

January 22, 2023
Jumada Al-Akhir 29, 1444 AH

STILL IN CAPTIVITY

11 SCHOOLGIRLS OF FGC, BIRNIN YAURI

586 DAYS

1 STUDENT OF BETHEL BAPTIST HIGH SCHOOL, KUJAMA

558 DAYS

REMINISCENCES

My parents established Otukpo in the 1920s

— Inuwa Jibrin >>Pages 9, 10 & 11



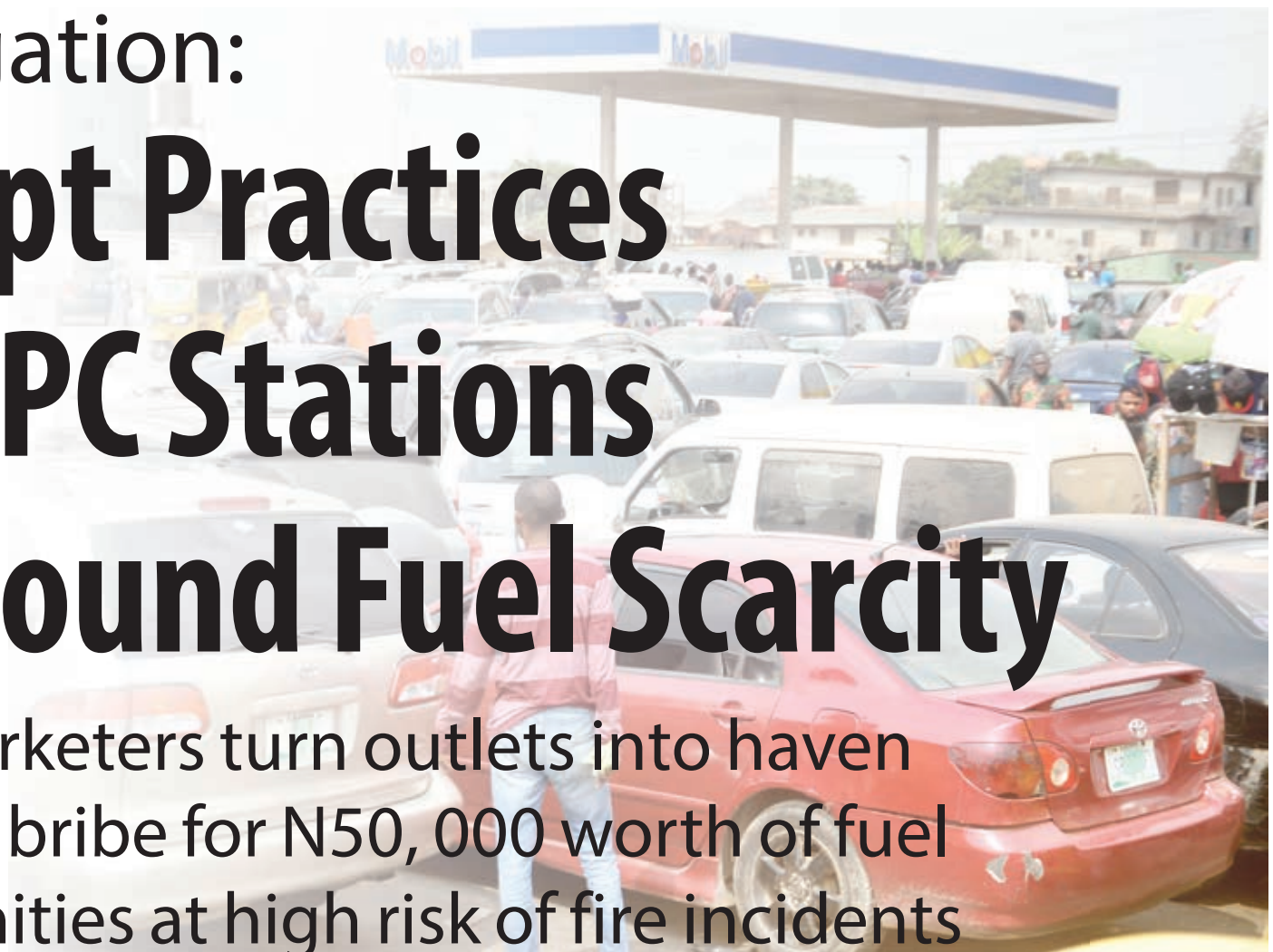
How Kano women are turning the tide in commerce



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Investigation:

Corrupt Practices At NNPC Stations Compound Fuel Scarcity



- Black marketers turn outlets into haven
- N13, 000 bribe for N50, 000 worth of fuel
- Communities at high risk of fire incidents
- FG using DSS to address infractions – Official >>>Pages 4&6

EVERYTHING WOMAN

After 2 PhDs, 3 MScs, I need more – Kwara female don

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RACE TO ASO ROCK

Nwanyanwu: An all-rounder eyeing presidency

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Yam prices far below cost of production, farmers lament >> Page 27

INSIDEPOLITICS

Tinubu is the solution Nigeria needs – Senator Opeyemi Bamidele

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WEATHER SUMMARY:



ABUJA:
Max: 37
Mostly sunny



KANO:
Max: 33
Mostly Sunny



KADUNA:
Max: 36
Mostly Sunny



KATSINA:
Max: 34
Mostly Sunny



MAIDUGURI:
Max: 36
Partly cloudy



JOS:
Max: 31
Partly cloudy



SOKOTO:
Max: 36
Partly cloudy



MAKURDI:
Max: 38
Partly cloudy



ENUGU:
Max: 38
Partly cloudy



IBADAN:
Max: 37
Partly cloudy



P/H:
Max: 24
Partly cloudy



LAGOS:
Max: 33
Partly cloudy

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PRAYER TIMES

SOURCE: Islamic Research and Timing Organisation, Kaduna.

City	Fajr	Zukhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
ABUJA	5:37	12:46	4:01	6:32	7:37
ENUGU	5:37	12:47	4:02	6:33	7:38
KADUNA	5:40	12:47	4:02	6:30	7:35
KANO	5:39	12:42	3:57	6:23	7:28
KATSINA	5:44	12:46	4:01	6:26	7:31
LAGOS	5:26	1:04	4:19	6:51	7:56
MAIDUGURI	5:22	12:25	3:40	6:06	7:11
P/HARCOURT	5:37	12:50	4:05	6:37	7:42
SOKOTO	5:53	12:54	4:09	6:37	7:42

PAGE 3 COMMENT

CBN-DSS tussle must cease

If Nigeria's public institutions work to their design and purpose daily, and in accordance with the statutes that set them up, which often are as clear as daylight, then the whole country would be the better for it, and then some.

If the head of central bank would not stray too far into politics, to the extent of becoming a card-carrying member of a political party and putting himself forward for political office while still on seat, then he would make few political enemies and the economy would be in safer hands. If the head of the nation's secret police would do more of spying than engage openly in political dog-fights with other public officials and politicians, then for sure, the country would see less crime by the day. And if the president of the nation would brook no turf wars and inter-agency rivalries among his appointees, then the government would function less acrimoniously and deliver on its mandates and promises to Nigerians.

Sadly, all of this is the shadowy political drama reaching anti-climax in Nigeria today. Over the past month or so, the impression has been created in the local and international news that the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr Godwin Emefiele is on the run because the Department of State Security (DSS), led by its Director-General, Yusuf Magaji Bichi, are on his chase. The mere impression of this is not good for the Nigerian economy, nor for President Buhari's government, even if none of it is true, as both the CBN and the DSS have claimed.

Last Monday, CBN's Director of Corporate Communications, Osita Nwanisobi had told newsmen that "Mr. Emefiele, who proceeded on leave in December 2022, resumed work today, Monday, January 16, 2023. The Governor resumed with renewed vigour to perform his duty ahead of the first Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting of the year scheduled for January 23 to 24, 2023".

Nwanisobi's statement was intended to assure the country that Mr Emefiele's absence from office since December 13-15 2022, when he attended the US-Africa Leaders' Summit in Washington DC together with President Muhammadu Buhari, was no more than a routine matter of going on leave.

But Nigerians know that just before that Summit, the media reports had indicated that the DSS had approached the Federal High Court, Abuja, for a warrant for the arrest of the CBN Governor over what the court filings and newspapers described as allegations of "terrorism financing" and "economic crimes of national security dimension" against Mr Emefiele. But ruling on the case at the time, the chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice John Tsoho had dismissed the application by DSS for Emefiele's arrest warrant on grounds that the DSS had not supported its grave allegations with concrete evidence. Before all this, news had filtered across social and some mainstream media in the country that operatives of the DSS had stormed the office of the CBN Governor in an apparent attempt, allegedly, to arrest him. Of course, both the CBN and the DSS had denied any such thing happened.

And even while CBN's official communication last Monday had sought to present Mr Emefiele's resumption of work as normal routine from holiday, several newspapers had reported it was anything but. Reports in some newspapers had said the CBN Governor had returned into the country "secretly" earlier than last week; others reported that he was allegedly escorted to office that same Monday by men of the Nigerian army, while still other newspapers reported that top military officers and traditional rulers were lobbying the presidency and the DSS to prevent his arrest.

No one knows where the truth lies in all of this, or whether, for that matter the alleged

charges by the DSS against Mr Emefiele were even true in the first place. For us at Daily Trust, however, three things are clear by this point. The first is that something is amiss somewhere between the CBN Governor and the DSS and Nigerians have and deserve the right to know. This much is amply demonstrated by the application for warrant of his arrest filed in court by the DSS, even if as Justice Tsoho makes clear, the application does not say whether the "Godwin Emefiele" sought by the DSS is also same one as Nigeria's current Governor of the Central Bank.

Daily Trust also believes that President Muhammadu Buhari's numbing silence through all this is dangerous, not only for his government but also for the country at large. If it is true that the DSS are bent on arresting the CBN governor for whatever charges, and that he is now under military protection, then that creates a potential for gun battle between men of the DSS and the army, and on the premises of the CBN no less. Given previous cases of armed conflict between various security agencies, few situations could spell more danger than this.

Finally, we believe the position of the law on all this is also clear. As a secret police outfit, the DSS lacks prosecutorial powers. The Nigeria Police Force and the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice both have these powers. If the DSS has enough evidence of terrorism financing and economic crimes against the CBN Governor, or for that matter, any other Nigerian, then it behoves it to hand same to those agencies that have the powers to prosecute. Arresting the CBN Governor is not by itself evidence of crime, even if it is a means for collecting evidence.

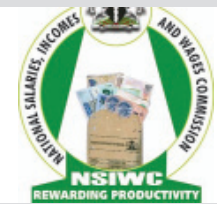
We, therefore, urge President Buhari to break his silence by calling all sides to order and act only in accordance with the law. In the meantime, this shadowy tussle must cease. It has cause Nigeria more than enough embarrassment already.

TODAY IN HISTORY



On this day in 2018, Netflix became the largest digital media and entertainment company in the world, worth \$100 billion.

HAPPENING THIS WEEK



The National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission (NSIWC) said the federal government will commence the process of reviewing the national minimum wage on Monday, January 23, 2023.



The International Day of Education is on Tuesday, January 24, 2023. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the day in celebration of the role of education for peace and development. Education is a human right, a public good and a public responsibility.



The Federal High Court sitting in Abuja has fixed January 27, 2023, for ruling on the suit challenging the candidacy of Bola Tinubu, the presidential candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2023 general elections.

Justice Binta Nyako fixed the date for Wednesday, when the case resumed in court.

A group, the Incorporated Trustees of Kingdom Human Rights Foundation International had sued the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Chairman, the APC and Tinubu as 1st to 3rd defendants, seeking the disqualification of Tinubu from contesting the 2023 presidential election.

SUNDAYPHOTO



Bursa, Turkey
A lenticular cloud is seen during sunrise from Gökmen aerospace training centre

Photo: Halit Mirahmetoglu/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

BIGSTORY

Investigation: Corrupt practices at NNPC stations compound fuel scarcity

From Clement A. Oloyede, Salim Umar Ibrahim (Kano), Ali Rabiu Ali (Dutse), Haruna Gimba Yaya (Gombe), Hope Abah Emmanuel (Makurdi), Tijani Labaran (Lokoja) & Simon E. Sunday (Abuja)

Many corrupt practices at retail outlets of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPCL) Limited have continued to compound the fuel scarcity that has hit the country for several months, investigation by *Daily Trust on Sunday* reveals.

These corrupt practices, according to findings and observations in states like Kano, Jigawa, Benue, Kogi, Gombe and others, include, but not limited to bribery, touting, diversion of the product to black marketers as well as dispensing with few pumps to increase queues which discourage motorists from waiting to buy at the approved price.

Despite the acquisition of Oando's OVH Energy, a move aimed at growing the portfolio of the NNPC and the rebranding of Oando's stations that followed, motorists said they had not felt the impact of the increase in the company's retail stations.

But NNPC officials in Abuja told *Daily Trust on Sunday* yesterday that the essence of having many official filling stations across the country was to mitigate the effects of gradual deregulation of the oil sector on the poor.

One of the officials said that while the NNPC, with great pain, would continue to supply the products to its outlets and others; community leaders, security operatives and citizens must work together to tackle shady deals and make the product accessible to all.

'Season of racketeering'

Activities of black marketers around NNPC filling stations have subjected motorists to staying in long queues for hours, overnight and day long, especially in Kano State, *Daily Trust on Sunday* observed.

With many of the independent marketers increasing the pump price to as high as N320/litre, few stations like A.A. Rano, Salbas, Aliko and NNPC retail stations that retain the N184/litre pump price are always besieged by motorists whenever they have reports that the stations have received supply, with many motorists spending the entire night in their vehicles despite the biting harmattan.

But many of the motorists that dared the impact of cold to queue for fuel at these stations end up not getting to buy as some of the

- Black marketers turn outlets into haven
- N13, 000 bribe for N50, 000 worth of fuel
- Communities at high risk of fire incidents
- FG using DSS to address infractions – Official



■ A black marketer's vehicle burnt while lifting fuel from an NNPC station in Kano

PHOTO: Salim Umar Ibrahim

station managers have devised ways of diverting the product to black marketers for extra money, and after dispensing to few vehicles on queue, they (stations), shut down and announce that they are out of supply, only to return in the midnight to sell to black marketers, investigation by *Daily Trust on Sunday* revealed.

It was observed that the main beneficiaries of this product are black marketers who flood the stations whenever there is fuel. Some have privileged information beforehand and arrive as early as possible; while others arrive late and still bypass motorists on the queue to get it based on underhand dealings with station managers, attendants and touts delivering returns to station managers.

In Kano, the NNPC mega station situated at Hotoro has been turned into a black marketers'

haven. This is obvious by the high number of cars and motorcycles with jerry-cans always flooding the area, mostly without engines customized to contain large quantities of fuel.

Daily Trust on Sunday also observed that most of the cars deployed by the black marketers sometimes have provision for spare tanks constructed inside the car for the purpose of buying more fuel. This is also beside the jerry-cans, and in some, drums inside the vehicle. The cars usually have tinted glasses for disguise.

Also, motorcyclists mostly fill their tanks, move out of the station, offload in an empty jerry-can and go back to refill.

It was further observed that this happens in rounds or multiple trips; while others who are there to get little to take care of their businesses, are still on the queue.

N13,000 bribe for N50,000 worth of fuel

It was also gathered that while others give out bribes to get their ways into the stations to get the fuel, some black marketers pay as much as N13,000 bribe on every N50,000 worth of fuel.

Suleiman Isah, who was in transit to Adamawa, said he queued for eight hours at the Kano NNPC mega station but could not get fuel.

"Honestly, what they are doing is not good. And it is not hidden; you can see for yourself. Look at this tricycle (pointing at a tricycle being pushed into the station), they have entered more than five times today, and as you can see, it doesn't even have an engine, they constructed a large tank and just pushed it. It is just a tank on wheels.

"While the government, and by extension, the NNPC, is spending

billions to import and subsidize the product, some unscrupulous elements are sabotaging all the efforts. I am not ruling out corruption at all levels, but the one we see is in the hundreds of outlets in the country that are meant to directly benefit the poor.

"What they do is pay a bribe and get their way - N13,000 for every N50,000 worth of fuel. They give priority and other privileges to people who are mostly their friends and associates. They will call them on phone, and when they arrive, they ask you to remove your car and give them a way to get it in. They will go in, get the fuel and move," Isah said.

Another motorist, Baba Alkali, said, "This is nothing; we are used to it. Whoever knows this place is aware of these corrupt practices.

"We are just gambling; if we get it, that's what we want, if we do not, we leave and the time would be wasted."

Daily Trust on Sunday further observed that some fierce-looking individuals see an opportunity to get money at fuel stations.

This set of individuals pick up sticks and join security men, pretending to be controlling the crowd and queues, but in actual sense, they are also collecting bribes from individuals to facilitate entrance into filling stations. They go back on the queue, negotiate with customers, especially private car owners, to collect as much as N1,000 per vehicle to take them in.

In Dutse, Jigawa State Capital, despite limitations set on the amount of fuel to be bought with jerry-cans and motorcycles, motorists said black marketers still have their way at the NNPC mega station and give bribes to get fuel in whatever quantity they want.

The motorists said they were abandoned on queues by some privileged personalities and black marketers.

Bashir Abdullahi, a driver, said he usually spent the whole day on a queue waiting to refuel his car, but saw many black marketers that find their way.

Also, Garba Salisu, another motorist, said he once stayed from morning till evening, but was told that fuel had finished, only to find out later that black marketers were still being attended to.

Isah Ibrahim, a black marketer in Dutse, said he and his colleagues usually got to NNPC mega stations to buy fuel because it is sold at the government-approved rate.

"If we buy fuel at the rate of N300, we cannot realise better profit, but at the mega stations, our profit is good despite what we give out before getting the fuel," he said.

Communities at high risk of fire incidents

While all these are happening, host communities and vehicles are usually at a high risk of fire outbreaks.

Last Tuesday, courtesy of the same corrupt practices, a vehicle loaded with fuel inside jerry-cans was engulfed by fire at the entrance of NNPC filling station at Club

Continued on page 6

20th Daily Trust DIALOGUE

Theme:

Interrogating the 2023 Presidential Agenda

Chairman of the Event



John Cardinal Onaiyekan
Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja.

Royal Father of the Day



HRH Alhaji Ismaila Mohammed, MFR
(Veteran Journalist)
Sarkin Karshi, Abuja.

Panelists



Mrs. Ibukun Awosika
Former Chairman,
First Bank of Nigeria (FBN).



Prof. Jibrin Ibrahim
Professor of Political Science and
member of the Board of the Centre
for Democracy and Development (CDD).



Dr. Yetunde Anibaba
Lecturer, Analysis of Business
Problems, Lagos Business School.



Dr. Eugene Enahoro
Human Capacity Development Specialist
and CEO, Heltoni Services Limited.

📅 Thursday, January 26, 2023 ⌚ 10:00 am

📍 **NAF Conference Centre and Suites**, Gwarinpa Express Way, near NEXT Shopping Mall, Kado, Abuja

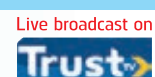
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Corrupt practices in NNPC stations compound fuel scarcity

Continued from page 4

Road, by Murtala Muhammad Way in Kano.

Eyewitnesses said the vehicle burst into flames as they were about to leave the filling station.

Daily Trust on Sunday learnt that while there was no life lost, the driver sustained a minor injury and ran away from the scene of the incident.

Jafar Muhammad Ahmad, popularly known as Sanjo Badawa, who was present at the station when the fire incident happened, told one of our correspondents that motorcyclists inside the station were “more than 300, but they refused to attend to us. They were just giving these guys (black market operators).”

A similar fire incident occurred about a week ago at the NNPC mega station in Dutse, Jigawa State, involving a vehicle which was said to be buying fuel with jerry-cans concealed inside the vehicle.

Authorities deny allegations

While he accepted waving the trouble of spending much time on the queue to some privileged individuals, the assistant manager of the NNPC mega station in Kano, Shafi’u Aminu, denied collecting bribes from anybody.

He said the station was a public place and was committed to serving the public.

“Whoever told you that he has been here since 8am and did not get fuel is lying because we are doing the right thing. Those in the queue are our priorities.

“I don’t know of those tricyclists, for the ones I know, their tanks don’t take more than N1,300 or N1,500 worth of fuel. When we take in cars like six or seven times, we take motorcycles, then tricycles.

Black marketers use fabricated tanks to lift fuel in Gombe

In Gombe, black marketers of petroleum products are making brisk business from the current fuel scarcity being experienced in the country to the detriment of motorists and the general public.

A major dealer in the black market business, Muhammad Kabir, a resident of the Tudun Wada area of Gombe metropolis, said he bought the fuel at N195 per litre from the NNPC mega station after bribing his way into the fuel station.

He said he paid the security at the gate N5,000 before he could be allowed in with a tinted vehicle, specially fabricated with a big drum that can contain over 5,000 litres of fuel.

According to him, they have a special arrangement with the management of the NNPC mega

station, where the N6 difference is meant for the management and the fuel attendants will also be settled.

“After getting the fuel, we usually sell to roadside black marketers at the rate of N275 per litre, and sometimes it is more than that, depending on how cheap we got the fuel,” he said.

Another black marketer along the Biu Road, Sagiru Dana, alleged that he got fuel from major dealers who had struck a deal with the management of the NNPC mega station.

He said they bought a 31-litre gallon at the rate of N8,500 from major black marketers and subsequently sold at N12,400.

Dana added that they sometimes got fuel from independent marketers’ fuel stations at N275 per litre and they, in turn, sold between N350 and N400 per litre.

“When we are lucky, we get fuel from other NNPC outlets at N250, that is after bribing security men at the gate and other workers. They mostly dispense fuel to us at night,” the black marketer said.

When our correspondent visited the NNPC mega station along Biu Road, officials said they had to seek clearance from their headquarters in Abuja before speaking to the media.

However, as of the time of filing this report, *Daily Trust on Sunday* could not secure clearance from the NNPC headquarters.

Allegations of sharp practices in Benue, Kogi

In Benue State, there have been allegations of sharp practices against workers of the NNPC mega filling station along the Otukpo road in Makurdi, the state capital.

Our correspondent gathered that some workers at the station charged motorists N200 each before allowing them entrance in for fuel purchase.



■ Black market fuel dealers attend to motorists in Lagos

PHOTO: File Photo

One of the motorists, who declined to mention his name, alleged that workers who engaged in that habit usually took undue advantage of motorists on queue.

“If you insist on doing the right thing, you would remain on queue for long hours. And it may even be that at the end of the day, you would have wasted your time because the station will stop selling,” he said.

A driver, who simply identified himself as Cletus, accused the NNPC station of selling to black marketers at night after the vendors must have parted with some money.

“At night they (workers) will sell to black marketers in big jerry-cans. They do these things subtly not to attract the attention of the public,” the driver said.

However, our correspondent could not verify this claim at the time of filing this report.

Some other motorists, however, said the common sharp practices that had made those on queues helpless was the N200 bribe for quick access to the product.

They alleged that when some motorists part with their money, the workers neck-deep into the ill practices would find a way either through the out-gate to open for such people to hurriedly buy and leave the station at the detriment of those on queue.

Daily Trust on Sunday reports that NNPC filling stations dispense the product at the normal

government rate, which often makes the queues unending and a nightmare for motorists.

“Often, you remain on the queue forever, but if you part with some money or know someone at the station they will make way for you to obtain fuel and go your way.

Similarly, motorists in Lokoja, the Kogi State Capital, alleged foul play in the dispensing of fuel at the NNPC mega station.

A motorist, who plies the Okene-Lokoja-Abuja Road, Mallam Abubakar Ahmed, said, “There are strong indications that the station used to divert fuel to unknown sources. I have not seen

it being done, but my colleagues have been saying so. And I have a reason to believe it because of the development at the station recently.”

Efforts by our correspondent to speak to officials of the mega station failed as the staff on ground claimed to be casual workers and could not speak for the station.

FG using DSS to address infractions – Official

Although the chief communications officer of the NNPC, Garba Deen Muhammad, did not immediately respond to enquiries by *Daily Trust on Sunday* on the alleged infractions, a senior official, however, said selling petrol to hawkers by filling stations was not only peculiar to NNPC outlets. He noted that there were bad eggs who would want to sabotage the efforts of the government in sustaining petrol supply and distribution.

“The NNPC Ltd has championed sanity for the market, and recently, in collaboration with Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), we partnered with men of the Department of State Services (DSS) who move across retail outlets to stop such infractions.

“The DSS has gone far in investigating stations selling to hawkers, those selling above pump price. Seven depots were even suspended by the NMDPRA late in December 2022 for hiking their prices even when the NNPC supplies to them at the official rate,” the senior official explained.

He also said the NNPC and President Muhammadu Buhari were considering the effect the total removal of subsidy would have on the masses, otherwise it would have gone since.

“We, at the NNPC, are doing a lot to ensure that petrol is available despite the global fuel crisis. For these infractions, we investigate them, and if we find our business partners operating those retail outlets to be guilty, we have the sanctions.

“I can also tell you that this week, the NNPC and NMDPRA met with the leadership of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), all in a bid to address cases of smuggling of petroleum products from Nigeria,” he noted.

If you insist on doing the right thing, you would remain on queue for long hours. And it may even be that at the end of the day, you would have wasted your time because the station will stop selling



■ A long queue of vehicles waiting to fuel in Abuja

PHOTO: File Photo

APC campaign director, Naja'atu Muhammad, resigns, quits party

● It won't affect Tinubu's chances – APC

By Ismail Mudashir & Saawua Terzungwe

Barely five weeks to the commencement of this year's general elections, the Director, Civil Society of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council, Naja'atu Muhammad, has resigned her membership of the party and position.

In an exclusive interview with *Daily Trust on Sunday*, Naja'atu said she would no longer support the party's presidential candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu because he "hardly thinks straight."

The former director, who hails from Kano Municipal Local Government Area, also said she would not pitch tent with another political party, claiming that all parties in the country shared same political ideology.

Recall that early this month, two directorate members of the APC Presidential Campaign Council resigned their membership of both the council and the party.

The former director said that despite her

closeness to Tinubu, she would no longer support him because a lot of things had changed.

"Yes, I am no longer supporting him; that is why I left the party. A lot have changed. He can hardly think straight. I am very sure of that. You can see his clips.

"I have transcended religious, tribal or regional sentiments, so I can't afford to look at things with that narrow premise. I think it is not only irresponsible, it is criminal because we have succeeded in dividing this country for selfish reasons. We can't continue like that. We need to move our country forward. That is my reason. I have nothing personal against anyone," she said.

She said she would be meeting with the presidential candidates of the leading opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar and that of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi in the next few days before taking a decision on who to support.

In a letter dated January 19, 2023 and addressed to the APC national chairman, Abdullahi Adamu and seen by *Daily Trust on*

Sunday, the former director of APC campaign stated she left because of recent developments in the country's political and democratic space.

But reacting to the development, the Director of Public Affairs and spokesperson of the APC Presidential Campaign Council, Festus Keyamo, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), told *Daily Trust on Sunday* that her vote won't affect Tinubu's chances of winning the election, adding that the reasons she gave were personal.

Keyamo said, "We respect the rights of all individuals to associate and disassociate at anytime. My big sister has said she is quitting party politics. We also respect that. Just as she is leaving, we are also gaining elsewhere in the North West.

"The whole Labour Party so-called structure in Jigawa has collapsed into the APC. So, it is plus and minus. In this case, the plus is more.

"However, we regret losing the vote she would have cast for us, but we are confident that it will not substantially affect the overall result as we expect a difference of more than two million votes in Kano between us and the party that will come second."

Major marketers jerk petrol price to N190/l

● FG denies approval

By Simon Echefufun Sunday

Amidst the persisting petrol scarcity in the country, major marketers have implemented a fresh hike of price from N180 per litre to over N190 in Abuja and Lagos, just as Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) retail stations increased the rate from N179 to N185 during the weekend.

However, the Minister of State, Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, on Friday, denied any increase in the price of petrol. The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, recently said the government would immediately commence the removal of petrol subsidy in phases before the termination date in June this year.

A marketer, Abdullahi Yusuf, told *Daily Trust on Sunday* that they were raising their prices based on the increase in wholesale price at the depots.

"The ex-depot price is above the N148 official rate, and at times the depots sell at N160. So, we adjust our prices accordingly," he said.

The NNPC has remained the sole importer of petrol since 2017.

It was observed that Rain Oil in Gwarinpa, Abuja, whose depot was suspended two weeks ago for high ex depot price, has continually sold at N190/l. There are other less known stations selling at over N200/l in Abuja and neighbouring states.

But in the statement, Sylva said President Muhammadu Buhari had not approved any price increase for fuel as has been bandied around.

Supporters of the presidential candidate of Labour Party, Peter Obi and his running mate, Yusuf Datti, during the party's rally in Jos yesterday.

PHOTO: NAN



No going back on cash withdrawal limits, NFIU tells govts

By Sunday Michael Ogwu

The Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit has said it will not reverse the cash withdrawal limit guidelines it issued earlier this month regarding financial operations of the three tiers of government in Nigeria.

The NFIU issued the statement in reaction to its meeting with the governors of the 36 states of the federation who had sought its understanding

to reconsider or tinker with the cash withdrawal guidelines.

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) had faulted the recent directive by the NFIU directing banks from executing demands for cash withdrawals from all public accounts.

The NFIU, on January 5, directed banks in the country to stop executing demands for cash from public accounts, as well as payment of estacodes and travelling allowances, effective

March 1, 2023.

But in a statement signed by its chief media analyst, Ahmed Dikko, the NFIU stated that it had given enough time for all entities in the country to withdraw cash above the approved daily limit and it was no longer in the interest of the country and its citizens to continue to indulge in such violation.

According to the statement, the director of the NFIU,

Modibbo Hamman Tukur, had said at the end of his meeting with the governors that the agency was, however, ready to cooperate with the six-man committee set up to work with it.

Modibbo said, "We acted within our functions and the law. We issued the guidelines to control the barrage of investigations we saw coming. Our guidelines are meant to help the governors not to fight them or any public servant

2023: I won't sell Nigeria's assets – Nwanyanwu

By Abbas Jimoh

The presidential candidate of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP), Chief Dan Nwanyanwu, has said that if elected, he will not sell Nigeria's assets.

He said this yesterday in Abuja at the public unveiling of

the updated 80-page manifesto and campaigns of the party ahead of this year's elections.

He said his administration would sell petrol less than N100 per litre without subsidy as he would prioritise fixing the refineries to work, beyond promises if elected.

Nwanyanwu, who is also the national chairman of the ZLP, said he would abolish the country's paper currency and turn them into coins to encourage cashless policy and tackle corruption.

On the possibility of reviving the refineries and other comatose

national assets rather than selling them to individuals and corporate organisations he said, "I won't sell any national or government asset, I will revamp them and make them work. They sold the national assets to themselves and that worsened the situation."

NDLEA destroys 317 tonnes of cannabis in Edo, arrests 4

By Abbas Jimoh

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have raided a cluster of cannabis syndicates operating in the Opuje forests in Edo State, where massive warehouses and tents storing over 317.4 metric tonnes of the psychoactive substance were destroyed.

This is coming few hours after the chairman/chief executive officer of the agency, Brigadier-General Mohammed Buba Marwa (retd), vowed to make life tough for drug barons and cartels in the new year if they failed to back out of the illicit trade.

The spokesman of the agency, Femi Babafemi, said yesterday in Abuja that at least, a police impersonator, Omoruan Theophilus, 37, who parades as a police inspector to convey the drugs from the forests to the cities, and three others, Aigberuan Jacob, 42; Ekeinde Anthony Zaza, 53, and Naomi Patience Ohiewere, 42, were arrested in connection with the drugs.

Diphtheria outbreak: NPHCDA urges parents to vaccinate children

By Ojoma Akor

The National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) has enjoined parents and caregivers in Kano State and other parts of the country to ensure that their children under one year are

fully vaccinated with pentavalent vaccines and other childhood vaccines.

The childhood vaccines are bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG), Rota virus vaccine, polio vaccine, inactivated polio vaccines (IPV), measles vaccine, yellow fever

vaccine and meningitis vaccine.

The executive director of the agency, Dr Faisal Shuaib, gave the advice yesterday in Abuja while fielding questions from *Daily Trust* on Sunday on the recent diphtheria outbreak in Kano and other states.

He said diphtheria is a vaccine

preventable disease, adding that keeping up to date with recommended vaccines is the best protection against the disease.

Dr Shuaib said the outbreak was a clear indicator of poor immunisation performance in the affected areas in Kano State.

He said the agency was collaborating with Kano State and the affected local government areas, as well as all other stakeholders involved in immunisation service delivery to improve the routine immunisation performance in the state.

Make PVC your AK-47, Gov Diri tells youths

From Bassey Willie, Yenagoa

Ahead of February's general elections, Bayelsa State governor, Senator Douye Diri, has advised youths to shun electoral violence and instead use their Permanent Voters' Card (PVC) to elect credible leaders with the capacity to deliver on sustainable development, peace and economic prosperity.

Senator Diri gave the advice while addressing youths during a programme

tagged: "Prosperity Youths Day 2023," at the Ecumenical Centre in Igbogene, Yenagoa.

Diri spokesman, Daniel Alabrah, in a statement yesterday, quoted the governor as describing the PVC as a tool that confers political power on the electorate, saying what the youths needed was the card, which he said was more powerful than an AK-47 rifle.

He said: "The PVC is your AK-47. You do not need any gun or machete to intimidate anyone.

Bayelsa youths are not violent but intelligent and productive.

"Elections are a very serious business of choosing leaders that will lead them towards prosperity, development and growth."

He also urged youths to shun drug abuse and all acts of violence before, during and after the elections and stressed the need for them to key into the government's various policies and programmes targeted at building their capacity.

Defection: Kogi APC wants Ajaokuta Rep's allowances stopped

By Itodo Daniel Sule

The All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kogi State has asked the speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, to stop the constituency allowances of member representing Ajaokuta Federal Constituency, Lawal Idirisu, following his defection from the ruling party.

The party also wants the lawmaker to refund salaries and other benefits he had received from the National Assembly prior to his defection from the APC as contained in Section 68(1) (G) and (2) of the 1999 Constitution as amended. "That sometimes in May 2022, knowing that he was elected on

the platform of APC to serve between 2019 to 2023, the said Hon. Lawal Muhammadu Idirisu defected to New Nigerian Peoples Party (NNPP) where he emerged as the flag bearer on the 20th day of May 2022, respect of 2023 General Elections for House of Representatives, Ajaokuta Federal Constituency before the expiration of the period for which the current House of Representatives was elected.

"That premise on the above, it is common knowledge that the aforesaid Hon. Lawal Muhammadu Idirisu automatically lost his seat at the House of Representatives as a member representing the good people of Ajaokuta Federal Constituency having regards to section 68 (1) (g) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) and Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/1060/20 wherein the Federal High Court Abuja sacked Hon. Yakubu Dogara for defecting

from Peoples Democratic Party to All Progressives Congress," the letter reads in part.

The party said despite the defection, the lawmaker has been drawing salaries, allowances and constituency projects' funds on "the false belief that he is still a member of the House of Representatives."

Reacting, the lawmaker who spoke through his media aide, Yunusa Muhammad, described the call to declare his seat vacant as 'laughable', saying, "the constitutional power to declare a seat vacant rests with the courts and not individuals."

CHANGE OF NAME

That I was formerly known, called and addressed as HAFSAT SANI SALEH. That I now want to be known, called and addressed as HAFSAT. UMAR SANI. That all my credentials/Documents bearing my former name HAFSAT SANI SALEH shall remain valid and legally tenable. General public take note.

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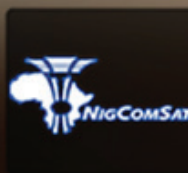
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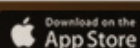
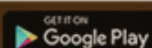
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REMINISCENCES

My parents established Otukpo in the 1920s — Inuwa Jibrin

Alhaji Inuwa Jibrin, a veteran journalist, was one of the pioneer members of staff of the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria (BCNN) in the early 1960s. He also played leading roles in administration and other fields, including the private sector. In this interview, he spoke of his childhood days, how his parents settled in Benue from Kano, and other interesting issues.

By Kabiru A. Yusuf

Looking at your early life, it appears that though a Kano man you had a special experience of growing up in another part of the country, specifically in Benue State; how did this come about?

It is quite correct. From Madabo in Kano, our grandparents went out to spread Islam through Keffi, then across River Benue to Ankpa in the present day Kogi State. From there, after his Quranic education, my father was picked by Europeans, who told him that they would like him to work with them. In those days it was difficult for the Zaki (or "Lion", as we called the Whiteman) to say something and somebody would say no. That was in 1920.

He served as a messenger to the district officer, then he was taken to a place called Okpoga in Benue State today, which used to be Idoma Division. I think it is now under Okpokwu.

As he told me, he was in the Quranic school when the late Emir of Zazzau, Aliyu Dansidi was deported to Ankpa, then Lokoja in September 1920.

A railway was constructed



■ Alhaji Inuwa Jibrin

from Kano to Port Harcourt, so the headquarters was moved from Okpoga to Otukpo, which is today one of the headquarters of a local government.

My parents established Otukpo town in the 1920s. My father served there up to 1950 and was transferred to Makurdi. He retired in 1950. So I was born in Benue and I went to St. Mary's School there. It was a Catholic school. From there, I proceeded to Benue Middle School in Katsina-Ala.

Do you think that growing up in Benue among the Idoma and attending a Christian school sort of defined you later in life?

Yes. But it did not affect my religion in any way because my father kept saying that all he wanted was for me to get the education but I would remain a Muslim.

We used to go to church, sing in the church choir and so on. And during examinations I was usually top in Christian Religious Studies and they would be wondering how a Muslim would do that.

In fact, in those days, most of the teachers in primary school, which was a Catholic school, were Igbo. I remember that the headmaster, Mr Uzo, was from Awka in Anambra State.

I was the class monitor throughout, so I would come early in the morning, fetch water, go to the teacher and bring the register, sweep the class and so on.

So, one morning when I was in Standard Four, he called me to his office and just drew his table, gave me a ruler, pen and paper and asked me to report at the Methodist School across the road. He didn't tell me what was happening, so I was very scared. I went and asked for the headmaster, one Mr Onazi, who later became commissioner in Benue-Plateau before his death.

Was he doing you a favour?

I wouldn't know, but I think

so. I asked for the headmaster's office, where I met a man who asked if I was Jibrin. I said yes and he said I should come along. He took me to a class and said we were going to sit for examination to Middle School, Katsina-Ala. We were six or five of us. That was it.

Didn't you like to go to Katsina-Ala?

I didn't like to go.

Why?

I didn't like to go because I was told that Tiv chaps were cruel. We used to call them Munci. They used to beat people.

What was your experience?

Because I could speak Idoma

and understand Igbo, I blended.

From Katsina-Ala you went to Government College, Keffi, which was one of the top secondary schools in the North; how was your experience there?

We opened Government College, Keffi in 1954. We were the first students, but the first set started in Kaduna, including the late Audu Abubakar; former vice chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Prof Naiyya Yahaya. They finished in Kaduna.

We went to Keffi with people like Paul Unongu, Abdullahi Ibrahim(SAN) and Professor Gor. I think he is a medical doctor. He is in Benue today.

We mixed with others from Ilorin, Kabba Province then, Plateau, and one or two from Zaria Province, Southern Zaria as it used to be. We had Bulus Kagoro; I remember he was from there.

From Keffi, did you go straight into broadcasting?

No, we sat for the Cambridge examination, not the West African School Certificate examination. I decided to take care of my father who had already retired in 1950.

Did he retire in Otukpo?

Yes, he retired and settled there after staying 30 years. He had a house there, so he decided to stay. I came over to Kaduna and I said the best thing was to get something doing to help him, at least as a reward because he was about 70 or so.

So I joined the judicial department. H.O. Mohammed recruited me. At that time the northernisation policy was just starting. As I was passing through the corridor, I saw him and knocked at the door, went into the office, greeted him and said I was looking for a job. He looked at me and asked if I didn't know where people were being recruited. I said I knew the Public Service Commission and he asked why I would not go there. I said there was an elderly gentleman there who would hardly answer my greetings; whenever he saw me he would start writing. He looked at me again, burst into laughter and said it was because of the way I dressed.

How were you dressed?

I tucked in right from school because the only time we used our kaftans and shirts was when going to the Friday mosque in Keffi. Even when going for games you would tuck in, so I was used to that.

But the impression is that in those days it was easy to get jobs for somebody with secondary school education; is that true?

Yes, it was easy but depends on where you go and when you go. This is because before we finished, there were so many organisations coming to propagate their services.

I had wanted to go to forestry department because I was interested in scouting and so on. I was a troop leader in the school. When the late Kali Imam, who was the conservator of forest, came and gave us a lecture, I approached him. He looked at my results and said I was weak in mathematics. He graduated from the University

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My parents established Otukpo in the 1920s

of Aberdeen and was employed. He suggested I change to either veterinary course or something else and I said I would do that. So I applied for veterinary and was called for interview in Makurdi. But the veterinary officer said I did not sit for Chemistry and Physics, so there would be some difficulty in the future. He advised that I seek something in administration and I said okay.

So you went to the judiciary just to look for a job, not because you were really interested in that sector?

No. When I went there he asked which school I attended and I said Government College, Keffi. He asked if I passed the exam. I said yes and he asked for evidence. I had a photocopy of the statement of result, so I showed it to him. He just drew his drawer and gave me a form to fill and bring the following day. That was how I started.

When I went, he just called one Mr Eno, the assistant chief clerk and said he should make me a dispatch clerk. That was how I started.

You moved quickly from that place, why didn't you stay?

I was there for a year, then went on leave. My father asked where I was working and I said the judiciary. When he asked if it was the sharia or western judiciary and I said it was western, so he said I would change, adding that if it was sharia he would agree.

Luckily, the NBC advertised for a programme assistant and I was staying in an area where the late Sani Kontagora used to stay. He developed interest in me and we used to follow him to the Rigachukun area. In those days there were bushy areas and he was interested in hunting birds. Guinea fowl and other birds could be found there.

Alhaji Sani was in the NBC?

He was the acting controller of the NBC, who was in charge of the whole Northern Region. He asked for my qualification and I said Cambridge School Certificate.

I was called for interview, together with the late Adamu Augi, Mahamadu Yakasai and others. I remember that the late Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, was a member of the board. The secretary of the NBC came for the interview from Lagos.

I remember that Muhammadu King asked why I wanted to work in a radio station. He asked if I worked in a radio station and I said no. On why I wanted to work there, I said I was interested, adding that I used to listen to radio stations, especially BBC, Voice of America, Radio Alkahira in Cairo, Radio Pakistan etc.

Were they broadcasting in Hausa or English?

Hausa and English. I told him the various times and frequencies of those stations. He wanted to know the leader of Pakistan and I said Marshal Ayub Khan. That was the end of it. A week later, I received a letter that I was successful in the interview as a programme assistant.

I think the highlight of your broadcasting career was when you became one of the pioneer staff of the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria.

Yes.



Alhaji Inuwa Jibrin

It also appears that you spent the longest span of your career there; can you talk to us about it?

Yes. It was interesting. I was the continuity announcer at the NBC when one day, the premier, Ahmadu Bello returned from one of his Middle East tours and there was a news bulletin and the news reader was not around. The news bulletin was taken to the controller. The acting controller was Alhaji El-Nafati from Gombe State, which was Bauchi at that time. Since the news reader was not around, he took the bulletin to see the continuity

announcer. When I started reading the news I was shivering.

But you were not supposed to read news, why did you accept it?

I was not supposed to read it but since he gave me there was nothing I could do; so I started reading it the way I thought I should do it. A whole controller was standing on me, so I was shivering. At the end of it, I said perhaps I would just get a sack letter the following morning.

The following morning when I reported in the office, they said the controller wanted to see me and I said that was the end of

the news as I would be sacked. To my surprise, when I went to the office that was not the case.

Did you enjoy working in the BCNN; why did you leave?

I enjoyed working there. It was a powerful radio station heard all over, right up to Cameroon in Garuwa, Yaoundé, Benin Republic, Niger; in fact, up to Agadez. In fact, we used to receive letters from the Mediterranean areas that they heard the news. It was the only station with a powerful transmitter; we were heard all over the North.

And whenever there was any ceremony, such as installation of new emirs, or the governor touring, we used to follow in a Land Rover to cover the event; and as a result we were able to go round; in fact, virtually all over the northern region and that was a fantastic experience.

After staying for about two years or so, I was sent to the BBC for more training in broadcasting. This was in 1963. In BBC, I had training in radio broadcasting. I was in the training when President John Kennedy was assassinated.

At the end of it, when I was preparing to come back, there was a letter that I should proceed to Granada Television in Manchester, so I was flown to that place. I was there for another three months studying television production and so on before coming back finally in May or so in 1964.

I seized the opportunity to enroll in the London School of

Journalism by correspondent.

When I came back I continued, and in 1965 I got my diploma in journalism. So I really enjoyed it. In fact, it was my best time.

Why did you leave the BCNN?

I left because I got some sort of frustration from a man who later became my in-law, Dahiru Modibo. Others were being promoted over and above me because I used to challenge him that he should not move with some kids. He was the head of sound broadcasting while the general manager was Abba Zoro. He was brought in as an administrative officer or senior admin officer in Sokoto Province, then stationed in Gusau.

Abba Zoro became a famous broadcaster, his training not withstanding; is that not surprising?

He was a very straightforward and real broadcaster because right from the time he was at the University College, Ibadan, he used to do part time broadcasting during holidays.

He was very honest and dedicated. Being under him, I would call him to the studio and talk to him. And after office hours I didn't move about but others socialised. At that time, anything could happen, and I told him.

Abba Zoro also did his own, but everything was in his house. I used to say that being a head of department you should not take yourself to be on the same level with everybody and mix with them socially. That was my understanding; and that was my issue with the boss (Dahiru Modibbo).

Later on, God being what he is, I got married to his niece and felt that in our tradition, it would not be a good idea to start arguing with your in-law in the open.

One morning, Martha Audu just came and asked if I could look for something else. I asked what was wrong as I was doing my job and she said they were not happy the way things were happening. In fact, she pressurized me and said the marketing board was looking for a public relations officer and I should apply. I told her that in northern Nigeria I knew they would have already made up their minds on who should be there.

She kept on pressurizing. In fact, she forced me to apply in the last day. Reluctantly, I wrote and she personally took it to whoever. Surprisingly, a week later I was invited for interview.

When I went for the interview, luckily, I met two gentlemen who were old boys of Government College, Keffi - the late Audu Abubakar and Tanko Kuta. Kuta was our head boy while Abubakar was number one in the register.

They looked at my certificate and so on. I think Abubakar asked: "If you said you went to Keffi, can you recognise anybody around who attended the school? I identified the head boy and the number one in the register. I also mentioned other things.

And the interview was over?

That was the end of it. When I left the job was already mine.

From what I read, I think this marked a period in your life when you moved from broadcasting to administration. You also moved from

Continued on page 11

And whenever there was any ceremony, such as installation of new emirs, or the governor touring, we used to follow in a Land Rover to cover the event; and as a result we were able to go round; in fact, virtually all over the northern region and that was a fantastic experience

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the marketing board to Livestock Department, Mining Corporation and back; why all these movements?

You see, with the marketing board, changes were coming up as there was reorganisation. I was posted to Gusau as area manager in administration because somebody, the late Alhaji Nahuce, was to be appointed from the North West but he said no, explaining that he was getting old. He wanted to retire in the civil service. So Yahaya Gusau said I should be posted there because he knew me. I was once a caretaker of one of his houses in Sardauna Crescent and I looked after the house properly. So he believed I would take a very good care of the area. That was how I was posted there.

I think I was in grade level 12 but I was sent to act on grade level 15. I was there for two years. I, therefore, said that since I was posted to administration, the best thing was to do something and go back to the university and study administration and get something to properly back me up.

Subsequently, I applied to the ABU and they called us for interview. It was a written and oral examination. A professor from Pittsburgh University, United States, looked at me and my curriculum vitae and said that with my experience I should go straight for master's, not a diploma. But there was no master's at that time, so he said I could go for a diploma.

When a letter was written to me to go for a diploma, I came back to Kaduna. Accidentally, I went to the late Yahaya Gusau to report that I was going back to school, and he asked: "On whose authority?" I said the general manager had approved it. So he picked the phone and called Usman. When Usman came, he pounced on him and I burst into tears and left the office. I said if that was the case I was no longer interested. That was how I changed.

So you changed to Livestock?

I changed and I came to Kaduna, where I met Lema Jibril. I think he was the director, development office. A few weeks later, they advertised and I applied. He called me for interview, and again, luck being on my side, the late Dr Bukar Shuaib, the permanent secretary, was the chairman of the board for the interview.

When he came, we all stood up and greeted him. I knew him as a friend to Yahaya Gusau, Ambassador Sani Kontagora and Mohammed King. He looked at me, kept quiet for some time and went in. Later on, I was called in. That was how I moved to Livestock.

Why did you go to Mining in Jos?

Again, I went to ABU from Livestock. After a year service, Alhaji Hamisu Kano allowed me to do advanced diploma in Public Administration. I wrote on dairy production in northern Nigeria as my project and gave him a copy. He took it home, studied it and the following morning, he called me.

A week later, the secretary called me and gave me a letter. I looked at it and saw that I was sent to Vom to take care of Madara Limited because the general manager there, Mr Davies, was

proceeding on leave. They said I should take over from him and look after the place for three months.

They said everything would be taken care of. So I proceeded to Vom, but it took me a whole year as they would not let me go come back until Plateau politics started. They did not want Hausa man.

When I came back to Kaduna, a month later, I was told that Rilwanu Lukman was looking for me. I spoke to him on phone and he said he wanted to see me in Zaria. He said they were looking for experienced people like me, so I should come over. But I said I was alright with what I was doing. He said they would advertise.

Reluctantly, I applied and went for interview. Holdson Wright was the permanent secretary and chairman of the Mining Corporation. For the first time I was seeing that type of interview.

They assembled about eight of us and would ask one question for all of us to answer. Everybody was to answer in his own way. The final question Mr Wright asked was what we thought about the legacy of the military as they were leaving. They all gave their answers, and when it came to my turn I said they would be remembered for transportation, road development, bridges and airports. He asked where those legacies were and I mentioned Lokoja, Katsina-Ala, Cross Rivers and Makurdi bridges, adding that they would open up transportation.

You also went to New Nigerian Newspapers; why?

I was the secretary, and later on, director of administration in the Kaduna State Broadcasting Corporation. After two years, I took a study leave and went back to the university for a master's degree in Public Administration. When I came back, I served for another year or two. And I discovered that I started marking

time, having I reached the limit.

Was it because of age?

Not age; the salary came to the bar and there was no other thing. The only thing was to be the general manager, and the position was political.

New Nigerian was looking for a personnel manager on a higher grade, I think grade level 15 or thereabouts, so I applied and was interviewed and taken.

So, all along I was moving on transfer of service from one organisation to another, not resignation. It was a continuous service.

You seem to have left the New Nigeria abruptly; was your stay there not a happy one?

I left after two years. Again, it was Mohammed Haruna; we were not in good terms, not that we were quarreling, but there was one thing I advised him on.

As the managing

director of the company?

Yes. I advised him to allow his subordinates to brief him on situations whenever he came to the office, especially before friends. I said it was not suitable for us to be talking about the organisation before outsiders, and that didn't go well with him.

So, one morning, I came to the office and he pounced on me, saying I was trying to look down on him. I was shocked. In fact, I removed my glasses and tears were coming out from my eyes because I never thought of doing anything of that nature.

Was that really a factor or you felt you were older and maybe didn't fit in?

I was much older and I didn't fit in and he didn't quite understand what administration meant.

How was your experience in the private sector? Did you make money there

better than the civil service?

The money was not much, but at least you would have peace of mind and respect. They would listen to you when you give advice.

At what point did you stop working?

That was in 1994. I went to Owerri for a meeting, I think it was the Institute of Personnel Management or something like that. We stayed at Mode Hotel, owned by the late vice president, Alex Ekwueme.

You stopped working since 1994; how do you survive?

I survive on goodwill. I also got my gratuity. And my children are all working.

How many wives and children do you have?

I had three, but I am now left with two, and we have been together. My senior wife, Modibo's niece, has been with me for 53 years while the second one, from Saulawa Katsina, also a niece to the late Isa Katsina, has been with me for 48 years.

How many children do you have?

They are many: 19 alive - 10 young men and 9 females.

What do you do with your time? Do you have hobbies?

I farmed for some time but discovered that it was for others; they cheat you. In fact, I will continue reading and writing. Right now, my old school, Government College, Keffi, has commissioned me to write its history. I did the first batch some 20 years ago, so I have been asked to bring it up-to-date. I am on it right now. So, I read at least three papers every day.

How do you keep fit? Are there particular things you don't eat?

No. I just walk around in the early morning after prayers. I remembered that during the early hours of my retirement, I used to play hockey. In fact, right from Form Two, I played up to Form Six.

We joined Kaduna Plakers with the late Sani Katsina and others. We were going round and playing hockey. Now, just walking keeps me fit.

Any dietary restrictions?

No. I don't have diabetes, I eat normally. I like tuwo and miyar kuka so much. I also take yoghurt from time to time. I take oranges and banana, However, I don't take sugary drinks.

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Alhaji Inuwa Jibrin

EVERYTHING WOMAN

After 2 PhDs, 3 MScs, I need more – Kwara female-don

Dr Khadijat Toyin Musah hails from Balogun Gambari in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State. The firstborn of her family has made many firsts in her career as a nurse. The multi talented scholar, whose passion for education knows no bound, told *Daily Trust on Sunday* that she was not satisfied with two doctorate and three masters' degrees, as well as other issues.

From Mumini AbdulKareem, Ilorin

How would you describe your years of growing up as a girl-child? I always become nostalgic whenever I remember those good old days when the upbringing of a child was a communal responsibility - every member of the community was involved. We were brought up to respect our elders, including those who were not biologically related to us. So a child would always avoid any act of indiscipline, having it in mind that he/she could be reprimanded by any adult in the community.

It is a pity that some of these societal values have been eroded and compromised in the name of civilisation and our society is the worst for it. I was brought up to appreciate the value of hard work. My father was a popular merchant dealing in buying and selling of cattle while my mother was a trader.

You are highly educated, how did you achieve that?

I was fortunate to have parents who were determined to give me the best in terms of education and also inculcated in me the moral value. I thank the Almighty Allah that I was able to make use of the opportunities. Typical of an average Ilorin child, I was enrolled in an Arabic school, where I learnt the rudiments of Arabic and Islamic education. I remain grateful to my parents for providing me with these great opportunities that have been of tremendous help to me in all facets of my life.

What informed your chosen career?

Alhamdulillah! I will say that nursing has been the profession of my choice even before I entered secondary school. I always love to assist people around me; and I don't like seeing people experiencing any form of pain or suffering. So it was natural when I had to choose a career/profession. I naturally went for nursing science, and, Alhamdulillah, it turned out to be a right choice for me. I feel highly fulfilled as an advanced nursing practitioner with specialisation in community health and geriatrics.

Did your spouse play any role in all of these?

He played a great role and is still playing. I met my husband when I was about to enroll in the School of Nursing, Oshogbo. At that time, I

was not ready for marriage because of my strong desire to acquire more education although my parents were already mounting pressure on me. My fear was whether I would still be able to continue my education after marriage. I am, however, grateful to Allah for giving me the right man who lived to his promise that he would give me all the necessary support and encouragement to get to the peak of my career. I owe my success to the tremendous support of my spouse, Alhaji Zakari Musah, a successful banker. He gave me all the support. I thank him for standing by his promise and lending a helping hand during house chores.

I can boldly say my husband is good!

Tell us more about your education?

I am a registered nurse, midwife and a public health officer with 28 years of clinical, administrative, teaching and research-based experiences. I am an alumnus of School of Midwifery, Ilorin (Now College of Midwifery) and School of Nursing, Osogbo (now College of Nursing). I hold a bachelor degree in Nursing Science from Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State and another B.Sc (ed) in Health Science from Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), both with second class (upper division). For my postgraduate degrees I have gotten two PhDs in Nursing Science and Public Health from the University of Nicaragua (UCN), South America and University of Ilorin, with three MScs in Nursing Science, Epidemiology and Tropical Diseases (UCN) and Education (OOU) respectively.

I am the chairman of the West African Postgraduate College of Nurses and Midwives, Oyo-Osun Branch. I worked briefly in the General Hospital, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, as a senior nursing sister before crossing to the academia.

How has your journey in the academia been?

I had the honour to serve as the head of the Department of Community Health; the pioneer Director, Centre for Paramedics and Emergency Services; Director, Centre for Wellness and Creative Arts Therapy in the Kwara State University, Malete Nigeria.

I have toured the 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) on account of either an external examiner, marker or as a guest lecturer in some higher institutions and organisations. I have also given four



Dr Khadijat Toyin Musah

keynote addresses in many higher institutions in Nigeria.

I have reviewed curriculums and developed contents for universities in Nigeria and abroad, including the Adeleke University, Ede; James Lind Institute, Singapore; African Institute of Public Health Professionals; West African Health Examiner Board. I have contributed immensely to the advancement of nursing and public health in Africa.

It was my presentation that got the Kwara State University (KWASU) Senate approval for the proposal on the commencement of nursing programme.

Presently, I have been appointed to the Faculty of Nursing Sciences, University of Abuja as the pioneer dean for the commencement of nursing programme. I have visited states in the USA, England, Germany and Australia on account of scholarly activities and adventure.

I had the privilege as a co-author of the book Titled "Fundamentals of Clinical Practice for Public Health Nursing Officers - a book that was adopted for the training of Public health nursing officers in Nigeria. By the grace of Almighty Allah, I have the singular opportunity for the presentation that got KWASU Senate approval for the proposal on the nursing program which is yet to

commence.

Currently, I have been appointed to the Department of Nursing Sciences, University of Abuja, as the pioneer Head of the department for the commencement of nursing programme.

Amid the challenge of girl-child education, especially in the North, how was it possible for you to bag two PhDs and three M.Sc in different fields?

Alhamdulillah! It has not been easy, but I will attribute my modest achievements to the Almighty Allah who, in his infinite mercies, made it possible for me to realise my life ambition. I am indebted to my parents, my father of blessed memory (May Allah be pleased with him) and my mother. Both of them went extra miles and made huge sacrifices to ensure that I am successful in my chosen career; then my spouse and pillar of support, who believed in my dreams. I consider myself fortunate to have him as my husband.

What was your biggest obstacle in accomplishing this feat and how did you surmount it?

Honestly, I cannot remember the obstacles because I put them behind me. All I remember now are the achievements. Obstacles will always be there, and they were

actually there. The roads to success are always filled with potholes. My desire to succeed made it happen, with the Almighty God on my side. If you dream it, you can achieve it! When you think right, act right and do away with unnecessary distractions you will surely get to your destination in due course.

How were you able to balance your studies with the home front, and now, work?

God gave me a loving husband who understood my dream. His support and encouragement made it easier. My mother-in-law of blessed memory was also available to nurse my children while I was pursuing further studies. It was a joint effort.

What has been your biggest motivation?

It is no other thing than the desire to make a difference, and the quest for knowledge.

Have you rested on your oars or you still have other achievements in view?

Have you ever heard the saying, "If you are not growing you are dying?" Without continuous personal and career growth, one will remain stagnant. So, we move. I am working on some other projects.

Any regret thus far, and what would you like to change in your educational path?

There is no regret of any kind and I have nothing to change in my educational trajectory. I chose nursing as a career, branched into public health nursing specialty and made my contributions. I am happy to have chosen to be a nurse. I have contributed to the advancement of both nursing and public health at national and international levels. I thank the Almighty Allah who made it easy.

Apart from academics, what other thing do you do?

I am a cycling enthusiast and Rotarian of repute. I am a member of the Board of Cycling Federation of Nigeria. I even sponsored a cycling programme for the entire 16 local government areas in Kwara State, which got the nod of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq and other stakeholders on the need to promote health and wellness.

By Allah's grace, I can describe myself as a balanced woman. I think right, act rightly and avoid stress. Although I am a multi-talented nurse and public health guru, I know my boundaries. My passion for caring led me to establish the Khadijat Toyin Musah (KTM) Foundation.



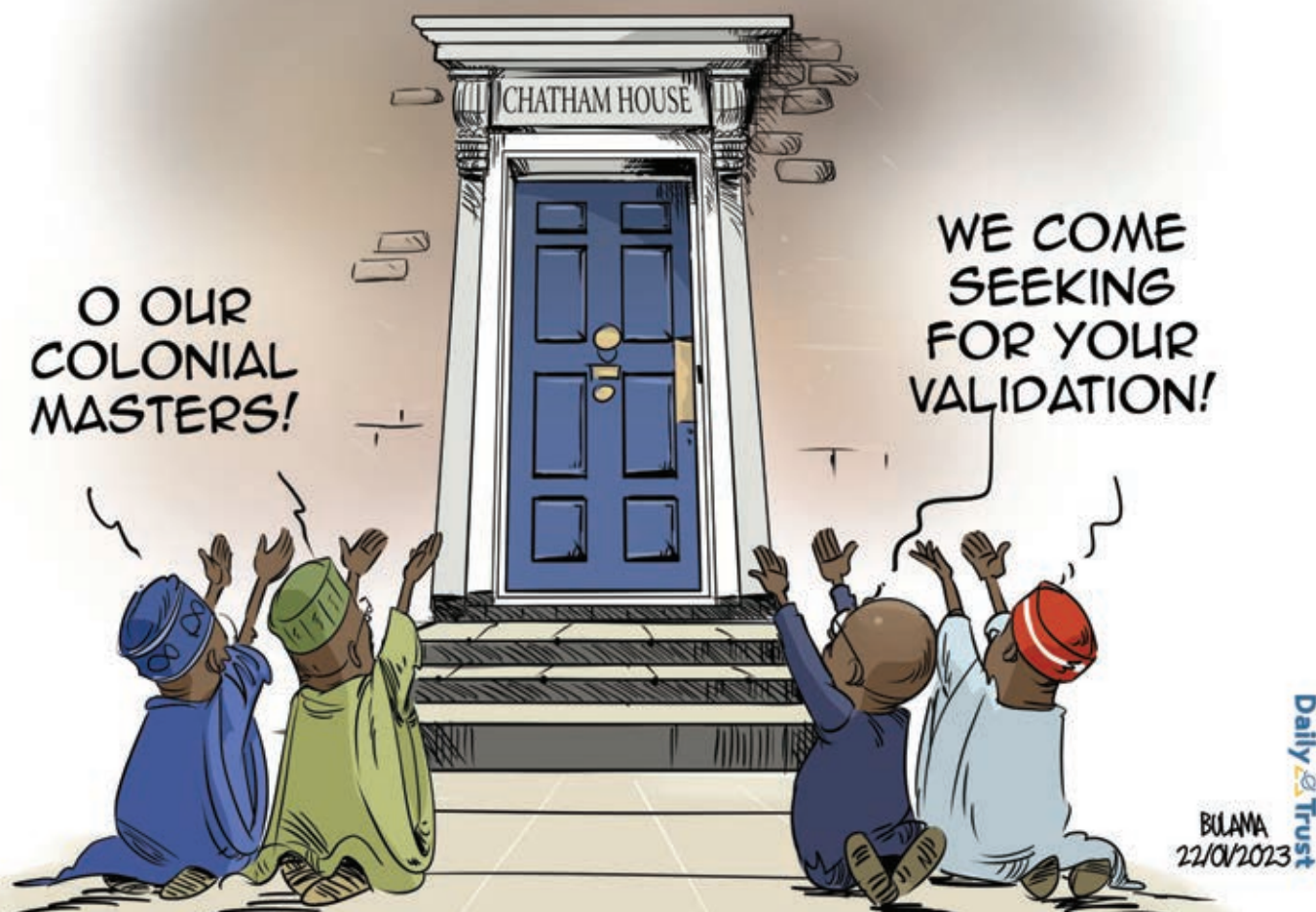
2023

Today we celebrate the Chinese New Year (Spring Festival). According to the Chinese calendar, this year is the Year of the Rabbit. In Chinese culture, rabbit symbolizes optimism, kindness and peace, and brings vigor and luck.

We thank all Nigerian friends for their strong support for the development of China-Nigeria relations and the local Chinese communities over the past year. Wish you good health, happiness and success in the Year of the Rabbit.

The Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Lagos

January 22, 2023



The editor welcomes brief letters on topical issues. Write an e-mail to sunday@dailytrust.com or sundaytrust@yahoo.com.

Shaping Nigeria's AI, robotics' future

As the year 2022 came to a close, the world was thrown into a frenzy after a US-based AI firm, OpenAI released a groundbreaking solution called "chatGPT" which could converse, reply to text messages sent by humans and answer almost any question as accurately as if it were human itself and all-knowing. This solution even proves to have the capacity to write news articles, public speeches, academic papers, and computer codes and can go as far as discussing matters relating to your local traditional recipes.

Today, unlike a decade ago, countries are now competing fiercely towards attaining AI supremacy.

This is not surprising as recent events have proven that AI, Robotics, Blockchain and Cybersecurity have a huge impact on national security, intelligence, healthcare and food security. With fast advances in

technology, there is no doubt that the next decade presents an opportunity for countries to redefine their future, and improve on the quality of life, healthcare and availability of jobs through the needed up-skilling of their workforce and re-modelling of their industries.

Deviating from an age-long Nigerian tradition of simply waiting to import and consume any latest technology in the world rather than contribute to its development, the nation is lucky to have some leaders that are keeping tabs on global developments and are guarding the coast keenly.

For example, in 2019, a young Nigerian, Olusola Ayoola after bagging his Ph.D. in the area of Nuclear Robotics and working extensively with UK's government decided to return home to establish Nigeria's first fully functional robotics and Artificial Intelligence Facility for training, research

and product development.

Since its establishment, the Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Nigeria (RAIN) has proven to be world-class and has even attracted international students and recognitions from the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations Ms Amina J. Mohammed, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), USA and Canada missions in Nigeria, as well as First Bank of Nigeria Plc., Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), the National Institution of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (NIEEE), the Office of the Surveyor General of the Federation, the Federal Ministry of Youths and Sports, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA).

Some of the groundbreaking research carried out at RAIN include unattended baggage detection, a mini weather station, AI-based Traffic Light System, a ground robot vehicle and unmanned VTOL aerial vehicle (IMORP), CETHED and RAINSC75/76.

The Chief Executive of RAIN, Dr Ayoola has confirmed that there are lofty plans in place including the construction of a Centre for Excellence in Drone and Unmanned Vehicles for Geospatial Intelligence, provision of training scholarships to the youths of Nigeria, particularly those from Ibarapa East/Ido Federal Constituency, and the improvement of AI Robotics product prototypes up to the required military standards.

Aminat Akinyemi writes from Ibadan, Oyo State

My sour experience of the army, others' operations in the South East

I write to the Chief of Defence Staff, the Chief of Army Staff and the Director of State Security Services to inform them of the shock I experienced during my visit to the South East during the last Christmas celebration, about the approach deployed by the Nigerian Army and other security agencies in a joint security operation in the South East.

I was in my home in Mbaise, which is not too distant from the Amahohuru Nguru, where the army arrested one of the kingpins of the ESN alleged to have been involved in the killing of several innocent persons in Imo State.

After the arrest of the suspect, the army proceeded to attack many innocent citizens in the area and set many houses on fire, thereby destroying the lives and livelihoods of many more.

I learned during my stay that the army has deployed the same scorched earth method against other communities in the South East where its men have had a confrontation with

criminal gangs, leading to the loss of innocent lives and destruction of property. The people suffer double jeopardy as the criminals attack them as saboteurs while the security agencies also attack them as sympathisers of terrorists.

While commending the efforts of the army in ridding the country of terrorism and insurgency, attacking non-combatant civilians and unarmed citizens in the name of collateral damage is not only against international conventions on conflicts, but it would dent the image of the army, deny them valuable intelligence and civilian support.

I plead with the army and other security agencies to treat the South East as part of Nigeria and treat the people with compassion as has been seen in various medical programmes in communities of the zone to accelerate the early resolution of the ongoing violent conflict.

Uche Edozie wrote from Dallas, Texas, USA

Tabula rasa: Blank Slate or Innatism?

First off, it is expected of every human to possess innate ability and knowledge.

However, some consider a child's mind to be empty, that is, it is without innate knowledge at birth. So, the mind is said to be without any knowledge or ideas; a child derives his/her mental lexicon from experience. It is important to note that a child's mind has ideas, knowledge, and perception because he/she does not only build his/her mental knowledge through experiences. Further, on the one hand, tabula rasa, a Latin word that compares the mind of a child to a blank slate, is a theory that claims individuals are born without built-in mental content, and therefore all knowledge comes from experience or perception.

Moving, the doctrine of innatism has it that human has in-built content. This doctrine opposes the "blank slate" theory. The philosophers, Plato and René Descartes posited that innate knowledge is born in every human, and this knowledge makes up their mental content. Also, they agreed that humans possess some knowledge through experiences they acquire from their personal and social life. But all humans have the inborn ability to do things because of their innate knowledge. A child gradually attempts to talk by babbling first.

The attempt by the child is simply triggered by his/her innate ability. Such a child also attempts to walk by crawling first. The ability to walk and crawl at an early stage is not learned by the child through experiences. Therefore, this doctrine supports and subscribes to the concept of nature rather than nurture.

In contrast, tabula rasa — the theory of blank slate — accentuates that the human mind is without innate knowledge. The human mind is built and developed through experiences. It is the antithesis of innatism. John Locke in his essay 'Human Understanding' stated that "tabula rasa" meant the mind of an individual was born 'blank'. It emphasized the fact that individuals have the freedom to author their lives because the rules on how to live are processed by their sensory experiences.

In sum, tabula rasa and innatism distinguish between the concepts of nature and nurture. Tabula rasa is important to shaping a child. Educators could adopt this theory to aid the learning process of children.

Gbewa Segbenu wrote in from the Department of English, Lagos State University, Ojo

DIALOGUE WITH MY COUNTRY

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Are big brother's eyes on the social media?

The minister of information and culture, Lai Mohammed, has served notice that big brother is looking over the shoulders of the social media community to bring some sanity into what they do and how they do it to protect the society. Not many people would disagree with him. The excesses of the social media are, to say the least, disturbing. They recklessly libel people and peddle outright falsehood against individuals, groups of persons and especially public officers, President Buhari not excepted.

Even more dangerous is the unbridled use of incendiary language to make Nigeria look like a country on the verge of catching fire. Mohammed is right to say that it would be irresponsible of the government to do nothing and let this go on until perhaps, the lit match is thrown into a pool of gas.

We saw something of this in the print media from the late eighties to about the end of civil rule in 1999 when the country was virtually overwhelmed by a new genre of print journalism in which untrained hands, desirous of exploiting the political crisis for financial gains, floated newspapers whose strongest points were arrant sensationalism and embellished falsehood. The stories they purported to report had nothing to do with the screaming banner headlines. They knew what they were doing because many newspaper readers then and now buy newspapers on the basis of their screaming headlines. We called them junk newspapers. But I am afraid they did not earn junk Naira; they earned the same Naira that became progressively scarce for the mainstream print media committed to good journalism in which the need to report facts trumped the murk of mock journalism.

But let us be fair to those junk newspapers that had their days of infamy at our collective expense. Nigerians are excitable people. They delight in newspaper stories that speak ill of people in power, no matter how incredible or outlandish the stories might be. In character, they welcomed the junk newspapers with open arms. And more and more of them joined the crowded market of gutter journalism.

At Newswatch magazine, we held a periodic meeting with our distributors and vendors. At one of such meetings, several of them suggested that our magazine must join the growing trend of junk journalism if we must survive in the increasing inclement media weather. They must have been right. But we stuck to our principles and the Naira failed to flow, and we paid the price.

That tells you that the junk newspapers did become a brand, patronised by the high and the low. When some of them threw the black paint in the faces of some of their well-heeled patrons, they knew what it meant to be a victim of media smear and falsehood. Government largely ignored them. It was journalism without borders at its most wretched. But in the end, their excesses and recklessness exerted a combined force to drive them out of business. Sanity returned to the print media again and had held – until now.

Until the internet and the mobile telephones democratised information dissemination. The social media have become the platforms of this new power in the hands of those who were once thought to be powerless. Armed with his mobile phone, a man becomes a reporter and editor, a dangerous one-man editorial squad. With this versatile tool, he writes, takes photographs

and circulates them. He does not pretend to be a journalist and therefore, does not feel bound by the rules of the game. His stories have one side and one side only. He does not need to be fair and balanced. His sole objective is to peddle whatever germinates in his manured mind and takes it to the social media platform. It is not for him to consider the consequences.

I do sympathise with Lai Mohammed. In trying to sanitise the social media, I am afraid he has set a herculean task for himself. I would like to caution that given the nature of the social media, he should proceed with caution lest he be driven by frustration to reach for the sledgehammer. And that would be a very costly mistake. He knows as much as anyone else that attempts to regulate the media under all forms of government draw the ire and the fire of the public.

Suspicion of attempts to gag the media usually takes on a life of its own. We are all sensitive about freedom of speech; the same freedom that made it possible for the junk newspapers to flourish when they did; the same freedom that makes the unregulated social media possible. Freedom of speech and of the press does not distinguish between foolish speech and wise speech; nor does it discriminate against bad and irresponsible journalism in favour of good and responsible journalism.

The social media have become a strong media brand. They have their social uses. That much we must admit. Touching them might feel like touching the Lord's anointed. We acknowledge their role, reach and power. They birthed the Arab spring in 2010. It was the first demonstration of the power of the social media using nothing more lethal than the computer and the mobile telephone. One man sitting before his computer screen in Egypt hatched and spread a revolution within and among Arab nations that changed for ever the architecture of their governance.

The social media exposed under-aged voters in Kano State in 2019. It was not possible for the public relations fact spinners in INEC to deny what the mobile phone cameras revealed. INEC was forced to admit that underage voters had always slipped through its net in various parts of the country.

But the social media are not a paragon of media responsibility. Their failings are becoming glaring. They too have succumbed to the manipulation of facts to satisfy economic, political and other exigencies. They increasingly elevate gossip into a fine art of information dissemination.

In its issue of November 4, 2017, the Economist magazine examined the role of the social media in a democracy. It sought some answers to its own apt question: Do social media threaten democracy? The magazine argued that social media amplify divisions in the society. That should be strengthened the minister's resolve to return the insane to the path of media sanity. It has not happened. Is big brother sleeping on duty or has he lost the battle for sanitising the social media? The social media are thriving and giving decent men and women hypertension. (This column was first published on November 2, 2019, titled Big brother's eyes on the social media). I have republished under the new title to draw attention to the increasingly ignoble role of the social media in the lead up to the general elections this year.

PERSPECTIVE

2023 and efforts at national security

By Zakari Usman

Most of the security challenges facing Nigeria, and indeed, the world today, are both asymmetric and trans-border in nature. They mostly involve non-state actors in different regions and sub-regions. Nigeria and its neighbours are, therefore, not immune to national security threats; hence the need for the Office of the National Security Adviser, whose responsibilities include developing and maintaining intelligence and information-sharing relationships with the international community, military, domestic and private sector partners to promote intelligence-related communications, standardise processes for collaboration and lead coordination on all issues concerning national security to double efforts.

Like other security advisers before him, Major-General Babagana Monguno, who was appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari on July 13, 2015, has faced a share of the challenges facing the country and how to solve them.

Normally, to tackle security challenges in a troubled country like Nigeria, there is usually a shift in policy and managerial directions to enhance the coordination of security and intelligence institutions and provide capacity, thereby mainstreaming new processes that support efforts against threats to national security.

Last year was particularly daunting for the Office of the Security Adviser as there was the need for a tremendous effort at deploying a multi-sectoral approach to deal with the security challenges facing the country. The year, however, started on a note of hope as the executive director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ghada Fathi Wali, commended Nigeria following the first-ever successful prosecution of piracy in Africa. The feat was achieved through a successful collaboration between Nigeria and the UNODC as evidenced by the Global Maritime Crime Programme and the Strategic Vision for Africa, launched in 2021. Interestingly, two key events led to the success – the promulgation of the Suppression of Piracy and other Maritime Offences (POMO) Act and the Falcon Eye.

Between January 31 and February 2, 2022, there were more efforts to tame the monster called insecurity in Nigeria as the National Security Adviser, along with his United Kingdom counterpart, Sir Stephen Lovegrove, hosted an inaugural dialogue in support of security and defence. The event featured defence staff talks and a cross-government forum on human rights. In a communiqué released after the three-day event by the two parties and jointly signed by Monguno and Lovegrove, Nigeria and the United Kingdom noted that the two countries enjoyed a deep and long-standing security and defence relationship.

As the 2023 general elections approach, there became an urgent need for peace; therefore, in partnership with the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), the Independent National Electoral Committee (INEC) was tasked to address all the logistics and operational challenges.

The success recorded during the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) area council and the off-cycle governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun states testify to the success of the efforts of the federal government, through the Office of the National Security Adviser to tackle the

challenges of insecurity in the country.

At a workshop on election security and management, organised by the Nigeria Police for its officers and men, it also became imperative to call for synergy, professionalism and patriotism among security agencies.

"A successfully policed and peaceful election circle is a fundamental variable in the quest by any nation to advance its democracy and deepen its system," the National Security Adviser had said. And he was right.

During a meeting of the Cybercrime Advisory Council in March, additional cyber security sensitisation for stakeholders was directed, while cyber security toolkits for MSMEs were launched. Expectedly, after five years of efforts by the federal government, Nigeria achieved a milestone in cyber security, becoming part of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime for enhanced international cooperation in July 2022.

To adequately fight insecurity in the country, President Buhari signed the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Bill (2022) into law in May. And this brought relief of sorts to a lot of Nigerians.

Further efforts at bringing peace to the country also led to participation in brainstorming sessions of the Africa Union Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in May 2022. There was a two-day working visit to the United Nations Office of Counterterrorism (UNOCT) at the invitation of the UN Under-Secretary-General (USG), Vladimir Voronkov at the United Nations headquarters in New York, all to achieve the desired results in our dear country. Notably, Voronkov; the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed; UNOCT Chief of Human Rights and Gender, Veronic Wright; UN Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Martha Pobe; UNOCT Deputy to the USG for Counter-Terrorism, Raffi Gregorian; Director of the Counter-Terrorism Centre, Jehangir Khan; the permanent representative of Nigeria to the UN, Tijjani Muhammed Bande and other officials attended the session.

There was also a high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the

Also, at the Accra Initiative Summit of Heads of State and Government in November 2022, the federal government called on civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, bilateral and multilateral development partners and other non-state actors to support their host governments in the fight against terrorism and transnational organised crimes. The summit took note of the will of the Nigerian government to designate representatives to the Multinational Joint Task Force in Tamale, Ghana.

Condemning various attacks on INEC facilities in the country, the NSA had said, "To those people who have gangsters working for them, I want to send a very clear warning, regardless of whichever political party, including the party of the president. As long as you decide to scuttle the electoral process, law enforcement agencies will equally be uninhibited in reacting to whatever action you have taken."

Further efforts at tackling the spate of insecurity in the country led to the inauguration of an 11-man special investigative panel on oil theft, which is also yielding positive results as many loopholes have been discovered.

As the country prepares for the 2023 general elections, it is hoped that these measures would bring the needed solution to the seemingly intractable insecurity in the land and usher citizens into a new lease of life.

Usman wrote from Maitama, Abuja

COMMENT & DEBATE

[PENPOINT]

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Chatham House parade: the ethnocentric dimension

For some time, Chatham House - the London based British public affairs advocacy think tank has been in the news, following the parade of Nigerian political figures who have serious stakes in the forthcoming electoral exercise, on its platform. Their mission has been to exploit the valued attention of its global audience. Appearing in no chronological order here have been Professor Mahmoud Yaqoub, the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as well as Bola Tinubu, Peter Obi and Rabiu Kwankwaso who are the respective presidential candidates of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Labour Party (LP) and the New Nigerian Peoples Party (NNPP). Incidentally, Abubakar Atiku of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) which is the main opposition political party has reportedly not indicated if and when he will be disposed to join the parade at Chatham House.

In some sense however, appearing at Chatham House seem to serve as one of the credentials for winning elections in Nigeria. Hence, ever since the parade commenced, the country's public space has been inundated with reactions which range across varied interpretations of the speeches by the respective political leaders.

London based Chatham House hosts the Royal Society of International Affairs (RSIA) and is named after a former British Prime Minister - William Pitt, the First Earl of Chatham who once lived there long before 1903, when the institute was established.

Since its establishment, the institute has been serving as a platform for facilitating robust debate and information exchange among designated stakeholders in British and global affairs. Its primary selling point is its independence from any formal control by the British Government as its funding comes primarily from subscriptions by its members comprising corporate bodies and individuals spread across the world and presently number over 3,000 individuals more than 250 well-appointed corporate bodies.

The organization claims to be an independent institute that provides thought leadership on key issues that 'defined the 20th century'. According to its claim, it also was involved in the drama of fostering independence of African countries by providing a platform for dialogue throughout the season of decolonization. However, a more insightful appraisal of its role in global and African affairs since 1903, betrays much of its contributions in sustaining the colonial mindset of the British establishment with respect to exploiting the African continent - firstly as colonies, and later as members of the Commonwealth of nations. However against the back drop of the global reach, to appear on its podium qualifies as a valued credential for any individual any time any day. In the same vein the politics of Nigeria also qualifies as a worthy engagement for Chatham House.

The foregoing notwithstanding, the recent parade draws a parallel with the ongoing ethnocentric scramble by the

ruling global powers to fixate the mind of Africa's leadership community, on the hoax that all good things for the continent must come from beyond its borders. Much as the Chatham House may be close to the Nigerian experience given the historical ties between Britain and this country, lessons from contemporary global geopolitics dictate that caution should be applied even with the Chatham type of parade.

For instance there is the disturbing annual parade of African Heads of State to China under the auspices of the China Africa Cooperation Forum in the course of which all that is heard afterwards are the speeches of the Chinese President. The Chinese who feel out-scored in the colonial partitioning of Africa during the Berlin Conference of 1885-86, are now coming with a sense of vengeance to completely take over the African continent. They have even set up their own police stations in some countries including Nigeria where they have one in Benin City. Presently they claim that the Chinese Police stations on African soil are for monitoring their dissident nationals abroad. But who can guarantee that someday

The foregoing notwithstanding, the recent parade draws a parallel with the ongoing ethnocentric scramble by the ruling global powers to fixate the mind of Africa's leadership community, on the hoax that all good things for the continent must come from beyond its borders

Nigerians will not bear the brunt of Chinese Police brutality. There is also the Africa France Summit which on the surface seems a tame collaborative venture but in looking deeper one sees signs of tendencies to recolonize Africa.

Going back to the profile of the RSIA, much as they offer a platform for independent, robust scrutiny of issues, such processes are not devoid of value judgment. While the globalisation of its network also guarantees the absence of parochial considerations and focus on the issues that matter, the guarantee of the ethnocentric interests of the British establishment cannot be ruled out.

Such a situation raises the question of whether any Nigerian institution can also rise to that level of integrity of attracting global acclaim as trust worthy in independence of enterprise. For clarification, Nigeria has a complement of institutions that ordinarily should have been counted as credible enough to provide the unbiased platforms for the kind of dialogue which our leaders are parading to Chatham House to engage in. However given the deep seated tendency of favouritism and nepotism in the country's political fabric, they suffer a credibility crisis following suspicions of such earlier mentioned ills, by their operators. Yet it is often overlooked that the foreign institutions we easily run to in order to have our voices heard are even more guilty of biases even as theirs are officially skewed in the interest of their nations.

This is where the sections of the Nigerian media establishment who are providing the platforms for Independent and all inclusive dialogue for politicians deserve commendation. Even if they may not boast of global prominence like Chatham House, they provide exclusively, the local Nigerian flavour which matters for the forthcoming polls. After all, the polls will not be held in London or anywhere else, but Nigeria.

That is why they - our local platforms matter more than Chatham House.

The portrayals of Kashim Shettima

By Sylvester Oseghale

A few days ago, Senator Dino Melaye, in one of his disturbing bursts of discourtesy attempted to make fun of the APC presidential candidate and his running mate. What was intended to be in defence of his boss, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, became a shameful exercise in bigotry that I believe even Atiku himself would find cringeworthy and embarrassing if he pauses to weigh the implication. The damage that video would cause the PDP ticket, for which Melaye is a spokesman, is something he ought to have weighed if he truly knows his job.

Asking Nigerians to reject the APC ticket, Melaye called Shettima "Osama Bin Laden," an unspeakably dangerous reference to his ethnic origin as a Kanuri man from Borno State, where Boko Haram broke out. The bigotry Melaye attempted to sell is the usual ethnic profiling that undermines unity in Nigeria, where an entire ethnic group is targeted and profiled because of the transgressions of certain individuals of the group, individuals who don't represent the group or their interests.

If Melaye were smart, he would have realized that based on his logic Atiku should also be called out as a Fulani bandit, being from an ethnic group that has been fiercely accused of the spates of killings and kidnappings across Nigeria. The Fulani have been at the receiving end of the very dangerous mindset demonstrated by Melaye, this resort to demonizing, vilifying and blackmailing the entire members of an ethnic group because of the criminal transgressions of renegade individuals or a group that identifies with the ethnic group.

Beyond the ethnic profiling, calling Shettima "Osama Bin Laden" is a classic case of the very Islamophobia that's trailed Muslims all over the world. Melaye's video fuels more than just ethnic profiling of the Kanuri, who are the worst victims of the atrocities of Boko Haram in Nigeria. They have paid with their lives, and have sacrificed too much for some shallow-thinking politician to feel it's acceptable to ridicule any of them as terrorists or terrorist sympathizers.

The Kanuri have been orphaned and widowed by Boko Haram, and so have their political elite been targeted for assassinations by the group. Their youths have also joined state-approved vigilante groups to keep Nigeria safe and to protect us from the menacing threats of Boko Haram. What Melaye attempted to fuel is painting these patriots too as criminals and complicit in the spread of the very terrorism that's ravaged them and their properties and habitats because of their ethnic origin.

Atiku may choose to overlook his spokesman's bigoted and Islamophobic rants, but he's as vulnerable as Shettima to Melaye's smear campaign. In a world where Muslims are struggling to undo the damage of the propaganda warfare that got every Muslim profiled as a practising or a potential terrorist, reckless communications like Melaye's must never be allowed to trend unchallenged. The implication is damning. It's beyond politics.

Anti-Muslim North propaganda has been an easy sale in various bigoted quarters in the country, and no rational man who's paid attention to Shettima's roles in the war against terror would call him stereotypical names as done by Melaye. He's been a frontline critic of Boko Haram and has never minced his words in asking the federal government to arm the

military properly to stand a better stance in the conflict.

The first time I paid keen attention to Shettima was during the Chibok girls' abduction saga, which the federal government attempted to deny or play down at first. As the Governor of Borno State, the jurisdiction of that crime against humanity, he was at the centre of this story and I watched as he fought to remind President Goodluck Jonathan to live up to his expectation as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. This harmless plea set in coordinated attacks and mischaracterizations from the PDP-led government.

Even before the tragedy in Chibok, Shettima was in the news for drawing attention to the plights of his people and crying out that the Nigerian troops stationed in the Northeast were under-equipped. Boko Haram militants had not only demonstrated their superior firepower in waging their war against Nigeria, but they also went as far as capturing vast territory of Nigeria as big as Belgium. Jonathan's response to Shettima's sympathy with the military was a threat to withdraw troops from the Northeast to teach Shettima a lesson, and the nation rushed to call him out and stand in solidarity with the then Borno State Governor.

But Shettima isn't new to coordinated smear campaigns. In 2017, while still the Governor of Borno State, his spokesman, Isa Gusau, had to release a statement to refute a 20-minute taped conversation, purported to be between Governor Shettima and Governor Kunle Amosun of Ogun State in which the voice mistakenly attributed to Shettima was heard insulting the Igbos and mocking their political essence.

Of course, the voice in the audio was evidently not Shettima's, and even though the

source of the provocative material, which has also been circulated by knowing but mischievous partisans in this election season, was unknown, Mr. Gusau alleged that "one particular presidential aspirant from the North has declared a war of mischief to destroy some persons including Governor Kashim Shettima."

That attempt to portray Shettima as either Osama, as done by Melaye, or as an Igbo-hating political leader would've flown if his track record isn't known. The same Shettima singled out an Igbo military officer, Major General Rogers Nicholas, the Commander of "Operation Lafiya Dole," whom he praised as an "Igbo man from Mbaise" as a pivotal force in decimating Boko Haram terrorism. And, at a town hall meeting in Maiduguri on February 7, 2018, he also shared that "some of our greatest recent feats in the conflict were done by non-northerners and non-Muslim officers in the military. Most of the soldiers that sacrificed their lives are not of the Kanuri ethnic group."

So, it's unfortunate to watch these glaring lies and historical revisionism being broadcast and printed to smear Shettima's image, especially by those who know his exact portrait. The Dino Melayes and the partisan and bigoted characters in the business of ethnic profiling and Islamophobia may think it's just politics, but the victims aren't just the target of their falsehoods. We are all victims of each lie and each attack on ethnic and religious identity that goes unchallenged. Politics is not madness. May God save Nigeria.

Sylvester Oseghale is a lecturer and public affairs analyst based in Abuja

TAMBARARI

Extra

CULINARY CORNER



Spicy Jambalaya rice

PHOTO: Internet

Compiled by Rosemary Etim Bassey

Jambalaya rice is a famous American dish influenced by West African and French cuisine. It's prepared with a combination of quality proteins like meat or fish and veggies and is quite similar to jollof rice. The veggies could be celery, onion, bell peppers, or sausage, and the meats could be chicken, sausage, prawns, or shrimp.

Ingredients

Cooking oil, chicken breast,

boneless, chicken sausage, prawn, plum tomatoes, medium-sized chilli peppers, bell peppers (red, yellow, green), celery, medium-sized onion, spring onions, garlic cloves, chicken stock, uncooked rice, creole or Cajun seasoning.

RecipeMix in some salt with the deveined prawns. In a pan, heat 2 tablespoons of oil and add the minced garlic. Add the salted prawns gently, then allow them to cook for 2-3 minutes on each side before taking them out of the pan.

Add the chicken and sausage, then toss frequently for 5 to 7

minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through and releasing juices and the sausage is just beginning to brown. Put aside after being transferred to a clean plate.

Pour the remaining oil into the pot, followed by the chopped onion. Add the ground tomato and pepper paste after frying for two minutes until transparent. Fry for three minutes.

Stir in the chicken stock, Creole or Cajun seasoning, and bay leaf (if using). Pour the washed rice into the pot and

distribute it evenly. Cook for about 20 to 25 minutes, or until the liquid in the pot is almost completely evaporated, with the lid on and the heat down to medium-low.

Add the cooked chicken, sausage, celery, bell peppers, and spring onions. Stir everything together, then add the prawns and top with additional celery.

Turn the burner down to the lowest setting, cover the pot, and wait five minutes before turning it off. Remove the bay leaf before serving.

HEALTHY LIVING

Proven health benefits of Kale

Kale is a wholesome food that is high in beta-carotene, vitamin C, and antioxidants. Additionally, it has minerals that can help with heart health, weight loss, eye health, and more. Kale is one of the most nutrient-dense leafy greens available, being rich in key minerals and antioxidants. Here are some science-backed health benefits of Kale:

High in nutrients: Kale comes in a wide variety. The shape of the leaves might be smooth or curly, and they can be either green or purple. A single cup, or 21 grams (g) of raw kale contains; Calories: 7, Carbs: 1 g, Fiber: 1 g, Vitamin K: 68% of the Daily Value (DV), Vitamin C: 22% of the DV, Manganese: 8% of the DV, Vitamin A: 6% of the DV, Riboflavin: 5% of the DV Calcium: 4% of the DV. Small amounts of folate, vitamin

B6, potassium, magnesium, and iron are also included in each serving. You may increase your intake of these essential vitamins and minerals as well as other crucial elements by including more kale in your diet.

Lowers cholesterol levels: There are numerous crucial roles for cholesterol in the body. When you consume a high-fat meal, the liver converts cholesterol into bile acids, which are then released into the digestive tract. Bile acids are reabsorbed into the bloodstream and used once more after all the fat has been absorbed and they have completed their job. Some components in kale can bind bile acids in the gastrointestinal tract and stop them from being reabsorbed. This lowers the body's overall cholesterol levels.

Contains anti-cancer



compounds: Cancer is defined by uncontrolled cell growth. However, kale has a ton of substances that are thought to have anti-cancer preventive properties. One of these is

sulforaphane, a compound that has been demonstrated to assist in preventing cancer from forming at the molecular level. Additionally, it contains indole-3-carbinol, another compound that is thought to aid in the prevention of cancer.

Source: www.healthline.com

Hello, there!

Welcome to another of possibilities. What is life without Hope? It's important that you hold on to hope as the universe hears your desire and might just push you in the right direction.

Wondering what amazing recipes we have for you this week? Head over to the culinary corner for a spicy jambalaya rice recipe to go alongside a soothing Orange, lemon, ginger juice.

Agbadas are originally women by men. However, women have adopted the fashion trend and it is here to stay. Our women's fashion page features a collection of female agbada styles.

For every corporate man, ties are an essential part of their style. Our men's fashion page shows how dapper a man of style looks when suited up with the perfect tie.

Ever wondered why with all the best skincare products and routine, your face is not as smooth and supple as you want it to be? It might be those stale makeup brushes you haven't washed in months. Our beauty sections list out all you need to know about cleaning your makeup brushes.

Until next stay safe and remain blessed.

Amina Alhassan
(Editor)

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Orange, lemon, ginger juice



This cool and refreshing orange juice mixture is the perfect drink to enjoy on a hot day.

Ingredients

Oranges, lemons, ginger, honey

Recipe

Squeeze the lemon and oranges.

Grate the ginger.

Pour everything into a blender and blend until smooth.

Fill glasses with orange juice and serve.

WOMEN'S FASHION

Agbada slay

Compiled by Rosemary Etim Bassey

Agbada is a traditional outfit usually worn by men from Yoruba land in South Western Nigeria. However, because of its unique design, it is now also worn by men from other tribes. Also, women have been able to adopt the style and making it more creative and feminine. Some women decide to wear it with trousers while others use the design to make bubus. However, this is a fashion trend to jump on as wearing a female agbada will always have you stand out in a crowd.



SOCIETY NEWS

Compiled by Rosemary Etim Bassey

Olori Sekinat Elegushi hosts 200 children for New Year party

The Quality and Selfless Empowerment Foundation, an initiative of Queen Sekinat Aramide Elegushi, organised a New Year's Eve party for approximately 200 children from Ikate Kingdom in Lagos State and its environs, as part of its activities for the New Year.



The annual New Year's eve party is one of her humanitarian programmes for community inhabitants, particularly the poor.

Elegushi urged the kids to be focused, disciplined, and free of all social vices in

order to make their parents and the nation proud.

"Also, as you resume school tomorrow, I urge you to study very hard so as to become great personalities in life, make your parents and the country proud," she said.

Olori Sekinat expressed her gratitude to the foundation's patron, her husband, as well as the other trustees for their assistance and for spending time with the kids.

Yewande Adekoya marks 40th birthday in grand style

On Friday, January 20, 2023, popular Nollywood actress Yewande Adekoya uploaded photographs to celebrate turning 40 in style. The Yoruba actress took to social media to express her gratitude to her creator.



Yewande Adekoya, whose marriage had some difficulties, appears to have moved past them in order to concentrate on her happiness.

Prior to her big day, the mother of two had been counting down and posting images.

The star captioned the amazing photographs and video saying: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME. Comfortable in my skin. Content with where I am at. Excited about where I am headed. Grateful for all

the little things and the BIG THINGS He has done for me. Running my race, in my lane. Comparing with no one but me.

Thank you, Lord, for sparing my life to see this moment. I am super Grateful.

Who am I Oh Lord that you are mindful of me. I give you all the Glory Baba. I am super grateful for everything.

A NEW DAWN. Lord I am super grateful for everything. May your will continually be done in my life."

Iyabo Ojo and Mercy Aigbe, among others, congratulated her in the comment section.

How Patience Ozokwor made me quit indecent dressing – Mercy Johnson

Actress and mother of four - Mercy Johnson, revealed how veteran actress Patience Ozokwor encouraged her years ago to cease indecent dressing.



During her conversation with the actor on this week's episode of her weekly cooking show, Mercy's Menu, the actress said: "Do you remember when you were younger, before you got married, when I told you that the photos you take today, your children

will see them tomorrow and immediately see the kind of lifestyle you lived."

Mercy Johnson confirmed the statement, saying: "Yes, you did. You told me Mercy dress properly, you will have kids and when they grow up, they will ask you, why are you looking this way? Yes, I remember, I'm lucky but I still learned the hard way really."

Tie Swag

Compiled by Rosemary Etim Bassey

It is customary to wear ties at some formal parties since they boost one's formality and professional appearance. It gives guys wearing conventional business suits the chance to dress with style, colour, and originality. In addition, it improves a man's appearance and makes him look sophisticated. If you want to spice up your corporate outfits, try buying a pair of ties.



ETIQUETTE

Table setting etiquette



Compiled by Rosemary Etim Bassey

Dinner time gatherings can be wonderful family affairs, and most people are accustomed to setting out knives and forks for their regular evening meal. But what about those occasions, especially in times like these, when we want to make dinner more of a celebration of being with our loved ones? Do you feel comfortable with table manners and rules? Do you understand the distinction between a dessert fork and a salad fork? Or which drink goes in which glass, and where should they be set on the table?

Here's a guide on setting a table, whether it's formal or informal.

Basic table setting

You might wish to learn how to set a table properly if you're preparing for a weekend breakfast or a regular dinner. For informal gatherings, the very minimum of tableware is required: a placemat, fork, knife, and spoon; a dinner plate; a water glass; and a napkin.

Set the placemat down on the desk.

In the centre of the placemat, place the meal dish.

To the left of the plate, place the napkin.

On the napkin, place the fork.

Place the knife with its blade facing in and closest to the plate to its right. Place the spoon next to the knife, to the right. (The plate, utensil bottoms, and cup should all be level.)

In between the plate and the utensils, just above where 1pm would appear on a clock, place the water glass.

Note: In a straightforward table setting, it is permissible to place the napkin on top of the plate, while some believe this can give the table a more formal atmosphere.

Casual table setting

The basic table arrangement and the casual table setting are essentially the same, with the exception of the addition of a soup bowl and a dinner plate in the latter. Only place the glassware, tableware, and flatware that you will be using on the table. All you need to set is a dinner fork if you aren't eating a salad course. There is no need for a red wine glass if you are merely serving white wine. Skip the soup bowl and spoon if there isn't a soup course.

Set the placemat down on the desk.

In the centre of the placemat, place the meal dish.

Overlay the dinner plate with the salad plate.

Place the salad plate on top of the soup bowl if you're starting with a soup course.

To the left of the charger, place a napkin.

Place the fork on the napkin to the left of the dish.

Place the spoon next to the knife that is closest to the plate on the right side of the plate.

The water glass should be placed directly above the knife.

Place the wine glass or another glass for a beverage to the right of and just above the water glass.



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How to clean your makeup brushes



If you apply makeup frequently, you've certainly noticed that after a few usage, your makeup brushes start to look a little grimy. Maintaining healthy skin and flawless makeup application will be made easier by regularly cleaning your makeup brushes. To keep your brushes in great condition, try washing them promptly after each use and performing a deep clean once a week.

Wipe off excess makeup with a clean cloth: The procedure of deep cleaning begins with this. Grab a paper towel or a clean hand towel and give your brush a thorough wipe down, handle and all, before beginning any deep cleaning. To get rid of all the extra makeup, try whirling your makeup brush onto some paper towels many times.

Run the bristles of the brushes under lukewarm water: Keep the bristles pointing downward while you rinse. This will lessen the chance of water running back and dissolving the glue holding the brushes together in the centre of the brush. To actually go into the middle of the brush, move and separate the bristles. Never use boiling water; just lukewarm water. Over time, particularly if you clean your brush frequently, hot water can harm the bristles.

Mix warm water and 1 tbsp of shampoo: You can use clarifying shampoo or baby shampoo. Add your preferred shampoo after adding some sink water to a bowl or small dish. Make sure there is enough water in your measurements—they don't need to be exact—to completely submerge your brush's bristles. Detergents or makeup removers are alternative options, but shampoos work just as well.

Add olive oil or coconut oil if your makeup is oil-based: Add 1 tbsp (15ml) of olive oil or coconut oil to your water and shampoo if you use a makeup or concealer that contains oil as a base. The oil will make it easier for the makeup to be broken down, resulting in a cleaner, fresher brush.

Swirl each brush in your mixture: It should only take a few seconds to complete this. As the makeup falls off your brush, you'll probably notice that the water is becoming hazy or soiled, which is a positive sign. Work up a lather with your brush in the palm of your hand if it's particularly dirty. The bristles will become more agitated as a result, which may result in a deeper clean.

Rinse the brush under warm water: To

thoroughly clean the bristles, keep stroking them. Rinse again until all of the soap or shampoo is gone, keeping the brush pointed downward to prevent water from running back into the handle. Your brush is good to go if the water flows flawlessly! You don't have to clean it once more. The following two procedures should

be repeated if the water doesn't run fully pure.

Squeeze out excess water: Gently squeeze the bristles with your palms or a fresh piece of paper towel until they are moist. Avoid wringing or rubbing the brushes because doing so could harm the bristles.

Lay your brushes out flat to

dry: To absorb any additional moisture, spread out a clean towel. To prevent the bristles from flattening out while drying, hang the brush's tip off the edge of a counter or table. To prevent water damage to the handle or the glue within, try to keep the brushes flat until they are completely dry.

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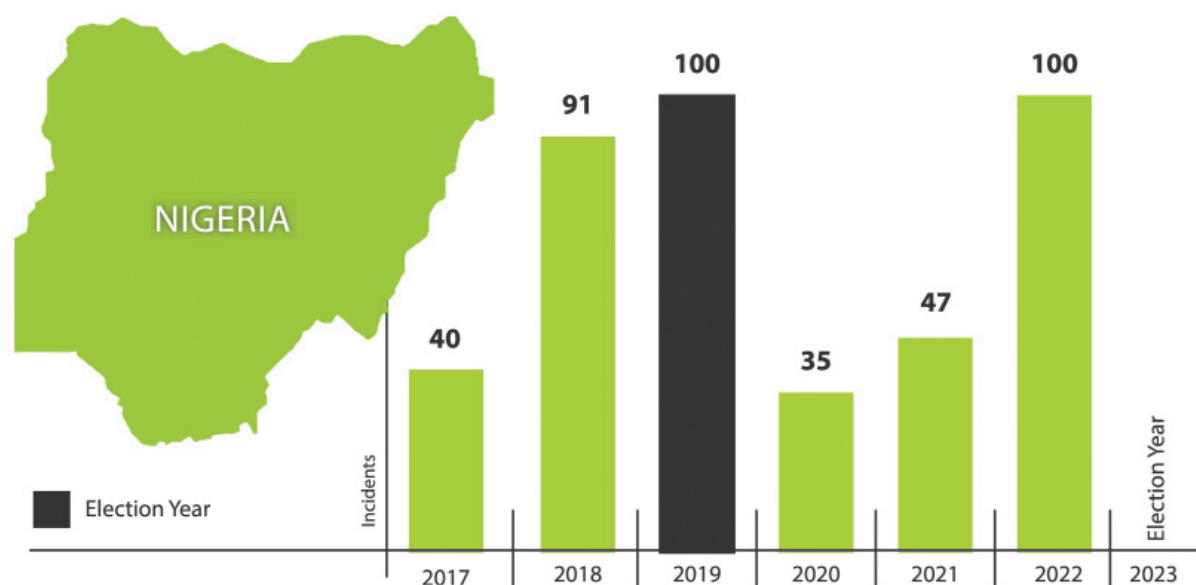
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SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Nigeria | Death by tax collector

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS



By Theophilus Abbah

At 2am on March 28th 2022, Olanrewaju Suraju, the head of the Human and Environmental Development Agency (HEDA), was asleep beside his wife in their bedroom in Abuja when they suddenly found themselves under attack by men who had broken into the house. The men, who made off with laptops, mobile phones, and cash, could have been mistaken for ordinary criminals were it not for the fact that they mysteriously told the couple that they were ‘acting on information and instruction.’

Nigerian burglars recently appear to have developed a taste for targeting social justice activists. Houses are robbed, but the thieves also make a point of severely beating their victims too. Suraju, an activist whose organisation is involved in a long-running battle with the Ministry of Justice over corruption involving one of Nigeria’s rich oil blocks, was a very vocal activist. The attack against him and his wife was so vicious that it left both of them in the hospital.

Plain-clothed thugs

One month before the attack on the Suraju family, plain-clothed thugs had attacked activists on their way to a court hearing. Again victims were severely beaten and their phones and money were stolen. A month before that, a similar group targeted Omoyele Sowore, initiator of the protest movement ‘RevolutionNow’ and publisher of the critical online news site Sahara Reporters. He was also on his way to a court case. Afterwards, Sowore said, a source in the State Security Services (SSS) had told him that the attack had been ordered by them. He also recalled that the same men had attacked him during a scuffle at an earlier protest, while SSS operatives and police had prevented his escape.

Deji Adeyanju, an associate of Sowore who was himself once beaten so badly by vigilantes during a peaceful protest that he was hospitalised in a life-threatening condition, also says that sources in the SSS confirmed that the agency is behind the attacks. ‘They alerted us before the attack on us that one ‘Ali from Kano’ was ‘leading a mob’ towards us. As they were beating us, I mentioned this name, and it seemed to shake them, as if their secret had been exposed. Intelligence operatives in Nigeria now, whenever they can’t come out

against anti-government elements openly, they hire thugs who go after them, both online and offline,’ says Adeyanju. ‘The leadership of this SSS goes after civil society instead of gathering intelligence on Boko Haram.’

‘We were alerted that one ‘Ali from Kano’ was leading a mob towards us’

Though Adeyanju formally reported the assault to the Inspector General of Police in December 2019, the police authorities have yet to make any arrests or publish an investigative report on the case. The same is true for the attack on Olanrewaju Suraju and his wife. ‘The police showed no interest at all,’ Suraju says, ‘even when we tracked one of my phones, which was activated by the assailants and gave details of its location. The same authorities who use thugs to attack activists are in firm control of even institutions where victims are supposed to seek redress.’ In a joint statement about the attack, five prominent Nigerian organisations active in the fields of human rights, transparency, anti-corruption and media stated their belief that the attack was aimed at stopping Suraju’s activism.

Oppressive tactics

The recent uptick in violence against activists began in 2020 when organised protests against corruption and human rights abuses were gaining momentum amid a global wave of protests caused in part by the effects of COVID-19 restrictions on people’s lives and livelihoods. At the time the state security forces responded to these protests with a wave of oppressive tactics which have continued to date (see box). On August 18th 2020, amid the growing unrest, the head of the Human Rights Writers Association (HURIWA) Emmanuel Onwubuiko was among the first to go underground. At the time he had been in the midst of an investigation into

‘We were alerted that one ‘Ali from Kano’ was leading a mob towards us’

corruption at the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, where officials appeared to have embezzled 500 million Naira (around US\$1.1 million) meant for children’s school lunches.

Onwubuiko made the difficult decision to relocate his family after being followed home by a Toyota Camry driven by ‘a fierce-looking person, with about two other armed occupants’ while driving in Abuja on the evening of August 18 2020. Meanwhile, his work eventually led to an investigation by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), a statutory agency that formally probes corruption, but so far the commission hasn’t published any report.

The young men proudly wore T-shirts with the name of their governor

Massive retaliation

On August 5th 2020, six Nigerian states found themselves gripped by #RevolutionNow protests that demanded better governance, proper infrastructural development, an end to extrajudicial killings, and the sacking of service chiefs over the poor security situation in the country. The police responded with teargas, injuring scores and arresting 91. Meanwhile, protests against the police’s notorious paramilitary Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) were also growing. The elite unit is accused of violence, extortion and extrajudicial killings, and tensions resulting from their enforcement of COVID restrictions finally erupted in a wave of resistance over the summer of 2020. On October 15th the security authority of Abuja declared a ban on all protests, citing COVID-19 safety fears. This failed to stem the popular anger, however, and five days later a protest at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos ended in tragedy as the Nigerian army was sent in, killing at least thirty citizens and injuring over fifty more.

Since then, popular protests have lost momentum, but targeted attacks on individual activists continue. The latest among these is Victoria Chintex, local head of the Labour Party’s women’s wing in Kaura, Kaduna State. She was a leading official in the campaign of presidential candidate and Buhari challenger Peter Obi, who is amassing increasing support among anti-corruption activists due to his relatively clean record as a former governor of Anambra State and his published manifesto for improved governance, a pragmatic plan. Chintex was shot and killed by gunmen on 28 November in an apparent assassination.

The young men proudly wore T-shirts with the name of their governor

Local authorities’ tolerance of criminal behaviour is often more directly visible away further from the capital, in Nigeria’s 36 federal states. Against a backdrop of soaring youth unemployment, officials are turning a blind eye to the activities of gangs of underemployed young men, so long as those gangs also act in their interest when called upon. Groups of unemployed young men often operate as ‘supporters’ or ‘security guards’ for governors or senators, sometimes even wearing T-shirts that proudly display the names of their benefactors. On April 5th 2021, two protesters, Larry Emmanuel and Victor Udoka, were caught putting up posters calling on President Buhari to resign in Lokoja, the

Nigeria | Death by tax collector

Continued from page 17

capital of Kogi State. A gang of 'supporters' descended on the two, beating and flogging them before handing them over to the police. Rather than charge the youths with assault for attacking citizens engaged in a widely-practised form of political speech, the authorities instead took the side of the perpetrators. The two activists were charged with disturbing the peace and jailed for 78 days before being released on bail. They were eventually acquitted more than a year later.

Armed tax collectors

This tolerance of expedient criminality has also given rise to the phenomenon of freelance tax collectors, groups of youth who are licensed to collect 'taxes' from citizens. Often armed, they frequently target farmers or set up roadblocks to extort the drivers of trucks transporting cash crops, wood and smuggled goods across state boundaries. Such groups are allowed to keep the lion's share of the money they collect, in exchange for their loyalty and availability in times of need. This debt usually comes due during election season, with tragic results: it was a group of tax collectors, for example, who burned Salome Achefu Abu alive in her house on November 18th 2019. Salome Abu was Woman Leader of the PDP in Kogi State and an opponent of the incumbent. The killers made no secret of being 'on assignment' for Yahaya Bello and Edward Onoja of the All Progressives Congress (APC), the state's governor and deputy governor respectively. Other houses in the area were also burned down in the same attack.

In his police statement, Ochoi Edicha, a group member who has since been convicted of arson and murder, said that they were sent by the ruling APC 'to defeat the opposition' PDP in that election. 'Atta Akpa Ugbedu [a supposed leader of the APC] from Ejule [a major town in Ofu Local Government Area] ordered that the property of any person with affiliation to Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) should be destroyed', his statement said. It added that another APC party stalwart, identified as Barry from Itoke, directed that 'we should continue destroying PDP members' properties (and) continue burning houses unabated. They claimed that they are the people in control of the Government and nothing [in terms of punishment] will happen...'. Edicha described his group as being involved in 'produce', a reference to their tax collections which in this case were levied from farmers.

'Political thugs were observed moving around freely'

When asked to comment on the accusations against his boss, Governor Yahaya Bello's spokesman Kingsley Fanwo denied that Bello had played any role in the murder, instead portraying the incident as part of broader violence between political opponents. Meanwhile, Achefu Abu's widower, Simeon Babani Seidu Abuh, also claims his wife was targeted. 'She had already been beaten up while watching the voting process at her polling unit.' After receiving hospital treatment for her injuries Achefu Abu decided to stay home to rest, but just the next day the couple's home was set ablaze.

A report by election observers in Kogi State would later call for the annulment of the polls due to the unprecedented level of violence around the election, during which, it said, 'political thugs were observed moving around freely in the company of Police and DSS operatives across many local government areas'. Its report noted that the secretariat of the opposition Social Democratic Party, which had been located only a few metres from



Olanrewaju Suraju, chairman of the Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA)

PHOTO: Tribune Online



Dantala, 19, sits beneath a bridge at Mararaba bus stop in Abuja. Everyday he waits beneath the bridge so that he can help passengers to get on and off the busses. On a good day he'll earn 1,500 naira, but on less favourable days he might only bring home 400 naira

PHOTOS: Dawali David



Commuters in Abuja pass a wall covered by election posters

the State's police command headquarters in the capital, Lokoja, was also burned down. The elections were not overturned, however. The results stood and Yahaya Bello remains governor.

A constant threat

Like opponents of the ruling party, journalists are under constant threat in Nigeria's states. In 2022 alone, the Press Attacks database reported a string of audacious attacks. In one attack, thugs loyal to a high-ranking member of the Ebonyi State House of Assembly beat up the local representative of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Nnamdi Akpa. In other attacks in May and June, journalists attending opposition campaign rallies in Osun and Oyo states were badly assaulted. In June Haruna Mohammed and Idris Kamal found themselves arrested and arraigned before a magistrate court for publishing a

story that angered a member of the Bauchi State House of Assembly. In October a gang loyal to a local politician in Zamfara State threatened and assaulted a leading member of the local Nigerian Union of Journalists, Ibrahim Musa Maizare, after he asked them to leave the building where the NUJ's office was housed. According to Maizare, the men shouted that they would not leave the place because it was given to them by a politician and that as long as the politician continue to live they would not vacate the place. Maizare also said that while the police had quickly arrived at the scene, they did nothing and quickly left.

The police did nothing and quickly left

Nationwide, meanwhile, the use of legal charges to silence journalists is also on the rise, with more traditional charges of supporting terrorism, incitement and defamation falling out of favour, replaced by the use of a new law that criminalises cyberstalking. While the law is nominally meant to target fraud and identity theft, lawyers quickly realised that it had much broader oppressive potential. Kaduna State-based reporter Luka Binniyat, for example,

'Political thugs were observed moving around freely'



The remains of the home of Salome Abuh, a leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) woman leader, after she was killed in a targeted arson attack

fell foul of the law in November 2021 after a report he filed for the local Catholic News Agency accused the state government of failing to protect farming villagers against violent bandits. (The same accusation has been published in many reports covering rural violence in Nigeria, including by ZAM). The month before, two journalists in Kwara State found themselves charged with criminal conspiracy, defamation, inciting disturbance, injurious falsehood, and cyberstalking after they accused the state government of misuse of public funds while chatting in a Whatsapp group.

A 'last chance'

Olanrewaju Suraju of HEDA feels that Nigeria's upcoming 2023 elections might be the last chance for a new government to 'recognise that anti-corruption and human rights activists are partners in the development of Nigeria'. 'There will be little hope for the future otherwise', he said. 'Many activists, out of frustration, are (already) leaving Nigeria for developed countries.' He added that the international community should do more in terms of 'ex-communicating those with poor human rights records' from 'the comity of nations'. 'It's really so bad.' Meanwhile, also in the run up to the upcoming elections, the department supervising the secret services, the DSS, has warned state politicians to cease working with criminal gangs.

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AGRIC BUSINESS

Why it has been difficult to revive groundnut pyramids

From Ibrahim Musa Giginyu, Kano

It is on record that for decades, Kano State has held a high place as home to agricultural produce, especially groundnuts, hides and skin, to the extent that the state gradually became synonymous with the famous groundnut pyramids that served as state and national symbol.

Some decades ago, the groundnuts produced in the state and neighbouring villages were gathered in one place to form pyramid-like structures made from groundnut sacks for export to other countries.

It was also gathered that in those years, groundnut production was a strong pillar in the region and the country's economic progress. It was one of the key sources of income to the colony and the colonial masters during the colonial era.

According to a 77-year-old groundnut merchant, Malam ShehuKulkul, history has shown that groundnut wasn't a popularly grown agricultural commodity in the region until 1912 when most farmers were encouraged by high economic



■ A truck about to move groundnuts out of Dawanau grain market in Kano

returns from the commodity as cash crop. The rush to mop up the produce from the farmers made the trade well organised.

The pyramids were said to have been invented by a famous businessman in the region, Alhassan Dantata. He was one of the most successful businessmen

supplying groundnut and other agricultural commodities to the Royal Niger Company (RNC). It was gathered that the pyramids were created as a form of storage methodology, where bags of groundnut were stored in the shape of a pyramid before they were taken by train to Lagos and

later shipped out of the country.

In those days, it was an attraction to see huge piles of groundnut sacks that grew higher than most of the buildings, which stood as a symbol of northern Nigeria's abundance of blessings in agricultural commodities.

Sadly, groundnut pyramids

have become history to be reminisced upon as they disappeared decades ago. The question remains: Is it possible to revive the pyramids in Kano?

In response to this question, the Kano state chairman of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) Alhaji Abdulsheed Magaji Rimin Gado, said that with the right policy and political will, the pyramids can be restored as farmers have been trying to improve groundnut production over the years.

"The AFAN has been pushing for the inclusion of groundnut in the ongoing Anchor Borrowers Programme for years now but to no avail. Indicators have shown that groundnut production has dropped because both farmers and traders have shifted to other agricultural products, such as rice. It is also clear that if groundnut has been given half of the attention rice is presently having, the pyramids would have returned," he said.

He further said that various research institutes had come onboard, and they have done their best in

Continued on page 26

MARKET WATCH

Compiled by: Hussein Yahaya, Vincent A. Yusuf, Hope Abah, Ibrahim Musa Giginyu & Risikat Ramoni

DAWANAU GRAIN MARKET, KANO

Crop	Per/KG	Price (N)
Grains		
Maize	100kg	22,000
Beans	100kg	41,000
Sorghum	100kg	22,000
Millet	100kg	23,500
Wheat	100kg	44,000
Rice	100kg	60,000
Rice (Paddy)	100kg	25,500
Tomato	Big basket	7,500

DANDUME GRAIN MARKET, KATSINA

Crop	Per/KG	Price (N)
Grains		
Maize	100kg	21,500
Beans	100kg	40,000
Sorghum	100kg	21,000
Millet	100kg	24,000
Wheat	100kg	46,500
Rice	100kg	62,000
Rice (Paddy)	100kg	24,500
Tomato	Big basket	8,000

KUMO GRAIN MARKET, GOMBE STATE

Crop	Per/KG	Price (N)
Grains		
Maize	100kg	21,000
Beans	100kg	40,000
Sorghum	100kg	22,000
Millet	100kg	24,000
Wheat	100kg	45,000
Rice	100kg	60,000
Rice (Paddy)	100kg	23,500
Tomato	Big basket	8,500

MUTUMBIYU GRAIN MARKET, TARABA

Crop	Per/KG	Price (N)
Grains		
Maize	100kg	19,000
Rice (locally)	100kg	54,000
Rice (Paddy)	100kg	21,000
Beans (white)	100kg	43,000
Cassava (dried)	100kg	11,000
Soya beans	100kg	33,000
Sesame	100kg	76,000

DOMA MARKET, NASARAWA STATE

Crop	Per/KG	Price (N)
Grains		
Maize	100kg	25,000
Sorghum	100kg	23,000
Rice (Paddy)	100kg	27,000
Beans	100kg	46,000
Soybeans	100kg	36,000
Millet	100kg	24,000
Cassava (dried)	100kg	13,000
Sesame	100kg	95,000

UGBA MARKET, LOGO LGA, BENUE STATE

Crop	Per/KG	Price (N)
Grains		
Rice (local)	50kg	31,000
Maize	(29L bag)	42,000
Millet	100kg	31,500
big Beans	100kg	52,000
small Beans	100kg	48,000
Guinea corn	100kg	32,000
Sesame	100kg	66,000
Soybean	100kg	35,000
Bambara	100kg	53,000
Tomatoes	Big basket	_____

ATTENTION READERS: In some markets, prices of products are relative to the size of the bags. some bags(29L and 30L) weigh far more than 100kg. The case in question are markets in Nasarawa and Benue states.



Multiple taxes, insecurity chase poultry farmers out of business



■ A poultry farm

From Peter Moses, Abeokuta

The vice president of the Egba Economic Summit (EES), Yinka Chris Coker, has said that poultry farms are closing down in droves in Ogun State, most especially in Egbaland in Ogun Central.

Coker blamed the development on multiple

taxation and insecurity, warning that food insecurity maybe staring residents in the eyes if the situation is not addressed.

He said this while speaking with newsmen in Abeokuta, shortly after this year's Annual General Meeting of the EES, with the theme "The future is now."

Coker, who was flanked by the EES president, Adeshina

Luwoye, chairman of the Board of Directors, Abiodun Karunwi and Dr Gbenga Adeoye, particularly asked the government to help in reducing repeated taxes and levies to allow farmers and operators of small and medium scale businesses operate efficiently.

He said, "Most of the poultry farms in Ogun State, especially in

Egba land now except major ones, are closing down because it is pretty costly to feed their animals.

"When you want to test that, go from Abeokuta to Ibadan old road where there are a lot of poultry farms that have closed down. The major reasons are insecurity and cost of running the business. The third one is the multiple taxation and ease of doing business within Ogun State.

"So, we will implore the government to help us in reducing repeated taxes and levies. We also like the government to improve on security so that people can go back. We don't want to get into food crisis because if this is not improved upon, the food crisis is looking at us in the face. Production of animals now is pretty expensive. You can check how much they are selling eggs, talking about N80 for one piece. You even get farms for you to produce the eggs.

"This is one of the things we focus on in the EES, trying to be an advocate of people to the government for the government to know what's going on and see ways to improve on them."

Outspan renews MoU with Kano dairy farmers

By Vincent A. Yusuf

Outspan Nigeria Limited, a subsidiary of Olam Food Ingredients, has signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Kano Dairy and Livestock Husbandry Cooperative Union (KADALCU) in Kano.

The renewed MoU is targeted at continuing the partnership to develop the local dairy sector. Outspan Nigeria has been partnering with KADALCU since 2020 to execute its value chain development efforts.

Through the partnership, the organisation has been able to establish four milk collection centres equipped with adequate cooling systems that are powered by off-grid equipment close to the smallholder dairy farmers in Kano State.

The MoU also allows the organisation to provide feed, carry out artificial insemination and vaccination exercises to improve the health of cows and their productivity level.

Speaking on the significance of the renewed MoU, Praveen Paulsamy, the vice president of ofi Dairy in Nigeria, said, "We are glad to have come this far in our local dairy value chain development journey.

"The Kano Dairy Union has proven to be an invaluable partner in this journey. It is only fitting to extend our partnership actions to keep scaling the development of the sector in line with the federal government's agriculture development and food security aspirations."

He explained that the renewed MoU would help ofi channel sustain investment in the dairy sector and move to the next phase of its multi-year sectoral development plan to address the challenges around improving milk production in the country.

"The renewed focus, in addition to our existing value chain development initiatives, under the auspices of the 'Milk Mission,' encapsulate our ambition to help raise the productivity level in the dairy sector while engendering a performance scale that has the potential to push the sector towards fulfilling its economic contributory potential.

All our BIP initiatives seek to address protracted issues, such as low productivity level, poor cattle health, the dearth of wider cold chain services, inefficient logistics systems and low exposure to modern agronomic practices, which are stifling growth in the dairy sector," Praveen added.

Responding to Outspan's actions, Alhaji Usman Abdullahi Usman, the chairman of Kano Dairy said, "Kano State can produce 30,000 litres of milk per day. But previously, the infrastructure and logistics necessary to collect and preserve the milk for proper off-taking by industrial users were not available.

Absence of soil classification undermines agric production — Don

By Abubakar Akote, Minna

A professor of Soil Science and Provost of the Niger College of Education, Minna, Professor Muhammad Yakubu, has said that Nigeria lacks a national soil classification system to support transfer of technology from one farmer to another.

He stated this while delivering the 18th Inaugural Lecture of the Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State, tagged, "Pedology and the Nigerian Farmer: The Nexus."

While calling on the federal government to set up a team of soil scientists through the Nigeria Institute of Soil Science and Soil Science Society of Nigeria

to come up with a classification system relevant to Nigeria's needs, the don said lack of adequate soil scientists to undertake surveys on adaptability of soils to various crops and guide farmers on techniques to adopt while planting crops to achieve maximum yield was also undermining agricultural activities in the country.

"Sustainable soil management is the lifeline of agriculture and pedological research in the foundation. There is dearth of soil information in Nigeria, coupled with lack of detailed soil survey data to support agricultural development.

"The training of young scientists in the area of soil science is important. Of all the disciplines

in agriculture, soil science is the least subscribed by students. The expansion of new agricultural lands, environmental studies and interpretations of land for various uses requires the expertise of a pedologist."

The don emphasised the need for increased pedological research in Nigeria for the benefit of farmers, noting that it would help in transforming the agricultural sector and improve economic growth.

Professor Yakubu also recommended that the use of soil in the country should be guided by laws and regulations to ensure sustainable use and proper land management.

He said a well conducted

detailed soil survey would help farmers in introducing innovations in resource management system, lamenting that despite its vastness in agricultural land, Niger State has no soil map.

Earlier, the vice chancellor of the institution, Professor Abu Kasim Adamu, said the lecture was relevant, saying that farmers in the state needed to be rightly informed on current issues on soil and soil science as they get prepared for the next planting season.

He called on youths to take up farming as an occupation and make themselves active employers of labour rather than being political thugs or social miscreants.

Why it has been difficult to revive groundnut pyramids

Continued from page 25

the development of different groundnut seeds.

"The International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Institute for Agricultural research (IAR), Samaru, Zaria, have done, and are still doing their best in ensuring that a sustainable solution to groundnut production in Nigeria is achieved," he said.

A visit to the groundnut section of the Dawanau International Grain Market revealed sketchy business

activities going on. And according to a groundnut merchant, Malam Bashir Dawanau, groundnut business has been down recently due to issues related to the existence of modern groundnut processing companies that directly obtain the crop from farmers.

He further revealed that the presence of other alternatives to groundnut, such as cotton seeds and soybeans could also be contributed to the dwindling groundnut business. He also said that groundnut production had reduced as states like Kano, Katsina and Jigawa no longer

produced it in bulk.

"These bags of groundnut you are seeing are from Taraba, Adamawa and Maiduguri because Kano, Katsina and Jigawa no longer produce groundnut in bulk, and as such, I personally believe that the pyramids have gone forever. However, with sustainable and effective agricultural development policy towards enhanced groundnut production, the pyramids may be restored," Dawanau said.

Similarly, an agricultural extension worker in the Kano State Ministry of Agriculture,

Malam Lawal Basheer Ilyasu, said if all groundnut collection in the state would be centred in one place, the pyramids could be realistic.

He said the emergence of mega groundnut mills, small and medium scale groundnut processing companies had contributed to the demise of groundnut pyramids as a bag is now over N76, 000.

He explained that the increase in demand by processing companies made production look inadequate, but in reality, the farmers are doing well.

Current yam prices far below cost of production, farmers lament

Senegal to host Africa summit on food production

...as TAAT targets 100m tons

By Vincent A. Yusuf

African leaders along with development partners will meet in Senegal to lay out strategies for unlocking Africa's food-production potential.

Senegal's President Macky Sall, the African Union's Chairperson, will host the three-day Dakar II Food Summit beginning on Wednesday 25th, with the African Development Bank Group as a co-host.

A press statement by APO Group on behalf of African Development Bank Group (AfDB) said that the summit is a follow-up to the inaugural meeting in 2015, when the Feed Africa Strategy for Agricultural Transformation (2016-2025) in Africa was suggested.

The Summit's agenda, Feed Africa: Food Sovereignty and Resilience, focuses on improving Africa's food nutrition and security, harnessing the continent's vast agricultural resources, increasing international trade, expanding market share, and increasing production and processing value addition.

The African Development Bank Group President Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina stated that the Dakar II Summit will mobilize government commitment, development partner and private sector investment, define much needed policies, and strategically drive activities to deliver at scale, adding that the gathering will be a watershed moment for the continent's food sovereignty and resilience.

Heads of state and government will meet during the summit to create revolutionary, nation-specific food and agriculture delivery compacts. During sessions and throughout the summit, the corporate sector and development partners will also play major roles. African nations are also expected to make concrete political commitments to put in place measures intended to end the continent's extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

The event will highlight initiatives that are already helping Africa achieve food security and resilience. This includes the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) platform of the African Development Bank, which is supplying 11 million African farmers in 21 countries with heat-tolerant wheat, drought-tolerant maize, and high-yield rice seeds.

Dr. Martin Fregene, the African Development Bank's Director for Agriculture and Agro-Industry, claims that TAAT would increase food production by 100 million metric tonnes, enough to feed 200 million people.

He said scaling up agricultural technology initiatives like TAAT achieves more than only increasing agricultural productivity, adding that it boosts wealth, generates employment, and facilitates regional and global trade in the African markets.



Another yam market in one of the producing LGAs in Niger State



Yam being displayed at Kuta Yam Market, Shiroro LG, Niger State

By Abubakar Akote, Minna

Yam farmers in Niger State have lamented the continuous fall in the price of yam due to the unending abduction of traders who come from Lagos and other parts of the country to buy the commodity.

Farmers told our correspondent in Kuta, the Headquarters of Shiroro Local Government and Mutun-Daya, one of the major yam markets in Munya Local Government Area, that the current price was not commensurate with the prices they bought inputs such as fertilizer and chemicals during the planting season.

According to them, insecurity is the major cause of the fall in the price of yams as traders who normally come from Lagos and other parts of the country have stopped due to persistent abduction by bandits. Traders and truck drivers said their means of livelihood was also affected by the fall and low sales.

Farmers keep the commodity in the markets for days before getting buyers while some of them said they have resorted to taking the commodity to their customers in Lagos and other parts of the country. They called for a more severe

onslaught on bandits to free the routes to their yam markets, especially those in Shiroro and Munya local government areas to enable buyers access the market.

They also decried the rising cost of fuel, as well as the deplorable condition of roads to easily transport their farm produce to the market.

Ibrahim Tanko, one of the yam farmers in Shiroro, told our correspondent that, "Honestly speaking, the price of yam has continued to fall seriously. The quantity of yam that cost N110, 000 before is now N55, 000 and this happens each market day. Buyers have run away because of kidnappings. The major challenge we face now is that we bought inputs at a higher cost, we bought fertilizer at N30, 000 per bag. We don't know what to do to recover what we spent on the farm because we are losing with the current market price. It is farmers that take yams to meet buyers now instead of buyers coming to meet farmers in the market. Some farmers now take yam to Lagos and other parts of the country because they need money."

Another trader in Kuta market, Bello Idris, said "traders who used to come from other places to buy farm produce from us are no longer

coming because of insecurity in Shiroro. We are seriously down because if we bring our farm produce to the market, instead of making profit we are losing."

He added that "farmers are facing a lot of challenges in Niger State. We don't have good roads to easily transport our farm produce to the market. Government should help us construct good roads. They should also help us with subsidized farm inputs. Farm inputs are too expensive in the market now. The price of petrol has also gone up and it is affecting us. Currently in Kuta, petrol goes for N310 per liter. We don't also have hospitals. Before we take our pregnant women to the hospitals in town, some lose their lives or have miscarriages because of the deplorable state of our roads. We also need potable drinking water."

Similarly, Sani B. Sarki, the Secretary Yam Farmers Association, Mutun-Daya, Munya Local Government Area, told our correspondent that "If we would be allowed to stay peacefully in our villages, even if the government doesn't help us, we will fend for ourselves."

The Chairman Yam Traders, Shiroro LGA, Salisu Mai-Doya, said the price of yam has not been stable

since the beginning of this harvest season, affirming that buyers have are no more coming due to unending kidnappings in the area.

"The price of yam has not been stable. Whenever buyers come, the price goes up and if buyers are not on ground, the price goes down. Buyers no longer come like before. Sometimes, while we are in the market, we would be told that bandits are coming. People would abandon their goods and run. So, we lose a lot. Nobody would enter this area now with his wealth in the name of trading," he said.

Also speaking, Abdulkarim Tshohon-Soja, Chairman Truck Drivers, Mutun-Daya Yam Market, said "When there was peace, we used to load 10 or 20 trucks on a market day but you hardly load two now. It is affecting us because unless traders come to buy, we will not have anything to load. But because of these bandits who kidnap people on a regular basis, they have stopped coming. When they kidnap you, they collect your money and you still suffer before you regain freedom. That is why most traders have diverted to other places where there is relative peace.

Shiroro, Paikoro and Munya are among the major yam producing local government areas in the state.

Fire destroys ex-ambassador's oil palm farm

From Peter Moses, Abeokuta

An early morning fire has gutted farmland located in Onipepe axis of Obafemi-Owode Local Government Area of Ogun State, and destroyed palm trees worth millions of naira.

The farmland belongs to the former Nigerian Ambassador to Zambia/Malawi, Mrs. Folake Marcus-Bello.

Our correspondent gathered that the fire incident, which occurred in the early hours of Tuesday, ravaged the 10 hectares of the farmland known as Folake B Farm, destroying over 500

palm trees among other farm products.

The cause of the fire at the farmland located along Siun-Sagamu-Abeokuta expressway was still unknown, but it was further gathered that the inferno lasted for about four hours, before it was put out.

During a visit to the farmland on Thursday, it was observed that palm trees affected were burnt to ashes.

The manager of the farmland, Mrs. Adesola Adebayo, explained that she got a phone call from villagers at about 4.30pm, informing her about the fire, and

she had to rush down to the scene.

She said on arrival, she and other villagers were helpless on the volume of the fire, which was spreading without control, adding that the harmattan situation contributed to the fast spread of the fire which caused serious damages

"I don't know the cause of the fire; maybe it was caused by hunters looking for bush meat, who might have put fire on the bush to track the animals. One cannot also rule out activities of some unscrupulous elements who may deliberately set the farmland on fire. The harmattan further

worsen the situation," Adebayo said.

The former Nigerian Ambassador confirmed the "sad development," adding that she was short of words when she heard about the development, stressing that she has committed millions of naira to the farmland.

"This is disturbing and worrisome. I am short of words and it was difficult to believe. Just as we are looking forward to harvest, the inferno destroyed millions of naira farm products. The larger part of the 10 hectares of the farmland has been consumed," she said.

AGRO SOLUTIONS



Narrow-row advantage in irrigated soybeans production

Increasing interest in growing soybeans under irrigation in western Nebraska got agronomists in that state pondering what size row widths were best for irrigated soybeans.

In that area of Nebraska and other irrigated regions of the High Plains, “continuous corn has been the most common and, in many cases, the most profitable irrigated crop sequence,” explains Strahinja Stepanovic of the University of Nebraska.

Stepanovic was part of the university’s research team including Laura Thompson and Keith Glewen. “However, difficulties in managing resistant pests (particularly western corn rootworm and western bean cutworm) and bacterial disease outbreaks (such as Goss’s wilt or bacterial leaf streak) have triggered the need for adding other crops, such as soybeans, to irrigated crop rotations in southwest Nebraska,” he says.

Many farmers in this area of the country have reported superior soybean yields with 15-inch rows due to the faster rate of canopy closure, better weed suppression, and reduced evaporative loss early in the season.

However, the Nebraska researchers found there was limited data available on what those yield differences may be.

So, the team set out to determine what the yield differences were with irrigated soybeans planted in 15- vs. 30-inch rows. Aided by funds from the Nebraska Soybean Board, the researchers conducted three replicated on-farm studies comparing yields at those row widths for two different years and in two different locations.

Definitely High Yields

When averaged across the two sites, soybeans planted in 15-inch rows yielded 67

bushels per acre, 7 bushels more than beans in 30-inch rows, which yielded 60 bushels per acre. Yield differences ranged from 4 bushels at one location for two years up to 12 bushels at the other research site.

In addition, soybeans planted in 15-inch rows also had lower grain moisture at harvest (up to 0.9% less) and significantly greater marginal net return (\$25 to \$128 per acre) than beans in 30-inch rows.

In addition, aerial imagery at the Chase County, Nebraska, research site in 2017 showed less vigor and higher thermal stress in 30-inch-row soybeans during the early reproductive growth. The on-farm research cooperators at that research site also observed better suppression of volunteer corn in soybeans planted in 15-inch rows.

Less Thermal Stress

Based on the results of those field tests, the research team recommends planting irrigated beans in 15-inch rows. “Aerial imagery showed less thermal stress in 15-inch-row spacing, which suggests that in cases where water may be limiting, such as in sandy soils with low water-holding capacity and higher evaporative losses, there may be an even greater benefit to 15-inch-row spacing for soybeans,” Stepanovic says.

But he does warn that “although we have not observed differences in disease pressure in our field studies, it has been reported that planting soybeans in 15-inch rows may increase the occurrence of white mold disease.”

The only cost consideration when switching to narrow-row soybeans would be the extra investment in a narrow-row planter or having to double-plant fields.

Source: *Successful Farming*

Only govt’s interventions can boost wheat production, marketing in Nigeria — WFAN

From Zahraddeen Yakubu Shuaibu, Kano

The newly elected president of the Wheat Farmers Association of Nigeria (WFAN), Alhaji Musa Shehu Sheka, has described government intervention in wheat farming in the country as a contributing factor that will enhance production of wheat for local consumption and for export.

Alhaji Sheka disclosed this while addressing newsmen after he assumed office as the new president in Kano. His emergence followed the death of the former president of the association, Alhaji Salim, who died three weeks ago.

He said at a time when the Russia and Ukraine war had affected the importation of wheat, the country should take advantage and boost production in order to bridge the gap of in-house consumption and also export to other countries.

“That is what we tell the government all the times, it is only through government

intervention that we can produce enough and even export outside the country. The problem of Ukraine-Russia and some Asian countries has caused all the problems we are facing now. It has led to scarcity and a hike in the price of wheat. So, we should take advantage to produce more so that we can feed ourselves.”

He said it is time for African countries to rise and invest more in wheat farming to ensure that the region can feed itself.

He said as a newly elected president he will work assiduously in ensuring adequate development of wheat farmers across the federation.

Sheka maintained that the association is not only for the northerners but for all Nigerians, hence he will ensure that members from the 36 states are carried along.

He promised to work tirelessly in addressing the challenge of inadequate farming inputs, training and retraining of wheat farmers among others.

Nigeria risks losing 34% GDP to climate disaster

By Vincent A. Yusuf

About eight poorest countries including Nigeria face grim economic future with a median GDP hit of -20% by 2050 and -64% by 2100 under current climate policies.

A study published by Christian Aid a few months ago highlights the devastating economic impact climate change will inflict on the African continent, even if the world limits heating to 1.5C.

The report, titled the cost to Africa: drastic economic damage from climate change, was led by Marina Andrijevic, an economist at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Vienna.

The report shows that eight countries face GDP hits of more than 25% by 2050 and 75% by 2100 under current policies. These eight are: Sudan, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti and Nigeria.

The economies of these nations are anticipated to remain stronger than they are today by the years 2050 and 2100. In comparison to a scenario in which climate change didn’t occur, this analysis shows the extent of the harm that climate change has done to their GDP.

African countries will have an average GDP decrease of -14% by 2050 and -34% by 2100, even if countries limit the rise in global temperature to 1.5C as called for in the Paris Agreement. This emphasizes the necessity for a strong loss and damage mechanism, even if nations manage to limit global warming to less than 1.5C.

Sudan and Nigeria, which had one of the worst rainy seasons in living memory last year, are the nations with the greatest anticipated GDP loss.

According to the Christian Aid report, Sudan’s GDP will decrease by 32.4% by 2050 and 84.4% by 2100 under present climate policies compared to what it would be if there was no climate change. Sudan can anticipate a GDP hit of -22.4% by 2050 and -51.6% by 2100 even in a 1.5C scenario.

According to a news release issued by Christian Aid late last year, despite the report’s bleak economic forecast, Africa remains the least responsible continent in terms of causing the climate problem. According to the report, the top 20 worst-affected countries emit an average of 0.43 tonnes of CO2 per person. In comparison, the United States and Canada



Wheat

produce 14.2 tonnes per person, Australia 15.4 tonnes, and Saudi Arabia 18.

“This analysis shows the huge drag that climate change will be on the economic development of Africa. African countries face a number of challenges and the climate crisis poses a major threat to their ability to sustainably develop their economies.

An economist at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Vienna, who contributed to the study, Marina Andrijevic, said these numbers are only a function of rising annual temperatures, not the effects of extreme weather events. This means that they might be conservative estimates, because the economic harm of extreme weather events caused massive losses on their own that might affect both economic growth and

the level from which African economies start to grow again.

In Nigeria, there is a lack of coordinated approach by relevant agencies and ministries such as that of Environment, Water Resource and Agriculture and Rural Development, to adopt climate-smart agriculture and resilience.

Experts warned that Nigeria may well underestimate the impact climate change will have on the nation’s agricultural productivity, pointing that already farm yield is dropping and rural farmers are grappling with climate related problems.

Currently, the deforestation rate in Nigeria which fuels the charcoal economy is the fastest in the world and stakeholders are concerned that the country may lose its forest resources in the next few decades.



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INSIDEPOLITICS

Tinubu is the solution Nigeria needs – Senator Opeyemi Bamidele

Senator Michael Opeyemi Bamidele, representing Ekiti Central at the Senate, in this interview, says the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, is the kind of solution that Nigeria needs at this time.

From Raphael Ogbonnaiye

You witnessed the inauguration of the Grassroots Independent Campaign

Council, GICC, in Ekiti State. What is the significance of this event to the aspiration of Asiwaju Bola Tinubu?

Ekiti is keying into what the rest of the 35 states of Nigeria and the FCT are doing to inaugurate a platform to run a door-to-door campaign for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu. We have two major organs for the campaigns, the Presidential Campaign Council, PCC, at national and state level, which is in-charge of organizing the rallies and coordinating the campaign and the other organ is what is called the Tinubu/Shettima Grassroots Independent Campaign Council, GICC, which is saddled with the responsibility of door-to-door campaign, that is what we have inaugurated in Ekiti. My hope and prayer are that everybody will take advantage of this platform to take the message of Asiwaju presidency to every nook and cranny of the state.

The election is a few weeks from now, what gives you the impression that Asiwaju has the edge over other candidates?

When something is very clear and the facts are very clear, the fact speaks for themselves. Going by what is happening in Nigeria, going by the nature and the popular and scientific campaigns, the Asiwaju campaign outfit is running, and going by the antecedents of all the frontline candidates and then situating Asiwaju within all of these, it is obvious to me that Asiwaju in this campaign and in the February 25 election, is the presidential candidate to beat. I'm also convinced that Asiwaju is the kind of solution that Nigeria needs at this time, among all of those who are contesting. He is not promising to do anything he has not done before; he was governor of Lagos State for eight years and by the grace of God, I was an integral part of that administration. I served in his cabinet as Special Adviser, I served as Hon. Commissioner and after that I also served in the cabinet that took over from him under Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN. So, for eleven and a half years in a row, I was a member of



■ Senator Michael Opeyemi Bamidele

I was there to see what Asiwaju was capable of doing and under his watch, we created a new Lagos. Anyone who goes to Lagos today would know that it is not the Lagos that you knew before Asiwaju came in

the cabinet for Lagos State.

I was there to see what Asiwaju was capable of doing and under his watch, we created a new Lagos. Anyone who goes to Lagos today would know that it is not the Lagos that you knew before Asiwaju came in. There was a Lagos of refuse, there was a Lagos of insecurity, there was a Lagos of transportation and traffic chaos, all of those have become a thing of the past and they are taking it beyond the current level to also deploy train infrastructure technology across the state. Red line, blue line, yellow line have all taken off in Lagos, so essentially, a new Lagos is created and all

we are trusting God for is that Nigerians will give Asiwaju the presidency of this country so that he will replicate what he did in Lagos across Nigeria.

Why was he able to do this? It was not by any magic, Asiwaju has a thorough and scientific understanding of people, of what is wrong and what is to be done and also because he has an unusual capacity to identify talents and deploy such talents on the society for creativity and for development. I have no doubt that from every nook and cranny of this country, Asiwaju would be able to identify and deploy such talents. With him, our story

cannot be the same as a nation.

There seems to be internal struggles by different support groups for dominance at this time. Are you sure this is about loyalty to Asiwaju or about scrambles for campaign funds?

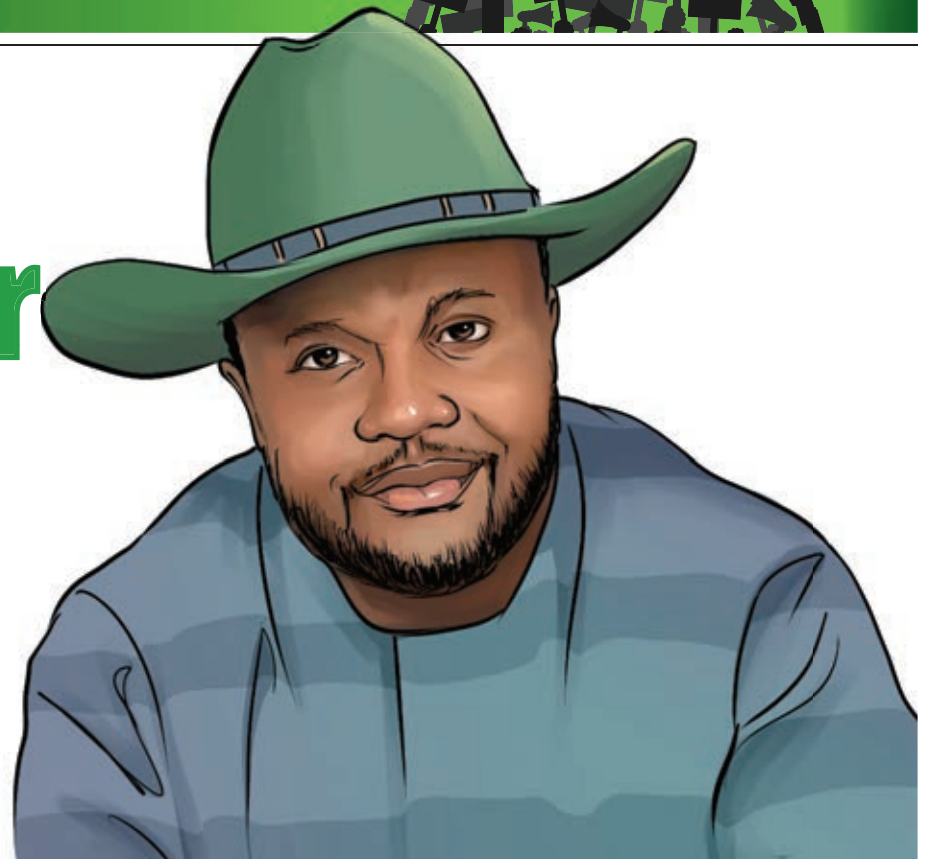
I would tell you, Asiwaju is not a poor man but at the same time, Asiwaju does not have enough money to run the campaign to be president of Nigeria. So, for a lot of people who are involved, it is not just about money. A lot of people are spending their own money and talking about support groups, people started forming support groups in the last two years even before Asiwaju won the

primary of the party and Asiwaju didn't give anybody money to form or run support groups. As a matter of fact, of the more than 80 percent of the support groups that we have across the country, Asiwaju has not even met with the leadership. Even here in Ekiti State, we have to encourage them to start to register with the party, so that people know where to find them. So, nobody gave money to anyone to start a support group; people are doing this as an answer to a popular aspiration that they feel Asiwaju represents, and which everybody is trying to identify with. So, essentially, resources are been put together by people; they didn't collect any money from Asiwaju to do what is going on. This campaign secretariat was donated, Asiwaju didn't rent an office in Ekiti to run a campaign and this is a replica to what we have in different parts of the country where people are donating their resources to run a campaign for him because they believe that with him, our story cannot be the same.

Yes, in the course of the campaign, funds would be deployed because moving from one state to another, local government to another, or door-to-door campaign, requires logistics support, and such logistic support would be provided, but it is not a business-as-usual affair and not an atmosphere or platform for anybody to amass wealth. What is ahead of us is more important than how much money anybody can get at this moment.

Why should the people of Ekiti Central trust you again with their votes on February 25?

I believe by the grace of God, the people of Ekiti Central know that I have adequately and credibly represented them in the Senate in the last three and half years. So, I believe it is a consensus. I believe I had a good tenure as a first term senator and that explained why the leadership and members of the party resolved on their own to give me an unopposed ticket, an automatic ticket to go back for a second term. I also believe that the people from Ekiti Central, beyond the party I represent, believe that I had done well representing them by the grace of God. And so, if it is the consensus that it's been a good term, I think it is only good to say, one good term deserves another and I think that is where we are.

RACE TO ASO ROCK**NWANYANWU:****An all-rounder eyeing presidency**

By Saawua Terzungwe

Dan Nwanyanwu, the presidential candidate of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) for the February 25 poll, is a man of many parts.

His tentacles are remarkable, having worked in different capacities as a lawyer, businessman and politician. He is equally a strong voice in the South East because of his passion for the region, especially concerning the agitations for a power shift to the zone.

He has garnered experiences in different fields and held several positions, both politically and otherwise on Nigerian soil.

He was the national chairman of the Labour Party (LP), and later, chairman of its Board of Trustees (BoT) before he dumped the party for the ZLP, where he equally became the national chairman before picking the party's presidential ticket.

The Imo State-born politician was elected as local secretary and branch secretary of the National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions Employees (NUBIFIE) in Apapa, Lagos.

He became the chairman of the Domestic Committee of the Union Bank unit of the NUBIFIE in 1982. With this position, he became a member of the National Executive Council of the union.

He was elected as the national treasurer of the National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions Employees (NUBIFIE), a position he held until 1989 when he was elected the national president of the union, which automatically made him a member of the National Executive Council of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).

He attended Saint James Primary School in Amuzu, and Oraifite Boys' High School in Anambra State. He read Labour Management Relations at the School of Business, Howard University, Washington D.C., United States of America. He

worked in Union Bank between 1979 and 1993.

Born in 1959 in Amuzu-Amaimo in the Ikeduru Local Government Area of Imo State, Nwanyanwu has made a mark in defending the region on issues related to it.

Position on S/East insecurity

Dan Nwanyanwu had linked the spate of attacks in the South East region to an alleged political conspiracy to de-market the region in the race for the number one job in the country.

He spoke during the heightened attacks on the facilities and personnel of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the region

Nwanyanwu, who spoke on Channels Television's "Politics Today," described the April 5, 2021 prison break at the Owerri Correctional Centre as a turning point in the security crisis in the region.

He said, "About the insecurity in the South East, I have made my position very clear, right from the time there was a jailbreak in an Imo facility at Owerri prisons.

"The insecurity you have seen in the South East was imported because of where we are going now so that they will de-market people like us from the South East - that we cannot be president because there is insecurity in our place. It was imported."

He alleged that the conspirators had been able to partner with some locals to do their "dirty job."

Exit from LP

Nwanyanwu had dumped the Labour Party in a letter dated February 13 and addressed to his successor, Alhaji Abdulkadir Salam.

In the letter, Nwanyanwu, who ran the party as national chairman for 10 years before he finally handed over to Salam, alleged that his successor had turned himself into a "biblical Pharaoh" despite genuine advice given to him.

Part of the letter reads, "I regret to observe that events in the LP, especially with regard to the handling of the recently concluded nomination of candidates on the platform of the party for the

2015 general elections do not align with

the integrity, transparency and accountability for which the party achieved reputation over the years.

"I have had cause to confront you personally with the information available to me regarding these matters of concern, and I must admit that your incoherent answers created more doubts in my mind about your innocence.

"Consequently, I hereby tender my resignation, both as chairman of the Board of Trustees of LP and member of the party. I have already taken steps to effect my resignation as a member of the party at my ward as required by the party's constitution."

It is imperative to state that during Nwanyanwu's reign as the LP's national chairman, the party produced one governor in Ondo State, Olusegun Mimiko.

Next direction

Sequel to his exit from the LP, Nwanyanwu joined the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP), where he became the party's national chairman.

He equally emerged as the party's presidential candidate for the February 25 poll.

Presidential race

He emerged as the presidential candidate of the ZLP at its national convention in June 2022, ahead of this year's poll.

The convention brought together 185 delegates across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Addressing delegates at the convention, he said his administration would guarantee fundamental human rights of citizens if elected.

"We will obey fundamental human rights of Nigerians. We will ensure that things are not done with fiat. Nigeria is shaking. I don't need experience that will make me steal Nigeria's money.

"Nigeria needs a fresh start with sharp minds that will turn things around. After one year of our government we will not be depending on oil.

"When I become president, I will unite all sections of Nigeria. I will make sure that there is trust among Nigerians irrespective of ethnic leaning. I will make use of traditional institutions and give them the role they should play.

"Traditional rulers and religious leaders will be given key roles in nation-building. In the first three months we will be able to see Nigerians smiling together again," he said.

Chances

Political pundits have argued that Nwanyanwu and the party upon which he seeks to attain his political goal are not popular enough to take a shot at the presidency this year.

Another factor analysts have brought to the fore is that Nwanyanwu is coming from the same geopolitical zone as the presidential candidate of his former party, Peter Obi, who is one of the top three contenders for the apex seat.

It is argued that Obi would defeat him in the South East and many other geo-political zones because many do not know the symbol and logo of the ZLP.

A political analyst, Chief Jackson Lekan Ojo said, "Since he emerged, we have not seen him on the podium campaigning. Is that

how the presidency of this country is won?"

"These are politicians who are just trying to bring the office of president to disrepute."

Titles

Nwanyanwu has held several titles. He was the pro-chancellor and chairman of the Governing Council of the Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko in Ondo State (AAUA).

The Osemawe of Ondo Kingdom, HRM Oba Dr. Victor Adesimbo Kiladejo (Jilo 111), on the 50th anniversary of the Osemawa Dynasty, conferred on him the title of Otun Atunluse of Ondo Kingdom on 17 July 2010.

In recognition of his contributions to humanity, President Goodluck Jonathan conferred the national honour of Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR) on him on September 17, 2012.

Credible polls

Nwanyanwu, in one of his media interviews, said President Muhammadu Buhari should leave a legacy of free, fair and credible elections in 2023.

He said, "Since the president has failed in everything he campaigned on, he should ensure that the forthcoming elections are transparent."

He also gave the INEC a pass mark over its preparation for the election, saying the opposition will not hesitate to declare openly when the commission begins to deviate.

"The young ones are demanding to take charge of their lives. Nigerians have seen that they have been defrauded of what belongs to them," he said.

Sequel to his exit from the LP, Nwanyanwu joined the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP), where he became the party's national chairman. He equally emerged as the party's presidential candidate for the February 25 poll.

BUSINESS

NESG emphasises prosperity sharing

...Invest in human capital, infrastructure – W/Bank chief



By Vincent Nwanma

The Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG), the country's foremost policy think-tank, has launched its macroeconomic outlook for this year, with emphasis on sharing of prosperity by all Nigerians.

The purpose of the group's focus is to ensure that all stakeholders are carried along in economic activities in the country, said Dr Olusegun Omisakin, the head of research at the NESG in his opening presentation at the event on Wednesday.

"We are going to discuss this within the framework of making sure that nobody is left behind. We will share prosperity together; making sure that we don't have people who are completely excluded from the production processes, a better hope for the country, and making sure that we give it whatever we need to do to get out of this situation," Omisakin said.

The World Bank group defined "shared prosperity" as the process of fostering income growth among the bottom 40 per cent of a country's population through sustained economic growth and equitable distribution of growth outcomes.

In its domestication of the concept, NESG defined it as "a situation or state in which every Nigerian enjoys a decent standard of living measured by equitable access to economic opportunities, including decent jobs, quality education and health care, along with the protection of lives and property."

Unfortunately, the reality in Nigeria is that many people are already left behind and excluded from the prosperity sharing process. With a monetary poverty incident of about 42 per cent and a 63per cent multidimensional poverty rate (133million people), it is clear that many are mere watchers. This gets more alarming given NESG's projection that inflation will moderate to 20.5 per cent, while unemployment will spike to 37 per cent from the current 33 per cent.

To ensure that prosperity is shared, it first has to be created, panelists who featured at the event declared. And for the sharing to be done on a sustainable basis, it also means that the size of the pie must be increased, they pointed out.

The NESG said the first objective of Shared Prosperity in Nigeria is to build a competitive economy which would require a sustained growth of 7.5per cent per

annum, although it projects a growth rate of just 2.98per cent for this year. The second objective, according to it, is an equitable distribution of prosperity.

Unfortunately, the reality in Nigeria is that many people are already left behind and excluded from the prosperity sharing process. With a monetary poverty incident of about 42 per cent and a 63per cent multidimensional poverty rate (133million people), it is clear that many are mere watchers

"Sharing the economic pie is as complex as building it," it noted in its outlook document.

In his contribution, Shubham Chaudhuri, Country Director for Nigeria, World Bank, said that countries that had been able to achieve shared prosperity, from the examples in South East Asia, invest in human capital development and public infrastructure or public goods, including security. Such countries, he said, had been able to banish extreme poverty and make everyone better off.

For the government to be able to do these, the finances must be available to ensure that these investments are there, he explained. These ensure that private enterprises are empowered, not to start but to grow and flourish and create the jobs that provide the economic opportunities that are important, he said.

"No country has been able to achieve shared prosperity without these elements," the World Bank boss said.

"In the case of Nigeria, this fiscal imperative has not been met," he said, noting that the government revenue to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio in the country is currently around 7per cent, which is "the lowest in the world."

"For a government to meet the needs, provide public infrastructure and other needs, it needs a revenue ratio of 15per cent to 20per cent of GDP for low and middle income countries. In rich countries, this ratio is up to 40per cent.

"So, Nigeria needs to spend about 15 to 20 per cent of GDP to do these basic things.

So that means that now because that revenue is about seven per cent, there is a need to mobilise revenue," he said.

The flip side of that is that tax-paying public has to have the confidence that the government will spend those resources in the right ways. "That is the quality of spending, whether you want to find out if N6trillion is spent on gasoline subsidies or health care facilities, schools or roads. That is the fiscal challenge," he noted.

On the macro side, there is a need to free the space for private investment, and for private firms to grow and create jobs.

For this to be achieved, he said there was a need for stability in three key prices: exchange rate, inflation rate and the cost of doing business.

He noted that access to foreign exchange had not only been difficult but had also become unpredictable. Those are the two challenges we see on the macro front, he added.

For Taiwo Oyedele, fiscal policy partner and Africa tax leader at PwC Nigeria, the pathway to building prosperity in the country lies in the government initiating fiscal reform that would enable the private sector to be the key driver of the process.

Contrary to claims about Nigeria's corporate income tax rate, which is currently at 30per cent, he said it was not the lowest in the world. He pointed out that in addition to that, there was an education tax of 2.5per cent.

It would be recalled that the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) had demanded that this be raised to 10per cent.

"And I can tell you from data that one basic point of education tax is equivalent to two points of corporate income tax. Effectively, you are talking about 35per cent.

That's even if you haven't added withholding income tax," he said.

Oyedele argued that in many countries, when a company pays income tax it doesn't pay again when it declares a dividend. "In Nigeria, we pay 10 per cent; so, effectively, that takes it above 40per cent. With that, Nigeria will easily rank among the top five highest corporate income tax in the world. The global average is 23per cent," he further said.

He also debunked the claim in some quarters that Nigeria's VAT of 7.5per cent is the lowest in the world. This is not quite correct because you are comparing mangoes and apples. In Nigeria, you don't get input credit on investments, including fixed assets and services. Over 100 countries around the world would give you credit so long as you are in business, so you don't bear the cost; 7.5per cent in Nigeria feels like 12 to 15 per cent," he said.

He said the way out of this was to step up revenue mobilisation through a new framework. While the problem looks quite big, "the solutions are simple when we find the right people who want to do the right thing," he added.

He also said, "We have to develop a different philosophy around tax generation, and that philosophy is one that states, "Create prosperity so that you can collect a portion of it in taxes."

But the truth is that the current level of exclusion in Nigeria's economic system as marked by poverty does not guarantee that. For the 133million Nigerians who are multidimensionally poor, he said, "If you throw them up, maybe blood will come out but you wouldn't find money because they are very poor."

The government must also harmonise its tax system, both vertically and horizontally. He said there were at least 66 different taxes and unofficially over 200.

He further said, "We need to deal with that. Let one agency collect revenue for the government. In the 2023 budget we have asked 63 ministries, departments and agencies to collect revenue. Who does that? The consequence is the negative impact on tax revenue, All of them are generating revenue but the money is not getting to the government," he said.

In addition to this, the government should also begin to use the data it generates for intelligence to get more people into the tax net and make those already in the net pay the correct taxes.

Role of capital market

The policy thrust in this regard, according to Ayodele, must be to create prosperity so that there will be something to tax. In this regard he said, "We need to remove the impediment for people trying to raise finance through the capital market, so the policies enable us to find prosperity. Then we have to ensure that even the government itself becomes creative in the way they raise finance, not only the bonds but to ensure that they look at equity finance and listing of government's entities in the capital market.

"Also, we need to lower Nigeria's corporate income tax rate. That is the first important step."

He added that over the last 20 years, 94 countries had reduced their corporate tax rates. Only about four have increased their over that period and Nigeria is one of them. And the increment was through the backdoor, on all manner of taxes. He said Nigeria should not be in the 10 highest tax rate countries in the world.

How stock market will shape Nigeria's economy in 2023

By Philip Shimnom Clement

The stock market is critical to Nigeria's economic growth and development, especially going into an election year.

As such, the 2023 general elections and their outcomes would have a major impact on investors' confidence, not least because of the elevated risk associated with elections in the country.

Speaking on the outlook of the market for the year 2023, Uche Uwaleke, a professor of Capital Market at the Nasarawa State University, Keffi, and president of the Capital Market Academics in Nigeria, noted that the current bullish trend in the market may not be sustained through the first quarter of 2023, when cautious trading and profit-taking are likely to take centre stage.

According to him, "History indicates that in an election year, a number of foreign investors do seek safety in other emerging markets, and may return sometime after the election, if it is largely judged to be credible by the international community."

"Owing to this flight-to-safety inclination, government securities will most likely offer the most opportunities and become the toast of investors during the first half of 2023," he said.

Speaking further, Uwaleke highlighted the monetary policy decisions of the Central Bank of Nigeria, and the implementation of the budget, among other policies that will also impact the elections.

CBN's monetary policy

The capital market expert noted that given that the impact of monetary policy comes with a lag, it should be expected that the full effects of the pace and scale of policy rate hikes in 2022 would hit the economy in 2023.

"Tight monetary conditions will most likely weigh on near-term economic growth and dampen stock market performance, especially in the first half of 2023," he said.

"It is most likely that the CBN, following the advice of the IMF in the Article IV consultation with Nigeria, will keep financial conditions tight to contain inflation which implies limited upsides for the equities market.

"Regrettably, political uncertainty and insecurity will not allow high-interest rates to support any meaningful flows from foreign investors in H1 2023.

"As a result, I expect economic activity to decelerate in Q1 and Q2 of 2023. Perhaps, nowhere will this be more apparent than in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors, where growth rates have already begun to tank, according to the National Bureau of Statistics' GDP Q3 2022 report," he said.

On the implications of such



decisions, he expressed belief that "Against this backdrop, companies in the agriculture and consumer goods sectors may record depreciation in their share prices during these periods."

"In general, CBN's tightening stance in the first half of 2023 will largely contain stock market gains.

"It bears mentioning that the supply-side and cost-push factors driving inflationary pressure in Nigeria, including energy costs and insecurity, which are exogenous to the CBN, will likely deny the monetary authority victory over the war against inflation as the expected impact of the implementation of currency redesign and a cash withdrawal limit on inflation and exchange rates may not crystallise in the near-term."

Implementation of the 2023 expansionary budget

From a theoretical perspective, the implementation of an expansionary budget ought to turbo-charge the stock market as output expands with a positive pass-through to the earnings of quoted companies.

However, the 2023 federal budget of about N21.8 trillion is weighted more on recurrent expenditure (N8.32 trillion) and debt service (N6.55 trillion).

This has grave implications

for inflation and interest rates given that the huge budget deficit will be financed chiefly through borrowing. So, fiscal conditions may deteriorate, which will likely attract downgrades by rating agencies such as Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch, negatively impacting confidence and stock prices.

A related issue is the government's plan to securitize over N23trn in government debt owed to the CBN. What all these portend is a high-interest rate environment in 2023, which will not augur well for the stock market.

On the deficit, he said the elephant in the room seemed to be the issue of fuel subsidy, which the 2023 budget has only accommodated up till June. How the new administration navigates the challenges that will come with its removal lie at the heart of macroeconomic stability in the second half of 2023.

"It goes without saying that negative investor sentiment on the part of both domestic and foreign investors will prevail if fuel subsidy removal is made possible.

"This is why the government should begin in earnest to engage relevant stakeholders; effectively communicate to the public as well as agree on compensation measures

with organised labour with a view to ameliorating its direct impact and unintended consequences," he added.

On the upside, the don noted that the implementation of the revised Capital Market Master Plan (2021-2025) expected to kick in from 2023, may buoy market performance, especially in the 2nd half of 2023.

"Given that the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning is the implementing ministry and has been charged with the responsibility for its successful execution, it is expected that, unlike what obtained in the past, the ministry will drive it as part of the national economic policy agenda.

If that is done, sectors like ICT (MTN, Airtel), Agriculture (Okomu, Presco), Industrial (Dangote Cement, BUA Cement), Oil and Gas (SEPLAT, MRS) and Financial Services (Zenith, GTCO) may benefit from increased investors participation in H2 2023 on the back of the revised plan which seeks to achieve significant participation of institutional (especially pension funds, insurance companies, mutual funds) as well as retail investors in the stock market," he further explained.

On the global space, he asserted that a rise in US interest rates and bond yields will make it more expensive for the government to service the huge public debt now in excess of N42trn, especially the foreign debt, with a significant Eurobonds component.

"This development will worsen the current fiscal imbalance, jeopardise the 2023 budget as well as crowd out development funds.

"Having gone through this route before, both the fiscal and monetary authorities should anticipate the fallout of monetary policy tightening by central banks in developed economies and put in place measures to cushion the adverse impact on the Nigerian economy," he said.

He further explained that the international crude oil price is likely to stay above the 2023 budget reference price of \$75 per barrel on average.

"To be sure, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) forecast is to the effect that Brent crude oil prices will average USD95.33 per barrel in 2023, due in part to the OPEC+ output target and the EU ban on Russian crude imports as well as the G7 price cap which is aimed at reducing Russia's ability to finance the war in Ukraine," he added.

Tight monetary conditions will most likely weigh on near-term economic growth and dampen stock market performance, especially in the first half of 2023 ...It is most likely that the CBN, following the advice of the IMF in the Article IV consultation with Nigeria, will keep financial conditions tight to contain inflation which implies limited upsides for the equities market

It's all about the soil

Mark 4:14-20, "The sower soweth the word. [15] And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. [18] And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, [19] And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. [20] And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

Have you ever wondered why the word of God does not produce the same result in every hearer? It is because it depends on the state of the heart of the hearer. As we can see, the quality of seed is the same but the type of soil determines how well the seed performs. The problem is not with the sower; the problem is not with the seed; it is with the soil. This explains why life's outcome differs between different people who are exposed to church or the Word of God. Let us examine the four types of soil here:

a) Wayside. This refers to a toxic environment. This type of person is exposed and vulnerable because he or she is surrounded with ungodly friends and is not abiding in church.

b) Stony ground. These type of people are in the church but refuse to attend any discipleship training program. They resist learning. They develop no root. As a

result, they remain shallow and can easily be deceived. They do not obey the Word of God. These type of people can be rebellious. Their spirit is not being fed so they lapse into their old ways.

c) Among thorns. Toxic beliefs and emotions. This type of person is choked with the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pursuit of riches, greed, lust, etc. A soul that is crowded with problems cannot focus on Jesus. It will fall away.

d) The good ground. This the prepared heart, the willing heart. The ready heart. They are hungry for the Word of God and they are prepared to practice what they learn. The Word of God grows, flourishes and produces results in their lives.

The first three can be turned into good ground. We just must be deliberate about it especially now that we know.

That is why we need to pray for the hearts of the people we minister to before ministering to them. The soil has to be prepared to receive the seed. The seed has to be protected through prayer from being snatched by the devil. He is terrified of the seed. He has a phobia for the seed. Ever since God told him that he would be destroyed by the seed of the woman, he panics whenever he hears the Word seed. He attacks the seed and the sower. He knows what can happen when the seed is allowed to thrive. Because, any seed allowed to thrive will multiply his headache.

The seed is the devil's nightmare!

Acts 16:14, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." The Amplified Bible says, "...and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul." People can be listening to you, but they are not paying attention. If

they are not paying attention they cannot be impacted. Then the preaching will be in vain and your efforts will be wasted.

Ezra 7:10, "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." From the word go, Ezra made up his mind to study the Word of God with a view to doing whatever it says.

7 Benefits Of Preparing The Soil

1. A prepared heart is easily ignited with the love of God. A prepared heart receives and embraces the Word of God, meditates on it until it becomes a personal promise.

2. A prepared heart surrenders to God's will and is blessed.

3. A prepared heart mixes the Word with faith, acts on it until it turns into miracles

The seed has to be protected through prayer from being snatched by the devil. He is terrified of the seed. He has a phobia for the seed. Ever since God told him that he would be destroyed by the seed of the woman, he panics whenever he hears the Word seed

and breakthroughs. The Word produces thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold in the prepared heart depending on how prepared it is.

4. A prepared heart receives sudden and instant miracles. 2Chronicles 29:36, "And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly."

5. The prepared heart witnesses and enjoys the glory of God when it's manifested. The Holy Spirit is seeking for prepared hearts so He can move over their lives. God will show you His glory during the AGSS.

6. A prepared heart is not only fruitful, it abides.

7. Greatness. 2Chronicles 27:6, "So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God." God will lift you to enviable heights! You will become great. Your children will become great. Your finances will grow and become large. Great wealth awaits you in your glorious future, in the Name of Jesus!

God prepares people for His moves if we ask Him. Let us pray today and ask the Holy Spirit to not only prepare our hearts but the hearts of all those who are exposed to the Word of God during a program or any Service from now on or when they read or study the Word of God.

Pray that every heart will be receptive to the Word of God and surrender to God's will. God will answer our prayers and prepare our hearts to receive. The Word of God will produce results in your life! Get ready for huge testimonies, in Jesus Name! Get ready to prosper and flourish, in Jesus Name!

Bishop Dr Charles Olowjoba is the General Overseer of Dayspring Bible Church Worldwide with HQ in Abuja, Nigeria & President, Dayspring Christian Ministries Int'l.

By Stephen Ojapah MSP

Cain brought some of his harvests and gave it as an offering to the Lord. Then Abel brought the first lamb born of one of his sheep, killed it and gave the best parts of it as offering. The Lord was pleased with Abel and his offering, but he rejected Cain and his offering. Cain became furious and he scowled in anger, then the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? Why that scowl on your face? If you had done the right thing you would be smiling but because you have done evil sin is crouching at your door it wants to rule you, but you must overcome it! Then Cain said to his brother Abel. Let us go out in the fields. Cain turned on his brother and killed him. The Lord asked Cain where is your brother Abel? He answered I don't know. Am I supposed to take care of my brother? (Genesis 4: 2-9).

This story is often taken to be an injunction against murder, but that does not get us very far, beyond a self-evident moral point. The clue to the deeper meaning of the story of Cain and Abel perhaps rests on two aspects of the narrative: the offering to God, which Cain produces, and God is displeased with; and the clues provided by the etymologies of the two brothers' names.

Nevertheless, a clue to the origins of the Cain and Abel story may also lie in the symbolic meanings of the brothers' two names. 'Cain' is from a root word meaning 'forge' or 'smith', and is cognate with the Arabic kain, which means the same thing. In Genesis 4:22 we learn that 'Tubal-cain' was 'an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron', which lends credence to this etymology (Tubal was a district in Asia Minor, in what is now Turkey).

Meanwhile, 'Abel' is believed to be

Rejecting the offering of Cain to Nigeria

derived from Jubal or Jabal, the ancestor of nomadic shepherds. If we put these two names together, we find that Cain represents the farmer and skilled artisan, while Abel represents the herdsman or nomad. As Isaac Asimov points out in his endlessly informative Asimov's Guide to the Bible: The Old Testament by Isaac Asimov (Sept 19, 1973). The authors of these early histories were farmers and settled city-men who would doubtless have viewed nomads as a threat to their civilization: the nomads were potential invaders and raiders. Cain is not just a farmer but also a representative of a skilled class of metalworkers, remember: as such, he symbolizes the development of more advanced technologies during the Bronze Age (as it gave way to the Iron Age).

Curiously, it has been suggested that Abel's name might be distantly related to the Babylonian aplu, meaning 'son'. As with the Great Flood and other origin-stories from the Book of Genesis, the tale of Cain and Abel may have emerged from earlier Sumerian myths about the clashes between the older, nomadic way of life and the new city-focused farming culture that was displacing (and replacing) it. The fact that Cain, the representative of this new culture, kills his brother, who represents the weaker nomadic culture, is a sort of allegory for this mass shift towards more advanced agriculture in the ancient Middle East.

Thousands of years after the story of Cain and Abel, the 21st century is not yet immune to the tensions and the drama of clashes between different ideologies, classes of people, and systems of both government

and economics. President George W Bush on 28 June 2005 while making a speech in Fort Bragg, North Carolina said. "The terrorists fight because they know that the survival of their hateful ideology is at stake. They know that as freedom takes root in Iraq, it will inspire millions across the Middle East to claim their liberty as well. And when the Middle East grows in democracy, prosperity and hope, the terrorists will have no space"

The whole Iraq war with the billions of dollars involved can be described in three words clash of ideologies This three words have turned young married women into widows in their thousands. The three words have turned millions of children into orphans overnight. At every military hospital, when you see the wounded and the traumatized soldiers, one cannot afford to remain neutral to the barbarism of this clash. From the time of Cain and Able, epochs after epochs, one dominant ideology have always sought to silence the other. Very often, the weaker ones like Abel are muscled into silence.

The ideology of hatred and extremism will continue to fester amongst us until we decide to give peace a chance and let the ideology of love and care dominate our hypothalamus. The world has over bled because of hate and ideological differences. For almost a year now, Russia and Ukraine have continued to waste human and capital resources, and there is no end in sight, despite many appeals from all those that matter in this world. Like the story of the rich man who told father Abraham to send one of the angels to talk to his brothers on earth who are still living in squalor of sin and greed

to repent. Abraham said they have Moses and the prophets to talk to them, if they will not listen to them, even if someone should rise from the dead, they will not listen (Luke 12:16-21). Russia have all the Moses and the Prophets to listen to, if they will not listen to them even if angels come to right now, they might still not listen.

Perhaps the most fascinating thing about the story of Cain and Abel in this reflection is how we can present our worst to friends as our best. When I was in the secondary school. There was a classmate of ours whom we all knew to be very selfish. He never shared anything with anybody. One day, he began to share cabin biscuits to us his classmates, all of us were very curious to find out why this young fellow has become so generous overnight. Not too long, we discovered that the biscuits he was sharing has expired, and it is already developing maggots. Sad! That is the difficult part of the story of Cain. He was simply out to give God the worse. If he could offer God such horrible gifts, I can only imagine what he could give to men.

This is election year and we pray for the best candidate for our country; let us wish ourselves the best gifts through the leaders we intend to elect. Let us reject the gifts of Cain to Nigeria. Come February 2023.

Fr Stephen Ojapah is a priest of the Missionary Society of St Paul. He is equally the director for Interreligious Dialogue and Ecumenism for the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto, a member of IDFP. He is also a KAICIID Fellow. (omeizaajapah85@gmail.com)

INTERVIEW

Why we need to adopt new model of parenting in Nigeria – Boma Obuoforibo

Boma Obuoforibo is a parenting coach and founder of The Positive Parents Academy, an online institution that trains and mentors parents on ways to raise their children. In this interview she said parents should move away from flogging and adopt new ways to nurture the 21st century children.

By Faruk Shuaibu

Why did you start this academy?

Growing up, I watched how my parents raised us; and I didn't have anything against it until I became a parent. I found out that at some point I was subconsciously doing exactly what my parents did and I was not happy with the results I was getting, in terms of discipline. I found out that I was doing more of shouting and yelling; and it was exhausting. So I felt there had to be a better way.

Yes, our parents did the same thing, but did we really turn out okay? The fact that I was doing the same thing shows that it was not okay. Raising the 21st century child is a lot of work. They have a different perspective about life. And with technology, which has dominated the world, a lot of things have changed, so, parenting needs to change.

When I go around and see parents relate with their children, most of them want children to be better behaved, but they are stuck because the only thing they know is shouting and flogging. So I had to seek knowledge. That was the drive.

I wanted a relationship with my daughter but what I was doing was breaking it. For you to be able to effectively correct a child, you need to connect. So, I had to ditch the shouting and flogging. It was a struggle, but in this part of the world there are so many myths, which I have to tell parents about so that they would change their minds, and when they see the results it would be easier to relate with what I am doing.

The truth is that the world has an agenda for children right now. And they are coming in subtle ways, especially through technology, peer influence and all of that. If parents don't change strategy they would be attracted to the other side. As such, parenting is not about force and control, it is trust and respect. And how you get

it is when you have a relationship. Somebody that has a relationship with you will naturally want to do what you want.

Parents need to understand that parenting right now is war because a lot is happening in the online space. Something as simple as cartoons that children watch have started to infuse the aspect of woman-woman, man-man marriage. So, as a parent you need to get into your child's heart before the world gets into their mind. That is my drive; and if we can get the family right, we would have a good society.

People have argued that it is better for a woman to sit at home and take care of the children, while others think she should have a career; how do you think she can combine both?

In those days, it was a situation where the father would go to the farm while the mother stayed at home, but now, a lot of things have changed. It is a shared responsibility, and from a religious perspective, the man has the primary responsibility. If you work together you can achieve more because each time parents spend with their children is very important. For instance, the father's role is very key, especially in the life of a girl-child. I advised some single parents to find a father figure for their children because parenting is not something you leave for the mother alone. It is a shared responsibility that every parent should be able to take up and do their path.

For career, it is about essentialism. Parenting is time-bound. Some parents think children are a distraction from work, but they don't know that they are actually important. There will be a time when you need to forego some things and begin to slow down in your career so that you show up for the children because there are things you must do at a certain age. It is a window of opportunity which you may need to make sacrifices so that you can



■ Boma Obuoforibo

do those things before they move on to their next phase in life.

What other aspects of African parenting do you think are out of age and we need to adopt new ways of bringing up children?

There are some phrases that need to change. We need to stop thinking that if you did not flog a child you have not disciplined him or her. That is because they have programmed the children to listen only when they are flogged and shouted at.

Also, they say a thing like, "A child wey go spoil go spoil" but what they don't understand is that every child is parented differently, even twins. The reason is because each child has his/her own personality, temperament, love language and learning styles. So, if you need to

When I go around and see parents relate with their children, most of them want children to be better behaved, but they are stuck because the only thing they know is shouting and flogging. So I had to seek knowledge. That was the drive.

discipline and understand things about a child, you are tailoring your parenting based in those aspects. Some children supposedly turned out bad because parents don't understand those specifics about their uniqueness.

They say that if you love a child too much you would spoil him. They think that loving children means buying things for them, but it is about understanding the child's love language. For instance, if a child likes quality time but you are a parent that is always going out and leaving your responsibility to a nanny but you shower them with gifts and paying school fees, that is not the actual meaning of love. In fact, children thrive in love and attention. Another thing they think is that if they apologise they have lost their authority as parents, but the truth is that it is actually a skill you are modeling; it does not make you any less of a parent. It would rather build the trust and respect your child would have for you. I just hope every parent would have a change of mindset.

What is your advice for parents whose children did not turn out good?

It is not too late. At whatever point you are in your journey, it is not too late to start afresh, so don't give up. The only thing is that you need to put in more work. It is doable. You can do something to change the situation, but it requires work.

Is there any relationship between hard parenting and a child becoming a bad person, such as engaging in drug abuse and always getting physical?

Yes, most times, when we flog, it affects the emotional brain. We have two parts in the brain - the emotional and thinking brain. So, when you start flogging your

child or being physical, it shuts out the thinking brain and you would not achieve your goal. Now, the emotions are acting and they are afraid and angry. Most times, those forms of discipline eventually lead to the three arrows of rebellion, resentment and being reserved. There is a state in the child's life when their peers and other adults start to become more of an influence than the parents. So, when they are constantly being treated like that, they move to other people that can validate them since they are not getting it from home. No parent should get to that point.

Usually, from zero to 10 years, parents are usually the first influence, so if you can make the most of it instead of spending time flogging, you will win your child. After that, other people influence them and they tend to hear from those people than you. So, if you have not established a bond or relationship with the children, they would feel that their friends and other adults are right, that is where the drug abuse comes in as they want to belong and feel independent. That is why you have cases of drug abuse, violence and all of that.

Do you think the government needs to come in and correct these anomalies through laws?

Already, we have started spreading the message. There are some government officials that have called some parenting coaches on how they can make parenting training mandatory. We are also doing some advocacy. For instance, it should be made mandatory that once you become a parent, you should go through an academy where you will be learning how to be a good parent. I believe we will get there if we want to see change in our society.

Kasuwarni Mata: How Kano women are turning the tide in commerce

From Salim Umar Ibrahim & Rahima Dokaji (Kano)

For over five years, Rabi Umar has been coming to Yan Kaba market on a daily basis to sell tomatoes and other vegetables. She said it was the only trade she could rely on if she was to take care of her five children, whose father died six years ago.

For Rabi, selling tomatoes and other perishable items is paying off. She said it was her sister who advised her to launch into the business five years ago after she discovered the “women area.”

“I started investing with N2,500. I used the money to buy from the big marketers and sell it at home. After I did that three times, I decided to ask a fellow woman how I could secure a spot here, and she told me that if I could come to the market as early as 6:00am she would allow me use her name to start as she’s well known by the marketers.

“I can remember that day vividly. We asked the price of pepper, and they told us it is 9,000, so I collected it as a loan and sold it for N9,500. The next day I bought two baskets of tomatoes and sold them. So that’s how I started.

“And I can confidently tell you that with this business I am doing better financially. I take care of my children,” Rabi said with a smile.

Women’s participation in trade is growing in Nigeria, albeit continuously dominated by men, especially in the northern part of the country due to some cultural and religious beliefs. In Nigeria, due to some growth bottlenecks, women comprise only 41 per cent of micro-business owners, findings show.

Daily Trust reported how young female entrepreneurs in northern Nigeria are now breaking the glass ceiling and proving their mettle by using digital platforms to engage in e-commerce business.

According to a survey conducted by the Nigerian International Trade Centre (ITC), the current regulatory environment, social bias and economic structures are significant blockages to the advancement of women in trade participation and performance in Nigeria.

Despite all these pushing and pulling factors of women participation in trade, several markets in Kano State have started dedicating sections solely for women traders that engage in businesses hitherto dominated by men. Places like ‘Yan Kaba Market and Larabar Mata are some of these markets.

Daily Trust on Sunday spoke with some of these traders, who were able to turn their sorrows into businesses, most of them after being divorced and left with children to take care of, and other additional obstacles they faced as women in the community.

Yan Kaba is an ancient market in Kano, where groceries and a variety of food stuff, either bulk purchase or small quantity, are sold. It is situated at Nasarawa Local Government Area. It is also a market where thousands of locals and foreigners



■ A cross section of women at the market

buy and sell.

Hajiya Fatima, a divorcee, is a trader at Yan Kaba, and she told Daily Trust on Sunday how hardship and responsibility drove her to the market.

“I started this business after I was divorced and left with children to take care of. Even before I got married, I used to come here and buy tomatoes and pepper to sell at home, but after the divorce I decided to find a spot here and continue my business.

“What I and the rest of us (women traders) normally do is to collect groceries from the big marketers without paying, then sell it by adding a small profit on top, then pay them back. It is actually the reason I chose this particular business as it doesn’t require much capital. Sometimes you can even owe the marketers for a long period of time, and pay at your convenient time.

“They (marketers) are very understanding and sympathetic. And it is not just the marketers, even

the male buyers usually buy from us even if they initially have no such intention because we are women doing something that was men’s business”, said Fatima.

How women built a mega market in Kano community

Larabar Mata is a biweekly women market that opens on Wednesdays and Saturdays. It was gathered that the market originally started when a leprosy hospital was

This market has impacted the economy of not just the state, but the country in general, as unlike before, more than 2,000 people, both men and women, come here weekly to buy things



■ A woman displays tomatoes at the market

built in the area. It usually opens on Mondays and later moved to Wednesdays.

So, when the local women realised the crowd gathering around the hospital, they started selling food to the patients and doctors. That’s where the market gets its name ‘Larabar Mata,’ which translates as “women’s Wednesday.”

But despite being majorly a female market, the chief and head of the market is a man.

Rabi Hasan Zara, the chief and head of Larabar Mata market, told Daily Trust on Sunday that years later, it was decided that since the market was developing, and more people were recognising it, it should be registered as an official weekly market.

“Although from the beginning, only food items like cooked cassava, moringa and peanut bars (known locally as kulikuli) are sold, now almost everything ranging from household items, to cooking oil, children’s clothing, to food stuff, among others, are sold.

“This market has impacted the economy of not just the state, but the country in general, as unlike before, more than 2,000 people, both men and women, come here weekly to buy things. You can even see for yourself how people have already started purchasing shops, not just stalls,” he said.

He said the major challenge they faced was how the government did not recognise Larabar Mata as a big market like Wambai or Kwari, thus never offering assistance to them.

“If you see the number of people earning their daily bread here you would wonder what would become of them and their family if the market collapsed. What will the government do with them? I am saying this is

because there are more poor people here. This place was originally owned by Audu Bako people, they sold it to the government, who sold it to companies and the companies sell it to people.

“Now, the challenge is that those poor people don’t have enough money to buy a shop or stall because they are very ordinary traders. So, what we want the government to do is come up with a project like Yan Tebura Mall like the ones in Kantin Kwari market in the remaining unsold spots.

“The government should know that we are very organised, to the extent that we form committees and meet regularly to discuss how we can get the traders that are selling things outside the market to come back inside. I promised them that I would talk to the company to accommodate them pending the time they sell the places,” he added.

Challenges for the female traders

Hajiya Fatima said one of the major challenges they faced was uncertainty as sometimes it is profitable and sometimes not.

“It depends on the number of buyers. And like we all told you, it is not that we have huge investments. Most of the time we get transportation fare after selling the goods, if not, we borrow it from fellow marketers and pay when we have the chance,” she said.

Many other women in this market are now taking a cue, venturing into daily trading of vegetables in order to ease their suffering and meet up with their day-to-day activities and demands.

But they said there were challenges mostly associated with the current high cost of living and uncertainty.

FACTCHECK

In partnership with
Centre for Democracy Development (CDD)

Nigerian elections 2023: How influencers are secretly paid by political parties

By Chiagozie Nwonwu, Fauziyya Tukur & Yemisi Oyedepo

A BBC investigation has discovered that political parties in Nigeria are secretly paying social media influencers to spread disinformation about their opponents ahead of general elections in February.

The BBC's Global Disinformation Team has spoken to whistle-blowers working for two of Nigeria's political parties, and prominent influencers who have described it as "an industry".

The whistle-blowers say parties give out cash, lavish gifts, government contracts and even political appointments for their work.

We changed their names to protect their identity. "Yemi" is a prominent strategist and "Godiya" a politician.

"We've paid an influencer up to 20m naira (\$45,000; £37,000) for delivering a result. We've also given people gifts. Other people prefer to hear: 'What do you want to do in government, be a board member, be a special assistant?'" says Godiya.

Reconstruction with an actor of the interview with Godiya

"Godiya", a politician from one of Nigeria's parties, says influencers have been paid up to \$45,000 for delivering a result

Situation rooms are commonplace in the run-up to an election. It's where political parties strategise, develop plans and monitor their campaigns' success. But in the rooms the whistle-blowers described to us, there was another function: following how false narratives assigned to influencers were performing.

Strategist Yemi says fake stories are developed to improve their candidates' chances: "You can deliberately misinform in a suitable way for you."

The BBC has spoken to multiple influencers who have confirmed that payment in exchange for false political posts is widespread.

One influencer who asked not to be named - with almost 150,000 Facebook followers - told us he is paid by political parties to post completely false stories about political opponents. He says he does not do it openly but rather plants false stories through other micro-influencers he hires.

Separately, Rabi'u Biyora is a major influencer known for supporting the governing All Progressives Congress (APC) party.

He told us he was "wooed" by an opposition party to stop promoting the APC's candidate, and give his support to their candidate instead.

Posts on his Facebook timeline confirm he did just that. He told us he did not receive gifts of any kind to do so. But we discovered a Facebook post from 2019 in which he said he received a car and money from a party in exchange for his support on social media.

We put this finding to him, but he stopped responding to us.

Tactics

With an estimated 80 million Nigerians online, social media plays a huge role in national debates about politics. Our investigation uncovered different tactics used to reach more people on Twitter. Many play on divisive issues such as religious, ethnic and regional differences.

In July, influencers widely shared posts associating Kashim Shettima, the APC's candidate for vice-president, with members of the Islamist militant group Boko Haram.

This false narrative gained momentum on Twitter and was shared thousands of times, spilling onto WhatsApp and other platforms.

Using reverse image search, we found that those in the picture with Mr Shettima were nomadic Fulani parents whose children he had enrolled in secular schools in 2017, not members of Boko Haram.

Tweet associates APC vice presidential candidate Kashim Shettima with Boko Haram; instead he was having a meal with Fulani parents

A reverse image search revealed that the men were nomadic Fulani whose children Mr Shettima had enrolled in western schools in 2017 and not Boko Haram members.

A month later, influencers promoted a claim without evidence that Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi was linked to, and following orders from, the Indigenous People of Biafra (Ipub) - a separatist movement designated in Nigeria as a terror group. His party denies this.

Those who shared this information included Reno Omokri - special assistant to former opposition President Goodluck Jonathan - who has more than two million followers on Twitter.

When approached for a comment, Reno Omokri said he stands by his accusations, but insists he has not been paid by the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) to campaign on their behalf.

Meanwhile, false claims that the PDP presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, fell ill and was rushed out of the country have been shared several times on Twitter.

Godiya, the politician we interviewed, says political parties tell influencers to elicit as much emotion as they can with their paid posts.

"We use images that may not even be relevant to the story we are trying to spin. We can take pictures from East Africa in the 1990s in warzones and attach them to a tweet about how my ethnic group is being killed. When people get emotional they retweet, they like, and it gets traction," she says.

According to the whistle-blowers, the hired influencers are sometimes given an idea that they should frame in their own words. At other times, they are given the actual tweets that need to be published at specific times.

They say influencers are paid based on the number of followers they have. They also say payment happens mostly in cash to avoid a paper trail.

Moral compass

It is not illegal for political parties to hire social media influencers in Nigeria, but spreading disinformation on social media is a breach of the country's laws and Twitter's policy.

The BBC has asked Nigeria's main political parties, APC, PDP, and the Labour Party, about the whistle-blowers' allegations. They did not reply to our request for comment.

Men listening to radio

False messages tend to spill offline - travelling from Twitter to news programmes, becoming real conversations on the streets of Nigeria

In response to our findings, Twitter has taken down some of the accounts we reported to them and said it had a responsibility to protect electoral conversations from interference, manipulation, and false information.

However, there are concerns about the platform's capacity to tackle misinformation in Africa after Elon Musk's takeover of the company, when its continental headquarters in Ghana was closed and nearly all its staff fired.

The BBC has reached out to Twitter again after these changes, but received no response.

Idayat Hassan, director at the Centre for Democracy and Development, says the activities of these influencers amounted to "political interference".

"It is undermining trust in democracy, undermining trust in the electoral system, and it is instigating conflict," she says.

But politician Godiya sees it a different way, and defends the tactic: "It is a game. Somebody had to win, and God help me, I will not be on the losing side."

Culled from BBC





STATES

NIGER

You are an iconic change-maker, Ngige hails Anyaoku at 90

By Rosemary Etim Bassey

The Minister of Labour and Employment, Sen. Chris Ngige has extolled the former Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, as a colossus whose profound attainments and illuminating career in global embassy, elected an iconic change maker.

A statement by his Media Office, yesterday in Abuja, described Chief Anyaoku as an institution, whom generations of Nigerians will look back on in history as an enigma in exemplary citizenship and diplomacy.

Ngige said, "You are a great son of Nigeria who is eminent on all counts and whose name is a foreword in the book for excellent citizenship. You are a change maker whose example provides a veritable counterpoise to the socio-economic and political uncertainties that conspire against Nigeria today."

The statement added that all through his career, first in the federal civil service from where he joined the Commonwealth Secretariat, rising to become the Deputy Secretary General and then, two term Secretary General, first black man ever to achieve such, to becoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Second Republic, Chief Anyaoku distinguished himself.

BENUE

Naira redesign deadline: CBN introduces cash swap for rural dwellers

From Hope Abah Emmanuel, Makurdi

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on Saturday introduced CBN Cash Swap Programme to enable rural dwellers meet the deadline for the exchange of their old naira notes for new ones.

The Director of the Financial Markets Department of the CBN, Dr Angela Shere-Ejembi, who led the team to Benue State on the nationwide awareness/sensitization programmes for speedy collection of the new notes, dropped the hint in Makurdi.

Shere-Ejembi stated that the CBN Cash Swap

Programme would commence in Rural/Underserved Areas on Monday, January 23 as part of its sustained awareness campaign to enforce speedy collection of the new notes at CBN branches by the Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) and mandated issuance of the new notes through Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) to ensure distribution is fair, transparent and evenly spread across the country.

The CBN official added, "The old N1000, N500, and N200 notes can be exchanged for the newly redesigned notes and/or the existing lower denominations (N100, N50, and N20, etc) which remain legal tender."

TARABA

Monies for APC mega rally hijacked – Campaign coordinator

From Magaji Isa Hunkuyi, Jalingo

Coordinator of Tinubu/Shettima Presidential Campaign Council for Southern Taraba, Chief David Sabo Kente, has alleged that some politicians in the party at the state level have hijacked the funds meant for the presidential campaign rallies in the state to frustrate the success of the campaigns.

Kente, who disclosed this at a rally organized for the zone at Wukari, said some of the party stakeholders had to task themselves to make sure that the zonal rally held.

He maintained that the Tinubu/Shettima mega rally scheduled to hold in Jalingo on January 20 was postponed because the party still does not have a gubernatorial candidate in the state by virtue of the pending litigations at the Supreme Court.

"We taxed ourselves to raise money for this rally because the money the state was given for presidential rally has been hijacked. We love our party and we will do everything humanly possible to work for the victory of the party," he said.

Meanwhile, the Aku Uka of Wukari, Manu Ishaku Adda Ali, has called on politicians to conduct themselves in manners that would foster unity and development rather than create chaos and destruction.

The paramount ruler commended Chief David Sabo Kente for his effort in carrying the people along in all his political activities.

EKITI

Oyebanji declares holidays for PVC collection in Ekiti

From Raphael Ogbonnaieye, Ado-Ekiti

The Governor of Ekiti State, Mr Biodun Oyebanji, has declared Tuesday, January 24, a work-free day in the state.

This is to enable eligible voters collect their Permanent Voters Cards (PVC) at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)'s designated centres.

Governor Oyebanji, in a statement by his Special Adviser, Media, Mr. Yinka Oyebode, urges eligible voters to take advantage of the holiday and collect their PVC which is their licence to participate in the forthcoming general election.

Similarly, the National Assembly candidates of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) have described their purported suspension by the party as an "unnecessary distraction".

Addressing newsmen in Ado Ekiti yesterday, the senatorial candidates,

Alhaji Lateef Ajijola (Ekiti Central) and Hon. Funso Ayeni (Ekiti North) as well as House of Representatives candidates, Otunba Yinka Akerele (Ekiti North 1), Hon. Babatunde Ajayi (Ekiti North 2), Lere Olayinka (Ekiti Central 2), Joju Fayose (Ekiti Central 1) and Mrs. Emiola Adenike Jennifer (Ekiti South 2), called on members and supporters of the party in Ekiti to remain calm, assuring that "nothing will be left undone to ensure our deserved victory in the forthcoming elections."

People gather to collect their Permanent Voters Card at Emmanuel Anglican Church Achara Layout in Enugu State on Friday

Photo: NAN



PLATEAU

Insecurity: OPSH gets new commander

From Ado Abubakar Musa, Jos

A new commander of the special task force, Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), Major General Abdulsalami Bagudu Ibrahim, has assumed command of the headquarters in Jos, Plateau State.

He took over office from Major General Ibrahim Ali, who was recently posted to Theatre Command North-East Joint Task Force Operation HADIN KAI (OPHK) as Theatre Commander.

Speaking during the handing and taking over ceremony held at the headquarters of OPSH, the outgoing commander, Major General Ali, assured that men and officers of the command have expressed readiness to cooperate with the incoming commander in achieving the aims and objectives of OPSH, especially in sustaining its kinetic and non-kinetic approaches toward achieving lasting peace.

In his remarks, the incoming commander, OPSH, Major General

Abdulsalami Bagudu Ibrahim, said achievements recorded by the outgoing commander would be sustained and improved on.

Major General Ibrahim urged men, officers and relevant stakeholders in the corridor of peace to unite against crimes within the joint operation area of the command, and charged personnel on the need to remain disciplined and continually preach peace for the advancement of society.

AKWA IBOM

FG ready to respond to health threats – Minister

From Iniabasi Umo, Uyo

The federal government has pledged its readiness to strengthen capacity and respond to health threats in the country.

The Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Emmanuel Ehanire, stated this on Saturday during the commissioning of projects at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo.

The projects commissioned include a molecular laboratory complex, a new oxygen plant, a patients' clinic complex and medical out-patients clinic. Surgical out-patients clinic, Orthopaedic out-patients clinic, genealogy, pharmacy/laboratory unit, radiology complex, renovated and re-equipped intensive care complex all funded by the federal government under COVID-19 funds.

The minister, who expressed satisfaction with the management of the hospital,

compared the trajectory of development in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital to that of one of the frontline hospitals in India.

He said the commissioned projects proved that the federal government is committed to the provision of modern equipped health care centres to citizens in fulfilment of its mandate to Nigeria.

Speaking on brain drain in the nation's health sector, the minister assured that the Federal Ministry of Health has now introduced a one-to-one policy that would allow a Chief Medical Director to make an immediate replacement of a doctor or nurse who is permanently out of service.

While speaking, the Chief Medical Director, University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Prof Ememabasi Bassey, said the infrastructural renaissance in the teaching hospital came through his initial assessment on assumption of office four years ago.

BAYELSA

No Nigeria lover will vote APC in 2023 – Diri

From Bassey Willie, Yenagoa

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has said that no person who truly loves Nigeria will vote for the All Progressives Congress (APC) considering its unimpressive performance in the last seven years in governance at the centre.

Diri, who was addressing members of the Ward to Ward for Diri/Lawrence sociopolitical group, on a solidarity visit at the government house in Yenagoa yesterday, said a vote for APC in the state is tantamount to endorsing the woeful performance of the party at the centre.

He, however, urged the people of the state to vote massively for all candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to ensure a landslide victory for the

party in the forthcoming general elections.

Represented by his deputy, Senator Lawrence Ewruhadjako, the governor stated that the ruling party in the country can no longer be trusted with political power, urging the group to work for the success of the PDP at all levels.

According to him, his administration has made giant strides in infrastructural development, education, security, sports and virtually all sectors of the economy.

Earlier, the Director General of the group, Ogidi Bara Ben, said they were satisfied with the performance of the prosperity administration in different areas, particularly the impressive progress being made in the construction of the Bayelsa Central Senatorial Road.

FEVER PITCH

UNBEATABLE SPORTS ACTION

Dani Alves is not a rapist - wife

Dani Alves' wife, Joana Sanz, has come out to support her husband following rape allegations that have seen him detained by Spanish police.

The Spanish model tied the knot with Dani Alves in 2017, and according to an interview, she believes her husband did not commit the crime he is being accused of.

Joana Sanz, the 29-year-old wife of Brazilian full-back Dani Alves, took to a televised interview to support her husband.

"I know who my husband is," she said in the interview, per Het Laatste Nieuws.

"I know how respectful he is. I have often seen women dare to try something with him while standing next to him. I don't want to know what they're trying to do



■ Dani Alves

when I'm not there."

Sanz also used her Instagram to show solidarity with her lover, posting a picture of their hands locked together with the caption

'together'.

The former Barcelona full-back has denied the allegations levied against him.

He stated that he enjoys dancing alone and does not try to bother anyone, in an attempt to refute allegations that he danced with his accuser before entering the bathroom with her.

The 39-year-old is currently in detention while Mossos d'Esquadra, the Catalan police, investigates. He is not allowed to post bail because the judge deems him a flight risk.

Dani Alves has been fired by his club Pumas UNAM following his arrest.

FCT to revive mini-stadia in 6 area councils

Insurance, Enyimba chase away points as Abia Warriors, Rivers Utd face tricky ties

By Jide Olusola

The 2023 abridged Nigeria Professional Football League season is set for week three round of football matches across some centers in the country.

Some teams have had mixed results from the previous games while some like Remo Stars have yet to taste defeat and will want to maintain the record.

Plateau United vs Enyimba

This is a heavyweight match since Plateau United, the 2017 champions and Enyimba, the eight-time champions. The game, which is set to take place today at the New Jos Stadium, will see Enyimba, who picked up three points on the road in week one, try a second away win against Plateau United, who have failed to win a game despite scoring four goals in their first two outings.

Kwara United vs Bendel Insurance

It will be a battle for Bendel Insurance to keep its perfect record and maintain their lead in Group A at the Lekan Salami Stadium today while Kwara United will seek to score their first goal of the year. It is worth noting that the Harmony Boys' last two league matches with the Group A leaders ended in goalless draws.

Remo Stars vs Shooting Stars

Remo Stars is another team with a perfect record in Group A

but are sitting in second place in this group after two wins in two games, beginning with a strong 2-0 victory in Ikenne the last time they played at home. 3SC have a tough task ahead on Wednesday against a side that has scored goal with reckless abandon as they have lost two straight games.

Abia Warriors vs Lobi Stars

Abia Warriors have also begun their season well after taking maximum points in their opening two matches. Warriors, who have scored five goals and conceded just one, welcome Benue side, Lobi Stars who has just one point so far, to their Umuahia Township Stadium today. Statistics have it that the hosts are unbeaten in the last four matches against their visitors, with three wins and a draw.

Rivers United vs Niger Tornadoes

Both sides have had a good start with the defending champions, Rivers United taken four points from their opening two matches while the Miners from Niger State have a 100 percent start following two wins in two.

Rivers United have won four of the last four matches vs Niger Tornadoes in Port Harcourt and are unbeaten in their last five meetings against Tornadoes, with three wins and two draws.

El-Kanemi vs Gombe United

From two games played, El-Kanemi Warriors have garnered three points and battle a faltering



■ Gombe United players in training ahead of their game with El-Kanemi Warriors in Maiduguri

Gombe United side who have just one point. In the last four games, the host have won two games with the latest victory in 2019.

Nasarawa United vs Akwa United

This is a tricky tie for the hosts at the New Jos Township Stadium as they have not won a game and without a point this season and will desire to bounce back with a win over Akwa United who are also yet to win a game but have a point.

The last 11 games between both sides have seen Akwa winning

5 while Nasarawa has four wins. However, the last game between both sides ended 6-1 in favour of Akwa United last year.

Bayelsa United vs Wikki Tourists

Both sides have never played against each other in the league but this should be an interesting game at the Samson Siasia Stadium, Yenogoa. The hosts have one point while the visitors remain winless after two games.

Doma United vs Dakkada

Newly promoted side, Doma United have also never played

against Dakkada FC. The visitors have amassed four points while their hosts have just a point secured from home - Pantami Stadium, Gombe.

Enugu Rangers vs Sunshine Stars

This is expected to be a tough game at the Awka City Stadium as their last two games ended in goalless draws. The hosts have not performed up to expectations having lost all two games while the Akure based side are also without a win but have drawn their own games to secure two points.

Struggling Ekong set for Salernitana loan move

By Jide Olusola with agency reports

In a bid to secure regular playing time, Super Eagles captain William Troost-Ekong is reportedly set to join Serie A club Salernitana on loan from Watford till the end of the

season.

The 29-year-old centre-back is on Watford's bench against Rotherham in the English Championship, but Sky Italia reports that he will be in Italy on Sunday for a medical ahead of the loan move.

According to reports, Watford

has agreed to take Troost-Ekong on loan from Salernitana till the end of the current campaign with a buy-back clause.

Watford have reportedly approved a loan deal for Troost-Ekong to join Serie A club Salernitana with an option to buy.

The Nigerian international has played 17 games for Watford this season across all competitions after falling out of favor earlier in the season.

Troost-Ekong will reportedly return to Italy where he played for Udinese from 2018 to 2020 when he joined Watford where

he's been ever since.

It also helps that current Salernitana coach Davide Nicola was in charge of Udinese when Troost-Ekong was there.

Salernitana are currently 16th on the Serie A table with 18 points from 18 games sitting six points above the relegation zone.

Diri offers automatic employment to Asaba 2022 medalists

From Bassey Willie, Yenagoa

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has announced a reward package for athletes who represented and won medals for the state at the 2022 National Sports Festival which was held late last year in Asaba, Delta State.

He equally announced automatic employment for those yet to be employed in the state sports council and directed the Ministry of Youth and Sports to work out the modalities.

Bayelsa placed a historic second behind Delta, surpassing its earlier best position of third recorded at the 2020 festival hosted by Edo State in 2021.

Diri, who received the state's contingent yesterday inside the Executive Council Chambers of the Government House, Yenagoa, recalled that Bayelsa won 109 gold, 104 silver and 87 bronze medals.

The governor also announced N1m each to individual gold medalists and N750,000 each for team gold.

He also rewarded individual silver medalists with N500,000



Bayelsa State governor, Senator Douye Diri, with one of the medal winning athletes

and N300,000 for team silver medalists while individual bronze medalists got N300,000 and N150,000 for each team bronze medalist.

Coaches and secretaries of gold medal teams got N500,000 each while their assistants got N300,000 each. Those in silver category N300,000 each and their assistants N200,000.

The governor also rewarded athletes without medals with

N50,000 each.

He said "You have broken your own record and now Bayelsa is the number two sporting state in Nigeria. Your record and the state's exploits in football and other sporting activities have resulted in my being nominated as the Best Sports Governor in Nigeria.

"That award will be dedicated to all of you. Let us continue to raise the image of the state like you did in Asaba."

FCT to revive mini-stadia in 6 area councils

By David Ngobua

The Director, FCT Sports Department, Mr. Luka Istifanus, has said plans are underway to revamp all mini-stadia in the six area councils of the FCT.

The Director who made the disclosure while reacting to the 9th place finish of Team FCT at the last edition of the National Sports Festival in Asaba, Delta State, said the sporting facilities, if revamped, would enhance sports development in the territory.

It will be recalled that for the first time in history, FCT finished in ninth

position on the medals table away from Abuja.

The Head, Media and Communications Unit of the Department, Vivian Onubogu, quoted the director as saying each time the sports festival was staged outside Abuja, Team FCT finished around 16th to 19th position on the medals table.

Istifanus, therefore, expressed optimism that at the next festival to be held in Abeokuta, Ogun State, FCT would target seventh place finish.

He reiterated that with early and adequate preparations, it will be possible for FCT to finish among the

top seven at the next edition of the sports festival.

"We shall do everything possible to work on the lapses we noticed at the last edition of the sports festival in Asaba. FCT won't rest on its oars in a bid to finish among the top seven in Abeokuta.

"Since we are opposed to poaching of athletes, we shall continue to organise grassroots tournaments where we would discover budding athletes.

"When discovered, our well trained coaches would groom them for national and international competitions," he assured.

Bayelsa Scrabble Star invited for world championship tourney in USA

From Bassey Willie, Yenagoa

The Bayelsa State-born scrabble gold medalist during the last National Sport Festival, Akpos Malafakumo Best, has been invited for qualifiers of the World Scrabble Championship in United States of America, (USA) slated for June this year.

Malafakumo, produced an outstanding display in the National Sports Festival amassing a total of four medals, two gold, two silver, a performance which has earned her an international invitation for the

World Scrabble Championship.

Speaking with Sports Writers in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State Capital on Saturday, Malafakumo, said she was elated with the invitation after her brilliant outing in the National Sports Festival in Asaba, Delta State, stating that she is focused on qualifying for the championship.

She noted that with Bayelsa State exploit in sports in the last three years, she believes that qualifying for the showpiece would further give the State global attention that the state is enjoying, assuring Bayelsans of a sterling

outing in the championship.

According to her, the preparation for the next National Sports Festival in Abeokuta, Ogun State has commenced in earnest, pointing out that her target was to go beyond two gold, two silver which she won in the edition 21st in Asaba.

Malafakumo who hails from Peretorugbene in Ekeremor Local Government Area of Bayelsa state was crowned the best female scrabble player in the first Governor Diri Scrabble championship in 2021.

P' Harcourt festival: Strata Base, Bob Track, Navy, Sidafeco sweep stakes

By Ernest Ekpenyong

The prestigious 2023 Port Harcourt International Polo Tournament ended with a thrilling climax last weekend with home teams led by Strata base, Wildden Aviation, Bob Tract and Sidafeco Ventures and the Navy and sweeping top laurels.

After seven days of bumper polo actions pitting top teams with all the big names in the noble game of kings and professionals from Europe, Port Harcourt Bob Track and Strata Base

Group teams emerged winners and runners-up champions, carting home the event's biggest laurel, the King Diette-Spiff Cup and the General Hassan Katsina Cups respectively.

As the biggest sporting festival in the oil rich Niger Delta region, the polo fiesta lived up to its cutting edge thrills and excitements, with The Nigerian Navy successfully defending the T.Y Danjuma Cup, while David Sikpa's Sidafeco Ventures team left the loudest roar, finishing runners-up.

Polo Royals also reported that the Naval contingent who threw in two fortified teams into the polo rumble, added a second title for effect, defeating Port Harcourt Paragon in a fiercely fought final to clinch the Lulu Briggs Cup.

The 2023 polo festival also threw up Wildden Aviation team as the proud winners of the glittering King T.J.T Princewill Cup, with visiting Lagos Awolowo team pivoted by Funsho George carting home runners-up laurels.

SPORTING VERDICT

DAVID NGOBUA

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May away victories in 2023 NPFL flow ceaselessly

As the 2023 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), abridged season enters Week 3 today, the desire of many football stakeholders no doubt is for the fair officiating and the resultant away victories recorded so far to continue unhindered. Some people may rightly say it is too early in the day to give the referees a pass mark but we have to encourage those who are doing their best to make a difference.

Without doubt, the professionalism exhibited so far by some of the referees is responsible for the history that has been made. Since the inception of professional football league in Nigeria in 1972, this is the first time that the opening week has produced four away wins and four away draws. It's simply unprecedented.

It will be recalled that the official opening match of the current season ended in favour of Bendel Insurance who shocked Akwa United 2-0 at the 'Nest of Champions' in Uyo. By the time the remaining nine matches in both Group A and B were played, three more away victories were recorded. Niger Tornadoes shocked Wikki Tourists 2-0 in Bauchi, Enyimba edged Nasarawa United 2-1 in Jos while Rangers lost 0-1 at home to Abia Warriors. Infact, only two clubs, Rivers United and Remo Stars won their home matches.

Interestingly, Week Two matches too were not concluded without an away win as the only privately owned and true professional club in the NPFL, Remo Stars, travelled far north to beat Gombe United 1-0. As a matter of fact, it was the first home defeat for Gombe United in three years. That enviable record was shattered by the youngsters from Ikenne. The away win by Remo Stars was complimented by three away draws as Akwa United forced Enyimba to a 0-0 draw in Aba, Kwara United also earned a point in a 0-0 draw with their 'landlords' 3SC in Ibadan and Rivers United forced Sunshine Stars to a 1-1 draw in Akure.

As said earlier, the away victories and draws we are talking about wouldn't have been possible without the fair officiating by most of the referees that we have seen in action so far. It will be recalled that when he inaugurated the newly constituted Referees Appointment Committee, the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) president, Ibrahim Gusau, charged the football arbiters to be fair and firm in their decisions as he warned sternly that it will never be business as usual. By that statement, Gusau only confirmed the already known fact that most Nigerian referees indulge in dubious practices with the whistle.

However, the results recorded so far in the 2023 NPFL season are indications that the men who had become cogs in the wheel of progress are ready to repent. But truth be told, if not for the wise and selfless decision by the Hon. Gbenga Elegbeleye led Interim Management Committee (IMC) to take away the payment of referees indemnities from the clubs, Gusau's vow to flush out the bad eggs among the 'gentlemen of the whistle' would have made no difference. For now, based on the arrangement with GTI Investment, one of the sponsors of the league, we are told referees' entitlements are paid directly into their bank accounts even before they arrive at their match venues. This has given the referees the audacity to take courageous decisions.

As a matter of fact, it is still difficult to understand what the defunct League Management Company (LMC) was thinking when it handed over the payment of referees indemnities to the clubs. By that senseless decision, the league title literally became an article for the highest bidder. It became so easy for matches to be bought because referees were easily compromised. Those who paid the piper dictated the tune.

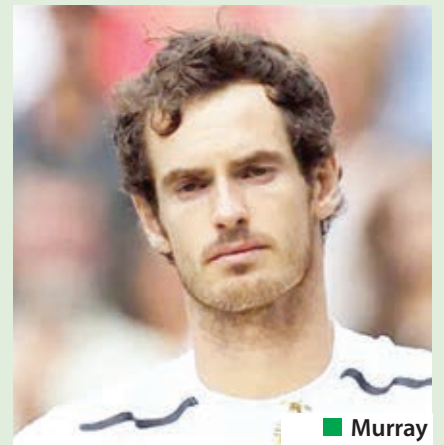
Therefore, for finding a way to stop clubs from having total control over referees, the IMC has solved almost half of the problems that have continued to make nonsense of past efforts to reposition the NPFL. Clubs are beginning to believe that away victories are possible. It is necessary to reiterate that once the win at home by all means syndrome is abolished, the standard of the league will naturally improve.

Indeed, it was so frustrating for most clubs that suffered broad daylight robberies in the hands of match officials who had collected 'egunje'. At the same time, there was constant bloodbaths at match venues where referees collected bribes but failed to deliver to specifications.

Well, it is said to whom much is given, much is expected. Therefore, having been liberated from their oppressors, Nigerian football referees must prove to everyone that their poor outings in the past seasons were as a result of lack of motivation. They have started well this season but if they still return to the bad habits that have denied them recognition and match appointments by FIFA and CAF, everyone will conclude that they are incurably pathetic. At the same time, they must not manufacture away wins for clubs in order to be seen to be providing a level playing field.

Nevertheless, for the referees to continue to fair and just in the discharge of their duties, they must be provided with a conducive environment, which can't be achieved without the cooperation of the clubs. League football is like a marathon race so along the way, desperation will set in for some clubs. Those who want to win the title will become desperate to scoop as many points as possible and those faced with relegation would show even more hunger for points to beat the drop. At that time, supporters of such clubs would have little or no regard for fairplay. All they would want would be nothing but victory by hook or crooked means. It is at that time that we would know the true colours of the clubs and the referees. For now, let the away victories continue to flow.

SPORT ROUND-UP



■ Murray

Battling Murray succumbs to Australian Open defeat

Andy Murray is out of the Australian Open after eventually losing to Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut in a valiant display where he struggled to move. Former world number one Murray finished his second-round match at 4 am on Friday and, returning to court 39 hours later, was beaten 6-1 6-7 (7-9) 6-3 6-4.

The 35-year-old Scot, who had career-threatening hip surgery in 2019, was the last Briton to fall in the singles.

Murray left everything out on the court before succumbing to the man who famously beat him at the 2019 Australian Open in what the three-time Grand Slam champion feared would be the final match of his career.




■ Lowry

Lowry in three-way tie for Abu Dhabi lead

Shane Lowry, the highest-ranked player in the field at the Abu Dhabi Championship, justified his top billing by climbing to the top of a stacked leaderboard yesterday.

The Irishman, ranked 20th in the world and winner of the 2019 British Open, carded a third round six-under par 66 to share the lead at 13-under par 203 with promising Australian Min Woo Lee (66) and a resurgent Italian Francesco Molinari (69).

Lowry jumped up the leaderboard after a holed-out second shot for an eagle on the par-4 sixth hole, and then made five birdies and a bogey to stay there.



But it is in the House of Representatives, where an Ad hoc Committee on the Probe of Recovered Looted Funds and Assets of Government (2002-2020) is doing some authoritative public digging.

Is the House of Reps for sale or rent?

Preface: In February 2016, nine months after Major General Muhammadu Buhari assumed rulership of Nigeria, Justice Mohammed Idris of the Federal High Court made perhaps the most significant order on a government since the return of civil rule in 1999: account for all loot recovered, and publish the information on a dedicated website.

The judge ruled that all governments during the period had "breached the fundamental principles of transparency and accountability" and ordered that Buhari and his successor governments "account fully for all recovered loot."

The court described the failure or refusal of the government to disclose the detailed information and to publish such information widely as a breach of the fundamental principles of transparency and accountability and violates the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act.

Predictably, the Buhari government, despite shouting from the rooftops daily about how much it was "combating corruption," and serving the rule of law, disobeyed the order.

In July 2017, another court ordered the Buhari government to publish a list of the high-ranking public officials from whom it had recovered public funds since it assumed office, and how much it had recovered from them.

Justice Hadiza Rabi'u Shagari was ruling in a Freedom of Information suit brought by the by Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP). The court stated that the Buhari government owed the legal debt to "tell Nigerians the names of all suspected looters of the public treasury past and present."

The following day, Abubakar Malami, the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation, announced that the government would carry out the order.

I declared my doubt. Subsequently, Mr. Malami, in response to another Freedom of Information request by SERAP, confessed. He said his government had "no records of the exact amount of public funds stolen by a former military head of state, Sani Abacha, and no records of the spending of about \$5 billion recovered loot for the period between 1999 and 2015."

By that statement, Malami confirmed that until Buhari assumed office, about \$5 billion had been recovered. Think about that for a moment: \$5bn.

Buhari commenced his seventh year in office yesterday, but we now know that his government has been the beneficiary of at least another \$700 million in the past four years. That figure was disclosed mid-month by Malami himself.

That figure would include the \$308 million repatriated in January 2020 by the US and the Island of Jersey.

It would also be recalled that in the terms of that repatriation, the Buhari government committed to spending the money specifically on three pieces of infrastructure: the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, the Abuja-Kano Road, and the Second Niger Bridge.

Last week, the old question, first asked in President Olusegun Obasanjo's second term, returned, as it became clear that we are now confronting the repatriation—and possible re-looting—of at least \$6bn: "What have you done with the recovered funds?"

The Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, challenged the government, as did SERAP, which urged Buhari to "urgently direct Mrs Zainab Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning to disclose spending details of the \$700 million...including the list and location of projects completed with the money, as well as details of the contractors that executed the projects."

But it is in the House of Representatives, where an Ad hoc Committee on the Probe of Recovered Looted Funds and Assets of Government (2002-2020) is doing some authoritative public digging.

Among the ear-popping revelations so far: Minister of Finance, Zainab Ahmed admitted to the federal government's manipulation of recovered loot and borrowing from it without legislative authorization.

The Accountant-General of the Federation (OAGF) was unable to explain "discrepancies and other infractions" in the remittances of recovered funds supposedly made by his office to the Central Bank, including one of about €5 million.

The OAGF approved the disbursement of funds from the recovery accounts without the authority of the National Assembly.

Discrepancies in the records of recovered assets presented by various government agencies, for instance, differences cited by committee member Adejoro Adeogun in the number of vessel the EFCC handed over to Malami's office, "[but] the navy gives a different number and you have a different number — the same items, different inventories, different figures."

The NNPC stashed \$60 billion of public funds in the US, the Prosecutor of the Special Presidential Panel on Asset Recovery (SPPAR), Tosin Ojaomo, alleging that his panel's efforts to recover the funds were frustrated by Malami, who confiscated the this and many other case files.

Ojaomo, who submitted over 20 documents in support of his claims, alleged the discovery of

an expensive hotel in Enugu State belonging to an official of the Petroleum Equalization Fund (PEF) as well as N2.2 billion in his personal bank accounts.

Ojaomo also testified that in one instance, the Auditor-General of the Federation (AuGF) withdrew N10 billion in two tranches from the coffers of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), a case also allegedly frustrated by AGF Malami's sitting on the files.

The CBN illegally paid N2 billion to Malami from recovered loot, the panel citing a CBN a letter for the release following Malami's request, as well as another in which the AGF requested payment of approved solicitors' fees.

And if you really wanted some sense of the chaos and calumny in the Buhari government, the market to go is the Ad hoc committee. Take the case of ex-Delta State governor, ex-convict James Ibori for instance.

This week, the federal government announced the receipt from the UK of £4.2 million loot recovered from he and his associates.

Malami celebrated it as "a demonstration of the recognition of [sic] reputation Nigeria earns through records of management of recovered stolen Nigerian stolen in the execution of public oriented projects."

The AGF said the money would [again!] be used to fund the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, the Abuja-Kano Road, and the Second Niger Bridge.

But at the House hearing on Tuesday, OAGF Ahmed Idris announced that the money had been paid to the Delta State government. "Any recovery that is arising from any state, goes to that state," he explained.

That was not just news, it was a shock. Only two months ago, Malami had announced on television that the money was federal property as the law that had been breached by Ibori was a federal law and the repatriation a national transaction.

"All the processes associated with the recovery were consummated by the federal government and the federal government is, indeed, the victim of crime and not sub-national," he said.

What had changed in two months? Apparently, not much: within hours, the Delta State government announced that it had not been paid the money.

The following day, OAGF was back at the microphone, "explaining" that contrary to his statement 48 hours earlier, "the issue of the £4.2m Ibori loot has not been properly resolved."

This confirms that Buhari, Malami and Ahmed have been as manipulative of accounts they did not disclose, as they have of their secretive selling of recovered physical assets.

Final question then: will the House complete this assignment? Or will it sell out?

This column welcomes rebuttals from interested government officials.

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