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P2 may wipe
Nigeria, Zulum
raises alarm**



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THE **Nigeria Standard**

VOL. 13 NO. 803

WEDNESDAY, November 1, 2023

N200

Email: nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com

Over 90 million Nigerians lack access to electricity



Tinubu President Bola Tinubu said on Monday that over 90 million Nigerians lack access to electricity in the country.

Tinubu disclosed this at the 10th anniversary of the privatisation of Nigeria's power sector and the 1st Nigerian Electricity Supply

Industry (NESI) market participants and stakeholders roundtable (NMPSR) held in Abuja recently.

Nigeria has struggled with poor power supply for decades, a challenge that is estimated to cost businesses about \$29 billion yearly, according to the World Bank.

The power sector was privatised in 2013 with the distribution and generation sub-sectors split and sold to private owners. This was aimed at enhancing the power distribution in the country.

Only the transmission component, through the Transmission Company of Nigeria, remains a public

property.

Speaking on Monday, Mr Tinubu represented by Sodiq Wanka, the Special Adviser to the President on Energy and Power Infrastructure, said 10 years after the privatisation of the power sector, the objectives of the privatisation have not been met.

"The key objectives of the privatisation effort were to improve the efficiency of the power sector, unlock private sector investments and unleash the potential of the nation through an energised economy.

"10 years on, I believe it is fair to say that the objectives of sector

-Tinubu

privatisation have by and large, not been met. Over 90 million Nigerians lack access to electricity," Mr Tinubu said.

He said the national grid only serves about 15 per cent of the country's demand.

This, he said, has left

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We'll sustain the mandate given to PDP

By **PETER TITLE**

The Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has reassured that every possible action within the confines of the law will be taken to defend and protect the mandate given to the People's

Democratic Party (PDP) by the people of Plateau during the 2023 General Elections.

Gyang Bere, the Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Executive Governor of Plateau State disclosed in a statement made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD**.

judiciary, emphasizing that it is comprised of men and women of integrity who will uphold justice in the collective interest of the Plateau people.

He made these remarks on Monday during an interview with journalists at the Yakubu Gowon Airport, Heipang, shortly

scholarships for Plateau Engineering students among other significant benefits.

The Governor clarified that the PDP's victory in the 2023 elections was fair and unequivocal. He acknowledged concerns among Plateau people regarding certain

-Gov Mutfwang

despite the setbacks, there will be light at the end of the tunnel.

He assured the people of Plateau State that their hard-won victory would be preserved.

"We have faced challenges, but we are addressing them diligently. I urge our people to remain patient and calm. Our confidence in the judiciary remains unshaken. I believe in the integrity of the men and women in the judiciary who will do what is right when the time comes," Governor Mutfwang stated.

Regarding his visit to the United States, the Governor shared positive outcomes, stating, "I sought potential investors and forged relationships with both the United States and State Governments, aiming to bring global attention to Plateau State.

"I am pleased to announce that the visit was successful. We engaged in an Agriculture Investors Conference with Vice President Sen. Kashim Shettima. We have advanced discussions with the African Development Bank to establish an agro-processing zone in Plateau, which will significantly impact our economy."

He continued, "We also partnered with American institutions for exchange

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Plateau State Governor, Barr Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang on Monday addressing a mammoth crowd that gathered at his official residence immediately after his return from outside Nigeria. Photo: Office of the Directorate of Press and Public Affairs, Rayfield, Jos

News

Over 90 million Nigerians lack access to electricity

—Tinubu



Tinubu

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households and factories to rely on expensive self-generation, which supplies a staggering 40 per cent of the country's demand.

What is worse, is that the total amount of electricity that can be wheeled through the national grid has remained relatively flat in the last 10 years.

"The grid capacity has increased from just over 3,000 MW to typically just over 4,000MW today. Versus a 40,000MW target by 2020 that the federal government had set pre-privatisation," he added.

He explained that the reasons for the underperformance of the

sector in the last decade are well known.

"There are deep commercial, governance and operational issues that have beleaguered the sector."

He said as of Q2 2023, for every kWh of electricity sent to the grid, only 60 per cent of it is paid for.

But as we know, even the tariff paid for that unit of electricity is far from being cost-reflective, especially in light of the recent devaluation of the Naira. The sector has suffered from chronic underinvestment, especially in transmission and distribution."

Mr Tinubu further explained that many of the successor utilities of the PHCN have failed to meet their performance improvement targets due to technical and financial capacity issues.

"We are in a vicious cycle of under-performance and under-investment, and everyone has a different view of which value chain player should be blamed for continued sector malaise.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has urged officers and men of the police to eschew corruption and high-handedness in order to gain the trust and confidence of Nigerians.

The President gave the charge today at the Conference and Retreat for Commissioners of Police and above at Owerri, Imo State.

The president urged the IGP and his officers to set the highest standard of conduct and lead by example.

The president was represented at the event by the Minister of Police Affairs, Senator Ibrahim Gaidam.

According to the president, "I want to emphasize the importance of professional ethics and integrity. As senior officers and leaders, you must set the highest standards of conduct and lead by example.

He added: "This retreat marks a significant milestone in our collective efforts to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of our nation's police force. It provides us with a valuable opportunity to reflect on our achievements, discuss the challenges we face, and chart a course for the future. As leaders within the Nigerian Police Force, your dedication, commitment, and unwavering service to our great nation deserve our utmost appreciation.

"This retreat serves as a platform for us to engage in meaningful discussions, exchange ideas, and learn from each other's experiences. Let us seize this opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made so far and identify areas where we can further improve.

We must address issues such as capacity building, professional ethics,

Tinubu urges police to stop corruption

community engagement, and the use of technology to enhance our policing methods. In this era of rapid technological advancements, we must embrace innovation and leverage digital tools to enhance our effectiveness.

"Technology can assist us in crime prevention, intelligence gathering, and the investigation of complex cases. Therefore, I urge you all to explore and adopt cutting-edge technologies that can

support our mission of maintaining law and order.

Addressing participants, Inspector General of Police Kayode Egbetokun said noted that the cardinal focus of his police administration is improving the capability of officers, standardising service delivery viz-a-viz driving transformative agenda, embracing the principles of transparency, accountability, and professionalism while upholding the rights of citizens and attending to the welfare of officers.



Egbetokun

Reps summon six agencies over N21bn

The House of Representatives Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has summoned the heads of the Nigeria Communications Satellite Ltd (NIGCOMSAT), Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRE), and other government agencies to address a N20.853 billion audit query.

Other affected agencies are the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) and three other entities.

The committee, led by Bamidele Salam, issued a 72-hour ultimatum for these agencies to appear before it.

The audit queries, totalling N20.853 billion, were raised against these agencies by the Office of

the Auditor-General of the Federation.

Notable among the summoned agencies are the Rural Electrification Agency (REA), Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC), and the Federal University of Petroleum Studies in Effurun, Delta State.

Mr Salam emphasised that this decision followed the agencies' absence during a committee sitting aimed at addressing the audit queries against them.

He also issued a stern warning, stating that this invitation represents the final notice before a warrant of arrest could be issued against the heads of these agencies.

Out of the six invited entities, only the Rural Electrification Agency sent letters to the committee

requesting that the Chief Executive Officer be excused from attending the hearing.

Furthermore, the investigation encompassed the scrutiny of cash advances and the proper allocation of funds budgeted by the House for some of these agencies.

Mr Salam declared, "We are going to use our constitutional powers to ensure that every kobo spent by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) is prudently utilised."

The committee members previously expressed their dissatisfaction with the attitude of heads of some government agencies towards parliamentary invitations and called for appropriate sanctions.

(NAN)

'We'll sustain the mandate given to PDP'

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Mutfwang

programmes and capacity building. Liberty University, for instance, has generously offered five scholarships in Engineering for Plateau State postgraduate students.

Additionally, commitments have been made to provide medical equipment for our hospitals. We will continue these discussions and keep the people of Plateau informed."

PLSG to partner AfDB on Agro processing zone

The Plateau State Government and the African Development Bank (AfDB) have reached an agreement to establish a Special Agro Processing Zone in the state. This initiative aims to revitalize the state's economy and create employment opportunities for its youth population.

In a statement signed by the Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Gyang Bere, it disclosed that

the agreement was formalized during a bilateral meeting between Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang and AfDB President, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, held on the sidelines of the World Food Prize Foundation Dialogue 2023 in Des Moines, Iowa, United States of America.

The discussion arose due to Plateau State's absence from the initial phases of the AfDB's initiative, which focuses on industrializing agricultural potential in African subnational entities.

Governor Mutfwang highlighted Plateau State's suitability for various agricultural ventures, citing its favorable climatic conditions. He emphasized the potential for improving agricultural products along the value chain, including potatoes, maize, wheat, yam, soybeans, fruits, vegetables, exotic flowers, and various meat productions.

These enhancements, he said, aim to boost Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and increase farmers' earning capacities.

Governor Mutfwang expressed his commitment

to creating an enabling environment for investments and ensuring the state's economic growth.

Dr. Adesina on his part, praised the engagement and reaffirmed AfDB's dedication to developing the Special Agro Processing Zone in Plateau.

In addition to establishing the SAPZ, AfDB plans to provide capacity development for Plateau's human resources and integrate the state into other bank programmes. Dr. Adesina underscored the significance of Plateau State's re-enlistment in the SAPZ plan, given its vast untapped agricultural potential.

The SAPZ initiative, with an investment of approximately one billion dollars, is part of AfDB's strategy to boost Africa's

agro-economy. Nigeria's Vice President, His Excellency Kashim Shettima, reiterated Nigeria's commitment to the success of SAPZ during his session with Dr. Adesina, aligning with President Tinubu's 'Renewed Hope' agenda.

Other notable attendees at the meeting included Dr. Beth Dunford, Vice President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development; Prof Oyebanji Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, Senior Special Advisor to the President on Industrialization; Dr. Martin Fregene, Director of Agriculture and Agro-Industry; Richard Uku, Senior Advisor to the AfDB President; and Monde Nyambe, AfDB Task Manager, among other high-ranking AfDB officials.

Professor Zulum says the continuous existence of IDP camps in Local Government Areas of Borno State is a potential time bomb as they serve as a recruitment ground for Boko Haram and ISWAP.

"The position of Borno State on the map of Nigeria is very important to all of us. Borno State is bordering Chad, Cameroon, and Niger Republic. Our borders are so porous and therefore maintaining security in the North-Eastern subregion entails maintaining the security of the entire country," he said while hosting the reconstituted management board of the North-East Development Commission (NEDC) at the council chambers of the Borno State Government House in Maiduguri on Monday.

"While North-West and North-Central and others are speaking about banditry, kidnapping, and others, ours is Boko Haram and ISWAP. It's better for us to control it, not for the sake of Borno State. The hub of Boko Haram and ISWAP is Borno State. We have to control them.

"We have to stop the younger ones from being recruited into Boko Haram and ISWAP, otherwise, in the near

future, the entire Nigeria will be wiped off the map."

While lamenting the number of people in IDPs, Zulum said the development has worsened the plight of the people.

"And then in Borno State, in the year 2012, about 3.5 million people were displaced. We returned many but still, we have over one million people: internally displaced people living in IDPS camps – that is increasing prostitution in IDP camps, that is increasing procreation without care in the IDP camps. There is drug abuse in the IDP camps," Zulum added.

"And therefore we want the intervention of the North East Development Commission. We want you to partner with the state government for us to close these IDP camps so that people can earn their means of livelihood by themselves.

"Otherwise, many of the people will decide to join ISWAP and Boko Haram. These people who are living in IDP camps are a matter of great concern to all of us. On the assumption of duty, I promised the people of Borno State that I'd close all official camps that are inside Maiduguri Metropolitan Council and we did so with the help of Almighty Allah.



Business & Economy

Prematurely commissioned refinery and post-subsidy Nigeria

When former Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari walked into Dangote's refinery complex that Monday, 22nd May 2023, the world anticipated a new dawn for oil trade in Africa's largest economy. Even though this would be about the fifth refinery on Nigerian soil, it carried the hopes of over 200 million people for three reasons, writes TUNDE AJIA .

FIRSTLY, it is Africa's biggest. It will produce 650,000 barrels per day, potentially addressing Nigeria's decades-long energy supply crisis. In fact, the first product from the refinery was expected to hit the market by the end of July 2023. Secondly, it is not government-owned. Had it not been owned by Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, the general public would have dismissed it as another effort in futility, waiting to be frustrated by Nigeria's powerful oil cabals. Thirdly, the existing refineries under government control have been hounded by operational inefficiencies, making them incapable of meeting the growing demand for petroleum products.

Consequently, Nigeria, the oil-rich nation, has imported more than 80% of its refined petroleum products. This makes Nigeria the largest importer of refined petroleum products in Africa, importing primarily from the Netherlands (\$3.62 Billion), Belgium \$1.78 billion), Norway (\$1.2 billion), India (\$992 million) and the United Kingdom (\$760 million). In 2022, Nigeria spent \$23.3 billion on petroleum product imports and consumed an average of 33 million litres of petrol daily. With 650,000 barrels per day, Dangote's refinery plans to export the surplus petrol and turn Nigeria into an export hub for petroleum products. This complex megaproject is said to be the world's largest single-train refinery, costing \$19 billion to build after nearly 10 years of delay and initial estimates of \$12bn to \$14bn. Analysts say the refinery's local production would massively slash the country's import bill.

Nigerians can be rest assured that Dangote's pipes will remain dry for the next few months before production begins

Here's how several analysis in 2017 put it: "Dangote refinery (650,000 bpd) opens its gates mid-2019, operating at 50% utilisation, existing refineries (445,000 bpd) are operating at 15% utilisation and modular refineries (combined capacity of 100,000 bpd) also come onstream early 2019, operating at 90% utilisation. "These ramp up to 70%, 20%



Ekpo

and 90%, respectively, by 2030. Net effect: By 2019, Nigeria becomes Africa's 3rd largest refiner of petroleum products and a net exporter of refined petroleum products. Its exports are estimated to exceed 37,000 bpd (approximately 6 million litres daily). "The modular refineries bridge a supply gap of 53,000 bpd (approximately 8.5 million litres daily) in Nigeria. "Nigeria becomes West Africa's refining hub by 2019, supplying the region with at least 37,000 bpd (approximately 6 million litres daily). By 2026, Nigeria's

exports to the region exceed 130,000 bpd (approximately 21 million litres daily), reducing the region's imports from US and Europe by approximately 80%."

Did this go according to

"With subsidy gone, Nigerians looked to the acclaimed saviour to mitigate the cost of PMS, whose prices rose from N197 to N570 and now N617/litre. In early June, days after President Tinubu's bold announcement, video footage surfaced online showing construction workers at Dangote's refinery who revealed that the facility is nowhere near complete. Sharing the video of the uncompleted refinery, the workers said, "Na lie, work never finish, Nigeria na scam." This visually corroborated feelers I had received long before Buhari walked in to commission it, days before leaving office. Findings revealed that the refinery still required much work to bring it to full functioning capacity. While some equipment was still expected to be imported, those already fitted hadn't passed the ongoing integrity test at commissioning."

commission it, days before leaving office. Findings revealed that the refinery still required much work to bring it to full functioning capacity. While some equipment was still expected to be imported, those already fitted hadn't passed the ongoing integrity test at commissioning.

The President of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria, Comrade Osifo, speaking on Channels Television's Politics Today on 2nd August stated that it would "take some time for Dangote's refinery to get to that optimal point of full production dependency." Osifo said, "As of now, they may have their own mechanism because it is 80 percent privately owned that we may not know. But from our external view, we don't think it will come into even up to 50 percent production before the end of the year." The Energy Times gave some specificity to Osifo's "some time" when it reported that works on production lines, including electrical works, are largely behind schedule. It quoted a source saying, "With equipment still being expected and an integrity test yet to be conducted, I don't see the refinery coming on stream until March 2024, the main reason why Dangote was granted a permit to import fuel pending the completion of work on the refinery." The importation license remains a much-argued topic. Therefore, I would not stir it in this article

What's not in doubt here is that Nigerians can be rest assured that Dangote's pipes will remain dry for the next few months before production begins. This sounds like a huge disappointment until viewed in the context of the megaproject space in Africa. Plagued by long running socio-political influences and macroeconomic factors, most megaprojects are anything but certain. Nonetheless, they should not be painted as complete when, in fact, they are not.

plan?

Writing from the future, the \$19 billion refinery was commissioned four years after the proposed 2019 launch. It was expected to churn out its first oil product in July 2023, but hasn't spilled a drop as of this writing. This shouldn't bother the average Nigerian if the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (otherwise called petrol) were still N195/litre. On inauguration day, President Bola Tinubu inadvertently turned the attention of Nigerians to the Dangote Refinery when he declared, "Subsidy is gone!"

With subsidy gone, Nigerians looked to the acclaimed saviour to mitigate the cost of PMS, whose prices rose from N197 to N570 and now N617/litre. In early June, days after President Tinubu's bold announcement, video footage surfaced online showing construction workers at Dangote's refinery who revealed that the facility is nowhere near complete. Sharing the video of the uncompleted refinery, the workers said, "Na lie, work never finish, Nigeria na scam." This visually corroborated feelers I had received long before Buhari walked in to



Relief for businesses as Nigeria waives tax penalties

THE Nigerian government plans to waive tax penalties, outstanding penalties, and interest for companies, in a move that is part of changes to make it easier to conduct business and boost revenues.

Investors often cite Nigeria's many taxes, debatable penalties, and multiple revenue collection agencies as major factors adding to the cost of doing business and discouraging investment.

"We are working on waiving penalties on interest for businesses so that investors can pay the principal amount that is due," Taiwo Oyedele, chair of the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, told BusinessDay on Monday.

"The aim is to reduce and eliminate the complexities in Nigeria's tax system and bring as many people as we can on board," he added.

Nigeria has one of the lowest tax collection rates in the world at approximately 10.8 percent of gross domestic product, though tax receipts did rise by 56 percent in 2022 to a record N10 trillion. Still, only 47 percent of this year's budget will come from revenues and the rest from borrowing.

"We are working hard on harmonising government revenue collection; we can't continue to have situations where government agencies make more money than states," Oyedele said.

President Bola Tinubu's predecessor, Muhammad Buhari, left a N77 trillion debt to local and foreign creditors. Already, 96 percent of the government's revenue is being used to service debt and there have been fears that the government's cash crunch could worsen if additional revenue is not generated.

To change the narrative, the government has set up a



Tinubu

committee to reform the tax system, which suffers from high levels of evasion; enhance collection efficiency; and remove barriers impeding business growth as it tries to widen the tax base and achieve the target.

"The tax component of what we are doing is less than 20 percent. We are working on reforms in fiscal governance, revenue transformation, and economic growth facilitation," Oyedele said.

He said his committee is discussing with state governors and looking at "suspending multiple taxes that frustrate businesses and find money from government agencies where there are surpluses".

Oyedele was also very critical of government agencies' collecting taxes and fees in dollars.

He also announced plans to introduce an Emergency Economic Intervention bill that will reach the National Assembly before the middle of November.

"They promised to give it accelerated hearing so we expect by the end of November

we should have this bill up and running," Oyedele said.

Nigeria has over 60 official taxes and levies collected by federal and state governments and local authorities, mandated by law, according to him.

Including unofficial taxes – taxes that agencies legally or illegally levy without the backing of law – the country has more than 200 taxes, he said, adding that the large number was "making life difficult for our people."

"We have managed to convince the governors at the first meeting. We want to create a national portal for transparent spending for all public spending on projects for all tiers of government," he added.

Taiwo disclosed plans to introduce new foreign exchange rules, including a crackdown on illegal currency trading before December.

Before strengthening to 1,200 per dollar on Friday, the naira had early last week hit a record low of N1,310/\$ following strong demand on the parallel market.

and gas firms have the most foreign currency (FC)-denominated debts, and their naira equivalents surged on the back of the large devaluation in June, when the naira closed at 751.98 per dollar on the official market as against 465.46/\$ at the start of that month.

Their debts ballooned to N9.7

trillion in June from N6.79 trillion in the previous month, accounting for 25.88 percent of the banks' total credit, which grew to N37.48 trillion from N30.18 trillion, according to the data.

Operators in finance, insurance and capital markets saw the second biggest increase as their debts rose by 32.44 percent to N3.47 trillion, while those in trade and general commerce owed N2.88 trillion, up 22.55 percent.

Manufacturers owed N6.98 trillion as of June, up 22.46 percent compared to the previous month.

The spike in debts poses risks to banks' loan books but analysts believe that the sector looks relatively well placed to weather this devaluation storm.

Many of the lenders reaped bumper profits in the first half of the year partly due to foreign exchange revaluation, even as the capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of the sector declined in June.

"While banks' receive a positive valuation effect from the naira devaluation, their loan books might suffer. Around 30 percent of total banking sector

THE National Bureau of Statistics says prices of beef, rice, beans, onion, yam and other food items increased in September.

It stated this in its selected food prices watch report for September 2023 released in Abuja on Monday.

The report said the average price of 1kg of boneless beef increased by 28.08 percent from N2,199.37 recorded in September 2022 to N2,816.91 in September 2023.

"On a month-on-month basis, 1kg of boneless beef increased by 0.62 percent in September from the N2,799.51 recorded in August 2023," the report said.

It said that the average price of 1kg of local rice increased by 60.59 percent on a year-on-year basis, from N471.42 in September 2022 to N757.06 in September 2023.

"On a month-on-month basis, 1kg of local rice increased by 2.48 percent from the N738.74 recorded in August 2023."

It said that the average price of 1kg of brown beans increased by 28.76 percent on a year-on-year basis from N556.81 in September 2022 to N716.97 in September 2023.

"On a month-on-month basis, the price increased by 3.47 percent from the

Food Prices Rise by 26.76% in September -Report

N692.95 recorded in August 2023 to N716.97 in September 2023."

The NBS said the average price of 1kg of Onion bulb rose by 29.81 percent on a year-on-year basis from N397.18 in September 2022 to N515.59 in September 2023.

"On a month-on-month basis, the price increased by 0.45 per cent from N513.29 recorded in August 2023."

It stated that the average price of 1kg of yam tuber increased by 45.11 percent on a year-on-year basis from N409.23 in September 2022 to N593.83 in

September 2023.

"On a month-on-month basis, 1kg of yam tuber increased by 3.03 percent from the recorded N576.39 in August 2023," it said.

On state profile analysis, the report showed that the highest average price of 1kg of boneless beef was recorded in Anambra at N3,800.42, while the lowest price was recorded in Kogi at N1,845.29.

It said that Rivers recorded the highest average price of 1kg of local rice at N931.82, while the lowest was recorded in Benue at N539.35.



Kyari

2023: FEC approves N2.2tn supplementary

THE Federal Government has approved a N2.18tn supplementary budget for the 2023 fiscal year.

This would fund urgent issues including national defense and security. The supplementary funding was also targeted at providing welfare packages for

workers and Nigerians at large.

The Minister of the Budget and Economic Planning, Abubakar Bagudu, disclosed the details of the funding to State House Correspondents at the end of this week's Federal Executive Council meeting President Bola Tinubu chaired

at the Aso Rock Villa.

Bagudu said, "N605bn for national defense and security is to sustain the gains made in security. It will accelerate the gains in that sector as the funds will be made available to security agencies before the year runs out.

"Equally a sum of N300bn was provided to repair bridges, including Eko and Third Mainland bridges, as well as construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of many roads nationwide before the return of the rainy season.

"The sum of N210bn was provided for the payment of wage Awards. In negotiation with the Nigeria Labour Congress, the federal government agreed to pay N35,000 each to about 1.5 million employees of the federal government and that covers September, October, November and December 2023."

Bagudu explained the underpinnings of the N400bn cash transfer payments the Council approved, saying, "You may recall that the federal government secured a \$800m loan from the World Bank to pay cash transfers of N25,000 to 15 million households. The \$800m is for two months, October and November.

The Minister also disclosed that "the President graciously approved that an additional month should be funded by the federal government and that is what this N100bn is for."

Oil firms' debts surge most on devaluation

THE debts owed by oil and gas firms to Nigerian commercial banks jumped by over 40 percent largely due to the recent weakening of the naira, now representing over a quarter of the lenders' total credit to the economy.

Data from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) indicate that oil

and gas firms have the most foreign currency (FC)-denominated debts, and their naira equivalents surged on the back of the large devaluation in June, when the naira closed at 751.98 per dollar on the official market as against 465.46/\$ at the start of that month.

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trillion in June from N6.79 trillion in the previous month, accounting for 25.88 percent of the banks' total credit, which grew to N37.48 trillion from N30.18 trillion, according to the data.

Operators in finance, insurance and capital markets saw the second biggest increase as their debts rose by 32.44 percent to N3.47 trillion, while those in trade and general commerce owed N2.88 trillion, up 22.55 percent.

Manufacturers owed N6.98 trillion as of June, up 22.46 percent compared to the previous month.

The spike in debts poses risks to banks' loan books but analysts believe that the sector looks relatively well placed to weather this devaluation storm.

Many of the lenders reaped bumper profits in the first half of the year partly due to foreign exchange revaluation, even as the capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of the sector declined in June.

"While banks' receive a positive valuation effect from the naira devaluation, their loan books might suffer. Around 30 percent of total banking sector

loans have been made in foreign currency," David Omojomolo, Africa economist at London-based Capital Economics, said.

"For borrowers whose income is in naira, servicing these debts will become more expensive. That said, while data are hard to come by, loans to the oil and gas sector – whose income is in dollars – probably account for a large share of total foreign currency lending," he said.

The country's economic growth stood at 2.51 percent in the second quarter, inflation surged to a fresh 18-year high of 26.72 percent in September and the money policy rate – the benchmark interest rate – was raised in July to 18.75 percent, the highest in more than two decades.

Banks' NPL ratio declined further to 4.1 percent in June from 4.5 percent in prior month, remaining below the maximum prudential requirement of 5.0 percent, according to the CBN.

The continued decline in NPL has been attributed to write-offs, restructuring of facilities, Global Standing Instruction (GSI) and sound credit risk management.

The GSI, a policy introduced by the central bank in 2020, is a mandate authorising the recovery of due loan obligations from any and all deposit accounts maintained by a defaulting borrower with other banks other than the creditor bank.

A global credit rating agency, Fitch Ratings, said in July that naira devaluation would inflate banks' FC-denominated risk-weighted assets (RWAs), putting pressure on capital ratios.

"It will also inflate FC-denominated problem loans, thereby increasing the prudential provisions that banks must hold against them. The impact is mitigated by banks' generally small FC-denominated RWAs and net long FC positions, which deliver FX revaluation gains," it said.

It said the devaluation, along with the fuel subsidy removal, would also lead to higher near-term inflation and tighter monetary policy, putting pressure on borrowers' debt-servicing capacity and causing impaired loans to rise quicker than was previously envisaged.



Kyari



Business & Economy

Harnessing consumer credit for 'made in Nigeria' products

*In a rapidly globalizing world, nations are looking inward to discover indigenous solutions to economic challenges. For Nigeria, one of the keys to unlocking a prosperous economic future lies in promoting "Made in Nigeria" products. However, this endeavour needs a catalyst—a force that stimulates demand, boosts production, and drives innovation, writes **MAYOWA ADEBAYO**.*

Consumer credit, which allows people to purchase goods or services before they've actually earned the money to pay for them, has long been recognized as an essential tool for stimulating demand in economies worldwide. It enables consumers to spend more, and in turn, stimulates production, job creation, and economic growth. Yet, when targeted towards locally produced goods, its benefits are magnified.

Empowering local industries: The first and most direct benefit is the empowerment of local industries. When consumers have the credit facilities to buy "Made in Nigeria" products, local manufacturers get the motivation to enhance production quality and capacity. It's a ripple effect: the increase in demand leads to increased production, which then requires increased raw materials, labour, and logistics. The end result is job creation, better income distribution, and a stronger local economy.

Reducing dependence on imports: Currently, Nigeria's reliance on imported goods drains foreign exchange reserves and often results in capital flight. By making consumer credit readily available for local products, there's a real potential to shift the balance. Consumers, empowered by credit, can opt for local alternatives, reducing the demand for imported goods. The nation's foreign exchange can then be channelled into more impactful projects or reserved for essential imports.

Fostering innovation and competitiveness: As local industries sense the growing demand for their products, there's an inherent push for innovation. To keep attracting consumers, they will invest in research and development, seeking ways to improve product quality, introduce new products, and adopt best practices from global industries. Over time, this innovation culture will make Nigerian



products not just locally relevant but globally competitive.

Facilitating transition to an export-led economy: A strong domestic demand for "Made in Nigeria" products lays the foundation for exploring international markets. When local industries meet and exceed local demand, they naturally look outward. With the right policies and trade agreements in place, Nigeria can transition from being import-dependent to becoming an export powerhouse. This will not only boost the country's foreign exchange earnings but also position Nigeria as a key player in the global market.

Positive feedback loop of economic growth: Consumer credit's role doesn't stop at boosting demand. It plays a part in a positive feedback loop that's essential for sustained economic growth. As credit facilities make local products more accessible, industries grow, leading to job creation. With more people employed, there's an increase in disposable income, which means

more spending. And when that spending is again channelled towards local products, the cycle continues, leading to consistent economic expansion.

However, for this vision to materialize, there are prerequisites:

Robust financial infrastructure: For consumer credit to be effective, Nigeria needs a strong financial infrastructure, one that is inclusive and accessible to all. This includes sound banking systems and capital markets, consumer credit guarantees, efficient credit bureaus, and tech-driven solutions.

Education and awareness: Consumers should be educated about credit facilities, their rights, and responsibilities. This ensures that they use credit judiciously and understand the importance of repayment.

Quality control: To promote "Made in Nigeria" products, the government and relevant agencies must ensure that these products meet high-quality standards. Only then can they

gain the trust of local consumers and stand a chance in the international market.

Federal-backed consumer credit Guarantee Company: To instil confidence in lenders, a federal-backed guarantee company can ensure loans given to consumers are recoverable, stimulating banks and financial institutions to extend more credit.

Robust regulatory and legal framework: A sound framework ensures that all players, from consumers to lenders, operate within defined boundaries. This will safeguard against exploitation, maintain industry standards, and offer recourse in case of disputes.

Risk management framework: It's pivotal that risks associated

with lending—such as default risk—are proactively managed. A comprehensive risk management framework, possibly driven by technology and big data analytics, can aid in predicting, evaluating, and mitigating these risks.

In conclusion, consumer credit, when channelled correctly, has the potential to be a game-changer for Nigeria's economic landscape. By focusing on "Made in Nigeria" products, the nation can foster industrialization, pave the way for a transition to an export-led economy, and truly harness the vast potential it undoubtedly possesses. The journey might be long, but the path is clear, and the rewards, immensely promising.

"Federal-backed consumer credit Guarantee Company: To instil confidence in lenders, a federal-backed guarantee company can ensure loans given to consumers are recoverable, stimulating banks and financial institutions to extend more credit. Robust regulatory and legal framework: A sound framework ensures that all players, from consumers to lenders, operate within defined boundaries. This will safeguard against exploitation, maintain industry standards, and offer recourse in case of disputes. Risk management framework: It's pivotal that risks associated with lending—such as default risk—are proactively managed."



Uzoka-Anite

Politics

Kogi poll: AA candidate promises to boost economy

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

AHEAD of the November 11 Kogi State Governorship election, candidate of the Action Alliance (AA), Olayinka Braimoh has promised to regenerate and reposition the state for a steady and sustainable economy, if elected.

Braimoh made the promise in continuation of his campaign to Adogo in Ajaokuta LGA of the state.

According to him, his main and cardinal agenda is to change the trajectory of the state by replacing poverty with prosperity. He noted that it's only possible if the people align with the Action Alliance programmes and policies.

Braimoh decried what he described as growing poverty level and unemployment despite the abundant resources and intellectual capacity the state was endowed with.

The governorship hopeful promised to touch the lives of the people in terms of physical, social and economic services intended to change the negative narrative which has impacted and dogged the path of the state since creation.

The AA candidate also promised to provide quality and affordable education for every child in the state, positing that a well educated and empowered society can positively affect several lives and enhance the quality of infrastructure.

Braimoh promised to promote and develop the agrar sector by tapping into the opportunities for farmers and create the necessary market for their produce, and by extension grow the state economy.

Unimpressed by the unfulfilled promises of the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC in the state, Braimoh pledged to revive the economy of the state by tapping into the potentials of the tourism sector with a view to create more wealth for the people of the state.

He said the depressing economy of the state and the inability of successive administrations in the state to invest in the infrastructure and keep it on the pedestal of growth had become worrisome.

He said his administration will export and exchange services for money to drive cash flow in the economy, and promised to partner with technical experts to change the trajectory of the state economy.

The governorship candidate promised to provide workable solutions to the myriads of challenges militating against the growth and development of the state, if given the opportunity on November 11.

Welcoming the candidate in Lokoja, representative of the Market Women Leader, Malama Zainab Ladidi Ibrahim said the women were impressed with the action plans of the party for the womenfolk and youths, hence resolved to massively vote for



Braimoh

him.

At Adogo, party supporters and enthusiasts who thronged the party secretariat pledged to work assiduously for the victory of the party's candidate.

The people of Geregu and its environs also trooped out in their multitude to receive the party's candidate and promised to embark on door-to-door campaign as a strategy to win more support and make his victory certain.

The AA candidate was warmly received at the palace of the Ehtu of Elaite, Ajaokuta LGA by a jubilant crowd, where he received the royal blessing of HRH Alhaji Ahmed Aminu Edogu.

When Braimoh stopped over at the palace for the blessings of the royal father, he explained that he was in the governorship race to change the trajectory of the state and bring about a paradigm shift

that would cause the people to smile.

"On tourism, we intend to develop our tourism sector to booster the economy and attract funds into the state".

Addressing thousands of decampes at the various meetings, the party's flagbearer promised that if given the mandate, he would improve their standard of living and provide them job opportunities that would create wealth, and its further distribution to the people of the communities.

According to him, "the decampes from the PDP, NNPP are tired of suffering and have decided to leave darkness for light", promising not to disappoint them if voted into power.

He advised them against selling their votes for peanuts, promising to equitably distribute the wealth across the nooks and crannies of the state.

JIDAUNA YUNUNG,
Abuja

THE National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) has called for more funding for members of the National Assembly (NASS) for effective monitoring of budget implementation by the executive arm of government.

Director General of NILDS, Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman made the call in Abuja recently while lamenting the difficulties and challenges faced by standing committees in the NASS in carrying out their oversight functions.

Speaking during a visit by the leadership of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), FCT Correspondents Chapel, Prof. Sulaiman said proper funding will ensure standing committees of the NASS to carry out their assignments without fear or favour.

"There are issues that border on oversight assignments and I keep saying those issues will not be corrected until we provide more funding for the parliament to do their oversight. And that is what Nigerians will not want to hear."

"When the parliamentarians are going to oversight Nigerian Port Authority (NPA), Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) and the only vote of budget you could give them is N3 million to oversight an agency that will remit trillions and you say they will not be vulnerable?" he queried. Adding, "then, we are just deceiving ourselves".

He added that, "When the agencies you are to oversight are the ones funding the oversight, then the oversight is dead on arrival. Proper funding of oversight functions of the parliament would ensure accountability and transparency

NILDS calls for more funding for NASS members



Sulaiman

on the part of the committees".

Speaking further, Sulaiman stressed that media practitioners have a role to play in the reportage of oversight functions of the parliament with the view to probe and scrutinize the executive arm of government in budget implementation.

He said journalists, as critical stakeholders in democracy, therefore, have the statutory responsibility and role in keeping Nigerians abreast of the workings of their elected representatives even beyond sitting for the proceedings during the plenary session.

He said Nigerians have the right to know that the parliamentarians are only charged with the responsibility to make laws, oversight and represent their constituents, and not to physically implement projects like road construction.

He said the press is not just a stakeholder but a cornerstone that has been the bridge in giving feedback on what Nigerians are going through and what the

government is doing.

"This is where journalists have to come in and interrogate how much is there for the National Assembly and State Assemblies to perform their functions especially the aspect of oversight, and this is the area you can call MDAs to question and account. I think we need to do more."

"The history of this country's independence is not complete without the press. Governance is not complete without the press," he said.

Sulaiman expressed the readiness of the Institute to partner with NUJ in providing capacity building for journalists even for those who are not directly covering the National Assembly.

On his part, the Chairman of NUJ FCT Correspondents Chapel, Comrade Jide Oyekunle, commended the Director General of NILDS for his untiring and unrelenting efforts in enriching and deepening the reportorial knowledge and skills of members through periodic capacity building /training particularly those covering the National Assembly.

He said the visit was aimed at bringing to the notice of the Director-General the need to extend the capacity building to other journalists in various areas, such as the judiciary, finance, crime, energy, health and others in order to acquaint them with the workings of the legislative arm of government.

"This will go a long way to erase the wrong and negative perception which Nigerians still harbour about the legislative arm of government, particularly the issues surrounding the official vehicles saga," Oyekunle said.

know the road, insisting that there was no vacancy in Lugard House for opposition political parties.

Governor Yahaya Bello, who was visibly elated by the unprecedented turnout, described the sea of heads at the rally and the acceptance displayed as a show of love for the APC and appreciation of the party's achievements under his watch.

He thanked President Bola Tinubu for his quality leadership, and for his unflinching support for Kogi State, adding that the party in the state would not disappoint.

Alleged BVAS reconfiguration: INEC commended for refuting claim

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

CHIEF Akerejola, Abiodun, the Director General of Renewed Vision for New Direction Campaigns Office for Ododo/Joel 2023, has hailed the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), for refuting the claim by Social Democratic Party (SDP) that its staff are reconfiguring the BVAS in Government House, Lokoja, ahead of the November 11 governorship election.

The Director General in a statement made available to journalists in Lokoja, recently, appreciated INEC for its quick response to clear the name of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and that of Governor

Ebira promises bloc votes for APC

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

THE people of Kogi Central Senatorial District, recently trooped out massively, from all corners of the zone to declare their total support for the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress, Usman Ododo.

The people of the zone expressed delight over the unprecedented crowd that converged at Okene for the zonal campaign, saying that it is a clear indication that Kogi Central will deliver en bloc to the ruling party in the election.

The various speakers, who spoke at what was described as the most attended rally in the history of the state, stressed that the massive turnout was an indication of the forthcoming resounding victory for the APC.

Addressing the excited supporters, mainly Ebira indigenes, the Minister of Steel Development and Director General, Kogi State APC Governorship Campaign Council, Shaibu Abubakar Audu said, "This crowd gathered here today is unprecedented in the political history of Kogi State. In my years of following the politics of Kogi State, without mincing words, this is a game changer, a final nail on the aspiration of the opposition political parties in the state.

"The vision of Alhaji Usman Ahmed Ododo which has attracted this crowd, is to provide agricultural revolution across the state, with massive crops produced across the senatorial district. We are here to pursue a Kogi agenda and not an ethnic agenda. The incoming administration will build on the legacies of Governor Yahaya Bello in massively providing infrastructure and empowerment for the people."

"The Federal Government under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is interested in the revitalisation of the Ajaokuta Steel Plant. He has asked that Ajaokuta be declared an industrial park. The president is also interested in ensuring that the free trade scheme across Nigeria is reviewed so that Ajaokuta can be declared a free trade zone."

"Once that is done, it would create massive jobs; 500,000 direct and indirect jobs will be created for our teeming youths. This is the reason the president is concerned and has said we cannot afford to outsource a critical state like Kogi State to a hostile opposition party. Kogi State will remain an APC state," he declared.

In his remarks, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mohammed Jamu Asuku, said the people of Kogi Central had, by the mammoth crowd, testified to the great achievements of Governor Bello.

"The mammoth crowd is a testimony that indeed Governor Yahaya Bello has done more than enough for the people of the state. The mammoth crowd is a testimony that indeed the APC has chosen an acceptable candidate. The people of Kogi Central have, by today's turnout, resolved to vote massively for Alhaji Usman Ahmed Ododo and Comr. Salifu Joel," he said.

One of the key stakeholders of Kogi East Senatorial District, Hajia Halima Alfa, commended Governor Yahaya Bello for bringing a new dimension of politics to the state, and described the governor as a prophet well respected at home.

"I have never seen this kind of crowd in Kogi State in my entire political life, since I started attending rallies in 1999. Kogi Central is no doubt APC. History will no doubt be made come November 11, as the district will produce the highest vote for the APC," she declared.

Mohamed Idris, son of former Governor of Kogi State, Ibrahim Idris, who publicly declared his support for the APC candidate, urged the people of Kogi Central, and the state at large, to follow the man and party that

Politics

Parable of Plateau mountains, hills and rocks

Is this our true story? Is this our true identity, what we really represent? How did we get to this juncture, this dark crossroads of political dis-juncture where we have become threats to one another, the butt of the laughter of our friends who once held us in very high esteem? Who tells the tale of this bleeding mountain? Writes CHRIS GYANG.

IS it the people who dwell in its verdant valleys, see and understand its predicaments that should say it? Absolutely. But sometimes even these hill dwellers may not perceive its painful and anguished groan, much less the tears it sheds, most of which is imperceptible to the uninitiated, anyway. We may be too absorbed in our daily pursuits of eking out a living from this shifting jungle, seeking for fame and glory on this shimmering, gaudy, stage that we may easily lose sight of the travails of these rocks. But the rocks are also weeping. The granite is slowly turning to dust, soon to be blown away by the gusts of political racketeering, avarice, selfishness, distrust. Unlike the mountains that once bound and sheltered not only us but the country as a whole, these hills have now been turned into mere sand, drifting on the winds of political subterfuge and confusion. Surely, the consequences shall be dire. And who triumphs at the end?

When the time for reckoning comes, we, our own, our descendants and the entire nation will be at the receiving end. And what shall we tell tomorrow's children? That we were so much caught up in our own personal, petty, battles that we lost sight of the bigger picture that the future held? What kind of people are we, then?

We have since turned politics into a blood sport where red-eyed gladiators ruthlessly eliminate each other for the pleasure of their backers and their (gladiators') self-preservation.

We claim that we of these lush valleys, we say that we have illustrious founding fathers to whose graves we pay homage daily. But did they ever foresee that we shall someday be so ferociously at each other's necks?

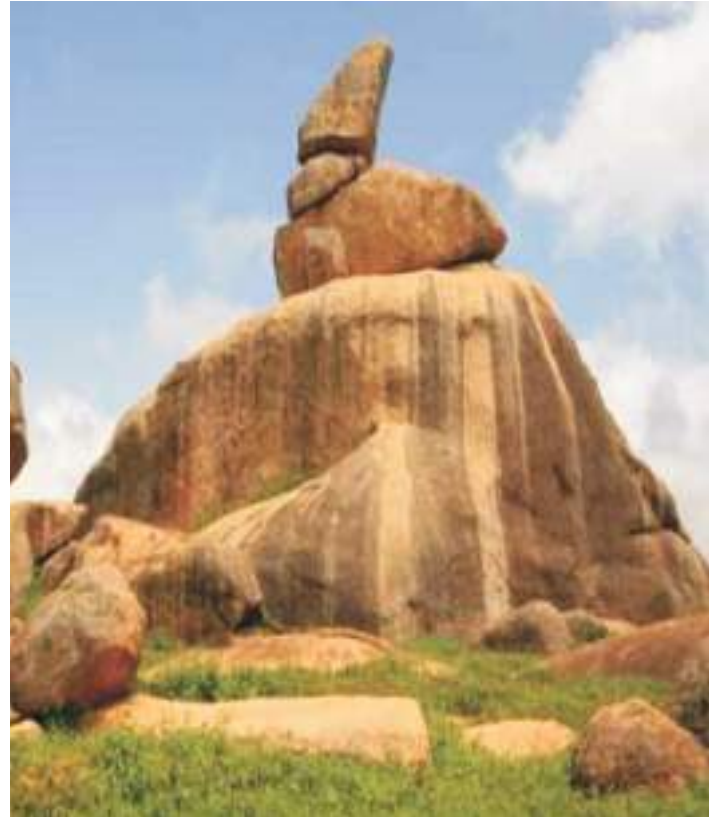
Could they have had an inkling that this land for which they made the supreme sacrifice would be turned into the playground of shlyock politicians bent on bartering our patrimony for flimsy, transient, political gain?

But all of us, I dare say, stand accused. Unfortunately, few of us can comfortably acquit ourselves. We must pray that we do not fall into that category of the damned, of whom it shall be said that our forebears wept in their graves on account of our deliberate transgressions. Let us not be cursed for transforming their pretty, formidable dreams and mansions into glorified sepulchers.

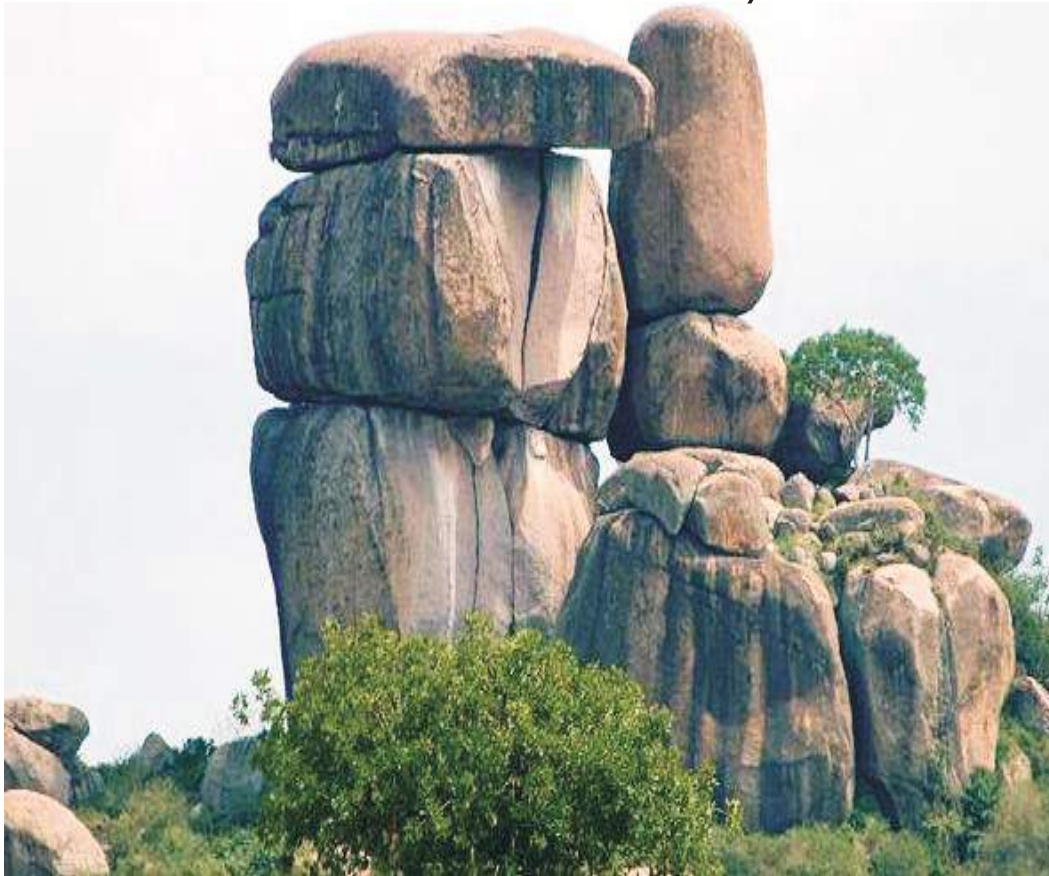
The undulating green mountains that symbolize our state and the dogged and valiant spirit of our people are crying out,



Wase Rock



Riyom Rock



Shere Hills

loudly; weeping for this political dispensation that has turned us into arch enemies and made politics a bloody, remorseless, battleground.

Plateau's solid rocks are weeping. They tearfully moan that this is not the nature of a people imbued with the nature and character of rocks. The nature of being resilient and capable of absorbing and withstanding earthquakes with resolute calm and equanimity. This is the Plateau spirit that should not be chipped away by political, tribal and political bigotry. The founding fathers who cast this virtue on the stones and rocks of our minds had this in

mind even as they sacrificed their all for us; so that we should make this rocky piece of Nigeria a home for a proud people.

Can beautiful mountains, hills such as these weep? Closely observe Plateau State today and you will make sense of the notion that whenever human beings are engaged in bitter strife, nature often bears the brunt. That is the wisdom encapsulated in the timeless truism that when two elephants fight, the grass suffers. We must be cautious that, as men and women endowed with the gift of discernment and differentiating between good and evil, we should always do the right thing, no matter the consequences.

Have we become so desperate, blinded by our self-serving ambitions that we have completely forgotten that even these mountains, rocks and hills weather? That only truth and goodness ultimately prevail? Try as much as we may to turn things into our own image, there will certainly come a time when their true form must manifest. It's in the nature of human beings to doggedly pursue their set goals, whether good or evil.

But finally, good triumphs over evil. And truth prevails. It's just a matter of time. Of which, sadly, we have a very limited supply. And, most notably, an even lesser capacity

to manipulate as we do politics. Plateau is hurting. She is deeply wounded, gored, by the sharpened weapons, darts, of politics which have been mutually unleashed against each other. This fierce, internecine, battle is bound to leave scars that may take a long time to heal. This contestation for political power, for reasons that are not often altruistic, has poisoned relationships between both friends and communities. Even within communities, long-standing associations have been shattered.

Religious groups, which are among the biggest and most significant social structures of our society, have been infiltrated and stymied by politics.

Ordinary citizens are so distracted and tormented by this noxious atmosphere that they cannot apply their minds and energies towards meaningful creative endeavours.

How does a government concentrate on bringing development to its citizens when political distractions and shenanigans surpass every other productive activity within the polity?

This democracy has become a bugbear to us rather than a driver towards alleviating the human condition. Can we extract any sense from this frightening chaos?

Indeed, we are caught between a rock and a hard place here. Incidentally, Plateau State is a rocky place, full of mountains and hills.

But, ironically, her people are blessed with the softest hearts on earth; hearts that uplift fellow men with boundless love. This is because, just as He did with Peter, Christ has already built His Church on this rock – Plateau State.

IMAGES

MUTFWANG COMMISSIONS CLINIC

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang recently commissioned a clinic in Vwei Community, Jos South LGA



Barr. Caleb Mutfwang with the TIC Chairman of Jos South LGC, Hon. Peter Vwang Dung



Plateau State Governor, Barr. Mutfwang commissioning the project at Vwei, assisted by the Gbong Gwom Jos and President of the State Traditional Council of Chiefs, His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba CFR, TIC Chairman, Jos South LGC, Hon. Peter Vwang Dung and others guests



Cross section of invited dignitaries



Governor Mutfwang unveiling the project



Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang delivering speech



Cross section of villagers during the commissioning ceremony



DOPPA, Mr. Gyang Bere (left) with other Principal Staff of the Governor



Transition Implementation Committee Chairman of Jos South LGC, Hon. Peter Vwang Dung reading his speech

Politics

November polls: Fears mount over insecurity

In two weeks' time, an estimated 5.41 million eligible voters will be heading to polling units to cast their ballots in the governorship elections in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa states. Despite assurances by INEC and the security agencies pre-election violence and fear of intimidation threaten success of the November 11 elections, BENJAMIN SAMSON writes.

THE off-season governorship elections in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa states on November 11, 2023, will be the first elections to be conducted under the President Bola Tinubu-led administration. However, the recurring problem of politically motivated violence, and attacks on perceived opponents in the states have taken frightening dimensions and are threatening to mar these elections.

In a chat with our reporter, Senior Policy Analyst, Nexter Group, Charles Chimdiya Asiegbu, said its publication titled: "Nigeria's 2023 State Elections: Mirroring Hotspot States," listed Kogi, Bayelsa and Imo states as having a propensity for electoral violence based on historical evidence and the existing security situation.

He said: "With the ongoing campaigns, there is a heightened climate in the state. The environment has generally been characterised by inciting and fierce rhetoric, threats of violence, and actual incidents of violence among key political actors," he said.

It is worth noting that on July 24, 2023, arsonists burnt down the Social Democratic Party (PDP) campaign office in Lokoja, the capital of Kogi State; this is as it was reported on July 10, 2023, that suspected thugs invaded the SDP campaign office and destroyed billboards, showing the picture of President Bola Tinubu alongside the SDP governorship candidate.

Similarly, on June 3, 2023, the Kogi state SDP Governorship Candidate, Muritala Ajaka, escaped assassination by whiskers when his convoy was attacked by gunmen.

A similar attack was reported on Governor Yahaya Bello's convoy allegedly by the supporters of the SDP, leading to some aides of the governor being injured.

The security situation in Kogi has attained mind-boggling proportions.

In Imo state, on September 19, 2023, unidentified gunmen attacked and allegedly killed no fewer than eight security operatives and also set ablaze two vehicles. The security agents affected were soldiers, policemen, and men of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).

In another incident on April 21, 2023, gunmen killed five policemen at the Okpala Junction in the Ngor Okpala Local Government Area of Imo state. Also killed during the attack were a couple identified as Mr and Mrs Chinaka Nwagu, who hail from the Amankwo Okpala community.

On July 18, 2022, there was uproar in the state over the killing of 14 youths, who were returning from a wedding in Awo-Omma in the neighbouring Oru West Council to their community in the Otulu Area of Oru East Local Council of the state, by suspected members of Ebube Agu security operatives, who opened fire on them unprovoked.

Ahead of the governorship election in Bayelsa state, no fewer than three persons were reportedly shot dead in the Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa state on February 15, 2023, following a clash involving two rival cult groups.

During the 2023 election, INEC moved voting in 141 polling units in Bayelsa State to Sunday; the INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, told journalists the move followed interruption of voting process by thugs.

He further disclosed that National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members handling those polling units were afraid, which led to the postponement.

Experts speak

Speaking with our correspondent, a Security Expert, Okechukwu Nwafor, said that despite the fact that there were not many consequences for



Musa

electoral violence, politicians deploy all strategies to win elections.

He said, "I am not surprised that insecurity is a major concern in the off-cycle elections. People are desperate to win an election. Politicians are ready to kill because to them election is a do-or-die affair. Politicians have seen that there are not many consequences to election violence and thuggery."

He advised that security agencies must be on top of the situation and avoid being partisan or transactional.

He added, "Some security officers have become very partisan and transactional and might turn blind eyes to thuggery."

"I should think by now that the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), which is the lead agency, would have devised strategies for being in this situation. They should start by building a robust synergy with other robust security agencies. The police should be able to deploy enough officers to the three states."

"This new government has a task on their hands to prove to Nigerians that they are on top of the situation and that democracy exists in the country."

In the same vein, another Security Expert, Oladele Fajana, while speaking on the situation noted that, "Insecurity is not new, especially when it comes to election periods. In the past, we have experienced clashes among the party supporters that led to the burning of property and killing in most cases, like that of 1983, which I witnessed," he said

Fajana stressed that, "Proper planning, responsible policy, provision of adequate security, and transparency judgment will help to address the rising insecurity across the country."

He called for synergy between the Police and other security agencies to instill confidence in the minds of voters before, during and after the conduct of the election.

"Security is a critical aspect of the electoral process that requires attention during the entire electoral process and INEC has recently raised an alarm and fears indicating that insecurity may pose a great challenge to the governorship election.



Egbetokun

"Citizens too have had cause to worry over the issue of insecurity in the states and if this is unchecked may discourage citizens from coming out to exercise their franchise on election day," he stated.

Ethnicity takes center stage in Kogi In a chat with our reporter, a Kogi-based Political Analyst and Associate Professor of Law at Salem University, Lokoja, Isa Odaudu, attributed increased cases of political violence in the state to ethnic politics.

He said: "Ethnicity has always played a major role in the outcome of elections in Kogi state. Of the three major ethnic groups in the state, the Ebiras and the Igalas are more likely to play the ethnic card."

"Aside the 1991 election that produced the late Prince Abubakar Audu as the first executive governor of the then young state, subsequent elections have been coloured by ethnic considerations."

"In 1991, the contest between Audu from Kogi-East and the late Architect Stephen Olorunfemi from Kogi-West was largely based on ethnic interests. Audu had contested on the platform of the defunct National Republican Convention (NRC), while Olorunfemi ran on the platform of the Social Democratic Party (SDP)."

"While people from the Eastern flank voted massively for Audu, Olorunfemi controlled votes from the West, leaving the Kogi-Central as the battleground."

"This scenario was repeated in 2007, when the central voted overwhelmingly for their own, in the person of Senator Salami Ohiare of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), against Alhaji Ibrahim Idris of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) from the East, who received massive votes from his senatorial district, controlled majorly by the Igalas. Then, Kogi West became the free zone."

"Those elections also witnessed high-scale violence, leading to loss of lives and destruction of property across the state. And now, as the state votes this Saturday in the governorship election, trends of ethnicity and violence have reared their ugly heads, leading to apprehension. If not properly managed, the coming election could get out of control."

The same scenario played out in 2019 between Yahaya Bello of the All Progressives Congress (APC), who was the incumbent governor from Kogi Central and Engr. Musa Wada of the

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) from Kogi East. Bello eventually emerged winner in an election that was more or less a contest between the Ebiras and the Igalas.

"This time, the stage is already set for another ethnicity contest, this time among the three major candidates who are relying on votes from their ethnic groups Usman Ododo of the APC (Ebira), Senator Dino Melaye of the PDP (Okun) and Murtala Ajaka (Igalas)," he said.

Way out

To contend any violence that could mar the off-season elections, Chimdiya said there was no definitive solution to the problem of election violence and violent conflicts, however, significant efforts should be made to limit violence.

He said, "Security agencies should collect and use data on the most common election-related violence in the 2023 presidential elections to prepare for forthcoming off-cycle elections."

"A strategic approach will include sourcing data from relevant think tanks, CSO and NGOs. This data can be examined with security intelligence to understand violent issues and election-related violence better."

"Security deployments and monitoring in hotspot communities should not be restricted to election days. Such areas are equally vulnerable to pre- and post-election violence, necessitating troop deployments and adequate operational logistics to ensure peace, law, and order."

"Known offenders and harbingers of election violence should be personally cautioned and their engagements monitored during, on and after the elections. This should include the monitoring of their activities posted on social media."

"Violence frequently results from accusations of rigging and bias involving the election body and the police. The reputations of INEC and, to some degree, the police for keeping neutrality during the 2023 general elections deteriorated immensely."

"It is expected that they rebuild their image during the off-cycle elections. Any action or inaction that questions the electoral body's integrity should be avoided. This

should include how and whom it uses for its logistics, strategic communications, and its response to emergent issues.

"Developing mechanisms for early reporting, prevention, and reduction of electoral violence should be improved by civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs)."

"This method can be managed by the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, which brings together more than 60 local and national organisations to share information, anticipate problems, and take swift action. Security agencies can improve their partnership with CSOs to make the most of these systems."

"Security forces, notably the police, should be better equipped and retrained in performing their duties. Security officer(s) caught assisting or inciting violence or criminality should face sanctions."

CDS assures on security

Meanwhile, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Christopher Musa, has assured that the military was committed to protecting the nation's democracy and ensuring peaceful atmosphere in the forthcoming governorship elections in Kogi, Bayelsa and Imo.

Musa made the remark when the Minister of Defence, Alhaji Mohammed Badaru, and Minister of State, Dr Bello Matawalle, paid a working visit to the Defence Headquarters in Abuja.

He urged all stakeholders in the three states to ensure that nobody was killed in the process of casting vote.

According to him, it is important that they all put hands together to ensure that the election is hitch-free, peaceful and reflect what the people actually wanted.

The CDS said the military would do whatever it takes to protect democracy and help it to thrive in Nigeria, adding that they were fully ready, prepared and committed to the task.

"We know there have been series of challenges within the sub region where we have a number of coups all over."

"We want to assure Mr President and to you all, that the Armed Forces of Nigeria is fully committed to democracy," he said.

NEWS

Kefiano Foundation to launch creative hub November

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) CHIEF Executive Officer (CEO) of the Kefiano Foundation,, Chief Wungak Kefas Ropshak, has disclosed that the foundation was set to launch "Plateau Creative Hub", an initiative that would help train younger generation in being independent at the end of next month in Jos, Plateau State capital.

He disclosed this while in an interview with SUNDAY STANDARD shortly after presenting his keynote address at the Myrole Conference: Present and Future Plateau, organised by Myrole Aid Mission, held at the conference hall of Crest Hotel and Gardens, Jos, the state capital recently.

The CEO said, "It is a reality, it has come to stay. We are going to launch the Creative Hub at the end of November this year. Everybody is invited as I said before. It is a Creative Hub and my personal initiative. I do not just talk, but do the talk as you always know me."

"I want to see how we can train the younger generation to be independent because it is key. It is going to help a whole lot in reducing criminality in the society as far as I am concerned.



Kefiano

It is also going to reduce a full burden even to me who is spending money to help people in due course, if other people are doing well.

"This is a reality that I intend to achieve by the grace of God and I am going to launch it in November. By January, I will start going to every Local Government to train not than hundred (100) youths in the area of Information Technology (IT). That is my intention by the grace of God", he disclosed.

Ropshak, however, clarified that he was not doing it for any political reason, but was out of his desire and resolve to ensure that Plateau youths were engaged in

the private sector, because most Plateau children grew up to know their parents as civil servants.

"So, I thought there is the need to create this awareness in the private sector because whether you like it or not, a public worker still come back to the private sector. I also see it that it is never a waste to invest in humanity. It is my dream!", the CEO enthused.

He, therefore, called on the Plateau youths to key into this great opportunity and be independent because entrepreneurship would soon rule the world since there is gradual drop in employment opportunities for them these days.

From John FWAH, KADUNA

THE Kaduna State Government has approved the release of N3.1 billion for the payment of gratuity for retirees and death benefits for families of the deceased under the Defined Benefit Scheme and the Contributory Pension Scheme.

A statement issued recently by the Chief Press Secretary, Mohammed Shehu, said.

"Governor Uba Sani gave the approval in line with his commitment to easing the hardship faced by the "elderly, who are among the states most vulnerable."

"Governor Sani remains committed to ensuring that upon retirement, workers who have served Kaduna State diligently, have full access to what is rightfully theirs.

"The Kaduna State Government through the

Governor Sani puts smiles on retirees' faces



Uba

State Pension Bureau is resolute in ensuring the continuity of the release of these payments for gratuity and death benefits to beneficiaries in the state.

"The release of these

funds, the statement added, will aid in ameliorating the ripple effects of the current economic realities, especially for the elderly who have retired from active service."

Dangote up-skills host communities in sustainability campaign

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

The sustainability team of the Dangote Cement Plc, Obajana plant, headed by Dr Eseosa Ighile, embarked on training of secondary students from catchment areas on practical skills.

Skills Development Workshop, Sustainability Awareness Campaign and Corporate Philanthropy were some of the high points of the weeklong sustainability programme at the Obajana Plant of the Dangote Cement Plc.

Sustainability Lead at the Obajana Plant, Dr. Eseosa Ighile said this year's sustainability programme,

themed "Sustainable Production and Consumption - The Dangote Way" was very impactful.

Dr. Ighile said the company has also aligned its Sustainability Framework to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of its drive to mitigate environmental and social challenges in Nigeria.

"We've executed various programmes during Sustainability Week aligning with the SDGs, which included a Sustainability Awareness Campaign on conserving available resources, reducing waste and promoting sustainable living practices.

"We also embarked on a Community Waste Clean-Up Exercise, successfully clearing waste dumps around the Obajana community. Similarly, we organised a Skills Development Workshop for secondary school students from catchment communities, with the theme "waste to wealth," she said.

On skills development, she said, students who were drawn from host communities learned skills to convert plastic waste

into crafts and make healthy drinks to sustain their daily needs.

She said learning materials were shared in schools as part of community development projects, which aligns with SDG 4 on Quality Education.

According to her, some of the environmental achievements include cleaner surroundings after our community clean-up, a deeper understanding of biodiversity at the company's mining sites, and a focus on sustainable consumption and waste reduction.

"Our message is simple - sustainable living is not just a responsibility but a source of pride. By making sustainable choices in our daily lives, we can collectively create a brighter, greener, and more prosperous future for everyone. We encourage every Nigerian to embrace sustainability for the well-being of our community, nation and generations," she said.

In their reactions, some members of the communities described the sustainability programme of the company as very impactful, saying the company is positively changing the physical and the social landscape of host communities.

Kogi AG's wife empowers 2,000 women

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Following the current economic hardships in the country, no fewer than 2,000 women in Uhana and Akpogu communities in Kogi have been empowered with cash and food items by the wife of the Accountant General of the state, Hajia Zainab Jibrin.

Hajia Zainab Jibrin while distributing the items during her visit to Hana and Akpogu villages, said the

gesture is in her spirit of extending support to the resilient women of the community.

She called for the unity and peaceful coexistence of the people of the area and urged them to continue to embark on active business activities that will shape their living conditions.

According to her, "The

event showcased the communities' strength and determination to uplift the living standard of the people in the face of Nigeria's challenges

"Today, we are here to offer relief materials to help ease some of the burdens you carry, as a token of our gratitude."

She urged them to ensure that they exercise their right to vote in the upcoming November 11, 2023 elections

She emphasized, "You are the pillars of this community, and you have the potential to shape the future of our state and our nation."

Hajia Zainab Jibrin used the occasion to introduce Alhaji Ahmed Usman Ododo, the APC gubernatorial candidate, as deeply committed to addressing challenges in healthcare, education, and youth employment.

She implored the audience to support and vote for him, stating, "When you cast your ballots on November 11,

2023, you will be casting a vote for a brighter future for your families and your community. Together, we can build a stronger, more prosperous Kogi State.

She expressed gratitude to the people of Uhana and Akpogu villages, emphasizing the impact of their active participation in the upcoming election, and rallying the community for unity and determination to shape a better future for Kogi State.

The Ohinoyi of Uhana, HRH Uhana, Alhaji Isah O. Aliyu, and the community leader of Akpogu, Alhaji Musa Umar, warmly received the humanitarian team and expressed heartfelt appreciation for the kindness extended to their community.

Hajia Zainab Jibrin's visit served as a reminder of the power of unity, resilience, and civic participation in building a brighter future for Kogi State as the nation looks ahead to the forthcoming election, leaving an indelible mark on the close-knit community.



Ighile

News

We won't tolerate delay to signed agreement - Ajaero

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

PRESIDENT of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Joe Ajaero, has vowed not to tolerate any act of delay or obstruction in upholding the signed agreement of October 2 by the Federal Government come November 1, 2023, urging NUPSRW members to stand strong in defense of the unions and Nigerians.

He stated this while delivering his keynote address at the 46th National Executive Council Meeting of the Nigeria Union of Public Service Reportorial, Secretarial, Data Processors, And Allied Workers (NUPSRAW) held at the Crespan Hotel & Suites, Jos, the Plateau State capital recently.

The NLC President, represented by Plateau State NLC Chairman, Comrade Eugene Manji, said, "Comrades, on November 1st, 2023, we expect the federal government to have upheld all the tenets of the agreement signed on October 2, 2023. This agreement is not just a piece of paper, but a binding commitment to the welfare and rights of our comrades and masses across the nation.

"It is a testament to what we can achieve when we negotiate with a unified voice. It is our duty to make sure it happens completely by simply insisting collectively refusing to be divided that the agreement be totally implemented without fail.

"However, should we find ourselves faced with delays or obstructions, let it be known that we stand prepared to take the necessary actions. Our



Ajero

strength lies not only in our numbers but in our resolve to protect the rights and dignity of every Nigerian and worker in this great nation. It is in our readiness that our victory becomes assured.

"We urge you as you hold your meeting to keep this in mind and prepare for any eventuality. Vigilance, they say is the price for freedom. You must all remain alert because you may be called to the picket lines tomorrow to keep date with our patriotic duty of keeping our nation and workplaces safe from the hands of retrogressive forces", Ajaero encouraged.

Welcoming the participants at NEC meeting, the National President of NUPSRAW, Comrade Roselyn Uba-Anarah, said, "the NLC National Delegates Conference held in February this year, where our noble union featured delegates,

one of our own eventually emerged and was sworn in as one of the elected National Administrative Council (NAC) members. This went down in history as one of the most peaceful and well organised conferences ever.

"Our emergence as NLC NAC is a testimony of our

visibility, activism and participation in issues that concern our members and Nigerian workers generally", she highlighted.

However, Uba-Anarah happened to be the only female membership of the NLC Political Commission and served as a member of the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Committee.

Earlier, the Plateau State Chairman of NUPSRAW, Comrade Nelly Adama, said, "I am proud and extremely joyous to see distinguished personalities, the creme de LA creme of NUPSRAW, Public Service Bureaucrats and other members of the NLC.

"I want to, on behalf of the National Leadership of NUPSRAW, thank the Governor Caleb Mutfwang, for your kind gesture to host the 46th National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of our great union and for making us proud on the Plateau", she commended.

Meanwhile, the Plateau State Controller of Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, Mrs. Augusta Isi Omaconu, commended the resilience of the leadership towards steering their goal. According to her, "I have every confidence that this meeting will be another significant milestone."

Herders kill 6, abduct one in Benue

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

ARMED Fulani herdsmen October recently launched two separate unprovoked attacks on some communities in Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue State, killing 6 persons in the process.

A source, Pever Acham told journalists that "armed herdsmen numbering 10 in the early hours of today (Sunday October 29th, 2023) attacked Tse Gamber in Sengev Council Ward, claiming the lives of 3 persons with one Iorhon Dam being held hostage

by the herdsmen".

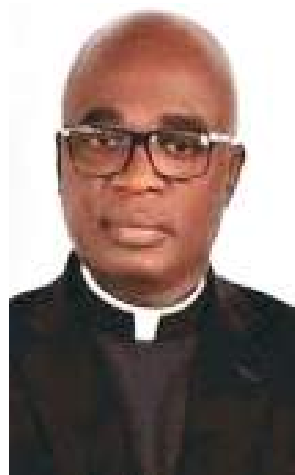
The source further said Camp, Nagi, Mbachohon council ward, a settlement along Naka-Agagbe road was attacked this evening, killing 3 persons and injuring others.

Bodies of those murdered were yet to be removed from the mortuary for fear of another attack.

The Benue Police Command PPRO, SP Sewuese Anene who confirmed the attacks through the police WhatsApp platform, said she lost 3 of her cousins in the Sunday morning attack.

No official statement from

the military operatives stationed in the areas as at



Alia



Weaning judiciary of self-inflicted injuries

THE judiciary recently came under intense scrutiny from within when Justice Musa Dattijo, a retiring Justice of the Supreme Court fired darts at the rot going on in the once revered institution. He called for reforms in the Supreme Court failure of which would lead the Court down the path to perdition. According to Justice Dattijo, "Public perceptions of the judiciary have over the years become witheringly scornful and monstrously critical. It has been in the public space that court officials and judges are easily bribed by litigants to obviate delays and or obtain favourable judgments."

Dattijo went on to say "His lordship Adefope-Okojie JCA, at the point of exiting, had enthused, inter-alia, thus: "Pleas are expressed everyday by the generality of the public begging the judiciary to be just to be truthful; and to save the country from collapse. My question is whether the judiciary needs to be begged or cajoled? What is it that qualifies any person to bear that exalted name 'Honourable Justice'? Is it not for him to administer justice without fear or favour?...."Unfortunately, It has been severely vilified, with the Apex Court so denigrated and called by a social commentator as a voter gaggle of useless, purchasable judicial bandits. How did the judiciary get to this level? Why is the whole country on edge for fear of what the public regards as unpredictable judicial pronouncements?"

He further stated that "Recently, fresh allegations have been made that children and other relatives of serving and retired judges and justices are being appointed into judicial offices at the expense of more qualified candidates lacking in such privilege and backing. It is asserted that the process of appointment to judicial positions are deliberately conducted to give undue advantage to the "children,

spouses, and mistresses" of serving and retired judges and managers of judicial offices."

Saying that "In some quarters the view is strongly held that filth and intrigues characterize the institution these days! Judges are said to be comfortable in companies they never would have kept in the past. It is being insinuated that some judicial officers even campaign for the politicians. It cannot be more damnifying!"

This is how rotten the judiciary has become over the years and it has lost the sobriquet of being the last hope of the common person. The judiciary like it has been alluded to above is cash and carry. If you are not rich to buy your way through the courts, then you can not get justice no matter how good your case

Justice Dattijo concludes that "This is how a society goes down the drain really quickly first overlook evil, then it permits evil, then it legalizes evil, then it promotes evil, then it celebrates it and then persecutes those that still call it evil." Lastly, according to Dattijo, Adam Grant's words, in moments like this, are also instructively apposite: "When you follow a concept, consider what would lead you to withdraw your support. If the answer is nothing, your integrity is in jeopardy. Your highest loyalty belongs to principles not concepts. No concept deserves unconditional love. Commitment is earned through character."

But truth be told, the judiciary is a product of our society where everything goes. If you cheat and get away with it, you are considered smart. If you follow the rules, you are considered a dunce and called names. Nigerians generally have a penchant for doing the wrong things and push the blame on others. If they drive against traffic, it is not their fault but that of those who are supposed to manage traffic. They are quick to point that somebody is not doing their job. We must learn to obey the law and do what is right at all times even if nobody is looking. This is the general illness which has affected all facets of our society and which has eaten deep into the fabric of our society. We must then determine to do right and bring back our society from the brink.

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As postulated above, Nigerians must decide what they want their society to look like. If you want growth you must work for growth and if you want rot continue doing those things that would lead you to damnation. Therefore, the judiciary must wean itself of the baggage and burden of being accused of being wrong footed. It must change and start towing the path of truth. That is the only way we can change the perceptions and narratives about the judiciary and indeed, the entirety of the society.

News

First Lady charges women to work in love

By JIDAUNA DARING

WIFE of the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Mrs. Helen Mutfwang has encouraged women to work in love and shine the light of Christ in their service to God and humanity while on earth.

Barr. Mrs. Mutfwang gave the word of encouragement at the 29th Annual National Convention of the Women Wing of Christian Association of Nigeria WOWICAN, held at the Christ Apostolic Church, Area One, Garki Abuja.

This was contained in a statement signed by the First Lady's Press Secretary, Mrs. Narin Gofwen and made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** in Jos.

The First Lady, Mutfwang congratulated WOWICAN for a successful convention and urged them to step down lessons learned to other women in their various states.

She admonished them to strive to emulate the selfless service that was offered by Jesus Christ.

Minister, Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, who was represented by the Secretary, Women Affairs in the ministry, Pastor Adedayo, said the theme of the programme was apt considering the happenings in the country and the world at large. And urged citizens to support the present



Mutfwang

administration and be united towards achieving peaceful coexistence

President, Christian Association of Nigeria, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, acknowledged the efforts of WOWICAN in complementing CAN, and promised to continue to support them to achieve success in whatever programme they would do.

Guest preacher on the occasion, Pastor David Ibiyome of the Salvation Ministry, represented by the Resident Pastor, centred his message on the theme of the convention: "My Peace I Give Unto You, Not As The World Giveth".

Pastor Ibiyome said that true peace comes from God and prayed for peace to reign in Nigeria and the world over.

WOWICAN National Chairperson, Deaconess

Victoria Ihesiulor said that the sound teachings received in the fellowship over the years have not only transformed the lives of members, but have also left a positive impact on the communities they serve.

According to her, the theme for this year's convention is "My Peace I Give unto You, Not as the World Giveth".

Goodwill messages came from Rev. Mother Esther Ajayi, of Love of Christ Generation Church, UN Women Country Representatives to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Beatrice Eyong and the Italian Ambassador to Nigeria, Stefano De Leo among others.

The event featured presentation of awards to some individuals who distinguished themselves.

THE Federal University Lokoja has handed over cheques of one million Naira each to the two best graduating students that emerged at the 6th and 7th combined convocation.

The two students are Zafirah Eneyamire Isah, best graduating student 2020/2021, Department of Chemistry and Mariam Oiza Ibrahim 2021/2022 set for the Department of Economics.

The amount presented to the best students was pledged by Rt. Hon. Dr James Faleke during the just concluded 6th and 7th combined Convocation.

Presenting the Cheques officially to the best students, the Vice Chancellor, Federal University Lokoja, Prof. Akinwunmi Olayemi, praised Hon. Faleke for fulfilling his promise, pointing out that the reward would serve as a challenge to other students to work hard.

The Vice Chancellor urged the male students of the institution to sit up and work hard like the two beneficiaries who are females, to strive for further academia laurels.

While pointing out to the beneficiaries that the

FUL presents N1m to best graduating students

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

money should not be used for frivolities, he urged them to use the money in pursuing their Post Graduate degrees.

Aside offering admission to the best graduating students, Prof. Olayemi said it is also the policy of the university to offer employment for the best Post Graduate Students of the University.

In their separate remarks, the beneficiaries, Zafirah Eneyamire Isah, best graduating student

2020/2021 and Mariam Oiza Ibrahim, best graduating student 2021/2022 expressed appreciation to Hon. Faleke for the kind gesture.

In her remarks, Zafirah Eneyamire Isah who was overwhelmed with joy, prayed for God to reward the donor. She promised judicious utilization of the funds.

Mariam Oiza Ibrahim, could not hide her joy. She said the money would enable her to further her studies and thanked the donor for the support.



Olayemi

3 companies to share NCC's N30m prize money

By DORCAS PANKYES

THREE companies, out of 81 companies that contested at the Nigerian Communication Commission's inspired technology innovation talent hunt competition, shared the N30 million prize money equally.

This was disclosed in a

statement signed by Reuben Muoka, Director, Public Affairs, Nigeria Communication Commission.

According to the statement, 9 other shortlisted companies went home with N500,000 consolation prizes each.

Solaris GreenTech Hub, Knownow Africa Limited and Specxs Care Limited, came bright at the 2023 NCC's Annual Hackathon Competition, adjudged by an independent Panel of judges, chaired by the President of Digital Bridge Institute (DBI), Prof. Mohammed Ajiya.

Solaris, whose team comprises Chiemela Anosike, Ineke Chiemerem and Onoh Chiemela, won in the Renewable Energy Solution category of the Hackathon with their green energy solution that provides clean energy hubs for people in rural communities to be able to charge their phones and other mobile/electronic devices.

Knownow, with a team consisting of Abdulazeez Abiola, Dr. Mudasiru Taiwo and Dr. Oluwaseun Ojerinde team emerged winner in the Blockchain Solution category for their fraud-detection and prevention solution.

Specxs Care Limited, also a winner, with team members comprising Isah Dahiru, Ameenat Bala and Musa Gambo, lifted the trophy also with their wearable devices called 'Smart Bladder', which can help manage urinary incontinence in elderly people and reduce the cost of their daily spending while ensuring proper personal hygiene.

Prof. Ajiya said the panel was painstaking in assessing all the submissions/entries, diligent in shortlisting the 12 participants and meticulous in determining the three winners through strict compliance with the requirements stated by the Commission for the exercise.

Earlier in his keynote address at the event, the Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of NCC, Dr. Aminu Maida, who was represented by the Director, Research and

Development, Ismail Adedigba, said the event aligns perfectly with one of the core objectives embedded within the new Strategic Vision Plan (SVP) of the Commission for the years 2023-2025, which speaks to fostering the development of cutting-edge technologies through rigorous research to catalyse sustainable economic growth and overall development within Nigeria.

He noted that this year's event focuses on three pivotal thematic areas that not only pertain to Nigeria but also resonate with global concerns. The themes, he said, are: Blockchain-enabled Data Protection Solutions for Enhancing Regulatory Compliance; Assistive Technology Solutions for the Elderly and People with Disabilities; and Technology Solutions for Renewable Energy in Rural Areas.

Adedigba said Talent Hunt Research through Hackathon is just the inception of the Commission's unwavering commitment to nurturing innovation and nascent ideas, the way it has been doing for previous winning innovative solutions and ideas that had emerged through the annual Hackathon.

"The culmination of this competition is not confined to the grand prize of N10 million awarded to each winner from these three thematic areas for the development of their solutions, but goes beyond this. The Commission takes a holistic approach to support these promising innovations. We closely monitor the progress of these solutions as they evolve into full-fledged prototypes," he said.

He added that in a world where innovation is paramount, NCC often witness the remarkable potential of Hackathons to showcase fresh perspectives on existing challenges. He added that the NCC's annual Hackathon serves as instrumental tools in sustaining innovation and mobilising the collective intelligence of the innovators to tackle pressing real-world issues, both in the business realm and within our social fabric.

How our IGR leaped from N10.6b to N19b - Tribunal

WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

THE Chairman appointed by the Gombe Government to head the state's Revenue Recovery Tribunal, Muhammad Tukur Jungudo, has praised Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya's foresight in establishing the tribunal which has so far recovered close to N19b revenue within one year.

According to Tukur Jungudo, the tribunal was able to achieve an unprecedented feat in revenue recovery because the determination and commitment deployed by the State Government towards the tribunal boosted it into doubling the revenue from N10.6 to about N19b.

He explained during the commemoration of one year anniversary of the tribunal that the revenue of Gombe State had risen in high bounds which shows that from October to December 2022, the revenue had risen to N6.6 billion and also from January to September 2023 to N12 billion.

According to him, the tribunal was established on the 5th of October 2022 with the mandate to recover

government's revenues from companies and individuals of which the tribunal had gone a long way in achieving that.

He noted that the aim of the tribunal is to surmount the problems of tax evasion which causes the government to lose a lot of income. The Chairman added that it was aimed at ensuring fairness and transparency in the tax system.

He said another objective was to enhance tax payers' confidence and curtailing delays and bottlenecks in the adjudication of tax matters at conventional courts.

In his address at the occasion, Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya who was represented by his Deputy, Manasseh Daniel Jatau, said the State Government, under the leadership of the governor, had been working transparently to take Gombe to the promised land of development which is the desire of all nations.

While commending the Governor for setting up the Revenue Recovery Tribunal which brought about a remarkable increase in revenue generation from

N10.6 billion to N18.9 billion only a year after setting it up, it has proven to be a very important tool in the improvement of the revenue aspect in governance.

He also thanked the members of the tribunal as well as the people of the state for their cooperation. He said, "May I at this point commend and thank members of the tribunal for their dedication to duty.

"Permit me to pinpoint that the reward of hard work is more work. Furthermore, like any other organization, you must be relevant, responsive and adaptive for you to continue and enjoy your work.

"I also most sincerely commend the law abiding residents stakeholders in Gombe State who believed and cooperated with the tribunal, for the achievements recorded.

"I appeal to other residents in Gombe State to do all that is within their means to assist and support this tribunal accordingly.

"Know that from these taxes, levies, fees,

Government uses to provide the needs of the society. Be that as it may, Government will as usual

utilize all resources available including revenue in the improvement of services that is being rendered to the citizens", he assured.

In their separate remarks the State Attorney General and Commissioners for Justice, Barr. Zubairu Mohammed Umar and the Commissioner of Budget and Economic Planning, Salihu Baba Alkali, explained that the Revenue Recovery Tribunal was not established to witch-hunt people but to address issues relating to tax evasion with a view to ensuring revenue generation for the benefit of the people



Yahaya

Foreign Commentary

War in Sudan, consequence of a derailed transition

Two hundred days into the war in Sudan, the Sudanese people remain trapped in a conflict not of their own making. More than 9,000 civilians have been killed and 5.6 million forced to flee their homes, while the capital, Khartoum, continues to be ravaged by savage internecine warfare. Meanwhile, the world's attention is gradually shifting elsewhere. Writes Dirdeiry M Ahmed

When the war erupted on April 15, the story circulated by international media outlets was that this is a typical power struggle between two generals who were once allies: Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the commander-in-chief of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, the commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Nothing is further from the truth.

Recently, in a statement marking the six months of the war, United Nations Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths said this is "one of the worst humanitarian nightmares in recent history". He emphasised the horrific reports of rape and sexual violence and asserted that the country has been engulfed in chaos. Yet, he said nothing as to why the war is being fought.

If the media have mischaracterised the reason behind the eruption of the war, high-level statements from the international community, like the one above, have been completely silent about it. Neither have tried to envision Sudan's path forward.

On April 11, 2019, an uprising triggered by the deteriorating economic situation toppled President Omar al-Bashir, ending his three-decade-long rule. Sudan formerly experienced two uprisings that brought down military regimes – in 1964 and 1985.

Given their experience with past uprisings, in 2019, the Sudanese people widely expected a brief political transition that would address economic issues – with the help of the international community – and prepare the country for multiparty elections within a year or two. However, that was not to be. This time around, two factors that were nonexistent in 1964 and 1985 came into play and proved to be paramount.

First, because of the "Islamist" compartment of al-Bashir's regime, regional and international players were more focused on "dismantling" it so the elections would not end up bringing Islamists back to power. For this purpose, the international community had to start a project to remake the country.

Dissolving the former ruling NCP and hunting its leaders outside the purview of the law became the main objective of the transition. A commission that was not accountable to the attorney general or subjected to judicial review was formed for this purpose.

The comprehensive overhaul of the country included calls for Sudan to join the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to rush into convening pride parades even before homosexuality is decriminalised, and to normalise relations with Israel by joining the Abraham Accords. These controversial issues were imposed on the schedule of the transition, even though they



Alburhan

are the business of an elected parliament.

Second, uninitiated neoliberals – mostly former communists and Baathists – were anointed by the international community as the legitimate heirs of al-Bashir. As soon as they became comfortable in their new positions, they completely forgot about the economic woes of the country and failed to produce any programme for reform. Additionally, they did not want to hold any elections, bearing in mind the narrowness of their support base.

Soon enough, they locked horns for power, each wanting to have a larger piece of the cake in this exceptionally long transition. As a matter of fact, the entire transition was transformed into an exercise in fielding the neoliberals as the newfound political elite of the country.

When the Constitutional Charter of August 2019, which sealed a marriage of convenience between the military component (both SAF and RSF) on one hand and the neoliberals on the other, frayed in October 2021, the international community pushed another deal down the throat of the two sides. That was the Framework Agreement of December 2022.

Eventually, Hemedti – already beleaguered and fearing international sanctions for launching a bloody crackdown on a sit-in in Khartoum in June 2019 – threw in his lot with the neoliberals in a bid to improve his political fortunes. Allegedly, he was also on a mission "to restore democracy and civilian rule".

By then, it was clear to diplomats in Khartoum that an eventual showdown between SAF and RSF was inevitable. Yet, nobody was willing to call for ending the faltering transition and convening elections.

Sudan sits at the intersection of the Middle East, North Africa, East Africa, and the Sahel. As such, it is

very much in the throes of all ills of these regions. In this accursed quarter, if you profess a position tolerating the possible return of Islamists to power, you are grabbing the third rail with both hands.

That is mainly because some groups and countries in this region are very quick to attack anyone who questions whatever they are doing to exclude Islamists. For them, any Islamist is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and a likely operative of ISIL (ISIS), al-Shabab or Boko Haram.

In Sudan, in particular, such conversation takes place in the shadow of three decades of government that the West abhorred and always accused of doing something nefarious. This had been the case even though that government went to great lengths to gain Western acceptance, including by agreeing to the secession of South Sudan, adopting the 2005 constitution, and opening unprecedented avenues for women in education, employment, and leadership.

Yet, in this part of the world, it is the past rather than the present that shapes how current events are seen. It is the stereotype and the cliché rather than the reality that matters.

When CNN asked the RSF spokesperson on April 26 about their objective, he said the group was "seeking to capture" al-Burhan and bring him to justice for "many treasons acts against the Sudanese people".

Because RSF was fighting at the beginning of the war for the cause of the neoliberals – namely, to rid the country of the Islamists – international think tanks, the likes of the International Crisis Group (ICG), have not hesitated to wish it well.

In a report released in July 2023, the ICG stated: "The RSF has held the upper hand in Khartoum since the early days of the war, but that

advantage is only growing more apparent. Even some army backers suggest the RSF is on the cusp of decisive military victory in the capital, especially if it can soon overrun the compound where army leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and some of his key lieutenants are sheltering. The RSF has besieged the headquarters almost since the conflict began; it has now tightened its grip."

Calling the SAF's claim to the title of national army "dubious", the report went on to assert: "Given internal fissures and the deep hostility toward the RSF, any settlement raises the risk of a split in the army, including the possibility that hardliners team up with Bashir-era Islamists to fight on. An RSF victory would likely leave no place for those Islamists, who might then face a difficult choice among negotiating surrender terms, battling on in a losing cause or seeking safe passage to a third country."

The sidelining of Islamists in Sudan is clearly a top item on foreign agendas for Sudan.

Apart from failing to see the military progress made by SAF, courtesy of its air superiority, the ICG also did not register the change in RSF's goals for the war. While RSF needed the neoliberals for the purposes of winning international legitimacy, talk of "restoring civilian rule" figured prominently in its rhetoric.

But as the war scales tipped in favour of SAF, RSF was more in need of a source of fighters to join the war. The neoliberals were of little help in this regard.

As a result, the RSF spokespeople started to claim that their goal is to end "the 1956 state" controlled by riverine communities of central and northern Sudan and to replace it with one controlled by Junaid tribes, the ethnic groups of Arab origin that live in the Kordofan and Darfur regions of Sudan, as well as Chad and Niger.

The involvement of fighters from these tribes, be they Sudanese or non-Sudanese, is now a prominent feature of this war. Of course, this has momentous implications for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sudan and for the peace and security of the region.

As Rosalind Marsden, the former UK ambassador to Sudan and associate fellow at Chatham House, has warned: there is a risk of a "de facto partition, in which Hemedti controls Darfur and much of Khartoum, SAF controls much of the rest of the country, especially the east and the north, and an armed movement led by Abdel Aziz Al Hilu contests South Kordofan and southern Blue Nile. Indeed, in an audio recording released on September 14, Hemedti suggests for the first time that, if Burhan establishes a

government in Port Sudan, he will form a government in Khartoum".

Yet this dimension is not taken seriously enough by the international community. For the United States, for instance, the most urgent concerns in Sudan shifted from the exclusion of Islamists to addressing humanitarian needs, not putting the country's transition back on track. Being Sudan's largest contributor of humanitarian aid, the US has expressed its support for a ceasefire and peace negotiations to make delivering aid possible.

Indeed, providing humanitarian assistance to displaced Sudanese people should be the top priority, particularly in the Chadian border town of Adre, where many have fled from neighbouring Darfur. Nonetheless, if the transition is not fixed, the humanitarian crisis will persist for years to come.

Last week, it was announced that SAF and RSF have resumed talks in Jeddah with the hope of agreeing on a ceasefire, and possibly a deal to end the war. With SAF gaining the upper hand on the main battlefield and RSF losing military momentum, it is expected that the latter will sue for peace. This is particularly so because the meandering lines of tribal fighters from Western Sudan to Khartoum started to dwindle.

About two weeks ago, mediators from the African Union and the subregional Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) visited Cairo to consult with politicians on how to start an all-inclusive process to restore the Sudan transition to its path. Perhaps there is a ray of hope after all.

The Sudanese people are hardwired for freedom. A call for elections will resonate with many. Sudan is not new to multiparty elections which were held even during al-Bashir's regime. In 2010, the polls that were convened at the end of the transition period following the second Sudanese civil war were monitored by the Carter Center and were seen as highly credible.

It is not true that the Sudan war is a fight between two generals. Nor is it a war that was "decades in the making", as the ICG report would have us believe. To be sure, this is a war that was triggered by a derailed political transition.

The parties who caused that to happen still do not see the need for the country to pivot to the path of its transition. For them, a return to the transition implies the vanquishing of RSF and, even worse, the return of Islamists. If that is the likely outcome, for some, it is better to see the country disintegrate. Yet, many active players are now convinced that there is no viable alternative for this country other than to restore the transition to its path.

Foreign News

D'Insurrection' should bar Donald Trump from US presidency

Donald Trump should be disqualified from running for president again due to his role in the 2021 assault on the United States Capitol, lawyers have argued, citing an insurrection clause in the Constitution.

The former president, who currently enjoys a commanding lead in the race to be the Republican candidate for the 2024 presidential election, should be barred from running on the grounds that he "incited a violent mob" on January 6, 2021, it was claimed as a trial opened in a Colorado courtroom on Monday.

The Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington advocacy group has launched a lawsuit seeking to use a Civil War-era provision of the US Constitution barring anyone who has engaged in "insurrection or rebellion" from holding federal office.

The group hopes to block Trump from running in Colorado's ballot, and that the test case could then help bar his way to running in other states.

"Trump incited a violent mob to attack our Capitol, to stop the peaceful



Trump transition of power," Eric Olson, a lawyer representing the group, said in an opening statement before a Colorado District Court judge.

Trump spent the weeks before the riot spreading false claims that voter fraud had been widespread in the November 2020 election, which he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

Encouraging his supporters to rally in Washington, DC, he used a speech to direct them to the US Capitol, where Congress was certifying Biden's win. Only after hours of violence did he appeal to the rioters to go

home. A lawyer for Trump denied that the former president incited supporters to violence and said it would set a dangerous precedent to disqualify him based on "legal theories that have never been embraced by a state or federal court".

Trump faces similar lawsuits in Michigan and Minnesota. The Colorado case is the first to go to trial.

However, legal experts suggest that the strategy is a long shot, especially given that the Supreme Court, dominated by a 6-3 conservative majority that includes three Trump appointees, would have the final say.

A British MP for the ruling Conservative Party has been sacked from his role as a ministerial aide after calling for a ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza war.

Paul Bristow, an aide to the secretary of state for science, innovation and technology, had written a letter to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak last week urging him to change his position on the conflict and back a "permanent" end to the hostilities.

The British government says it supports "humanitarian pauses" but not a ceasefire.

In his letter, Bristow said a full ceasefire would save lives and allow humanitarian aid to "reach the people who need it the most".

In a statement on Monday, a Downing Street spokesperson said the decision to remove Bristow from his position came in response to comments deemed "not consistent with the principles of collective responsibility".

Bristow, who represents Peterborough in parliament and co-chairs the all-party parliamentary group on British Muslims, expressed understanding about Sunak's decision.

"It is with regret I leave a job I enjoyed. But I can now talk openly about an issue so many of my constituents

Paul Bristow sacked after call for Israel-Gaza ceasefire



Sunak

care deeply about," he told the BBC.

"I believe I can do this better from the backbenches rather than as part of the government payroll."

Israel in recent days has expanded its air and ground attacks on the Gaza Strip, which has been under relentless

bombardment since a surprise attack by Hamas, the group running the enclave, inside Israel on October 7.

Officials in Gaza say more than 8,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's air attacks, while in Israel the death toll has topped 1,400, according to Israeli authorities.

Shoigu claims US fueling tension uphold 'global dominance'

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, centre, taking his seat at the 10th Xiangshan Forum

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu has accused the United States of fuelling geopolitical tensions to uphold its "global dominance by any means" and warned of the growing risk of confrontation between nuclear-armed countries.

Addressing the Xiangshan Forum, China's biggest military diplomacy conference, Shoigu also claimed the NATO alliance was trying to expand its footprint in the Asia Pacific under the

pretence of seeking dialogue and collaboration with regional countries.

"Washington for years has deliberately undermined and destroyed the foundations of international security and strategic stability, including the system of arms control agreements," Shoigu said at the start of the three-day event on Monday.

"Having provoked an acute crisis in Europe, the West is trying to expand the crisis potential in the Asia Pacific," he told delegates from about 90 countries.

"Direct involvement of

countries with nuclear arsenals multiplies the strategic risks. The West's line towards escalation with Russia poses a risk of direct conflict between nuclear powers, which will result in catastrophic consequences," Shoigu added.

Shoigu's gloomy assessment was echoed by China, whose defence minister Li Shangfu was sacked without explanation last week after disappearing from public view at the end of August.

China has refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has deepened economic, diplomatic and military cooperation with Moscow since the start of the war in February 2022.

Russian President Vladimir Putin this month paid a two-day visit to China, his first outside the former Soviet Union this year and part of the Kremlin's drive to strengthen its economic partnerships across Asia.

Zhang Youxia, China's second most senior military official, painted a grim picture of the international situation, blaming countries he did not name for the turmoil.

"As we look across the world today, hotspot issues are arising one after another. The pain of war, chaos and turmoil, and loss of life are constantly playing out," Zhang said.



Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, centre, taking his seat at the 10th Xiangshan Forum

Biden to regulate strongest safety of AI

United States President Joe Biden has issued a sweeping executive order to regulate the development of artificial intelligence (AI) amid growing concern about its potential impact on everything from national security to public health.

"To realise the promise of AI and avoid the risk, we need to govern this technology," Biden said on Thursday. "In the wrong hands, AI can make it easier for hackers to exploit vulnerabilities in the software that makes our society run."

The executive order includes a provision that developers of the most powerful AI models must notify the government of their work and share safety test results.

It also calls on the National Institute of Standards and Technology to establish "rigorous standards" for testing AI prior to its release, the Department of Commerce to develop guidelines for identifying AI-generated content, and agencies funding "life science projects" to establish "strong new standards of biological synthesis screening" to ensure AI

cannot engineer the world has ever taken on biohazards.

Biden also called on Congress to pass data privacy legislation and for the Department of Justice to address "algorithmic discrimination" among landlords and federal benefits programmes.

White House Deputy Chief of Staff Bruce Reed hailed the measures as "the strongest set of actions any government in

AI safety, security and trust" and the "next step in an aggressive strategy to do everything on all fronts to harness the benefits of AI and mitigate the risks".

Fears about the risks of AI have grown exponentially since the release last year of Open AI's ChatGPT, whose capabilities caught regulators and government officials around the world off guard.



Biden

Feature

Any way out for labour cul-de-sac?

Recently, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) the two labour bodies that superintend on Nigerian workers have been having issues with the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) over sundry issues. This came to a high recently with the removal of oil subsidy. While the Organized Labour has threatened strike actions, government has tabled negotiations which has not yielded fruits. CHINDAPBA NGOP examines the issues.

BEFORE now, he Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) as a mega labour union in Africa established by military decree in 1978, with over 40 affiliates and also a key player in the International Labour Organization (ILO) had gained considerable prominence globally. NLC used to be strong voice in the country not only by playing the role of defending, protecting, promoting the rights and securing full employment policies that improved the working conditions for well-being of workers, but also played a pivotal role in voicing the concerns and grievances of the wider constituency. The Nigerian Labour Congress has been at the forefront of resistance to the policies of neo-liberal reforms.

Admittedly, the NLC had equally contributed in the leading role of the popular and national liberation in the 70's and 80's leaving an imprint on the political landscape of the country. But, today, the Nigeria Labour Congress that workers and Nigerians alike always admired and looked up to for strong voice in challenging anti-peoples' policies seems to be a shadow of its old self for failing to deliver on its mandate of protecting workers jobs and livelihoods.

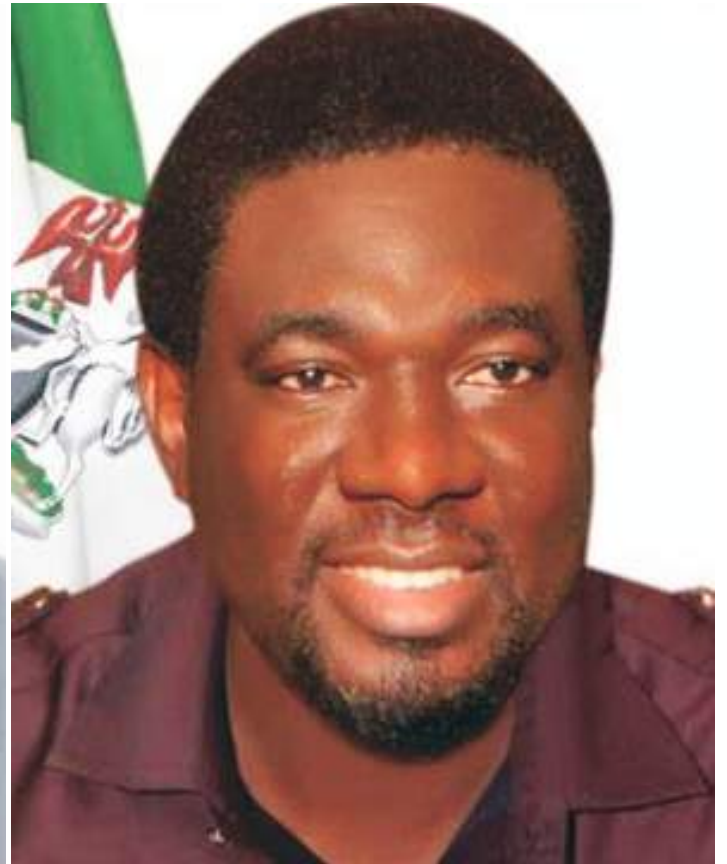
Consequently, the Nigeria Labour Congress is not only losing its bargaining and negotiating power at the moment but its image is deteriorating irresistibly thereby risking the catastrophe of becoming irrelevant because workers and Nigerians are losing faith in the Organized Labour.

To make matters worse for the Organized Labour, in this era of progressive and globalized capitalism, where digital revolution of machines and robot are rapidly replacing human labour, joblessness is tripling with the number of those who are gainfully employed in both public and private sectors of the economy are fast depleting while casualization, privatization, outsourcing and deindustrialization have also rooted back the gains made by he Nigeria Labour Congress in the 80s and 90s. these challenges have unquestionably reduced the Unions strength and memberships.

Glowingly, however, the response of the Organized Labour, notably, the Nigerian Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress to these threat have not always been palatable and wholly triumphant in recent times. For sure, the challenges have posed in immense dinger for the labour movement given the precarious fiscal quandary. That workers and Nigeria citizens are passing through



Ajaero



Osifo

owing to the declaration of nationwide warning strike to subsidy removal of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) by President Bola Tinubu, on May 29, 2023 in his inaugural speech and the subsequent imposition of austerity packages that have further exacerbated the purchasing power of most of households to fall precipitously. Obviously, there is no amount of palliatives that will be sufficient to reduce the pains and raise the purchasing power of the masses. It now goes without saying that, for the working class to get commensurate increase in their salary relative to the present high cost of living is near impossible there are still long roads to "living wage".

The Organized Labour is getting weak and feebler ideologically and politically to force matters beyond reformed capitalism and as always, government and the way. The Organized Labour had repeatedly embarked on an unsuccessful strike and protest over the constant upswing in petroleum pump prices and hike in electricity tariff before the removal of subsidy. Since the suspension of the planned indefinite strike of October 3, 2023 by the Organized labour on subsidy removal after series of negotiations and meeting that often ended up in deadlock for another 30 days there have been continued mixed reactions had on September 5 and 6, 2023 embarked on a two-day

It will be recalled that the NLC had on September 5 and 6, 2023 embarked on a two-day

Organized Labour as to and prosperity for all". He called whatever there is still solidarity on Nigerians "irrespective of in labour movement or not? Or ethnic, political and religious differences to join in the can the Organized Labour still represent the voice of the planned nationwide strike as they described it as "Mother of all strikes". The question here: is the interest of "all Nigerians captured in their negotiations? The Organized Labour should note that the complementary efforts of the Organized Private Sector workers and the masses are not only useful and key in their collective bargaining, but essential to build a strong solidarity and alliances. For the Nigeria Labour Congress to reclaim its rightful position and gain respect, the leadership must re-invent itself and stand-up to mend its simmering divisions within its affiliate industrial unions. It will be recalled in 2015 back-out of planned strikes to half hike in petrol price, organized by former President, Comrade Waba's faction. As President Tinubu once said "those who can't accept defeats in ections do not deserve the joy of victory when it is their turn to triumph".

The agreement between the Federal Government and Organized Labour with the Presidential approval of the temporally wage award of N35,000, to cushion the effect of fuel removal to only federal government workers and directing the state councils to initiate negotiation with their states government. Is quite unfortunate, by these positions, States are going to embark on yet another festival of strike/protests over a pitiful sum of N35,000. In fact the body language of the Organized Labour have clearly showed that the plights of the employees in the private sector and the unemployed do not matter to the leadership of the organized labour and it goes to justify their hypocrisy in the negotiations.

For instant, the President of the Nigerian Labour Congress, Comrade Joe Ajaero needs to be reminded of his message to commemorate Nigeria's 63rd Independence Anniversary on October 1st, titled "The travails of mismanaged giant" where he said the planned nationwide strike of October 3 is a March to freedom, better living conditions

As the 30-days ultimatum given to the Federal Government by Organized Labour draws closer, let's watch if government will fulfill their parts of the bargain by implementing the 15 points constrained in the Memorandum of Understanding because popular insurgencies and crimes arising in our societies are functions of mass misery.

TEEN'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

7 common signs of a troubled teen

ADOLESCENCE is a time of critical development, both emotionally and physically. At this time, teenagers begin to establish their own identities and seek more independence in their everyday lives. Their behaviors might involve distancing themselves from parents, acting out, or rebelling against the rules, in order to assert themselves as self-sufficient and in-control. While behaviors like these are typical for teenagers, there are red flags that can signal more troubled teenagers.

"Troubled" is a term that is often used for teenagers who are facing distress. This distress is frequently related to one's mental health, and causes negative behaviors like substance use, skipping school, and acts of violence. These problems go beyond the scope of typical teen behavior. If a troubled teenager is not helped, it can lead to issues in his or her adult life.

Because teenagers are inherently temperamental, it can be difficult for parents to determine when a teenager is struggling and when it is time to get help. If you believe your son or daughter is exhibiting signs of troubled teen behavior, it is important to contact a professional. If you are unsure if his/her behaviors are cause for concern, read on. Below we outline the common signs of a troubled teenager, versus signs of normal teen behavior. Almost all teenagers show signs of mood swings, defensiveness, and disobedience. You may find that your teenager is becoming more distant and prioritizing time with friends. He or she may be testing the waters with new looks to draw attention or to develop a sense of style. These are all normal behaviors that come in adolescence. However, there are some signs that can indicate a more troubled teen.

Warning signs of a troubled teen

Extreme Mood Swings: With adolescence comes changes in hormones and body chemistry. This can lead to occasional mood swings in teenagers. However, extreme mood swings – especially those that do not fit the situation – can be cause for concern. If your teen is extremely happy, then severely depressed, for example, that would be classified an extreme mood swing. Or, if your child is exhibiting unreasonable fits of anger, disrespect, withdrawal, hostility, sadness, take note. A radical change in sleeping patterns, such as sleeping all the time to not sleeping at all, can signal troubles with your teen.

Sudden Change in Friend Groups: As noted, teenagers tend to spend more time with their friends and are more significantly influenced by their social circles.



At this age, it is common to make new friends as they develop their sense of self. However, if your teenager has completely abandoned old friends, like a best friend from third grade, and started hanging out with an entirely new group that you do not know, you may be concerned. This new friend circle may not come around to the house, and cause your teenager to act out more than usual. If your teen has a new questionable friend group, and in turn has changed their behaviors and attitudes for the worse, this is a common sign of trouble on the rise.

Sudden Changes in Behavior: Another sign of a troubled teenager is a marked change in one's normal behavior. As a parent, you know your son or daughter well. You know how long they sleep, how motivated they are, how anxious they are, how they perform in school, and what they enjoy doing in their free time. You know what makes your teenager comfortable and what sets them off. So, if you see a change that is markedly different from your teen's usual, it may raise a red flag. Examples of abnormal behaviors that teens might display include sleeping too long (or not enough), forgetting to do things, lying to and manipulating others, missing school, hating once-loved activities, disrespecting others, or distancing from friends and family. It may also involve increased signs of aggression, anxiety, and/or depression.

Sudden Drop in School Performance:

A major, and seemingly random, drop in school performance is another red flag that your teen might be struggling with something outside of academics. If your child is usually consistent in their grades, but performance suddenly tanks, ask yourself if there is a reason why. Did they just change schools? Does it seem like something is bothering

them, like depression or a bully at school? Are they attending their classes, or skipping out? Are they using drugs? If you do not have these answers, ask questions to your teen. You may find the answers signal a bigger issue with mental health. Additionally, it is important to note that some teens struggle with learning disorders. These vary in symptoms and severity, but can include trouble retaining information or learning in certain methods. Parents should note that a drop in academic performance could signal a learning disorder, as well, which would also require professional help.

Violence and Abuse: Teenagers facing mental health disorders will often have difficulty controlling their emotions. They may display unusual amounts of anger and aggression. Some teens may take that anger to a new level, by lashing out on others. This may include starting fights at school, teasing their peers, or acting violently towards those in the home (including people and pets). If your teenager is getting in trouble for violent acts, or threatening others and their belongings, this is a tell-tale sign of a more serious, troubling issue.

Self-harm: Teenagers who are troubled with mental health problems do not always pose a threat to others, sometimes they threaten to hurt themselves. If your teen is displaying signs of self-harm, suicidal thoughts, or dangerous behaviors that could be fatal, seek help immediately. This is a clear sign of mental health disorders in teens, and that something more troubling is taking place. Common signs include self-mutilation, dangerous drug abuse, and threats of suicide.

Substance Abuse: It is not uncommon for teenagers

to drink or use drugs. This is an age where risk-taking and fitting in with friends is at its peak, and many teenagers will use drugs to make a statement in some way. However, substance abuse at this age is very dangerous—and frequent, recurring substance abuse among teenagers is cause for concern. Outside of peer pressure and the desire to try something new, many troubled teens will turn to drugs and alcohol as an escape. They may try drugs to make them feel better, whether that be to numb a pain or be more social in a situation, due to an underlying mental health disorder. This can start a cycle of addiction. As a parent, it is important to watch out for signs that your teenager is using drugs. These signs include increased secretive behavior, distancing from family and friends, lying to you about their whereabouts, lack of energy and motivation, and changes in their eating and sleeping patterns. Check out the top signs of drug abuse in teenagers, and know when it's time to seek help.

Signs of typical teen behavior: As noted above, teenage behavior can ebb and flow throughout development. Teenagers will be temperamental and moody at times. They will distance themselves from family occasionally, in efforts to fit in with their friends. However, it is important for parents to know the difference between the troubling signs above, with the more typical behaviors below. Here are some common teen behaviors that get confused with the above:

Mood Swings:

Teenagers can be irrational, impulsive, irritable, and disrespectful at times. They are growing and figuring life out. Some highs and lows are normal for teenagers to experience. However, jumping from extremes is where the concern begins. Friends First:

Teenagers are very social beings, and highly influenced by others. They rely on their friends' acceptance and perceptions to understand their place in the world. Research shows that teenagers prioritize social interactions and experiences more than any other point in life. As a result, most teenagers want to hang out with their friends more than their family members. It is the rapid changing of friend groups that can be a red flag.

Changing Appearance: As teens begin to develop their identities, they will start playing with fashion a bit more. They may choose styles that are more provocative or attention-seeking than their parents might prefer. However, this is a normal stage of development. Changing appearances can become a red flag if it goes beyond fashion, however. Signs of cutting (self-harm) and excessive weight loss or gain, for example, are more concerning changes that are worth attention.

Desire for Independence: Becoming a teenager means embarking on a new stage of development. It brings with it an increased desire for independence and sense-of-self. Teenagers have an inherent desire for freedom outside of their home and families. They will, often, do what they want to do (rather than what they are told). However, they still benefit from structure. Parents should continue to implement rules and boundaries during adolescence. Those who are increasingly defiant to those rules, without any regard for their parents or the consequences, may indicate a more troubling situation.

If you have found that your teen is in fact showing troubling signs, the next best step is to speak with a professional about your options. Many troubled teenagers act out or act negatively due to deeper-seated issues with their mental health. For example, many teenagers display troubling behaviors as they fight against anxiety, depression, trauma, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, body dysmorphia, and substance addiction, to name a few. You may contact your family doctor or therapist for help.

Source: Turnbridge.com

THE NIGERIA STANDARD'S WORLD

Health

Worm infection in babies and kids

By MAHAK ARORA

WORMS, small and often unnoticed parasites, make their home in the child's intestines, where they leech nutrients from their host's diet. This type of infection, medically referred to as a Helminth infection, contributes to the prevalence of stomach aches in children. Given the frequency of these infections, it is crucial for parents and caregivers to acquaint themselves with the various types of worms in kids' poop that can afflict children, as well as the multifaceted aspects related to the causes, symptoms, and treatment of worm infections.

Being well-informed empowers individuals to take appropriate steps in preventing and managing these infections, ultimately safeguarding the health and well-being of their children. There are various types of worms that can breed in the human body. The most common worms that infect babies are:

Tapeworms, also called flatworms, have hooks and suckers that attach to the intestines and breed on the partially digested food. A tapeworm can be as long as a few inches or even 40 feet in length! Children generally ingest them through contaminated food. **Roundworms**: Roundworm infection is caused by the worm *Ascaris lumbricoides*. They are hollow in shape and can grow 35 cm in length. Roundworms inhabit saltwater, soil and fresh water, and are generally passed on to humans via pets.

Pinworms/Threadworms: Pinworms, also termed threadworms, are small, thin, and white worms that reside in the rectum. When the person sleeps, the female worm lays eggs in the anal area. This results in itching that transfers the eggs to the child's fingers. These eggs survive on clothes, bed linen and toilet seats, and get ingested through contaminated food and drink. Pinworm infections are most common among babies and toddlers. **Hookworms**: Hookworms usually occur due to



poor sanitation. These are small parasitic worms that attach themselves to the intestinal walls. A child can catch a hookworm infection on coming into contact with contaminated soil.

How will you know if your child has worms? Children seldom display symptoms of being infected. The infection could also be minimal and therefore, go unnoticed. We recommend that you get your baby checked if you spot any of these symptoms of childhood worms: Foul-smelling stools. Itching around the anus, abdominal pain, fatigue, diarrhoea, weight loss, vomiting

Loss of appetite, lack of sleep, jaundice, irritability, stomach trouble, bowel issues, restlessness and anxiety, gas and bloating, constipation. A few serious complications are obstruction of the small intestine, appendiceal lumen, bile duct, and pancreatic duct; intestinal volvulus; intussusception; peritonitis due to perforation of a viscus; and liver and lung abscess.

What Are the Causes of a Worm Infection? How do kids get worms? Babies and young children are likely to get infected with worms while crawling and playing outdoors. The most common causes that help the development of worms in babies are: Coming into contact with an infected surface. Consuming

infected food or water, poor hygiene or lack of cleanliness, consumption of raw or undercooked food, improper washing of hands, contact with an infected person.

There are tests to determine a worm infection. Doctors can pinpoint a worm infection in children by the following tests: **Stool Examination**. A stool sample is sent to the lab to determine the presence of worms or worm eggs. **Fingernails Examination**

The doctor examines the baby's fingernails for worms or faeces underneath. **Sticky tape test**. This test is specifically performed to detect threadworms. A piece of tape is placed on the baby's bottom to collect worm eggs if any. **Cotton Bud Swab**,

A cotton bud is used to check the baby's bottom for the presence of worm eggs. **Ultrasound Test**, this test is only performed in cases of severe infection. Here, the doctor uses ultrasound to detect the exact location of the worms.

Treatment for Worms in Children. Eradicating worm infection is not difficult. Paediatricians usually prescribe anti-parasitic medicines. Depending on the severity of the infection, she may prescribe any of these medications: **Mebendazole**: It is considered safest to treat a variety of worm infections in children. **Pyrantel**: It is another safe medicine for children often prescribed by the doctor. **Albendazole Tablet/ Suspension**: can be used in children between 13-24 months of age. It should not be used in children aged under one year.

There are also some home remedies for a worm infection. If you suspect worm infestation you should seek medical attention first. You can then use the home remedies below as complementary treatments. Puree these ingredients before feeding:

properties, making it beneficial in treating worms. It can be consumed directly as oil. **Cloves**: Cloves can destroy existing worms and their eggs and can also prevent future infection.

There are effects of Worms on a Baby's Growth. Worms are parasites that live in and derive nutrition from the body of their host. They impair children's health in the following ways:

Worms cause the loss of iron and protein and often lead to anaemia in children. Roundworms result in the malabsorption of nutrients. Worms cause a loss of appetite, a decline in nutritional intake and weakness. They are also responsible for diarrhoea and dysentery in babies and toddlers.

Childhood undernutrition by mechanical and irritant action, decreasing intestinal absorption, competition for host's nutrition



Unripe Papaya: This has an enzyme, papain, that acts as an anthelmintic and destroys the worms in the intestine.

Garlic: This is a natural deworming agent and is highly effective in killing parasitic worms. **Carom Seeds**: These seeds are rich in thymol, which helps prevent the growth of intestinal parasites. They can be mixed with jaggery when offering a child. **Pumpkin Seeds**: These seeds have cucurbitacin that can paralyze the worms and prevent their survival in the body. **Bitter Gourd**: This helps fight the worms in the tummy. Mixing with water and honey masks the bitter taste.

Neem: This has anti-parasitic properties and is useful in destroying various intestinal worms. **Carrots**: Carrots have vitamin A which enhances a child's immunity and helps to fight intestinal parasites. Consuming carrots on an empty stomach can help in clearing worms. **Turmeric**: It is an internal antiseptic and is known to eradicate all types of worms. **Coconut**: This has strong anti-parasitic

and alterations in the intraluminal conditions of the small bowel. They affect physical and mental development, resulting in the child being underweight or stunted for his age.

How to prevent your baby from a worm infection? Maintaining good hygiene is vital to prevent the occurrence of worms in children. Babies become vulnerable to worm infections once they start crawling and walking. So, it's important to practise the following measures: Change your baby's nappies regularly. Wash your hands every time you change the diaper.

Keep the house and surroundings clean.

Ensure that your toddler wears closed shoes while playing and washes his hands and feet after returning home.

Don't let him play near water-logged areas. Cut your baby's nails frequently.

Give your baby only boiled and filtered water. Baby food should be cooked well to prevent a worm infection. Wash fruits and vegetables with clean water before cooking. Wash clothes and bed linen with hot water. Keep your baby's potty seat clean.



Editorial

The FG, NLC impasse

For the umpteenth time, the Nigeria Labour Congress and its affiliate unions have threatened to go on another indefinite strike if its demands are not met by the Federal Government (FG).

Shortly after power batons exchanged hands on May 29, 2023, the announcement of the fuel subsidy removal by the President Bola Tinubu made Nigeria's economy to plunge, causing untold suffering for citizens. These provoked series of industrial actions and threats by the NLC and its affiliate union Trade Unions Congress (TUC).

Indeed life in the country has worsened. Daily increase in food prices, outrageous transport fares, hike in school fees, soaring prices of commodities, cooking gas costs, house rents, inflation and other economic crisis have become the order of the day.

As the economic crisis bites harder, the FG should urgently take concrete actions and implement the agreements it reached with Labour Leaders, to avert another planned nationwide strike.

NLC President, Joe Ajaero, and his TUC counterpart, Festus Osifo, unhappy with the harsh economic realities were still magnanimous to listen to reason and call off its planned strike for the best of the country.

Also concerned with the worrisome situation, apart from announcing a N5bn Naira relief package to states, Nigeria's President in an address on 1st October 2023 announced a short-term wage award of N35,000 to all federal government workers beginning from the month of September pending when the new national minimum wage is expected to be addressed.

Other agreements in the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) signed by Labour and the FG includes provision of high-capacity Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses for mass transit, implementation of various tax incentive measures for the private sector and general public, payment of N25,000 Naira per month for three months starting from October 2023 to 15 million households, including vulnerable pensioners and increase its initiatives on subsidized fertilizers to farmers across the country among other laudable solutions.

The FG should therefore hasten up and implement its MOU with Labour to make life meaningful for Nigerians and to avert another strike. Government needs to revisit its economic policies, so that life would be better for the citizens.

FG and the Minister of Labour and Productivity who are handlers of the agreement-implementation should step up their game because another strike certainly is not the answer, it only grounds the system and heats up the polity adding salt to the injury.

State governments too should act fast and think of strategies to alleviate the suffering of their civil servants and citizens. Already Benue State Governor, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia has set the pace with his purchase of 100 buses to be pumped into the state's transport system - 'Benue Links' to ease the suffering of his citizens. Some other states too have taken strategies to reduce the suffering of their workers.

This is not time for the display of affluence and extravagance by the political class while citizens wallow in suffering. Therefore another solution to the problem that will convince Labour to see the commitment of FG to the problem is for the FG to set the pace by cutting cost of governance so that it will be emulated at the state, and other levels.

Truth be told, the salary and take home pay of workers is not feasible. Therefore, reasonable solutions should be implemented as fast as possible. The Labour - FG issue should be addressed before it takes a different dimension.

If the economy does not improve, and economic solutions are not proffered, the situation can get out of hand and may become disastrous as spelt out in the adage "A hungry man is an angry man". Therefore, preventing a state of anomie, as a result of a harsh economy must not be allowed to happen in the country.

EDUCATION can be defined as the field of study that is concerned with the pedagogy of teaching and training. Other definition include the process of training and developing the knowledge, skill, mind, and character of an individual. In a nutshell, education is the process of gaining knowledge.

In recent times, education has been faced with diverse challenges, ranging from insecurity, cultism, bullying, lesbianism, gayism, and a host of others. This has greatly retarded the wheel of progress and thrown the sector into a state of comatose and disarray. Parents, guardians and care givers are in a state of dilemma as to what to do next. With huge resources budgeted for the education, sector, the downward spiral has remain unabated, with the sector begging for rapt and urgent attention.

Covid-19 is also a contributory factor contributing to the nose diving standard of education in Nigeria. In the year 2020, schools were shut down for almost a year in a bid to contain the surge of the dreaded Corona virus pandemic. Resources in the hands of parents are quite lean, forcing them to withdraw their wards from schools, to new ones with a lesser school fees. The challenge on the part of parents is quite enormous with little options at their disposal, they struggle to make ends meet with ever increasing school fees and other basic amenities in the market, and this has become apt in other to avert imminent collapse of the education sector.

Discipline has been eroded in our institutions of learning as parents are ever ready to go and fight teachers and school administrators, in view of that, school management is likewise reluctant to instill discipline in this wards so as to avoid confrontation. Obviously, there is a trust deficit on the part of the parents and the school management. This has linger for so long which if not properly addressed, it can lead to the burial of education in Nigeria.

Furthermore, students on their part challenge teachers and school authorities any time the rod is used. Some even come to school with dangerous weapons to challenge their teachers. A similar case was reported in a state in Nigeria, where a

female student brought a gun to school to shoot a teacher that flogged her. This dangerous trend is taking different dimensions that might possibly escalate if not properly tamed.

Moreso, the teachers become the albatross of some of this students' they engage in illicit affairs with this minors and naive set of students, taking advantage of their exuberance, which has led to teachers impregnating students and



Education and its dwindling fortune in Nigeria

students impregnating their female teachers. This dirty and displayable act takes place in the education sector. What then is the future of education in our country?

Looking at the recent case at Downen College in Lagos, it leaves much to be desired, cultism among high school students, increasing rate of truancy and bullying have become a source of wrong. A lot of parents will be discourage to adopt the boarding facility of schooling because it led to the death of the boy in question.

In addition, lesbianism and gayism is on the increase in boarding houses, translating into monsters that will become albatross of others. This definitely negate the morality instill in them by their parents and wards. A lot needs to be done urgently.

Government, through the affected agencies need to draft laws that will restore

the trust deficit currently been experienced among school administrators and parents. Parents needs to know that their children are in safe hands and not teachers praying on the students like the recent case reported in Kano State where a 5 year old Hanifa was murdered and buried in a shallow grave. It is a matter of national public importance to arrest the degrading and deplorable situation.

Charity begins at home so, parents need to start the discipline from home before handing their wards to the school management, if both parties are playing their part concurrently, frictions will be greatly averted. Parents must inculcate the right values into their children.

Government must provide a secured environment that will be conducive for learning. Without security,

little will be adhered. In the world today, Nigeria has the highest out of school children with over 10 million students roaming the street or in IDP camps, wasting away. Security is paramount if we must stem the tide and change the narrative. Nothing can be achieved without proper security.

Deliberate efforts must be put in place to achieve the desired goal, students must be thought skills that will support the knowledge they are acquiring in school. Certificate is given in character and in learning. The students must be molded both in character and in learning. By so doing, generations unborn will benefits from this laudable step.

By Ajang Ajiji John, Rikkos, Jos.

Insecurity and delay in response to attacks

IT is obvious that the most unfortunate stories that Nigerians often go to sleep and wake up with on daily basis are these unprovoked attacks that are being unleashed on innocent Nigerians without any reason.

These heinous and senseless attacks often meted on our people are always observed as a well calculated plan before carrying out the attacks.

More offending than not, it always lead to loss of lives and destruction of property.

Infact, what sometimes baffles some of us is the issue of non arrest of perpetrators by our security outfits. Indeed, some of the things that always give some of us concern is the fact that the assailants cannot disappear

into the air. This, however, has clearly shown that Nigeria's security are suppose to be trained more on tracking offenders for effective arrest of any gang or terrorist attack.

Again, why the arrest of those criminals who have become heartless in their human thinking is sometimes difficult can be attributed to the security's delay in prompt response to any distress call connected to such attacks.

It is also unfortunate that our security sometimes end up arresting people who know nothing about the attacks, especially those within some of the attacked communities.

It doesn't make any sense for security to arrest

innocent people under attack. The question is: how can a family member who is counting the loss of his beloved and has suffered destruction of property during an attack be arrested?

When the real perpetrators are not always arrested so as to make them face the full wrath of the law of the land to serve as deterrents to others, cases of criminality instead of reducing would be increasing in number. It is a minus for everyone if they attack and go back freely into their respective homes. When we don't call a spate a spate we shall never get it right.

JIDAUNA DARING.

Standard Cartoon

NEW CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE FEDERATION SWORN IN



Opinion

Leadership: Navigating pains, adversity depths

By
TOYE SOBANDE

In the fast-paced, high-stakes world of leadership, there is an unspoken expectation that leaders must be unwavering, steadfast, and ever-successful. The focus often lies on achievement, growth, and success. Leaders are viewed as unshakeable pillars of strength, decision-makers who can weather any storm and guide their teams toward victory. However, beneath the successful exterior and the façade of confidence and competence, leaders, like anyone else, experience pain. This pain may take the form of failure, the agony of tough decisions, or the distress of unexpected setbacks. In truth, leaders are not immune to the human experience.

So, how can leaders navigate this pain, and why is the process so crucial to their effectiveness and authenticity?

The initial step in processing pain as a leader is acknowledging its presence. Denying or suppressing pain tends to amplify its impact and prolong its effects. Recognizing that experiencing pain is an integral part of life, and as a leader, an essential part of the journey is crucial. Embracing vulnerability and acknowledging the existence of pain can pave the way for healing and growth.

Understand that making mistakes or facing difficulties doesn't diminish your leadership abilities; rather, these are integral parts of the path to success.

Leaders often bear the weight of their teams and entire organizations on their shoulders. Yet, they too need support. It's important for leaders to seek out trusted mentors, friends, or coaches who can provide a safe space for them to express their pain and share their feelings. Vulnerability and the pursuit of empathy should not be seen as weaknesses but as sources of strength.

Pain often carries valuable lessons that can shape the future course of leadership. Instead of viewing setbacks or failures as entirely negative experiences, approach them as opportunities for growth and learning. Analyzing what went wrong, contemplating what could have been done differently, and how these experiences can shape your leadership journey can lead to significant insights.

Leaders are often their own harshest critics. It's essential to extend the same compassion and understanding to oneself that one would offer

to others facing pain. Understand that making mistakes or facing difficulties doesn't diminish your leadership abilities; rather, these are integral parts of the path to success.

Pain can sometimes lead to tunnel vision, making challenges appear insurmountable. It's essential to maintain a broader perspective by reminding oneself of the purpose, values, and long-term goals that fuel your leadership journey. Remember that setbacks are temporary, and as a leader, you have the resilience to overcome them.

Leaders must resist the temptation to cope with pain through unhealthy means such as overwork, substance abuse, or isolation. Instead, they should focus on healthy coping mechanisms such as regular exercise, meditation, mindfulness, or engaging in hobbies that bring joy and relaxation.

Related News

Experiencing pain can give birth to a more empathetic leader. Use your personal experiences to connect with your team members on a deeper level. Show empathy towards their struggles and be open to supporting them through their challenges.

Resilience is the ability to

bounce back from adversity, to rise from the ashes stronger and more determined. Leaders can cultivate resilience by building a robust support network, practicing adaptability, and fostering a growth mindset. Resilience is a crucial asset for processing pain and emerging stronger, more focused, and more driven.

Leaders are not invincible. They too experience pain, and the manner in which they process this pain can profoundly impact their leadership effectiveness. By acknowledging pain, seeking support, learning from experiences, practicing self-compassion, maintaining healthy coping mechanisms, leading with empathy, and cultivating resilience, leaders can navigate the depths of pain and emerge as stronger, more compassionate, and more effective leaders. Pain, when processed constructively, can be a catalyst for growth and positive change in leadership.

Leadership is not just about success, but also about how we handle adversity and pain. It's about rising stronger from the challenges we face. Leaders who embrace their pain and use it as a source of growth become not only more

effective but also more authentic and relatable. They inspire their teams not by being infallible but by being human and demonstrating that even in the darkest moments, there is a path forward.

As we traverse the complex and ever-changing landscape of leadership, let us recognize that pain, when confronted with courage, strength, and compassion, can serve as a powerful catalyst for transformation. It is through our struggles that we uncover our true potential and lead with greater resilience, wisdom, and humanity.

Ultimately, leadership is not just about reaching the destination; it's about the journey and the lessons we learn along the way. Embrace the pain, for within it lies the seeds of your growth and the potential to become the resilient, empathetic, and effective leader you aspire to be. These experiences equip you with the ability to extend your hand in support to others, to lead with empathy, and to inspire with authenticity. The experience of pain, processed through resilience, equips you with a leadership style that is not only effective but also genuinely human.

Designate May 25th to celebrate Nigerians

ON the 1st of October 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from the colonial masters and till today, we celebrate our freedom, tagging it the birthdate of Nigeria. In 2023, Nigeria celebrated its 63rd independence anniversary.

Independence celebration in many countries of the world that had history of colonization is a usual practice and a day to reflect more than rejoices. A day to recount the journey that led to the new entity and a need to appraise progress made so far. Independence Day, however, is not the same as citizen's day. Independence Day is a reminder of slavery, a reminder of past loss where another from another land ruled. A day that often blind the citizens to their existence prior to independence.

Before colonialization, our people existed and a day must be set aside to sing our songs of unity, a day to rekindle pride in our identity, our histories, a day of great stories, a day of reward for good citizens, a day to celebrate heroes past and heroes present.

Permit a digression into the concept of mental slavery and a mark that never forgets that a people once ruled you and you were incapable of handling your affairs either in the face of threat, fear, or intimidation. Many children growing today do not know who they are and where they are from beyond the history of another forming their identity. A common example is, "who discovered River Niger"? The chorus answer would be Mungo Park and that indeed is a fact but not the history of the Nigerian child. For a Nigerian child, River Niger had always existed, and our forefathers were visibly present. For the whites, their citizen who succeeded in reaching the confluence after several failed

By BISAYO BUSARI-AKINNADEJU

attempts is Park. John Ledyard planned to discover the Niger via Egypt but died in Cairo. Lucas, and Houghton in 1789 and 1791 respectfully attempted to discover the course of Niger, prior to Mungo Park first and final expeditions which yielded in the first discovery in 1796 and in 1805, when he discovered the actual course and termination of River Niger successfully.

It is trite that October 1st, 1960, is a significant day in history as well as 1914 where the southern and northern protectorate was amalgamated. The truth however is that what we have handed over to us was a country of different tribes, faith and culture. A country of people who must thereafter work to build a united front to succeed and to not keep falling. Nigeria in her beautiful map, bounded by strength, love and faith must revisit the foundational structure to ensure that her building will not collapse.

The advocacy is for a new Nigeria where the citizens see themselves as one and that desire for a United Nigeria birthed the #IAmANigerian campaign. There will be another opportunity to talk about the beauty of being united in Nigeria but the focus is a need to have a day set aside in Nigeria to celebrate ourselves as people of this nation. While the country has days set aside for religious celebrations and workers day, there is an urgent need for a day that is not for any religion or region, a day that is not for any class of citizen, but a day for all Nigerians, the IAMANIGERIAN day. The IAMANIGERIAN day is a solution to the disunity we have experienced so far. If a day

is set aside for this purpose, children unborn will come to know of a day when we are all one tribe united in green, white, green, raising the flag and bearing the coat of arms in our hearts. A day Nigerian child abroad can visit the nation, a day you can work into your establishment anywhere in the world with pride. A day the naija spirit can rejoice in her own land.

For a very long time, the IAmANigerian day proposition was unheard of, indeed within Nigeria, the idea was not conceived until Bisayo Busari-Akinnadeju started the campaign officially in 2015. The fact is that every great nation has had to come to a point where their unity is a fabric that must be woven by the citizens themselves.

Many would see an American citizen wears the American identity with pride, not because USA is free from poverty, diseases, corruption or insecurity but a foundation was laid as far back as In 1951, when the President of the United States gave the following directive; "Now, Therefore, I, Harrys Truman, President of the united States of America, under and by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Congress through Public Resolution 767, approved May 3, 1940 (54 Stat. 178), do hereby designate Sunday, May 20, 1951, as "I Am An American Day", and do set aside that day as a public occasion for the recognition, observance, and commemoration of United States citizenship, and for the special recognition of those of our youth who have attained their majority and of those foreign-born who have become citizens through naturalization during the past year." Therefore, setting aside a day to celebrate

citizens in Nigeria is not a strange practice.

To demystify the proposition and to continue this advocacy, Project One, a prominent organization in Nigeria, One Nigeria Citizenship Appreciation initiative, has recently rekindled its "IAMANIGERIAN" campaign, advocating for the designation of May 25th as the "IAMANIGERIAN Day". This ambitious project, "IAMANIGERIAN" campaign commenced officially in the year 2016.

It was the brainchild of Bisayo Busari-Akinnadeju, a Nigerian lawyer, philanthropist who had devoted her time from childhood to the Nigerian ideology and promoting the greatness of the brand.

The "IAmANigerian campaign is a national project that shapes the narrative of the country to strengthen national unity, recognition of our past hero's, celebrate the rich cultural tapestry of Nigeria, and reinforce the collective Nigerian identity. In this article, we will delve into the significance of the IAmANigerian campaign and its journey towards establishing May 25th as a special day for all Nigerians.

Objectives
The IAmANigerian campaign has been a hallmark of Project One's efforts over the last seven years. The campaign's primary objectives are: To instill in the Nigerian child a sense of pride in national identity, to build a brand that defines the Nigerian citizen and to build a nation where unity is our strength and among the black race

Busari-Akinnadeju is the founder and convener of the Project One – IAmANigerian Conference

News

Unskilled animal husbandry, pastoralists' migration, others hamper milk production in Nigeria

Nigeria's per capita consumption of milk is eight litres, below the global average of 44 litres, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) thus leaving a deficit of 36 litres per capital write **Abubakar Ahmadu Maishanu**

It is late August and Illiyasu Atawame is milking his cows at his hut in Jigawar Tsada, a village on the outskirts of Dutse, the Jigawa State capital. The manual routine has been a key part of his practice in the last 40 years.

The Fulani pastoralist moved to the area from Jahun Local Government Area of the state in search of pasture for his livestock. Mr Atawame says life has become difficult for him and other pastoralists.

"It is no longer what it used to be because of shrinking grazing land.

"If you entered the bush with your animals, apart from the fresh grass, you would find groundnut and bean leaves left behind by farmers after harvest of their crops. But farmers nowadays go home with everything. They fight you over corn stalks in the dry season, how much more over their crops in the rainy season."

Herders like Mr Atawame move their cattle over long distances to seek grazing areas, which sometimes leads to violent clashes between the herders and local farmers whose farms the cattle destroy. The effects of climate change, such as desertification in the far north of Nigeria, have also limited the available grazing land.

Mr Atawame's average of two litres of milk per cow during the rainy season is just slightly higher than the national average by migrant pastoralists.

"The productivity of local cow breeds mostly managed by pastoralists is low at 0.5 to 1.5 litres of milk per day, compared to a global average of 6.6 litres per day by cows managed by pastoralists," Dianabasi Akpainyang, the national president of the Commercial Dairy Ranchers Association of Nigeria (CODARAN), says.

Apart from the challenge of the breed of cattle many Nigerian herders use, which experts say is not the best for milk production, the pastoralists are also largely uneducated and get little or no support from the government.

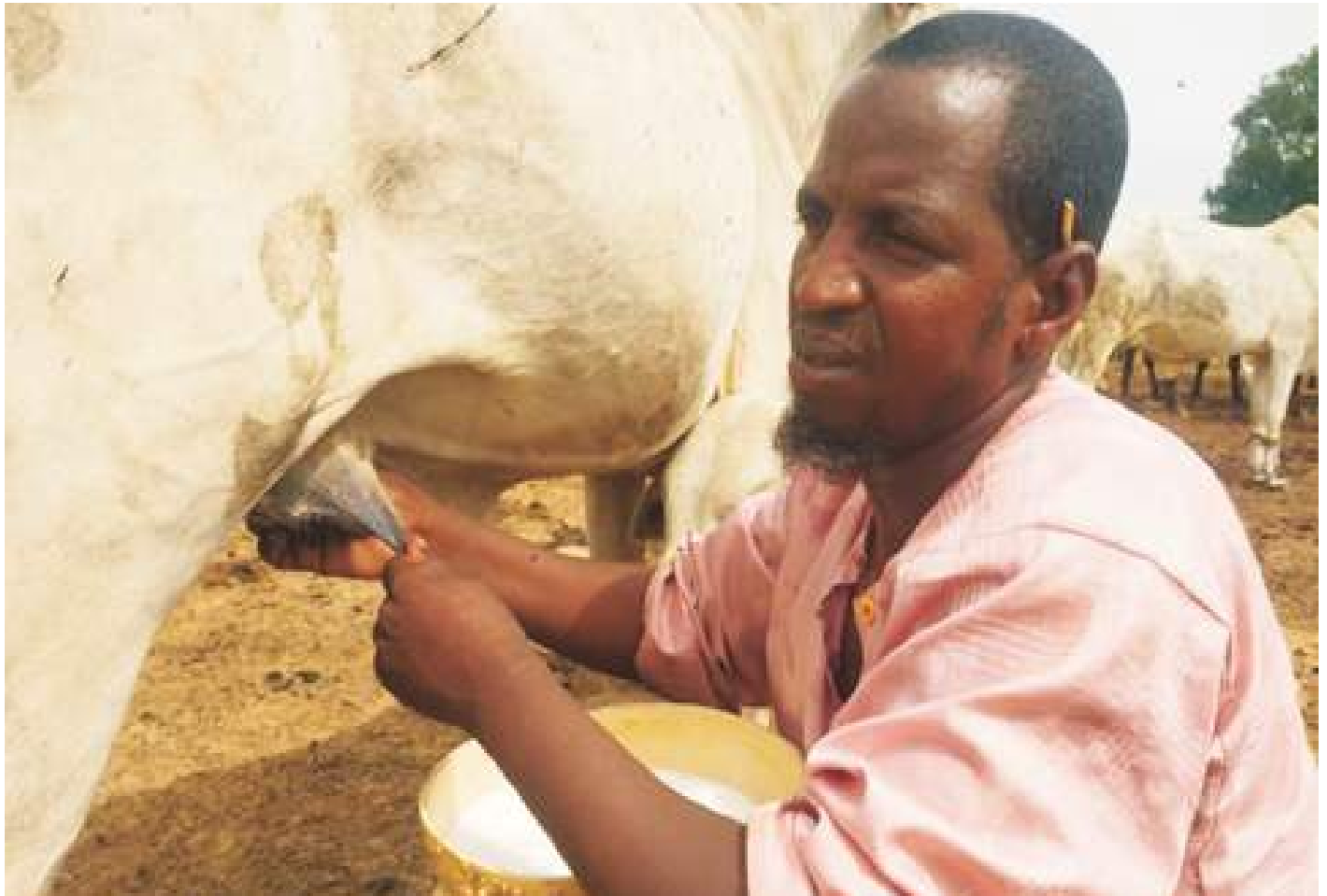
Mr Atawame says he has never had any training on how to improve his practice. He has continued to rear and milk his cattle exactly the way he inherited the practice from his father. Told that he can increase his yield tremendously by using technology and embracing modern practice, he replies hopefully: "I am ready to learn if I have the opportunity."

Another pastoralist in the community, Abubakar Atiku, says he gets about five litres of milk daily from his cows. He too says he used to get more from his cows. "Things are very difficult now because grass is difficult to access. Everywhere you go there are crop plantations with the farmers keeping an eagle eye on you.

"We now use other domestic feeds as complementary feeding to get the cows to produce more milk for sale and our household consumption," Mr Atiku says.

Other herders who interacted with our source in the area spoke in the same vein, indicating that the traditional practice of animal husbandry in this part of Nigeria is increasingly becoming unsustainable without government.

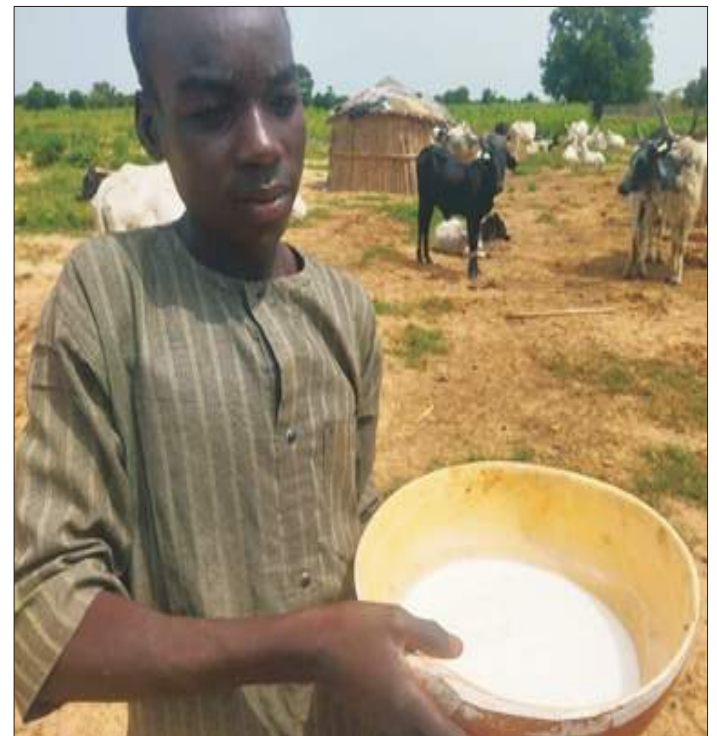
Young people constitute a significant percentage of Nigeria's estimated population of over 200



Illiyasu Atawame



A scene of Mr Atawame hamlet in Dutse



Herder displaying fresh milk

million, making the country one of the biggest markets for dairy products. But per capita consumption of milk in the country is eight litres, below the global average of 44 litres, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Official data states that of the estimated 1.3 billion tonnes of milk consumed annually in Nigeria, 60 per cent are imported at \$1.5 billion yearly. Yet, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture estimated that Nigeria has about 20 million cattle, making it the fourth-largest cattle population in Africa. About 2.35 million of the animals are involved in dairy production.

However, the nation has not

optimised its potential in milk population partly because of the government's inadequate attention to the animal husbandry sub-sector, populated mainly by Fulani pastoralists who practice at the subsistence level.

Although there are large industrial dairy farms in some parts of the country, a large amount of the local milk production is done by the largely uneducated Fulani pastoralists.

According to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, "Nigeria's milk production accounts for only 13 per cent of West African production and 0.01 per cent of global dairy output".

Despite its size, relative to other

African countries, the Nigerian dairy sector is largely fragmented and inefficient. Yet, with a milk deficit of 1.2 million metric tonnes per annum, the sector offers huge potential for returns on

Abubakar Garba, a pastoralist in the Gamoji Fulani community in Gaya Local Government Area of Kano, says the perennial crises between the herders and the farmers have also affected milk production. Abubakar Garba milking a cow (PHOTO CREDIT: Abubakar Ahmadu Maishanu)

Mr Garba says because grass is no longer abundant like before, herders travel long distances through forests scavenging for grass.

"Now, 30 cows cannot produce the quantity of milk produced that three cows used to produce due to challenges associated with the poor grassland. Now cattle are struggling to feed on remnants left by the roadsides, leading to constant quarrels between herders and farmers. My children have been arrested and beaten many times for encroaching on farmland.

"These are some of the problems that hinder the production of milk because cows cannot produce milk without eating enough pasture. In my youthful years, I used to hand-milk the cows in big buckets with a few cattle but now things have changed," the herder says.

According to Mr Garba, many forest reserves and grazing areas in Kano and neighbouring Jigawa State have been allocated or put into use by farmers.

News

NIWA MD charges staff on dedication to duty

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE newly appointed Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), Lokoja, Munirudeen Bola Oyebamiji, recently, assumed office with a charge to staff of the organization to redouble their dedication to duty for greater performance.

Oyebamiji who appreciated President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for giving him the opportunity to serve at this level, promised that he will give priority to staff welfare as a motivation for higher productivity.

Oyebamiji while addressing members of staff at NIWA headquarters on resumption of duty, also assured of equal opportunity to all. He said that he will not let anyone down



Oyebamiji

Appreciating the staff and we'll wishers, Oyebamiji said "let me especially appreciate everyone for your love and best wishes since my appointment was announced. I have been overwhelmed. "I am indeed very grateful to the members of staff of this agency for your warm reception. I appreciate our APC party leaders, an associate from Osun State, as well as my brothers, sisters, and friends from Dikire.

"Ladies and gentlemen, my life has been marked by discipline and accountability. I was thrown into a very competitive sector early in my career. The banking sector does not support mediocrity in any form. "Your performance determines your placement and benefits. I have the uncommon privilege to learn

and practice classical banking under the duress of the industry in the marine sector, among others. "NIWA can be performance-driven with your support. These two values will be my guiding principles as a servant in this position. "Dear colleagues, you agree with me that as Nigerians, we need to approach our national challenges with a renewed resolve.

"We just must begin to do things differently if we hope to achieve different results. "I therefore bring to you a campaign of renewed hope that things can be better, and that things indeed will get better with our combined efforts. As an agency, our mission is clear, and our objectives are achievable. "For Nigeria to attain her full

economic potential, all sectors, including the inland waterway, must be primed to support efficient and effective surface delivery. I therefore plead for your cooperation, dedication, and doggedness. "As we approach the task before us, let us delete every line of division in our daily activities. It is time for all hands to be on deck. We cannot afford to fail, and we will not, by the special grace of God. "In the coming days, we shall unveil all our programmes and activities, in line with Mr. President's charge and the mandate of the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economies, with the thematics spelled out effectively. "Ladies and gentlemen, I am an advocate of an open door policy where everyone matters."

"I have worked very closely with him for three years and he was a very wonderful leader. He had shown me that leadership is not about occupying the position, but about making an impact. "It is unfortunate that we are greatly going to miss him," Oyibo said. Present at the funeral were sons and daughters of Ebiraland, the Kogi State Governor, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, the Attah of Igala, His Royal Highness, Matthew Opaluwa and other royal fathers in Kogi.

Our correspondent reports that the deceased Ohinoyi of Ebiraland was born on Feb. 7, 1929 and was the fourth traditional ruler and Ohinoyi of Ebiraland. He was a son of the second Attah (now "Ohinoyi") of Ebiraland, Ibrahim Onoruoiza of the Omadivi clan, who would look at the issues and would be guided by the laws to discharge its responsibilities for the good of Nigerians. "The whole idea is not to wallow in lamentations but to solve the challenges and improve services to Nigerians."

NIS seeks improved working conditions, capacity enhancement

THE Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has appealed to the Senate to approve improved conditions of service, competitive remuneration and regular promotion for personnel of the service.

The Acting Comptroller General of the NIS, Mrs Caroline Adepoju, made the appeal during an interactive meeting with Senate Committee on Interior.

Adepoju said the NIS conditions of service were supposed to be at par with other sister agencies, especially with respect to remuneration.

She lamented the glaring disparity on what its personnel received compared to other sister agencies.

This, the acting CGI said, was discouraging and demoralising to personnel of the service in the discharge of their statutory responsibility.

Adepoju also decried the non regular promotion status of its officers, noting that many of the personnel had been stagnated on a particular grade level without promotion for many years.

She said that there was need to open up space for promotion and called for improved capacity of its personnel for effective discharge of their

responsibility. The immigration boss also called for improved funding and logistics for the NIS to enable it properly execute its mandate like provision of E-gate.

According her, there is need to increase the number of its personnel for adequate manning of the airports, sea and land borders.

"Our conditions of service for NIS personnel, in terms of remuneration, we are expected to be at par with the Customs Service, Nigeria Police Force, but our remunerations are poor and can not actually take us home. "Our promotion is slow and because of this, people are demoralised; we need our promotion evaluative system and eligibility to be reviewed. "We need to create vacancies to remove stagnation among the personnel of NIS. In spite of the teething challenges, she noted that the service under her leadership had almost cleared back log of passports.

Adepoju added that the management was also poised to and committed to improving its service delivery mandate in line with the renewed hope agenda of President Bola Tinubu. Alhaji Ja'afar Mohammed,

the Secretary, Board of Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) Nigeria Correctional Services, and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, corroborated Adepoju's submission. He explained that the board has had historical challenges, saying that the board had existed on an ad-hoc basis. The secretary said that the board didn't have comprehensive record of employees of NIS to generate eligibility status on issues relating to promotion and retirement

He, however, said the board since its inception had taken far reaching decisions on repositioning the agency, adding that it would work with the committee to achieve more successes.

"We want to work with the committee to establish the board as an independent body; the board is now repositioned to function accordingly." Chairman of the Committee, Sen. Adams Oshiomhole said the interaction which was at the instance of the committee was to have a first hand information and overview on the challenges faced by the service.

Oshiomhole said that the service had lots of challenges, adding that the committee

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

Ohinoyi of Ebiraland laid to rest

THE remains of Ohinoyi of Ebiraland, Alhaji Ado Ibrahim was laid to rest at his hometown, Okene, Kogi recently.

Our correspondent reports that the corpse of the paramount ruler was committed to mother earth according to Islamic rites around 8.40 p.m.

Secretary of Ebiraland Traditional Council, Alhaji Salihu Sule, explained that the burial could not hold earlier because of unforeseen challenges as the corpse left Abuja late and only arrived in Okene around 6.45 p.m.

"On arrival, there was a family meeting that was held before the final internment according to Islamic rites," Sule said.

Sheik Salihu Ebere, the Chief Imam of Ebiraland, who led the burial rites and prayers for the repose of the soul of the late Ohinoyi, prayed to God to forgive the royal father his sins.

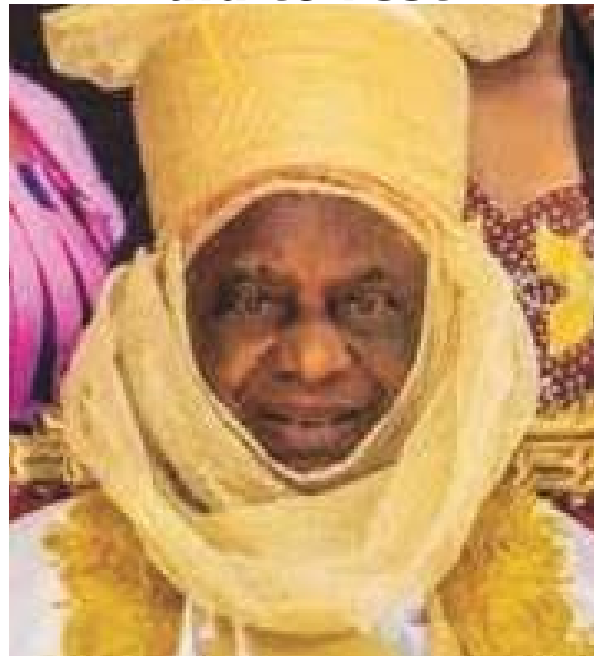
The cleric said since death is inevitable, all humans must be conscious of the fact and live a loving, peaceful and God-fearing life.

In his remarks, Dr Godwin Oyibo, National President, E Bira Development Association, described the death of the paramount ruler as shocking and very painful.

"With painful hearts, we have just laid to rest the remains of our leader and father, who died in the early hours of Sunday in a hospital in Abuja.

"Committing his corpse to mother earth was very painful and unbelievable.

"I have never been this close to someone who suddenly is no more. It has never happened to me till this time. He was the kind person one would not want to part with.



Ibrahim

"I have worked very closely with him for three years and he was a very wonderful leader. He had shown me that leadership is not about occupying the position, but about making an impact. "It is unfortunate that we are greatly going to miss him," Oyibo said. Present at the funeral were sons and daughters of Ebiraland, the Kogi State Governor, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, the Attah of Igala, His Royal Highness, Matthew Opaluwa and other royal fathers in Kogi.

Our correspondent reports that the deceased Ohinoyi of Ebiraland was born on Feb. 7, 1929 and was the fourth traditional ruler and Ohinoyi of Ebiraland.

He was a son of the second Attah (now "Ohinoyi") of Ebiraland, Ibrahim Onoruoiza of the Omadivi clan, who reigned from 1917 to 1954. Ado-Ibrahim was enthroned as the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland in 1997 and reigned until Sunday, when he died. Before ascending the throne, Ado-Ibrahim was a successful businessman who lived most parts of his life in Lagos.

Dr Ibrahim was born to His Royal Highness, Alhaji Ibrahim Onoruoiza Attah and Hajija Hauwawu Ozianuwa. Young Ado Ibrahim completed his Nursery and Quranic education at the age of 11 years. He was enrolled at the Okene Native Administration School from 1934 to 1940 for his elementary education. Upon completion of his elementary education, he was admitted to Okene Middle School in 1941.

After spending two years, he moved to the famous Ondo Boys High School for his secondary education from 1943 to 1946. From 1947 to 1949, he moved to Oduduwa College, Ile-Ife, Osun where he completed his secondary education. He was employed by the United African Company (UAC) in 1950 as a special entrant for accelerated management. Having successfully gone through the Accounting and Sales Department in 1952, he was promoted to the post of Manager at the Kingsway Stores, Kaduna.

In January 1953, he quit Kingsway Stores and moved to Jos as Personnel Manager of Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria Limited in charge of maintaining operation areas of Bukuru and Barkin Ladi. In that same year, he attended the first Mining School in Jos and qualified as a Mining Prospector and Area Manager. Later in the year, the company sent him on a further technical training course, organised by the Anglo-American Mining Corporation, in Johannesburg, South Africa. Upon his return, he was immediately promoted to Area Manager and assigned the responsibility to excavate the Lead/Zinc Ore deposits at Izom in the Abuja district, and to lead a team.

Priest, mother, toddler kidnapped in Taraba

From **VICTOR GAI, Jalingo**

IT was a bleak weekend in Taraba State as kidnapers went on rampage, whisking away a mother, her one year old child and a Catholic priest in two separate incidences.

According to the Police spokesman in Taraba, Abdullahi Usman (SP), the kidnap of a mother and her one year old child took place at their residence behind the Jolly Nyame Stadium, Jalingo and not around the Winners Comprehensive College as earlier speculated.

He disclosed that the kidnapers had earlier on taken along with them the woman, her child and their household but later on released the house help.

On the latest situation concerning Rev. Fr Thaddeus

Tarhembe, who was kidnapped on Sunday in Wukari, he said the kidnapers were yet to make any demands.

The Very Rev. Fr Thaddeus Tarhembe, the Parish Priest of St Ann's Parish, Sarkin Kudu in Ibi Local Government Area of Taraba State was kidnapped in the early hours of Sunday.



Kefas

Feature

By MUHAMMADU BUHARI

A matter of principle

RARELY in modern times can so few have tried to take so much from so many. If Nigeria had lost its arbitration dispute with Process & Industrial Development in a London court on 23 October, it would have cost our people close to USD15 billion. We won, and all decent people can sleep easier as a result. Justice Robin Knowles said Nigeria had been the victim of a monstrous fraud. But it was a close-run thing.

As the judge said: "I end the case acutely conscious of how readily the outcome could have been different, and of the enormous resources ultimately required from Nigeria as the successful party to make good its challenge." But ordinary Nigerians never took the decisions that ended up before Justice Knowles.

Had Nigeria lost, it would have required schools not to be built, nurses not to be trained and roads not to be repaired, on an epic scale, to pay a handful of contractors, lawyers and their allies – for a project that never broke ground. How did it get to this point? How did Nigeria prevail? Was this a one-off, or par for a shabby and distasteful course? What are the lessons for the future?

The 'P&ID Affair' was already firmly set by the time I came into office in 2015. A company registered in the British Virgin Islands that no one had heard of,



Buhari

with hardly any staff or assets, had won a contract to build a gas processing plant in Cross Rivers. The company was owned by Irish intermediaries who knew Nigeria well and had done business in everything from healthcare to fixing tanks.

The previous government could not supply the gas. The plant was never built. Construction was not started. P&ID did not even buy the land for the facility. But the contract, incredibly, was clear: P&ID could sue Nigeria, and claim

all the profits it might have made over 20 years as if everything had been completed. Nigeria was in court in London, trying to talk down liability and costs.

Back at home, fixers were looking to work out a quiet settlement. This is often the way. A lot of contracts end up in dispute. P&ID won a settlement in 2017 of USD6 billion, with compound interest. People, including out of work ex-British Cabinet Minister Priti Patel, were queuing up to insist we paid, or

risk Nigeria becoming an untrustworthy trade pariah. It was clear that far from the whole story had been told.

I tasked Abba Kyari, my chief-of-staff and Attorney General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami, with finding a way, even at that late stage and despite so much conflicting advice, to get us a fair hearing. Working with a number of different agencies and senior officials of government, we began to find a huge amount of evidence, not all of which Justice Knowles was to accept.

But he agreed that P&ID had paid bribes. He agreed that one of P&ID's founders had committed perjury. And he agreed that P&ID had somehow found in its possession a steady supply of Nigeria's privileged internal legal documents, outlining our plans, strategies and problems.

My own view is that this whole, sorry affair shows how important it is to follow the legal process in resolving a dispute. It shows that given time and opportunity for each side to present their case, the temple of justice can satisfactorily resolve all disputes without resort to extra-judicial measures.

It was definitely worth the struggle: this was an attempted heist of historic proportions, an attempt to steal from the treasury a third of Nigeria's foreign reserves. But even at this

moment, we should note what the English judge cautioned. The arbitration process in London "was a shell that got nowhere near the truth."

We need better contracts, in the public and private sector. And we need greater transparency: the reality is that, had P&ID not conjured up quite such an outlandish ransom, they may have found themselves in the same place as the myriad other invisible contractors who all too often quietly take Nigeria for many millions in out of court settlements.

Stern sanctions are indicated for Nigerian public officials who have been proven to connive with foreign criminals to defraud our country. Nigeria has won this battle with corruption, but the war is far from over.

As Justice Knowles concluded: "This case has also, sadly, brought together a combination of examples of what some individuals will do for money. Driven by greed and prepared to use corruption; giving no thought to what their enrichment would mean in terms of harm for others."

"Others that in the present case include the people of Nigeria, already let down in so many ways over the history of this matter by a number of individuals in politics and administration whose duty it was to serve them and protect them." Well said.

Muhammadu Buhari served as President Federal Republic of Nigeria

News

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On the latest situation concerning Rev. Fr Thaddeus Tarhembe, who was kidnapped



Kefas

7 confirmed dead in Taraba boat mishap

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

SEVEN persons have been confirmed killed from a boat accident that occurred on Saturday in the Ardo Kola Local Government Area of the state.

The Police spokesman in Taraba, SP Usman Abdullahi, in a chat with **The Nigeria Standard** said seven corpses have been recovered from the incident and that the actual number of passengers on board the boat is still unknown.

"The boat mishap happened on Saturday. They loaded passengers from Mayo Renawo, headed to Karim. The boat capsized and the whole passengers drowned.

"At the time of loading, nobody could say how many people were on board.

"As at this morning, we got

THE Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has appealed to the Senate to approve improved conditions of service, competitive remuneration and regular promotion for personnel of the service.

The Acting Comptroller General of the NIS, Mrs Caroline Adepoju, made the appeal during an interactive meeting with Senate Committee on Interior.

Adepoju said the NIS conditions

NIS seeks improved working conditions, capacity enhancement

of service were supposed to be at par with other sister agencies, especially with respect to remuneration.

She lamented the glaring disparity on what its personnel received compared to other sister agencies.

This, the acting CGI said, was discouraging and demoralising to

personnel of the service in th discharge of their statutor responsibility.

Adepoju also decried the no regular promotion status of it officers, noting that many of th personnel had been stagnated on particular grade level withou promotion for many years.

She said that there was need t open up space for promotion an called for improved capacity of it personnel for effective discharge c their responsibility.

The immigration boss also calle for improved funding and logistic for the NIS to enable it proper executive its mandate lik provision of E-gate.

According her, there is need t increase the number of it personnel for adequate manning c the airports, sea and land borders.

"Our conditions of service for NI: personnel, in terms o remuneration, we are expected t be at par with the Custom Service, Nigeria Police Force, bu our remunerations are poor an can not actually take us home.

"Our promotion is slow an because of this, people ar demoralised; we need ou promotion evaluative system an eligibility to be reviewed.

"We need to create vacancies t remove stagnation among th personnel of NIS.

"We need better office an residential accommodations bot in our states and border security we need logistics to aid our borde management, both land air and th sea."

In spite of the teething challenges, she noted that th service under her leadership ha almost cleared back log c passports.



Ahmed

an update that seven bodies stated.

were recovered. The Police But the Acting Chairman of marine are there, the inland Water Transporters in volunteer divers are there. Taraba S N tate, Mr. Jidda They are working Mayoreneyo said the boat assiduously to make sure was carrying over fifty that others are rescued passengers when the alive, " the spokeman accident occurred.

Parents, child preference and enmity



By YVONNE ISHOLA

ONE of the commonest problems in most families is siblings rivalry. It manifests in a variety of ways. In the formative years, parents often overlook or laugh off their children's expressions of jealousy. A friend once shared how her eldest son was caught in the act of giving his one week old younger sibling some swipes of cane. In this case, it was 3 broomsticks. The baby's high pitched cry was what alerted the mother.

It could have been worst. When asked why he hated his

brother so, the 2-year-old said since the mother brought back her baby from the hospital, she had given him little or no attention.

The above example may sound hilarious but could lead to serious issues when not addressed the best way. If not now, in the future.

Parents preference of a child over the other or others has served to bring out the worst in the rejected or unloved child. The worst-case scenario is when it breeds enmity between siblings. A good example is the biblical story of Jacob and Esau, Isaac's famous twins. In their case, the father preferred Esau (because he was an outdoor man and often brought him the game). The mother on the other hand preferred Jacob for the simple fact that he was an indoor man. With the help of his mother, Jacob stole his brother's blessings from their father. That was the last straw on the camel's back. The battle line was drawn.

Esau began seeking revenge. That began a long feud. These twins became sworn enemies who continued

fighting all through the pages of the Bible.

The above parents fuelled their children's fight then sat by and watched as they tore each other to pieces. At this point in time, there was nothing they could do to correct their interference with God's plans. It was just God's faithfulness that prevailed.

A middle-aged man was lamenting recently that his mother has labelled him the black sheep of the family. Any time anything goes wrong in the family especially with his siblings, she blames it on him. She claims he has run down the family business. This has turned his siblings against him. She warned his elder brother from associating with him if he didn't want to be a drunk. The irony is that he learnt to drink alcoholic drinks through his brother. The man is so bitter and says he misses his dad who is late.

On a lighter note. A man visited a house and asked for the eldest. One of the family members asked if he was looking for the most respected because of his wealth or the eldest in age.

The above anecdote is the



reality in most families where parents will dethrone the eldest because he is financially poor and has no social standing. At meetings, his voice will not carry weight because everyone will always agree with the one who has financial backing. His decision is final. In no time, the eldest would begin to feel unloved and disrespected. This can easily breed disaffection between the eldest and the rich and favourite son.

An embittered lady once disclosed how she was made by her mother to prepare peppered meat for her married younger sister. She did it joyfully, only for her mother to begin ordering her around to serve her younger sister while her sister was treated like royalty. All because she is married to a wealthy man. At the end of the day, she cleaned up after her younger sister and ended up eating the wings out

of the whole chicken she prepared.

In some families, it is the brilliant children that are given preferential treatment. Gifted children are disregarded or treated as dull. This has killed the passion of some gifted children. One of the major reasons why it is said the grave is the richest place on earth because of the many people that die without putting their talents to constructive uses.

Parents have become so materialistic that it is he who pays the piper that dictates the tune. They have thrown morality to the winds and carelessness whose horse is gored as they look out for their interest.

The word of God says 'wisdom is profitable to direct'. Every parent needs wisdom in handling the home front and the children or we would end up bringing up enemies instead of brothers and sisters.

Encouraging continuity in governance



By JIDAUNA DARING

IN a democratic system of government, it is believed that continuity should be the norm in what has been inherited from a predecessor by the successors of any given administration at different levels of governments, but unfortunately in Nigeria the reverse is the case.

It is quite unfortunate to say that, what is presently obtained in governance is the abandonment of predecessor's initiatives at all levels whether the predecessor and successors are from the same party or not. This precarious and unfortunate scenerios has become the bane of our leaders. These is no gain saying that this is at the detriment of the people and society.

In fact, when elections are over , it is expected that the

hand of the clock should be directly pointed on how the journey of governance should begin because, the eyes of the people are on persons who seat on the driver's seat as a leaders.

Therefore, the quest for Nigerian leaders to imbibe the culture of continuity in governance cannot be overemphasized, since it is geared towards ensuring that completion of whatever unfinished projects that have been embarked upon by the predecessors at any given administration are needed.

Therefore, continuity in governance should be encouraged amongst those that come on board as successors regardless of whatever plans they may have for the people.

To further promote continuity, our successors should as a matter of concern develop positive attitude when it comes to giving attention to whatever, inherited projects of their predecessors. This, if put in cognizance, would no doubt go a long way to give people more sense of fulfillment or belonging as they will always have projects that could have been abandoned but completed by their successors.

What is more important to note is that, good leadership produces good governance

which can translate into practical development. Therefore, good leaders must seek to produce good results or viable legacies through continuity in governance.

In fact, one of the tragic mistakes that are sometimes made by some political leaders is that, they promise much more than they can deliver to the people. This has led to a huge credibility gap between our leaders and the electorate because the people's expectations are often higher whenever there is new leadership at different level.

What seems to be more worrisome when it comes to continuity, is the increasing cases of unnecessary termination of inherited projects by some past successors at different levels of representations without considering the volume of resources that were committed into such unfinished projects as the case may be.

It is also glaring that this unfortunate practice as observed amongst some of our leaders over the years have contributed negatively to the abandonment of many projects that if completed could have significantly bought about more development to the people. What is equally disturbing in this regard, is the fact that some of these important projects have become an eyecore to the people who ought to have enjoyed such projects.

It is never a crime in for successors to complete any inherited projects from the predecessors whether big or small as far as such projects have direct bearing on the lives of the people. It will do Nigerians more good if our successors at different levels of representations will be given the needed priority for continuity in governance.

Worthy of mote in this regard is the fact that, the amiable and pragmatic leader of the 'Time is Now Governor,'

Caleb M. Mutfwang of Plateau State, has made it clear to all and sundry in Plateau that, his administration revisiting some of the unfinished projects started by the immediate past government. This is the spirit that our leaders are supposed to imbibe at different levels of representations so that our beloved state can be transformed to a land of milk and honey in all its ramification.

With this good leadership style, it now behooves on all citizens of Plateau State to rally round "the captain of the Time is Now" with good support so that the already imbibed spirit of continuity in the end yields good dividends of democracy to the people of different sectors.

This can also be achieved when people put aside their political tribes and religious differences. When these things are addressed, the sky will always be the limit of any given leader on board.

"Therefore, continuity in governance should be encouraged amongst those that come on board as successors regardless of whatever plans they may have for the people. To further promote continuity, our successor should as a matter of concerned develop positive attitude when it comes to given attention to whatever, inherited projects of their predecessors, this, if put in cognizance, would no doubt go a long way to give people more sense of fulfillment or belonging as they will always have projects that could have been abandoned but being completed by the successors".

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

THE word retirement means different thing to different people at different levels, especially young people who tend to assume that there is a lot of time to prepare for it. While this is a wrong assumption, it is also important to know that retirement is not age-based.

Retirement is a big part of life and it is essential to plan for it as you would plan for writing important exams or an event in your life.

Again, retirement marks the end of a person's working career and the beginning of a new phase of life where one can pursue his interests, spends time with family and friends, and enjoy leisure activities.

However, this can also involve receiving income from various sources such as pension, personal savings, investments, etc. With proper retirement plans, one can be assured of peace of mind after service.

October 29, 2023 would ever remain a significant day in the life of the Licensed Pastor Christopher Chung and Mrs. Lyop as the church auditorium of Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), Local Church Council (LCC), Nassarawa Gwong, Jos was filled to capacity with senior clergymen, members, supporters, family, friends and dignitaries from all walks of life in attendance to honour the retirement service of Pastor and Mrs. Chung.

Licensed pastor Christopher was born into the family of Da pastor Joro Chung Dusu and Ngo Dat Chung Dusu, all of blessed memory in Rebet of Ket village, Foron District, Barkin-Ladi Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau state, Nigeria.

He started his humble primary educational studies from 1966-1973 in Foron where he obtained his first school leaving certificate (FSLC), and later went further to acquire additional certificate at Aboso Builders and Architectural Draughtmanship from 1976 to 1979.

In search for the truth and the light of God, he went to the former Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA), now known as the Evangelical Church, Winning All for his Theological Education by Extension course from 1978 to 1979 and later continued same at COCIN Theological Education by Extension (TEE) where he backed an Advanced Certificate Course (Post DBS), from 1987 to 1988 and later added additional certificate from the COCIN Extension Theological College (ETC) from 1990 to 1997 and Federal Polytechnic Bauchi from 1988 to 1989 where he also obtained a certificate in Architecture.

He got married to his beloved wife, Lyop Kpam Loman of Sho village in Ropp District of Barkin-Ladi LGA in April 25, 1981 at COCIN LCC Bakin-Kogi, in Foron by Reverend Gwom Tsok.

The union is blessed with three (3) children, namely Mr. Obed Mangjah Christopher, Mr. Paul Kpam Christopher, Miss. Catherine Christopher. His foster children include; Miss. Chundung Jonathan Loman and Nerat Jonathan Loman.

Nonetheless, licensed pastor Christopher, before going into full time ministry, worked with the Plateau State Government at Jos Metropolitan Development Board (JMDB) and Ministry of Lands and Survey and Town Planning from the year 1980 to 1995 as a civil servant.

Before his retirement from his meritorious service in the vineyard, he took the appointment into full time ministry with the COCIN Regional Church Council (RCC) Jos, in April 1st, 1995 till this moment of his exit.

Over the years, he has served the church in different capacities at the local church council, including

serving in other different committees in building the body of Christ.

Earlier, the leading Pastor of COCIN Church Nassarawa Gwong, Jos, Rev Emmanuel Joel Nimcheffa charged the retired pastor to remain focused in God as he continues to serve while in his retirement from active service of the Church.

Nimcheffa in a sermon titled "The work of a gallant soldier" said that a gallant in Christ is the person who is not afraid of spiritual and physical wars, ensuring that the gospel of

service in the vineyard and also wish him the best in his human endeavours as he retired from his active service to COCIN.

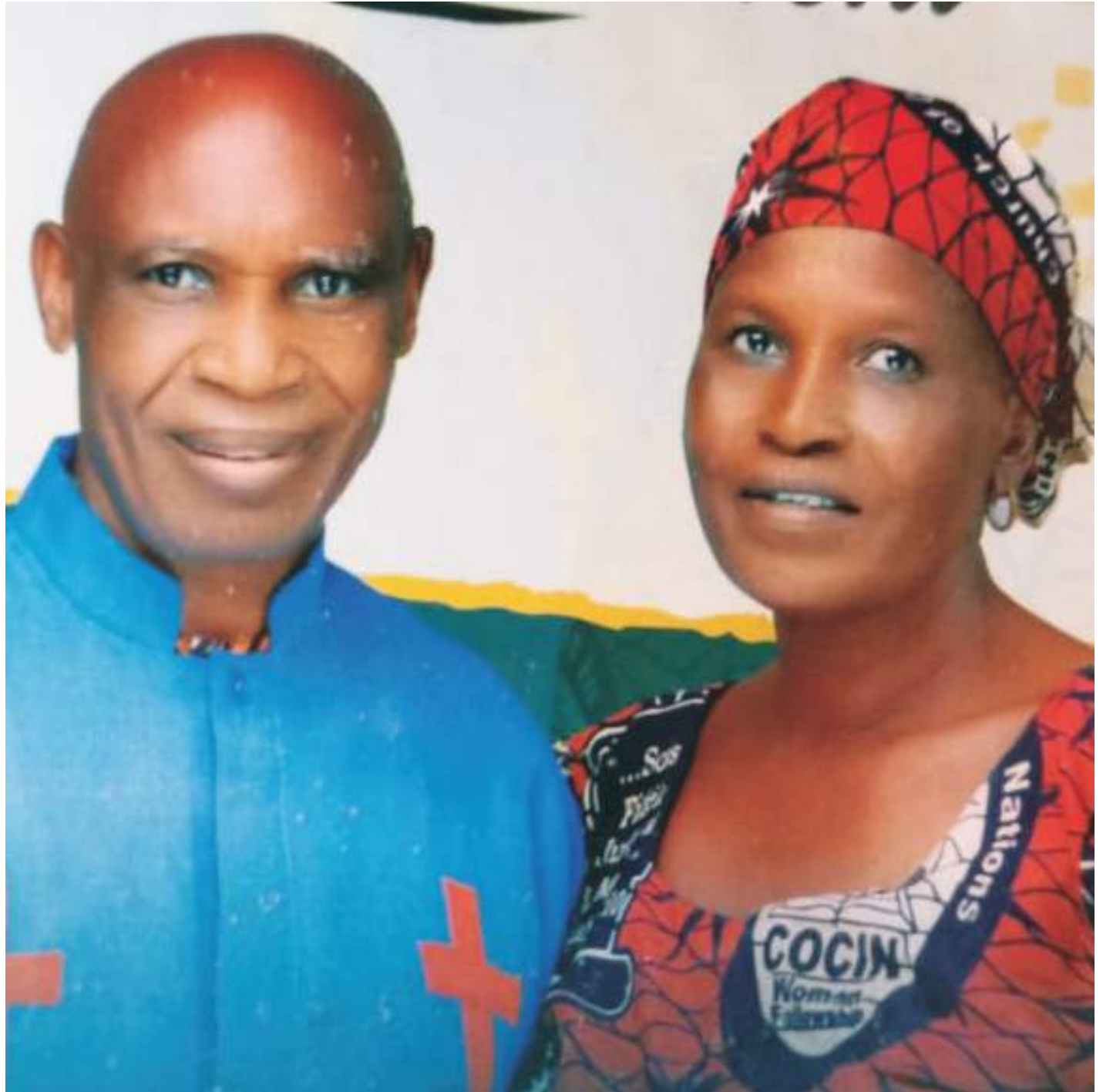
Gwam encouraged him to be faithful even to the point of death and prayed for God's protection and guidance as he takes a bow.

His wife appreciated God during the retirement service and attested that God has been faithful to the family and has seen them through thick and thin.

She appreciated her husband for



The Lord's general takes a bow from service



Rtd. Pastor Christopher Chung and wife

Christ is preached at all times.

He took his Scriptural reading from the book of Philippians chapter 3:12-14. Stated that, "I admit that I haven't yet acquired the absolute fullness that I'm pursuing, but I run with passion into his abundance so that I may reach the purpose that Jesus Christ has called me to fulfill and wants me to discover. I don't depend on my own strength to accomplish this; however I do have one compelling focus: I forget all of the past as I fasten my heart to the future instead. For I run straight for the divine invitation of reaching the heavenly goal and gaining the victory-prize through the anointing of Jesus".

He stressed that the pastor is humble and a gentle servant of God who was diligent and dedicated to the service of God and humanity.

Performing the retirement obligations, Chairman of RCC Jos, Rev. Cletus Doka Gwam, who administered the retirement rites appreciated the retired pastor for his

taking good care of her and the family even on her sick bed recently that she took ill.

Lyop thanked the entire COCIN and members for cordial working relationship with the clerics at different places they had worked.

The guest preacher at the occasion, the Chairman, Regional Church Council (RCC), Kabong, Rev. Zacs Dara encouraged believers in Christ to live in peace with all men.

He stressed that retirement should not be a time to start planning, rather one's planning starts from the day you start work and also encouraged retired pastors to be ready and willing to serve when the need arises.

He added that the greatest opportunity is to serve. "You have accumulated many gifts and skills over your years of work in the vineyard of God, it would be good to share with others from your wealth of experience over the years".

He believed that there are many people and ministries who could benefit from the years of experience

as a shepherd and further urged him to rest properly after active service.

In a sermon titled "The departure of a faithful servant from active service" taking his first Bible reading from the book of Acts of the Apostles chapter 20:26, where he narrated the account of Paul's testimony of the completion of his work as a servant of God, where he taught them all the truth that they needed to know as believers in Christ in order for them to be faithful in their lives.

He added that it is a thing of great joy for a servant of God to start well and finishes strong in the vineyard, for many started well but could not finish well in the faith. He prayed for God to see him through as he takes his bow at this occasion from service.

In separate good will message from the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang, who was ably represented by Secretary to the Government of the State Government (SGS) Mr. Samuel Jatau, Chairman COCIN Provisional Church

Council (PCC) Jos, Rev. Mudimka Seri, Chairman RCC, Jos, Rev. Cletus Gwam and Royal father Gwom Rai of Riyom HRH. Samuel Jok have all congratulated the retired Pastor for attaining the age of retirement in the vineyard of God and prayed for God to see him and his family through as he exited from active service, wishing him the best in his human endeavours.

The celebrant in a chat with our correspondent, advised clergy men that are still in active service to be faithful in their services and they should not politicized the Church but should keep preaching the gospel of Christ.

He also called on the general populace to be faithful in what they do, be it Government or private sector to be faithful in what they do, for we shall all give account of all our works before God on the last day.

He prayed for the church to remain united and committed in the services of God, just as it all started in the days of the apostles till date.

IMAGES

FORMER PDP YOUTH LEADERS HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE

The Forum of former PDP Youth Leaders in Plateau State (Veterans) on Monday held a world Press Conference on the recent Tribunal Judgements in the state at the NUJ Press Centre, Jos



Leader of the Forum, Ibrahim Yakubu Itse (middle) flanked by members of the former PDP Youth Leaders briefing journalists



Cross section of members of the Forum of former PDP Youth leaders at the Press Conference



Comrade Ibrahim Yakubu Itse(left) putting heads together with one of the Forum members, Comrade Wushangka Lengwe



NUJ Vice Chairman, Pam Musa (left) Assignment Committee



Cross section of journalists covering the briefing



Cameramen and photographers on duty during the Press Conference



NUJ State Secretary, Mary Replong Domtur with former PPC Chapel Secretary, Ezekiel Dontinna during the press briefing



From left are, Peter Amine, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Christy Tamai Wassak, State Ministry of Information (MOI) and Sati Tanko of the National Star Newspapers

Photos: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

Wife keeps flashing her breasts, husband considers devoice

A desperate husband confessed he is contemplating divorce because his wife won't stop "flashing her breasts" since getting a boob job. The 32-year-old opened up about his marriage, which hit a rocky patch when his partner, 30, went under the knife.

"My wife and I have been together 11 years, married for just over five. Ever since I met her in college, she has been insecure about her appearance, specifically her body. When we got our first jobs out of college and became financially stable, she approached me and asked how I felt about her getting a boob job," he wrote on Reddit.

The man "loved her how she was" and "didn't think she needed one", but he supported her decision, and in 2021 she had the procedure. She was overjoyed with the results, it boosted her confidence and, the husband says, "definitely emboldened her to 'put them on display' so to speak, she went from wearing baggy and unrevealing clothing to very tight and revealing shirts with a lot of cleavage."

Problems began to arise between the pair when his other half started showing people her bare breasts. "It was mostly her just showing her girlfriends, which was still weird to me, but didn't really cross a boundary... however, it's almost as if the more and more she's 'shown them off' and gotten validation, the more and more enabled she is to continue doing so," he explained.

"The first time it crossed a boundary for me was when we were at a friend's

house for dinner and drinks, and she had a little too much to drink and showed her girlfriend her breasts while her girlfriend's husband was standing right there." He confronted his wife about the situation but she "dismissed" his feelings and "shook it off like he was being controlling."

The final straw was pulled when the couple went round to a friend's house to watch a football game. "She got drunk... upon our team scoring in walk-off fashion, she lifted her shirt and flashed her breasts at the entire party while jumping up and down in celebration. She's not even a football fan and hardly understands who to cheer for. To me, it was like an excuse to just off her breasts to everyone, without their consent, might I add," he shared, adding that the incident sparked a massive row.

"She got defensive and turned it around on me, saying that for once in her life she's happy with how she looks, and she just wants to feel good about herself. I again tried expressing my boundaries, but she completely dismissed them. We have been short with each other for a week since that's happened. It may sound ridiculous, but if she can't respect my feelings and my boundaries, this could be grounds for divorce."

One sympathetic Reddit user responded, "It's fair to tell her that it makes you and others uncomfortable," while another argued: "The day people stop seeing breasts as sexual will be awesome – men flash their nipples all the time!"

Source: THE MIRROR



...When illiterate clerics carry the day

The Israeli-Palestinian war which started after a terrorists' attack by Hamaz against the State of Israel on October 6th 2023 where over 1,400 innocent lives were lost is beginning to take a more dramatic and complex dimension around the globe. Since this deliberate act of genocide against the Jewish state, there have been miscellaneous display of hatred, misinformation, promotion of mythical religious interests and fallacious ideologies aimed at setting the entire on fire.

For avoidance of doubt, religious extremists are cashing on the unfortunate unfolding developments in the Middle East to proliferate baseless historical narrations just to suit their barbaric intentions even at a high cost of many souls. Many of such religious bigots have thrown humanity to the trash and only intend to infiltrate weak minds to hurt many more innocent people.

Unbelievably, yours sincerely has witnessed mobilization of vulnerable citizens across nations of the world in their scheme to gang-up and annihilate this Jewish nation from the face of the earth. Be they Hezbollah, Hamaz and or militant groups in Iran, their pragmatic intentions are to wipe out the Jews from the surface of planet earth.

Sad enough, even here in Nigeria, some hardliners have started spreading this toxic ideology to the citizens of this country. A few days ago, an Islamic cleric hypnotized his followers claiming that the fight in Gaza was against Muslims faithful the world over. While dogmatizing them, the cleric urged the faithful to contribute anything they have and ensure that they prayerfully and or otherwise seek for the extermination of the Jewish State. Certainly, this is not the right time to get me wrong, because of the obvious fact that no sane individual would accept the humanly created catastrophe in Israel and Gaza Strip right now.

For the records, since the most recent war erupted, Palestine have lost more than 8,000 of its citizens while Israel has lost close to 1,500. Aside this, the Israelis are also claiming that about 223 of their citizens have been kidnapped and taken into several tunnels in Gaza. From whichever dimension this war is analyzed, the truth is that innocent people are the victims of this carnage.

But again, for us to have a definite headway, we must accept the reality of the fact that this war was brought upon Israel by this ruthless Hamaz terrorists themselves. Before October 7th 2023, life was going on normally in the State of Israel. In fact, all communities there were gulped by the traditional Jewish festival before Hamaz attacked these places.

Though the Israelis and Palestinians have over decades been able to manage fragile peace, no one ever expected the terrorist group to launch such a sophisticated aggression which eventually led to the death of over 1,400 innocent lives. However, an investigation subsequently revealed that the violent aggression of Hamaz into Israel was planned for over two years running before its eventual execution in such a brutal manner.

It is not hidden fact that since the State of Israel was created in 1945, there has

been an ongoing battle over land occupation in the region. This decades long feud that led to the death of many innocent souls in the midst of several attempts by regional and international bodies to finding lasting solutions to this unabated conflict has equally continue to generate great concern.

The inability of global bodies to find lasting solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has brought us to where we are today. Unfortunately, many derailed scholars and religious bigots have continued to fuel all sorts of hatred concerning the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. It is also a pity that even here in Nigeria, some illiterate clerics have continued to misinform citizens about the conflict. The last time I checked, some of these spiritual leaders were insinuating that the conflict was an attempt towards killing and provoking global Muslims faithful. Many of these cynics are also claiming that the United States of America is assisting Israel to commit acts of genocide against Palestinians in the Middle East.

Unfortunately, many of these pro-Palestinian advocates have little or no idea that the ongoing conflict has nothing to do with religion, race or ethnicity. In fact, the conflict is all about land related issues and the inability of both sides to come to terms with the reality on ground. For the avoidance of doubt, the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts dates back to 1947 after the United Nations adopted the Resolution 181, a Partition Plan which sought to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish States. On the other hand, while the Palestine claim that the land belongs to them, Biblical history clearly indicates that the promise land had been given to Israel long before now.

Without acts of provocation, in early hours of October 6th 2023, the militant Islamist group crossed over into Israel storming the southern cities killing over 1,400 lives and injuring many others. The attack which took the Jewish State and the global community by surprise was one of the most barbaric incidences to have happened in most recent times.

In the midst of this calamity, the Israelis were able to pull themselves together and defend themselves from acts of annihilation meted them. As it is today, many people have quickly forgotten that it was Hamaz which started this war. They have forgotten that Hamaz should be given no place in modern civilization.

Now that Israel has successfully not only repelled these attacks but is pursuing these criminals at a high cost on the Palestinian people, these cynics are bitterly complaining that innocent citizens are being killed in Gaza.

Certainly, this is the kind of world we are all living in where acts of wickedness are not condemned but acts of self-preservation are vehemently condemned in its totality. For those who care to read me please, let them know that the world will never be peaceful with extremists and fanatical groups in the likes of Hamaz existing on planet earth. Therefore, the only option left is for Israel to help our civilized world do the needful for the sake of global security and peace.

Tribute

Plateau mourns Dewa, Requiem Mass held

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

IT was not just a loss to the Dewa's family alone, but a huge one to the entire people of Plateau State and Nigeria. A professional per excellence and passionate lover of his people, who has touched many lives directly or indirectly, Ephraim Lenka Dewa's death to many was a tragic one which is hard to come to terms with.

His death came to many as a shocker that goes down the spine particularly for those who have followed with keen interest the deceased's valuable contribution towards a better Plateau of becoming an investment. Dewa's show of love to his home state was not some kind of mere serenade to move the crowd, but a unique and immeasurable one. His passion to turn around the lives of his people through his investment and development plans was unfortunately cut short by death.

For he dumped a lucrative and good paying job abroad to come back and contest for the Governorship seat of his state. It was a clear demonstration of the vision he had for the state. When he was called upon by those who admired his passion and vision for his people back home, he gladly answered not because of his personal gains but to have a space to fulfil his investment and developmental dreams.

Unfortunately, the political language of our country is more or less "business" and it became difficult for his dreams to penetrate.

The Prince of Ngwan Royal ruling house in Kabwir District of Kanke Local Government Area, has traveled, worked and faired well in several professional fields worldwide. At the time of his passage, Ephraim, was Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of WSN Global Af, an asset management advisory company engaged in investments, development, advisory and management services focused on infrastructure, Real Estate and Private Equity.

He had a combined 30 years professional experience that consisted of infrastructure, finance, private equity, engineering, management, lecturing, real estate, development and construction. During his career, he was responsible for the management of over \$7 billion in infrastructure and related assets.

For the family of Nde Paul Dewa of Kabwir Royal Family, the pains of losing their first son is



Late Dewa

really heartbreaking especially when the biological parents are still alive. In Ngas culture, it is believed that parents should preferably die ahead of their children, but we cannot question God over this unfortunate and tragic incident.

The deceased who died at the age 61, his biological parents Nde Paul Dewa (Father) and Matwok Theresa Talatu Dewa (Mother) are alive, sound and

hearty.

However, it is certain that ones' life is worth reflecting on, especially when he or she lives a God-fearing and fulfilled life while on earth. Late Ephraim Lenka Dewa's life on earth was actually a reflection of a devoted Catholic.

Though, he died and was eventually buried in United States of America (USA), the love and respect he has back

home demanded for a special Requiem Mass and Prayers in his honour on the Plateau. It was held on Wednesday, at the St. Louis Catholic Church Jos.

No wonder, the mass witnessed an outpour of tributes from many who met and felt the touch of late Ephraim Lenka Dewa. The Tunkuda's family, was heartbroken as they mourn Lenka Dewa, describing him as a smart, fearless and courageous man of faith, true child of Plateau State saying, "he would have prospered and lifted his home state high for his visions to bring in foreign investments and development to Plateau State.

On his part, the former Plateau State Governor, Chief Joshua Chibi Dariye said, "I have lost an amiable friend and brother, Engr. Ephraim Lenka Dewa (ELD) May God grant your wife (Sofie) children, Nde Dewa & Mummy, your siblings, political associates, Ngas nation and the Zumunta Association in the USA, fortitude to bear the irreparable loss" The mourners also included: Victor

Nengak Filibuster Dimka; Ayuba Adamu Paiko; Evaristus Wangpoe Fuanbial; Nori Abakah; Hubert S. Shaiyen; King's College Class of 1977 (KCOB79) and K. Othman, respectively.

Other tributes were received from: Dewa A. Mankat; Alphonsius Dewa; Kelvin Deshi; Pemwa, African Queen; Eugene Sebastian Gotau; Paul Juryit; Charles Kaye, for Kaye family; Lady Rosemary Tamwakat Dafit LSM Nee Dimka) and the Dewa's family in that other.

Quite touching is the tribute from his parents Nde Paul Dewa and Mama Theresa Paul Dewa. They said, "to our Baby Ephraim Lenka, we wish you safe journey to meet your Lord and his Son Jesus Christ. As humans, we wish you had remained longer, but God loves you more and has called you now. May the Lord be glorified in His works.

May you baby Ephraim rest in peace. We wish that you bury us, but the Almighty God says no. The Lord says you are done. We agree and praise the Almighty Lord's Holy Name! Adieu Baby! Adieu Ephraim! Adieu Lenka! Adieu Dewa! We are your Mommy and Daddy", they enthused painstakingly.

Family members, friends and sympathizers also trooped in their numbers to pay their last respect. During Requiem Mass at both St. Louis Church JD Gomwalk road Jos, thereafter to the Family House No. 1 Secretariat Link for the continuation of prayers.

News

Kaduna begins yellow fever vaccination campaign

From JOHN FWAH, Kaduna

THE Kaduna State Government said it has commenced a yellow fever vaccination campaign across the 23 LGAs in the state, where it targets over 10 million residents.

Director of Public Health at Kaduna State Primary HealthCare Development Agency, Hamza Ibrahim, said over 10 million residents are targeted with the vaccine.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), yellow fever is a viral disease that is transmitted to humans by the bites of infected mosquitoes.

Hamza Ibrahim said the government intends to achieve an 85 percent vaccination level, adding that the exercise would run from October 30 to November 10.

He said, "We will be conducting the vaccination in our 1,198 primary health centres, worship centres, motor parks, markets and schools."

"The target age group for the Yellow Fever vaccination are individuals ranging from age nine months to 44 years. Yellow fever is a silent killer disease.

"People don't often go for routine checks to know about the disease, and that's why we are giving the vaccine as prevention.



Uba

"We will be conducting the vaccination in our 1,198 primary health centres, worship centres, motor parks, markets and schools," Ibrahim said

"The target age group for the Yellow Fever vaccination are individuals ranging from age nine months to 44 years. Yellow fever is a silent killer disease.

"People don't often go for routine checks to know about the disease, and that's why we are giving the vaccine as prevention.

We just started today and hope to achieve 85 per cent of the population, which is over 10 million persons.

"I urge residents to accept the vaccine as it is free and safe.

"Let no one deceive you that the vaccine is not safe and then you turn down the vaccine. I urge you all to accept the vaccine as it is very free and safe."

The director urged traditional and religious leaders in the state to create more awareness of the campaign.

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

ALL is set by the Jos Film Initiative (JOFII) for the Second Edition of Rock International Film Festival (RIFF) in Jos, the Plateau State Capital tomorrow at the Jos National Museum Auditorium with lineup of human rights films and panel discussion to climax with Rock Award ceremony November 4, 2023.

The Festival Director, Henry Samson Mafulu, disclosed this at the Second Press Conference marking the occasion titled: "Rock International Film Festival (RIFF). It prepares to Illuminate Jos- Second Press Conference", held at the Jos National Museum Auditorium Monday.

The Festival Director said, "RIFF is a renowned film festival dedicated to showcasing thought-provoking films that address human rights and social justice issues. With its mission to inspire, inform, and ignite change through the art of storytelling, RIFF has captivated audiences worldwide. Following a highly successful inaugural edition, RIFF.

"After the overwhelming success of our first press conference, Rock International Film Festival (RIFF), is thrilled to welcome members of the media once again to join us for the highly anticipated second press conference on October 30,

RIFF's 2nd edition kick-starts today



Mafulu

2023.

"This event marks a significant milestone as we gear up for the second edition of the Rock International Film Festival, scheduled to take place from November 1st to 4th at the Jos National Museum Auditorium. And to get an exclusive sneak peek into the exciting lineup of human rights films and engaging panel discussions that RIFF 2023 has in store for attendees", he highlighted.

According to a statement issued by Mafulu, it stated that it was exciting to hear first-hand updates on guest

speakers, filmmakers and notable personalities attending the festival to ensure a vibrant and diverse experience for all attendees.

"Rock Awards Preview: Gain insights into the prestigious Rock Awards ceremony, scheduled for November 4th at 2 pm. The ceremony will honor outstanding contributions to human rights storytelling in film, encouraging impactful narratives and meaningful discussions.

"Partnership Announcements: Discover our latest collaborations with local and international organizations committed to promoting human rights through the powerful medium of film, underscoring RIFF's dedication to advancing global conversations.

We invite you to join us as we amplify the human rights conversation through the power of cinema at RIFF 2023!" the Festival Director outlined the events.

He, therefore, called on citizens to take advantage of this great opportunity and voice out on issues bordering on human rights violations and promised to step this awareness down to communities in the Local Government Areas of the state.

The event would have members of Human Rights Commission, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDELA), the Police, the Army, human rights organisations, all representatives of the Plateau State Government, state ministries and all other distinguished personalities respectively.

CHANGE OF NAME

NANCWAT

I formerly known and address as NANCWAT NANBYEN, now wish to be known and addressed as NANCWAT NANBYEN FADIP. All former documents remain valid. My correct date of birth is June 21, 2000, not June 21, 1999. All concerned authorities and the general public should take note.

Minister of Labour hosts German Chancellor

BY HOSEA NYAMLONG

MINISTER of Labour and Employment, Simon Bako Lalong has hosted visiting German Chancellor, Olaf Scholtz at the Migrant Resource Centre in Lagos facilitated by the German Development Corporation GIZ and the Nigerian Government.

This was contained in a press release signed by Dr. Makut Simon Macham, Special Adviser (Media) to Honourable Minister of Labour and Employment and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos recently.

The statement added that

during the visit of the German Chancellor, the Labour Minister expressed the appreciation of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the people of Nigeria to the Federal Republic of Germany for supporting the establishment of the Migrant Resource Centre which has the ability to carry out rehabilitation, skill development and empowerment.

He said "Let me use this opportunity to sincerely acknowledge the continuous support of the German Government to Nigeria, through the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) for establishing the

Nigerian - German Centre for Migration and Development in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, within the framework of the Partnership Agreement signed between GIZ and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment under the Global Programme, Migration for Development (PME), funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development"

Lalong said the partnership agreement was signed in recognition of the need to promote the development potentials of international labour migration and to support the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment to manage labour migration in a development-oriented way, provide support for the return and reintegration of migrants, create awareness on the risk of irregular migration as well as provide advice and information on regular pathways of migration to Germany.

He stressed that the centre has so far recorded significant achievements in the areas of capacity building for staff of the ministry; review and validation of the National Policy on Labour Migration 2014; and awareness creation on the dangers of irregular migration.

However, others include implementation of employment promotion activities such as, monthly

Career Path/employability trainings for job seekers; guidance and counseling for potential and returnee migrants; organization of job fair and employment promotion conferences; internship placements; business registrations; career information day, entrepreneurship training and business start-up support; social and economic reintegration of return migrants; outreach and sensitization programmes amongst others.

"Worthy of note within this collaborative framework is that from inception of the programme in 2018 till date, a total of 320,000 beneficiaries have been provided with individual support measures. 37,600 beneficiaries have been placed in employment; 53,300 beneficiaries were provided with business startups while 87,445 beneficiaries were provided with education and qualification measures.

Also, 63,500 individual counseling sessions have been provided, while 9,750 beneficiaries were provided with psychosocial support accordingly" he said.

The Minister stated that the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has encapsulated a wholistic approach towards creating economic opportunities for the teeming youths within the Renewed Hope Agenda. The

President has also directed the roll out of several programmes including the funding of small and medium scale businesses as well as the provision of incentives and support to young entrepreneurs to establish and run businesses in Nigeria.

He also appealed to the Federal Republic of Germany to consider the establishment of more Migrant Support Centres in the country to further deepen the fight against irregular migration.

The establishment of such centres particularly in other regions such as the north that is also a route for irregular migration will make access to the services rendered easier with attendant benefits.

In his remarks, the German Chancellor commended Nigeria for its commitment to addressing irregular migration and working with his country to support regular migration particularly as it relates to labour.

He said his country continues to open its doors to skilled migrants from Nigeria and other parts of the world but will only encourage people who wish to migrate to use appropriate channels.

Olaf Scholtz said the German-Nigerian Migrant Resource Centre is one of the avenues through which the two countries hope to further deepen their collaboration and partnership.



Lalong

Sports

The problems facing Hag at Old Trafford

By SIMON STONE

AS he tiptoed round the thorny issue of why Manchester City are so much better than Manchester United, Pep Guardiola was careful to be both respectful and protective of fellow manager Erik ten Hag.

But in speaking about his own club, Guardiola still managed to indirectly shine a light on the current state of his city rivals.

"I said many times we are in the same direction - chairman, CEO, sport director, manager and players," he said.

"We make mistakes, of course, but when we lose or things are not going well we are not here to blame someone, we just see what we have to do to be better and find a solution.

"In my first season, we didn't win. I didn't find my chairman complaining, he supported me unconditionally. When we lost the Champions League final against Chelsea I was devastated. My chairman said, 'Come on, we are going to win it, what can we do next? Let's go.'

"When that happens we are not overexcited when we win and when we lose we are not dramatic. That's why I think the club is so stable."

In black and white, it seems so simple. Yet at United, with uncertainty over the ownership, a public falling-out between manager and players, supporter unrest and questions over recruitment, being stable is a status that seems totally beyond them.

So, just as happened during the tenures of Louis van Gaal, Jose Mourinho and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, significant progress made in one season under Erik ten Hag is in danger of being swept away by regression and mediocrity in the next.

Ralf Rangnick's appointment as interim manager when Solskjaer was sacked in November 2021 is largely now widely regarded as a mistake.

Yet, when the German arrived at Old Trafford, one of the major attractions was the depth and breadth of his knowledge gained through his extensive work as a sporting director with the Red Bull group. The message was that this expertise would potentially be available to United for two additional years.



Hag

Rangnick came to some pretty clear conclusions, his first public assessment coming in March 2022, just before a 4-1 defeat at Manchester City.

"What is obvious, not only with Manchester City but also with Liverpool, is they have had continuity and consistency with their head coach, have a very clear identity and a clear idea of how they want to play," he said.

"This idea is the headline for everything that happens in the club. This is the secret behind their success. It is what all the top clubs in Europe have in common. It is something that Manchester United needs to develop and improve in the next couple of years."

The following month, after a 4-0 loss at Liverpool, Rangnick delivered an update.

"You don't even need glasses to see and analyse where the problems are," he explained. "It's not enough to do some minor amendments - cosmetic things. In medicine you would say that this is an operation of the open heart."

The problem for Rangnick was that not everyone at United agreed such surgery had to happen.

Instead, they felt Ten Hag could deliver the improvement required through their own recruitment plan. They have given him in excess of £350m to execute it.

But, as some have observed, recruitment seems to have centred around doing 'easy' deals.

The arrival of Casemiro from Real Madrid last summer for an initial £60m fee was lauded, but it is worth recalling the 31-year-old started last season on the Real bench.

Christian Eriksen also came in on a free transfer, choosing to join United rather than sign an extended deal with Brentford. They also paid £13m to sign Tyrell Malacia on a four-year contract before, finally, Brazilian winger Antony came in on deadline day for £82m, the second biggest signing in the club's history.

Could any of these deals be regarded as difficult?

It was the same with

Rasmus Hojlund this summer - the £72m represented a virtual five-fold increase on the sum paid to Sturm Graz by Atalanta just 12 months earlier.

United also paid Chelsea £55m for Mason Mount, who had refused to sign a contract extension at Stamford Bridge, where he had one year left on his contract.

Andre Onana cost £47.2m after Ten Hag took the bold decision to ditch David de Gea, believing the Cameroon international's superior ability with the ball at his feet would be a major positive.

And, while many feel England midfielder Declan Rice would have been a perfect fit at United, instead they ended up signing Sofyan Amrabat, initially on loan, from Fiorentina.

Aside from injuries to Luke Shaw, Lisandro Martinez, Casemiro and Aaron Wan-Bissaka, there was one other player whose services were not under consideration by Ten Hag against City.

While Jadon Sancho has not yet done much to justify the £73m Solskjaer paid for him two years ago, the continuing stand-off between the England winger and Ten Hag does not reflect well on either side.

Sancho has been encouraged by team-mates to deliver the apology Ten Hag demands for his inflammatory social media post, which came in response to his manager's declaration he had been left out of the defeat at Arsenal on 3 September because of sub-standard training performances.

While BBC Sport has been told the Sancho situation is complicated, it was also pointed out such matters are better dealt with on the training field at the time.

But Sancho's words, which have now been deleted, were damning and complained of the 23-year-old being made a "scapegoat". Is it plausible he is the only player who feels this? And what does that say of Ten Hag and the way he has managed his squad?

Ten Hag arrived from Ajax almost 18 months ago, having forged the reputation of a modern-day coach committed to the pressing game.

He stated to Viaplay after

Sunday's 3-0 derby defeat to Guardiola's City that he cannot replicate that at Old Trafford because he doesn't have the players and instead he needs to be more direct.

Yet Match of the Day pundit Danny Murphy is not alone in thinking some of United's more established players simply do not work hard enough.

On top of this is United's ongoing search for "strategic alternatives", launched on 22 November last year with the aim of "enhancing the club's future growth, with the ultimate goal of positioning the club to capitalise on opportunities both on the pitch and commercially".

Following the withdrawal of Sheikh Jassim, who was adamant his bid to buy 100% of United was the best for the club, it now seems certain the other major bidder, Sir Jim Ratcliffe's Ineos Group, will get involved with an initial 25% stake.

He will enter a club whose overall debt, including outstanding transfer fees, now stands at over £1bn.

It has been suggested Ratcliffe will have control of all sporting matters but, in a commercial enterprise the size of United, that in itself feels complicated. Even those close to Ratcliffe wonder how someone as controlling as the 71-year-old will work alongside the Glazer family, who have driven the commercial side of the club and not been scared to make decisions that benefit them no matter what outside criticism it draws.

Had Sir Bobby Charlton's death not taken precedence, it would be easy to imagine the prospect of the Glazer family remaining 'in charge' at Old Trafford drawing more supporter protests. Given the outcome of yesterday's game, it is inevitable the fan disquiet will resurface pretty soon.

Evidently, this whole situation is way off the serene picture painted by Guardiola of life on the blue half of the city. Positive results can mask inherent issues. But they also make it easier to deal with them, away from the glare created by defeats and below-par performances, which is where United and Ten Hag are right now.



Manchester United's players endured another miserable afternoon on Sunday in the 3-0 home loss to Manchester City

Sports

Men's Ballon d'Or: Messi wins eighth award

ARGENTINA and Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi has won the Men's Ballon d'Or for an eighth time.

BBC SPORT said that, the 36-year-old was recognised at the ceremony in Paris after helping his country win the World Cup in Qatar last year.

England and Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham won the Kopa Trophy for the world's best player aged under 21.

Messi won his record-extending Ballon d'Or award ahead of Manchester City forward ErlingHaaland.

France forward KylianMbappe - who became just the second man to score a World Cup final hat-trick in the 4-2 penalty shootout loss to Argentina - finished third.

"It's nice to be here once more to enjoy this moment," Messi said. "To be able to win the World Cup and achieve my dream."

The former Barcelona and Paris St-Germain star added: "I couldn't imagine having the career I've had and everything I've achieved, the fortune I've had to be part of the best team in history."

"All of them [Ballon d'Or awards] are special for different reasons."

Norway international Haaland scored a record-breaking 36 goals in 35 league games and hit 52 in all competitions as City won the Treble of Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup.

He was recognised for his achievements with the Gerd Muller Trophy for best goalscorer.

"I want to thank Manchester City, the whole club," said Haaland.

"I also want to thank my family and all the people around me for making me who I am today."

The Ballon d'Or recognises the best footballer of the year and is voted for by 100 journalists from around the world.

As well as helping Argentina to World Cup glory, Messi also played a key role as Inter Miami won their first trophy - the Leagues Cup - and has scored 11 goals in 14 appearances for the Major League Soccer side.

He has now won three more Ballon d'Or awards than anyone else, with Cristiano Ronaldo having won it five times, most recently in 2017.

The Portugal international, who plays for Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia, was not named on the shortlist for the first time since 2003.

Argentina World Cup winner and Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez won the Yashin Trophy for the best goalkeeper in the world.

Martinez won the Golden Glove in Qatar, saving a spot-kick from Kingsley Coman in the penalty shootout win against France in the final.

He also helped Aston Villa finish seventh in the Premier League and secure a place in the Europa Conference League.

However, Martinez was



Messi

jeered by some of the crowd at the Paris ceremony. The goalkeeper was criticised for this celebration after winning the World Cup against France last year.

Manchester City were named the club of the year at the awards for the second year running.

Pep Guardiola's side became only the second English team to win the Treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup last season.

Real Madrid winger Vinicius Jr received the Socrates Award for his contribution off the field and vowed to keep speaking out against racism in world football.

Vinicius has been the target of racist abuse regularly in La Liga games for the past two seasons.

He was recognised for starting a foundation that is building schools in impoverished areas and investing in education in Brazil.

"I will remain strong in the fight against racism," said the Brazilian. "It is a very sad thing to talk about racism

Women's Ballon d'Or: Bonmati wins award for the first time

SPAIN and Barcelona midfielder AitanaBonmati has won the Women's Ballon d'Or for the first time.

BBC SPORT said that, the 25-year-old enjoyed a hugely successful year as she helped her club triumph in the Spanish top flight and Champions League, and her country win the World Cup in the summer.

She was also crowned Uefa's player of the year in August.

England goalkeeper Mary Earps achieved a fifth place finish while team-mate Rachel Daly was 10th.

Fellow Lionesses Millie Bright and Georgia Stanway were also among the nominees.

Sam Kerr of Chelsea and Australia finished second, Barcelona and Spain teenager Salma Paralluelo was third, and FridolinaRolfso of Barcelona and Sweden finished fourth.

"I'm very proud to win the Ballon d'Or," Bonmati said.

"Football is a collective sport so I'd like to extend this prize to my team-mates and staff."

She added at the end of her speech in English: "Finally congratulations to the other nominees. They're great footballers."

"As role models we have a responsibility on and off the

pitch. We should be more than athletes and keep leading by example and fighting together for a better, peaceful and equal world."

Spain's World Cup win was overshadowed by the fallout from Spanish football

nowadays, but we have to continue in the fight so that people suffer less."

Former England and Manchester United midfielder David Beckham presented the men's Ballon d'Or to Messi, but before announcing the winner he paid tribute to Sir Bobby Charlton.

The England World Cup winner died at the age of 86 earlier this month.

"I probably don't have to tell this room how special Sir Bobby was to the world of football," Beckham said.

"He was respected on the field for what he won but was respected even more off the field for what he stood for."

"He will be missed. When we looked up into the stands he would always be there cheering us on."

"He started it off for me. If it was not for Sir Bobby turning around to Manchester United and saying 'watch this young man' I probably would not have played for Manchester United."

"I owe him everything."

West Bromwich Albion climbed back into the Championship top six as they scored a goal in each half to deservedly win a Midlands derby against lacklustre Coventry City.

BBC SPORT said that, Grady Diangana put the Baggies ahead on 17 minutes when he slid home from close range after Coventry keeper Ben Wilson parried the ball to him.

Matt Phillips then brilliantly set up Brandon Thomas-Asante for a superb second goal as Albion went route one to finish off the hosts.

Coventry striker Haji Wright had earlier wasted a great chance to equalise when through on goal, but there was nothing else left in

the tank from the Sky Blues as they slid to a third straight league defeat.

It leaves Mark Robins' side still 20th, although only eight points behind fifth-placed Albion in a table that remains as tight as ever in this competitive division.

Albion made two changes from last Tuesday's 2-0 home win over Queens Park Rangers, but defender Cedric Kipre was surprisingly named in the starting XI.

Boss Carlos Corberan had expected Kipre to be out "for months" after limping off late on against QPR, but scans gave him the all clear.

Injury-hit Albion's alterations

came further up the pitch, with Pipa coming in at right wing-back for Darnell Furlong and Alex Mowatt recalled in a tactical reshuffle that led to Thomas-Asante starting on the bench.

City boss Mark Robins, by way of contrast, made five changes from the 2-0 defeat at Rotherham, bringing back Bobby Thomas and Liam Kitching in defence and restoring Jamie Allen, Tatsuhiro Sakamoto and Haji Wright further forward.

Although they had marginally the better of the first half, it did not quite click for the Sky Blues in front of goal.

Sakamoto had a powerful shot beaten away by Palmer before Coventry were out of luck with a penalty shout for handball.

Albion then stunned the hosts by taking the lead when Wilson spilled Nathaniel Chalobah's shot - and Diangana was on hand to find the back of the net.

He now has goals in successive games, having not previously scored since February's win against Coventry at The Hawthorns.

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ENGLAND and Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham has won the Kopa Trophy for the world's best player aged under 21.

BBC SPORT said that, the 20-year-old was recognised at Monday's Ballon d'Or ceremony in Paris.

Bellingham has enjoyed a stunning start to his career at Real Madrid, scoring 13 goals in his first 13 games since joining in the summer.

The Kopa Trophy recognises his performances last season, during which he scored 14 times in 42 games for Borussia Dortmund.

He also helped England reach the quarter-finals of the World Cup in Qatar.

Bellingham was picked ahead of Bayern Munich's Jamal Musiala, with former winners - Barcelona pair Gavi and Pedri - as well as Real team-mate Eduardo Camavinga also up for the award.

He said: "It is a great list of players [to have won this award before]."

"It is an honour to be in front of some of the best players in the world here and some of the best to have ever played the game."

"To win this trophy means a lot but for me the important

Corberan's Baggies seal derby win

WEST Bromwich Albion climbed back into the Championship top six as they scored a goal in each half to deservedly win a Midlands derby against lacklustre Coventry City.

BBC SPORT said that, Grady Diangana put the Baggies ahead on 17 minutes when he slid home from close range after Coventry keeper Ben Wilson parried the ball to him.

Matt Phillips then brilliantly set up Brandon Thomas-Asante for a superb second goal as Albion went route one to finish off the hosts.

Coventry striker Haji Wright had earlier wasted a great chance to equalise when through on goal, but there was nothing else left in

the tank from the Sky Blues as they slid to a third straight league defeat.

It leaves Mark Robins' side still 20th, although only eight points behind fifth-placed Albion in a table that remains as tight as ever in this competitive division.

Albion made two changes from last Tuesday's 2-0 home win over Queens Park Rangers, but defender Cedric Kipre was surprisingly named in the starting XI.

Boss Carlos Corberan had expected Kipre to be out "for months" after limping off late on against QPR, but scans gave him the all clear.

Injury-hit Albion's alterations

came further up the pitch, with Pipa coming in at right wing-back for Darnell Furlong and Alex Mowatt recalled in a tactical reshuffle that led to Thomas-Asante starting on the bench.

City boss Mark Robins, by way of contrast, made five changes from the 2-0 defeat at Rotherham, bringing back Bobby Thomas and Liam Kitching in defence and restoring Jamie Allen, Tatsuhiro Sakamoto and Haji Wright further forward.

Although they had marginally the better of the first half, it did not quite click for the Sky Blues in front of goal.

Sakamoto had a powerful shot beaten away by Palmer before Coventry were out of luck with a penalty shout for handball.

Albion then stunned the hosts by taking the lead when Wilson spilled Nathaniel Chalobah's shot - and Diangana was on hand to find the back of the net.

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Bellingham wins Kopa Trophy for world's best young player

thing is team trophies and the important thing for me is to kick on and help Real Madrid and England win trophies for many years."

Former Premier League striker Chris Sutton described Bellingham as "the most exciting prospect" he has witnessed in his lifetime.

He told BBC Radio 5 live's Monday Night Club: "Going to Real Madrid as a 20-year-old and going alongside legends of the game like Luka Modric and just bossing it, just taking

everything in his stride.

"He makes things look so easy. I remember watching Gazza play at Carrow Road and it was like he was playing in his back garden, miles ahead of anything else on the pitch. That's what it's like watching Bellingham, it's just so easy."

"I think he's probably the most exciting prospect I can remember in my lifetime for one so young coming through. He's just going to carry on developing and getting better and better."



Bellingham

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Aitana-Bonmati

Sports



Falcons

We can't afford to miss another Olympics ticket- NFF

AS the Super Falcons tackle their Ethiopian counterparts today in Abuja in the qualifiers for Paris 2024 Olympic Games, Secretary General of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Dr. Mohammed Sanusi, says Nigeria cannot afford to miss the party a fourth time. **The Guardian** said that, the Super Falcons have missed three consecutive Olympic Games since their last appearance at Beijing 2008. They lost out in the race to London 2012 under coach Uche Eucharua, while Christopher Danjuma failed to qualify the team to the last two editions, Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020. Another opportunity beckons today at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, where the Falcons will battle with Ethiopia in a second round, second leg game of the qualifiers. The two teams played a 1-1 draw in the first leg last week. Speaking with **The Guardian**, Sanusi stated that the NFF has

given the Super Falcons the motivation they need to cage the visiting East Africans. "It is a big task for the team, the NFF and all Nigerians," Sanusi said. "We have motivated the players, and I am very sure the Super Falcons is ready to do Nigeria proud because we can't afford to miss featuring at the Olympics Games for the fourth time." Speaking further, Sanusi said: "The players and members of the technical crew know that every team is a treat. Some years back, one can easily predict that the Falcons would overpower all African teams and get the ticket. It was the same way some countries like Germany and China were beating Nigeria with high margin some years ago. That is not possible now. "All stakeholders have a role to play. They should come out and give the Super Falcons to support they need to beat Ethiopia on Tuesday. I know

the Falcons have the capacity to do it. We love them and we are happy with their outing and general conduct at the last World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. As I said, now is the time to destroy this vexed issue of Olympics jinx. We have to take our place in Paris," he stated. Both the Super Falcons and visiting 'Lucy' of Ethiopia had their official training sessions on the turf of the MKO Abiola Stadium, Abuja yesterday. The Guardian recalls that last week, at the Abebe Bikila Stadium in Addis Ababa, team captain, Rasheedat Ajibade's screaming half volley gave Nigeria the equaliser six minutes into the second half after the home team scored from a corner kick in the sixth minute. The winner today will take on the winner of the Cameroun/Uganda fixture in the third round of the series. Uganda defeated the Indomitable Lionesses 2-0 in Kampala last Thursday.

Semenya focused on 'winning battles against authorities

DOUBLE Olympic 800m champion Caster Semenya says her focus is now "more about winning battles against the authorities" than collecting medals.

BBC SPORT said that, Semenya, 32, was born with differences of sexual development (DSD) and cannot compete in any track events without taking testosterone-reducing drugs. The South African wants to hold World Athletics to account for discrimination against athletes with hyperandrogenism.

"I fight for what is right for humanity and for inclusivity," she said.

Speaking to news agency Reuters, Semenya - also a three-time 800m world champion - added: "My last chance to win at the Olympics was in 2016 - Paris [host of the 2024 Games] is not my goal. It is more about winning my battles against the authorities.

"In running I have achieved everything I ever wanted. They have never stopped me from being the great athlete I

am. I went four years unbeaten; I've done my part."

In July, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of Semenya in a case related to testosterone levels in female athletes.

The case at the ECHR was not against sporting bodies or DSD rules - but specifically against the government of Switzerland for not protecting Semenya's rights and dates back to a Swiss Supreme Court ruling three years ago.

The ECHR found the Swiss government did not protect Semenya from being

discriminated against when its Supreme Court refused to overturn a decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas), which upheld the World Athletics rules. The judgement could yet be appealed.

Hyperandrogenism is a medical condition characterised by higher than usual levels of testosterone, a hormone that increases muscle mass and strength.

Under regulations introduced in 2018, athletes with DSD were only allowed to compete in track events between 400m and the mile if



Semenya

ALISON Lee completed a record-breaking weekend at the Aramco Team Series in Saudi Arabia by shooting a seven-under-par final-round 65 to secure an eight-shot victory.

BBC SPORT said that, American Lee, 28, broke the 54-shot scoring record on the Ladies European Tour with a 29-under 187.

She finished above Spain's Carlota Ciganda, who was three shots ahead of England's Charley Hull in Riyadh.

"I've played some really good golf this week and putted even better," Lee said.

"I hit almost every green, gave myself plenty of birdie opportunities, and made a lot of them count with aggressive, confident play.

"I had a lot of fun out there and I'm delighted with the win because any tournament is difficult to win."

Lee shot successive rounds of 61 on Friday and Saturday to set a new 36-hole record, beating Scot Kylie Henry's record from the 2014 Ladies German Open by five strokes.

She also becomes just the second player to win a Ladies European Tour title without dropping a shot, after Italy's

Lee claims eight-stroke win

Diana Luna at the 2011 Ladies German Open.

"It's surreal to think I played that well," Lee said. "Shooting 11 under over the first two days, I've obviously never done that in my career. "I feel like for three days I

played really confident golf. Coming off a really good week last week [as runner-up at the BMW Ladies Championship] gave me a lot of confidence coming into this week."



Lee

Murray not enjoying tennis after a loss

ANDY Murray says he is "not enjoying" his tennis after suffering an agonising opening-round defeat by Australian Alex de Minaur at the Paris Masters.

BBC SPORT said that, the 36-year-old fell 7-6 (7-5) 4-6 7-5 to the world number 13, who he has never managed to beat in six meetings.

Murray twice served for the match and missed match point in another gruelling contest lasting just over three hours.

"I'm not really enjoying it just now in terms of how I feel on the court and how I'm playing," Murray said.

"The last five, six months haven't been that enjoyable, so I need to try and find some of that enjoyment back because playing a match like that

there's not much positivity there.

"When I play a good point, I'm not really getting behind myself and then in the important moments, that will to win and fight that has always been quite a big, big part of my game," he added.

Murray smashed his racquet twice during the match against De Minaur and the loss means the Scot has still not won a match at the Paris Masters since winning the tournament in 2016.

Despite his negativity, Murray did not give any indication that he could retire but said he would need to do "a lot of work" if he wants to keep playing.

"It's not just going to be like one or two weeks of training to get me to where I need to get to, it's going to have to be a lot of work and consistent work to give myself a chance," he added.

Murray, who has lost five of his last six matches, failed to convert three match points against De Minaur in Beijing last month and this latest loss in Paris is his fourth against the 24-year-old this year.

His opponent saved set points before pinching a close opening set with a narrow tie-break victory.

Murray recovered with a more assured performance in the second, breaking in the ninth

game to level and force a decider.

Murray's record against De Minaur this year also includes defeats at Monte Carlo and Queen's, but it looked like the former world number one might break that losing streak after finding himself a double break up in the deciding set.

He had match point at 5-4 but missed it with a long return and smashed his racquet on the floor in anger after handing De Minaur a break-point opportunity, which he took to level at 5-5.

Murray became increasingly exasperated as he knocked the drinks bottles and towel off his bench before failing to hold either of his next two service games and squandering opportunities to force a final set tie-break.

He again smashed his racquet on the floor as he sent a return into the net and De Minaur closed out the win.

Fellow Briton, Cameron Norrie, pulled out of the tournament with a knee injury but is expected to be fit enough for the Davis Cup Finals on 23 November.

World number one and two Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz received first-round byes and will enter the tournament in the second round along with the six other top seeds.



De Minaur



Quest



writer

CHRIS GYANG

FRAGMENT

"Apparently, Nigerians had of themselves seamlessly progressed and transformed from being victims of foreign exploiters to depraved shylocks locked in a perpetual battle to corner the country's oil resources for their regions, states and families. All sense of patriotism, talk less of nationalism, is jettisoned in this deadly strive, heavily powered by religion and ethnicity."

CHRIS GYANG

Nigeria's crude reality

WE knew crude oil before we knew ourselves as citizens of one country. That is the tragedy of Nigeria. The curse of the Black Gold hangs heavy on our necks.

Had crude oil been discovered in Nigeria some decades after independence, surely, our rallying points would have turned out to be very different - much more edifying, appealing and saner - today.

But so far, our tortuous journey as a geo-political entity and people has been substantially defined by the struggle for the control of the wealth accruing from Nigeria's huge oil deposits.

While other nations and countries have been shaped and tampered by their profound consciousness in shared values such as freedom and nationhood, protecting the ideals and identity of the motherland, upholding human dignity and rights of their peoples, Nigeria was built on very faulty foundations by the colonial British empire.

It was for the sole purpose of enhancing the colonizer's commercial interests. Perhaps it was only logical for Nigeria to proceed from being a colonial trade outpost to a free country of citizens whose common goals and aspirations are the sometimes deadly struggle for the control of oil wealth.

In this atmosphere so thick with the dizzying fumes of dubious mercantilism and a back-biting urge for primitive and repulsive accumulation of oil wealth, corruption and its attendant ills are bound to abound, profusely. Our so-called nation is bound in its chaotic alliance more by the consciousness of our stupendous oil wealth than, as our national



anthem seems to claim - freedom, peace and unity.

Rising poverty, brutal quest for political power and dominance, religious extremism which has bred decades of terrorism, banditry and kidnapping, spiraling inflation with no end in sight, a rising wave of unemployment and widespread discontent and disillusionment have become all too common throughout our country.

Apparently, Nigerians had of themselves seamlessly progressed and transformed from being victims of foreign exploiters to depraved shylocks locked in a perpetual battle to corner the country's oil resources

for their regions, states and families. All sense of patriotism, talk less of nationalism, is jettisoned in this deadly strive, heavily powered by religion and ethnicity.

In other climes, enterprise, innovation, the application of human talent and ingenuity and patriotism drive and sustain human and national development and progress.

But not in Nigeria. Which explains the desperate struggle for political power, and in fact all other opportunities, that have the potential of opening up avenues for the acquisition of this oil wealth.

That is why the wheels of our

national and subnational state structures are almost solely lubricated by oil money. The ingenuity of our leaders begins and ends in this monthly ritual of sharing our country's commonwealth.

But our own crude reality is not, should not be, the benchmark, the rule, for a country that is so richly endowed by nature. Take a look at others and you will realise that we are an abnormal exception, in fact an aberration of the worst form.

Even though Dubai's economy is not oil-based, it has channeled the little resources it got from oil in the 1960s and 1990s into building other sectors. That diversification has greatly enhanced its economy - largely dependent on trade and commerce.

As a result, it has become an international investment hub. The emirate's Hope Probe, part of its space programme established in 2006, has been orbiting Mars since 2021. They are now planning on sending their own astronauts to space in the not too distant future.

Certainly, Dubai's little oil

wealth has not spawned the kind of frightening monstrosities Nigeria's immense resource has so profusely and catastrophically done to us.

Saudi Arabia is a leading oil exporter. It has deployed its huge resources to deliberately insinuate itself into the global economy through making high yielding investments in blue chip enterprises and corporations all over the world.

It has done this through the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia which was founded in 1971 with an asset base that currently stands at about \$800 billion.

It is also using that Fund to boost its sports industry by channeling billions of dollars into that sector. This has attracted renowned international football stars to the largely desert country and placed it on the world golf circuit through the LIV tournament.

The kingdom has also embarked on a highly ambitious project that is set to give it a chunk of the world's tourism, industrial, investment and entertainment space, among others. It is envisaged to be on a scale and nature that will make it compete favourably with the best internationally.

It is doing this by sinking a whopping \$500 billion into building a futuristic mega city. Known as NEOM, it is located in the northwestern Tabuk Province and will be made up of a floating port, a ski resort and a mirrored city, among others.

From the two instances above, we have seen how both little and huge oil revenues can be used as triggers for monumental socio-economic and political transformations.

Can we also change Nigeria's crude reality into a very positive and humane one chiefly geared towards uplifting and dignifying our citizens and country at large?

Yes, it is doable. But that is a discussion for another day.

NB: Part of the title and the inspiration for this piece were drawn from Brian Black's 2012 book, *Crude Reality: Petroleum in World History*.

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