress/ writer/ former Miss Kenya)

and Amberr Washington (Vice President/Co- Founder HAPAWARDS/ Movie producer/ Founder Omobowale foundation)," he said.

Others are Dr. Michael K. Obeng

(Plastic Surgeon/ President Global Health Solution, Dr. Thomas Big Ted Kwaka HSC (Amb Consul General Los Angeles- KENYA), Nathalie Beasnael (Nurse/ Entrepreneur/ philanthropist and Mr Paul Mwaura Mwangi (Founder/President Staff Today Inc/ MD Kamahuha Real Estate.



Prof. Adeyeye

Foreign Commentary

The global human rights regime has collapsed

We urgently need a radical new framework to protect the fundamental rights of all human beings. HAYTHEM GUESMI writes

Human rights, as we know them, are dead. Amid a climate emergency, seemingly endless conflict, and consequent refugee crises, the glaring absence of an effective global strategy to safeguard the most fundamental rights of impoverished and marginalised populations across the world has made it clear that the concept of "human rights", as sacralised by the liberal West, has lost all meaning and purpose – for everyone, but especially for those of us in the Global South.

According to the United Nations, as many as 828 million people – or 10 percent of the global population – go to bed hungry each night. Of those struggling with hunger, 80 percent are living in areas prone to climate change – areas that are overwhelmingly in the Global South. Wars, uprisings and coups – often tied to geopolitical skirmishes between global powers – are also disproportionately harming these very same regions.

Unable to see an end to their misery, some of those suffering from war, famine, oppression or destitution in the Global South are embarking on dangerous journeys across desert and sea to find safety and prosperity in the Global North. Rather than taking action to protect the human rights of these refugees, however, the Western states who pride themselves in being the inventors of the very concept of human rights are treating them like an enemy.

As a result, tens of thousands are languishing in inhuman migrant detention centres along the US and European Union borders, and the Mediterranean Sea is now a migrant graveyard. According to the International Organization for Migration's Missing Migrants Project, more than 28,000 drownings have been recorded there since 2014. The true number of deaths is impossible to know and likely much higher.

And drowning in the Mediterranean is only one way people in the Global South, who make up the global majority, are dying en masse because the Western-led international community does not assess their human rights as being worthy of protection. They are also dying in natural disasters aggravated by climate change, and in wars waged to further geopolitical agendas. They are being killed by drones and burned alive by settlers.

The signs of the death of human rights are omnipresent. Western governments are working hard to shield the Israeli apartheid from accountability, while criminalising Palestinians resisting Israel's oppression and those supporting their liberation struggle. The leading social media companies of the Global North are allowing dangerous misinformation targeting already marginalised and under threat populations to



Rohingya refugee boys salvage a gas cylinder after a major fire in Balukhali camp at Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh, Sunday, March 5, 2023.

fester on their platforms. European countries are still selling a toxic pesticide – banned in the EU because of its proven harms to children and unborn babies – to countries in the Global South. And the list goes on.

All the while, the West continues to try and sell itself as the one true defender of human rights.

Western nations regularly condemn and even sanction the likes of Russia, China and Iran for violating the human rights of their citizens and those living in their influence zones. They often make foreign aid conditional on recipients making improvements on human rights protections, and some have even launched military interventions under the guise of addressing human rights violations in the past.

In response to the invasion of Ukraine, a country at the very heart of Europe, for example, the Global North states not only swiftly condemned the grave human rights violations Russia committed there, but also implemented special programmes to ensure any Ukrainian civilian in need can find safety in another country without facing significant obstacles. They also put their support behind the International Criminal Court (ICC) and provided its investigators with any help necessary to try and convict the Kremlin.

Viewed in isolation, this may be seen as confirmation of the West's adherence to the international human rights regime it helped build. But for those in the Global South, who cannot help but compare the

West's embrace of Ukraine to its treatment of their own countries, this whole episode is nothing but confirmation of the Global North's endless hypocrisy.

Indeed, the countries that took swift action to help the Ukrainian people did not open their borders to the Sudanese in the same manner when they were facing an equally grave military threat. They never did it for the Palestinians either, many of whom are still living under the iron fist of a violent invader.

They are also very selective about when they would support the ICC. Sure they supported ICC's prosecution of Africans when it suited their agenda, but they never let its prosecutors anywhere near their own drone wars or unlawful torture programmes – in fact, the US is not even a state party to the court.

While they are now condemning Russia and any state that continues to collaborate with it, in the Global South they themselves have long been prioritising geopolitical interests over human rights concerns, supporting oppressive regimes and undermining democratic movements. This is arguably the main reason why many Global South nations have been hesitant to support Western-backed Ukraine's resistance against the Russian invasion.

This crisis in the global human rights regime and discourse is not new.

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was passed by the UN in 1948, it was celebrated as a big

step towards a more peaceful world. Coming on the back of the horrors of the second world war and the Holocaust, it was a ray of hope signalling that a better world, where the fundamental rights of all are respected, could be possible. Yet this dream did not last long. The very nations that developed and pushed for the new human rights regime swiftly started to violate it to further their interests, hurt their enemies and expand their interests. They even attacked several Global South nations to bring them "democracy" and protect their "human rights".

What is new, however, is the open rejection of the Western human rights framework by the Global South populations. Those who have been suffering the worst of the Global North's aggression and duplicity since the signing of the UDHR are no longer convinced at all that Western governments, institutions and organisations can – or more accurately want to – protect their fundamental rights. They now see them as what they are: ineffective, duplicitous, and more crucially, dangerous.

Those protesting on Arab streets, living under constant attack in the Brazilian favelas, trying to survive the open-air prison that is Gaza or looking for a way out of the sprawling refugee camps in Bangladesh no longer believe or expect in any way that the Global North will come and do something to ensure their supposedly sacred "human rights" are not violated.

Human rights, as it is currently understood and applied in the Global South, must not be

saved. Contrary to conventional wisdom that laments the end of the human rights era and suggests new solutions to safeguard it, it is rather long overdue to move beyond this discourse and imagine radically different egalitarian and progressive principles informed by the struggles and ethics of the people in the Global South.

The end of the human rights era should be viewed as an opportunity to forge a new path towards inclusivity and equity that puts the Global South's, the global majority's, demands at the forefront of constructing new, radical visions and frameworks.

Only by moving beyond the West's hypocritical use of human rights as a discriminatory ordering principle for international politics can we create a more inclusive, diverse, and representative approach to defining and protecting everyone's fundamental rights.

In doing so, local communities and Indigenous populations in the Global South can take an active and central role in rethinking and implementing environmental preservation and sustainable development.

As we face multiple interconnected ecological and humanitarian crises, the international community needs to urgently accept the undeniable demise of the current human rights regime and move quickly to construct a radical alternative that would truly put the fundamental rights and needs of all human beings, including those in the Global South, at its centre.

Source: Aljazeera

Foreign News

Jong Un to meet Putin

Kim Jong Un expected to meet with Putin to discuss providing arms to Moscow

A US official said Monday that the North Korean leader may travel to Russia soon to meet with President Vladimir Putin as the Kremlin tries to acquire military equipment for use in its war in Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un pose for a photo during their meeting in Vladivostok, Russia, April 25, 2019. POOL/REUTERS



Putin

Jon Un

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un expects to meet with President Vladimir Putin in Russia to discuss providing arms to Moscow for its war in Ukraine, the United States said Monday, September 4. The announcement comes after the White House last week warned that Russia was already in secret, active talks with the North to acquire a range of munitions and supplies for Moscow's war effort.

"As we have warned publicly, arms negotiations between Russia and the DPRK are actively advancing," National Security Council (NSC) spokeswoman Adrienne Watson said, using an acronym for the North. "We have information that Kim Jong Un expects these discussions to continue, to include leader-level diplomatic engagement in Russia."

Read more Russia and North Korea seek closer cooperation

Kim - who rarely travels outside his country - is likely to head later this month to Vladivostok, on Russia's Pacific

coast not far from North Korea, to meet with Putin, according to The New York Times. The paper said Kim could even travel to Moscow, but that was uncertain. NSC spokesman John Kirby said last week that despite its denials, North Korea supplied infantry rockets and missiles to Russia in 2022 for use by the privately controlled Wagner military group.

Meanwhile, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu traveled last month to North Korea seeking to acquire additional munitions for the war, Watson added. "We urge the DPRK to cease its arms negotiations with Russia and abide by the public commitments that Pyongyang has made to not provide or sell arms to Russia," Watson said.

Last week at the United Nations, the United States, Britain, South Korea and Japan said in a joint statement that any deal to increase bilateral cooperation between Russia and North Korea would violate Security Council resolutions forbidding arms deals with Pyongyang - resolutions that Moscow itself had endorsed.

They said that following Shoigu's visit to Pyongyang, another group of Russian officials traveled to North Korea for follow-up talks on arms purchases.

Any talks between Kim and Putin would come as Ukraine carries out a highly scrutinized counteroffensive in the south and east of the country, which Putin on Monday claimed was unsuccessful. "It is not that it is stalling. It is a failure," Putin said Monday. "At least today this is what it looks like. Let's see what happens next."

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov on Monday announced he had handed in his resignation to parliament after President Volodymyr Zelensky called for "new approaches" to face Russia's offensive.

Niger's post-coup PM says negotiations are underway for the withdrawal of French troops

France has around 1,500 troops in the Sahel state, many of them deployed at an air base near the capital Niamey.

Niger's junta-appointed Prime Minister Ali Mahamane Lamine Zeine speaks during a press conference in the capital Niamey, Niger, September 4, 2023.

Niger's military-appointed prime minister on Monday, September 4, said "contacts" were underway for a "very swift" withdrawal of French forces following a coup in July that saw ties with Paris spiral downwards. In a press conference, Prime Minister Ali Mahamane Lamine Zeine said "the contacts that are underway should enable a very swift withdrawal" of French forces. But, he said, Niger wished "to maintain cooperation with a country with which we have shared an enormous number of things."

Tensions between Niger and France, its former colonial power and ally in the fight against jihadist insurgents, ratcheted up after rebel officers on July 26 forced out President Mohamed Bazoum. France has stood by the democratically-elected leader. It has refused to acknowledge the coup leaders as the

Negotiation continue for withdrawal of French troops



Tchiani

legitimate government and similarly ignored announcements canceling military agreements with Paris and a threat to expel the French ambassador.

Read more Article réservé à nos abonnés Macron maintains firm stance toward junta in Niger, risking confrontation

France has around 1,500 troops in the Sahel state, many of them deployed at an air base near the capital Niamey. Tens of thousands of protesters rallied outside the base at the weekend to demand they leave, responding to a call by a pro-civilian coalition.

The post-coup government on August 3 renounced military accords with Paris, a move France has ignored on the grounds of legitimacy. One

of the accords required a notice period of one month, according to military sou Confrontation between France and Niger junta intensifies

Zeine said that as a result of the renunciation, the French troops in Niger were now "in a position of illegality." Referring to the showdown over French ambassador Sylvain Itte, he said the envoy had displayed "an attitude of contempt" by refusing to meet the authorities on August 25.

Niger: Thousands rally in support of coup as ultimatum for French ambassador looms near

Niger: Thousands rally in support of coup a day after ordering French ambassador to leave

First French evacuees from Niamey arrive in Paris 'sad' to have left Niger, but 'happy' to be safe

Central African bloc suspends Gabon over coup

The Central African regional bloc, known as Eccas, says it has suspended Gabon's membership in response to

last week's coup. Earlier on Monday the coup leader, Gen Brice Oligui Nguema, was sworn in as transitional

president. He seized power just after Ali Bongo was declared to have won a third term as

president. He has not given a time frame for returning the country to civilian rule.

As leaders from central Africa sat around the table and decided to suspend Gabon because of the coup, there may have been a few moments of self-reflection.

Hosting the meeting was Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo who said neighbouring Gabon was a threat to peace, security and stability in the region.

The president of Equatorial Guinea is now 81 and has been in power since 1979.

His family - like that of Ali Bongo in Gabon - has been accused of large-scale looting of state resources

and severe oppression of the opposition.

He is possibly not the only African leader who has stayed in power for ages and is a little jumpy at the word "coup".

Dozens killed in fighting between SDF, Arab tribesmen

Dozens of people are said to have been killed during days of clashes between a US-backed, Kurdish-led militia and Arab tribal fighters in Syria.

The fighting erupted after the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) arrested the head of a tribal militia backed by Arab clans with which it worked in the eastern province of Deir al-Zour.

The unrest later spread north and west to Hassakeh and Aleppo provinces.

The UN has received unconfirmed reports of 54 civilian dying in attacks.

Critical infrastructure is also said to have been destroyed or damaged, including at least two hospitals and three water treatment facilities.

The US, which has hundreds of troops in SDF-controlled areas to counter the jihadist group Islamic State (IS), has urged all sides to immediately cease fighting and come to a peaceful resolution.

A US-led global coalition relied heavily on the SDF and its allies to drive IS militants out of tens of thousands of square kilometres of northern and eastern Syria between



The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces and its allies control much of north-eastern Syria

2015 and 2019.

The Syrian government controls adjoining territory west of the River Euphrates along with allied militias backed by Iran. The government accuses the SDF of "separatism" but they have largely avoided conflict during the 12-year civil war.

Rebel factions supported by Turkey meanwhile control neighbouring stretches of land along Syria's northern border.

The unrest began on 27 August following the arrest of Deir al-Zour Military Council leader Ahmed al-Khubail, also known as Abu Khawla, as part of what the SDF said was an operation

targeting IS sleeper cells and drug dealers.

The SDF accused him of complicity in multiple crimes, including drug trafficking, mismanaging security, failing to stop IS sleeper cells, and exploiting his position for personal interests.

Fellow Arab tribesmen angered by Abu Khawla's arrest reportedly set up roadblocks and attacked SDF positions and patrols in a string of towns located along the east bank of the Euphrates.

The SDF, which blamed "elements of the [Syrian] regime and some beneficiaries" of Abu Khawla for the unrest, sent

reinforcements to the province in an attempt to regain control.

and that they continued in Shahil and Hawayij over the weekend.

On Monday, an SDF spokesman told AFP news agency on that Dhiban was the last town where fighters loyal to Abu Khawla were still concentrated, and that SDF forces were trying to "settle" the situation there.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based monitoring group, reported that the SDF was attacking Dhiban following the breakdown of ceasefire negotiations.

According to the SOHR, at

least 71 people have been killed in Deir al-Zour, including five children, 39 Arab fighters and members of the 23 SDF. But other reports have put the death toll at more than 100.

Other parts of the country have also been affected by the unrest.

On Sunday, 23 Syrian soldiers and Turkish-backed rebels were killed when the latter tried to infiltrate Hassakeh's Tal Tamr area, which is held by the SDF and government forces, according to the SOHR.

And on Friday, first responders from the White Helmets said five children were killed when a shell hit a home in the rebel-held village of Muhsinli during similar clashes near Manbij, in Aleppo province.



Nguema

Feature

Wife battering as domestic violence

Wife Battering refers to violence acts comprising of psychological, physical, sexual and emotional assaults carried out by men against their wives or partners with the intent of expressing control over them or inducing fear and pain over them. Legally, it is seen as psychological symptoms suffered by a woman repeatedly abused by her husband or partner. AJIJI AJANG JOHN writes.

WIFE battering is one of the most common forms of violence against women by husbands or other intimate male partners. Undoubtedly, violence against women remains the most underreported case despite the magnitude of the problem especially among the youths and the middle age. Violence against women is a major global health problem. It is a combination of physical, psychological and sexual abuse directed at spouse. It is globally pervasive yet underestimated human right violation.

There are pockets of cases where the wife's abuse and batter their husbands but its not as prevalent as that of the men battering their wife's. The society beliefs that it is the men that abuse their wife through battering. It must be said that men too go through battering. A lot are ashamed to voice out because it sound awkward to the ears.

Buttressing further, in many societies wife battering is seen as what is due to nagging wife. Coincidentally, wife battering cut across both the literate and the illiterates, religious and free thinkers, batter women and men as well as the married and the unmarried. Painstakingly, women bear these pains and grieve in silence with the hope that her man will change. Women in the course of these bear their brutal husbands just for the sake of ignoring shame and disgrace as well as the stigma of being portrayed as a woman who ran away from her marital home.

More so, a good number of women remain in abusive marriages because of their children. A woman is closely attached to her child which makes it imperatively difficult for her to jettison her children, she rather remain a punching bag to her husband. Many of them meet their down six feet down the ground which is rather unfortunate.

Many women bear various degrees of brutality and abuse by their husbands partners. In most cases, these women are forced to forgive their brutal husbands on account of ensuring peace in their respective homes. The most painful part is that, after subjecting such a caring woman into physical, psychological and emotional trauma, we left them with no option but make them victims of the society.

Some of these cases are reported to the clergy, rather than finding a permanent solution to the problem, they use the scripture to subdue the woman into submission to the monster called husband, they try to salvage a life threatening situation with a snap of the finger, they end up presiding over the burial service of the victim, with



the notion that the lord giveth and taketh' and the man battered his wife over domestic issue. It was reported that his in-laws came thereafter and pounced on him. This is obviously a case of medicine after death. The culture of being our neighbors keeper has fast eroded us, we care less what happens next door, we don't promptly intervene when the urgent need arises. We trivialize life threatening situation by saying 'let me mind my business' going back to the root beckons on us, being our neighbors keeper goes beyond exchanging pleasantries in the day, we should look out for each other, an injury to one, is an injury to all.

The government must come up with policies and programs to ameliorate the surge of the hydra-headed monsters. Agencies such as Domeslic and Sexual Violence, Social Protection, and a host of others should be establish to check the rising cases. This must be done in collaboration with the Plateau State House of Assembly, to give it a legislative backing and frame work.

Excuses such as drinking, smoking, womanizing, drugs, shouldn't be entertained marriage is for adult, it is a call to responsibility. As for the unmarried folks out there experiencing such, it is an eye opener towards what will befall you if you eventually commit your future to him. Harken to the red flag in your relationship while you have the chance.

Woman should lower their expectations in view of a man changing to a better person. It is a rare case of such happening, embrace the reality hurt your feelings in other to save your life.

There are some unjustifiable reasons as to why men battered their wives, most men who batter their wife's are either into drinking, womanizing, smoking, drugs, regrets, lack of trust, bad friends, third party, wrong advice, pride, anger and curse.

Like the Holy Scripture states, the power of life and death is in the tongue. A lot of women barely bridle their tongues, they are quick to respond to issues, thereby jettisoning restraint. The strength and weakness of a woman lies in the use of her tongue. A lot of woman arouse the anger of their spouses by the careless use of the tongue, vomiting venomous words. Patience should be a virtue that

must be imbibe in other to forestall the spate of battering. Individuals must have firm control over their speech and conduct. It is only the living that enjoys the good things of life.

Religious bodies must dissociate itself from promoting battering by way of trying to salvage a decayed situation. It must be noted that its only the living that enjoys marriage as such, protection of life must be paramount in trying to settle dispute related to spouses. Dogma shouldn't be prioritize above the sanctity of life. Once battering is involved, drastic measures must be deployed.

Battering is prevalent on the Plateau with unwanted death recorded daily. The city of Jos is gradually becoming an epic center of these surge. Just recently, a case was recorded in Furaka, Gwafan District in Jos

North Local Government Area where a man killed his wife. Don't wait for a motivational speaker to encourage you on a wrong path, borrow leaf from the experience of others and jump out of that abusive relationship or marriage, there is no marriage in heaven, your life is sacrosanct to you.

To the men out there, your response towards your responsibility shows how responsible you are. Your wife or girlfriend needs care, love and attention not punches and bruises, be responsible enough to correct her when she goes wrong,

no matter how exercebated your anger is, never you lay a finger on her, there are better ways to correct and get the attention of a woman to do the right thing. Better days lies ahead for your relationship and marriage.

" A good number of women remain in abusive marriages because of their children. A woman is closely attached to her child which makes it imperatively difficult for her to jettison her children, she rather remain a punching bag to her husband. Many of them meet their down six feet down the ground which is rather unfortunate. Many women bear various degrees of brutality and abuse by their husbands partners. In most cases, these women are forced to forgive their brutal husbands on account of ensuring peace in their respective homes. The most painful part is that, after subjecting such a caring woman into physical, psychological and emotional trauma, we left them with no option but make them victims of the society."

THE NIGERIA STANDARD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Reasons why your cough may not be improving

By **NEHA PATHAK**

THERE are several reasons why a cough may stay with you. The explanation could be as simple as allergies or a lingering infection, but it could also be more serious. It's important to get to the bottom of the cause and take steps to keep your condition from getting worse.

If you have a cough that's lasted 8 weeks or longer, chances are you have what's known as a "chronic cough." That means that your cough is likely not caused by a simple respiratory infection or cold, so trying to ignore it won't make it go away.

More than a nuisance, a chronic cough is an actual medical diagnosis that needs attention. You should see a doctor to determine what's causing it and how to treat it.

The causes of a chronic cough can range from things that are easily treatable to some that are far more serious. Your treatment will depend on the underlying cause. Possible causes include:

Postnasal drip: Also called upper airway cough syndrome, postnasal drip is a common cause of a long-lasting cough. Allergies, viruses, dust, chemicals, or inflammation can irritate your nasal membranes and trigger runny mucus that drips out of your nose and down your throat. This makes you cough, especially at night when you lie down.

A cough related to postnasal drip may improve when you use a decongestant, nasal or oral antihistamine, nasal glucocorticoid, or nasal spray. The best treatment (or combination of treatments) depends on your symptoms and medical history.

Asthma: When you have asthma, the muscles around your airways tighten, the lining of your airways swell, and the cells in your airways produce thick mucus. An asthma cough is your body's way of trying to get air into those restricted areas. Asthma can be triggered by weather, allergies, infections, tobacco smoke, medications, and even exercise and emotions.

If this is what's triggering your cough, your doctor will probably give you the standard treatment for asthma, which includes an inhaled glucocorticoid to decrease inflammation in the airways. If you also have wheezing or shortness of breath, they may prescribe an inhaled bronchodilator to open up your airways.

Infections: Even after you seem to have recovered from a cold, flu, COVID-19 infection, or pneumonia, the cough may linger. Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a respiratory tract



infection and can be an under-the-radar cause of chronic cough. While it's usually covered in childhood immunizations, the CDC recommends that adults get a pertussis booster shot. Your doctor can measure your immunity with a blood test.

Many infections simply need to run their course. It takes time for your lungs to heal and create new cough receptors (which are responsible for triggering the cough reflex). But in some cases, your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD): With GERD, a weak band of muscle around the lower part of your esophagus lets stomach acid move into your esophagus instead of sending it to your stomach. The acidic fumes coming from your stomach can irritate your lungs, triggering a chronic cough. Heartburn and chest pain are common symptoms of GERD, though you may not have any symptoms besides the cough.

You may have to make some lifestyle changes to get relief. These include avoiding substances that increase reflux, such as high-fat foods, chocolate, colas, red wine, acidic juices, and too much alcohol. Your doctor may ask you to lose weight or stop smoking. They may prescribe a medication to slow the

production of acid in your stomach, called a proton pump inhibitor. It may take several weeks of treatment before you see results. If your cough doesn't improve during this time, you might need further testing.

Blood pressure drugs: Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, which are often used to treat high blood pressure, may cause a chronic dry, hacking cough in up to 20% of people who use them. A slight change in medication can take care of this side effect.

Smoking: Smoking damages your lungs (and the rest of your body). Your lungs make mucus to try to get rid of chemicals and particles in tobacco smoke that irritate them. This is what's often referred to as the "smoker's cough." It can also be among the first signs of a much bigger problem, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

You should stop smoking, but don't expect the cough to clear up right away or at all. Years of smoking mean your lungs will take time to try to repair themselves.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD): COPD is a group of diseases, including emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and chronic obstructive asthma, that make it hard to get air in and out of your lungs. In most cases, your body makes too much mucus and coughs to try to clear it out. Another symptom is shortness of breath. Over time, COPD can worsen and become life-threatening. Most people who have COPD are smokers or used to be. But it's possible to have COPD even if you never smoked. Your doctor can treat COPD with rescue inhalers and inhaled or oral steroids to help control symptoms and minimize further damage. You might also need oxygen therapy.

Lung cancer: Although this shouldn't be at the top of your list of possible causes, it's another reason to get your cough checked out. Smoking is by far the top cause of lung cancer, although some people who get lung cancer have never smoked. If you're a

nonsmoker and don't have a family history of lung cancer, it's not the likely diagnosis. Your lungs include three parts: tissue, airways, and circulation. Only the airways have cough receptors, so if you have a growth in other parts of your lungs, it may not trigger a cough.

Treatment is determined by the size and location of the cancer. You may need surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted drug therapy, or immunotherapy. If your doctor can't find the cause of your cough and it persists (called a refractory cough), they might recommend a cough-suppressing medication. There are both prescription and nonprescription versions. Don't take nonprescription medications for long periods without talking to your doctor.

Diagnosing the Cause of a Chronic Cough

To get to the cause of your cough, your doctor will take your medical history and do a physical examination. They'll want to know things like:

When did the cough start? Is there something that seems to trigger it? Do you cough up any phlegm, mucus, or blood?

Have you been in close contact with anyone who has similar symptoms or may have had a respiratory infection such as a cold, pneumonia, COVID-19, tuberculosis, or whooping cough? Do you smoke or have you in the past? Do you have trouble with heartburn or indigestion? Do you have any allergies? Have you had postnasal drip? Have you started taking any new medications recently? Your doctor will take your vital signs, including your temperature, and listen to your lungs and heart with a stethoscope. Based

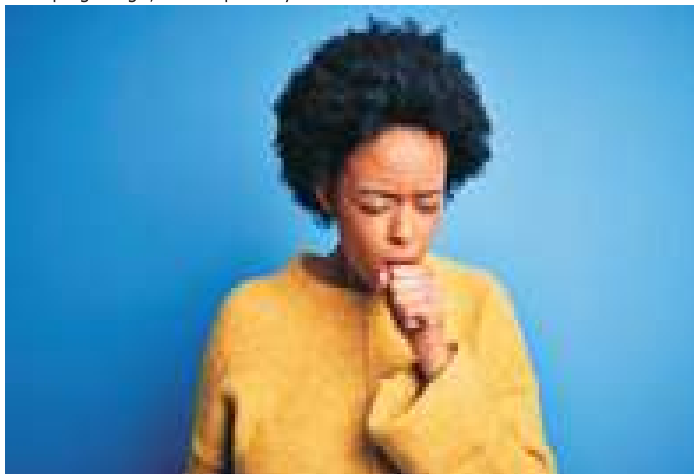
on your symptoms, they may suggest a trial treatment before doing further tests. If your cough improves, you shouldn't need more testing.

But if your cough persists, or if your diagnosis isn't clear, you may need further testing. These might include: Throat swab. A long cotton swab is used to take a culture and test for infection.

Blood test. This could help tell if your body is fighting an infection.

Chest X-ray. Your doctor may request a chest X-ray or even a chest CT scan, especially if you smoke or used to, or if you have other medical conditions that can affect your lungs. **Lung function tests.** Your clinician may try to measure the pattern of airflow into and out of the lungs. This includes conducting a spirometry (you'll breathe out hard and fast into a small plastic device to measure how well you breathe out air) or a methacholine challenge test (also known as bronchoprovocation test) to evaluate how "reactive" or "responsive" your lungs are. **Acid reflux testing.** Acid in your esophagus may trigger coughing. Also called a pH probe, this test measures the level of acid in the fluid in your esophagus. A test called an upper endoscopy may be done in some cases to look for irritation of the esophagus and to obtain a biopsy of the esophagus.

When to Call Your Doctor: If you have a cough that's lasted 8 weeks or more, see a health care provider. Coughs linked to allergies or even the common cold can last months, but you shouldn't ignore them. Call sooner if you have other symptoms such as shortness of breath or fever. If you're coughing up blood, seek help immediately.



EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Beauty bytes

How to cope with things you can't control

By **JACQUELYN JOHNSON**

DO you feel the need to control everything around you? This is common, and there are ways to manage.

You can't control how your colleagues think and act. You can't control the traffic. You can't control whether your loved ones become ill. And yet, accepting that you can't control these things can be difficult in itself.

But although you can't control the world around you, you can control your reaction to it. Learning to accept and cope with things you can't control might help you find peace of mind when faced with difficult situations. It could also help you relieve stress and anxiety.

Addressing your mindset

A cognitive distortion is a persistent thought that isn't grounded in reality. Cognitive distortions make you see things more negatively than they really are. Everyone experiences cognitive distortions to some degree. The more cognitive distortions you experience, the more negative your thoughts can be.

You might find it difficult to think positively or objectively about certain experiences because of these distorted thoughts. A common cognitive distortion is the control fallacy: the idea that you can and should control more than what you actually can control.

For example, you might feel guilty if your partner doesn't enjoy their birthday, even though their happiness is out of your control. Or you might spend time and energy getting your younger sibling to study when their success is really up to them.

Maybe others have described you as "needy" in relationships because you tend to want to be in control and in contact with the other person all the time. Your thoughts might be telling you that you're responsible for others or for events, and that's why you feel the need to be in charge of every situation. But perhaps you're not responsible for everything that you think you are.

Learning to recognize these thoughts can be helpful and might lead you to stop worrying. When you identify that your thoughts aren't entirely truthful and rational, you might find it easier to cope with them.

If you realize some things aren't your responsibility, you might let them go instead of trying to control them. If you find yourself leaning on cognitive distortions that lead to controlling behaviors, a mental health professional could help. Cognitive distortions can be effectively addressed through cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and other types of therapy.

Identifying what you can control

The opposite side of the control fallacy is the idea that you can't control things you can actually control. For example, you might blame external forces, such as fate



mindfulness refers to focusing on

the present moment, where you are, and what you're feeling right now. Concentrating on your surroundings might take your mind off of things you can't control in the moment. "In a world where we would rather disconnect by binge-watching shows or scrolling on our phones, the way to regain feelings of control and lower stress levels is to connect to the body through mindfulness activities and breathing exercises," says Roseann Capanna-Hodge, a licensed professional counselor in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and the founder of The Global Institute of Children's Mental Health.

Capanna-Hodge recommends engaging in at least 10 minutes of mindfulness exercises a day. "When we learn to tolerate uncomfortable sensations, thoughts, and feelings, we move from a stress-activated sympathetic state to a more relaxed parasympathetic state," she explains.

When the parasympathetic nervous system is activated, your body relaxes and rests. Your breathing, heartbeat, digestion, and blood pressure slow down and you feel at ease. Not sure where to start? Consider these short mindfulness exercises.

Using deep breathing

Consider using deep breathing exercises when you're feeling overwhelmed by things you can't control. Deep breathing might be able to soothe anxiety by taking you out of the fight, flight, or freeze mode and activating the parasympathetic nervous system.

Capanna-Hodge suggests trying diaphragmatic breathing, also known as belly breathing. A 2017 study Trusted Source of 40 healthy adults found that those who underwent an 8-week training course in diaphragmatic breathing experienced reduced negative

responses to stressful situations. Identifying those things you can control may help you deal with those you can't. "When clients have expressed frustration about circumstances beyond their control, I acknowledge the emotions involved and ask what aspects of their lives they can control," says Edie Weinstein, a licensed social worker and journalist in Philadelphia. "Likely, they will recognize that there are more areas where they feel they have choices."

Recognizing the control you do have over some things in your life might help you feel better. It might help to do what you can and surrender the rest, Weinstein says.

Practicing mindfulness

responses to stressful situations.

To practice belly breathing, try these steps:

Sit down in a comfortable but upright position.

Put both hands on your belly, and close your eyes.

Slowly breathe in through your nose as much as you can.

As you breathe in, fill your belly with air.

Slowly breathe out through your mouth pressing your lips together, as if blowing kisses.

Let your belly release all the air and become flat once more.

Continue breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth while you focus on the motion of your belly.

You can use this technique every time you feel your stress levels rising when thinking about a

situation you feel the urge to control.

Journaling your thoughts

"Journaling is a powerful tool since it is a mindfulness technique," Weinstein says. Journaling can be an effective way to express and process your emotions. It can help you deal with things you can't control by becoming aware of the reasons behind this controlling need.

Writing your thoughts and feelings as they come up might also help you identify those cognitive distortions you experience the most and that might be increasing your anxiety about what you can and can't control in life. You could start your journaling exercises by asking yourself these questions:

What am I feeling right now? What was I thinking when I started feeling this way? What in this situation causes me pain or stress? Is this something I can change? If I can't, what are some aspects of the situation I can control? What would really happen if I can't change anything in this situation? The goal with journaling is to: Identify things you can't control identify things you believe you should control and why you feel that way

find those aspects of each situation you can indeed control become aware of the root causes of your anxiety or stress

When to seek help

"There is never a wrong time to work with an objective professional," Weinstein says. "Please don't wait until things become overwhelming to reach out for guidance."

Weinstein says that if anxiety is getting in the way of your day-to-day functioning, it's a sign to reach out for help.

Capanna-Hodge adds that the physical symptoms of stress, such as changes in your sleep pattern or gastrointestinal difficulties, can be a sign that you might benefit from finding a therapist.



Editorial

Education and hike in fees

As early as July this year, many institutions increased their fees by 100 to 200 percent for reasons we are not unfamiliar with, and this may be forcing many of our indigent students to drop out of school.

It is on record that many federal and state universities raised their fees, to cushion the effects of funding challenges.

Similarly, parents and guardians in Nigeria are groaning over the recent school fee hike in the prices of primary, secondary and tertiary education across the country amid accelerating inflation.

Some parents with children in both secondary school and University are crying out that the reality of the high cost of living is having a multiplier effect on everything including school fees, books, uniforms, boarding fees, food and other items.

There are reports of some "top-notch" secondary schools in Lagos which have raised school fees from an initial N500, 000 to N1.2 million, an increase of N700, 000 from what they were paying before.

The issue of student loans by the Federal Government is yet to commence. More so the conditions are believed would deny a lot of student's access. Other alternative sources of funding our children's education have thinned out in recent times.

This rising cost of living has gotten out of hand, and is already beginning to limit access to education. For parents with children in private schools, a switch to public schools is being considered. By the time schools reopen for the new session, public schools enrolment would be a common thing.

On the flip side, and as it relates to those sponsoring themselves in school, a scenario of students dropping out of school won't be farfetched. If you add that number of those whose parents cannot fund their children's education, the situation will not be far from a cracking point.

As earlier mentioned, we are likely to witness a large number of school dropouts in the near future. This is worrisome.

The resultant effects of the subsidy removal and other economic policies of this regime is causing these hikes in fees and other things. Virtually everything in the market, ranging from goods and services, transportation, and the like keep skyrocketing.

It is said that education is the bedrock of any society. The case is not different in Nigeria presently. The government cannot be seen to be folding its hands at times like this. Conscious efforts must be made to ensure education remains accessible, at present and in the future.

It is not acceptable that education is becoming an exclusive reserve of the rich. This only spells doom for the nation.

The far reaching effects of this would be that the society will breed more miscreants, and criminality will be on the increase. An idle mind, is said to be the devil's workshop. The security challenges this is likely to cause might as well be unprecedented.

In its bid to proffer a solution, the House of Representatives had asked the Nigerian government to suspend the hike in fees for higher institutions and unity schools. However, nothing has been done in that regard. The government insists that Federal Universities are tuition free. But the hike communicates otherwise.

Organized labour is currently on a 2 day warning strike to, in part, drive home the point that increase in remunerations of workers is long overdue. So far, there has been no commensurate increase in salaries of workers, and the implementation of the N30,000 minimum wage is a far cry in most states in the country.

Haven said so much earlier on, the question remains as to how parents with dwindling incomes are expected to pay the school fees. To say the least, this hike in school fees is not only ill-timed, but inconsiderate. This is coming at a time when Nigerians are battling with a harsh economy caused by fuel subsidy removal, and other economic policies that are so unfavourable to most Nigerians.

Some institutions, like the University of Jos, the University of Lagos, amongst others who have announced a hike in school fees should take a leaf from what the Kaduna State government has done by slashing the rates of school fees of their tertiary institutions to make education accessible to all during this harsh economic period.

State Governments have a huge part to play in all these, and should issue out education-paliatives and incentives to cushion the effects of the economy on education. This can come, in part, by way of sponsoring indigent students and giving more scholarships to deserving students.

Government has to kick against any additional fee-hikes, both in states and at the federal level. Federal institutions domiciled in States should not be exempted, because this will affect student enrollment.

The hike in school fees by government or privately owned educational institutions during these hard times is another burden on Nigerians, especially the poor who are already in deep economic trouble. This is uncalled for.

With this, a good number of Nigerian children will not go to school. The government needs to continue to subsidize education, and halt the planned increase in school fees, and regulate private educational institutions.

THE Bukuru Cattle Market is said to be one of the oldest in Northern Nigeria but not much has been done to keep it in and better condition.

The cattle market which is located in Jos South local government area of Plateau State dates back to the Nigerian colonial Period where traders and other business activities usually take place and is popularly known as Karra Market.

Recently, traders in the market were asked to quit by the local government authority which it was gathered that contract was awarded to a company for its modernization but uptill now not much has been seen in terms of work on the site.

Although traders at Bukuru Cattle Market have raised concern over the quit notice given to them by the Jos South Local Government Council. I wish to therefore suggest that instead of demolition of the market and relocating them, to a new place, why not modernize the present market to a better standard in order to generate more revenue



Government should renovate Bukuru cattle market

for the local government and the state at large. In view of the influx of business activities in the market.

Considering the importance of the market as a business hub, I wish to appeal to the Plateau State Government under the able leadership of His

Excellency, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, to kindly wade into the lingering issue surrounding the modernization of the cattle market for the local government and the state at large.

Fatima Abdulkarim Taye is an IT student from Federal Polytechnic Bauchi.

Rikkos community needs portable drinking water

I want to use this medium of THE NIGERIAN STANDARD to appeal to the Plateau State government to come to the aid of the people of Rikkos community with the provision of portable drinking water.

People of Rikkos community have

to go through difficult challenges on a daily basis trying to source water for their daily cooking and other domestic usage due to the absence of pipe borne water.

The people now depend on water vendors, wells, River ponds

which are the main sources of getting water in the area.

As we all know, water is life, it makes life much easier and without modern water facilities, the health implication could be devastating with cholera and diarrhea and other health hazards which can be contracted due to the inability to access good water.

However in order to safeguard the health of the people of the area, there is need to provide water for the well being of the people in that community.

I also want to appeal to the Plateau State government to assist the people of rikkos communities with pipe borne water in other to ease their daily suffering of going to search for water at odd time of the day and the need for boreholes and the provision of clean water to be provided in the area so that the people can have a cause to have this basic amenity for domestic use which can be of great benefit for all the citizens and also give them a sense of belonging.

Abdul Azeez Abubakar is an IT student from Federal Polytechnic Bauchi.

PLSG, please place priority on early child education

A child's early foundation for his or her future development provides a strong base for a life long learning abilities.

Children who are enrolled in every child education programme tend to achieve more success at school with better career opportunities. This is necessary for holistic development of a child's social, emotional and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation for life long learning and well being.

A good discipline in early childhood education programme also helps the child in the future while it is important to note that early childhood education can

expose and expand the child's scope of learning and growth in the environment and expose his or her understanding in terms of knowledge and development particularly in the acquisition of learning skills.

I therefore wish to appeal to the Plateau State Government to as a matter of priority place emphasis on compulsory education for every child. This policy would lay a foundation for a better and prosperous future for our children as well as for the overall development of the country.

Ibrahim Khadija Hassan is an IT student from Federal Polytechnic Bauchi.

Standard Cartoon



Opinion

How Tinubu can revive university system

By
Sunday Saanu

MOTIVATION to do this write-up is predicated on the perception that President Bola Tinubu is public-opinion sensitive and determined to take Nigeria to greater heights. He also seems to be committed to doing whatever can bring greater good to a greater number of Nigerians. From all indications, Tinubu, unlike his immediate predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari, is more communicative and interactive with obvious willingness to make life more bearable.

President Tinubu, who brands his government as administration of "renewed hope", comes across as a leader who is ready to right many, if not all, the wrongs of the past, particularly the misdeeds of the last regime. Were it not so, what grammatical function is the adjective "renewed" performing in this context? Tinubu seems to be committed to uplifting the drooping spirits of Nigerians at this point in time. I hope I am right. He knows that all is not well with many aspects of our national life. It is against this backdrop that one is persuaded to join many eminent Nigerians, in raising the issue of public university system with him.

There is no controverting the fact that the system is currently tottering at the brink of collapse as it is dying of insipidity. Without being euphemistic about the poor condition of the system, it is unfortunate that many federal universities in their laboratories have resorted to using kerosene stove in place of Bunsen burner. In metaphorical sense, the system is not only sick, it is on an intensive care unit, gasping for breath. During the Buhari regime, the system sweltered from crisis to crisis, as various campuses of universities became cloudy with so much aches and pains.

In response to the nagging problems of poor funding, decayed infrastructure, poor welfare of workers, therefore, campus-based associations: Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities

(SSANU), National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), and Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU) as usual, took on Buhari's regime, after shouting themselves hoarse, embarking on indefinite strikes.

Perhaps the last year strike which began on Monday, February 14, 2022, and was called off on October 14, 2022 remains one of the longest with debilitating effects on the system. For eight months, the system was in a complete paralysis and rigour mortis. With Buhari and his cunning and contemptuous silence style in charge, assisted by the Education Minister, Malam Adamu Adamu, and Labour Minister, Dr. Chris Ngige, the then government, sadly, provided leadership atrophy which clearly destroyed the system. It is unfortunate that the strike was allowed to drag for that long.

However, irrespective of what may be perceived as the unions' "excesses or offences", no responsible government should have allowed a crisis to fester for eight months. And, after eight months of starvation, stress and distress, the government invoked the "no-work, no-pay" policy, thereby withholding payment of the striking workers! Who does that? Who says ASUU members did not work during the crisis? Many of them were still stealthily supervising theses and dissertations of their students with hunger in their stomach. I know many students who completed their Ph.D programmes during the eight months of strike.

Who says SSANU and NASU members were not working during the strike? Security men and women who are members of these unions were coming to work every day to protect government's property. Armed robbers could have invaded the campuses and wrecked havoc but for the services of our patriotic security personnel. Yet, Buhari's government was audacious enough to say those who sacrificed so much to safeguard lives and property should not be paid! And they have not been paid up till now!

What Buhari and his ministers did to the university system was more than an

equivalent of the coup d'etat in Niger Republic. The way they handled the face off amounted to a deliberate destruction of the system. Bad enough, it was as if Ngige had cheap scores to settle with academics in general and ASUU President, Emmanuel Osodeke, in particular. Ngige, displaying all the traces of tyranny and subtle sadism was just being propagandistic rather than being genuinely interested in seeking solutions. One could see a glint of pride in his eyes with the aura of braggadocio. Nothing he said gave cause for cheers as it was all gestural utterances without positive impact.

Let me slice it a little thinner: Buhari handled the crisis with extreme apathy and unfriendliness. While Ngige, in a fit of vengeful hubris was always presenting a palanx of statistical inaccuracies, sarcasms, and negative innuendos, Education Minister, Adamu, appeared to be at loss; standing aloof with no creative solutions to the raging storm. At the end of the day, it was a triumph of politics over rationality, with humongous spill-over effect.

Today, many academic and non-academic staff members have resigned and migrated abroad in search of the proverbial greener pastures. Political elite forced them to seek safety elsewhere. If there is any sector that has experienced "Japa" syndrome, it is the university system as workers resign on a daily basis in all the university campuses. Refusing to pay varsity workers in different categories for four and eight months, respectively, is an indiscretion that is currently hunting at a higher cost to the integrity of the system.

Indeed, if Buhari and his boys thought they defeated and decimated the campus-based unions, they only need to look back and see the backlash of their draconian decision. In a particular department in a university, only three lecturers are left behind as 10 of them have resigned and migrated abroad, saying they could not withstand the indignity of begging to feed their families. Again, many of the young academics sponsored abroad for further

studies by Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have refused to come back to the system.

Now, what is the way forward? This is where I invite President Tinubu to step forward and remedy this national disaster. If there was a government which inadvertently destroyed a system, there must be a government that should be credited with renewing and rebuilding. Tinubu should be able to bind the wounds inflicted on the system and dress its suppurating gashes. The first step in this regard is to pay eight months withheld salaries of the academics and four months of the SSANU members. Forget about the court ruling upholding "no-work, no-pay policy". Tinubu shouldn't be legalistic in this matter, rather he should be moralistic!

How much is the salary of a professor? An average professor goes home with a little above N400,000. The payment is a pittance and the wages are wretched in today's economy. It is therefore heinous and heartless for any government to have withheld such poor salary for eight months. Apart from the eight-month salary withheld, ASUU in its recent release claimed that the government has stopped paying promotion arrears since 2018. SSANU has also confirmed the same claim, adding that the government has never paid 23 percent salary increase implemented among other federal workers recently.

University is the resource base of the nation. It is the powerhouse of the future. It is very pivotal to the country's growth. Developed countries such as Canada, Australia, Japan, Finland and the United Kingdom place much premium on their education system and they are better for it. In Nigeria, contrary is the case as knowledge is derided, scholarship is disparaged. Yet, we want our universities to rank among the best in the world. It is day dreaming!

However, it is a refreshing feeling to have Asiwaju as the president at this time. A leader has an uncanny ability to see far deeper, larger and longer than an ordinary man. Tinubu, without doubt, possesses substantial native wisdom,

potent enough to handle the crisis. The remediation option is simple: he should promptly order the accountant-general of the federation to release the withheld salaries; interact with union leaders, and assuage their pains.

The mood of the university workers, since last year, has been dour. From the recent strike, they have ended up with burns and blisters. The workers have paid the price of crucifixion in order to ensure that the system enjoys the glory of resurrection. The point cannot be overstated that they need healing. The healing they require urgently now is the payment of their seized salaries and other allowances. This is the road to recovery.

In all likelihood, one is hoping that President Tinubu, along with his Education Minister, Prof. Tahir Mamman, should be able to dislodge the siege of stagnation hovering over the university system in country. This government should strive to inspire hope out of the current hopelessness in the system. This is the desired direction. Tinubu should save the system from intellectual haemorrhage. He should empower the remaining university workers who have not "japaed". As John Maxwell will say, "leaders become great, not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower".

Interestingly, President Olusegun Obasanjo came in 1999 and increased university workers' salary, thus writing his name in gold. It must not be said that President Tinubu perpetuates the leadership deficit foisted on the system by Buhari. Indeed, this wickedness against the university workers must not be sustained through inadvertence. Destruction of education is the destruction of the country. It is so demoralising for a professor to be begging to feed his family, while those who could not boast of five credits at school certificate examination level are sharing billions in Abuja. Nigerians are watching and waiting.

Saanu writes from the University of Ibadan via sundaysaanu@gmail.com

Youth mentorship, national development and the CAMP imperative

A mentor empowers a person to see a possible future, and believe it can be obtained –Shawn Hitchcock

In mid-April of 2018, during a panel appearance with world leaders at the Commonwealth Business Forum in London, former President Muhammadu Buhari criticised Nigerian youth as 'lazy'. Perhaps, Buhari was not speaking literally, but metaphorically, when he made that inciting statement, given the majority of Nigerian youth's attitude to nuance attributes of patriotism such as mentorship, sacrifices, volunteering, selfless service, and personal leadership.

Sad enough, it is not only those in key political positions and corporate offices that perceive Nigerian youth as 'lazy' even with their education qualifications and the vibrant energy they are endowed with. At local and grassroots levels, this disdain for active youth participation in vital aspects of leadership and business is apparent. One thing is to have an education, energy, and skills; knowing how to effectively combine and channel these endowments into productive and sustainable endeavours is another.

This is one of the main reasons leadership and strategic communication coach, J. Loren Norris, admonishes that "If you cannot see where you are going, ask someone who has been there before."

Jean Rhodes, a professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts and the founding editor of the Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring, offers insights into how mentorship can help the individual and society. In her book 'Older and Wiser: New Ideas for Youth Mentoring in the 21st Century', Rhodes stresses that youth mentoring is among the most popular forms of volunteering in the world and that youth mentoring programmes must change to become truly effective.

One of the sobering conclusions in the book is that most mentoring programmes do not focus on what young people need because they are

By KINGSLEY ALUMONA

poorly suited and rely overwhelmingly on volunteers, who rarely have the training necessary to teach these skills to young people. The book frowns on the fact that some organisations typically prioritise building emotional bonds between mentors and mentees instead of emphasising the development of specific social, emotional, and intellectual skills.

Mentors and effective mentorship programmes are in short supply in Nigeria. There is no doubt that for the youth to be productive and for the country to develop there is an urgent need to institutionalise sustainable youth-orientated mentorship programmes across the country. Irrespective of the negative label Nigerian youth wear around their neck, there are a few of them seeking the right places to acquire mentorship skills. This is the first positive move for this small group of youths.

While government and cooperate organisations may not have the time and resources to venture into massive and intensive mentorship programmes for the citizens, the internet and social media are awash with intentional leaders and mentors that have dedicated their skills and time to teaching and mentoring young Nigerians.

Dr Charles Awuzie, the South African-based Nigerian thought leader and techpreneur, is one such person. In recent years, he has been leveraging his mentorship platform, the Charles Awuzie Mentorship Programme (CAMP), to mentor thousands of people – especially, young people and youths – in Nigeria and Africa on technology and entrepreneurship, health and longevity, and relationship and intentional living.

Recently, Awuzie announced through his verified Facebook page that this year's edition of the CAMP programme – tagged the Evolve

Conferences with the theme 'Where Dreams Evolve into Reality' – would be held in partnership with Zeton Integrated Services in late September in Abuja. He noted that his singular mission for the conference is to empower African visionaries, ignite minds, shape visions, accelerate innovations and redefine possibilities through real-world mentorship connections with esteemed industry leaders.

Awuzie revealed that the best speakers and mentors in strategic industries would grace the conference to impact the lives and future of Nigerian youths with the sole aim of driving national growth and sustainable development. He stressed that practical and critical mentorship is what young people and youths need to salvage the sad narratives associated with their future and that of the country.

Speaking of critical mentorship, Torie Weiston-Serdan, an American scholar and youth mentoring expert, writes that critical mentoring places youth at the centre of the process, challenging norms of adult and institutional authority and notions of saviourism to create collaborative partnerships with youth and communities that recognise there are multiple sources of expertise and knowledge.

In her book 'Critical Mentoring: A Practical Guide', Weiston-Serdan describes how collaborative mentoring works in practice in terms of dispositions and structures, and addresses the implications of rethinking the purposes and delivery of mentoring services – both for mentors themselves and the organisations for which they work.

On mentorship and organisations, Awuzie was once asked what his life secret was and his response was "Sound mentorship and the influence of the successful people I follow." He added that, because people knowingly or unknowingly become who they follow, his mentorship platforms are dedicated to inspiring communities and

shaping national narratives for good.

On another occasion, he emphasised that there is a level of authority one cannot attain in their career until they become a student to a mentor. He drove this point home when he said, "Even in my family if you ask me for help, I ask you if you have been mentored by me or any real mentor out there. If you have not been mentored, whatever is done for you will neither benefit you nor society."

Awuzie has severally, through his platforms, affirmed his stance that mentorship is the province of intentional people. He has also severally lamented that in Africa, people seek a mentor when they are broke but run away from mentorship when they make money.

In light of this, however, he emphasised that smart people know that they need mentorship the most when they become successful. He buttressed this fact by adding that "This is why Bill Gates would not let go of Warren Buffett – his sanity depends on him. Dangote holds tightly to Bill Gates. And Otedola would not let go of Dangote."

A lot of things have to be learnt from people like Awuzie if Nigerian youth desire quality mentorship and leadership to distinguish themselves among their peers from other clans. Also, a lot of institutions and platforms need to be established to help young people and the youth to reach their maximum potential and contribute meaningfully to national development.

I would conclude this reflection with a quote from one of Charles Awuzie's mentees, Kel Armstrong Amobi, also popularly known as KAA. KAA opined that no matter how big one is, they should get a harsh mentor who is committed to grooming them to become a formidable force. On the other hand, he warned: "And if you are a mentee who feels too arrogant and too big to listen, you are an enemy unto yourself."

Kingsley Alumona is social commenter based in Ibadan



Towards a New Plateau: 100 Days Later

By GYANG BERE

Introduction

As it has turned out, he was very eager, in a great hurry, to set to work. Apparently, that was what had informed the adoption of this catchphrase for the government from the onset: **THE TIME IS NOW**.

There is a ring of urgency about that not. Therefore, there would neither be delay nor procrastination for there was too much that had been left unattended to that needed to be done. That was why he made this solemn pact with Plateau people on that fateful day of May 29, 2023: We know you are expecting much from us. Today, it is not just my inauguration; it is our inauguration as it marks the beginning of our collective quest for a new Plateau.

No doubt, the governor has set out in earnest towards living up to those noble words, now cast in stone. That is, despite the debilitating challenges he met on ground in the first one hundred days of the emergent **THE TIME IS NOW** administration.

Insecurity

Insecurity was the number one problem confronting the state when Governor Mutfwang assumed office. Thus, only two days after his swearing-in, he visited Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Riyom and Mangu local government areas. That visit gave hope and confidence to the already despondent women and children who were abandoned for years in the IDP camps and reassured them of the commitment of his administration to address their plight.

Plateau citizens and indeed the entire country still recall the massacre of more than 100 people that took place in parts of Mangu Local Government Area on May 15, 2023. Others have since followed in Heipang and Kwi, among others.

The governor did not mince words about this ugly state of affairs when he assumed office. During his inauguration, he put these attacks in proper perspective and outlined the direction his government would take in bringing them to a definite end: It is an undeniable fact that much blood has been shed on the Plateau for close to two decades now which has retarded the pace of our development. The time has come and The Time is now, when we MUST say enough is enough.

We must break this vicious circle of hate and attacks and refuse to allow people to brand us negatively. That is not who we are. They even labeled such genocide as farmers/herders clash to the chagrin of the whole world. I wish to assure you that the government under my watch will be committed to peaceful coexistence and will work assiduously to secure the boundaries of Plateau State. Criminal elements/invasers hell bent on destruction will be decisively dealt with.

That was the first time in the last eight years that government was taking such a tough and decisive stance against such carnage that had almost become a daily routine in parts of the state. Moreover, it took no small courage for the governor to officially debunk for the first time the familiar narrative that had gained ground during the previous administration that what was happening in the state was a conflict between farmers and herders.

It was in the light of these that he personally interfaced with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu who graciously gave him a listening ear and promised to do everything possible to help out.

The governor also had one-on-one interactions with the nations security chiefs when he visited the Defence and Army headquarters in Abuja on July 12, 2023. As a result, he extracted their firm commitment towards stepping up the campaigns, both kinetic and non-kinetic, against the perpetrators of these heinous crimes.

One of the outcomes of such initiatives was the relocation of the GOC, Third Armoured Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Jos, who also doubles as the Commander, Operation Safe Haven, OPSH, to Mangu in the wake of the May 15 attacks. The presence of the other arms of the security apparatus was also beefed up in Mangu, Barkin Ladi, Riyom and Bassa local government areas.

During an August 21, 2023, meeting with Plateau Elders, Governor Mutfwang captured his gratitude and shed more light on the results of these high level interactions thus: I want to thank Mr. President and the security chiefs because they immediately swung into action and I want to particularly salute the new GOC and Commander of the Operation Safe Haven who came and demonstrated professionalism and didnt stay in his air conditioned office for close to a week where he was commanding the troops from the front.

And as a further mark of the administrations commitment to practically confront the hydra-headed monster of insecurity head on, the governor has convened four Security Council meetings in the last three months. The fourth was held on Tuesday, August 22, 2023. These meetings are very crucial and strategic because they assess current situations on ground and proffer immediate and long-lasting solutions, among others.

The state government is further boosting the security architecture of the state by revitalizing the moribund state-owned security outfit Operation Rainbow. The nations relevant security agencies would be fully involved in retraining its personnel and general overhaul. The governor has likewise appointed an experienced and renowned expert on Security and Homeland Safety, Brigadier-General Gakji Shipi (retired) as Special Adviser on Security to guide him appropriately in that very sensitive area.

The administration has unveiled the state security and information center where citizens report security concerns through a toll-free line. It has provided an opportunity for government to get prompt information on burning security issues in rural communities for swift intervention.

It has also set in motion policies towards ameliorating the conditions of the thousands of people forced from their ancestral lands by the attacks and are currently living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps and homes of relatives and loved ones all over the state.

On July 12, 2023, Governor Mutfwang visited the national

headquarters of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Abuja where he made a strong case for the welfare of the IDPs. Based on the promises made by the Director-General, Mustapha Habib Ahmed, some relief materials have started trickling into the state. It is hoped that, soon, the tempo will pick up so that the victims of these attacks can get succour and relief pending their relocation to their ancestral homes.

The Agricultural Services Training Company (ASTC) has been fully mobilized to farming communities in Mangu, Barkin Ladi and Riyom local government areas to assist farmers continue the farming season was abruptly interrupted by these ks.

Deploying 29 tractors, about 900 hectares of land have already been ploughed. intervention is fully implemented by the authority provided by the agro-rangers of the Nigerian Civil Defence Corps.

Plans are underway to increase the quantum of land and extent

end the exercise into the dry season to enable farmers continue plying their trade even after the rains cease. Subsequently, the Plateau Agricultural Development Project, PADDP, and other related government agencies have joined in these efforts.

The governor also undertook an official visit to the Executive Secretary of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in Abuja. He drew the Agency's attention to the urgent need to fund schools that have been adversely by the conflicts in the state. Most of these have been destroyed and others turned into shelters for IDPs.

Unwieldy debt burden/civil servants strike and welfare

When the governor assumed office and critically looked at the true state of things on the ground, he realised that the situation was far worse than he and his team had imagined. The rot was so deep and widespread in the civil service that government documents were being typed and photocopied at business centres, not minding their levels of confidentiality.

Upon that, civil servants were being owed salaries of five months, amounting to over N11 billion, which was one of the reasons that had forced them to proceed on strike. Worst of all, there was an unwieldy debt profile of over N300 billion and many other outstanding financial obligations hanging on the neck of the state government.

The Plateau State Polytechnic was on the brink of collapse as almost all of its courses were long overdue for accreditation. The state government had to source the required N200 million to bail it out. The Mutfwang administration had to raise close to N300 million to save the Plateau State University from having the accreditation of some of its core programmes withdrawn.

At inception on May 29, civil servants who had been on strike insisted that their February and March arrears must be paid for them to call off the strike. When government met this demand, they resumed work. As we speak, the backlog of June salaries have been paid and it is expected that in one weeks time July backlog would be completed and that of August will commence. The state government is certain of continuous and seamless

payments because it already has July and August salaries in the bank. While clearing the backlog of salaries, pension arrears are also being paid.

Environment

Plateau State was once reputed to be one of the cleanest and most orderly states in the country. But somewhere along the line, things changed as refuse heaps became a common sight in the Jos city centre, its environs and all over the state.

By the time Mutfwang assumed leadership on May 29, 2023, the entire state was choked with rubbish and utter chaos became the order of the day in our communities, our roads and streets. As a result, government immediately declared a state of emergency on the environment.

Some appreciable level of sanity, cleanliness and orderliness was restored as government galvanized the moribund environmental sanitation machinery of government into action. Refuse disposal trucks literally did battle with the mountains of refuse that had piled up in the Jos/Bukuru metropolis and other parts of the state. The administration also reintroduced the monthly sanitation exercise which the governor personally supervised. This has had very commendable outcomes.

Citizens still remember the road accidents caused by pothole-infested roads that led to the loss of lives in the Jos metropolis and outlying towns. To curb this dangerous trend, the state government has commenced work on the maintenance of roads in the Jos/Bukuru metropolitan area.

Potholes are being patched and overlaid with asphalt to facilitate free movement of traffic. At the moment, the deep potholes that dotted the Polo Roundabout road to the

Police Headquarters have been fixed. Likewise, those at the Gold and Base Roundabout, Rayfield, Dadin Kowa, DB Zang junction

Bukuru expressway, Gada Biyu to Farin Gada in Jos among many others. Full maintenance work will be adequately carried out after the rains cease.

Traditional institutions/Plateau elders

At the inception of this administration, the states royal fathers, under the aegis of the Plateau State Council of Chiefs and Emirs, paid Governor Mutfwang a courtesy call. Led by their Chairman, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, these custodians of the peoples cherished cultures and traditions urged the governor to remain focused in leading citizens; prayed that the measures he had put in place to curb the security challenges worked; and pledged their support to always offer wise counsel to enable the state regain its lost glory as The Home of Peace and Tourism.

On that auspicious occasion, the governor had told the royal fathers: We have high regard for you as individual royal fathers and collectively as a Council. Therefore, we will always consider you as fathers of the land and always turn to you for wise counsel whenever necessary.

And to further buttress this fact, he once again reiterated that their attendance of the August 21 meeting was yet another testimony that the state government can always approach them for their sagely and fatherly advice on burning matters of state whenever the need arises. He assured the elders that he would strive at all times to keep all channels of communication open between both sides so that whenever you feel you have the necessary input to make, we will be glad to receive it.

Appointments/retreat and onboarding

The quality and nature of a governments appointees determine its success or otherwise because they are the drivers of state policy. For Governor Mutfwang, he had set his mind on using young and vibrant technocrats to drive his THE TIME IS NOW agenda.

It is these well-motivated and vibrant Young Turks that have been propelling the machinery of state in the last one hundred days.

And to further enhance their capacity, a six-day retreat and onboarding was organized for them beginning August 18, 2023, at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, NIPSS, Kuru, Plateau State. At the end, participants resolved to improve funding to meet the demands of the state by exploring alternative sources of funding, reducing the cost of governance and improving revenue generation for effective revenue funding.

They also agreed to practice inclusivity and mainstream gender in all government policies and programmes and rise above the years of socio-economic, political and security struggles, build on the legacies of Plateaus founding fathers and attain a clear identity to ensure holistic comprehension of THE TIME IS NOW mantra, among others.

Surely, they came away from that retreat with renewed vigour and determination to ensure the attainment of set objectives so as to take the state out of its present quagmire.

Granted, Governor Mutfwang has personally admitted that the situation his administration inherited was far worse than its expectations. But he has so far demonstrated that he did not allow such a bleak reality dampen his initial resolve to restore to Plateau State its lost glory.

That much he has amply proven in the first one hundred days of this administration. On that score, it would not be amiss to declare that, for Plateau people, the next four years promise to bring showers of sustainable peace and giant leaps in economic and social progress. **THE TIME IS NOW** to build a united and prosperous Plateau.

Gyang Bere is the Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Executive Governor of Plateau State.



News

21-day ultimatum expiration: ARD ready for indefinite strike

Fom AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

The Association of Resident Doctors (ARD), Kogi State Specialist Hospital (KSSH) Lokoja, has called the attention of the Kogi State Government to the expiration of the 21 day ultimatum to resolve its demands.

It would be recalled that the association had on Aug. 9, issued 21 days ultimatum to Kogi Government to resolve its demands or be ready for indefinite strike action, after suspending its 2-day industrial action directed by the National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD).

The ultimatum was to give room for dialogue and engagement with the state government.

The notification was given in a statement jointly signed by the ARD KSSH's President, Dr Ameh Friday; and Secretary General, Dr Peter Samuel, and made available to journalists on Saturday in Lokoja.

"The ARD KSSH, wishes to state that today, makes it 21 days since her last communicate and one month since she suspended her industrial action as directed by the national body - NARD for the government to look into the aforementioned pressing demands as listed below. "Having examined the inertia that has greeted our requests, also keeping in view our previous failure to join the national directive to suspend service delivery because of our commitment to the client and State Government which unfortunately has never been appreciated.

"We would like to remind the government of our modest demands once more.

"Upward review of CONMESS 2014 to CONMESS 2023, and approval of Medical Residency Training Fund (MRTF 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023).

"Review of hazard allowance as released by the National Salary, Income and Wages Commission, 22nd December, 2021, and implementation and cash backing of promotion as well as the statutory Annual Increments with payment of arrears of both annual increments and promotion," It said.

The association stressed that the statement would serve as a reminder of the association's initial communicate.

The association emphasised that the moral and psychic of her



Bello

members in the Kogi State Specialist Hospital is at an all-time low with respect to their concerns, unfortunately. The Hospital working environment coupled with the unpalatable economic realities have further

Tinubu replaces NASENI leadership with 32 year old

By DORCAS PANKYES

In a surprising turn of events, President Bola Tinubu has made a decisive move by sacking Dr Bashir Gwandu from his role as the Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI).

The news was officially announced in a statement issued by Chief Ajuri Ngelale, the Special Adviser to the President on Media & Publicity.

Taking swift action, President Tinubu wasted no time in appointing Khalil Suleiman Halilu, an accomplished 32-year-old individual, as the new CEO of the agency. This decision demonstrates Tinubu's commitment to promoting fresh ideas and youthful leadership within his administration.

The statement noted that the appointment of Halilu, a talented innovator and technology expert, aligns with the vision of the administration to prioritize science, engineering, and technological advancement. The new CEO's extensive experience in these fields is expected to bring innovative perspectives and drive progress for NASENI.

In accordance with the NASENI Act of 2014, Halilu's appointment is set for an initial term of five years. President Tinubu has expressed confidence in his ability to deliver results and make a meaningful impact during his tenure.

The decision to replace Dr Bashir Gwandu with a young and dynamic CEO has

worsened the already sour situation

"The ARD would convene a congress meeting 7 days from now to have an appraisal of the progress made so far and take a decision on all the aforementioned demands," the association said.

sparked widespread conversation and anticipation of positive changes within NASENI. Many experts and observers applaud Tinubu's bold move, considering it a fresh injection of youth and expertise into a critical government agency.

As news of the appointment spreads, stakeholders in the science and engineering sectors have expressed optimism about the future of NASENI under Halilu's leadership. The new CEO's ability to tap into his extensive network and leverage his technological backgrounds, offers the potential for significant advancements in Nigeria's scientific and engineering endeavors.

Tinubu's directive came with immediate effect, highlighting the urgency and importance placed on the revitalization of NASENI. As the agency undergoes a transformative phase, it is expected that new policies, projects, and collaborations will be implemented to propel Nigeria's science and engineering sectors forward.

The appointment of Khalil Suleiman Halilu serves as a testament to President Tinubu's commitment to driving forward-thinking change and harnessing the potential of the nation's youth. As Halilu assumes his new role, all eyes will be on him as he works towards elevating NASENI's reputation and reinforcing its position as a key player in Nigeria's scientific and engineering landscape.

The journey towards innovation and progress has begun with this groundbreaking

By PETER TITLE

Governor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has commended the New Life For All (NLFA), also known as Sabon Rai Don Kowa for sustaining the burden of spreading the gospel of Christ for the salvation of mankind.

The Governor made this known when the National Chairman of the New Life for All, Reverend. Dr . Stephen Panya Baba and his Executives paid him a courtesy visit at the New Government House, Little Rayfield Jos, recently.

According to the governor, they would at all times celebrate the church for the significant role it played in establishing educational and health institutions which led to civilization and wellbeing of the people irrespective of religious affiliation.

Gov. Mutfwang who described the Church as critical partner in national development, assured them of government's support at all times.

He said they came into government at a critical moment when crisis was rife but revealed that the security paraphernalia were able to brought it under control and is being sustained.

The governor noted that the late Paul Gindiri gave New Life for All an identity and prayed for such leaders to emerge for the propagation of the gospel.

appointment, paving the way for a brighter future in science and engineering in Nigeria.

Police kill 5 suspected kidnappers in Bauchi

From ABBAS GUNGUA, Bauchi

Bauchi State Police Command in a serious shootout between its operatives and suspected kidnappers, killed five of suspected armed kidnappers.

This was unfolded by the Command's Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Ahmed Mohammed Wakil, while briefing journalists on the development recently. He disclosed that three AK 47 rifles, one SMG rifle, three empty magazines, 105 rounds of live ammunition and one cutlass were recovered from the gang.

The State Commissioner of Police, Auwal Musa Muhammad who briefed the press through the Command's PPRO, confirmed that the incident occurred in the night hours of 29th August 2023, on the outskirts of Jamaare town.

He explained that a combined team of operatives in conjunction with a quasi-security outfit under the mandate of Operation Restore Peace (ORP) had encountered the suspected kidnappers/bandits in Jamaare while carrying out routine surveillance.

According to the PPRO, the operatives who raided the hideout of the heavily armed suspected criminal gang, suddenly came under gunfire but upon returning fire, five of the gang leaders were killed while the remaining gang members fled.

"In furtherance to our commitment to stem the tide of crime and criminalities in the state, the command under the courageous leadership of the Commissioner of Police, CP Auwal Musa Muhammad PSC, has carried out several

Mutfwang showers accolades on NLFA

Earlier, Rev .Dr. Stephen Panya Baba, the National Chairman NLFA informed the governor that they were in the Governor's office to commiserate with him over the crisis that had rocked the state where many were maimed and killed describing it as unfortunate.

According to the Chairman who is also the President, Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), said spiritual and church leaders were disturbed about the killings and explained that it necessitated for relief materials they distributed to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in various camps within the state with the assistance from their partners both in Nigeria and abroad.

Rev. Dr .Baba enumerated some lined up programmes which NLFA intends to embark upon and called on the state government to support them in that direction.

He commended Governor Mutfwang for the resilience exhibited in curtailing the crisis in Mangu, Bokkos, Barkin - Ladi, and Riyom Local Government Areas as well as ensuring that the IDPs were taken care of.

The ECWA President called on people of the state to rally round the governor in fighting the bandits that are unleashing terror on the people, assuring him that the Church were with him in prayers.

In the same vein, the

General Overseer of the Dunamis Gospel International, Dr Paul Enenche recently too paid a courtesy visit on Governor Caleb Mutfwang at the New Government House, Little Rayfield Jos.

According to the him, he could not come to Jos and not pay a visit on the Governor as he stressed Jos was his second home where he schooled with the governor and started his ministry.

Dr. Enenche frowned at what was happening in the state, most especially the killings in some local governments of the state and assured the governor that whatever has a beginning must have an end saying they are in deep prayers for the state for the restoration of peace.

The General Overseer said that it was the work of the enemy of the church who were bent on making the state ungovernable. But prophesied that the Governor would definitely leave the state far better than he met it.

Governor Mutfwang who said he was very elated to receive Dr . Enenche and his wife, also a schoolmate, explained that the state was under threat but was of the belief that the crisis would soon be over.

According to the governor, he would forever remain grateful to the church for the role they are still playing for the restoration of peace on the Plateau.



Egbetokun



LANGTANG NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND FURNISHING OF PROJECTS.

Langtang North Local Government council is undertaking Constructions, Furnishing and solar street lights in the LGA thus wishes to engage the services of suitable and qualified constructors for the following projects in the Local Government Area.

- i. Constructions of Lock up shops in Zamko market
- ii. Constructions of mini Abattoirs and Rehabilitations of slaughter slabs.
- iii. Renovation of the Chairman's lodge phase i (Main House and Gate) Langtang
- iv. Renovations of the Chairman's lodge phase ii (Boy's Quarters and fence) Langtang
- v. Extension and Renovations of VIP Lodge Langtang
- vi. Furnishing of Chairman's Lodge Langtang
- vii. Installations of solar street lights in Langtang Bwawat, Gazum, Zamko and Pilgani
- viii. Renovation of Staff Quarters in Federal Lowcost Langtang.

Pre-Qualification Requirements:

1. Evidence of Registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)
2. Evidence of tax-clearance certificate for at least three (3) years
3. Evidence of financial capability from a reputable Commercial Bank
4. Evidence of Technical knowhow and goal performance
5. Evidence of Registration as a local contractor with the LGC
6. Evidence of value added tax (VAT) Registration certificate
7. Evidence of successful executions of similar projects
8. Any other information that will enhance the chances of the contractor/company

Collection of Tender

Since the Pre-qualification and tender stage are to run simultaneously, the advertisement serves as a notification for both pre-Qualification and Tender. Interested contractors should apply and collect priced BOQs and other details in respect to the projects from Langtang North Local Government council Department of works on a payment of a Non-refunded fee of thirty thousand Naira (N30,000.00) only.

SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TENDER DOCUMENT

Submission of pre-qualification and completed Tender documents shall be returned on or before seven (7) days from the date of this advertisement, sealed spiral binding of three (3) copies addressed to the office of the chairman Transition Implementation Committee Langtang North L.G.C, Langtang Plateau State.

Note: Only short listed Contractors will be contacted.

Signed

Dogo, Emmanuel Luka (CNA)

Director Budget Planning Research and Statistics Secretary Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC)
For: Chairman Transition Implementation Committee.



KANKE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL INVITATION TO TENDER

Kanke Local Government council is undertaking Constructions and electrification project, in the LGA thus wishes to engage the services of suitable and qualified contractors for the following projects in the Local Government Area.

1. Completion of electrification of Kaler to Tipik Community
2. Construction of road from Tipik, Diwa to Tigya, Garam.

Pre-Qualification Requirements:

1. Evidence of Registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)
2. Evidence of tax-clearance certificate for at least three (3) years
3. Evidence of financial capability from a reputable Commercial Bank
4. Evidence of Technical knowhow and goal performance
5. Evidence of Registration as a local contractor with the LGC
6. Evidence of value added tax (VAT) Registration certificate
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Note: Only shortlisted Contractors will be contacted

Signed:

Mrs. Lami Dashe

Director Budget, Planning, Research and Statistics
Secretary Tender Board

For: Chairman Transition Implementation Committee Kanke LGC.

Governor Bala in tears over deplorable education standard

From ABBAS
GUNGURA, Bauchi

Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed has shed tears over the rapid increase in the number of out-of-school children in the state and the decline in the standard of education at basic education level.

Full of emotion, the governor said despite his numerous achievements in the state, his administration has failed the people of the state in the area of educational development. He therefore berated, and held the management of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) as well as Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) Secretaries responsible for sabotaging his efforts at developing the sector better than how his administration met it in 2019.

The Governor was speaking at the opening of a meeting of education sector stakeholders including SUBEB management, Ministry of Education, LGEA Secretaries and LGA Caretaker Chairmen at the New Banquet Hall of the Government House recently.

According to him, "I was thinking loudly when I discussed with Commissioners of Education, Local Government Affairs and the Chief of Staff that we need to focus on education. Because my attention was drawn to some areas where,



Mohammed

completely, SUBEB is not doing anything after spending so many years there and bragging that we have renovated over 5,000 classrooms.

"There are mega schools that have been left untouched, unenumerated, unaccessed. They were not even brought forward by the agency for renovation. I think the quality of our work is not something to go home with because I have visited those schools myself and the roofs are either leaking or blown off".

Bala Mohammed lamented further, telling the officers at the meeting that "The quality of supervision by SUBEB is appalling. I have done my best but certainly, there is no supervision, no quality control, it has been business as usual.

"I am highly disappointed with all managers in the

sector, from my humble self, the SSG that is supervising SUBEB, the Ministry of Education and the LGAs. We have not done well in that sector, it is a shame on us.

"You are not doing anything, it is just eye service and making money. That's all, and I will not fold my arms to allow this to continue. No, it must not continue. In Dumi here, a few kilometers from Bauchi town, an old school, older than some of the towns in Bauchi with about 20 classes, is left abandoned. Our pupils are sitting on the mats, all the roofs have been blown off," he further lamented.

"I wonder where our Education Secretaries are in the scheme of things. The rate of attrition of teachers and schools is unbelievable, he betterly queried.

"The World Bank and UNICEF as well as other development partners are assisting us to develop the sector, but no positive results. We are regularly paying our counterpart grants. Just in 2022, we spent N3b but I can't see what we have done with such an amount. We spent N5b and N9b yet the schools are left like that. Definitely, something is wrong with the system."

The Governor added, "Somebody there or some people are sabotaging us. Today is not a tea party, I am not happy. Before we declare State of Emergency on education, we have to declare state of emergency on ourselves.

What is Nigeria's priority?



By FRANCISCA ADIDI

THERE is no doubt to the fact that every Nigerian knows that the polity is heated given the fact that the 2023 elections are at the corner and politicians are forming caucus and negotiations are going on in order to bring in good results and to also belong to the credible or profitable platforms.

Nigerians are also aware that the too many problems of Nigeria are glaring. But the leadership is pretending not to see nor is doing enough to find any solutions to ending or reducing them.

The problem started since the previous administration who could not solve it. This present government came and promised to end corruption and other lingering

problems, yet neither the corruption nor the security problem Boko Haram nor banditry have reduced. Rather, the country has become too corrupt that only God will intervene.

It seems that the only language that is understood in Nigeria today is the language of politics. This is because politicians have taken so much and have overshadowed the polity that our leaders do not think of any development both physical and human but only themselves.

In most states, salaries of workers are not paid, while so many infrastructural developments are left undone with bad roads, hospitals unequipped, education neglected, just to mention but few. Yet our leaders complain of lack of funds to fix these sectors.

Surprisingly, today, politicians are buying forms for political offices with millions of Naira, where are all these monies coming from? What is Nigerians priority? Politicians are buying nomination forms with huge sums of money while our children are home waiting for ASUU strike to end. All these actions are proof that to our politicians, politics is a business rather than

rendering service and representation.

Nigerians have reason to ask our politicians how they all got this money to buy nomination forms while so many problems are left unresolved. This is because politicians are promoting class distinction and the use of power, money and position to usurp the various political offices of the nation.

Today, very few poor politicians can win elections in Nigeria. Unless if the poor will write one day and rise against the opinion of the rich, thus very good candidate may never win elections. Our type of politics is driven by money which is in the hands of other people who may not have the qualities but only have the money to buy the power.

Meanwhile, Nigerian universities are closed down. Nigerians did not see the strike coming, with some seeing it as unwarranted, given that Universities have been on and off from ASUU strike and the 2020 Covid-19 shutdown of the country for more than three months.

Nigerians also think that both ASUU and Federal Government are wrong on this occasion judging by the disposition both displayed in allowing another strike. Also,



Nigerian students are tired of this unending lingering issues between ASUU and the federal government.

The question is, why can't the parties be considerate to the feelings of weary students and their families and the damage the incessant strikes have done on the University system? Why is ASUU not tired with the frequent strikes and disruption of academic activities? And also, why is the federal government so obstinate and unyielding to the demands, of ASUU on ensuring quality education?

We have more of private hospitals, than good government hospitals. The prices of petroleum products is on the increase. Many Nigerians are homeless because of the too many attacks on communities by bandits.

Today, the country is regarded as Africa's country with the highest unemployment rate. And as a means of surviving, many unemployed adolescents have turned to internet fraud while

huge sum of money is in the bags of many politicians.

Nigeria's economy situations is deteriorating every day with the purchasing and selling situation depressing as a result of inflation which is one of the country's great issue.

Nigeria's political leaders have not helped to improve the country's situation for they have a history of engaging in corrupt practices.

It is unfortunate that those who seek to govern Nigeria are made to cough out so much money to purchase forms just to signpost their original intention as persons who see only objective would be to hits recoup their huge investments and to further impotent the citizenry.

Nigeria's priority should be that her citizens live in peace and are comfortable irrespective of where they live.

Adequate measures should be made to ensure that our youth are well placed in all sector of life.



By DUMAH RANDONG

WHOSE interest are they representing? Is it their interest or that of the people whom they represent? That is the question I would like to pose as a precursor to this discussion. This is coming on the heels of a demand by the 10th National Assembly to appropriate to itself a whopping sum of 70 billion naira for the turnaround maintenance of members' offices and other sundry issues.

The amount, according to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Senator Yemi Adaramodu, is to support their working conditions. The funds according to him are for the purchase of furniture and to carry out repairs in the lawmakers' offices. The spokesman of the Senate went

Between affluence and the multidimensional poverty in Nigeria

further to say that no member of the National Assembly would receive any money from the 70 billion budgeted to support their working conditions.

The Senate, he said was not ready to join issues with those it called misguided and mischief makers that alleged that the 70 billion naira was a gift from the Executive arm of government. The passage of the Supplementary Appropriation Act according to the Senate, was part of their constitutional duty. One other mind-bugging issue is the purchase of 40 billion naira Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV) for the National Assembly.

It was reported that some hours after the two chambers of the National Assembly planned to spend 40 billion naira on Sports Utility Vehicles, new facts also emerged that 107, 2023 models of Toyota Land Cruiser for the senators and 2023 Toyota Prado for members of the House of Representatives.

The planned purchase, it was further reported, would be different from the official vehicles expected to be procured for the four presiding officers of the National Assembly, the Senate President, Godwill Akpabio, Speaker of the House of

Representatives, Tajudeen Abbass, and the Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau and Deputy Speaker, Benjamin Kalu.

This decision did not go down well with some members of the National Assembly who have distanced themselves from the plan and called on the leadership of both chambers to settle for locally-assembled vehicles to reduce and recycle the funds in Nigeria.

Now, if you juxtapose this humongous amount to be used in the purchase of these SUVs with the current situation in the country, it gives one an impression that nothing has changed from what it used to be. And this also suggest that we are in for another trouble having gone through the same trust deficit in the last eight years of the APC government.

Considering the increasing high cost of living as a result of

the hike in Premium Motor Spirit (Petrol) due to the removal of the subsidy by the Federal Government.

It is on believable that we have a set of people who call themselves our representatives, but they appropriate 70bn to themselves to buy cars and renovate offices at a time that Nigeria was groaning. The country can not be turned into a movie show.

Amidst multidimensional poverty and the much-talked about reduction in the cost of governance by those at the helm of affairs who we know are deceiving the masses in the name of good governance. The soaring cost of living occasioned by the removal of the subsidy has further thrown the country into another hardship that many Nigerians can barely afford a meal not to talk of the three square meals in a day as the approved world

standard.

In any case, those we have chosen as our leaders have soon forgotten that leadership is all about trust and this has to be guarded in order not to risk losing the confidence of the people. The question to ask is, do the people we call our leaders have conscience? Look at how they keep deceiving the masses that we need to cut down the cost of governance which has become like a sermon in the lips of these so-called political elites.

Then you also look at how the masses are struggling daily to secure a meal to help them survive to the next day to see what becomes of tomorrow. Worse still, the excruciating pains brought as a result of the petroleum subsidy removal have further thrown them into another state of hopelessness.

"Amidst multidimensional poverty and the much-talked about reduction in the cost of governance by those at the helm of affairs who we know are deceiving the masses in the name of good governance. The soaring cost of living occasioned by the removal of the subsidy has further thrown the country into another hardship that many Nigerians can barely afford a meal not to talk of the three square meals in a day as the approved world standard".

By IBRAHIM ADEYEMI

NOBODY wanted to tell me the story behind the pain of a people in the coastal settlements of Lekki in Lagos. A few people said it had better be buried in a secret grave forever. When I probed further, I found a narrative bizarrely told with grief.

Lekki was a blossoming town of aquatic splendour blessed with green vegetation and rich biodiversity. But the government

How Lagos Seaport ruined fortunes of local communities

would endorse a multi-billion naira seaport to grow the national treasury — at the expense of the locals in Lekki and its ecosystem.

Then I asked: How can a people conceal their pains in eternal darkness? The locals said they feared the wrath of the authorities whose passion for generating revenues appears to trump their commitments to the safe living of the people.

In October 2022, I witnessed a wave of magic bricks turning into modern houses and industries in Lekki town. In MagbonSegun village, for instance, the sea rolled up into a mountain, roared and simmered downward while a horde of helmeted Chinese workers engineered the Lekki Deep Port a distance away.

Life can be good on the Lekki shore, residents said. Fathers fed their families with proceeds from fishing. Children looked up to their successful fishermen-fathers. Fishes in the Lekki streams beckoned on the people, and fish vendors smiled at one another at different points of sale.

But this rural life was short-lived for the people when the deep seaport emerged, causing them deep pain. Now, the port has stripped the Lekki community of its charm and the people of their wealth. Catfish, tilapia and crabs were easy to catch; Chinese fish and sharks were the pride of a successful fisherman. But these aquatic blessings are disappearing, ruining the livelihood of the people. Fishermen sat in groups tending to their nets and wearing long looks on the shore of MagbonSegun. Their business was crumbling, they said, and the cost of livelihood was almost costing them their lives.

One said he had fished for three decades, bought cars, built houses and sent children to schools only to become a peasant fisherman. Another one said he used to earn up to N200,000 for every fishing adventure but rarely makes up to N30,000 now. A fish vendor said she had toiled for days to trade fish, but her efforts yielded nothing.

One common thing the fishermen told PREMIUM TIMES: The dredging activities by the seaport engineers are destroying their fishery resources and chasing them away from us. The more they dredge, the farther the fishes run.

The locals' claim seems sensational, but the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Pacific (UNESCAP) confirmed it in a report, saying dredging removes marine habitat, leading to a gross loss of fishery resources. The report also said disturbance from construction activities on a port site terrorises fishes, displacing them while dredging removes plants and animals living in the sea.

As of July 2022, the construction works on the Lekki seaport were nearing conclusion with dredging activities pegged at 97.90%. By January 2023, the port was set to commence its operation.

We are pleased to announce that the construction of Lekki Port is now at 94.3% completion," Lekki Deep

Sea Port stated on its website at the time.

On 23 January 2023, President Muhammadu Buhari inaugurated the Lekki seaport, the deepest in sub-Saharan Africa. On a build, own, operate, and transfer (BOOT) basis, the seaport project, a 45-year concession, was awarded to the Lekki Port LFTZ Enterprise Limited (LPLEL) by the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA). Occupying 90 hectares of the 830 hectares of land reserved for the Lagos Free Zone

adverse impact on the marine ecosystem resulting from the maritime shipping activity, noting that the landscape's biodiversity would be in danger, primarily due to the induced urbanisation of the community.

"The environmental and social management system will include the preparation of detailed standard operating procedures for all port activities as well as comprehensive emergency preparedness and



Events People & Places



(LFZ), the port was constructed by the China Harbour Engineering Company Limited (CHEC).

On several occasions, the Lagos government had said it would generate \$201 billion from the Lekki deep seaport when completed. They described the project as "a game-changer and a pacesetter". The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) added that the new port would contribute \$361 billion in economic impact in 45 years. The ICRC projected that \$201 billion would be generated from revenue, royalties, duties and taxes while \$158 billion would be gained from direct and indirect business impacts.

Before the construction of the Lekki seaport, an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was conducted on the 90 hectares of land the project would occupy and its host communities. The project site was surveyed for assessment of the human, biological and physical environment following the Federal Government's Environmental Impact Assessment Act of 1992.

In the assessment document, environmental experts predicted there would be adverse impacts on traditional livelihoods, noting that fishing would likely be restricted from operating in the channel area during dredging and marine infrastructure construction. They observed that the project would hurt the terrestrial ecosystem of the port site vegetation, soil and the removal of wildlife habitat.

They foresaw, again, that dredging of the harbour and access channel, construction of marine infrastructure, and disposal of dredged material would injure the space's biodiversity. They expressed trepidation upon an

response plans to deal with accidents that could threaten the health and safety of workers, nearby residents, and the environment," the document stated, showing commitments to mitigating environmental hazards on the Lekki shore.

The place many call Lekki is an extension of the small rural settlement between the lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean of Nigeria's Lagos State. In the dark days of the 19th century, Lekki was a meeting point for invading imperialists trading Africans overseas for cash.

A certain MrLecqui, a Portuguese slave master, was notorious for perpetuating this small town to merchandise Nigerians for slave labour abroad. He had built a slave trade empire and the small town would later be named after him. MrLecqui would die of severe malaria in his Lekki home, after many years of active slave-trading of Nigerians, according to historical records.

But in 1963, Obafemi Awolowo, Nigeria's first premier of the Western Region, was charged with treasonable felony and his prison home would be MrLecqui's former apartment in Lekki. His restriction to the town would let him explore the area closely.

He then acknowledged the great uniqueness of Lekki town, due to its numerous natural resources and biodiversity, prophesying that the area would be a hub for great economic potential and an industrial revolution. And in truth, decades after MrAwolowo's prophecy, the Deep Seaport, the Dangote Refinery, and other economic-growing industries, sprouted out of the Lekki soil.

But these developments would not be cost-free.

Misfortune trailed the people of

Lekki when the government engineered the seaport. As industrial activities germinated on their land, the locals in Lekki failed to grow with these developments. This costs them their livelihood because their sole and traditional source of income is fishing. But the era of enjoying the gifts of nature abundantly is vanishing due to the emergence of the port and other industries.

Residents said their fishes consume the daily toxic excreta from the seaport. These fishes are weakened once they taste the dangerous wastes and eventually die or run far away.

Sunday Abouhje, a fisherman on the seashore, is a witness to the tears of the Lekki people. I met MrAbouhje in Idotun, a small village on the shore of Lekki. The heavy-hearted man trudged through the sandy road of the riverine community, carrying the burden of insistent self-doubt over yet another failed fishing adventure.

"May the good, flourishing moments return to Idotun," he told PREMIUM TIMES, revealing how his life had changed in many ways he never envisaged.

When I asked what exactly has changed, he said: "These days, we suffer before we catch fish. Before now, we would use the engines for seven or eight years before they get spoiled, but now they get spoiled quickly. The cause is the chemicals they pour into the water (from the seaport)."

Environmental and port experts consulted for this story said the same thing: Toxic discharges from ships could be sources of water pollution. Bilgewater, ballast water, oily wastes, sewage, and garbage, among others, are residues in a ship that could toxify water. They also

said spills of oils, lubricants, fuels and other oily liquids may be other sources of water pollution.

Once an oil or oily compound is discharged into water, it is spread on the surface by winds and currents, forming a thin layer, a report by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific, stated. On the surface of seas in tropical or temperate zones, oils can be polymerized gradually by biodegradation and eventually form dense particles which sink.

The Lekki Seaport is established on the Lagos Free Trade Zone, a multi-billion naira investment destination with world-class infrastructures. The Free Trade Zone industrial complex — integrated with the Lekki Seaport — is harming the host communities, the recipients of its industrial wastes. Using geospatial assessment, the experts said the Free Trade Zone industries have two main drainage channels where they dispose of industrial wastewater.

The waste from sailing vessels, the fragments from dredging and the oily pass-outs from machines deployed to construct the seaport endanger the people's lives and destroy their marine biodiversity. However, other industries in the Free Trade Zone aggravate the conditions of the people as they have nowhere else to deposit their wastes than directly into the waters where the fishes live and the fishermen seek survival.

Experts said this has implications for the fishing economy, considering that the drainages lead directly to the fishing coast of these communities, depositing oil and cosmetic chemical waste in the basin.

IMAGES

GOVERNOR MUTFWANG RECEIVES NEW LIFE FOR ALL TEAM

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang on Monday received the National Chairman, New Life For All (Sabon Rai Don Kowa) Rev. Dr. Stephen Panya Baba in his office at Government House, Little Rayfield, Jos



Governor Mutfwang (left) welcoming the NLFA chairman, Rev. Dr. Stephen Panya Baba, ECWA President



Barr. Caleb Mutfwang (left) with Rev. John Nash and Evangelist Joshua Mape of the NLFA



Governor Caleb Mutfwang (right) his Deputy, Her Excellency, Josephine Piyo with Commissioners, Hon. Musa Ashoms, Information, Hon. Bashir Lawandi Datti, Youth and Sports and Adams Bulus Lekshak, Works



Plateau State Governor, Barr. Mutfwang, Deputy, Josephine Piyo, NLFA National Chairman, Rev. Dr. Stephen Panya Baba, NLFA Executives and members of State Executive Council in a group photograph

Photos: DANLADI DUK

MUTFWANG RECEIVES FOUNDER AND SENIOR PASTOR, DUNAMIS

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang on Monday received the Founder and Senior Pastor, Dunamis International Gospel Centre, Dr. Paul Enenche, wife, Dr. Becky and other men of God in his office at Government House, Jos



Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang (right) in a warm embrace with the Dunamis International Gospel Centre Founder and Senior Pastor, Dr. Paul Enenche



General Manager, JMDB, Arc Hart Bankat (left) with the Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Hon. Bashir Lawandi Datti



New PFN Chairman, Pastor Dunka Gomwalk (seated left) Pastor Akila Yusuf with other Pastors and the Governor's Aides



Plateau State Governor, Barr. Mutfwang (left) Presenting souvenir to the Founder and Senior Pastor, Dr. Paul and Dr. Mrs. Becky Enenche

Photos: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

UK's 'most married man' retreats to care home

THE UK's 'most married man' is turning his back on romance and moving to a care home, stating that his eight wives have 'worn his body out'.

UK's 'most married man' is turning his back on romance and moving to a care home, stating that his eight wives have 'worn his body out'.

Ron Sheppard, 74, kept dating until last year after admitting he didn't like being alone.

But after eight children and eight marriages, Ron says his relationship days are finally done.

He most recently called off an engagement to an American woman called Rose - who he had never met - in 2019 after it "didn't feel right".

Ron told Somerset Live: "My health is not good now. I think it's possible all my wives have worn my body out over the years."

"The mental and physical stress of the divorces have taken their toll."

Ron first tied the knot in 1966 with Margaret.

The pair shared three children but later divorced after two years, after which came wife number two, Jeanette.

Wed in 1973, the union lasted just one year before Ron got married for the third time a couple of years later in 1976.

He and Lesley had two boys but Ron - a former tour manager of comedian Norman Wisdom - left her five years later before she died in 1996. Then came Kathy in 1982.

The couple, who had a daughter, worked at Pontins as bluecoats with Shane Richie. Ron then wed Sue in 1986 and had two boys. But she threw him out 11 years later.

Usha from Singapore was next to tie the knot with Ron in 1999, followed by Wan in 2003 and Weng a year later. Ron's longest marriage was 13 years and the shortest just 10 months.

Lothario Ron has remained single since his marriage to Weng collapsed but admits to having 'friendships' with a number of ladies. But he doesn't regret walking up the aisle so many times.

"I don't regret any of my marriages," he said, "because I have my eight children."

Heartbreakingly, Ron said his constant search for love stemmed from sexual abuse he suffered as a child.

He says the trauma left him 'constantly

craving companionship'.

He continued: "It left me with a lot of problems."

"I turned to women. I felt safe in the company of women."

Ron released his autobiography, *Lord of The Weddings*, in 2014, and is still working on his second book *The Wife Collector*, which he says is due to be released alongside a film being made in the US.

His days now are very different to those when he was a serial husband, and he's leaving his two-bedroom ground floor flat in Somerset for a new life in a care home in the Isle of Wight, to be close to his family.

But far from looking for a new lady to share his golden years with, Romeo Ron says he is no longer well enough for romance due to his failing health.

Sadly, Ron suffers with a range of medical conditions including Parkinson's Disease, Lewy Body Dementia, COPD and Arachnoiditis which have left him reliant on a wheelchair and a team of carers which visit him three times a day.

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"I spend my days in a lot of pain," he added. "I can't do anything really as I shake so much."

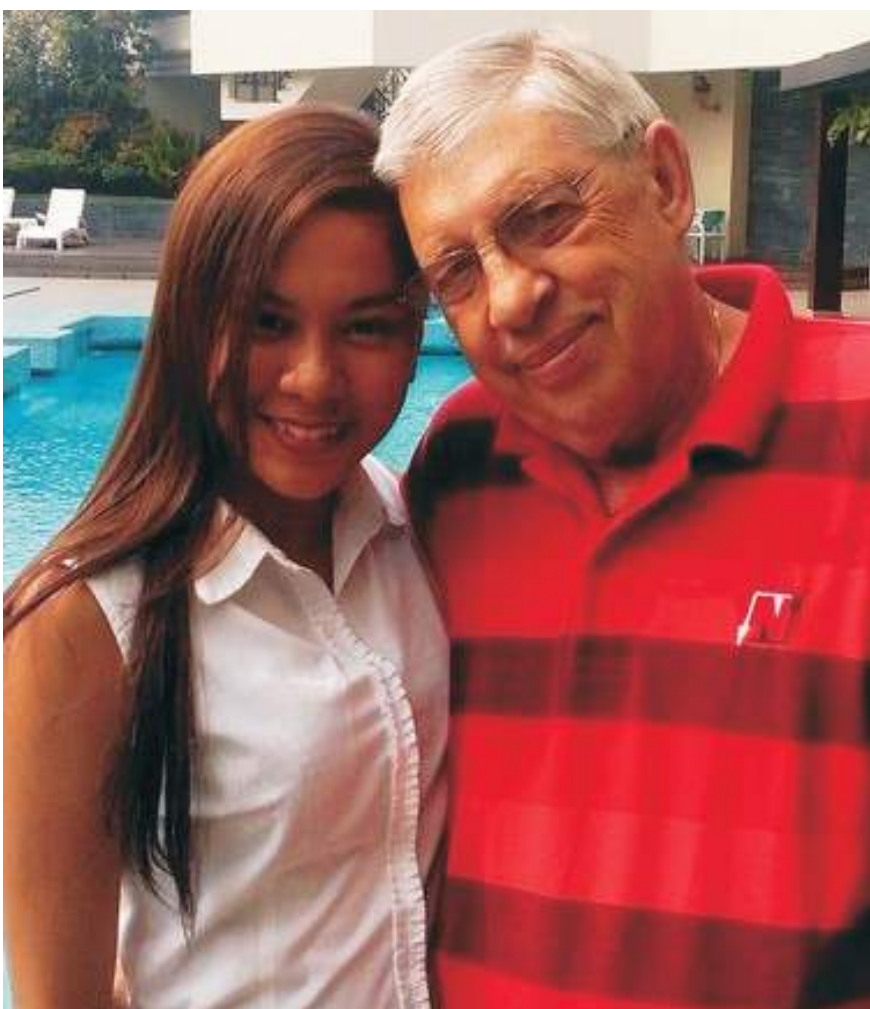
"I have carers come in to help me three times a day. They cook me meals and check on me and do shopping."

"I don't really go out at all apart from when I occasionally go shopping with my carers."

Ron is not in touch with any of his wives but is looking forward to moving to the Isle of Wight to be close to his sons and their families.

"I have a care home place organised but I am just waiting on social services," said Ron. "And I am looking forward to getting over there and starting a new chapter of my life."

Source: The Mirror



The
ISSUE
BULUS GAMBO

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Dogara: Is this 'political prostitute's' huggermugger over?

ONCE upon a time, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives during the 8th assembly, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara held sway in the corridors of power. As member representing Bogoro, Tafawa Balewa and Dass at the green chambers for over a decade plus, he certainly was once a force to reckon with within the circle of the political gladiators in the country including his immediate constituency back home. And as luck will have it for Dogara, after party-political cunning in the House of Representatives back then, he eventually materialized as the Speaker of our nation's significant parliament which epitomizes the integral aspect of the legislative disposition of the nation. Lest many have forgotten, the former Speaker's rise to power was necessitated by the doggedness of his people back home who came out under the rains and sun to ensure that he consistently won elections to represent them at the lower federal chambers in Abuja.

Dogara who emerged as Speaker on the 9th June 2015 is a minority from Bogoro Local Government Area of Bauchi State favored by the god of politics to excel thus far in his political career. Today, Dogara is no longer the Speaker and would certainly come May 29th 2023 be amongst several other federal legislators in the country whose tenure would expire and he will not return to the green chambers for any legislative duty again. Evidently, Dogara will come back home where he all started his political adventure to meet his people at Gwarrangah village and more of his constituents at Bogoro, his local government area. As is the tradition with most politicians, he may decide to hold a Thanksgiving Service and or preferably quietly stay back in Abuja to think of what he would venture into next in life. He would certainly be left deep in thoughts considering the present traumatic and unpleasant unfolding developments trying to envelop him back home. For many concern individuals like us, the federal lawmaker may with a sober reflection come to terms with the unpleasant realities on ground concerning him and perhaps turn a new leaf.

This is because; once out of power, reality eventually hits many of such once political gladiators and pushes them to repentance. This perhaps is the only noble path Dogara may humbly chose to follow if the little "demons" in him do not rebel again.

Prior to the 2023 general elections, Rt. Hon. Dogara and Babachir Lawal abandoned the ruling All Progressive Congress,(APC) in protest over the Muslim-Muslim ticket which the party decided to adopt. After several visitations to churches and other significant political gatherings aligning with others who shared his similar thoughts, Dogara ended up in the People's Democratic Party, (PDP), an opposition political party which decided to adopt a Muslim-Christian ticket but infringing the gentleman's rotational agreement consensus earlier adopted by the northern and southern political juggernauts in the country. This gentleman's agreement came into effect before the emergence of this incumbent political dispensation to help consolidate the balance power sharing arrangements for uninterrupted effective and efficient leadership succession intended to enhance fairness, justice and socio-economic and political integration of the citizens of the country.

With the passage of time however, Dogara back home in Bauchi State surprisingly decided to support APC's gubernatorial candidate in the state, Air Vice Marshall Saqid Abubakar against the incumbent Governor, Senator Bala Mohammed who has since won re-election for a second term of office. Rt. Hon. Dogara's campaign for the immediate past Chief of Air Staff was an open secret to the extent that people got confused on which side of the divide the former Speaker was. This attitude was another flagrant disregard to party loyalty and another anti-party activity if one may say so.

Though Dogara was a team member of PDP's Presidential Campaign Council for Atiku/Okowa, he was also deeply involved campaigning for the APC gubernatorial candidate of Bauchi State perplexing

intellectuals and political pundits. Even as he meander from one political party to another taking crucial decisions which needs further consultations with stakeholders back home, Dogara for once never found it expedient to do so. This is certainly Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara for you. Retorting to this infrequent malfeasance, the APC Presidential Campaign Council Spokesman, Festus Keyamo described Dogara as a political prostitute. Keyamo, the incumbent Minister of State Labour further tagged the former Speaker as a wanderer and back-stabber. True to his word, since Dogara's departure from APC, no one can pragmatically ascertain where or which political party he can confidently call his comfortable home. Plenty water has passed under the bridge right now and not even Dogara himself can resonate the positive implication of his nasty political misadventure and or it's glaring advantage to both the members of his immediate constituency and Bauchi State at large. Typical of some Nigerian politicians who employ administrative ingenuity to tackle crucial issues, Dogara is perhaps still hypnotized by spontaneous wealth and affluence and believes that he is still in a class of his own forgetting the reality of life in the sense that in politics and or life journey, there are seasons for everything under the sun. His leadership arrogance eventually came to bear after he started fighting anyone who shared a more pragmatic and logical ideology than his. Dogara is such a man driven by fallacious quest for power, unimaginable control of people and overwhelming notice me kind of a lifestyle. This narcissistic ideology, unnecessary desperation for undue and undeserved power control by Dogara has led to his political misadventures in most recent times. As it is today however, Dogara is no longer on the same page with APC, PDP and or the Governor of Bauchi State. Beyond this, he has consistently continued to pick up fruitless quarrels with the former Executive Secretary of TETFund, Prof. Suleiman Bogoro, one man who has selflessly served this country with due diligence and integrity including other noticeable stakeholders in his community. For some of us, there is no way Dogara can compare his level of impact both back home and in diaspora with that of Prof. Bogoro. Truth be told, Prof. Bogoro's legacy and tremendous service to humanity is uncountable and Dogara can never claim to have done anything near it despite the office he occupied when he held sway in the corridors of power. Unfortunately, Dogara is yet to comprehend the simple fact that the people of Bogoro are wiser than his thoughts now.

Therefore, if some unfolding unspeakable happenings in Bogoro Local Government Area fingered at Dogara must be taken into consideration critically, some of us with all sense of responsibility would opine that the Dogara we know in 2015 is not the one some of us are seeing these past months and years. His unpleasant engagements with stakeholders of the area has portray him as one who is selfcentered, uncultured and intolerant of eclectic peculiarity of a contemporary but complex society as ours. In the midst of many intellects Bogoro Local Government Area is blessed with, Dogara has continued to arrogate a fallacious cloud-nine lifestyle only ascribed to medieval tyrannic emperors degrading the need for accepting systematic principles of good brotherliness for the benefit of the people of the entire area. The way and manner Dogara arrogates power to himself including his erratic reaction to societal issues today makes some of us wonder whether he is not out of touch with reality this time.

But again, for the fact that while the APC has won the presidential polls, PDP has overwhelmingly won both the Bauchi State gubernatorial election solidifying the return of Senator Bala Mohammed as Governor and theseat of the member representing Bogoro constituency at the Bauchi State House of Assembly with the retention of Hon. Musa Wakili Nakwada of the PDP, he will end up becoming politically homeless without any base to operate after 29th May 2023. This equally means that the people of his constituency have completely deserted him for their own good.

As each day passes-by, Dogara will continuously bereminded of his obvious political miscalculations which has brought him from the pinnacle of power down to rock bottom. He will also be reminded of the obvious fact that prosperity eventually judge all mankind when the chips are down.

View Point

Cleaner fuels key to future of sustainable mobility

THE future of mobility is green and electric, of this there should be no doubt. As the first automotive manufacturer to commit to the Paris Agreement, Volkswagen Group knows and understands this well. The Group has set ambitious targets and has invested significantly to become a global leader in e-mobility.

In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Volkswagen is similarly dedicated to paving the way for a future of sustainable production and mobility. At its production site in Kariega, Volkswagen Group South Africa (VWSA) plans to run production 100% carbon-neutral by 2030.

Furthermore, the company is actively pursuing a regional drive towards sustainable mobility across SSA. This push includes e-mobility in Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda, all of which have already committed to the goals set by the Paris agreement and the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26).

However, the future does not exclude the internal combustion engine (ICE) and this has been confirmed with the planned introduction of Euro-7 vehicle emissions standards in Europe from 1 July 2025. VWSA's approach is therefore two-fold; to facilitate the transition to e-mobility, but also to improve the conditions that would enable the use of more advanced internal combustion engine technology.

For many years, Europe has periodically introduced higher vehicle emissions standards, from Euro-1 through to its current standard of Euro-6. With each subsequent update, the development of modern emissions after-treatment technology has been preceded with the improvement in fuel quality; in other words, has been specified to be 'cleaner' and more environmentally friendly.

The converse is thus also true; cleaner fuels promote the sale and trouble-free operation of Volkswagen vehicles with higher emissions standards while sub-standard, or 'poor' fuel quality, will negatively impact both new and old technology vehicles, is worse for the environment and have a negative impact on the vehicle technology.

Another challenge for Africa is that regulations governing emissions and roadworthiness in most SSA countries have been non-existent for many years; however, the regions of East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have started to develop such regulations.

Two markets leading the way are Morocco and Kenya, who have already reached Euro-4 emissions standards and have Euro-5/6 in their sights.

As stated earlier, it all starts with improved fuel quality. Over the last 20 years Africa has seen the removal of lead from automotive petrol, a great success no doubt, and now the focus has turned to the reduction in sulphur. At the African Petroleum Ministers meeting held in Nairobi on 29-30 November 2022 the focus was to find ways for Africa to fast-track the realisation of low-



sulphur fuels across the continent.

Sulphur occurs naturally in crude oil and should be removed during the refining process. Its presence in fuel reduces the efficiency of catalysts and therefore reductions in sulphur would immediately translate into reductions in vehicle emissions and particulate matter, and subsequently increase the life of the catalyst itself.

In addition to sulphur, markets in Africa are challenged with the removal of high levels of metallic additives, like manganese and phosphorus, which poison the catalytic converter and irreversibly reduce the efficiency of the emissions after-treatment technology in vehicles, thus no longer ensuring the vehicle remains within the prescribed emissions standards in which they were designed to operate and leads to higher emissions.

The fuel specifications for automotive petrol cover many other components that need to be controlled in order for trouble-free vehicle operation and impact positively on the environment and human health. Some examples include fuel octane, olefins, aromatics, benzene and diesel contamination.

The octane rating is a measure of the fuel's capacity to resist auto-ignition, meaning a low octane rating can cause engine damage from auto-ignition in harsh cases. High levels of olefins lead to engine deposit formation, while high aromatics increase engine wear, particle formation and tailpipe emissions, and as benzene is a known human carcinogen, its levels should be strictly controlled. The availability of cleaner fuels would therefore greatly improve emissions from vehicles in SSA.

Today, with poor quality fuels, vehicle manufacturers, importers and traders can only offer older model vehicles with older emissions limits and higher fuel consumption. The introduction of



sub-50ppm sulphur fuels, free of metallic additives and contamination, at 95 octane and with the correct levels of olefins, aromatics and benzene will promote the risk free sale of low emission and more efficient Euro-4 emissions vehicles. This needs to be in conjunction with ongoing sampling and analysis of fuels in the market (not only at point of entry) and a process of dealing with poor quality fuels.

Coupled with having lower fuel consumption the ultimate benefit from cleaner fuels is a cleaner environment. Higher emissions technology vehicles that meet Euro-5 and Euro-6 emissions limits do so in conjunction with 10ppm sulphur fuels. This is precisely why the VWSA team has started engaging with various governments and other stakeholders across Africa – particularly in the countries where

Volkswagen already has assembly facilities and a sales footprint- in order to improve fuel quality and help create the required legislative framework.

The most successful example has been that of the shift to Euro-4 fuels and emissions standards in Kenya. This shift came about from the initial application of the Euro-4 enabling fuel countrywide, specifically with the introduction of a 2mg/litre limit for manganese, followed by the introduction of Euro-4 emissions standards for motor vehicles. Other examples are Ghana, South Africa and Rwanda. While dates for implementation of the updated fuels and emissions standards are still open, the intention shows how important higher emissions standards are for these markets.

For countries that rely on fuel importation that would mean an updated 'shopping list'; one that includes the limits mentioned

before combined with the full requirement as specified in the Euro-4 enabling standards. A region as vast and diverse as SSA will not change to zero emission mobility overnight – but Volkswagen's key markets are definitely willing. Many African governments are taking up the challenge of finding the right mobility solution that works for their market – and Volkswagen wants to find out what it can contribute to these markets.

While the promotion of e-mobility has made it to the top of many countries' agenda, cleaner fuels are also necessary in the interim to enable the use of newer and more modern and efficient engine technologies. To enable this step forward towards lower emission mobility, the hurdles of poor fuel quality must be overcome.

Sources: THEWILL

News

Education Ministry, UNICEF, celebrate Nigeria learning passport

By DORCAS PANKYES

Marking a pivotal moment in the nation's education journey, Federal Ministry of Education (FME) and UNICEF, celebrate the Nigeria Learning Passport (NLP) reaching the 500,000-user milestone.

The achievement stands as a testament to the government's commitment to modernizing the educational landscape, ensuring every Nigerian child can access quality education tailored to their needs.

This was conveyed in a statement by UNICEF in Abuja that Ms. Cristian Munduate, UNICEF Representative in Nigeria, said, "Reaching 500,000 users isn't just a reflection of a successful platform, but of the government's visionary leadership and dedication to its citizens. As we set our sights on 1.5 million NLP users by 2024, the continued strategic guidance and involvement of FME will be invaluable."

Digital learning has emerged as the future of education, and by investing in the Nigeria Learning Passport, Nigeria is paving the way for children and young adults to thrive in a digital economy. The NLP offers interactive simulations and cutting-edge courses in fields such as computer and agricultural science, empowering the younger generation with the requisite skills for the future.

"I stay on top of my class work at home or school, and I like that they are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the NLP platform".

"I was impressed at the selection of courses available on the NLP platform—everything from biology to mathematics to entrepreneurial and secretarial studies," said Bolade Ayomide - fourteen-year-old student at the Government Senior College Agege, Lagos.

Teachers, too, benefit immensely from the platform, accessing invaluable resources for professional development, ensuring that they are adequately equipped to provide dynamic, interactive learning experiences. Parents and caregivers are not left out, as they can support their child's learning trajectory, starting from an early age with the platform's playful



learning courses.

Launched in March 2022 by FME and UNICEF, and powered by Microsoft, the NLP now operates actively across 18 states. With over 15,000 curriculum-aligned resources available in English, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, the platform boasts a versatile offering. Users can also track their progress and achievements via the platform's personal learning record.

With the support of Airtel Africa, the NLP is accessible at no cost on all Airtel devices. IHS Towers is also providing support to ensure that schools are connected to the internet. These public-private partnerships have ensured that the digital learning divide is being bridged, and every child, regardless of connectivity access, has an opportunity to learn.

"In our journey to democratize digital education, the role of the private sector, especially partners like Airtel Africa and IHS Towers, have been nothing short of transformative," added Munduate. "Their commitment not only amplifies our efforts but ensures that we bridge the digital learning divide effectively. With such strong public-private collaboration, we are confidently advancing towards a future where every Nigerian child, irrespective of connectivity challenges, receives quality education."

The statement further explained that UNICEF and partners are investing in necessary infrastructure, like data, computers, smart devices, internet access, and teacher capacity development, to bring digital learning to every child and young person in Nigeria. "Join us on this journey," they invite. NAF

aircraft have continued to give the requisite outcome while denying non-state actors the freedom to perpetrate their nefarious acts at will. While the NAF alongside other security agencies remain focused in undertaking their assigned tasks, the need for all Nigerians to see themselves as part of the solution to these challenges through the provision of actionable information to security agencies, cannot be overemphasized.

Nigeria to host 54 African nations, others for AfIGF

By POLYCARP ISHAYA, Pankshin

THE forum of National Union of Road Transportation Workers (NURTW) in Pankshin, Kanke and Kanam Local Government Area branches recently held annual quarterly executive officers meeting at the Pankshin branch secretariat of the union.

It called on the government at all levels to roll out palliatives to cushion the effect and hardship faced by the common man due to the removal of fuel subsidy by the federal government. Adding that the removal of subsidy is directly affecting the transportation industry nationwide.

The forum in the resolutions reached at the meeting and read by the forum's chairman, Mr. Nandir Danjuma who is also the branch chairman of the NURTW Kabwir said they are in support of the giant step taken by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for the removal of the fuel subsidy, which he said is long overdue. But called on the presidency to judiciously channel the fuel subsidy money to better the lives of the entire citizens of Nigeria through the execution of meaningful projects that have direct bearing on the lives of the people, especially in areas like road construction and maintenance, health, education, agriculture and the transport sectors among many others.

At the end of the meeting, the forum went for an

THE Sokoto State Government has in its bid to cushion the effect of fuel subsidy removal by the federal government, earmarked and approved the sum of over N20.3 billion Naira for the procurement of food items as palliative for the people of the state.

The state's government also declared a state of emergency on the food sector as a demonstration of its readiness to tackle the problems for the people especially the young and old members of the society.

This was disclosed by the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Alhaji Jabir Mai-Hula during the news briefing after the State Executive Council maiden meeting in Sokoto.

He said the meeting approved the purchase and distribution of 57,000 bags of 50kg of rice and 26,000 bags of 100 kg of millet at a total cost of N3.9bn.

Alhaji Mai-Hula said the responsive initiative was aimed at getting the items distributed to ease the current economic crises among its people and the society as the items are to be distributed across the 23 local governments of the state.

He also disclosed that the state government, in collaboration with the

Sokoto approves N20.3bn for palliatives



Aliyu

federal government, approved the purchase and distribution of 44,000 bags of maize for the same purpose.

In a separate development, the commissioner said the sum of N3.4 billion has been approved for the purchase of 50 units of 18 seaters Toyota buses and 30 units of Toyota Camry vehicles for commercial purposes in the state.

He explained that the buses would be used for inter-state and local transport services while the Toyota Camry will serve the transportation needs of females only within the state.

Also, the Commissioner for Innovation and Digital Economy, Alhaji Bashir Umarun Kwabo confirmed the council's approval of N2.6bn for the purchase of 66 Toyota Hilux for the purpose of supporting security agencies in tackling security challenges being faced in the state.

He explained that each Police Division across the 23 LGs will be allocated a brand new Hilux and the remaining would go round other security outfits in the state.

On his part, the Commissioner for Lands and Housing, Alhaji Nasiru Dantsoho disclosed that approval has been given by the council for the construction of 500 Housing units estate at the cost of N7.4bn.

He said the housing estate will comprise of 300 units of 3-bedroom flats and 200 units of 2-bedroom flats at Kalambaina in Wamakko Local Government Area of the state.

The commissioner also said the sum of N1.8 bn had been approved for the repairs, construction and rehabilitation of roads in the state.

His Energy and Petroleum Resources counterpart, Alhaji Sanusi Danfulani said that N1.2bn has been approved for the phase I Solar light installation across streets and roads in the metropolis has been approved even as the installation will further beautify the streets and assist in the area of security in the metropolis.



Tinubu

advocacy visit to the zonal office of Pankshin, Kanke and Kanam Local Government Areas Vehicle Inspection Office (VIO) in Pankshin and later paid a courtesy visit to the office of the Pankshin Unit of Federal Road Safety Commission Commandant, CRC Abdullahi Santali Maikasuwa, and Pankshin Areas Command.

Speaking while in the different offices: the Zonal Inspection Officer's office, and those of the FRSC and Nigeria Police Area offices, the chairman of the forum, Mr. Nandir Danjuma said they were in his there to officially welcome the VIO boss and newly transferred FRSC boss to Pankshin to solicit for their support and cooperation in their activities as union officials and at the same time as transporters.

He added that they were also in the offices to solicit for

a cordial/working relationship between the National Union of Road Transport Workers and officers and men of Pankshin Zonal Vehicles Inspection Office, that of FRSC and the Police Area Commands.

In his response, the Pankshin Zonal Vehicles Inspection Officer, Mr. Danladi Dakup Gokir thanked the officials of the union for the visit. He assured them of his maximum support and cooperation at all times, when the need arises. Gokir, however called on the union officials to always advise their members to avoid overloading, high speed and warned that his office will not take it lightly with any of their members that refuses to adhere to the laid down rules.

He emphasized on the need for the union and their members to always give priority to the maintenance of their vehicles, especially defects in motors to include screen wipers, signal lights, headlights

Sports

Who are the most expensive players ever?

PREMIER League clubs have been splashing the cash again this summer with Moises Caicedo, Declan Rice and Josko Gvardiol among the players to have moved for big money.

It is not just English teams either - with England duo Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham moving to foreign clubs for huge sums too.

As transfer records fall, BBC Sport has looked at some of the most expensive players ever by position, league and nationality.

For clarity's sake, we are using initial fees, excluding add-ons where possible.

Most of the priciest goalkeepers have gone to Premier League teams, led by Chelsea's £71m outlay on Athletic Bilbao's Kepa Arrizabalaga in 2018.

Alisson's £66.8m move to Liverpool from Roma the same summer ranks second, followed by Manchester United's signing of Inter Milan's Andre Onana this summer for £43.8m.

Next is Manchester City's 2017 signing of Benfica's Ederson for £35m.

The Ederson move ended Gianluigi Buffon's 16-year reign as the world's most expensive keeper - following his £32.6m move in 2001 from Parma to Juventus.

Thibaut Courtois' switch from Chelsea to Real Madrid was reportedly in a deal worth about £35m - but some of that may have been add-ons.

It was thought that Manchester City's deal to sign Josko Gvardiol was going to end up topping this list, but at £77m he comes in at second place.

Leicester's £80m sale of Harry Maguire to Manchester United in 2019 remains the world record.

Virgil van Dijk's £75m move from Southampton to Liverpool now sits third, with Wesley Fofana's £70m journey from the King Power to Chelsea not far behind.

Bayern Munich's signings of Lucas Hernandez from Atletico Madrid (£68m in 2019) and Matthijs de Ligt from Juventus (£65.6m in 2022) are next.

The most expensive midfielders list has changed drastically in recent months.

Enzo Fernandez became the most expensive midfielder ever with his £107m move from Benfica to Chelsea on 1 February.

In second place is Philippe Coutinho who cost Barcelona £105m when they signed him from Liverpool in 2018.

And then there is a three-way tie on £100m - with two happening this summer.

Moises Caicedo's move from Brighton to Chelsea may rise to £115m, but the initial fee is £100m. Declan Rice moved from West Ham to Arsenal for the same up-front price, rising to £105m.

Jack Grealish cost Manchester City a flat £100m from Aston Villa in 2021.

This means Paul Pogba's move from Juventus to Manchester United (£89m) in 2016 is no longer in the top five.

Also just outside below that is Jude Bellingham's move this summer from Borussia Dortmund to Real Madrid for an initial £88.5m.

The most expensive two deals both involved Paris St-Germain in the same summer. PSG spent £200m on Barcelona's Neymar in 2017 and soon after signed Monaco's Kylian Mbappe, initially on loan, in what became a £165.7m deal.

Atletico Madrid's £113m move for Benfica forward Joao Felix in 2019 is third in all positions, when you exclude potential add-ons for Coutinho and Barcelona's Ousmane Dembele.

Next among forwards is the £107m Barcelona paid Atletico for Antoine Griezmann, also in 2019, and then Romelu Lukaku's £97.5m move from Inter Milan to Chelsea in 2021.



Paris St-Germain pair Neymar and Kylian Mbappe remain the two most expensive footballers ever



England team-mates Jack Grealish and Declan Rice are the most expensive British players of all time

Belgium's Lukaku holds a record of his own with total career transfer fees of £294.5m, having joined Chelsea twice, Everton, Manchester United and Inter.

Neymar could break that if his £77.6m Al-Hilal move goes through - that would take his total to £326.2m.

Spanish clubs have made three of the top 10 most expensive signings of all time, although perhaps surprisingly none involved Real Madrid.

Atletico's move for Felix is number one in Spain, with Barcelona's deals for Griezmann and Coutinho also featuring.

Just outside the all-time global top 10 is Dembele, who joined Barcelona for an initial £97m from Borussia Dortmund in 2017.

Real's biggest signing remains the initial £89m they paid Chelsea for Eden Hazard in 2019. That fee reportedly could have reached £150m, but it is unlikely many of the add-on criteria were met before he left the club this summer.

PSG have the top two most

expensive signings ever - with Neymar and Mbappe - and then nobody else in the top 50.

Edinson Cavani is next with his 2013 move from Napoli to PSG for £55m.

Monaco, who paid a reported £50m for Atletico Madrid's Radamel Falcao in 2013, are the only other French team to ever spend more than £30m on a player.

Chelsea's £107m addition of Fernandez remains the British transfer record.

Caicedo to Chelsea, Rice to Arsenal and Grealish to Manchester City (all for £100m) follow.

Chelsea also rank high up with their £97.5m signing of Lukaku, with Manchester United's acquisitions of Pogba (£89m), Ajax winger Antony (£82m) and Maguire (£80m) next on the list.

Gvardiol (£77m) comes after that, with Lukaku appearing for the second time courtesy of his £75m move from Everton to Manchester United in 2017.

The Italian league's record spend was on a 33-year-old, with Juventus paying £99.2m in 2018 for Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo.

Next was Juve's £75.3m signing of Napoli striker Gonzalo Higuain in 2016 and then Inter's £74m move for Lukaku from Manchester United in 2019 (which ranks as only Lukaku's third biggest move).

Juve are next, too, with Matthijs de Ligt costing £67.5m from Ajax in 2019.

As would be expected, Bayern Munich are responsible for the majority of Germany's biggest signings - topped by the recent £86.4m move for Tottenham striker Harry Kane.

The record before that was Lucas Hernandez's £68m move from Atletico Madrid in 2019, followed by last year's £65.6m signing of De Ligt from Juventus.

Bayern paid an initial £44.7m for Manchester City winger Leroy Sane in 2020 which is fourth on the list. By contrast, that would not make the top 50 Premier League signings.

The biggest buy ever by a team outside of Europe's top five leagues was Shanghai SIPG's £60m signing of Chelsea midfielder Oscar in 2017.

That record is about to be smashed with Al-Hilal having agreed to sign Neymar from PSG for about £77.6m.

Most of the biggest signings by non-European clubs before now were made in China between 2016 and 2019.

But Saudi Arabian clubs are investing heavily this summer and Al-Hilal have spent £51.7m on Zenit St Petersburg winger Malcom and £47m for Wolves captain Ruben Neves this summer.

Rice and Grealish jointly hold the title of being the most expensive British footballer ever.

Bellingham is third, followed by another England team-mate Kane and then Wales winger Gareth Bale, who made an £85m move from Tottenham to Real Madrid in 2013.

Maguire, the £80m man, is followed by Jadon Sancho who moved in 2021 from Borussia Dortmund to Manchester United. Mason Mount is next following his £55m move from Chelsea to United.

Kieran Tierney is the most expensive Scot ever, joining Arsenal from Celtic for £25m in 2019. Northern Ireland's priciest player remains Jamal Lewis, who made a £15m switch from Norwich to Newcastle in 2020.

Eight of the record signings from the top 10 countries in Fifa's world rankings have already been mentioned so far.

Argentina's most expensive player is Fernandez, France's is Mbappe, Brazil's is Neymar, England's is a tie between Grealish and Rice and Belgium's is Lukaku.

Van Dijk leads the way for Dutch players, with Ronaldo top for Portugal and Kepa the most expensive Spaniard.

Gvardiol's move to City smashed the Croatian record, with his move far surpassing the £30m Real Madrid paid Tottenham to sign Luka Modric 11 years ago.

Sandro Tonali has become the most expensive Italian after signing for Newcastle for a reported £55m from AC Milan, beating the £50m Chelsea paid for Jorginho from Napoli in 2018.

Sports

Which players joined Saudi teams this summer

SAUDI Pro League teams have made many headlines this summer, with stars like Karim Benzema, N'Golo Kante and Ruben Neves joining Cristiano Ronaldo in the country.

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund recently took over four of the country's top teams - Al-Ittihad, Al-Nassr, Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli - while the other 14 top-flight clubs have some big-name players too.

So many players - and managers - have recently moved to Saudi Arabia, that it's hard to keep up.

Here's an easy guide to which stars are playing for which clubs.

Abha, from the city of the same name, were playing in the third tier as recently as 2017-18 before winning back-to-back promotions. They have never won a major trophy.

They are managed by Czeslaw Michniewicz, who was Poland's boss at last winter's World Cup in Qatar, and their biggest name is Felipe Caicedo, the 34-year-old Ecuador striker who played for Manchester City 14 years ago.

Al-Ahli are one of the country's biggest teams - and one of the four taken over by the PIF recently. The three-time champions were in the second tier last season but went up as champions. The Jeddah side, who share a ground with Al-Ittihad, are still looking for a manager.

Al-Ahli have been busy attracting talent from the Premier League this summer, having signed French winger Allan Saint-Maximin from Newcastle for an undisclosed fee and paid £30m deal to bring Manchester City forward Riyad Mahrez to the club.

Ex-Liverpool striker Roberto Firmino and former Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy are their other two biggest signings this summer. Ezgjan Alioski and Modou Barrow have both played in the Premier League, for Leeds and Swansea respectively, while Bastos is a former Lazio defender.

is managing in his third country after success at Rangers and the opposite at Aston Villa

Former Rangers and Aston Villa boss Steven Gerrard will manage Al-Ettifaq this season, with England and Liverpool midfielder Jordan Henderson joining him after completing a deal worth £12m plus add-ons.

Scotland defender Jack Hendry has



Karim Benzema is presented to Al-Ittihad fans after joining on a three-year contract

signed from Club Brugge, the 28-year-old having also spent a period last season on loan in Italy with Cremonese.

Winger Amin Younes, who has won eight senior caps for Germany, should be back in their squad this year after a loan spell with Utrecht. Forward Robin Quaison is a Sweden international.

Al-Fateh's only title came back in 2013. They are managed by former West Ham boss Slaven Bilic, who was appointed in July to replace former Blackburn Rovers midfielder Georgios Donis, who has taken over Al-Wehda.

Their most notable player is ex-Barcelona winger Cristian Tello, who won one cap for Spain. Fellow Spaniard Fran Velez and former Monaco left-back Tristan Dingome are also in their squad.

Al-Fayha won the Saudi title in 2017 and the King Cup in 2022. Their manager is former Yugoslavia a

international Vuk Rasovic. Their Al Majma'ah Sports City stadium, with a 7,000 capacity, is the smallest in the league.

Veteran goalkeeper Vladimir Stojkovic is a former Serbia international and has played for Wigan and Nottingham Forest. Striker Milan Pavkov also played for Serbia, although he was sent off against Germany in his only cap. North Macedonia's Aleksandar Trajkovski scored the goal that denied Italy the chance to go to the 2022 World Cup.

Al-Hazem, who were promoted last season, have never won a major trophy. Boss Filipe Gouveia played for an managed a host of Portuguese teams.

They are one of the few teams in the league without any well-known players. Goalkeeper Ayman Dahmen has played for Tunisia.

Al-Hilal have won a record four

Asian Champions Leagues and 18 Saudi titles. Ex-Benfica boss Jorge Jesus replaced former Oxford manager Ramon Diaz this summer.

Another PIF-owned club, they spent £47m this summer to sign Wolves captain Ruben Neves and also brought in Kalidou Koulibaly from Chelsea and Lazio midfielder Sergej Milinkovic-Savic for big fees. Ex-Porto striker Moussa Marega, former West Brom playmaker Matheus Pereira and Peru winger Andre Carrillo, once of Watford, are also in the team.

Al-Ittihad - also owned by PIF - are Al-Hilal's big rivals in a derby known as Saudi's Clasico. They are the defending champions, with ex-Wolves and Tottenham boss Nuno Espirito Santo leading them to last season's title. Scot Ian Cathro is one of Nuno's first-team coaches.

Formed in 1927, they are Saudi Arabia's oldest football club.

They were one of the biggest movers this summer, signing Real Madrid's Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema and N'Golo Kante, formerly of Chelsea, plus £25m Celtic forward Jota.

They join ex-Brazil keeper Marcelo Grohe, former West Brom defender Ahmed Hegazi and Brazilian midfielder Igor Coronado, who played for Banbury United in 2012 after coming through the MK Dons youth set-up.

The club has also completed a deal for Brazil midfielder Fabinho from Liverpool.

Nine-time champions Al-Nassr beat their league rivals to worldwide headlines by several months when they signed five-time Ballon d'Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo in January after his Manchester United exit. He scored 14 goals as they finished second in the Pro League.

Ronaldo's fellow Portuguese Luis Castro replaced Rudi Garcia as boss this summer, and they are the other PIF club.

Inter Milan captain Marcelo Brozovic, Man Utd full-back Alex Telles and Lens midfielder Seko Fofana also made the move

recently.

Ex-Arsenal keeper David Ospina, former Argentina international Gonzalo Martinez, ex-Benfica forward Talisca and Ivory Coast defender Ghislain Konan also play for the team. Saudi international Mukhtar Ali played for England at Under-16 and U17 level.

Al-Okhhood, who have never won a major trophy, were in the third tier just five years ago. Their manager Jorge Mendonca was Reading's assistant boss from 2018 to 2019.

The Najran-based team have no household names, with veteran Brazilian goalkeeper Paulo Vitor joining from Portuguese side Chaves this summer.

Another one of the smaller teams in the top flight, Al-Raed have no significant silverware and are managed by ex-Shakhtar Donetsk boss Igor Jovicic. They share a ground with Buraidah rivals Al-Taawoun.

Their Brazilian defender Pablo Santos has played in the top flights in Portugal, Russia and Turkey.

Al-Riyadh's best season was in 1993-94, when they finished second in the league and won the Crown Prince Cup. They were promoted last season and have just hired Belgian manager Yannick Ferrera.

Goalkeeper Martin Campana has won nine caps for Uruguay.

Six-time champions Al-Shabab are currently looking for a new manager.

Former Valencia and Argentina midfielder Ever Banega is their most famous player. Colombia international Gustavo Cuellar and goalkeeper Kim Seung-gyu, who has gone to three World Cups with South Korea, are also in the squad.

Al-Taawoun, the 2019 King Cup winners, are managed by Brazilian Pericles Chamusca, his 30th managerial job despite only being 57.

Spanish midfielder Alvaro Medran made five appearances for Real Madrid in 2015-16.

Al-Tai, who have yet to win a major trophy, appointed Croat Kresimir Rezic as their manager this summer.

Guinea-Bissau midfielder Alfa Samedo had loan spells in the English Championship with Nottingham Forest and Reading between 2019 and 2021.

Watch Oscar Duarte's header give Costa Rica the lead against Uruguay

Al-Wehda, who were formed 88 years ago, last won a trophy in 1966 with the King Cup. Former Greece midfielder Georgios Donis is their manager, having moved from Al-Fateh this summer to replace Jose Luis Sierra.

Costa Rica defender Oscar Duarte scored at the 2014 World Cup against Uruguay, while midfielder Faycal Fajr and goalkeeper Munir Mohamedi both featured at the 2018 World Cup for Morocco.

Former AC Milan, Atletico Madrid, West Brom and Romania player Cosmin Contra was named Damac manager earlier this year. The club have no major silverware.

Domagoj Antolic won six caps for Croatia and Adam Maher played for the Netherlands.

Khaleej narrowly avoided relegation last season, having been promoted the previous season. They are managed by Portuguese Pedro Emanuel.

Veteran defender Lisandro Lopez won four caps for Argentina and played for Benfica and Inter Milan. Fabio Martins is one of four former Portugal youth internationals in the team.

SOURCE: BBC SPORT



Cristiano Ronaldo was one of the only household names in the league last season

Sports



Henderson

Jordan Henderson 'really hurt' by criticism of transfer

ENGLAND midfielder Jordan Henderson says he was "really hurt" after being criticised for joining Al-Ettifaq.

Henderson, who moved to the Saudi club from Liverpool in July, has been a vocal ally of the LGBTQ+ community.

His move has been criticised by some LGBTQ+ campaigners, as same-sex sexual activity is illegal in Saudi Arabia.

"My intention was never, ever to hurt anyone. My intention has always been to help causes and communities," Henderson told the Athletic.

"I do care about different causes that I've been involved in, and different communities... I do care. And for people to criticise and say that I'd turned my back on them really, really hurt me.

"All I can say is that I apologise, I'm sorry that I've made them feel that way. But I haven't changed as a person."

The 33-year-old wrote a long piece for the Liverpool matchday programme in November 2021, expressing support for Stonewall's Rainbow Laces campaign.

With his Saudi switch, Henderson has reunited with former Liverpool team-mate Steven Gerrard, who was appointed manager of Al-Ettifaq in July.

Henderson said: "I've gone above and beyond to help [the LGBTQ+ community]. I've worn the laces. I've worn the armband. I've spoken to people in that community to try to use my profile to help them. That's all I've ever tried to do.

"When I hear stuff like, 'You've turned your back on us', that hurts me. I do care. I have family and friends in the LGBTQ+ community."

Liverpool's LGBTQ+ fan group Kop Outs urged Henderson to "stand by your words as a professed ally & champion of #LGBT+ rights, of women's rights and of basic human dignity" after he agreed the move to Saudi Arabia.

The group has reacted to his latest interview with a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, saying: "This sounds more like an attempt to rebuild his 'brand', sorry isn't good enough, actions speak louder than words."

Henderson said he would not

country from afar while burying "our heads in the sand".

Henderson added: "I think people know what my views and values were before I left and still do now. And I think having someone with those views and values in Saudi Arabia is only a positive thing."

Henderson joined Liverpool from his boyhood club Sunderland in 2011 and went on to make 492 appearances, becoming captain and winning seven major titles, including the Premier League, Champions League, FA Cup and EFL Cup.

His position at the club came under the spotlight after failing to secure a regular starting role under Jurgen Klopp in the 2022-23 campaign.

The arrivals of Dominik Szoboszlai and Alexis Mac Allister early in the summer transfer window suggested the skipper's game time would continue to be limited this season, and he no longer felt secure in his position at the club.

Talking about what persuaded him to head to Saudi Arabia, Henderson said he was attracted by the prospect of trying to grow the game he loves in another country and said nothing would change by criticising another club.

Rugby World Cup: Who will lift the Webb Ellis Cup

WITH what feels like a very chaotic set of 'warm-up' matches done, we can now confidently predict who is going to win the 2023 Rugby World Cup. Well, OK, maybe not...

But what we can say is that there are four sides heading into the tournament who are almost perfectly matched, and then there are the rest.

Opta's tournament predictor uses thousands of data points and its AI Supercomputer to simulate the Rugby World Cup 10 million times, giving a percentage chance of each team winning the tournament.

The predictions take into account recent form, historical success, pool and fixture difficulty, plus much more.

Ireland have never made it past the quarter-final stage at the Rugby World Cup, but surely this year that hoodoo will end.

Placed number one on the World Rugby rankings on the eve of the tournament and picked as our favourites (just), Andy Farrell's side are as ready as they will ever be to become only the second northern hemisphere nation to win the Webb Ellis Cup, after England's triumph in 2003.



Ireland sealed a Grand Slam and the Six Nations title in March and have won their last 13 matches

A fan was ejected from the US Open after being accused by Alexander Zverev of using "the most famous Hitler phrase there is in this world".

Organisers removed the fan from Arthur Ashe Stadium on Tuesday after a complaint from German 12th seed Zverev.

The 26-year-old heard a remark from a spectator in the crowd during his win over Jannik Sinner.

Zverev was serving in the fourth set when he stopped and approached chair umpire James Keothavong.

"This is unacceptable. This is unbelievable," a furious Zverev told the umpire.

Keothavong immediately turned around and asked the man to identify himself but he did not come forward. The umpire then urged fans to remain fair and show respect to both players.

A few minutes later, security personnel stepped on to the

Fan ejected after 'disparaging remark' towards Alexander Zverev



Zverev

side of the court to identify the man with the help of other spectators and eventually ushered him out of the stadium.

"A disparaging remark was directed towards Zverev," a US Tennis Association spokesperson said in a

statement. "The fan was identified and escorted from the stadium."

Zverev went on to beat the Italian sixth seed 6-4 3-6 6-2 4-6 6-3 in a match lasting almost five hours to set up a quarter-final meeting with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz.

NOC kicks off universities' directors of sports training

THE Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC) has announced a kick-off of a comprehensive training schedule for Directors of sports in Nigerian universities.

This was revealed in a statement by NOC spokesman, Tony Nezianya on Tuesday morning.

Part of the statement reads, "The Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC) is excited to announce plans to restart the conduct of a comprehensive training program for Directors of sports in Nigerian universities.

"This programme, which is a collaboration between the Olympic Movement, and the Nigeria University Games Association (NUGA), began in 2019 to provide top-notch training for university athletes. "One of the primary



Nezianya

objectives is to promote Olympism and instil the three

core values of Excellence, Friendship, and Respect among the athletes.

"We firmly believe that by involving the custodians of university athletes in this programme, we can better achieve these objectives."

"In an evaluation of previous events, it became evident that the participation of university athletes' custodians would be crucial, especially considering that a significant number of the National athletes come from universities.

"In a bid to facilitate this training, we will be conducting the seminars in four NUGA zones.

This has been scheduled as follows:

University of Ibadan – Sept. 5 to Sept. 8, 2023.

University of Abuja – Sept. 12 – Sept. 15, 2023.

Port Harcourt (IAUE) – Sept. 19 to Sept. 22, 2023.

Sule Lamido University Jigawa – Sept. 26 to Sept. 29, 2023.

"The Committee encourage all Directors of sports in Nigeria universities to take advantage of this opportunity and join us in realising our shared vision of excellence, friendship, and respect within Nigerian sports.

"Let us come together and make a lasting impact in the future of sports in our nation."

The Ibadan leg will kick off on September 5 to 8, 2023.

Zealand only rank fourth on our predictions, but the margins splitting the top four sides are so small that in reality they have as good a chance as any of their three other rivals.

A record defeat by arch-rivals South Africa won't be how they wanted to enter the tournament, but they have thick skin. A wounded All Blacks side is surely one of the scariest

prospects in international sport. The opening game of the Rugby World Cup, between New Zealand and France on Friday, is sure to be huge.

South Africa are the only side to win the World Cup having lost a pool stage game, doing so in 2019. Neither side will want to be forced into trying to replicate that.

Beyond the 'Big Four', there are another four sides who we predict have at least a one in a hundred chance of pulling off a shock by winning the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

Pool D rivals England and Argentina are both lacking consistency and form, but both have produced results against the top nations in this current World Cup cycle that will ensure they are not taken lightly.

Bitting at their heels on our predictor are France. Have the host nation finally found the perfect wine to pair with their Roquefort? The classic French flair and flamboyance has always been there but they now have the gritty defence and tactical nous to give them the consistency to go all the way.

Superstars are littered through their team and although they will feel the loss of fly-half Romain Ntamack keenly, they have enough depth to cope with such setbacks.

For South Africa, Test rugby results between World Cups are somewhat of an irrelevance. Sure, the Springboks fans never want to lose, especially when the opposition wear black jerseys, but there is always the fall-back line of "It'll be fine; it will all come together at the World Cup".

Their record win against New Zealand at Twickenham in their final warm-up game proves that, as ever, they are peaking just at the right time and will be a formidable threat as they seek a fourth World Cup triumph.

Three-time winners New



Quest



writer

Longji Aaron Bako

FRAGMENT

Pollination occurs when pollens are transferred from one flower to another resulting in fertilization and seed production. It is an essential ecosystem service that contributes to both the maintenance of biodiversity and food production. Pollinators are vital components of both wilderness and farmland ecosystems, they are therefore regarded as keystone species due to the disproportionately large role they play in the community structure.

Longji Aaron Bako

Ecosystem services: Emphasis on pollination, seed dispersal

Dispersal as co-evolution

PLANTS have co-evolved with some animals for the dispersal of their seeds to suitable environments and conditions. Interactions between fruiting plants and their seed dispersers are now largely recognized as diffuse mutualisms with seeds dispersed by an array of fruit consumers, whose behaviour and composition may vary both geographically and temporally, the tight co-evolutionary relationships between plants and seed dispersers are considered rare and limited to cases where seed size constrains a potential disperser assemblage, or to areas where the disperser community is impoverished. Vertebrate dispersers deliver ingested seeds to different microhabitats, this act of dispersal from the maternal environment is important in the diversification of germination timing, Plants dispersed by vertebrates have evolved seed appendages or coverings that are ingested and digested by animals that later eject the seeds in conditions suitable for germination. Dispersal can be carried out on the exterior of the animal or can be carried out after seeds have passed through the digestive system of the animals.

Endozoochory vs Exozoochory

Endozoochory: Seeds enter digestive system of animals, generally when they ingest plant structures closely associated with seeds, these are subsequently spat out, regurgitated or defecated in conditions suitable for germination, as seeds pass through vertebrate guts, they experience a variable scarification which serves as seed treatment. This process might diversify their timing of germination that is, asynchrony which may be advantageous in unpredictable environments. Passage of seeds through mammal guts changes the timing of germination, generally accelerating it and increasing its diversification that is, asynchrony. Prompt germination often enriches plant fitness by allowing early seedlings to outcompete later seedlings. The Elephants for example ingest and subsequently disperse seed of many plants such as *Parinari excelsa*.

B. Exozoochory: This explains how animals carry seeds on their exterior and further disperse them to areas they may find suitable to



germinate. This can be seen in the dandelion and other plants that have burs and / or spicules that stick to animal bodies and are further dispersed.

Pollination occurs when pollens are transferred from one flower to another resulting in fertilization and seed production. It is an essential ecosystem service that contributes to both the maintenance of biodiversity and food production. Pollinators are vital components of both wilderness and farmland ecosystems, they are therefore regarded as keystone species due to the disproportionately large role they play in the community structure.

It is estimated that 75% of crop species identified as globally significant, require a degree of animal pollination. Fruits and vegetables, which add variety to the human nourishment and provide essential nutrients, tend to depend greatly on pollinators.

Wild pollinators are important for agricultural production and it has been shown that diverse pollinator assemblages increase pollination services as a result of complementary resource use arising from variations in morphology and behaviour among pollinator taxa. In many developing regions, wild pollinators are the sole provider of pollination services available, particularly for small-scale farmers, because of the high

costs associated with maintaining managed colonies and perhaps limitations in technology to maintain a managed colony.

PLACING VALUE ON THE ECOSYSTEM ?

The issue of conferring value on the ecosystem and its services has been undergoing a lot of arguments. Some argue that it is impossible or unwise, that we cannot place a value on intangible resources as human life or other aesthetics. Meffe and Carrol, (1994) argue that when construction standards are set for roads, bridges and others. We are automatically valuing human life because spending more on the project will eventually save lives. The world today is in an economic age. Financial language is one that we understand in our discourse. It is an age of financial literacy and nations measure how well they are faring by measures such as GDP, profits and income. Books that nowadays emerge as best sellers are those on financial literacy. Little wonder there are headlines from the environmental protection such as, —global ecosystems are worth \$33 trillion, —Bats' estimated monetary value is placed at \$3 billion annually and so forth.

Opinions can be contrasting on whether or not nature and biodiversity should be conferred

economic valuations but as it is established throughout this write-up, nature provides us with direct goods and services which are valuable economically and affect our economy directly, nothing seems wrong in discussing and measuring or analysing those values to gain them better appreciation.

The services enjoyed from the natural ecosystems are very difficult or impossible to replicate. While it is also difficult to place direct monetary value on these services, what is possible is calculating some of the financial values. For instance, 80 percent of world's population depends on natural medicinal products, the value of pollination services rendered by animals such as bees, bats and birds for free can worth trillions of dollars, for example, in U.S only, it is estimated at 6 billion dollars annually.

The Financial based ecosystem valuation is partially a communication strategy since the monetary language is a much simpler and interesting one to the people of this age and for the fact that the economic value of ecosystem services is a reality, it is huge and noteworthy to a wide range of policy and decision makers. For instance, globally, about 75% of the crops depend to some extent on pollinators in order to produce food enjoyed by man this service of crop pollination has been estimated at

about 200 billion dollars. In the US, a recent study estimated the value of pollination by managed honey bees alone at 14.6 billion dollars and this is aside the services provided by feral pollinators which would have further raised this value.

Demand and supply determine price, as seen in the water and diamond paradox. It is only obvious that diamond is scarce as compared to water and therefore the reason for its higher price but unlike diamond, if there is no water at all in this world, life and its many processes may stop. The world would pay all it has to avoid losing its life support system. Another technique that can be used in the valuation of ecosystem services or nature in general, is to examine the costs avoided by the presence of an ecological feature or ecosystem service. For example, consider the amount we will have to invest in water treatment plants if we lose the wetlands and their service of water purification.

Ecosystem benefit indicator is an alternative to economic valuation and is a quantifiable feature of physical and social landscapes that relates to and defines the value of ecosystem goods and services. Both the monetary valuation and the Ecosystem benefit indicator can complement each other. Though the monetary approach tends to gain much attention and weight.

Concluded