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No plan to stifle press freedom -FG

The Federal Government has assured the Nigerian media that the President Bola Tinubu administration has no plan whatsoever to stifle press freedom.

Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris Malagi, conveyed the position of the Government on Monday, in Ibadan while

speaking at the opening of Oyo State Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) held at the Press Centre, Iyaganku.

Represented by Mrs Egun Omolara Esan, Director of Protocol, Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, the Minister said the President Tinubu-led administration is committed to free press.

In our pursuit of media

development, we have strived to provide access to information, improve media infrastructure, and promote media literacy across the nation.

"These initiatives aim to bridge the gap between urban and rural areas, ensuring that every Nigerian has access to accurate and unbiased information. Moreover, we acknowledge that the media landscape is not

without its challenges, including issues such as the proliferation of misinformation.

"In response, we will work collaboratively with the Nigeria Union of Journalists to enhance access to information in order to combat the menace of disinformation, fake news and hate speech. Just like I stated during the visit by the

President of the NUJ to my office last week, the Bola Tinubu administration has no plans whatsoever to stifle press freedom.

"This is in recognition of the fact that a free press is vital to the development of our democracy. Democracy is not an end in itself but a means to an end. As such, I will charge the media to continue to report the



Continued on page 2 Tinubu



Plateau State Deputy Governor, Her Excellency, Josephine Piyo, NAWOJ Chairperson, Mrs. Nene Dung, her State EXCO, immediate past Chairperson, Mrs Jennifer Yarima, former NAWOJ national officials in a photograph yesterday during courtesy call at the Government House Rayfield, Jos
Photo: DANLADI DUK



Mutfwang

Exhibit Plateau spirit of love, friendship, tolerance

By PETER TITLE

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, urged Plateau State citizens residing in the United States to embody the quintessential Plateau spirit marked by love, togetherness, friendship, tolerance, and peace.

The Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Executive Governor of

Plateau State, Gyang Bere disclosed it in a statement.

He made the appeal at a Gala Night of the 2023 Annual National Convention of Plateau Association-USA, held in Maryland, United States of America.

Governor Mutfwang, explained that no single tribe on the Plateau can stand in isolation, no matter its strength.

He stressed the need for all Plateau sons and daughters residing in the Diaspora to unite and form a cohesive alliance aimed at mutual development. Such collective effort, he said, is the first step towards ushering development back to their cherished homeland.

The President of Plateau State Association-USA, Dr. Bathlomew Shepkong,

expressed profound gratitude to Governor Mutfwang for his exemplary leadership, in guiding the people of Plateau.

Dr. Shepkong affirmed the association's commitment to collaborating with the 'Time is now' administration on the Plateau in order to attract substantial Foreign Direct Investments into the

-Mutfwang

state, thereby propelling the state towards unprecedented growth and development.

The Gala Night was a melting pot of cultures and friendships, as representatives from various associations extended their support. Friends of PSA-USA,

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News

No plan to stifle press freedom-**FG**

Continued from page 1

development currently taking place, particularly under the leadership of our President, who has taken some bold initiatives to ensure the prosperity of our citizens and the nation in general.

"In a world where information is the lifeblood of society, the role of the media is paramount. It serves as the bridge between the government and the people, ensuring transparency, accountability and dissemination of accurate information.

"I am deeply honoured to stand before you today as we gather to celebrate the remarkable achievements

Exhibit Plateau spirit of love, friendship, tolerance -**Mutwang**

Continued from page 1

including the Zumunta Association, USA; Plateau State Diaspora Development Association, USA; Igala Association; Berom Association; Middle Belt Association Canada;

in the field of media development, most importantly as a recipient of the NUJ Media Development Award. This recognition holds a special place in my heart.

"This award is not just a recognition of my efforts, but a celebration of the essential role the media plays in our society. The Nigeria Union of Journalists has consistently played a pivotal role in shaping the narrative of our nation, fostering dialogue, and championing the cause of the fourth estate. I must acknowledge the invaluable contribution of this great Union, the NUJ," he said.

and distinguished guests including the Kaduna, Igbo, Yoruba, Trinidad and Tobago, Cameroon, and other communities, graced the event with their presence.

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) has approved a 30-day implementation plan for the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the federal government and organised labour unions.

The Minister of Labour and Employment, Simon Lalong, made this known Monday in Abuja while speaking to State House correspondents at the end of the council meeting chaired by President Bola Tinubu.

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) had in September said they would embark on an indefinite strike from 3 October over the prevailing hardship caused by the removal of fuel subsidy.

However, on 2 October, the two major Nigerian labour unions and a coalition of various workers unions suspended the nationwide strike they were to commence on 3 October.

The labour unions announced their decision to suspend their strike in a MoU signed by the

FEC approves implementation of agreement with labour unions

representatives of the labour unions and the federal government.

According to the MoU, the unions will now suspend their strike by 30 days, with parties to the agreement committing "to henceforth abide by the dictates of Social dialogue in all our future engagements."

The MoU also stipulated that the document shall be filed in "relevant court of competent jurisdiction within one (1) week as consent judgment by the Federal Government."

Speaking on Monday, Mr Lalong said the MoU was presented to the council on the implementation of the agreement with labour.

He said: "We presented a memo from the Federal Ministry for Labour and Employment, precisely on the arrangements between government and Labour.

"You are already aware of all about 15 or 14 items as part of the agreements. But we went beyond mere



Ajaero

agreements to tell them that something different this time was happening because one part of the agreement was to file it in a court of law, which we had set the process already and the other one was the presidential approval."

He explained that there cannot be any presidential approval other than the federal executive council.

"So presented them to the Federal Executive Council, we analyzed every aspect of the agreement to show the

genuineness and also provide for a harmonious and good industrial relationship. And that was why it was presented and it was approved for implementation.

"Initially, Yes, it was agreed that within 30 days, there must be evidence of implementation. I think that was the basis of presenting to the Federal Executive Council. And the federal executive council also approved that within these 30 days, we'll go on with the implementation of the agreement between the labour and the government," he said.

Responding to a question on item six of the agreement that borders on the alleged government interference in the activities of the leadership of the NURTW, Mr Lalong said a meeting with the leadership of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) has been concluded.

He said: "Well, the sixth item was about interference, specifically with issues that were about Road Transport Workers and Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN). Immediately the next day, we embark on meetings between the two organizations.

As of today, they have already reached out. And we have concluded that RTEAN and today they're making a report to the ministry about the agreement. Because they went into agreement too and we're also going to get back to their parent association. And then the next one was NURTW.

"Last week we were with them. Of course, if some of you were there, you knew why we postponed. I reminded them that we have to because we're keeping to the dates of the agreement. But they said no, we cannot strictly keep to the date because it's very important to them that we realize the end."

SA may overtake Nigeria as Africa's biggest economy

South Africa is set to briefly overtake Nigeria and Egypt as the continent's largest economy next year, International Monetary Fund forecasts show.

The IMF's World Economic Outlook envisions South Africa's gross domestic product reaching \$401 billion based on current prices in 2024, compared with Nigeria's \$395 billion and Egypt's \$358 billion. Africa's most industrialized nation is expected to only hold the top spot for a year before it once again lags Nigeria, and then fall to third place behind Egypt in 2026, according to the report, which was released last week.

While IMF data shows Nigeria's economy has eclipsed South Africa's since 2018, its fortunes have dimmed along with a decline in production of oil and it has been grappling with runaway inflation and a plunge in the value of the naira.

According to Bloomberg economists, "We believe the IMF's projections reflects where it believes meaningful reforms will take place. South Africa's transient emergence as Africa's largest economy in 2024 is mainly due to the shrinking of Nigeria and Egypt's GDP in dollar terms, following sharp currency devaluations.

However, the long-term trajectory shows Nigeria and Egypt regaining their top spots, with the former taking a strong lead. For Nigeria to realise the GDP expansion projected by the IMF, we think oil output must be restored to its potential; insecurity needs tackled; and the bottlenecks in the power sector addressed."

Bola Tinubu has announced significant policy changes aimed at getting the state's finances back on track since he became president of the West African nation at the end of May, including revamping the foreign-exchange system, scrapping costly gasoline subsidies and taking steps to address dollar shortages and boost tax revenue.

Those measures are causing initial pain in Africa's most populous nation, but are expected to increasingly pay dividends going forward. The IMF sees GDP expanding 3.1% next year, compared with 2.9% in 2023.

The reforms should lead to "stronger and more inclusive growth," Daniel Leigh, division chief in the IMF's research department, told reporters at the fund's annual meetings in Marrakech, Morocco, last week.

Egypt has devalued its currency three times since early 2022 as it confronts a

foreign-exchange crunch, with the pound losing almost half its value against the dollar.

The government secured a \$3 billion IMF package last year that requires a more flexible exchange rate, a move it's only likely to undertake after December elections in which President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi is seeking to extend his rule until 2030.

The delay has stalled IMF reviews that were initially scheduled for March and September. Successful appraisals could unlock about \$700 million in postponed loan tranches, give Egypt access to a \$1.3 billion resilience fund and potentially spur major Gulf

investments.

The government is meanwhile in talks with the IMF on boosting its rescue package to more than \$5 billion, according to people familiar with the discussions, confident it can overcome the hurdles preventing it from accessing support, including addressing concerns over its currency policy. The implementation of a reform agenda could underpin an economic growth rate of 5% or more from 2026, according to the IMF.

Unlike Nigeria's naira and Egypt's pound, South Africa's rand is free floating, and has lost about

Boost for naira as Nigeria receives W/Bank loan

Nigeria's embattled naira is set for a lift after lawmakers approved plans by the government to seek a \$1.5 billion loan from the World Bank.

Wale Edun, the Finance Minister, told reporters in Abuja, the capital city, on Monday that the funding will be concessionary and is expected to be secured by December.

Nigeria will also seek \$80 million of financing from the African Development Bank, he said.

The naira weakened to N778.80 per US dollar on Monday at the official market, according to data from FMDQ but was stable at N1,049 per USD on the



Edun



Business & Economy

Nigeria's power dream stuck 10 years after privatisation

If Tunji Awojide was told in 2013 that he would still need four diesel generators to run his hospitality businesses 10 years after the privatisation of Nigeria's power sector, he would have shrugged off such a statement. OLADHINDE OLADIPO writes.

But that is the reality he is contending with as frequent power outages remain constant in Africa's largest economy – with no city spared electricity shortages – despite billions of dollars invested in the sector.

The sector was privatised in November 2013 as the distribution and generation companies were handed over to private investors amid high expectations but the country's national grid has only managed to record an additional 1,426 megawatts, according to findings by BusinessDay.

This development has sparked criticisms from many Nigerians who have suffered from chronic shortages of power, and repeated promises to fix the problem have long been a staple of election campaigns.

"I run a 500KVA generator virtually 24 hours, and you can imagine how a 500KVA generator gulps fuel. If I have a full house, I run an 800KVA generator. The days that we have very few guests, we run a 350KVA generator. I have four generators; does that not sound crazy to you?" Awojide said.

Awojide is one of millions of business owners in the country who are forced to depend on generators to power their businesses.

Data obtained from the Nigeria Electricity System Operator showed electricity generation increased by 41 percent from an average of 3,400MW in November 2013 to 4,826MW as at October 13, 2023.

"From gas availability, pricing, and metering to delayed payments limiting cash flow for operating and capex investment, there is a myriad of problems without the country's economic manager being deliberate and intentional in solving them," Jide Pratt, country manager of Trade Grid, said.

"To a large extent, Nigeria is still far away from solving its power problems," he added.

A senior official in the power sector who pleaded anonymity said electricity subsidy has increased largely on the back of the massive devaluation and floating of the naira.

"The electricity sector is



facing a liquidity challenge driven initially by the six underperforming distribution companies, which until the devaluation had been unable to meet their market obligations to the tune of about N30 billion per month," the source said.

He noted that the latest shortfall is mainly driven by the abrupt naira devaluation causing a significant hike in the gas pricing and the price of generation contracts that are pegged to the US dollar.

"The key problem for government and the sector now is how do you pass on such a high cost of electricity to consumers that are receiving low energy since privatisation in 2013," he added.

The country has an installed power generation capacity of 12,500MW but produces a fraction of that for its over 200 million citizens, leaving millions of households and businesses reliant on power generators.

Although there are few wins such as state electricity autonomy and growing traction in renewable energy, the country still has the lowest access to electricity globally,

with about 92 million people lacking access to power, according to the Energy Progress Report 2022 released by Tracking SDG 7.

"The road ahead needs more attention than any other period which is why I question the decision of the President to place a finance expert in power at this particular time," Pratt said.

BusinessDay analysis shows that although Nigeria's transmission capacity has increased by 20 percent to an average of 4,200MW in the last eight years, the population has soared by 57 percent from 131 million people to 206 million, according to the latest World Bank estimates.

"Another major issue over the years has been the unavailability of gas," Kayode Oluwadare, an energy expert, said. "Large gas-fired power plant projects require power purchase agreements and feed gas agreements before they can secure funding, but the inability of those projects to secure feed gas supply on a long-term basis is a major challenge."

Kelvin Emmanuel, chief executive officer of Dairy Hills, said the country cannot increase electricity generation without addressing three things.

One senior analyst told BusinessDay that "with the mounting debt and the record-breaking unfunded shortfall, it is only a matter of time before the market grinds to a complete halt. And that will be devastating."

While Nigeria seems to be moving at a snail's pace, the stories for other African countries seem different.

For instance, Ghana is making plans and implementing policies and programmes to further grow its power sector to achieve 100 percent universal energy access and probably export to Nigeria.

"Ghana has through a robust policy formulation and implementation achieved between 80 to 85 percent universal energy access in the country," Hanson Monney, head of generation and transmission unit, Ministry of Energy, Ghana, said at an industry event last September.

In Ghana, according to

Monney, the government was exploring all options including grid energy, mini-grid and solar-dominated renewable energy to achieve the country's universal access to energy by 2024.

Tunisia also boasts 100 percent national electricity access for both rural and urban areas.

The North African country predominantly generates its electricity from natural gas and is on track for long-term investment in renewable energy, targeting a 30 percent share of renewables by 2023, according to findings by BusinessDay.

Algeria has a 99.8 percent national electricity access rate – 99.6 percent in rural areas and 99.9 percent in urban areas.

"Natural gas accounts for 96 percent of the country's installed capacity with the remaining 4 percent sourced from a combination of oil, solar, hydro power, and wind," Energy Capital & Power said.

Source: BusinessDay



Business & Economy

FG urges investors to leverage African space sector

The Federal Government has urged investors to leverage opportunities in the African space sector for its liberalisation, saying that the continent is strategically positioned to deliver space-based services to the world.

Mr Uche Nnaji, Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, said this recently at the opening of a 5-day maiden edition of the African Space Economy Conference and Exhibition.

The conference is being organised by the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA), in collaboration with Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI).

The programme is with the theme "Exploring Space Economy for Africa's Economic Growth", having industry players, businessmen, scientists, students and the government in participation.

Represented by Prof. Nnanyelugo Ike-Muonso, Technical Adviser on Programmes, Nnaji said that Africa needed to explore the immense potential hidden in the space sector to harness creativity and sustainable development.

The minister urged the participants to leverage Fourth Industrial Revolution and other disruptive technologies to the advantage of the country.

Dr Halilu Shaba, Director-General of NASRDA, said part of the objectives of the conference was to build synergy between practitioners and investors in the space sector.

Shaba recalled that NASRDA was established in 1999 to help the nation to explore the economic potential derived from space science and technology.

Shaba called on the participants to take advantage of the 'Business-To-Business' opportunities to network from other like-minded people from across the globe.

Dr Al-Mujtaba Abubakar, President, ACCI, said that the space industry was growing rapidly, with about 10 per cent annual growth rate, while the African continent was yet to leverage on the growth.

Abubakar said that Africa was still lacking the requisite policy framework needed for robust facilitation and regulation of the sub-sector.

Abubakar further said that the conference would mirror developmental issues to impact governance.

The reas the conference would explore, he said, include: Space Technology



Nnaji

and Communication, Space Technology and Internally Generated Revenues, Space Technology and Internal Security, Space Technology and Food Security, among others.

Mr Adetokunbo Ogundeyin, General Managing-Director, Proforce Galaxies Limited, said that space technology had the full potential to change the security landscape in Nigeria.

Ogundeyin said that space technology can provide border surveillance, response and deterrence, prevent counterterrorism and kidnapping, maritime security and geospatial intelligence, among other

interventions.

According to him, a nation's space capabilities can enhance its international influence, diplomatic leverage and allow participation in international space collaborations and negotiations.

He said that investment opportunities in space economy can benefit everyone, adding that it encompasses space manufacturing, infrastructure development, human capital development, space startups and entrepreneurship.

There was an exhibition tour of space-generated innovations by dignitaries. (NAN)

Nigeria to lose crown as Africa's biggest economy

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report, which was released last week.

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Tinubu

The Federal Government yesterday, benchmarked its 2024 budget on a crude oil price of \$73.96 per barrel and an exchange rate of N700 to the dollar, while projecting N26 trillion for the fiscal year.

It also affirmed that the administration would maintain the January - December budget implementation cycle as President Bola Tinubu would soon present the 2024 appropriation bill to the National Assembly to ensure its ratification before the end of the year.

The Minister of Planning and Budget, Atiku Bagudu, made the disclosure at the end of the Federal Executive Council (FEC), presided over by President Bola Tinubu, recently.

Bagudu was joined in the briefing by his colleagues from the Minister of Information, Mohammed Idris; Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of Economy, Wale Edun; Works and Housing Minister, Dave Umahi; Industry, Trade and Investment Minister, Doris Uzoka-Anite; and Minister of Labour and Employment, Simon Lalong. He further announced that the Council has approved the 2024-2026 medium-term

Egypt's GDP in dollar terms, following sharp currency devaluations. However, the long-term trajectory shows Nigeria and Egypt regaining their top spots, with the former taking a strong lead. For Nigeria to realise the GDP expansion projected by the IMF, we think oil output must be restored to its potential; insecurity needs tackled; and the bottlenecks in the power sector addressed."

Bola Tinubu has announced significant policy changes aimed at getting the state's finances back on track since he became president of the West African nation at the end of May, including revamping the foreign-exchange system, scrapping costly gasoline subsidies and taking steps to address dollar shortages and boost tax revenue.

Those measures are causing initial pain in Africa's most populous nation, but are expected to increasingly pay dividends going forward. The IMF sees GDP expanding 3.1% next year, compared with 2.9% in 2023.

Budget: FG to peg crude price at 73\$



Bagudu

expenditure framework (MTEF) and fiscal strategy papers (FSP).

The Minister explained that the executive is required by the Fiscal Responsibility Act to present to the National Assembly ahead of a budget presentation, a document that will provide the medium-term economic outlook for the economy, adding that FEC made assumptions about reference price for the price of crude oil, which it pegged at \$73.96, as well as an exchange rate of N700 to a dollar.

This is just as the Federal Government approved an application for \$1.5 billion in financing from the World Bank and another \$80 million financing from the African Development Bank (AfDB).

According to the Minister of Finance, Edun, the funding will be provided through the International

Nigerians paid N268bn electricity bills in Q2

The Federal Government says power consumers paid a total of N267.86bn as electricity bills in the second quarter of this year.

It disclosed this in the just released second quarter 2023 report of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission, while explaining the collection efficiency of power distribution companies during the review period.

It said, "The total revenue collected by all Discos in 2023/Q2 was N267.86bn out of N354.61bn billed to customers. This translates to a collection efficiency of 75.54 per cent, which represents an increase of 6.79pp (basic points) when compared to 2023/Q1 (68.75 per cent).

On market remittance, the NERC report stated that in 2023/Q2, the cumulative upstream invoice payable by Discos was N194.69bn, consisting of N154.04bn for generation costs from NBET (Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading) and N40.65bn for transmission and administrative services by the market operator.

Development Association, known for its virtually interest-free loans.

He explained that in a world grappling with high interest rates to combat inflation, Nigeria's efforts to restore economic balance and prudent financial management have garnered support from multilateral development banks.

As a result, Edun noted that the World Bank was willing to provide \$1.5 billion in concessional financing, which is not only affordable but also disbursed relatively quickly.

On the \$80 million financing from AfDB, the minister said the financing was designated for the Ekiti Knowledge Zone project (EKZ) in Ekiti State, which aims to empower young individuals by facilitating their engagement in the knowledge economy and the technology sector.

On remittance by special and cross-border customers, the regulator stated that in 2023/Q2, out of the four international customers serviced by the MO, only Transcorp-SBEE made a payment of \$1.43m, against an invoice of \$2.13m issued for services rendered in 2023/Q2.

It said the three other international customers did not make any payment against the \$11.97m invoice issued to them by the MO for services rendered in 2023/Q2.

It noted that cumulatively, bilateral customers made a total payment of N816.66m, against the cumulative invoice of N2,845.08m issued to them by the MO for services rendered in 2023/Q23.

Data from the report showed that while the Discos improved in their remittances to the power market, international consumers of Nigeria's electricity defaulted to a large extent during the review period.



Business & Economy

Sustainable banking in Nigeria: A regulatory approach

Sustainable banking is a form of banking that aims to balance the environmental, social, and economic impacts of financial activities. It seeks to promote positive development outcomes for society while protecting the communities and environment where financial institutions and their clients operate. Sustainable banking, which advocates for sustainability in the financial sector, is a segment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially because it represents the spirit and intent of the SDGs designed to achieve a more sustainable and better future for humanity. Sustainable banking places not only a moral duty, but is also a business promoting opportunity, as it can enhance the reputation, public opinion, competitiveness, and resilience of financial institutions which practice sustainability. CHINENYENWA OWUAMALAM write

THE United Nations currently drives the financial aspect of this initiative as a key player by bringing together financial institutions around the world, to subscribe to sustainable banking principles. The world's foremost sustainable banking framework, with over 300 signatory banks representing almost half of the global banking industry, was signed at the United Nations. This framework, the Principles for Responsible Banking (PRB), directs banks to align their core strategy, mandate and investments with the SDGs and some international agreements like the Paris Climate Agreement, and to demonstrate responsible positive socio-environmental impacts in their activities. The PRB currently has 10 Nigerian banks listed online as signatories.

In 2012, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in collaboration with the Bankers Committee, launched the Nigerian Sustainable Banking Principles (NSBP), compliance of which is mandatory for all deposit money banks, discount houses, and development finance institutions in Nigeria. The NSBP was further affirmed by representatives of Nigerian financial institutions present, during the Bankers Committee meeting of 4th October 2018. The NSBP covers the following nine areas: environmental and social risk management, environmental and social footprint, human rights, women's economic empowerment, financial inclusion, environmental and social governance, capacity building, collaborative partnerships, and reporting.

The NSBP is a major step forward for the Nigerian banking industry, as it demonstrates the commitment of the financial sector to aligning the sector's operations with the global sustainability agenda. The Principles respond to the specific challenges and opportunities within the Nigerian context, such as the need to diversify the economy from oil dependency, the need for financial institutions to collaborate to drive the sustainability goals despite industry competition, and the long-overdue need to address the social and environmental impacts of extractive industries. The NSBP also encourages the growth of small and medium enterprises, advocates for the empowerment of women, and is the pillar upon which corporate social responsibility measures (which promote the SDGs) rest.

However, the implementation of the NSBP is not without challenges. Some of the barriers include lack of awareness on, and understanding of sustainability issues among bank staff and customers; inadequate data and tools for measuring and reporting on sustainability performance; insufficient incentives to reward compliance, inadequate laws and regulations to enforce strict compliance; limited capacity and resources for integrating sustainability into business strategies and processes; and resistance to change from some stakeholders who perceive sustainability as a threat or unnecessary burden.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) embodies sustainability in both its vision and mission. While its vision is "to be a people-focused Central Bank, promoting confidence in the



Cardoso

economy and enabling an improved standard of living", its mission is "to ensure monetary, price and financial system stability, as a catalyst for inclusive growth and sustainable economic development". These statements represent the heart and soul of the Bank and its employees. It suffices to know that the vision and mission of the Bank is in line with the CBN Act 2007, which further empowers the Bank with a developmental function to stimulate financial and economic development. The CBN is therefore at great liberty backed by statute, to engage in initiatives which encourage the NSBPs. It is however expected that the new administration of the CBN would formulate a balancing mechanism to ensure that the core mandate of the Bank is not overshadowed by its developmental function.

Sustainable banking in Nigeria has made significant progress in the past decade, but there is still a lot of room for improvement

By way of recommendation for the CBN, this writer has put down some initial thoughts. For starters, financial institutions in Nigeria need to have a second look at their visions, missions, and sustainability statements to ensure that they are in tandem with promoting responsible banking for the sake of now and posterity. These should be conveyed clearly to their internal and external stakeholders, who should master and

practice them in their day-to-day activities. Furthermore, all financial institutions (the CBN inclusive), should incorporate sustainability into their governance structures, decision-making processes, risk management systems, product development, service delivery, performance measurement and reporting. As a nation, we need to think smart. Nigeria cannot continue to rely mostly on oil and gas to be the solution to economic prosperity, as this dependence has to a large extent proven to be an Achilles' heel, rather than a resource blessing. Financial institutions should therefore innovate and experiment with new solutions, technologies and approaches that can generate shared value for their businesses, the financial sector, the country, and the world at large. From the legal angle, extant regulations and policies governing the financial sector need to be revisited to ensure that their provisions do not offend the NSBP or inadvertently reward a financial institution's failure to implement them.

Very fundamentally, it appears that the NSBP, a well-crafted document, requires a review which would place it on par with topical issues affecting humanity. One of the discussions during such review should revolve around the inclusion of Climate action as an NSBP, in recognition of the adverse effects our negative choices have on the atmosphere and environment. Global warming is a

topical issue that must be taken very seriously, especially in Nigeria where flooding and the risk of wildfires in arid land is high. The objectives of the Nigerian Climate Change Act 2021, which extends to the CBN and financial institutions in Nigeria, should be incorporated into the NSBP. Significantly, youth development must also be added as a principle under the NSBP, since this would in no small measure improve positive output for Nigeria, especially in situations where physical manpower is an advantage. The average Nigerian youth is resilient, intelligent, hardworking, and industrious. Put together, Nigerian youths have been forged to withstand difficult situations, yet we remain hopeful for, and are truly ready to join hands in rebuilding Nigeria.

This is where the importance of nationwide awareness of the NSBP comes in. Nigerian citizens should be educated on what the NSBP entails, in the languages and by the visuals they can understand, which would enlighten them on how their actions can affect the future. In the words of the CBN Governor, Mr. Olayemi Michael Cardoso, "Learning should be continuous. Even the way we see things changing in our environment everyday with technology, new ideas, new issues, you need to be ahead of the game". Indeed, Nigeria must be primed to be ahead of the game. Keeping in mind that section 2(e) of the CBN Act mandates the Central Bank of Nigeria to

act as a banker and provide economic advice to the Federal Government, the Bank should align the 8-point agenda of the Tinubu-led Government with the NSBP, in rendering its financial advice to the Federal Government for the promotion of a sound and sustainable financial system in Nigeria.

Going further, the collaboration between financial institutions which is already embedded in the current NSBP must be intensified, with the CBN as the expert driver, to guarantee that finance is never a barrier to the achievement of the NSBP. Consequently, the Chief Executive Officers of financial institutions must cooperate with the newly appointed CBN management and work in one accord to foster fiscal-monetary coordination in favour of the NSBP. As a preliminary measure, all financial institutions in Nigeria that are yet to subscribe to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Banking should be mandated by the CBN to do so. Finally, given the poor rate of compliance in Nigeria, a reward-based incentive can also be initiated by the Bank, to ignite compliance with the NSBP by both financial institutions, foreign and local investors, and Nigerian citizens in general.

Sustainable banking in Nigeria has made significant progress in the past decade, but there is still a lot of room for improvement. The NSBP provides a solid foundation for Nigerian financial institutions to build on, for the benefit of our beloved country Nigeria. However, it needs to be complemented by a strategic mindset that can foster a permanent culture of sustainability within the financial sector.

It is insightful to point out that the new CBN Governor, during his tenure as the Lagos State Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, designed and developed a strategy document, based on poverty alleviation and growth. Also, during his tenure as the Board Chairman of Citibank Nigeria Limited, his efforts resulted in a significant increase in the percentage of women on Citibank's board, rising from 8% to an outstanding 50%. The cited examples clearly mirror his views on sustainability and reveal the prospect of the CBN Management to advance the concept of sustainable banking as recommended by the United Nations. Nigerians should therefore exercise their civic duty of giving the new administration of the apex Bank an opportunity to reset the trajectory for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. The media is also encouraged to be more understanding, by not setting unrealistic milestones for the Governor and his deputies, in the projection of a better image for the CBN. These considerations would ensure that the team remains focused in their quest to revive the financial sector in a sustainable way, and without undue pressure. That said, to whom much responsibility is given, much accountability is expected. It is therefore expected that within a reasonable time, and under the leadership of the newly sworn in Management, the Central Bank of Nigeria would soar to greater heights.

Indeed, change has come to stay. But the change required to attain great lofty heights, begins with all of us.

Source: BusinessDay

Politics

Governorship elections : INEC warns against weaponised fake news

From
JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

NIGERIA'S Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is warning of the dangers of weaponised fake news and misinformation in the lead-up to the country's off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi states on November 11th.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu said recently that the commission is "conscious of the critical role of the media in our political and electoral process" but that "a free and vibrant press is also obliged to adhere to professional and ethical standards".

Prof. Yakubu who was represented by a National Commissioner and Chairman of the Information and Voter Education Committee, Sam Olumekun, specifically warned against the use of "abusive language directly or indirectly likely to injure religious, ethnic, tribal, or sectional feelings" in political campaigns.

He also reminded the media of their constitutional obligations to provide equal coverage and visibility to all political parties.

The warning from INEC came at a workshop in Nigeria's north central state of Nasarawa.

Nasarawa State shares borders with Nigeria's capital city, Abuja.

INEC's warning came amid growing concerns about the spread of fake news and misinformation in Nigeria, particularly on social media. In recent years, there have been a number of high-profile cases of fake news being used to manipulate public opinion and sow discord.

In the lead-up to the 2023 general election, INEC introduced a number of measures to combat the spread of fake news, including partnering with social media companies to remove false information from their platforms. However, the commission has acknowledged that it is facing an uphill battle against the spread of misinformation.

The weaponisation of fake news and misinformation is a serious threat to the integrity of Nigeria's electoral process. It can be used to suppress voter turnout, undermine trust in the electoral commission, and sow discord among the electorate.

INEC has called on political parties, candidates, and the media to play their role in ensuring



Yakubu

that the off-cycle elections are conducted in a free and fair manner.

The commission has also urged the public to be critical of the information they consume and to only share information from reputable sources.

Speaking also, a national Commissioner and member of the Information and Voter Education Committee, Prof. Kunle Ajayi, urged Nigerian media to be ethical and avoid fake news in the upcoming off-cycle governorship elections in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa states.

According to him, the media plays a critical role in the electoral process, but that it is important for journalists to be objective and unbiased in their reporting. He warned against the spread of fake news and inflammatory and sensational news, which could incite violence or endanger social life.

In his goodwill message, the team lead of the Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) in Nigeria, Rudolf Elbling, said the media is essential to democratic elections and a watchdog for the transparency of the process.

He said that Nigerian journalists are well trained professionals, but it is always worthwhile to come back to certain principles that are crucial to a credible and peaceful election process. These principles include: Editorial independence, fact-checking, impartiality, keeping a proper tone in reporting, guarding against hate speech.

Elbling also said that the media plays a crucial role in educating the public about the electoral process and ensuring that citizens are informed about the candidates and issues.

He expressed concern about the safety of journalists in Nigeria, noting that elections can be dangerous for them due to tense and sometimes violent campaigns or the announcement of results.

Elbling said that the responsibility for protecting the physical security of everyone within its territory rests with the government, but that journalists may find themselves in precarious situations if security agents are not present or willing to attend to them.

In his welcome remarks, the Chairman of the INEC Press Corps, Segun Ojumu welcomed participants and highlighted the importance of accurate and unbiased reporting to ensure transparency, public trust, and the credibility of the electoral process.

He also thanked all participants for their commitment to professional and ethical reporting, which he said is essential to the success of Nigeria's democracy

Presidency honours Gombe due process bureau with awards

THE Director General of Gombe State Due Process Bureau, Babayola Mohammed Isa, has earned the "Distinguished GovTech Trailblazers Award" for his exemplary leadership in advancing GovTech initiatives and digital governance in the public sector.

The office of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms in the Presidency, organizers of the award, which was held at the International Conference Centre Abuja, also saw the Gombe State Due Process Office receiving the best State MDA in innovative Digital Services award.

The Gombe recipients stood out brilliantly among many Federal establishments and state agencies from across the six geopolitical zones, receiving the prestigious awards.

According to the Director General, Bureau for Public Service Reforms (BPR), Dr Dasuki Ibrahim Arabi, the Presidency organized the award event through his agency, to reward government agencies and individuals for their remarkable achievements in technology and digital innovations.

He revealed that none of the agencies were aware that they were being scrutinized for the awards. He also explained that the recipients of the award emerged sequel to a nationwide nomination and online voting process advertised through radio, television and newspaper

THE Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the South-East zone says it has begun the process of reconciling its aggrieved members that defected to other political parties.

The party said this at its Zonal Meeting in Enugu, pointing out that the measure was part of the efforts initiated to reclaim its position in the zone.

It expressed the hope that the initiative would help to consolidate its support base for the political and historical development of the country.

In a speech, Gov. Peter Mbah of Enugu State urged party leaders and faithful in the region to rise to the task of recovering its lost ground and rebuilding the party to its pre-eminent position in the years past.

Mbah, who is the Leader of the party in the zone, said there was need to rejig the party's financial, administrative and operational strategies.

He expressed a strong conviction that the party would rise again in the zone.

"As the National Vice Chairman South-East rightly observed, we have shed a lot of weight.

"Today, when you look at other parties, whether it is Labour Party, All Progressives Congress or the New Nigeria Peoples Party, and so on, you are actually talking about PDP members.

The governor further said

PDP initiates reconciliatory steps to reclaim South-East

that it was time for the party to begin to craft a strategy on how it could get back to that "pole position" that they had always occupied.

"It means we have to first of all consolidate our support base as a party, and now reach out to our brothers and sisters, who may have felt aggrieved for one reason or the other and left the party to see how we can bring them back," he said.

Earlier in an address of welcome, the South-East National Vice Chairman of the Party, Chief Ali Odefa, also called on party faithful and leaders in the region to brace to the challenge that would engender the resurgence of the party in the zone and beyond.

He opined that it was only through the collective efforts of members that the party could return to the enviable height it used to be in the zone.

Odefa, who recalled how PDP used to have five governors in the zone some years back, said "it reduced to four, then three, and one ran away.

"It remained only two and after the last election, we only have one seated with us here - Gov. Mbah.

"But by the grace of God, some of our candidates in other states are in court.

"So, it is our prayers that the one we already have will

be retained and the ones that are pursuing their cases in court would win.

"We must do everything to get our party back on the track," Odefa further said.

Meanwhile, the Chairman, Board of Trustees of the party and former Senate President, Sen. Adolphus Wabara, has given assurance that the party would bounce back in the region, given Mbah's leadership quality.

According to Wabara, nothing will happen to PDP, all these people will come back because this is their home.

"So, I do not want us to be discouraged. Let us continue to have hope and belief in PDP," he said.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Governor of Enugu State, Ifeanyi Ossai, former governors of Imo, Chief Achike Udenwa and Chief Emeka Ihedioha; former governor of Ebonyi State, Dr Sam Egwu, and Zonal Woman Leader, Ifeyinwa Morah as well as state party chairmen, including Augustine Nnamani of Enugu State. (NAN)

"The CP uses this medium to sternly warn all the political parties in the state and their supporters to play by the rules and stop heating up the state," the police warned sternly.

publications.

He said it was initiated to honour and motivate those who develop solutions, initiatives and programmes as well as harnessing technology for the betterment of public services and digital governance.

He commended the Gombe State Government for its historic and technology achievements, hailing the state as one of the fastest-growing digital economies in Nigeria.

In his remarks after the award presentation, Babayola

Mohammed Isa, DG Gombe State Due Process Bureau, thanked Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya for his tremendous support to him and the agency as well as his administration's interest and investment in digital governance and economy.

The event was graced by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Sen. George Akume who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, OSGF, Retired Federal Permanent Secretary, Dr. Ibrahim Jalo Daudu, Director-General, NASREA, Prof. Aliyu

Jauro, an illustrious son of Gombe who also received an award at the occasion among other dignitaries.

Other agencies from Gombe State who were also honoured at the occasion with other awards were, the Gombe Geographic Information System (GOGIS) and its DG, Dr. Kabiru Usman Hassan as well as the Gombe State University (GSU).

The Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Aliyu Usman El-nafaty, received his award and that of the university.

Bayelsa Gov'ship election: legal setback is temporary

From **WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe**

CHAIRMAN of the All Progressives Congress (APC) National Campaign Council for the Bayelsa Governorship Election, Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State, has described the sacking of the party's candidate, Timipreye Sylva,



Inuwa

from contesting the November 11 election by a court judgment as a temporary setback.

He stated this when he led a high powered team on a strategic engagement with the Bayelsa APC stakeholders in Yenagoa where he boosted their morale saying, "We'll come out stronger from the temporary legal setback".

The flag-off of the Bayelsa APC campaign in Yenagoa was originally scheduled for Saturday 14th October, 2023, but was postponed by the national leadership of the party.

However, Governor Inuwa Yahaya said his visit at the weekend was aimed at igniting the spirit of the party members and allay their concerns regarding the recent court

- APC Campaign Council

judgment which barred the party's Governorship candidate, Timipreye Sylva, from contesting the November 11 election.

Governor Inuwa met with critical stakeholders in Yenagoa during the visit and left the supporters with encouraging and uplifting words. He urged them to stand firm and assured them of the party's unwavering support as they continue their journey towards a triumphant electoral victory on November 11.

Exhibiting confidence, Inuwa told the stakeholders that "We'll emerge stronger from this temporary legal setback. Don't slow down on the campaigns.

Politics

Court adjourns ruling on bench warrant for SDP candidate

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

KOGI State High Court sitting in Lokoja has adjourned to October 23, for ruling on an Ex parte motion urging the court to issue a Bench Warrant for the arrest of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) Deputy Governorship candidate, Mr Sam Ranti Abenemi.

The trial Judge, Justice A.S. Ibrahim reserved the ruling after hearing submissions of the State Counsel and Kogi State Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), BadamaKadiriEsq and Counsel to the Defendant, Jibrin Samuel Okutepa (SAN).

In the Case No: HCL/112c/2023 between: The State - Complainant/Applicant and Sam RantiAbenemi - Defendant, the state government alleged forgery of GCE O'Level certificate against the defendant.

Charged with Perjury, False Declaration, Use of False Documents as Genuine and Possession of Forged Record, the SDP Deputy Governorship candidate was said to have tendered a forged 1979 Ordinarily Level Certificate in his Form EC9 submitted to INEC.

The Prosecuting Counsel, said the offense was contrary to Sections 158, 164, 366 and 368 respectively of the Kogi State Penal Code.

According to him, a complaint was written to the Director of Security, Department of State Services (DSS) by one Shaibu O. Abdullahi, the vice Chairman, Kogi Central Senatorial District of the SDP.

According to him, Abdullahi had alleged in the "Complaint" that Abenemi presented a forged GCE result to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the November 11th, 2023, Governorship Election.

The SDP Deputy Governorship candidate, according to Abdullahi, lied on Oath in his Form EC9 (Substitute) Affidavit in support of particulars, that he obtained the said GCE result.

The prosecution further submitted that during investigation of the complaint by the DSS, several invitations were extended to the defendant but he failed to honour them.

He said that the case diary was forwarded to the office of the DPP for Legal Advice and the Legal Advice declared a prima facie case of Perjury, False Declaration, Use of False Documents as Genuine and Possession of Forged Record against Abenemi.

Kadiri submitted that the Defendant had also refused to appear in court for his trial and went ahead to file the Motion Ex Parte to compel appearance through a Bench Warrant.

The motion, supported by a seven-paragraph affidavit deposed to by one AyegbaMomoh, a Litigation Registrar in the state Ministry of Justice, prayed the Court to grant an Order issuing a Bench Warrant for the arrest of the defendant to answer the case



Gabam

against him.

He also prayed for an Order of the Court directing all police officers, officers of the Department of State Services (DSS), officers of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) or any other person executing the warrant of arrest to apprehend the defendant.

Counsel to the defendant, J.S. Okutepa (SAN), flanked by J.O. Adele (SAN) and 12 other lawyers, told the court that the state was only exhibiting the "Audacity of Arrogance in trying to procure a Bench Warrant against the defendant."

He said that by the 9th of October when the prosecution were filing the Motion Ex Parte, they had not even served notice

on the defendant. He added, "As at 9 am when Your Lordship sat, the Bailiff had not been mobilized to effect service.

"If he (Abenemi) had been served, he would have been here. He has nothing to run away from. Granting this motion will be a dangerous precedent to set for criminal jurisprudence.

"Justice is not only for the DPP or Kogi State, it is also for the defendant. Justice hurried is justice denied. We should all flee from the appearance of impropriety", Okutepa cautioned.

The trial judge, Justice A.S.Ibrahim adjourned to October 23, for ruling on the Motion Ex Parte.

Reps confirm purchase of vehicles

From **ABBAS SHEHU GUNGURA, Bauchi**

THE House of Representatives has confirmed that the National Assembly bureaucracy is in the process of purchasing and distributing operational vehicles to members of the house in the next few weeks.

However, the green chamber said the report of the purchase as reported in the media has been

exaggerated.

Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Information, Hon. Akin Rotimi while briefing National Assembly Press Corps explained that "the vehicles are work tools, and not status symbols. Members are diligent and patriotic elected Representatives and not entitled. The anticipated allocation of vehicles will



Rotimi

BY **EZEKIEL DONTINNA**

THE Plateau State Chapter of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), has reacted, condemning the statement tagged: "Fear Grips PDP as Appeal Tribunal Starts Sitting" credited to one Shittu Bamaayi, describing it as vile, malicious, fictitious, false and misleading.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the State Publicity Secretary of PDP, John T. Akans, KSM, Fcia, JP, and made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** in Jos, the state capital as a rejoinder to the statement issued by the #GenerationNext# Public Relations Officer, Shittu Bamaayi.

The statement stated that, "the attention of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) Plateau State chapter, has been drawn to a vile, malicious, fictitious and ill-fated Shittu Bamaayi's report on the National and State Assembly Appeal Court proceedings in Abuja.

"His report is not only false and misleading, it is treacherous, full of bile and must be condemned by all. As a party that respects the integrity of the judiciary, we will not delve into a matter that is before the court like Shittu, even when the hearing procedure was done in line with the normal court proceedings.

"Shittu Bamaayi's press release leaves us with no other option than to question his current status in the APC, whether he is the publicity secretary or an outside vendor of the party because election has come and gone, and also his professional credentials", it stated.

According to the State Publicity Secretary, "it's a

PDP condemns claim of fear as empty rhetoric



Chris

shame that the APC in the state is not well coordinated to be a vibrant and knowledgeable opposition. In a futile attempt to sound knowledgeable and because they don't know, they resort to false headlines and empty rhetorics.

"As a party, we will be doing Plateau State and the people a disservice if we do not alert the public on the worthlessness of the rantings and ramblings of Plateau APC through Shittu Bamaayi", he emphasized.

The PDP, advised the good people of Plateau State to be wary of APC'S anti-people false rhetoric, advising the APC to stop making spurious, irresponsible and unsubstantiated claims that betray the bitterness, delusion and angst in them.

"Opposition in politics

requires intelligence, tact and criticism not deceit and childish tantrums!

"Plateau people believe in the vision and mission of His Excellency Governor Caleb Mutfwang. Over the past 5 months now, he has not only shown capacity in the management of the human and material resources of the state but in the design of a well established master plan that will become a roadmap to a prosperous future.

"The Governor is already laying the foundation for many years with some of the reforms and landmark projects he is set to embark on from the civil service reforms, to basic education, health, power, agriculture, SMEs, culture, sports and security etc", Akans enthused.

Senate to make laws to address economic challenges

Representatives is allocation of the vehicles representation, monitoring a trending to members. And constituency outreach topic across multiple because the issue has traditional and online generated significant media, concerning the public interest".

Senate to make laws to address economic challenges

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja.**

Deputy Senate President, Barau Jibrin has stressed the determination of the Senate to make laws that will address the challenges facing all sectors of the economy. A Statement by the Special Adviser to the Deputy Senate President on media, Ismail mudashir quoted jibrin as disclosing this at the just concluded 9th G 20 parliamentary

Speaker's summit held at New Delhi, India,

According to the lawmaker, digital platforms have impacted on various sectors of the economy. He stated that although developed countries have gone far in the use and operation of digital technology, developing countries such as Nigeria are tapping into the global trend, hence providing vast opportunities to the citizens.

Barau Jibrin further stated



Akpabio

that digital platforms are being deployed in the area of democratic governance and political accountability by the government, the media and civil society organizations.

Government, he added, is working with agencies and civil society organisations towards fully embracing the global

open government partnership initiative.

According to Senator Barau, Nigeria's experience of transformation through public digital platforms, is a testament to the nation's resilience, adaptability and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of its people.

IMAGES

DEPUTY GOVERNOR RECEIVES COPAP

Plateau State Deputy Governor, Hon Josephine Piyo on behalf of the Executive Governor yesterday received on a courtesy call the Coalition for Public Accountability in Plateau State (COPAP) in her office at Government House Rayfield, Jos. The group were led by Prof. Patricia Lar



Deputy Governor, Hon Josephine Piyo in a warm embrace with COPAP Leader, Prof. Patricia Lar



Her Excellency, Deputy Governor, Hon Josephine Piyo and the Commissioner, Higher Education, Dr. Kachollom Gang



Chief of Staff, office of the Deputy Governor, Hon Alex Kundang with the Commissioner for Higher Education, Dr. Mrs Kachollom Gang



Prof. Patricia Lar signing the visitors register



Director General, Research and Planning, Government House, Sam Godongs with the Permanent Secretary, Deputy Governor Office, Mrs Helen Ishaya



Cross section of members of the COPAP entourage



Press Secretary to the Deputy Governor, Martha Nyam with the PA to Her Excellency, Sam Kube



Deputy Governor, Hon Josephine Piyo, Leader COPAP, Prof. Patricia Lar, Government officials and the COPAP delegation

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Politics

First Ladyship, statecraft and Renewed Hope agenda

First ladyship has its origin in the United States. According to history, it originated in 1849 when president Zachary Taylor called Dolley Madison "first lady" at her funeral, while reciting her eulogy. However, it was said to have gained wider recognition in 1877 when Mary C. Amees wrote an article in the New York city newspaper, The Independent, describing the inauguration of President Rutherford B. Hayes – she was quoted as having used the term to describe Lucy Webb Hayes. Gidado Ibrahim writes.

THE term is now used all over the world to describe the wife of a president or head of state.

The office of First Lady has no constitutional backing globally. In Nigeria, it began to gain prominence during the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida (rtd). His wife, the late Maryam Babangida, popularized it with her Better Life for Rural Women programme in the 80's and 90's. Since then, subsequent wives of presidents or heads of states have amplified the relevance of that office with life-changing pet projects.

The current First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, is one in her own class. She's not only the wife of Nigerian President, Bola Tinubu, but also an eminent stateswoman vested in statecraft. Having served three terms uninterrupted, proving her mettle in the various spheres of our national life, she has since launched a pet project known as Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI). In keeping with its mandate of empowering Nigerian women with enabling skills, the RHI recently graduated the first set of beneficiaries of its Women in ICT Training and Empowerment Programme.

There is a very old and famous saying that "behind every successful man, there stands a woman". This aptly captures the life of the current Nigerian First Lady, Senator Remi Tinubu. In the political history of Nigeria, this is the first time the president, Senator Bola Tinubu, is a firmer parliamentarian, same as his vice, Senator Kashim Shettima. And to cap it all, the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu is a three-term Senator representing Lagos Central.

The holy Bible asked in Proverbs 31vs10: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Similarly, An-Nisa 4:34, 34th verse in the fourth chapter of the holy Quran says, "So virtuous women are those who are obedient, and guard the secrets of their



Oluremi

husbands with Allah's protection." This is an excellent description of Senator Oluremi Tinubu's personae.

Besides her administrative, legislative and business acumen, the First Lady is an ordained Pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God and a virtuous mother, given the character of her children.

I agree with the statement that the active supportive role of the Nigerian First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu to her husband, President Tinubu, is indispensable to the success of the Renewed Hope Government. Armed with a bumper resume, without an iota of a doubt, Oluremi Tinubu is a stabilising factor for Tinubu's government.

The First Lady is a powerful and influential figure in Nigerian politics. Her support for her husband is essential to the success of his government. She is a stabilising force who provides him with valuable

advice and support.

So far, she has helped to promote her husband's policies and agenda to the Nigerian public. She has also used her platform as First Lady to raise awareness of important issues such as women empowerment, child education, and healthcare. She has worked to bridge the gap between the government and the Nigerian people. She has provided her husband with valuable advice and support on a range of issues.

Overall, Oluremi Tinubu is a valuable asset to her husband's government. Her courage under fire and ability to keep her cool irrespective of storms is a sign of her strength, resilience and leadership. She is a woman who is not afraid to stand up for what she believes in, even when it is difficult. She is also a woman who is able to stay calm and collected in the midst of adversity.

Her courage has been evident throughout her career. When she was First Lady of Lagos State, she spoke out against injustice. She also worked to improve the lives of women and children in the state.

As a Senator, Mrs Tinubu has continued to be a vocal advocate for good governance and social justice. She has been a strong supporter of her husband's political career, even when he has faced challenges. Tinubu is a true inspiration to us all. She is a woman who has shown that it is possible to overcome any obstacle and to achieve anything you set your mind to.

Oluremi, as a role model for women and men everywhere, is a woman of strength, resilience and leadership.

Since her husband became President of Nigeria on May 29, she has been a strong supporter of his administration. She has also used her platform as First Lady to promote women's empowerment and child education.

Senator Tinubu's statecraft is evident in her many years of public service. She has served as the First Lady of Lagos State and as a Senator representing Lagos Central Senatorial District. In these roles, she has worked tirelessly to promote good governance and to improve the lives of her constituents. She is a champion of women's empowerment and child education. She has also been a vocal advocate for social justice and human rights.

Senator Tinubu's motherhood is evident in her love for her children and her commitment to their well-being. She is also a role model for mothers and women everywhere. She has shown that it is possible to be a successful career woman and a devoted mother at the same time.

Senator Oluremi is a true embodiment of statecraft, astuteness, and motherhood. As a role model for women and men everywhere, her dedication to serving her country and her people is an inspiration to us all.

In conclusion, let me state here

that in actualising her Renewed Hope Initiative, the First Lady must closely work with major stakeholders. On the continental front, Senator Oluremi should hold meetings with other African First Ladies to complete her husband's role as chairman of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States.

This will demonstrate that she is not just the mother of the Nigerian nation, but also of the entire African continent. With this, she can address all the vices across the continent by seeking legislation for unconditional punishment for culprits of domestic violence, rape, among others. The legislation will not only ensure justice for rape victims; the bills would also secure legislations to support women in needs.

This explains why the First Lady should also perfect plans to complete the construction of African First Ladies headquarters in Abuja.

In Nigeria, the First Lady should also work closely with wives of state governors to map out effective strategies that would restore peace and economic stability in the country. Senator Oluremi she also encourage the ruling class to provide for vulnerable Nigerians by visiting orphanage homes to give succor to motherless children.

These orphanage homes contributed immensely to the emergence of the Renewed Hope Initiative. Most of the orphanages we visited across the country during the 3023 campaigns, seeking for Tinubu's election, were solidly behind the Tinubu/Shettima ticket.

First Lady Oluremi should also hold roundtable discussions with Nigerian officers wives, including the Army, Navy Airforce, Police, DSS, NIA, NIS, NCS, Fire Service and wives of permanent secretaries on how to implement the Renewed Hope economic development agenda. By so doing, she would have assisted in restoring peace and stability in our great nation.

With such collaborations, it would be difficult for the enemies of the country to propagate lies based on religious sentiment. It will send strong signals to political charlatans that we are one nation and one destiny, which was the mantra upon which President Tinubu based his electioneering campaign.

May the Almighty God bless Nigeria.

Ibrahim is director, Communications and Strategic Planning, Presidential Support Committee (PSC).

Ibrahim is the Special Assistant to the Osun State Governor on Print Media.

"So far, she has helped to promote her husband's policies and agenda to the Nigerian public. She has also used her platform as First Lady to raise awareness of important issues such as women empowerment, child education, and healthcare. She has worked to bridge the gap between the government and the Nigerian people. She has provided her husband with valuable advice and support on a range of issues. Overall, Oluremi Tinubu is a valuable asset to her husband's government. Her courage under fire and ability to keep her cool irrespective of storms is a sign of her strength, resilience and leadership. She is a woman who is not afraid to stand up for what she believes in, even when it is difficult. She is also a woman who is able to stay calm and collected in the midst of adversity."

NEWS

Proposed HND Top-Up programme beyond NUC - NBTE

From
JOHN FWAH kaduna

THE National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) has said that the proposed Top-up programme in foreign offshore accredited Universities for Nigerian Higher National Diploma (HND) holders, was beyond the jurisdiction of National University Commission (NUC).

The Executive Secretary, NBTE, Professor Idris Bugaje stated this in a letter to the Minister of Education in response to questions bordering on the newly initiated HND Top-Up Programme using offshore credit transfer admission.

Bugaje said that HND holders who choose to pursue an academic career, at the moment, have no progression path except through the Postgraduate Diploma. And anytime they wish to switch to universities as lecturers after their Ph.D., they are always queried to produce their first degree.

While proffering a lasting solution to HND-BSc crisis, therefore, Bugaje implored the minister to convince President Bola Tinubu to sign the Anti-Dichotomy Bill into law, assuring that it will bring an end to the unwarranted and undeserved discrimination against HND holders in Nigeria.

"The top-up or credit transfer admissions by foreign universities was being mooted as an alternative to the PGD", Bugaje stressed.

In a statement by the Head, NBTE Media Unit, Hajiya Fatima Abubakar issued recently, it stated that "six Nigerian Universities have shown interest in joining the Top-Up programme but the Board has not responded to their request as NUC may not give them approval."

The letter to the minister reads in part: "I write to update you on the media response last week of the National Universities Commission (NUC) of Nigeria to an NBTE-initiated progression for HND holders through the Top-Up programme in foreign (offshore) accredited universities.

"Only the FME Division of Evaluation and Accreditation has the power to assess the foreign degrees (not NUC) after the students have graduated and may seek that.

"NBTE only provides HND Curricula content for credit mapping and eventual credit transfer admissions. The admissions are done by foreign universities and their Senates make awards of degrees not NBTE. In fact, the entire process is designed to operate seamlessly without NBTE.

"NBTE also has no financial benefit in the whole exercise though we requested low



Bugaje

tuition of a maximum of about 10% of regular fees since course delivery is online".

"NUC, from its press release, seems to dislike online programmes, attempting to take us back to the 20th Century. Online programmes are today a globally accepted mode of education delivery, especially in the 21st Century.

Nigerian educational policy has accommodated that with an Open University approved by the Federal Government and NBTE-approved Open Distance Flexible and e-Learning (ODFeL) Centres being operated by 36

Polytechnics at the moment, and the number is growing."

"Nigerian HNDs are much respected globally. Many European countries give them direct admissions for Masters. Last year, a shining example was Miss Islamiyat Ojelade, HND Distinction in Science Lab Technology (Biochemistry) graduate from the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, who last year received PhD admissions and Scholarships from seven (7) top US Universities, without the BSc. and not even MSc. Let us therefore start respecting our HNDs here at home and stop this discrimination by NUC and others with this mindset", the

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

SIXTY-one will be conferred with First Class Honours Degrees at the 6th and 7th Combined Convocation ceremony of the Federal University, Lokoja, billed to take place on Saturday, October 21, 2023.

The Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Olayemi Akinwumi who disclosed this at a pre-convocation press briefing held at the permanent campus of the institution on Monday, said that a total of 2,511 graduands will be conferred with First degrees, 99 - Master Degrees and 128 Postgraduate Diploma.

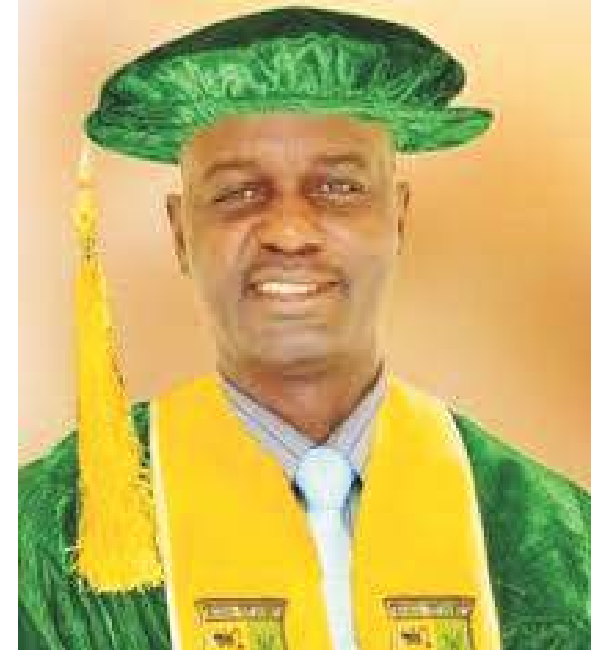
Professor Akinwumi also hinted that in an effort to meet the high demand for professional programmes by citizens of Kogi State, Federal University, Lokoja has commenced the running of new courses in Medicine, Nursing and Engineering.

He said that the College of Health Sciences has taken-off fully while maiden students' admission exercise into Engineering and Nursing will take place in the 2023/2024 academic session.

According to the Vice Chancellor, "the establishment of these new academic programmes is in line with my vision and agenda to run some professional courses that were not in existence in the Federal University, Lokoja but are of high demand by the citizenry of Kogi State.

"Our desire to run

FUL convocation: 61 to bag First Class Degrees



Akinwumi

professional courses is equally geared towards solving the problem of admission denial for citizens of Kogi State due to the competitive demand of these programmes".

Professor Akinwumi also hinted that the establishment of programmes like Agriculture, Law, Pharmacy, Psychology and Medical Laboratory Sciences are in the pipeline.

He commended the Federal Government under the immediate past President Muhammadu Buhari for approval to convert the

Federal Medical Centre, Lokoja to Federal Teaching Hospital to be used as Teaching Hospital for the Medical Programmes.

He stated that his administration made a significant impact in the provision of basic infrastructure that facilitated effective teaching and learning in the university, ranging from construction of road networks, administrative and academic buildings to procurement of academic, health and educational facilities.

FG embarks on geo-physical survey in Taraba

From
VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

THE Federal Government will embark on an "airborne geophysical survey" in Taraba State which is aimed at improving geological information and data towards the diversification of the economy.

The activity which will be conducted by the Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals Development would employ "the use of yellow coloured small aircrafts fitted with aeromagnetic lenses to carry

out aeromagnetic surveys in selected states of the federation including Taraba State".

According to a press statement by the Media/Communication Officer, Mineral Sector Support for Economic Diversification Project, Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, Ishaku Kigbu, the operation will cover five local government areas. Namely: Ardo Kola, Jalingo, Karim Lamido, Lau, Yorro and Zing.

The ministry is therefore

notifying Tarabans of the presence of aircrafts that would be flying at low altitude in the aforementioned areas.

"The Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, wish to re - notify the people of Taraba State, that the Federal Government, in continuation of its quest to improve the availability of geological information and data to enhance the diversification of the economy to achieve the Renewed Hope agenda of the present administration, is still embarking on an airborne geophysical survey within and around the state.

"Having carried out full sensitisation in the state earlier, the ministry wish to re

-emphasise that the activity is still ongoing hence the state will experience the flying of these special aircrafts at very low altitude in a repeated pattern to capture magnetic anomalies.

"In Taraba State, areas the aircraft will fly at low altitude to capture geological information and data include Ardo Kola, Jalingo, Karim Lamido, Lau, Yorro and Zing LGAs.

"The Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, therefore, wishes to inform the state and LGAs affected not to panic or entertain fears as the activity is safe.

"This has become very necessary given the security

situation in the country and to ensure that the people are not misinformed or dis-informed," the statement read.

The statement added that the "Airborne Geophysical Mapping Survey" started in June 2021, and that a "robust sensitisation and enlightenment campaign was carried out in the 19 states that were to be covered by the activity".

"The programme experienced overlaps due to weather conditions and logistical reasons but has been progressing well since it started," the statement ended.

ShopRite to establish branch in Gombe

From **Willie Attah, Gombe**

THE management of Pledge-Tech Engineering, owners of the famous ShopRite outfit, has concluded plans of establishing its shopping mall in Gombe State.

As part of their commitment and willingness, the top management of the outfit were in Gombe State for interaction with the state Investment and Property Development Company on possible ways to come and invest in the state and provide customers with a world-class shopping experience.

Leading the state team during the meeting, the Managing Director, Gombe State Investment and Property Development Company (GSIPDC), Muawiya Farouk, informed the team of the Gombe

State Government's desire to partner with genuine investors that will bring development to the state.

He told his visitors that the state government, under the leadership of Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, has created an enabling environment for businesses to thrive.

He said the planned presence of ShopRite is a welcomed development owing to the fact that it will create job opportunities for teeming youth as well as boost the economy of the state.

He thanked the management of Pledge - Tech Engineering for the initiative to partner GSIPDC with a view of bringing ShopRite to the state.

He said with the secured environment, coupled with the industrial park under

construction and the best state in ease of doing business, the state is speedily moving towards sustainable economic development.

Earlier speaking, the team lead of Pledge - Tech Engineering said they were in the state on a feasibility study and to interact with officials of Gombe State Investment and Property Development Company GSIPDC on their intention to bring ShopRite to the state.

He appreciated the State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, for providing an enabling environment and business opportunities.

He said Pledge -Tech Engineering has concluded plans to set ShopRite outfit in its quest to boost the state and the country's economy as well as create job opportunities for the teeming youth in the state.



Alake

News

Piyo applauds rural women in food production

By DUMAH RANDONG

Plateau State Deputy Governor, Josephine Piyo has hailed women in rural communities for their immense contributions to sustainable development, particularly in the area of agriculture and rural enterprise in Plateau State.

In a statement by her Press Secretary, Martha Nyam, to mark the International Day of Rural Women, the Deputy Governor applauded the role of women in rural development, food production and poverty eradication.

She appreciated rural women for supporting their households and communities in providing food, generating income, improving rural livelihoods and the overall wellbeing of families in the state.

Piyo who described rural women in the state as



Piyo

dogged and resilient, said that it was critical that they are accorded their rightful place as active participants in the efforts to achieve development in Plateau State.

She noted that the administration is sensitive to gender equality and

women empowerment which are essential components of human development and basic human rights.

The Deputy Governor also assured that their administration is working assiduously to ensure local communities were safe for farming and other businesses to thrive.

I 'll collaborate with ANAN for good governance

By FWENJI GOAR

The Commissioner, Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Plateau State, Hon. Ephraim Usman says the present administration has resolved to leave a legacy of great service and a prosperous state.

He noted that he will collaborate with the Association of National Accountant of Nigeria (ANAN) for good governance and capacity building.

Hon Usman disclosed this during a courtesy call on him by the Association of National Accountant of Nigeria (ANAN), Plateau State branch in his office.

He stated that Plateau State is happy with the location of the Association College and university in the state, adding that it has trained a lot of the professionals and quite a number of them are holding key positions in the present administration.

The Commissioner called on the association to join 'The Time is Now' administration of Governor Caleb Mutfwang in moving the state forward and pray for it to succeed.

Earlier in his remarks, the state branch Chairman of the association, Mr. Andy Agbadi Udah, stated that they were in the Commissioner's office to identify with him as one of them and to congratulate him on his recent appointment by the Governor which he said has gladden their hearts.

He thanked Governor Mutfwang for appointing their members into his administration and promised to support the government.

The Chairman announced that the ANAN university has introduced masters and PHD programmes to enhance knowledge.

Also in the Commissioner's office were officials of the National Association of Plateau State Students (NAPSS) led by its National President, Jerry

Mantim who said they came to identify with him as a former leader of the association. He called on him to ensure that the present administration fulfills its promise of increasing their bursary allowance

He thanked the Governor for releasing over three hundred million and two hundred million naira to the Plateau State University Bokkos and the State Polytechnic Barkin-Ladi respectively, for the accreditation of some of their courses.

In a related development, the leadership of the Pankshin Old Boys Association led by its National Treasurer, also paid a courtesy visit on the commissioner.

Mr. Reuben Mallah said their visit to the ministry was to congratulate the Commissioner who is one of them, on his recent appointment. And called on the State Government to complete the abundant legacy project in their college.

He called on the State Government to revive and increase the number of technical colleges in the state, adding that this will go a long way to help the students to be self-sufficient..

Responding, the Commissioner thanked all the groups for coming and stated that the present administration will work together with them. He called on them to support and pray for them to succeed.



Usman



Restructuring health care delivery

The state of the healthcare delivery system of any society defines the level of the development of that society. When a society has a robust and functional healthcare delivery system, it saves and free for itself the fund to embark on developmental projects.

By PAUL JATAU

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

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

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

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

when it comes to

sharing the spoils of office. At some points, the ethnic cards are played just so as to keep us all divided.

Yes, our leaders have not shown the resolve to lead the way but so has the followership. They disobey laid down processes but so do the followers. They refuse to grow our institutions by starving them of funds, so too does the followership who flagrantly disobey these institutions by refusing to cooperate with them.

Reading through the social media has been nightmarish. Insults are hauled at leaders for not doing what is right but no solutions are proffered by these critiques as a way out of the quagmire. So where are we heading to?

“ Yes, our leaders have not shown the resolve to lead the way but so too has the followership. They disobey laid down processes but so do the followers. They refuse to grow our institutions by starving them of funds, so too does the followership who flagrantly disobey these institutions by refusing to cooperate with them. ”

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

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

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

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

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

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

News

Governor Mutfwang re-echoes call for peace

By PETER TITLE

Plateau State Governor, Barr Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has reinforced his commitment to fostering peace and unity in Plateau and Nigeria, as he addressed the congregation at Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) in Maryland, Washington D.C., USA.

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

During the Sunday service, Governor Mutfwang drew inspiration from Hebrews 10:24-25, urging believers to watch over one another so as to promote love and good works wherever they find themselves.

Emphasizing the significance of love, peace, tolerance, and selflessness as exemplified by Jesus Christ, Governor Mutfwang said the task of enhancing unity for sustainable development for the benefit of the state is a collective one.

He stressed that enduring peace and unity on the Plateau would lead to progress, growth, and collective development,



Mutfwang

benefiting everyone regardless of their faith or ethnicity.

Rev. Henry Bello, the Pastor in charge, warmly welcomed Governor Mutfwang and his delegation, saying they are

delighted at the fellowship. He prayed for wisdom and God's guidance to ensure the success of Governor Mutfwang's administration in order to bring substantial benefits to all citizens.

Bauchi to enhance moral rectitude

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

BAUCHI State has concluded its retreat which had in attendance participants comprising of commissioners, special advisers, permanent secretaries and chairmen of local government councils.

It recently, rose up from its three-day event with a resolve to re-establish a Societal Reorientation Committee to enhance moral rectitude in the services and livelihood of the state.

A communique drawn from the retreat was read out by the Deputy Governor, Hon. Auwal Jatau. It observed that there are stress related challenges at workplace due to several factors, hence the advise that motivation, leadership style stress management, diversity and inclusion, work-life balance and organization culture

should come to the fore. The retreat took into cognizance the monumental achievements and challenges and the "dogmatic changes that have taken place in the past four years of the state present administration. The Transition Technical Committee, chaired by Professor Usman Bugaje, reviewed the document, 'My Bauchi Project' and came up with the successes and lessons of the first term tenure.

Also, the communique resolved that the reviewed 'My Bauchi Project' should be owned not only by Governor Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed but also by all other members of his cabinet comprising Commissioners and Special Advisers. Permanent Secretaries and Local Government Caretaker Committee Chairmen, so as to take ownership of the

blueprint. It said there should be change of mindset on the part of the participants in the retreat, to be anchored on continuous public enlightenment and rule of enforcement, while Government should tap into global best practices, particularly Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence, as e-Commerce should be aggressively promoted, leveraging on Bauchi's giant strides in ICT manpower.

The retreat resolved that a formula should be developed for aggressive exploitation of untapped natural resources endowment, particularly solid minerals and tourism, as well as upscaling of infrastructure and benchmarking as a deliberate policy for establishing smart cities. And ease of doing business guidelines be enforced to attract investments, both local and foreign.

The resolution also seeks to promote human capacity development, competence and merit in the civil service, and among public office holders generally, and optimally implement "My Bauchi Project" for proper planning and budgeting to provide for the various socio-economic needs of the people of Bauchi State within available resources.

Retreat participants in their own right should imbibe the leadership qualities of knowledge, vision, humility, justice, fairness, tact and wisdom. They should understand and know the

various types of power and how to exercise them for the common good of the people of the state, the retreat also resolved

"Public procurement law should be strictly observed in the procurement of goods and services by the government to ensure transparency, accountability, value for money and curbing of fraud. A central and viable data management system should be established to curb ghost workers syndrome and other fraudulent activities. A strong political will is however, required to actualize this process".

"However, in order to sustain the momentum, greater collaboration is required between state government, security agencies, community leaders and the generality of the people of the state. This is because security is everybody's business. Furthermore, the approval of His Excellency, the Governor, to recruit 20,000 youths to become security watch dogs should be pursued vigorously. This should form the nucleus of proposed Kaura Security Model.

Participants expressed their immense gratitude to Governor Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed for his visionary leadership and political will to convoke the retreat that unveiled the Second Term Blueprint on "My Bauchi Project" and the opportunity availed them to thoroughly discuss and build on the success. L

From JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has congratulated the Managing Director/CEO of the Nigerian Film Corporation, NFC, Dr Chidia Maduekwe on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

A statement by the spokesperson of the president, Ajuri Nhelale said the former lawmaker was a distinguished public servant and a passionate advocate of the Nigerian film industry.

According to the president, "I celebrate Dr Chidia Maduekwe on his 70th birthday. He is a man of many achievements who has devoted over 35 years of his life to the service of our nation in various capacities.

On this auspicious occasion, I pray that God Almighty grant him long Life, good health and more wisdom to continue to serve our nation".

Meanwhile, Benue state

President salutes NFCs' MD/CEO at 70

Governor, Hyacinth Alia has promised to settle the #359 billion salary and pension arrears being owed workers

by the past government. Alia who briefed journalists in Abuja said he is working round the clock to ensure that it is realized.



Tinubu

Nigeria's education in serious crisis - UI don

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO

A professor of Industrial Education and Training from

the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Kehinde Oluwaseun Kester has declared that the education sector in Nigeria is in a serious crisis.

Kester, who spoke recently in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, advised the three tiers of government and other stakeholders to intervene by providing more funding to save the sector from total collapse. "Public procurement law should be strictly observed in the procurement of goods and services by the government to ensure transparency, accountability, value for money and curbing of fraud. A central and viable data management system should be established to curb ghost workers syndrome and other fraudulent activities. A strong political will is however, required to actualize this process".

"However, in order to sustain the momentum, greater collaboration is required between state government, security agencies, community leaders and the generality of the people of the state. This is because security is everybody's business. Furthermore, the approval of His Excellency, the Governor, to recruit 20,000 youths to become security watch dogs should be pursued vigorously. This should form the nucleus of proposed Kaura Security Model.

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"Nigeria's education is highly underfunded and there is an urgent need for intervention. It is garbage in and garbage out. From primary to secondary and to tertiary. So, we are having issues. It is becoming a serious issue. To improve the education sector in the country, more money, more funding is required.

"So, how do we re-imagining the education system? We need to digitalise the system. We need a more adaptive learning environment. We need skills that are not taught in classrooms. We need to increase access to education. "Sir, ma, we are moving into the fifth industrial revolution. It is called industrial 5.0. Since we have industrial revolution 5.0, we should have education 5.0. "Our jobs will still be there, they are bringing industrial revolution 5.0 to strike the balance between man and machine. We want to use industrial revolution 5.0 to bridge the gap between the top and bottom".

The state governor, Engineer Seyi Makinde who was represented by Commissioner for Information and National Orientation, Prince Dotun Oyelade, while speaking, noted that press week is an avenue for journalists to re-dedicate themselves to their professional calling.

He said "The press week is not only for merry merry alone but for deep soul searching. Journalism is the best profession. Idris, while delivering his speech, urged journalists to continue to promote the ideas of democracy through their reportage.

"I will urge us on the need to continue to report the activities of President Bola Tinubu. Let us continue to promote the ideas of democracy. The success of our democracy lies in your dedication to service. I am confident that we will overcome our challenges".

Kester narrated that the world is moving towards fifth industrial revolution. Henoted that people should not worry about job loss when the time comes.

"We need to take our education sector more seriously. Nigeria's education is more or less knowledge transmission. It does not take care of the quality. I wish to say that Nigeria's education is very weak, poorly funded.

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Auwal

Feature

Cleaning Europe's largest saltwater lagoon

WHEN Eladio Sánchez Egea returned home one evening in April 2020, after working another long day in the field, he found his 11-year-old son agitated. At school that day, the boy had been told the agricultural industry was responsible for polluting the waters of Mar Menor, Europe's largest coastal saltwater lagoon which borders the Mediterranean Sea in the Iberian Peninsula, in southeastern Spain. "This is your fault, you are responsible for destroying our home," the boy told Egea, who works as an organic farmer. Egea was upset, although not at his son. "I was angry at how people perceive us farmers," he recalls. "Everyone blames us for the pollution in Mar Menor instead of assuming collective responsibility."

Over the past four decades, the Mar Menor has faced severe contamination from an excess of nitrate and phosphate, chemicals typically found in the fertilisers used in the neighbouring Campo de Cartagena, the largest agricultural croplands in the region. This contamination has led to several ecological collapses, pushing endemic species, such as the Spanish toothcarp, or Iberian killifish, to the brink of extinction. After decades of inaction and scientific warnings, local authorities have slowly been introducing both restoration and prevention measures in the hopes of saving the lagoon.

These steps either deal with the consequences of the pollution, for instance, organising cleaning efforts to fish out the algae from the lagoon. Alternatively they can directly target the source of the pollution. This can include legislation limiting the use of inorganic fertilisers, directing farmers to plant hedges that act as natural barriers reducing the flow of nutrients and prevent soil erosion, and clamping down on illegally irrigated lands to regulate the use of water for agricultural purposes. But despite a recent improvement of the lagoon's ecosystem, experts warn that this may be short-lived, and more drastic action is needed to reverse the damage.

In the early hours of an already hot morning in March, the first rays of sun stroke the waters of Mar Menor. The distant call of seagulls flying across the beach announces the sunrise. It should be an idyllic scene, but instead of clear, shimmering waters, the lagoon is a dank, murky green. Once known by locals and tourists as "the crystal sea" for its pristine waters, Mar Menor has since been dubbed the "green soup". In recent years fishermen have been catching more algae than fish, lining the shore with green triangular piles. For Mariló Jiménez Huescar, a local from San Javier, a town located four miles (7km) from Mar Menor, the lagoon is part of her social identity. "I used to go to the beach every summer, and the lagoon has always been a part of my life," says the 26-year-old.

Once a thriving ecosystem home to unique species such as the endangered long-snouted seahorse, the severe contamination of Mar Menor is not new. Following four decades of rampant urban development, regulatory mismanagement, and the rapid expansion of livestock and agricultural production, a stream of nitrogen and phosphorus has steadily flowed into the lagoon. "The lagoon has spent 20 years enduring this pressure," explains Miguel Ángel Esteve, a professor of ecology at the University of Murcia in Spain who has been studying the Mar Menor since the late 1990s.

In 2016, the ecosystem collapsed. The excess of nitrogen and phosphorus led to the lagoon's eutrophication, a process where a surplus of nitrates leads to the rapid and widespread growth of algae that feed on them. Studies have shown that as global temperatures keep rising, increased water temperatures can also stimulate the growth of these blooms. The algal blooms – some of which can be harmful to humans and animals – covered the lake's surface, preventing sunlight from penetrating the water. This stopped plants growing in the water from photosynthesising, while marine species struggled to find oxygen.

"It's as if the lagoon was gasping for breath," says Esteve. The lagoon turned from a clear



oasis brimming with life into a "green soup", he says. In 2016, 85% of the lagoon's vegetation died. Species like the large fan mussel have almost gone extinct. Three other collapses have followed in recent years. Among the most dramatic consequences of eutrophication are episodes of asphyxiated fish, like the ones locals witnessed in August 2021 when more than five tonnes of dead fish were washed ashore.

The lagoon's environmental degradation has not only affected its biodiversity. The hospitality, housing, and fishing sectors bore the brunt and residents no longer recognised a beloved summer spot. "I could not swim in the lagoon anymore because the water surface was covered with green algae," says Huescar. The strong stench of decomposing algae and rotting fish stopped both locals and tourists from entering the water. Huescar decided to take action and participated in her first demonstration against the pollution in December 2019.

Widespread protests

Even before Huescar joined the demonstration, the public outcry led to several protests in cities across Spain. But it was only in 2018 – the same year the EU Commission sent a notice denouncing the Spanish government's failure to protect the water with nitrate levels well above the legal limit of 50 mg/litre – that the regional government and the Hydrographic Confederation of Segura River, the body in charge of the administration of public water resources, introduced a bulk of recovery measures.

These included clamping down on illegally irrigated croplands, and restoration efforts such as the fishing out of algae. The latter, however, is contested by experts like Esteve, because while it temporarily cleans its waters, it doesn't significantly reduce the levels of nutrients in the Mar Menor in the long-term. Nat Llorente Nosti, an activist for the non-profit Ecologistas en Acción, states that between the summer and the end of 2022 £5m (€6m/\$6m) was spent on employing fishers to remove over 20,000 tonnes of algae. As of

August 2023, a total of £14.3m (€16.6m/\$17.5m) has been spent. "The government should have dedicated these funds for a better use...to tackle the main source of contamination instead of clearing the water to make it look appealing from the surface," says Nosti.

The main industry targeted by new interventions is the agricultural sector. "So far, I've been impacted by four measures, some of which we were already practising but others are new, like the planting of hedges," says Egea. On his 24 acres (10 hectares) of farmland where he mainly grows peppers, celery, and pumpkin, the hedges act as natural barriers, filtering nitrates from fertilisers and preventing soil erosion.

The other steps Egea has implemented are the collection of rainwater – both for irrigation purposes and so it doesn't absorb nutrients and flow into the lagoon – regular checks by public officials to ensure solutions are adequately implemented, and the use of pressure monitors (agricultural devices which allow the precise application of fertiliser or water), he says. The farmers are legally required to have two in each section of their cropland. Egea says that the monitors provide crops with the precise amount of water, avoiding overwatering.

Many farmers, such as Egea, feel resistant to implement these changes as they don't understand how they will help improve the health of the lagoon. So far, no widespread assessment has been published on how effective the measures are, although Esteve is currently undertaking research.

While Egea has at times felt unjustly vilified as a farmer, experts like Nosti are adamant the interventions should target the agricultural sector. This is because up to 85% of the nutrients come from the livestock and intensive agricultural sector, mostly from fertilisers used in the lands of the Campo de Cartagena – more than 148,286 acres (roughly 60,000 hectares) of croplands lying to the west of the lagoon. Known as "Europe's orchard", over 60% of the fruits and

vegetables grown in the Campo are exported, 21% to the UK alone. Exports to the United States have doubled in the first half of 2023 compared to the previous year, reaching a total of €2.2m (£1.9m/\$2.3m). Besides the agrarian sector, studies find that around 15% of nutrients come from urban activity, such as sewage waters.

In order to bring that number down, a single action is not sufficient, says Javier Senent Aparicio, a researcher who studies the flow of water streams at the Catholic University of Murcia, in south east Spain. "The Mar Menor is a complex ecosystem. That is why several measures have to be applied in conjunction," he says, hoping to draw the attention of the authorities to the critical situation of the lagoon.

In particular, there are eight specific measures that, combined, are the most successful, a 2023 study found. The study conducted as part of the European Union-funded research project Smart Lagoon by Aparicio and his colleagues found that, together, the measures can reduce the flow of nutrients by around 70% – "with nitrate exports being reduced by 67% and phosphorus exports by 75%". Six of these eight interventions directly target the croplands.

Most nutrients flow into the lagoon from superficial water streams that run from the farmlands down into the lagoon, especially during heavy rainfall, says Esteve. A smaller part of the nutrients that flow into the lagoon, around 25%, he says, come from the Cuaternario aquifer, where nutrients have been seeping in over decades. The aquifer does not naturally store potable water, but it is used for irrigating farmlands. The aquifer holds underground streams which directly flow into the Mar Menor. In March 2023, Esteve estimates that an average of five metric tonnes of nitrates were flowing into the lagoon every day. Around 4,500 to 5,000 tonnes of nitrates a year, both from superficial and underground discharges."

Source: BBC.com

Foreign News

EU leaders to meet on Israel-Hamas war

EUROPEAN Council President Charles Michel has said it is of utmost importance that the Council agree a common position on the Israel-Hamas war [File: Geert Vanden Wijngaert/AP Photo]

European Union leaders are set to meet to decide on a united message on the ongoing Israel-Hamas war after days of mixed messages.

In the emergency video conference on Tuesday, the EU leaders will discuss their response to the conflict after confusing and sometimes contradictory messaging that has raised tensions within the bloc.

"It is of utmost importance that the European Council ... sets our common position and establishes a clear unified course of action that reflects the complexity of the unfolding situation," European Council President Charles Michel said in a letter inviting leaders to attend the meeting.

Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the European Commission, travelled to Israel on Friday to tell Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Israel has Europe's backing, a move that generated blowback for appearing to speak for the bloc as a whole.

"Foreign affairs is a matter for member states, it is a matter for the [European] Council," the AFP news agency quoted an unnamed EU official



as saying.

Von der Leyen also faced criticism for not stating that the EU expects Israel to abide by international humanitarian law in its response to Hamas's October 7 attacks, as other EU leaders did.

EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell last week said Israel's siege of Gaza "is against international law", following a meeting of EU foreign ministers.

Oliver Varhelyi, the commissioner responsible for relations with countries neighbouring the EU, also faced criticism last week for going it alone to announce that a disbursement of EU development aid to Palestinians had been frozen.

Officials later clarified that development projects in Palestinian territories might

"need to be adjusted" but humanitarian aid would be unaffected.

Von der Leyen on Monday said the EU would triple humanitarian aid to Palestinians to 75 million euros (\$79m).

During their meeting on Tuesday, EU leaders are expected to discuss ways to mitigate the fallout of the war amid fears of regional escalation and a humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has placed Gaza under a total blockade and bombarded it with unprecedented air raids in retaliation for Hamas's attack, the deadliest on Israel in decades.

Israel's attacks have killed at least 2,808 people and injured more than 10,000 others in the enclave, according to Palestinian officials.

DONALD Trump 'does not have the right to say and do exactly as he pleases', Judge Tanya Chutkan said

A federal judge has barred Donald Trump from criticising prosecutors, the court and possible witnesses ahead of his trial on election subversion charges.

It follows recent remarks in which the former president slammed prosecutors as "a team of thugs" and attacked one witness in the case as "a gutless pig".

Judge Tanya Chutkan said a limited gag order against Mr Trump was necessary to prevent "a pre-trial smear campaign".

A Trump spokesperson criticised the ruling as "another partisan knife".

The Republican frontrunner for president in 2024 was charged earlier this year over his alleged efforts to overturn his 2020 election defeat at the hands of Democrat Joe Biden.

The four counts in his indictment were: conspiracy to defraud the US, conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding, obstruction of an official proceeding and conspiracy against the rights of citizens.

Special Counsel Jack Smith, who is leading the investigation, requested a gag order on the basis that Mr Trump's comments could "prejudice" participants, including prosecutors, jurors and court staff.

His office also argued that attacking potential witnesses would have a "chilling" effect on the case.

"The defendant can't be permitted to intentionally try

Trump gets gag order in 2020 election meddling case



Trump

this case in the court of public opinion," government lawyer Molly Gaston argued in court on Monday.

That left Judge Chutkan in the tricky position of balancing the need to protect the legal proceedings with the free speech rights of a political candidate.

Over the course of more than two hours, she reminded Mr Trump's team that, as a criminal defendant, he "does not have the right to say and do exactly what he pleases".

She noted Mr Trump had referred to Mr Smith as "deranged", and to her as "a biased Trump-hating judge" and "a radical Obama hack".

She added that she was "deeply disturbed" by his inclination to attack others, such as the special counsel's wife and a court staffer in his New York civil fraud case.

Mr Trump faces a partial gag order in that case over his criticism of the New York judge's top clerk in a post that included her name, photograph and social media.

"This is not about whether I like the language Mr Trump uses," Judge Chutkan said on Monday. "This is about language that presents a danger to the administration of justice."

Attorney John Lauro, who spoke on the former president's behalf, defended his "colourful language" as part of the "rough and tumble" of politics.

He argued that Mr Trump was in the middle of a campaign and "entitled to speak truth to oppression".

But Judge Chutkan pushed back: "Because he is running for president, he gets to make threats?"

Her limited ruling on Monday was "narrowly tailored", she said - not as far as the special counsel wanted, but doing enough to prevent a "smear campaign".

The partial order does not block Mr Trump from criticising President Biden, his justice department or Washington, where the case is being tried.

But it does bar comments about the special counsel, his team, court staff or potential witnesses - except Mike Pence, Mr Trump's vice-president and rival in the 2024 race.

Daniel Noboa elected Ecuador's youngest president

Businessman Daniel Noboa, 35, will become the youngest president in Ecuador's history, after winning Sunday's run-off.

With more than 97% of votes counted, Mr Noboa, a centrist, had a lead of four percentage points over his left-wing rival, Luisa González.

Ms González conceded the election and congratulated Mr Noboa on his win.

In his victory speech, Mr Noboa said that he would "give back a smile and peace to the country".

The election campaign was overshadowed by unprecedented levels of violence, which saw one of the candidates, Fernando

Villavicencio, assassinated just days before the first round of voting in August.

The murder rate in Ecuador quadrupled between 2018 and 2022 and opinion polls suggested that security was voters' main concern going into the election.

Flanked by heavily armed soldiers, Mr Noboa took to the stage and said that "tomorrow we will start working for a new Ecuador, to reconstruct a country battered by violence, by corruption and hate".

Analysts point out that Mr Noboa, who has little political experience, will face an uphill struggle to tackle Ecuador's security problem and its poorly performing economy during his limited time in

office.

While presidential terms in Ecuador are normally four years long, this was an early election triggered by the dissolution of parliament by outgoing President Guillermo Lasso.

Mr Noboa will serve out the term begun by Mr Lasso, which will end in May 2025. He can then stand for a second term.

Supporters of the young businessman took to the streets to celebrate his win.

IMAGE SOURCE, EPA

"We need new blood and not the old politics that have done us so much harm," a 23-year-old student told Reuters news agency. "Our president should waste no time and work very hard to put the brakes on insecurity."

During his campaign, Mr Noboa said that he would combat the country's powerful gangs - many of which operate from inside jail - by placing the most hardened criminals on prison ships off Ecuador's coast.

He has also said that he will boost security at Ecuador's borders and ports to disrupt key drug-trafficking routes.

In order to lift the economy from its post-pandemic slump, he has promised to increase employment opportunities for young Ecuadoreans, in particular by creating incentives for national and foreign companies.

A graduate of the Harvard

Kennedy School, Daniel Noboa seems to have appealed to young voters fed up with a lack of prospects.

While he presented himself as an alternative to more established politicians, his critics point out that he comes from one of the most powerful families in Ecuador.

The young Noboa is the son and heir of banana magnate Álvaro Noboa, who tried - but failed - to be elected president five times.

Brussels shooting: Police shoot dead attacker who killed Swedes

POLICE in Brussels have shot dead the man who killed two Swedish nationals on Monday evening.

The 45-year-old man named as Abdesalem was shot in a café in the Schaerbeek neighbourhood.

Two Swedes were killed and a third injured in the automatic rifle attack on Monday.

It took place on Boulevard d'Ypres, 5km (3 miles) from the stadium where Belgium was playing Sweden to qualify for the Euro 2024 football tournament.

Brussels has been on its highest terror alert ever since.

The gunman is believed to be a man of Tunisian origin who was in Belgium illegally, after his asylum application was rejected in 2020.

He posted a video online

saying he had killed people in the name of God and the prosecutor's office believes he was inspired by the Islamic State group.

Belgian Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden told Flemish public broadcaster VRT that the automatic weapon found on him was the same as the one used in Monday's attack.

Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, called Monday's shooting "a harrowing act of terrorism" in a press conference on Tuesday, and prosecutors said the likely motive were the victims' nationality.

Sweden's foreign ministry sent a text message to citizens in Belgium telling them to be "vigilant".

They were also asked not to be overt with their nationality, public

broadcaster SVT reported.

Mr De Croo said: "Perpetrators, they try to instil fear, distrust and division in our free societies. Terrorism. Terrorists must understand that they will never succeed in their intent."

Fans were held in a Brussels stadium as a match was suspended after the shooting of Swedish nationals

The attack began at 19:00 on Monday (17:00 GMT), when a man opened fire in the north of the city centre.

Videos shared online showed a man on a scooter, dressed in an orange fluorescent jacket, pull up and start shooting passers-by.

He then chases people into the hallway of an apartment building to gun them down. Four gunshots can be heard.

The perpetrator shot three people of Swedish nationality, killing two of them.



Noboa

Feature

'The problem is distribution, not resources'

Inequality is growing around the world. Every year, the gap between the rich and the poor gets even wider. Today, it is estimated that 1% of the population owns more than 70% of the world's wealth. A recent analysis by the UN shows that six of the seven countries in the world where the top 10% of the population holds more than 80% of the wealth, were in Africa. Writers, EJIKE NWOLISA

ECONOMISTS are in agreement that inequality is bad for the economy. If the income gap is too large and wealth is too concentrated, it will affect the aggregate demand which if seriously insufficient, induces an economic recession. A large income gap will also reduce the liquidity of a country's social class and the resilience of economic growth in the medium and long term which will have a negative impact on economic growth. These issues affect the effectiveness of monetary policy.

While the factors responsible for this inequality in the developed world are different from their drivers in the developing nations, the effectiveness of the government's policy initiatives aimed at closing this gap is equally wide apart in different climes. Despite the imperativeness of such policies, many African countries have yet to initiate them, not to talk of evaluating the aggregate impact on the economy.

Mahatma Gandhi was once quoted to have said that "the Earth has enough resources to meet the needs of all but not enough to satisfy the greed of even one person". This quote is apt in our world of today but very relevant in the analysis of most of our problems in Nigeria today where the greed of the few suffocates the wellbeing of the majority.

Poverty and inequality in Nigeria are not due to a lack of resources but to the ill-use, misallocation and misappropriation of such resources. In our public space, we have consciously and unconsciously institutionalized the culture of unequal distribution of jobs/opportunities, unequal distribution of political patronage, unequal distribution of national assets, and unequal distribution of infrastructure. At the root of this unfair distribution is corruption. It is common knowledge that public officeholders in Nigeria steal billions of dollars from the national wealth every year.

In Nigeria, there is an overwhelming sentiment that laws and regulations are designed to benefit a particular region. The concentration of key government agencies in the hands of one region leads to undue political undertone, corrupt practices and ineffective regulatory powers of government. The best jobs and heads of 'juicy' agencies and parastatals are the exclusive reserves of a particular region/tribe. Many Nigerians believe that the law and its implementation are not in the best interest of all citizens. The slogan "go to court" is now used as a mockery of the judicial system. The socio-economic consequences of all these are very injurious to our society.

When wealth distribution becomes concentrated in a small



Nigerians

number of people, political power tends to become skewed in favour of those small wealthy people who manipulate the government to their favour through both legal and corrupt practices. This explains why godfatherism, vote-buying and other forms of rigging are prevalent in our society. It is now proven that we are incapable of conducting credible elections no thanks to the devilish desire of the few to perpetually cling to power for selfish motives. The negative impact is that the worst of us have continued to rule the best of us to the detriment of our country.

Researchers have consistently pointed to evidence that economically unequal societies have higher crime rates. Surveys conclude that 'inequality is the single factor mostly and consistently related to crime.' Denying people what is due to them may induce the urge to violently take it, resulting in a higher propensity for criminal behaviour. This explains why violent crimes like kidnapping and armed robbery are on the rise in our nation.

As the means of legal livelihood get fewer in an unequal society, illegal ways of sustaining lives increase even when risks of punishment when caught are taken into

consideration. Who is still in doubt about why prostitution, drug trafficking, cybercrime, 'Yahoo and Yahoo plus' and other vices are on the increase?

A high level of economic inequality means a higher level of poverty. Poverty is associated with poor public health, poor schooling and poor decision-making ability which place significant burdens on the economy. When the price of commodities increases in the midst of low income, the populace's support for government policies declines. With the increasing number of poor people blaming the government for their woes, they tend to, directly and indirectly, resist even the policies that might be in their best interest in the long run. The resultant effect is that the citizens and the nation will be stuck in the vicious cycle of poverty.

A widening rich-poor gap tends to increase the rate of rent-seeking and predatory market behaviour. While stocks and corporate profits soar to new heights, wages as a percentage of GDP have stagnated. It is an aberration that the profits of Nigerian banks have continued to increase at arithmetic progression year by year while the manufacturing sector is shrinking and the national economic growth rate is declining. The huge profit level of

our banking industry is an indication of a malfunctioning economy driven by the obsession for profit at the expense of providing financial services and support for commerce and industry at competitive fees and charges.

Unequal income distribution increases political instability. Political capture produces ill-gotten wealth which perpetuates economic inequality. The massive concentration of economic resources in the hands of fewer people presents a significant threat to inclusive political and economic systems. Instead of moving forward together, people are increasingly separated by economic and political power, inevitably heightening social tension and increasing the risk of societal breakdown. Our elites are completely detached from the masses. The widening gap between these two extremes is a time bomb waiting to explode. History favours the poor in a class war. Nigerian elites should note this while they continue to strangle the masses with the relentless public display of their affluence.

Equality of opportunities is a central tenet of inclusive modern societies. Recent evidence shows that income inequality and inequality of opportunities are highly

correlated. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, strong family connections rather than merit is a greater determinant for the type of job a fresh graduate can secure. Our graduates' life chances are strongly determined by their parents' socio-economic status. Those who have power, have it for themselves, their friends and their families. Sadly, ordinary citizens' fate and achievements are being determined by their tribe, religion, family or any other immutable characteristic.

Nigeria must build a new political and economic system that works for everyone, not just for the fortunate few. Every Nigerian should be given the chance to succeed. Any system where, whether a citizen succeeds or not is not in his hands, should be dismantled. A level playing ground and deliberate redistribution will help in this regard. Statistics have shown that combined direct and indirect effects of redistribution can lower inequality. Economic growth may produce few wealthy individuals but economic development involves lifting a significant number out of poverty. The latter should be the ultimate target. 'No society can be flourishing and happy when the far greater part of its members is poor and miserable'

-Adam Smith

THE WORLD

With **PALANG KASMI**

Relationship

How not to end a relationship



By **ANABELLE BERNARD**

WHEN we fall in love, we often believe the relationship will last forever. We always hope that this one is the one, that it will be different this time, and that there's no way anything can ever happen to break you up.

Except, sometimes those things can happen, and you do break up. If we only look at the divorce rate, research shows it is around 50% (although measuring divorce rates is more complex than comparing marriages to divorces in a single year).¹ Because they are not as closely monitored, it is much more difficult to obtain rates on casual and common law partnerships that break up. Relationships end for a wide variety of reasons. Conflict is one common reason, but sometimes it involves other reasons that mean ending a relationship with someone you still care about. When this happens, you must learn to break up with someone you love.

To do this, you should: Acknowledge that it will cause pain on both sides, have a face-to-face conversation, be honest but not overly detailed, avoid responding

to arguments, make a clean break in order to create distance, be sympathetic, don't shame or blame the other person, allow yourself to grieve the relationship.

Why and how do breakups happen?

Most of us enter relationships with the hope that we will never have to end them. Marriage, especially, is built on the premise that it will remain "until death do us part." Common causes for breakups include personality differences, lack of time spent together, infidelity, lack of positive interactions between the couple, low sexual satisfaction, and low overall relationship satisfaction. Ending a relationship is one of the most difficult things we have to do. No matter where you are in the breakup process, knowing how to break up well (including how to break up with someone you love) can help make this transition smoother and less harmful for both partners.

How to break up the right way

We say "right" way, but in reality, there is no right or "best" way to break up. Every relationship is

different, and every person in a relationship is different. It is up to you to consider the personality, needs, and feelings of your partner as you read through this article and figure out how to end things. Recognize that it's never easy. Understand that there is no pain-free way to break up. We all wish that we could end relationships without any hurt or pain. But no matter how broken the relationship is, officially ending it will cause pain on both sides. Once you acknowledge that there will be pain, you can be prepared for the aftermath.

Do it Face-to-Face. If you've ever been dumped by text or email (or if you've been ghosted altogether), you know how it feels to be given so little consideration that the other person didn't even bother to tell you in person. Why do the same to another person? Your partner deserves the dignity of a face-to-face conversation. An intimate setting is arguably better, but if you are worried about your partner having a violent reaction, a public place is safer.

Be honest but don't give too much detail

In general, people want to know why they're being dumped. While "you're terrible in bed" or "you lack ambition" might seem like an honest answer, it doesn't really preserve your partner's self-esteem or dignity. Using a reflexive sentence like "I don't feel we're compatible sexually" or "I don't think our long-term goals align anymore" are nicer ways to express your feelings. Don't do a play-by-play of the things the other person did wrong or use clichés like "it's not you, it's me." Do not give in to arguments or protests. If the breakup is a surprise for the other person, they might try to argue, protest, or give reasons why you should remain together and try again one more time. If you are at the point of breaking up, nothing can restore or revive the relationship now. Giving in will only delay the inevitable.

Make a clean break. Do not suggest you stay friends. Avoid saying "let's stay in touch." To move on from romantic relationships, you need to avoid further emotional entanglements with the ex-partner. You may be friends again down the road, but this is not the right time to consider this possibility. Show empathy, express your sadness at the breakup and share some good things about your time together. Being dumped feels really bad. You can soften the blow a little by talking about some of the good times you shared together. Say something like, "You taught me so much about cooking and I am a better cook now, thanks to you".

You want to make the other person feel like they had a positive impact on your life despite the relationship ending.

Avoid blaming or shaming, avoid turning the other person into "the bad guy." Nobody's perfect. You have faults too, and turning your ex-partner into an evil figure is not helpful (aside from obvious instances of violence, but that's not the kind of relationship we're talking about here). They may have done some bad things, like cheating, but they are human too. It's better to resolve your feelings around what they did (if they did anything wrong) rather than who they are. Give yourself time to grieve. Even if you are the one ending the relationship, there will be a period of heartbreak, sadness, and pain. This is one of the most difficult parts of figuring out how to break up with someone you love. You still care about them, but you need to remind yourself of the reasons why the relationship isn't working. Realize that you will also need to adjust to your new situation. Surround yourself with people you love, do things that make you happy, and remember that crying and feeling sad is perfectly okay. In any breakup situation, the most important thing to remember is to be kind and compassionate. It's easy to forget how the other person might feel when we are so caught up in our own emotions, but it is essential to avoid centering the entire conversation on yourself. If you reach out with kindness and compassion, things will be much easier for everyone.



THE NIGERIA STANDARD

With **PALANG KASMI**

Living

Invest in girl-child to make her independent - Plateau stakeholders

By **PALANG KASMI**

EACH year, the International Day of the Girl Child 2023 is dedicated to recognizing and promoting the rights and well-being of girls worldwide.

It emphasizes the importance of empowering girls through education, access to healthcare, and protection from violence and discrimination. The day, every October 11, also encourages girls to dream big, pursue their goals, and contribute to building a more equitable and just world.

The 2023 theme "Invest in Girls' Rights: Our Leadership, Our Well-being" has been described by stakeholders as apt and a call to action to make the lives of girls better. It is unfortunate that girls around the world continue to face challenges linked to social, religious, cultural, educational, economic and in other areas. Creating a forum for commitments that pledge to fight for the rights of girls, by making stakeholders amplify their voices to create a world where every girl can lead and thrive is what the United Nations Day strives to achieve world wide.

As part of the celebration of the 2023 International Day of the Girl Child, the UN Secretary-General said: "Women and girls can lead us to a fairer future. Let us amplify girls' voices, and recommit to working together to build a world where every girl can lead and thrive" In agreeing with the above statement by the United Nations Secretary-General, many bodies, groups, individuals and organisations, called for action concerning the future of the girl-child especially ways to make her strive to economic independence.

Plateau State Deputy Governor, Hon. Josephine Piyo in her message to mark the 2023 girl-child day reiterated the commitment of the Caleb Mutfwang-led administration in promoting and creating ample opportunity for girl child development.

She said advancing the cause of women in the state by creating adequate access to education, safety, and healthcare for the girl-child, was paramount to their administration even as she decried that harmful gender norms perpetuated in some communities are some of the stumbling blocks that keep women locked out of opportunities, particularly negotiating rooms and political institutions in the future.

She said the Plateau State government is putting up efforts and policies that are critical in advancing access to education and skills that will empower women girls in the state. "Government would advance girls' human rights by investing in their growth and addressing the significant barriers and access challenges they face" she said and encouraged young women and girls to imbibe the culture of self discipline and not indulge in risky behaviours.

Likewise, Senate Minority Leader and Senator Plateau North, Sen. Simon Mwakwong

called for greater attention to Girls especially in building their skills to attain economic growth, in his statement to mark the day. "Girls possess multi-dimensional talents, gifts and capacities that must be harnessed in a fit environment in order for them to achieve their full potentials at appreciable levels. They play critical roles in households, society and the economy hence the need to build their capacities through quality



education, skill acquisitions and other positive activities".

"Deliberate actions and greater investment need to be put in place to address the prolonged barriers being faced by Girls in fulfilling their rights and achieving their full potentials at appreciable levels" he said adding that the theme of the 2023 International Day of the Girl Child is apt. "The right investment and action must be made/taken to ensure that Girls' rights are not only protected but they are provided with the conducive environment to

achieve greatness against known encumbrances. Empowering Girls has the propensity of breaking the cycle of poverty which in turn will translate to a more prosperous society".

He assured that as a Federal Lawmaker, he will give attention to enacting laws and supporting laws that will have direct bearing on the Girl Child challenging them to live responsible, modest, purpose-driven, disciplined, and goldy lifestyles that will add values to the Family, society and the World at

large. He lauded their contributions to Nation building.

The Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Human Virology Nigeria, IHVN, Dr. Patrick Sunday Dakum, also called on Nigerians and Governments at all levels to prioritize, implement, protect and promote the rights of the Girl-Child in the country. Doing so according to him, will secure a better and promising future for tomorrow's leaders.

Speaking on the 2023 theme, Dakum also the Plateau State Labour Party (LP) Governorship Candidate in the 2023 elections said except that is done, posterity will suffer advanced and sophisticated various degrees of societal vices built on the current ones the country is squarely facing.

Dakum said as the girl-child is tomorrow's mother, there is nothing commensurate to ensuring the protection of their rights and freeing their lives from fear and want so that they can grow in peace. And that investing in the girl-child will abolish the physical, emotional, and intellectual impairment that poverty inflicts on children leading to a lifetime of suffering and poverty and handing down its negative legacy from generation to generation.

Dakum reiterated the vitality of ardently envisioning and considering with all verity the girl-child as future homemaker, moulder of the next generation attitudinally, informal educationally wise and nurse from the cradle to adolescence, and to sacredly grant them the desired direction, sound grooming, protection, education and all other forms of empowerment they need to be fully prepared for tomorrow's motherhood. He cautioned that when abused, denied the rights to education, raped, forced into girl-child marriage, trafficked into prostitution and domestic slaves, they are bound to see the world in the negative perspective and take lowlife as mode of survival which is disastrous to the wellbeing of generations to come adding "Society is the reflection of the home, and to have a better society, the homes must be better,

and to have better homes is not magical but investing on the girl-child. When the girl-child and women are empowered, the society is empowered. Proverbs 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it. If the girl-child is given the desired attention and trained in the right way, she won't depart from it when she grows up, thus; our homes and the society will be secured".

Equally in a message, Plateau APC governorship candidate in the 2023 general elections, Dr. Nentawa Yilwatda Goshwe said the challenges faced by our adolescent girls compromise their prospects for work and financial independence as adults.

He advised Governments and stakeholders to get committed to promoting gender equality, empowering girls, challenging gender stereotypes, and advancing their human rights is a must-do for our generation.

"If we change their today then we are changing their future. Today I celebrate the resilience of Plateau Girls who despite all these challenges have burnt their figures to achieve greatness", he said.

On her part, the Plateau state chairperson, Stand up for Women Societies (SWS), Lib. Grace Gora, described the challenges faced by girls as numerous and an impediment to their success stories if not adequately addressed.

Gora who is also the Secretary of Mangu Development Association (MDA), women wing says girls displaced and living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Mangu, Riyom, Barking Ladi and other Local Governments of the state as result of the recent crisis and attacks has exposed many girls to social ills like trafficking, sexual harassment, rape, lack of education, poor menstrual hygiene and sanitation. She called on stakeholders to come to their aid and support girls living in IDP's and conflict zones to actualise their dreams and secure a bright future despite their predicament.



Editorial

On food, insecurity and hunger in the land

DESPITE THE declaration of state of emergency on food insecurity few months ago by the Tinubu led administration, the situation is even getting dire with this bite heavily felt by households across the country's over 200million population.

WORRISOME is the fact that all the measures put in place to cushion the effect of the increase in price of Premium Motor Spirit [PMS], especially with the release of N5billion to each of the 36 states to buy grains and fertilizers for distribution to vulnerable citizens does not appear to be provide tangible solution to the food crisis nationwide.

RATHER, there are allegations that some state officials have diverted the grains and fertilizers to the markets and are being sold at cut-throat prices and for personal greed which has further put an estimated 25million people to a brink of hunger.

UNFORTUNATELY, finding immediate solution to the worsening food crisis may be far-fetched considering the myriad of factors such as, the constant free fall of the Naira against notable foreign currencies like the US Dollar, the high cost of fertilizers and pesticides, the threat of insecurity on farmers and above all, the effect of the flood disaster that ravaged several farming communities during last year's cropping season with Billions of Naira worth of harvest destroyed.

SADLY, all these have added another pressure on the economy that had suffered several inflationary trends within the last two years with negative consequences on society especially with the resultant rise in psychological trauma among the citizens who are trying to cope with other challenging realities of economic hardship.

PERHAPS, it is time for a new approach to be tried by the Federal Government in order to salvage this embarrassing situation in a country that prides itself as the strongest economy on the African Continent with vast expands of rich soil for agriculture that can feed its entire population and even export food commodities to other countries in Africa.

SUFFICE TO NOTE, Nigeria can borrow a lift from other developing countries. One is India which suffered similar food crises in the 1950s and 1960s that it became known as a "Begging bowl" nation. But by making food self-sufficiency its top economic and foreign policy in the 1960s, it jettisoned that image and became one of the leading exporter of food in the world.

WE call on the Federal Government in tandem with all the states of the Federation to come out with a template on agriculture that could take the nation back to the good days of Green Revolution by coming out with concrete plans and strategies which include pro-agriculture economic policies, land reform and aggressive investment on mechanized farming with support and grants to both small and medium scale farmers in the country.

FURTHERMORE, Governments at all tiers, must eliminate the "Middleman" syndrome who often stand to determine which farmer gets what and how in terms of pricing for their food produce which leaves the farmers at the mercy of those sherlocks.

NO DOUBT, it must be known that there is no quick fixes for the bad situation the nation has found itself and without making agriculture attractive particularly among the army of the youth population most of whom are unemployed and taking refuge in criminality.

THEREFORE, a political will is required with the framework that will protect the land and the farmers while steps must be taken to raise farmer's productivity, boost supply, and lower prices to consumers and ensuring good returns on investment. Anything short of that may just be wishful- thinking.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Enhancing skills amongst undergraduates

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

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



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

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

Either in a job or in organisation exposure should

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

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

Barracks road bridges need urgent attention

BARRACKS road Bridges need urgent attention

RECENTLY, the two bridges linking the Police Barracks road from West of Mines up to the one along St. Theresa's Church are fast becoming death traps with holes taking over.

Permit me therefore to appeal to the Plateau State Ministry of Works to urgently carry out repair works on the two bridges which are fast giving way to pot holes and now on the verge of collapse.

However, these bridges which are within the city centre constitute an embarrassment to the state which prides itself as Home of Peace and Tourism.

These bridges, apart from linking other major roads within the metropolis serve as alternative routes for motorists who try to avoid the usual hustle and bustle at the busy Ahmadu Bello Way.

Therefore, by repairing the road and the bridges, it could add to the beauty of the city centre as well as reduce traffic congestion that is associated with the Terminus area of the metropolis.

The risk of allowing these bridges to collapse would mean causing more hardship for those plying the West of Mines area to Ahmadu Bello

Way therefore causing a major blow to an already congested metropolis.

Prevention they say is better and cheaper than cure.

Abdulazeez Abubkar is an

IT student from Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi.

Nigerian youth must shun political violence

POLITICAL violence is becoming a global phenomenon which many nations try to contend with within their political system.

This can be in form of crises in the society particularly during elections where most politically related violence are always attributed to the teeming youths that are supposed to be the backbone of every society. Due to idleness, lack of education, unemployment, poor orientation and greed of the political class our youth are becoming vulnerable in our society.

Another factor which reinforces violence in African political system is the desperate attitude of African politicians, the desperation to win election and occupy political offices by all means is a major cause of political violence. .

In some cases, it is the contestants who in their quest for political powers organize some youths and provide arms that will be use to enforce fear during

election and it is said that" when two elephants fight only the grass suffer". It is simply the youths who are at the middle of those desperate fellows aspiring that are being use against each other and even to the civilians who are peacefully exercising their rights to vote for a representative with pure intention and hoping to choose a credible candidate that will protect their interests.

During campaigns, the money and offer of some materials to the voters have become the order of the day across African nations. It is also a factor responsible for continued spread of political violence. The level of poverty on the continent is such an intimidation where the innocent youths may be recruited for violence which is done just to survive. The politician use of huge amount of money during electoral campaigns in form of gift to the poor especially those in the rural areas just to win peoples votes is not

good for the people and democracy. Who would then be on ground during election to snatch ballot boxes and cause confusion, specifically, the youths are targeted as instruments of perpetuating violence and their hearts are poisoned with money and other items which can make them participate and not be concerned of the danger involved in executing such acts.

For this phenomenon to discontinue, there must be a favourable, peaceful atmosphere for citizens to participate in the country's democracy and be able to elect their representatives peacefully without any molestation. The youths should therefore be cautioned on accepting any gift from politicians or be used as violent instruments to disrupt any peaceful election process in the country.

Gloria Jared is an IT student from Kwara University, Wukari.

STANDARD CARTOON

Kidnappers and delegates are the jobs that pays more than Central Bank and NNPC in Nigeria.
"Cash flow no network problem"
True or False?
Government must answer this question.



Opinion

Towards collective response to soft target attacks

By **KAYODE ADEBIYI**

IN his introductory remarks on his first day at work as the new National Security Adviser (NSA) on June 26, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu made a salient acknowledgment: securing the nation requires a collective effort.

"Mr President has a huge commitment to securing every inch of our country. We will work with all stakeholders to deliver on this vision.

"This enormous task of securing our country is that of all Nigerians and all friends of Nigeria," he said.

An analysis of media content shows that, among other things, Ribadu seems to have prioritised two courses of action since he became NSA.

Firstly, he appears determined to entrench the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches towards finding lasting solutions to Nigeria's security challenges.

Security experts say at any opportunity, Ribadu never fails to emphasise improved horizontal and vertical interagency and inter-governmental collaboration in surmounting threats to national security.

Second, the NSA has made it known that to optimise effectiveness, Nigeria's national security architecture has to be holistically reassessed by strengthening legal frameworks and reviewing strategies.

Experts say Ribadu's position is in line with the modern concept of national security, which involves the collective ability of a country to protect its people,

interests, values, and critical infrastructure.

Also, President Bola Tinubu has outlined and prioritised an end to oil theft, the fight against violent extremism and insurgency, and extinguishing separatist agitation in his national security agenda.

While there are reasons to be optimistic about the fight against perpetrators who pose a threat to national security, experts warn that there has been a recent rise in soft target attacks by insurgents.

On September 1 gunmen attacked and killed at least seven worshippers in a mosque when they were observing evening prayer at Saya-Saya village in Ikara local government area of Kaduna State.

On September 22, armed bandits invaded the hostels of undergraduates of the Federal University Gusau, Zamfara, and abducted 24 female students.

Early this month, the Police in Katsina State confirmed the kidnapping of five female students of the Federal University Dutsinma (FUDMA) in Katsina by gunmen.

A few days later, gunmen burnt down the parish house of Saint Raphael's Catholic Church in Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State, killing a seminarian in the process.

On Oct. 9, armed men abducted four students of the Nasarawa State University Keffi; three of the students were female while one was male.

These incidents share common traits: They are attacks carried out on facilities and locations that are difficult to secure and are used by the public in large numbers.

They are also attacks with the potential to have a widespread adverse impact on large numbers of people if the facilities are destroyed or fatalities are recorded.

Due to the nature of soft target attacks, security experts say existing and fresh security policy frameworks should be able to address threats posed by non-state actors using the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

Its main objective is to institutionalise, mainstream and coordinate P/CVE programmes at national, state and local government levels and is expected to be reviewed every three years.

Some stakeholders therefore advise the NSA to start his reassessment of legal frameworks and strategies by reviewing that particular action plan to clarify the

roles and responsibilities of states and local governments.

As national and subnational governments have their roles to play in tackling insecurity, so do the media, organised private sector, religious and traditional leaders, politicians, development partners and diplomatic community, civil society organisations and citizens have their roles to play.

One crucial method of collaboration some experts have identified is the use of soft power, which involves co-opting and shaping the buy-in of other stakeholders through appeal and attraction.

Whether it is insurgency, oil theft, or separatist agitation, Nigeria is involved in asymmetric warfare against non-state actors whose relative strength, strategy, or tactics differ significantly.

"As national and subnational governments have their roles to play in tackling insecurity, so do the media, organised private sector, religious and traditional leaders, politicians, development partners and diplomatic community, civil society organisations and citizens have their roles to play. One crucial method of collaboration some experts have identified is the use of soft power, which involves co-opting and shaping the buy-in of other stakeholders through appeal and attraction."

By **OLAYINKA OPALEYE**

Protect psychological health at workplace

GLOBALLY, October is earmarked for mental health awareness to inform people about its importance and reduce stigmatization and discrimination often experienced by people with mental illness. This article, however, seeks to sensitize readers on how not to negatively impact someone else's mental health or cause psychological imbalance through one's actions or inactions.

There are certain behaviours within organizations that strip employees of psychological protection. Wherever these behaviours exist, all sorts of things take place that indirectly affect the success and sustainable growth of the company without even knowing. However, before going into that, it's important to clarify certain terminologies to put things in the right context.

As often said, there is no health without mental health. Rightly justified is the WHO's definition, which holds as a complete state of wholeness not limited to physical state or absence of diseases, ailments, or infirmity but such that includes mental and social wellbeing. Interestingly, mental

health also transcends the absence of mental illness. It also involves coping with life's stressors, working productively, maintaining positive relationships, and making rational decisions. Therefore, it encompasses psychological and social fitness, including emotional resilience, adaptability to changes, and the capacity to experience a wide range of emotions, from happiness to sadness, without considerably impacting one's daily life.

Interestingly, we are often advised to cope with issues to preserve and protect our mental health while ignoring our environment's role. We usually put the sole responsibility on the individual, which begs one to wonder how long they can manage a toxic environment without losing it. And when we suggest the person leaves the organization when push comes to shove, one wonders how many more organizations they will have to go through before finding a non-toxic one. Also, note here that the toxicity a person may experience could be from a manager, team member(s), or a group of people; the odds keep stacking. Hence, advising the individual to leave the

organization may also have an adverse effect, especially when they love their job or the company.

Therefore, protecting mental health should be a two-way street where both parties are held accountable for each other's psychological health, with these parties being the employee – who is responsible for self and dealings with colleagues and the employer – who is responsible for everyone and policies that ensure a conducive work environment.

And since mental health is deeper than sanity, it, by extension, includes emotions and circumstances that cause one to be unproductive, uncomfortable, anxious, eerily quiet, restless, angry, scared, untruthful, and sad sometimes. The effect of employees continuously experiencing any of these emotions in an organization can be grievous. Such work situations impede open communication, positive team or organizational culture, transparency, accountability, and willingness to take risks, which blocks innovation, creativity, participation, involvement, and engagement. It is, therefore, crucial for organizations to know how to maintain a positive work environment through psychological protection.

A mentally safe and protected workplace is where employees feel safe sharing ideas or asking questions without fear of regret or ridicule. It is a place where employees speak up without fear of retribution, where they can make mistakes, take responsibility, and be accountable without punishment or criticism. A psychologically protected work environment is an organization where an employee can comfortably be an outlier, even if their opinion is

unpopular but truthful. According to Brene Brown, a healthy workplace is where the culture encourages the practice of VAULT, which succinctly means if it is not your story, it's not for you to share.

The leadership should encourage staff to practice self-care, seek support through EAP when needed, and introduce activities promoting emotional and psychological wellness

The numerous benefits of allowing employees to contribute positively through ideas, solutions, and suggestions include but are not limited to reduced conflicts, fewer errors, fewer accidents, increased compliance with rules and regulations, and minimized bullying and harassment. However, creating such a work atmosphere requires inclusive processes, policies, and organizational culture with built-in structures that seek worker feedback—noting that listening or receiving feedback is not an end but a means to it, which is acting objectively on the information gathered. Likewise, encouraging open communication that fosters a culture of openness and honesty needs to be backed by established trust. Confidentiality and fairness in all interactions help a whole lot with this trust-building.

A positive work environment that protects workers in this context engenders them to contribute their optimal potential and feel energized while at it. Therefore, leaders are responsible for promoting, modelling, and constantly reinforcing these practices. Workplace culture also makes a big difference in safeguarding people's feelings. A work culture that embraces new ideas and sees discussions as opportunities to learn, share, and collaborate without retribution is usually successful at this.

Even though we seldom consider safety as an issue beyond physical risks, such as working with dangerous chemicals in hazardous environments or around infectious diseases. Eliminating unsafe work situations harmful to workers' minds through prompt assessment and address is required for full work protection.

Lastly, the leadership should encourage staff to practice self-care, seek support through EAP when needed, and introduce activities promoting emotional and psychological wellness.

You suddenly realize your organization scheduled you for a three-month training requiring you to juggle work. The weekly training time appeared to be fixed based on most attendees' work schedules, with probably little to no consideration of your peculiar daily activity map. Therefore, you find yourself constantly getting to class late, unable to have your camera on, as you are always multitasking during lectures. Even though you tried explaining this situation to the facilitator, references to you have degenerated to "our friend," which psychologically labelled you as a special, unserious, or unfocused participant.

List five things the training coordinator or facilitator should have done to avoid this situation. Also, what steps would you take to protect your mental health? Kindly send your input/comment to oopaleye@gmail.com

"And since mental health is deeper than sanity, it, by extension, includes emotions and circumstances that cause one to be unproductive, uncomfortable, anxious, eerily quiet, restless, angry, scared, untruthful, and sad sometimes."

Feature

Of bans, foreign exchange earnings, and strong naira

The only reason that the so-called "ban" in June 2015 by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on access by importers of some 40-plus items to the official foreign exchange market made sense, was because the management of the foreign exchange market was topsy-turvy. First, because the restriction allowed importers to continue bringing these goods in, so long as they could source their foreign exchange needs from outside the CBN's multiple windows, the apex bank simply acknowledged via the ban, the perverse incentives that its subsidy regime was producing. Even today, after experiencing the full consequences of the CBN's "follies", most Nigerians argue that there was no subsidy under the old foreign exchange arrangement. IFEANYI UDDIN writes.

WE simply had multiple official markets where the naira's exchange rate traded way below what obtained at the non-official market. All who argue this point concede that the possibility of those who got access to dollars at the official rate being able to resell their allotments or portions thereof at the unofficial markets was all shades of wrong. Indignation at this arbitrage opportunity ran the full gamut of possible responses. Perpetrators were morally bankrupt, unpatriotic, or downright criminal — if not all three at the same time. Yet, we all are familiar with the precept that a business can only breakup its markets into segments with different prices only if there are strong barriers to goods moving across the different segments.

Beyond this, the insistence on full disclosure of all relevant information and the breakdown of barriers to exit and entry in the design and operation of markets is to prevent price gouging on the part of sellers, and price arbitraging on the part of middlemen. The CBN and most Nigerians missed this point. The bigger problem with the CBN's management of the nation's foreign exchange earnings was never its "uncountable" leaky windows. It was to have conceded that we had to introduce to the market via sundry agents all that we earned from exporting crude oil. Today, we are in awe of the US\$1 trillion in Norway's sovereign wealth fund. We are amazed at the investment



initiatives that countries in the Middle East are powering with their own.

Still, we fail to ask ourselves why countries as dependent on the export of hydrocarbons as we are, seem in finer fettle. In the 1970s, geopolitical crises in the Middle East drove oil prices up. Nigeria suddenly found itself awash in cash. More than enough, apparently, for a sitting head of state to declare that money was not our problem. How to spend it productively, obviously was. Those were the good old days that most Nigerians above 50 today hark back to. In truth, those days

marked the onset of the country's current crisis. All the petrodollars that came into the country did was push up the naira's exchange rate. Plenty of dollars running after few naira, in other words, inflated the naira's value. Nigeria was strong in the eyes of most patriots who beheld it. At a point, one greenback was all of 75 kobo.

There were other unintended effects, unfortunately. Arguably, the most significant effect of a "stronger" domestic currency was to drive imports up (we have not always loved foreign goods, at least, not

until they became incredibly cheap). Worse, was that this "stronger" naira raised the cost of domestic inputs, especially labour, and as a result, of domestic output generally. Net effect? The uncontrolled influx of petrodollars into the economy, beginning from the 1970s, reduced the price competitiveness of primary produce exports and doomed the development of a domestic manufactured goods industry.

The likes of Norway started salting away their dollar earnings in offshore investment vehicles when *The Economist* newspaper

described as "Dutch disease" this economic pathway in The Netherlands, after that country discovered large natural gas deposits in 1959 (about the same time as our Oloibiri started pumping out both crude oil and natural gas). When, in 2004, the Obasanjo government adopted the oil price-based fiscal rule, and in 2007 President Umaru Yar'Adua signed the Fiscal Responsibility Bill, we seemed finally to have grokked the importance of warehousing parts of our foreign exchange earnings outside the economy and driving external investments through them.

Today, confronting evidence of the cackhandedness of our management of our foreign exchange resources until very recently, the question turns back to why a country in dire need of investment such as ours should keep such resources away. Two answers really. First, is that despite its need for investment, there is only so much that the economy may take without severe distortions showing up. Second, the best way to allocate such resources, if and when we finally attract them, is via transparent markets.

Uddin Ifeanyi, journalist manqué and retired civil servant, can be reached @IfeanyiUddin

CHANGE OF NAME

MARIA

I, formerly known as **NANNA MARTINS**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MARIA SHEDUL**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

MAYEL

I, formerly known as **SOLOMON BIRTRUS**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MAYEL BITRUS**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

KATNAP

I, formerly known as **RAMKO NANGOR**, now wish to be known and addressed as **KATNAP NANGOR RAMKO**. My correct date of birth is 1/1/1998 not 25/12/1998. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take

NWANSHAK

I, formerly known as **VICTOR MWANRET**, now wish to be known and addressed as **NWANSHAK MWANRET DASUN**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

SALE

I, formerly known as **SALE KUMKUR**, now wish to be known and addressed as **SALE KUMKUR DASHE**. Correct date of birth is 1/8/1980. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

CHRISTY

I, formerly known as **TAMAI CHRISTY SIMON**, now wish to be known and addressed as **CHRISTY DAKUP WASSAK**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

BAWA

I, formerly known as **BAWA MAGDALENE**, now wish to be known and addressed as **BAWA NANLEP DANLAMI**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

NWAOHU

I, formerly known as **CHIMA NWAOHU NULL**, now wish to be known and addressed as **NWAOHU EVANGELIST CHIMA**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

News

Roll of women cannot be overemphasized -Mutfwang

By JIDAUNA DARING

WIFE of the Plateau State Governor, Barrister Mrs. Helen M. Mutfwang has said that the role of women in moulding lives and advancing peace in the society, cannot be overemphasized.

The First Lady stated this at the church service to culminate this year's women week of the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), at the COCIN Headquarters Church Jos, on Sunday.

Barrister Mrs. Mutfwang while rejoicing with the entire COCIN Women Fellowship on this merry day also commended the leadership of the church for setting aside a week for each group to engage in in-depth teachings which also reflect on its activities annually.

She said this year's theme: "The Woman as a Peace Builder" was very timely especially now that the nation is in great need of peace.

Barrister Mrs. Mutfwang pointed out that the work of God and spiritual activities of Christians is a continuous duty as long as they have breath.

She specifically thanked the church for making this year's women's week a reality and the leadership of the women's fellowship for making the week a huge success.

"I am confident that the lessons learnt will strengthen our families, the body of Christ and our communities. She said"

The First Lady also used the medium to specially thank the women and everyone for the support given to her husband before, during and after the Governorship Elections. "I covet your prayers to enable him meet the demands of the office and provide the qualitative leadership needed to turnaround the fortunes of the state".

She maintained that the event was the first time, being witnessed in her capacity as the First Lady of the state. She added that she also solicited for the prayers of the church so as to enable her succeed in her role of supporting her husband.

Barrister Mrs. Mutfwang equally used the opportunity to emphasize the need for unity in the church. She added that it is God's will for the church to be united, stressing that there is no better time for unity in the church and the entire body of Christ than now.

The first Lady told the congregation that her doors will remain open so as to work together to advance the body of Christ and work assiduously for the peace and prosperity of the land.

Earlier in his remarks during pastoral greetings COCIN President, Rev. Dr. Amos Musa Mohzo



Mutfwang

appreciated the state First Lady for having time to worship with COCIN women during their service. He applauded all the COCIN women across different countries for their full participation during the week-long activities.

Mohzo challenged both husbands and wives to always live in love and unity. He emphasized the need for parents to ensure good moral upbringing of wards or children

Guest preacher during the service, Dr. Mrs. Justina K.

Damap who took her reading from Mathew 5.9, encouraged women to be peace makers both at home and community.

She said that blessed are the peace makers for they will be called children of God.

Given vote of thanks, Women

Leader, Mrs. Blessing Dawal appreciated the entire congregation for the support and cooperation accorded them during the week-long activities and urged them to sustain such tempo.

Governor Inuwa reassures Investors Of safety, Incentives

WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, has pledged his administration's commitment in providing favorable business conditions for potential investors.

He encouraged them to leverage on the state's status as number one in the ease of doing business with facilitated structural reforms and a world class infrastructure and peaceful atmosphere.

The governor made the pledge during a roundtable meeting organized by the Gombe State Government in collaboration with development partners, to engage with investors from within and outside the state.

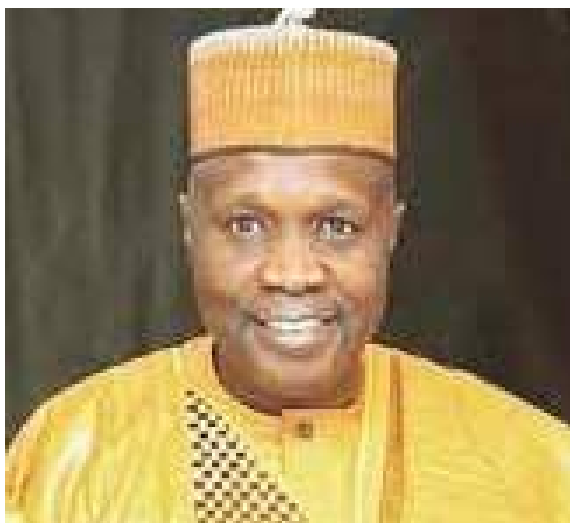
Represented by the Commissioner of Trade, Industry and Tourism, Hon. Nasiru Mohammed Aliyu, the governor assured that his

government has a plethora of enticing incentives for potential investors.

According to him, these incentives are designed to facilitate a streamlined process for investors, adding that comprehensive reforms put in place have effectively established a convenient "one-stop shop" for investors, eliminating the traditional bureaucratic hurdles and making the process of setting up businesses more efficient and hassle-free.

He explained that the comprehensive reforms initiated by his administration have led to the ranking of Gombe as the number one in the "Ease of Doing Business in Nigeria" twice.

This recognition, he said, underscores the tangible impact of these reforms on fostering a business-friendly environment within the state



Inuwa

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Prof. Ibrahim Gambari, an academic, diplomat and former Chief of Staff to former President Muhammadu Buhari has underscored the need for enhanced investments in the nation's universities to encourage innovations and technological advancement.

Gambari made the call at the Federal University Lokoja (FUL) while delivering a Public Lecture titled, "The Relevance of University Education in Innovation for the Advancement of Town and Gown Symbiosis."

He underscored the need for investments in the universities as citadels of learning to enable students attain their academic heights, the knowledge frontiers and exploit their natural talents.

He noted that a deliberate policy that encourages investment in research universities, play important roles in knowledge creation and innovation.

"Regardless of which school of thought one subscribes to, what is clear is that there is a correlation stemming from higher education to research and innovation.

"But we must not forget that academic course content also has to keep up

Don solicits more investments in universities



Gambari

with the pace of fast-expanding knowledge frontiers." He said.

The attainment of the goals of university education, according to him, requires the interdependence and close collaboration of the host communities and the universities which he referred to as the Town and the Gown.

The gown (University),

according to him, are key players in the global knowledge economy, essential participants in the emerging innovation systems and active stakeholders that play a pivotal role in the process of innovation and knowledge commercialization for the development of the town (community).

The renowned Diplomat said that addressing the Town and Gown symbiosis, it is important that we review the relevance of a university education relative to Innovation.

The Professor of Political Science and International Relations, decried a situation where the relationship between the universities and their host communities are parasitic or commensalist.

He described the situation as when the management of universities are indifferent to the interest of host communities in respect of employment, capacity building, information dissemination, corporate social responsibilities.

"This often generates tensions, conflicts, social unrest, and invariably academic disruptions, thereby defeating the attainment of higher education goals.

"Infact, Town and Gown relationships are the true embodiment of the phrase "till death do us part. Recent events around the globe, like the Covid-19 pandemic, have pointed out to us what happens if there's a rupture in the town-gown relationship.

He urged that the Universities must be cognizant of not isolating themselves but ensure they descend from their ivory tower and engage with the host communities, build inroads and embrace them with open arms.

The communities on the other hand, he said, should also understand the enormous responsibilities that comes with playing host to a very diverse group of people young and old.

and reflects the commitment to sustainable economic growth.

He told the gathering that the roundtable meeting was to create a platform to engage with local investors in an effort to make them explore opportunities for establishing their businesses at the Muhammadu Buhari Industrial Park, with a particular focus on the small and medium-scale industries.

He emphasized that the creation of the Muhammadu Buhari Industrial Park would not only serve as a remarkable hub for trade and investment, but also have the potential to boost both the state and national economies. The park, spanning 1000 hectares, would complement the administration's ongoing initiatives to steer the state toward sustainable economic growth and development.

Speaking at the event, the Commissioner of Finance and Economic Development, Hon. Muhammed Gambo Magaji, pointed out that during the past four years of Governor Inuwa Yahaya's administration, significant investments were made in infrastructure. These investments have substantially contributed to creating an environment that fosters the growth and success of businesses in Gombe.

In her remarks, the Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), one of

the key sponsors of the preliminary programmes leading up to the forthcoming investment summit, Mrs. Joyce Oburu, commended the Gombe State government for its diverse initiatives geared towards enhancing the state's investment potential.

She particularly lauded the establishment of the industrial park as a notable achievement in this regard.

She pledged that UNDP would remain dedicated to forging a collaborative partnership with Gombe State, stressing that the partnership aims to support Gombe State in realizing its ambitions to fully harness and promote its investment potential.

She maintained that UNDP's ongoing involvement will be instrumental in helping Gombe achieve its economic goals and create a thriving environment for prospective investors.

Others who expressed solidarity with the Gombe State government's drive towards making the state an investment destination include representatives of the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, Bank of Industry, USAID State 2 State Programme and numerous commercial banks.

The roundtable was attended by business entities from within and outside Gombe State, including the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Groundnut

Millers Association, Rice Millers Association among others.

Feature

Timely passports and concrete roads

Let's talk governance. There's something to cheer for a change: Interior Minister Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo had promised to clear the backlog of 204,332 passports outstanding at the corruption-ridden Nigerian Immigration Service within two weeks. The goal was achieved in three weeks. By Nigerian standards, that achievement is a cause for celebration. WOLE OLAOYE writes.

We all remember all the novel measures introduced to facilitate passport issuance during the Obasanjo administration (1999-2007). As soon as a new administration came in, immigration officials rolled back the changes and reverted to their default setting designed to make the process of obtaining the Nigerian passport an ordeal that could only be mitigated by paying bribes.

It is difficult to fully appreciate the level of degeneracy in the passport issuance system if you had never been on the receiving end. In the past, a visit to any passport office showed how little respect the government had for its citizens. Like most public service outlets, citizens were dehumanised and fleeced at random. Little wonder that foreign embassies and consular offices took a cue and treated Nigerian applicants for visa like sub-humans.

Stories of woe abound aplenty. There was the story of a lady working with a multinational firm who needed to attend a conference and sought the renewal of her passport. When she showed up to have her photograph taken, the officers on duty advised her to pay for 'fast-tracking' if she wanted to receive her passport in time. She paid the bribe, but the bribe-takers did not perform as promised. By the time she laid her hands on the passport, the conference had come and gone. She missed the conference.

An online medium, PRNigeria, recently told the story of Eklou Joseph, an Indonesia-bound student, whose narration gave a graphic picture of how the wheel of corruption in the passport issuance process rolled:

He said: "When my friend made his online payment, they frustrated him because they assumed he was trying to be clever by first registering online, instead of physically seeking their help for the registration..."

"I didn't bother to pay online, I came here directly and paid N150,000 for a 64-page passport with ten-years validity (which normally cost N70,000). The N80,000 I added to the N70,000 for my passport is for 'fast tracking'. Meaning, the NIS officials will fast-track the processing of my



Tunji-Ojo

passport, and ensure that I get it in a week, after completing my registration".

He was subjected to a 'Nigerian roulette' for months thereafter before his passport was produced. He said he felt ashamed for his country.

As to be expected, the passport mess has also been exported abroad. There was the case of a student in the UK who had wasted precious time attempting to follow due process by applying online for her passport. When nothing seemed to be working, she spoke to fellow Nigerian students who advised her to stop wasting time and reach out to a particular middle man known as a reliable facilitator. Rather than do that and pay the required bribe, she called her parents in Nigeria who spoke to somebody who knew somebody — and, pronto! The lady was given the name and number of an officer within the embassy with instructions that her call was being expected.

After making the phone call, she was requested to come the following day. By the time she was leaving the embassy several hours later, she had her brand new passport in her hands!

Interior Minister Tunji-Ojo revealed that the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) had to work on three shifts per day, including weekends and public holidays, to achieve delivery within the deadline. He saluted the 'heroic' efforts of immigration officers and called on applicants to come and collect their passports.

The minister's achievement within such a short time showed that it is possible to fix

the incongruities in Nigeria if there is political will. The minister didn't import immigration officers from Pluto or Neptune. He used the same personnel who were lounging on the rot before his arrival in the Interior Ministry. Many analysts, however, disagree with the minister's characterisation of the officials as 'heroes'. What heroism is in doing a job for which you are paid?

All the same, I am not unhappy to re-echo the rambunctious celebration of my barber who is hoping that his son will someday benefit from the new 'quick passport' spirit blowing through the NIS and join the Japa golden fleece train. Barber Adio thinks Minister Tunji-Ojo is a magician deserving of celebration. "Tiri gbosa for di ministra!", he roared.

Works Minister Dave Umahi is an engineer who, so far, seems to be engineering well (apologies, Jerry Gana). Since he took office, he has made it known to whom it may concern that he will not

be a rubber stamp minister who's only interested in kickbacks at the expense of the country. "There is no art to find the mind's construction in the face", wrote Shakespeare; so, this is not about judging a book by its cover. What catches my attention is that for once, we have a minister who asks questions and is ready to do things differently.

Against the traditional practice of constructing major highways with Asphalt surfacing, he has, against the run of play, been advocating the use of concrete. He is convinced that our environment is more hostile to asphalt roads than those made of concrete and that the latter would be both cheaper and more durable. What excites me is that general science seems to bear Umahi out.

Experts in the field of engineering posit that asphalt has its own merits. It is petroleum-based (a mixture of aggregates such as sand, gravel, crushed stone and a petroleum-based binder). It is flexible, can withstand

extreme temperatures and is also easier and cheaper to repair than concrete. By comparison, concrete (a mixture of cement, water, and aggregates), is more environmentally friendly and can last up to 30 years with proper maintenance.

Festac Example

Our experience in Nigeria is that many major highways constructed with trillions of Naira begin to fail even before the full completion of the whole stretch. Sometimes, the problem may not be due to bad workmanship but wrong choice of materials. A verifiable example known to this writer is the highway from Amuwo-Odofin to Festac Town through the famous Apple Junction. Contractors used to pay an annual pilgrimage to that road unfailingly because the asphalt coat never lasted more than eight months. That was until the then Governor Fashola put a stop to the scam by ordering a fresh soil test which indicated that interlocking concrete tiles would be the best option. The road has remained in pristine condition since then.

If that is the spirit Dave Umahi is bringing to his assignment at the Works Ministry, I have no doubt that he will find ready allies in the common people who, over the years, have borne the brunt of government's incompetence and corruption. It is better to have safe, well paved highways with toll gates than to have free, sprawling death traps which only serve to depopulate the country.

Wole Olaoye is a Public Relations consultant and veteran journalist. He can be reached through wole.olaoye@gmail.com,

"As to be expected, the passport mess has also been exported abroad. There was the case of a student in the UK who had wasted precious time attempting to follow due process by applying online for her passport. When nothing seemed to be working, she spoke to fellow Nigerian students who advised her to stop wasting time and reach out to a particular middle man known as a reliable facilitator. Rather than do that and pay the required bribe, she called her parents in Nigeria who spoke to somebody who knew somebody — and, pronto! The lady was given the name and number of an officer within the embassy with instructions that her call was being expected."



By Palang Kasmi

Plateau is one of the northern states battling security challenges in the country. The situation has resulted in killings and displacement of many residents from their ancestral homes in Mangu, Bokkos, Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Governments. While some of these displaced residents have sought refuge with their families or relatives, others are forced to live in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps as temporary shelters. Over 500 persons are reported to be IDP's in

Plateau. At challenging times such as this, among some of the social ills that affects people living in IDP's is Trafficking In Persons (TIP). The human traffickers usually cash in on these humanitarian crisis and pretend to come with solutions. Sadly, they have ulterior motives which usually ends in dire consequences, many experts have warned.

Traffickers have a pattern of pretending to render help to unsuspecting victims. They come and pick out school kids with promises to enroll them into schools, or pick girls with a promise of a better life in large cities, only to turn them into high profile sex trafficking rings, at the national or international levels. Most victims lured into sex trafficking during interviews said, they were promised good jobs and a better life by these traffickers only for them to discover a different ball game after they arrived their new destinations.

In May 2022, a publication of News Agency of Nigeria revealed some tips released by National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) of some

tricks used by human traffickers to lure their victims.

"The traffickers often capitalised on victims' ignorance. The new tricks utilised by Traffickers in Persons (TIP) include technology, hunting,

Traffickers preying on vulnerable IDP's

fishing, surrogacy, sports; especially football, orphanage and homes, among others. Before now, the human traffickers were using direct contact, also known as physical contact, but have opted for new tricks. The traffickers often leverage our social media to reach the public, especially their targets. Through this, innocent Nigerians have been trafficked. On hunting tricks, the traffickers continually request for friendship on social media either using nicknames or impostors. On fishing tricks, trafficker's often published mouth-watering job offers to entice unsuspecting job seekers. Technology has its positive impact in combating crime, enhancing prosecution and fast dissemination of news.

However, offers through social media must be investigated".

"Any couple with children that are still using surrogates could be a suspected case of child trafficking or labour. Orphanage trafficking is more rampant with unregistered orphanages and homes, with owners canvassing for poor parents under the disguise of caring for their children. We appeal to all parents to check the legal status of these Orphanage's with the relevant local government area before releasing their wards. Traffickers often disguise as orphanage operators".

Therefore, parents, guardians, wards and stakeholders at IDP camps should be vigilant and must not allow human traffickers to

gain access to children and youths on camps. Community, women, youth, and traditional leaders have a role to play. Security agencies too should up the game and watch out for suspicious activities and movements at IDP camps.

Where necessary, such stakeholders should create a tracking and well-documented register, and should work with relevant government bodies and agencies to ascertain if orphanages seeking to shelter orphans and other vulnerable children are actually genuine. Young girls and boys should not be trusted into the hands of orphanages or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) without proper documentation and monitoring structures.



Appreciating our leaders on the Plateau



BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

IT may sound weird to some who might take it from a different perspective or rather, see governance as an exclusive reserve of some few who are privileged to steer the affairs at a particular point in time and allow the vital parts of their mental attitudes to be crapped off by staggering sentiments.

It is quite unfortunate that we pay so much lip service to the Plateau project for some political benefits and fail to key into it by identifying those grey areas that have been bottlenecks to our successive Governors to help quench some of the already set flames.

So sad to also note is, how we ignorantly attached sentiment, to everything we do. You see some gifted and intellectually endowed sons and daughters hiding their ideas in boxes and sometimes die with it because

of this sentiments of individualism- a kind of, 'if not me, everything perishes' syndrome.

This, has long been the struggle since the return of democracy in 1999 and there is no denying the fact that, these category of people still exist with pool of ideas laying down with them and probably, waiting for only God knows when it would be their turn led to help Plateau.

It would be called that, barely a year or two of Governor Joshua Chibi Dariye's tenure, the already set "Hydra Headed Monster" took everybody unawares and surfaced, diverting all developmental programmes of this young man and it was one crisis or the other turning the beautiful Tin City of Jos into a smoke town which later escalated to other local government areas of the state.

That, inexplicably kept happening to the end of his tenure until Governor Jonah David Jang, took over. Jang, as an experienced Military Governor and a Security Expert came in and it was all believed that, his wealth of experience would be able to squash this insecurely headlong, but it metamorphosed into a gorrhella warfare, where villages and communities were attacked, people chased out of their ancestral lands.

This was not because Jang lacked any ideas or was not capable of handling these challenges, but this same calibre of people saw it as an

exclusive reserve to Jang and his team and deliberately left him to exercise his military experience alone. Although, he truly proved himself in his eight years tenure just like the biblical Gideon, who was fighting war with one hand and building the city with the other hand.

It reached a point where Churches, Markets, Mosques and viewing centres were attacked by suicide bombers who were ironically harboured by some ignorant citizens who never knew it was beyond political interests. As God would do it, the entire citizens begun to understand the situation and decided to team up and embarked on a search because in a market, there is no tribe, no religion and class.

However, when Governor Simon Bako Lalong, came on board as a child of necessity and a product of protests vote after 16 years of No Go Areas, silent killings, sleepless nights due to attacks on communities, forceful ejections from ancestral land, land grabbing and all manner of security challenges, he quickly restructured and came up with a different approach, knowing quite well that all strategies were almost exhausted.

Considering these different approaches and expertise used by his predecessors, especially his immediate past counterpart with all his military tactics, these challenges kept changing in styles and approaches and as a civilian with little but no military experience in the

middle of this high expectations, Lalong, decided to embrace dialogue to understand what exactly were the issues and root causes of this incidents.

This was because he saw Plateau State running out of its pride and economic status. Most industries here on the Plateau were packing out every day as a result of the unfortunate happenings. Investors no longer saw the beautiful Jos city as safe for them again and this placed Plateau State's name in the global scene as a no go state.

He looked back and forth and saw that, there was no remedy other than asking for God's intervention and used of wisdom to handle these volume of challenges. Of course, using the confrontational approach was not the right option at that point in time, because it may somehow worsened such sensitive situation.

So, he swiftly used diplomacy and invited all stakeholders on the Plateau for a townhall meeting to identify what the issues were and look for ways of proffering solutions these challenges. In fact, it was one of the largest and most well attended stakeholders town hall meeting which probably, might be because of how tired they were with reports of killings and bloodbath the state has been grappling with and wanted a total stop to it no matter what it takes.

Today, the negative storylines about Plateau have disappeared, placing the state among the most peaceful states in Nigeria. In fact, Plateau State

is now the safest and the most peaceful and crime-free states in the country. People troop in day-in-day-out to enjoy the serene weather, have fun and hold seminars and workshops as well as musical concerts etc, in the capital city of Jos.

You need to see how structures or buildings are being erected everyday in Jos to the envy of the enemies of Plateau state who had been instrumental to all forms of conflicts we were tight to, denying us all privileges we were enjoying as a people wherever we go. Some were even calling us "CRISIS" especially when attending sport festivals.

However, it is our prayer that the incoming Governor, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang, who is also a lover of Peace will consolidate on these gains and revisits the strategies used by his predecessors and permanently bring back the Plateau of Dream!

It will cost us nothing if we understand the true essence of our living together as Plateau people and put our arms around each others' shoulders and say No to anything that divides us and move as one united people irrespective of political parties, tribes and religion affiliations or where one comes from.

What is happening today in Mangu, Bokkos, Riyom, Barkin-Ladi and parts of Jos-South Local Government Areas is nothing but a display of a beheaded dragon that struggles with its last breathe. Therefore, Governor Mutfwang should not be moved or be intimidation! God bless Plateau State! God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

IT is true that the patches of any dense fog that affects visibility of roads do clears off in the midmorning when the a brighter day is set to resume. No matter how the drops of its thick blanket, it barely exits the time set for it to disappear.

This really demonstrates how destiny works especially in a situation where ideas struggle with interests. It is quite unfortunate in this part of our world to note that, the display of interest in whatever we do tends to gulf the best in us and it becomes so difficult to make a choice of what can help improve or change our situation.

It is sad that, we sometimes make wrong decisions that ultimately have unkind bones in us that it later turn out to be so difficult to grumble or blame it to anyone. Yes, leadership comes from God, but some are some kinds of punishment to us for us to reset our paths.

However, decades before now, the Plateau State Chapel of the Correspondents of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), has not have it this great. it has all through been work, work and work forgetting the vital part of their lives which keep them souring.

But in less than a decade now, the turn out of things at the Correspondents' Chapel really calls for celebration. Before now, members barely have time for themselves or families because of how busy they have always been and this gradually affects them health wise.

One cannot not figure out the spirit behind these crops of young men who now steer the affairs of leadership recently. It is possible that these calibres of young men have exhumed one of old horses and carried out dome kinds of autopsying on what has been killing the old horses and thought of how to wedge the scourge.

Although, their elections are most times fierce and a thug of war, but it appears all were to turn away from the old past and have a new direction and the replying effect by young men is gradually manifesting. The old practice of running the streets from morning to evening without proper check up is disappearing.

It may interest you to know that, this new approach started when the present Director of Press and Public Affairs (DOPA), Gyang Bere, was the Chairman of the Correspondents' Chapel before fate found its ways in uplifting him to this exalted position. In fact, he did not finish his tenure as the chairman, Correspondents' Chapel before his appointment came.

This truly explained how brighter day could clears off the fog in the midmorning. Sensing the inconveniences in members' mobility, Gyang and his vibrant team came up with the idea of getting a car for the Chapel to ease their transportation problem and it was done within the first

quarter of his administration and so, the new baby car was bought.

And it became a springboard to whoever could be his alike in vision who might succeed him as Chairman. Ironically, one of his visionaries emerged as Chairman with those pull of ideas starting with the Free Eye Check for his members, the entire NUJ and public through SIGHTSAVERS NIGERIA.

Selben said, "like they say, "health is wealth and the Eye is the window to the world. We are very key in ensuring that blind people get all the services they need to restore their sight. For those with visual impairment to have all the preventive measures they need to prevent their blindness.

"We have a huge scourge of blindness in Nigeria and most of cases have not received the

Plateau Correspondents' Chapel organises free eye check



Polycarp Auta, chairman correspondents' chapel

It is one thing to assume leadership and another thing to have ideas that can change the face of things for your followership. What makes a leader outstanding is in how well coordinated he or she is and the quality of ideas he or she has in stock to identify and solve the pressing needs of membership.

This, glaringly, was demonstrated when the brand new Chairman of the Correspondents' Chapel, Comrade Polycarp Auta, undertook a massive Free Eye Check for his members with the NUJ members and the general public benefiting from, in his less than two months in office.

He said, "we organised this particular activity so that, our members can feel the impact of our administration. We also understand the importance of eye to Journalists that is why we decided to bring this organisation to come and check our members' eyes.

"We are happy that the SIGHTSAVERS NIGERIA up larged us and agreed to collaborate with us and are doing this eye check, giving glasses and drugs freely after treatment. We have only 55 members in the Correspondents' Chapel, but we decided to invite our colleagues on the Plateau with their families, the NUJ Community and people from across the state to come and benefit", Auta disclosed.

On her part, the Team Lead of the SIGHTSAVERS NIGERIA, Dr.

needed attention they deserved. We are very much aware of the role the Media played in ensuring that, that attention is given to eye health to promote eye health and nip it in the central agenda of every government.

"The Journalists on the Plateau have been working with us for a very long time, but we have not had this kind of relationship and collaboration in the past. This is the first time we are synergizing this way more so that, we are celebrating World Sight Day. We want to urge Journalists in other state to emulate what Plateau did", she enthused.

However, some of the beneficiaries also bear their minds. The National Auditor of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Ladi Emmanuel, commended the organisers of this lifesaving programme saying, "I had a problem with my eye glass and I was planning to go to hospital to get one for myself when this great gesture came to me. With this, they have brought me back alive".

Also, the Chief Executive Officer Jos Electricity Distribution (JED) PLC, Musa Abdullahi, said, he was to attend a meeting with stakeholders following what happened at Kabong in the early hours of Friday, but because of importance also attached with this activity, he decided to take part in it saying, "it is so wonderful and good and I want to urge the organisers to keep it



Pwaspo, NUJ chairman undergoing screening



Penzing, Teamlead Sightsaver Nigeria



Member of NUJ awaiting screening exercise

up". In fact, the number of people that trooped in to partake in this exercise was quite alarming! You need to see how members whose exercise was primarily for them struggled for seat with non-members who came in their numbers to get the services.

What people thought it was going to be an hour or two ended up in being a huge and full day programme. The Plateau State Council Secretariat has not been this busy of recent. It is certain

that the team of Doctors that attended to this crowd really had a filled day and must need two to three days break to shake their bites.

Kudos to the leadership of the Correspondents' Chapel for picking it from the most sensitive part of Journalists' pride and strength which is no other than the eyes. Without the eyes, there will no writing, scouting for news and effective disseminating to the society the day to day happenings. In fact, the world will go blind too!.

IMAGES

PASTOR YEMI MATTHEW AT 50

The wife of Amb. Pastor Yemi Matthew of the RCCG, Mrs. Florence Y. Matthew and his friends on Sunday staged a surprised 50th birthday celebration to her husband at the Redeemed Christian Church of God after Plateau Private School, Jos



Amb. Pastor Yemi Matthew and wife arriving the venue of the surprised birthday



Amb. Pastor Yemi Matthew, flanked by his family cutting the birthday cake



ACO/SATGO, Pastor C.T Oni praying for the celebrant and family



ACO/SATGO, Pastor C. T Oni (left) Pastor Mrs. Oni in a photograph with the celebrant and family with Pastor and Mrs. Amos Adesola, DRP



Pastor Yemi Matthew with family at his 50th birthday celebration



Cross section of RCCG Pastors at the celebration



Pastor Isaac Shobayo, wife and other well wishers



Kenzy Ngupar of PRTVC congratulating Pastor Yemi Matthew at 50

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

'A stranger kissed my toddler, I was horrified'

A woman was left mortified when a stranger decided that she would kiss her 20-month-old son on the lips - and she wasn't happy, despite the fact she was apologetic son

When you take your little one out and about, the likelihood you'll get others cooing over them is high. From strangers telling you how adorable they are, to asking how old they are and when they were born, it's all part and parcel of being a parent - and you might even find the attention endearing.

But one woman was left mortified when an entitled shop assistant asked her 20-month-old son for a 'kissy', and proceeded to "kiss him on the mouth." She was left asking "Why?" and she was still furious, despite the fact the woman had apologised to her.

'My greedy stepdaughter eats too much fruit - I'm thinking of rationing it'

The stressed mother wrote on Reddit: "Aaaah so annoyed! At the food store that I go to regularly, I am a stay-at-home mum and so we go regularly for a little outing in the day, and the lady who sees us often that works at the one counter asked my son for a 'kissy' and then kissed him on his mouth.

"I immediately said 'Did you kiss him on the mouth?' and she said yes and I said no no no don't do that. She apologised. It's just so annoying. I know I can be quite a friendly person and maybe she thought it was fine but aaaah why????!!!"

Of course, it's advised by the NHS not to kiss a baby on the lips, especially if you have a cold sore, as it can cause neonatal herpes. It can cause babies to become seriously unwell, and symptoms include the baby lacking in energy, becoming floppy and unresponsive, and breathing rapidly.

In the comments, others shared their unusual similar experiences. One wrote: "I was at the store with my 18-month-old and he was eating a banana. A random lady came by and asked him cutely if she could have a bite. I thought she was joking - and then she bit a piece off his banana and walked away."

"Oh hell no, why are people even comfortable doing this to kids they don't even know", someone questioned, whilst another fumed: "What the actual f* k. I would have lost my mind. "

Source: The Mirror



Nigerians as Hamaz advocates

IN the past one week, many global citizens have been trying to come to terms with the unparalleled attacks by Hamaz on the state of Israel which has led to the death of over 1,300 citizens. The attack which according to resources took about two years planning caught Israel, one of the best armies in the region and the world napping. United States officials noted that about 27 of its citizens were killed during the attack.

What keeps bugging the minds of reputable global security experts is how on earth these terrorists gained access and infiltrated Israeli defense systems unnoticed to unleash such a devastating calamity on innocent lives, mostly women and children. Most annoying was the way and manner Hamaz also took over 200 hostages across Gaza borders into the city to perhaps only God knows where.

In the aftermath of the attack, the state of Israel was forced to take urgent but concrete steps to avoid a repeat of any such callous and barbaric acts in the coming years. As Israel intensifies its operations in the Gaza Strip, more than 2,000 Palestinians have so far been killed and thousands on both sides wounded.

But again, Israel has called-up about 360,000 reservists even as concerns have been expressed that the conflict is spilling over into a broader regional conflagration. It is on notice already that Israel has been hit several times by rockets fire from southern Lebanon.

Justifying their attacks, the Hamaz said their actions became necessary to resist occupation of Gaza and seek revenge for the 2021 raid on Islam's third-holiest site, Al-Aqsa Mosque. Basically, for all those who have followed with keen interest this Israeli-Palestine conflicts for decades, it has all been over land disputes and their quest for a Palestinian state. It is also on record that many scholars have hinged their thoughts on the more concrete but lasting sustainable solutions to the conflict.

In the two states solution submissions, some scholars are of the opinion that the two state solution mechanism agreement would entail creating a state for the Palestine's along the Gaza Strip which Israel said it must be demilitarized. Secondly, Hamaz sees Jewish settlements built on its occupied lands in 1967 as illegal and their continuous expansion antics has also become a contentious issue between both sides and the international community.

But again, the Palestinian foreign ministry bought to public domain; the main area of dispute which by any means is not religiously inclined and or motivated. Some of these documented grudges highlighted notes that, there are about 5.6 million Palestinian refugees mainly descendants of those who fled in 1948 and live in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria who needed to be brought back home.

Unfortunately, the ongoing Israeli-Hamaz war has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by some Islamic clerics in Nigeria. Just recently, Muslims in their hundreds also gathered at Dawah Center at Ijesha are of Lagos State in a procession urging for immediate cease fire in the war hit Gaza. Many others have expressed their outrageous support to

the Palestinian's quest for the complete obliteration of the state of Israel.

For these pro-Palestinians, the killings of over 1,300 innocent Israelis by the Hamaz terrorists which ignited this most recent conflict is not all anything to be considered. However, their major concern for now is that Israel must be stopped from its retaliatory attacks against these terrorists in Gaza. Shameful though, I recently heard another Islamic scholar urging President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to sack the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nyelson Wike for intending to synergize with an Israeli Security Agency to protect citizens of the territory. A few of them have crossed the red lines by calling on other Arab nations of the world to join forces and wage war against the state of Israel until the nation is obliterated once and for all. These are hypnotized men of God, who should be seen to be on the side of peace and equity for the progress of our global community. Firstly, for one to speak on the side of truth, one must with all sincerity of purpose ask deliberate questions including the motives behind those who started this war in the first place. One must also ask what really ignited this ongoing war?

If the memories of the 7th October Hamaz attack on Israel is still fresh on our minds, how comes that these pro- Palestinian forgot in a hurry these callous attacks meted against innocent Israelis who never saw this coming. These terrorists for the avoidance of doubt killed more than 1,300 innocent lives during this unprovoked attacks in Israel. The terrorists also took close to 200, hostages back to Gaza and until now no one knows where these hostages including women and children are kept.

If we must stand on the side of truth, these Nigerian Pro-Palestinian are only hypnotized and pragmatically dogmatized based on fallacious religious ideology that has contributed in dragging this country into unnecessary stress and anxiety in the past few years. What keeps on bugging the mind of yours sincerely is how these advocates are trying to drag Nigeria into this issue that will leave us at the mercy of these advanced nations of the world. I for sure know that those mobilizing themselves for war against Israel are living in a complete fiasco. This is so because of the obvious fact that the Jewish nation has the right to defend itself from any external aggression.

Considering what has happened since this war started, me think that no nation would fold its arms and watch the continuous obliteration of its citizens without doing anything about it. Therefore all those seeking to mobilize a regional conflict in the Middle East through the proliferation of religious fallacies are cowards and trouble makers who do not mean well for Israel and peace for the entire world.

Just as ISS was dealt with, Hamaz must also pay the price of the atrocities it committed by killing innocent women and children which led to the ongoing war in Gaza. We must come to terms with the reality of the fact that Hamaz does not represent the people of Gaza nor does it represents Islam, except if these pro-Palestinian protesters want us to believe so.

Feature

Fuel subsidy removal and plight of Nigerian workers

By Aisha Gamb

ON May 29 during the inauguration of his administration, President Bola Tinubu took a bold step that his predecessors shied away from, the removal of the controversial fuel subsidy.

For years, Nigerians had yearned for the removal of the subsidy which they say had been used by some of the operators of the oil and gas industry to enrich themselves at the expense of other Nigerians.

The subsidy removal was meant to free up some money which would be used to boost infrastructure and quality of life of the populace.

While some of the aims of the removal have been met, including the astronomical rise in the funds accruing to the Federation Account which is shared monthly by the three tiers of government, others have been largely unmet.

To cushion the effect, the Federal Government rolled out a raft of measures, including N5 billion palliatives to state governments which is being released in tranches.

Other interventions proposed by Tinubu include buses across the states and local governments for Mass transit at a much more affordable rate.

He also promised that N100 billion would be invested to acquire 3000 units of 20-seater Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fuelled buses.

The buses, he said, would be shared to major transportation companies in the states, using the intensity of travel per capital.

He said participating transport companies would access credit under the facility at 9 percent per annum with 60 months repayment period.

On salary increment, Tinubu



Tinubu

said his administration was working in collaboration with Labour Unions to introduce a new national minimum wage for workers.

"I want to tell our workers this: your salary review is coming", he said.

Other interventions include the signing of four Executive Orders to address unfriendly fiscal policies and multiple taxes that are stifling the business environment and the funding of 75 enterprises with N75 billion to improve productivity.

There is also Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises which would be funded with N125 billion out of which N50 billion would be spent on Conditional Grant to 1 million nano businesses between now and

March 2024.

The target is to give N50,000 each to 1,300 nano business owners in each of the 774 local governments across the country.

For Agricultural promotion, 225,000 metric tonnes of fertilizer, seedlings and other inputs would be provided to farmers who are committed to the food security agenda.

As the president unveils government's interventions to reduce the effect of subsidy removal, an expert in Finance and Entrepreneurship, Prof. Yusha'u Ango advised that the interventions should cut across the whole country.

He said that the funding of 75 Enterprise with one billion naira each would have more impact if it gets across all the

geopolitical zones of the country.

"What we are calling for is to ensure that this loan cuts across the whole nation so that every society somehow benefits from this.

"The effectiveness of these interventions will be after implementation", Ango said.

Many state governments on their part have also taken some steps to mitigate the impact of the subsidy removal on their citizens.

The organised labour led by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has engaged the Federal Government on the need for palliatives to be made available to workers.

After series of threats of strike and dialogue, the Federal Government bowed to the Joe Ajaero- led NLC and approved N35,000 wage award to workers.

As workers await the full implementation of the palliative measures, some of them say they face numerous challenges which have the potential to hinder their productivity.

Mrs. Halima Abdullahi, a worker with a Kaduna-based private auditing firm, said that she now spends N23,000 to fuel her vehicle weekly as against N5,000 before the subsidy removal.

"My house is far from my work place and I use my vehicle to transport myself to work and take my children to school.

"When the fuel price was increased to N530, I bought N19,500 worth of fuel that

lasted for only one week.

"As fuel price hits N615, I bought fuel once. I parked it at home after exhausting the petrol because I couldn't continue to spend N23,000.

My one month salary was expended on transport alone which led me to borrowing; Now I use tricycle to transport myself and my children to school. I spend N2700 daily", she said.

She urged government to immediately increase minimum wage as it would set a pace for private companies to follow.

Corroborating Abdullahi, a civil servant, Sani Idris said he has parked his car at home, removed the battery and covered it with a car cover.

"Previously N1000 fuel was enough for me to go to work and come home but with the removal of subsidy, I had to buy N3000 fuel daily which is something I can't sustain.

"I use commercial transport now because it's the best option as it reduces cost. We hope to have an increase in salaries soon so that we can afford fuel," he said.

The experience of Abdullahi and Idris is replicated in various cities across the country as transportation and food is said to consume more than 70 percent of workers' monthly income.

As workers wait patiently for government to honour their palliative promises they hope that the wait will not last too long. (NAN Features)

"To cushion the effect, the Federal Government rolled out a raft of measures, including N5 billion palliatives to state governments which is being released in tranches. Other interventions proposed by Tinubu include buses across the states and local governments for Mass transit at a much more affordable rate. He also promised that N100 billion would be invested to acquire 3000 units of 20-seater Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fuelled buses. The buses, he said, would be shared to major transportation companies in the states, using the intensity of travel per capital. He said participating transport companies would access credit under the facility at 9 percent per annum with 60 months repayment period."

News

Ag Provost pledges quality teaching, learning

ACTING Provost of Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Dr. Mrs. Christiana Fwenji Zumyil has pledged to sustain and improve on of teaching and learning in the institution for effective manpower development in the education industry in the country.

This was contained in a press statement made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** by the institution's PRO, Istifanus Kyakmut recently.

To achieve this objective, the Acting Provost disclosed that necessary enabling facilities and environment would be put in place to provide stable academic activities in the college.

Already, she said, staff welfare and training is now a top priority in the institution with over seventy percent of workforce engaged in further studies to obtain higher qualifications as well as regular conferences and seminars mostly sponsored by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund-TETFund.

Dr. Mrs. Christiana Fwenji Zumyil gave this indication while reviewing her one hundred days in office recently.

According to the Acting Provost, she has ensured the completion of ongoing



Fwenji Zumyil

projects in the college especially lecture halls and equipping laboratories meant to boost learning processes and to give students a sense of belonging in that regard.

She expressed gratitude to the Tertiary Education Trust Fund-(TETFund) for its continued intervention to the college in the funding of projects and manpower development which has remained a driving force in maintaining high standards and quality teaching in the institution.

Dr. Mrs. Christiana Fwenji Zumyil commended the collective support of both staff and students of the College within the period

under review which saw to the peaceful coexistence on campus thereby bringing about stability and unity of purpose for learning to strive.

The Acting Provost disclosed that the college management under her watch will continue to collaborate with relevant agencies of government to attract incentives for the growth of education in Nigeria and expressed gratitude to all supervising Commissions like the NCCE, NUC, TETFund and the Federal Ministry of Education for their continued support and encouragement to the college.

From
TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

BENUE State Governor, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia has commiserated with the Catholic Bishop of Katsina-Ala Diocese, Most Rev. Isaac Bundepeun Dugu, the entire Catholic faithful and Christian community over the demise of Rev. Fr. Faustinus Ukenongo Gundu, the Catholic Priest of St. Joseph Catholic Church Jootar, Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

Governor Alia in his condolence message noted that as a servant of God, Rev. Fr. Gundu greatly contributed to the spiritual growth and development of the church and humanity for many years and his decades of service will not be forgotten.

He particularly sympathised with the catholic faithful of St. Joseph Catholic Church, Jootar where the late Cleric was a Catholic Priest and had endeared himself to his parishioners.

The Governor in a statement

Governor Alia condoles bishop Over passing of clergy



Alia

by his Chief Press Secretary, Sir Tersoo Kula, prays God to grant eternal rest to the deceased as well as grant the family and the entire church the fortitude to bear this great loss.

Recalls that Rev. Fr. Gundu had slumped on Thursday October 12th, 2023 and was taken to St. Anthony's Hospital, Zaki-Biam where doctors pronounced him dead.

By **JIDAUN DARING**

AS the world observed Global Handwashing every October 15 of each year, citizens of Plateau State have been called upon to work together to ensure healthy society-when it comes to handwashing in the state.

Plateau State First Lady, Barrister Mrs. Helen M. Mutfwang made the call on the occasion of Global Handwashing Day, organized by the office of the state's first lady in collaboration with the state ministry for Women Affairs and Social

Development, held at Old Government House Rayfield Jos, on Monday.

Barrister Mrs., Mutfwang remarked that Global advocacy day is dedicated to increase awareness and understanding about the importance of handwashing with soap as an effective and affordable way to prevent diseases in order to save lives.

She pointed out that the initiative aims to curtail germ transmission and reduce the prevalence of diseases such as diarrhea, respiratory infections and cholera. She added it was also aimed at motivating people from all works of life around the world to improve handwashing habits for a better hygiene.

The First Lady said that the theme for this year's celebration was "clean hands are within reach". She explained that the theme serves as a comprehensive Platform for educating people, especially children about the significance of hand hygiene and proper handwashing techniques.

"I am glad to say that our children are here to witness the celebration of the event today." She then encouraged people to always take their hand hygiene seriously.

She emphatically state that frequent washing of hands with soap should be seen as a collective task that must be taken with utmost importance, She added that it was the most effective and affordable way to prevent spread of communicable disease to save lives.

First Lady also affirmed that the present administration in the state under the leadership of the captain of "The Time is now", Barrister Caleb Mutfwang is committed to partnering with International Organizations, Civil Society Groups and Non-Governmental Organizations

(NGOs) among others was not only to promote hand hygiene and curtail germ transmission, but to also ensure the general health and wellness of the citizens.

She appreciated the participated schools and students who represented other schools during the event and urged the students to extend the message of imbibing the culture of clean hand to all schools in the state.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, state Epidemiologist ministry of health Plateau State, Job Maren emphasized the need for people to go back to hand hygiene practice because the hand transmit different kind of diseases.

Maren advised students to be ambassadors of hand hygiene both in schools and homes.

He then urged the students to take the campaign serious, saying that prevention is better than cure.

Also given a talks on handwashing, state disease surveillance and notification officer ministry of health, Solomon Barnabas Bikwat said that the hands are the main tools for work. He advised people not to take the issue of handwashing for granted, saying that hand hygiene helps a lot in reducing the cases of contracting disease through hand.

Given vote of thanks, commissioner for women Affairs and social Development, Hon. Mrs. Caroline PanglangDafur thanked the first lady and other invited guests for gracing the occasion, describing such support as a move that is geared towards taking the state to a greater height.

Dafur while scoring the importance of education advised students to concentrate on their studies.

Group advocates disables equal rights

As the world commemorates

From
TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

International Day for Disaster Risks Reduction (IDRR), a group, Elim Christian Vocational Training Centre has advocated equal rights for people living with disabilities.

Executive Director, Elim CVTC, Mr. Emmanuel Egbodo told journalists

recently in a press briefing at the premises of Brothers FM Makurdi, that this year's theme was in line with Elim's vision for supporting and building capacity of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups to enjoy full participation in safe and inclusive society.

He said, Elim CVTC was committed to promoting

empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities and other vulnerabilities by facilitating equal access to sustainable development and community services through partnerships and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

According to the executive director, the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction was not merely an observance but a rallying call to bring organizations, agencies and communities worldwide on a common platform.

He explained that the commitment of Elim CVTC to this year's theme emphasizes the collective responsibility

of governments, organizations and individuals in addressing disparities and promoting equitable and sustainable societies.

Mr. Egbodo maintained that as the human population continues to grow and the frequency of natural disasters increases, there is a greater need to reduce the risks of death, destruction and loss. He added that risk reduction systems create essential frameworks that help people, communities and countries minimize harm to their residents.

In a remark, the Executive Secretary, Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA), Sir James Iorpuu while commending Elim CVTC for organising the

celebration in the state said, the event was in line with the vision of Governor Hyacinth Iormem Alia's administration to lower the impact of disasters in the state.

Sir Iorpuu pledged on behalf of the state government to partner with Elim CVTC to create awareness and mobilise the people to reduce inequality for those with disabilities.

The theme for this year's commemoration was "Fighting Inequality for a Resilient Future". He decried padding of salaries of teachers in the state and announced discovery of ghost workers and ghost schools which he said raised the monthly wage bill of teachers to N1.6 billion instead of N800 million.

Sports



Rooney

Is Rooney good to take Birmingham back to EPL?

By RICHARD MARTIN

SOME of the best coaches, both from the past and present, were brilliant footballers in their day. Take Johan Cruyff, Pep Guardiola, Diego Simeone, Didier Deschamps, Carlo Ancelotti or Zinedine Zidane. Yet from Diego Maradona and John Barnes through to Thierry Henry, Steven Gerrard, Frank Lampard or Andrea Pirlo, there is also a wealth of evidence to show that top footballers do not always make top coaches.

Owners and directors, however, continue to trust former greats with masterminding their teams despite having scarce or unconvincing track records in the dugout. Birmingham City are the latest club to put their eggs in the basket of one of the best players of the modern era after hiring Wayne Rooney.

Rooney's predecessor, John Eustace, had made a strong start to the season and taken the Blues to sixth position in the Championship, with realistic hopes of qualifying for the play-offs. In his last two outings as manager, he had overseen big wins over Huddersfield Town and local rivals West Brom.

Eustace's reward was to be booted out of his job and replaced by Rooney, whose D.C. United had just finished ninth in their MLS Eastern Conference and failed to make the play-offs. His two-year stint in charge of Derby County, meanwhile, ultimately ended in relegation, albeit in very challenging circumstances.

Rooney's appointment will undoubtedly further raise the global profile of Birmingham, whose new American owners, which include NFL legend Tom Brady, have huge ambitions. But

hiring him is also a huge gamble. Rooney has so far built his coaching reputation on fighting fires and damage limitation. Now his task is to lead Birmingham back to the Premier League for the first time in 13 years. Falling below the sixth place Eustace had achieved and missing out on the play-offs would be seen as a huge failure. and Zidane, or Henry and Lampard?

Rooney cut his coaching teeth with Derby, first as a part-time player, part-time assistant coach to Philippe Cocu, and then as permanent manager after the Dutchman was sacked.

The Rams were bottom of the Championship when Rooney made the transition, having taken six points from 11 matches. Under Rooney, who was interim boss for two weeks before taking the role permanently, they picked up 40 points from 35 games and ended the campaign one place and one point above the relegation zone.

It was not exactly a great escape, however. Derby lost six of their final seven matches and only achieved survival on the final day of the season after the most frantic of finishes. They snatched a 3-3 draw against fellow relegation contenders Sheffield Wednesday with a late equaliser from the penalty spot, sending the Owls down instead.

They also had to rely on Cardiff City equalising in the 88th minute against Rotherham United, who would otherwise have stayed up and relegated Derby.

Derby could not avoid relegation in Rooney's second campaign in charge, but this was the season when his reputation as manager grew. The club's long-running financial issues condemned the Rams before the

season had begun as they were placed in administration and unable to make any transfers.

Matters only got worse when they were hit with a 12-point penalty in September and then had an additional nine points docked in November for breaching the league's accounting rules. The punishments only made Derby more defiant, and Rooney was credited for leading a brilliant run of five wins and three draws in 10 matches to give them a semblance of hope of avoiding relegation.

Derby's form led to Everton approaching Rooney when they sacked Rafael Benitez, but he turned down an interview to focus on trying to keep the Rams up. That hope eventually faded and Derby were relegated in April, eventually finishing second from bottom. If it had not been for the points deduction, they would have finished 17th, taking 55 points.

Rooney was given a great reception by supporters following a rousing speech to outside the club's training ground after being relegated. "We're grateful for the support you've shown us all season. It's been f*cking tough, been hard. Difficult moments for us, for you especially", Rooney said. "But we've tried our best, we've given everything we can. It's unfortunate we've been relegated but now we'll plan to make sure this club comes back."

Rooney did not keep his promise, though, as he left Derby in June 2022 after the planned takeover by Chris Kirchner fell through.

Just a month after leaving Derby, Rooney went back to D.C. United, the penultimate club of his playing career. As with Derby, he inherited a club in a mess. D.C. United were bottom of the Eastern Conference when he succeeded Hernan

Losada, and in 15 months he oversaw a big improvement.

But it was ultimately not enough and D.C. failed to make the play-offs in Rooney's first and only full season in charge, finishing ninth in the 15-team Eastern Conference. They lost 14 of their 34 matches while winning just 10.

Rooney was happy to admit that he saw his time in D.C. as another step in his coaching education. "Coming out here has just really been about gaining experience and for me to try and develop as a coach," Rooney told *PA Media* in July.

"I know I am not where I want to be as a finished article, but these next few years are really important in terms of me getting to grips and getting the best out of myself and eventually out of the players. But it is something I really enjoy. It's a great experience for me to come here and work and I think it will really help me moving forward."

One problem that some world-class footballers have when they turn to coaching is a lack of empathy with players not quite at their level. That does not appear to be the case, however, with Rooney, who has developed close relationships with his players.

"He makes you think about things that you have never thought about the game," former D.C. United midfielder Lewis O'Brien told *The Express*. "You watch videos and he'll stop it and his assistant coaches would stop and ask 'Where should you play it now?'. I would give my answer and then Wayne would go 'No, you should have played this pass five seconds ago because that guy is running that way and his footwork is out'."

"I didn't think of anything like that. There are just sides of the game that players don't see and to

have a coach like Wayne and the backroom staff, who have been with him for a while, to understand those little things is strange. I've tried to take the most out of this situation as possible."

Derby striker Martyn Waghorn, meanwhile, said Rooney always looked to lift the spirits of the younger players and was a soothing presence on the sidelines. "He could sense there was anxiousness and just tried to calm it down as much as he can, saying don't worry, it'll be fine I believe in you," Waghorn told *Talksport*. "He's got that winning mentality, but in terms of relaying it across to the players, he's very relaxed. He brings a lot of calm in pressure situations. A really good presence to have in the side."

But there is still the inescapable truth that Rooney is an inexperienced manager with fewer than three seasons under his belt and far from convincing results. Across all competitions with Derby and D.C. United, Rooney has won just 38 matches, a win rate of 27 percent, while drawing 36 games and losing 65. His teams have scored 138 goals, fewer than one per game, while letting in 186. It is not exactly a record that suggests he will be able to achieve great things with Birmingham, whose co-owner Tom Wagner wants to make the club "a beacon of sporting excellence".

And many Birmingham fans are wary of replacing a successful if unglamorous manager with a big name. When the club sacked Gary Rowett midway through the 2016-17 campaign, they were in play-off contention, but replaced him with ex-Chelsea star Gianfranco Zola, with disastrous results. Zola was sacked five months later and Birmingham only.

Sports



Hubert

Shanghai Masters: Hurkacz beats Rublev to win title

HUBERT Hurkacz saved a match point on his way to victory over Andrey Rublev in the Shanghai Masters final.

BBC SPORT said that, Hurkacz was 6-5 down in the deciding tie-break but hung on to edge past the Russian fifth seed 6-3 3-6 7-6 (8-6).

Both men were seeking a second Masters 1,000 title, with world number 17 Hurkacz winning out in a heavy-hitting contest.

The Pole, 26, sent down 21 aces on his way to a first title at this level since winning in Miami in 2021.

Rublev, 25, had not dropped a set on his run to the final but was unable to stop Hurkacz completing a seventh win in eight finals on the ATP Tour.

The world number seven

remains well placed to qualify for November's ATP Finals in Turin. He is fifth in the 'Race to Turin' rankings, while Hurkacz moves up to 11th, 335 points behind Dane Holger Rune, who is in the eighth and final qualifying place.

Meanwhile, World number four Jessica Pegula claimed her second title of the season with victory over China's Yue Yuan in the Korea Open final in Seoul.

The 29-year-old won 6-2 6-3 in Sunday's final for her fourth career victory.

Pegula, who was seeded first after accepting a wildcard in Korea, became the first American since Venus Williams in 2007 to win the title.

"My mom is Korean and she was adopted from here so it's really special to be able to win

here," she said.

Pegula, who won the Canadian Open in Montreal in August, also reached the finals in Doha in February and Tokyo, where she lost to Veronika Kudermetova this month.

This was the first WTA final for 128th-ranked Yue, who had not reached a quarter-final before this week.

Elsewhere, Canada's Leylah Fernandez defeated the Czech Republic's world number five Katerina Siniakova to win the Hong Kong Open.

Former US Open runner-up Fernandez claimed her first WTA title this season and first since March 2022, coming from a set down to win 3-6 6-4 6-4.

The 21-year-old, who entered the tournament ranked number 60, will return to the top 50 after the win.

Asher-Smith splits with coach after 19 years

BRITISH sprinter Dina Asher-Smith has split with her long-time coach John Blackie nine months before the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

BBC SPORT said that, Asher-Smith, 27, who won 100m bronze at the 2021 Games in Tokyo, had been coached by Blackie since she

was eight.

She will now be guided by Edrick Floreal and based in Austin, Texas.

It comes after disappointing results at this year's World Championships, where Asher-Smith finished eighth in the 100m final and seventh in the 200m.

She announced her change

of coach with an emotional statement on her Instagram page.

"After 19 years, John Blackie and I have ended our coach-athlete partnership," Asher-Smith said. "My life changed by meeting him and I will forever be grateful to him."

"His intellect, patience and dedication has taken me from an energetic eight-year-old to a world champion with over 20 international medals and many Olympics, World, Commonwealth and European finals."

"John and I will, of course, remain close friends."

"Thank you to John and thank you to all my team in London whose talents and hard work have helped me realise so many dreams to date."

"My next chapter will be led by Edrick Floreal based out of Austin, Texas. I'm very excited to join his talented training group as we head to Paris 2024."

SOUTH Korea's Tom Kim held off Canada's Adam Hadwin over the closing holes to retain his PGA Shriners Children's Open title at TPC Summerlin in Las Vegas.

BBC SPORT said that, the 21-year-old, who finished joint second at this year's Open Championship, shot a five-under 66 to finish on 20 under.

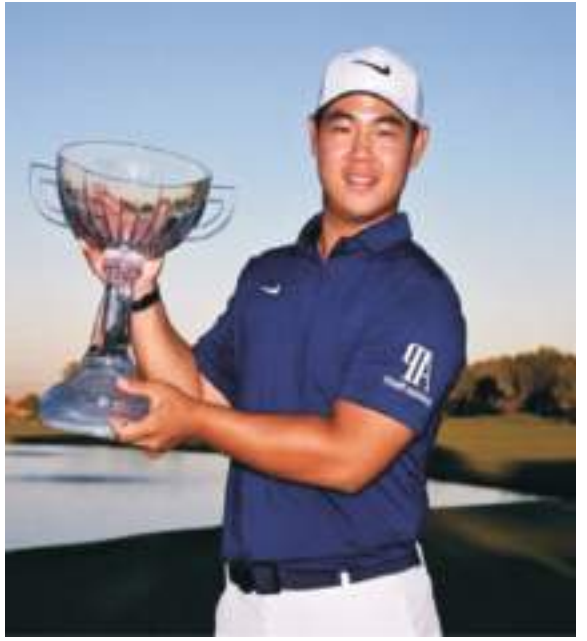
It was enough to beat Hadwin by one shot and win his third PGA Tour title.

Kim sank a 12-foot birdie putt at the 15th and Hadwin paid the price for a bogey at the 16th.

"It has been a long season," said Kim. "I'm very fortunate to defend. I've learned so much this year. It has been a blessing. It has been very humbling."

Kim, the world number 16, birdied three of the first four holes before back-to-back bogeys at five and six dropped him out of the lead but he recovered with birdies at

Kim retains title in style in Las Vegas



Kim

the ninth, 12th and 13th fell short of making the to take control. cut on her PGA Tour

On Friday, US Solheim debut, missing out by Cup star Lexi Thompson three strokes.

Yin beats Vu in Shanghai play-off to win first tour title

AMERICAN Angel Yin beat Solheim Cup team-mate and world number one Lilia Vu in a play-off to win the LPGA Shanghai.

Yin, 25, claimed her first victory on the LPGA Tour in her 159th start with a birdie at the first play-off hole after finishing tied with Vu on 14 under par.

Vu forced the play-off with a four-under 68 in the final round to pull two shots back on overnight leader Yin.



Angel Yin was this season's 12th first-time winner in the LPGA - a new record for the tour

Northern Ireland's Stephanie Meadow, 31, also went low with a 65 to finish tied for eighth place, two shots back.

"Throughout the round I was thinking to myself, it's not easy to win. It's not easy to win," said world number 35 Yin, who took home \$315,000 (£260,000) - part of a \$2.1m (£1.7m) prize fund.

"It's been a special week."

A dramatic final day at Qizhong Garden Country Club saw the lead change hands repeatedly.

Sweden's Solheim Cup star Maja Stark started the day in a share of the lead with Yin but fell back into the field, eventually finishing in a five-way tie for eighth place on 12 under after a level-par round of 72.

Meadow also reached 12 under after producing

seven birdies in a bogey-free final round that followed a marked progression through the tournament - her 65 coming after earlier efforts of 74, 71 and 66.

Five players ended one shot behind the leading pair, with South Korea's Hye-Jin Choi the pick of those after carding a blistering eight-under 64.

British Open champion Vu, 26, was in the penultimate group and finished with a par four on the last to take the clubhouse lead.

But Yin held her nerve to claim the par she needed on the 18th to finish tied with the two-time major winner, after finding the green with an approach shot from a fairway bunker.

Yin then went one better on the same hole in the play-off, hitting a three on the 18th to clinch victory.



Asher-Smith

Sports

'Doc' who played at World Cups in two sports

"You know, sometimes rugby players on cricket fields are not good things." As the only man to have ever played in both a Rugby World Cup and Cricket World Cup, Rudie van Vuuren knows what he's talking about. Piers writes.

MALE rugby players may be known for their machismo, but in 2003 Van Vuuren took his into a Cricket World Cup too - telling Pakistan captain Waqar Younis his fellow fast bowlers Wasim Akram and Shoaib Akhtar might lack a bit of pace.

That's Shoaib, who six days later would deliver the fastest ball ever recorded - 100.2mph (161.3km/h) - against England.

And here he was facing a little-known tailender making his one-day debut, on its greatest stage, for cricketing minnows, in their first World Cup. The odds were stacked firmly against Van Vuuren.

"We were 42-9. I came in at number 11 and, at that stage, the lowest total in a World Cup was 45 all out," says Van Vuuren.

"I remember our team manager saying to me just before I walked out: 'Doc, just keep us out of the record books.'"

The team manager seemingly failed to mention anything about sledging some of the game's legends, however.

"At the drinks break, I said to Younis: 'Waqar, you're never going to get me out with these seamers. You need to bring on the spinners because Shoaib is not fast enough.' He just lost it, and got really angry with me."

Within minutes, Shoaib was pummeling Van Vuuren to the extent he bowled what was then the World Cup's fastest ball - clocking 98.5mph (158.5km/h).

But Namibia's last man did not just hold firm in the five balls he faced from Shoaib and the 11 from Wasim - he hit both men for four.

And his brave batting display - 14 runs from 19 balls, which could not save the match but ensured Namibia made it to 84 - ended when he was bowled not by a speed merchant, but by spinner Saqlain Mushtaq.

"It was a great experience playing against the top of the world's best players," says Van Vuuren, who like all of his team-mates was an amateur.

"Sport at that level is a mental thing. If you're going to be intimidated by a ball of 160 km/h, you don't belong."

Cricketing fairytales

When Namibia's team manager called Van Vuuren 'Doc', he did so because he was already a qualified physician.

That meant that as the tournaments approached - unlike now, they were played at different times of the year - Van Vuuren had other things on his mind.

"I was a full-time doctor in private practice so that made it very difficult," he says. "When I played rugby and cricket, I didn't get paid - I lost money - but I knew then that the sport would end one day."



Rudie van Vuuren played at both the Cricket World Cup and Rugby World Cup in 2003

"We were just amateurs, with a very good cricket team. It would have been better if we had beaten one or two big names, but we couldn't."

Van Vuuren and his team-mates lost all 10 games they played across both tournaments, but that didn't stop him impressing - particularly in the cricket.

Namibia faced heavyweight opposition in that tournament, which was staged in Africa for the first time. After opening the tournament against co-hosts Zimbabwe, they met Pakistan, England, India, Australia and the Netherlands.

Van Vuuren smiles as he recalls hitting England legend James Anderson for six - describing it as the "the best thing of that game", even though he then took five wickets. "Pretty amazing," he says, "against the nation that invented cricket."

It remains the only time a Namibian has taken five wickets in a Cricket World Cup match, and includes another dose of sledging from 'Doc' - this time for future England captain Michael Vaughan.

"He was not impressed," says Van Vuuren. "He gave me a look and I thought, 'maybe that's not the right guy to chirp.'"

Next in line to beat Namibia were India, but Van Vuuren did have the distinction of taking his side's only two wickets - including breaking the stumps of the legendary Sachin Tendulkar.

"When he had eight runs or so, I bowled him an absolute screamer and he played, missed, looked at me and nodded his head," Van Vuuren says, grinning. "Over a hundred runs later, I eventually got him!"

"I asked him for a photo and he sat down with me and we talked for a long time. I remember thinking, 'what an incredible sportsman - so humble, so successful, never controversial and here he sits down with a Namibian player - he doesn't need to do it.' It was a humbling experience."

Another soon followed, albeit in a different way, against eventual champions Australia - as Darren Lehmann thrashed Van Vuuren for 28 off his side's final over en route to a thumping win.

"At lunchtime, I walked past Darren and he said: 'Sorry for ruining your World Cup, mate.' I took it in good spirits. It was terrible, but it happens. My son still teases me about that."

With figures of 0-92 from his 10 overs, Van Vuuren was then out for a duck - as he would be in the final game against the Netherlands.

Cracking the codes

Van Vuuren grew up in Windhoek - the capital of a vast nation more than double the size of Germany, but with a population 30 times smaller.

He does not remember time before he played both cricket and rugby, but it was the oval ball that was his primary love. Nonetheless, he made his international cricket debut first - winning his first cap in 1997, just three weeks before doing likewise in rugby.

It was the start of a way of life that would involve regularly swapping between the sports, working out how to juggle his working life with his sporting life, and getting used to either gaining or losing weight.

"It was difficult being a very busy medical doctor and playing sport, especially two codes," he says. "There was no time for watching TV, relaxing or anything like that - it was sport and work, and that was it. "And it was difficult to morph from a rugby body to a cricket body in a

couple of weeks. I would play cricket, then gain five kilograms and play rugby, then lose five kilograms and play cricket.

"I became very, very disciplined at managing my time and my diet, and that is one of the greatest things I've learned from sport - how to be disciplined."

That discipline was evident between the World Cups, as Van Vuuren returned to work.

As one of few obstetricians then in Windhoek, he delivered 70 babies. And it was then he became aware of his own entry - into the annals of sporting history.

"I didn't even know it was something special," he says. "Then a journalist phoned me and said: 'Did you know that no-one else has ever played in a rugby and cricket World Cup, or even in two World Cups in different sports codes, in one year?'"

"I said I didn't, and then all of a sudden it became something."

History beckoned, but on the eve of Namibia's Rugby World Cup opener against Argentina, misfortune struck as the team trained in Australia.

"It was the last sprint," says Van Vuuren, "and when I heard my calf go, I just knew."

'Can we not play a little more?' Van Vuuren's medical knowledge made the pain even more acute given he knew the significance - especially once the results came back.

"The scan just showed everything was torn," he says. "It was just utter, utter disappointment because physically I was in incredible shape, and I was so ready for that World Cup."

It was particularly cruel given he had missed the 1999 tournament after a row with Namibia's then coach.

The nature of the tear meant his calf needed between six and eight weeks to recover, but Namibia's group games all fell within a three-week period.

"You can only control the controllables so I tried to just stay as positive as possible and rehab," Van Vuuren says. "But I was sitting

on the side, really wanting to play - and really wanting to fulfil the prophecy."

Van Vuuren sat out three heavy defeats, with the Welwitschias beaten 67-14 by Argentina and 64-7 by Ireland before hosts Australia inflicted a 142-0 hammering.

That result remains the biggest winning margin in a Rugby World Cup match, and there was further misery for Van Vuuren when a haunting figure returned as he spoke to two Australia players after the game.

"I was in reception talking to George Gregan and Joe Roff when I heard somebody whistle," he says. "I looked over and there was Darren Lehmann showing me [with his fingers] '28'. That's when I knew I would never get rid of this thing."

Namibia had just one match left - against Romania - and Van Vuuren was desperate. His calf was far from healed, but the burn inside him was to simply get on to the pitch.

"The pain was there but the levels were such I could actually make it onto the pitch. I said to the staff: 'I don't care what you do, I have to get on to the field.'"

"Luckily Dave Waterston, our coach, backed me and said: 'Just go on.'"

Van Vuuren - his body stuffed with painkillers - had just under 10 minutes to make an impact, and was determined not to waste a second.

"I remember the first contact I made. I got the ball from the line-out and just thought, 'even if break my leg off now, I'm going to make it count.'"

"I remember making a big tackle. I remember the contact was very hard, but I survived it and played." Van Vuuren had done it. Yet the final whistle of a 37-7 defeat did not prompt celebration of his feat.

"I remember thinking, 'can we not play a little bit more?' It was disappointing, but I had to make peace with it."

"I was just relieved I got the opportunity, and thankful for the grace to get on to the pitch."



Van Vuuren is congratulated after taking his fifth wicket against England



Quest



writer

RONÉL RENSBURG, PhD

FRAGMENT

"The basic scenario of the moral sage in each tradition emphasises virtue and moral character. In the days leading up to his condemnation, Socrates was taken up with a single question: how to be excellent at being human? He sharply criticised the pseudo-transformational sophists - the purveyors of false wisdom - because they did not know themselves and they abandoned fidelity to the way of truth."

RONÉL RENSBURG

Archbishop Tutu as moral sage

Cont'd from last week

The transformational leader treats each follower as an ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU 750 individual and provides coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities.. While authentic transformational leaders are concerned about developing their followers into leaders, pseudo-transformational leaders are more concerned about maintaining the dependence of their followers.

They exploit the feelings of their followers to maintain deference from them. Pseudo-transformational leaders will welcome and expect blind obedience. They will attempt to enhance their personal status by maintaining the personal distance between themselves and their followers.

They encourage fantasy and magic in their vision of the attractive future while true transformational leaders promote attainable shared objectives. The ethics of transformational and charismatic leadership The ethics of leadership rests upon three pillars: (1) the moral character of the leader; (2) the ethical legitimacy of the values embedded in the leader's vision, articulation, and a message that followers either embrace or reject; and (3) the morality of the processes of social ethical choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue.

Such ethical characteristics of leadership have been widely acknowledged. Transformational leaders set examples to be emulated by their followers.

For many moral analysts, leadership is a many-headed hydra that alternately shows the faces of Saddam Hussein, Adolf Hitler, Osama Bin Laden and Pol Pot as well as those of Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Tutu and Mother Theresa.

The stories that recount the accomplishments of such leaders raise moral questions concerning both the character of the leaders as well as the legitimacy of their programmes. Following the ideas of Rogers and maintained that charismatic leadership (which they defined similarly to transformational leadership) of self-serving leaders could result in deception and exploitation of followers, but argued that most leaders pursued both personal and societal interests. Subsequently, Conger and Kanungo reviewed the dark side



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of charismatic leaders: narcissisms, authoritarianism, Machiavellianism, flawed vision, a need for power, and a lack of internalisation of values and beliefs.

Authentic transformational leadership provides a reasonable and realistic concept of self - a self that is connected to friends, family, and community, whose welfare may be more important to them than their own.

Their moral obligations are grounded in a broader conception of individuals within community and related social norms and cultural beliefs. Transformational leadership is consistent with Judaic-Christian philosophical traditions and discourses on the leadership of the moral sage that presuppose a trusting community as the central life context.

In leadership, character matters. This is not to deny that evil people can bring about good things or that good people can lead the way to moral ruin. Rather, leadership provides a moral compass and, over the long term, both personal development and the common

good are best served by a moral compass that reads true.

Here some lessons can be drawn from the traditions of the moral sage and social prophet that have enjoyed prominence in a wide variety of cultures. Whether visionary or ascetic, the moral sage and social prophet have also widely been perceived as agents of change, as well as people to be emulated and as leaders of others, not followers. Both Socrates and Confucius have come to epitomise leaders with authentic idealised influence. There is no doubt that over the centuries they have taken on heroic dimensions.

Their framing narratives underscore a fundamental dynamic of leadership. Each proposed to his followers the highest ethical standards that they themselves implemented in their own lives. More importantly, in terms of authenticity, each was recognised as a moral sage and leader by others, not by self-proclamation.

Historically, the central focus of ethical concern in Chinese traditions manifests a right

ordering of personal relationships.

Epitomised in Confucius' "five relations", Chinese ethics emphasises personal virtue and specify proper conduct in family, kinship, and friendship relations, as well as among social equals and between superiors and subordinates in socio-political organisations and institutions.

The social and political order has always been seen as a moral issue and it plays a critical role in realising humanity's ethical destiny. The virtue of ren (human-heartedness, benevolence) and the virtue of yi (righteousness) are the grounding virtues of the moral life.

They express the way (dao) that one existentially embraces. The moral person in each tradition would sacrifice anything for the sake of virtue.

For example, the Confucian moral tradition is strikingly clear about the relation of profits to moral virtue. From the Analects (4.5) one reads: "Confucius said, 'Wealth and honor are what every person desires.

But if they have been obtained in violation of moral principles, they must not be kept. Poverty and humble station are what every person dislikes. But if they can be avoided only in violation of moral principles, they must not be avoided. If a superior person departs from humanity (ren), how can s/he fulfil that name? A

ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU 752 superior person never abandons ren, even for the lapse of a single meal. In moments of haste, one acts according to it. In times of difficulty or confusion, one acts according to it' "...

In Socratic terms, one finds a striking similarity: the moral person does not "put money or anything else before virtue". Both Socrates and Confucius base their approaches upon authentic inspirational motivation.

Each proposes a transcendent vision of fulfilment, justice, and peace based upon the right ordering of relationships.

Each is transcendent and grasps the "beyond in our midst", a better future. Each transforms by invitation, not by coercion. Each manifests consistency between word and deed. The

inspiration is simple: virtue is its own reward.

The basic scenario of the moral sage in each tradition emphasises virtue and moral character. In the days leading up to his condemnation, Socrates was taken up with a single question: how to be excellent at being human? He sharply criticised the pseudo-transformational sophists - the purveyors of false wisdom - because they did not know themselves and they abandoned fidelity to the way of truth.

While pretending to be wise, they were foolish. The Socratic enterprise is grounded in a relentless pursuit of the truth, in the development of wisdom and the cultivation of virtue.

Indeed, Socrates himself transformed others precisely because of his fearless commitment to virtue.

For Confucius, the moral sage is the key person in bringing about personal righteousness and social justice.

A superior person (jyundz) is a moral person, who walks the moral way and attempts to practice virtue through self-cultivation.

Both the sage and the superior person live under the restraint of virtue and aim to transform society accordingly. A superior person is perform a moral leader.

The common, inferior or small person (xiaoren) either does not know or does not follow the way and is not a positive moral force.

In today's world, Socrates and Confucius seem almost naive, offering a vision based on the premise that through personal cultivation, guided by moral leaders, people will develop strong moral character and embrace virtue above all other things and, in so doing, will transform themselves and society. But from this simple framework of truth-wisdom-virtue a vision of the transforming power of the moral sage has flowed down through the ages.

The heart of the moral enterprise is the development of good character, which is defined by commitment to virtue in all circumstances. This framework was integrated into Judaic-Christian traditions through personages such as Augustine, Aquinas, and Maimonides.

To be concluded next week