

Saturday, January 28, 2023
Rajab 6, 1444 AH

STILL IN CAPTIVITY ▶ 11 SCHOOLGIRLS OF FGC, BIRNIN YAURI **592 DAYS** 1 STUDENT OF BETHEL BAPTIST HIGH SCHOOL, KUJAMA **564 DAYS**

ENTERTAINMENT



Funding is Kannywood's nightmare – Mansur Sadiq

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NEWS

Faltering North-East NPFL clubs still buzzing with fans



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New naira notes:

Pressure mounts on CBN to extend Jan 31 deadline

- Ganduje, Northern elders, MURIC, others decry untold hardship
- Cash crisis hits states over scarcity of new notes
- Touts make brisk business, sell new notes to willing buyers

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Oyetola wins at tribunal as Adeleke heads to Appeal Court

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COVER



Families of slain journalists recount travail, call for justice

- Children grapple with sorrow
- Police fail to provide update on cases
- CJP, NUJ condemn murders, demand justice

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Passengers stranded as Kaduna-Abuja bound train derails

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INSIDE POLITICS

Kano gov'ship election: Ganduje, Kwankwaso, Shekarau in supremacy battle

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QUOTE UNQUOTE

“Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.”
— T. S. Eliot



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it

— Aristotle



PHOTO OF THE DAY



■ Sympathizers' watch as a building burns along Patrick Bokkor Crescent in Jabi, Abuja yesterday.

Photo: Ikechukwu Ibe

PRAYER TIMES

City	Fajr	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghrib	Ishah
ABUJA	5:40	12:47	4:04	6:33	7:38
ENUGU	5:39	12:51	4:07	6:31	7:39
KADUNA	5:41	12:48	4:04	6:33	7:38
KANO	5:38	12:43	3:59	6:28	7:33
KATSINA	5:42	12:50	4:06	6:28	7:36
LAGOS	5:58	1:03	4:19	6:52	7:57
MAIDUGURI	5:20	12:27	3:43	6:10	7:15
P/HARCOURT	5:43	12:50	4:06	6:37	7:42
SOKOTO	5:52	01:00	4:16	6:43	7:48

Source: Islamic Research and Timing Organisation, Kaduna.

WEATHER

STATES	DAY	NIGHT
Abuja	36	26
Kaduna	36	24
Kano	33	22
Katsina	33	22
Maiduguri	35	21
Jos	31	18
Ibadan	37	27
Enugu	38	27
Port-Harcourt	30	22
Lagos	34	28

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INEC holds BVAS mock accreditation Feb 4

Abbas Jimoh

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said that it would conduct a mock accreditation of registered voters in 436 polling units (PUs) nationwide, on February 4 using its Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machines.

The INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, said this during a meeting with Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) yesterday in Abuja.

He said that 436 Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machines would be deployed for the exercise.

“As you are already aware, the commission has taken delivery of the BVAS machines for the election. We have also dutifully tested each machine in our offices nationwide to ensure its functionality.

“The next step is to conduct field tests across the country involving actual voters. For this reason, and in readiness for nationwide deployment, the commission is conducting a mock accreditation of voters similar to what was done ahead of the recent Ekiti and Osun states governorship elections.

“The mock accreditation will hold on Saturday 4th February 2023 in 436 polling units nationwide. Twelve polling units have been designated in each state of the federation and

four in the FCT on the equality of the country’s 109 senatorial districts for the exercise.

“A comprehensive list of the polling units, including their names and PU Code numbers, as well as their distribution by State, Senatorial District, Local Government and Registration Area (Ward) will be uploaded to the commission’s website shortly,” Yakubu said.

He urged registered voters in the affected PUs to appear on the scheduled date with their PVCs for the mock exercise.

He said doing so will help to reassure the public of the robustness of the INEC system and to strengthen its processes ahead of the general election.

He said, “Civil society organisations, the media and the general public are welcome to observe the process. At the end of the exercise, the 436 BVAS machines involved will be reconfigured before they are deployed for the General Election.”

The INEC boss also said that movement of materials for the election to various locations nationwide is being concluded and would be followed by training of officials, while ongoing consultations with stakeholders will be intensified.

“Airlifting and delivery of sensitive materials to states of the federation has gone far. Accreditation of national and international observers and the media is being finalized,” he said.

Oloyode does not operate social media accounts – JAMB

Chidimma C. Okeke

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has raised alarm over a LinkedIn account purported to be the account of the Registrar, Prof. Is-haq Oloyode, and sending friend requests to members of the public.

A statement by JAMB’s spokesperson, Dr Fabian Benjamin, said it was a ploy initiated with the sole aim of defrauding “gullible members of the public.”

“The Board wishes to state that Prof. Is-haq Oloyode does not own or operate any

social media account and neither has he asked anybody to open or manage one on his behalf,” the statement said.

He said the disclaimer became necessary in view of some unscrupulous elements, who have purportedly opened a LinkedIn account on his behalf to hoodwink unsuspecting members of the public “with their bogus claims of the erudite professor helping to network business enterprises, managing careers, providing jobs, running a research firm or connecting people with business contacts of firms or industry through the account.”

Northern elders warn against plan to interfere with elections

Philip Shimnom Clement

The Northern Elders Forum (NEF) has warned individuals planning to interfere with the conduct of credible elections and peaceful transition of power to another administration to stay off.

NEF said it has reviewed the difficult conditions under which Northerners and other Nigerians live at present as well as concerns over the security of the elections which will be conducted in February and March this year.

In a statement signed by the Director of Publicity and Advocacy of NEF, Dr Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, the elders said there are concerns over hint on the possibility that the elections may not hold, and some kind of “unconstitutional contraption

may be forced on Nigerians after May, this year.”

NEF said those who peddle the rumours point to the near-desperate circumstances under which Nigerians live.

“They suggest that difficulties simultaneously imposed by insecurity, crushing inflation, fuel scarcity, exchange of old for new currency notes and others which affect particularly poor Nigerians are deliberately contrived to inflame passions and trigger unrest which may poison the election environment or threaten its conduct.

“The Forum has no basis to support these conjectures. Nonetheless, it warns against any attempts to interfere with the conduct of credible elections and a peaceful transition to a new administration.

Money laundering: We’re yet to get court’s order for service on Atiku – Lawyer

By John Chuks Azu

A lawyer to the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council has explained that the Federal High Court in Abuja was yet to grant an application seeking leave to serve the court papers on the presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar over money laundering allegations.

John Ainetor Esq, who filed the suit on behalf of the spokesman of the counsel, Festus Keyamo (SAN) on Friday informed Daily Trust on Saturday that contrary to our previous report that the order for substituted service has been granted, it was filed seeking substituted service on Atiku through


the Atiku Abubakar Campaign Organisation at Ademola Adetokunbo Crescent, Wuse II, Abuja.

In the writ filed on January 20, Keyamo is demanding an order of the court compelling Atiku, who is the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate to provide to anti-corruption agencies such as the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB); the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) with details of a bank account belonging to a company, Marine Float, and two undisclosed companies described as Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) allegedly used for money laundering during his tenure as vice president between 1999 and 2007.

NUMBERS

COMPILED BY Abbas Jimoh


662 Nigerians reported dead, 2,430,445 displaced, 3,174 injured in 2022 floodings according to NEMA



309 Nigerians renounced their citizenship including 159 in 2022 and 150 between 2006 to 2021 September 2022 according to Federal government



1.89m International passport booklets Nigeria Immigration Service issued in 2022



3.19tn Naira properties federal government said were lost to fire incidents nationwide between 2015 and 2022



Infographics KEHINDE O. OMOTOSHO

WHOSAIDWHAT?

IN THE NEWS

Compiled by Abbas Jimoh

”

“Lack of conversations across fault-lines and primordial proclivities mean our leaders are unable to share ideas, have durable and sustained policies for long time. This prevents useful cooperation, stability and sustainability. It means that whatever best practices are in one location remain there and may die there.”

– Chief Olusegun Obasanjo
Ex-President



”

“I am concerned about the short duration handed to Nigerians to effect the change of their old notes to the new ones considering the rural dwellers who are yet to be aware of the development and the fact that the new notes were scarce.”

– Mr. Samuel Ortom
Benue State Governor



Sunday M. Ogwu, Philip S. Clement (Abuja), Maryam Ahmadu-Suka (Kaduna), Abiodun Alade (Lagos) & Salim Umar Ibrahim (Kano)

New naira notes: Pressure mounts on CBN to extend Jan 31 deadline

There has been an increased pressure on the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to extend the January 31 dateline for phasing out old N1,000, N500 and N200 notes. Relevant stakeholders are also saying the deadline is not possible because the new notes are nowhere to be found.

Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano State, the Northern Elders Forum (NEF) and the Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), among others, have added their voices for the extension of time or outright cancellation of the policy until the country is ripe.

They made the call with barely three days to the January 31 deadline as people across the country have decried untold hardship over their inability to access the redesigned naira notes from the banking hall or the Automated Teller Machines (ATMs).

Daily Trust Saturday reports that some unscrupulous officials of the CBN and commercial banks are already conniving with touts to 'sell' the new notes to willing buyers.

For instance, in Damaturu, the Yobe State capital, cash speculators hanging around banks collect N11,000 of old notes in exchange for N10,000 new notes.

The situation is the same in Kano as some CBN officials allegedly took the new naira notes to various mosques and churches for distribution to POS operatives, who would in turn distribute the money to desperate citizens who want to get rid of their old notes.

One of the POS operators, Kabiru Isaku, said, "We were asked to go the mosque in our area in Hotoro and I was among the first set of people to be there.

"We were told they would come with N10million to share for us. We waited until around noon. And when they shared around N700,000, they said we should go to mosque and come back later; and when we returned, we discovered that they had left. The whole thing is a racket," he said.

Another trader in Hadejia, Jigawa State, Sajo Aliyu, said, "It is an outright violation of what is expected. Of course, they have brought something like mobile banking to exchange the monies, but when you go with N300,000 they would only give you N10,000 of new notes and leave you with N290,000 of old notes. I don't understand what is happening," he said.

At the 20th edition of the Daily Trust Dialogue on Thursday, a professor of Political Science and member, Governing Board, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Jibrin Ibrahim, said the ambitious CBN would continue to face challenges.

He said the Nigerian Security Printing and Minting facility did not have the capacity to meet the currency needs of Nigeria, hence the paucity of funds in banking halls and ATMs.

Daily Trust Saturday learnt from credible sources that although the CBN wants to reduce



■ Customers queuing up to withdraw from a bank ATMs in Jabi, Abuja yesterday

the over N3trillion in circulation to about N1trn, they were able to produce only about N200billion new notes so far.

Chaos everywhere

Visits to various ATMs in Abuja, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos indicates long queues where the naira is available.

Daily Trust Saturday observed that most of the ATMs in the state were out of cash before noon during a visit to Ikeja, Agege and Surulere.

Banks also witnessed crowds of customers who wanted to deposit old notes. Most banking halls in the city were crowded as customers rushed to beat the January 31 deadline.

A staff of one of the banks confided in our correspondent that they didn't have new naira notes to load in the machine as instructed by the CBN.

"We can't put old notes on the machine because of sanctions from the CBN," he said.

A businessman, Kayode Adeoye, who said he needed cash to embark on a journey to Ibadan, lamented, "We are in a pathetic situation in this country. I couldn't get cash in the bank and at PoS operators. I am supposed to go to Ibadan to see my family for the weekend," he said.

Daily Trust Saturday observed that most shop owners have stopped collecting old notes, thereby turning back potential customers. The old notes were also rejected by commercial bus drivers.

Similarly, a number of ATMs within the Kaduna metropolis have been besieged by customers in an attempt to withdraw the new naira notes ahead of the deadline.

Our correspondent gathered that scarcity of the new notes is causing undue hardship on

customers, who have to spend many hours on the queue to withdraw money, while some end up not withdrawing as the money loaded in the machine is exhausted.

Some of the banks visited were congested as customers were seen frantically trying to deposit their old naira notes. This, our correspondent gathered, presented an opportunity for bank officials to take advantage of desperate customers.

A customer in one of the banks visited told our correspondent that officials in some banks refused to change the old notes until they were given bribe.

Muhammad Garba said he was at the bank yesterday to change his old notes of N1. 8 million but was asked to pay N60,000 by officials of the bank before his money would be changed.

He said he had no option but to pay the money for fear of losing his money since the deadline was only days away.

Ganduje, Northern Elders call for extension

The Kano State governor, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje has sympathised with the people in the state over the prevailing hardship as a result of CBN's new policy on redesigned naira notes which went into circulation last week.

The state commissioner for information, Malam Muhammad Garba, who made this known in a statement on Friday, said the government was deeply moved by the attendant consequences of the policy, which has been affecting the people, especially poor Nigerians, due to its timing and short transition period.

Ganduje assured that the state government was making frantic efforts to collaborate with other stakeholders to see to the extension

of the transition period set for the total withdrawal of the old and issuance of enough new naira notes to the people.

Similarly, the Northern Elders Forum (NEF) has called for an extension of the January 31 deadline set by the CBN for the cessation of old naira denominations as legal tender.

In a statement signed by the Director of Publicity and Advocacy of NEF, Dr Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, the elders noted that the current difficulty and hardship Nigerians are going through over the cashless policy warrants that the apex bank should extend the deadline.

The Forum noted, "Whatever its benefits, it cannot be of value if it destroys many aspects of the economy or alienates already hard-pressed citizens further."

The chairman of the Sokoto State chapter of the Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), Muhammad Mansur Aliyu, a lawyer, in his remark appealed to the federal government to extend the deadline by at least two weeks.

He said businesses in Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States were almost grounded as a result of the January 31 deadline, as well as a refusal to accept the old notes in commercial transactions out of fear of possible inability to deposit the old ones in commercial banks.

Kano lawyer asks court to restrain Emefiele over deadline

A Kano-based lawyer, Sanusi Umar Sadiq, has asked a Federal High Court in Kano to restrain the CBN governor, Godwin Emefiele from implementing the currency swap deadline on January 31.

The lawyer, in the motion for the enforcement of his fundamental rights under sections 44 and 46 of the Nigerian Constitution of 1999 and Article 14 of the African

Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and others, the lawyer said that making the N200, N500 and N1000 notes to cease to be legal tenders by January 31 would violate his fundamental rights, and therefore, unlawful and unconstitutional.

The legal luminary contended that the arbitrary stoppage of the existing notes, which are largely in circulation, would cripple the economy and further entrench poverty among Nigerians, as well as throw the country into chaos.

He wants the court to compel the CBN and its governor "to follow and comply with the global best practices for changing currency, whereby the old ones are gradually withdrawn from circulation by not releasing them to the public once they get deposited in banks within a reasonable time that shall not be less than six months."

Banks extend operations to Sunday to receive old notes

As the deadline draws closer, First Bank Plc has notified its customers that it would open its branch on Saturday and Sunday

Zenith also joined the fray of banks to open on Sunday between the hours of 9am to 2pm to receive old notes.

Other banks who have indicated interest to provide Sunday operations include FCMB, Guaranty Trust Bank, Wema, Union Bank,

January 31 deadline not feasible - Experts

A financial expert, Professor Uche Uwaleke, says the deadline of January 31 for the currency redesign is not feasible, while calling for an extension by extra two weeks.

Reacting to the development of the scarcity of new naira notes, he told *Daily Trust Saturday* that, "As much as the initiative is a positive move for the Nigerian economy, I think the deadline has become unrealistic in view of the fact that the new currency notes are still not well circulated, even in urban areas.

So, I suggest an extension by two weeks to enable the new notes reach rural communities through the agents and networks licensed by the CBN," he added.

Expressing a divergent view, a development economist, Joseph Momoh, said the forthcoming elections may be one of the reasons banks were allegedly hoarding new banknotes

He noted that with politicians' quest for cash during elections, it is possible that the CBN deliberately made the move to halt disbursement so that they would not take advantage of the situation to stockpile cash for the elections.

"As you are aware, elections are close and politicians are very smart people. If the money is made available everywhere, they may hide it to buy votes. So I suspect that the CBN is being smarter and cautious at the same time," he added.

COVER

Families of slain journalists recount travail, call for justice

- Children grapple with sorrow
- Police fail to provide update on cases
- CJP, NUJ condemn murders, demand justice

Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, no fewer than 19 journalists have been killed – mostly in questionable circumstances. *Daily Trust Saturday* tracks some of these murders, capturing the anguish of the victims' families in search of justice.



■ Bayo Ohu



■ Blessing Ohu



■ Bose Onifade



■ Gibson Godfrey Boyi



■ Mariam Isa

Afeez Hanafi

Life has not remained the same for Mrs Bose Onifade since she lost her only son, Pelumi Onifade to gruesome murder. At 20, Pelumi, a 200-level Mass Communication student at Taiye Solarin University (TASUED) in Ogun State was just starting out as a journalist with Gboa TV when he met his untimely death in the violence that erupted during the October 2020 #EndSARS protest in Lagos.

Pelumi was reportedly shot dead by policemen attached to the Lagos State Task Force, who raided the Abattoir area of the state where he had gone to interview some traders whose shops were looted by hoodlums.

More than two years after, the grief is still fresh. Aside the difficulty in getting justice, his bereaved mother is devastated that Pelumi's corpse has not been released by the Lagos State Government for burial.

"It is only God that can judge those who killed him. In Nigeria, if you don't know people you are nothing, but I have God. He went to interview some people in the Abattoir area that day. We were looking for him, only to find his corpse at the Ikorodu mortuary. We were later told that his body had been moved from the mortuary to another one.

"I am appealing to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to intervene so that Pelumi's corpse will be released. They did a DNA test for me in 2021 at a government hospital in Ikeja to identify the corpse and promised to call me when the result was ready, but nobody has called me since then," Bose said, sobbing.

As the first child, every member of the family looked up to Pelumi as a young, promising man who would liberate the family from the shackles of poverty. This was a lofty dream the family held dear, only to be shattered unexpectedly.

"We are poor people. Schools were on holidays due to the COVID-19 lockdown and he was working in a television station to raise some funds to buy books," the grieving mother continued, trying to suppress tears.

She also said, "Pelumi was my 'husband,' friend and brother. Every day I remember him, it is a big sorrow. Before the incident happened, we were discussing my birthday and he promised that we would celebrate it, not knowing that two days to my birthday I would not see him again.

"Everything is in God's hands, but I know that if Pelumi was alive, my life would be better. I miss him so much. I relocated from my former residence because I always took ill. My dad was sick because of Pelumi's death. He didn't have a male child, so he loved him so much. He died in October 2022."

Bose said she attended a panel of enquiry set up by the state government to investigate the #EndSARS killings, including Pelumi's, but since the panel concluded its enquiry, she had not heard anything about the case.

Asked why the corpse has not been released, the Commissioner for Information and Strategy in Lagos State, Mr Gbenga Omotosho said, "The mother can go to Yaba mortuary with a proof of evidence. She should go for the DNA result.

"Regarding the #EndSARS panel, we have done almost everything the white paper (on the panel investigation) stated. But we have no power to prosecute soldiers or policemen. We have sent those cases to the federal government," Omotosho added.

One death too many

Pelumi was one of the journalists in Nigeria and across the world killed in the line of duty. Ahead of the International Human Rights Day, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) on December 10, 2022 restated the need for the international community to take concrete action to protect the safety and freedom of journalists,

saying it recorded a spike in the number of journalists killed or imprisoned in 2022.

The IFJ said it recorded 67 killings of journalists and media staff in 2022, compared to 47 in the preceding year – a reversal of the decline recorded in recent years.

Through its media freedom project, the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) tracked cases of assault on journalists, including cyber attacks, which it said imperiled journalists from performing their job effectively.

In November 2022, the Media Rights Agenda (MRA) stated that at least 19 Nigerian journalists were brutally murdered since Nigeria's return to democracy in May 1999. They include Fidelis Ikwuebe, a freelance journalist with The Guardian in Anambra State; Eneche Akogwu, a Channels TV reporter in Kano; Sam Nimfa-Jan, an NTA reporter killed in Jos; Maxwell Nashal of the Federal Radio Corporation (FRCN) in Adamawa; Precious Owolabi of Channels TV in Abuja; Titus Badejo of Naija FM in Oyo; Tordue Salem of Vanguard in Abuja, among others.

The MRA lamented that investigations and prosecution of the perpetrators were inconclusive. Bayo Ohu's case is one of many.

An assistant news editor at The Guardian, Bayo, was shot dead in his home in the Egbeda area of Lagos one Sunday morning in 2009 – right before his then 10-month-old daughter, Modesodun, who is now 14.

In what was suspected to be an assassination, the assailants only went away with his phone and laptop and didn't attack other residents within the compound. Although some suspects were arrested and paraded by the Lagos State police command, nothing has been heard of the case.

Getting closure to the tragic killing and ensuring that the perpetrators are brought to book is the least consolation Bayo's wife, Mrs

Blessing Ohu and his five children would want. However, the possibilities of achieving it narrow by the day as the police have failed to follow the case to a logical conclusion.

In May 2012, the court freed three suspects charged with Ohu's murder, on the ground that the prosecution failed to prove the case.

After searching for justice for years to no avail, Blessing said she had decided to move on with life.

"The police paraded some criminals and it was even televised. After that, I don't know what happened again. If there was any development, perhaps they would have called me, but nobody did. Everybody knows that in Nigeria, when it comes to justice, until you get it you can't be sure of it. I won't say that justice was served because I only knew they paraded some suspects.

"We all know what is supposed to be done, but I never heard that somebody was jailed because of the matter. But if the police feel that justice has been served, I leave everything to God," she remarked, solemnly.

Recalling how the murder occurred, the widow said she had to weather the storm and step in to fill the vacuum left by her husband's sudden death.

She said, "It is God that has kept us through. I would describe that day as one of the darkest parts of my life because one minute you were out happy, the next minute you were back, sad and sorrowful.

"I went to church that day, and barely 40 minutes after, I got a call. The person was screaming 'come home'. My baby was 10 months old then and I wondered what could have happened to her. As I was pondering over it, my little niece, who was staying with us, came and said armed robbers came to the house and shot my husband.

Continued on page 6

Families of slain journalists recount travail, call for justice



■ Pelumi Onifade



■ Precious Owolabi



■ Titus Badejo



■ Tordue Salem



■ Zakariya Isa

Continued from page 5

"I fainted at that moment. After I was revived and got home, his body had been taken away. There was blood everywhere. The children were very young then, so for a long time they believed that their dad travelled and would come back. Dad never came back and I kept telling them that he had gone to heaven. That was how they began to understand that he would no longer come back.

"The burden of taking care of the children is on me, but I must pick up the challenge. What I can do, I do and leave the ones I can't to God. Bayo was a loving father and husband. He was the eyes of the extended family and made sure everyone was happy."

Like Pelumi and Bayo's cases, the mystery behind the gruesome killing of Zakariyah Isa, a reporter at the Nigerian Television Authority, has remained unresolved since October 2011.

Isa was shot dead in front of his residence in Maiduguri, Borno State by some Boko Haram terrorists who reportedly accused him of spying on them for the Nigerian security authorities.

Neighbours who were alarmed by the gunshots that night reportedly caught some people suspected to have carried out the dastardly act. But that was all the family knew of the case, 11 years after.

Overwhelmed by the burden of looking after seven children, Isa's wife, 42-year-old Maryam Isa, told Daily Trust Saturday that the family had resigned to fate, believing that justice may be elusive after all.

She said, "I don't know if the security agents have arrested the people that killed my husband, and I can't tell if those caught were the killers. For me, it is past; my only prayer and hope is to get the support for my children to live well and get the best."

Maryam revealed that before the incident, they depended on Isa's income to eke out a living, noting that his death had further impoverished the family.

She said, "I will never forget the day he was killed. It was October 22, 2011, around 7pm, after the evening prayer. I was inside the house nursing Hafsat (the last child) and preparing dinner when I suddenly heard gunshots. I was scared.

"It was like a dream to me. He was buried the following day. The then Governor Kashim Shettima attended the burial. After his death, life became more difficult for us. I wanted to withdraw the children from school, but one of my late husband's colleagues in the NTA sponsored their education.

"She also bought a grinding machine for me and encouraged me to be strong. Hafsat is in Primary 5; her sister just finished junior WAEC and will be entering SS1. My son, Umar, got admission into a polytechnic, but I don't have money, so he is at home."

Children grapple with sorrow

One of Isa's children, Nufal, was enjoying

fatherly pampering when the tragedy struck. She had no inkling that the bond would be cruelly truncated.

"I miss my dad so much. Sometimes when I see my friend's fathers buy things for them, I feel sad and wish my father was alive. I think of him anytime I am alone," the 14-year-old girl disclosed.

Gibson Godfrey Boyi is in the same shoes as Nufal. He was about six months old when his father, Samson Boyi, a photojournalist at the Adamawa State-owned newspaper, *The Scope*, was killed. Samson was shot dead in 1999 by some gunmen who attacked the convoy of a former governor of the state, Malam Haruna Boni.

Gibson, now 22, grew up to know his father on photographs. He told our correspondent that his father's untimely demise threw the family into a huge financial crisis. His education and that of his five siblings is stuck after secondary school. They are now into farming to fend for themselves and their mum.

He said, "I was told about his death. I don't know my father; I only saw his pictures. His death affected us seriously. Life is very hard for us. If he was alive things would not be this bad. All of us could not proceed beyond secondary education because of funding."

He said the family had taken solace in God as they don't know anyone that could help them get justice on the matter.

"No effort to ensure justice because we don't have people who can fight for our cause. We can't tell the government what to do. But I believe that God would fight on our behalf," he added.

25 journalists killed in Sierra Leone, Ghana, others

Apart from Nigeria, in English-speaking West African countries comprising Sierra Leone, Ghana, Liberia, The Gambia and part of Cameroon, at least 25 journalists have been killed in controversial circumstances, records have shown.

According to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 18 journalists were killed in Sierra Leone between 1992 and 2022, either while covering dangerous assignments or through targeted murder. The CPJ also noted that 2067 journalists were killed globally during the period, 934 of which were directly linked to reports done by the deceased. Sadly, of the 2067 killings, 2004 cases, representing about 97 per cent, remain unresolved.

In Ghana, three journalists were killed between 2007 and 2019. They are George Abanga of Success FM, Samuel Enin of Ashh FM and Ahmed Hussein Suale, who was shot dead in Accra. Suale worked with an undercover reporter, Anas Aremeyaw Anas of Tiger Eye Private Investigations, to uncover corruption in Ghanaian football.

In another calculated murder, a Liberian journalist, Tyron Brown, 24, was killed in April 2018. A black vehicle reportedly dropped

Brown's corpse outside his home and zoomed off.

One of the most respected journalists in The Gambia, Deyda Hydara, was killed in December 2004. In July 2019, Al-Jazeera reported that an army officer admitted before a truth commission that he was involved in the act and accused former President Yahya Jammeh of ordering the journalist's murder.

"We opened fire, myself, Alieu Jen and Sana Manjang," Lieutenant Malick Jatta said at the public hearing.

"Our commander, Captain Tumbul Tamba, was communicating to the former president, Yahya Jammeh, on the phone during the operation," he said.

Jatta told the commission that his commanding officer later gave him an envelope containing dollars, which he said was a "sign of appreciation from the big man (a reference to Jammeh)," a reference to Jammeh.

In Cameroon, a freelancer, Ngota Ngota Germain, 38, was killed in April 2010, while a broadcast journalist, Samuel Wazizi, who had been imprisoned since August 2, 2019, died in detention in suspicious circumstances. Wazizi, a presenter on Chillen Media Television (CMTV), died in a military hospital in Yaoundé.

"I am deeply concerned about the circumstances surrounding the death of Samuel Wazizi," the director-general of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, had said, calling on the authorities of Cameroon to investigate the death.

Police fail to provide update on cases

Daily Trust Saturday reached out to police public relations officers in Lagos, Adamawa and Borno to find out the current status of the cases tracked by this paper, but none of them could give update for more than a week.

The Lagos police public relations officer, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, said he contacted the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department to get information on Bayo's murder but was yet to get a feedback.

When contacted in December, the police spokesperson in Adamawa, Sulaiman Nguroje, said it would be difficult to find records on the murder of Samson Boyi, which occurred in 1999.

He promised to get back as soon as he got details of the case. Subsequently, he did not pick calls from our reporter or respond to a text message sent to him.

Efforts to speak to the spokesman of the Borno command, Mohammed Shatambaya on Isa's case also proved abortive as he did not respond to phone calls and text messages.

Meanwhile, the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR) said there was the need for an overhaul of the country's criminal justice system to ensure prompt prosecution and dispensation of justice.

The CDHR president, Dr Osagi Obayuwana, observed that victims of crimes lost interest in pursuing the matter on account of delayed prosecution, and sometimes, intimidation.

He said, "The victimisation of journalists arising from the discharge of their duty to the society tends to be a matter that is perpetrated by the government – probably because they stumbled into some sensitive information which the government feels embarrassed about. We remember Dele Giwa's case, Tunde Thomson and others.

Journalists suffer unjust deprivation of their liberty for being the watchdog of the society.

"However, there is an issue of funding of the police to work effectively and commit to professional excellence. So, cases that end up being prosecuted are a very small percentage. When we have a Nigeria of our dreams that is more responsive, these issues will be resolved. Civil servants are not motivated to show commitment to excellence."

CPJ, NUJ condemn murders, demand justice

Jonathan Rozen, a senior researcher at the CPJ, said attacks against journalists in Nigeria remained a serious problem and posed huge obstacles to freedom of press entrenched in the constitution and international conventions.

He observed that too often, journalists in Nigeria experienced threat or violent attacks, and in some cases, killings, without those responsible being held accountable.

"Impunity is a major issue. What we really need to see from the authorities – those with the mandate to investigate crime against journalists and curb impunity – is the political will to act and deliver on that mandate," he told *Daily Trust Saturday*.

Rozen noted that oftentimes, authorities in Nigeria and around the world spoke of accountability, but failed to act.

"In order to curb impunity, there is a need for action for justice in these cases so that the families can receive closure on these killings," he urged.

The national president, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Chris Isiguzo, said the union would not relent in demanding justice for slain members, adding that it was working with other organisations to ensure that rights of journalists are protected.

"Where we need to engage the service of a legal practitioner, we do, but we can only do this when members of the union are involved. We continue to say that if you are a practitioner, ensure that you regularise your membership with the union so that when there is an issue, the union can take it up," he said.

Instructively, organisations like the CJID, MRA, NUJ, CPJ, CDHR and other civil society organizations, are unequivocal in their demand for protection for journalists and justice for those killed in the line of duty. They want the relevant authorities to pursue the cases to a logical end and bring the culprits to book.

This story was funded by the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development, under the Media Freedom Project, through Justice for Journalists Foundation.

Oyetola wins at tribunal as Adeleke heads to Appeal court

Afeez Hanafi

The Election Petition Tribunal in Osun State has declared Adegboyega Oyetola of the All Progressives Congress (APC) winner of the July 16 governorship election.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had declared Ademola Adeleke of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) winner of the poll.

The tribunal, which heard Oyetola's petition against Adeleke's victory, yesterday annulled the result

of the July 16 Osun governorship poll.

Justice Tetsea Kume, while delivering a majority decision declared that INEC did not comply substantially with the constitution and the provisions of the Electoral Act.

He subsequently deducted the over-voting observed from the votes scored by the candidates and declared that Oyetola won the election, having polled 314,921, while Adeleke's score came down to 290,266.

Justice Kume directed INEC to withdraw Adeleke's certificate of

return and issued another one to Oyetola who won a majority of the lawful votes.

Meanwhile, the Osun State governor, Ademola Adeleke, has described the judgement of the governorship election petitions tribunal as "a miscarriage of justice," vowing to challenge the ruling at the Court of Appeal.

Reacting to the verdict of the tribunal from his country home in Ede, Adeleke faulted the resolution of the over-voting question in favour of Oyetola, calling it "an unfair interpretation against the will of

majority of voters."

While urging his supporters to remain calm, Adeleke vowed to appeal the judgement at the Court of Appeal, insisting he remained the rightful winner of the July 16 election.

"I call on our people to remain calm. We will appeal the judgement and we are sure that justice will be done. Let our people be reassured that we will do everything possible to retain this widely acclaimed mandate," the governor said in a statement signed by his spokesman, Olawale Rasheed, said yesterday.

Reacting to the judgement, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Paul Ananaba, said the judgement could be overturned on appeal as it has a dissenting judgement, which makes it not unanimous.

But Hameed Ajibola Jimoh, a lawyer, said the tribunal had the powers to, based on evidence before it, deduct the unlawful votes and declare the person with the majority of the lawful votes as winner.

"The tribunal is right, except there are no reason or ground that the appellate would rely on to set it aside," he said.



Kaduna-Abuja bound train that derailed along Kubwa Abuja yesterday
PHOTO: Adam Umar

Passengers stranded as Kaduna-Abuja bound train derails

Chris Agabi & Adam Umar

An Abuja-bound train from Kaduna, yesterday derailed at Kubwa, a satellite town in Abuja. This is coming less than a week when another train derailed on the Warri-Itakpe train corridor.

The managing director of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), Fidet Okhiria, an engineer, confirmed the accident to our correspondent on the phone. He, however, said he didn't have much detail on the accident but there had been no fatalities reported yet.

He said he was still gathering information on the accident and would provide further details at the appropriate time.

Sources at the station told one of our reporters that the derailing occurred at a point where the rail diversion used by trains

NRC suspends operations

different axes is situated.

There was no report of any casualty as gathered by one of our reporters who visited the scene around 5pm yesterday.

This accident is also coming less than a month after a train crushed a woman to death around the same Kubwa axis of the Abuja-Kaduna train corridor.

It is also coming just about three weeks after scores were kidnapped on the Itakpe-Warri train corridor.

The Itakpe-Warri train derailment was attributed to vandalism on the rail track, but it is not immediately clear what might have caused the derailment on the Abuja-bound train.

Senator Shehu Sani, in a tweet, called on the NRC to ensure the safety of the

stranded passengers.

Daily Trust Saturday reports that the frequency of ugly accidents on the train operations in Nigeria has raised serious concerns and apprehensions from travellers.

In the wake of the resumption of the train operations, the Minister of Transportation, Alhaji Muazu Jaji Sambo, promised that enough safety measures had been put on the corridor to forestall security breaches.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has said the Abuja-Kaduna train service has been temporarily suspended following the derailment of a train around Kubwa corridor.

A statement by the NRC and signed by Engr. Niyi Ali, the Director Operations

Nigeria set for free, fair elections, Gbajabiamila tells EU Mission

Balarabe Alkassim

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, yesterday said that Nigeria had made enough preparations to have successful, free, fair elections in 2023.

He gave the assurance when he received the European Union (EU) Observer Mission delegation led by Barry Andrews.

"We are prepared for it. Those saddled with the responsibility, from Mr President, the National Assembly, INEC, political parties, to other stakeholders along the

chain, are all ready to make the votes count.

"The electoral law is in place. We have done all we needed to do, and now, we have to wait and see how things pan out.

"Election is a process that leads to the final day. It is very complex, but at the same time, it can be very simple, depending on the attitude of the actors," he said.

Gbajabiamila advised the EU Mission to get balanced views about the political situation by engaging a broad range of stakeholders before making their conclusions on the outcome of the forthcoming general elections.

He said their reports on election outcomes could only reflect what truly transpired when observers engaged with multiple stakeholders.

Speaking earlier, Barry Andrews, told the Speaker that the EU Mission was happy to be invited to observe the polls just as it had done on seven previous occasions.

He informed Gbajabiamila that they would formally unveil their work plan at a news conference on Monday in Abuja and would release a preliminary report on the elections, two days after the conclusion of voting.

Buhari commissions more projects in Katsina

Tijjani Ibrahim, Katsina

On his second day of the official visit to Katsina State, President Muhammadu Buhari has commissioned other developmental projects executed by the administration of Governor Aminu Bello Masari.

The projects commissioned yesterday include the Gora-Makauraci-Malamawa road, General Hospital, Musawa and Government Day Secondary School (GDSS) Musawa in the Katsina South senatorial district, known as Funtua zone.

Others were the rehabilitated

and asphalted Sandamu-Baure-Babban Mutum road and Gurjiya-Sandamu-Karkarku road in the Katsina North senatorial district, known as Daura zone.

Speaking to journalists during the commissioning of the Gurjiya-Sandamu-Karkarku

road, the managing director of BAUHAUS Contractors, the constructing firm, Mr Ihab Serhal, appreciated the government of Masari for constructing the road, which he said the benefitting communities were longing for years.

Court refuses suit seeking to disqualify Tinubu

John Chuks Azu

A Federal High Court in Abuja has declined to compel the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to expunge the name of the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Tinubu, from the list of candidates for the 2023 presidential election.

Justice Binta Nyako yesterday dismissed the suit because the applicants, not being a registered political party, lacked the locus standi to appear before the court.

Justice Nyako noted that by the latest suit, the Incorporated Trustees of Kingdom Human Rights Foundation International had filed a multiplicity

of suits over the APC presidential primary.

In the suit brought by its counsel, Jideobi Johnmary, the non-governmental organisation accused the APC of failing to comply with mandatory provisions of section 90(3), 84(13) of the Electoral Act, 2022, in nominating Tinubu as its presidential candidate.

However, both the APC and Tinubu, who were cited in the suit as second and third defendants respectively, filed preliminary objections to challenge the competence of the suit.

They described the suit as non-justiciable, adding that it was statute-barred since it was not filed within 14 days after Tinubu's name was submitted to the INEC.

Daily Trust advertisement banner with contact information and logos for various partners like SME Classifieds and MEDIAN.

Advertisement for Rahamaniyya Fertilizer & Processing Co. Ltd. featuring images of fertilizer bags and a tractor. Text includes: "NEW WAY OF FARMING", "FACTORY ADDRESS: Asare Town, along Kalambaina/Wammako Road, Wammako L.G.A, Sokoto State, Nigeria.", "HEAD OFFICE: No 10 Gimbiya Street, Area 11 Garki, Abuja FCT, Nigeria.", "TEL: +234 9161650587, +234 8127027474.", "email: rahamaniyyafertilizer@gmail.com"

NNPC has 1.6bn litres nationwide, NMDPRA assures

Simon Echowofun Sunday

The Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) has assured Nigerians that there is petrol sufficiency of over 1.6 billion litres as of January 26 both on land and marine.

In a statement yesterday, it said NNPC has additionally made firm commitment to supply more volume of petrol for the months ahead to guarantee national energy security and nationwide availability at the government regulated price.

The regulatory body said the current distribution hitch is heightened by activities of cross-border smugglers, who divert petrol meant for Nigerian market to neighbouring countries where petrol prices are significantly higher than Nigeria's regulated price.

"We are engaging and collaborating with the Nigeria Customs Service to address this issue. The price arbitrage between Nigeria and neighbouring countries has continued to grow due to inflation and the regional impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the global energy value chain including international freight rates

and coastal vessels charter rates," the statement said.

NMDPRA also said the ongoing government effort to rehabilitate strategic Nigerian roads ahead of the rainy season has necessitated rerouting of tanker trucks conveying petroleum products to alternative roads, therefore increasing transit time and associated cost of product transportation.

It said NNPC and stakeholders have done modest adjustment in the cost of product transportation to cater for the impact of high AGO price on transporters, while making special provision of diesel to marketers at a reduced price.

Nasarawa gov loses son as Buhari mourns

Umar Muhammed, Lafia & Muideen Olaniyi

Nasarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Sule, has lost one of his sons, Hassan Abdullahi Sule.

Daily Trust Saturday reports that Hassan died in the late hours of Thursday January 26, after a brief illness.

The deceased, who got married in June last year, was Governor Sule's eldest son with

his first wife, Hajiya Silifat Sule. In a statement signed by the governor's Chief Press Secretary, Ibrahim Addra, Hassan died at the age of 36.

The deceased has been buried in Gudi, Akwanga Local Government Area of the state.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has condoled Governor Abdullahi Sule over the passing of his son.

The president, in a statement

issued yesterday by his spokesman, Malam Garba Shehu, said "My deepest and heartfelt condolences to the governor and his family on the tragic death of his worthy son, Hassan."

Buhari also restated his prayers and condolences to the government and people of the state following the recent tragedy involving herdsmen.

"May the souls of all the deceased rest in peace," he said.

Gombe gov't employs 1,000 new teachers

Haruna Gimba Yaya, Gombe

Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State yesterday issued appointment letters to 1,000 graduates appointed into the state civil service to teach in secondary schools across the state.

Speaking after issuing the newly recruited teachers with

their appointment letters, Governor Yahaya said their appointment aimed to reposition the state's education sector, to keep pace with the 21st century challenges and realities.

He said since the inception of his administration in 2019, he declared a state-of-emergency in the education sector, followed by

a 60 per cent increase in capital allocation in the 2020 and 2021 budgets.

Governor Yahaya added that over 1,327 classrooms were built or renovated, furnished and equipped, with five secondary schools being completely renovated, equipped and upgraded to mega colleges.



THE JULY 1966 COUNTER COUP

GENERAL AGUIYI IRONSI

REMINISCENCES

THE JULY 1966 counter-coup that toppled the first military government of General Aguiyi Ironsi has one living witness: his ADC, then Lieutenant Sani Bello, who was with him that fateful morning in Government House, Ibadan.

For the first time, now Colonel Sani Bello, former Military Governor of Kano State and multi-millionaire businessman, speaks to Trust Television on how Ironsi and his host Colonel Fajuyi lost their lives and how he survived to tell the story.

CATCH UP ON THIS BIT OF LIVING HISTORY ON TRUST TELEVISION, SATURDAY, 28TH JANUARY (8-9pm); REPEAT THURSDAY BY 10PM AND IN SUNDAY TRUST, JANUARY 29TH.



COLONEL (RTD) SANI BELLO

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CARTOON



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

CBN deadline and new notes circulation crises

The governor of Central Bank, Godwin Emefiele, shortly after the Monetary Policy Committee meeting on Tuesday stated that the 31 January deadline for the collection of old naira notes remains sacrosanct.

Emefiele's statement came after the National Assembly deliberated on the need for the apex bank to extend the collection of the old naira notes to June in view of the rush with which the policy is being implemented and how the rural and unbanked communities would suffer the consequences.

It could be recalled that last year, the CBN announced its decision to redesign the N200, N500 and N1000 notes in its quest to move the country to a cashless economy.

Though the policy has continued to generate mixed reactions from Nigerians, it has the blessing of Mr President. There is no gainsaying the fact that the policy is a big blow to money launderers, kidnappers and vote/voters' buyers. However, it has come at the wrong time. Majority of Nigerians do not have bank accounts and 80 percent of transactions in the country are cash backed.

Besides, lack of good network systems coupled with erratic power supply have made electronic banking services across the country, especially in rural areas, more

difficult and unreliable to Nigerians.

The CBN's January deadline is like putting a cart before the horse. While the grace period granted to Nigerians to deposit their old notes was 90 days; there was inadequate enlightenment and sensitization campaign not only by the CBN but also by other government agencies such as the National Orientation Agency to enable Nigerians to be abreast of the policy.

The blame games between the CBN and Deposit Money Banks (MDBs) has compounded or worsened the scarcity of the new notes. CBN insisted that it has released adequate newly printed notes to banks to upload in their respective automobile teller machines (ATM), while banks continued to disperse old naira notes to the surprise of desperate Nigerians. Nigerians have been eager to obtain the new notes but there are nowhere to be found.

Most of the ATMs don't have the new notes to dispense to desperate Nigerians who are all out to get the notes for their transactions.

The development is already taking a negative tolls on business activities across the country as people are now rejecting the old notes in the face of non availability of the new notes. This is quite unfortunate!

Yes, the CBN's swap policy in which mobile money agents are allowed to swap new money to the tune of N10,000 directly to rural Nigerians is good and may hasten quick circulation of new notes but the few days remaining are not enough to penetrate remote communities and other riverine areas.

Why has the apex bank waited until now before coming up with the cash swap policy? They ought to have done this a long time ago.

Besides, the CBN has also waited until the last minutes before they hurriedly embarked on sensitization campaigns to markets and other informal sectors of the economy.

The decisions by the merchants or marketers to stop collecting old notes before the deadline amidst scarcity of the new ones will fuel naira circulation crises. The POS operators who are supposed to ease transaction difficulties have been making brisk businesses. They have increased charges ranging from N500 to N1000 per N10,000 deposit.

With the deadline fast approaching and many Nigerians yet to deposit or access the new redesigned naira, CBN should as a matter of urgency extend the period as being demanded by Nigerians.

Ibrahim Mustapha Pambegua wrote from Kaduna State

Short&Sharp

Effect of social media on students

What do majority of people do during their leisure time in today's world? Well, they are busy accessing one of the numerous social media platforms available like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.

Having a social network is important as it has been shown to have a positive effect on mental health and well-being. It allows students to connect with like minded peers, breaking limitations of distance and time.

However, the use or misuse of social media has affected a lot of students and teens.

It has among others led to fear of missing out (FOMO) and social media addiction; isolation, depression and anxiety; cyber bullying and self-absorption.

Going to bed right after spending time on a social media site affects sleep and can lead to insomnia which can in turn cause physical stress.

It is easy to become addicted, and research shows that students who spend too much time on social media can suffer from poor sleep, fatigue, negative body image, anxiety, identity theft, social isolation and exposure to content that is not age appropriate.

Although there are important benefits; social media can also provide platforms for bullying, exclusion, unrealistic expectations about body image and sources of popularity; normalization of risk-taking behaviours.

Past studies have found that students who spend more time on social media sites are likely to demonstrate poor academic performance.

This is because they spend time chatting online and making friends on social media sites instead of reading books.

Oyetayo Bushroh Omolade wrote via oyetayobushroh2020@gmail.com

Dangers of vandalizing petroleum pipelines

Vandalization of petroleum pipelines is a common occurrence in Nigeria. It occurs almost on a daily basis as some unscrupulous Nigerians damage or destroy pipelines to steal petroleum products for their personal use. In most cases, people claim that poverty and unemployment that has pervaded the country is responsible for their actions.

The fact is that most Nigerians want to make money without having to work hard or even work for it. No matter the reason for pipeline vandalism, the deliberate destruction of pipelines poses serious issues. When inexperienced individuals tamper with oil pipelines, the effect can be devastating.

Nigeria had experienced significant economic loss due to pipeline vandalism. Nigeria lost about \$42 billion to crude theft as well as domestic and refined petroleum products loss between 2009 and 2018. This must stop!

Odu Mistura Ayoola wrote from the Department of English Education, Lagos State University

INEC, let there be free, fair elections

With less than a month to the general elections, there is need for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to do everything possible to ensure a free, fair and credible election.

Nigerians are more ready than ever before to exercise their franchise as such, INEC as the umpire must ensure the votes of every Nigerian counts.

INEC must resist all forms of pressure from any quarter as we approach the crucial elections.

Onogwu Reuben wrote from Karu, Nasarawa State



■ From left: National Chairman, New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), Prof Rufai Ahmed Alkali and the Country Director, International Republic Institute, (IIR) Mr Santiago Stockar



■ Dr Remi Oyewumi from the Office of the National Security Adviser, (right), with the Board Member, Director, Media Trust Group (MTG), Malam Mannir Dan Ali



■ Former Minister of State for Defense, Lawal Batagarawa



■ President UFUK DIALOGUE, Emrah Ilgen



■ From Libyan Embassy, Taher Mohammed



■ A cross section of students at the event



■ A cross section of students at the event



■ Youth Leader, Akwa Ibom Community in Abuja, Comrade Christopher Udoh



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Funding is Kannywood's nightmare – Mansur Sadiq

Muhammad Usman Umar, also known as Mansur Sadiq, is a producer, director and actor. Born and raised in Plateau State where he did both primary and secondary schools, he has a diploma in public administration and also a professional diploma in Television and Film from the Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano. In this interview, he talks about funding in the entertainment sector, and sundry issues.



Ibrahim Musa Giginyu, Kano

How did you venture into the film industry?

My sojourn into filmmaking started when I was twelve years old. What really happened then was that, with my father's consent, I played a role in a film that was shot close to my house in Jos. After that single role, I proceeded to focus on my educational career but with the zeal to act concealed in my heart. After secondary school, I joined a drama group based in Jos called 'Farin Wata Drama Group' and in that group, I held several leadership positions. That drama group produced actors like late Ahmad S Nuhu, Tijjani Faraga, among others.

I had another push when my uncle studying Theatre Arts at the University of Jos was doing one of his projects and featured me in it. That was how after my secondary school, I moved to Kano, where I began both my pursuits in educational and film careers.

How many films have you acted in?

I acted in several films before my conversion to what I am today. I have gone through several stages in the art of filmmaking such as lighting, production assistant, producing, cameraman and directing. I have acted as a lead character in six films, which include Jigo, Fice, Almur, among others.

I can beat my chest today to say I made tremendous contribution to the improvement so far

recorded in the lighting sector in the industry. It will interest you to note that despite the fact that I don't do lighting for now, almost all of the lighteners in the industry have a connection with my tutorial directly or indirectly.

Can you tell us about the first film you directed?

The first film I directed in Kannywood is called Tutiya and that was about a decade ago, but up till this moment that I speak to you, I am still proud of that film.

Do you believe that kannywood has recorded some developments?

Of course, there are a lot of developments in the industry. If you compare our storylines, pictures, sound and the artist's composition, you will agree with me that we have indeed made tremendous improvement. However, most of the developments so far recorded were self motivated because the sector lacks the needed support.

How do you mean, "the sector lacks the needed support"?

You see, Kannywood has grown to become a child of necessity and it is clear that the film industry has provided a means of livelihood to uncountable number of people but yet, if you closely take a look at what the industry is going through, you will find out that there is absence of both government and private sector funding in the industry. The presence of these two important sectors in the industry would have moved the industry to the apex of film making business not only nationally but globally.

It is apparent that lack of funding has been the industry's

nightmare for ages. Had it been the industry is enjoying at least 40 per cent patronage by the two sectors, the difference would have been very noticeable but unfortunately, the practitioners were left to source for funds themselves and do the little they can to keep the industry afloat. This is why the industry has migrated to YouTube and other platforms.

Do you believe the migration to YouTube is a positive development?

To some extent it is. It is important to note that Kannywood has become a necessity in the nation's entertainment sector and since the trend has changed, coupled with the region's cultural affiliation that has given the cinema a negative connotation, Kannywood was left with no option than to take the available survival means.

It is also unfortunate that some group of people in the North failed to consider filmmaking as a profession or a career and yet they believe that the industry can entertain them. These factors have forced the filmmakers to seek avenues to be able to move on and since YouTube provides the needed space to operate, they took that chance to continue to survive.

Are you working on any project currently?

Yes, I am working on a mini-TV series 'Jagora' among other works. Moreover, I am also working on a project tagged Media Art Project, which is an Nasaba entrepreneur-like project on skills acquisitions on film making and other aspects; in it we have targeted youths and

women to become self-reliant. What we need currently is support from other stakeholders to be able to expand the project to contain more beneficiaries.

The film making sector surely needs professionalism and that is why we started the project to enable practitioners to be more professional in what they do.

Is Mansur Sadiq married?

Initially, I did not want to talk about my marital status. However, this medium is exceptional and I will want to make it clear here. I am married and have a daughter. I had a wife but the marriage did not work and we got divorced. However, I am planning to get married again, you will soon receive an invitation to that effect.



if you closely take a look at what the industry is going through, you will find out that there is absence of both government and private sector funding in the industry. The presence of these two important sectors in the industry would have moved the industry to the apex of film making business not only nationally but globally

MURIC asks NBC to Ban Portable's new song

The Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) has petitioned the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission to prohibit Portable's latest single, claiming that it encourages ritual killings.

MURIC Director Dr Ishaq Akintola claimed in a statement on Monday, January 23, 2023, that the song is an open invitation to criminality and requested that the government take action to reduce the harmful impact it has on young people.

The statement read; "We find this song disgusting, detestable and egregious. It is a brazen assault on Nigerian and African values. Portable's latest song has reduced human life to the level of ordinary ants that can be stamped out under human feet without qualms and without consequences. It is an open



invitation to criminality. It makes a mockery of law and order. It is an open disrespect for human life."

MURIC urged the government and pertinent parties to take the required steps to sanction the singer.

"We invite the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) and the Performing Musicians' Association of Nigeria (PMAN) to take necessary action with military dispatch," it added.

Okorie's 'Billionaire' dominates Spotify Nigeria viral chart

Stanley Okorie's viral Nigeria hit tune 'Billionaire' has reached the top of Spotify Nigeria Viral 50 following a rise in activities spurred by its success on social media.

The song has been utilised as the soundtrack for videos and has recently been popular on Instagram

and Tik Tok. The song celebrates prosperity and exhorts those who possess it to take advantage of it.

The message of 'Billionaire,' as well as the song's music, have resonated strongly with an audience that grew up watching Nollywood films that popularised such songs.



Wale Adenuga, others inducted into Comedy Hall of Fame

From Abdullateef Aliyu, Lagos

Chairman/CEO of Wale Adenuga Productions (WAP), Mr Wale Adenuga has been inducted into the Comedy Hall of Fame at the 2nd edition of The Humour Awards held in Lagos. He was honoured for "his immense contributions to the growth of the Comedy Industry in Nigeria."

The event also awarded

other individuals who have made notable marks in Nigerian Comedy; including Nkem Owoh, Sunday Omobolanle (Aluwe), Ngozi Nwosu, Mr Macaroni, Hafiz Oyetero (Saka), Chinedu Ikedieze, Nosa Rex (Baba Rex), Real Warri Pikin, and others.

Managing Director of WAP, Wale Adenuga Jnr. who received the award on behalf of Mr Wale Adenuga said, "We appreciate

the organisers of this impressive event for acknowledging people, like our Chairman/CEO, who have contributed to the growth of Nigeria's Comedy Industry.

"While there is still a lot more to be done, we are proud of what has been achieved thus far, and we pledge that Wale Adenuga Productions will continue to push the envelope for the sake of future generations."

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Congratulations! TO AN **Elder Statesman** PER EXCELLENCE



**COLONEL
SANI BELLO**



Signed ALHAJI
YAKUBU ABUBAKAR
(WAKILIN MINNA)

On behalf of my family, I wish to join your family, numerous friends, well-wishers and associates in congratulating you on your well deserved award of honorary doctorate, conferred on you by the Senate and Management of the Prestigious Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Indeed, the award is in recognition of your selfless service to humanity and your incredible track record of excellent performance in all the positions of responsibility you have held in your life.

We know that the award of an honorary Causa is usually a thought out process to confer honors on deserving dignitaries who have made significant marks in life.

Therefore, the award did not come to us as a surprise because you have always served as a great mentor to several people whose contributions to the national development have remained indelible in the actualisation of Nigeria.

I am optimistic that this recognition of your exceptional contributions to the national development will spur you to do more for the benefit of humanity.

Opinion

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PHILOSOPHIAITH WITH M.U. NDAGI

mundagi@dailytrust.com Tel: 08059637394 (SMS only)

Like a bad penny

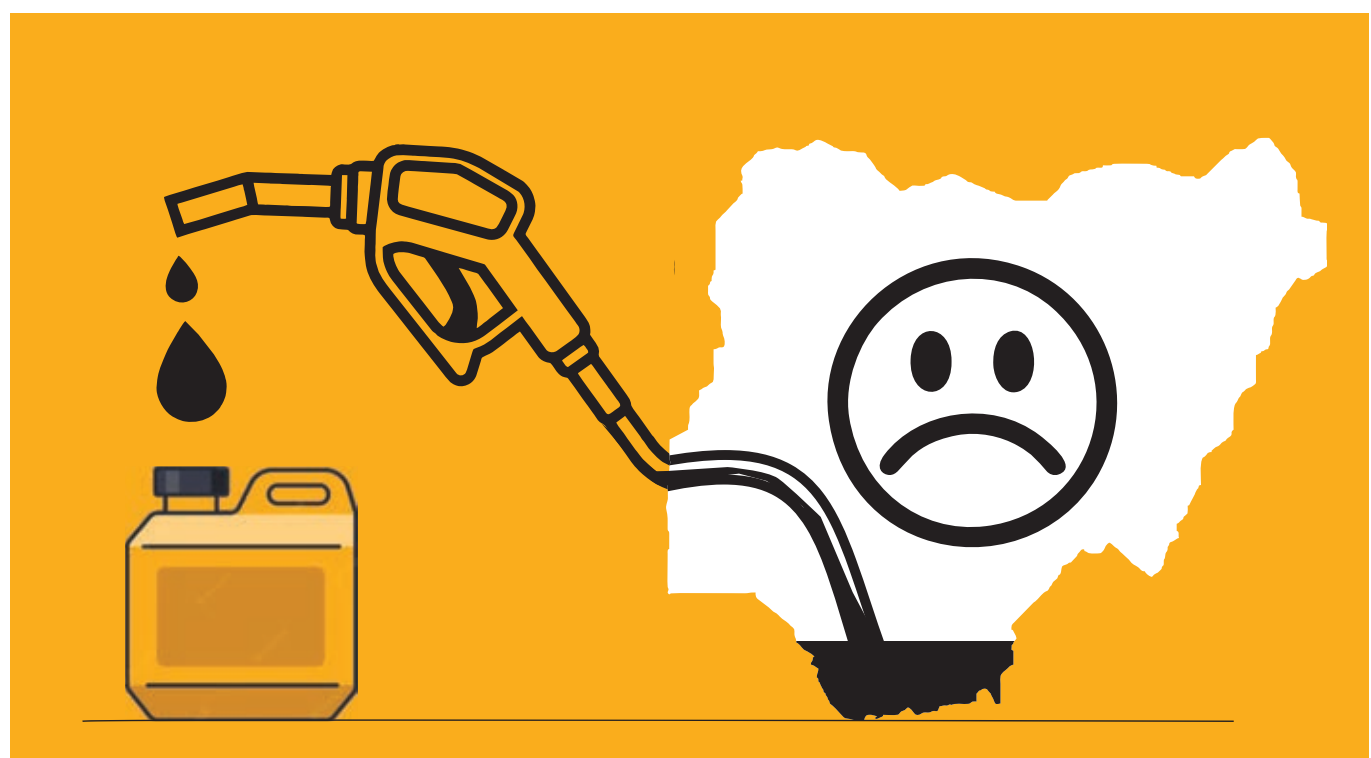
Yes, petrol scarcity is back again as if it were a bad coin. The only devilish trend that could probably surpass perennial petrol scarcity or the stretched-out queues occasioned by the scarcity is corruption; another evil that has almost become intractable in Nigeria. Except for the honey-moon years (2015-2018) of President Muhammadu Buhari's first term in office as elected civilian president, petrol scarcity has, for most part of the Nigeria's nationhood as an oil producing and exporting country, remained one of the worse recurring decimals. Given how sharp practices have deeply bedevilled Nigeria's petroleum industry over the years, scarcity of products has more often than not been caused by artificial forces.

Pump prices even at filling stations owned by major marketers have become so irregular. They keep changing frequently; leaving motorists at the mercy of oil marketers. This is even as government lays claim to paying trillions of naira in the name of subsidy. Ironically, officials of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited (NNPCL) and oil marketers yet have separate excuses to advance in defence of themselves each time Nigerians are subjected to untold hardships arising from short supply of products.

The respite of uninterrupted supply of petrol particularly in Abuja and Lagos experienced by Nigerians during the last Christmas and New Year seasons only happened by the grace of the stern warning handed down late last year to all stakeholders by the Department of State Services (DSS). Worried by the sufferings to which petrol scarcity exposed Nigerians to for most part of the year, the secret police in the early part of December 2022 issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the NNPCL and all categories of marketers to end the lingering fuel crisis in the country; adding that it was prepared to deal with defaulters.

The petrol queues that swiftly disappeared after the threat issued by the DSS unfortunately returned again to all filling stations in Abuja and other parts of the country where petrol always sold at exorbitant pump prices. One wonders why oil, which is God-endowed and a resource that should supposedly be a blessing to the country, has rather become a source of misfortunes for most citizens. Corrupt practices at retail outlets of the NNPCL such as bribery, touting, diversion of the product to black marketers have continued to compound and worsen fuel scarcity in Nigeria.

Reports in the media indicate that few pumps are put into use at most filling stations with a deliberate intent to create long queues, and as a consequence, compel impatient motorists to pay gate keepers in order to shunt the long queues. Others who cannot endure the fatigue of staying on long



queues go to black marketers or roadside retailers who sell the product above official pump price. These infractions carried out by product racketeers consequently unleash hardships on Nigerian motorists. Unemployed young people who hawk the product in plastic containers of 5 litres or 10 litres continue to make brisk businesses for as long as petrol scarcity lasts. To them, this abnormal situation as a source of daily bread; and therefore, should not cease.

The adversities that come along with scarcity of petroleum products are many. The health and wellbeing of citizens are endangered. The economy also suffers in many ways. Productive manhours are wasted on queues. It triggers increase in



Without any prejudices, if the sector under the watch of this set of people was allowed to be engrossed in the unceasing crisis of petrol scarcity we find it today, what difference would the bringing of the same people together in one committee to do the same work they hitherto failed to perform make?

transport fares and fuels inflation generally. Consequently, it kills small businesses and overstrains poor Nigerian with burdens greater than they have the financial capacity to bear. Are we not by our own actions as government regulatory agencies or marketers or retailers not converting oil from the blessing, which God intended it to be, into a curse for Nigerians?

In an attempt to respond to Nigerians' cry over the lingering fuel crisis, President Muhammadu Buhari on Tuesday January 24, 2023 approved the constitution of a 14-man steering committee to enforce petroleum products supply and compliance at official pump price. While President Buhari will personally chair the steering committee, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva will serve as the alternate chairman. Other members of the committee are the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Resources; National Economic Adviser to the President; Director-General of the DSS; Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Custom Service; Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC); and the Commandant-General, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). The rest of the members are the CEO of the NMDPRA; Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN); the Group CEO of the NNPCL; Special Advisor (Special Duties) to the Minister of State for Petroleum. The Minister of State's Technical Advisor (Midstream) will serve as Secretary of the Committee.

The committee's terms of reference according to a statement issued by the Senior

Adviser (Media & Communications) to the Minister of State for Petroleum, Horatius Eguu, the president directed NMDPRA to ensure strict compliance with the government's approved ex-depot and retail prices for petrol. The committee is also expected to guarantee national strategic stock management, visibility on the NNPCL refineries rehabilitation and track daily distribution to tackle smuggling. NNPCL, which is the sole supplier, is further required to meet the domestic supply obligation of petrol and other petroleum products in the country. Buhari as the Minister of Petroleum Resources and Chairman of the Committee further directed that the interests of the ordinary Nigerian be protected from price exploitation on other deregulated products such as diesel, kerosene and cooking gas.

The presidential committee under reference is, in a way, a mockery of Buhari as minister of petroleum. The membership of other public officers on the committee equally sounds ridiculous. Except for the DSS, if all members of the committee had done all that was required of them by their public offices, there wouldn't have been any need for this committee. Without any prejudices, if the sector under the watch of this set of people was allowed to be engrossed in the unceasing crisis of petrol scarcity we find it today, what difference would the bringing of the same people together in one committee to do the same work they hitherto failed to perform make? As optimists, it would be our collective joy if the committee is able to change the decades-old aberrations in Nigerians oil industry. May Allah save Nigerians from the wicked plots of covert and overt economic saboteurs, amin.

African time or irresponsibility?

Who created this ugly mantra of African time that we have made a part of our daily culture and reality? A friend recently invited me to their organisation for an intellectual discussion. Just before we ended the conversation, he said emphatically "No African time, please". I assured him that won't happen with me. I don't do African time except where I know vividly, going on time will be a sheer waste of time.

I see African time as a serious menace that irks of irresponsibility, but this is Nigeria where everything abnormal has been normalized.

At what point did we degenerate into lawless irresponsible people? Yet, we hope to see the magic happen with our nation. Our wait will not be over anytime soon.

Someone will organize an event to start by 4pm and you get to the venue by 3.45 and nothing has been set up. If you decide to wait, you may see the host of the event still in night wears (jallabiya) and slippers, hurling orders at decorators. Be sure that this event will start by 6 or 7pm. Meanwhile, you would have programmed your time to attend the event for a certain number of hours only. Meaning that with the state of the venue, your own schedule has been disrupted already. The bride comes late to her event; the mother of the bride is also late, so are caterers or video coverage people. We just don't know the value of time and being on time.

I have been invited to a speaking engagement at a university to start at 9.30am. I was at the venue by 9am and to my surprise, the venue was not even open. I was the only person there at the time. I called the host to notify him of my arrival and he was wondering why I was that early. I had to

remind him to check the time on the card. It was at that time the venue was changed. We got to the new venue and that was when they started to set up everything - sound system, banner, cleaning of the hall, etc. This event didn't start till 11.15am. My paper that was meant to be delivered in 45 minutes was collapsed into 10mins. My plans for that day were completely thwarted and ruined and the day turned unproductive.

In another speaking engagement that I was invited to by some young people, the same thing happened. It was for 2pm and by 4.30pm I was told that the venue was still not ready. I apologised and told them that I will not be attending as I have other things scheduled for the day.

Now you see; working with the military has shaped my attitude towards punctuality. It has constantly made me deeply appreciate and respect them. If an event is to start by 9, be sure that by 8.45 am, every principal staff and officers are seated. Once the superior officer enters the hall, all doors to the venue are locked. This is apart from the constant rehearsals before the event to ensure no mistake is done, nothing is left to chance.

I say it times without number to whoever cares to listen; the military is the only institution in Nigeria that still has a large degree of sanity. Discipline is top-notch; they are super organized as they follow a hierarchy. Punctuality is strictly adhered to and has some form of accountability. If something goes wrong, someone must pay for it.

Of course, the institution is not perfect as 'Nigeria has happened' to it as well but it is still a model to be studied and implemented by Nigerians especially as it concerns African time mentality.

I have come to realize something with Nigerians; we are deeply arrogant people

who would give an arm and a leg just to show off. Many people relish the idea of arriving very late to an event just for attention. They want all eyes on them by the time they enter the hall to steal the show.

Our politicians are most guilty. They have no respect and value for anything at all. Invite them to an event and be sure that they will be there very late just to make a statement and be the centre of attention, and be sure that they would be leaving before the end of the event. These are the people we keep glorifying while they maintain this arrogance and keep rubbing it in our faces.

We cannot always hope to see things change in this nation and think it is one Tinubu, Atiku, Kwankwaso or Obi that will change anything. They cannot!

We have a rotten system that needs to be overhauled from the bottom up. If as simple as keeping to time is this problematic for almost every ordinary citizen, then we have a fundamental problem. We must stop this attitude of African time; it is irresponsible! It has bred laziness, procrastination, wasted opportunities, inefficiency, and lack of productivity. Any attempt to do the right thing, you are seen as the abnormal Mr know-it-all.

We have to take responsibility for our irresponsibility.

Maryam Hamza PhD wrote from the Dept of History and War Studies, NDA Kaduna (maryamhamza2009@gmail.com)



Three major economic sins of Godwin Emefiele

In the current imbroglio about Mr Godwin Emefiele and his 8-year rule of the Central Bank of Nigeria, three major things indict him as a CBN governor who neglected his primary assignment at the apex bank.

1. Naira-Glutting the Economy - No control over inflation:

One critical way monetary authorities control inflation is by looking at a nation's legal tender (in our own case, the Naira), not just as a store of value, but also an economic product, which can be traded, and which is also subject to the forces of demand and supply. Mr Godwin Emefiele must have missed this point.

When Emefiele came, in 2014, the Naira issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), and believed to have been in economic circulation, was less than one and half trillion naira. In fact, in December 2015, just above a year into Emefiele's governorship of the CBN, the Naira was N1.46 trillion in circulation.

Seven years later, in September

2022, this amount more than doubled to N3.23trn! What were the economic infrastructures being funded by Emefiele's astronomical supply of the Naira to the economy? None at all! There was no manufacturing, no additional employment, and there was no salary and wage increase which required that reckless dole out of the Naira.

By the law of economic demand and supply, it seems that Mr Emefiele only wanted to deliberately create an artificial inflation, which he did! Too much Emefiele's money chasing too few Nigerian goods, and we landed in Emefielation - which should be the most recent type of inflation. This was a fatal economic accident, albeit a deliberate or a mediocre one! Was this deliberately planned and executed to instigate the citizenry against its sitting government?

Now, to worsen the situation, and then lay credence to a deliberate plan to ditch the economy, N2.73trn of Emefiele's N3.23trn in circulation was outside the banking system! 84.52

percent of Emefiele's supplied money was not under his control! So, how did he control inflation through the Monetary Policy Committee? He would "reduce" the money "in circulation" by, say, N300bn, by pretending to raise interest rate by 1 per cent, and those holding N2.73trn cash outside the banking system would circumvent his move by pumping N500bn into the economy! So, it was a lie that the Monetary Policy Committee actions were in charge of the inflation steering wheel.

And, how did the CBN's intelligence and surveillance miss the fact that N2.73trn of its N3.23trn supplied money was outside the banking system? No economic administrator would ever believe this white lie! Mr Emefiele knew this fact of par money circulation, and a certain structure of the CBN administration must have known it. If they didn't know, then this is good enough ground to sack them immediately.

2. Molesting and strangulating the GDP

When Mr Godwin Emefiele

arrived the Central Bank of Nigeria, 2014, our GDP for that year was \$546.68bn. The previous year, 2013, it was \$508.69bn. To date, these were the two highest GDPs attained by Nigeria. Immediately Mr Emefiele settled down on the pedals of the CBN, he seemed to have pulled the choke lever against the economy. 2015, our GDP tumbled down to \$486.80bn, and we lost \$59.88bn, or 10.95 per cent.

This GDP tumble continued in 2016, to \$404.65bn (-\$142.03bn, or 25.98 per cent decline from 2014 highest); then, \$375.75bn, in 2017 (-\$170.93, or 31.26 decline from 2014). It is noteworthy here that our GDP in 2005 was \$176.13bn, which means we lost the whole of our 2005 economy in just one year of 2017.

Now, while waiting for the 2022 GDP figure, the 2021 GDP figure stands at \$440.78bn - still a far cry (23.03 per cent down side) from pre-Emefiele's \$546.68bn of 2014. Our next CBN Governor has a herculean task of returning us to the glory we once had. It is worth noting that while an administrative

recession has not been formally mentioned, we have been going through technical recessions all through the Emefiele years.

3. The Over-Hyped Forex

The Naira to foreign currencies exchange rates have been over-hyped, making their astronomical hike look more monstrous than the Naira glut and the GDP strangulation. Here, the Naira to US Dollar exchange rate is more hyped, perhaps because of the US Dollar's financial elegance. It is economically imperative to note that the financial elegance of the US Dollar is globally more pronounced than its economic weight. For instance, the US Dollar, this January 2023, has a debt weight on it of \$31.4trn. In the same US\$ terms, the debt on the Naira is less than \$180bn (about 0.5 per cent of the debt weight on the US\$). Even in per capita terms, the debt on the Naira is less than \$900 per capita, while the US\$ is groaning under some \$94,000 debt per capita.

Actually, the US\$ is a diplomatic currency, competing globally with certain economic and

financial currencies. So, the fact of the ballooning exchange rate of the US\$ against the Naira has little impact on the actual productive side of Nigeria's economy, perhaps affecting the little importation of equipment and machines for production. The non-productive side of our economy, the elitist consumption side, is what Emefiele has idolised with the so-called fall of the Naira. There is so much cry and hue there.

So, overall, the banking, financial and economic prowess of Mr Godwin Emefiele have all been called to question. So is his integrity, also, called to question, especially if he cannot prove that our dwindling economic fortunes are deliberate, or mediocre. Remember that Emefiele's battle with the DSS, over allegations of state crimes, are also major dents on his person and integrity.

It is painfully nauseating that Mr Emefiele has refused to resign, and that President Muhammadu Buhari has yet to relieve him of his job.

Jameel Muhammad Dahiru wrote from Area 11, Garki, Abuja

COLUMN No.6 WITH ABDULKAREEM BABA AMINU

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Nigerians, devils, and the deep blue sea

The phrase 'Between the devil and the deep blue sea' is an idiom that offers two equally terrible choices. People use this phrase to outline the difficulty they face making a decision because both options are not palatable. The expression has been in existence since at least the 1600s. This expression doesn't have to do with the devil of scripture, as many would assume, but to a seam around a ship's hull near the water. When a sailor attempted to caulk this seam in heavy seas, he was in serious danger of falling overboard, and drowning. And if he didn't caulk the seam, the ship could fill with water and sink. In other words, the sailor was faced with two awful choices: risk his life to repair the ship or risk the entire ship by not repairing the ship.

If you are reading this, and you are Nigerian, then you understand the poor sailor's dilemma, especially relating to the 2023 general elections slated for the 25th of February. I won't name names or declare anyone a devil, literal or figurative. But let us be honest with ourselves and ask if we are not faced by a dicey situation. To begin, I will make a declaration that will shock many: I do not have a candidate for the presidential election yet. I also do not know if I will be the beneficiary of a last-minute reprieve, or not. You see, this is not because of the quality of candidates out there. I will not get into the mechanics of a candidate's solid standing or not, and certainly not the hardcore mudslinging going on right now.

But just this past Thursday, at the 20th

Daily Trust Dialogue in Abuja, panellists rightly raised concerns that the blueprints of the presidential candidates in the 2023 elections cannot solve Nigeria's problems. They said the presidential candidates had not explained to Nigerians how they would go about addressing issues of national importance, which they listed as security, economy corruption, and restructuring. During the dialogue, recorded video presentations called 'My First 100 Days in Office as President of Nigeria' were presented from each of the four main candidates: Atiku Abubakar (PDP); Bola Ahmed Tinubu (APC); Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso (NNPP) and Peter Obi (LP). Many present doubted hard if the candidates could execute their manifestos, mainly because it was widely felt that they had failed to explain the 'how' of it.

That is exactly where the problem lays, the 'how' of it. We have for decades been willing or unwilling witnesses to grand campaign promises and declarations which have proven to be phantoms till this day. You won't catch me judging any one, much less executing them. But I am sure that among the main candidates, some of them know deep down within their conscience, that they are not fit for office. But those staples of the politician worldwide (ego, greed, an insatiable lust for power and money) will not let them see clearly. The truth is, judging is a far lesser sin than what our political leaders do to us repeatedly, making us seem like the world capital of failed leaders, and our national sport being jumping from frying

pan to fire.

While I am not proud of my earlier confession of being candidate-free, I have made my peace with my position on the fence. But that's not to say I won't make a last-minute sudden move to grab a leaf in order not to drown. The more I think, the more I am reminded how dire a situation it is. As I wait for an 'aha!' moment, I pray others are more decisive, and better-informed than myself regarding this issue. I, of course, stand with the 'doubting Thomas' panellists of the 'Trust Dialogue, and for good reason.

The two decades I spent as a journalist have showed me what many cannot even begin to experience in a whole, robust lifetime. I have had front row seats to riots, violent attacks, concerts by superstars, movie premieres, and all kinds of generation-defining moments. I also got to regularly interview some of the biggest newsmakers in Nigeria, during moments when they had the most chutzpah or none at all. And all through that, it was a nation without social justice warriors who do nothing but plume, or ethnic bigots, virtue-signallers, outrage-peddlers, or cancel culture-purveyors. It was a Nigeria that, while flawed, still had something then which is missing today: Hope. Hope for a leader who knows what he is doing, and in turn taking our nation back to greatness, or even a semblance of it. The way it looks like right now, though, it looks like I have no choice but the deep blue sea, or perhaps even the devil. God save us!



Woman pours hot water on co-wife over witchcraft suspicion

Mumini Abdulkareem, Ilorin

A 42-year-old housewife, Lola Abdulsalam, has been remanded at Oke Kura Correctional Centre, Ilorin, Kwara State for allegedly pouring hot water on her senior co-wife, Abdulsalam Bilikisu.

The police on Friday filed a two-count first information report

against Lola, bordering on causing grievous hurt and defamation of character, contrary to sections 247 and 292 of the penal code.

According to the police, the defendant reportedly insulted and assaulted Bilikisu while she was removing a dead rat at the backdoor.

"The defendant (Lola) started beating her (Bilikisu) with a

broom, calling her a witch and later went into the kitchen to get boiled water from the fire and poured it on her body, leaving her face, breasts and other parts of her body severely burnt.

"The victim was later rushed to Cottage Hospital, Olorunshogo, Ilorin, where she was admitted for treatment," the charge sheet reads.

The prosecutor, ASP Zacheus Folorunsho, urged the court to remand the accused in custody pending the completion of police investigation on the matter.

Magistrate Ibrahim Dasuki, who presided over the matter, granted the prosecutor's application and adjourned the matter to March 6, 2023.

I'll replace sharing formula with production - Obi

Abbas Jimoh

The presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Mr Peter Obi, has said his government will not continue with the 'handout' of sharing formula but implement a production formula where every Nigerian would be productive for positive impacts.

Obi, who said this on Friday at a Leadership Townhall held at the University of Abuja, pledged to work hard in pulling people out of poverty.

"The only way to do this is to move your country today from consumption to production. Nigeria can be self-sufficient in food production and change its trajectory of a wasteful economy largely dependent on mere

sharing oil revenue when it could actually task the federating units to up their games for the growth of the economy.

"Nigeria is not producing anything. We are in a country today that is wasting everybody's time on sharing. And we want to remove the sharing formula and replace it with production. We are attacking this country's production based on factor of employment.

"Nigeria can earn more from agriculture than oil. India can feed itself. India has a population of 1.4 billion people sitting on a land of 3.2million square kilometers. Nigeria lives on 1/3 of India land 923,000sqkm of land. We cannot feed ourselves. It cannot continue," Obi said.

Women crucial in Nigeria's economic development — Tallen

Ismail Adebayo, Birnin Kebbi

The Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen, yesterday said women had a crucial role to play in the economic development of Nigeria.

Addressing a section of the 43,894 beneficiaries of the Nigeria for Women Project at the flag-off of the sub-national women's economic empowerment road show in Birnin Kebbi, the minister said women's contributions to economic development started from homes, where families are groomed to go into the larger society.

She added that in contemporary Nigeria, the majority of women were engaged in one productive activity or another, including their involvement in entrepreneurship activities, such as farming, agricultural food chain, craft, white-collar jobs, and are making exploits in their different capacities.

The minister assured the women that they heard their perspectives and it would be reflected in the National Policy on Women's Economic Empowerment. She added that President Muhammadu Buhari had approved the formation of a high-level Advisory Council on Empowerment of Women and Girls in Nigeria.

She commended Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu for keeping to his promise to domesticate the Child Rights Act 2003 and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (2015), and his wife, Dr Zainab, for tirelessly supporting the ministry's mandate through her Medicaid project.

In his response, the secretary to the state government, Babale Umar Yauri, who represented Governor Bagudu, said there were over 43,894 beneficiaries of the Nigeria for Women Programme in Kebbi State, adding that government has spent N2.7billion for the empowerment of women.



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 2. University of Ilorin, Kwara State
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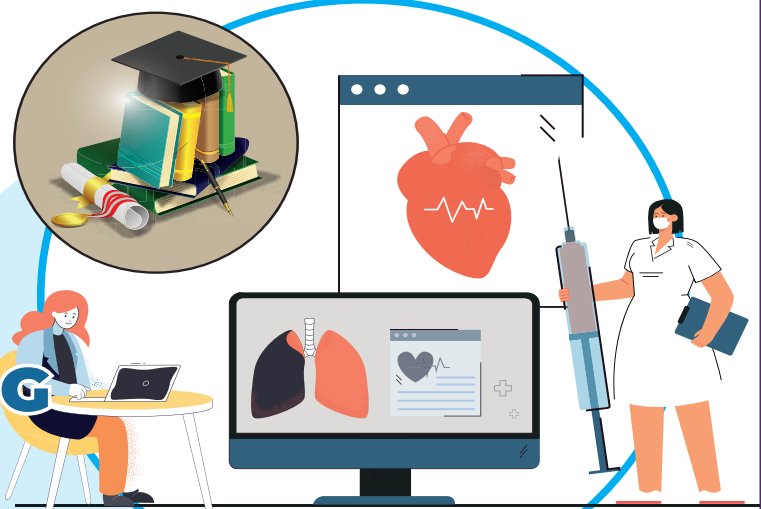
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■ Vociferous fans of Doma United cheering their team against Sunshine Stars at the Pantami stadium in Gombe (1)

Faltering north-east NPFL clubs still buzzing with fans

David Ngobua, Haruna Gimba Yaya, Gombe, Hassan Ibrahim, Bauchi

As the 2023 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) season enters week four this weekend, El-Kanemi Warriors, Doma United, Gombe United and Wikki Tourists, all from the north-east, are among some of the clubs that are already gasping for breath.

Without doubt, the performance of the north-east clubs has left unsavoury taste in the mouth of their teeming supporters. NPFL returnees El-Kanemi Warriors have managed to record one win and one draw out of three matches. They lost their opening match 0-2 at Remo Stars. With only four points, they are placed sixth out of 10 teams in Group B.

On their part, Gombe United without a win have drawn two and lost one match. After their opening day 0-0 draw at Sunshine Stars, they returned home where they were shocked 1-0 by Remo Stars. However, in their Week Three fixture at El-Kanemi Warriors, they picked a point in a 0-0 draw. They are presently seventh in Group A with a paltry two points.

Newly promoted Doma United have fared even better than Wikki Tourists as they have in their kitty four points to place sixth in Group B. After Doma United are called were forced to a 1-1 draw by Sunshine Stars in their opening match, they suffered a slim 0-1 loss at Niger Tornadoes but bounced back to a historic 1-0 home win over Dakkada FC.

But the most pathetic of the north-east clubs is no doubt Wikki Tourists who have lost all three matches. The 'Bauchi elephants' first stumbled at home when they lost their opening match 0-2 to Niger Tornadoes. They then travelled to Uyo where they were beaten 2-1 by Dakkada before losing by the same margin at Bayelsa United in their third match.

Their poor run has left them glued to the

basement of Group B without a single point. They share the same ignominious record with fellow northerners Nasarawa United who are also last on the Group A table.

From the foregoing, it is clear the four clubs are not living up to the expectations of their teeming supporters. Expectedly, pressure has begun to mount on the management and technical crew of these clubs, especially Wikki Tourists who have emerged as early candidates for relegation.

However, one intriguing thing that has continued to baffle most football stakeholders is the massive support these clubs still enjoy despite their lackadaisical performances in the 2023 NPFL season.

While more successful clubs like Enyimba FC, Rivers United, Plateau United and Enugu Rangers play in near empty stadiums, the stadia where the struggling north-east clubs play their home matches are usually filled to capacity.

Interestingly, even El-Kanemi Warriors which just returned to the Nigerian topflight after some years in the lower division are enjoying massive support from their

vociferous fans. The El-kanemi stadium in Maiduguri is filled to the rafters with enthusiastic fans who troop out to watch their warriors battle opponents.

Some of the fans of these clubs who spoke to our correspondents expressed disappointment in the performances of their respective clubs in the ongoing season but vowed to continue to support them no matter the degree of pains they may have to endure.

The chairman of Gombe United supporters club, Adam Magaji, said "Our love and support for the club is total, it is unconditional. For many of us, Gombe United is like our 'national team' that must be supported in all circumstances.

"We always appeal to our members to be patient even when the outcome of a match does not favour us. And people have been cooperating with us as we rarely experience acts of hooliganism at the Pantami stadium.

"We are lucky to have passionate fans who understand the implications of violent acts on their darling club," he said.

Another supporter of the 'Savannah Scorpions', Sani Umar, said he has been supporting the club for over 25 years.

"I have been a supporter since during the Pro-League era before the advent of the Premier League. I have been using my own money to purchase tickets for other supporters to cheer the team to victories.

"I have hired vehicles from my pocket to sponsor our fans to go and cheer Gombe United at away matches. That is to show our deep love for the club," he said.

Despite the poor start to the season, Umar expressed optimism that after Gombe United's double home, they would improve on their position on the table.

On his part, the Chairman of Doma United supporter's club, Abdullahi Isa Balayi, who is a blacksmith by profession, said his passion

for the club made him spend his hard-earned money to hire vehicles and sponsor other supporters to attend the club's away matches.

"So, it was this dedication that the club management noticed that made them decide to appoint me as the chairman of the supporters' club, when we got promoted to the Nigeria National League some years back.

"There were supporters of the club, but they weren't under one umbrella. But when the club started making waves, it was decided that the supporters club needed a leader for proper coordination.

"So, in all residential areas of the state, we have local chairmen who manage Doma United supporters in these particular areas. So, through them, we know the dedicated supporters that will get gate passes when we are playing at home and those to be sponsored when we are playing away matches.

"Most of the supporters who follow us outside the state are those that were with us for a long time. So, the time a supporter joins the club determines his ranking in our register," he explained.

Another fan of Doma United, Ibrahim Yakubu, a resident of Gandu quarters in Gombe metropolis, said proximity to the club and players endeared them to keep supporting the club.

"In fact, I prefer watching local clubs than watching European football. I preferred them because we are watching them physically to cheer them on and we have a stake if they win or lose, because we share many things in common," he said.

The chairman of Wikki Tourists supporters club, Garba Idris, also explained reasons behind the unwavering support for the club despite their shambolic performance in the ongoing season,

He said "The truth of the matter is that the people of Bauchi love football and Wikki Tourist FC has captured the minds of the people that is why when Wikki is playing the stadium is filled to capacity.

"The fans always want to watch them play because in the past the team did very well especially under the current coach who has taken Wikki Tourists away from relegation worries.

"Whenever we win or secure a draw in our away matches, fans of the club become eager to watch the next home game because the away result naturally dominates discussions in town. It is for this reason that you see mammoth crowds at our home matches."

The chairman also said genuine fans of Wikki Tourists are hardly associated with acts of hooliganism because the spirit of sportsmanship is inculcated into them. He said even when they suffer defeat, the fans don't lose self control.

"When I was made the Caretaker Chairman of Wikki Tourists Supporters Club, I organized a meeting with the leadership of the supporters club of neighbouring clubs like Gombe United, Plateau United and Kano Pillars and I was lucky that we arrived at long lasting solutions to incidents of violence among our supporters.

"If you would remember, last season we defeated Plateau United 2-1 but there was no violence at the end of the match. If it were before, when Plateau United scored the first goal, the tension would have degenerated into full blown violence at the end."

"Bauchi state has teeming youths who are ardent football fans. They love and adore Wikki Tourists. Any time the season is on, Wikki Tourists become the most topical issue among the residents of Bauchi," he said.





BECA CONGRATULATES



AHMED
IBRAHIM
LAWAN
@64

On behalf of the Bade Emirate Community in Abuja, Engr. Ahmed Kadi Amshi FNSE, congratulates **Ahmed Ibrahim Lawan PhD, GCON, Sardaunan Bade, President of the Senate**, on his 64th birthday.

BECA is proud of you as one of its own who has been very successful from humble beginning as a teacher, administrator and lawmaker.

The Bade Community is happy that as the head of the 9th Assembly, harmonious working relationship between the executive and the legislative arm has remain the watchword.

Sir, Nigeria never had it so good.

You're undoubtedly leaving an indelible mark and everlasting legacy as an astute administrator and a successful lawmaker.

Your leadership style will remain as reference point as history will write your name in gold.

Keep it up.

May you live longer to continue serving the country in the best way.

Congratulations to a worthy Ambassador at 64.

BECA is proud to associate with you.

Happy Birthday.

Signed:
Elder Bade Emirate Community in Abuja,
Engr. Ahmed Kadi Amshi FNSE





INSIDE SOCCER

WITH DAVID BILLINGTON

Arteta says new signing ticks the boxes

I asked the question “why has Arsenal signed Jakub Kiwior from Spezia.” He became Mikel Arteta’s second significant incoming player joining Brighton’s Leandro Trossard. A fee of £17.5million was paid to the Italian club for Kiwior but the contract provides for a further £3.5million in bonus payments based on performances and appearances. The initial deal lasts until 2027 with a further optional year. Kiwior’s position with Spezia was usually on the left-hand side of a back three but he can also be used in midfield. Arteta said the answer to my question is that signing Kiwior solves two requirements needed in his squad. He will be used as a deputy to cover Gabriel Magalhaes at the back and provide competition for William Saliba but also with his experience at Spezia, he could step in for midfielder Thomas Partey when needed. Arteta said, “He is a young versatile defender who has shown huge potential and qualities with Spezia in Serie A and also at international level with Poland. Jakob is a player who will bring extra strength and quality to our defensive unit.”

Conte wants new players at Tottenham

Tottenham coach Antonio Conte has been scratching his head to come up with a new defensive formula to strengthen his team. Finally he gave up and told chairman Daniel Levy that he cannot progress with the current players employed at the club and he needs to bring in fresh talent. During 65 matches since taking charge at White Hart Lane, Conte has used his favoured three centre backs combined with wing backs. Following the Manchester City collapse after leading 2-0 at half time, hundreds of supporters have called upon Conte to change his defence at the back. Conte responded that he would like to try something different but he does not have players with the right characteristics and he is fielding his best current option. To play four at the back he said requires specialist defenders and he does not have those. Shock news for Eric Dier, Ben Davies and co. He pointed out, “In my career, I’ve played with a back four and won two championships with a 4-2-4 at Juventus. So I am open to change the current formation but in order to that I need different players.” Tottenham have conceded 31 goals already this season after 20 games which is worrying Conte and Spurs’ supporters. The coach suggested that his strikers are an even more important challenge and said, “The most important area for us is the strikers. In this squad I have to create support for Sonny (Heung-Min Son) and Harry (Kane) and Kulusevski or Richarlison. Conte hinted that he might use all four of his forwards in the same line up very soon and perhaps a 4-2-3-1 formation with Harry Kane as a No10.

Mudryk makes impressive start for Chelsea

After making several

mistakes and attracting criticism from fans and the media, Chelsea owner Todd Boehly finally looks to have got something right. Injured Reece James, Noni Madueke and Trevor Chalobah all sent positive messages to newly signed winger Mykhailo Mudryk after he came off the bench and impressed with his intense energetic play against Liverpool. James sent a lightning emoji showing how impressed he was with the Ukrainian’s speed, ability and overall performance. The Chelsea players have already taken to Mudryk as one of their own and congratulated him in the dressing room after the Liverpool match. In all 6,000 fans sent messages of support and



Leandro Trossard

coach Graham Potter said, “He’s not played since November, hasn’t had any game time, so it would have been a risk to play him from the start. He was really good. He’s only been with us for a few days and he will get even better. He is dangerous in one-to-one situations and his dribbling is excellent and he knows where the goal is.”

Everton fans blame directors

Fans at Everton have recently protested against their board of directors. Coach Frank Lampard was another target (although he had a hard core of supporters) amid complaints that the directors do not communicate enough with fans to keep them informed as to what is happening within this failing club. The board took five hours to release a statement that Lampard had been sacked earlier in a phone call at 3pm. The call was made by owner Farhad Moshiri. Fans however were not told until a statement was released five hours later at 8.15pm. This was more ammunition for the supporters to claim that the club is “chaotic and dysfunctional”. They have organised more protests to take place before the match against Arsenal on February 4th. Marcelo Bielsa is Everton’s preferred choice to replace Lampard with Burnley’s ex-coach Sean Dyche and Mauricio Pochettino also being considered. Moshiri approached Bielsa himself but at the moment the board of directors have not

backed him publicly. Bielsa said in an initial conversation that he has studied the current players and does not consider them able to play his style of football. He wants to inject more pace into the team and is also wary of the toxic atmosphere within the club. Other possible candidates mentioned include sacked Southampton coach Ralph Hasenhuttl and Carlos Corberan who is leading a revival of West Brom’s fortunes in the Championship League. Firefighter Sam Allardyce’s name has cropped up alongside Wayne

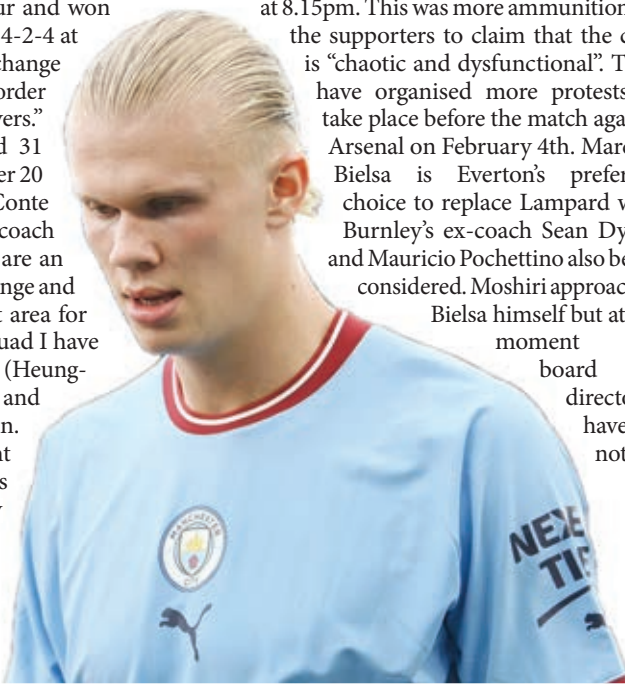
Rooney. Bielsa is very much attack minded whereas Dyche organises his teams based around defensive tactics and playing out from the back. Thousands of fans went on social media to comment on the current situation at the club and they put the blame on Everton’s leadership and not Frank Lampard which is a small crumb of comfort for the ex-Chelsea legend.

Wan-Bissaka responds to Ten Hag’s coaching

The newly revived form of Manchester United’s right back Aaron Wan-Bissaka has delighted coach Erik Ten Hag. After a challenging time at Old Trafford all the signs were that he would be shipped out either by transfer or on loan in January. However, Wan-Bissaka has responded to Ten Hag’s coaching skills and improved considerably. With the rise of United and the form of Marcus Rashford, Wan Bissaka’s performances have often been overlooked but not by Ten Hag who now sees him and Diogo Dalot as his first choice right backs. Wan-Bissaka positions himself much better on the pitch after learning from Ten Hag and he is more of threat going forward with some good runs up the right-hand side of the field in every game he has played recently. At last he is justifying the £50million spent on buying him in 2019.

Players feed Haaland for his hat-trick

As I wrote last week, Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola spent time with his midfield and forward line in training where he demanded that more balls were fed through to Erling Haaland who was often being left stranded alone upfront. The response was immediate and Grealish, De Bruyne and Mahrez constantly put balls into the striker’s path against Wolves with Haaland scoring three in a 17 minute blistering display. Guardiola said after City beat Wolves 3-0, “He has to get the ball delivered into him as much as possible, we have fantastic players around him but the first goal was because he is there in the right place and the ball from Kevin (De Bruyne) was fantastic. If he receives the right passes he will do the rest.”



Erling Haaland

WEEKEND FIXTURES

Saturday, January 28

La Liga
Cadiz vs Real Mallorca 2pm
Girona vs Barcelona 4:15pm
Sevilla vs Elche 6:30pm
Getafe vs Real Betis 9pm

Serie A

Empoli vs Torino 3pm
Cremonese vs Inter Milan 6pm
Atalanta vs Sampdoria 8:45pm

Bundesliga

Hertha Berlin vs Union Berlin 3:30pm
Hoffenheim vs M’gladbach 3:30pm
Mainz vs Bochum 3:30pm
Freiburg vs Augsburg 3:30pm
Bremen vs Wolfsburg 3:30pm
B’ Munich vs Frankfurt 6:30pm

Ligue 1

Troyes vs Lens 5pm
Marseille vs Monaco 9pm

Sunday, January 29

La Liga
Valladolid vs Valencia 2pm
Osasuna vs A’ Madrid 4:15pm
Celta Vigo vs Bilbao 6:30pm
R’ Madrid vs Sociedad 9pm

Serie A

AC Milan vs Sassuolo 12:30pm
Juventus vs Monza 3pm
Lazio vs Fiorentina 5pm
Napoli vs Roma 8:45pm

Bundesliga

Schalke vs Cologne 3:30pm
Leverkusen vs Dortmund 4:30pm

Ligue 1

Nice vs Lille 1pm
Auxerre vs Montpellier 3pm
Brest vs Angers 3pm
Clermont vs Nantes 3pm
Strasbourg vs Toulouse 3pm

PREMIER LEAGUE STATS

LEADING GOALSCORERS

1. Erling Haaland 25
2. Harry Kane 16
3. Ivan Toney 13
4. Aleksandar Mitrovic 11
5. Rodrigo 10

LEADING ASSISTS

1. Kevin De Bruyne 11
2. Christian Eriksen 7
2. Bukayo Saka 7
4. Gabriel Jesus 5
4. Alex Iwobi 5

MOST PASSES

1. Rodri 1,758
2. Lewis Dunk 1,442
3. Thiago Silva 1,402
4. Pierre-Emile Højbjerg 1,325
5. Virgil van Dijk 1,317

MOST CLEAN SHEETS

1. Nick Pope 12
2. Aaron Ramsdale 9
3. David de Gea 8
3. Ederson 8
5. David Raya 7

MOST SAVES

1. David Raya 86
2. Bernd Leno 82
3. Jordan Pickford 73
4. Alisson 65
5. Vicente Guaita 63

Stats in numbers >>>>>>>>>>

10 Since his debut for Man United, Wout Weghorst recorded 10 successful lay-offs in all competitions, at least six more than any other Premier League player in all competitions.

100 Bruno Fernandes’ goal was his 100th goal involvement for Manchester United in all competitions (56 goals, 44 assists), in his 155th appearance for the club.

10 Since the start of last season, Arnaut Danjuma is one of only two La Liga players - along with Vinicius Junior - to have scored 10+ goals with both his left (10) and right foot (12) across all competitions.

109 Declan Rice has progressed the ball 109 metres per 90 minutes with his ball carries this season in the Premier League, the most of any central midfielder.

8.3 Khvicha Kvaratskhelia has been involved in 8.3 attacking sequences per 90 minutes this season in Serie A, the most of any player in Europe’s big five leagues (min. 1000 minutes).



Maizube Holdings Limited

Congratulations

The Board,
Management and staff
of Maizube Holdings
Limited, wishes to
congratulate Col. Sani
Bello (Rtd) on the
conferment of an
Honorary Doctorate
Degree (Honoris Causa)
by Ahmadu Bello
University, Zaria.

May Allah Subhana
Wata'ala continue to
guide, protect and
bestow on you more
blessings. Ameen.



Col. Sani Bello (Rtd)

Chairman, Mainstream Energy Solutions Limited

Signed:
Management
Maizube Holdings Limited

Osinbajo calls for revamp of NIPSS

Faruk Shuaibu

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has called on the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) to revamp its operations to initiate ideas that would solve Nigeria's problem.

Osinbajo, who was speaking during a courtesy visit by the trustees of NIPSS to his office, highlighted the need to reposition NIPSS, recalibrate its visibility and attract significant financial backing from the private sector and other non-public sector sources.

According to him, a think-tank such as NIPSS is effective

is when it provides a space for people to think and develop ideas because ideas make difference.

He said, "This is why countries that have made progress continue to seek ways not just in developing their own think-tanks, but in looking for other think-tanks they can collaborate with because there is so much happening around the world and a lot of collaboration is necessary."

According to a statement by VP's spokesperson, Laolu Akande, Osinbajo identified areas that should concern Institute to include developing ideas on how to get extreme poverty out of the country and address climate change issues,

among others.

On his part the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar, said the trustees are committed to serve and assured the VP of their preparedness to deliver on the mandate.

The Director General of NIPSS, Prof. Ayo Omotayo, reiterated the importance of finding alternative sources of funding research, infrastructure upgrade and other activities at the institution.

He assured the VP and the BOT members of management's commitment to leave a legacy of commitment to serve and accountability in the management of the funds raised.

Gen Akilu mourns 3 eminent Kano citizens

Zahraddeen Yakubu Shuaibu, Kano

An elder statesman and retired senior military officer, Brigadier-General Haliru Akilu (rtd) has expressed shock and grief over the demise of three notable citizens of Kano State within the first week of this year.

In separate condolence messages, General Akilu who is also the Kano Board of Trustee member of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), expressed deep sympathy over the death of the NGO's Legal Adviser in the state, Barrister Kabiru Muhtar and two others.

The General's condolence

messages were issued by Malam Bello Sani Galadanci, Publicity Secretary, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Kano State Chapter.

He recalled the enormous contributions the late legal officer had made in various spheres while in the service of Kano State, the banking sector and the nation.

Barrister Kabiru Muhtar had served as the Secretary/Legal Adviser to the Water Resources and Construction Agency (WRECA) and was appointed Commissioner for Agriculture under the Kabiru Gaya administration in 1992.

He served creditably in the banking sector and

was a renowned public administrator.

In similar messages showing grief, General Akilu condoled the families of a legal luminary and professor of Law, Prof Awwal Yadudu, whose wife Hajiya Zainab passed on in a US hospital and was buried last Monday in Kano.

The third condolence went to the family of renowned Islamic scholar, Goni Mallam Mustapha Arzai who died after a protracted illness.

The former Director of Military Intelligence prayed to Allah to grant mercy to the souls of the departed, and give their families the fortitude to bear their loss.

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AROUND & ABOUT

Lagosians abandon pedestrian bridges, risk lives crossing highways

Yvonne Ugwuezuoha, Lagos

The estimated population of Lagos State is put at over 20 million, making it the most populous city in Africa. With this comes the huge task of the populace commuting from one place to another to make ends meet through various means of livelihood.

Owing to the large number of road users - pedestrians and motorists alike, as well as the need to minimise road accidents, pedestrian bridges are constructed across the highways in the state. These foot bridges are strategically constructed at densely populated areas along Lekki-Epe Expressway, Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway, Apapa-Oshodi Expressway, Ikorodu Expressway, among others.

However, despite the provision of these facilities, a good number of road users still prefer to cross the expressway without using the pedestrian bridges, leading to accidents and loss of lives in the process.

There are several cases of vehicles crushing pedestrians who are in the habit of dashing across the roads instead of using the pedestrian bridges.

Even with a pedestrian bridge not up to five meters away, many residents would opt for jumping between cars and buses, flagging down oncoming vehicles with their hands while begging for a chance to get to the other side of the road.

Daily Trust Saturday observed many passengers at the ever-busy Ojota area of the Ikorodu Expressway ignoring the two footbridges in the area while crossing to the other side of the road.

It was a similar trend at Igboefon on the Lekki Expressway as some pedestrians were captured running inbetween oncoming vehicles. The same can be said in places like Palmgrove-Onipanu, Obanikoro, Maryland, Ojodu-Berger, Oworonshoki, Cement, Sanya, Charlie boy by Gbagada, Alapere, Lekki Phase 1 amongst others. The only exceptions are places where the wire mesh installed by the government has not been destroyed.

Successive governments in Lagos State have put in place laws compelling pedestrians to make use of the foot bridges instead of crossing expressways in the state.

Former Governor Babatunde Raji Fashola, on August 2, 2012 signed the Lagos Road Traffic Bill into law in order to ensure safety and orderly flow of traffic in the state.

In enforcing the law, successive governors also deployed officers of the Lagos Environmental

Sanitation Corps (LAGESC) popularly known as KAI and relevant agencies to apprehend offenders.

Despite the construction of pedestrian bridges on major highways to ensure safety of pedestrians while crossing roads, Lagosians abandon such bridges to cross highways, endangering their lives, *Daily Trust Saturday* reports



Residents crossing the Lagos/Ikorodu expressway, abandoning the pedestrian bridge at Ojota in Lagos

PHOTOS: Benedict Uwalaka

Sanitation Corps (LAGESC) popularly known as KAI and relevant agencies to apprehend offenders.

However, in recent times, enforcement seems to have been relaxed, leading to many pedestrians abandoning the footbridges in the state.

Daily Trust Saturday also observed that the wire mesh installed to serve as barriers against dashing across roads, are often damaged overnight.

Why we risked our lives crossing expressways

A resident, Francis Anthony

The state of bridges in the state is something the government has to look at. For instance, the one at Oshodi is often littered with touts which puts fear in me that I may get attacked or thrown off the bridge during a scuffle

Nzediegwu, disclosed that he hardly uses pedestrian bridges because they are built in a way that makes it stressful to use.

“Asides that, in places where they’re rarely used, it’s always messy and dirty, and can be dangerous to use due to touts residing there.

“In all honesty, I only use it mostly when it’s mandatory and I have no other choice, especially when there are barriers that’d stop one from accessing the other part of the road,” he said.

Another resident, Ayobami Okerinde, who confirmed the absence of footbridges in the Ikorodu area where he resides, said he occasionally uses pedestrian bridges when he moves around the state.

“In some places, the bridge is quite far from where I’m going,

leaving me no choice but to cross the road.

“Also, the state of bridges in the state is something the government has to look at. For instance, the one at Oshodi is often littered with touts which puts fear in me that I may get attacked or thrown off the bridge during a scuffle,” he said.

Latoye Precious Adefila, who frequents Ojota area of Lagos State, says he doesn’t use the pedestrian bridge because it is far from the bus stop.

“The bridge is far from the bus stop and it is stressful to climb, more like doubling the journey. I cross the main road when I have to go to the other side of the road, but I am always careful. In fact, with stories we have heard of pedestrian bridge theft and the kind of boys we see on these bridges, especially at

night, anybody will pick crossing the road over using the bridge,” he added.

A cleric, Abdulganiy Ayinla, lamented that pedestrians who dash across the expressways, contribute to accidents and gridlock on the road apart from endangering their lives.

“It is a bad habit from the people. They make driving difficult because as a driver you have to slow down so they can cross. If you don’t slow down or stop completely, they will rain curses on you or you may end up hitting one of the pedestrians,” he said.

Temporary shelters, market points

Due to the abandonment of pedestrian bridges across the states, some of them have become temporary homes for the less privileged, physically and mentally challenged, as well as meeting points for hooligans.

Some residents claimed that for fear of being harassed or ripped off of vital belongings while taking the bridge, they would rather risk their lives crossing busy expressways.

Some of these pedestrian bridges also have become refuse dump sites thereby making them inaccessible to pedestrians.

Most disturbing are traders that use the footbridges for displaying their wares, making it difficult for pedestrians to access the bridges.

Lagos intensifies advocacy, enforcements

The Lagos State government maintained that the usage of pedestrian bridges is part of safety measures put in place to help residents commute without hindrances in the state.

The Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Gbenga Omotosho, said the government is using community leaders to reach out to the people on the importance of using the footbridges in the state.

“We are using community leaders to talk to the people not to abandon pedestrian bridges but to see the bridges as a safety measure. Sensitization on the advantages of using footbridges is also ongoing on radio and television stations,” he said.

He also said the state has not relaxed the enforcement of the policy mandating residents to use pedestrian bridges. He noted that officials of LAGESC are dismantling makeshift stores set up by traders in response to complaints by Lagosians that they are unable to use the bridges as a result of commercial activities on the facilities.

He also warned that the state will not hesitate to prosecute anyone caught vandalising wire mesh installed by the government.



Pedestrian bridge at Igboefon

PHOTOS: Yvonne Ugwuezuoha

INSIDEPOLITICS



■ Ganduje



■ Kwankwaso



■ Shekarau

Kano gov'ship election: Ganduje, Kwankwaso, Shekarau in supremacy battle

Clement A. Oloyede, Kano

For the first time since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 and barring any 11th-hour compromise, each of the three leading politicians in Kano State will enter the battlefield with one thing in mind: to win the election for his anointed candidate and retire the other two from the political scene.

Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, Senators Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso and Ibrahim Shekarau, have taken turns to rule the state since 1999 for two terms each and now have their horses in the race, with each hoping to be the first to single-handedly "anoint" a successor.

This is so because it is the first election circle where each of the political heavyweights will belong to different political parties. The norm since 1999 has always been two of the trio teaming up against the other, but the dynamics have now seen Ganduje as the leader of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Kwankwaso as the leader and presidential candidate of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) and Shekarau as the leader of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

For the APC, Ganduje had to surmount some dissenting voices to anoint his deputy, Nasiru Yusuf Gawuna, as the gubernatorial candidate, while it was an easy ride for Kwankwaso to re-anoint his in-law and former commissioner, Abba Yusuf Kabir as the gubernatorial candidate, just as it was in the 2019 election when he was in the PDP.

For Shekarau and his party, the crisis that forced Kwankwaso out of the party has lingered, and now even threatens its participation in the gubernatorial election. Until late December, Sadiq Wali, son of former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aminu Wali, had been the recognised gubernatorial candidate of the party. Wali and Shekarau belong to the same faction trying to wrest control from Kwankwaso's allies left in the party that headed by Shehu Sagagi.

But following a Federal High Court

judgement in late December, which declared Mohammed Abacha, son of former military head of state, the late Sani Abacha, as the authentic candidate of the party, the Wali and Shekarau group has gone back to the drawing board as Abacha belongs to the group of Sagagi.

So, unlike Ganduje and Kwankwaso, Shekarau's path to influencing the emergence of the next governor of Kano state has been complicated by the internal wrangling within the party he only re-joined late last year after a voyage in the APC and a short stint with Kwankwaso in the NNPP.

Shekarau and the Wali group are still hoping that the appellate court would restore the candidacy of their choice.

Gawuna, the APC gubernatorial candidate and Ganduje's deputy and anointed successor, has one thing going for him: he is not known to be in the bad books of any of the other political gladiators.

The 55-year-old served as chairman of Nassarawa Local Government for eight years under the administration of Shekarau before he was appointed a commissioner in

2014 by Kwankwaso, and was reappointed a commissioner in 2015 by Ganduje when the latter took over power. He would later be appointed as Ganduje's deputy after the resignation of Hafiz Abubakar.

In 2019, he was retained by Ganduje and they jointly emerged winners after a re-run election. However, it was the incidents leading to the rerun election that shot Gawuna to the limelight of national politics after images of him being sandwiched between police officers in a van went viral. The incident, it was reported, had to do with the collation of results during the election, where it was gathered that he and Murtala Sule-Garo, the then commissioner for local government affairs and now his running mate, arrived the venue of the state collation centre and allegedly began to disrupt the process.

Their actions led to a halt in the announcement of results at the centre after some youth suspected to be supporters of the opposition PDP tried to attack the two officials. Police would later explain that Gawuna and Sule-Garo were not arrested but escorted out of a hostile environment.

This incident and the perceived lackadaisical performance of the ruling party at the national level, as well as allegations that had continued to trail his boss and some policies of the government he served as number 2 have become the greatest hitches for the APC candidate despite his acclaimed excellent performances as commissioner, deputy governor, as well as his role as the chairman of Kano State Taskforce Committee on COVID-19, which won the state several laurels.

Abba Kabir Yusuf, the candidate of the NNPP, is going into the election with the mindset of reclaiming his "stolen mandate," he has said at several fora. He has maintained that he won the 2019 election against Ganduje and was only denied of his entry into the Government House by the controversial declaration of the election as inconclusive and the rerun election that followed.

Yusuf, popularly known as Abba Gida Gida, has been a household name in Kano since the 2019 election when he flew the flag of the PDP to challenge Ganduje's return bid but oftentimes has been overshadowed by the popularity of his mentor, in-law and political godfather, Kwankwaso, observers of Kano politics noted.

The 59-year-old served as Kwankwaso's commissioner for works, housing and transport, the powerful ministry at the centre of Kwankwaso's modernisation and infrastructural development drive for Kano between 2011 and 2015. And his 70-page blueprint launched last year has placed emphasis on education and health care, as well as consolidation of the Kwankwasiyya ideals for the state.

Whether this would be enough for Yusuf to wrest power from the ruling party is still up for debate, especially with the financial war chest of the ruling party and Kwankwaso also having another personal race in the general elections - his presidential ambition.

But beyond the three major parties, other parties and candidates are also hoping to change the narrative. Sha'aban Sharada, a House of Representatives member and former aide to President Muhammadu Buhari, who recently dumped the ruling APC after missing out on its gubernatorial ticket, has been making a name for himself among the youths in the state. He was a very influential member of the defunct G-7 faction of the APC led by Shekarau, which nearly wrested party controls from Ganduje last year.

As the campaigns continue, Sharada's continuous appeal to residents is considered a challenge for both the ruling APC and the NNPP. For the APC, it is believed that supporters of the 41-year-old lawmaker constitute a sizable portion of the votes that secured victory for the APC in 2019, especially in the Kano metropolitan area. And for the NNPP, his growing appeal among the youths and women, which is the core of the NNPP's support base, is also considered threatening.

Other candidates like Bashir I. Bashir of the Labour Party, an engineer; Salihu Tanko Yakasai of the People's Redemption Party (PRP), Malam Ibrahim Khalil of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and Bala Gwagwarawa of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), who all recently left the APC or had a stint with the party, strongly believe in their chances of winning the election, but analysts believe that unless compromises are reached before the election day, their successes at the poll may be that of denying the ruling APC of thousands of votes.

Analysts, however, believe that although the election has more tendencies of being a proxy war among the three political gladiators in the state, there are still slim chances of new guards like Sharada retiring all the old guards with a surprising result at the poll.

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FEATURE

Amidst demands for compensation, train project excites communities along Kaduna-Kano corridor

As many residents are excited about the business development that the completion of the Kano-Kaduna rail project will bring, some residents still hold grievances and await compensation from the government over farmlands converted for the project.

Zahraddeen Yakubu Shuaibu, Kano

Residents of communities on the corridor of the ongoing Kano-Kaduna rail line project have expressed joy and satisfaction with the progress recorded by the project with a great hope to boost and ease business relations between the two states and even beyond, but many of them still call on the government to pay them compensation for their farmlands taken over by the project, *Daily Trust Saturday* reports.

According to some of them, apart from promoting businesses, the project will also uplift their towns and promote developmental activities in their regions.

For Malam Muntari Abdullahi and other residents of Tashar Yari and Makarfi towns in Kaduna State, the train is progressing beyond measure, which makes relieve the olden days of rail transportation and how it made their transportation system easier. He said their town, as one of the leading villages in farming, would get rapid transformation which will enhance their movement of farm produce to either Kano or Kaduna and other cities, as well as the supply of other commodities to their towns.

Also, according to residents of Kuya town in Ikara Local Government Area of Kaduna State, apart from playing a key role in moving their goods, the train will provide more business opportunities and increase visitors, especially if one of the stations is established in their town.

"This railway will be very useful to us, especially with regards to the farming sector. It will ease our movement of farm produce to markets. Everybody here is a farmer and we live far away from the market. Also, we can move freely to other places like Kano or Kaduna cities," one of the residents, Idi Barau said.

The Kano-Kaduna train project was commissioned by President Muhammadu Buhari in July 2021. Although the project commenced on April 14, 2022, it is expected to be completed on June 30, 2023, the Project Profile indicated. With a length of 200.11 kilometres and an expected speed limit of 150 kilometres per hour, the modern railway project is being constructed by the Chinese company - China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation Limited (CCECC) at the cost of \$1.2 billion.

Executed purposely to facilitate the expansion of the Northwest extension of Abuja-Kaduna railway, the Kano-Kaduna counterpart is expected to strengthen the link between the cities and other areas, promote the export of agricultural products and other mineral resources as well as facilitate the mass movement of passengers, particularly middle-class income earners.

When *Daily Trust Saturday* correspondent travelled along the axis, it was found that the project is recording success across all the sites with workers, vehicles, and their supervisors as well as engineers moving from one place to another to ensure proper coordination. From the starting point in Zawachiki of Kumbotso Local Government Area of Kano State, which shares perimeter fencing with Dala Inland Dry Port to Tashar Yari in Kaduna State, the project has been divided into eight sub-units each with its engineers and supervisors thereby making it easier for professional and faster constructions.

From Zawaciki, passing through Kanwa town in Madobi LGA of Kano State to the neighbouring towns and villages along the Kano-Kaduna axis, passing through Ikara LGA of Kaduna State and then linking to Kano-Zaria Road, the rail project proceeds to the Tashar Yari axis where one of the biggest stations is expected to be situated. It will further link to the Zaria

train station, from where it will then proceed to Rigasa in Kaduna State.

Daily Trust gathered during the trip that from the Zawachiki main station in Kano to Tashar Yari in Kaduna State, the project has reached a significant completion stage. This is to the extent that majority of the places have been completed. The only part remaining is laying the rail tracks on the route. With exceptions of where the train has to go on top of bridges due to dams and other linkages to towns, some of the completed places have already been decorated with grasses by the sides of the rail line, a development that shows its readiness to be used upon laying the tracks.

In an interaction with some workers on site, who chose not to be named, they said if not for the past rainy season which halted the bridge construction, further leading to delay in the work, they would have finished by now, adding that in the next two months, the bridges would also be completed.

They said the train line, as a modern one, has to undergo several processes some of which include places it will go on top of bridges, while some underground, as well as on the ground just like motor vehicles.

"There are four bigger bridges that will pass on top of the water, while there are also smaller ones that are either linking two villages or are providing ways for passage of people, goods and animals to the bush or farms," one of the workers said.

However, despite the progress recorded by the project, it has not reached the Kaduna Rigasa train station. The project currently stops at Tashar Yari, a few kilometres to Zaria city.

Daily Trust gathered from the Zaria Train Station that the contractors have cleared and demarcated the roadside to Kauna, but work has not started.

Speaking further about the development the project will bring to them, a resident of Kanwa town in Madobi Local Government Area of Kano State, Malam Harisu Iliyasu, said they never thought about the reality of the work until it reached its present stage, hoping that it will be completed during Buhari's administration.

"Even though they brought their equipment long ago, we never thought they could make it to this level. We thought it was the usual promises from politicians, but honestly, with what we have seen now, we believe that the project is a reality. We will have a train passing through our town. That, alone, is a big development.

"But our hope and prayers are for the project to be completed during this administration. We are afraid that the incoming government will abandon it. This is how the government operates, if you don't like a project started by your predecessor, you just abandoned it, which is the reason for our setback," he said.

Communities lament non-payment of compensation

Meanwhile, although the Kano-Kaduna train service is of great benefit to the states and communities along the corridor, some of the residents of these communities lamented that they are yet to receive compensation for their farmlands that were acquired for the project. Others said they were paid but not to the expected amount, calling on the government to consider them.

"This place that we are standing is also part of the train areas. It belongs to me. But I wasn't even paid a Kobo. They paid some of us but they didn't pay some. We are pleading with them to please pay us our compensation," a resident of Kanwa town, Zubairu Murtala said.



Some part of the completed project awaiting the rail tracks

Project reaches 75%, to be completed soon – Contractor

Speaking to our reporter on the state of the project, one of the engineers on site, Hassan Umar, said they have so far achieved their target of the project and that they will finish within the agreed time. He said they are presently at over 75 percent and that the majority of the places await only the track laying.

"The project has reached its final level. From here to Tashar Yari, majority of the work has been done. The only thing that remains is the laying of the rail tracks which will make it ready for use. In most of the places, we have even planted grasses which will

beautify the places.

"The only thing delaying the project is the bridges we are constructing and very soon they will be completed. We are working day and night. It was the rainy season that halted the work, but now we are fully back," he said.

Likewise, during the trip, *Daily Trust* gathered from the main station in Tashar Yari that the rail tracks would soon be laid on the completed parts of the project. The tracks were sighted by our reporter with the train that will lay them on the ground. An insider, who doesn't want to be named, said the company expects some bridges to be completed.

NRC

NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

NRC Nigeria: Consultancy notice: Capacity Building Training in Borehole Construction

NRC Nigeria through the WASH Sector in North East Nigeria would like to roll out the capacity development plans supporting government counterparts, agencies and private sector, in a bit to ensure quality programming and support for affected populations.

The WASH Sector has identified critical key areas of capacity building:

- 1. Drilling and Construction of Boreholes:** The existing water infrastructure is made up of Upper; middle level to very deep aquifer boreholes in Northeast Nigeria. The lack of adequate skills in the drilling, construction and post drilling activities has led to the loss of boreholes and sometimes dry wells.

To roll out successful training sessions we are looking for a service provider(s) that will offer the training on a **staggered period between 20th – 25th March, 2023** for (5) five days in person, in Yola, Adamawa State. The trainers will provide training modules, guidance and necessary technical support and conduct the pieces of training with the support of the WASH Sector NE Nigeria.

Application procedure

All interested applicants are requested to submit their curriculum vitae along with other required documents listed below to the following email and as per the detailed tender document to: ng.tenders@nrc.no.

Kindly request for the TOR through ng.procurement@nrc.no
Please note one can submit questions until **5th February 2023 mid-night (Nigeria time)**.

The application should be titled: **"13/NRC-NG/CLT/2023 - Capacity Building Training in Borehole Drilling and Construction"** in the e-mail subject.

The deadline for submission is 10th February 2023. Failure to meet the closing date will result in the bid being rejected. Only short-listed/successful candidates will be contacted.

Unveiling 'the faces' behind Edo train attack



■ Obaseki and security chiefs during briefing on the attack

Usman A. Bello, Benin

Edo State became the centre of attention on January 7 following the abduction of 20 passengers at the Igueben train station.

The passengers were waiting at the station lobby to board the train coming from Itakpe to their various destinations but ended up spending over one week in the captivity of their abductors.

Findings by Daily Trust Saturday indicate that all the kidnapped victims have regained freedom while 11 suspects have been arrested in connection with the attack.

Following the abduction, the Police, Department of State Services (DSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Edo State Security Network, vigilante and hunters relocated to the area for bush combing, which resulted in the rescue of the kidnapped victims.

Six of the victims - two elderly men, including a retired police officer, a nursing mother and her baby, two and three years minors, were the first set of victims to escape from their abductors.

Twelve others were rescued after eight days in the kidnappers' den while the remaining two, who were said to be staff of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, were rescued a few days later.

The police and the Edo State Government claimed that no ransom was paid to get the victims released but relatives of the kidnapped victims and residents in the area said ransom was paid for the release of the victims.

Speaking with journalists at the police cottage hospital where the 12 rescued victims were receiving treatment, Governor Godwin Obaseki, said the victims were rescued by a combined team of security operatives in collaboration with hunters and vigilantes.

He said no ransom was paid to secure the release of the victims while no life was lost in the rescue operation.

"The security team tracked and intercepted the kidnappers in their hideout. They were tactful in their approach to ensure that no life was lost in the operation," he said.

Obaseki blamed traditional rulers in the area, who he said flouted government's decision to ensure that grazing opportunities were not given to herders in their forests.

"We got information that some traditional rulers, particularly in that area, are not respecting government's decision not to give grazing opportunities to herders in their forest.

"I have instructed that the matter be

investigated and anyone found to be harbouring people they should not harbour in their domain would have questions to answer. We don't have this incident in communities that have cooperated with us on the directive," he added.

Meanwhile, the commissioner of police in the state, Muhammad Dankwara, who also declared that ransoms were not paid, said the victims were rescued at Udo forest by his men.

"We got an intelligence report that the kidnappers were roaming about in Udoh forest and the security forces laid an ambush. And in trying to move the victims from one location to another, the security intercepted them and the kidnappers abandoned their victims."

Arrested suspects charged

Eight suspects, including two traditional rulers, the Onojie of Udo, Friday Ighedujiemu and the chief of Eko-Ibadin, Ibadin Hamilton, were initially arrested in connection with the attack.

Other suspects were Ighoko Odion, Okojie Ewa, Okie Patrick, Halilu Umaru, Aminu Ibrahim, and Isah Aliyu.

Daily Trust Saturday learnt that additional three suspects were also arrested, bringing the total number of arrested suspects to 11.

However, eight of the suspects, namely Ibadin Hamilton, Ighoko Odion, Okojie Ewa, Okie Patrick, Friday Ighedujiemu, Halilu Umaru, Aminu Ibrahim, and Isah Aliyu, have been charged to court.

The suspects charged included two traditional rulers, three local vigilantes and three herders.

A source within the community who spoke to Daily Trust Saturday in confidence said, "The information we had about the arrested traditional rulers is that the governor gave directive some months ago, that all traditional rulers and local government directors should not allow herders to camp in their domains and should also clear all the forests of herders."

"The traditional ruler of Udo is said to be guilty of allowing herders in his forest to continue grazing cows.

"According to the information, they found two cows in the palace of Eko-Ibadin traditional ruler and the government is alleging that the cows were given to him by herdsmen.

A source with knowledge of the case also disclosed that the three local vigilantes were discovered to be informants for the abductors.

"The vigilantes, according to what we gathered, were alleged to be informants to the kidnappers," the source said.

Daily Trust Saturday also learnt that there had been several petitions against the traditional ruler on alleged shady deals.

Charges against suspects

The police had charged the eight suspects to court, seeking an order to extend their detention in police custody pending the conclusion of investigation.

According to the charge sheet filed by the police on January 17, the suspects were charged for criminal conspiracy and kidnapping.

The document revealed that Odion, 62; Ewa, 58; Patrick, 42; Ighedujiemu, 51; Hamilton, 59; Umaru, 28; Ibrahim, 25; and Aliyu, 25; all male, conspired to kidnap the victims with the expectation of getting N20million from their relatives as ransom for their freedom.

Part of the charge sheet reads, "That you, Ighoko Odion, Okojie Ewa, Okie Patrick, Friday Ighedujiemu, Ibadin Hamilton, Halilu Umaru, Aminu Ibrahim, Isah Aliyu, and others now at large did conspire amongst yourselves to commit

felony, to wit: kidnapping and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 5 and punishable under section 2 (1) (2) of the Kidnapping Prohibition (Amendment) Law of Edo State, 2013."

"That you, Ighoko Odion, Okojie Ewa, Okie Patrick, Friday Ighedujiemu, Ibadin Hamilton, Halilu Umaru, Aminu Ibrahim, Isah Aliyu, and others now at large, at the Nigerian Railway Station, Igueben, Edo State, in the Benin judicial division, while armed with guns and other dangerous weapon, did attack and kidnap passengers inside the train to an unknown destination till now with intent to receive ransom payment of N20million before releasing them from your captivity, and thereby committed an offence punishable under section 2 (1), (2) of the Kidnapping Prohibition (Amended) Law of Edo State, 2013."

Controversy over ransom payment

The Edo State governor, Obaseki and the commissioner of police, Dankwara, at different occasions, said the victims were rescued without payment of ransom.

Dankwara said, "To the best of my knowledge, the kidnapped victims were rescued by my men and no ransom was paid."

On his part, Governor Obaseki told journalists that the victims were rescued by a combined team of security operatives in collaboration with hunters and vigilantes

"No ransom was paid to secure the release of the victims, and no life was lost in the rescue operation," Obaseki said.

But a relative of one of the victims who only gave her name as Favour disagreed with the governor and the commissioner of police.

Favour, who hails from Ebudin in Esan Central Local Government Area and an elder sister to one of the victims, told journalists that they paid N2million to get her sister released.

"They demanded a ransom of N20m and my brother told them that we didn't have such money; but we gave them N2m," she said.

A resident of the area who spoke to Daily Trust Saturday on the condition of anonymity corroborated Favours narration.

He alleged that the state government and the police were economical with the truth as ransom was actually paid for the release of the victims.

He said, "The families of the 12 supposed rescued victims paid N2m each for the release of their loved ones. Also, the two last released victims, the station manager and booking clerk, paid ransom."

According to the information, they found two cows in the palace of Eko-Ibadin traditional ruler and the government is alleging that the cows were given to him by herdsmen



■ Rescued victims at the hospital



■ Rescued victims



AROUND THE STATES

KADUNA

Comment on my successor demolishing more houses than me, joke - El-rufai

Mohammed Ibrahim Yaba, Kaduna

Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-rufai has said he was only cracking a joke when he said his successor will demolish more houses than he did across the state.

The governor described the All Progressives Congress APC governorship candidate in the state, Senator Uba Sani, as a soft minded individual when compared to him (El-rufai).

It could be recalled that El-rufai sometime in June 2021 was quoted to have said that his successor will demolish more houses than he did in the state.

The comment generated condemnation from the opposition parties and is still generating backlash for the ruling party as the country approaches elections.

But El-rufai at a media chat aired on local radio stations in the state described his previous comment as a joke.

He said his successors will be Senator Uba Sani and Dr Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe, God willing.

"Uba is not like me; he is a bit soft. What I was trying to show was that leadership is difficult; sometimes you take certain decisions you don't intend to take but which will benefit the people. Which was what we did," he said.

EDO

NYSC seeks Obaseki's support over hostel accommodation

Usman A. Bello, Benin

The Acting Director General of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Mrs Christy Ifeyinwa, has sought the support of the Edo State Government in addressing the hostel accommodation, water and other challenges at the orientation camp.

Represented by the Edo State Coordinator of NYSC, Mrs Abiodun Olubukola, she made the appeal yesterday at Okada, Edo State, during the swearing-in of the 2023 Batch 'A' Stream 1 Corps Members deployed to the state.

The DG, who commended the governor for the assistance rendered to the state NYSC, said the camp is still faced with inadequate hostel accommodation for corps members and other collaborating agencies.

"Other challenges are completion of the water treatment project, completion of the sporting arena, provision of beds in the camp clinic and perimeter fencing of the camp to prevent further encroachment by individuals," she said.

On his part, Governor Godwin Obaseki charged the corps members to be serious with the service year as it offers them the opportunity to develop mentally and be exposed to various issues of leadership and good government.

KANO

Dala inland port set to boost economy, businesses

Salim Umar Ibrahim, Kano

Managing Director of Dala Inland Dry Port, Kano, Ahmed Rabiu, has said that the port which is soon to be commissioned by President Muhammadu Buhari will boost the economic and business activities across the Sahara region.

While addressing journalists in Kano, he said the president is expected to commission the port on Monday, adding that the port when operational will solve all the contemporary problems at the sea port as a port of origin and destination.

"All containers coming in will not leave empty. They will also take something back as export. It will serve as a transit port to the Republics of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. Cargoes will go anywhere in the world from Kano State without following up to any sea ports across Nigeria," he said.

On his part, chairman of the port, Abubakar Sahabo Bawuro, said the port has a holding capacity of 20,000 units of containers with room for expansion, adding that it will be a pride not only to Kano, but the country at large.

GOMBE

Elections: NCoS seeks voting right for prison inmates

Haruna Gimba Yaya, Gombe

The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) has called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to provide voting rights for inmates incarcerated at custodial centres across the country.

Gombe State Comptroller of NCoS, Lawal Idris Gusau, stated this in Gombe during a one-day stakeholders meeting for Northeast stakeholders ahead of the 2023

general elections, organised by the Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA).

Represented by Assistant Comptroller Operations, John Zakka Dukwui, he said the electoral laws have disenfranchised inmates from participating in elections.

Gusau lamented that the Nigerian constitution also does not recognise inmates as voters, saying that those incarcerated at custodial centres should be given opportunity to vote "because being there does not deprive

them of their citizenship."

He called for the amendment of the constitution and electoral act to recognise inmates as voters and make provision for them to vote at the respective custodial centres they are being incarcerated.

Earlier, Executive Director of CTA, Mrs Faith Nwadike, said her organisation as an accredited domestic observer, convened the stakeholders' meeting as part of its contributions towards having a free, fair and peaceful elections.



■ From left: Secretary to the State Government, Mrs Folashade Jaji; Deputy Governor, Dr Obafemi Hamzat; Lagos State Attorney General, Mr Moyosore Onigbanjo; Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State; Chairman House Committee on Appropriation, Mr Gbolahan Yishawu and Commissioner for Budget and Planning, Mr Sam Egube during the signing of 2023 Appropriation Bill into Law in Lagos on Friday

PHOTO: NAN

PLATEAU

PWDs lament difficulties in accessing airports, other facilities

Ado Abubakar Musa, Jos

Persons with disabilities have cried out that they are finding it difficult to access airports and other public facilities in the country, describing the situation as discrimination and denial of their rights.

Coalition of disabilities organizations, in partnership with Centre for Citizens with Disabilities, Spinal

Cord Injury Association and Hope Alive for Possibilities Initiative yesterday at a forum in Jos, said access to airport or airline facilities and services for the purpose of air traveling, was very significant, but individuals with disabilities' rights are flagrantly overlooked.

Executive chairman, Plateau State Disability Right Commission, Kyennan

Minzin, while speaking on the matter, said, "Whenever we find ourselves at the airport, we find it difficult to get access to the facilities like the way other people are getting them. There is no elevator provided for us. We have to be lifted together with our wheelchairs. We can't also get access to toilets and important facilities.

He said there have been

numerous accounts of outright denial of air travel rights of persons with disabilities not to talk of humiliation and degrading responses of their requests.

David Obinna, Executive Director, Centre for Citizens with Disabilities, said the event was to sensitize stakeholders to understand the difficulties they faced and find how to find solutions to them.

PLATEAU

Why we are reconstructing tertiary institutions' internal roads - Fashola

Dickson S. Adama, Jos

The Minister of Works and Housing, Babatunde Raji Fashola, has said the federal government's intervention in schools has improved infrastructure in higher institutions.

He said these interventions have made the students express renewed enthusiasm about attending classes because some defective roads have been restored to good condition.

Fashola made this known at the federal government's handing over ceremony of

a 2-kilometre rehabilitated road by the ministry at the University of Jos in Plateau State.

He said road rehabilitation is part of the government's intervention in its facilities in federal institutions.

Represented by the Federal

Controller of Works, Plateau State, Engr. Abubakar M. Usman, Fashola said the gap in the nation's infrastructure needs is steadily being bridged by a gradual process of repairs, renewal and construction on major highways and it has reached the schools.

BENUE

Woman held over death of 10-year-old

From Hope Abah Emmanuel, Makurdi

The Benue State Police Command has arrested a woman over suspicion of beating her 10-year-old stepson to death.

Spokesperson of the Command, SP. Catherine

Anene, disclosed in a statement made available to journalists in Makurdi.

Anene said the report about the incident was received on Tuesday at about 5pm at the 'E' Police Division in Makurdi.

She said the suspect, who is now in police custody, had allegedly beaten the deceased,

Fanen Yange, earlier on the said day for stealing meat from the pot.

The police spokesperson added that according to the report, the deceased Fanen went to bed and did not wake up.

Anene said, "preliminary investigation reveals that

the deceased, Fanen Yange, 10 years old of International Market Area, Makurdi, was alleged by his stepmother, Mrs. Upev, to have stolen meat from the pot and she beat him up during the early hours of the day but when the victim went to sleep at night, he did not wake up.

Land tussle: No end to face-off between Abuja natives, military



PHOTOS: Abubakar Sadiq Isah

■ Some natives with the Commissioner for Public Complaints Commission (PCC) during assessment on the disputed land in December, 2022

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

The face-off between indigenes of the FCT and the Nigerian military over land ownership started in September 2016, when the military 'invaded' Tungan Maje, Kpakuru, Yelwan-Zuba communities located along Gwagwalada-Giri-Zuba on the Abuja-Lokoja highway and started marking the houses of natives for demolition.

The marking of their houses and pulling down of economic trees in their communities did not go down well with the natives of the area, who perceived an alleged move by the military to take over what they said were their ancestral 9,000 hectares of land.

Before the military's alleged invasion of these communities in 2016, they had mounted signposts from Airport junction-Iddo-Sarki, Anagada - Tungan - Maje down to Zuba, with an inscription boldly written in red and black paints "This Land Belongs To The Nigerian Army Keep Off".

However, tension started heightening in April 2019, when the natives discovered that the military was moving in equipment such as bulldozers and excavators, and had started clearing the expansive land and digging pit from Iddo down to Tunga Maje.

They raised an alarm and wrote petitions to the National Assembly, FCT Administration and the authorities of Gwagwalada Area Council through their youth leader, Comrade Ishaku Umar. They accused the military of intimidating and harassing their people whenever they go to cultivate their farm lands.

As the alleged harassment of the natives continued unabated by military, the natives under the aegis of the Coalition of Abuja Indigenous Association (CAIA)

led by its coordinator, Comrade Ezekiel Musa Dalhatu, who is now the commissioner for Public Complaints Commission (PCC) representing the FCT, led protests twice to the National Assembly to lodge their complaints over incessant harassment and intimidation of the natives by the Nigerian army over their farm land.

The natives, during their protests, claimed that the land in question, which is under Zuba chieftdom of Gwagwalada area Council, has been their ancestral land even before Nigeria was created in 1914. Some elders noted that the vast land, which stretches from Iddo Sarki, along Airport Road, down to Zuba, belongs to the natives.

They said they grew up to inherit the land from their forefathers who were into farming and hunting as their major occupations, and so vowed not to relinquish their ancestral land to the Nigerian Army.

Malam Audu Ibrahim, a native of Yelwan Zuba community, said he hardly cultivates his farm because of threats from soldiers who usually invade the land to chase him and other farmers away.

The situation did not also go



■ Women with placards protest invasion of their ancestral land by the Nigerian army

down well with the Agora of Zuba chieftdom, HRH Alhaji Mohammed Bello Umar, who, at different fora, has decried the incessant intimidation and harassment of his people by military while in their farms.

He said his subjects were deprived of cultivating on their farm lands, alleging that they were most times chased away from their farms by the military.

Also, the district head of Tungan-Maje, Alhaji Hussaini Barde, in one of the interviews with our reporter, maintained



■ Some natives with banners during a protest taking over of their land by the Nigerian army

Nigerian Army mounted signposts between Iddo Sarki, along airport road, down to Zuba, some years ago.

"Immediately we saw the signposts, what we did as law-abiding citizens was to contact the FCT authorities, who told us that they had not given the land to the Nigerian Army," he added.

The Nigerian army under the former Chief of Army Staff, Tukur Buratai, was quoted to have claimed that the said land was officially allocated to the army in 1979 while the certificate of occupancy was issued in 2011.

"In 2011, when all lands were revoked and land owners were directed to rectify, the Nigerian army duly applied for the recertification, and they have legally recertified this particular land," Buratai was quoted to have said during a public hearing at the National Assembly.

However, the FCT administration under the leadership of Muhammad Musa Bello, was said to have denied issuing such land to the Nigerian army. Despite the minister's denial, the Nigerian army had continued with the building of structures at the site which sparked fresh protest by the natives in August 14, 2020.

The natives, from the six area councils, trooped out in their numbers including women carrying placards and leaves, and blocked the Abuja-Airport Road, as they refused to be intimidated by the gun-wielding soldiers from gaining access to the disputed land. Motorists plying the road, including Vice President Yemi Osinbanjo, who was on his way to the airport, were caught up in the gridlock.

Osinbanjo, who alighted from his convoy and addressed the protesting natives, promised to channel their grievances to President Muhammadu Buhari. A committee was set up by the presidency, with the vice president as chairman. The committee reportedly ordered the Nigerian army to stop any form of development at the site.

Despite the order, the army continued with the building at the site which further resulted in another protest at Tungan Maje, in which one of the youths was allegedly shot dead by soldiers. The situation created tension, drawing the attention of the FCT minister of state, Hajiya Ramatu Tijjani Aliyu, who later visited the palace of the Agora of Zuba, Alhaji Mohammed Bello Umar, to douse tension among the aggrieved natives.

The minister was quoted at the monarch's palace as saying "if indeed the land was allocated from the federal authorities to the Nigerian army, of course consideration must be made for new place to relocate to and of course to settle you by compensation."

However, as things stand at the moment, the military authorities have continued with building of structures at the site, even as the youth leader of the affected communities, Comrade Ishaku Umar, disclosed to our reporter on Thursday that some officials from the FCDA have visited some of the communities and took photographs before leaving.

"Actually, some officials from the FCDA came two weeks ago and took photographs before leaving. They assured us that they will get back to us. We are yet to hear from them since then."

that his forefathers settled in the community even before he was born and so wondered why the military will lay claim to ownership of their ancestral land.

"I want to make it categorically clear that we have been in existence even before the decree that established Abuja in 1976. Before the creation of this country in 1914, our people have been here," he said.

According to him, there are over 25 villages in Zuba chieftdom, which include Sarki Akoro, Bassa, Shishida, Yelwan-Zuba, Jawoji, Malauni, Kpakuru, Tungan-Ali, Epe, Tungan Samu, Anagada, Padna, Tungan-Nara; and "the Nigerian Army is asking indigenes of these communities to relocate."

He said it's funny that the Nigerian Army claimed to have acquired the land in 1979, explaining that the decree which created Abuja had outlined that the affected communities should be duly resettled and compensated whenever the need arose.

"In Zuba chieftdom, there are over 25 villages while there are 20 in Jiwa in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), which the army is claiming belong to them," he said.

The district head reiterated that the problem started when the



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<p>SAFIAT: I, formerly known as SAFIAT SAFIAT BAMITALE, now wish to be known and addressed as OGUNDARE-AJIMO SAFIAT BAMITALE. All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.</p>	<p>KAMALU: I formerly known and addressed as KAMAL UMAR but now wish to be known and addressed as KAMALU MUHAMMAD and D.O.B 16/07/1998. All former documents remain valid. The general public and any authority concerned should take note, please.</p>	<p>I formerly known as ABDULMAJID YARDAMU now wish to be called and addresses ABDULMAJID IBRAHIM all former document remain valid authority concern and general public should take to note</p>	<p>ABDULLAHI: I, formerly known as ABDULLAHI SHAMSUDEEN SHAMSUDEEN, now wish to be known and addressed as ABDULLAHI SHAMSUDEEN ZAKARI. All former documents remain valid. The general public and any authority concerned to please take note</p>
<p>ABRAHAM: I, formerly known as IBRAHIM AYODEJI FEMI, now wish to be known and addressed as ABRAHAM AYODEJI. All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.</p>	<p>MRS ALOWOMASE: I formerly known as MISS TOWHENU YETUNDE BEATRICE, now wish to be known as MRS ALOWOMASE KHADIJA YETUNDE. All former documents remain valid. Authority concerned and general public please take note.</p>	<p>I formerly known as FIDDAUSI MUHAMMAD ABDULLAHI 20-02-1984 now wish to be called and addresses FIDDAUSI ABDULLAHI 24-02-1984 all former document remain valid authority concern and general public should take to note</p>	<p>YAHAYA: I, formerly known as YAU YAHAYA, now wish to be known and called YAHAYA YAU JOB. All former documents remain valid. The general public and any authority concerned to please take note.</p>
<p>BASHAR: I, formerly known as Bashar Ibrahim, now wish to be known and addressed as Bashar Ibrahim Tambuwal. All documents remain valid. Authority concerned and the general public to take note.</p>	<p>TERWASE: I, FORMERLY KNOWN AND CALLED AS KWAGHWA MIMIDOO FELICIA NOW WISH TO BE KNOWN, CALLED AND ADDRESSED AS TERWASE MIMIDOO FELICIA. ALL FORMER DOCUMENTS REMAIN VALID. GENERAL PUBLIC AND OTHER AUTHORITIES CONCERNED SHOULD PLEASE TAKE NOTE.</p>	<p>SHAIBU: I, formerly known as DAUDA YAKUBU, now wish to be known and addressed as SHAIBU YAKUBU. All former documents remain valid. Authorities concerned and general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ODUNAYO: I, formerly known and addressed as ODUNAYO BENJAMIN. Now wish to be known and addressed as ODUNAYO IRE BENJAMEN. All former documents remain valid, Authority Concerned and General public please take note.</p>
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<p>GANI I, formerly known as MUSLIMAT SAIDU IDRIS now wish to be known and addressed as MUSLIMAT SAIDU GANI. All former documents remain valid public to take note.</p>	<p>I formerly known as DANJUMA BLESSING, now wish to be called and addressed as ADIKWU BLESSING. All former documents remain valid. General public and Authorities concerned should please take note.</p>	<p>I UBALAH YAHAYA AUDU wish to notify the general public that my date of birth was mistakenly appear as 01/07/1962 instead of 01/01/1966. All former documents remain valid Authority concerned and general public should please take note</p>	<p>I, FAGBEMI ADEGOKE FRIDAY of Assemblies of God Nigeria wishes to be known as OLUWAGBEMI ADEGOKE FRIDAY. All former documents remain valid, Authority Concerned and General public please take note.</p>
<p>AHMAD: I formerly known as AHMAD ABDULKADIR now wish to be known and addressed as AHMAD ABDULKADIR MUHAMMAD. All former document remain valid authorities concerned and general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ESTHER I formerly known as ESTHER LAWRENCE TIMOTHY now wish to be known and addressed as ESTHER PETER OTU. All former documents remain valid and general public should take note</p>	<p>TASIU: I, formerly known as TASIU SANI now wish to be called and addressed as TASIU SANI DANNENE. All former documents remain valid. Authorities concerned and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>OKUSANYA: I, formerly known and addressed as Mrs. OBATOSIN KOFOWOROLA KUDIRAT. Now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs OKUSANYA KOFOWOROLA KUDIRAT. All former documents remain valid, Authority Concerned and General public please take note.</p>
<p>I formerly known and addressed as KWUAJU CHINEDU now wish to be known and addressed as IKELIE GEORGE CHINEDU. All former documents remain valid. General Public to take note.</p>	<p>ZAINAB I formerly known as ZAINAB ABDULLAHI DANJUMA now wish to be known and addressed as ZAINAB ABDULLAHI ALTI. All former documents remain valid and general public should take note</p>	<p>RAHMATU: I, formerly known as RAHMATU .M.DANBALA, now wish to be known and addressed as RAHMATU MUHAMMAD DANBALA. All former documents remain valid. The general public and any authority concerned to please take note</p>	<p>BADMUS: I, formerly known and addressed as ADEBOUN ABIODUN AZEEZ. Now wish to be known and addressed as BADMUS ABIODUN ABDULAZEEZ. All former documents remain valid, Authority Concerned and General public please take note.</p>
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<p>IHUOMA IJEOMA EMEM: I was formally known and called IHUOMA IJEOMA IWUAMADI. From now henceforth, I wish to be known and called IHUOMA IJEOMA EMEM. All former documents remain valid. The general public to please take note</p>	<p>I formerly known as Fatima Usaini Aminu 15-01-1988 now wish to be known and address as Aisha Ahmad 17/07/1990. All former documents remain valid. General public to take note</p>	<p>MERCY: I, formerly known as MERCY DANIEL, now wish to be known and addressed as MERCY YANAYOK DANIEL. All former documents remain valid. The general public and any authority concerned to please take note</p>	<p>My name was wrongly written on my BVN as ABDULAZEEZ LATEEF ABIOLA instead of ABDUL AZEEZ ABDUL LATEEF ABIOLA. Henceforth, my correct name is ABDUL AZEEZ ABDUL LATEEF ABIOLA. All former documents remain valid. All former documents remain valid, Authority Concerned and General public please take note.</p>
<p>I formerly known and addressed as RAMAT AJALA BELLO now wish to be known and addressed as RAMAT ADEOLA BELLO. All former documents remain valid. General public to take note.</p>	<p>MBAYA: I formally known as BUKAR M MBAYA now wish to be known and addressed as BUKAR MOHAMMED MBAYA. All former documents remain valid, general public should please take note.</p>	<p>MUTTAKA: I, formerly known as JAMIL MURTALA, Old DOB: 01-10-1980, now wish to be known and called MUTTAKA MUKTAR, new DOB: 01-01-1980. All former documents remain valid. Stanbic IBTC, general public and any authority concerned to please take note.</p>	<p>UMAR: I, formally known and addressed as Umar Bukar Fannami and Alh. Bukar Fannami now wish to be known and addressed as Umar Bukar and my correct date of birth is 14/02/1989 not 12/02/1987. Concerned authorities and the general public are to take note.</p>
<p>I formerly known and addressed as ABDURKARIM AHMED now wish to be known and addressed as AHMED ABDULKARIM DOKA. All former documents remain valid. General public to take note.</p>	<p>I Formerly known as Abduljalal Bello Malami now wish to be called Abduljalal Bello D.O.B 5-10-1999 not 5-5-1995. All former documents remain valid. The Authority concern and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ZAINAB: I formerly known as ZAINAB HALIRU now wish to be called as ZAINAB MOHAMMED HALLIRU all former documents remain valid general public all authority concern should please take note</p>	<p>SANI I formerly known as INUSA SAIDU now wish to be known and addressed as SAIDU SANI. All former documents remain valid General public should please take note</p>
<p>I formerly known and addressed as DANBAI NIKOLAS now wish to be known and addressed as BITRUS DANLADI. All former documents remain valid. General public to take note.</p>	<p>I formerly known as ZAINAB ABUBAKAR now wish to be called and addressed as ASMAU MUHAMMADU. All former documents remain valid. The Authority concern and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ASMA'U: I formerly known as ASMAU ABDULLAHI now wish to be called as ASMA'U ABUBAKAR all former documents remain valid general public all authority concern should please take note</p>	<p>EZE: I formally known as EZE CHUKWU IKE. Now wish to be known and addressed as EZE IKE CHUKWU FIDELIS. All former documents remain valid. Authority concerned and general public should please take note.</p>

LOST OF DOCUMENT

LOST OF DOCUMENT : On the 17/01/2023 at about 1530hrs, one Aminu Amada 'm' resident of Maiduguri, Borno State came to the Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department (SCIID), Maiduguri with a sworn affidavit of lost of document, duly signed by the Commissioner for Oaths at the High Court of Justice of Borno State of Nigeria in Maiduguri Judicial Division, dated 13th January, 2023 prepared by one Barrister I. B. kamai Esq. Stating that, he lost his grant of occupancy No. BO/37974 on plot No. 49 designated BOTP/146 Kiskasma Comm. Strip bearing the name of one Amodu Mohammed being misplaced and he did all what it takes in tracing the lost document from where kept and other places suspected to be there but his effort turned abortive Hence he felt it indispensable reporting to the policed for an extract. ACTION TAKEN : The Complainant was advised to go to the relevant authorities concerned for verification and subseqed replacement of the document.

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This is to inform the general public of the Original Allocation and Deed Of Assignment belonging to **PRINCESS SAKEENAH SADEEQ** for a 5 bedroom villa 5V 3 at Bellevue residence phase 2 Life camp Abuja, Plot No. 1702, located at Cadastral zone C02, with File NO. MISC 52021, Certificate of Occupancy (COF O) No. 1a5fw-1c5dz-zee3r-cecbu-10. All efforts to trace the said missing documents proved abortive. If found please return to the nearest Police Station.



A PHYSICIAN'S DIARY

BY FATIMA DAMAGUM
drfatima0984@gmail.com



Lagosians abandon pedestrian bridges, risk lives crossing highways



>>> Page 24

'HYPONAIRAEMIA'

In the medical world, the prefix 'hypo' is added to an entity to indicate loss or a reduction in quantity of that thing. So, for example, hypocalcaemia means you have low calcium and hypotension means low blood pressure. In the same vein 'hyper' means higher quantity or levels of something just in the way 'Hypertension' means a high blood pressure.

These days, Nigerians are suffering from 'hyponairaeamia'. Low levels of Naira.

I am one of those who believe in the cashless policy. I firmly believe that for an economy to thrive, financial transactions need to be transparent so that they can be tracked. There is nowhere else in this world that one can buy a house for N100million upfront and in cash, except in Nigeria. The entire world has adopted a cashless economy and Nigeria cannot be left behind. My Uber app does not allow for cash payments as soon as I leave the shores of this country. In Saudi, an old man in a derelict shop in Jeddah noticed as I struggled to differentiate between SR100 and SR10 while making payment and asked in halting English- 'Hajja, no card?'

Whatever Oga Emefile's motives are and whether he is guilty of the accusations flying around, is not my business. What is evident, is that the decision to reduce the amount of physical cash in circulation is a step in the right direction.

Echekoba and Ezu (2012) in research carried out in Nigeria, observed that 68.2% of the respondent complained about long queues in the bank, 28% complained of bad attitude of teller officers (cashiers) while 2.89% complained of long distance to bank locations to their home or workplace. Likewise, in her 24th NCS conference in December 2011, CBN data shows that 51% withdrawal done in Nigeria was through automated teller machine (ATM), while 33.6% was through over the counter (OTC), cash withdrawals and cheque 13.6%. Payment was also done through point of sale machine (POS) which accounted for 0.5% and web 1.3%.

The cashless economy policy of the CBN is therefore designed to provide mobile payment services, breakdown the traditional barriers hindering financial inclusion of millions of

Nigerians and bring low cost, secure and convenient financial services to urban, semi - urban and rural areas across the country.

That being said, the problem of our dear country has never been about brilliant policies, but about implementing them. Issuing short deadlines, diverting new notes meant for ATMs to personal houses, creating a false scarcity, disregarding people living in rural villages where their banks have been destroyed by Boko Haram and creating needless hardship are some of the repercussions of a good policy that has not been thoroughly thought out.

Some of the challenges of this policy are: a) Nigeria is cash - based, people are accustomed to using cashing for most of their transactions b) The security issue is one of the major challenges in the development of cashless policy in Nigeria. For example, in some rural areas, there is only one bank available to serve over 3million people! Some communities have to travel to the state capital for a transaction. c) Low Level of Internet penetration and poorly developed telecommunication impede smooth development and improvement of e-payments and e-commerce d) Lack of suitable legal and regulatory framework for e-payment: Nigeria current laws do not accommodate electronic contracts and signatures e) The state of electrical power in Nigeria today cannot accommodate smooth operations of financial activities. There is need to develop a reliable and sustainable power supply and frankly, diesel generators are not the answer f) Nigeria's high rate of illiteracy may affect the total implementation of the cashless policy.

Recall that on the 1st of April, 2017, the CBN after commencing a nationwide implementation of cashless policy had to suspend it after three weeks in 30 states of the federation.

However, of all these challenges, the people who will feel the most blow are those with micro and small-scale businesses. A price tag 1.25% of the cost of every transaction done through the point-of-sale terminal will be charged by the operators of the terminals. For instance a micro or small scale business owner who makes a million naira daily

on sales will have to remit 1.25% of the amount, which is N12, 500, if point of sale (POS) is used for all the transactions. This is in addition to the bank's charge for commission on turnover (COT) of 0.5%, which is N5000. These charges lead to an increase in the overhead cost of running the business. Irrespective of the risk and losses.

And this is me being generous. How many small-scale businesses make a million a day?

Another important issue that affects the Micro and Small-Scale businesses is security of funds. A situation where there is a communication breach a transaction and the business owner does not receive an alert to confirm payment of goods; the buyer may be compelled to make multiple payments for the same transaction. More so, due to the high rate of cyber crime in the society business owners are at risk of being defrauded.

There is an incident I remember in anger. I was suffering from Hyponairaeamia (yes, I was broke) and I had to buy a flight ticket. I used my last money to purchase the ticket. Immediately after making the payment, my computer screen went blank and immediately left

the website. I checked my phone and sure enough I had been debited. I must have checked my email a thousand times that day, but there was no ticket. It was a Friday and I was supposed to travel on Sunday. My bank people said to wait that "the money would be reversed within two working days". So, there I was, no money and no ticket. And it was an official trip.

Luckily, my sister bailed me out by buying me another ticket. My money was reversed after five days. Imagine, if that was your whole capital and source of livelihood? What about those people selling fruits by the roadside?

"Eneke the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching" -Chinua Achebe, Things fall apart.

Firstly, we must encourage all our loved ones to open an account. There are many agency banking outlets that do not require for a person to enter into the banking hall. Common examples are First bank and FCMB.

Secondly, find an honest (emphasis on honest) POS agent near you or in the village near your loved ones. You can transfer money to their accounts for them to withdraw.

Thirdly, the smaller denomination notes are not

affected, so you can ask for them at the bank or POS. This however requires negotiation and a lot of smiles. It helps if you already have an existing rapport with someone at the bank. It took a lot of calls, but I was finally able to get N20,000 in N100 bills for safekeeping at home. Like I mentioned earlier- I believe in this policy, but how am I supposed to pay the girl who comes to plait my daughter's hair? Or give the plumber N700 to buy a waste pipe? How am I supposed to give my son money for lunch? How do I buy agbalumo on the street?

Since ATMs are only dispensing new N1000 and N500 notes, and the queues are from here to heaven, therefore, the lower denominations will be our saviour.

Another way out of this quagmire is through Gift cards. I know gift cards are not a big deal in this environment but they exist and it is time we learnt how to use them. Afterall, necessity is the mother of invention. Banks like Zenith, offer prepaid cards to customers. Therefore, one can purchase a card and load it with eg N20,000 and gift it to your old grandmother in the village. She will be able to use it in shops and withdraw from a POS without having an account. Simple!

We must find a way to live with this policy. Na condition make crayfish bend!

BACK-HAND

BY ABDULKAREEM BABA AMINU



[Repeated]