

**Let Cardoso
be, you all
cannot
be experts**
- Tinubu



News: Governor Sani urges strong northern partnership Page 11

Sports: Korea sack Klinsmann after 12 months Page 37

Politics: Don't incite Nigerians, APC tells PDP Page 5

Sunday Standard



TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1972

VOL. 13 NO. 816

SUNDAY, February 18, 2024

N250

Email:nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com

Hunger:

Is Nigeria sitting on a time bomb?

Gradually and painfully, hungry Nigerians presently enduring hardship may be left with no other option than to embark on uncontrollable revolution if the Federal Government fails to urgently tackle the issue of food insecurity stirring us in the eyes. Life is becoming unbearable as most citizens of the country hardly afford daily meals for survival. JENNIFER YARIMA writes. Pages 10 & 31



FG secures \$30BN commitment from investors
P2

Rising cost of cement: Minister summons manufacturers
P2



Resign if you can't solve Nigeria's problems P2

Nigeria and medicare cost

TO say that Nigeria at present is facing myriad health challenges is stating the obvious. To equally say that the cost of medication in the country has skyrocketed over time, making its affordability a herculean task is a gross understatement.

DICTATION of illnesses, its diagnosis and prescription of drugs have become the exclusive preserve of a very few. With the biting economic downturn, couple with the hyper-inflationary trend, millions of Nigerians can ill-afford prescribed medication from the conventional hospital in the country.

THIS has led to many patients resorting to what has popularly been termed (alternative medicine) otherwise known as herbal medicine. In spite of its vaunted efficacy, this alternative means of medicare, most at times have its side effects particularly as regard dosage to be taken and the purity of the herbs.

WE observe with sadness that, the few pharmaceutical industries that hitherto existed in the country have taken flight. Because of the present unfriendly economic climate in the country, many of such multi-million naira pharmaceutical industries have since relocated to neighbouring countries for their businesses.

THIS ugly scenario simply means double jeopardy for the Nigerian economy and its people. For one, it means the local pharmaceutical retailers will have to import these drugs from the producing neighbouring countries. This in turn will compound the already volatile situation in the foreign exchange market (Forex).

AND what is to be done? Government should deliberately create a conducive and enabling environment for entrepreneurs in the pharmaceutical industries to produce the drugs needed in Nigeria with focus on local content. That done, key players in the pharmaceutical industry can produce optimally and equally thrive.

THERE is no doubt, investment in the pharmaceutical industry is capital intensive. It may be a bit difficult for individuals on their own to go all out and invests in the industry. Therefore, the onus lies with the government to invest heavily in the industry. Once robust foundation has been laid, it behooves on the entrepreneur to cash in on the situation.

AGAIN, the citizenry must change the narratives of perpetually depending on foreign manufactured drugs even when there are equally effective drugs of the same type produced in the country. This too will go a long way in patronizing the made-in-Nigeria drug products and also encourage the manufacturers entrepreneurs.

WE believe, above all, that the political will is key towards achieving this objectives. Government should not merely pay-lip-service to matters of health of its people. It is a truism that many Nigerians die from ailments simply because they cannot afford the exorbitant charges on drugs. Something ought to be done, and it has to be done quickly.

FG secures \$30BN commitment from investors

The Federal Government yesterday disclosed that it had secured a whopping sum of \$30 billion commitment from a foreign corporate entity willing to invest in Nigeria, with potentials to create jobs and boost productivity in the country.

Minister of Industry, Trade and Investments, Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite, who disclosed this at a media briefing in Abuja, said the fund had already arrived Nigeria and was not a mere pledge. Uzoka-Anite also disclosed that part of the investment will come in the form of equipment while the rest will come in terms of finance. This is in addition to the \$14 billion worth of FDI flow from India which was secured on the sidelines of the G20 Summit held in India.

The minister said that since the inception of the President Bola Tinubu's administration, Nigeria's bilateral engagements have been fruitful and have led to significant investments in the country. Uzoka-Anite said that since the G29 Summit, the Confederation of Indian Industries has been visiting Nigeria to further explore identified investment opportunities, just as there has been an engagement with Germany, Netherlands, UAE, South Africa, and others to open up avenues for investment and the establishment of joint regulatory protocols. She said: "Recently, we signed a MoU on Enhanced Trade in Partnership (ETIP) with the United Kingdom, where we have extensively discussed the issue of joint regulatory protocols.

"This has culminated in the signing of the Enhanced Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement. "This agreement



Uzoka-Anite

facilitates smoother trade processes, allowing Nigerian businesses to export more goods to the UK. "It also provides capacity building and sensitisation for Nigerian exporters on how to benefit from the UK Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS), which enables Nigerian exporters to export up to 3000 different agricultural products to the UK with beneficial terms." Uzoka-Anite said the government has also re-launched the Nigerian Trade Policy 2023-2027, which is geared at stimulating the domestic economy by connecting Nigerian SME's to the global value chain thereby ensuring that Nigerian businesses have the capacity to be globally competitive.

She added: "In furtherance of ensuring this global competitiveness, we are currently negotiating our accession into the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) Agreement, which is posited to be the largest free trade area in the world, with a combined GDP of \$3.4 trillion and access to a market of over 1.3 billion people

spread across 54 member states of the African Union. "Recently, I was at the 13th AFCFTA Trade Minister's meeting where we are actively negotiating Nigeria's unique position on several crucial matters bordering on digital trade, safeguarding against illegal transshipment under the AFCFTA and tariff lines in specific sectors of the Nigerian economy.

"The successful implementation of the AFCFTA is expected to lead to diversification of exports, improved market access, enhanced trade opportunities and increased foreign direct investment." Furthermore, under the Presidential Council, we are implementing several initiatives to reform the commodity trading landscape and also NCX's operations and performance. These reforms, she said, will create a future where the hard work of farmers and miners translates into equitable opportunities in national and international markets, contribute to minimising food inflation, enhance solid mineral and agricultural production and exports, boost private sector investment in the agricultural value chain, and foster economic empowerment among small hold farmers and miners."

Uzoka-Anite also disclosed that her ministry is set to launch the National Trade Intelligence Unit in collaboration with other MDAs such as the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy, the Nigerian Customs Services, Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, and the Central Bank of Nigeria. The Trade Intelligence Unit, she said, will be the National Coordinator and focal point for all trade related data and information in Nigeria

Resign if you can't solve Nigeria's problems

-PDP Gov

GOVERNORS elected on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have reminded the All Progressives Congress (APC) led Federal Government that it was elected to solve Nigeria's problems not to compound them.

The governors who were reacting to the criticisms of the Progressives Governors' Forum and the Minister of Information and National Orientation Alhaji Mohammed Idris, over its earlier statement, called on President Bola Tinubu to resign if he cannot provide a solution to the problems plaguing the country.

The state chief executives in a statement over the weekend, by the Director General of the PDP Governors' Forum (PDP-GF) Cyril Maduabum, noted that even though Nigeria is a federation, "there is indeed only one economy.

"Hardship and suffering being faced by Nigerians have no tribal, religious or party colouration. A hungry man is an angry man.

"While all tiers of government have a role to play, the APC-led Federal Government has a disproportionate role to play in mobilising Nigerians and all organs and tiers of government for sustainable solutions.

"If it can not do so or is unable to do so, it should graciously throw in the towel"

The governors stated that the communiqué issued at the end of their meeting on February 12 was borne out of patriotism, and as partakers of the nation's governance

They reminded Tinubu that the bulk stops at his table, and advised the APC to stop the blame game, or use of propaganda to obfuscate or confuse issues.

According to the statement, "PDP-

governed states are comparatively the best in Nigeria in terms of developmental policies, programmes, and projects that benefit their states positively, regular payment of salaries, pensions, gratuities, and minimum wage to their workforce.

State governments that are delinquent on these issues are not of PDP extraction. It is false to say so."

They pointed out that the food crisis experienced in the country is exacerbated by insecurity and high exchange rate issues, which they said, are within the purview of the Federal Government.

The governors promised that as stakeholders in governance, "to

Rising cost of cement: Minister summons manufacturers

THE Minister of Works, David Umahi, says prominent cement manufacturers have been summoned to a meeting over the rising cost of cement.

He expressed worry that the cost of the product was rising at an astronomical rate despite huge patronage by road and housing contractors to cement manufacturers.

The Minister's Special Adviser (Media), Orji Uchenna Orji, in a statement in Abuja on Saturday, explained that the meeting would take place on Monday, February 19, 2024, at the Ministry's Conference Hall, Mabushi, Abuja.

According to the statement, "The Minister of Works, David Umahi, has summoned an urgent meeting of all cement manufacturers in Nigeria."

It said that those invited are Dangote Plc, BUA Plc, Larfarge, and others.

The minister said that it is common knowledge that the manufacturers

continue to work collaboratively with President Tinubu to find lasting solutions to a very difficult situation created or exacerbated by the APC since 2015. We believe in cooperative federalism.

"The buck ultimately stops at Mr. President's table as the chief executive officer of Nigeria, the president and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the federation, the chief salesman and leader of Nigeria.


"We are not in doubt that he is trying his best. We only hope and pray that his best is good enough to take Nigeria out of the woods in the

have their challenges, saying that they shall look into, but from their findings, the disparity between ex-factory price and the market price is wide.

He stated that they need to look into the situation and other issues with a view to finding a common front.




Umahi



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum**
On Sunday

gobum_katt@yahoo.co.uk 07037977744 (sms)



"One of the most vexatious issues coming out from the money meant to cushion the sufferings Nigerians are going through is the several billions meant to be given to the NASS and the Judiciary. The question has been asked: Why are the two arms of government getting such huge amounts of money, even while it has been established that they are better off?"

IT is already a fact that the National Assembly in the second week of July 2023 approved a whopping sum of 500 billion as palliative to assuage the Nigerian people on account of the removal of petroleum subsidy by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as soon as he was inaugurated on May 29.

From all intent and purposes, this huge amount cannot solve the problem it is intended to counter. If the package is meant to be shared with Nigerians, most of them are of the view that it should have been invested in critical areas that may touch their lives as they will be impactful in more ways than share it.

Nigerians believe that some of the sad experiences of Sure-P, Public Works Programme, and N-Power are too nuanced to be forgotten easily. While the social interventions were deservedly enunciated, their execution was poor, and at best selective. They lost their steam as soon as they came on board; while the economy hemorrhaged on many fronts as a result of the sleaze that accompanied them.

The House of Representatives has gone ahead to approve the package, but not without the National Assembly and the Judiciary getting a large chunk of the palliative. While Nigerians think otherwise, the National Assembly has gone ahead to defend what they have been allocated.

Nigerians seem to know better where all is leading. They (Nigerians) have repeatedly alleged that it was another way of softening the ground for the Presidency for support. Whether that is the case or not, the frustrations of Nigerians are understandable and should be appreciated on its merit.

The removal of fuel subsidies has led to massive increases in the prices of goods and services, but more worrisome, the cost of living is cause to be disturbed. Unlike in the past where only the poor felt the pinch of various government policies, the new development cannot be said to be the same. The pain is being felt by all and sundry, and that makes it more worthy of study.

If Nigerians felt the pains of the fuel subsidy, it is the second increase of 617 naira per liter that raised their adrenalin level to incredible heights. Hardly were Nigerians 'about to adjust' to the increase on the day of inauguration than they were greeted with another huge lift in the price of the commodity again.

Since then, there have been intemperate comments about the administration of President Bola Tinubu. Little wonder, the N500 billion palliative promised by him and approved by the National Assembly is being reworked, on account of the harsh time being experienced.

Indeed, more Nigerians have joined the bandwagon of asking the government to rescind the decision and plow the humongous amount into areas that will benefit more people in the future. There is nothing that should take away what the people want.

Many people do not believe that such palliatives could get into the

Right time to give Nigerians palliatives



hands of those who genuinely deserve to be given. In the current situation in Nigeria, who is not poor? Many think the items or any such palliative meant for the rich and strong.

No doubt, most Nigerians are the hard hit for it. The commentaries many have read about the new government of President Bola Ahmed on different platforms are not palatable. They tell of many things that are yet to come.

By and large, it is a warning to guard our loins for good or bad. We are headed for more of the hard times. These are meant to tell us to accept that the mistake of yesteryears is back to haunt us.

There is no doubt we are in for austere times ahead. Had we taken this 'rejected' path since 2012, when President Goodluck Jonathan's government was on the verge of removing subsidies, perhaps we would have gotten things right.

Those who opposed him then have since become team members on the saddle and who are taking a walk down the same path. They say, whatever goes around, always comes around.

As things stand, an emergency has been declared on food security instead of insecurity, given what has happened in several states. Most members of such communities that are traditionally known to produce food cannot access their farms this year. For this reason, it is a known fact that there is nothing but hunger in the land; therefore, the government should have known better what to do.

While the subsidy issue remains one of the most sensitive items Nigerians have had to grapple with lately, the 800 million dollars from the World Bank during the Buhari regime and how it will be used as directed must be handled with tact. The template should be renegotiated by the government so long it knows what it wants to spend the money on.

Market forces may not solve all economic problems, and that is why we need to define boundaries; and redistribute income in such a manner that people's confidence in

the economy will be boosted.

This is doable, so long as the government can get stakeholders to prepare the road map on how to get all working for Nigeria using an acceptable template. It is possible to build the capacity of Nigeria's economy to be productive; while we localize policies that can suit our environment. What may work in the United Kingdom, Rwanda, or Canada and elsewhere may not work in Nigeria.

Nothing is absolute in these policies. Nigerians have just been promised palliatives, which have not yet been implemented, but some DISCOS are already talking about reviewing their tariffs and taxes for their despondent consumers. As you read this, I want you to know that 11 of them have already applied for a review for the cost of services that are non-existent or at best given at their whims and caprices.

Government policies need to have a tinge of fiscal policies that can the effects of hardships: Taxes on health, education, etc, and also what could be done to reduce the effect on investors. Taxes are not about profit but should be directed to all segments in order to survive and make life meaningful for all.

All the steps taken by the government mean there will be an increase in revenue. It is possible to publish the amount gotten through so that citizens will appreciate what it is being used for. If the states don't work for their development through revenue generation, the federal may be suffocated.

Government can focus on critical areas that would improve the quality of lives of the people. Almost all states are involved in road projects, but there are no improved investments in health, education, and other critical sectors to make the lives of Nigerians better.

To cushion the effects of the subsidy removal, the government should release grains to Nigerians and other farm inputs such as fertilizers to farmers. Currently, the cost of procuring it is beyond the reach of most farmers. These are the critical inputs but they are procured under stringent conditions that are stringent.

Therefore, to get a lot of these sorted out by the government, the right policies must be taken. Often, the implementation of the policies has been the bane of their successes. Agriculture needs to have the right policies put in place that might give Nigeria the expected frame for the development of this sector.

There is no doubt that human capital development has not taken center stage in aggregating its benefits in our quest to compete with nations in other civilized climes. More is needed, and frankly speaking, there are Nigerians whose desire to be utilized is central to their training.

The Tinubu administration has already passed eight months into its first year of the first term. Some people have said that he comes as someone who may not have been prepared to lead. He may have been touted as being prepared to lead Nigeria. More is being expected of him, particularly in dealing with the malfeasance left by the last administration of Muhammadu Buhari.

If anyone has taken a walk to the market lately, Nigerians are in for a hard time. The markets are at best chaotic, unmindful of no one except their profits. Therefore, the question to ask is what is the road towards solving it? The government believes that the best that can come out of the quagmire is to dole out money to the poor of the poorest Nigerians.

The governments over the years have distributed money under different guises, but it is also safe to ask: Who benefitted from it? What is the social register that Nigeria has generated? There has been controversy attached to those who generated the template. Perhaps due to our population and lack of planning, the desire by the government to give out different palliatives has been hampered.

Whether it is Sure-P, Trader Moni, or any of those initiatives executed in the past, can any government over the past 23 years say with certainty if the money got to those who meant to receive it? Even if it

did, could it be said that those put in place of the initiative were fair enough?

Have Nigerians not been told by two ministers of the former administration, that of Finance and Humanitarian Development, Aisha Ahmed and Sadiya Faruk respectively that Nigerians benefited immensely from the school feeding program and other initiatives by the government to cushion the effects of the hardships on Nigerians.

She is currently facing the consequences of her actions while in office. Her successor, Dr Beta Edu, is on suspension for the transfer of over N500million into a private account three months after she was sworn in as minister. What becomes of her is yet to be known, but it can be said anywhere, her story is a sad reminder of what has befallen us: Corruption and it should be killed.

One of the most vexatious issues coming out from the money meant to cushion the sufferings Nigerians are going through is the several billions meant to be given to the NASS and the Judiciary. The question has been asked: Why are the two arms of government getting such huge amounts of money, even while it has been established that they are better off?

Nigerians may not be satisfied with the reason that has been provided by the leadership of the NASS. For them, they deserve it for what it may be used for; but Nigerians know better why such humongous amounts are being doled out. Nigerians are of the view that these policies can be reviewed to allow for the space for which they can urgently address the mass of the people, and not the politicians, and the rich that benefit more than the poor.

Social investment by its name is not bad, what has often beclouded such initiatives is how the implementation is made. The truth is that the implementation has been bastardized over time by those put in place to manage them. No one is sure how much was spent by the last administration or where the receivers are from. The social register must be reviewed and those that deserve to get palliatives should be accordingly given.

Some states have started to increase the minimum wage to be paid to their workers. Imo State has promised to give 40000 naira only to its civil servants, and other investment palliatives to marketers. In Kwara and Bayelsa States, for instance, free transportation and a few days to come to work have been approved for its workers. Let us hope that other states may follow suit.

Note: The material you just finished reading was published last year. Several things have happened since then. The prices of goods and services have gone up three or more times what used to obtain.

The living conditions of Nigerians is not what should be. Governments as the people are indeed saddened about what is happening. They want government to fix things and quickly so.



Burden of children as parents

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

PSIRS promises to support taxation competition programmes

By JIDUANA DARING

EXECUTIVE Chairman Plateau State Internal Revenue Service (PSIRS), Mr. Jim Pam Wayas has said that the service would continue to support programmes that are geared towards promoting taxation in the state.

Mr. Wayas stated this when he flagged-off 2024 National Schools Tax Debate Competition, held at the PSIRS conference hall in Jos.

Our correspondent reports that the event was organized by the national body of the Society of Women in Taxation (SWIT) in collaboration with the state chapter and Ministry of Education with the theme; "Taxation Impact on Economic Growth; Lowering Taxes will Stimulate the Nigerian Economy."

PSIRS chairman said that the importance of the competition cannot be overemphasized since it aims at educating the younger ones through debate competition on taxation's impact on economic growth.

Mr. Wayas also expressed the PSIRS readiness to give the participating students from Plateau State who are expected to represent North Central in the debate competition at the national level, the necessary support.

He encouraged the participating students to work towards first position at the national level of the competition. He added that the competition if performed well will serve as a source of getting scholarship for their studies.

Mr. Wayas described taxation as a new oil for Nigeria. He pointed out that the service would continue doing everything possible to ensure that Plateau citizens are properly informed, educate and enlightened about paying tax in the state.

In her remarks, SWIT Chairman, Plateau State Chapter, Halima Maidambe expressed delight and thanked PSIRS for the support given to them for the programme.

Maidambe explained that SWIT is an association of women that engage in tax



Wayas

practice who are equally members of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CTTN) and have been involved in a number of activities aimed at promoting the ideals and mandates of CITTN.

She pointed out that CITN also carried out projects that have great impact on members of the society; increase their disposable income and educate the general public on taxation and the need to pay tax.

Maidambe added that the society, as part of her annual activities, thought it wise to organize a National Schools Tax Debate featuring 6 Senior Secondary Schools each from Plateau, Lagos, Bayelsa and Cross River States.

She maintained that the objective of the school debate is to enhance to participants with knowledge to assist in respective early engagement as "Tax Ambassadors". She encouraged the students to participate actively in this debates, as their involvement would play a vital role in realizing their vision and mission of raising "Tax Ambassadors", for the country.

Maidambe disclosed that at the end of the states competition, the successful school (best students) from

the participating states would compete at the national level for the championship prize and also be decorated "SWIT Ambassador for 2024." She added that the national grand finale is billed for March 2024 in Abuja.

Earlier in a welcome remarks, LOC. Chairperson, Mamot A. Rosemary said the main aim of the debate was centered on early and formal tax education in secondary schools, building a tax culture into the lives of the young ones which will help them as future taxpayers or tax administrators to understand the taxation system and their responsibilities.

SUNDAY STANDARD reports that the participants include: St John's College, Government Model Secondary School Shendam, Government Secondary School, Angulu Jos, Girls High School Gindiri, St Pauls Academy and Unique Academy Mangu. However, the first prize, second and third went to St Paul's Academy, Government Model Secondary School Shendam and Girls High School Gindiri respectively.

Drug dealer killed by customers in Gombe

WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

THREE murder suspects of a drug dealer were among several others paraded by the Gombe State Police Command for various offences within the state.

Parading the suspects on behalf of the State Police Commissioner, Hayatu Usman, the Command's spokesman, Mahid Muazu Abubakar, said Police investigation revealed that the three murder suspects were customers of the deceased drug kingpin.

He explained that the drug dealer sustained cuts in his back and head during a fight between him and his customers after a disagreement among them.

According to him, on the 12th of February, 2024, in the afternoon, one Mustapha Mato of Deba town reported at the Deba Police Division that the Deba Police Division that Dangunde Abba, Abdulsalam Shehu and Abdulmalik Garba,

all of Anguwan East in Deba town, fought with Samaila Yusuf (the deceased) who was aged 30yrs and inflicted deep cuts on his back and head using a cutlass.

He said the victim, who was rushed to the hospital, died while receiving treatment but that detectives from Deba Police Division, immediately launched a full blown investigation which revealed that the deceased drug dealer sustained the wounds as a result of the disagreement between him and his customers.

According to the Police Public Relations Officer, the case is still under investigation and the suspects will be charged to court upon the completion of investigations.

He said the Gombe State Police Command, under the leadership of CP Hayatu



Usman

Usman, remains committed to upholding law and order.

"We commend the dedication of our officers and urge the public to continue providing vital information to aid in the fight against crime", PPRO Mahid stated.

SUNDAY POLITICS

Lawmaker makes case for community policing

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja



IN his first appearance at the House of Representatives, Hon. Daniel Asama, the representative for Bassa, Jos North in Plateau State, moved a motion on a matter of urgent public importance. Hon. Asama highlighted the pressing need to implement Part 14 of the Nigerian Police Act 2020, focusing on the establishment of community policing.

Addressing his honorable colleagues, Hon. Asama expressed concern over the relentless attacks by insurgents in various communities across Nigeria.

He emphasized that despite previous resolutions passed by the House of Representatives, the affected communities continue to suffer from these heinous acts. Existing security measures appear inadequate, leaving these communities vulnerable.

Drawing attention to the recent attacks in the Inzenga community, located in Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, Hon.

Asama stressed the urgency for action. He pointed out that the Nigerian Police Act 2020, explicitly outlines provisions for community policing in Sections 113, 114, 116, and 117.

Acknowledging the time constraints, Hon. Asama expressed his gratitude to the House of Representatives and proceeded to present his prayers. Firstly, he called for a minute of silence to honor the innocent victims of these horrendous attacks across the nation.

Secondly, he urged the Inspector General of Police to fully implement community policing as indicated in Part 14 of the Nigerian Police Act 2020. Lastly, he implored the House Committee on Police Affairs and Legislative Compliance to ensure compliance with the

Asama implementation and report back within four weeks.

The motion put forth by Hon. Asama received support and commendation from other members of the House. Recognizing the importance of addressing the rising insecurity in the nation, they emphasized the need to take immediate action.

The House agreed to the prayers presented by Hon. Asama, vowing to implement community policing as outlined in Part 14 of the Nigerian Police Act 2020. They further mandated the House Committee on Police Affairs and Legislative Compliance to oversee the enforcement process and provide a report to the House within four weeks.

With this motion, Hon. Daniel Asama has taken his first step towards addressing the security challenges faced by his constituents in Plateau State and communities across Nigeria.

The implementation of community policing is hoped to strengthen security measures and ensure the safety and well-being of all citizens.

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

THE Progressive Governors Forum has advised their counterparts in the Peoples Democratic Party against utterances and actions capable of inciting the masses against the federal government.

APC Governors in a statement by its Chairman and Governor of Imo State, Hope Uzodima said the economic and security challenges confronting the nation needed a collaborative approach towards finding a lasting solution to them and not finger pointing.

On the recent press briefing by the PDP Governors Forum where they likened Nigeria to another Venezuela, Uzodima said it was unpatrotic for those in leadership positions to play the ostrich when they were fully aware of what President Bola Tinubu was doing to reverse the situation.

He further stated that while the PDP had catalogued what they perceived to be the economic problems of the

Don't incite Nigerians, APC tells PDP

country, they could not proffer a single solution to it.

The Progressive Governors Forum noted that the statement by the PDP Governors that 'ultimately', the decisions rest squarely with Nigerians and other organs in the country to ensure that we take actions that

will bring relief to all of us amounted to veiled incitement of the public against the federal government.

He enjoined the PDP, especially the governors, to encourage Nigerians to be patient, instead of denigrating the image of the country before the international community.



Kanke TIC Chair swears-in TIC members

TRANSITION Committee Chairman of Kanke Local Government Council, Hon Shikir Nuhu Caleb, has sworn-in transition committee members will help him pilot the affairs of the Council to greater height

This was contained in a statement e-signed recently by *Tea Gomos, Special Assistant on Media and Protocol to the TIC Chairman.* According to the statement, the colourful event marked a new beginning for Kanke Local Government, where the Transition Chairman of the Council stated that, "this occasion which is pivotal to



Caleb

the life of our administration will provide the variable platform for effective operations of government at the third tier.

He stated that, in this regard, our chosen appointees who have passed through rigorous challenges during electioneering must strive to leave above board and perform their functions within the dictate of their respective offices."

The Chairman added, "As you assume duties in your various areas of assignment, let me remind you that, as drivers in your respective departments and representatives of your political constituencies, you cannot do it alone. Therefore, you must exhibit the wisdom to motivate the work-force alongside the technocrats to ensure maximum cooperation in order to meet and possibly surpass your departmental expectations. You must come with new innovations to drive this administration forward." He charged them to be proactive in handling issues of governance and work towards achieving set goals of the

The Senior Special Assistants to the Executive Governor of Plateau State at the Local Government Level with their portfolios include:

- 1). Hon. Golu Paul Golwak: SSA on Special Duty, Budget and Planning.
 - 2). Hon. Beatrice B. Theodore: SSA on Administration.
 - 3). Hon. Lokrit Gershon: SSA on Education and Youth Affairs.
 - 4). Hon. Joseph Gotom: SSA on Agriculture and Rural Development.
 - 5). Hon. Waptu Wubetwe: SSA on Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) and Community Development.
 - 6). Hon. Wuchir Gozumtang: SSA on Social Services.
 - 7). Hon. Rita Lokrit: SSA on Health.
 - 8). Hon. Bakomi Gocheka: SSA on Revenue and Research Documentations.
- Shikir then expressed appreciation to Governor Mutfwang for allocating 40 bags of fertilizer to every polling unit in Kanke LGA at a discount price of #6,250. He urged Kanke people to be security conscious and also to be industrious in other to mitigate the current economic hardship, while urging the youths to shun all forms of social vices and crimes. The Chairman thanked the Ngolong Ngas, HRM Nde Jika Golit, other traditional rulers, illustrious sons and daughters, political stalwarts, religious leaders, security agencies, management/staff and the general public for being part of the epoch making event and assured them that by the special grace of God, his administration will not disappoint the good people of the LGA.

Senate sets up constitution review committee

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

THE Senate President, Senator God swill Akpabio, has constituted a 43_ member Constitution

Review Committee to handle all bills seeking for one alteration or the other in the provisions of the 1999 constitution.

According to the Senate President, the 43

members consist of 8 principal officers who are to serve as Steering Committee within the larger committee. A senator from each of the 36 states of the federation and FCT and one senator representing each geo political zone of the country.

Senator Akpabio disclosed that the 43 member committee will be chaired by his deputy, Senator Barau Jibrin, APC Kano North, Senate Leader, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele will serve as the Deputy Chairman Deputy Leader, Lola Ashiru, Chief Whip, Ali Dime, Deputy Whip, Peter Nwebonyi, Minority Leader, Abba Moro, Deputy Minority Leader, Kamorudeen, Minority Whip, Osita Ngwu and Deputy Minority Whip, Rufai Hangs and others.



Uzodima

SUNDAY POLITICS

Averting food riots in Nigeria

The decision of the federal government to release 102,000 metric tons of grains from the national food reserves and import foodstuff symbolises a willingness to address the current spike in the prices of food, energy and other essential items in the country. SALISUNA'INNA writes.

THE decision which followed peaceful demonstrations against high prices of food and cost of living in Kano, Niger and four other states, indicates that the APC-led government did not dismiss the protests as acts of sabotage sponsored by political opponents.

Even though releasing 102,000 metric tons of grains to the public may briefly moderate prices of the relevant grains; but resorting to food importation cannot sustainably end the current and future food insecurity in the country.

It is important to appreciate that the time lag of about six months between placing the order for the food, processing payment, shipping it to our shores, evacuating it off bulk vessels, transporting it to bagging stations and then to distribution centres nationwide will make the imported food arrive too late for the people.

The six-month time lag from purchase to delivery is enough time to produce more food locally as the wet season in Nigeria starts in April. Indeed, the money that will go into food importation may serve the country better if deployed to support the production of staple food items at home during the approaching wet season. Nigeria does not have to produce export crops to please foreigners only to resort to importing foodstuff to feed its own population.

Some of the money for importing food can as well be used to support ongoing irrigation farming this dry season. It is doable with the requisite degree of sincerity of purpose.

While addressing the food issue, the governor of Kano state spoke of traveling to Abuja and inform President Bola Tinubu that food prices are high in Kano state. He met with food traders in the state and urged them to cut food prices and stop hoarding food.

The governor of Niger state issued an instruction, perhaps unlawfully, banning food traders from buying foodstuff in the state and ferrying the items to elsewhere in the country. This could deprive food processing factories in parts of the country, especially the South-west, of raw materials.

Candidly, the measures and



actions by the federal government and the governors of Kano and Niger states have not addressed the underlying reasons and causes for the high cost of food and other essentials in the country.

The causes of the precarious food situation are hardened criminals and deadly insurgents that have displaced and exiled whole farming communities from their land in the North. Restoring security in the farming communities, recovering and securing the land to facilitate the return of farmers and give them essential support to cultivate their farms are essential.

Other causes of high food prices include unpredictable weather pattern that has caused drought and floods which devastated crops; prohibitive prices of agricultural inputs such as certified seeds, farm labour, fertilisers, fuel for irrigation pumps and transportation.

Support for farmers through the provision of certified seeds, agro-chemicals for pest control, extension service and fertilisers should be prioritised.

Lack of continuity, poor funding and haphazard implementation of otherwise promising initiatives in the

agriculture sector should be replaced with seriousness, methodical approach and commitment to work for the good of the country.

Many initiatives including Farm Settlement Programmes in the three defunct regions of the First Republic; Shehu Shagari's Green Revolution; Obasanjo's Operation Feed the Nation; the Agricultural Transformation Agenda; Buhari's National Food Security Programme and the Tinubu-declared State of Emergency on Food Security in Nigeria could not succeed fully due to poor implementation and inadequate funding.

The same challenges

minimised the impact of other agricultural development programmes including the National Accelerated Food Production Programme launched by the administration of General Yakubu Gowon after a devastating drought; the School-to-Land Programme; the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, Youth Employment in Agriculture (YEAP) and the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme.

The institutions that were set up to facilitate the attainment of food security for Nigerians including the River Basins Development Authorities; the Bank of Agriculture; National Agricultural Insurance

Corporation; so many specialised research institutes; a National Seeds Council; National Agricultural Land Development Authority and Cooperatives Colleges at best produced mixed results.

It is appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of these programmes and institutions with a view to phasing out those that cannot achieve their purposes.

Agricultural projects financed with foreign loans should be sincerely implemented. All future agricultural projects should be homegrown and funded by the National Agricultural Development Fund established by the APC-led

"The causes of the precarious food situation are hardened criminals and deadly insurgents that have displaced and exiled whole farming communities from their land in the North. Restoring security in the farming communities, recovering and securing the land to facilitate the return of farmers and give them essential support to cultivate their farms are essential. Other causes of high food prices include unpredictable weather pattern that has caused drought and floods which devastated crops; prohibitive prices of agricultural inputs such as certified seeds, farm labour, fertilisers, fuel for irrigation pumps and transportation."

SUNDAY POLITICS

On President Tinubu's meeting with state Governors

The move to restructure the nation's security architecture, particularly as it affects policing the over 230million population may have commenced, with both the federal and state governments formally considering the possibility of a state police to tackle the rising security challenges, ABDULLAHI M. GULLOMA writes.

HOWEVER, there, would still be need for further consultations on the issue in order to find a common ground on the implication process. Also, the two levels of government agreed to take on headlong the issue of hoarding of farm produce as one surest way of arresting the current challenge facing the nation's food security.

These were some of the highlights of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's meeting with 36 state governors, while Vice-President Kashim Shettima, the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, the Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Ekundayo, Director-General State Security Service, Yusuf Magaji Bichi and a few ministers, were also in attendance, at the State House in Abuja Thursday.

Addressing the meeting, President Tinubu said his administration was evolving home-grown solutions to address the nation's food security challenges by setting up schemes to support local production and discourage all forms of rent-seeking that are associated with food importation.

On security, President Tinubu approved the establishment of a committee comprising state governors and representatives of the federal government to, among other things, explore the modalities for establishing state police.

Tinubu further endorsed the training and equipping of forest rangers by sub-national governments to safeguard human and natural resources in local communities.

"My position at this meeting is that we must move aggressively and establish a committee to look critically at the issues raised, including the possibility of establishing state police.

"From Kano, we have read reports about large-scale hoarding of food in some warehouses. The National Security Adviser (NSA), the Inspector-General of Police, and the Director-General of the Department of State Services should coordinate very closely and ensure that security agencies in the states inspect such warehouses with follow up action.

"We must ensure that speculators, hoarders, and rent seekers are not allowed to sabotage our efforts in ensuring the wide availability of food to all Nigerians.

"What I will not do is to set a price control board. I will not also approve the importation of food. We should be able to get ourselves out of the



situation we found ourselves in, because importation will allow rent seekers to perpetrate fraud and mismanagement at our collective expense. We would rather support farmers with the schemes that will make them go to the farm and grow more food for everyone in the country.

"We must also look at the rapid but thoughtful implementation of our livestock development and management plans, including dairy farming and others," he said.

The president urged the governors to trust the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) with the management of the country's monetary policy, emphasizing the importance of allowing designated institutions to fulfill their mandate effectively.

He said the "cacophony of postulations" on the fluctuation of foreign exchange rates was unduly affecting the market negatively.

"Every one of us cannot be an expert. If we have given someone an assignment, let us allow them to do it. If they cannot do it, then we find a way to quickly get them out of the system," the president said.

He asked the governors to always make the welfare and prosperity of the people a priority of their development programmes, assuring them that the federal government would continue to work diligently to improve the nation's revenue profile.

At the meeting, the president and the governors also emphasized the importance of working together to address issues of insecurity, food security, and out-of-school children.

Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq of Kwara state and Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), expressed appreciation to President Tinubu for convening the meeting and affirmed the governors' commitment to partnering closely with the federal government.

...Idris provides more insights Providing further insights into what transpired at the meeting during a parley with State House Correspondents, Minister of Information and National Orientation Idris Mohammed said: "There is also a discussion around the issue of state police. The federal government and the state governments are mulling the possibility of setting up state police.

"Of course, this is still going to be further discussed. A lot of work has to be done in that direction. But if our government and the state governments agree to the necessity of having state police, this is a significant shift.

"Like I said, more work needs to be done in that direction. A lot of meetings will have to happen between the Federal Government and dissolved nationals to see the modalities of achieving this."

...Food security On food security, Idris, who accused some traders of hoarding food products, said the security agencies had been mandated to liaise with governors to tackle the menace.

Similarly, the meeting considered the increase in the number of Forest Rangers across the country to effectively protect the forests and allow

farmers to go back to their farms.

The minister said: "Mr. President has agreed to set up a committee to deepen the conversation that has happened at the just-concluded meeting. Of course, you know that it is impossible to complete most of the issues that were raised at the meeting so is going to be a continuous one.

"The National Security Adviser, the Director General of the State Services, and the Inspector General of Police have been directed to coordinate with the state governors to look at the issue of those hoarding commodities.

"At this point, the nation requires foods to be brought out to the people so that we can control prices and put food on the table of most Nigerians, other commodity traders are busy hoarding these commodities so that Nigerians will suffer or they will make more money as a result.

"So the governors and Mr. President have taken this decision that security agencies will collaborate with the state governors to ensure that this ends."

On the earlier option of the nation possibly going the way of importing food, the minister said: "A decision has also been taken that in the interest of our country; there will be no need for food importation at this point. Nigeria has the potential to feed itself and even be a net exporter of food items to other countries. And we do not also want to reverse some of the progress we have seen in terms of food production in this country.

"What we're seeing now is just

a temporary difficulty that will soon go away. Therefore, the solution to it is by continuous investment in agriculture so that food can be made available to all Nigerians.

"Of course, you know that Mr. President has declared emergency in agriculture many months ago. Therefore, part of the measures that he has taken is to ensure that investments, more investments are made in this sector for the benefit of our people."

...Security around farmlands The minister noted that there was significant improvement in areas where farmers had not been able to cultivate following security challenge.

"Those farmers have now returned to their farms. It is the same thing in Jigawa and many parts of the country. The governors, including the governor of Plateau State, has also attested to the fact that despite all the challenges that we're having, there appears to be improvement in security in these areas.

"Mr. President and the governors also thank the security agencies for the work they are doing. Some of them even pay the supreme price with their lives to ensure that Nigerians have a secure environment. They have thanked Mr. President for all that he's doing. And they have also asked him to do more so that at the end of the day, we will have a completely secured Nigeria.

"Now in this direction, Mr. President and the state governors have also discussed the possibility of improving the numeric strength of forest rangers to train them so that they can keep our forests and our borders very safe."

SUNDAY PEOPLE

MUTFWANG HOLDS MEETING WITH FEDERAL ESTABLISHMENT

Plateau State Executive Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang recently held meeting with Federal Government Establishments on the Plateau at the New Government House Rayfield, Jos



Governor Mutfwang (left) shaking hands with the Chairman of the Federal Government Establishment, Mr. Emmanuel Toukek



NTA Jos zonal Network Centre, Rifkatu Daniel (right) flanked by other Heads of Federal Government Establishment



General Manager, Federal Radio Corporation Highland FM Jos, Patience Jatau, (2nd left) flanked by other heads of Federal Agencies at the meeting



Governor Mutfwang delivering his message at the meeting



From left are, Personal Physician to the Governor, Dr. Mershack Daniel CMD JUTH, Dr. Pokop Bupwatda and Health Commissioner, Dr. Cletus Shurkuk



Representatives of DG Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Mr. Wilfred Mukan (left) and that of the Provost, Federal College of Education (FCE) Pankshin, Mr. Istifanus Kyakmut respectively



Cross section of Plateau State Government officials



Cross section of Heads of Agencies at the meeting with the Governor

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

SUNDAY POLITICS

Political honeymoon turns into economic nightmare

NOTABLY, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was aware of the economic hardships during his speech addressing Nigerians some months ago. He stated, "The cost of fuel has risen, food and other prices have followed suit, households and businesses are struggling, and things seem anxious and uncertain, writes **OLUWATOBI OJABELLO**. "I understand the hardships you face. I wish there were other ways, but there are not." – The hard way, the only way, so to say.

As the cost of living continues to soar, many Nigerians struggle to make ends meet. Adesua, a single mother of three residing in Ikorodu, expresses that every trip to the market feels like a battle against rising prices. "I used to be able to budget carefully and provide for my children," she says with a heavy sigh. "But now, it's a struggle just to put food on the table."

It's not just families like Adesua feeling the pinch. Small business owners, like Adeolu Samson, who resides in Mushin and runs a neighbourhood grocery store, are grappling with dwindling profits and mounting debts. "I've had to let go of some of my employees," he admits, his voice tinged with regret. "But if things don't improve soon, I don't know how much longer I can keep my shop open."

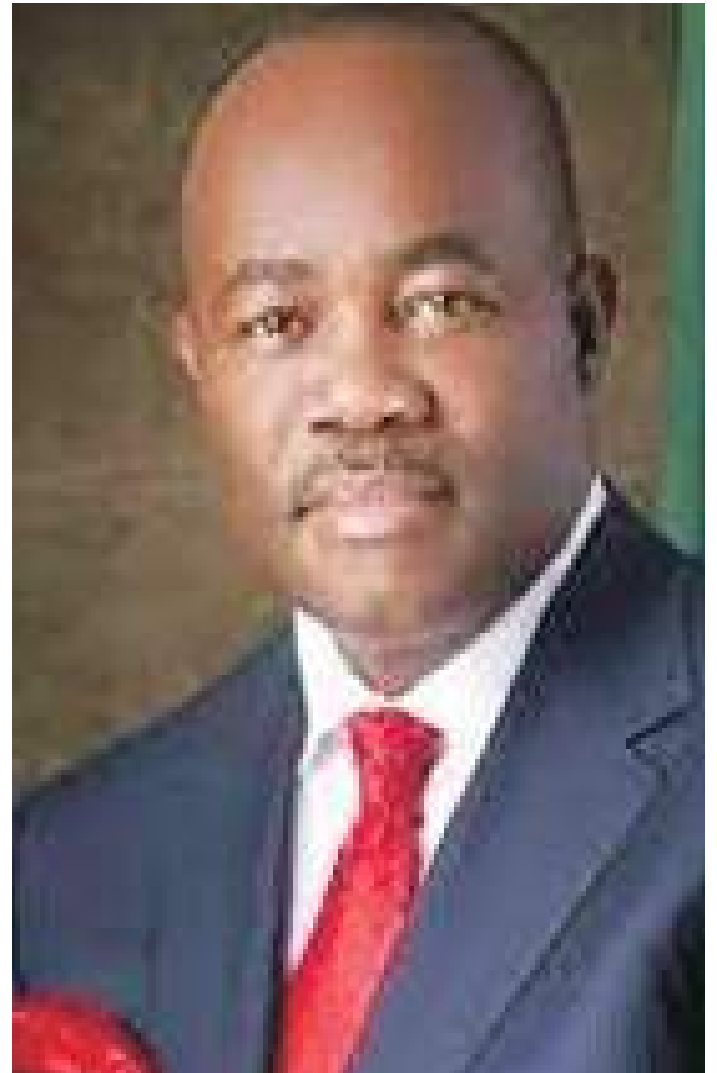
Over six months, from June to December, there was a notable spike in both food prices and overall inflation. Food prices surged by 34.35percent, indicating a sharp increase in essential goods costs. Meanwhile, overall inflation soared by about 26.90percent, signalling widespread price hikes across sectors.

This rapid rise in inflation highlights the economic nightmare on households, hinting at potential challenges in affording everyday necessities.

A commentator somberly remarked, "We're teetering on the edge of a social crisis as everyday essentials become increasingly unaffordable for many Nigerians." He emphasised the ongoing repercussions of the President's decision, which continues to sow seeds of hardship across the nation.



Tinubu



Akpabio

According to the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the surge in food inflation is attributed to the rising prices of bread, cereals, oil, potatoes, yams, rice, fish, meat, fruits, milk, cheese, and eggs.

This paints a vivid picture of the challenges faced by ordinary Nigerians as they struggle with skyrocketing living costs and diminishing access to affordable nourishment.

"It's disheartening that our country's economic growth has consistently been 'jobless growth' over the years—characterised by a lack of inclusive growth. Yet, another economic reform policy has plunged millions of Nigerians into hardship, with hunger prevalent, purchasing power diminished, and wages stagnant," Adeleke Jamiu, an economist said.

Okenwa Valentine, a

conglomerate businessman in Egbeda, expressed grave concerns about the state of the economy. "With the look of things, the economy is crashing drastically considering the persistent rise in inflation rates and exchange saga," he remarked, fearing a potential exchange rate of N10,000/\$.

He noted the daily decline in purchasing power, driven by escalating food prices. In response, he explained, "As for me, I have decided to draw a family tree in terms of feeding, and I've been trying to prioritise necessities to manage with just two meals per day instead of three."

Valentine lamented the drop in the standard of living, expressing hope for an economic recovery to alleviate the threat of hunger. He described the distressing experience of walking the streets of Lagos and witnessing fear among fellow citizens. "In a nutshell, the cost of living is too high, especially for car owners," he observed, highlighting the necessity to reconsider outings due to fuel expenses.

Reflecting on widespread discontent, Valentine noted, "There's nothing more to say about the economy; everybody is angry. That's why people talk rudely and harshly nowadays." He underscored the critical issue of food scarcity, stating, "Food is what fuels the body system, and currently, food is the major



Abbas

"Over six months, from June to December, there was a notable spike in both food prices and overall inflation. Food prices surged by 34.35percent, indicating a sharp increase in essential goods costs. Meanwhile, overall inflation soared by about 26.90percent, signalling widespread price hikes across sectors. This rapid rise in inflation highlights the economic nightmare on households, hinting at potential challenges in affording everyday necessities".

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Tinubu



Abubakar



Ajero

Hunger: Is Nigeria sitting on a time bomb?

Gradually and painfully, hungry Nigerians presently enduring hardship may be left with no other option than to embark on uncontrollable revolution if the Federal Government fails to urgently tackle the issue of food insecurity stirring us in the eyes. Life is becoming unbearable as most citizens of the country hardly afford daily meals for survival. JENNIFER YARIMA writes.

IT is not in doubt that most Nigerians are today experiencing excruciating pains of increase in cost of consumable food items which are largely beyond the reach of the masses. This has sparked off protests in some quarters as more people demanding necessary and quick action from relevant authorities to save Nigerians from severe hunger.

In the past few weeks, Nigerians have been protesting against soaring food prices as economic crisis continue to force people skip meals and eat poor grade food items. It is quite devastating that people have these days been forced to adjust family menu and life style to suit what is obtainable at the moment. Very few homes today enjoy the luxury of three-square meals.

The situation has gotten so bad that some mothers in northern Nigeria have resorted to digging

anthills in search of grains stored up by insects to feed their children and in some cases poor grade rice used as fish food to feed on. This is slowly taking us to a sorry stage of compromise and corrupt tendencies for survival. Relentless wave of attacks against farmers in Nigeria by armed groups is hindering critical food supplies and threatening to push the country deeper into a devastating hunger crisis. It should be noted that hunger does not have religious and or ethnic coloration, a hungry man is an angry man.

Nigerians are living in the world of uncertainty as there are no specific prices attached to items that one can boast of getting if he or she goes back to the market the following day. It's sad that commodity prices keep fluctuating, dollar is rising, petrol is rising as well. One needs to know current prices of various

food items to enhance budget friendly shopping decisions. Prices of foodstuff in Nigeria today vary depending on items and locations.

Rice ranges now between 60,000 to 70,000 naira for a 50kg bag, beans is between 60,000 and 70,000 naira as well. Maize costs 800.00 per mudu, noodles prices vary depending on the brand and size. Other food items such as garri, potatoes and cooking oils also have varying prices, these prices are subject to change due to supply and demand. With this, one can be sure that patronage of food vendors by customers would be drastically minimized as plate of food now is expensive. Most people now just eat to survive and not a balanced meal as expected.

Price of cooking gas is almost getting out of hand as one kg is now 1,300, charcoal and firewood that serves as

substitute in most homes seem untouchable now. Where does our hope lay? The current happenings have made most people to deeply reflect on the scripture that draws the attention of believers to the ugly situation in the Bible where women resorted to eating their children because of starvation as recorded in 2 kings 6: 24 – 30.

Increased attacks on farmer across parts of the country are leading to displacement, market disruptions and loss of livelihoods. According to Nigerian Security Trackers from January to June 2023, armed groups killed more than 128 farmers and kidnapped 37 others across Nigeria. For Bulama, a strategic farmer in the northeast Nigeria, "On different occasions while we are in the field farming, armed groups have attacked and kidnapped farmers who are our friends and brothers, requesting ransom most times; it's an amount no villager can afford".

In January, the United Nations estimated that more than 25 million people in Nigeria could face food insecurity this year, a 47 percent increase from the 17 million people who were already at risk of going hungry mainly due to the ongoing insecurity, protracted conflicts and the projected rise in food prices. In addition, an estimated two million children under five years across the northeastern Nigerian states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe are likely to be pushed into acute malnutrition in 2023, with about 700,000 children on the brink of death.

Climate change that comes with extreme weather crisis is

also another major contributing factor that would largely affect food production that might push people into hunger as predicted in some quarters. Nigeria had earlier declared a state of emergency on food insecurity to help tackle food shortages and rising prices and increase protection for farmers facing violence from armed groups. The violence against farmers is worsening the obvious hunger being faced by many particularly now that most people do not know where their next meal will come from.

The hardship being faced at the moment has generated the needed attention of the Northern Traditional Rulers' Council led by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar 111 which lamented over the deteriorating socio-economic as well as insecurity ravaging the country. He said, the nation was sitting on a keg of gunpowder with millions of Nigerians going hungry and jobless.

Worried about the state of the nation, the traditional ruler expressed the need for Nigeria's teeming youths to be gainfully employed or empowered if not the nation is sitting on a time bomb adding that "having millions of youths without jobs, without food, we are looking for trouble. He lamented that the two monsters confronting the nation at the moment are poverty and insecurity which if not given proper attention could spell doom for the nation. As custodians of the people, their role in ensuring peace within their domain is crucial in calming

"Nigerians are living in the world of uncertainty as there are no specific prices attached to items that one can boast of getting if he or she goes back to the market the following day. It's sad that commodity prices keep fluctuating, dollar is rising, petrol is rising as well. One needs to know current prices of various food items to enhance budget friendly shopping decisions. Prices of foodstuff in Nigeria today vary depending on items and locations".

NEWS

PSC shortlists 171,956 applicants for JAMB CBT

By PETER TITLE

THE Police Service Commission (PSC) has announced that it has shortlisted a total of 171,956 applicants for the upcoming Computer Based Test (CBT) scheduled to take place on Tuesday, March 5th, 2024. These applicants were selected from the recently concluded credentials and physical screening exercise conducted nationwide. Out of the 315,114 applicants invited for the screening exercise in the General Duty cadre, 171,956 were successful and have been shortlisted for the JAMB CBT. Among the shortlisted candidates, there are 25,818 females and 146,138 males, reflecting the diverse pool of talent in the recruitment process. The state with the highest number of candidates for the tests is Kaduna, with 12,343 applicants. It is followed by Bauchi with 10,911 candidates, Benue with 10,532 candidates,

and Katsina with 10,457 candidates. On the other hand, Anambra state has the least number of candidates with only 343 applicants, followed by Lagos with 504 and Ebonyi with 600. Dr. Solomon Arase CFR, retired Inspector General of Police and Chairman of the Commission, expressed his satisfaction with the progress of the recruitment exercise. He acknowledged the importance of quickly injecting successful candidates into the system to strengthen the fight against insurgency and banditry in the country. The Commission has entrusted the responsibility of conducting the CBT to the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) due to its extensive experience in conducting similar examinations. The candidates will be tested on their aptitude for the General Duty positions.



Arase

Candidates who pass the CBT will be required to undergo medical examinations before proceeding to the next stage of training. The PSC is determined to ensure that the Police Force is properly trained, equipped, and citizen-oriented, providing inspiring leadership for the nation's eternal security. The PSC Chairman, Dr.

Arase, expressed his gratitude to the president for the opportunity to reinforce and reinvigorate the Police Force, with the aim of improving its performance. The Commission remains committed to its goal of selecting qualified individuals who will contribute to the safety and security of the nation.

Governor Sani urges strong northern partnership

From JOHN FWAH Kaduna

GOVERNMENT Uba Sani of Kaduna State says that Northern states must form strong partnerships to revitalise the region's economy, and combat poverty and insecurity. The governor who was represented by his deputy, Dr Hadiza Balarabe, spoke at the 6th executive meeting of the Northern Traditional Council in Kaduna recently. Gov Uba Sani suggested immediate collective action by governors in the region to strengthen access to education, healthcare and agriculture, and in addressing poverty and unemployment. He said the northern states must form strong partnerships to revitalise the region's economy, and combat poverty and insecurity. The meeting primarily focused on enhanced security as a key factor for stability and the development of the North. During the meeting, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar, said they would explore solutions to alleviate the challenges and advise governors in the region accordingly. Sultan Abubakar, who is the Chairman of Council, advised the traditional rulers to appraise the

situation candidly in order to find effective solutions to the region's problems. He said the meeting with chairmen of the 19 Northern state traditional rulers' and FCT, was to address concerns of the people, for a better future. According to him, the outcome of the meeting will be communicated to all governors in the region. He acknowledged their responsibility as fathers to provide solutions to the various challenges facing the region, emphasising the need for honesty in acknowledging all issues, including lack of regular sources of livelihoods, leading to insufficient daily

meals for the common man. The royal father said insecurity and the rising issue of poverty demand immediate attention, stating that things are not okay in Nigeria and the North, adding that having a large population of unemployed youth without proper opportunities was hazardous. The sultan urged political leaders to take decisive actions to remedy the situation to ensure peace and stability in the region and Nigeria as a whole. He said that the meeting should delve into the root causes of the problems,

but added that the problems should not be solely attributed to the present government. The Sultan expressed concern that previous solutions articulated by the traditional rulers were not implemented, but said they would continue to discharge their duties to millions of people who believe in the traditional institution. He also stressed the importance of empowering traditional institutions to function effectively. The Director General, Department of State Services (DSS), Yusuf Magaji Bichi, represented by Kaduna State Director of DSS, Abdul Enechi, emphasised the inseparable link between security and development. He called for collaboration within all institutions to counter any security threat, and urged the traditional rulers to monitor activities in their domains and identify informants. Bichi said rising prices and lack of availability of food is already causing tension and called on the royal fathers to support government in developing alternatives to the issues.



Uba



Nigerian govt hints on providing social welfare for every citizen

THE Federal Government, on Sunday, said it is dedicated to equipping hospitals in the country with modern equipment, providing healthcare professionals with training and ensuring social welfare for every citizen, including comprehensive health insurance coverage

SERAP sues Akpabio, Abbas over failure to clarify details of N345bn NASS budget

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has filed a lawsuit against the Senate President, Mr Godswill Akpabio and Speaker of House of Representatives, Mr Tajudeen Abbas over "the failure to disclose, clarify and explain the details on National Assembly budget of N344.85 billion, and the rationale for several budget items, such as the N6 billion budgeted for two car parks.

Fresh crisis brews in Labour Party as national treasurer accuses Abure of misappropriating N3.5bn

The National Treasurer of the Labour Party, Oluchi Opara, on Monday asked the party's National Chairman, Julius Abure, to account for N3.5 billion generated during the 2023 general election in the country.

Mama Boko Haram, two others jailed 10 years for N40m fraud

Justice Umaru Fadawu of the Borno State High Court, Maiduguri, has sentenced Aisha Wakil, popularly known as Mama Boko Haram, and two others to 10 years imprisonment each for N40 million fraud. Read more

PDP governors urge Nigerian govt to address insecurity, economic hardship

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors' Forum on Monday urged the Federal Government to address the security challenge and economic hardship in the country

NLC President Ajaero says labour may demand N1m as minimum wage due to rising inflation

President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Joe Ajaero, says with the rising inflation and high cost of living in the country, organised labour may end up demanding for N1 million as minimum wage from the federal government

Challenging times ahead as IMF predicts Nigeria's foreign reserves to drop to \$24bn in 2024

Nigeria may be heading for a challenging time ahead in 2024 and 2025 if the latest reports by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is anything to go by. Read more

Hoodlums attack NAFDAC officials on enforcement drive in Abuja

Hoodlums on Monday attacked officials of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) who were on enforcement operation against substandard drugs in Abuja.

Nigeria lost 15,000 nurses to brain drain in 2023

The Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria (NMCN), Faruk Abubakar, says Nigeria lost not less than 15,000 nurses and midwives in 2023 as they left the country to seek greener pastures abroad

Ivory Coast wins African Nations Cup

The Elephant of Ivory Coast on Sunday night won the 34th edition of the African Cup of Nations.

Tinubu honours Super Eagles with national awards, properties (VIDEO)

President Bola Tinubu on Tuesday hosted the Super Eagles at the State House in Abuja, recognizing their efforts in the recently concluded (African Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournament. Read more

PDP BoT urges Tinubu to address economic hardship, strengthen naira

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Board of Trustees (BoT) on Tuesday charged President Bola Tinubu to address the current economic hardship in the country.

Senate constitutes 1999 Constitution amendment committee

The Senate on Wednesday constituted the 1999 Constitution Amendment Committee. Read more

Nigerians to pay more for beer from Feb 19

Nigerians have been told they would have to pay more for beers as Nigerian Breweries Plc has issued a new price review notification to all its customers in the West Zone. Read more

8. Again, CBN raises Customs import duty rate to N1,481/\$1

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has increased the exchange rate for Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) import duty rate at the nation's seaports.

Tinubu, govs consider establishment of state police

President Bola Tinubu and State Governors have reportedly agreed for the establishment of state police in the country.

Reps ask finance ministry, CBN to consult before reviewing Customs exchange rates

The House of Representatives on Thursday urged the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to provide notice to Nigerians before altering the Customs exchange rates

SUNDAY FEATURE

Dialectics of ransom payment to kidnappers

The height of insecurity in Nigeria begs for high level solutions. Insecurity can be traced to recent increase in proliferation rising poverty. Successive governments since 1999 had only succeeded in sustaining the widening gap between the poor and the rich, ADEFOLARIN A. OLAMILEKAN writes.

OUR reference, essentially, speaks to the volume of manifestations and purveyors of insecurity as occasioned by proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the country.

Unfortunately, our linking the current insecurity in our dear nation to poverty is connected to the wealth of the nation. Is it not surprising that citizens of a mineral resource nation like ours would be languishing in poverty and penury?

This is the reason political economists say resource dependency makes so much money available for sharing, as we do say humorously, "money miss road". Sadly, this makes access to the Nigerian state seat of power very lucrative, highly competitive, and a do-or-die affair.

In the bid to achieve this, some stakeholders in the Nigeria project have devised several dubious means, including flagrant abuse of people's rights, inciting violence, aggressive pursuit of injustice and the accompanying galloping corruption.

Though Nigeria is notorious for ethno-religious, communal, political conflicts, of late, banditry and kidnapping have become a menace in Nigeria forming part of the predicaments confronting and distorting development.

Kidnapping for ransom has become part and parcel of insecurity challenge in Nigeria. It is part of the inhuman criminal activity that has escalated over the years alongside other insecurity challenges of communal clashes, ethno religious violence, and terrorism.

Other violent activities include that of the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), Odua People's Congress (OPC), militancy and herdsmen/farmers crisis, cattle rustling, cultism and gang war.

Regrettably, kidnapping has snowballed into hostage taking of school children, travelling passengers, traditional rulers, clergymen, village heads, and ransacking of communities.

The abduction of Kankara Government School students in Katsina state and

Kagara Government School students in Niger state, to mention a few, is still very fresh in the minds of Nigerians.

These kidnappers operate in different groups across the country. Media reports have it that some of these bandits and kidnappers are affiliated to Boko Haram and other Islamic militia groups operating in the North-east while others are members of ethnic militia and criminal gangs.

The latest of kidnapping havoc was witnessed in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja and environs, where kidnappers stormed residential estates and victims were taken to isolated areas in the forest, with demand for millions of naira as ransom to free their victims.

Painfully, kidnappers and their allies now see this ransom as their entitlement or kill their captors when payment failed. However, government is yet to tackle the menace of ransom payment.

A critical observation of ransom payment to kidnappers is worth reflecting on. It's a phenomenon that is now becoming a norm of which, if not nipped in the bud,



could be legitimised.

Sadly, there are those who justify it in our societies with divergent moral, ethical, social, cultural, religious and political the volume of manifestations and purveyors of insecurity as occasioned by proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the country.

Unfortunately, our linking the current insecurity in our dear nation to poverty is connected to the wealth of the nation. Is it not surprising that citizens of a mineral resource nation like ours would be languishing in poverty and penury?

This is the reason political economists say resource dependency makes so much money available for sharing, as we do say humorously, "money miss road". Sadly, this makes access to the Nigerian state seat of power very lucrative, highly competitive, and a do-or-die affair.

In the bid to achieve this, some stakeholders in the Nigeria project have devised several dubious means, including flagrant abuse of people's rights, inciting violence, aggressive pursuit of injustice and the accompanying galloping corruption.

Though Nigeria is notorious for ethno-religious, communal, political conflicts, of late, banditry and kidnapping have become a menace in Nigeria forming part of the predicaments confronting and distorting development.

Kidnapping for ransom has become part and parcel of insecurity

challenge in Nigeria. It is part of the inhuman criminal activity that has escalated over the years alongside other insecurity challenges of communal clashes, ethno religious violence, and terrorism.

Other violent activities include that of the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), Odua People's Congress (OPC), militancy and herdsmen/farmers crisis, cattle rustling, cultism and gang war.

Regrettably, kidnapping has snowballed into hostage taking of school children, travelling passengers, traditional rulers, clergymen, village heads, and ransacking of communities.

The abduction of Kankara Government School students in Katsina state and

Kagara Government School students in Niger state, to mention a few, is still very fresh in the minds of Nigerians.

These kidnappers operate in different groups across the country. Media reports have it that some of these bandits and kidnappers are affiliated to Boko Haram and other Islamic militia groups operating in the North-east while others are members of ethnic militia and criminal gangs.

The latest of kidnapping havoc was witnessed in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja and environs, where kidnappers stormed residential estates and victims were taken to isolated areas in the forest, with demand for millions of naira as ransom to free their victims.

Painfully, kidnappers and their

allies now see this ransom as their entitlement or kill their captors when payment failed. However, government is yet to tackle the menace of ransom payment.

A critical observation of ransom payment to kidnappers is worth reflecting on. It's a phenomenon that is now becoming a norm of which, if not nipped in the bud, could be legitimised.

Sadly, there are those who justify it in our societies with divergent moral, ethical, social, cultural, religious and political sentiments. Arguably, corrupt intiments. Arguably, corrupt individuals are let loose by our court system.

This set of persons and groups that society already considers their actions criminal and murderous, now get pampered after contravening the laws of the land. This begs for answer: what happens to law abiding citizens that are victimised by these criminals?

Some scholars believe that this as a result of frustration when legitimate desires of a person or group are denied them either directly or indirectly as a result of the way the society is structured.

They argue that the "feeling of disappointment" may lead such a man or group to express anger through violence. This anger and violence can also be directed to people who are directly or indirectly related to those people that are said to be responsible. The foregoing, however, does not justify why kidnapping and ransom payment persist.

Similarly, the support by these theoreticians for amnesty for bandits and kidnappers is not acceptable.

Banditry and kidnapping have been equated with pipeline vandalism, the activities of the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) struggle against oil pollution and underdevelopment of host communities by both the Nigerian state and oil companies. And this, to the advocate of amnesty for bandits and kidnappers, is the way to go.

Many Nigerians have argued that the relative usage and success of violence in drawing attention to the injustice has made this a strategy for promoting "identity politics". This has given rise to provoking ethnic tension, sentiment and violence as a

means of attracting attention to economic, political interests. In a way, this suggests that Nigerians who are disgruntled against the government can take up arms against the state to attract whatever favour or largesse they feel is there to be given.

Thomas Hobbes, in his 1651 work, Leviathan, stated that citizens yield to a powerful rule by a sovereign, who, in turn, promises an end to civil and religious war, and to bring forth a lasting peace, and give him the right to conduct policy, including waging war or negotiate for peace for the good of the "commonwealth."

Therefore, for us, the Nigerian state has no business negotiating with elements such as kidnappers, or allow ransom payment to succeed the way it is today. For instance, the Westphalia Peace Treaty ignited the concept of a sovereign state. An attribute of it is what i.e., a mandate for national security that suggests that the Nigerian state has absolute power to go after the enemy of her citizens, which, in this respect are kidnappers and ransom collectors or negotiators.

This could discourage others as well as show that the Nigerian state is in charge of securing the life and properties of citizens, young and old

What needs to be done in addressing this challenge?

From a critical stand point, ransom payment to kidnappers can only be understood from the dialectics of discovering the truth of ideas that gave impetus to kidnappers in a way they see the money they received as self entitlement. Another is that our fight against kidnapping and ransom payment must commence from a logical point to unravel the linkage between poverty and crime on one hand, and failure to cater for citizens' welfare through equitable distribution of state resources to all.

To mitigate the challenge at hand, it is important to understand national security as "measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any given time, by balancing all instruments of state policy through governance, that can be indexed by computation, empirically or otherwise, and is extendable to global security by variables external to it".

We believe that paying ransom to kidnappers is to further deepen problems around our national security. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to address this ugly scenario as that will be the panacea for development in the country, ensuring the assertion that as development increases, conflict decreases. When this happens, the peace space expands, while the violence space contracts.

Nevertheless, it has been observed that crime and criminality are likely to exist and thrive in societies where leaders are not doing enough to alleviate the plight of the people. This is the time to act against the character of post-colonial state in Africa evident in Nigeria's unnecessary resource looting and wastages that ordinarily should be used to provide critical infrastructure for the citizenry.

Adefolarin A. Olamilekan, political economist, writes via adefolarin77@gmail.com 08107407870;08073814436

SUNDAY FEATURE

State of Emergency declaration on food security

On the 13th of July 2023, Nigeria's President Bola A Tinubu declared a state of emergency to tackle the rising cost of food and its impact on Nigerian citizens. A UN report in January 2023 by Cadre Harmonisé, a government-led, and UN-supported food and nutrition analysis carried out twice a year, projected that 25 million Nigerians were at high risk of food security this year, up from the estimated 17 million people currently at risk – meaning they would not be able to afford enough nutritious food every day. We can infer that Nigerians are in the middle of a crisis, hence, the need for President Bola Tinubu to declare a State of Emergency regarding food security. JOACHIM ADEBAYO ADENUSI writes.

IT is important to understand what the state of emergency on food security means. In an emergency situation, a government is given special legal powers to steer the country through a crisis or an extraordinary situation to protect its citizens. This kind of declaration should trigger a range of responses: normal government functions may be suspended, citizens may be advised to change their behaviour, government agencies may be authorised to execute contingency plans, and certain non-absolute civil liberties and human rights could be limited or suspended.

In a state of emergency or crisis of this nature, leaders face challenges that are uniquely different from any normal activities within the state. There are at least four common activities that must take place. The first is the need for preparation before the crisis, the second is the ability to mobilise followers during the crisis; the third is the leader's effectiveness or performance perception by the followers, and fourth is the effect of consolidation of efforts following crisis situations. The need for preparation before a crisis is the most common observation made by many scholars. Also, an effective leader should be able to read the signals of looming crisis with cognition and sensemaking ability to proactively frame key social issues that may become political in the future. It is critical to emphasise not only the significance of preparation but the importance of risk identification, predictability, and vulnerabilities assessment as essential components of tackling a crisis from the onset.

This paper looks at the positive steps taken so far by the Nigerian government, explores potential governance challenges observed from various publicly published documents, and offers practical suggestions that could assist in ensuring effective food security crisis management in Nigeria. It will not be analysing the causes, consequences, and historical context of the food insecurity crisis in Nigeria, which has been covered extensively by organisations such as CARE International's Evaluation, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Islamic Organization for Food Security



Tinubu

and more.

It is important to acknowledge Tinubu's determination to address the cost-of-living crisis facing our world today, with a declaration of state of emergency to address the known emerging threat which is now at crisis point in Nigeria. This appears to align with CARE's analysis of the 12 key action points around which Bola Tinubu's government is committed. In addition to the list of actions stated by CARE, a BBC online report stated some of the initiatives proposed by the Nigerian government, such as using money saved by the recent removal of a fuel subsidy to provide fertiliser and grain to farmers; increased protection for farmers who have abandoned their lands following years of attacks and kidnaps for ransom; and a desire to support poorer citizens with a \$10 (£8) allowance a month for six months.

Finally, President Bola Tinubu's declaration of a state of emergency on food security shows a strong commitment to tackling the critical issue of food scarcity and limited access to clean water in Nigeria. In

agreement with Akinsemolu A & Onyeaka H's analysis, this paper also believes the proposed measures demonstrate a thorough approach to mitigate this crisis in the immediate, medium, and long-term. If Bola Tinubu's plan to focus on all aspects of the agriculture and food value chain succeeds while creating jobs at the same time, then the President's declaration holds significant potential for positive change for generations to come in Nigeria. However, it is imperative to ensure that effective crisis leadership and risk management governance with utmost transparency and accountability processes are in place to ensure that the intended outcomes of the above initiatives are achieved. The next section will be looking at some of the possible challenges Bola Tinubu's government could face in achieving the intended outcomes.

This crisis should be a moment of critical reflection for changing the psychological equilibrium (the mindset) of the Nigerian stakeholders because it will create a new set of uncertainties which outcomes can be positive, negative, or something

completely unknown depending on how it is handled. The starting point for President Tinubu's regime is clarifying roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders that will be involved in implementing the measures stated above. Also, the government will have to depend on the machinery of the civil service because of the significant role they play in the formulation and implementation of strategies necessary to manage the crisis.

Furthermore, the Nigeria civil service is still grappling with the problems of bad governance due to non-accountability and the ever-present manifestation of corruption that is pervasive, undisguised, and yet untameable as suggested by Fatile. Also, the reliability and effectiveness of the technical and administrative capacity of the civic service should be questioned and could create limitations in dealing with the complexity of the crisis. Unless good governance exists that will make the Nigerian civil service accountable, the process of facilitating individual/collective efforts of the citizens in resolving the food crisis will be hampered.

Stakeholders' roles, responsibilities, and coordination challenge. The question is, who or which of these stakeholders will be leading the implementation of President Tinubu's plan? For the President's state of emergency declaration to be successful, each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined with measurable expected outcomes and a time limit. The Intergovernmental and intraorganizational dynamics often lead to a lack of a coordinated response, distrust, and conflict.

A lack of clarity in the scope of implementing the proposed urgent mitigation plans could be another challenge. This is sometimes referred to as scope creep resulting in wasting public funds, negative reputational damage, and leading to the expected positive outcomes of declaring the state of emergency not to be met. Also, inadequate scoping of what needs to be done could lead to implementation ambiguity, making it challenging to manage and define boundaries surrounding the crisis.

The ineffective mode of giving, receiving, and sharing information is one of the reasons for ineffective emergency management response. The Tinubu's administration will not only have to master the art of communication with the Nigerian citizens that they are protecting but also dialogue with all the stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in responding to the emergency.

Emergency response performance measurement and management challenge. How would President Tinubu's team have assured Nigerians that the state of emergency declaration plan is effective, efficient, and adaptable? This is a critical governance challenge to overcome to demonstrate commitment beyond words to the Nigerian citizens.

Finally, ineffective management of risks and uncertainties in Nigeria.

This food security crisis implies there must be a change from standard operating procedures, where this change has significant implications for performance of the government and the people of Nigeria with potential positive/negative consequences depending on how it is managed.

In a state of emergency induced by a major crisis of this nature, effective governance and leadership will require a process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it. It should set in motion the process of facilitating individual/collective efforts of the citizens and those tasked with resolving the crisis to accomplish the shared objective of mitigating the food crisis.

Will President Bola Tinubu's stated emergency declaration make any difference to Nigerians in the next few years? Will citizens be able to confirm that the food crisis is now being managed with positive outcomes?

Joachim Adebayo Adenusi (Ogarisk) PhD; Partner – Conrad Clark Nig Ltd Convener – Nigerian Risk Leadership Summit: Head – Research and Policy – PSJ Foundation UK.

Continued from last week

Digital publications and resources that provide in-depth insights and valuable information on specific subjects. Webinars and workshops: Interactive virtual events that facilitate real-time learning, discussion, and skill development.

Membership sites and subscription models: Exclusive communities and content accessible to subscribers, fostering ongoing learning and engagement. Coaching and mentoring: Personalized guidance and support from experts in various fields, tailored to individual needs.

The audience for knowledge commerce is wide-ranging and includes individual consumers as well as businesses. Individuals, for example, may sign up for online courses that offer personalized learning pathways, enabling them to acquire knowledge relevant to their interests and career goals. Businesses can facilitate employee learning and development (L&D), enhance brand authority through thought leadership content, and provide a scalable source of revenue.

To create genuinely valuable knowledge products, structure them to be engaging, easy to grasp, and memorable. In the context of an online course, this may include dividing it into modules, integrating interactive features such as memory flashcards, and utilizing multimedia to cater to different learning styles. The aim is to empower learners, ensuring they effectively absorb and retain information, ultimately enhancing the knowledge's impact.

A high-quality information product not only benefits learners in the short term but also contributes to long-term customer satisfaction and increased sales, as satisfied customers are more likely to recommend and return for further offerings.

Benefits of knowledge commerce: Knowledge commerce offers a multitude of benefits. For learners: It provides accessible and convenient ways to acquire new skills and knowledge, enabling lifelong learning. For businesses: It opens up new revenue streams, creates passive income opportunities, nurtures customer relationships, and positions businesses as industry leaders. Knowledge commerce is a viable online business model for a diverse range of individuals, including subject matter experts, coaches, teachers, and creative. It allows them to leverage their expertise, share valuable insights, and monetize their knowledge.

Whether you are passionate about a specific topic or possess specialized skills, knowledge commerce can be the bridge that connects your expertise with eager learners in the global marketplace.

How to sell knowledge-based products and services: Ready to start reaping the financial rewards of your expertise and knowledge? Great; now the work can begin! In this section, we'll run you through the seven major steps of monetizing your knowledge through online courses and digital products and services.

1. Identify your area of expertise: The first step in selling knowledge-based products and services is finding your area of expertise. You might know a little about a lot of subjects, but that won't cut it in the knowledge commerce sector. You'll need to really know what you're talking about in order to offer something of value. Note that you don't necessarily need to be an out-and-out expert in the subject now, but you will need to be an expert by the time you create your content.

So how do you pick your expertise? It's all about self-reflection. Take some time to reflect on your experience, your skills, your qualifications, and existing knowledge. You may also gather feedback from your friends, family, colleagues, mentors, and clients. What subject would they turn to you for expert guidance? It's important to check that there's a market for your knowledge and skills. Many knowledge commerce business owners identify what knowledge is in demand before making their selection. You can do this by conducting market research, hosting surveys and polls, and engaging in networking.

2. Analyze the market to find your niche: You can't come up with a profitable business idea without first analyzing the market. Before you start to develop your products and business, be sure to take the time to understand how you can fill a gap in the market and launch a product that will be valuable to a reasonably large audience.

Market research is your starting point. Begin by identifying your target audience – the people who are most likely to be interested in what you have to offer. Conduct keyword research to understand the words and phrases they use to search for information related to your niche, and analyze the demand for your chosen area of expertise, ensuring there is a genuine interest in the knowledge you plan to share. It's recommended to read through industry reports, look at social media trends, and see which technological advancements might impact your niche. Regardless of the subject matter you choose, there will be competitors. This isn't a bad thing, as it shows you that there's a market for your niche. Analyzing who your competitors are can also provide a wealth of information that directs and shapes your own business. Some key things to look for when scrutinizing your competitors include:

Pricing strategies: How much do competitors

charge for their products? What pricing structures do they utilize? Marketing techniques: How do competitors advertise their products and courses, and what platforms do they use? Customer engagement: In what ways do competitors provide an excellent customer experience? Note that while having a few competitors is healthy, be aware of market saturation. You'll struggle to get customers if supply outstrips demand. In that scenario, it's best to think of how you could differentiate your offering to set your business apart from your competitors.

Choose a platform to host your content: As a content creator, you'll need a platform that allows you to host and sell your knowledge products. While there are various third-party platforms that can be solid options depending on the kind of products you want to create, we recommend creating your own website, which offers several advantages:

Tailored brand experience:- Building your

Exporting knowledge for forex



website allows you to craft a platform exclusively tailored around your brand. This ensures a cohesive and consistent brand experience for your audience. Direct traffic:-With your website, you can drive traffic directly to your platform without competing with other vendors on store marketplaces. This means your audience's attention remains focused on your offerings. Cost and revenue control: Creating your website gives you full control over costs and revenues. You can manage expenses more effectively and retain a larger share of your earnings.

A cost-effective and highly flexible Content Management System (CMS) like WordPress is an excellent choice for hosting your digital knowledge products. WordPress can be used in conjunction with WooCommerce to sell both physical and virtual knowledge products, offering a seamless eCommerce experience for your customers.

WordPress: One of the advantages of WordPress is that its large ecosystem of plugins can be used to create knowledge products directly. One such plugin is Sensei LMS, which is particularly well-suited for those looking to create and monetize online courses.

Sensei LMS: Introducing Sensei: Your knowledge commerce solution

Sensei caters to a diverse range of professionals, including entrepreneurs, academics, coaches, marketers, and agencies, seeking to monetize the online courses they create. It offers a host of features that make it an ideal choice:

WooCommerce integration: Sensei seamlessly integrates with WooCommerce, allowing you to monetize courses through any available Woo extensions, giving you flexibility in your pricing strategies. Note that you will need the Sensei Pro plan to integrate with WooCommerce.

Customizable lesson templates: Sensei comes with various lesson templates that you can customize and reuse. This makes the process of creating content faster but also allows you to provide a much more consistent experience across your course. These templates Interactive elements: Sensei supports various interactive elements, such as videos, flashcards, and quizzes.

Course format versatility: Sensei is a course platform, but you have full control over the format of your course. You might want it to be exclusively a video course, or you might want to create an online eBook where the content is released periodically. You can also mix and match formats to keep the experience varied. AI-powered features: Sensei boasts AI features like Quiz AI, Tutor AI, and Course Outline AI, which enhance the learning experience and simplify course management tasks.

Plan your online content: Developing a strategic content plan is key to ensuring that your knowledge commerce business can find success. A well-structured content strategy ensures that your offerings have clarity, direction, and alignment with your learning objectives. Here's why it's vital: It ensures that your content has clarity and direction, and is in sync with the learning objectives. It helps with the planning of marketing campaigns for new courses/learning materials. It sets a timeline for creating high-quality, valuable content that meets your audience's needs. To organize your content effectively, consider



editorial icon by alew taleeb

seen in this article how you can integrate Sensei with WooCommerce to monetize your courses. Through this integration, you can set up all kinds of pricing structures, such as one-time payments, subscriptions, course bundles, or memberships. You'll also get access to sales reports so you'll know whether you need to bolster your marketing efforts further. As you're working on monetization strategies, bear in mind that there's a difference between selling your course and generating a profit. To be profitable, you'll need to sell your content at the right price. There's a host of pricing strategies you can utilize, but you'll ultimately need to factor in:

How much you need to earn to generate a profit, how much your target audience is willing to pay for your materials, how much your competitors are selling their content for, promote your knowledge product. Once your knowledge product is available for purchase, then it's time to let people know why they should pay for it! There are numerous ways you can do this, so let's look at a few:

Pre-sell your product: Pre-selling is a strategy that works well with online courses, though you can also use it for other products, such as books and eBooks. This approach allows you to test the market and gather potential students. Offering early-bird discounts or bonuses can incentivize early sign-ups.

Utilize diverse marketing strategies: Social media marketing: Utilize platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to reach and engage with your audience. Create engaging posts, share valuable content, and interact with your followers.

Email marketing: Build an email list and send regular newsletters with informative content and course updates. Email marketing is a powerful tool for nurturing leads and converting them into customers.

Content marketing: Create valuable content such as articles, podcasts, videos, and webinars that showcase your expertise. Share this content on your website, social media, and other relevant platforms to establish your authority in your niche.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization): Optimize your website and content for search engines to increase organic traffic. Keyword research, on-page optimization, and backlink building are essential components of effective SEO. The Art of Accomplishment uses email marketing as a means of letting subscribers know when enrolments are open.

Connecting with influencers: Identify influencers or thought leaders in your niche and reach out to them. Collaborate on content, co-host webinars, or invite them to be guest speakers in your courses. Their endorsement can significantly boost your credibility and reach.

Affiliate programs: Implementing an affiliate program can expand your reach and boost sales. Affiliate marketing involves partnering with individuals or businesses who promote your products in exchange for a commission. Affiliate for WooCommerce is a useful tool that can help you set up and manage your affiliate program efficiently.

Referral marketing: In addition to affiliate programs, consider implementing a referral marketing strategy. Encourage satisfied customers to refer others to your courses by offering incentives such as discounts or access to exclusive content. Referral marketing can be a cost-effective way to acquire new customers.

Start monetizing your knowledge today with Sensei. The knowledge economy is big business. If you have expert knowledge that you're ready to impart to the world, then you can get a slice of the pie by creating your own knowledge commerce business – but you'll need a robust strategy to make it work.

You'll need a clear vision for your project, excellent content, a great platform, and a solid marketing strategy. Sensei is a course-creating platform for WordPress that helps at every stage of online learning content success, including the creation, distribution, and sales. With a user-friendly interface, customizable course templates, seamless WooCommerce integration, and a host of interactive features that enhance learner engagement, this is the tool you need to create a knowledge product that compels people to learn from you.

Concluded

WHAT a great privilege it has always been, sharing God's Word with you. I am confident that this series has been a blessing to your life. Today's episode is a continuation of the thought line we have been looking at. Just to refresh your memory, **"they that seek the LORD shall not want,"** (Psalms 34:10). Praise the Name of the Lord forevermore!

In this life, there is a place called 'no want'. So, do not let the devil terrorize you by your present circumstances. There is a place for you, which is called 'no want'. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Look at John 10:10 (Amp). I'm trying to describe this from the Word of God, not from my own words. Jesus Himself said, in John 10:10, that, **"The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows),"** (AMP). In Christ, you have the right to have and enjoy life in abundance, until it overflows.

The Hebrew word for 'abundant life' there comes from a phrase that describes a quality of life that is superabundant in quantity and superior in quality, blessed be the name of the Lord. I want to establish this because it must be a reality in your own life, Amen. You must let God convince you from His Word. You have to understand that there is something better than what you are experiencing now. Let the Word of God penetrate the depth of your innermost consciousness, that there is something better for you in this life.

God works with principles, and you cannot be casual about these things; if you believe God's Word, you sit at it, look at it, tell yourself look, this is God's Word to me and I believe that not just generally now, but for me, there is a place of overflow. It is not a matter of how it is going to come. That 'how' is not your business yet. The first business is- get that thing in your heart- there is a place of overflow for me. Glory to God forevermore!

2Corinthians 9:8 says, **"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work,"** (KJV). And God is able- oh hallelujah! Your God is able, not just able, but He is willing to make all Grace abound towards you. The Amplified version says- **"And God is able to make all grace (every favor and earthly blessing) come in abundance to**

you, so that you may always (under all circumstances, regardless of the need) have complete sufficiency in everything (being completely self-sufficient in Him), and have an abundance for every good work and act of charity," (AMP). Amplified says "every earthly favor and benefits", to abound towards you, so that you always- are you here?- having all sufficiency... See, it is a working of the grace of God. God is going to position people, places and things around

except there is overflow. I have said it earlier that if God's children do not have money, God does not have money; because we are the body and He is the head. If God's people are not in a place of favored advantage upon the earth, He is not; that is how God sees it. We are His expression upon the earth. Are we together?

Let us go again to Psalms 81. I just want to imprint in our hearts today that this 'overflow' life exist. Praise the Lord. I want to show you severally from the Bible, so that we can know this thing is not just a



I shall not want (13) Believe God for more than enough



you so that there will be a flow in your life, of overflow. It is a working of the grace of God, glory to God forevermore. It is not a function of man's calculations, it is a working of the grace of God; so that you, having always, sufficiency, in all things, may abound unto every good works.

We're also told the purpose of the overflow- having all sufficiency in all things, we can abound unto every good works. There is no better work to do, than the work of the Gospel, right? Expanding God's Kingdom. So that means that God's Kingdom cannot move forward except there is overflow. I repeat,

figment of man's imagination; it is not just some kind of thing for our psyche. It is something that we should take seriously because it is God's Word.

Psalms 81:13- says, **"Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries,"** (KJV). Poverty, lack, those are the enemies; sickness, adversity, the haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him, and their time should have endured forever. The haters of the Lord- people that hate God and His people would

have submitted themselves unto God. That means, there is something that is supposed to happen in your life and my life, in fact the blessing of the Lord, abounding upon our lives should be able to make us swallow up the land. We are supposed to fill this land and swallow it up!

In fact, we will keep praying because praying is very important as we work in the wisdom of God and the blessing of God. My simple counsel for God's children is "just own that place". Is it just real estate, own it! Hallelujah! Think ownership! Let's allow the thought to pierce through our hearts.

The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves to Him but at times it should have endured forever. He should have fed them with the finest of wheat, and with honey out of the rock; He should have satisfied them, praise the name of the Lord. Rock stands for 'hard place', rock stands for 'difficult place', praise the name of the Lord. That means the God you serve brings honey out of difficult places. Watch and see honey come out of that difficult place! Watch and see it turn, glory to the name of the Lord.

So, what are we doing, now? Through God's Word, we are painting a picture; we live by pictures, hallelujah. Everyone here today, lives by invincible picture. There is a picture going on in your life; and I am telling you, the events of your life, the circumstances of your life, things that you have been through in life, have contributed in painting or

describing your attitude towards life, praise the Lord; and what you are expecting in life, glory to the name of the Lord, Amen.

Now, some people think that they are being humble by saying it is just enough to have a nice family, praise the Lord; maybe just a car for my wife and I, maybe just a nice house, be able to educate my children and all of that. That is not a kingdom vision. Because if you have a kingdom vision, that is not all you need. Praise the name of the Lord. Well, that may sound humble, but in God's eyes, with all due respect, I want to tell you that when you begin to look at it from God's eyes, it begins to tend into selfishness; because all you need, you are saying, is what you need for yourself, praise the name of the Lord. But God wants you to extend your borders! You see, the Lord began to deal with me as we began to enter into recession. He said, do not believe me for enough but believe me for more than enough. Set your eyes on that target, praise the name of the Lord, because we need to extend our borders; we need to get the Word of God out to more people. We need to get help out to more people, praise the name of the Lord. And let me tell you the truth, there are some people, that your first contact with them, is not 'preaching' that they need. Your first contact with them is that you need to physically fight the devil off their lives, and get their head to be correct so that they will hear the Gospel; some people, their first contact, whether you realize it or believe it or not, the first contact or thing they need is, you need to balance them and make them feel like human beings first! Because contact with you will be the first God contact they will ever have. Do you know that there are some people on this earth that do not know what it means to be given something that will benefit them without a strange favor? There are some women, there are some widows that do not know what it is to have a favor done to them without them opening up their legs. How many of you know that when you come into that kind of situation, and you come as a person of God, you come as the first God contact they meet.

Let me tell you the truth, it is not just with prayer that you redefine people's mind about God; you have to change, we have to change our mind about wealth, riches, substance and material things; you have to change your mind about it because satan has got so many people locked up in a corner. And some people think that the less they have, the holier they are- that is not so! Responsibility will demand for you to learn, which is what we are doing from God's Word; how to handle or the purpose of these things, and why and how God puts them in our hands and why He puts them in our hands, and how we should handle them. Glory to the name of the Lord!

To be continued...



INTERNATIONAL

Ban on India's electoral bonds and 2024 election

While transparency advocates and opposition leaders say ban is a big win for democracy, Modi's BJP dominates other political funding and remains confident ahead of national elections.

By YASHRAJ SHARMA

THE Indian Supreme Court verdict on Thursday scrapping an opaque, election funding system has set off powerful tremors in the country's politics, with transparency advocates arguing that it could expose those involved in a controversial form of political financing ahead of national elections.

Opposition leaders say the judgement represents a setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, whose government introduced the electoral bonds scheme seven years ago and which battled long and hard in the top court to defend the funding mechanism.

But the BJP itself has insisted that the court order will not affect its chances in the coming elections, expected between March and May, in which Modi is aiming to secure a third straight term in office.

Electoral bonds, introduced by the BJP in 2017, allowed individuals and companies to donate money to political parties anonymously and without any limits. A five-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, observed that the "political contributions give a seat at the table to the contributor" and that "this access also translates into influence over policymaking".

The Supreme Court described the scheme as "unconstitutional". It also directed the state-run State Bank of India (SBI) to halt issuing the bonds, furnish identity details of those who bought them, and provide information about bonds redeemed by each political party. The information will be made public on the website of the Election Commission of India. The SBI is the only organisation authorised to issue the bonds under the scheme.

The release of that information, because of the court order, could give nearly one billion Indian voters their first look at the donors who secretly shelled out billions of dollars to political parties since 2017, and open up scrutiny of the potential benefits they secured in return.

"This judgement essentially upheld the need for transparency in the funding of political parties and reinforced that people's right to know in a democracy overrides any anonymity," Anjali Bhardwaj, co-convener of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information, told Al Jazeera.

"Political funding is the fountainhead of corruption in India and [electoral bonds] funnelled unlimited flow of



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, centre, arrives with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Bishwa Sarma, right, to address a public rally in Guwahati, India, on Sunday, February 4, 2024, ahead of national elections from March, 2024

'black money' to political parties anonymously."

In all, the SBI has sold electoral bonds worth \$20.3bn, including the latest tranche in January this year. The BJP received nearly 55 percent of these total donations.

"The ruling party has received huge amounts of money which it used in [the last national election in 2019]. It has been a travesty of the parliamentary democracy that has been corporatized in India by anonymous donations," said Brinda Karat, a senior leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), speaking to Al Jazeera.

The left-wing party, currently in power in the southern Indian state of Kerala, was among petitioners before the Supreme Court who had demanded that electoral bonds be declared illegal. It was also the only major party to formally decide that it would not accept any donations through these bonds.

"The judgement has called out this government's legalisation of political corruption. The BJP will be now accountable to people for money it has taken from corporates and policies it has formed for the corporates in quid pro quo," Karat said.

Pramod Tiwari, a Congress party MP and the deputy leader of the opposition in the upper house of India's parliament, described the court verdict as a milestone moment for the country.

"The judges have laid bare the violations of the Indian constitution by the BJP, who employed legislative powers with wrong intentions," Tiwari said, "to facilitate black money into political funding."

"This is a slap on the face of the BJP," he told Al Jazeera. Tiwari said the judgement would dent the prospects of the Hindu majoritarian party in the upcoming national vote. "The government has been caught in the act of robbery and pumping money in the shield of legislative powers."

But the BJP on Thursday suggested that it was not too concerned by the court order.

Ravi Shankar Prasad, a BJP leader and MP, took a swipe at opposition claims that electoral bonds were responsible for giving the party a dramatic edge over its rivals.

"As for a level playing field, the question is whether you are in the field or outside it. People decide whether you are in the field," he told reporters.

Critics of the opposition have also pointed out that barring the CPI (M), other political parties also took donations through the electoral bonds scheme. The Congress, for instance, received 9 percent of all secret funding funnelled to political parties under the scheme – though that is a sixth of what the BJP secured.

And while the scrapping of the electoral bonds scheme might eliminate one form of controversial funding, political

parties still have other avenues to receive big dollars.

Among them is direct funding from corporations, which political parties are required to declare to the Election Commission of India. And there, the BJP's dominance over other parties is even greater than it has been with electoral bonds. In the 2022-23 financial year, the BJP received nearly 90 percent of all corporate donations – not including electoral bonds – according to research by the Association of Democratic Reforms, a nonprofit focused on electoral transparency.

In all, political parties spent \$8.7bn on India's last national election in 2019, according to the New Delhi-based Centre for Media Studies, and analysts expect 2024 to eclipse that figure comfortably.

For activists who have been fighting the electoral bonds scheme, Thursday's order was a moment to celebrate.

Commodore Lokesh Batra, a 77-year-old retired naval officer and transparency campaigner, who filed more than 80 requests under India's Right to Information Act to procure some details of the scheme, spent the day fielding congratulatory calls.

"Electoral bonds were creating an unequal field and it was a non-transparent form of political funding," he told Al Jazeera in a phone interview.

"Corporate doesn't give money

unless you have a quid pro quo. In this case, any foreign company could create a subsidiary in India and donate; our democracy [was vulnerable to] be influenced by countries abroad."

The timing of the judgement at least prevents the parties from accepting bonds in another tranche before the national election, Batra added. "The political parties need to become more transparent about funding and uphold internal democracy."

Venkatesh Nayak, the director of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, said his organisation's research found that after the introduction of electoral bonds, opaque donations became more and more prevalent. Now, he said, institutions like India's central bank, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and the Election Commission of India (ECI) "need to stand up to the occasion".

Both the RBI and the ECI had initially expressed reservations about the electoral bonds scheme but had then, in effect, accepted it.

"The RBI and ECI would be embarrassed," SY Quraishi, former chief election commissioner of India, told Al Jazeera, on the about-turns these institutions took when they "came out in the Supreme Court with language similar to the government".

"The election commission must be feeling very awkward

INTERNATIONAL

US to send weapons to Israel amid invasion

THE United States is preparing to send more bombs and other weapons to Israel even as it pushes for a ceasefire in the war on Gaza and has said it opposes Tel Aviv's plans for a ground invasion in southern Rafah where more than half the enclave's displaced population is trapped.

The proposed arms delivery includes about a thousand each of MK-82 500-pound (227kg) bombs and KMU-572 Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) that turn unguided munitions into precision-guided bombs, The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday, citing unnamed US officials.

The US is further considering sending FMU-139 bomb fuses, with the total shipment estimated to be worth tens of millions of dollars, which will be paid from US military aid to Israel.

The report cited an assessment of the proposed arms transfer drafted by the US embassy in Jerusalem as saying the Israeli government has requested "rapid acquisition of these items for the defence of Israel against continued and emerging regional threats".

The assessment also dismisses potential human rights concerns, saying "Israel takes effective action to prevent gross violations of human rights and to hold security forces responsible that violate those rights".

The administration of US President Joe Biden has so far twice bypassed Congress to urgently send bombs and other munitions to Israel amid the war that has killed more than 28,000 Palestinians, mostly children and women, and left tens of thousands more injured or missing.

According to the WSJ, the US has provided roughly 21,000 precision-guided munitions to Israel since the start of the war last October. It said the remaining weapons are enough to sustain 19 weeks of bombing Gaza, but that would



Biden

shrink to days if Israel also launches a full assault on Lebanon, where it has been engaged in border fighting with Hezbollah.

On Friday, Biden said he has repeatedly told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu there "has to be a temporary ceasefire" in Gaza during "extensive" conversations this week.

In the face of widespread international condemnation, Israel has insisted it will soon launch a ground invasion of Rafah, the southernmost city in the Gaza Strip that borders Egypt. It is where an estimated 1.4 million of the enclave's 2.3 million population has been forcibly displaced in Israeli attacks across Gaza in the four-month conflict.

While the Biden administration maintains that an Israeli incursion into the densely packed city would be a "disaster", it has said that such an operation would not result in tangible consequences, such as a freeze in US weapons transfers.

Biden said he cautioned Netanyahu against moving forward with a military operation into Rafah without a "credible and executable plan" to protect Palestinians sheltering there.

"I anticipate, I'm hoping, that the Israelis will not make any massive land invasion [of Rafah] in the meantime. So, my expectation, that's not gonna happen," Biden said.

Reporting from Washington, DC, Al Jazeera's Kimberly Halkett said it was "unclear" if Netanyahu was listening to Biden.

"Historically he has not, especially when it comes to the US cautioning about how to conduct the Israeli military campaign," Halkett said.

Washington, some of Israel's other allies, in addition to the United Nations and a slew of rights groups, have said an assault on Rafah given the dire humanitarian situation suffered by Palestinians in Gaza would prove catastrophic.

Netanyahu has ordered the military to draw up plans that would evacuate civilians, but top UN officials have said there is no feasible way of moving people from the area and that there is no safe place left in Gaza.

Israeli defence minister Yoav Gallant said the country is "thoroughly planning" its ground invasion of Rafah, and Netanyahu promised early on Friday to reject "international dictates" on a long-term resolution of Israel's conflict with the Palestinians.

THE decision to postpone this month's elections in Senegal is against the constitution, the country's top court has ruled.

The Constitutional Council annulled both President Macky Sall's decree and a contentious bill passed by parliament moving the vote to December.

Widespread protests have gripped the West African country, once considered a bastion of democracy in the region.

Opposition figures said it amounted to a "constitutional coup".

Mr Sall had announced he was pushing the election back because of concerns over the eligibility of opposition candidates.

His proposal was backed by 105 out of the 165 MPs after a fiery debate which saw police remove some opposition MPs from the chamber. A six-month postponement was originally proposed, but a last-minute amendment extended it to 10 months, meaning a new election date of 15 December.

Mr Sall had reiterated that he was not planning to run for office again. But his critics accused him of either trying to cling on to power or unfairly influencing whoever succeeds him.

Opposition candidates and lawmakers, who had filed a number of legal challenges to the bill, will feel vindicated by the court's decision on Thursday evening.

Khalifa Sall, a leading opponent and a former mayor of the capital Dakar, who is not related to the president, had called the delay a "constitutional coup", while Thierno Alassane Sall, another candidate, also no relation, called it "high treason".

Senegal election delay ruled unlawful

The court said it was "impossible" for the election to be held on the original date of 25 February - just 10 days away - but urged authorities to organise it "as soon as possible".

Mr Sall is yet to react to the ruling. His second term of office expires on 2 April.

While the election could be held before April, the disputes that led to the polls being postponed in the first place remain unresolved, including allegations of corruption in the Constitutional Court and objections from opposition candidates who had been excluded from the candidate list published last month.

Holding the elections using the disputed candidate list could spark renewed unrest and violence by supporters of those barred from contesting, in

particular Ousmane Sonko, who is hugely popular among young Senegalese.

Most candidates have not been campaigning since President Sall issued his 3 February decree, hours before campaigns were meant to kick off.

The decision comes on the same day as several opposition politicians and civil society members were released from prison, in what some in the country viewed as a move to appease public opinion.

Senegal had long been seen as one of the most stable democracies in the region. It is the only country in mainland West Africa that has never had a military coup. It has had three largely peaceful handovers of power and until earlier this month had never delayed a presidential election.



Sall

US says Russia developing 'troubling' space-based anti-satellite weapon

RUSSIA is developing a space-based anti-satellite weapon that is "troubling" but poses no immediate threat, the White House has said.

National security spokesman John Kirby said US intelligence officials had information that Russia had developed the technology but that the weapon was not currently operational.

He said US officials were analysing the information they had and consulting with allies in Europe.

He confirmed the weapon was "space-based" but would not comment on reports in US media that it was either nuclear-capable or nuclear-powered.

Moscow downplayed the US claims, describing them as a "malicious fabrication" that were a White House ploy to try and secure the passage of a multibillion-dollar Ukrainian aid package through a resistant Republican-led House of Representatives.

Kirby said the latest weapon could pose a lethal risk to astronauts in low orbit, along with potentially disrupting vital military and civilian satellites. It would also breach the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which prohibits the deployment of "nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction" into orbit or to "station weapons in outer space in any other manner". More than 130 countries have signed the agreement, including Russia and the US.

Experts said the US does not have the capability to counter In a statement, Venezuela's government said it decided to suspend the activities of the UN rights office and "carry out a holistic revision of the technical cooperation terms". It said the review would take place over the next 30 days. It was not immediately clear if the Venezuelan government had notified the UN directly of its order to close the office. UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said during his daily briefing on Thursday that he had just been made aware of the decision and would get back to members of the press.

The UN human rights office has operated in Venezuela since 2019.

San Miguel, 57, was arrested last Friday in the immigration area of an airport in Caracas, sparking

claims, describing them as a "malicious fabrication" that were a White House ploy to try and secure the passage of a multibillion-dollar Ukrainian aid package through a resistant Republican-led House of Representatives.

Kirby said the latest weapon could pose a lethal risk to astronauts in low orbit, along with potentially disrupting vital military and civilian satellites.

It would also breach the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which prohibits the deployment of "nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction" into orbit or to "station weapons in outer space in any other manner". More than 130 countries have signed the agreement, including Russia and the US.

Experts said the US does not have the capability to counter

such a weapon. US President Joe Biden had been kept informed and had requested direct diplomatic engagement with Moscow over the weapon.

On Thursday, another Republican House member, Andy Ogles, urged House Speaker Mike Johnson to investigate the impact Turner's action may have had on foreign and domestic policy, asking whether he should remain chairman.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan also briefed lawmakers.

The US sees Russia and China as its biggest nation-state competitors and says both are developing a range of new weapons systems, including nuclear, cyber and space capabilities.

Venezuela orders suspension of UN rights office

VENEZUELA has ordered the local office of the United Nations human rights body to suspend operations and given its staff 72 hours to leave, accusing it of promoting opposition to the South American country.

Foreign Affairs Minister Yvan Gil announced the decision at a news conference in the capital Caracas on Thursday.

He said the office - the local technical advisory office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights - had been used by

the international community "to maintain a discourse" against Venezuela.

The move came two days after the UN agency expressed "deep concern" over the detention of prominent rights activist Rocio San Miguel and called for her "immediate release".

Gil said the UN rights office had taken on an "inappropriate role" and had become "the private law firm of the coup plotters and terrorists who permanently conspire against the country".

He said the decision would remain in place until the agency "publicly rectify, before the international community, their colonialist, abusive and violating attitude of the United Nations Charter".



Gil

CHANGE OF NAME

UNWANA
I, formerly known as **UNWANA KIINI ISAAC**, now wish to be known and addressed as **UNWANA KIINI DANIEL**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

UNWANA
I, formerly known as **UNWANA NSIKAN ISAAC**, now wish to be known and addressed as **UNWANA NSIKAN DAVID**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

EZEKIEL
I, formerly known as **EZEKIEL MARVEN REUBEN**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EZEKIEL REUBEN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

NANCHEN
I, formerly known as **SELDIP MERCY**, now wish to be known and addressed as **NANCHEN MERCY**. Correct date of birth is 4\9\1965 not 5\4\1980. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

BINAAN
I, formerly known as **BINAAN NKUP PATRICIA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **BINAAN MONDAY NKUP**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

SPACE FOR SALE



The fans inspire us to continue telling African stories - Mary Njoku

Mary Njoku, CEO of ROK Studios, alongside Nollywood stars Desmond Elliot, Bolanle Ninalowo, Chinedu Ikedieze and Efe Irele recently embarked on a tour of South Africa, Zambia, the UK, Lagos and Accra connecting with fans and Nollywood lovers across Africa and the diaspora. In an exclusive interview with Nollywood Observer, Mary Njoku discusses Nollywood, content, fans and ROK studios.



Why did ROK decide to embark on this tour?

We embarked on this tour to connect with our fans across Africa and beyond. It has been such a wonderful and insightful experience so far, spending time with so many of our super fans in the UK and South Africa. It's great to hear what they think about Nollywood, what they love about ROK and what they want more of. We are always speaking to our fans - face-to-face and via our social media platforms to see how we can improve.

The tour would be incomplete without a

'homecoming' with people in my home - Lagos and of course in Accra. **The fans inspire us to continue telling African stories. There are a number of consistent faces on the ROK tour, how is ROK able to get such loyalty and commitment from its actors?**

We all want the same thing - to keep the fans entertained and to do what we are passionate about. It is very important to work with people who are on the same page as you. What we do is for the people, to make

Continued on page 26

'I'll never be desperate again' - Jim Iyke vows



Popular Nollywood actor, Jim Iyke, has vowed never to be desperate again in his life.

Jim Iyke stated this in a viral video on the internet,

while narrating his encounter with the late founder of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN), Prophet TB Joshua.

It was reported that the actor was captured in a widely spread video in 2013 undergoing deliverance at SCOAN.

Speaking in his latest interview with Teju Babyface, the actor insisted that he was forced to take his sick mother to the prophet for healing out of desperation.

Regretting taking such a step out of desperation, he said, "I will never be desperate again in my life. Desperation was what took me there—to take my mother there, hoping that a man of God would heal her. If she were to live, twenty TB Joshuas would not stop her.

"It was her time, nobody would have made me enter that space; he was not the only one I went to; I have been to five or six men of God; is it because I do not want to mention names? How they drove me the money they took from me."

'DNA test must be done in my presence' -Mohbad's father.

Mr Joseph Aloba, father of late Nigerian rapper, Ilerioluwa Olademeji Aloba, aka Mohbad, has said a DNA test on his grandson must be conducted in his presence.

It was recalled that Nigerians have been torn apart over calls for a DNA test on the late singer's son, Liam, to ascertain his true paternity.

Speaking in a recent interview with Stams TV, elder Aloba said a DNA test on his grandson is a must, stressing that it has become a national concern

On the rumours that a DNA test has been done, he said a DNA test can't be conducted without his consent.

He insisted that he has to be present or send a representative before the DNA test can be done.

Aloba said even at that, it would be conducted at two different hospitals to be sure of the result.

He said, "Concerning the DNA test, it's a must they do it. Nigerians are demanding for it. I heard rumours that they did it but no matter what, I'm Mohbad's father so I'll give consent on the DNA test or send anyone who can represent me during the test if I'm not there to know how they'll do it. And even when they want to do it, it should be done in two different places so we can be very sure and know the truth.

Also, where I am from in Ikere Ekiti, even Olu Ikere just left my side now after paying me a visit. We don't accept bastards where I'm from, but it will be a thing of joy for me if this child is Mohbad's because this is the only child he said he left for me. Three days before his death, I was with him, he even served me food and he put Liam on my hands and he was taking pictures.

So I'll be very happy if Liam is Mohbad's son because I love the child. But if it turns out that Liam is not his son, it won't be good if we don't find out now because of the future so that even late Mohbad shouldn't be blaming me that I accepted something like this in. So the DNA is very necessary."



Continued on page 26

EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

Living

How to buy your daughter the best dresses

BUYING clothes for your children is difficult, especially when you have a daughter. Girls tend to be born with their own sense of style that just increases as they grow older. Add their unique body shape to the mix and it can be hard to find clothing that fits them and their style. As a mom, it's up to you to pick the right outfit. As if choosing your own outfit wasn't difficult enough, now you have to pick clothes for your baby girl too!

Children are sensitive to how others behave with them. The wrong clothes can make them feel like outcasts. Your clothing choice can affect their social life and self-image. That's a huge responsibility, right? Don't worry, because we have your back. Here's how to buy your daughter the best dresses and outfits for any season and age.

Here are top 10 tips for buying the best girl's dresses

What a blessing it is for moms these days that there are websites where you can buy any outfit you want right from the comfort of your home. If your daughters are old enough, they can shop with you, without any pressure from sales staff or the discomfort of trying on new outfits in store fitting rooms.

Buy your daughter dresses and other outfits requires some patience, knowledge, and a dash of fashion sense. If you don't know how to buy the right girl's clothing for your daughter, let these top tips be your guide.

Let them choose

A person's likes and dislikes develop as they grow. Your daughter's fashion sense is slowly evolving. Encourage her to make her own choices, even as a toddler. Act as a guide (perhaps setting some boundaries around price or modesty) and help her find her own style. At some point, she will have to choose her own clothes. Let her know that it is okay to dress how she wants, as long as it is appropriate. Let her play with colors, patterns, materials, and pieces. She will learn through trial and error what works and what doesn't. If your daughter likes playing dress-up, help her understand what colors and items go together. Show her how fashion works without imposing your style on her. You want to nudge her in the right direction without limiting her creativity.

This is a great way to help her find her identity and become confident. Not all girls want to dress up like a princess. (I have one girl who loves purple and earrings and nail polish and one girl who abhors anything like that and prefers to wear black and denim.) Noticing what she wants to wear will help you understand her better.

What fabrics to select?

Picking the right fabric can be tricky, but there is a way you make the best choice every time. Let the temperature be your guide. When the temperature is hot and humid, stick to materials like cotton, linen, and denim. As the temperature starts to drop in fall, opt for heavier cotton and lighter wool. You might also want to incorporate some leather items like jackets, pants, or skirts into their autumn outfits. Shift to heavy wool or clothes lined with fleece to keep your daughter warm. Some flannel items are thick enough to be worn in fall



and winter. If you want to buy something fancy, opt for thick silk or soft cashmere. For spring, bring out all the bright and light materials. Too cold for cotton? Let them wear silk and linen. The best thing you can do is let them wear a jacket, while they sport a lighter fabric inside.

Play with Colors

People say that children should wear colorful clothing and they are not wrong. Suppose you dress your baby in winter clothes but choose dark and morbid colors. Would that look pleasing to your eyes? Play with colors. Choose a color scheme and buy various items that fall within the same palette. You can mix and match those clothes to make different items. Let your daughter make her own color choices. She will be happy wearing



clothes that match her favorite colors. If she is a little artist who loves working with colors, she will certainly enjoy mixing and matching colors to arrange her outfits. (My 11-year-old is an artist who is probably the most critical of what she and her sisters wears, and what she thinks goes together—or doesn't.) Can't find the right bottoms for your colorful shirts and tops? Pair them with denim shorts, skirts, and pants.

Run with the seasons

We never wear sundresses in winter and padded jackets in summer. How do we know not to do that? Let's say it's common sense. We know exactly what kind of clothes to wear in what season. So if you need some help buying clothes, let the seasons be your guide. Stick to seasonal colors when dressing your daughter. Some specific colors dominate different seasons. What colors come to your mind when you think of fall? You might say orange, tan, and dark green. These are all the colors you associate with autumn, due to falling leaves and Thanksgiving. Spring colors would be bright pinks, purples, and other pretty shades we associate with the season of flowers. Choose colors according to seasons and your daughter will always stay in style.

Pay attention to details

Let's say you walked into a baby's first birthday party. You look at the baby and see a seedling clip "sprouting" from their head. Can you imagine how cute that would look? This is why paying attention to details always pays off. There are so many ways you can put more details into your daughter's outfit. One great way

is using prints and patterns. If she is the only one wearing a unique and pretty pattern, she is bound to stand out!

You can also add details by using accessories like hair clips and jewelry. Her outfit should tell a story. Going to a party? Add celebratory details like glittery jewelry or firework patterns to her dress

Put comfort first

During a playdate or any event with children, you will always spot one little girl who looks extremely uncomfortable in her clothes. The dress might be suffocating or itchy. They look unhappy and keep complaining to their moms. Do you want your daughter to be that little girl? Yes, fashion matters. Dressing well also matters. But not at the expense of your child's comfort. She might look like a doll in that princess dress, but if it is irritating her skin, don't buy it.

Children want to play around and have fun. If they are wearing uncomfortable clothes, they will not be happy. If you want her to enjoy dressing up, buy dresses that are pretty and comfortable.

Accessorize

Children become fascinated with accessories from a very young age. The jingly bangles and sparkly earrings always garner interest. Don't let that interest die. Teach them to accessorize.

You can easily make an ordinary dress stand out by adding the right accessories. Children tend to mimic the adults around them. How many times have you seen your daughter trying to walk around in your shoes?

Get them interested in their own fashion items and accessories. However, make sure that she wears accessories that are appropriate for her age, like not letting her wear heels until a certain age, as it can permanently damage their feet and cause growth-related problems. You also have to make sure that the accessories are comfortable. Don't make her wear dangly hoops that might hurt them or bangles that might cut her wrist. Be careful with necklaces as your child might feel suffocated by them. Necklaces and bracelets can not only be a fashion symbol, they can also serve practical purposes. Sensory jewelry can help a child who tends to chew her hair, nails or clothes. Amber or hazelwood jewelry can help a child who has eczema or other health concerns. A special piece of jewelry could remind your daughter of Mommy to help her cope with separation anxiety. These accessories can not only complement an outfit, but also give your daughter more confidence when she's out of the house.

Branded vs. Generic

Many people think branded clothes are better than those from a generic local clothing house. In some cases, this might be true as a well-known brand will need to uphold its reputation. However, it's not always the same. Sometimes the same t-shirt is sold by both a generic shop and a branded store. Even though they are of the same quality, the price might be very different.

Your child should have some branded items, but make sure she knows that branded clothes are not always the best. She might treasure her branded dress, but then you can buy more clothes for her if you balance it out with more affordable, generic clothes.

Mix and match

One mistake people commonly make is creating sets of clothes that go together exclusively. Let's say you bought a top and a pair of pants for your daughter that only go with each other. So she will only be able to wear that set and won't be able to mix them with other items to create another look. One key to dressing fashionably is buying items that can be used again and again by mixing and matching. You can buy clothes that fall in the same color gradient and match different items to create a variety of outfits. This way, your daughter would sport a different look every day.

Keep an eye out for discounts

If you want your daughter to dress fashionably, she will need more than one dress. Wearing the same clothes, again and again, can get boring. Keep an eye out for discounts so that you can buy her new clothes. If you keep updating her wardrobe, she will always get to dress fashionably. If you have a surplus of older clothes, then only keep a few that you can reincorporate into her looks. Give away the rest to people in need. This will also help her learn to share and give to people who are less fortunate.

On a final note, when picking out girl's dresses for your daughter, you need to find items that will fit the season and occasion. Play with colors and teach her how to create unique looks. Help her learn that fashion is not just about branded clothes. Your dress should make a statement and tell your story. If you show her the ropes, she will grow up to be a stylish young lady who always dresses fashionably!

EVER'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

RECIPES

Garlic, butter, steak and potatoes

By
JOANNA CISMARU

THIS delicious Garlic Butter Steak and Potatoes is a one-pan recipe that only requires 10 ingredients! The dish is a quick and easy take on juicy steak and tasty potatoes that is bursting with garlicky goodness! It's a wonderful meal perfect for weeknights that you can make in under 30 minutes!

The pairing of steak and potatoes is a classic! And for good reason! When you serve perfectly cooked juicy steak together with potatoes of any kind it's absolutely delicious. But sometimes you just don't have the time or money for the full-blown steak dinner. And that's where this tasty garlic butter steak and potatoes recipe comes in!

This dish is a one-pan spin on steak and potatoes that is not only easy to make but super yummy. It's composed of pieces of sirloin steak that are marinated, then perfectly sautéed with lots of garlic, and then tossed together with baby potatoes that were cooked in the same pan. It's a simple dish that is loaded with lots of flavor that your whole family will love!

You'll love this recipe because it is a simple one-pan meal that only requires 10 ingredients and just under 30 minutes to make. With no special equipment or skills needed. Instead of the typical big steak on a plate with potatoes on the side, this dish is pieces of juicy steak and baby potatoes that are sautéed together into deliciousness. Everyone loves steak and potatoes with lots of garlic. This easy recipe is sure to quickly become one of your family's most requested meals.

Ingredients

You'll need to make garlic butter steak and potatoes.

Steak Marinade

Sirloin Steak – This is a great cut of meat that stays tender when marinated and sautéed. You can also use tenderloin to make these steak bites.

Soy Sauce – I always use a low-sodium variety to control the level of added salt.

Olive Oil – Any type of vegetable oil will work, but I like the flavor that olive oil adds to meat.

Sriracha – Just a bit is used to add a touch of spice, but you can omit it if you like.

Potatoes

Baby Potatoes – Baby Yukon gold potatoes are a great choice. But any baby potatoes will work.



Olive Oil – I like to use olive oil, but you can use any vegetable oil you like.

Butter – Always use unsalted butter in cooking to control the level of added sodium.

Garlic – Always use fresh garlic cloves for the best flavor. Store-bought minced garlic can sometimes have a bitter taste if it has been open in your fridge for too long.

Italian Seasonings – This mix of dried herbs is typically a blend of basil, oregano, rosemary, thyme, and marjoram. If you don't have any Italian seasoning, you can just use a combination of whatever you have on hand or make your own using my recipe here.

Salt – Enhances the natural flavor of the potatoes.

Black Pepper – Used along with the salt used to season the potatoes. You can use regular or fresh ground black pepper.

This is the best steak recipe for a quick meal that takes just a little under 30 minutes to make! All you have to do is cook the

potatoes, sear some meat, and serve! Easy peasy and dinner in no time! Marinate. The first step of this recipe is to infuse the meat with a yummy marinade. So combine the soy sauce, olive oil, and Sriracha together in a small bowl. Then add the cubed meat and set it aside while you cook the potatoes.

Cook The Potatoes process shots showing how to make garlic butter steak and potatoes.

Start cooking the potatoes as the steak is marinating. To do this, heat a large skillet over medium-high and then add the olive oil and one tablespoon of butter to the pan. Next, add the potatoes and cook them for about 8 minutes or until they are nicely browned and fork-tender. If your pan is small you can do this in batches. Then transfer the potatoes to a plate and set them aside for now.

Sear the steak. You'll use the same skillet to cook your steak, so go ahead and add the rest of the butter to it along with the

minced garlic and Italian seasoning. Then cook the mixture for just 30 seconds until it's aromatic. Next, add the steak pieces to the pan in a single layer, but reserve any leftover marinade. Now, cook the meat over medium-high heat for one minute without touching it at all, then toss it, and sear it just one more minute.

Add the potatoes and finish. Once you've seared the cubed meat, pour the reserved marinade over the steak and cook it for yet another minute. Then add the potatoes back into the skillet and cook together with the meat until warmed through. Finally, taste the dish and season with salt and pepper if needed.

Serve and enjoy
When the garlic butter steak and potatoes is done, transfer it to your favorite dish and garnish it with some fresh chopped parsley and Parmesan cheese if you like. Then serve it with a green veggie like my Roasted Brussels Sprouts or a salad to make it a complete meal.

Expert tips

Use both the butter and oil. Make sure to use the olive oil with the butter. Doing so prevents the milk solids in butter from burning and becoming bitter. Cook the potatoes separately. You need to cook the potatoes first not only because they take longer to cook, but also because the meat needs that time to marinate.

Don't overcook the meat. If you like your meat well done, then go for it and cook away! But if you don't then make sure you only cook the sirloin pieces for just a few minutes on each side.

Storage

Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 3 days or in the freezer for up to 3 months when stored in an airtight container or freezer bag. To reheat, just put them in the microwave for about 3 minutes on medium heat. You can also reheat them in a skillet if you prefer. If frozen, thaw the leftovers out in the fridge overnight and then reheat them in the oven for about 15 minutes



Reality Bites

with Palang Kasmi
 peekembo@yahoo.com
 08036417305, 08095322786

Parents, know the benefits of listening to Children

WHY is it necessary to listen to children? Isn't it the child who needs to listen? Every individual has a need to be heard, both for children and adults. If the child's need to listen is not fulfilled, what will happen? Will this affect his psychological development when he grows up?

Just imagine, when the child is telling the experience on the first day of school. What situations often occur? Listening to children while doing other activities? Listening and listening to children's stories until they are finished? Listen for a while and then start advising him.

Psychological development in adult individuals is formed from childhood experiences. Adult individuals who have the experience of being heard will grow into different characters from individuals who have the experience of not being heard. The most prominent character formation from listening to children is the development of a positive self-concept in children. The self-concept here is the child's picture of himself, namely how he perceives, evaluates, and accepts himself. Thus, with a positive self-concept, children will grow up with confidence in their ability to do things to achieve goals and develop themselves. Character building through listening activities is important, especially for children.

Some of the benefits of listening to children are as follows:

When listening to children, it will be easy to understand the child's point of view and their feelings, such as their joys, fears, and worries.

When listening to children, children can also learn how to build relationships and communication that respect and respect each other.

By listening to children, children's priorities and interests are easier to understand. Apart from that, it also makes it easier to provide proper access to children, so that they can grow and develop more openly.

Listening can also help children to increase their self-confidence and feelings of worth (self-esteem) within themselves. When listened to, children feel their views are respected and valued by adults. In addition, children can also learn and practice communicating their ideas or views with limited experience.

When self-confidence in children is built because they are listened to, it will be easier for children to acquire new skills, such as social skills and skills to reflect on their experiences and to explore themselves by



communicating them in their own way and point of view.

What needs to be done to be able to listen to children?

Before practicing listening, it is necessary to know and understand what listening is. The word "hear" has a different meaning than the word "listen". Based on KBBI, "listening" is the occurrence of sensory activity, namely capturing sound. When capturing sound enters the ear and can feel the sound, passive activity occurs or does not take action. Thus no real effort is required to hear. Meanwhile the word "listen" means paying attention to sound. This makes

the word "listen" an active action, because it pays attention to the sound, both the intonation and the content of the sound. In addition to listening, there is also an effort to concentrate and understand what you are listening to. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that it is possible to hear without listening, but it is impossible to listen without hearing.

Being a good listener is not something easy, it takes skills and attitudes that need to be trained continuously. Some attitudes and skills need to be trained to be able to listen well,

especially listening to children.

Practice being empathetic by placing yourself to be part of your child's everyday life, so you can listen specifically to your child's experiences and find out about their thoughts and feelings regarding these experiences.

Show respect and appreciation when listening to children. One of them is to give time to take turns for children to talk, and avoid judging children's experiences or opinions. Trying to be more sensitive to the emotions and feelings displayed by children, by showing an open attitude and willingness to understand children's different points of

view. Showing an honest attitude in communicating attitudes, reactions, and feedback on children's experiences, while still needing to adjust the way of communication to the child's age level.

Showing patience and sensitivity to the right time, because listening takes a little time and readiness to be fully aware of being fully present so that listening can feel comfortable and can provide feedback according to the child's communication patterns. The article was written by Ms. Melvi Rosilawati, M. Psi, Psychologist at EMC Sentul Hospital.

EVER'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

Health

Deciding when to see a doctor



REGARDLESS of our age, we should all see a doctor on a regular basis for preventative care and a way to develop a baseline for our health. Sometimes there are glaring signs you should see a doctor in addition to those regular visits. Here are 6 of those signs.

A Headache with Additional Symptoms
Most headaches can be relieved by over the counter medications. A headache that is more severe than normal is a

warning sign something else is wrong and you should probably see your doctor. When a headache is accompanied by fever, nausea, confusion, trouble walking or talking, or a stiff neck, skip your doctor and go right to the ER. You could be having a stroke, or it could be meningitis.

Stomach pain and digestive issues
We all get an upset stomach from time to time, but certain accompanying symptoms should prompt you to see a doctor. Diarrhea that lasts longer than a

few days, heartburn that doesn't go away, constipation or stools that are bloody or black, and persistent severe abdominal pain are all signs to see a doctor as soon as possible.

Painful back
This is a common complaint, but sometimes it can be more serious. Watch out for weakness and tingling down the leg. If you have a fever, redness on your back, and are losing weight, call Davidson Family Medicine for an appointment.

The common cold or flu

Most of us know the symptoms to watch for when it's cold or flu season, and we also know how to treat those symptoms. In certain cases, we need a doctor's intervention.

Those symptoms include some of the following: A cough that lasts over 2 or 3 weeks, a high fever, excessive sore throat with painful swallowing, persistent vomiting, an earache, symptoms that last 10 days or longer and seem to be getting worse. You don't need to have all these symptoms; even one should be a reason to call your doctor.

A head injury
This is one instance where most of us would call a doctor. Yes, it could appear minor, but it could also just as well be a

concussion. If you feel dizzy, have balance problems, begin to vomit, and are sensitive to light, see a doctor. If you begin to have mood changes, can't sleep, concentrate, or remember things, call Davidson Family Medicine for an evaluation.

Depression, anxiety, or other mental health problems
Never suffer in silence and alone. Any time you are having feelings of sadness that won't go away, have changes in eating or sleeping habits, are constantly worrying or anxious, and find you can't cope with day to day problems, call your doctor for help. Any thoughts of hurting yourself or others – don't delay to call a doctor. Source: Davidsonfamily medicine.com



BUSINESS WORLD

Housing deficit: Tinubu, Dangyiwa and renewed hope

Shelter is a fundamental human right, ranking second only to food in importance. Yet, Nigeria faces a significant housing deficit, estimated at 28 million units as of 2023. With the complex issue of housing affordability and accessibility in Nigeria and the historical efforts, not a few Nigerians are viewing the current initiatives by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu under the coordination of Housing Minister, Ahmed Musa Dangyiwa, as another hoax. GIDADO IBRAHIM writes.

NIGERIA'S housing deficit has grown steadily since independence, fueled by various factors. While earlier concerns focused on mortgage inefficiency, the problem has evolved to encompass rapid urbanisation, population growth, slum demolition, poverty, and rural-urban migration. This intricate interplay has resulted in a 300% increase in the housing deficit over the past three decades, exceeding population growth by nearly double.

Efforts to bridge the housing gap have been undertaken by various administrations. Notably, the Shehu Shagari government, which berthed Shagari Low Cost Housing in every corner of the country. The late General Sani Abacha's military regime saw significant housing projects, including Gwarinpa estate in Abuja. However, these initiatives often fell short of addressing the broader national need.

Recognising the urgency of the issue, the Tinubu administration appointed Ahmed Musa Dangyiwa, a former Managing Director/CEO of the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria, as Housing Minister. Dangyiwa's

experience and understanding of the sector are seen as assets in tackling this complex challenge. A key initiative under Dangyiwa's leadership is the "Renewed Hope Cities and Estates Programme," aimed at constructing 100,000 housing units across the country through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). The programme's first phase focuses on 20,000 units in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), with a pilot project of 3,112 units already under way.

This initiative emphasises affordability, accessibility, and job creation. President Tinubu has directed the construction of access roads to these new estates, acknowledging the importance of connectivity and infrastructure development. Additionally, the programme is projected to generate 500,000 jobs in the FCT alone.

While the Renewed Hope programme represents a significant step by the president, several challenges remain. The estimated N21 trillion required to address the national deficit necessitates substantial investment, exceeding the current average annual investment of N7.47 trillion in the real estate sector. Furthermore, population growth will continue to outpace construction unless addressed concurrently.

Other concerns include ensuring the programme's transparency and accountability, guaranteeing affordability for low-income



Dangyiwa

earners, and effectively like the "Renewed Hope Cities and Estates Programme" with stricter transparency and accountability measures. Encourage diverse private sector participation and ensure affordability for low- and middle-income earners.

Targeted Subsidies: The Tinubu administration should implement targeted subsidies for specific demographics or housing types (e.g., social housing for low-income families) to maximise impact and avoid misuse.

Housing Microfinance: Facilitate access to microfinance loans for individual homeownership or small-scale developers, focusing on financial literacy and loan repayment support.

Transparency and Accountability: Tinubu and his minister, Ahmed Musa Dangyiwa, must enhance policy and regulatory framework to streamline approval processes, reduce bureaucratic hurdles and

delays in obtaining building permits and land titles to encourage faster construction and investment.

Standardise Building Codes: They must also implement and enforce national building codes that ensure quality, safety, and affordability while considering regional variations and local materials.

Land Use Reform: Address land ownership complexities and facilitate access to affordable land for developers, particularly in urban areas.

3. Promote Innovation and Technology:

Sustainable Construction Above all, President Tinubu must

Methods: Encourage the use of innovative and sustainable construction materials and technologies to reduce costs and environmental impact.

Modular Housing: Explore the potential of modular housing for faster and more efficient construction, particularly for affordable housing projects.

Digital Platforms: Utilise digital platforms to improve transparency in housing allocation, land titling, and construction monitoring.

4. Address Underlying Challenges:

Urban Planning: Invest in comprehensive urban planning that considers housing needs, infrastructure development, and job creation within cityscapes.

Poverty Reduction: Implement broader poverty reduction strategies to increase affordability and access to housing for low-income Nigerians.

Education and Skills Development: Equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed for employment in the construction sector, creating jobs and boosting the housing market.

5. Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement:

Engage with communities: Involve communities in planning and decision-making processes to ensure housing solutions meet their needs and avoid displacement.

Collaborate with civil society: Partner with NGOs and community organisations with expertise in housing and development to leverage their knowledge and networks.

Promote regional cooperation: Explore regional partnerships and knowledge sharing to learn from successful housing initiatives in other African countries.

Remember, tackling a complex issue like the housing deficit requires a multi-pronged approach and sustained commitment. Evaluating the effectiveness of implemented policies and adapting them based on data and feedback will be crucial for achieving long-term success.

The fear is that with the porous nature of the nation's economy, coupled with its inflationary trends, the prospective home owners may never be realised, as today vast majority of Nigerians, especially those residents in Abuja and other cities of the country, are not finding it easy to have a roof over their heads. The renewed hope initiative should ensure that residents, developers, public and private sectors are involved, with structured schemes that allows tenants to acquire their Houses, pay rent over a period of time and own these houses specifically.

Above all, President Tinubu must

develop thick skin and deaf ears to certain criticisms. He should understand that people who really can't communicate think everything is an argument, and people who lack accountability think everything is an attack. Sometimes people don't want to hear the truth because they don't want their illustrations destroyed.

Tackling Nigeria's housing deficit requires a multi-pronged approach, encompassing government initiatives, private sector investment, and community engagement. While the Renewed Hope programme offers renewed hope, its success hinges on overcoming significant financial, logistical, and social hurdles. Addressing these challenges effectively will determine whether this initiative truly bridges the housing gap and provides Nigerians with the decent and affordable shelter they deserve.

Good enough, President Tinubu's choice of Dangyiwa as minister of Housing is a demonstration of the president's knack for identifying talents and make the best out of them. Architect Dangyiwa transformed the NHF within five years, leading his team to mobilise N279 billion in additional contributions to the NHF scheme at an average of N55.8 billion per annum.

He was able to do this by ensuring transparency and accountability in the management of the NHF scheme, engaging state governments to resume contributions to the NHF scheme and building strategic partnerships with labour centers such as the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA).

With these kind of antecedents, Nigerians should not be surprised to discover that they have a minister who will be willing to personally monitor work at construction site everyday to avoid manipulation and use of fake building materials. This is a man who will adhere to the Renewed Hope agenda and follow the president's direction, as far as he knows that direction will yield results. Under his watch, there'll be no room for money laundering, corruption, and other related offences in the building sector, as he will ensure President Tinubu's fight against corruption is won.

For my fellow citizens, Nigerians, it is time we drew the distinction between constructive criticism and political propaganda orchestrated by opposition, aimed to influence and instigate us into unnecessary crisis as a result of their selfish desires. We expect these political jobbers to rally support for President Tinubu's anti-graft war. God bless Nigeria.

BUSINESS WORLD

Let Cardoso be, you all cannot be experts -Tinubu

PRESIDENT Tinubu has urged the governors of the 36 states of the federation and critics to trust the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) governor, Olayemi Cardoso, with the management of the country's monetary policy, emphasising the importance of allowing designated institutions to fulfil their mandate effectively.

The President made the plea at a meeting recently with 36 state governors, attended by Vice-President Kashim Shettima, the National Security Adviser, Nihu Ribadu, the Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, the Director-General of the Department of State Services (DSS), Yusuf Bichi, and some ministers at the State House in Abuja on Thursday.

He said the "cacophony of postulations" on the fluctuation of foreign exchange rates was unduly affecting the market negatively.

"Every one of us cannot be an expert. If we have given someone an assignment, let us allow them to do it. If they cannot do it, then we find a way to quickly get them out of the system," the President said.

President Bola Tinubu has said his administration is evolving home-grown solutions to address the nation's food security challenges by setting up schemes to support local production and discourage all forms of rent-seeking that are associated with food importation.

On security, President Tinubu approved the establishment of a committee comprising state governors and representatives of the federal government to, among other things, explore the modalities for establishing state police.

The President further endorsed the training and equipping of forest rangers by sub-national governments to safeguard human and natural resources in local communities.

"My position at this meeting is that we must move aggressively and establish a committee to look critically at the issues raised, including the possibility of establishing state police.

"From Kano, we have read reports about large-scale hoarding of food in some warehouses. The National Security Adviser (NSA), the Inspector-General of Police, and the Director-General of the Department of State Services should coordinate very closely and ensure that security agencies in the states inspect such warehouses with follow up action.

"We must ensure that speculators, hoarders, and rent seekers are not allowed to sabotage our efforts in ensuring the wide availability of food to all Nigerians.

"What I will not do is to set a price control board. I will not also approve the importation of food. We should be able to get ourselves out of the situation we found ourselves in, because importation will allow rent seekers to



Tinubu

perpetrate fraud and mismanagement at our collective expense. We would rather support farmers with the schemes that will make them go to the farm and grow more food for everyone in the country.

"We must also look at the rapid but thoughtful implementation of our livestock development and management plans, including dairy farming and others," the President stated.

President Tinubu asked the governors to always make the welfare and prosperity of the people a priority of their development programmes, assuring them that the federal

government will continue to work diligently to improve the nation's revenue profile.

At the meeting, the President and the governors emphasised the importance of working together to address issues of insecurity, food security, and out-of-school children.

Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq of Kwara State and Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) expressed appreciation to President Tinubu for convening the meeting and affirmed the governors' commitment to partnering closely with the federal government.

Nigeria's real estate predicts \$2.26trn growth in 2024

THE real estate sector in Nigeria is forecast to grow to \$2.26 trillion in 2024, of which residential estate will contribute \$1.93 trillion or 85.4 percent.

Analysts who made the forecast noted that the growth would be happening at the backdrop of challenges of weakening currency, poor infrastructure, multiple taxation, high construction costs, among others confronting the sector.

Speaking at the Real Estate Outlook 2024 launch organized by Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce, NBCC, in partnership with FIABCI, an International Real Estate

Federation, Founder and Chief Consultant, B. Adedipe & Associates Limited, Dr. Biodun Adedipe, who outlined the challenges also noted that the sector will grow at compound annual growth rate, CAGR, of 7.52 percent to \$3.02 trillion between 2024 and 2028.

He said that housing development is a driver of investments that stimulate an economy and serves as a major source of job creation.

He pointed out that Nigeria's 22 million units housing deficit, mostly in urban areas was home to about 51.7 percent of the population, adding the country's population estimated at 223.8

ON Thursday, the oil market rose after retail data in the United States prompted a sell-off in the Dollar, the trading currency for the commodity, with Brent crude futures up by \$1.26 or 1.5 per cent to \$82.86 a barrel and the US West Texas Intermediate crude futures up by \$1.39 or 1.8 per cent to \$78.03 per barrel.

The US Dollar index slid about 0.3 per cent after data showed US retail sales fell more than expected in January.

A weaker Dollar usually boosts oil prices as it makes the commodity cheaper for holders of other currencies.

Retail sales in the world's largest economy, a signal for demand, tumbled 0.8 per cent last month, the biggest drop since March 2023, the Commerce Department's Census Bureau said.

Data for December was revised lower to show sales rising 0.4 per cent instead of 0.6 per cent as previously reported. November sales were also revised down to show them unchanged, rather than rising 0.3 per cent.

The data prompted optimism around interest rate cuts from the US Federal Reserve going forward, which could be positive for oil demand.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) said that global oil demand is losing momentum, prompting the agency to trim its 2024

Oil market rises as dollar weakens

growth forecast to 1.22 million barrels per day from 1.24 million barrels per day.

On the supply side, the IEA estimated that supply will grow by 1.7 million barrels per day this year, up from its previous forecast of 1.5 million barrels per day.

Earlier this week, the agency which represents industrialized countries, predicted oil demand will peak by 2030, undercutting the rationale for investment.

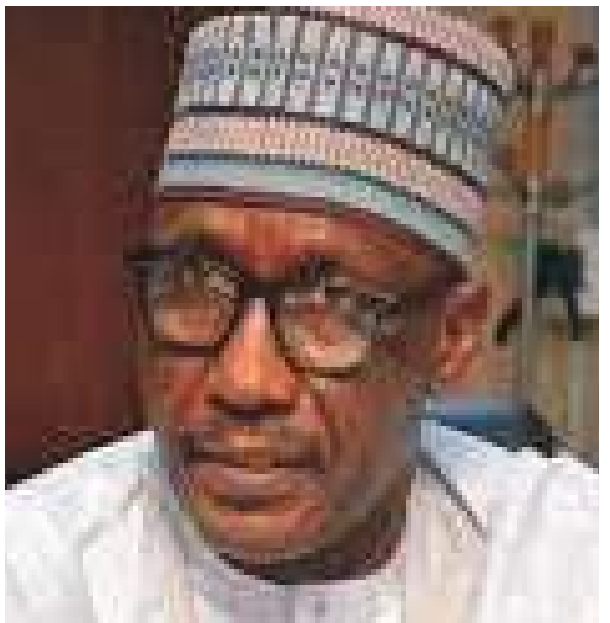
Economic woes sent warning to investors as two major economies began recessions.

The United Kingdom fell into recession in the second half of 2023 when its gross

domestic product (GDP) contracted by 0.3 per cent in the fourth quarter, having shrunk by 0.1 per cent in the third quarter, official data showed.

Japan also slipped into recession at the end of last year, surrendering its title as the world's third-biggest economy to Germany.

Once the second-largest economy in the world, Japan reported two consecutive quarters of contraction on Thursday — falling 0.4 per cent on an annualized basis in the fourth quarter after a revised 3.3 per cent contraction in the third quarter.



kyari

and nimble enough to learn from mistakes, carry the learning forward into the next tasks and keep improving."

Earlier in his welcome address, President of NBCC Mr. Ray Atelly, said that Real Estate Outlook was an annual event of the chamber, designed to provide a platform for stakeholders in the sector to share their experience in the areas of advocacy, entrepreneurship and professional career fueled by passion, audacity, and innovation.

In a panel session, Group

Chief Executive, Land Mark Africa Group, Paul Onwuanibe; Founder/Chief Executive of Aircom Nigeria Ltd, Yemi Idowu; and Chairman, Construction and Real Estate Group, NBCC, Hakeem Ogunniran; said that the sector which is supposed to be a professional sector has been mis-regulated.

He said: "We need policy from government to drive private sector investment, there are lots of opportunities but we cannot get up on our own".

FG to borrow N2.5tn through bonds – DMO

THE Federal Government is seeking to raise N2.5tn in its second FGN bonds auction of the year.

Debt Management Office in a circular issued recently, stated that the offerings consisted of N1.25tn with a maturity date of February 2031 and N1.25tn with a 10-year tenor.

FGN savings bonds are part of the domestic borrowing plan of the federal government.

Last year, the Federal Government raised about N7.06tn from the fixed income market.

This year, the Federal Government has projected

its new borrowings to hit N7.83tn.

President Bola Tinubu had sought approval from the National Assembly for about \$8.69bn and €100m as part of the external borrowing plan for 2022 to 2024.

The latest FGN bonds have a face value N1,000, with a minimum subscription requirement of N50,001,000 and subsequent increments in multiples of N1,000.

Interest payments on FGN bonds are usually semi-annually.

In January, the FG had offered a two-year FGN Savings bond due January 17, 2026 at 11.033 per cent



Oniha

per annum and another three-year FGN Savings Bond due January 17, 2027 at 12.033 per cent per annum.

It allotted N603.42bn for the two-year tenor bond and N1.394tn for the three-year bond.



Dangiwa

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Risk management in procurement that anyone can understand

The easiest way to define procurement is as the acquisition of goods and services. It is a vital part of supply chain management, which has evolved from purchasing, which is an administrative function, to procurement, which is a more strategic approach to goods and service acquisition. Today, procurement goes beyond that. It also entails the good planning and management of the stakeholders who provide these goods and services. OBINNA NWODO writes.

JUST like many other aspects of business operations, the procurement process has a lot of risks. If not well managed, there will be major exposure to losses and poor business performance. Remember that this article is worth reading if your organisation has a procurement unit. Moreover, who won't have a procurement unit in 2024? Haha!

Cost

What are the risks involved when we talk about cost? A lot of procurement professionals have been asked by their company to ensure costs are low during purchases. This is cool, but is it long-term? How sustainable is it? Have you ever heard of the total cost of ownership? I'm not going to define anything here. Let me give you an example.

Imagine you want to purchase a car. Option A is N1000 and Option B is N1500 (Please, this is an imagination; Don't carry 1k to buy a car. I no dey oo. LOL). You immediately think that going for Option A gives you a N500 cost savings, right? It absolutely does at that time, but... Option A needs N100 monthly for gas and maintenance, and Option B needs N40. By the end of one year, you would have spent N2,200 on Option A and N1,980 on Option B. By the end of the second year, you would have saved more than N900 if you went for Option B. So, you see, focusing on unit cost isn't always a sustainable way to deal with cost-associated risks.

Quality

Quality is often a myth, but it's not a business school



discussion. For instance, a surface pump for domestic water supply requires a float switch to control pumping, demonstrating the importance of quality in our daily lives.

You have a low-quality option for N20 and a high-quality one for N35. And then you say, "Why on earth would I pay almost two times the cost of this for a float switch? Is it not the same thing they both do?" Well, here's the twist: The N20 one lasts for two months

before it goes bad, and the N35 lasts for four months or more. You would need 6 pieces of the N20 guy per year, which will be N120. 3 pieces of the N35 come to the N105.

So generally, a good buyer is a long-term thinker. Back to the business environment, quality is not a myth, and it is paramount to competitiveness. Moreover, the peace of mind it brings gives more time to focus on other strategic purchases and procedures, which add value to

the company and foster continuous improvement and growth.

Supply chain value is paramount, and speed has become crucial in production and service delivery. In the service industry, sourcing a building contractor for a restaurant branch renovation is critical. The estimated time of completion (ETC) is the top priority, followed by quality and cost. The only justification to choose a contractor with a cheaper cost and longer ETC is if the savings from mobilising that vendor outweigh the money lost during the additional period the branch is closed.

For instance, if Contractor A offers a shorter renovation time, the only justification to choose Contractor B is if the value to customers and savings from using Option B outweigh the profit if the branch is closed for a longer period.

Capacity, culture alignment, and large pool of suppliers

Working with suppliers who have the capacity we desire and culture alignment is one thing that many procurement

professionals may not pay attention to, and to be honest, we really need to. Imagine a medium-scale FMCG company that had inaccurate forecasts and planning and had to turn to a supplier to save the day (remember that we are imagining here).

They are open 24/7, so they reach out to a supplier on Saturday morning to supply raw materials to their plants, and the supplier says, "We do not work on Saturdays. Apologies for any inconveniences caused." Please tell me who cooked these beans. Now, write this down: NEVER RELY ON ONE SUPPLIER. They will check their supplier pool and ensure they get the raw materials to the plant. If you are reading this and you do not have a large pool of suppliers, then you need some more strategic sourcing.

Procurement professionals should prioritise risk management for daily activities and processes, focusing on all data and considering the potential harm and harm to the organisation rather than focusing on a few parameters and making decisions based on them.

"Supply chain value is paramount, and speed has become crucial in production and service delivery. In the service industry, sourcing a building contractor for a restaurant branch renovation is critical. The estimated time of completion (ETC) is the top priority, followed by quality and cost. The only justification to choose a contractor with a cheaper cost and longer ETC is if the savings from mobilising that vendor outweigh the money lost during the additional period the branch is closed. For instance, if Contractor A offers a shorter renovation time, the only justification to choose Contractor B is if the value to customers and savings from using Option B outweigh the profit if the branch is closed for a longer period."



The fans inspire us to continue telling African stories – Mary Njoku

Continued from page 18

them happy. ROK is a family – we are on tour as a family.

What determines the type of stories produced by ROK TV?

What type of stories do the people who consume the content enjoy the most

Our environment, experiences and interactions with people on a day-to-day basis

Powerful storytelling that reflects the many different aspects of African life

What has been the greatest discovery of the ROK team throughout the Rok Tour?

Seeing how much love we got from the people outside of Nigeria, especially in South Africa and Zambia. Nollywood is no longer a Nigerian phenomenon, it is for all of Africa and through this tour we have expanded our knowledge of people and places outside of Nigeria which can be developed into broader African stories.

How does ROK intend to give back to the next generation of Nollywood Directors, Producers and Actors that are aiming for a start in the industry?

This is the whole premise of ROK as a company. We love new faces. You can see that a lot of people have grown in the past few years through ROK. A great example, Efe Irele who is also on the tour with us, has really seen her career accelerate very quickly, and she has grown into such a versatile and well-sought out actress.

I am passionate about the younger generation and providing opportunities for them through acting, scriptwriting, etc. I was once in a position where I was in search of opportunity so anything I can do to lift others and create job opportunities, I will. Bringing new blood into Nollywood, whilst also collaborating with professional stars that have paved the way for the rest of us, is an important balance.

What steps must a Director take to get

their project showcased on ROK? Must ROK be an executive producer on the project before it is showcased on the channel?

At least 85% of the content on ROK is produced by us, however we do also acquire content from other production companies to showcase on our platforms across Africa and the UK. Quality content, quality storytelling – this is critical to all of our acquisition decisions

Where do most viewers of the ROK channel come from and what does it tell the team about the type of content being produced?

As a TV channel, ROK reaches 13.5 million subscribers across DSTV and GOTV platforms in Africa alone. In the UK it reaches 12.5M viewers. We create diverse content from epic dramas to modern city romance stories, to make the movies relatable to viewers both home and abroad.

What message would you leave for someone that does not believe in Nollywood content but you would like to use ROK as a factor to convince them to begin this journey?

As long as we continue to produce meaningful and relatable stories, that are entertaining and speak for us Africans, we will continue to create new Nollywood converts on a regular basis.

What is the goal of ROK in the next 2-5 years?

To produce more African content, for Africans by Africans. We would like to unite Africa by inviting talent from other countries – we want to learn about South African stories, about Zambian stories, about Africans who grew up in Europe, we want to share relatable content through our movies and series.



If you want to stay relevant, emulate Wizkid – Shallipopi

Continued from page 18



CROWN Uzama, professionally known as Shallipopi, a popular Nigerian musician, has offered some helpful career advice with fellow entertainers.

The Elon Musk crooner stated that if his colleagues want to stay relevant in the industry, they must mimic Afrobeats superstar Wizkid's social media decorum.

Shallipopi expressed this in a recent interview with 78 Factory, explaining that overworked musicians frequently forget their ideals.

He said: "To stay relevant, you stay silent. When you talk too much, you lose value. Let your music and your success speak for you like Wizkid."

The Edo-born singer also disclosed during the interview that his genre of music isn't afrobeats but afro-pluto.

Meanwhile....

Zlatan gave my career life – Shallipopi

Crown Uzama, also known as Shallipopi, a rising Nigerian artist, has underlined the importance of rapper Zlatan Ibile in his success.

According to the "Elon Musk" singer, Zlatan gave his music career "life" without receiving any monetary compensation.

The TikTok sensation, 23, revealed this via his Instagram story while giving a tribute to the Lagos Anthem hitmaker.

Shallipopi wrote; "Big shoutout to Zlatan Ibile. Bro literally gave my career life. He didn't ask for anything in return."

He became an internet sensation after his song 'Elon Musk' went viral. He later remixed the song with Zlatan Ibile and Fireboy DML which solidified his stardom.

Lupita Nyong'o and Boyfriend Selema Masekela Break up

LUPITA Nyong'o and boyfriend Selema Masekela have ended their romance less than a year after going Instagram official. Read her powerful message on her "heartbreak" and "pain"

There is no more "us" for Lupita Nyong'o and Selema Masekela.

The Oscar winner and her boyfriend have broken up after about one year together, she shared on Instagram Oct. 19 without naming her ex.

"It is necessary for me to share a personal truth and publicly dissociate myself from someone I can no longer trust," Lupita wrote. "I find myself in a season of heartbreak because of a love suddenly and devastatingly extinguished by deception."

The Black Panther star shared why she decided to reveal the news publicly in spite of the heartache she's currently feeling.

"I am tempted to run into the shadows and hide, only to return to the light when I have regained my strength enough for me to say, 'Whatever, my life is better this way,'" she continued. "But I am reminded that the magnitude of the pain I am feeling is equal to the measure of my capacity for love. And so, I am choosing to face the pain, cultivating the courage to meet my life exactly as it is, and trusting that this too shall pass."



SUNDAY FEATURE

Olukoyede and the renewed EFCC agenda for corruption

Whistleblowing is today the most talked-about strategy in the global quest for combating corruption, and achieving transparency and accountability in governance across all sectors, Godwin Onyeacholem writes.

HIS recourse to prevention, to deal with corrupt practices, can hardly be faulted. One of the most effective mechanisms for successful prevention happens to be whistleblowing. It is a compelling source of the "proactive deterrence" and the "greater inclusivity in terms of participation of all stakeholders" that Olukoyede desires to achieve. Here, citizens are key, being the largest stakeholders and the most critical factor in the fight against corruption.

Since Nuhu Ribadu, now national security adviser, it seems no executive chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has demonstrated a greater zeal to fight corruption in Nigeria than Ola Olukoyede, a lawyer and an insider who spent considerable time at the management level of the renowned anti-graft institution, before his appointment as executive chairman in October 2023.

His first task on settling in office just about three months ago had been the re-branding of the image of the EFCC, away from the unpleasant resemblance of the infamous secret political police of Nazi Germany, to one with a high premium for thorough professionalism that prioritises humaneness in the conduct of operations. And this move has been hailed by many people who say it is the right thing to do.

With as much vigour as Olukoyede has sworn to fight the rot under his nose, he has declared that his eagle eyes (no pun intended) would also be trained on every nook and cranny of society – especially the three arms of government and specifically the presidency – in a determined hunt for the economic and financial malfeasances embedded in their provinces. In case the executive, legislature, and judiciary make light of this resolve, they are hereby put on notice that, much unlike his predecessors, this sheriff means business in a different way.

The EFCC helmsman offered the public a taste of his stated mission at an event he hosted in Abuja on Wednesday, 31 January, which brought together a diverse segment of the society to discuss "youth, religion and the fight against corruption." Although the theme of the public engagement spoke directly to young people and faith leaders, it was no less a fitting window into the anatomy



Olukoyede

of corruption and its many destructive footprints in society.

The youth were there in a large number, and so were leading figures across faiths and educational institutions. Two of the most revered traditional rulers in the country, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, Sultan of Sokoto, also considered the spiritual leader of Nigeria's Muslims and the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi (Ojaja II), were also on hand to show solidarity with the renewed EFCC campaign to combat corruption in the country. President Bola Tinubu was represented by the vice president, Kashim Shettima.

The meeting was a way of prevailing on the youth and religious leaders to use their strategic positions to mobilise society to confront and dismantle a menace that has continually

held the country down for decades.

Despite the achievements EFCC has recorded over the years through the efficacy of its enforcement power which has led to appreciable conviction and asset recovery, Olukoyede is disturbed that, rather than abate, financial crimes, including grand corruption and cybercrimes, keep rearing their monstrous heads.

He believes that the solution is to adopt a new strategy that focuses on prevention, which incidentally is also an approach favoured by the United Nations Conventions Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the ECOWAS Commission in its protocol on the fight against corruption, alongside the supplementary protocol on good governance and democracy in West Africa.

"Indeed, proactive

implementation of effective and coordinated policies against corruption remains the best guarantee for public security, economic development and the effective functioning of public and private institutions. The recalibration of the commission's prevention strategy seeks to promote proactive deterrence and greater inclusivity in terms of participation of all stakeholders. Our motivation is to see how corruption, whether in ministries and agencies of government, in the ivory towers, or the private sector, could be prevented before it occurs," he said.

His recourse to prevention, to deal with corrupt practices, can hardly be faulted. One of the most effective mechanisms for successful prevention happens to be whistleblowing. It is a compelling source of the "proactive deterrence" and the "greater inclusivity in terms of participation of all stakeholders" that Olukoyede desires to achieve. Here, citizens are key, being the largest stakeholders and the most critical factor in the fight against corruption. Unless citizens are persuaded to get on board, the anti-corruption ship will be grounded.

The immediate past administration uncharacteristically came to

power on this promise and consequently added whistleblowing as a new wrinkle in the fight against corruption. It was the right step to take. Whistleblowing is today the most talked-about strategy in the global quest for combating corruption, and achieving transparency and accountability in governance across all sectors.

But even in its awareness of this, that administration could not go beyond mouthing whistleblowing as a policy in all of its eight-year tenure. Little or no effort was made towards sustained public education and the proposed whistleblower protection legislation is stillborn, despite the valiant efforts of civil society groups and committed state partners towards putting in place such an important legal framework.

Thankfully, in appreciation of the value of whistleblowing to the success of its work, EFCC has the Eagle Eye App which it launched in July 2021. The tool should come in handy for Olukoyede in the renewed drive to put prevention in front of any other approach he might be considering for taming economic and financial crimes. The App, according to its promo, eliminates person-to-person contact in the reporting process and guarantees anonymity, which is a major incentive to whistleblowing. All the EFCC boss needs to do now is to initiate a robust campaign of awareness for this App and its benefits, and join frontline stakeholders like the Ministries of Finance and Justice, and the Whistleblowing Advocacy Coalition (WAC) to demand a quick enactment of the whistleblower protection law.

In the keynote address read on his behalf by the vice president, President Tinubu assured that corruption would not be allowed in the polity. "We cannot be focused on growth and development and at the same time offer any breathing space to corrupt practices in any form," he stated. And as if responding to the Sultan of Sokoto and the Ooni of Ife who, earlier in their separate goodwill messages, had warned the political elite against making it difficult for the EFCC chairman to do his work, the president said the EFCC had been "duly instructed to do its job at all times without any extraneous considerations."

It is hoped that the EFCC chairman will not be constrained by some influential persons in the presidency, or in any other high quarter, to lower the standard the president has set for him in prosecuting this administration's anti-corruption campaign.

Because the EFCC under Olukoyede is rousing all citizens to the challenge of confronting an evil that "steals from all of us and imperils our collective hope for a better society," he should be man enough to resist all pressures to compromise his work, or simply walk away in the alternative.

"His first task on settling in office just about three months ago had been the re-branding of the image of the EFCC, away from the unpleasant resemblance of the infamous secret political police of Nazi Germany, to one with a high premium for thorough professionalism that prioritises humaneness in the conduct of operations. And this move has been hailed by many people who say it is the right thing to do"

NEWS

Air power indispensable in tackling security challenges

By DORCAS PANKYES

IN a recent seminar held at the Armed Forces Command and Staff College in Jaji, Kaduna State, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has emphasized the crucial role of air power in addressing the fluid and complex security challenges faced by the country. The seminar, titled "Evolving Character of Air Power in Modern Warfare: Nigerian Air Force Combat Operations in Perspective," brought together esteemed scholars, both from the military and external sources, to discuss and propose solutions for enhancing the operational effectiveness of the NAF.

Air Vice Marshal Abubakar Abdulkadir, the NAF Chief of Training and Operations (CTOP), highlighted the need for continuous adaptation and innovation in the face of rapid technological advancements and creative adversaries. He emphasized that leveraging cutting-edge technology, conceptual revolutions in air power, and the key enablers of the Chief of the Air Staff's command philosophy are essential for the NAF to become a resilient and agile force.

One of the key enablers mentioned by Air Vice Marshal Abdulkadir is force structure optimization, which involves acquiring platforms with multirole capabilities and durable with cost-efficient maintenance protocols. As part of this strategy, the NAF recently upgraded its Order of Battle with the induction of platforms such as the T-129 ATAK helicopters. These deliberate acquisitions align with the NAF's operational needs and contribute to its ambition of becoming a resilient force.

Air Vice Marshal Hassan Alhaji, the Commandant of the College, emphasized that air power has become critical and its effects unmatched in the uncertain and complex operational environment. He stressed the importance of seeking contemporary and innovative strategies to stay ahead of adversaries. He also highlighted the creative employment of multidomain capabilities, with air power as a key enabler, as a necessity in the current operational and fiscal realities.



Abdulkadir

The seminar, spanning two days, witnessed engaging discussions on various topics related to air power and its evolving role in modern warfare. Scholars shared their insights and proposed workable solutions to enhance the NAF's operational effectiveness.

The NAF aims to nurture an air force that is flexible, adaptable, and resilient enough to withstand the ever-evolving trends in air power and the security landscape. To achieve this, the NAF recognizes the importance of an effective man-machine synergy and

- NAF

ensures that courses taught at the Department of Air Warfare are relevant and valuable, with nominees limited to the most qualified.

The Nigerian Air Force continues to reaffirm its commitment to maintaining air superiority and contributing to national security. By embracing technological advancements, conceptual revolutions, and strategic enablers, the NAF is poised to tackle the current security challenges and remain unrivaled in the domain of air power.

GSU gets four new professors

From Willie Attah, Gombe

FOUR new Professors are among the twenty two newly promoted academic staff of the Gombe State University (GSU) recently approved by the institution's Governing Council.

Chairman of the Governing Council of the university, Senator Joshua Lidani, made this known to journalists during a press briefing, recently. He further said that the institution now has a total of twenty four (24) professors.

He stated also that the Governing Council equally approved the promotion of eighteen (18) staff to the

rank of Readers. All the promotions were with effect from 1st October, 2022.

According to him, the Council had, during its 51st meeting, approved the promotions which also included eighty five (85) other academic staff to various ranks in the university system with effect from 1st October, 2023.

He said the Council during the meeting, recommended the promotions of forty one (41) other senior academic staff to various ranks, subject to positive external assessments.

In the non teaching staff category, Senator Lidani



Lidani

By FWENJI GO'AR

EMployees HAVE BEEN CALLED UPON to remain resilient in order to ensure growth and progress as they discharge their responsibilities. This was the core of the message of Pharm. Fabian Y. Agwo, the out-going Executive Secretary, Plateau State Drugs and Medical Commodities Management Agency (DMCMA) at the conference room of the agency, during a meeting held with staff of the organisation, recently.

The meeting was called to brief staff of the agency on developments regarding the appointment of a new Executive Director, by His Excellency, Barr Caleb M. Mutfwang, the Executive Governor of Plateau State, on Monday, February 12, 2024.

Addressing staff of the agency, Agwo appreciated staff for being resilient in the discharge of their duties, even in the midst of lean resources. He thanked them for their hard work, especially at this time that the agency is just taking off amidst all the teething problems associated with the growth of the new organisation.

He appreciated the patience and cooperation demonstrated by staff in the course of their duty,

DMCMA staff tasked to support CEO

DMCMA staff tasked to support CEO



Agwo

describing it as commendable.

Agwo requested that same be extended to the incoming Executive Secretary.

He pleaded that staff should continue to see the agency as a people-oriented organisation and that the work has a direct bearing on the lives of the citizenry, as such, there is no room for error.

"The strength of a chain lies in its weakest link," he said, as such everybody in

the organisation is important, and should be treated as such.

The outgoing ES urged that all staff should always put in their best, and continue with the spirit of harmony and togetherness.

Agwo reemphasised the need for staff to give the incoming ES the needed support to succeed. He pointed out that they are not working for an individual, but are working for the overall good of the people of Plateau State.

PFN congratulates former chairman on appointment

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

Steven Dangana, on his appointment as Special Adviser to Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, on Religious Matters.

This was contained in a press statement signed by, Rev. Dunka Joseph Gomwalk, Chairman, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, Plateau State Chapter, on Saturday and made available to SUNDAY STANDARD in Jos, the state capital following his appointment by the governor.

The statement said, "The Chairman, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Plateau State Chapter, members of the Executive Council, the State Advisory Council, and the entire PFN family on the Plateau, wishes to heartily congratulate their immediate outgoing Chairman, Rev. Dr. Steven Dangana, on his appointment as Special Adviser to Religious Affairs to His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang.

"The appointment is well deserved and PFN wishes to note that it did not come as a surprise considering your pedigree and track record of hard work and devotion when you served two tenures as PFN Chairman in the state. You provided quality leadership and became a bridge between the PFN Churches and other denominations both within and outside the state.

"The PFN describes the appointment of Rev. Dr.

Steven Dangana as Special Adviser to the Governor on Religious Affairs as putting a round peg in a round hole and expresses optimism that you would use your God given office to further unite the Church and bring the government closer to the body of Christ on the Plateau", it stated.

The PFN Chairman thanked His Excellency, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang for finding Rev. Dr. Steven Dangana worthy of the appointment and prayed God Almighty to continue to strengthen the governor as he continues to provide dividends of democracy to the citizens as evident by the infrastructural development all over the state within less than a year of his administration.

He therefore urged the appointee to continue to be the Fellowship's worthy ambassador and prayed God to grant him exceptional wisdom, good health and strength to use his office to further unite the Church and add value to Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang's led administration of "The Time Is Now" movement.



Dangana

NEWS

Kogi First Lady expresses concern for less privileged

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE First Lady of Kogi State, Hajia Sefinat Usman Ododo, has expressed concern for the plight of the less privileged in the society

Sefinat, a committed community leader, philanthropist per excellence, and a pillar in the advocacy for girl-child education in Nigeria, made her feelings known in a statement made available to our correspondent.

She also drummed support for the empowerment of the women folk just like their male counterparts, in order to boost gender equality in the state.

According to the statement, "Hajia Sefinat Usman Ododo is the wife of the fifth executive Governor of Kogi State, His Excellency, Alhaji Ahmed Usman Ododo. She is the newest First Lady in Nigeria and an amiable mother to



Ododo

the people of Kogi State.

"Her Excellency, Hajia Sefinat Usman Ododo, hails from the family of Mr and Mrs Sadiq in the ancient city of Okene, Kogi State. She is the youngest in the family and was born and brought up in Idoji,

Okene city.

"She is a humble mother, a brilliant and successful business woman, and a visionary thinker who focuses on executing strategic policies that will have direct impact on the lives of the downtrodden"

Gombe to partner organisation for increased sorghum production

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

GOMBE State Government has entered into talks with Global Biofuels Limited towards improving sorghum farming, addressing unemployment, youth restiveness and development.

It is also expected that apart from the partnership on the sorghum farming which will generate electricity through ethanol, concerted efforts will be made towards improving the general well being of the people in the state through the project.

Global Biofuels Limited is a global company renown for application of digital technology in changing the narratives of underdevelopment by addressing perennial problems that have bedeviled humanity.

It was during the meeting between management of the company and the

Gombe State Government where the Deputy Governor, Manasseh Daniel Jatau, represented Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, that the contents of the engagement were made clear to both parties.

The Deputy Governor said the development was coming at the right time when the administration is working hard to ensure industrialisation with a view to providing job opportunities for the teeming youths for improved revenue generation and the general standard of lives of the people.

He assured the team of the State Government's desire to partner with them in modern sorghum farming by providing the needed support and discussing with the land owners to see the importance of allowing the use of their lands which will be paid for.

The Deputy Governor

added that the Governor has made things easier for Investment and investors by providing water and a dedicated line for electricity from the Dadin-Kowa dam to the industrial park and other necessary incentives to woo investors into the state.

Speaking earlier, the Executive Vice Chairman, Global Biofuels Limited, Dr. Felix Obada, told the Deputy Governor that they were in the state to seek collaboration with the government in the area of modern sorghum farming so as to tap from its numerous benefits of producing ethanol for electricity, grains for food security and massive job opportunities for the teeming youths in the state.

He noted that sorghum as a crop is native to Nigeria, especially in the North where the stem contains over 27 % sugar content for ethanol and the leaves are used for animal feeds while the grains are used as food.

Dr. Felix said the company will need about 5,000 hectares for production of the crop in the state, adding that it will provide about five million direct jobs and over two million indirect jobs.

He appealed to the state government to assist them in getting the land for the project, stressing that all land owners whose lands will be used, shall be shareholders in the company to make them

From TERESE TUHWA Makurdi

THE Centre for Food Technology and Research (CEFTER), Benue State University, Makurdi has sought the partnership of Benue Investment and Property Company Limited (BIPC) to end post-harvest losses in the state.

The Director of CEFTER, Professor Barnabas Ikoye, made this request recently while presenting activities of the institution to the management of BIPC at the company's corporate headquarters in Makurdi.

Professor Ikoye, during his presentation outlined so many viable opportunities in food production that BIPC can key into and create a brand for the company.

He said, the research institution has proposed to undertake ten mini-factories sponsored by the World Bank where oranges, mangos, casava, yams, tomatoes, rice, etc can be processed.

Ikoye explained that when launched in April, the centre will produce

CEFTER seeks BIPC partnership to end post-harvest losses



Ikoye

many consumables and beverages such as biscuits, tomatoes, pepper paste and water.

The Director particularly requested BIPC partnership in the production of wine, craft beer, and processing of mango, pineapple, sorghum, lemon and other agricultural crops produced in the state.

According to him, the institute was setting up a controlled-atmosphere storage facility and a dryer to store fruits and vegetables produced in the state.

Responding, the Managing Director of BIPC, Dr. Raymond Asemakaha expressed readiness to partner the institute in creating wealth for people of the state.

He said, "BIPC is ready to partner with you because Benue State has a peculiar

problem of unemployment which is about 4.7 million youths. We're sitting on a time-bomb that will soon explode, so we are doing everything to make sure we engage in ventures that will add value to the state and create jobs for our teeming youths."

The Managing Director emphasised that if post-harvest losses are controlled, farmers will have value for their farm produce and prevent capital flight.

"If we control post-harvest losses, we will stop capital flight, allow our farmers to have value for their goods and give the right revenue to our state."

"It is a good business; BIPC will visit the plant. We need to up our game in Benue, so we're interested in investing in wine and craft beer processing," the MD added.

Gov. Bala announces use of technology to curb crime

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

IN his determination to get rid of all forms of crime and criminality in the state, Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State, recently announced the intention of his administration to engage technology for effective result.

Governor Bala made this public at the end of the year 2023 party, organized by the Nigerian Police Force, Bauchi State Command, where he said the use of technology would assist the state government to deal decisively with criminals.

He appreciated Bauchi Police Command and other security agencies in the state for their tireless efforts towards tackling security challenges across the state and pledged to continue to provide them with a conducive environment to discharge their responsibilities diligently.

While acknowledging the harmonious relationship between his administration and security agencies in the state, he emphasized the need for synergy among all the stakeholders in order to achieve the desired objectives. Also in appreciation, Governor Bala willingly donated the sum of one hundred million Naira to Bauchi Police Command.

The governor reassured that his administration will not relent in ensuring maintenance of law and order in the state for investment opportunities which will contribute to economic development of the state.

Governor Bala Mohammed, who therefore expressed gratitude to Bauchi Police Command for presenting him with an award of excellence in recognition of his administration's unwavering commitment towards the promotion of peace and security, said

the award will ginger him to do more for security services to operate effectively.

On his part, the Bauchi State Commissioner of Police, Auwal Musa Mohammed, explained that the award presented to Governor Bala Mohammed was in appreciation of his administration's huge investment in the maintenance of peace and security across the state.

Similarly, the state First Lady, Hajia Aisha Bala Mohammed has been presented with an award of excellence as the Champion Against Gender Based Violence.

Our correspondent reports that journalists in Bauchi were not left out of the Police awards presentation as Ishola Michael of Tribune News Paper and Auwal Hassan of Viewers TV also received awards as Best Reporters in Print and Electronic respectively.



Manasseh

NEWS

FRSC confirms death of 2 persons

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE Kogi State Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Oyediji Sunday has confirmed the death of two persons in a motor accident that occurred on Ogori /Magongo road in Kogi State.

The FRSC Boss who made the confirmation in a chat with our correspondent on Friday, attributed the cause of the accident to wrong overtaking.

According to him, "The accident was between a commercial motorcyclist and a Toyota Venza Car. It was as a result of over speeding and wrong overtaking. Two persons were confirmed dead and have since been deposited in a morgue nearby Edo State while other survived victims are receiving treatment at Ogori General Hospital in Kogi State"

The Sector Commander, however, advised motorists to avoid over speeding and



Sunday

wrong overtaking and strive to abide by the rules guiding driving.

Our correspondent gathered that the incident happened at about 2PM on Thursday.

It was also learnt that one victim of the accident died immediately while the other who was unconscious and rushed to Ogori General Hospital, later died after

suffering severe injuries.

One of the deceased victim, according to our findings, was identified as John Aisoni, a commercial motor cyclist in the Ogori /Magongo area of Kogi State, while the other is working in a microfinance bank in the same Local Government.

Eyewitnesses traced the cause of the accident to over speeding.

By JIDAUNA DARING
JOINT Union of Plateau State Owned Tertiary Institutions (JUPTI) has observed with concern the politicization, removal and appointment of Chief Executives of tertiary Institutions and outright cancellation of employment that was carried out in 2022 by the immediate past administration.

JUPTI Chairman, Comr. Sunoe Peter Longbaam, on behalf of the joint unions made these observations known while briefing journalists on the unions' position at the NUJ Secretariat, Jos, the Plateau State capital.

Comrade Longbaam said it was in the light of the above that the JUPTI were compelled to call for press briefing to address, inform and educate people on the dangers and negative precedents the action of government will create in the nearest future.

JUPTI Chairman further explained that the institutions affected by removal and appointment of chief executives of tertiary Institutions include Plateau State University, Boko, Plateau State Polytechnic, Barkin-Ladi, College of Education Gindiri, College of Health Technology, Pankshin and College of Health Technology, Zawan.

JUPTI frowns at removal of tertiary Institutions' heads



Plateau State Polytechnic, Barkin-Ladi, College of Education Gindiri, College of Health Technology, Pankshin and College of Health Technology, Zawan.

Comrade Longbaam pointed out that all the positions of the affected heads were advertised, interviews were conducted and they were found appointable.

He added that their appointments were in accordance with the edicts and laws that established these institutions in the state.

"We wonder which criteria were used to remove the head of the tertiary Institutions? The removal of these officers was not in line with the extant laws governing the Institutions. The union is shocked with the development especially, knowing fully well that not long, our dear governor was a beneficiary of law and justice.

JUPTI Chairman, maintained that this development is going to be a serious setback, particularly in their quest for a better educational system in the state. "We are really worried about the future of our tertiary education. This same

government set up visitation panels for these Institutions, where are the reports?" he asked.

The unions condemned the action and demand that government should visit "its action for the sake of industrial harmony".

Comrade Longbaam, while speaking on the cancellation of the employment offered in October 2022, said that the issue of employment was a product of agreement reached with government that led to the recruitment of staff in 2022. He added that the employment was to bridge the gap in manpower of the tertiary institutions.

"We wish to request that government should have a rethink and isolate candidates with questionable issues and reinstate the staff that were qualified, especially those cleared by successive committees in the interest of industrial harmony".

JUPTI appeal to the members of the public and well-meaning Plateau people to intervene for this newly employed staff to be reinstated for the benefit of the students, the system and the progress of the state.

Police neutralise terrorist kingpin, arrest 15

From **ANENE AIKE, Sokoto**

SOKOTO State Police Command has neutralised one notorious terrorist kingpin, arrested 15 kidnappers and banditry suspects.

Other notorious criminal elements handed the state's Police boss include gun runners in separate operations across the state between November 2023 and February 2024.

The command carried out successful operations in communities across Gwadabawa, Wurno, Wammakko and Bodinga - Tambuwal road in the state where 2 Toyota brand vehicles were also recovered.

Briefing newsmen while parading the suspects including two underaged, Sirajo and Sanda of Binji Local Government respectively, the state Commissioner of Police, Aliyu Hayatu Kaigama, said the suspects of which one was neutralised, were arrested in four separately coordinated operations by the command team of Anti-kidnap and Terrorism Unit upon tip offs.

The commissioner also proudly stated that it was through the Command's credible intelligence, an ambush it laid along Bodinga -Tambuwal highway that led to the arrest of the suspects.

Kaigama disclosed that several arms and ammunitions, including GPMG, Cartridges, several rounds of live ammunitions, AK-47 rifles and handsets were recovered from the suspects who specialised in carrying heinous crimes in the state.

He also stated that the Command recovered in their possession, three AK47 rifles with 90 rounds of live ammunition, 30 from each magazine. In addition, he said that the suspects were said to be heading to Tambuwal town for a kidnap mission before they were intercepted and arrested.

Similarly, additional 26 rounds of live ammunition was found in possession of one Muhammad Bello of Dingyadi town in Bodinga Local Government.

The Police boss disclosed that its team of operatives gallantly engaged the suspected bandits in their numbers in a fierce gun duel and succeeded in neutralizing one of the suspected bandits who were passing in their numbers. They also shot the leg of one Ibrahim Bello, member of the gang who was fetching water from a well in Gigane village, Gwadabawa Local Government Area.

He also boasted that the neutralised suspect's GPMG rifle with six live ammunition attached to the chain, was recovered as it aggressively traced and arrested other fleeing bandits members.

Similarly, Kaigama confirmed the arrest of two suspected gun runners and suppliers, Muhammadu Mode and Betuwa Dogari all of Bukuyum LGA Zamfara State.

The CP said the duo were billed for Sokoto to receive delivery of 790 live ammunitions for on onward delivery of same to a well known Kidnap kingpin, Kwalie when the operatives from the Sokoto state CID intercepted them along

Gaidau Illela Road in Illela LGA.

That Kwalie who is now at large, has his criminal activities cut across Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States respectively.

The Commissioner added that the command remains resolute and determined to continue being sensitive and proactive upon every useful intelligence in order to rid

the state of crime and criminals.

Kaigama also vowed to ensure proper and in depth investigations were carried out on all the cases accordingly, adding that while investigation is still ongoing, the command wishes to assure members of the public of its commitment to rid Sokoto of criminality in all its manifestation.

BASG approves engagement of stakeholders in aquaculture

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

FOLLOWING the emergency meeting of the State Executive Council, held recently at the Council chamber of the Government House, Bauchi, it approved the provision of roadmap for the development of aquaculture and dry season farming at Gubi Dam of Ganjuwa Local Government and other available dams around the state. This is aimed to address hunger and poverty among citizens of the state.

The state Commissioner of Budget and Economic Development, Alh. Aminu Hamayo disclosed while briefing journalists on the outcome of the council meeting, shortly after long hours of deliberation.

The commissioner who expressed the councils satisfaction with the state budget performance within the last five years, explained that budget implementation

performance is a key to measure the political will and commitment of the government towards provision of basic amenities to the citizens.

He added that the implementation of the budget from 2019 to 2023 has increased drastically with over 80% performance, also that it is a requirement of the

Nigerian Governors forum for proper financial planning and implementation.

The state Commissioner of Education, Jamila Dahiru, at the press briefing, explained that the council was satisfied with the level of renovations undertaken at the Special Education Center Yelwa.

Revealing that the council had approved for the provision of all required

tools and facilities for learning of students with special needs for inclusive education.

On the issue of food scarcity and hunger, The state commissioner of Agriculture and Rural Development, Professor Simon Yalams, confirmed that the council has resolved to constitute a Committee which will gather inputs from professionals and make recommendations to government towards addressing food insecurity in the state. He said especially now that there is hunger and anger among people that need quick concern by government.

Also the State Commissioner of Lands and Survey, Amina Katagum, said the council had approved increase on land rent so as to improve the revenue of the state for effective running of government towards providing dividends of democracy to the citizens.

She said the increase was made in such a way that would not injure the people, considering the hardship everyone is facing today.



Mohammed

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Hunger: Is Nigeria sitting on a time bomb?

the people against any spark of violence that may erupt.

Nigerians' quietness in the face of these challenges does not mean that all is well, measures must be put in place by government at all levels to ensure that the difficulty the nation is facing is drastically reduced.

Since the assumption of office last year, President Ahmed Tinubu ended fuel subsidy and currency controls leading to high cost of petrol and high cost of living as the naira's value fast deteriorated against the dollar. According to National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's inflation rate hit 28 percent in December, leading to worsening situation that sparked protests in several cities including Suleja in Niger state and Kano etc.

In 2015, Nigeria banned the import of rice to enable it boost domestic production. Amazingly, locally produced rice has spiraled beyond the reach of the common man. The cost of maize flour, millet, sorghum has shot up too. About 80 percent of Nigeria's grain is produced in the northeast, but violence in the region has increased pressure on supplies. The National Bureau of Statistics says at least 63 percent of the country's 220 million people live in extreme poverty with products such as meat, eggs and potatoes are considered as luxury.

More worrisome are activities of middle men and wealthy people who are further compounding issues by mopping up grains and hoarding them in warehouses to make excessive gains. Some states have taken steps to close

their borders and banned bulk purchases of grains from local markets to stop hoarding and exports across Nigeria's borders to stem the tide of food scarcity and high cost of food items. Niger State Governor, Mohammed Umar Bago announced a ban on the mass purchase of food stuffs from local markets. He ordered security forces to confiscate trucks carrying products in bulk and share the food to the poor.

A grain trader, Tumfafi said, "these were just stop gap measures that cannot solve the food problem we are facing, what impact can 1,02,000 tonnes made for 220 million people? Let the government secure our villages in the northeast and northwest for people to return and cultivate their farms. Nothing short of this will work.

The Nigeria Labour Congress has declared a two-day nationwide mass protest over hardship in the country slated for 27 and 28 February. As it is, it seems there is no going back on the ultimatum issued by NLC, not with the mass suffering and poverty across the country. At a meeting between the labour leaders and officials of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment led by the Minister of State for labour, Nkeiruka Onyejeocha, the labour leaders had said, only the government could stop the planned strike by addressing the 15-point agreement reached on October 2, 2023. The NLC National President, Joe Ajaero expressed concern on Channels Television that the new minimum wage advocated for is one million naira and wondered why people are

exclaiming that is a huge figure as against the National Assembly members whose take home is between 15 to 16 million per person. He added that "Nigerians go to market with huge amount of money with just little quantity of items to go home with as value of the Nigeria's currency changes per hour".

Protest would begin a week after the expiration of the 14-day ultimatum it issued to the Federal Government which will expire on February 23. The ultimatum was given to the government to meet demands ranging from wage increments to improved access to public utilities and accused it of failing to uphold pledges to soften the impact of reforms. The organized labour lamented that millions of Nigerian workers are facing hunger, limited purchasing power insecurity due to reforms that drove up inflation.

In a bid to stem the tide, President Tinubu met with the 36 state governors and the FCT minister and agreed on common ground to addressing some of the current challenges facing the

country especially the rising cost of food and insecurity. In an official release after their extensive deliberations, the president and the governors agreed to work together to solve the problems and tackle the economic pressure being faced by the citizens.

The president told them to address insecurity which is affecting farming and food production. The Federal Government will work with them and the National Assembly towards putting in place a mechanism that will engender state police instead of the vigilantes that are being used in some state. Tinubu charged the governors to strengthen their forest rangers and arm them to keep the forests safe from criminals.

On rising cost of food, the president has directed both the states and federal government to collaborate and increase local food production. The idea of food importation was discouraged to spur local producers to intensify efforts to get more food

available. Attention should be given to livestock development in their states and increase production most especially poultry and fish products. The president pleaded with governors to ensure that all salary arrear to workers, gratuities to retired workers and pensioners are cleared as a way to put money into the hands of the people since states are now getting more monthly allocation. As a way of decongesting the labour market, governors have been implored to create more economic opportunities for the youths to keep them more productively engaged.

Many Nigerians are living in slums and enduring conditions with many children malnourished. Palliatives are not the solutions to Nigeria's hunger, government storage facilities across the nation need to be opened to make food available for the masses.

Nigerians are calling for help as there is hunger in the land because survival now is for the fittest.

So help us God.

"Protest would begin a week after the expiration of the 14-day ultimatum it issued to the Federal Government which will expire on February 23. The ultimatum was given to the government to meet demands ranging from wage increments to improved access to public utilities and accused it of failing to uphold pledges to soften the impact of reforms. The organized labour lamented that millions of Nigerian workers are facing hunger, limited purchasing power insecurity due to reforms that drove up inflation".

METRO-FOCUS

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

Waste management: Turning waste into wealth

THE current state of waste management in Plateau State is of major concern due to the high rate of waste generation and poor management practices within the city centre and environs.

Today, Nigeria produces an estimated 32 million tons of solid waste per year, with only about 20-30 percent of it being collected and managed correctly. The remainder of the waste is either dumped in unauthorized places or burned, contributing to pollution and health risks to the populace.

Sources have attributed that waste disposal leads to direct and indirect environmental impacts, such as land occupation, resource depletion, amplification of global warming due to methane and other greenhouse gas emissions, waters intoxication due to landfilling, as well as acidification and toxic effects from emissions to air in the case of incineration. Direct impacts of waste represent a significant but comparatively small share of climate change, while resource depletion among similar effects is linked to indirect environmental impacts.

This is mainly because indirect results of wastes are linked with the extraction and processing of different resources to produce different types of products while focusing on the output rather than the input in many industries. This shows how indirect impacts of incorrect management of waste can be more devastating and present the highest potential.

In addition, waste management has many definitions, associated with the different approaches, procedures, design and implementation to identify, control and handle the different types of waste from generation and until disposal.

The full implementation of waste management processes, including waste prevention and reuse, and recycling wherever possible, has and can further help avoid considerable environmental impacts when assessed from a life-cycle perspective, considering direct effects such as emissions and indirect effects such as resource depletion.

Poor waste disposal practices within Jos metropolis has seriously hamper the progress towards an integrated solid waste management in households. METRO FOCUS gathered that the current practices of waste disposal from household and market settlements has contributed in littering the environment with solid



waste and also polluting the atmosphere with an offensive odour.

It was observed that places like Ahmadu Bello way, Rwang Pam street, AP Filling Station, Katoko Market, Farin Gada Market, Railway Market, Gada Biu Market, Bukuru Market, behind Old Juth Market, the famous Terminus Market and Terminus roundabout, were among places visited. Investigation has revealed that the household waste disposal practices and perceptions about waste management is very poor.

Considering the campaign against dirty environment by the past successive governments, and taking steps to create environmental

sanitation services within their administrative machinery and to train qualified personnel to carry out the sanitation work and inspection, they have not yielded much results to the effect of keeping the Jos metropolis and environs clean as expected.

Despite government's efforts in engaging private cleaning agencies that would help in waste management and disposal, most parts of Jos and environs are far from neat. Waste products at various disposal points within the city centre is yet to see the light of the day.

In spite of this, citizens observing sanitation every last Saturday of the

month, so as to make sure that the citizens clean their environment, in other to have a healthy life has failed.

It is been said that cleanliness is next to godliness. This has to do with healthy environment. These two things are very important in the life of the public because for one to be healthy, one's environment must be clean.

Similarly, increasing population is a plausible reason for the poor state of the environment. It is a fact that it is easier to keep the environment neat if the population is not too much to handle. This is why a market gets dirty easily. That is the reason why hospitals have to be swept several times to keep it neat.

On this note, dirty environment causes many communicable disease which include frequent diarrhea and vomiting. These signs usually start suddenly, one to five days after ingestion of the germ.

On the other hand, if turning waste to wealth is another global trendy concept that is trying to keep the environment clean and safe for inhabitants to live and to also make money out of it. The waste to wealth initiative focuses on planning and affordable technology in tackling and converting waste generated in the entire country into useful products.

These components include creation of a sorting centre/recycling kiosks for recyclable buy-back arrangement and entrepreneurship opportunities; developing market links for recyclables between the community and resource recovery centres. Instead of people dumping their solid waste into water ways, littering environment, would be a way to generate income rather than destroying the ecosystem.

However, waste management is the collection, transport, processing, recycling or disposal, and monitoring of waste materials. A typical waste management system comprises collection, transportation, pre-treatment, processing, and final abatement of residues.

The purpose of waste management is to provide sanitary living conditions to reduce the amount of matter that enters or leaves the society and encourage the reuse of matter within the society.

The goal is the reduction of total amount of waste by reduction and recycling of refuse, recycling and re-introduction of suitable groups of substances into production cycles as secondary raw material or energy carrier, re-introduction of biological waste into the natural cycle, best-possible reduction of residual waste quantities, which are to be disposed on suitable landfills, flexible concept concerning fluctuations in waste quantities and the composition of domestic waste. New developments in the field of waste management must be included into the developing country like Nigeria. Waste should be properly managed because of the huge amount of waste deposit that emanate within our society and the health hazard it poses which is a threat to the lives of the citizens.

Waste management offers business opportunities that both government, private and individuals venture into because of its great potentials in turning waste into wealth.

Environmental sanitation would improve and promote hygiene in our environment.



SUNDAY PEOPLE

GOVERNOR MUTFWANG RECEIVES PAN NATION

The People of Pan, of Qua'an Pan Local Government Area, recently paid solidarity visit to the seat of Government, New Government House Rayfield, Jos. They were led by the National President of Pan Development Association with traditional rulers



Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang (left) with the National President of Pan Development Association that led the delegation



Governor Mutfwang (middle) in a group photograph with the Long Pan, HRH Nda Emmanuel Dabang, President of Pan Development Association and Royal Fathers



Cross section of government officials during the solidarity visit by Pan Nation



National President, Pan Development Association (right) delivering his speech, Governor Mutfwang and SGS, Samuel Nanchang Jatau listening



Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang (left) in a handshake with the Long Pan, HRH, Nda Emmanuel Dabang (right)



From left are, Hon. Isaac Kyale Kwalu, TIC Chairman of Qua'an Pan LGC, Commissioner of Budget, Hon. Chrysantus Dawam and others



Cross section of Pan people during the visit at Government House



Governor Mutfwang, Government officials, PDA Executive in a photograph with other members of delegation

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK



Road Runner
 Michael Agada
 SAFER TOGETHER
 magada122@gmail.com
 +234 803 333 5313

How to lose someone following you when driving

1. If you observe someone tailing you while driving, the first thing to do is to ascertain if you are actually being tailed.

If you suspect that someone is actually tailing you, observe the car as you drive on. If the car remains behind you, make three to four turns in a row to see if it continues to follow you. Then signal a turn in on direction but turn quickly to the other direction. Observe if the other car turns as well.

2. Once you are certain that you are being followed, get on a highway or drive to a busy area.

Avoid driving home or to a deserted place or down a valley. You are more likely to shake off your tail in a crowd than a lonely environment.

3. Drive at the prescribe speed limit but a bit slower.

Soon another car (not that of your pursuer) will attempt to pass you. Speed up slightly so that the car pulls in behind you. Repeat, but do not go slowly that an innocent car behind you is able to pass you.

4. Slow down at a busy intersection with a traffic light, then accelerate through the intersection just after

the light changes.

The car following you may get stuck at the red light. If you attract the attention of the police for running a red light, your pursuer will most likely leave the scene.

5. When you have several cars around you, speed up.

Get off the highway (if you are on one), and make several quick turns to further escape your pursuer. Your pursuer should be too far back to follow closely.

6. Once you are out of sight of your pursuer, pull into a parking lot, a garage, or a shopping mall with lots of other cars.

7. If you still have not lost your tail at this point, drive to a police station and get help.

As a pedestrian
1. Determine if you are being followed, identify your tail.

Take a random path. Make unexpected changes in direction at interceptions and retrace your steps, effectively making a U-turn. Do not, however, get yourself disoriented or lost. Note any characteristics of your tail (dress, gait, height, and weight).

2. Keep an eye on your pursuer but do not look back at him or her.

Use reflective surfaces such as a shop windows to see behind you. If you have a makeup case with a

mirror, use that.

3. Stay in crowds, Do not go home to a deserted place or down alleys.

4. Once you are certain that you are being followed, use these methods to shake your tail:

A-Enter the front of a store, shop, or restraint and go out through the back entrance-most restaurant have exits in the kitchen.

B-buy a ticket for a movie, enter after it has started and leave through an emergency exit before your pursuer enters the theatre.

C-use mass transit and exit or enter the train or bus just before the doors close.

5. If you have not shaken your tail, walk to a police station or call the police from a public place.

Never go back home unless you are certain you are no longer being followed.

Beware
1. If you are certain your tail is harmless, you may want to brace up and confront him or her publicly with many people around. Tell the people that you know your bring followed and ask your pursuer why. Use this method only when you perceive that your pursuer is not dangerous.



NEWS

NNPC, Total Energies eliminate gas flaring

By DORCAS PANKYES

IN line with the commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet the targets outlined in the Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Accord, the NNPC Ltd/Total Energies Joint Venture has accomplished a major milestone by eliminating routine gas flaring across all its assets.

This was contained in a statement issued by Olufemi O. Soneye, Chief Corporate Communications, Officer NNPC Ltd on Thursday in Abuja.

According to the statement, the announcement was made during a recent inspection tour of OML 100 in the South-eastern Niger Delta, off Port Harcourt, by a joint team from NNPC Ltd and Total Energies. The purpose of the visit was to assess the progress of the OML Flare Reduction Project, which was launched in December 2023.

Previously, the NNPC Ltd/Total Energies Joint Venture had already achieved zero routine flaring in OML 99 (2006), OML 102 (2014), and OML

58 (2016). The successful elimination of routine flaring in OML 100, previously the only lease with ongoing flaring, marks a significant accomplishment. This milestone has resulted in a reduction of approximately

341KtCO₂e/yr in

greenhouse gas emissions, as the last routine flare volume of about 12MMscf/d of gas has been eradicated.

This achievement is a result of the NNPC Ltd's concerted efforts to implement a program aimed at achieving zero routine flare across all its assets by 2030. It

demonstrates the company's commitment to sustainability and its prioritization of reducing its carbon footprint, aligning with the 'first R' of its 5R Strategy: Reduce, Replace, Renew, Re-plant, Repurpose.

The NNPC Ltd's Upstream Directorate is actively working on similar initiatives across all its other assets to ensure that zero routine flaring is achieved by 2030, or even earlier.

The successful elimination of gas flaring by NNPC Ltd/Total Energies Joint Venture is a significant step towards combatting climate change and contributing to a greener future.



Soneye

NGO demands review of sanitation policy in Kogi

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

AS the new government in Kogi State under the leadership of Alhaji Ahmed Usman Ododo settles down, the Executive Director, Conscience for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution, Idris Miliki Abdul, has demanded for the review of sanitation policy in the state, to reflect the current challenges.

Miliki in a statement made available to journalists in Lokoja on recently, noted that Kogi State is witnessing not less than ten thousand vehicles crossing the state on daily bases which he said is

posing environmental challenges because of human attitude due to negligence of basic hygiene.

According to him, "Lokoja the state headquarters, hosts various market and motor parks, but the environment situation in those places is worrisome, as they are unkempt."

"We are also worried, it seems there is no demarcation between the Sanitation Board and the company expected to clean Lokoja Tow, as in many occasions, the government vehicles are being used by private company engaged to clean the city."

"Worst of it all, is the unavailability of portable

water in Kogi State, particularly in Lokoja that host both river Nija and Benue. It is condemnable that a state capital like Lokoja, will stay without water. Open defecation has become alarming rate in Lokoja town and across the state.

"Refuse are scattered across the town, without the evacuation as at when due, worst of all is the refuses dump sites have remain unkempt without proper management."

"We call on state of emergency on water and sanitation in Kogi State, without further delay."

"We recommend, specific date for cleaning specific market and all markets, which can not be done on the same day across board. This will not cost government beyond supervision, as all markets and motor parks should have a specific days and time for cleaning that will improve sanitation in those places."

"We call stakeholders conference on environment sanitation in Kogi state that will generate ideals on how to move this all important sector forward, that will include genuine professionals and relevant stakeholders"



Miliki

SUNDAY FEATURE

State of emergency declaration on food security

On the 13th of July 2023, Nigeria's President Bola A Tinubu declared a state of emergency to tackle the rising cost of food and its impact on Nigerian citizens. A UN report in January 2023 by Cadre Harmonisé, a government-led, and UN-supported food and nutrition analysis carried out twice a year, projected that 25 million Nigerians were at high risk of food security this year, up from the estimated 17 million people currently at risk – meaning they would not be able to afford enough nutritious food every day. We can infer that Nigerians are in the middle of a crisis, hence, the need for President Bola Tinubu to declare a state of emergency regarding food security. JOACHIM ADEBAYO ADENUSI writes.

IT is important to understand what the state of emergency on food security means. In an emergency situation, a government is given special legal powers to steer the country through a crisis or an extraordinary situation to protect its citizens. This kind of declaration should trigger a range of responses: normal government functions may be suspended, citizens may be advised to change their behaviour, government agencies may be authorised to execute contingency plans, and certain non-absolute civil liberties and human rights could be limited or suspended.

In a state of emergency or crisis of this nature, leaders face challenges that are uniquely different from any normal activities within the state. There are at least four common activities that must take place. The first is the need for preparation before the crisis, the second is the ability to mobilise followers during the crisis; the third is the leader's effectiveness or performance perception by the followers, and fourth is the effect of consolidation of efforts following crisis situations. The need for preparation before a crisis is the most common observation made by many scholars. Also, an effective leader should be able to read the signals of looming crisis with cognition and sensemaking ability to proactively frame key social issues that may become political in the future. It is critical to emphasise not only the significance of preparation but the importance of risk identification, predictability, and vulnerabilities assessment as essential components of tackling a crisis from the onset.

This paper looks at the positive steps taken so far by the Nigerian government, explores potential governance challenges observed from various publicly published documents, and offers practical suggestions that could assist in ensuring effective food security crisis management in Nigeria. It will not be analysing the causes, consequences, and historical context of the food insecurity crisis in Nigeria, which has been covered extensively by organisations such as CARE International's Evaluation, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Islamic Organization for Food Security and more.

It is important to acknowledge Tinubu's determination to address the cost-of-living crisis facing our world today, with a declaration of state of emergency to address the known emerging threat which is now at crisis point in Nigeria. This appears to align with CARE's analysis of the 12 key action points



around which Bola Tinubu's government is committed. In addition to the list of actions stated by CARE, a BBC online report stated some of the initiatives proposed by the Nigerian government, such as using money saved by the recent removal of a fuel subsidy to provide fertiliser and grain to farmers; increased protection for farmers who have abandoned their lands following years of attacks and kidnaps for ransom; and a desire to support poorer citizens with a \$10 (£8) allowance a month for six months.

Finally, President Bola Tinubu's declaration of a state of emergency on food security shows a strong commitment to tackling the critical issue of food scarcity and limited access to clean water in Nigeria. In agreement with Akinsemolu A & Onyeaka H's analysis, this paper also believes the proposed measures demonstrate a thorough approach to mitigate this crisis in the immediate, medium, and long-term. If Bola Tinubu's plan to focus on all aspects of the agriculture and food value chain succeeds while creating jobs at the same time, then the President's declaration holds significant potential for positive change for generations to come in Nigeria. However, it is imperative to

ensure that effective crisis leadership and risk management governance with utmost transparency and accountability processes are in place to ensure that the intended outcomes of the above initiatives are achieved. The next section will be looking at some of the possible challenges Bola Tinubu's government could face in achieving the intended outcomes.

The governance challenges

This crisis should be a moment of critical reflection for changing the psychological equilibrium (the mindset) of the Nigerian stakeholders because it will create a new set of uncertainties which outcomes can be positive, negative, or something completely unknown depending on how it is handled. The starting point for President Tinubu's regime is clarifying roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders that will be involved in implementing the measures stated above. Also, the government will have to depend on the machinery of the civil service because of the significant role they play in the formulation and implementation of strategies necessary to manage the crisis.

Furthermore, the Nigeria civil service is still grappling with the problems of bad governance due to

non-accountability and the ever-present manifestation of corruption that is pervasive, undisguised, and yet untameable as suggested by Fatile. Also, the reliability and effectiveness of the technical and administrative capacity of the civic service should be questioned and could create limitations in dealing with the complexity of the crisis. Unless good governance exists that will make the Nigerian civil service accountable, the process of facilitating individual/collective efforts of the citizens in resolving the food crisis will be hampered.

Stakeholders' roles, responsibilities, and coordination challenge. The question is, who or which of these stakeholders will be leading the implementation of President Tinubu's plan? For the President's state of emergency declaration to be successful, each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined with measurable expected outcomes and a time limit. The Intergovernmental and intraorganizational dynamics often lead to a lack of a coordinated response, distrust, and conflict.

A lack of clarity in the scope of implementing the proposed urgent mitigation plans could be another challenge. This is sometimes referred to as scope creep resulting in wasting public funds, negative reputational damage, and leading to the expected positive outcomes of declaring the state of emergency not to be met. Also, inadequate scoping of what needs to be done could lead to implementation ambiguity, making it challenging to manage and define boundaries surrounding the crisis.

The ineffective mode of giving, receiving, and sharing information is one of the reasons for ineffective emergency management response.

The Tinubu's administration will not only have to master the art of communication with the Nigerian citizens that they are protecting but also dialogue with all the stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in responding to the emergency.

Emergency response performance measurement and management challenge. How would President Tinubu's team have assured Nigerians that the state of emergency declaration plan is effective, efficient, and adaptable? This is a critical governance challenge to overcome to demonstrate commitment beyond words to the Nigerian citizens.

Finally, ineffective management of risks and uncertainties in Nigeria.

The possible suggestions

This food security crisis implies there must be a change from standard operating procedures, where this change has significant implications for performance of the government and the people of Nigeria with potential positive/negative consequences depending on how it is managed.

In a state of emergency induced by a major crisis of this nature, effective governance and leadership will require a process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it. It should set in motion the process of facilitating individual/collective efforts of the citizens and those tasked with resolving the crisis to accomplish the shared objective of mitigating the food crisis.

Will President Bola Tinubu's stated emergency declaration make any difference to Nigerians in the next few years? Will citizens be able to confirm that the food crisis is now being managed with positive outcomes?

"Furthermore, the Nigeria civil service is still grappling with the problems of bad governance due to non-accountability and the ever-present manifestation of corruption that is pervasive, undisguised, and yet untameable as suggested by Fatile. Also, the reliability and effectiveness of the technical and administrative capacity of the civic service should be questioned and could create limitations in dealing with the complexity of the crisis. Unless good governance exists that will make the Nigerian civil service accountable, the process of facilitating individual/collective efforts of the citizens in resolving the food crisis will be hampered."

SUNDAY SPORTS

In Real Sociedad, PSG may find a blueprint

REAL Sociedad cannot match Paris St-Germain for glitz and glamour but the French giants may well look at their Basque visitors on Wednesday and see a blueprint for the future. ALEX BYSOUTH write.

ACCORDING to analysis by Transfermarkt, there are just three academy graduates in PSG's Champions League squad - Presnel Kimpembe, Warren Zaire-Emery and Ethan Mbappe - compared to 13 at Real Sociedad, the most of any side left in the competition.

Wednesday's last-16 first-leg meeting is another step on PSG's bid for European success, something the club have craved for almost as long as they have witnessed young, talented Parisians slip through their grasp.

Kingsley Coman is the most obvious. Once the club's youngest-ever player before being released to Juventus, he scored the winner as PSG lost their only Champions League final to Bayern Munich in 2020.

Other notable names formerly on PSG's books include Chelsea forward Christopher Nkunku, AC Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan, Real Madrid left-back Ferland Mendy, Aston Villa winger Moussa Diaby and Juventus' Timothy Weah.

That is despite Paris' local league system, the Ligue de Paris Ile-de-France, boasting more players than the population of San Sebastian, where La Real are based.

PSG owner Nasser Al-Khelaifi says the "flashy, bling-bling" era at PSG is over - and if that is true, he could do worse than look at how the club's last-16 opponents have become one of Europe's top producers of talent.

When Laurent Bonadei joined PSG as a youth coach in 2012, he was convinced the club would win the Champions League within a decade.

Not only that, having observed PSG's dominance in youth tournaments all over the world, he believed they could do it with a side mostly made up of homegrown players.

"I liked what Athletic Bilbao was doing with Basque players, and in Paris, I only had Parisians," he told FootMercato. "I told myself that we had the means to do something exceptional."

Yves Gergaud, a PSG youth coach between 2002 and 2007, was the one who scouted Coman at the age of nine but believes the lack of an established pathway has stopped such a feat coming to fruition.

"You have the academy in one corner, and the pro team in another corner, directors and managers changing all the time, so it's very difficult to really develop players," he explained in BBC World Service's documentary on Parisian talent.

"But it's true that you could



Kylian Mbappe and Warren Zaire-Emery were raised five miles apart but their paths to PSG were very different - the club paid £165.7m to sign Mbappe, while Zaire-Emery came through the youth academy

field three or four teams of players from the Paris region in the Champions League."

PSG have won nine Ligue 1 titles since Qatar Sports Investments took over in 2011 but, with European success eluding the club, they have also appointed seven managers in that time - four of those in the past four years.

That is in contrast to La Real, where Imanol Alguacil is approaching six years in charge having previously coached the reserve and youth teams, providing both stability and success by winning the Covid-delayed Copa del Rey in 2021.

"It was only a few years ago the club were having some very difficult years," Mikel Oyarzabal, one of the Zubieta academy's most-prized assets, told BBC Sport last season.

"It is a process. The beautiful things are being seen now but it was all to do with the work done years ago."

La Real's reliance on homegrown stars is born both from financial necessity and a long-standing philosophy dictated by more than 14,000 members, the club's 'socios'. According to Transfermarkt, they have built the third-most

valuable squad in La Liga, behind Real Madrid and Barcelona.

Around 80% of youngsters at Zubieta come from the local Gipuzkoa region, with the occasional special talent invited from elsewhere. Antoine Griezmann was one of those, meaning the La Liga side produced more of France's World Cup-winning starting XI than PSG (0).

La Real also only dip into the transfer market to complement what they already have - currently that includes Japan star Takefusa Kubo, while David Silva and Alexander Isak have previously represented the club.

In the first half of this campaign, data from CIES Football Observatory shows club-trained players played 42.1% of La Real's minutes, opposed to 6.5% at PSG.

And lack of opportunity is not a new issue for PSG youngsters, with high-profile signings such as Neymar and Lionel Messi traditionally favoured over academy talent.

PSG have also seen prospects enticed to other leagues, notably the Bundesliga, with former sporting director Leonardo complaining some expect to find

"paradise" elsewhere.

The Greater Paris region is such a densely populated talent pool that more players at the 2022 World Cup were born there than in London and Sao Paulo combined.

It means many prospects from the region never make it to the PSG Academy at all, with other clubs in France and beyond keen to pounce.

For example, despite being born less than a 40-minute drive from the Parc des Princes, Arsenal defender William Saliba attended the academy at Saint-Etienne, 300 miles south, while Paris-born Liverpool centre-back Ibrahima Konate joined Sochaux and Barcelona's Jules Kounde went to Bordeaux.

It is not a new phenomenon, Paul Pogba and Anthony Martial were other potential stars who left Paris, but now PSG are using their financial muscle to reverse the trend.

Alongside Kylian Mbappe, who came through France's famed Clairefontaine academy before joining Monaco, PSG have signed Parisians Randal Kolo Muani and Nordi Mukiele in recent seasons, with further additions in Ousmane

Dembele, Lucas Hernandez and Bradley Barcola.

"The fans are loving the squad we have at the moment and the balance of it and the number of French players," said PSG's chief revenue officer Marc Armstrong.

Armstrong points to PSG's new training centre providing a base for all the club's teams and a change in sporting strategy that brings the first team and academy closer together.

"We have Warren Zaire-Emery, who is one of the most exciting players in Europe if not the world at the moment," he added. "We want a lot more of those players coming through in the future."

If PSG are to look closely at La Real, the key takeaway is "patience".

"There are many places where people are spending far too much money on processes we break up ourselves," explained Real Sociedad sporting director Roberto Olabe.

"Patience has to do with your commitment and your responsibility with regard to having development programmes for young players and training them based on professional ethics and to deal with the world of professional football.

"A football player needs time."



Mbappe scored for PSG in the first leg of a last-16 Champions League win against Real Sociedad on Wednesday

Mbappe intends to leave PSG at end of season

FRANCE striker Kylian Mbappe has told Paris St-Germain he intends to leave the club at the end of the season.

BBC SPORT said that, the 25-year-old's deal with the Ligue 1 champions is scheduled to expire and he has been heavily linked with a move to Real Madrid.

Mbappe's future was the subject of a **major stand-off with PSG** last summer.

At one point, Mbappe was exiled from the first-team squad and left out of the club's pre-season tour of Asia.

However, an agreement was reached that ensured PSG would not lose out when Mbappe eventually left and the terms of his now seemingly inevitable exit are still to be confirmed.

The forward has a one-year extension clause, so it is expected his departure will involve either a sale with a transfer fee or financial sacrifices on the player's part.

Whilst PSG would have wanted Mbappe to remain at the club, his exit looks set to come as they aim to build a younger squad and move away from the 'Galacticos' plan, that has also seen Argentina forward **Lionel Messi** and Brazil international **Neymar** leave since the end of last season.

It is estimated Mbappe, who won the World Cup with France in 2018, earns around €200m per year (£171m).

PSG are 11 points clear of second-placed Nice at the top of the French league and will also play Nice in the quarter-finals of the domestic cup.

The French champions beat Real Sociedad 2-0 in the first leg of their last-16 Champions League encounter on Wednesday, with Mbappe scoring the opener.

It was his fourth goal in Europe's top competition this season, while he has 20 goals in the domestic league in the present campaign.

Overall, he has 243 goals and 93 assists in 290 games for PSG and has helped the club to five Ligue 1 title wins.

Mbappe won a French top-flight title with Monaco before **joining PSG as an 18-year-old in 2017**, initially on loan before a 180m euro (£165.7m) move.

He scored 27 goals and registered 13 assists in 60 games for Monaco.

Mbappe was set to leave PSG on a free transfer at the end of the 2021-22 season but ultimately signed a two-year contract extension, with the option of a further year.

However, after Mbappe told PSG he would not agree to the additional 12 months of the deal, he was not selected for their pre-season tour to Japan last July.

He subsequently refused to meet with representatives of Saudi Pro League side Al-Hilal, who made a world-record £259m offer for him.

The striker later returned to first-team training following what PSG said were "very constructive and positive" talks.

Mbappe turned down a move to Real Madrid when he agreed to his current deal with PSG in May 2022.

He **scored a hat-trick in the 2022 World Cup final** but finished on the losing side as Argentina won on penalties, and Mbappe was subsequently appointed captain of France after Hugo Lloris retired from Les Bleus duty.

On Friday, Arsenal boss

Mikel Arteta was asked whether his club would be interested in the Frenchman.

"When there is a player of that calibre, we always have to be in the conversation, but it looks a different way," he replied.

It is the confirmation of something we heard for the last couple of days. It happened on Tuesday before training. There was an hour-long conversation with Nasser Al-Khelaifi, president of PSG, and Kylian Mbappe. They shook hands and Mbappe said "that's it, we are gone".

The French media, and other chosen media, got the memo from PSG saying he is leaving.

PSG are saying "yes he is leaving" but a bunch of things were mentioned as they are trying to put a positive spin on the story.

They are saying "we have started a new adventure that has to do with getting young French players and, in fact, the squad of PSG was the youngest in the last 16 of the Champions League, we have forgotten the galactico era and going somewhere else".

Review panel says 13 VAR decisions incorrect

SCOTTISH football's referee chief insists VAR is "adding value and accuracy" to the game - despite a review showing a big increase in wrong decisions.

BBC SPORT said that, thirteen decisions have been deemed incorrect by the Scottish FA's VAR independent review panel during the second round of Premiership fixtures - including the last Old Firm derby.

It represents a significant rise from the three errors reported across the opening round of top flight games.

However, Scottish FA Head of Referee Operations Crawford Allan insists VAR continues to improve

Scottish football.

"VAR is something that is now part of the top table of football at the top professional levels," he told BBC Sport Scotland.

"Why would you want to get rid of something that factually does improve decision making in the game? Especially when there's money involved in it at that level of the game.

"That's what it was brought in for - and we've got proof that it is adding value and accuracy to the Scottish football diet."

The findings say VAR was wrong not to recommend a review of Celtic defender Alastair Johnston's handball in the last Old Firm derby.

JURGEN Klinsmann has been sacked as head coach of South Korea after just 12 months in the role and following the country's Asian Cup semi-final defeat.

BBC SPORT said that, the German, 59, was appointed in February last year and had a contract until the end of the 2026 World Cup.

South Korea **lost to Jordan** in the Asian Cup on 6 February, prolonging the country's 64-year wait for the title.

The Korea Football Association (KFA) criticised Klinsmann's leadership and said a change "is necessary".

Fans, politicians and the Korean media had called for Klinsmann to be sacked after their semi-final exit in Qatar and there were also reports of in-fighting between top players during the tournament.

South Korea captain Son Heung-min **reportedly** injured his finger in a dispute with team-mates during a team dinner before their shock loss to Jordan.

"Coach Klinsmann failed to demonstrate leadership that we expected from the national team coach, including game management, player management and work attitude, which elevate the competitiveness of the national team," said KFA President Chung Mong-gyu.

Following the loss to Jordan, who are ranked 64 places below South Korea at 87th in the world, Klinsmann said he had no plans to resign.

However on Thursday, the National Team Committee, an advisory body of the KFA, recommended the sacking of the former Tottenham and Bayern Munich forward, who

Korea sack Klinsmann after 12 months



Jurgen Klinsmann succeeded ex-South Korea boss Paulo Bento last year but the German has been an unpopular figure since taking over

won the World Cup as a player with West Germany in 1990.

"We've reached a consensus that Klinsmann cannot exercise his leadership as national team head coach for various reasons and that a change of leadership is necessary," said KFA technical director Hwangbo Kwan.

Klinsmann has been an unpopular figure with fans since taking over because of the lack of time he spent in South Korea, preferring instead to remain based in California.

In his first six months in the job, a Seoul newspaper calculated Klinsmann had spent just 67 days in the country, in contrast to past foreign coaches who had all been based in the capital city.

He led Germany to third place at the 2006 World Cup and the United States to the knockout stages of the 2014 tournament, but his previous role before South Korea was a 10-week spell at Bundesliga

side Hertha BSC four years ago.

South Korea's star-studded side - which included Son, Wolves striker Hwang Hee-chan and Paris St-Germain's Lee Kang-in - were one of the favourites to lift the Asian Cup but they failed to show any real creative spark during tournament.

They only won one match in normal time and in the second round, they were 90 seconds from elimination before a 99th-minute equaliser against Saudi Arabia and then winning a penalty shootout.

In the quarter-final, they levelled against Australia in the 96th minute before Tottenham's Son scored a superb extra-time free-kick to book their last-four spot.

However, they did not register a single shot on target in the semi-final and were surprisingly outclassed by underdogs Jordan, who were beaten in the final by hosts Qatar.

Crystal Palace manager stable in hospital

CRYSTAL Palace say manager Roy Hodgson is stable in hospital after he was "taken ill" during training on Thursday morning.

BBC SPORT said that, Palace cancelled a news conference after the 76-year-old became unwell.

It was widely reported on Thursday morning that Palace are set to sack Hodgson, with the club 15th in the Premier

League and five points clear of the relegation zone.

Palace face Everton at Goodison Park in the Premier League on Monday.

"Following news that Roy Hodgson was taken ill during today's training session, we can confirm that he is now stable and is currently undergoing tests in hospital," the club said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"Everybody at the club sends their best wishes to Roy for a speedy recovery."

BBC Sport understands that Hodgson is set to lose his job, with former Eintracht Frankfurt boss Oliver Glasner a strong favourite to replace him.

Hodgson took charge of his 200th match as Palace manager earlier this week, with his side beaten 3-1 at Selhurst Park by Chelsea.

The club have won three league games since their victory over Manchester United at Old Trafford in September and have lost 10 of their past 16 top-flight matches.

The former England boss is in his second stint in charge of Palace, having returned for the final 10 games of last season when he signed a short-term deal to take over from Patrick Vieira.

He led the club to 11th in the table before agreeing to

continue to manage the side for the 2023-24 campaign.

Supporters have displayed banners in recent weeks calling for Hodgson to be sacked and shared their frustration with how the club is being run.

They voiced their displeasure when he substituted Eberechi Eze after 64 minutes in their FA Cup third-round defeat against Everton last month, with some supporters at Goodison Park chanting "you don't know what you're doing".

Hodgson was also criticised by some Palace fans for sending on Michael Olise as a substitute at half-time against Brighton with the team 3-0 down, despite the winger struggling with injury.

Olise lasted 11 minutes before suffering a recurrence of a hamstring problem.

Glasner, 49, lifted the Europa League with Frankfurt in 2022 during his first season in charge when they beat Scottish side Rangers on penalties in the final.

After guiding Frankfurt to the knockout stages of the Champions League last year, the Austrian left the club at the end of the season with a year still left on his contract, following a 10-match winless run in the Bundesliga.

SUNDAY SPORTS

Osimhen is leading candidate to replace Mbappe PSG

NIGERIA international Victor Osimhen is being heavily linked with a summer transfer to French moneybags Paris Saint-Germain.

Premier League giants Chelsea were thought to be in pole position to sign the reigning African Footballer of the Year at the end of the 2023-2024 season but there is a new development.

The Athletic UK's transfer market guru David Ornstein and Peter Rutzler are reporting that Osimhen features prominently on Paris Saint-Germain's transfer shortlist after Kylian Mbappe informed the club of his intention to leave this summer.

Mbappe has made it clear he would not extend his contract with the Parisians which expires this summer so the capital outfit are looking to sign Osimhen as his replacement.

Luis Campos, who works as Football Advisor for PSG currently and previously Lille's sporting director, played a key role in Osimhen's transfer to the Ligue 1 from Sporting Charleroi in 2019.

The influential Portuguese



Osimhen

talent spotter has known the former Golden Eaglets sensation for close to a decade, having scouted him at the age of 16 at the 2015 Africa U17 Cup of Nations. Osimhen has been in the headlines in recent transfer windows, with the likes of Manchester United and

Arsenal also mentioned as potential destinations in the Premier League apart from Chelsea who are in the market for a marquee striker.

Any offer to sign the 25-year-old has to be close to his release clause which is in the region of 130 million euros.

JOSE Peseiro has reacted to the latest FIFA rankings, which saw Nigeria rise significantly following an impressive outing at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations, Soccernet.ng reports.

The Super Eagles experienced one of the highest movements of the month, rising 14 places to vacate their previous 42nd position to now sit as the 28th-best footballing nation in the world.

Even more impressively, the Nigerian national team moved from number six to three in Africa, with only Morocco and Senegal ahead of the Super Eagles.

It is Nigeria's highest ranking since the country won the AFCON in 2013, and the rise can be linked to the Super Eagles' impressive showing at this year's edition of the continental championship.

Under the guidance of Peseiro, Nigeria reached the final of the AFCON against all odds before losing 2-1 to hosts Cote d'Ivoire in a pulsating final played at the Alassane Ouattara Stadium in Abidjan on Sunday.

Despite being pleased with

Peseiro set new target for Super Eagles

Nigeria's new rating as the third-best nation in Africa, Peseiro appears not to be satisfied just yet.

The Portuguese tactician took to his Twitter handle to reveal his target for Nigeria: to get the Super Eagles to number one on the continent.

Peseiro's post on Twitter is the clearest indication yet that the former Porto boss desires to retain his job as the head coach of the Super Eagles.

Peseiro's contract technically expired after the AFCON, but the Portuguese coach hit the semifinal target the Nigeria Football Federation set for him.

The former Real Madrid assistant coach was in Abuja on Tuesday, where he was honoured by Nigeria's President alongside his team.

However, reports surfaced shortly after that Peseiro is in contact with the Algerian Football Federation, which wants him to become the new manager of the Desert Warriors.

The NFF is yet to announce any decision on Peseiro's situation.

Peseiro took charge of the Super Eagles in May 2022 and has since won ten of 22 games, losing seven others.



Peseiro

Eagles soar to 28th place in FIFA ranking

AFRICA Cup of Nations (AFCON) runners-up, Super Eagles of Nigeria have moved up by 14 spots to placed 28th in the world in the February FIFA ranking.

The ranking table published on the website of the world football governing body on Thursday, saw the team amass 1,522 points as against the 1,474 points picked in December 2023.

The upward movement further shoot up the Super Eagles as the third placed team on the continent, behind Morocco and Senegal who have 1,663 (12th) and 1,620 (17th) points. However, the newly-crowned African champions Cote d'Ivoire, reaped the rewards of their continental triumph on home soil by being in the 39th place having moved up by 10 spots.

AFCON second runners-up, South Africa climbed 8 spots to 58th, with Egypt (36th), Cameroon (51st) & Ghana (67th) dropping down after their early AFCON 2023 exits. The Angolan side who were ousted in the last eight (93rd, up 24), are the biggest climbers in the latest installment of the global ranking.

In the points stakes, two-time Asian Cup winners Qatar (37th, up 21) chalk up the

biggest tally (92.04 points) after capitalising on home comforts to successfully defend their continental crown. Elsewhere, Jordan (70th, up 17), who were edged out in the final, make good ground, as do Thailand (101st, up 12), whose journey came to an end at the last-16 stage.

Qatar's rise sees them enter uncharted territory, with two other teams also recording best-ever rankings.

Senegal (17th, up 3), which suffered shoot-out heartbreak at the hands of the eventual winners Cote d'Ivoire in the AFCON Round of 16, break new ground.

Tajikistan (99th, up 7) mark their maiden Asian Cup campaign by making a first-ever appearance in the top 100.



Super Eagles

Plumptre returns to Falcons team ahead of qualifier

SUPER Falcons and Al-Ittihad defender, Ashleigh Plumptre has returned to the Nigerian Football team for the first time since the team exited the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in the round of sixteen, Soccernet.ng reports.

Plumptre, 25, was absent from all of Nigeria's Olympic qualifying games, claiming she was taking time away from the national team to focus and settle in with the culture in Saudi Arabia.

Alongside twenty other players, the former Leicester defender has been called for Nigeria's Women's Olympic qualifying clash against the Indomitable Lionesses of Cameroon.

The game will be played next Friday, with the first leg at the Stade de la Reunification in Douala, Cameroon, and the return leg coming in the

following week at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, Nigeria.

This fixture is the third round of the African qualifying series and the penultimate round of the series before the continent's flag-bearers to the 2024 Olympics are known ahead of the Games in five months.

Ugandan referee, Shamirah Nabadda as referee will be in charge of the game in Douala and will be accompanied by Lydia Nantabo, Jane Mutonyi and Diana Murungi.

They will serve as assistant referee 1, assistant referee 2 and fourth official respectively. Khadija Rezzag from Morocco will be the referee assessor while Lukusa Kanjinga from the Democratic Republic of Congo will be the commissioner.

For the second leg in Nigeria, CAF has appointed Namibian official Ndemugwanitha Twanyanyukwa as the referee, with her compatriots Eveline Augustinus, Olivia Amukuu and Victoria Shangula in the roles of assistant referee 1, assistant referee 2 and fourth official respectively.

Alice Wangari Kimani from Kenya will serve as referee assessor while Christine Ziga from Ghana will be the commissioner. The Super Falcons squad in full;

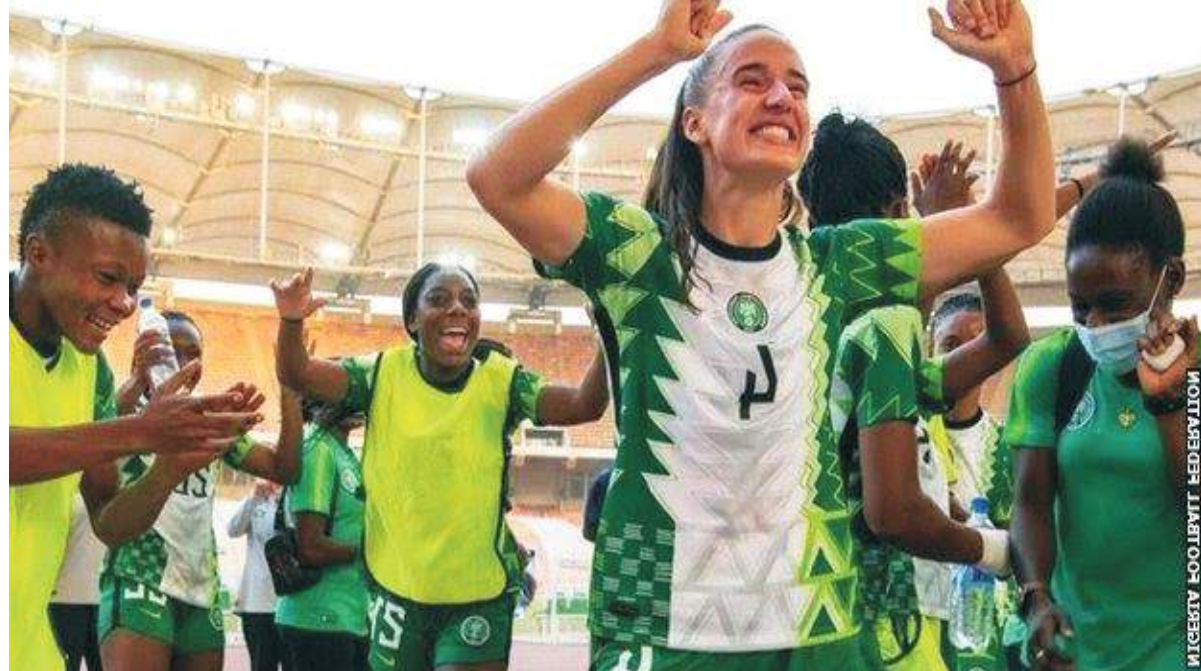
Goalkeepers: Chiamaka Nnadozie (Paris FC), Tochukwu Oluehi (Shualat Alsharqia FC, Saudi Arabia), Linda Jiwuaku (Bayelsa Queens).

Defenders: Osinachi Ohale (Pachuca Club de Futbol, Mexico), Ashleigh Plumptre

(Ittihad Ladies, Saudi Arabia), Oluwatosin Demehin (Stade de Reims, France), Michelle Alozie (Houston Dash, U.S.A.), Akudo Ogbonna (Remo Stars Ladies), Rofiat Imuran (Stade de Reims, France).

Midfielders: Deborah Abiodun (University of Pittsburgh, U.S.A.), Halimatu Ayinde (FC Rosengard, Sweden), Christy Ucheibe (SL Benfica, Portugal), Jennifer Echegini (Juventus Ladies, Italy), Rasheedat Ajibade (Atletico Madrid FC, Spain), Toni Payne (Sevilla FC, Spain).

Forwards: Omorinsola Babajide (Costa Adeje Tenerife Egatesa, Spain), Esther Okoronkwo (Henan FC, China), Ifeoma Onumonu (SLC Utah, U.S.A.), Asiat Oshoala (Bay FC, U.S.A.), Uchenna Kanu (Racing Louisville, U.S.A.), Gift Monday (Costa Adeje Tenerife Egatesa, Spain).



Ashleigh Plumptre featured in all of Nigeria's games at the FIFA 2023 Women's World Cup hosted by Australia and New Zealand

Mbappe: From Paris to the world

I BRAHIMA Traore smiles as he parks his black Range Rover outside the apartment block where his footballing story began.

He is back in Pantin, just outside the north-east corner of the peripherique - the ring road that separates central Paris from its suburbs.

Amid the din of sirens and the aroma of fast food, Traore buzzes in and takes the lift to the fifth floor. The doors open and his brother is waiting to welcome him back to their childhood home.

Inside, there are photos of the pair's Guinean father and Lebanese mother, as well as shots of grandparents and younger generations of the family. Dominating the view through the floor-to-ceiling windows, across a dual carriageway and tramline, is a vast sports complex, with two 4G football pitches.

"That's our Camp Nou, our Anfield," Traore says. "We used to jump over the fence at seven in the morning to practise our free-kicks. Before school and after school, it was football. Only football."

For many of the kids growing up here, constant practice can lead to the ultimate reward - a career in the professional game.

Traore, now 35, played more than 250 games for four different clubs in Germany's Bundesliga and captained Guinea at the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations.

"I remember just across the street, we had the player who used to play for Manchester United: Gabriel Obertan," says Traore. "It's the dream from everyone and then even more when you have someone who comes from the same suburb who makes it."

"When you hear that it's possible that, being from this area, you can play for a team like Manchester United, that is something that you want to follow, you want to pursue."

As the clock strikes 4pm, children and coaches flood on to the pitches below. Aston Villa's Moussa Diaby, former Arsenal winger Nicolas Pepe and France and Monaco defender Youssouf Fofana all started out at the same facility, which is shared by local clubs Esperance Paris 19eme and Solitaire Paris Est.

On the biggest stage of them all, Paris' finest are everywhere.

Thirty players at the 2022 men's World Cup in Qatar were born in the vicinity of France's capital. Compare that to two other hotbeds of youth football: Sao Paulo provided 12 World Cup players and Greater London eight.



A 12-year-old Mbappe

There were 11 Parisians in the France squad that lost to Argentina in the final, with the other 19 spread across eight national teams: Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon, Portugal, Germany and Qatar.

And then you have the icons of the recent past. World Cup winners Thierry Henry, N'Golo Kante and Paul Pogba all grew up in the banlieues (suburbs) of the French capital, as did Kante's former Leicester team-mate Riyad Mahrez.

How has Paris become a city that churns out more football talent than anywhere else?

Traore was born in Paris before moving to Guinea, settling back in the French capital from the age of four with his mother and siblings.

"You have a lot of people from North Africa round here; we used to say they are the real street footballers," he adds.

"Then you have a lot of Senegalese, Guinean, Malian people round here. In the summer, we used to do an Africa Cup. All the Guinean players would be in one team. All the Malian players, they will be in one team. Ivory Coast... whatever you want. It's crazy, because everyone is defending his country, and then it's just insane."

It was during one of these informal tournaments that a local scout spotted Traore and set him on the path of a professional career.

But that influx of talent and culture also emerged into an environment perfect for super-charging player

development.

A local government policy of building high-quality football facilities in every Paris banlieue, partly to keep kids off the streets and out of trouble, has been fundamental to making the sport cheap and accessible to all.

"You come down from your building and you have a football field, so the first thing you do is go play football," says Abdelaziz Kaddour, sports director of FC Montfermeil 93, a thriving club in Seine Saint-Denis, a suburban Paris region with one of the highest crime and unemployment rates in France.

Abdelaziz and Montfermeil oversaw the development of Arsenal defender William Saliba after he transferred from nearby AS Bondy, the club where France superstar Kylian Mbappe played as a child.

"Young people round here play football practically all day long," says Abdelaziz.

"And on top of that, most of the pitches are small. That means, they touch the ball a lot. They learn to dribble. And over time, it gives them a lot of quality, dribbling, speed, seeing things before others, tackling, intensity."

"And what's more, they want to make a living from football. They have the spirit. When you ask them the question, they want to be professional footballers at all costs."

"This is not an easy place to live. Many families are in difficulty. The children know it and give their all to succeed. It builds a mentality and that perhaps makes the difference, in addition to talent."

Sebastien Bassong, the former Tottenham, Newcastle and Cameroon defender, began his passage to football stardom at Deuil Enghein, a club located in Val d'Oise, directly to the north of Paris. He says football is "in the DNA" of those who grow up in the banlieues.

"There's a certain mindset that's very contagious," says Bassong. "I've got bigger brothers, so to make myself a name was difficult. But as soon as I started playing football, people started seeing me differently. I started to exist as soon as football came into my life. I started to puff my chest out a bit."

Bassong's talents were such that at the age of 13, he followed the path taken by Henry and Nicolas Anelka to Clairefontaine, the world-famous residential academy that has long cherry-picked the best talent from the Ile-de-France area.

"We call it the Harvard of football," says Bassong. "Most of my football IQ came from Clairefontaine. You think football, you drink football, you smell football, you sleep with your ball and, above all, you learn discipline. They develop champions."

Those not fortunate enough to be spotted by the scouts of Clairefontaine improve their skills in one of the biggest and most competitive amateur leagues in world football.

The Ligue de Paris Ile-de-France has more than 1,000 clubs and 270,000 players. It's such an important organisation that it has an office in the picture-perfect Place Valois, a well-struck free-kick away from the Louvre museum, right in the heart of Paris.

"Some of the great French players, or players who play in the major European leagues, say that what served them best was training in the Ile-de-France, that the level was very, very good," says the league's president Jamel Sandjak, a former defender of Algerian descent who played in the league before moving into football administration.

"Most of the France national youth teams are full of our players. So our regional teams are playing at national level. Scouts from all over the world come to Ile-de-France to look at players in our leagues."

The proliferation of foreign scouts explains the vast numbers of Parisian players who end up in the Premier League, with Liverpool's Ibrahima Konate and Chelsea's Axel Disasi among the latest batch. Konate even returned to his old Paris banlieue to unveil his Liverpool shirt, while a delirious crowd lit red flares and

chanted his name.

English teams have benefited from the fact that Paris St-Germain, the one truly elite club in the Paris region, has long favoured spending on overseas galacticos over developing homegrown talent. This policy came back to bite them in their one and only Champions League final in 2020, when **they lost 1-0 to Bayern Munich**, the winner scored by Kingsley Coman, a player PSG had released on a free transfer to Juventus six years earlier.

Yves Gergaud, a former PSG youth coach who scouted Coman at the age of nine, says the then-18-year-old winger's departure from the Qatari-owned club was prompted by the £33.5m arrival of Brazilian Lucas Moura to play in his position.

"It's all about business," says Gergaud.

"For 15 or 20 years now, they have wanted to win the Champions League, and they are trying to achieve that by attracting very great players, like Messi, like Neymar, like Thiago Silva."

"But unfortunately, they are still perhaps missing a little bit of soul."

"You have the academy in one corner, and the pro team in another corner, directors and managers changing all the time, so it's very difficult to really develop players. But it's true that you could field three or four teams of players from the Paris region in the Champions League."

For their part, PSG owner Nasser Al-Khelaifi **insists the era of "flashy bling-bling" is over** and the club point to the emergence of 17-year-old midfielder Warren Zaire-Emery - now a starter for France as well as his club - as evidence that the academy and first team are more closely attuned. Gergaud is not convinced.

"There is good work done in the academy. The scouts do a good job - they manage to detect very good young people but then it's difficult to get them to the first team because they don't have a reserve team and they find themselves being restricted to the under-19 championship."

"So there are players who can be ready like Warren Zaire-Emery at 16 or 17 years old, but there are others who should be able to keep developing at PSG and reach the first team."

The concentration of young talent in one city and its suburbs has created something of a circus around Paris' grassroots football.

Montfermeil sporting director Abdelaziz says there are often more scouts and agents than family members on the sidelines.

"When I started, I was scouting a lot in the Paris area but now it's starting to be impossible," says Jennifer Mendelevitch, an agent from Supernova Management, based in the Bois de Boulogne in western Paris.

"There are too many agents, too many people are trying to find the kid, the boy, who's going to make it. Right now, it's the jungle to get a player in the Paris area."

"You speak to a family and they already have agents and the kid is only 12. It's way too early. Let them be a kid. If they're going to make it, they're going to make it."

Even as she delivers the words, Mendelevitch knows she's fighting a lost cause.

With Mbappe and Zaire-Emery at the head of an army of talent, the battle for the brightest stars in the city of lights is as fierce as any on the pitch.



Georges Kevin Nkoudou, Warren Zaire-Emery, Kylian Mbappe and Sofiane Boufal are all products of the most prolific football talent hotbed in the world



PLATEAU United Club of Jos will, today, host league leaders Lobi Stars of Makurdi in a week 24 league cracker at the Zaria Road Stadium.

The match, which has been tagged one of the start matches of the week, will see the hosts attempt to maintain their one hundred percent home record this season.

Plateau United, no doubt, are excellent at home so far this season having won 10 of their opening 19 matches and currently occupy the 6th position 31 points. The won 3 and lost 2 of their last five league games

Lobi Stars, on the other hand, are at the top of the table with 36 points, 5 points clear of their hosts, having won 11 of their last 19 games and picking a couple of away draws, which suggests they are in decent form.

The Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) has resumed action after the mid-season break on Saturday, 17 February, with 10 matches scheduled for the weekend.

The league's first stanza witnessed 386 goals in 190 games, with Sikiru Alimi leading the goal-scoring chart with 11 goals.

Among the statistical highlights are 133 home wins, 10 away wins, and 47 draws. Several players have also moved out of the league during the break.

Top four picks for the weekend Shooting Stars will be out to avenge their home defeat by Enyimba on Saturday in Aba. Shooting Stars have historically struggled in Aba, with their best result in the past 19 years being a scoreless draw in the 2004/05 season.

Sporting Lagos has confirmed that six senior players in the team have mutually agreed to bid farewell to the Club during the January transfer window, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The club in a statement expressed its gratitude to the players for all their contributions to their journey.

Odafi Emmanuel, Saturday Okon, Abiodun Balogun, Godwin Udoh, Onyeka Ojeh and Osan

Mamah.

The statement reads: "Odafi Emmanuel, known by fans as Isco, played a key role in the heart of the midfield for us last season, and his late goal against FC One Rocket during the playoffs proved crucial in securing us a place in the top division.

"With four goals, Saturday Okon was one of our highest goalscorers in the 2023 NNL season. His dying-minute goal against Stormers SC is one of the Club's most popular goals, as it sealed our status as top-flight entrants.

"Abiodun Balogun has been a loyal servant for the club, wearing the badge from our first-ever season, and captaining the side on numerous occasions.

"Although Godwin, Onyeka and Osan only stayed at Sporting Lagos for half a season, their presence in the dressing room and among the rest of the squad players was always a breath of fresh air.

"The club wishes all the players success in the rest of their journeys as footballers. They're always a part of the Sporting Lagos family."

The second stanza of the 2023/24 Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) season resumes on Saturday, 17 February and Remo Stars Coach Daniel Ogunmodede has said that not winning the league will be a failure.

P/Utd host top side Lobi



Plateau United FC of Jos

The young, enigmatic coach made the declaration after leading Remo Stars to a second-place finish last season and after ending the first stanza in second position on the NPFL table, one point behind Lobi Stars, who lead the table with 36 points, and three ahead of third-placed Doma United.

Ogunmodede stated that their matchday 19 victory over Abia Warriors in Remo was one of the toughest for his side on home ground this season.

"It was a tough game for us—a very, very tough game—maybe one of the toughest games we've played at home this

season, against a very resilient team.

"They showed vigour and fought from the beginning to the end. Even after being two goals down, they responded with a lot of pressure and pulled one back," he revealed.

The Remo Stars coach also noted that his side was lucky to get the win.

He said, "The last 20 minutes were a very tough one for us. We were lucky to get away with this; we were very lucky."

On his team, missing loads of chances game after game, repeating itself in this one as well, 'Ijaball' stated that not

creating those chances would have been a problem for him.

"Not converting the chances is the responsibility of those on the pitch," he insisted.

Assessing his team after the first half of the campaign closed with 19 matches played, Coach Ogunmodede gave credit to his boys and expects more from the team ahead of the title run in the second half of the campaign.

"They fought hard. We want to be on top of the table, but we are not for now.

"I think we are still contending. We would

come back during the second round to come and fix this."

The coach did not mince words in saying his side wants to go a step better than last season's second-place finish when asked about his target for the season.

"We want to finish at least one place above where we were last season, and last season we finished as runners-up.

"We want to go one step better by winning the title. Failure to do that would result in a failed season for us, by our standards," he concluded.

Bosso commences Flying Eagles training session



HEAD Coach of Nigeria Flying Eagles, Ladan Bosso opened their training session on Saturday morning with just 18 players, BSNSports.com.ng can report.

The training which was held at the Training Pitch 1 of the Moshood Abiola Stadium, Abuja for one hour between 11:30 am to 12:30 pm saw the players having light training ahead of competition in March.

Bosso had on Thursday invited 30 players, the list which will be treamed down to 23 before they embark on the journey to Ghana to face their group opponents.

The eight teams that will compete for gold at the competition are host Ghana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda.

The African Games Accra 2023 will take place from 8-24 March 2024 in the Ghanaian capital, Accra.

Burkina Faso and Nigeria claimed gold in the men's and women's event respectively at the last edition of the continental multisport event held in 2019 in Rabat, Morocco.

Flying Eagles will kick off their campaign at the championship with Uganda on 8th March, 2024 at 9pm.