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Sunday Standard

TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1972

VOL. 13 NO. 802

SUNDAY, November 12, 2023

N250

Fifty years: The story of THE NIGERIA STANDARD



J. D. Gomwalk



Gov. Mutfwang



First Editor, Dan Agbese



A providential state visit from the South had exposed the political underbelly of the North. But it was more than that. It was also the beginning of a story that has hardly changed in the general run of the Nigerian odyssey. It is the story of the struggle for identity and how it found a voice to express itself. **WULIME GOYIT** writes. **SUNDAY MAGAZINE, Pages 10,31**

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Stop this reckless spendings

NIGERIA is indeed a country of contradistinction. Amidst the abundance of both human and natural resources Majority of the Nigerian populace wallow in abject poverty, wants and deprivation. Medicare has gone out of the reach of the ordinary Nigerian, school fees for the education of wards and relations have skyrocketed to high-heavens, unemployment of Nigerian youths have become the norm rather than the exception, amongst many other economic, social and even political misnomers plaguing the country. **YET**, a negligible few Nigerians particularly the political class and other men and women of means, chance and opportunity swim in unbelievable opulence, displaying their wealth with all the gusto they can muster. Nigeria is no doubt a paradox-one country, two nations. **WE** noticed ugly, if not despicable scenario recently when Nigeria's President Ahmed Bola Tinubu signed the **N2.17 tr. Supplementary Budget**. Amongst the items listed as "needs" was purchase of a yacht for Mr. President, purchase of vehicles for senators and renovation of the Presidential Villa. We find these bizarre, unreasonable and therefore uncalled for from all intends and proses.

TO put it point blank, it is the height of irresponsibility and insensitivity to the Nigerian people and the Nigerian nation. Demands for such items is patently wrong, while the timing is equally callous. Are our leaders living in another clime? Are they really with the mass of the people? If the answers to these posers are in the affirmative, then something must have gone awry because, if they are with the people in this country then, they should know, even sense that, there is inexplicable suffering in the land.

LITTLE wonder, Nigeria is being alluded as the poverty capital of the world. This is simply unacceptable and smarks of leadership failure in all its ramification. How can we claim to be the giant of Africa and the fastest growing economy in the country when a huge number of Nigerians go to bed on empty stomachs? When another majority cannot afford to pay its bills-hospital, rent, school fees and even transportation?

WITH the hardships increasingly becoming unbearable, something must give way. Government must act decisively and equally proactively to ameliorate the plight of Nigerians. The people are equally humans, flesh and blood and should have access to all the needs enunciated by Abraham Maslow in his Theory of needs. We should also be mindful of the age-long adage that "a hungry man is an angry man".

WE urge government to drastically cut the cost of governance. It does no good for our economy nor our democracy. As a matter of fact it has proved counter-productive as most times we depend on borrowings to meet our needs. Indeed, caution should be the watchword in whatever we do as a nation at this critical time.

PLHA approves N27bn as supplementary budget

The Plateau State House of Assembly (PLHA), has approved the sum of twenty seven billion naira (N27,000,000,000.00) only as supplementary budget for the 2023 fiscal year.

This is sequel to a communication received from the state Executive Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, requesting the assembly's consideration and approval.

The Speaker, Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule who read the communication before the floor of the House during an emergency Friday plenary, acknowledged the proposed submission by His Excellency.

According to the governor, the need to submit the document was in consideration of the fact that the budget already adopted, was inherited by his administration upon assumption of office in May, 2023 and not a reflection of its administration's agenda.

Another communication was also received by the House, for the approval of the state government to take a facility of one billion, five hundred and sixty two million, eight hundred and eighteen thousand, one hundred and twenty four naira, thirty one kobo (N1,562,818,124.31) only.

This, according to the state government, is to enable it to pay the counterpart funding in order to access the same from the Universal Basic Education (UBEC).

The communication reads, "You may be aware that the Plateau State Universal Basic Education Board has been unable to access funding from UBEC from the second half of 2021 to date, due to the state government's inability to provide counterpart funding that will qualify the state to access the same".

Also during plenary, the House hurriedly passed the 2024 budget proposal that was earlier presented to it by the state governor last Tuesday, after the Committee



Sule

Chairman on Appropriation, Hon. Danjuma Azi read its report before the floor of the House.

Recall that the budget defense by MDAs which had commenced Thursday, 9th October was called off on the second day Friday 10th. No reason was given for its suspension.

Court stops NLC, TUC from embarking on strike

The National Industrial Court has stopped the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Trade Union Congress (TUC) as well as their affiliates from embarking on any form of strike or industrial action slated for November 14.

President of the court, Justice Benedict Bakwaph Kanyip, gave

the order following an ex-parte application to that effect brought by the federal government, the attorney general of the federation (AGF) and minister of justice.

Justice Kanyip invoked sections 17 and 19 of the National Industrial Court Act to issue the restraining order

against the Labour.

The Federal Government and the AGF through their lawyer, Tijani Gazali had in the ex-parte application prayed the court to stop the planned strike action so as to stop untold hardships that would be inflicted on innocent law abiding citizens and their businesses.

Prices of goods rise, import rate hits N783.17/\$1

Customs duty payable on imported items at the nation's seaports has increased after the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), adjusted the official exchange rate used by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), for import duties and levies from N770.88/\$1 to N783.174/\$1.

With this adjustment, the prices of imported goods which Nigeria practically depends on will escalate further in the coming days with attendant untold hardship on many Nigerians.

Our correspondent reports that the CBN had on June 24th, adjusted

the exchange rate from N422.30/\$1 to N589/\$1, on July 6th, it was adjusted to N770.88/\$1

It was gathered that the changes were officially reflected on the Customs portal on Thursday through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

However, with the adjustment in the exchange rate, importers bringing goods through the nation's seaports will now be paying more as import duty tariffs following the addition of N12.294 to any one dollar of the total value used in calculating import duty.

However, maritime experts have argued that the new customs

exchange rate effectively means there would be an increase in import duty payable by clearing agents to the Customs service and would overall affect price of goods at the market.

Confirming the increment, the public relations officer, Tin Can Island chapter of the Association of Nigerian Licenced Customs Agents (ANLCA), Comrade Onome Monije, rued the increment, saying clearing agents will now pay more for cargo clearance at the various seaports.

She said the increment will affect vehicle clearance, saying clearing agents should engage their clients to forestall disagreement.

Ribadu urges security agencies to protect Nigerians

All security, intelligence and other relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), have been urged to take responsibility for protecting the lives and property of Nigerians.

The National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu, made the call at the briefing of Service Chiefs and Heads of Agencies on the road map for the establishment of the proposed Anti-Kidnap Multi-Agency Fusion Cell (AMFC), on Thursday, in Abuja.

Ribadu was represented by the National Coordinator of the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), retired Rear Adm. Yaminu Musa.

This is contained in a statement by Raphael Towoju of the Strategic Communications Department of NCTC-ONSA.

The NSA said it was imperative for all stakeholders to come together to find a comprehensive solution to combating the menace of kidnap-for-ransom and other related crimes bedeviling the country.

He said that the first Security and Defense Partnership dialogue between the United Kingdom (UK) and Nigeria was held in London in February 2022, as part of the concerted efforts by ONSA to address the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria.

According to him, one of the agreements reached during the dialogue was the need to create the AMFC to help stem the threats posed by kidnapping in the country.

So far, eight workshops have been held by personnel of relevant stakeholders working with experts of the UK National Crime Agency (NCA).

"The workshops culminated in the setting up of a multi-agency writing team to contribute to the formulation of a National Anti-Kidnapping Strategy," he said.


The NSA expressed appreciation to the UK through the High Commissioner for the support provided in the nation's efforts to tackle the issue of Kidnapping and other crimes in Nigeria.

In his remarks, the British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Richard Montgomery, said the first duty of any government was the security of its citizens, adding that the issue of Kidnapping brings trauma to families.


Montgomery reiterated the commitment of the UK Government to the full implementation of the Security/Defence partnership between the two nations.



Ribado



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum**
On Sunday



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"We know that the balance of power is tipped heavily greatly against the women. They don't just need appointment; they need to slug it out with the men during elections. The truth is that the women don't have the financial muscle to wrestle power from the men; hence they have to depend on the men for tickets to contest elective positions."

LET me make a confession right from the onset, and I won't hide under any guise: women the world over have come of age. They are everywhere proving their mettle. They have done a lot to be appreciated by the men. Those who think otherwise may not discard such views for a long time to come. The views are purely held on the basis of gender and for us, mark it; it is dangerous to our development as a people.

Like it or hate it, we can't deny the fact that women have changed the face of how things are done. We have examples to show; in fact even those who do not want to hear about the exploits of women, are quick to point to the fact that women have tremendously made their marks in Nigeria's development.

I have chosen a topic that several of Nigerians would prefer not to talk about. Each person you meet has a different version to the issue. Some of the reasons are spurious as they are laughable in content. The reasons don't reflect logic but are in the main chauvinistic in reason. Well, that is what the women don't want to hear, so also are some men.

Even as it is explosive, I would rather talk about it as perhaps just gloss over the issue. For how long would we ignore the issue? For how long would the men think that the women do not matter, so long as we think we are in a man's world? Who says that the women do not matter in these issues that we have always excluded them?

Several statistics have been provided on the level of acceptance of the quality of work and representation in the last couple of years. This is not to run away from the realities that in years pass, women were not considered to be 'good' enough to give quality representation. This is no doubt chauvinistic in orientation and thinking.

We know that the balance of power is tipped heavily greatly against the women. They don't just need appointment; they need to slug it out with the men during elections. The truth is that the women don't have the financial muscle to wrestle power from the men; hence they have to depend on the men for tickets to contest elective positions.

The women may be more in number, but it is always the men that are in command. One woman wrote: "sometimes I think that men are afraid of the speed with which we will achieve development if they gave power to women and so they hold on to it." We shall soon come to this point.

Below it has been considered why there are impediments in the way of women. I have reproduced the views so as to make a point in the area that even the men and women have continued to ignore. We need as a people to study what other countries have achieved in

Needed: A fight for Nigerian women



the area of balancing the negative stats against women. It is a different story altogether today. Consider this, and let me warn; these views are expressed by some Nigerians.

Let us consider these: In August 2003, women won 48.8% of the parliamentary seats. In the 2008 elections, women won 45 out of the 80 parliamentary seats, amounting to about 53.25% of the votes. Rwanda's post-genocide 2003 constitution reserves 30% of parliamentary seats for women. Perhaps as a result of genocide, the population of men in Rwanda today is 45% while that of women is 55%, so you could argue that the current representation in parliament is a fair reflection of current demographics. These women voted a new law granting women land inheritance rights, a thing which almost a heresy in our traditional African setting.

Within Africa, the average for women representation is 18.5%. Uganda and South Africa have an average of 44%. The post-

Apartheid Constitution of South Africa has outlawed all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, gender or sexual orientation. And they enforce those rights with great relish.

The Nordic countries have traditionally had the best tradition of gender balance in parliamentary government. The average representation of women is 44%. Norway and Finland have produced remarkable women prime ministers. The average for North America is 23.1%, while that of Europe is 19.9% (not that far ahead of Africa)! The Arabs, predictably score the lowest world-wide (11.7%).

Nigeria is extremely far behind in women representation. The problem exists throughout the 3 tiers of government. So far, no woman has made to Governor's position. Of the 700+ local governments, there until last year only 4 LG women Chairmen (funny, that one)! Obasanjo in his second coming did bring in a good number of women into the cabinet (although the murmurs of the 'Obasanjo women' being literally his were all the rage. And it was said that he dislodged the remarkable Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala because she did not understand what it meant to be "an Obasanjo woman". I am sure there were some who were totally above board, but one of them so ferociously defending his right to be philanderer got me rather suspicious of her and in fact of most of the "Obasanjo women".

Where does that leave us? Politics is a murky business, but it is also a calling demanding the highest ideals in moral character. It is about our very lives and destiny -- and the life chances of millions of our citizens. Women must be part of it, because they are the bedrock of our society. We need to create a political culture that allows the right sort of women to make it into politics and to be a pride not only to the womenfolk but to our society and nation. We need great women, noble women -- and I am sure they are there in our country, our communities and even in this Forum of ours. We must encourage them not only through progressive laws but through positive affirmation.

Patricia Etteh was removed for allegedly misusing 600 million naira. Her successor Bankole is in

trouble for allegedly diverting a staggering 35 billion naira.

Women, clearly, are better, if you truly look at it. Professor Adenike Grange was handcuffed for taking 10 million naira. Some of our men politicians are walking away literally with murder. Hassan Lawal, formerly of Works, had 25 billion in one account along. Let's allow the women to take over this country. Women are most reluctant to fight wars. They may be corrupt, but they seem more compassionate at the end of the day.

Again whether we like it or not out there, 'women are still struggling to be heard, of the 13 women that contested the governorship elections (in Nigeria), none was successful. 59 women contested as deputies, mainly in inconsequential parties except in Lagos State. 22 women contested the House of Representatives poll and only 15 were elected into the 360-member lower chamber. 7 women were elected into the 109 member senate out of the 97 that contested the election. In the 36 States Houses of Assembly, 517 women contested for seats and only 42 were elected. More so, only 1 contested the presidential election-Ebiti Ndok of UNPD, she did not win'.

Well I didn't expect her to make any impact. Even as a reporter I never read about her candidacy or given as much publicity as the others. Perhaps it could be attributed to her lack of financial muscles as the men who contested alongside with her. Nigerians are quick to point to the foray of Sarah Jubril, who since time immemorial has contested elections with the men. While it is

a fact that she was not the only female delegate, she got only a vote during the presidential primaries at Eagle Square, Abuja.

While it was apparent, she may have voted for herself, the other female delegates chose to go with the men. We do not know of any reason, but we do know that the women may have always stood against themselves and victory. She, like other women may have lost because they were not supported by the womenfolk. It has always been like that; as a result they hardly go far in such political contest.

We can count so many women who attempted or rather competed with the men but got wounded in the process. You don't need to go too far, remember, former NAFDAC and Minister of Information and Communication, Dora Akunyili. She resigned to contest for a Senatorial seat in Anambra. She almost (yes almost, that word again) got it, but got burnt on the way. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala also got burnt because the men wouldn't want the women to create any impact.

There was no doubt she put up a spirited fight like most women are wont to do. She no doubt lost gallantly. There are several women such as her. They got consumed by the political 'fire work' of their men counterparts. That does not mean they are inferior. They are not; it is only the imagination of the man; and indeed some the women who do not believe in their ability to conquer the world. This is the category that has stood between women and the realization of their enormous potentials.

As a matter of fact, most of the parties hardly gave the women any room to operate and express themselves. But it was not reason enough to get that decimal outing they got. Several of them made their marks without the men's support. That is what the men wouldn't want to hear about.

There is a national shortage of women politicians just as there is a shortage as engineers. But we know that some women have come out tops of the men in certain areas of human endeavour. There is so much to reap from the women. Their capacity for insisting of why things should be done rightly is awesome and can be appreciated in the final analysis.

That is what the country wants now. We have gone through so much and for negative reasons indeed. The time has come for the women to change the country's orientation in good governance and accountability. We are lacking in such regards, my instincts continuously tell me, and the women can provide that platform.



Trading places

GOD'S plan is for parents to take care of their children, provide for them, protect, love and care for them. However, in man's quest for numerical strength, man has bitten more than he can chew.

For a typical African man, it is a pride to have a large family. In the past, one of the reasons for a big family was so that one could have so many hands on the farm. But today most parents would tell you 'so that I will have many people taking care of me when they growup.' They say it without batting an eye.

During my days in the university, it was very common to see a young girl from a humble background carrying the weight of her family. In most of the cases I came across, they were the breadwinners of their families. They provided for their families, paid the school fees of their younger ones and even elder brothers.

One case that still stands out is that of a lady who was forced into marriage at twelve to a rich farmer in a remote village at Shendam, just because her father needed her bride price. She had the sense to run off before she was deflowered by her grandfather husband. Somehow she found her footing through the help of an uncle in Mangu and she enrolled in secondary school.

By the time we became close, she was not only the breadwinner of her family but also the authority. We were then in the university. The weight of the responsibility on her shoulders made her sexually immoral. Every move she made was geared towards getting the attention of men and sleeping with them for money. Going on like that, she had countless boyfriends with whom she was intimate just so she could cater for her family.

This lady was staying in a one-room self-contained apartment, but you should see how many dependants used to come for holiday. Shamelessly, her parents, including her father who sold her off to rich farmer, were always very demanding. She used what she had to provide for her family at the expense of her reputation, notwithstanding that a good name is better than rubies (Bible).

Another scenario is that of a father whose daughter was schooling in

Kaduna and living big due to the heavyweights she was going out with. Every time the father needed luxury items like designer perfumes or money, he called his Kaduna daughter who never failed her daddy.

At this point, the father had stopped giving her financial support. She had become an authority over her life and came and went as she wanted. She had a nice apartment in the heart of Kaduna. And she dressed expensively at all times complete with gold earrings and necklace. In fact, she smelt like money and radiated money. But her lifestyle when one came close to her was nothing to write home about. It was prostitution with the high and mighty and involved strengthening herself with Babalawos, witch doctors.

As we were growing up, there was a mother who was fond of lamenting to her daughter; 'Your own na kobo fuck you dey do? Your friends dey buy car, build house even for their parents. You still dey eat my food. Na two heads dem get?'

The mother was frustrated that her daughter was not a blessing to her because she was not immoral and neither was she bringing in ill-gotten wealth to better their lives like so many girls her daughter's age were doing. Instead her daughter still depended on her for everything.

It is not only girls that carry the weight of responsibility. I was told of a man who hates to see people giving birth to more than two children especially if one is not capable of providing for the kids. He became like that because he started paying his younger siblings school fees since he was in medical school. His parents naturally transferred that responsibility to him. He was not allowed to enjoy his money like his mates. His parents made it look like it was his responsibility.

The cases are inexhaustible. Parents have forgotten that these are some of the reasons why their voices don't carry weight. And vices abound in our society because we have left our positions due to laziness or self-centredness.

The first step is for every parent to be responsible and assert our positions in our home. The future of our children is in our hands.



NEWS

BCDCA president promises unity, oneness of purpose

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA, Abuja

THE newly elected President of Bwarat Community and Cultural Development Association (BCDCA), Prince Ponfa Audu Wuyep, has promised to promote unity among his people towards the development of the community, the local government, Plateau State and Nigeria at large.

He made the pledge recently while delivering his acceptance speech on the occasion of his inauguration/swearing-in as well as handing over ceremony, held at the District Office Reak-Bwarat in Langtang-North Local Government Area of the state.

The President said, "Our focus shall be geared towards the mobilization of various clans/communities within Bwarat land to come together and make progress in our developmental endeavors. In this wise, we intend to bring together branch chairmen, women, the youth and leadership of the various clans to a regular meeting as provided for the constitution to share ideas and suggestions on the way forward."

"We shall equally encourage BWAYA to partner BCDCA in consultation with Ponzhi to institute an Annual Ponzhi Bwarat Unity Cup Competition within our land. This will further strengthen our unity. We intend to institutionalize a stakeholder meeting, drawing membership of our people from all the clans/branches within and outside Bwarat land.

The stakeholders shall meet once in a year and there will be emergency meetings as the need arises. The purpose shall be to harness our human and material resources together for the development of our people. Right away, I wish to inform this august gathering that God helping us, we shall hold our maiden stakeholders meeting on



Wuyep

26th December 2022", he disclosed.

According to Wuyep, "We will in consultation with Ponzhi Bwarat and Bwarat Traditional Council resuscitate the Bwarat Elders Council which is an advisory body to support both the Traditional Council and BCDCA Exco in her activities. We shall actively participate in the programmes and activities of Ngwang Ishi Otarok (NIO) for the greater benefit of Bwarat.

"Similarly, we shall extend our hands of fellowship and work hand in hand with the Bwarat Traditional Council under the leadership of Ponzhi Bwarat, collaborate with similar bodies as ours including Gani Community Development Association, (GCDA), Gazum Cultural Educational Social and Development Organization (GACESDO), Nimbar Community Development Association, Tarok Progressive

Youth Association (TAPYA), Tarok Women, TAROSA, Tarok Professionals, etc. Beyond these native organizations, we shall source for NGOs to give support for the benefit of Bwarat land", the president assured.

However, those sworn-in alongside the President, Prince Ponfa Audu Wuyep, include: Nansel Iliya Cirbut, as Vice President; Hon. Nandom A. Pyendang, as Secretary to be assisted by Nansak Marmap, with Chief (Mrs) Bolcit Amos and Banjul C. Zwalven, as Treasurer and Financial Secretary respectively.

Others sworn-in were Nandot J. Nandom, as Social Secretary; Bongdul Lar Dombut, as the Publicity Secretary and the positions of Auditor and Legal Advisor went to Nanpon Nden Azhi and Barrister Nandom

Rotary Club offers medical outreach to community

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

OVER 3,500 residents of Galuwyi community in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have benefitted from the free medical outreach organized by the Rotary Club of Maitama, Abuja.

The president of the Rotary Club of Maitama, Rotarian Yusuf Alli, explained that the outreach was organized to mark this year's Rotary Family Health Day. He said that over 3,500 people in the community were offered free health outreach, which included tests and treatments of all ailments.

He said the Rotary Family Health Day was part of bonding with their adopted community and that every Rotary Club had an adopted community because their policy is 'Each one, bring one', safe one; each one brings one, care for one.

At present, we have over 3500 people who were given free medical services, and we achieved some purposes, and we raised awareness for our adopted community on their health status. We catered to their basic health challenges, and from there, we will know the

Similarly, United States-based Rotarian, Ms. Susan Paget, explained that the Rotary Club International had carried out over 11 million healthcare outreaches in 11 countries in Africa. And that no fewer than 2.6 million Africans had benefited from the humanitarian services of the club across the 11 African countries.

"Also, we will be able to know whether they are prone to epidemics. With this, we will be able to refer them to appropriate health authorities, or to a secondary, which is the general hospital or to a referral hospital, he said.



Mohammed

POLITICS

Gov. Mutfwang swears-in Jos North TIC Chairman

By DUMAH RANDOMG

GOVERNOR Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau state has sworn - in Mr Samuel Umaru as the Transitional Committee Chairman of Jos North Local Government Area.

Mutfwang, represented by his Deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo, called on him to engender unity within the local government.

The governor stated that the appointment was to fill the vacuum created by the exit of the Sole Administrator of the council, following his retirement from service.

"You must get yourself acquainted with the vision of the administration, aimed at engendering unity within the local government.

" You are expected to channel your energy towards uniting people in Jos North, irrespective of ethnicity or religion to provide the required dividends of democracy.

"Our citizens yearn for good governance and quality service delivery and they expect nothing less than that. It is therefore pertinent that you use your wealth of experience to serve Jos North and Plateau State better.

" I am pleased to welcome and have you on board today as a critical stakeholder in building a new and prosperous Plateau. I urge you to be committed and be diligent in handling all your assignments.



Mutfwang

Mutfwang said that his administration would not tolerate any act of corruption, urging the new council boss to be guided by the fear of God and work assiduously for the peace and prosperity of the state.

He added that his government is determined to ensure equitable provision of social and basic amenities to all strata of the society.

The governor thanked citizens for their endless support for the administration, stating that justice will prevail for Plateau people, urging them to remain optimistic amidst the prevailing challenges and trust the judicial processes.

Mutfwang reaffirmed his

administration's commitment to deliver on the mandate bestowed on them by the good people of Plateau, stating that the government would continue to carry out its primary responsibility of ensuring the security of lives and property and creating a conducive atmosphere for citizens to carry out their lawful businesses.

Umaru thanked the state government for the confidence reposed in him, promising to unite the people of Jos North LGA and promote peaceful coexistence.

He promised to overhaul the local government, ensure it experiences development and give it the credence it deserves.

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Deputy Inspector General of Police in-charge of the Saturday, November 11 Governorship Election in Kogi, DIG Habu Sanni says that adequate security measures have been put in place for security of the electorate before, during and after the election

He told journalists at a press briefing in Lokoja recently, that about 90 percent of personnel deployed for the election have arrived in the state.

He said those not yet on ground are either on transit or will take off on Friday to arrive early enough for the election.

He said that all the 3,500 polling units in the state would be adequately covered, adding that no room would be given to anyone who might want to disrupt the election on Saturday.

"Our deployment is proportionate to the threat levels identified before election. He added that 40,000 personnel and officers have been mobilised to neutralise any untoward happening before, during and after the election".

Kogi poll: Adequate security measures in place - DIG

He said that there would be public who might have movement restrictions on the information that may be election day and only those on useful to contact the Police essential duties would be Control Room whose number allowed to move after they and that of the officers in- have been issued with tags. charge of each zone would be circulated.



Egbetokun

PLHA commences 2024 budget defense exercise

By PAULINE DALLONG

PLATEAU State House of Assembly (PLHA), has commenced the 2024 budget defense. The House Committee Chairman on Appropriation and member representing Jos North West Constituency, Hon. Danjuma Azi described it as a huge success.

The exercise which is mandatory for all Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government is meant to scrutinize each budgetary proposal for the coming year.

It is, however, taking place at the Old Government House in

Rayfield and not the assembly complex, due to the ongoing strike by the Parliamentary Staff Association of Nigeria (PASAN).

The Speaker, Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule, who was on ground to see things for himself, participated in most of Thursday's exercise as he asked some very vital questions while also making contributions.

The House Committee on Parastatals and World Bank projects, represented by the Chairman and member representing Qua'an Pan North Constituency, Hon. Paul Datugun, urged MDAs under his purview to up their revenue base.

The MDAs who presented themselves for the exercise on day one were the Jos Metropolitan Development Board (JMDB), Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, Christian

Welfare Pilgrims Board and the Deputy Governor's Office.

Others include PLASIEC, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Solid Minerals, which was described as a critical sector by the Committee Chairman, Hon. Idris Kalamu representing Dengi Constituency.

While some of the heads of MDAs present expressed delight with the outcome of the exercise, others were not too happy as they mostly complained about the non releases of approved budgetary allocations which has hindered their performances.

Chairman of the Appropriation Committee, Hon. Danjuma Azi, reminded them that the state assembly was particularly concerned about the revenue generation components in some proposals

2024 budget: PLHA speaker promises prompt passage

By PAULINE DALLONG

Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly (PLHA), Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule has promised to expedite action on the prompt passage of the 2024 Budget.

He made the promise during his remarks, shortly after the state Executive Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang laid the Appropriation Bill before the floor of the House.

According to the Speaker, the House had, on Monday 6th October, received two communications from the

to present the 2024 Appropriation Bill before the state Assembly.

The second communication was to inform the House of the appointment of Mr. Samuel Dala Umaru as the Transition Committee Chairman (TIC) of Jos North Local Government Council.

He is to replace Mr. Istifanus John, the Interim Administrator who just retired from the state Civil Service while also requesting for the approval of a six months tenure extension of the sixteen (16) local

government TIC chairmen, from November, 2023 to April, 2024.

The 2024 budget tagged 'A Budget of New Beginning' which is aimed at laying a solid

foundation for the peace and unity of the state, is made up of the total sum of two hundred and ninety-five point four billion naira (N295.4 billion).

Kogi Poll: Police ban movement across state

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Kogi State Police Command has said there will be restriction of movement from 12 midnight of Friday 10 November, to

6pm of Saturday, November 11.

Spokesman of the command, SP William Aya said in a statement on Friday in Lokoja that the restriction of movement is

due to the governorship election holding in the state

restricted hours to take alternative routes.

on Saturday, November 11. "The Police appeals to the general public to adhere to this order to avoid any inconveniences they might encounter while en-route

'Declare state of emergency on illegal mining'

From JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja

THE House of Representatives has asked the government to declare a state of emergency to tackle illegal mining.

Similarly the green chamber has also asked the government to set up a committee comprising the police, military, DSS, Nigeria Immigration Service and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps to flush out all illegal miners.

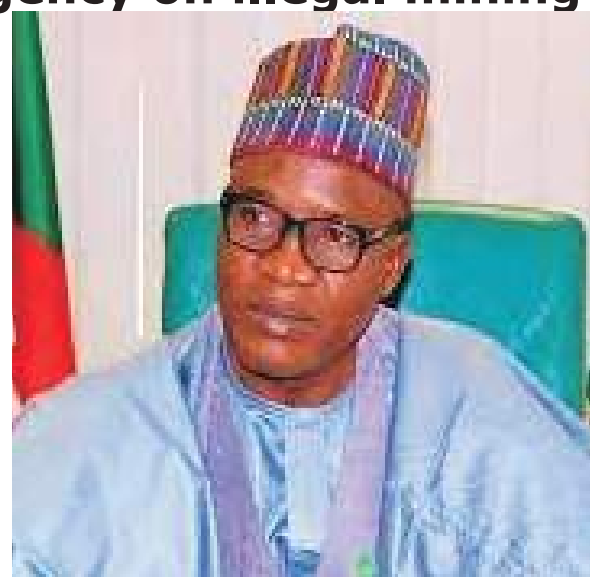
This is coming on the heels of a motion sponsored by Hon, Abdillahi Halims. Speaking on the motion,

Hon, Halims said mineral resources in Nigeria can be tapped to create jobs and boost the economy. He called for urgent interventions from the government and radical measures to address the issues affecting the solid minerals sector and its under performance.

He stated that the minerals sector contributed just 2.62 percent of the governments #6.63trillion total revenue. The motion was unanimously adopted after contributions from members on the floor of the House.



Sule



Halims

POLITICS

Tinubu signs supplementary budget

By JIDAUNA YANUNG

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has signed the N2.176 trillion Supplementary Appropriation Act 2023 to strengthen the nation's security architecture and other critical infrastructure deficit among other considerations.

The signing which took place at the Presidential Villa, Abuja was witnessed by Senate President Godswill Akpiabo, Speaker House of Representatives, Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), George Akume among others.

Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Abubakar Bagudu while breaking down the budget to newsmen in Abuja said the newly approved expenditure for defense and security consist of about thirty percent, while the thirty five percent was dedicated to the provisions of critical infrastructure to be allocated to Federal Ministry of Works,



Tinubu

Federal Capital Territory and Housing and Urban Development.

The president

commended the National Assembly for its expedition consideration and approval of the

You're uninformed on N2.17trn supplementary budget

THE federal government Thursday lashed out at the Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate, Peter Obi, over his comment on the recently signed supplementary budget.

Specifically, it asked Obi to get adequately informed on the budget before

making comments.

The government which described the budget as a "bold and pragmatic response" to national pressing issues, urged the opposition party to be "informed and balanced in the exercise of their right to differing opinions and refrain from

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

THE Senate Committee on Drugs and Narcotics has commended the leadership of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for its efforts in fighting substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking. It assured that it will partner with the agency to make it succeed.

The assurance was given after the NDLEA boss, Brig. Buba Marwa (Rtd) briefed the committee on the activities, challenges and achievements of the agency in the last 34 months, held at the National Assembly complex.

Marwa told the committee that the global supply and demand of illicit drugs including opioids and synthetic drugs, exacerbated the world drug problem with devastating impact on people and their well being across borders and continents

He regretted that families,

Senate committee hails Marwa, pledges support to NDLEA

communities, young and old and the fabric of society is daily being destroyed by drug abuse. On the achievements of the agency, Marwa said it has re-ignited its intelligence - based enforcement capabilities, focusing on drug barons and cartels with a view to cutting off suppliers and taking illicit drugs away from the streets. And this is yielding positive results with the arrest of 36,096 drug traffickers, among them 40 barons between January and September 2023.



Marwa

Court ends Anyanwu's plot to remain National Secretary

IN a resolute move, the High Court of Enugu has, for the third time, issued orders to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and its National Working Committee (NWC) led by Umar Damagum, commanding an end to Senator Samuel Nnaemeka Anyanwu's pretense as PDP National Secretary.

Despite the court's directives, the Umar Damagum-led PDP has persistently shown disregard for the sanctity of the judicial process, willfully disobeying the court's mandates.

Recapping events, the High Court, on October 20, 2023, instructed the PDP NWC to promptly acknowledge Hon. SKE Udeh-Okoye as the PDP National Secretary, as nominated by the PDP Zonal Executive Committee.

This order was reiterated on October

23, 2023, with the PDP counsel and that of Senator Samuel Nnaemeka Anyanwu presented in court. Regrettably, the Umar Damagum-led PDP continued to flout the court's authority.

On November 7, 2023, the Enugu High Court again reaffirmed its prior order and specified that:

1. The interim order compelling PDP to recognize Hon. SKE Udeh-Okoye as the valid National Secretary remains in force until the hearing of the motion on notice on November 27, 2023, or the determination of the Appeal in the appellate court, whichever occurs first.

2. The plaintiff is granted permission to serve all court orders and processes on PDP and Senator Samuel Nnaemeka Anyanwu through their counsels.

3. The plaintiff is

authorized to serve all court orders and processes on PDP Acting National Chairman, Umar Damagum, by posting them at the entrance of the PDP National Secretariat until he acquires legal representation.

4. An interim injunction prohibits Senator Samuel Nnaemeka Anyanwu from representing himself or being recognized as the National Secretary of PDP, or engaging in the role, until the motion on notice is heard on November 27, 2023.

The question looms: Will the PDP defy the court's authority for the third time, potentially undermining the principles of the Nigerian constitution? Any action now that the PDP takes contrary to the directives of the court, in regards to the office of the National Secretary of the party, is now null and void, illegal,

misrepresentation of facts for political gains."

Obi had, Wednesday, via a post on his X handle, said the supplementary budget failed to capture "urgent items of national welfare," despite being signed by President Bola Tinubu at a "late" period of the year.

The erstwhile Anambra state governor, who recently lost out at the Supreme Court over his bid to nullify Tinubu's election, branded the federal government's act as "uncaring" and "insensitive."

However, in response to the claim, Minister of Information and National Orientation Mohammed Idris Malagi said the budget signed into law Wednesday by Tinubu, was a reflection of the administration's "bold and pragmatic response to the pressing and economic

challenges Nigeria currently faces."

In a statement Thursday the minister's media aide, Rabi'u Ibrahim, a copy of which was obtained by our correspondent, the federal government said broad provisions were made in the supplementary budget.

Idris urged "the 2023 presidential candidate of the Labour Party to take the time and effort to acquaint himself with the details of the N2.17 trillion 2023 Supplementary Budget, which includes allocations for essential sectors: security, agriculture and food security, works and housing, wage increase for workers, student loan scheme and social safety nets, among others, all aimed at strengthening

the country's economic foundations and improve the living conditions of Nigerians.

"The broad provisions in the supplementary budget are a reflection of President Tinubu's strong desire and eagerness to support the vital functions of government, address urgent security needs, and fast-track the country's recovery process from the economic impact occasioned by the removal of fuel subsidy."

The statement urged the "political opposition to be informed and balanced in the exercise of their right to differing opinions and refrain from misrepresentation of facts for political gains."

He further explained that the supplementary budget was "derived from the active engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders who ensured that the budgetary provisions aligned with the needs and expectations of Nigerians."

The minister noted that all items contained in the budget had been "meticulously scrutinised" before its passage into law; a show of Tinubu's "inclination to accountability and transparency in government expenditure," to "ensure efficient utilisation of public funds."



Obi

SUNDAY POLITICS

GIVEN the very demoralising performance posted by INEC in the last general elections earlier in the year, whose glaring evidence shows their egregious faces at the various Election Petitions Tribunals across the country, the people have every reason to be very apprehensive and distrustful of INEC under the leadership of Prof Mahmood Yakubu.

Many consider the last elections as the worst and most wasteful in Nigeria's history. The commission was provided with all the legal and material resources it required to succeed and change the country's unedifying history of marred elections, but it sadly chose to fail woefully and shatter the cherished expectations of the people.

Before the elections, INEC had gone all out to convince Nigerians that election results would be electronically transmitted to the IREV (the INEC online viewing portal) from the polling stations. It even went to the National Assembly to secure amendments in the Electoral Law to make electronic transmission of results mandatory. And despite stiff opposition from remorseless rigging enablers, the commission was able to get what it wanted and there were wild jubiliations among patriotic Nigerians at home and abroad.

When doubts began to be entertained by many people about the sincerity and capacity of INEC to do what is right for which it has secured the requisite legal empowerment, the commission came out severally to reassure Nigerians that the election results must be electronically transmitted. It continued to stress the fact that it was bound by law to do so.

The advantages of electronic transmission were heartwarming. The instances of ballot-snatching and alteration of results, which usually occurred between the polling units and the collation centres, would be eliminated as the elections would electronically arrive at the INEC's IREV even before everybody had left the voting centres. The process appeared so transparent that many Nigerians were convinced that even before the election results had been uploaded, Nigerians could stay in the comfort of their homes and treat themselves to the exciting game of predicting the winners.

There would not have been any more opportunity for some unpatriotic fellows with primaevial mindsets to hide at what they call "collation centres" to concoct figures and announce the highest payers as "winners." Indeed, no hoodlum would have been able again to attack INEC staff as they conveyed the result sheets to the "collation centres" to hijack and alter the records. The whole process would have been so transparent that losers would easily accept defeat and all the costs invested in the execution of election tribunals, which have only ended up inflicting irreparable damage on

Governorship elections in Nigeria and credibility of electoral

As the November 11, 2023, governorship elections in Imo, Bayelsa and Kogi states draw close, widespread and justifiable concerns continue to mount about the capacity and willingness of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to organise free, credible and transparent polls to gratify the deep yearnings of the people to be allowed to exercise their constitutional right to choose their own governor. UGOCHUKWU EJINKEONYE writes.



the judiciary would have been avoided. Who really is afraid of transparency?

With this assurance drummed into the minds of Nigerians, the optimism that Nigeria was at last joining civilized countries to jettison the old, primitive style of conducting elections in favour of a more modern and reliable system overwhelmed the polity. The excitement was such that several Nigerians abroad deployed their hard-earned money to return home to participate in what they considered the first elections in their country that would truly reflect the wishes of the people. These Nigerians were excitedly posting on social media pictures of themselves in several countries boarding aircraft and heading home to have a taste of the unfolding wholesome and edifying democratic process that would liberate Nigeria from the grip of mostly imposed, medieval sole administrators.

But sadly, Prof Yakubu and his INEC had other plans for these Nigerians and all of us. It would seem that while INEC was busy raising the hopes of Nigerians, it was also quietly devising the most primitive and painful way to dash them. We were soon fed with the absurd, preposterous tale that in two elections held the same day and with the same equipment, it was possible for the National Assembly results to be uploaded on the INEC viewing portal (IREV) while that of the presidential election could not be put up due to what INEC called "glitches." And this lame excuse helped the callous and retrogressive characters at INEC to muster the audacity to execute this shattering volte-face and resurrect the long-discredited manual collation of results, which gives room for all kinds of crude

manipulations. By this singular action, the commission brutally disabled the capacity of Nigerians to monitor the elections and flagrantly destroyed the credibility of the whole process. I wonder if anyone would be able to trust INEC again even after its current chairman had left office with a badly tainted record!

In a decent country, Prof Yakubu and his INEC should have been probed to explain how with the humongous sum of N105 billion allocated for the execution of the electronic transmission of results, they simply ended up taking Nigerians back to the stone-age kind of elections. But Yakubu understands the game very well. He knows that the beneficiaries of the manipulated process, once they are in power, will never be able to muster the effrontery to call him to account. He also knows that the Nigerian judiciary has long largely lost its esteem, courage and ability to deliver quality judgments and so would easily lend its stamp of approval to the flagrant abuse of process and brazen disobedience of the extant laws governing the conduct of elections, which INEC had already decided to adopt as a guiding principle during the elections.

By now, instead of encumbering the public space with his unwelcome presence labouring to assure Nigerians who no longer believe him that the governorship elections results in Imo, Bayelsa and Kogi states will be electronically transmitted and that there won't be any "glitches", he should have been telling a court (which court, by the way?) how he spent over N300 billion to conduct this kind of outrageously sham elections.

By the way, Prof Yakubu is able to know when there will be

"glitches" in an election and when they will not occur. Does it mean then that these glitches (so-called) occur at the discretion and behest of the INEC chairman and that he has decided that they won't occur in the coming off-season elections? And why should we believe a man who once lied outrageously to us?

I am particularly interested in the governorship election in Imo State this Saturday and I think that if Yakubu wants the Imo people to accept his reassurances, he should reshuffle his staff and bring in credible people who are capable of securing the people's trust. It would be recalled that of all the governorship elections conducted across Nigeria in March, it was only in Abia State that spontaneous celebrations erupted and enveloped the whole state after the governor-elect was announced.

The Returning Officer in that election, Professor NnennaOti, who is also the Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, told the world that she had to resist tremendous pressures from Abuja in order to announce the correct results in Abia State. Instead of wasting his breath reassuring Imo people who no longer believe him, he should bring Prof Oti to repeat the transparent process she executed in Abia. This will even help Yakubu and his badly discredited INEC to infuse some bit of credibility into their work, which they need badly now.

I always find it insulting to imagine that a bunch of atavistic "kingmakers" would stay in one air-conditioned room somewhere and impose unacceptable leaders on long-suffering people just because they occupy some public offices. Those who have

continued to do this with relish should realise that they have already overtaken the patience of the people. It could burst soon. Decency demands that people are allowed to choose whom they want to be their leader.

Now, come to think about it, even the much-touted BVAS, which eventually failed Nigerians, is, in my opinion, an unduly costly process. With fewer funds, INEC can even conduct a totally paperless election. All it would take is simply a programmed machine (which could be a laptop) with its screen displaying the names and images of candidates. And once somebody touches his thumb on his preferred candidate's image, it will automatically register in the machine and reflect on the IREV where it will be recorded as a vote for the person. As simple as that! But will the bankrupt entities at INEC and the election-rigging enthusiasts among the political class allow this very simple but transparent process to happen?

I am not going to vote in Saturday's election because I was not registered in Imo State. But what is clear is that Imo people are tired of leaders imposed on them from outside to execute external interests that are mostly detrimental to Imo people's welfare. All I am concerned about is for the people to be allowed to get a leader they want and would vote for on Saturday.

Prof Yakubu should, therefore, bring Prof NnennaOti to repeat what she did in Abia. Fortunately, she can even remain in her FUTO base and report for work at the INEC state office. So, her deployment would not attract any undue cost to INEC.

Unless, like in the previous elections, Prof Yakubu and his INEC have some other motives.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

GOVERNOR MUTFWANG ADDRESSES COCIN 104 GCC

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang on Monday addressed the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) 104 General Church Council meeting, held at the Headquarters of the Church, Jos



Plateau State Governor, Barr. Mutfwang addressing the General Church Council during the opening ceremony



Former President of the Church, Rev. Dr. Musa Gotom (left) with COCIN United Kingdom, Rev. Kefas Tang'an and participants at 104 General Church Council meeting



From left are, COCIN Vice President, Rev. Dr. Timothy Nwan, President, Rev. Dr. Amos Musa Mohzo, General Secretary, Rev. Assoc. Prof. Benjamin Pokol and Deputy General Secretary, Rev. Dauda Jimra



Former COCIN Presidents, Rev. Prof. Dachollom Datiri, Rev. Prof. Soja Bewarang and Rev. Prof. Pandang Yamsat



Cross section of Traditional Rulers led by the representative of His Majesty, Gbong Gwom, His Royal Highness, Pozoh Johnson Jauro Magaji, the Ujah Anaguta of Jos North (right)



Cross section of COCIN PCC/ RCC chairmen at the opening ceremony



Cross section of members of Plateau State Executive Council



Vice Chancellor, Karl Kumm University Vom, Prof. Nanven Gambo participant at the 104 COCIN GCC meeting

Photos: DANLADI DUK

IN accordance with its constitutional mandate, the Plateau State House of Assembly on Tuesday 7th November, played host to the state Executive Governor Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang as he was at the assembly complex to preform one of his constitutional obligations. The occasion was the presentation of the 2024 Appropriation Bill. Interestingly, presentation of the bill is the first official assignment he has undertaken as governor in the state assembly.

N accordance with its constitutional mandate, the Plateau State House of Assembly on Tuesday 7th November, played host to the state Executive Governor Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang as he was at the assembly complex to preform one of his constitutional obligations. The occasion was the presentation of the 2024 Appropriation Bill. Interestingly, presentation of the bill is the first official assignment he has undertaken as governor in the state assembly.

Mutfwang may have broken the record for being the first governor to present the 2024 budget. Those who have been following the trend of events in the last couple of years would have noticed that while there is a desire by the executive to present the budget as early as possible, there is also the willingness on the part of the legislature to ensure that it is passed on record time.

Speaker of the state tenth assembly, Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule did not mince words as he expressed this willingness by promising to expedite action on the speedy passage of the budget. This is indeed a welcome development and departure from the past where budget presentation and approval were unnecessarily delayed. However, the bill awaits the next stages of the second and third readings.

Tagged: 'A Budget of New Beginning', it is aimed at laying a solid foundation for the peace and prosperity of the state, with emphasis on security, agriculture, human capital development, public health, industrialization and aggressive revenue generation. The proposed budget estimate is made up of the total sum of two hundred and ninety five billion, four hundred and thirty four million, five hundred and sixty eight thousand, four hundred and sixty four naira only (N295,434,568,464.00).

This amount consists of a

recurrent expenditure of one billion, five hundred and sixty three million, three hundred and sixteen thousand, four hundred and sixty two naira only (N1,563,316,426.00), representing 53% of the total budget size. The capital expenditure estimate is one hundred and thirty seven billion, eight hundred and seventy one million, two hundred and fifty one



Plateau assembly: 2024 budget tops agenda



Gov. Mutfwang with speaker PLHA Sule

thousand, nine hundred and ninety two naira only (N137,871,251,992.00) which shows an increase of one hundred and forty five billion, four hundred and eighty three million, two hundred and thirty three thousand, eight hundred and seventy three naira only (N145,483,233,873.00) over the 2023 budget.

In line with the administration's mantra of 'The Time is Now', next year's budget is expected to be hinged on the pillars of good governance, peace, security and justice, revamping agricultural transformation, education and human capital development, public health, environment and mineral development. Others are infrastructure and industrialization, taxation/resource mobilization. According to the governor, the implementation of the 2024 budget is going to be a people oriented one that will positively impact on the lives of the citizens.

Thankfully, the speaker Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule has given us his word that the

House will do the needful. bearing in mind the legislative requirements of due diligence with thorough scrutiny of the

2024 appropriation bill is a right step in the right direction. Equally commendable is the promise that work will commence on the bill sooner than expected for the executive's assent.

Meanwhile, the House had earlier in the week received a communication from the state Executive Governor Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang informing it of the appointment of Mr. Samuel Dala Umaru as the Transition Committee Chairman of Jos South Local Government Council. He is to replace Mr. Istifanus John, the Interim Administrator who just retired from the state civil service. The governor in the communication also requested for the approval of a six (6) months tenure extension of the sixteen (16) other local government transition committee chairmen. They are Hon. Markus Hussaini, Hon. Sati Shuwa, Hon. Peter Vwangdang, Hon. Fidelis



Gov. Mutfwang at the budget presentation

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



J. D. Gomwalk



Gov. Mutfwang



First Editor, Dan Agbese

Fifty years: The Story of *The Nigeria Standard*

A providential state visit from the South had exposed the political underbelly of the North. But it was more than that. It was also the beginning of a story that has hardly changed in the general run of the Nigerian odyssey. It is the story of the struggle for identity and how it found a voice to express itself. WULIME GOYIT writes.

The *Nigeria Standard* came from the impulse of one man. But by the time it took its form, it had become the standard bearer of the vision around which the aspirations of the people were molded. Conceived in a moment of exasperation, it rolled off the press in haste, just a few months after former Governor JD Gomwalk had seen off the then Mid-West State Governor, Col. Samuel Ogbemudia who had visited him. A snobbish treatment of the visit by the northern-owned newspaper, *New Nigerian* was the spark that ignited the flurry of activities leading to the establishment of the paper.

Coming when it did, against the odds that it faced, the birth of *The Nigeria Standard* spoke of the urgency of the issues for which it came; for the presence and place of the country's minority groups under the federal system; and for the unification of the hotchpotch of Nigeria's ethnic nationalities for the greater good.

The newspaper set out its mission as follows:

"Today, we join the growing family of the nation's news media. And we dedicate ourselves to the service of helping to build a strong and virile press that will enhance the enlightenment of our people, promote better understanding and ethnic harmony among the various groups that make up this great country and contribute to the economic advancement of

and political stability of our country.

"in carrying out our sacred duty of moulding public opinion, we shall not allow selfish motives or sectional interest to becloud our sense of national duty. We are born at a momentous period in the history of our country, a time when the Federal and state governments have embarked on gigantic programmes aimed at building a solid foundation for economic take-off and political stability.

"We owe it a duty not only to support the effort of the governments in this regard, but also to create a favorable atmosphere in which the people will continue to cooperate with government in their task of nation-building. We can only do this if truth, objectivity and fair play form the cardinal principles of reports and comments.

"For the benefit of the government and the governed, we will always offer constructive criticisms and maintain a virile editorial policy within the limits of the law. We will advise, implore, exhort, explain and criticize whenever necessary, without fear or favor.

"And as a vehicle of information, we will also undertake to interpret correctly government policies and measures to the people and relay the people's reactions and views on such measures back to the government for its guidance. As one of the national couriers of news and views, our principal political objective is to play up all

the factors that contribute towards the promotion of unity and trample on those that tend to kindle narrow nationalism, parochialism, and selfish tribal interests which are not only the symbols of disunity, but are capable of frustrating a nation's hope for a more progressive endeavor.

"Our task to the nation is difficult. But our ability to perform it satisfactorily will depend entirely on the amount of co-operation which we receive from you. We therefore appeal to all of you not only to co-operate with us but to patronize us in order to make *The Nigeria Standard* a success."

The newspaper was on the newsstands for the first time on July 8, 1972, decreed into life by Governor Gomwalk via Edict No. 6 of 1972, containing that editorial that set the tone for the pursuit of its grand ambitions.

Simple but assertive, confident but not condescending, the newspaper proclaimed its mission with the force of its convictions, and followed same with equal intensity. From the press of *The Nigerian Observer* newspaper in Benin, Mid-West State, production of *The Nigeria Standard* newspaper moved to Jos two years later, in 1974. It was said to be a dreary start as a former editor of the paper, Dan Agbese describes it in the book, **JD Gomwalk: A man of vision**. Dan Agbese says, "we did not just work, we plodded. Everything was set up for maximum mental and physical punishment. It fell

to the Government Printer to produce the newspaper. But it was done manually. This meant that every word was hand composed with the compositors picking individual letters from trays containing various typefaces...the agony was unbearable. We had no respite, we had the Printing Press to contend with too. It was a small letter press with its technology anchored in the 18th Century."

With the production machine only suited for the preceding generation of newspapering, with limited circulation of the paper and lacking in timeliness, it was indeed morning yet on creation day. Still, over time, *The Nigeria Standard* has provided the voice it set out to provide for sections of the society whose voices are hardly heard in the noisy clamour for resources and recognition.

Coming on stream when it did, *The Nigeria Standard* became the 6th oldest newspaper in the country and the second oldest in the North after the *New Nigerian*. But it is renowned for higher duties for the country than for its long life in the print media world. As it evolved into the behemoth that it became on the media space, it branched out into other publications designed to meet peculiar needs. **The Sunday Standard, The Nigeria Standard on Saturday, Yancin Dan Adam and The Rock** magazine, all came at different times in the heyday of the newspaper.

Buoyed by its popularity and wide circulation, the newspaper

attained heights that tend to belie its fortunes in later years. It is on record that even foreign governments, including the governments of the United States of America and the Soviet Union at some time invited an editor of the paper, Gideon Barde for visits to their countries. History also records that sometime during the Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo military regime, *The Nigeria Standard* was among the accredited media outfits on the entourage of the then Head of State when he visited The Gambia and Liberia.

But *The Nigeria Standard's* years of relative stability and progress, like other media of the 1980s and 1990s, would be troubled by the increasing arrogance and unrestrained ambition of a military class that had apparently lost sight of its primary mission. *The Nigeria Standard*, however, never abdicated its watch-dog calling, becoming more assertive in its demand for responsive and responsible leadership. In its reports and editorials, there was no let-up in the intensity of its critique of the military government, for which, reports said, it was at one time described as tending towards being a "Communist Manifesto".

The most recognizable face of the newspaper's radical bent was a former editor, Jonathan Ishaku whose running battles with the military junta got him fired twice in 1986/87 by the then Military Administrator of Plateau State, Col. Lawrence Onoja! And then there was, the incident

Continued on page 31

NEWS

PLSG pledges commitment to grow economy

By **DUMAH RANDONG**

PLATEAU State Government says it is determined to make the state one of the first five in Nigeria as a business destination of choice.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang stated this while declaring open a stakeholders workshop on Business Enabling Reforms Action Plan (BERAP) at the Conference Hall, Old Government House, Rayfield, Jos, recently.

Represented by the Deputy Governor, Josephine Piyo, Mutfwang reiterated that the political will and capacity to achieve this feat by his administration was not in doubt.

The workshop, organized by the Plateau State team, is responsible for championing the State Action on Business Enabling Environment Reforms, otherwise referred to as Saber.

It represents a significant milestone in ensuring that hindrances were cut off the ease of doing business on the Plateau, to the barest minimum.

He stated that in today's fast-paced global economy, it was imperative for governments to adapt, innovate and ensure that states were not just keeping up but thriving amidst the challenges.

"We understand that businesses are the lifeblood of any economy, creating jobs, stimulating growth and driving innovation. Therefore, we view it as our sole responsibility to create an enabling environment where businesses can flourish, where entrepreneurs can dream big," the governor added.

He described the meeting as a collaboration and partnership between the government, private sector stakeholders and civil societies. But noted that their insight, experiences and expertise were valuable to identifying the best strategies to enhance the business environment.

The governor encouraged participants to actively engage in the discussions, share their thoughts and contribute to the development of innovative solutions in order to shape the policies and initiatives that will define the future of business on Plateau.

Consultant to the State Action on Business Environment Reforms, Dr Paul Adepelumi in a presentation, noted that SABER was an offshoot of the Nigerian Economic Sustainability Plan, NESP established in 2018 to the states develop framework that would enable them do away with bureaucracy thereby attracting foreign investors.

Dr Adepelumi decried lack of policy framework by state governments as responsible for the little or lack of interest by investors to do business in the country.

He stated that SABER



Piyo

workshop was a project aimed at addressing these issues and disclosed that Plateau state was expected to meet certain criteria before accessing a 20 billion US dollars by the World

bank.

He added that there is what is called pre qualification and eligibility criteria of the project that determines what a state gets.

WFEO president tasks engineers on climate change

From **John FWAH, Kaduna**

THE new President of World Federation of Engineers Organization, (WFEO), Engineer Mustapha Balarabe Shehu, says the solutions to challenges of climate change rest on engineers.

The Nigerian-born Engineer Shehu spoke to the assembly of World Federation of Engineers Organization's (WFEO) Annual General Meeting (AGM) recently. Engineers all over the world had converged in Prague, Czech Republic to honour the first African and the 17th President of WFEO.

Speaking on the challenges faced as a result of climate change, such as flood, and that of conflicts resulting in the destruction of infrastructure and the displacement of people, Engr Shehu said, "the solutions rest on the engineers."

"As engineers, we will always be ready to deploy our knowledge and expertise to rebuild these damages or infrastructure."

Engineer Shehu who was the 28th President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers NSE, further added, "To handle these challenges, there is need to be equipped with the right knowledge."

The former President of the African Federation of Engineering Organizations (AFEO) between 2015-2016, stressed that as part of his agenda during his two years stewardship, he will ensure that engineers get equipped through trainings in order to have adequate knowledge to be able to handle challenges.

The new world leader also disclosed that his administration will look into the issue of having a comprehensive data of engineers, specifying the total

strength of the male and female engineers and their expertise.

A delegate at the colourful event, the Executive Director, Alim and Associates Ltd., Engr. Muhyideen Alim Yusuf FNSE, described Engr. Mustapha as a man of repute. He expressed confidence that the wealth of experience of the new President of WFEO would help in bringing growth

WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

THE Managing Director, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Nigerian Communications Satellite (NIGCOMSAT), Mrs Nkechi Jane Egerton-Idehen has visited Gombe State in search of more clients.

Mrs. Nkechi, while addressing the press after a two day working visit, said she was in Gombe for an awareness campaign on the activities and services of the agency.

She said, "This is a new era for NIGCOMSAT and we are here to ensure our clients, potential clients, stakeholders and partners are aware of this".

She said the duties of NIGCOMSAT as a communication satellite operator, is to enhance communication capabilities and infrastructure for the betterment of the people.

We are open for business - NIGCOMSAT



Nkechi

And Gombe State stands to benefit a lot from these services for its social and economic development.

According to her, the

agency aims to change the perception of people about NIGCOMSAT not just through words, but through tangible actions and results.

"We are determined to make NIGCOMSAT a beacon of national pride with an energised workforce, satisfied clients and national recognition", she emphasized.

The visit of the Managing Director was also to seek to work with the Gombe State Government not only to offer broadband access but also solutions that can enhance the operations of small and medium enterprises as well as educational and health care services in the state.

"To our present and prospective partners in Gombe State and beyond, I want you to know that we are open for business", she stressed.

Technology is the engine of every economy and NIGCOMSAT believes it is now better positioned than ever to provide the nation with reliable internet services that will stimulate innovation and other advancements in the tech industry.

NIGCOMSAT also feels its foremost duty as a communications satellite operator is to enhance communication capabilities and infrastructure for the betterment of Nigerians.

That is why it is determined to meet the mandate set by the Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy to provide universal, ubiquitous and cost effective access to communications infrastructure throughout Nigeria where the utilization of ICT impacts all spheres from agriculture, education, health, enterprises among others.

WFEO president tasks engineers on climate change

From **John FWAH, Kaduna**

THE new President of World Federation of Engineers Organization, (WFEO), Engineer Mustapha Balarabe Shehu, says the solutions to challenges of climate change rest on engineers.

The Nigerian-born Engineer Shehu spoke to the assembly of World Federation of Engineers Organization's (WFEO) Annual General Meeting (AGM) recently. Engineers all over the world had converged in Prague, Czech Republic to honour the first African and the 17th President of WFEO.

Speaking on the challenges faced as a result of climate change, such as flood, and that of conflicts resulting in the destruction of infrastructure and the displacement of people, Engr Shehu said, "the solutions rest on the engineers."

"As engineers, we will always be ready to deploy our knowledge and expertise to rebuild these damages or infrastructure."

Engineer Shehu who was the 28th President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers NSE, further added, "To handle these challenges, there is need to be equipped with the right knowledge."

The former President of the African Federation of Engineering Organizations (AFEO) between 2015-2016, stressed that as part of his agenda during his two years stewardship, he will ensure that engineers get equipped through trainings in order to have adequate knowledge to be able to handle challenges.

The new world leader also disclosed that his administration will look into the issue of having a comprehensive data of engineers, specifying the total

strength of the male and female engineers and their expertise.

A delegate at the colourful event, the Executive Director, Alim and Associates Ltd., Engr. Muhyideen Alim Yusuf FNSE, described Engr. Mustapha as a man of repute. He expressed confidence that the wealth of experience of the new President of WFEO would help in bringing growth

and development to the society.

Engr. Mustapha, an active participant in the affairs of WFEO was accompanied by family and friends and had the support of Nigerian engineers both at home and in the diaspora.

Delegates to the historic event were in high spirit as they looked forward to a successful and a fulfilled two

Governor Mutfwang presents N295.4 billion budget

PLATEAU State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has presented a budget of N295,434,568,464 for the year 2024 to the Plateau State House of Assembly for consideration. The budget, tagged "Budget of New Beginnings," is aimed at laying a strong foundation for peace and prosperity on Plateau State.

The Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Gyang Bere disclosed in a statement that Governor Mutfwang explained that the proposed 2024 budget is significantly

higher than the approved budget for 2023, totaling N145,483,233,873. He attributed this increase to his administration's commitment to implementing a budget that enhances the state's socio-economic development and improves the lives of the citizens.

The governor outlined the key focus areas of the budget, which include good governance, agricultural transformation, education, human capital development, public health, environment, mineral development, infrastructure, industrialization, and taxation/revenue mobilization.

The budget comprises a recurrent component of N157,563,316,462, representing 53.33%, and a capital estimate of N137,871,251,992, accounting for 46.66% of the total budget. Funding sources include internally generated revenue (IGR) of N38,360,874,931, Government share of FAAC amounting to N151,424,566,079, and N105,649,127,454 from capital receipts.

Allocation highlights for various sectors include N22,187,887,445 for

administration, N10,186,558,417 for agriculture, N134,660,000 for Commerce and Industries, N1,152,762,000 for Information and Communication, N6,819,344,600 for law and justice, N772,000,290 for Science and Technology, N20,627,993,898 for lands, housing, and urban development, N100,000,000 for tourism, culture, and hospitality, N15,988,944,486 for water, sanitation, and energy, N10,495,619,707 for education, and N5,453,801,200 for health, among other sectors.

Governor Mutfwang emphasized his administration's commitment to addressing the state's infrastructural and human capital development deficits with the available resources. He also urged citizens to fulfill their tax obligations promptly, emphasizing the importance of teamwork and efficient development in the state.

Rt. Hon. Moses Sule, Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, described the budget as a lifeline for the people of Plateau State and pledged the House's commitment to expedite its passage to accelerate development in the state.



Mutfwang

SUNDAY FEATURE

Nigeria's ecosystem remains on the brink

Climate change is principally a major problem caused by the increase of human activities. These climatic changes have wide-range harmful effects. As of 1960 Nigeria had about 30 percent forest. Nigeria's forests play an important role in protecting the country's ecosystem.
ALHASSAN A. BALA writes.

ON the average, Nigeria is said to be losing about 3.5 per cent of its forest annually, which is between 350,000 and 400,000 hectares of forestland. Also, a research conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) revealed that between 2000 and 2005, the country lost 55.7 per cent of its primary forests, and the rate of forest change increased by 31.2 per cent to 3.12 per cent, per annum.

Meanwhile, as of 2021 Nigeria has lost 96 per cent of its forest due to deforestation, according to the Director-General, Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), Muhtari Aminu-Kano. He said the country currently has only four per cent of its original forest cover.

Global Forest Watch also said between 2001 and 2021, Nigeria lost 1.14 million hectares of trees cover, as a result of the several activities like industrial agriculture and food, which take 80% of deforestation. Over 90 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa is dependent on wood from tree felling as a source of energy. 80% of Nigerians in rural areas depend on forests, which provide important opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and poverty eradication.

In an attempt for rural dwellers to meet the challenges of ensuring sustainable livelihood they tend to harm the environment through tree felling to use as sources of energy, heating and cooking. In Northern Nigeria, the greater percentage of rural dwellers are threatened by poverty which forces them to engage in deforestation for livelihoods.

The villagers around forests have been pushed by rapid population growth and the need for more income to over exploit fragile, and marginal grass land through overgrazing and tree felling for fuelwood and other domestic activities which result in desertification. Forty million Nigerians are engaged directly in fuelwood collection and charcoal production, according to a report by FAO).

Northern Nigerian states of Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, Yobe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara and Kebbi, are facing serious threat of desertification. This is due to over exposure of the fragile environment, mostly through deforestation, overgrazing by livestock and



occurrence of bush burning and drought.

The issue of tree felling as fuelwood in communities near forests is on the increase due to so many factors: many fell trees for commercial or business purposes as they sell the woods to people that burn and extract charcoal while others take the woods to other communities or cities that are far from forests. Yet, some are doing that for their immediate need in their various houses for cooking or for heating during harmattan.

While growing in Burji town, neighbouring Falgore Game Reserve in Kano state, I knew of men whose main sources of income were firewood from the forest's felled trees. To my knowledge, they had never engaged in farming or any other business aside selling firewood which majority of their customers use as source of energy in their

homes.

My recent visit to the town and by extension a place I knew in the last two decades as part of the forest has since become a land for farming as over 90% of the trees have been felled to make way for farming. I recall how I normally see animals like monkeys, rabbits, etc roaming, but I was told by residents that in the last 10 years nobody has seen any of them again, no thanks to deforestation.

While the negative trend continues unabated in all Nigerian northern states neighbouring Niger Republic, Chad and Cameroon, land is affected by the rising temperature leading to the rapid southward expansion of the Sahara Desert. Farmlands and surrounding villages continue to become barren and getting swallowed up by advancing desertification, which is forcing many pastoralists to migrate in search of better weather.

The National Bureau of Statistics

(NBS) data shows that 89.8 million Nigerians fell below the poverty line at the start of 2023, with an additional four million making it 93.8 million in May 2023. This accounts for 43 percent of Nigeria's 216 million people. This is among the reasons Nigeria remains one of the lowest consumer of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), popularly called cooking gas, in sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite the obvious advantages of LPG over other domestic fuel sources, only five per cent of Nigeria's households use LPG. Over 80 percent of households in Nigeria still use firewood and kerosene, which have been identified as major sources of emission.

No surprise that as the price of LPG keeps increasing making poor and middle class Nigerians unable to afford, it is unarguably another factor pushing those not only in rural areas but middle class in towns and cities to embrace charcoal and firewood as alternative sources of energy.

Furthermore, the growing insecurity in most northern states has forced many out of farming which had in several decades become their source of income and livelihood, and for them to be able to survive tree felling near their villages to sell has now become the necessary option. The forest sector contributes about 2.5% to the Gross Domestic Product and provides employment for over 5 million people through the supply of timber and non-timber products in Nigeria.

Nigeria is ranked the second largest producer of charcoal in the world with 4.5 million tonnes after Brazil with 5.5 million tonnes, and

first in Africa, with a combined 28% share of global production by FAO. Charcoal principally comes from tree felling in different forests in all parts of Nigeria.

Nigeria's Guinea Savannah region is not spared either. Logging and over dependence on firewood for cooking have stripped a greater part of this area of its vegetation cover. The situation is similarly replicated in South-west Nigeria, where the forest around Oyo state has long been reduced to grassland. Despite these glaring revelations, however, Nigeria seems not prepared for the impact of climate change.

Although the country has been lucky not to have experienced major climate-change-induced natural disasters, the effect of climate change is evidenced by persistent drought in the northern part and major flooding and erosion along the nation's coastline; another one was the disruptive weather pattern, as parts of the country have witnessed very hot weather conditions as a result of persistent drought. The Lake Chad has almost dried up, while there had been persistent desert encroachment in the north.

Worse still, the ordinary Nigerian in the street has no knowledge of climate change and its causes as they blame many other things whenever they experience draught and flooding due to the lack of orientation and enlightenment by authorities. These are what make the future of the country's ecosystem even more bleak unless there's an about-turn policy by the government and commitment to tackle the impending menace.

Bala, an Abuja-based freelance journalist, writes via balahassan2007@gmail.com

"While the negative trend continues unabated in all Nigerian northern states neighbouring Niger Republic, Chad and Cameroon, land is affected by the rising temperature leading to the rapid southward expansion of the Sahara Desert. Farmlands and surrounding villages continue to become barren and getting swallowed up by advancing desertification, which is forcing many pastoralists to migrate in search of better weather. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data shows that 89.8 million Nigerians fell below the poverty line at the start of 2023, with an additional four million making it 93.8 million in May 2023. This accounts for 43 percent of Nigeria's 216 million people. This is among the reasons Nigeria remains one of the lowest consumer of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), popularly called cooking gas, in sub-Saharan Africa."

SUNDAY FEATURE

COCIN GCC: Enhancing Karl Kumm University's prospects

By BULUS GAMBO

THE Church of Christ in Nations, (COCIN) annual General Church Council meeting has traditionally become an annual ritual where crucial issues affecting the entire church are appraised and extensively discussed. In its usual manner, the platform which consist of its president who this time around is Rev. Dr Amos Musa Mohzo and the other top three of the church in attendance are anticipated to lead the body through lucrative issues that will enhance church growth. This aside, the august meeting also has in attendance the various Provisional Church Council leaderships, Regional Church Council heads, Heads of Departments and other stakeholders of the church.

This year's general church council was not different as crucial issues affecting and or intended for the growth of the body of Christ was extensively discussed to the glory of God. Amongst some of these crucial issues was the progress report of the Karl Kumm University Vom which was established to train contemporary leaders for a better tomorrow. Indeed, the coming to be of this faith based university was hinged on the sincere yearnings and aspirations of COCIN to educate, train and produce quality prospective leaders for a more rejuvenated global society in years to come.

This year, the Vice Chancellor of Karl Kumm University Vom, Prof Nanven Audu Gambo was invited to tender a report concerning the developmental gains recorded since the establishment and commencement of academic activities for the 2023/2024 session by the institution. Delivering his report during the GCC meeting, Prof Gambo disclosed that the university has immense opportunities and prospects of becoming a world class citadel of learning if properly funded.

Interestingly, the university has become a part of COCIN's desire for holistic mission to mankind. As was perceived by Prof. Ezekiel Best team's proposal submitted to the church leadership in 2002, "COCIN will need to look ahead of its present dreams of the founding fathers of the mission."

But again, the defining moment in the establishment of Karrl Kumm University came on the 7th May 2003 when the COCIN General Church Council, (GCC) resolved to start a university owned by the church. Thus, it was followed by a letter of intent for the establishment of the university to the National Universities Commission in June 23, 2003. In November 2003, the church inaugurated sub-committees to work on



Prof. Nanven Gambo, V.C Karl Kumm University

the various aspects of the establishment of the university such as the site selection, law, academic brief, finance amongst others. On March 1 2004, the church Executive Committee, (EC) received a report of the site Selection Sub-Committee. Four sites out of several others were presented both within and outside the state which were investigated. Vom was however eventually chosen and the best site based on a rating of ten indices, where the availability of facilities for a temporary site, proximity to several other tertiary institutions and existence of a long COCIN hospital for the university gave edge to the site.

As at today, the university has admitted close to fifty students even as close to 200 candidates were on the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board's Central Admissions Processing System.

Basically, the university was granted licence on the 8th April 2021 by the National Universities Commission to operate as the 88th university in Nigeria. According to the incumbent Vice chancellor, "we have close to 49 students who have duly registered and admission would come to an end on the 14th November 2023 in compliance with the directive of JAMB as we submit to the body the list of registered students for matriculation on the 28th November 2023 by the grace of God. It is expected that we will have more students admitted in the 2024/2025 academic session. We have submitted to JAMB our adverts for inclusion in the 2024/2025 brochure detailing

subject combinations and entry requirements for both UTME and DE modes of entry"

The university is also keeping word over its commitment to starting Remedial AND IJMB programmes at the Gindiri campus of the university. The plan according to the Vice chancellor was being pursued with great enthusiasm until the unfortunate and unprovoked attacks on some communities in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State adding that "the meeting of the Senate of the university was quickly convened to discuss the way forward and it was reasonably advised that we should put the proposal on hold until the security situation in Mangu is clear enough for us to push on."

On students' accommodation "the first and second floor of both the male and female hostels, only the ground floor of the male hostel has been furnished for students' occupation. The first and second floors of the male and female hostels have beds without mattresses and pillows, ward ropes, reading tables and chairs. There is need to get the two hostels fully ready for more students next year. Let me therefore place on record our most profound appreciation to the COCIN Women Fellowship(CWF) for the passionate commitment to the completion of the female hostel. Significant progress has been made towards the completion of the project. May the good Lord bless and increase the capacity of COCIN Women Fellowship."

Prof Gambo noted that despite some of these challenges, the management was able to also provide solar light points to improve the security on campus, purchase a 16 seater Toyota Hummer bus to ease the transportation challenge of both staff and students and provided an internet connectivity on campus to aid teaching, learning and research in the university adding that the health service is operational."

On the issue of the Entrepreneurship Centre. The Vice Chancellor explained that "we only need to equip it with relevant equipment's for various skills acquisition. We have identified tailoring, digital skill, animal husbandry and bakery for now. These are the soft skills we can bring upstream for now. It is expected that as we grow, we will expand on these trades so that our students can have multiple choices.

Certainly, the insight given by the Vice Chancellor of the Karl Kumm University would encourage the General Church Council to continue supporting the institution to blossom in the coming years.

As a show of support during his remarks, the President of the Church of Christ in Nations, (COCIN), Rev Dr Amos Mohzo disclosed that "I am delighted to officially announce the forthcoming maiden Matriculation Ceremony of Karl Kumm University, Vom scheduled to take place on the 28th of November 2023, marking the commencement of the 2023 academic session. This momentous occasion culminates two decades of dedication and hard work by the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) whose strong commitment has brought this prestigious university to fruition. As we gather to celebrate this significant milestone, I would like to extend a heartfelt invitation to all PCC Chairmen, RCC Chairmen, Headquarters Church members, Gindiri Chaplaincy, stakeholders, Directors, all provosts and principals of institutions and Heads of Units to join us on this joyous day. Your presence at the maiden Matriculation Ceremony is not only evidence of the Church's enduring vision but also a demonstration of your continued support for the growth and development of Karl Kumm University."

According to him, " it is in line with this, the Executive Council has approved 2 percent as a steady deduction for the support of the University beginning in 2024. This event promises to be a moment of reflection, gratitude and inspiration as we witness the actualization of a long awaited dream."



COCIN top four

POLITICIANS need to learn how to be strategic thinkers because without strategic thinking they cannot be problem solvers. The only reason why we keep voting is because we believe that whoever we vote for has the capacity to solve our many problem. No leader knows it all but all leaders can learn. Learning is critical in leadership. All good leaders are strategic thinkers and planners.

Let us look at one aspect of strategic thinking and planning that can help political leaders to solve problems. It is called SWOT. SWOT is a business tool that can also be applied politically.

SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This is a diagnostic tool that businesses use to read their internal and external environment and for drawing up their business strategies. As politicians, you are going to be handling our community monies. Have you read your environment and yourself well? How can you deliver results if you do not know your left from your right? What are your political strategies?

Let us start with strength. As a leader, what are your strengths? In fact, are you a leader? Have you learnt leadership skills? Your strengths will include your educational background, your experiences, and your positive personal traits. It will include your network and your net worth, your circle of influence. How can you bring all this to bear in your new job?

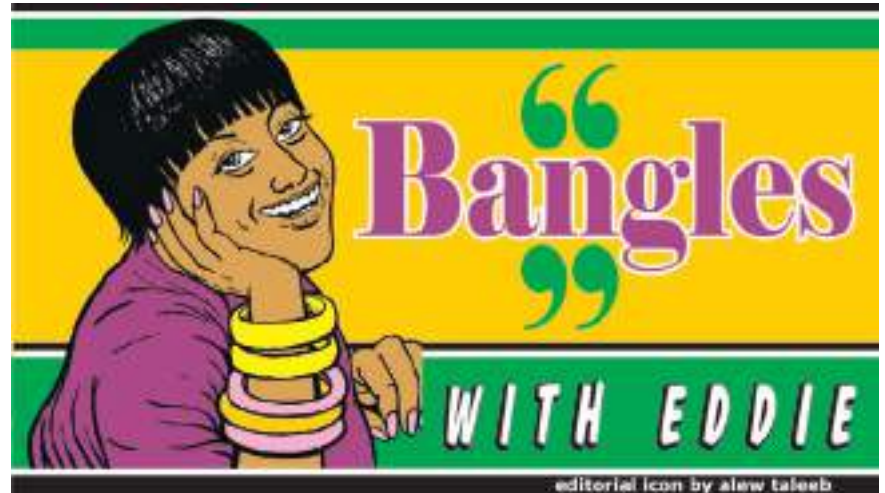
Let us say that you worked in for 20 years and you are an investment banker or an accountant by profession. Do you have to go for extra courses on budgeting for the public sector, yes. But you will find it easier than someone who read French or English language, who has to do extra. If you learn well, when the civil servants in your state start to play monkey games, you will see and understand what they are up to but if you are completely ignorant, you will sign documents that you cannot understand and when they steal, they will steal in your name and with your signature. If you choose to steal, you are not a leader but a thief because leaders do not steal, they are learned enough to create wealth and value.

The community that you will be leading, do you know the strength in that community? Let us say that the community has a lot of fertile land for growing yams and they produce big, delicious and healthy yams. How do you intend to generate revenue for the community with this strength? How do you intend to create value in the day of unemployment and poverty when the jobs are few and far apart? Do you know already, have you learnt or will you call in the entrepreneurs to advise you on how to maximize this strength? The local and international market for yam could be explored. Adding value to that yam by making it into yam flour and lafun for the international market could bring in massive revenue for the community. Teaching your people about natural pesticides, processing and packaging, preservation and marketing are some of the trainings you will need to provide to empower your community.

With this knowledge, you can draw up

a strategy on how to boost the farming and processing of yam and you can also partner with the export council, bank of industry and NEXIM to empower your farmers with training and loans. You can provide your farmers with fertilizer and other farming tools. You can grade the roads to their farms and provide storage facilities. You can start up factories with international certification so that the yam flour produced in your community could be exported easily.

If your strategy is well thought-out, you could provide jobs for the youth in



When politicians become clueless

THE PARTY IS ABOUT TO BEGIN

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your community while generating the much-needed foreign exchange for your community. If you do this and you are able to respond to the problem of unemployment, you would have solved one of the most pressing problems in your community without waiting for the Nigerian civil service to do so. Job creation can also help in maintaining security as the level of crime may drop.

The second aspect of SWOT is weaknesses. What areas of weakness do you and your community have. Let us say that you are not a farmer and would not understand the needs of the farmers technically or let us say that you know nothing about exports. The strategic question becomes, "how can I address these weaknesses?". You can consider many options. Hiring experienced experts and consultants in these fields who will work with your farmers and you, is a first step. However, because you are working with people, you need to carry everybody along.

A great leader is not one who has all the answers but one who knows how to work with the people who have the answers that he or she does not have. A great leader is one who consults and is willing to learn. As such, you could consider many strategies such as town

hall meetings with your farmers and exporters, steering committees and consultancies. Who are the experts in your community? You could call them together and form a think tank. In all your doings, make sure you learn as learning is a continuum in leadership. Have the humility to learn from big and small, stooping to conquer because the aim and objective is to create results for the people you represent.

O in SWOT is opportunities. What are the opportunities in your local and global environment? You have a community product to sell. You can focus on farming yams in your community. Comparative farming. You can leverage technology to put your product on the global map for marketing your community product. The internet is a global marketplace. You can empower your people abroad to become distributors of your community product because Nigerian food, just like Nigerian music, movie and fashion is becoming a hit abroad. Nigerians abroad are opening Nigerian restaurants every day, and our culinary deliciousness is competing with that of the Chinese. Locally, yam is eaten by all tribes and religion in Nigeria and the neighboring countries.

T is for threat in SWOT. Our biggest

agricultural threat in Nigeria is our lack of local knowledge in the areas of preserving, processing, packaging and marketing. Lack of electricity and the herder and farmer conflict is also a threat to agriculture. How can these threats be mitigated? You can set up a training centre to teach the community about natural pesticides, preservation, packaging etc. You can also make use of solar energy to provide energy for powering your small-scale yam industries. You can employ hygiene experts and certification experts. You can dig boreholes for water supply across the community as this is crucial to all forms of production. You can have dialogues and mediation sessions with your farmers and herders so that they agree on how-to live in peace together.

Someone told me that in their community, the farmers and herders agree that the cornstalk and agricultural by products and materials go to the herders while the cow dung go to the farmers. This agreement helps them maintain peace and a symbiotic relationship. Again, the farmers fence their farms with cactus and create a roads in between farms for herders to move. A few meters of grass here and there is also created. Everybody is happy. Personally, I like it because cow dung means organic farming.

WE shall be continuing on the topic-*I Shall Not Want*. We have established in our previous edition that God is bringing you into seasons of quietness. To enter into that season, all you have to do is to trust in the Lord with all of your heart (Proverbs 3:5-6). So all I am asking you to do today is to trust God. I know there are some stuff that may not have come together yet, but I still want you to trust God. I want you to lean your life upon Him.

The first proof of trust is joy and peace. It is the first Feast that God calls us to enjoy. When walking with Him, the first feast is not the feast of miracles; it is the feast of His presence, joy and peace, such as the world cannot buy. Such feast money cannot buy. A billion dollars cannot buy the joy of the Lord, unspeakable, full of glory. A billion dollars cannot buy the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. Joy and peace are the first fruits of His presence. It is the first feast He calls you to partake in.

How do you want to know whether or not you are on the verge of breakthrough? Check your joy level; check your peace level, not your petition level, because there are certain atmospheres that are an open invitation to God. The Bible says in Psalm 22:3 that, **God inhabitest the praises of Israel**. Israel in that context refers to all believers. So when you get into a dimension of praise, you don't even need to say God come, he is already there. He invites Himself, because He already knows you want Him because you have created the right environment. And listen to me, where God is, miracles happen. Where God is, favour comes; where God is, He will satisfy you with what you need whenever you need it. He will give you the revelation you need per time to sustain you. He will give you the wisdom you need per time to sustain you. That is His ministry.

However, as God begins to bless us, let us not reduce Him only to material things. As important as material things are, our first need, or the first feast that He calls us to, is the *feast of His presence*. Everything else begins to flow from there. His presence will cause a turnaround in your life; it will cause the journey to take a new turn for you; things will pick up for you, some things are going to gain momentum; some things are going to gain clarity in your life; and where you were walking in the shadows, you will begin to walk in the light. The light may become more intense, but you must run towards the light, because that is our strength.

You see, the first place 'fatness' will come to your life is your soul- your understanding. When your understanding becomes fat, your life also become fat. When I say 'fat', I

am not necessarily talking about physical fatness; I mean *satiated, satisfied*.

Again, as Psalm 23 puts it, **The Lord is my (my personal) Shepherd**, therefore, I shall not want. That means that everybody that comes to him, He has one idea in His heart- that you do not *want* again all the days of your life. Now, you have to

my mind. So I don't think like I used to think before. I don't make the kind of choices I used to make, because my perspective to life is different now.

I tell you the truth, the moment your perspective to life begins to change, then the track that you run begins to change. And of course, when we talk about walking in life, or

I shall not want (6) You're called to a feast



believe that; don't allow theology to upset your mind because God knows how to make it happen. You have got to believe that God does not want you to want, or to be lacking, or to be deficient in any area. That is His commitment to us. He said, **The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want**. You can put it in present tense and say, when you are confessing "I do not want".

I mentioned that the word 'want' comes from a Hebrew term, which means 'to lack', or 'to fail', or 'to be lessened'. It means 'to decrease' or 'to make lower'. It means 'to go without', or 'to be deficient', or 'to suffer defeat'. It also means 'to be void or empty, or destitute'. But thank God you are not destitute. God does not want you lacking; He does not want you failing, neither does He want you lessened in any way.

Then he said, **He maketh me to lie down in green pastures...** That is translated as pastures of quietness, or tender grass, and **He leads me beside still waters**, or waters of quietness. **He restoreth my soul**, is talking about the renewing of the mind; He changes the way I think, my approach to life. The way I reason things out. The way I do my things is changed by His Word; His word renews

running in life, or the path you are taking, we are talking about how you do things, your perspective, your approach to things. **He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his namesake. For Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, the valley of Shadow of Death** is described by the next sentence which says, **I will fear no evil...** fear of the valley of the shadow of death; fear of the outcome of my life, fear of how things are going to turn out, fear of how my bills are going to be paid, fear of how my life is going to turn out, fear of how my productivity or whatever it is, and fear of so many things.

I know that as you age,

sometimes, and you look at your life, there is a tendency many times for you to look at your life and wonder how much are you achieving? There is a tendency for that, but you see, when you begin to think like that, fear begins to come in. Because you are not thinking like God thinks. I say that when believers think, we must factor in the anointing. I always like giving the example of Elijah. What will give you stability is your reasoning. And if you look at it, when the Bible talks about God's infinite strength, it is usually associated with God's infinite understanding. Psalms 147:5 says, **Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.**

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I mentioned that the word 'want' comes from a Hebrew term, which means 'to lack', or 'to fail', or 'to be lessened'. It means 'to decrease' or 'to make lower'. It means 'to go without', or 'to be deficient', or 'to suffer defeat'. It also means 'to be void or empty, or destitute'. But thank God you are not destitute. God does not want you lacking; He does not want you failing, neither does He want you lessened in any way. Then he said, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures... That is translated as pastures of quietness, or tender grass, and He leads me beside still waters, or waters of quietness. He restoreth my soul, is talking about the renewing of the mind; He changes the way I think, my approach to life. The way I reason things out. The way I do my things is changed by His Word; His word renews my mind. So I don't think like I used to think before. I don't make the kind of choices I used to make, because my perspective to life is different now.

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God's strength is linked to his understanding, and so is your strength in life- linked to your understanding, especially of how you see things. If you allow the doubt of fear and confusion to get into your mind, and you stop thinking like God, or like people who are part of the Kingdom of God, and you stop factoring in the anointing and the blessing in your life, and the supernatural, what you start doing is that you step out of your course in life and you start running in the strength of men. And I am telling you the truth, when you begin to compromise on one thing, your entire value systems will crash. That is because what keeps us on course in life is our understanding. That is why we must run to the light.

to be continued...

INTERNATIONAL

US troops face further attacks in Iraq

UNITED States troops in Iraq have been targeted in new attacks using drones and explosives, military and security sources reported.

Three attacks took place on Thursday, the sources told Reuters. The incidents add to the more than 40 assaults that US and allied troops based across the Middle East have come under since the Israel-Hamas war started on October 7.

As well as two drone assaults at bases, a US-led coalition convoy was hit by an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in the vicinity of Mosul Dam.

The security sources said the patrol was accompanied by Iraqi counterterrorism forces and that a vehicle in the patrol was damaged. Three US troops sustained minor injuries but had returned to duty, the official added.

Drone attacks targeted American and coalition forces at the Ain al-Asad airbase west of Baghdad and al-Harir airbase in Erbil. Both drones were destroyed before reaching their target, the sources said.

A statement from Iraqi Kurdistan's counterterrorism service added that the attack at al-Harir had caused a fire at one of its fuel depots, but added that US-led coalition forces had evacuated the airbase on October 20.

Since the war between Israel and Hamas began, US and coalition troops have been attacked at least 40 times in Iraq and Syria. So far, 56 American personnel have been injured in these attacks, although all have returned to duty, according to the Pentagon.

The US has accused Iran of "actively facilitating" rocket and drone attacks by Iranian-backed proxy groups on its forces in Iraq and Syria.

Hungary signals veto of Ukraine EU membership talks

NEGOTIATIONS on Ukrainian membership in the European Union should not move forward, with the war-torn country "in no way ready" to join the bloc, Hungary's premier said.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban's remarks came on Friday, two days after Brussels recommended the opening of membership talks. The comments suggest that Budapest could block any formal invitation to Kyiv at a meeting in mid-December at which EU leaders are set to decide.

Unanimity among all member states is required to admit a new country into the bloc, giving Orban a powerful veto. Under the pro-Russian leader, Hungary has often complicated EU efforts to support Ukraine amid Moscow's invasion, although Orban has eventually nodded to all military and sanctions packages.

The EU's executive branch, the European Commission, on Wednesday recommended that Ukraine should be permitted to open membership talks, once it has addressed some shortfalls.

Speaking on his weekly morning slot on state radio,



Biden

Tehran denies these claims, saying groups engaging in the attacks were doing so on their own accord.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has said that Tehran "neither gives orders to the resistance groups across the region, nor stop them from taking decisions in their own countries based on their own interests".

On Friday, he stated that it is "inevitable" that the scope of the war in Gaza will expand.

The groups in Iraq who have targeted US military assets say the attacks will continue as long as the US supports Israel in its war on Gaza.

The US has occasionally retaliated against Iranian-backed forces in the region, including a strike on October 26 in Syria.

US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin asserted in a statement that Washington "does not seek conflict and has no intention nor desire to engage in further hostilities".

But he added that "these

Orban said Ukraine is in no state to join the world's largest trading bloc.

"Ukraine is in no way ready to negotiate on its ambitions to join the European Union," Orban said. "The clear Hungarian position is that the negotiations must not begin."

Ukraine EU accession talks: Kyiv launches ambitious judicial reform plan

Orban's government has refused to supply Ukraine with weapons in its war against Russia and has threatened to veto EU financial aid packages to Kyiv.

It also accuses Ukraine of violating the rights of an ethnic Hungarian minority in western Ukraine by preventing education in the Hungarian language.

At the same time, Hungary is in a protracted struggle with the EU over alleged infractions of rule-of-law and human rights standards. This has resulted in billions of euros in EU funds being withheld.

Hungary has often been accused of using its EU veto to try to force concessions from Brussels. However, Orban denied that Hungary's opposition to Ukraine's EU membership talks was

THEY include 34 children, Mexico's immigration agency said.

Most of those found in Matehuala, 600km (372 miles) north of Mexico City, were from Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras.

Officials did not provide details about where the migrants were heading, but many travel through the Americas hoping to reach the United States.

They were found after a local resident reported hearing cries from a locked trailer box, Mexico's National Migration Institute (INM) said, adding that they were being given food and medical assistance.

It also said they were

Mexico discovers 123 people trapped in trailer

being provided with accommodation until their situation is resolved.

Some of those found were also from El Salvador, Ecuador and Cuba.

It is unclear if those found in the trailer are part of a 7,000-strong migrant caravan currently making its way from southern Mexico to the United States, most of which are from Central and South America.

Many of those travelling the route are reliant on organised crime gangs, and are vulnerable to kidnapping and extortion.

Ahead of next year's election, US President Joe Biden has come under attack, particularly from Republicans, for his handling of migration, with the situation at the US-Mexico border being most prominent.

US authorities have detained more than 2.2 million migrants along the US-Mexico border since last October.

The growing number of migrants in cities such as New York has become a challenge for the president who has faced intense criticism over his handling of the border.

Iranian-backed attacks Portugal's president calls snap elections in March after PM resigns

PORTUGAL'S President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has dissolved parliament and called snap elections, two days after the country's prime minister resigned amid a continuing corruption investigation.

Rebelo de Sousa said on Thursday that the country would hold snap elections on March 10, the second in [as many years](#).

"I have chosen to dissolve the Assembly of the Republic and hold elections on March 10," he said in a televised address.

The announcement comes after Socialist Prime Minister Antonio Costa [offered his resignation](#) on Tuesday, following the arrest of his chief of staff as part of an anticorruption investigation that includes allegations of malfeasance and influence peddling.

The 62-year-old Costa, who first took power in 2015, denied any wrongdoing but said that he could no longer continue in his role. Prosecutors have said that he is the subject of a separate

investigation.

The state prosecutor's office has said that the country's Supreme Court is looking at the "use of the prime minister's name and his involvement to unlock" the activities being investigated.

FIFA announces ambitious six-nation 2030 World Cup

"I totally trust the justice system," Costa said on Tuesday. "If there are suspicions, then the judicial authorities are free to look into them... I am not above the law."

By law, an election must take place within 60 days of the issuing of a presidential decree dissolving parliament.

Rebelo de Sousa had said that he would only disband parliament, where the Socialist Party holds a majority of seats, after a vote on the budget for 2024.

That budget, which includes tax cuts for the middle class, spending on social programmes for the poor, and a 24 percent increase in public spending amid flagging economic growth, was passed by the



Marcelo

house on October 31. It must be finally approved by November 29.

After meeting with the main political parties on Wednesday and the Council of State, a consultative body, on Thursday, the president said that allowing lawmakers time to pass the budget will help "meet the expectations of many Portuguese".

Pope meets with Portugal church abuse survivors amid tensions

The corruption probe is focused on allegations of

Fighting rages on Ukraine front line as Russia goes on the offensive

RUSSIAN forces have intensified their attacks on key points of the front line as they go on the offensive in Ukraine.

Ukraine's general staff reported late on Thursday that its military had repelled Russian assaults across the front earlier in the day, including around the strategic eastern towns of Avdiivka and Bakhmut as Moscow's forces become more active following Kyiv's counteroffensive over the summer.

Ukrainian forces are reported to have repelled 11 attacks near Avdiivka, 15 in the Maryinka sector and 22 to the northeast in Bakhmut. Six attacks were repelled farther north near Kupiansk, the general staff said.

As Moscow ramps up its offensive, President Vladimir Putin paid a surprise visit to Russia's military headquarters for the campaign in Rostov-on-Don in southern Russia, the Kremlin said on Friday. The president surveyed plans and

improper behaviour around the development of lithium mining and hydrogen projects in the country, and Costa's chief of staff, Vitor Escaria, was arrested on Tuesday as police conducted raids on several public buildings and additional properties.

Prosecutors also named Infrastructure Minister Joao Galamba as a formal suspect, and issued arrest warrants for the mayor of the town of Sines, where some of the projects were to be located, and two executives at the company Start Campus, tasked with building the hydrogen production project

definitely advance," he added. Russia's Investigative Committee, in an account of the day's fighting, said Ukrainian forces shelled the town of Skadovsk in a Russian-occupied area of the southern region of Kherson. The report said there were dead and wounded in the attack.

Russia's Ministry of Defence also reported strikes on Ukrainian troops and equipment near Bakhmut.

Elsewhere, Ukraine's military intelligence agency said on Friday that Ukrainian forces damaged two small Russian landing boats in Crimea during an overnight attack using sea drones.

The statement said the vessels were crewed and loaded with armoured vehicles. The extent of the damage was not immediately clear.

Meanwhile, the news agency RIA quoted Russia's Defence Ministry as saying its air defences had brought down two Ukrainian drones over Crimea and one over the Tula region south of Moscow.

INTERNATIONAL

Can South Africa's white-led opposition win in 2024?

On April 1, John Steenhuisen was re-elected leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA), South Africa's largest opposition party, in a triennial congress in Midrand, just outside Johannesburg. CRYSTAL ORDERSON writes

IN his speech to 2,000 party members, he made clear the DA's intent to wrestle power away from the governing African National Congress (ANC) in the 2024 national election and to prevent any possible alliance with another rival, the left-wing Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

"During the remaining months before next year's election, the DA will make it our number one priority ... to prevent an ANC-EFF coalition," Steenhuisen said in his speech.

Next year's election is seen as the most important one since the dawn of democracy and the end of apartheid in 1994. Already, there are fears among the ANC faithful that after three decades in power, the party may not garner the necessary 50 percent of votes needed to stay in power.

Africa's most industrialised nation is struggling to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ripple effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A third of the country is unemployed and crime rates have soared, boosting the rise of xenophobic militias which blame immigrants. Rolling power cuts, or load shedding, are now routine for up to six hours daily.

Corruption scandals involving government officials have become a regular affair. Earlier this year, President Cyril Ramaphosa pardoned his predecessor Jacob Zuma who was jailed after refusing to testify about corruption and crony capitalism – which became known as state capture – during his tenure.

The ANC is also facing a pushback as its support base gradually erodes due to a changing demographic. According to data from the Electoral Commission (IEC), there are about 27 million registered voters: approximately 10 million of those are in the age groups of 18-29 and 30-39.

For voters in these age groups, the heroic status of Nelson Mandela, the iconic statesman and first president of post-apartheid era South Africa has taken a knock for his insistence on unity, not justice.

All of this has bolstered the DA to take a shot at unseating the governing party. Steenhuisen says the DA is the government-in-waiting and has a plan to clean up the country.

Still, the ANC's deep grassroots support could make it hard to defeat. Even without any merger, Ramaphosa and the EFF's charismatic leader Julius Malema separately pose a monumental challenge to the DA's inroads into the rural and urban areas.

Born in 2000 after a merger of the parties that were part of white minority rule, the DA describes itself as "broadly centrist". It governs the Western Cape – the third-largest province in the country which in the first quarter of 2022, contributed 14 percent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) – and the City of Cape Town, the legislative capital, which is seen as the best-run



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa interacts with John Steenhuisen, leader of the opposition party Democratic Alliance ahead of National Assembly members'

municipality.

The party is hoping to build on that base to snatch power at the national level in 2024. In parliament, the ANC remains the majority party with 230 of the 400 available seats. The DA has 84 seats, EFF has 44 and 11 other parties share the rest.

Steenhuisen who joined the DA from inception, has been a member of parliament since 2011. He was the party's interim leader from November 2019, having served as the chief whip of the DA in parliament for five years.

His supporters say the 47-year-old is the man to lead the party to victory in the 2024 election. The party's Gauteng province leader, Solly Msimanga, told Al Jazeera that Steenhuisen will "stabilise the party dynamics as we gear ourselves for the 2024 election".

Analysts are divided over whether the DA under Steenhuisen can make a serious mark in next year's election.

"I think the DA is projecting as a bigger player [than] it really is, but at the same time it remains the largest opposition party and has a footprint around the country," said political analyst Daniel Silke.

Levy Ndou, political analyst and politics lecturer at the Tshwane University of Technology, said it was too early to tell whether the party can indeed "defeat the ANC".

Historically, the DA's strongholds have been among the white demographic. An exodus of high-profile Black leaders from the party in the last decade has also hurt its positioning as an inclusive institution in a multicultural nation like South Africa.

Former party leader Mmusi Maimane left in 2019 saying there was a "disagreement about the vision and direction" of the party. Current Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille, previously elected as

Cape Town mayor under its platform, resigned in 2018, saying "when people abuse you, you must walk away".

However, DA leader in Gauteng Solly Msimanga dismissed what he called an "obsession".

"Why is it that when people leave the DA, then it's a Black issue? Our plan is very clear we want to build our own narrative and story, and we want to ensure we are able to carve out our value proposition to the people in SA and this is what matters," he said.

Nevertheless, race still matters heavily in South Africa, where more than a third of the population lives in poverty while most of the wealth is controlled by the white minority.

In South African politics, like many other places, winning an election is also about the numbers.

According to the IEC figures, in 2019, the DA received 20.77 percent of the 2019 vote, a downswing from 2014 when it

garnered 22.23 percent of the vote but an increase from 2009 when it received more than 16 percent of the vote.

But the governing party's support also declined from 62.15 percent in 2014 to 57.50 in 2019. In February, the ANC's internal electoral report predicted that the party's support will drop to 37 percent, keeping the DA at 27 percent and the EFF at 10 percent.

Multiple private polls have also weighed in. One by the market research organisation Ipsos shows that 43 percent of registered voters are likely to vote for the ANC, with the DA polling at only 20 percent.

Another poll released in early October by the think tank Social Research Foundation predicted that the ANC would garner 45 percent of the vote, while the DA would get 31 percent.

"It's a leap of faith for Steenhuisen to project himself as the next president as the DA has been a 20-25 percent party, and I

think we [are] looking at an uncertain 2024 election," Silke said.

Meanwhile, analysts say the DA's talk of a mooted alliance between the ANC and the EFF is a narrative driven by the latter's controversial pro-immigration stance and reallocation of land rights to instil fear among the electorate.

The DA is itself seeking a coalition with many smaller parties, but its history of failed partnerships could hinder its progress in that regard.

In 2016, it ran coalition governments in the major cities of Johannesburg, Tshwane in Gauteng, and the Nelson Mandela Metro in the Eastern Cape. Within three years, these coalitions collapsed and all the DA mayors were kicked out of office. Following the 2021 local government election, the DA again went into coalition with smaller parties to run Johannesburg but failed again.

Given that past, analysts say the DA's path to power remains complicated. The big question now, they add, is how many voters frustrated by the other heavyweights and looking for a new political home, can it attract into the fold?

Even the born-free generation (those born after 1994) will prove tough to convince, despite being disenchanted with the ANC. First-time voter 20-year-old Colby Adonis, a human resources student in Cape Town, is one of those who remain unimpressed by the DA, especially its pro-Zionist stance.

"I think they have a direction for the country, but at the same time they are contradictory; they speak on one thing, then they do another," he told Al Jazeera. "In terms of service delivery, they do a lot for the city of Cape Town and are very efficient but I cannot vote for a party that is supporting what is happening in Israel; innocent children are dying."

05
Has South Africa's ruling party betrayed Mandela's legacy? | Head to Head

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA



Supporters of the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) party cheer at a rally ahead of the November 1 local government elections in Cape Town, South Africa



Nollywood can curb internet crimes

-Kenneth Okonkwo

Kenneth Okonkwo, a Nollywood veteran, landed his breakout role as Andy in the 1992 classic, 'Living in Bondage' About 27 years after, he secured a major role in the movie's sequel which was directed by Ramsey Nouah. The movie premiered at the Filmhouse Cinema in Lagos on Saturday with the cast and crew in attendance. Premium Times interviewed the actor at the occasion. He spoke about his career and the industry



exceptional. So what you have today is a modern form that has those actors that had the depth imparting on the new ones, so this sequel is having the double portion of the anointing of the first living in bondage.

Where was the original version shot?

We shot it in Lagos, Adeshina Street in Surulere and several other locations. During that time we had no scripts so we had to come up with our entire lines ourselves.

For instance, to introduce a scene, the director can say, 'And Andy walked in angrily and spoke to his wife'.

We the actors would now have to develop the dialogue ourselves. It was really tough.

The sequel was shot all over the world.

Are you impressed with the final work?

From day one when I starred in 'Living in Bondage' I made up my mind that I was going to maintain the standard.

Continued on page 26

You starred in the sequel of 'Living in Bondage' 27 years after you featured in the original version. How does this make you feel?

It makes me feel fulfilled, it makes me feel that what I took the decision to enter (Nollywood) 27 years ago, against all odds would turn out this way.

So if 27 years after, the first movie has sustained the tempo and crescendo to the point that the younger generation yearns for a sequel, I feel honoured. The fact that my face still features prominently in the sequel, makes me fulfilled.

Having featured in both movies, what has changed?

Technology-wise, it is like comparing the stone age with the modern age but in terms of artistic perfection, it is almost the same thing.

The depth of acting when we started is actually way better than what is obtainable today because a lot depended on the creativity and dexterity of the actor.

Back in the day, the depth in the acting sold a movie. Remember, there was nothing like a film trick, so, the depth of acting when we started was quite deep.

But in terms of technology, it's



Scandals which shook entertainment industry

September 2021 has already made history as the month with the highest number of scandals in the Nigerian entertainment industry, so far. Literally, every other day in September, a fresh scandal broke just as some were brewing. Nigerians say it was indeed a 'September to remember' in Nigeria's entertainment industry and we could not agree more. The month witnessed a series of drama, clashes, and conflicts amongst Nigerian celebrities with stories of their personal lives, relationships, businesses, and family making headlines on a daily basis. It also raised several concerns on pertinent issues ranging from trust, family, friendship, competition, loyalty, and love. But if there was one Nigerian celebrity who courted controversies all month long, it had to be Tonto Dikeh and her estranged boo, Prince Kpokpogri. The latter was thrust into the limelight after Ms Dikeh unveiled him on the occasion of his birthday on June 27 on her official Instagram page. The short-lived and tumultuous affair came crashing like a pack of badly stacked cards in September amidst messy scandals. As we welcome October, we revisit some of the hottest scandals which kept the media busy and fans entertained in September.

Tonto Dikeh versus Prince Kpokpogri



Controversial Nollywood star, Tonto Dikeh, and her ex-lover, Prince Kpokpogri, dominated the news headlines all through September even though they officially parted ways in July.

Mr Kpokpogri, who is also the chairman of the Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum, described his ex-lover as "Helen of Troy" and claimed their short-lived affair was tumultuous.

"We dated for barely three months and it was more or less a living hell! So much has happened in such little time that I overlooked it for the sake of the so-called relationship and my sanity," Mr Kpokpogri said while reacting to the news of their break-up.

Mr Kpokpogri was thrust into the limelight after Ms Dikeh unveiled him on the occasion of his birthday on 27 June on her official Instagram page. The once happy relationship crashed after a viral voice note and a phone call between Mr Kpokpogri and a socialite was leaked online by a notorious Instagram gossip blogger. Ever since then, the once admirable couple have been locked in a war of words on Instagram.

In the thick of their blossoming romance, Ms Dikeh's fans pleaded with her to take their affair off Instagram and celebrate each other privately. Their pleas fell on deaf ears as Ms Dikeh took the open display of affection on Instagram a notch higher while her fans wished the affair could stand the test of time but little did they know that they would become sworn enemies in no time.

In a petition against Mr Kpokpogri dated September 6 and addressed to the Commissioner of Police, FCT Command, Dikeh through her counsels in Festus Keyamo Chambers, Okechukwu Uju-Azorji, and Arinze Egbo made several shocking revelations.

She accused him of blackmail, extortion, a threat to life, hacking, obtaining by false pretence and cyberstalking, and other unprintable allegations.

Mr Kpokpogri hit back at his ex-lover accusing her of infidelity and drug addiction. The Nigerian gossip mill went into overdrive with reports that the DSS had arrested Mr Kpokpogri but he would later debunk the report and in a matter of days, filed a petition against Ms Dikeh, requesting N10 billion compensation.

Jane Emena's alleged sex tape



Continued on page 26

EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Dealing with autism spectrum disorder

AUTISM spectrum disorder is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, causing problems in social interaction and communication. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behavior. The term "spectrum" in autism spectrum disorder refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity.

Autism spectrum disorder includes conditions that were previously considered separate — autism, Asperger's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder and an unspecified form of pervasive developmental disorder. Some people still use the term "Asperger's syndrome," which is generally thought to be at the mild end of autism spectrum disorder.

Autism spectrum disorder begins in early childhood and eventually causes problems functioning in society — socially, in school and at work, for example. Often children show symptoms of autism within the first year. A small number of children appear to develop normally in the first year, and then go through a period of regression between 18 and 24 months of age when they develop autism symptoms.

While there is no cure for autism spectrum disorder, intensive, early treatment can make a big difference in the lives of many children.

Some children show signs of autism spectrum disorder in early infancy, such as reduced eye contact, lack of response to their name or indifference to caregivers. Other children may develop normally for the first few months or years of life, but then suddenly become withdrawn or aggressive or lose language skills they've already acquired. Signs usually are seen by age 2 years.

Each child with autism spectrum disorder is likely to have a unique pattern of behavior and level of severity — from low functioning to high functioning. Some children with autism spectrum disorder have difficulty learning, and some have signs of lower than normal intelligence. Other children with the disorder have normal to high intelligence — they learn quickly, yet have trouble communicating and applying what they know in everyday life and adjusting to social situations.

Because of the unique mixture of symptoms in each child, severity can sometimes be difficult to determine. It's



generally based on the level of impairments and how they impact the ability to function. Below are some common signs shown by people who have autism spectrum disorder.

Social communication and interaction. A child or adult with autism spectrum disorder may have problems with social interaction and communication skills, including any of these signs:

- Fails to respond to his or her name or appears not to hear you at times. Resists cuddling and holding, and seems to prefer playing alone, retreating into his or her own world. Has poor eye contact and lacks facial expression. Doesn't speak or has delayed speech, or loses previous ability to say words or sentences. Can't start a conversation or keep one going, or only starts one to make requests or label items. Speaks with an abnormal tone or rhythm and may use a singsong voice or

robot-like speech

- Repeats words or phrases verbatim, but doesn't understand how to use them

- Doesn't appear to understand simple questions or directions. Doesn't express emotions or feelings and appears unaware of others' feelings. Doesn't point at or bring objects to share interest. Inappropriately approaches a social interaction by being passive, aggressive or disruptive. Has difficulty recognizing nonverbal cues, such as interpreting other people's facial expressions, body postures or tone of voice.

- There are patterns of behavior. A child or adult with autism spectrum disorder may have limited, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities, including any of these signs: Performs repetitive movements, such as rocking, spinning or hand flapping. Performs activities that

- could cause self-harm, such as biting or head-banging. Develops specific routines or rituals and becomes disturbed at the slightest change

- Has problems with coordination or has odd movement patterns, such as clumsiness or walking on toes, and has odd, stiff or exaggerated body language. Is fascinated by details of an object, such as the spinning wheels of a toy car, but doesn't understand the overall purpose or function of the object.

- Is unusually sensitive to light, sound or touch, yet may be indifferent to pain or temperature. Doesn't engage in imitative or make-believe play

- Fixates on an object or activity with abnormal intensity or focus. Has specific food preferences, such as eating only a few foods, or refusing foods with a certain texture. As they mature, some children with autism spectrum disorder become more engaged with others and show fewer disturbances in behavior. Some, usually those with the least severe problems, eventually may lead normal or near-normal lives. Others, however, continue to have difficulty with language or social skills, and the teen years can bring worse behavioral and emotional problems.

When do you see a doctor? Babies develop at their own pace, and many don't follow exact timelines found in some parenting books. But children with autism spectrum disorder usually show some signs of delayed development before age 2 years.

If you're concerned about your child's development or you suspect that your child may have autism spectrum disorder, discuss your concerns with your doctor. The symptoms associated with the disorder can also be linked with other developmental disorders.

Signs of autism spectrum disorder often appear early in development when there are obvious delays in language skills and social interactions. Your doctor may recommend developmental tests to identify if your child has delays in cognitive, language and social skills, if your child:

- Doesn't respond with a smile or happy expression by 6 months.
- Doesn't mimic sounds or facial expressions by 9 months.
- Doesn't babble or coo by 12 months.
- Doesn't gesture — such as point or wave — by 14 months.
- Doesn't say single words by 16 months.
- Doesn't play "make-believe" or pretend by 18 months
- Doesn't say two-word phrases by 24

months

- Loses language skills or social skills at any age.

Autism spectrum disorder has no single known cause. Given the complexity of the disorder, and the fact that symptoms and severity vary, there are probably many causes. Both genetics and environment may play a role.

There are many causes. Genetics. Several different genes appear to be involved in autism spectrum disorder. For some children, autism spectrum disorder can be associated with a genetic disorder, such as Rett syndrome or fragile X syndrome. For other children, genetic changes (mutations) may increase the risk of autism spectrum disorder. Still other genes may affect brain development or the way that brain cells communicate, or they may determine the severity of symptoms. Some genetic mutations seem to be inherited, while others occur spontaneously.

Environmental factors. Researchers are currently exploring whether factors such as viral infections, medications or complications during pregnancy, or air pollutants play a role in triggering autism spectrum disorder.

No link between vaccines and autism spectrum disorder

One of the greatest controversies in autism spectrum disorder centers on whether a link exists between the disorder and childhood vaccines. Despite extensive research, no reliable study has shown a link between autism spectrum disorder and any vaccines. In fact, the original study that ignited the debate years ago has been retracted due to poor design and questionable research methods.

Avoiding childhood vaccinations can place your child and others in danger of catching and spreading serious diseases, including whooping cough (pertussis), measles or mumps.

There are risk factors. The number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder is rising. It's not clear whether this is due to better detection and reporting or a real increase in the number of cases, or both. Autism spectrum disorder affects children of all races and nationalities, but certain factors increase a child's risk. These may include:

- Your child's sex. Boys are about four times more likely to develop autism spectrum disorder than girls are.

- Family history. Families who have one child with autism spectrum disorder have an increased risk of having another child with the disorder. It's also not uncommon for parents or relatives of a child with autism spectrum disorder to have minor problems with social or communication skills themselves or to engage in certain behaviors typical of the disorder.

- Other disorders. Children with certain medical conditions have a higher than normal risk of autism spectrum disorder or autism-like symptoms. Examples include fragile X syndrome, an inherited disorder that causes intellectual problems; tuberous sclerosis, a condition in which benign tumors develop in the brain; and Rett syndrome, a genetic condition occurring almost exclusively in girls, which causes slowing of head growth, intellectual disability and loss of purposeful hand use.

- Extremely preterm babies. Babies born before 26 weeks of gestation may have a greater risk of autism spectrum disorder.

- Parents' ages. There may be a connection between children born to older parents and autism spectrum disorder, but more research is necessary to establish this link.

Complications

Problems with social interactions, communication and behavior can lead to: Problems in school and with successful learning, employment problems, inability to live independently, social isolation, stress within the family, victimization and being bullied.

There's no way to prevent autism spectrum disorder, but there are treatment options. Early diagnosis and intervention is most helpful and can improve behavior, skills and language development. However, intervention is helpful at any age. Though children usually don't outgrow autism spectrum disorder symptoms, they may learn to function well.



THE SLOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Recipes

Delightful weekend doughnut



DECADENTLY glazed with rich, dark chocolate or simply dusted with cinnamon-sugar, doughnuts always make your day better. So why not whip up a batch once in a while?

Here are some doughnuts recipe courtesy Food Network Kitchen.

Kitchen's 3-Ingredient nutella doughnuts.

3-ingredient Nutella Doughnuts
 Level: Easy
 Yield: 6 doughnuts
 Nutrition Info
 Total: 1 hr (includes cooling and setting time)
 Active: 15 min

This sweet treat cannot be beat. In just an hour you can have homemade doughnuts using only three simple ingredients—and no deep-frying required ...

Show More
 Ingredients
 1 cup chocolate-hazelnut spread, such as Nutella
 4 large eggs
 2 cups all-purpose flour (see Cook's Note), plus more for dusting

Directions
 Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment.

Whisk 3/4 cup of the Nutella and 1 of the eggs together in a large bowl until smooth. Fold in the flour until combined. Turn the dough out onto a generously floured surface and press into a 6-by-8-inch rectangle. Use a 3-inch round cutter to stamp out 6 doughnuts, rerolling the scraps as needed. Use a 1-inch round cutter to cut a hole in the center of each round, then place doughnuts and holes onto the prepared baking sheet. Beat the remaining egg with 1 tablespoon water in a small bowl. Brush the tops of the doughnuts and holes with the egg wash.

Bake until a toothpick inserted

into the center of a doughnut comes out clean, about 10 minutes. Let cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely, about 15 minutes. Microwave the remaining 1/4 cup Nutella in a small microwave-safe bowl just to loosen it, about 30 seconds. Dip the tops of the doughnuts and holes in the Nutella and swirl to completely coat. Place back, coated-sides up, onto the wire rack and let sit until set, about 15 minutes.

Cook's Note
 When measuring flour, we spoon it into a dry measuring cup and level off excess. (Scooping directly from the bag compacts the flour, resulting in dry baked goods.)

The best old-fashioned doughnuts

Level: Intermediate
 Yield: 8 doughnuts and 8 holes
 Nutrition Info
 Total: 1 hr 30 min
 Active: 1 hr

We spent a lot of time perfecting this doughnut. We wanted a cakey and light texture that wasn't greasy—and we achieved it! The classic craggy ...

Ingredients
 2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting (see Cook's Note)
 1/2 cup granulated sugar
 1 tablespoon baking powder
 1 1/4 teaspoons plus 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
 1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
 2/3 cup plus 6 tablespoons buttermilk
 1/2 cup sour cream
 1 large egg and 1 egg yolk, beaten to blend
 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon vanilla paste
 3 tablespoons vegetable oil, plus

more for frying
 2 cups confectioners' sugar
Directions
 Special equipment: 3 1/4-inch round cutter and 1 1/4-inch round cutter

Whisk together the flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, 1 1/4 teaspoons of the salt and the nutmeg in a large bowl until completely combined. Whisk together 2/3 cup of the buttermilk, the sour cream, eggs, yolks, 1 tablespoon of the vanilla paste and the oil in a medium bowl until completely combined. Fold the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients just until a soft and sticky dough comes together (do not overwork).

Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and liberally

dust with flour (about 1/3 cup).

Scrape the dough onto the prepared baking sheet. Dust your hands and the top of the dough with more flour, then gently pat the dough to 3/4-inch thick.

Working on the baking sheet, punch out as many rounds as you can with a 3 1/4-inch cutter. Then use a 1 1/4-inch cutter to punch out the center of each round.

Dip the cutters in flour before each cut to avoid sticking. Gather the dough scraps and gently re-roll without overworking the dough. Repeat cutting until all the dough has been used (you should have 8 doughnuts).

Set a wire rack inside a rimmed baking sheet and line a second rimmed baking sheet with several layers of paper towels. Fit a large heavy pot with a deep-fry thermometer and pour in oil to a depth of 3 inches. Heat over medium-high until the thermometer registers 375 degrees F.

Fry the doughnuts in batches until deep golden brown, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to the wire rack and let cool slightly. Fry the doughnut holes until deep golden brown, about 90 seconds per side. Transfer to the wire rack and let drain for 1 minute.

Then transfer to the paper-towel lined baking sheet to cool for 10 minutes before glazing. (This two-step process gets a lot more oil out of the doughnuts than using only one method.) Repeat with the remaining dough, making sure the oil returns to temperature between batches.

Whisk together the confectioners' sugar, the remaining 6 tablespoons buttermilk, the remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla paste and 1/8 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl until the glaze is smooth and the consistency of honey; add more confectioners' sugar or buttermilk if necessary.

Dip each doughnut into the glaze on one side (we like the craggy side, it has more texture for an appetizing appearance), letting the excess drip back into the bowl, then return it to the wire rack. Toss the doughnut holes in the glaze to coat completely and return to the wire rack. Let the glaze set for 10 minutes before serving.

Cook's note
 When measuring flour, we spoon it into a dry measuring cup and level off excess. (Scooping directly from the bag compacts the flour, resulting in dry baked goods.)



Doughnuts



Reality Bites

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Health benefits of mint

DID you know there's much more to mint than you may think? Commonly found in foods such as chewing gum and toothpaste, mint is a species of plant belonging to the genus *Mentha*. In fact, there are a variety of different types of mint, such as spearmint and peppermint, each with their own uses and benefits. Mint can be enjoyed in aromatic teas, delicious desserts and refreshing drinks – like our Virgin Mojito Kombucha, which contains natural mint flavour in addition to organic mint leaves and cold pressed juice!

So, the real question is: does mint have any health benefits? In short, the answer is yes! There are a wide range of health benefits of mint, from improved brain function to digestive health. Better yet, opt for organic and enjoy all these benefits without the chemical residue or environmental burden, or mix your mint with other health-boosting foods. How about that? Drinking a fruity mojito and reaping all the health benefits of kombucha and mint? What a win!

We'll run you through some of the incredible health benefits of mint in more detail, as outlined in kambucha.com. Mint is filled with nutrients, improves digestive health, boosts your immune system, better brain function, supports your pregnancy, reduce cold symptoms, keeps your mouth healthy, helps manage stress, improves allergy symptoms, soothes irritated skin.

Mint is filled with nutrients and contains a number of different nutrients, such as:

Fibre – maintains a healthy bowel. Vitamin A – improves eye health and prevents cardiovascular disease, Vitamin C – supports immune system and tissue repair Calcium – maintain strong bones

Iron – supports healthy blood Folate – necessary for producing red and white blood cells

Manganese – beneficial for brain and nerve function

Mint is also a fantastic source of antioxidants, which helps protect your body from oxidative stress caused by free radicals. Oxidative stress can lead to fatigue, memory loss, joint pain, headaches and more unpleasant symptoms.

Another amazing benefit of mint is that it can help improve your digestive health, and even relieve some of the symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). Peppermint oil in particular has been known to alleviate IBS symptoms, since it contains menthol which can relax the muscle in your digestive system. In turn, this can help improve digestion and reduce stomach



pain.

Did you know that kombucha can also help reduce the symptoms of IBS?

Mint boosts your immune system.

As touched upon briefly, mint contains antioxidants that help against free radical damage and have a huge impact on your immune system. Maintaining a strong immune system is essential for overall good health and preventing a multitude of illnesses. In addition mint, can also boost your immune system and promote good health throughout the body.

Mint causes better brain function. Mint has been known to have a positive effect on brain function, helping increase alertness and memory capabilities, as well as prevent mental fatigue. These types of benefits of mints are typically obtained through inhaling the plant's essential oils, rather than from consumption. It also supports pregnancy.

Another lesser-known benefit of mint is that it can be used to support your pregnancy and help make breastfeeding less painful. Yes, you read that right! A natural cure for breastfeeding pain – hallelujah! Some new mothers apply mint to the skin, in the form of an essential oil or peppermint gel to relieve

breastfeeding pain and prevent skin cracking.

Some people also choose to chew mint as a way to prevent pregnancy nausea, and combat pregnancy anxiety.

Although many swear by these remedies, we recommend checking with your doctors before changing your diet, taking new medications or supplements, especially when pregnant or breastfeeding.

It reduces cold symptoms. The common cold is caused by a virus, which means mint cannot cure your cold, but it can certainly help relieve the symptoms. Studies reveal that mint can help improve nasal breathing, helping you decongest your sinuses and get you through the worst of your cold. Why not try a cosy cup of mint tea to warm you up as well? It also keeps your mouth healthy.

Mint is proven to mask bad breath, making it a great ingredient to flavour toothpaste, mouthwash and gum. And, while these products only mask the smell, chewing real mint leaves or drinking mint tea will actually kill the bad-smelling bacteria at the source and neutralise the smell. In fact, mint has strong antibacterial properties, peppermint in particular, and can be great for relieving mouth

ulcers, too.

Mint helps to manage stress. Research suggests that mint can help combat feelings of frustration, fatigue and anxiety. Some studies even suggest that the aroma of mint calms your nerves, which means simply eating a peppermint sweet or diffusing mint oils in the air can do the trick. Studies also suggest that peppermint can reduce blood pressure and prevent hypertension.

Mint improves allergy symptoms. Mint can help reduce the symptoms associated with dust allergies and asthma due to its anti-inflammatory properties. It contains an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent called rosmarinic acid that has anti-allergenic effects. So, next time you're feeling the wrath of pollen, reach for some peppermint!

It soothes irritated skin. Salicylic acid and Vitamin A have become extremely popular in the world of skincare, with many social media skin-care gurus preaching their cleansing properties. Mint products can

make a great addition to your skincare routine since it contains antibacterial properties, salicylic acid and Vitamin A, which are all beneficial for acne-prone or irritated skin. There are a variety of products on the market that contain mint and are known to unclog pores, reduce redness and break down pimples.

Similarly, containing high amounts of carotene and antioxidants, mint also does wonders for your hair. As such, mint is beneficial for treating dandruff and other scalp conditions. All that being said, it's important to note that pure menthol is not good for your health, whether that's inhaling it, consuming it or applying it to your skin!

Is mint good for you? Absolutely! Mint is a fantastic source of vitamins and minerals, and makes a healthy addition to your diet. Incorporating mint into your daily routine may not be for everyone, but don't let that get in the way of enjoying the benefits of mint. Not a fan of peppermint tea? Hate the taste of minty sweets?



EVERYONE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Parenting

Simple manners to teach your child

By **DAVID LOWRY**

DO you need a proper etiquette refresher? Helping your child master this list of good manners will get them noticed—for all the right reasons.

Your child's bad manners aren't always intentional. Sometimes kids don't realize it's impolite to interrupt, pick their nose, or loudly observe something about a stranger's appearance. They might also simply need an etiquette reminder or help managing their impulses.

What's a busy parent to do? Focus on teaching these 22 good manners to your little one—preferably before they turn 9 years old. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says it's also important to model this good behavior to your child, who learns by watching everyone around them.

When teaching good manners, give clear explanations using age-appropriate language, and offer consistent reminders. Don't forget to mimic the manners in your everyday life too! Proper etiquette doesn't always come instinctually to kids. By instilling these good manners, you'll end up with a thoughtful and polite child who gets recognized for the right reasons.

Say Please. Teach your child that it's polite to say "please" when asking for something. You can model this good behavior by saying "please" when you make a request of your child. For example, "Please pick up your toys before turning on the TV." Say "Thank You". Likewise, when receiving something—whether it's a physical thing or an intangible one, like help or a compliment—your kids should express gratitude by saying "thank you." Again, modeling these good manners will go a long way. When your child picks up their toys, enthusiastically thank them for being a big helper.

Wait your turn. Learning to take turns in conversation, without interruption, can be difficult for young children. Develop this skill by explaining why taking turns is important: It allows everyone to be heard equally. Also, kids should understand that sometimes it's OK to interrupt adults, like when there's an emergency. Otherwise, they should wait for a pause in the conversation before interjecting. Say "Excuse Me". Sometimes your child will need to interrupt you. They might have a bathroom emergency, for example, or their sibling fell and got hurt. In these cases, the phrase "excuse me" is the most polite way to enter the conversation.

Ask Permission. Teach your child to ask permission when they have any doubt about doing something. You may also have standing rules about situations



that require permission, like answering the door, downloading an app, or making a purchase. These manners can save you from many hours of grief later!

Don't remark on appearance. Kids tend to be masters of blurting out inappropriate comments and observations. They're not trying to be mean; they just haven't developed the social skills to avoid saying what they think. Curb uncomfortable moments by instilling one fundamental rule: Do not comment on other people's physical characteristics.

Reciprocate Greetings
Explain to your child how customary greetings work. For example, when someone asks how you are, give your response, and then reciprocate by asking how they are. Express Gratitude. Teach your kid when to express gratitude to others. For example, after spending time at their friend's house, they should thank their friend and their friends' parents for having them over. They'll be impressed by your child's good manners!

Knock on closed doors. Doors are for privacy, so if a door is closed, your child should knock before entering. But it's not enough to knock and barge right in! Rather, the next step is waiting to see if there's a response, then get permission before entering.

Introduce yourself.
Phone etiquette is also important for kids. Teach them to introduce themselves after placing a call, then ask to speak with the person they're trying to reach.

Be a respectful child.
Send Thank-You cards
If your child receives a gift, tell them it's important to be appreciative and say "thank you." A lost art that younger kids might

enjoy is making a thank-you card (or if they don't prefer artistic expression, sending a thank-you email). Don't use foul language. Uh oh, has your kid picked up on some colorful language? Don't worry; it happens to the best of us. Teach kids not to use foul or impolite language by cleaning up your own words. From there, explain that everyone tolerates cuss words differently, so to be respectful, it's best not to use them in public.

Don't call names
You've probably have heard the adage, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," but we all know that's not true. Most kids can recall a time when mean names hurt their feelings. Draw on their empathy by explaining their words can also hurt their friends, and they should never call people mean names.

Don't tease. Just like mean

names, teasing can also lead to or hurt feelings. Proper etiquette involves not making fun of anyone

Hold the door. It's polite to hold the door for other people. The hope is that, whenever your child walks through a door, they'll look around to see if they can hold it open for someone else.

Offer to help. Let your kids know that it's courteous to help people out, whether it's a parent, a teacher, or a neighbor working on a project. When they see someone struggling—perhaps a friend whose arms are overloaded with books—they should offer to give them a hand.

Say 'Pardon Me'.
Sometimes we bump into people. It's fine if accidents happen, but your child should acknowledge their mistake by saying "pardon me."

Practice Positive discipline at home.

Don't spread germs.
Germs can spread through air or touch. When kids understand how to practice good hygiene, they decrease their chances of getting sick and avoid spreading illness to others—and that's a good manner in itself! Teach kids to wash their hands after using the bathroom, cover their mouth when they cough

Do tasks without grumbling.
It's not always easy to do chores when you don't feel like it—even if you're an adult. But negativity can make matters worse, so even when your child feels grumpy about their tasks, they should try their best to complete them without grumbling.

Use eating utensils properly.
One important table manner for kids is using eating utensils properly. Kids often learn this manner through observation, but sometimes, they have trouble incorporating the skills because they adapted their own way of holding forks and spoons when they didn't have the dexterity for big-kid table manners. It's never a bad idea to share a refresher on the proper etiquette!

Use a napkin. Another key table manner is keeping a napkin handy on your lap. Your child can use it—instead of their sleeve—to wipe their mouth when necessary. Pass dishes at the table.

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One last essential table manner to teach: Don't reach for things at the table. Instead, ask to have them passed. Passing dishes not only limits bumping elbows, but it also reduces the likelihood of spilling!



Teach children how to show respect

BUSINESS WORLD

Nigeria's transport sector and electric vehicles transition

The climate crisis is forcing global powers to reduce their contributions to the degradation of our planet, but the challenge looks quite different in Nigeria: our transportation policy is primarily focused on improving mobility access for people and goods. As we are heavily reliant on imports from global manufacturers, and global priorities are shifting away from ours, we need to create bespoke solutions to ensure the survival of our transport sector, writes LAOLU ADEOLA.



BY harnessing granular data around local demand, and collaboration between financial institutions and industry stakeholders, there is potential to boost the local industry, making Nigeria a key player in the mobility market across the region

Global context

The transportation sector produces almost a quarter of emissions that have contributed to recent climate disasters. Since most transportation is powered by fossil fuels, which use internal combustion engines (ICE) –, efforts to lower the collective emissions from these vehicles will go a long way to reduce transportation-related emissions.

To that end, Electric Vehicles (EVs) are the current global favourite on the path to achieving climate-positive goals, as they achieve zero tailpipe emissions, and their costs are dropping rapidly. EVs crossed the 10% threshold of new vehicle sales globally last year, moving from their 'early adopter' phase to 'mass adoption'.

Implications for Nigeria

Nigeria's National Policy on

Climate Change does not mandate a zero emissions future but aims to bring down overall emissions at a reasonable pace. At the same time, the global value of used combustion vehicles is likely to fall as more manufacturers electrify, making them more accessible to Nigeria's overflowing demand. However, this means that the lag between our local market conditions and the ones for which global auto manufacturers plan will continue to expand. And, as supply from that market dwindles, the used-car market for both vehicles and spare parts will shrink, unless Nigeria is able to chart a course that allows it to take advantage of that gap.

Data, access to finance & the industry's untapped potential

Even though Nigeria's transport sector barely contributed .5% to the country's GDP in the second quarter of 2023, at around ₦160 billion, this figure should be over five times larger (closer to ₦1 trillion) using conservative estimates based on assumptions around the travelling population, daily spend, and number of travel days. However, there has not been enough robust reported data to back this up – until now. Pioneering entrepreneurs have

been able to generate bespoke pools of high-fidelity mobility data which can be leveraged to build a self-sufficient, sustainable and financially rewarding transportation ecosystem for the local economy, through intentionally fostered partnerships between policymakers, financial institutions, and industry players:

- Kobo360 has been able to connect truck owners with producers and distributors for long-haul trips and is using the data from this to provide working capital, asset financing, diesel discounts, and discounts on auto parts to registered truck owners and drivers.

- Max. ng offers a range of services such as bike-hailing, delivery, e-commerce, electric vehicles, and financial services. They claim to have empowered 21,000 champions with financial inclusion and have also introduced electric vehicles into their portfolio.

- Mecho Auto has grown from being a vehicle repair and maintenance company serving fleets, to include a focus on leveraging data from its customers to collate demand for spare parts across the sector, turning them into a spare parts

distributor.

- Moove has been democratizing vehicle ownership by providing revenue-based vehicle financing due to limited access from traditional financial institutions. They claim to have created close to 9,000 jobs for their customers in 2022.

- Shuttlers enables affordable and accessible transportation services, reducing carbon emissions and creating jobs. They've effectively built the infrastructure to empower mass transit and fleet owners while reducing emissions and congestion.

- Touch and Pay (TAP) have introduced Cowry & Omituntun cards used widely for public transport in Lagos and Ibadan respectively, making fare payments as easy as the tap of a card. More than removing the hassle of calculating change, it has also created a pool of data that allows bus owners to predict demand.

Recommendations for policymakers, financial institutions & mobility companies

Policymakers need to collaborate with industry leaders to increase local production. Companies like Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing are already proving local capabilities despite

the tough environment, and more of this should be incentivized. Financial institutions should create specialized products for this sector, backed up by proven demand data, allowing for more uptime and revenue for mobility businesses.

Finally, mobility companies should continue to stay laser-focused on fine-tuning their operations. The more surgical they can become in executing against their vision, the more they will create value for their stakeholders.

Conclusion

The energy mobility transition is changing the face of the transportation sector, and the next 5 to 10 years will be crucial for Nigeria. By harnessing granular data around local demand, and collaboration between financial institutions and industry stakeholders, there is potential to boost the local industry, making Nigeria a key player in the mobility market across the region.

Adeola is founder, Leke Services, a consultancy that partners with leaders to improve performance margins by helping to instil operational discipline.

BUSINESS WORLD

FG to spend N7.76tn on salaries, others

THE Federal Government's recently agreed wage with the Labour Congress, salaries to federal workers, and other non-debt recurrent costs are expected to gulp N7.76tn in 2023.

This is based on data from the initial 2023 budget and recently signed 2023 supplementary budget. The country's central government recently approved a N2.18tn budget to augment new expenses, including an agreed wage reward for workers due to the removal of fuel subsidy.

When the budget was announced, the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Abubakar Bagudu, noted that N605bn has been earmarked for national defense, while N210bn will cover the payment of wage awards.

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

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

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

According to appropriation details from the budget office, N1.01tn of the total budget is for recurrent expenditure with N1.17tn pegged for capital expenditure. The supplementary budget is set to



Bagudu

increase the total non-debt recurrent expenditure of the Federal Government to N7.76tn and capital expenditure to N4.53tn.

The supplementary budget is also set to increase the total budget for 2023 to N19.81tn. When debt servicing is removed, the budget totals N13.26tn. Of the N7.76tn budgeted for recurrent expenditure, at least N4.31tn (55.54 per cent) will be spent on salaries. So far, the

government has spent N978.10bn on salaries in the first three months of 2023, based on the 2023 Q1 implementation report.

It has spent N1.24tn on non-debt recurrent expenditure and N175.45bn on capital expenditure. So far, the government has borrowed N2.30tn to finance its budget, and before signing its supplementary budget, it predicted that fiscal deficit for the year would be N9.01tn.

FG records N15.7trn revenue shortfall in eight years

THE federal government recorded a revenue shortfall of N15.7 trillion in the last eight years, according to data compiled recently.

The recently published 2024-2026 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and Fiscal Strategy Paper (FSP) showed Africa's biggest oil-producing country has struggled to meet its revenue target of N52 trillion in eight years, creating a shortfall of N15.7 trillion as at June 2023.

"All the government programmes to increase

revenue have failed, except for growing 'independent revenue' from Federal Government-owned agencies," Seun Smith, a public finance analyst, said. "Even if the new tax reform committee is relatively successful, I expect it will take a few years to show results."

A further breakdown showed that in the first six months of 2023, the federal government projected N6.44 trillion as revenue to fund its budget but made only N5.19 trillion (80 percent of expected revenue).

"At a time of existential economic crisis, headlined by

THE Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas Company Limited (NLNG) has denied responsibility for the recent price hike in the country's cooking gas.

In a statement, NLNG's General Manager, External Relations, Andy Odeh, described media reports insinuating that the company had increased its prices as "speculative and indicative of a fundamental misunderstanding of Nigeria's intricate market dynamics."

Odeh explained that the price of cooking gas in the domestic market depends on several factors, including the forces of supply and demand and external factors, such as changes in exchange rates and the skyrocketing price benchmarks linked to crude oil prices.

He also pointed to the Panama Canal drought-induced vessel scarcity, which has recently affected energy prices and has cost implications for imported LPG.

Odeh added that NLNG has remained committed to delivering domestic LPG to locations as close to the market as possible by diversifying delivery points starting with Lagos in 2023, fostering competition among terminal owners and ultimately reducing

Cooking gas: NLNG faults market forces, external factors

consumer supply chain costs.

NLNG also promised to collaborate with relevant industry stakeholders to ensure the reliable supply of its LPG production to the domestic market at prices that reflect the market.

Analysts have said that several other factors may be contributing to the high price of cooking gas in Nigeria, including:

Increased demand: As the

Nigerian economy grows, so too does the demand for cooking gas.

Infrastructure constraints: Nigeria's LPG infrastructure is still underdeveloped, which can make it difficult and expensive to transport and distribute the product.

Government policies: Some government policies, such as import duties and taxes, may also be contributing to the high price of cooking gas.



Odeh

Expert laments N5trn annual loss on perishable products

AN expert in agribusiness, Dr Peter Anyim, has expressed worry over the state of agriculture in Nigeria as the sector remains an unfulfilled potential in the country.

He said the annual post-harvest loss of 5 trillion naira on perishable products which is due to the poor management of agribusiness in the country is not sustainable.

Speaking at the 2023 Institute of Business Development (IBD) Annual Conference and Awards held in Abuja recently, Dr Anyim said there are substantial opportunities in Nigeria for investors and entrepreneurs to harness the full potential of Nigeria's agricultural productivity.

Speaking at the 7th edition of the Dialogue with the theme, "Analysing Market Trends and Opportunities for Agribusiness in Nigeria," Dr. Anyim said that the agricultural potential of

Nigeria is enormous and yet Nigeria remains a net importer of food ranging from major staples such as cereals and root crops, livestock and dairy products, fruits and vegetables etc.

"It is on record that about two years ago, between January and March 2021, agriculture contributed to 22.35% of the total Gross Domestic Product and over 70% of Nigerians engage in the agriculture sector mainly at a subsistence level," he said. He stated that Nigeria remains the best place to invest given its 71 million hectares of cultivatable and arable farmland, which, according to him, only 33 million are currently cultivated and usually on subsistent basis.

Noting that commercial agriculture is still a far cry, he said: "Out of the 71 million hectares, 3.14 million hectares are irrigable land and only

about 220,000 hectares representing 7% is currently being utilised.

"Also, the annual post-harvest losses of perishable agriproducts translate to over five trillion naira which is about 60% of the products," he added.

He also mentioned that agriculture has remained the largest and critical component of the nation's economy, providing livelihoods for millions of Nigerians and contributing 24% to the GDP thereby creating employment for 36% of the country's labour force.

Dr. Anyim explained how the expected growth in population with the estimated 300 million by 2050 - making it the third most populous country globally - may affect the demand for food and agricultural products.

He advised that as the nation faces the dual challenges of a rapidly growing population and

increasing urbanisation, it is imperative to analyse the market trends and opportunities that exist within the agribusiness sector so as to inspire and attract investors, ensure food security, create jobs, and grow the economy.

"However, the government has implemented several initiatives and programmes over the years to address the situation, some of which include; the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), the Anchor Borrowers Programme and the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP).

"All these efforts were made to increase agricultural productivity in order to provide sufficient quantities of food to meet domestic demand as well as an abundance of commodity crops for export in the international market, to create enabling environment for investors and agribusinesses, increase funds, provide

N6.64 trillion while actual revenue was N4.64 trillion. In 2020, there was a shortfall of N1.8 trillion as the government's projected revenue was N5.84 trillion, but actual revenue amounted to N4.04 trillion.

In 2019, revenue projection was N6.99 trillion and realised revenue was N4.12 trillion, creating a shortfall of N2.87 trillion. In 2018, revenue projection was N7.17 trillion, while the government realised N3.87 trillion.

In 2017, the revenue projection was N5.08 trillion while revenue realised was N2.66 trillion; in 2016, the federal government's projected revenue was N3.86 trillion, but it realised only N2.95 trillion.

"In one glance, I hear the government demanding the people to make sacrifice; in another glance, I see the lifestyle of public officials, in the cost of governance, in the 25-car convoy, or the contingency travel," said Oluseun Onigbinde, co-founder of BudgIT, a civic organisation focused on strengthening civic engagement and institutional accountability.

"You can't have people struggle and those in public office enjoying themselves; that perception has to be clear," he added.

Other analysts questioned why the federal government continued to allocate scarce resources to more Sport Utility Vehicles and renovation of presidential residences when more than half of its population are living in abject poverty.

"Fuel subsidies had to go for

Nigeria's economy to survive. Having done it, what's the sacrifice for our political elite? The cost of governance is too high," Kingsley Moghalu, founder and president of IGET and a former deputy governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, said on X.

Further findings from the MTEF and FSP showed Nigeria's capital importation for three consecutive years declined from an annual level of \$16.812 billion in 2018 to \$5.32 billion in 2022.

As shown in the document, quarterly capital importation also declined by 51.51 percent from \$2.187 billion recorded in the fourth quarter of 2021 to \$1.06 billion in Q4 2022.

According to the report, trade deficits, loans, and currency deposits represented the largest component of capital importation in 2022, accounting for 65.17 percent (\$691.23 million) of total capital importation in Q4 2022.

This is followed by foreign portfolio investment (26.89 percent or \$285.26 million) and foreign direct investment (7.94 percent or \$84.23 million).

Lekan Ademola, a Lagos-based asset manager, said Nigeria is living above its means with the struggling FDI and rising revenue shortfall.

Agora Policy identified inflation of contract costs, absence of procurement plans, poor project prioritisation, poor budgeting processes, lack of competition and manipulations of procurements in Nigeria's contract award processes.

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Adopting cloud technology for business survival

In recent years, the global economy has faced and continues to face numerous challenges, including a pandemic, war, climate change, and inflation. Businesses have had to adapt and find new ways of working to tackle these challenges. Nigeria is no exception. KEHINDE OGUNDARE writes.



ACCORDING to the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria, the annual inflation rate accelerated to 24.08% in July 2023, the highest since September 2005. This has affected everything from electricity tariffs to transportation, all crucial to the performance of Nigerian enterprises.

Fortunately, by adopting the right technologies and using them the right way, enterprises can ensure that they're in the best possible position to tackle these challenges head-on. Technology does not only enable enterprises to cut costs, find efficiencies, and unlock higher productivity levels; it also allows them to engage with customers better and find new avenues for growth.

Hybrid work model backed by robust collaboration tools as a means to cut costs

Embracing remote and hybrid work models can exponentially decrease the costs associated with maintaining an office space. Think of a reduction in the costs of diesel or fuel, WiFi, office leases, facility

management, and so on. Collaboration and communication tools have also substantially evolved to support distributed workforces, helping enterprise teams stay connected from afar and sustain efficiency and productivity. Video conferencing, project management, and various collaboration tools help ensure that team members can work together regardless of their physical location.

Remote and hybrid work can also make it easier to expand into new regions. There are, for example, companies in Nigeria that now work with team members in Kenya, South Africa, and other parts of the world with ease.

Embracing cloud-based storage

Another factor to consider is the ability to work and save more information to the cloud, eliminating the need for excess paperwork and large machinery that often leads to extensive hardware maintenance. Moving paperwork like payroll processing, salary disbursement, customer records, and support inquiries to the cloud opens up further potential to analyse available data and automate repetitive

tasks where necessary. This can significantly reduce the manual labour of data entry for staff, thereby making them more efficient and productive. The cost benefits that emerge from cloud-based storage and software are numerous, ranging from reduction in material (like paper) costs, cost savings from clearing up office space, and cost optimisation by proper resource utilisation towards important tasks rather than monotonous labour.

Understanding what the customer wants

Most businesses also deal with retail and distribution in one form or another. As such, there is a need for businesses to maximise their online presence to reach out to target audiences and have access to a wider customer base while

reducing the costs and labour associated with physical marketing. Data analytics and similar tech tools can help determine the level of attention that a campaign or product is getting and what type of audience demographic is engaging with it. Analytical tools will further help track relevant information and lead to better decision-making as well as allocation of resources.

From customer relationship management to energy efficiency, and improved cybersecurity to financial management, cloud technology has played a huge role in establishing a better work environment, and it is definitely the way to go in today's business world. Cloud technology vendors have also adapted and modernised their

offerings across multiple business areas to suit today's landscape and help companies scale and improve efficiency. Zoho, for instance, has over 55 products as part of its cloud portfolio, which caters to an array of business needs from sales, marketing, and business intelligence to employee collaboration, HR, and finance.

To implement these technologies successfully, Nigerian enterprises should additionally consider conducting a thorough cost-benefit analysis, investing in training employees, and ensuring that their IT infrastructure is secure and well-maintained. These are equally crucial for achieving long-term competitiveness and cost optimisation through technology.

"Another factor to consider is the ability to work and save more information to the cloud, eliminating the need for excess paperwork and large machinery that often leads to extensive hardware maintenance. Moving paperwork like payroll processing, salary disbursement, customer records, and support inquiries to the cloud opens up further potential to analyse available data and automate repetitive tasks where necessary. This can significantly reduce the manual labour of data entry for staff, thereby making them more efficient and productive. The cost benefits that emerge from cloud-based storage and software are numerous, ranging from reduction in material (like paper) costs, cost savings from clearing up office space, and cost optimisation by proper resource utilisation towards important tasks rather than monotonous labour."



Nollywood can curb internet crimes

-Kenneth Okonkwo

Continued from page 18

I read all my scripts before taking up the role. When they came up with this sequel, the script took the producers about three years to write.

They kept rewriting it and I was involved in the entire process from the beginning until they came up with a fantastic script.

Are you earning any royalties from the movie?

These guys (the producers) are brilliant, they made me earn royalty from it and I had that ownership, no matter how small the royalty is.

Where there any major deviation from the original version?

Not really, because this sequel is a continuation and recreation of the first part. We simply recreated the original 'Living in Bondage' which has kept everyone captivated from the beginning to the end.

So, we are now watching in a new way, what was done in the 20th century, speaking about the same thing, passing the same message but in a different container.

This time around, content is able to generate the same interest with a double portion.

Will there still be a third part?

When we shot the first one, I never knew there would be a sequel to it, so when we see the Almighty God we will ask him.

What is your assessment of this sequel?

When I was watching the film with the journalists, the confrontation scene between



Ramsey Nouah and I drew the greatest applause.

This meant that everybody who watched the film was captivated. That shows you the depth of that movie, no one stood up.

When we shot the original version, the script came like a story, every scene was not dialogued. This meant that a lot depended on the creativity of the actors who came up with a fictional story.

But this one is detailed and dialogued and the artiste can just come in to take the dialogue. The first one, we had to rehearse for more than one month because we had to generate the dialogue ourselves.

What message does this sequel pass across?

The main fact that the major themes of the movie (rituals and internet scam) still exists almost 30 years after shows that a lot still needs to be done.

This means that Nigerian filmmakers need to keep emphasizing and highlighting the consequences of these crimes.

You can see that the consequences of the lead actor's actions are relatable even in our present times. Aside from showcasing wealth, riches etc in movies, filmmakers need to emphasise the need for honest living.



Scandals which shook entertainment industry

Continued from page 18

It was Tonto Dikeh who revealed that her ex-boyfriend had the sex tapes and nude photos of a famous Instagram dancer, Jane Emena, and other Nigerian celebrities and politicians on his smartphone.

Orezinena Jane, 28, is married to her long-time lover, Andre Plies.

Mr Kpokpogri clarified saying that he's only but a family friend to Mena, whom he said is an Isoko woman. He also said the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, must conduct some tests on Ms Dikeh.

"Is Janemena my friend? Yes! Beyond going to her shop opening years back, our relationship has only been on the phone. We have been family friends for years and the husband is someone that's close to me.

"It is a taboo where I come from to sleep with a married woman even though I am still single, worst of all, with a married Isoko lady, who will pay the ultimate price if she does that.

"Don't drag her and any other name in your imagination into our ship that has long sunk. I've lived and living a clean life. No amount of blackmail can pull me down.

Ms Dikeh's strong allegation sparked several reactions from fans, especially because Ms Dikeh alleged that Mr Kpokpogri built a store for Emena in Delta State.

2baba Idibia and wife, Annie



Trouble surfaced in the union between superstar singer, Innocent Idibia aka 2baba, and his wife Annie Macaulay in September.

Trouble began after Ms Macaulay openly accused her husband, of sharing the same house with his baby mama, Pero Adeniyi.

In a now-deleted Instagram Story post, she claimed that the singer "slept under the same roof" with Ms Adeniyi and the children (Ms Adeniyi bore him) when they vacationed in Disneyland, U.S.

Ms Adeniyi, 43, who is based in the U.S., is the daughter of a wealthy Nigerian businessman, Jide Adeniyi.

Also known as 2baba, Mr Idibia fathered three children with Ms Adeniyi while Sumbo Ajaba and Ms Macaulay bore two children each.

Ms Adeniyi and Ms Macaulay, were erstwhile sworn enemies. 2Baba wept uncontrollably when the reconciliation happened.

Ms Macaulay accused 2baba of cheating on her with his first baby mama, Pero Adeniyi, alleging that his family has been unkind to her.

September 2021 came with thorns, as Ms Macaulay revealed how badly she had been treated by her husband's family.

Nedu Wazobia FM and his ex-wife Uzoamaka Ohiri

September did not leave out Uzoamaka Ohiri, the ex-wife of the popular On-air personality Chinedu Ani known as Nedu Wazobia.

Ms Ohiri, who had earlier accused her husband of domestic violence, said that she wasn't aware of the paternity of their first child until a DNA test was conducted.

She accused Nedu of battering her a few weeks after she was delivered of their child by a Cesarean section.

Nedu would later respond to her claims saying their marriage was plagued with a lot of issues.

The radio personality and Instagram skit maker, said, "The continuous infidelity from her side made me conduct a paternity test on our kids which led to the revelation that our first son is not my biological son".

Explaining the origin of the DNA scandal during her interview with Goldmyne, Ms Ohiri, said "I was seeing someone before Nedu, he was on the side disturbing me, he had invited me a couple of times. I turned him down. After the relationship ended, Nedu and I met up.

"Along the line, I found out that I was pregnant. Trust me, if I knew that my first child was not for him, I wouldn't have married him. I can't deliberately pick another man's child and give it to another man. If I knew, I wouldn't have gotten married to him. On my wedding day, I was pregnant, everybody saw it."

To substantiate his claims, he also posted a copy of the DNA test which was conducted by a forensic laboratory, Viaguard Accu-metrics, located in Toronto Canada.

Nedu claimed his marriage has been dissolved but his estranged wife has said otherwise and has challenged him to produce the divorce papers since they separated four years ago.

The police would later caution Ms Ohiri allegedly warned her against making comments about Nedu on social media and the kids were handed over to Nedu.

Source: Premium Times

SUNDAY FEATURE

Small chance for INEC to save itself

All said, since the elections would be held in states outside the top 10 in the country's voter population, they offer INEC one big chance to repair its image. Azu Ishiekwe writes.

ELECTIONS in Nigeria this year might be nearly over but the war by other means could well receive fresh fire from the elections in three states this weekend.

The year began with general elections in February and March, and is closing with off-cycle elections in Imo, Bayelsa and Kogi on 11 November.

Conducting elections for three governors, after the major round of governorship elections in March that covered 28 states, including the legislatures in dozens of states, and the federal elections before that, might ordinarily look easy.

But they are not. These three off-cycle elections are in fact products of either violent electoral outcomes or bitterly fought court decisions. Apart from the post-election chaos that Nigeria has had to deal with, on a good day each of the three states on their own, is a political cauldron – a nightmare for organisers, participants and observers alike. Of the five states in the South-East, for example, Imo is arguably the most violence-prone, with widespread reports of random fatal attacks, jailbreaks, attacks on security personnel, police stations and government facilities. Even Governor Hope Uzodimma, the chief security officer of the state, has lived largely behind heavy barricades and moves about like a general in an active war zone.

To be fair, the violence in Imo predates him. It goes back to the years of the farmer-herder clashes; the rise in separatist agitations under MASSOB – a much earlier and far less deadly franchise than IPOB; and then followed by the upsurge in a variety of loose cannons. The situation has been worsened by years of poor governance.

But Uzodimma's dramatic emergence and his brand of politics appear to have brought a new, more dangerous salience to the violence in the state. If you



Prof. Mahmood

add the ongoing dispute between the national headquarters of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the state government to the mix, then you might understand why this weekend's election could be a perfect storm.

Labour has vowed to avenge the black-eye its president, Joe Ajaero, received in the hands of security personnel allegedly at the behest of Uzodimma. It has announced a flight ban on the governor and promised to follow up with a ground offensive.

Voter apathy remains a serious concern. According to a Guardian report on Tuesday, "only about 30 per cent of registered voters may decide the outcome in the three states combined." However, from recent history, whether at federal or state elections, 30 per cent would be a good turn-out.

Bayelsa is chaotic in its own way. Though the state managed to survive the turbulence after the forced removal of Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha in 2005, its brand of violence has often stemmed from an explosive

mix of hostage taking and crude oil politics. A state with some of the country's most forbidden creeks, Bayelsa is a logisticians' nightmare. It is also a base of former militants, who are ready, able and willing to outspend politicians to secure their political stronghold.

Bayelsa has enjoyed a fairly unchallenged reign of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) since 1999. A brief intrusion by the All Progressives Congress (APC) came to grief when the Supreme Court ruled that Governor-elect David Lyon could not be sworn in because his deputy filed false documents with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

But with former PDP governor and junior Petroleum Minister Timipre Sylva now running on the platform of the APC, power could change hands. Yet, PDP stalwarts still licking their wounds from the defeat in the presidential election, are unlikely to stand idly by and watch the fall of a durable PDP stronghold in the Niger Delta.

The omens in Kogi, with its

history of political violence – the most horrific in recent times being the 2019 murder of PDP Kogi woman leader, Acheju Abuh, who was burnt to death inside her home – are no less frightening. The ruling APC and opposition parties have continued to trade allegations of violence, even days to the election and no arrests have so far been made.

Apart from Kogi, where Yahaya Bello is ineligible to contest again, Imo and Bayelsa have incumbents itching to retain their seats.

In a country where incumbency is a rock to be circumnavigated, the records suggest that unseating an incumbent takes more than guts. Among the miserable tally of incumbents that failed a reelection bid were, Mohammed Abubakar of Bauchi (2015-2019), Ramalan Yero of Kaduna (2012-2015), Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi of Zamfara (2007-2011), Ikedi Ohakim of Imo (2007-2011), and current junior Minister of Defence, Bello Matawalle (2019-2023). If performance mattered, there would probably have been more.

Add to this the huge mutual suspicion of the political players, and the mistrust by the voting public, and you might understand why only winners come out of every election season, acclaiming democracy and certifying their victory as the popular will.

Voter apathy remains a serious concern. According to a *Guardian* report on Tuesday, "only about 30 per cent of registered voters may decide the outcome in the three states combined." However, from recent history, whether at federal or state elections, 30 per cent would be a good turn-out.

Elections in Edo and Ondo are next, but the three this weekend offer the Commission redeeming grace. All said, since the elections would be held in states outside the top 10 in the country's voter population, they offer INEC

one big chance to repair its image.

The presidential election in February recorded 26.7 per cent. While other elections are only marginally better, the South-East has remained a catastrophically low performer in recent years. The election that brought Anambra Governor Charles Soludo to power two years ago, for example, recorded a historic low turn-out of 10 per cent.

If *Guardian's* low forecast turns out right, it would be mainly for two reasons. One, the spike in violence in these states in the run-up to the elections, and two, the bitter aftertaste of the general elections held earlier this year. Seven months after the polls, the elections of a number of governors are still being challenged in the courts. Even if the courts existed solely for the pleasure of politicians, there still won't be enough justice to serve their desperation.

Political campaigns, if they have existed at all, have been a joke. Politicians in the three states where elections would hold have been making scandalous promises, ranging from free tickets to European job fares, to promises to turn water to wine.

Voters inclined to go out to vote in spite of these ridiculous offers are concerned for their safety, because complicit security services and their political paymasters have refused to punish past perpetrators of violence. There is no indication that it would be different this time.

Yet, more than anyone else, INEC knows that its poor handling of the general elections and their aftermath, could also be a strong reason for voter apathy. Voters won't come out if, on top of safety concerns, they don't also believe their votes would count. The Commission is once again in the spotlight. It cannot afford to fail.

Again, the Commission has promised that polling unit results would be uploaded directly to INEC's viewing portal, even in largely rural states like Kogi and Bayelsa, where there are limited communications and electricity infrastructure across large swathes of polling areas. We can't afford to have another round of excuses this time.

No one wants to hear about glitches, attempted hacking, failing batteries or poor networks. The bulk of the complaints in the last general elections, which later became the subject of litigation, have been about INEC's competence, credibility and the transparency of the process.

Elections in Edo and Ondo are next, but the three this weekend offer the Commission redeeming grace. All said, since the elections would be held in states outside the top 10 in the country's voter population, they offer INEC one big chance to repair its image.



NEWS

Mutfwang promises secured environment, quality education

DUMAH RANDONG

GOVERNOR Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State says he is committed to providing qualitative education and a secured environment for students in the state.

According to him, education remains the bedrock of every society, hence the government could not afford to play with the future of the younger generation.

Governor Mutfwang stated this when the Management of Federal Government College, Jos and the Old Students Association led by its National President, Dr Onyekachi Onyebugo paid him a visit at the Old Government House, Rayfield, Jos, recently.

Governor Mutfwang, represented by his Deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo, reiterated government's readiness to transform the sector in line with his agenda on education.

He assured the management and the Old Boys Association of FGC Jos of government's commitment to ensuring a secured environment and atmosphere for learning while also promising to look into the issue of drainages within the schools and the college's multipurpose hall abandoned for years.

The governor challenged



Mutfwang

the Old Boys Association to also embark on legacy projects as a way of giving back to their alma-mater.

Earlier, President of the Old Boys Association, Dr Onyekachi Onyebugo had informed the governor that the Federal Unity Schools was marking its 50th anniversary in Jos and that all the sets from 1977 to date were represented on the visit.

Dr Onyebugo commended General Yakubu Gowon who thought it wise to establish the unity schools and the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC which has helped to foster national unity in the country.

He highlighted the

uncommon receptive spirit and hospitality of the people of Plateau State, noting that it was heartwarming to hear what people say about the state, and that Jos particularly, really represents what the state stood for.

He extolled the leadership qualities of Governor Mutfwang especially in terms of security, saying it was commendable and urged him to continue doing what was good for his people.

Principal of Federal Government College Jos, Mr West Obomate had also used the occasion to solicit the government's support to secure the school, drainage and the completion of the multiple-purpose hall

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Kogi State Chapter has issued a stern warning against individuals falsely representing the council without proper authorization.

The Chairman of Kogi Chapter of the NYCN in a statement made available to journalists, said that impersonation of council leadership is a serious offense that will attract legal consequences.

"The NYCN has identified cases where individuals are claiming to represent the organization, engaging in activities beyond their legal authority. The council is committed to protecting its mandate entrusted by the youth of Kogi State and emphasizes that any unauthorized representation will not be tolerated.

"Furthermore, the council cautions political parties and aspirants to exercise caution when approached by individuals claiming to represent NYCN for mobilization or support. The organization explicitly states in its constitution that it does not engage in soliciting or mobilization efforts for political candidates. It encourages political parties to focus on grassroots engagement rather than relying on false

NYCN warns against Impersonation



Bello

representations.

"Financial solicitations in the name of the council, emphasizing that those seeking financial incentives on behalf of NYCN are not genuine members.

"Governorship candidates are warned that any payments or support extended to such individuals will be at their own risk and not endorsed by the council.

"No BOARD OF TRUSTEES (BOT) at the state level and warns against individuals

claiming to be part of such entities. It stresses that such claims constitute impersonation and will face legal consequences"

The message reiterates the commitment of the legitimate NYCN leadership under Amb. Sokubo Sara-Igbe Sokubo as the President, with chapter chairmen in all 36 states plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The former leaders, while respected, no longer have a role in determining the administration and operations of the Council.

KDSG to resettle Kaduna communities in ancestral homes

From John FWAH KADUNA

GOVERNOR Uba Sani says Kaduna State Government has mapped out plans to resettle Southern Kaduna communities and the

victims displaced by bandits back to their ancestral homes.

The governor disclosed that the collaborative move would be in conjunction with security agencies, particularly Operation Safe Haven. He disclosed this recently while briefing journalists shortly after the State Security Council Meeting held at Sir Kashim Ibrahim Government House, Kaduna recently.

Sani who was flanked by the General Officers Commanding 3 Division and 1 Division Nigerian Army, Major General AbdulSalam Abubakar and Major General Valentine Okoro respectively, said that the government was ready to provide all logistics necessary to resettle the displaced communities to their ancestral homes.

He said the government will be assisting the displaced people to rebuild their destroyed communities where need arises.

According to the governor, "fighting insecurity is the number one agenda of this administration because we believe, without resolving the security challenges, we might not be able to achieve all the development agenda of our government."

"We have invested a lot in the area of development, but I believe addressing the problem of insecurity is key.

And as a government, we have to promise to ensure that our people live in a secured environment.

"We have been able to achieve a lot and we will not relent. We will continue to fight the bandits, the insurgents and the criminals within Birnin Gwari and Southern Kaduna axis. The security reports from the security chiefs have shown that we are making progress, and we will continue to support them in terms of logistics and technology," the Governor stressed.

On Southern Kaduna persistent security challenges, Sani remarked, "We are working together with Operation Safe Haven under the command of the GOC 3 Division, General Abubakar on the resettlement of displaced Southern Kaduna communities. This is because the security and safety of our people is a fundamental human right of the people, it is not something that the government needs to think twice before doing."

"It is our responsibility to make sure that everyone that was displaced as a result of insecurity, is returned to their homes safely and the government will do that as its responsibility. Where they need to be supported in terms of rebuilding their community, we will do that. That is the responsibility of the government," he said.

Long Geomai, others, visit new Ngolong Ngas

TRADITIONAL Rulers of Shendam and Qua'anpan Local Government Traditional Councils have paid a courtesy visit to the newly selected Ngolong Ngas of Ngas nation, HRH Nde Jika Golit at the Pankshin/Kanke Joint Traditional Council Chambers in Pankshin.

Leading the two traditional councils members on the visit were the long Goemai of Shendam, HRH Miskoom Martins Shaldas 111 and the Long Pan, HRH Nda Emmanuel Dabang.

Welcoming the prominent traditional rulers at the Traditional Council Chamber in Pankshin, the Transition Implementation Committee Chairmen of Pankshin and Kanke Local Government Council, Hon. Samuel Shangka Go'ar and Hon. Shikir Nuhu Caleb respectively thanked the Long Goemai and the Long Pan for finding it worthy at this point in time to pay a visit to one of their own who has been selected as the Ngolong Ngas. He added that the visit of the paramount rulers has further strengthened the Ngas people as a nation after nine years (9) of staying without a paramount ruler (Ngolong Ngas).

The transition committee chairmen in their respective welcome address at the chamber applauded the doggedness of Governor Barr. Caleb Mutfwang in his untiring efforts to make sure that the Ngas people have a ruler.

They added that this kind gesture done to the Ngas nation by Governor of Plateau State Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has

also gone a long way in rekindling the confidence and trust of the Ngas people in the TIME IS NOW administration. It has also allayed the fear of the Ngas people that they may not be able to install or crown another Ngolong Ngas after the death of Nde Joshua Dimlong, in 2014, due to unending court cases.

They also assured the visiting traditional rulers that the selection process was done without the interference of either the Governor of the state nor the committee chairmen or any politicians. They assured them that the selection process of choosing the Ngolong Ngas was purely done on merit by the joint traditional councils of Pankshin and Kanke Local Government Areas.

The chairmen however appealed to the good and peace loving people of Pankshin and Kanke Local Government Area, especially the Ngas extraction to accord the new Ngolong Ngas the needed support and cooperation to enable him succeed in the hectic task ahead of him as he settles down to pilot the affairs of the Ngas people and the entire Pankshin/Kanke Joint Traditional Councils. They wished him God's protection, guidance, and the wisdom of King Solomon.

Responding on behalf of the visiting traditional rulers of Shendam and Qua'anpan Traditional Councils, the Emir of Kanam, HRH Muhammadu Muazu Mohammed said the Plateau State Traditional Council of Chiefs and Emirs is indeed very happy to



Shaldas

have a new Ngolong Ngas occupy the seat that has been vacant. The Emir appreciated Governor Mutfwang for ensuring that a monarch emerged. And he thanked the Pankshin/Kanke Joint Traditional Council for the wonderful job well done. He pointed out that the selection was done purely out of merit as a committee was set-up towards perfecting the selection process. The Emir added that the Ngolong Ngas should be reassured of their support and thanking the visiting traditional rulers of Shendam and

Qua'an-pan Traditional Council for the show of love and solidarity to the Ngas nation.

Long Mhship, Nda Dasha II on behalf of the Joint Traditional Council solicited for support and fatherly advice to the new Ngolong Ngas as he is a newcomer in the state Traditional Council of Chiefs and Emirs. He also sought their royal blessing for the new Ngolong Ngas to enable him to have the wisdom to pilot the affairs of the Joint Traditional Council of the two local government areas and the entire people of the areas.

NEWS

Mutfwang calls for calm following appeal court judgements

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja.

PLATEAU State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has pleaded for calm amongst citizens of the state in the wake of protests sparked by the recent Appeal Court decisions that invalidated the mandates of the PDP National Assembly members in the state.

In a statement recently, made available to journalists by his Director of Press and Public Affairs, Gyang Bere, in Jos, Governor Mutfwang acknowledged the profound disappointment felt by the people over the Appeal Court's pronouncement but called for calm.

He emphasized that it is natural to be distressed and devastated when there is a feeling that their will has been truncated. Though the Judgements haven't gone as many envisaged from the outset, he urged the people not to take the law into their hands.

Governor Mutfwang said it has been brought to his knowledge that both partisan and nonpartisan persons participated in the protest and said, "I appeal for calm. I strongly urge the citizens of Plateau State not to take any steps that will adversely affect the relative peace we are enjoying today. Let's not allow the feeling of disenchantment to degenerate into breakdown of law and order."

Expressing unwavering faith in the judiciary, Governor Mutfwang assured the people that justice would prevail for the citizens of Plateau State. He encouraged the people to be optimistic amidst the prevailing challenges and to trust the judicial process.

The Governor also noted that it was brought to his attention that some security personnel manhandled innocent persons. He however acknowledged the significant contribution of various security personnel in ensuring there is peace in the state and urged them to be polite in controlling peaceful protesters.

Governor Mutfwang urged the people, particularly supporters of the PDP, not to resort to vandalism but rather to place their trust and confidence in God Almighty, the Supreme Judge who presides over the universe.

He reiterated that as long



Mutfwang

as God remains on the throne, victory is certain. He urged the citizens not

to succumb to despair but to find solace in the knowledge that God is ever watchful and active.

Set aside ego, advance work of Christ - Mutfwang

By PETER TITLE

Governor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has charged Church leaders to set aside their ego and work assiduously to advance the work of Christ on earth.

He also advised them never to allow external influence to bring division in the church, instead to stand firm in propagating God's message to the world.

The Executive Governor handed this advice during the

104th General Church Council (GCC), held at the Church of Christ In Nations (COCIN), Headquarters Church, Jos recently.

Gov. Mutfwang thanked God that the Church has continued to thrive at these perilous times and urged them to set aside their differences and bring the body of Christ together.

According to him, "I had deliberately stayed away from politics, believing it was dirty. I came into politics as my own mission field and I have chosen

to work in the light and truth"

The Governor promised to work with all Church groups for the advancement of Agriculture, saying that the state was blessed with enormous agricultural resources which needed to be maximised.

The Church President, Rev. Dr. Amos Mohzo, said the church suffered setbacks, saying PCCs, Panyam and Gindiri were the worst hit where people were killed, maimed and or forced to flee, displaced from their homes by Fulani terrorists.

N250m paid to rescue 121 Baptist students - CAN Chairman

From John FWAH, KADUNA

THE Kaduna State Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Reverend Joseph John Hayab has revealed that a total sum of 250 million Naira was spent as ransom to rescue 121 students of Baptist High School who were kidnapped by terrorists in July, 2021.

Hayab led the parents and family of Treasure Ayuba, the last Bethel student who escaped from captivity about a week ago, on a courtesy visit to Governor Uba Sani, saying that there is need to clear the air on the erroneous information being circulated that it was the student that opted to remain with the bandits.

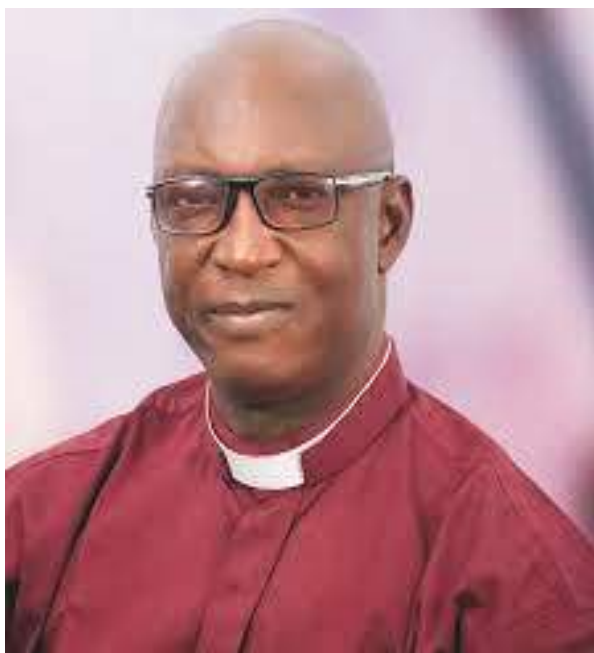
"There was nothing like that as the boy does not look like someone who would take such decision", he declared.

According to Hayab, the bandits took several measures for Treasure not to be released including twice snatching those that took ransom money to them.

He stressed further: "A total sum of N250 million was paid as ransom to rescue the 121 students. Today, we gather here with mixed feelings - relief, joy, and gratitude. We are here to welcome back Treasure Ayuba, the last of the

kidnapped students of Bethel Baptist High School, Kaduna, marched out while in their sleep in the school hostel and kidnapped on the night of 5th July 2021 by bandits.

"To the knowledge of CAN, over two hundred and fifty million (250,000, 000) Naira



Hayab

NGO wants wife to suspend FCTA Director

A non governmental organization (Network Against Corruption and Trafficking NACAT) has called on the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Nyesom Wike to suspend the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) Executive Director of Procurement, Onsachi Musa Idris for allegedly owning and running private companies while in active service. NACAT also wants the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the ICPC to immediately investigate Idris for alleged violation of public rules and abuse of office.

The organization in a press statement made available to newsmen in Abuja, said its investigations revealed that Idris did not declare his companies to the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) as stipulated by the law.

The statement which was signed by the Group Director of Investigation, Oghenedoro Tega, further alleged that the FCTA Executive Director and

some of his family members have an interest and are directors in Hollywood Films, Television and Creativity Arts Institute Limited, with

registration number RC1280962, registered on 14 August 2015, among others, which he did not declare in his Assets and



Wike

According to him, COCIN as a body, contributed over 500 bags of maize and other assorted grains, clothes as well as about ₦50,000,000.00 to relieve the agony of the people.

On Karl Kumm University, Vom, Rev. Dr. Mohzo officially announced that 28th November, 2023 has been earmarked as the maiden matriculation which would mark the commencement of the 2023/2024 academic session.

The President frowned at those bent on tarnishing the image of the Church in the social media which he said included their members and workers.

Rev. Dr. Mohzo therefore urged them to desist or face the wrath of the mighty God. He called on pastors to uphold the sanctity and holiness of the pulpit as a sacred space dedicated to proclaiming the pure gospel of Christ for the redemption of souls.

was paid as ransom to get the 121 kidnapped children from their captors, but for Treasure, his story became a heart-breaking one, further made worse by distorting the truth that the boy did not want to leave the den of the kidnappers.

"For the avoidance of doubts, CAN is aware of the firm efforts made by the boy's family, relations, and well-wishers to get him back home. To add salt to injury, on more than one occasion, the kidnappers abducted the persons sent with the ransom to get Treasure out of their hands, making his stay to become an infinite time of agonising pain until God intervened."

"Accordingly, on Thursday 2nd November 2023, I received a call from Treasure's parents that the boy returned home safely after being in the hands of his captors for 28 months... Treasure's miraculous return is a moment of triumph, not just for Treasure and his family, Bethel Baptist High School Kaduna, the Baptist family, Kaduna State, and

Nigeria, but for all humanity in general."

"Treasure's abduction, along with his fellow schoolchildren, remains a painful reminder of the challenges we face as a nation. The kidnapping of school children and students from a school facility is a stark harsh reality of the threats to our educational institutions and the safety of our young ones."

"The abduction shook us to our core, leaving us with a profound sense of urgency to bring an end to the atrocities perpetrated against the citizenry, the state, the nation at large and humanity in general."

"Today, as we stand here, welcoming Treasure back into the loving arms of his family, the church, people of goodwill and the government of Kaduna State, we are reminded of the resilience and determination that defines us as a people irrespective of religious affiliations or ethnic origin."

NEWS

Army tasks journalists on fake news peddlers activities

From Abbas Gungura,
Bauchi

THE Commander 33 Artillery Brigade, Shadawanka Barracks, Bauchi, Brigadier General E. Egbe, has charged journalists to work towards fighting against the activities of fake news peddlers for the betterment of Nigeria.

General Egbe gave the charge when he received the executives of the Correspondents' Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Bauchi on a courtesy call in his office recently.

The commander expressed concern that the internet space is always inundated with a series of fake news from different media bloggers and noted that such a scenario is not good for the security of the society.

"We work day-in day-out to secure the communities but such good efforts and our achievements are mostly under-reported. We are not saying some anomalies should go unreported, but let it be verified and communicated correctly", he said.

"We are all partners in the Nigerian project and as such, journalists should do more positive reports about the country than the negatives", the Army General stated.

Brigadier General Egbe, however, advised the leadership of the union of the need for training and retraining of their members for effective and professional manner of discharging their responsibilities as mirror of the society, thereby serving as disciplinary mechanisms with a view to ensuring more sanity in the pen profession as well as curbing the menace of fake news.

During an interactive session, one of the Army officers, advised the NUJ to if possible, collaborate with social media platforms such as the Facebook and others to ensure that fake news are not allowed to thrive.

Earlier in his opening remarks, the Chairman of the Correspondents' Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Bauchi, Mallam Ahmed Mohammed, informed the Commander that the purpose of the courtesy visit was to seek for collaboration and synergy between his members and



Egbe,

the 33 Artillery Brigade, Bauchi under his command.

Mallam Mohammed explained that the Correspondents' Chapel comprises both national and international print and broadcast reporters as members. He added that the members are well trained and disciplined in all aspects of journalism.

The chairman, while commending the commander and his personnel for securing

Bauchi State from bandits, kidnapers and other criminally minded persons, said journalists as major stakeholders in the security project of the country, are proud of their efforts.

"As major stakeholders in the security project of Nigeria, we feel we should come and seek for more collaboration not only to contribute our own part to the successes you are recording, but also to associate with you", Mallam Mohammed said.

LABOUR minister requests more partnership with ILO

By JIDAUNA YANUNG

NIGERIA has requested for more technical support and collaboration in areas of capacity building to enable the Tinubu administration achieve its strategic goals of job creation and enhancement of workers welfare as contained in the Renewed Hope Agenda.

According to Special Adviser on Media to the Minister, Makut Simon Macham, Minister of Labour and Employment, Simon Bako Lalong gave the assurance when he met with the Director General of the International Labour Organisation, Gilbert Houngbo at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva Switzerland on the sidelines of the 349th Session of the ILO Governing body.

Lalong said Nigeria has done a lot to guarantee the rights of workers and enable unions to thrive in protecting the rights of their members without any

hindrance.

He said the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu places high premium on the contributions of workers to the prosperity, stability and progress of Nigeria which in turn impacts on the global economy.

Lalong said President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda has clearly outlined the roadmap for improving the conditions of workers as demonstrated by recent wage awards and other policies resulting from the removal of fuel subsidy.

He said the government is also determined to create job opportunities for its teeming unemployed and under-employed youths who are a major source of strength for the nation.

On government-Labour relations, the Minister said the government has maintained an open door policy in dialogue and implementing collective bargaining with unions for peaceful industrial relations.

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

THE Civil Society Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN) with the support of UNICEF, is executing a project in Gombe State aimed at influencing stakeholders to increase Investment in Nutrition for Scaling Up of Quality Nutrition Services.

To this end, a coalition of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the media are being trained to build their capacity on advocacy and budget tracking.

According to Dare Isaac Oguntade, CS-SUNN's Project Manager, the target of the project which is a partnership between his organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), is to see a situation where there is an increase in total release of funding and effective utilization of funds from \$2m to \$3m within the next one year.

He said the training is on advocacy and budget tracking. He added, "that is what they will be doing for us to know it is implemented.

"They will be monitoring that throughout the year, and hoping that will help in tracking and securing more releases in funding as well as help in actualizing legislation for six months maternity leave from the current three months.

Mr Dare also emphasized the importance of the role the media will play in achieving success at the end of the project.

He said, "the role of the media is very important as

UNICEF, CS-SUNN commence one year project in Gombe



Yahaya

they spread the news on the need for behavioral change especially towards improving exclusive breastfeeding for it to be practiced, not just extending the period of maternity leave".

In her presentation, Mrs Ronas Musa, the Gombe State Nutrition Officer, decried the prevalence of malnutrition in the state despite government's interventions.

She said, the state has 27 CMAM sites in Dukku, Gombe, Nafada, Kwami, Akko, Yamaltu-Deba,

Funakaye and Kaltungo LGSs where treatment of acute malnutrition takes place.

While appealing for more funding of nutrition programmes by the State Government, she called for improvement in approach to tackling malnutrition through counseling, Infant Young Child Feeding (IYCF), increased funding as well as emphasis be made on complementary feeding ahead of purchasing Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF).

The Minister made some requests: "The ILO may wish to consider Nigeria's earlier request for the ILO to upgrade the ILO Office in Abuja to the status of a Technical Office (Decent Work Office) to serve English speaking West

Africa; to assist in strengthening the Labour Inspectorate System in Nigeria by providing technical assistance by building the capacity of Professional Officers in the Ministry and providing working tools; Technical Assistance to see the

process of reviewing Nigeria's National Labour Bills to a logical conclusion; as the second highest African contributor to the ILO budget (next to South Africa), more Nigerian professionals be employed into the ILO to bridge the under-representation of Nigeria in the ILO workforce, both locally and internationally" he said.

ILO Director General Gilbert Houngbo welcomed the Minister to ILO Headquarters and emphasized the significant role Nigeria continues to play in building a robust work environment through consultation and engagement with the labour.

He acknowledged the efforts of Nigeria in complying with the Conventions and instruments of the ILO which it is signatory to and said the organisation will continue to work with the government to strengthen areas that require attention.



Lalong

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Fifty years: The Story of *The Nigeria Standard*



Continued from page 10

surrounding the famous Standard 7. These were the seven senior editors/members of the Editorial Board of the paper who had resigned their appointments following the annulment of the results of the June 12, 1993, presidential election in which Chief Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic Party was expected to win.

The editors/Editorial Board members were Emma Gogwim, Gideon Mitu, Cyril Ogah, Harris Dawurang, Wilson Yale and Usman Abu. They had written the now legendary "This is Our Stand" editorial which demanded that the electoral process should be concluded and the winner declared. Asked by Government to retract that editorial, they stood up to the authorities and would rather quit their jobs! The seventh among them, Danjuma Abah, was of the Sub-Desk but decided to join the defiant party in solidarity!

As the military era stretched the polity to its limits, putting the media on their toes, there were concomitant economic

drawbacks with serious implications for media practice. As a consequence, the fortunes of the media, among other sectors across the country began to dwindle. The glory days of **The Nigeria Standard** had begun to recede. From a local newspaper to a respectable national daily, the paper's downward slide was aided by aging machines, shortage of consumables and a gradual thinning of the very good hands that took it to the very top.

When the Corporation moved its physical presence to No. 5, JD Gomwalk Road in 1975, its massive, ten-story building represented the pinnacle of its achievements, a fitting tribute to its grandiose goals. Christened Joseph Gomwalk House, after the founder of the organization, it was simply a statement on the Corporation's gigantic ambitions and the boldness of its vision. Sharing **The Nigeria Standard** precincts with other key areas of innovativeness such as the Commercial Printing department, which produced the popular Cactus Exercise Books, the idea was also for more

income streams for the Corporation. And while these revenue generating organs of the Corporation turned the wheels of its operations, **The Nigeria Standard** voice was heard in all its distinctiveness.

However, from limited circulation to a drop in the frequency of production, from being out of print to shortage of circulation vans, from the once-respectable national paper to a provincial mouthpiece, it has no doubt been a steep decline for **The Nigeria Standard**. As it is, the iconic JD Gomwalk House is just a shell of its old self, left in abeyance for years, serving no economic purpose. And then there are printing machines that have simply served out their time at **The Nigeria Standard**. Mostly outdated and virtually beyond salvation, they remain mere relics of the past. What is more, a depleting staff population, in no mood for the drudgery that is the profession, is no good news for the future of the paper. Now, are the best days of **The Nigeria Standard** behind it?

Somewhere in the production area of the newspaper outfit is the Goss Printing Press, which has churned out several thousand copies of the newspaper since the 1970s when it was installed. This German-made machine it was that printed the vivacious reports, seminal articles and prodigious writings that all together constitute the highpoint of **The Nigeria Standard** story.

But the legendary Goss now grinds slowly to an impending end. Weakened by age, it idles away as another one, the City-Line Web-Off Set, takes its place. In the midst of the despondency of the moment, this new one embodies the possibilities of the future. With the potential to re-launch the paper onto the path of greatness once again, it awaits the tonic that its own season requires.

Built in India and shipped into the country in 2014, the new press is several notches higher in its technology than anything **The Nigeria Standard** has ever seen. However, its advanced technology is not an end in itself. Like it was in the past, the

philosophy that underpinned the establishment of the newspaper must be in the center of the plans for its rebirth.

There is no gainsaying that recruitment of staff in all departments of the corporation, training of technical personnel for the transfer of knowledge on the new machine and re-orientation of editorial staff are among the essentials for a turn-around that is being sought. But all this can only be realized in a work environment that enhances optimal performance.

Fifty years after its founding, **The Nigeria Standard** finds itself in the age of the internet and the New Media. Bolstered by an unwavering spirit, it has survived the vagaries of the media environment, outliving many of its kind to be the brand that it is today. For the future, for its relevance and continued survival, its new approaches must fully exploit the vast resources that the information superhighway provides. This is a key requirement of the newspaper as it seeks to reinvent itself in the new age.

METRO-FOCUS

Jos "guinea pig" for new illicit alcohol drinks?

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

Some of the things we deliberately ignored in the past are gradually coming to consume us lately. We were busy paying lipservice to casual but sensitive things that now turn out to be a scourge we grapple with.

The indiscriminate siting and sales of illicit drinks in and around our neighbourhoods which needed to be arrested before now, has turned out to be the unseen peak that is ploughing our eyes these days.

The spread of these beer parlours and level of alcohol consumption today in Jos, the capital city of Plateau State has been a thing of great concern. To some, it is a huge business to the point that there exist gin's "refineries" secretly coming up on a daily basis and people have been consuming it without knowing their sources.

Some of these illegal breweries are not far from our neighborhoods, but people are careless to monitor what comes in and out a "Jericho hall fenced building" that is sited around their neighborhoods. This is simply because some of their youth are employed as security operatives or distribution agents.

Ignorantly, these youths take their pay off every month without knowing what is happening inside the main factory. They are always brainwashed with the story that the structure was just a mere warehouse that stores products brewed from the Western and Southern part of Nigeria or other African countries.

This has been going on long before now and the authorities saddled with the responsibilities of monitoring these illegal factories are not aware because we failed to ask questions and inform them. All we are concerned about is the so-called employment these factories provide to our youths.

In fact, most of these people in the neighborhoods are aware of what is happening, but would prefer to keep mute because their children are working in one similar factory or the other and will be unfair to deny his child earning his daily bread.

Convincing any resident in such neighbourhoods that sounds of machines heard only in the late hours of night coming from these structures are a proof that industrial processes take place there is a herculean task. And that was the intention of the owners. In fact, the mere fact that they only produce in the dead of night make their products suspect.

It would be recalled that the immediate past GbongGwom Jos, Late DIG, Da Victor Pam, staged a fight against illicit drinks popularly known as "Goskolo" in the neighborhoods and it was communally fought, dislodging both brewers and sellers of this illicit drink in communities. But it appears the hydra headed monster has resurfaced.

Yes, the consumption of this dreaded substance was somehow reduced and the urge for it seemed to be completely subsided along the line. Unfortunately, we assumed that the battle was over and relaxed. We forgot that these desperate illegal businessmen always strategise. As it is now, the situation is going out of hand because a new style has been introduced.

It will interest you to know that the same *Goskolo* has surreptitiously been channelled and repackaged in some small containers with an attractive outlook to give the public the impression that they are refined, blended and legal alcoholic beverages approved by the government.



However, findings have revealed that most of these factories are located around Utan, Apata, Kabong (GadaBiu), Goodluck Jonathan road, Tafawa Balewa Street, Bukuru and many more. They are yet to be discovered and that they are brewed in some hidden corners in the capital city of Jos and only God knows the materials used. You see labels and addresses that indicate names of some unknown companies from southwestern and eastern states which are deliberate attempts to misdirect.

We, therefore call on government

agencies like NAFDAC, NDLEA, SON, PAN, NSCDC, Police and other agencies to stage a house-to-house search in these areas to arrest all these illegal producers and marketers of this dangerous drinks that have killed so many of our promising youths.

Communities should also collaborate with these government agencies to fish out those indulging in this life consuming business.

Jos was one of the most serene and liveliest cosmopolitan towns in Nigeria that accommodated all and was fun to visit. It was a common sight to see people in the cool of the

day especially at weekends, relaxing with one or two bottles at various designated gardens. However, now the story is different.

Most young people ignore the usual place where locally brewed alcohol (*Bukutu*) is normally found in isolated ghetto areas when they cannot afford a decent drink. They have embraced these illegal illicit alcohol drinks because they are cheap and they call them "Quick Action" and they are killing them silently.

Could it be that the system then had monitoring mechanism that recognised products that were

accepted or welcomed in Jos? This is because products like Gulder, Guinness Foreign Extra Stout, Heineken, Star Lager and even the Rock Lager Beer/Class brewed in Jos were not abused as they are today.

Therefore, government on its part should do the needful by coming with stringent rules and regulations that will monitor the excesses of these illegal factories and the influx of different illicit alcoholic beverages into the state as refined gin. It is killing us and we cannot fold our arms to see that happen!

SUNDAY PEOPLE

NUJ CHAIR PAY VISIT ON THE STATE TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

The Plateau State Traditional Council of Emirs and Chiefs on Wednesday received the first female Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Plateau States Council, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo, EXCO and Advisory Council at the Gbong Gwom Palace, Jos



His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, CON, CFR, President, State traditional council of Chiefs and Emirs delivering his speech



Cross section of NUJ ex-officio and Advisory Council members



Cross section of some Traditional Rulers during the NUJ's visit



BECO President, Da Gyang Dudu (left) flanked by other Beroms leadership with the Gbong Gwom aides



First female NUJ chairman, Ayuku Pwaspo, Patron of the Union and Emir of Wase, HRH Alhaji Muhammad Sambo Haruna with EXCO listening to her courtesy call message



NUJ Patron, His Royal Highness, Alhaji Muhammad Sambo Haruna delivering remarks



Immediate past NUJ Chairman, Paul Jatau (right) with the Advisory Council Secretary, Isaac Shobayo



President of the Traditional Council, His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, NUJ Patron, Alhaji Muhammad Sambo Haruna, Emir of Wase in a group photograph with NUJ chairman and EXCO

Photos: DANLADI DUK



Road Runner

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SAFER TOGETHER

NEWS

Nigerian Governors' Wives commit to maternal, child health

From **ABASS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

THE Nigerian Governor's Wives Forum has expressed commitment to contribute in areas of maternal and child health problems considering the alarming rate of maternal and child mortality across the country.

She explained that the forum has agreed to work in collaboration with relevant bodies with a view to addressing the spate of gender based violence and women marginalization in different fields.

The Kwara First Lady made this known in Bauchi where she said these were part of the forum's resolutions at the end of its three days annual retreat held at the New Banquet Hall, Bauchi.

The Chairperson of the Forum and wife of Kwara State Governor, Prof Olufalake Abdulrazaq, told journalists after the meeting that they were in the state to deliberate on their work plan ahead of 2024.



Abdulrazaq

Prof. Olufalake Abdulrazaq who advocated for equal opportunity for women in relevant sectors, noted that the forum has also resolved to introduce initiatives aimed at increasing schools enrollment among women and children across their respective states. The forum has earlier paid a courtesy visit to Governor

Bala Mohammed and the Emir of Bauchi, Dr. Rilwanu Sulaimanu Adamu to intimate them on the forum's mission.

The Governor's Wives Forum through its dynamic chairperson, commended Governor Bala Mohammed for the wonderful reception accorded them since arrival.

FAAN officially takes over late priminister's international airport

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

SIR Abubakar Tafawa Balewa International Airport Bauchi was recently handed over to the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) officially by Bauchi State Government, for effective management and economic development of the state.

While addressing journalists shortly after a meeting with FAAN management at the Government House, Bauchi, the Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Mohammed Auwal Jatau, said the deal has been completed and the facility now fully handed over to the Federal Government.

Auwal Jatau, who received the FAAN management on behalf of Governor Bala Mohammed, expressed optimism that the handing over of the airport to FAAN will engender more development for the state and the Northeast subregion.

On his part, the Managing Director of FAAN, Kabir Yusuf Muhammad, said the Federal Executive Council has approved some substantial amount of money as a refund to the Bauchi State Government.

The Managing Director said even though the money might not be the exact amount Bauchi State had spent on the airport, he believed it was a sizable amount to be used for other

projects. "We are happy that the Bauchi State Government has agreed to cede the facility to the federal government for effective service delivery. The airport had been collaboratively operated by FAAN and the Bauchi State government.

"In a most recent discussion, looking at how to optimally use the airport, the Bauchi government graciously agreed to cede the operations of the airport to FAAN not because they cannot maintain it.

"It's because they strongly believe that handing it over to the federal government will open more development, not just to the airport but to the state government in general. I believe that not

only Bauchi State but the entire North East region will benefit from the new arrangement."

He explained that the Bauchi State Government has done creditably well for constructing a befitting airport of international standards which provides easy access to prospective air passengers from not just the state but the northeast in general.

On his part, the Secretary to the Bauchi State Government, Barrister Ibrahim Mohammed Kashim, said the takeover of the airport by the Federal Government will open up tourists sites in the state to international visitors which will also mean a unilateral development for other sectors of the economy of the state.



Jatau

Alcohol

1. What effect can alcohol have on your driving behaviour?

Faulty sense of judgement Slows down your reaction time Gives you false confidence You became a crash looking for where to happen

MEDICATION

2. You are taking medication which may affect your driving. You should?

Ask your doctor if you may drive and comply with his professional advice

3. Medication issued with or without prescription may cause drowsiness. TRUE OR FALSE?

True

4. Driving without breaks may result in fatigue. TRUE OR FALSE?

True

SAFE DISTANCE IN VARIOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS

S A F E DISTANCE/CLEARANCE

5. What is the effect of wet road surface on a vehicle's braking ability?

Generally, it doubles the normal braking distance which is required on dry surface

6. When driving uphill behind a slow-moving vehicle, what should you do?

Stay well behind until it is safe for you to overtake

7. After overtaking another vehicle, you should...?

Check that you are well past the other vehicle before gradually moving back to the right lane

8. What is the possible effect of cutting in too soon when overtaking another vehicle?

Both vehicles could collide

9. When overtaking a parked vehicle, you should...?

Allow sufficient clearance as you pass

10. What stopping distance should you allow when you suspect that the road may be wet and slippery?

Up to 4 times the normal stopping distance

11. What clearance should drivers normally allow for parked vehicles?

A door-width

STOPPING DISTANCE AND BRAKING ABILITY

12. The normal stopping distance of a car or motorcycle travelling at 50km/h on a dry road is...?

25 metres

13. The normal stopping distance for a car or motorcycle travelling at 50km/h on a wet road is...?

30 metres

14. The normal stopping distance for a car or motorcycle traveling 100km/h on a dry road is...?

70 metres

15. The normal stopping distance for a car or motorcycle travelling 100km/h on a wet road is...?

125 metres

16. Two vehicles each travelling at 100km/h collide head-on. What would be the combined speed at impact?

200km/h

17. If two vehicles each travelling at 60km/h collide head-on, the speed at impact is...?

120km/h

18. If two vehicles each travelling at 100km/h collide head-on the speed at impact is...?

200km/h

19. If two vehicles each travelling at 80km/h collide head-on, the speed at impact is...?

160km/h

20. The recommended minimum gap per km/h

30 metres

which should be left between vehicles travelling on dry road is...?

1 metre of each km/h

21. What may happen if you have to brake suddenly on expressway?

The vehicle behind might run into the back of your vehicle

22. The power of the engine affects the braking distance of the vehicle, TRUE OR FALSE?

False

23. What must you to enable you judge a safe distance to drive behind the vehicle in front in dry weather?

Allow at least 2 seconds to elapse between the vehicle in front and your vehicle passing a fixed point

24. What must you to enable you judge a safe distance to drive behind the vehicle in front in wet weather?

Allow at least 4 seconds to elapse between the vehicle in front and your vehicle passing a fixed point

25. Only a fool breaks the two second rule. TRUE OR FALSE?

True

26. What effect does overloading have on your vehicle's braking ability?

It increases the stopping distance

27. What effect does towing a loaded vehicle have on stopping ability?

It significantly increases the stopping distance

NIGHT DRIVING

28. When driving at night your headlights enables you to see a distance of how many metres?

100 metres

29. When driving at night your dipped headlights enables you to see a distance of how many metres?

30 metres



SUNDAY FEATURE

Deployment of strategies to secure Nigeria

Excellence needs no hype, makeover, or agitprop. Good work manifests itself in palpable reality. The security bent of the Tinubu administration is an exercise of deliberate, coordinated, meticulous and prescient deployment of strategies and actions to secure Nigeria. It is securing Nigeria pluck by pluck – with inexorable courage, purpose and urgency. PLUCK writes.

A large part of success in security operations lies in ICC – interagency cooperation and coordination. What more demonstrates this plank than the synergised effort between the Department of State

Services and the army in precluding what could have been a devastating blow, with a sludge of casualties in Kano?

On November 3, the symbiotic effort of the Nigerian Army and the DSS, led to the successful foiling of an attack on Kano by insurgents. The insurgents had been machinating a marquee attack, that could, perhaps, dampen citizens' confidence on the State. A detachment of soldiers and DSS operatives swooped on the sanctuary of the subversives in a dawn blitz in Gezawa Local Government Area of Kano State, arresting the henchmen.

The joint team recovered five AK-47 rifles, five AK-47 rifle magazines, one rocket-propelled gun (RPG), five RPG bombs, six hand grenades, five pairs of desert camouflage uniforms, 10 pairs of magazine pouches and some improvised-explosive device (IED) making materials.

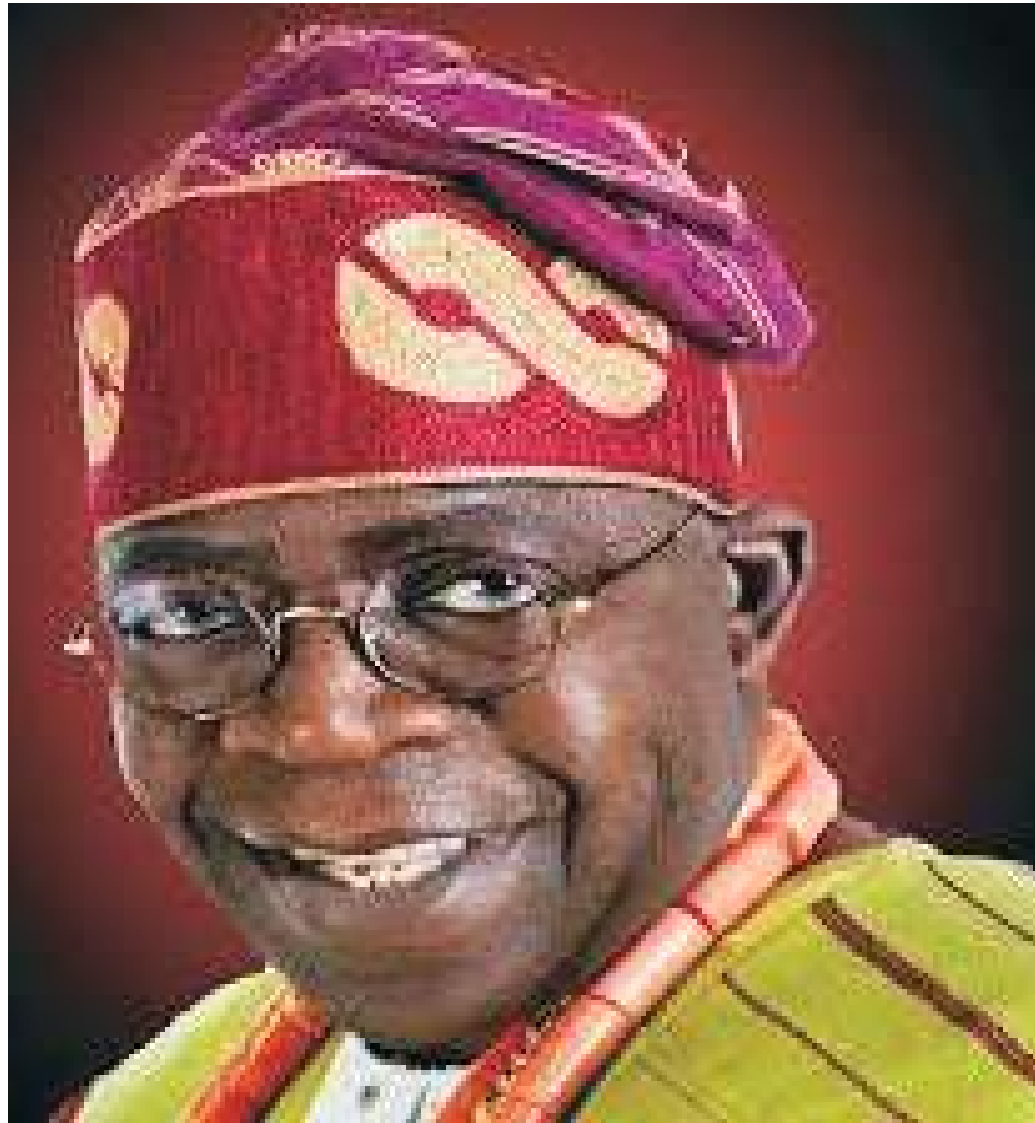
Obviously, the success of this operation is implicit in the cooperation and coordination between the army and the DSS, as well as in the actioning of intelligence. What imperils security anywhere in the world is, partly, interagency rivalry and the absence of coordination – when intelligence is available, but actioning is a challenge owing to some contentions.

On November 2, the allied effort of the army and the police resulted in the rescuing of two corps members. Bandits had kidnapped the corps members, who were transiting from Edo State in Yargoje community, Kankara Local Government Area of Katsina State. But the purposive and united

endeavour of the security agencies led to the safe return of the hostages.

Interagency cooperation and coordination (ICC) is pivotal for securing Nigeria. It is elemental for achieving the priority objective of the administration, which is strengthening national security for peace and security.

Since July 2023, the security forces have chalked up reasonable gains against subversives without a noising of the winnings. There is a fillip in security operations across the country. Since the past week, for



Tinubu

instance, there has been intensive air strikes against the troublemakers of our nation.

In the North-west, the air component of Operation Hadarin Daji, on November 1, conducted a slew of successful air strikes in Kankara Local Government Area (LGA) of Katsina State, targeting the hermitage of a terrorist kingpin, who is responsible for a chain of terrorist acts and banditry across Kankara and adjacent LGAs in the state.

The air strikes removed clusters of refuge used as hideaways by the kingpin and his gang, effectively dismantling their base of operation. Only Very few survivors escaped the fury of the Nigeria Air force.

In the North-east, precision air strikes by the air component of Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) on November 3, led to the elimination of several terrorists at their rendezvous, near Degbawa in Goza Local Government Area of Borno State. The terrorists were responsible for the recent attack on some locals in Geidam on

October 31, and had planned to meet to review the attack as well as the next line of onslaught on innocent Nigerians and other vulnerable targets.

In the South-east, security agencies have sustained incisive operations, rooting out units of IPOB/ESN terrorists from the area. Peace and normalcy are returning, just as citizens' confidence is witnessing a

reinforcement. For instance, On October 5, troops of Operation UDO KA II conducted raids on the haven of the terrorists around Ihiom-Ihittenansa in Orsu Local Government Area and Okigwe-Umulolo in Okigwe Local Government Area of Imo State.

The operational base and shrines of the subversives were erased, two suspects arrested, and a cache of arms recovered. This includes

ammunition, one PKT machine gun barrel, one locally made rocket-propelled launcher (Ogbunigwe) and IED making materials. In many other operations, imminent attacks had been thwarted, IPOB/ESN terrorists removed and arrested; criminal hermitages destroyed, hostages freed, and arms and ammunition recovered.

Further operations are in progress in the North-central, South-south and South-west. Across these zones, criminal hideouts have been extirpated, threats neutralised, arms and ammunition recovered, suspects arrested, and kidnap victims rescued.

These sustained efforts, successes, cooperation, and coordination among the security agencies clearly say there is a responsible, and strategic

national security leadership. There is purpose, there is direction; there is commitment, there is the will and the way, and there is a sense of urgency.

Securing Nigeria is a principal objective of the Renewed Hope charter. The Tinubu administration has exercised responsibility with significant gains in the sphere of security since assumption of office. Although there is more to be done and will be done, the administration is wholly committed to removing security threats and securing law-abiding Nigerians anywhere in the country.

Written by Fredrick Nwabufu (Senior Special Assistant to the President on Public Engagement.)

"The air strikes removed clusters of refuge used as hideaways by the kingpin and his gang, effectively dismantling their base of operation. Only Very few survivors escaped the fury of the Nigeria Air force. In the North-east, precision air strikes by the air component of Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) on November 3, led to the elimination of several terrorists at their rendezvous, near Degbawa in Goza Local Government Area of Borno State. The terrorists were responsible for the recent attack on some locals in Geidam on October 31, and had planned to meet to review the attack as well as the next line of onslaught on innocent Nigerians and other vulnerable targets."

SUNDAY SPORTS

Girona moved ahead of Madrid, to top table

BY ANDY WEST

NOT reigning champions Barcelona. Not Jude Bellingham's Real Madrid. Not even perennial title candidates Atletico Madrid.

The team sitting two points clear at the top of La Liga, with 10 wins from their opening 12 games, are tiny Girona, playing only their fourth-ever top-flight season and possessing the league's smallest stadium.

The story of Girona's success starts 1,000 miles to the north, in Manchester.

In 2017, Girona were one of the first clubs to become part of the global Manchester City Football Group (CFG) network. Ever since, they have benefited from City's expertise and organisational structure.

Girona also benefit from City's players, receiving a steady trickle of young talents either being prepared for potential Premier League action, deemed not quite good enough for Pep Guardiola's plans or simply being put in the shop window.

For example, striker Taty Castellanos netted 14 goals for Girona last season on loan from New York City FC, another CFG club, and was then sold to Lazio for a reported 20m euros.

The current Girona squad features a plethora of players with City connections.

Explosive 19-year old Brazilian winger Savio, who has three goals and four assists so far this season and looks set for a sparkling future, is on loan from CFG club Troyes. Right-sided dynamo Yan Couto, 21 years old, has been borrowed directly from City. Aggressive midfielder Yangel Herrera, who has scored four goals and ranks second in La Liga for fouls conceded, was signed from City after spending last season on loan.

And, perhaps Girona's most important player, midfield orchestrator Aleix Garcia, is another former City man. Garcia made nine first-team appearances for the EPremier League club between 2015 and 2017 but has really flourished since returning to his native Spain, currently leading La Liga charts for ball touches and passes into the final third.

Girona's City links run deep on and off the pitch - the club's executive president is none other than Pere Guardiola, Pep's brother. And the clearly defined CFG philosophy filters from the top down to the pitch, all the way to an attacking, possession-based style with the use of inverted full-backs.

Alongside a handful of decision-makers with City connections, the club is also run by two local men whose long history at the helm has provided great stability and clarity of purpose.

Club president Delfi Geli started and finished his playing career with Girona, representing Barcelona and Atletico Madrid in between, before returning in an administrative capacity in 2015.

Sporting director Quique Carcel is another Catalan, starting out in Barcelona's youth ranks and appearing for various lower-league clubs before taking up his current role in 2014.

Carcel has earned particular praise this season - and a new contract until 2027 - for his clever development of the squad with signings from both near and far.

Working within a tight budget, Carcel picked up cheap quality such as former Manchester United defender Daley Blind, young left-



With 31 points from a possible 36 so far, Girona have defied the odds to climb to the top of La Liga

back Miguel Gutierrez from Real Madrid and central defender Eric Garcia - another ex-Manchester City player - on loan from Barcelona.

Carcel's scouting network, with the help of Guardiola, also identified a couple of gems from Ukraine. Attacking midfielder Viktor Tsygankov arrived midway through last season from Dynamo Kyiv, while frontman Artem Dovbyk was signed in the summer from Dnipro-1.

The elegant Tsygankov has registered five goals and seven assists in his 29 appearances for the club, while Dovbyk has more goals (six) and assists (four) per 90 minutes than any other player in La Liga this season.

Third time lucky for Michel

The mixture of young, old, local and international talents has given Girona an exciting and versatile squad, but it still needs somebody to pull everything together.

And, in Michel, the club has struck gold with a coach who understands exactly what the hierarchy wants to achieve and knows how to do it.

The former midfielder's managerial career started with hometown club Rayo Vallecano, with whom he won promotion in 2018, but he was fired the following season as relegation loomed. The same pattern was repeated at his next club, Huesca, so when Michel joined Girona and immediately achieved yet another promotion, he might have feared another sacking was imminent.

Whereas most small clubs ruffle the feathers of bigger rivals by focusing on defensive organisation and physicality, Girona's success stems from all-out attack.

They have scored more goals than any other team in La Liga (29, with next-best Atletico on 26), and Michel's mindset was perfectly illustrated last weekend at Osasuna.

Leading 3-2 in the final stages, many managers would introduce an extra defender. But Michel brought on two forwards, one of whom, Portu, supplied an injury-time cross for Garcia to volley home the fourth goal.

Saturday's trip to Rayo will be a special occasion for Michel. He spent 17 of his 20 years as a player with Rayo, then savoured promotion as a manager before being fired, and now returns top of the league. As he receives well wishes from familiar faces at his former club, Michel could

be forgiven for indulging a Not reigning champions Barcelona. Not Jude Bellingham's Real Madrid. Not even perennial title candidates Atletico Madrid.

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clearly defined CFG philosophy filters from the top down to the pitch, all the way to an attacking, possession-based style with the use of inverted full-backs.

It would be very wrong, however, to think of Girona as some kind of City Lite. The CFG ownership is just one of many factors in their success.

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But it has been third time lucky, with Girona going from strength to strength since Michel took them up 18 months ago. With a licence - in fact, a requirement - from the club's hierarchy to play progressive, attacking football, he has created a team in his own skilful image.

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During pre-season, Michel told his players that, after finishing 10th last season, he didn't believe the team had yet reached their limits. Those words proved prescient. It remains to be seen where the limits are. sense of pride. But that's not likely, because he is a manager who always wants more.

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Since taking over in the summer of 2021, Michel has guided Girona from the Spanish second division to the top of La Liga

SUNDAY SPORTS

Klopp angered by 'chaotic' performance, media conference

ATTEMPTING to conduct his post-match interview in a media tent outside Stadium de Toulouse, Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp was annoyed by the noise of the home fans.

"We were as organised as this press conference - pretty chaotic," said a visibly angry Klopp, as Toulouse supporters chanted and banged on the tent.

BBC SPORT said that, the bedlam left Klopp struggling to hear questions or translations from the interpreter, after Uefa allowed the media conference to take place outside the ground.

It provided a fitting coda to a deeply infuriating evening for Klopp, who had seen his Liverpool side stunned in Toulouse.

Just two weeks after a thumping 5-1 win at Anfield over a side just one point above the Ligue 1 relegation play-off place, the Reds produced a superb performance in a 3-2 defeat.

While Liverpool were left aggrieved by a late Jarell Quansah equaliser being disallowed for handball following a lengthy and confusing VAR check, Klopp said the primary reason for the loss was their own performance.

"We were not aggressive enough," he said. "We gave balls easily away. Real mistakes."

"With all the possession you have obviously you should create more but you cannot concede three goals here, that makes no sense."

"They fought harder and it was deserved. Congratulations to Toulouse."

"You can play as good as you want but if you don't win decisive battles you have no chance in football."

"For me it's not a handball" Despite making nine changes to the team which started the draw at Luton Town in the Premier League on Sunday, Liverpool's XI featured plenty of first-team strength - including Luis Diaz, starting his first match following the release of his father by kidnappers in Colombia.

Liverpool's bench was particularly eye-catching. Mohamed Salah, Dominik Szoboszlai and Trent Alexander-Arnold all came on at half-time - but made little impact.

Darwin Nunez was introduced when the visitors pulled the score back to 2-1, while Diogo Jota was thrown on with 10 minutes of normal time to play, and found the net to make it 3-2.

Yet even a point would have flattered Liverpool, for whom the defeat could have been even worse had Thijs Dallinga not had two goals ruled out for a foul and offside respectively.

Liverpool lacked flow and created few clear-cut chances until the frantic final minutes.

The peak of the chaos came seven minutes into stoppage time when Toulouse failed on multiple occasions to clear their lines, allowing young centre half Quansah to seemingly slam home his first



Klopp

senior goal.

But several phases earlier in the move, the ball had ricocheted off Alexis Mac Allister's chest into his arm.

Bulgarian referee Georgi Kabakov had already pointed to the centre circle, seemingly

indicating 'check complete' - but then was called to the VAR screen, and subsequently disallowed the goal.

"I only saw the video back now and for me it's not a handball - but how can I decide that?" said Klopp.

Trophies the 'missing piece' for Kane, says Southgate

TROPHIES are the "missing piece" for England captain Harry Kane, says Three Lions manager Gareth Southgate.

BBC SPORT said that, Kane, 30, has been in prolific form since joining Bayern Munich from Tottenham in August, scoring 19 goals in 15 games for the German champions.

But while he is England and Spurs' record goalscorer, he has yet to win any major honours during his career.

"I'm sure if you spoke to all our guys who have won trophies it changes how you view yourself," Southgate said.

"It isn't going to change what we think he is capable of and isn't going to change his talent."

"But in terms of his mindset and how he will feel I'm sure that's something he will benefit from."

Kane enjoyed a record-breaking career at Tottenham, where he became the club's all-time top scorer with 280 goals in 435 appearances.

His 58 international goals have also made him England's all-time leading scorer - and he was the top scorer at the 2018 World Cup.

Signed for an initial 100m euros (£86.4m) by Bayern, Kane's wait for a first trophy could have ended in his first game for the German club - but his side lost the German Super Cup to RB Leipzig.

He will be hopeful of ending his first campaign in Munich with silverware, however, having joined a team which claimed its 11th successive Bundesliga title last season.

"Any player wants to win trophies, that's what we are all geared to," Southgate said, on the day he announced his England squad for their final two Euro 2024 qualifiers.

"He is of course proud of his individual awards, but if you talk to him he wants to win something with his club or his country. That's how he is driven, like they all are."

Southgate added: "I think clearly it's a missing piece for him at the moment."

Kane's spectacular start to his Bayern career continued on



Kane

Saturday as he made it back-to-back Bundesliga hat-tricks by scoring a treble against title rivals Borussia Dortmund.

His third hat-trick of the campaign, it took his league tally to 15 goals in 10 games - while he has also scored four goals in as many Champions League group games to help

Bayern make a perfect start in Europe.

"His football has always been really good. What's brilliant for him is he's taken on a new challenge, a fresh life if you like," Southgate said.

"He's moved to a big club abroad, which isn't straightforward, but he's

Man Utd: Ratcliffe's minority stake close to being agreed

SIR Jim Ratcliffe's deal to become a minority shareholder in Manchester United is expected to be agreed during this month's international break, possibly as early as next week.

BBC SPORT said that, it is expected Ratcliffe's Ineos Group will pay around £1.25bn to buy 25%.

United's owners the Glazer family announced on 22 November 2022 they were considering selling the club.

Ineos and Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani both made offers, tabling bids of around £5bn.

However, neither bidder was willing to reach the Glazer family's valuation, with co-chairs Joel and Avram Glazer both known to be reluctant sellers.

Sheikh Jassim withdrew from the process last month, claiming his final bid, thought to be double United's \$3.2bn stock market valuation, had

not met the Glazers' demands. Ratcliffe had already amended his initial plan to buy the Glazers' 69% shareholding and reduced it to a 'majority' stake.

However, it was only when he reduced it again, to an anticipated 25%, that the potential for an agreement increased.

It is not entirely clear what the structure of the deal will be, nor if there will be specific dates that would allow Ratcliffe to increase his shareholding. It is thought around £245m in additional funds will be made available by Ratcliffe for infrastructure works related to the stadium.

It has been reported Ratcliffe wants to assume control of the football operations side of the club.

Sources with a close working knowledge of Ratcliffe have told BBC Sport it was "impossible to imagine" he would agree to being a silent

Díaz's father freed by Colombian guerrillas



Díaz

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp told TNT Sports that the footballer was "really happy".

"We are delighted by the news of [Luis Díaz's] father's safe return and we thank all those involved in securing his release," the club said on Twitter.

Luis Alfonso Díaz, a cousin of the footballer's father, told Caracol Radio that it was "emotional" to learn that he

had been freed "after so many days of sadness".

"We feel a great satisfaction, we are glad that it's come to an end," he added.

President Gustavo Petro reacted on X, formerly Twitter, with the message: "Long live Freedom and Peace."

The Colombian Football Federation issued a statement thanking all those responsible for Luis Manuel Díaz's release, including the government, the military and the police.

It added: "Football is passion in peace. Let no-one ever think of attacking that reality again."

Díaz scored on Sunday, lifting his shirt to reveal the words in Spanish "freedom for papa"

On the day of the kidnap attack, the couple was accosted by the gunmen as they had stopped at a petrol station in Barrancas, in the northern province of La Guajira.

The kidnapers later abandoned Luis Díaz's mother, Cilenis Marulanda, in a car as police closed in, but dragged away his father.

Police originally said that a criminal gang was most likely to blame.

But a government delegation - which is currently engaged in peace talks with the rebel group - later said that it had "official knowledge" that the kidnapping had been carried out by "a unit belonging to the ELN".

The ELN is Colombia's main remaining active guerrilla group. It has been fighting the state since 1964 and has an estimated 2,500 members.

It is most active in the border region with Venezuela, where Luis Manuel Díaz and his wife live.

bottom of their Champions League group and eighth in the Premier League.

The Glazer family, who bought United for £790m in 2005, said in November 2022 they were to "explore strategic alternatives" for the club.

Petrochemicals firm Ineos already owns French Ligue 1 club Nice and Swiss club Lausanne.

Its sporting portfolio also includes high-profile sailing team Ineos Britannia - led by Sir Ben Ainslie - which is aiming to win the 2024 America's Cup for Great Britain.

Ineos also has a five-year partnership with Formula 1 team Mercedes - where it has a 33% minority stake - and took over the British-based Team Sky in cycling in 2019.

Ratcliffe, who says he is a lifelong United fan, tried and failed to buy Chelsea last year.

United are struggling on the pitch this season, having lost nine of their 17 games, sitting

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Osaka won the US Open in 2018 and 2020, and the Australian open in 2019 and 2021

Osaka plans return six months after giving birth

FORMER world number one Naomi Osaka will return to tennis at the Brisbane International, almost six months after giving birth. BBC SPORT said that, the Japanese four-time Grand Slam winner announced her pregnancy in January and had daughter Shai in July. The 26-year-old has not played on the WTA Tour since the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo in September 2022. "I am really excited about getting back out on court and competing," Osaka said. "I always love starting my season in Brisbane and can't wait to return. The Brisbane International is such a great

tournament and will set me up for a brilliant comeback this summer." The Brisbane tournament begins on December 31 and runs through to January 7, serving as a major event in the run-up to the Australian Open getting under way on January 14. Osaka won the most recent of her four Grand Slams at the Australian Open in 2021, her second title at Melbourne Park. In May 2021, after pulling out of the French Open, she revealed she had "suffered long bouts of depression" ever since winning her first major title at the US Open in 2018. She has previously taken

breaks from tennis to prioritise her mental health and spoken openly about the issues she has faced. Organisers of the Brisbane International also announced Great Britain's Andy Murray would feature at the tournament, which is returning after a three-year hiatus forced by the Covid-19 pandemic. "It's great to see the Brisbane International back and I am really looking forward to returning to Queensland this summer," said former world number one Murray. "I have great memories of winning the title in 2012 and 2013 and I would love to lift the trophy again for a third time in Brisbane."

Fernandez sends Canada through to semi-finals

LEYLAH Fernandez sealed Canada's place in the Billie Jean King Cup semi-finals for the first time since 1988, as Italy also reached the last four in Seville. BBC SPORT said that, Fernandez, 21, beat Poland's Magda Linette 6-2 6-3 after Marina Stakusic overcame Magdalena Frech 4-6 7-5 6-3. Italy are also through to Saturday's semi-finals - for the first time since 2014 - after beating Germany 3-0. The USA began their campaign by beating defending champions Switzerland, while Australia edged Kazakhstan. Fernandez prevailed in a three-hour match against Sara Sorribes Tormo, which she described as a "bullfight", to give Canada victory over Spain on Wednesday. But, a day later, the world number 20 was a comfortable winner over Linette and Fernandez said she was "proud and ecstatic" that her nation had ended a 35-year wait for a semi-final spot. Team-mates Gabriela Dabrowski and Eugenie Bouchard completed a 3-0 win over Poland - who are without world number one Iga Swiatek - with a 6-2 6-3 win against Weronika Falkowska and Katarzyna Kawa. Martina Trevisan and Jasmine Paolini confirmed Italy's progress from Group D with singles wins, before Lucia

Bronzetti and Elisabetta Cocciaretto edged a match tie-break against Friedsam and Laura Siegemund in the doubles - winning 6-4 6-7 (4-7) 11-9. Paolini recorded her second singles win of the tournament by beating Friedsam 6-3 6-2 after Trevisan - also backing up her win in the opening 2-1 victory against France - defeated Eva Lys 7-6 6-1. Record 18-time winners the USA, who would face Group C winners Canada should they

top Group A, will aim for a last-four place against the Czech Republic on Friday after overcoming winless Switzerland. Sofia Kenin, playing her first Billie Jean King Cup tie since 2020, clinched victory by beating Viktorija Golubic 6-3 6-7 (1-7) 7-5 after Danielle Collins won 7-6 (7-4) 6-1 against Celine Naef. Sloane Stephens and Taylor Townsend ensured a clean sweep for the USA, winning 6-1 7-6 (7-3) against Jil



Fernandez

Woods has 'zero issues' with repaired ankle

TIGER Woods says he has "zero issues" with his surgically repaired right ankle but other injury problems remain. BBC SPORT said that, the 47-year-old American has not competed since injury forced him to withdraw from the Masters third round in April. Woods, a 15-time major winner, then had fusion surgery on a bone in his ankle to address post-traumatic arthritis from a previous fracture in the joint. "That pain is completely gone," Woods told the Associated Press. "My ankle is fine. Where they fused my ankle, I have absolutely zero issue whatsoever." "But all the surrounding areas are where I had all my problems and I still do. So you fix one, others have to become more hypermobile to get around it, and it can lead to some issues." Woods was seen caddying for his son Charlie at the Notah Begay III Junior Golf National Championship earlier this month. "I'm pretty sore after caddying for four days," Woods said. "It was a flat course, thank God."

In recent years, Woods has also played with his son in the PNC Championship, an exhibition tournament in which major champions play alongside their children or parents. The next tournament will take place between 14 and 17 December and Woods would be able to use a cart instead of walking the

course if he decides to play in the event. In October, Woods and fellow golfer Rory McIlroy launched an indoor "high-tech league" and the American announced on Tuesday he will co-own one of the league's teams - Jupiter Links Golf Club - and will play for them when it begins in January 2024.



Woods

Maddison withdraws from England squad with ankle injury

JAMES Maddison has withdrawn from the England squad for November's Euro 2024 qualifiers with an ankle injury. BBC SPORT said that, the 26-year-old midfielder sustained the injury in Tottenham's chaotic 4-1 defeat by Chelsea in the Premier League on Monday. England play Malta at Wembley on Friday, 17 November before travelling to North Macedonia three days later. Tottenham said Maddison would "remain at Hotspur Way

for rehabilitation with the club's medical staff". The club did not say how long they expect the playmaker to be sidelined for. Maddison has scored three goals and made five assists in 11 Premier League games for Spurs since joining for £40m from Leicester City in June. He has made five appearances for England and was an unused substitute in the 3-1 victory over Italy in October which secured Euro 2024 qualification for Gareth Southgate's side with two games to spare.



Maddison

Teichmann and Simona Waltert, as Switzerland's title defence ended with back-to-back 3-0 losses. In Group B, Australia beat Kazakhstan 2-1 after Storm Hunter and Ellen Perez won a third-set match tie-break in their decisive doubles match against Anna Danilina and Yulia Putintseva, prevailing 6-1 4-6 10-5. Hunter had put Australia ahead by winning her singles match against Danilina 7-6 (7-2) 6-4 but Putintseva beat Kimberly Birrell 6-0 7-5 to level the tie. Kazakhstan play Slovenia in their final group match, with Slovenia guaranteed to progress with victory following their opening win over Australia. What is the Billie Jean King Cup - and when do GB play? Twelve nations are taking part in the finals of the competition, which was formerly known as the Fed Cup, with teams split into four groups in the round-robin stage. The group winners will advance to Saturday's semi-finals before the champions are crowned after Sunday's final in Seville. The winners will receive prize money of \$2.4m (£2.1m), which is part of an overall payment pot of \$9.6m (£8.4m) - a record figure for the event which matches the cash awarded in the men's equivalent Davis Cup.

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Four-time Grand Slam champion announces pregnancy

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Grand Slam winner announced her pregnancy in Tokyo in September 2022. "I am really excited about getting back out on court and competing," Osaka said. "I always love starting my

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She has previously taken breaks from tennis to prioritise her mental health and spoken openly about the issues she has faced.

Organisers of the Brisbane International also announced Great Britain's Andy Murray would feature at the tournament, which is returning after a three-year hiatus forced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It's great to see the Brisbane International back and I am really looking forward to returning to Queensland this summer," said former world number one Murray.

"I have great memories of winning the title in 2012 and 2013 and I would love to lift the trophy again for a third time in Brisbane."



Osaka has won two Australian Open and two US Open titles



Afcon 2027: Tournament predicted with three hosts

THE 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) will be the most profitable in history according to Rogers Byamukama, a board member of the Federation of Uganda Football Associations (Fufa).

Uganda will host the tournament alongside East African neighbours Kenya and Tanzania - the first time in history that three countries have delivered the continental showpiece.

"There's a minimum guarantee of nine completely sold-out home games - a record that has never been achieved before since a single host can only guarantee three home games," Byamukama told BBC Sport Africa.

"I can declare with confidence that the 2027 tournament will be the most commercially viable event for the Confederation of African Football (Caf)."

Caf will not be dealing with the host countries individually but as an entity, and soon the three nations are expected to name a joint organising committee.

The three hosts aim to have a shared spirit of 'Pamoja' - which translates as unity or together - yet a tournament spread across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania entails unique challenges.

Stakeholders from all three countries met in Kenya this week for the first time since their bid was accepted, with discussions dominated by infrastructure and anticipated difficulties.

"It's no secret that infrastructure has been one of the biggest challenges in this region," Byamukama said.

"But even as things stand right now, we have enough stadiums available to host the tournament. Renovating these facilities is a simpler approach than starting from scratch.

"It's very profound that the three governments have committed to funding the construction of new stadiums. Sports infrastructure ought to be the main legacy of [hosting] the Afcon."

Meanwhile, Byamukama expects the 2027 Nations Cup will be able to take advantage of both existing transport links and the collective population of the host countries, which adds up to over 162 million people.

"Our population is probably next to Nigeria, making it a very good Afcon market," he added.

"The beauty about our borders lies in our unity and seamless road transport, making it affordable for fans to watch a game in Nairobi, travel overnight by bus to Kampala for another match then take another bus to Dar es Salaam.

"This is such a powerful and highly marketable fan



AFCON 2021: Senegal beat Egypt to lift first title

experience."

An expanded Nations Cup comes with high cost implications, and the 'Pamoja' hosts have not had

to wait too long for conversations about money to begin - especially with a recent review of tournament guidelines requiring host countries to now deposit a

guarantee fee.

The 2027 hosts are expected to make a cash deposit of \$90m (£73.7m) to Caf - translating to \$30m per country - by 15 January

2025.

"None of the countries in the East African region was going to be able to host the tournament individually," admitted Byamukama.

CWC 2023: SA beat Afghanistan

RASSIE van der Dussen hit an unbeaten 76 to take South Africa to a tense five-wicket win over Afghanistan in their final World Cup group game.

Gerald Coetzee took 4-44 as the Proteas bowled Afghanistan out for 244 after Azmatullah Omarzai made an unbeaten 97 to rescue the innings from 116-6.

South Africa made hard work of the chase but held their nerve to get over the line in the 48th over.

Defeat officially ended Afghanistan's chances of making the top four.

Jonathan Trott's side needed to win by a highly improbable 438 runs to overhaul New Zealand on net run rate and stay in contention to reach the knockout stages but, after opting to bat first, lost wickets in clusters.

After a steady start, they lost three wickets for four runs to slip from 41-0 to 45-3 and then another mini collapse saw them lose three wickets in four overs midway through the innings.

However, Azmatullah held Afghanistan together with a well-paced knock, biding his time before accelerating late on, but three dot balls to end the innings left him three shy of a maiden international century.

In reply, South Africa, who have dominated sides when batting first but struggled chasing, started well with openers Quinton de Kock and Temba Bavuma putting on 61.

They fell in quick succession

but Van der Dussen and Aiden Markram continued the momentum with a 60-run stand.

But every time the Proteas appeared to be cruising, Afghanistan took a wicket to drag them back and when David Miller was dismissed with 62 still needed, the game was in the balance.

Van der Dussen and Andile Phehlukwayo remained composed, though, and having whittled down the runs required, they finished in a hurry with the latter going six, four, six to seal the win.

With a number of players struggling with slight injuries - most notably Bavuma and Lungi Ngidi - throughout the game, South Africa now have a few days to rest and recover before their semi-final against Australia.

After losing to Bangladesh in their first game, not much was expected of Afghanistan at this World Cup.

For all the talent in their team and the way they had shown themselves capable of competing with the top sides in white-ball cricket, they had yet to do it on the big stage with their only 50-over World Cup win coming against Scotland in 2015.

A month later and they have beaten three former champions in England, Pakistan and Sri Lanka - all in convincing fashion - and comfortably seen off the Netherlands as well.

But for one of the great one-day innings of all-time, they would surely have added Australia to that list and come into this match knowing a win would put them into the semi-

finals.

That dream has eluded them this time but any notion of Afghanistan being minnows of world cricket has long since been banished.

The confidence gained from their accomplishments in India should serve them well and with an ICC tournament each year for the foreseeable future, they will have plenty more chances to make history.

South Africa captain Temba Bavuma: "My leg is sore. I don't know the extent of it yet but I'll have to be fine. I am stubborn, it will have to be fine."

"Part of me is dreaming. We want to be back here [in the final]. But Australia are a big hurdle for us to overcome. We will enjoy today, take the

learnings and then get our minds set on that game."

Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi: "We gave a good message to the world in this tournament. We played big teams and we fought. The Australia game was in our hands, it was a shock that defeat. There was a lot of learning."

Player of the Match, South Africa's Rassie van der Dussen: "Someone always has to play the anchor role in a chase and I was happy to do that. The platform I had from Temba and Quinton made my job a lot easier, too."

"We do so well batting first and that makes people think we chase badly. We would like to improve our chasing, yes, and I think being in that situation tonight will hold us in



Ben Stokes

"This money is meant to facilitate the logistics involved around hotels, security, VIP protection."

The pre-paid guarantee deposit is expected to minimise the risk of a late postponement or re-allocation of hosting rights emanating from financial challenges.

For example, Guinea was stripped of rights to host the 2025 Nations Cup last October as the West African country was considered unprepared while Cameroon had the 2019 tournament taken away to be hosted by Egypt instead.

The true cost of the 2027 joint tournament has not yet been determined beyond the initial deposit, although Byamukama states "there is no cause for alarm" regarding financing.

Caf requires host nations to have a minimum of six stadiums to host a Nations Cup, two of which must be 40,000-seater and above.

The rest can be anywhere above a 20,000 capacity, which means that the three countries only need two large anchor stadiums among them.

Uganda announced the Mandela National Stadium in Kampala will serve as their main venue once ongoing renovations are finished while the Nakivubo War Memorial Stadium, which has been undergoing its own renovations for almost ten years, will serve as a back-up.

There are also plans to build a stadium in Hoima, roughly 200km north west of Kampala.

Meanwhile, Kenya's cabinet secretary Ababu Namwamba confirmed construction of a brand new stadium in Nairobi called the Talanta Stadium.

The minister recently turned over stadium renovations to the country's military in an effort to cut down on the government's rigorous procurement procedure and eliminate any delays.

The handover may have been prompted by the fact that in 2017 Kenya was stripped of the rights to host the 2018 African Nations Championship because of stadia infrastructure delays.

"We will be ready for the Afcon no matter what, and we will be ready on time," Namwamba promised.

Tanzania appears best prepared of the three hosts, with Tanzania Football Federation president Wallace Karia confirming the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam as their main venue.

The 60,000-seater would be ready to host if the Nations Cup kicked off today, and the stadium was sold out when it hosted the opening match of the inaugural African Football League between Simba and Al Ahly on 20 October.