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## Polls: BVAS A Game Changer, Buying PVCs Waste Of Time, INEC Assures

- Says dubious politicians will only disenfranchise victims
- Reiterates that no cause for alarm
- Says polls would hold in 8,012 polling units across Kaduna State

By; USMAN NASIDI, Kaduna

In view of the forthcoming general elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has assured that there is no cause for alarm over the attitude of some politicians, group of people or individuals collecting permanent voters cards (PVC) details of others, as they stand to be useless with the Bimodal Voter Accreditation system

(BVAS).

The concern was raised in Kaduna yesterday during a stakeholders meeting, where representatives of political parties, traditional rulers, media, including other stakeholders were in attendance.

Speaking at the event, the Administrative Secretary of the Commission, Malam Auwal Mashi, explained that the purpose behind such acts by some group of people is only to disenfranchise the



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## Let's Work Together To Redefine Real Estate Industry In Nigeria - Prof Osinbajo

\*Commissions Phase 1 Westlink Iconic Villa, Alakia in Ibadan



Vice- President Yemi Osinbajo at the commissioning in Ibadan



**Timi Frank Urges USA, Uk, EU To Prevail On Buhari, INEC Not To Postpone Elections** **P. 3**

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## Let's Work Together To Redefine Real Estate Industry In Nigeria - Prof Osinbajo

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Vice- President Yemi Osinbajo at the commissioning in Ibadan

By; **BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan**

The Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo on Thursday in Ibadan, said it is time for stakeholders worked together to redefine the real estate industry for the future in Nigeria.

Professor Osinbajo who gave the charge while speaking at the commissioning of Phase 1 of the Westlink Iconic Villa, Alakia in Ibadan, said despite the challenges in the country, Nigeria is now one of the topmost hubs for business, trade and investment, and that, "Nigeria is ranked 131 out of 190 economies in the world on ease of doing business, according to the latest World Bank ratings.

"The Nigerian business environment has been coloured and polarized with lots of challenges spawning fear as a result of insecurity, uncertainty, political, environmental and cultural disparities.

"In spite of these challenges, Nigeria is slowly but surely checking the boxes when it comes to the ease of doing business, resulting in the country being one of the topmost hubs for business, trade and investment", he said.

Professor Osinbajo added, "This is an improvement after moving 15 places from 146 in 2018. In pursuance of this administration's goal to further improve Nigeria's

ease of doing business ratings, President Muhammadu Buhari inaugurated the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC), chaired by my humble self, in July 2016. PEBEC's primary objective is to catalyse the country's business environment; and to also maintain a proper business climate".

"No doubt, the Ease of Doing Business reforms in Nigeria and the appeal to Nigerians in the diaspora, encouraged what we are seeing here today through this magnificent Joint Venture project between Odu'a Investment Company Limited and Chapter 4 Estates Management Ltd. UK".

Speaking further, Professor Osinbajo lauded effort of the Board and Management of Odu'a Investment Company Limited "for initiating the noble project, and ensuring that the First phase of the project is being commissioned today", Emphasizing that, "this clearly demonstrates a blend of private partnership which brings about greater dividends. What we see here today, confirms that there is a huge opportunity in Nigeria for investments in real estate industry."

He then tasked, "while government commits to creating an enabling environment, I will advise

that we look to the private sector for investments to galvanize growth in the sector. We must indeed, work together to redefine the real estate industry for the future in Nigeria".

Speaking, the Group Chairman, Odu'a Investment Company Ltd, Otunba Abimbola Ashiru said, "we plan to develop new, and build on existing partnerships to help meet the growing demand for modern and first-class properties and living environments. Over the last four years, the Odu'a Investment Group has leveraged partnerships with developers such as Chapter 4 Estates Management Ltd, Address Homes and many others to envision world class projects such as the Westlink Iconic Villa, Alakia, and the Ikoyi Crescent JV development between Wemabod and TheAddress Homes Ltd.

"There are a lot of other projects in the pipeline in cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Ado-Ekiti, etc. These projects are at different stages of development, and we will continue to count on the support of our shareholders and other stakeholders to bring these projects to the market seamlessly.

Over the next 36 months, expected to deliver over two hundred (200) units of residential properties ranging from affordable homes to luxury homes," he said.

Otunba Ashiru added, "

we also expect to bring to the market at least two new shopping malls in Lagos within that period. As a Group, we see opportunity across the whole spectrum of the real estate industry covering property development, estate management, and facility management".

" We therefore, recently transformed our flagship real estate subsidiary, Wemabod Ltd into a full-service real estate company to take advantage of opportunities across the entire value chain. In the next few years, you will definitely hear a lot from the Odu'a Investment Group not only through third party Joint Ventures, but increasingly from Wemabod Ltd. We have tasked Wemabod Ltd to aggressively expand its own portfolio of projects and clients.

"It is indeed my utmost pleasure to welcome you to this milestone event for the Odu'a Investment Group and our partners, Chapter 4 Estates Management Ltd. First, I will like to thank the Vice President on behalf of the Shareholders, Board and Management of Odu'a Investment, for making out time out of his very busy schedule to commission this Project today. We appreciate you very much, and are glad that you have generously graced this event with your presence."

## Hoodlums Invade Kaduna Residence Of TG News Publisher, Cart Away Valuables

\*Leave behind shocking threat letter

By; **MIKE ODEH JAMES, Kaduna**

Hoodlums suspected to be robbers are believed to have in the early hours of Thursday morning, broken into the Kaduna residence of a popular journalist and publisher of TG News, Mr. Tom Garba.

Our correspondent gathered that the incident was discovered by the gateman, who traveled three days ago, but returned to discover the house was broken into.

When contacted on phone, Mr. Garba confirmed the incident, explaining that they gained access to his residence by jumping the fence from an uncompleted property.

He added that they entered the building by burrowing holes through the Plaster of Paris (POP) ceiling.

He said although he is

presently at his home town, he received the disturbing message from his gateman.

According to him, he was told that the invaders made away with several valuables from his residence.

"They made a clean sweep with everything they could remove, including curtains and mattresses," he informed.

When asked if he has reported the matter officially to the police, he said he would do so when he comes back to Kaduna.

The TG News Publisher said that what is most worrisome, is a threat letter left behind by the hoodlums.

"The unknown hoodlums left a shocking note, 'Thank Your God you are not at home,' which sounds like a threat," he said.

## Group Hails Buhari For Constituting Transition Committee

By; **JABIRU AHASSAN, Kano**

A group, Movement For the Protection of Democracy and good Governance (MSDG) has assured that the 2023 general elections would be peaceful and hitch-free where the group called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure that the February 25 and March 11 elections are actualized without interference.

A statement signed and issued to our correspondent by the group's chairman, Alhaji Dauda Mohammed Ali said, "MSDG is happy to

hear that His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari has constituted a high powered transition committee that would plan and implement handing over to the newly elected government in a democratic dispensation."

The group further called on Nigerians to vote wisely in order to ensure that the 2023 general election is free, fair and transparent especially at present when the political situation in the country is taking another dimension. He thanked the security agencies for playing important roles towards the actualization of peaceful polls.

## Holding Presidential Polls February 25 Sacrosanct - Olaosebikan

By; BAYO AKAMO. Ibadan

Oyo State Chairman, Media and Publicity, of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council, Alhaji Kehinde Olaosebikan on Thursday, said holding the February 25 Presidential election is the solution to all the lingering crises engulfing Nigeria.

Featuring on a radio programme monitored in Ibadan, Alhaji Olaosebikan declared that there should be no going back in the February 25 Presidential election in Nigeria.

The APC Presidential Campaign Council in Oyo State maintained that February 25 will be a watershed in the history of Nigeria as its outcome would herald the outcast of the present evil doers and enemies of progress, retarding the growth of Nigeria.

"We all must make February 25, sacrosanct. To call these people, evil doers and enemies of the country is not out of place as they all know that Asiwaju with his track records and antecedents would do well as the President of Nigeria and take Nigeria to her rightful place in the comity of nations as the real giant of Africa", he said.

Alhaji Olaosebikan stressed that the time has come for Nigerians to rise against the antics of the few plotting against the peaceful conduct of the general elections as scheduled for their evil reasons.

According to him, Nigerians and allies of Nigeria across the world to use all powers within their reach to ensure that the February 25 presidential election and all other elections hold as scheduled in order to forestall a total breakdown of law and order in the country.

The Oyo State Chairman APC PCC Media and Publicity stressed that well-meaning Nigerians at all levels of governance, judiciary, military, police, captains of industry, business men and others

as well as our allies should rise against the antics of the few plotting against the peaceful conduct of the general elections as scheduled, for their evil reasons.

Alhaji Olaosebikan expressed support for Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir el-Rufai, Governor of Kano State, Abdulahi Ganduje, the APC Gubernatorial candidate in Oyo State, Teslim Folarin and other notable Nigerians attributing the sufferings being inflicted on Nigerians as the handiwork of some elements who do not want the presidential candidate of the APC Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari as President.

"Just as brilliantly explained by the Governors of Kaduna, Kano and many other prominent Nigerians including the gubernatorial candidate of APC in Oyo State, Senator Teslim Folarin, it is clear that some elements within and outside the government are hell bent in stopping the emergence of Asiwaju Bola Tinubu as the President, hence the orchestration of all these ill motivated policies. As they failed during the presidential primary, they would also fail now.

"They know that the overwhelming majority of Nigerians in all the zones of the country are going to vote for Asiwaju because of his competence, capacity and readiness to serve the people fairly, justly and equitably. It is also clear that Asiwaju is the only candidate that is campaigning rigorously, marketing himself to the people, moving energetically from state to state, holding rallies and consultations with critical stakeholders"

He also stressed, "shocked with the level of popularity and acceptance already harvested by Asiwaju Bola Tinubu across the country, they now want to scuttle the democratic process. God and the well-meaning Nigerians would not allow them."

## Timi Frank Urges USA, Uk, EU To Prevail On Buhari, INEC Not To Postpone Elections

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Former Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Comrade Timi Frank, on Thursday, called for the intervention of the United States, United Kingdom and European Union to prevent plot to postpone the forthcoming general election.

Frank who made this call in a statement in Abuja, said there is a potent plot by enemies of democracy to cause a postponement of the elections to enable them perfect their rigging strategies.

According to him, it has become imperative for leaders of advanced democracies and defenders of freedoms like the USA, UK and EU, among others, to impress it on President Muhammadu Buhari and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) not to succumb to APC's blackmails, but to conduct the elections as scheduled.

He insisted that their intervention would not only ensure that the elections are held as scheduled but will help save democracy in Nigeria.

He said in a recent media report that the APC is seeking postponement of the elections for four weeks, and it has vindicated his position that the ruling party has commenced plot to derail the elections.

He said: "The purpose of calling for shift of date of elections is not in the interest of Nigerians, it is being motivated by their Presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who used a similar method to emerge flagbearer of the party for 2023."

He insisted that APC Governors at the behest of Tinubu have been mobilized to blackmail INEC and Buhari to postpone the elections so as to enable them perfect their rigging plot.

Frank, who is the United Liberation Movement for



Timi Frank

West Papua (ULMWP) Ambassador to East Africa and Middle East, said the APC is seeking to buy time because "they know they if elections are held today they will lose." He said: "APC Governors have no right to complain that people in rural areas are suffering because of fuel and Naira scarcity since they are directly responsible for the pains and suffering in the first place.

"After all, the APC Presidential candidate has confirmed to Nigerians that his party has failed hence the excruciating poverty and pains in the land.

"This is the very reason Nigerians wants the elections to hold as scheduled so they can end the tenure of this wicked and uncaring administration for good."

He said it has become necessary for the international community to mount strong diplomatic pressure on the President not to heed the advice of nay sayers because any posts would plunge the country into unimaginable crisis.

He said the current riots in the South West and parts of South South over fuel

and Naira scarcity were sponsored by the APC so they can use it as strategy to prevail on INEC and the President to shift the elections.

He added: "However, this is not the strategy of Nigeria because Nigerians are ready to go to the polls to elect their representatives for which they have since collected their PVCs.

"Already the CBN has assured INEC that whatever logistics needed by INEC to conduct the elections would be provided to make conduct of the elections seamless.

"Why is it that it is only the ruling party that is crying over a policy which they initiated. They are not working to win the elections. They are working to steal the elections. That is why they need time.

"If elections are shifted today, Nigerians will revolt because it would be tantamount to a denial of their inalienable rights."

He urged Buhari to remain resolute and stand by his promise to bequeath a legacy of credible elections to Nigeria "which will invariably start from keeping faith with the dates as already

announced." He further said Nigerians are worried about judgements emanating from the Supreme Court of recent and called on the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kayode Ariwoola, not to play politics with election cases or confer regional advantage on particular parties or aspirants.

He said: "How can aspirants like Senator Godswill Akpabio and Senate President Ahmad Lawan who didn't contest for primaries suddenly declared by the Supreme Court as senatorial candidates irrespective of the rightful winners of those elections?"

"How can the apex court hurriedly rule against the ban on old Naira notes by the Central Bank of Nigeria, knowing fully well that the ruling would enable the APC to use slush funds denominated in old notes to engage in vote buying during the election?"

He called on the CJN to remain unbiased and an impartial jurist notwithstanding his position as stakeholder in the South West, where the APC candidate comes from.

## Hawker Dies As LASTMA Rescues Victims Of Multiple Accident

By: RAYMOND  
TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

Some victims involved in a vehicular accident cheated death by the whiskers as they were rescued by operatives of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) yesterday. However, a hawker presents at the scene of the accident, which occurred on the Kara Bridge outward Lagos, reportedly died on the spot.

The multiple accident, was said to have involved a fully loaded 40ft containerised truck with five other private vehicles, according to reports, occurred at about 7.00am. The Director, Public Affairs and Enlightenment Department of LASTMA' Adebayo Taofiq while confirming the report said the corpse of the dead hawker and several others rescued by were handed over to medical personnel on ground at the scene of the accident.

"Operatives of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) today rescued 2 major multiple accident victims and several others on 'Kara' bridge outward Lagos.

"The multiple accident which occurred around 7am today involved a fully loaded 40fts containerised

truck with 5 other private vehicles.

\* A male hawker selling died instantly during the accident.

"The corpse of the dead hawker and several others rescued by Lastma personnel were handed over to medical personnel on ground at the scene of the accident.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the fully loaded 40fts containerised truck developed a brake failure and crushed 4 other private vehicles (Passat Jeep AGL 323 GK), (A Camry MUS 270 HE), (Black colour Lexus Jeep) and (Black Prado Jeep) including an Hiace 18-seater commercial bus with passengers.

"The Head of Lastma (Zebra) around Ojodu-Berger Mr. Mabunmi Oluwa-biyi Abisola who led the Lastma rescue team confirmed that the truck with 4 other accidented private vehicles involved in the fatal accident were immediately removed from 'Kara' bridge to pave ways for free flow of traffic to other road users.

"He disclosed that emergency responders at the scene of the accident include the Nigerian Police, Trace Officials and Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC)", the LASTMA spokesperson stated.



One of the vehicles involved in the accident

## Polls: BVAS A Game Changer, Buying PVCs Waste Of Time, INEC Assures

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Says polls would hold in 8,012 polling units across Kaduna State

electorates or keep record of people they think are with them, but has no effect in respect to the general elections.

Mashi added that, the Commission has reiterated its commitment towards conducting free, fair and credible elections, while also denying the allegation of an attempt to postpone the polls in some local government areas in the state.

"Selling of voters' card for material gains or for any reason by anybody is done at his or her detriment by only disenfranchising his or herself from participating in the

election process. But this, with the new electoral act and the new technology provided for the conduct of the election would not in any way pave way for rigging as assumed," Mashi explained.

While reiterating the readiness of the commission, the administrative secretary further explained that elections are expected to be conducted in 8,012 polling units, adding that funds for logistics are already in the coffers of the commission in preparation of a hitch-free election in the state.

While according to him,

the Bimodal Voter Accreditation system (BVAS) is an electronic device designed to read Permanent Voters Cards (PVC's) and authenticate voters using voter's fingerprints in order to prove that they are eligible to vote at a particular polling unit.

Also, the BVAS usage entails either scanning the barcode/QR code on the PVC/Voter's register or entering the last six digits of the Voter Identity Number or typing in the last name of the voter by the Assistant Presiding Officer (APO 1) to verify and authenticate the voter.

However, during the one-day meeting, the stakeholders had earlier raised alarm over the rate in which politicians are luring electorate into selling their voters' card.

Similarly, it was also alleged that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) may likely postpone elections in nine local government areas of Kaduna State under the guise of insecurity.

[09/02, 7:51 pm] Jacob Dickson: Administrative Secretary of INEC in Kaduna, Malam Auwal Mashi, speaking at the stakeholders meeting in Kaduna yesterday



## Old Naira Swap Deadline: CNPP Carpets APC, Says Party Using Court To Armtwist CBN To Buy Votes

By: JACOB ONJEWU  
DICKSON

The umbrella body of registered political parties and political associations in the country, Conference Of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) has declared the action of Governors of the All Progressives Congress (APC), "seeking to ambush the naira redesign policy of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)," as "a plot to retain the old naira notes for the purpose of vote buying."

In a statement issued in Abuja by its Secretary General, Chief Willy Ezugwu, the CNPP noted that "from all indications, the APC is afraid of losing in the 2023 general elections hence the desperation to kill the CBN monetary policy that could checkmate the use of illicit funds for elections.

"While appreciating the security and anti-graft agencies for their efforts in mitigating the ongoing economic sabotage by desperate politicians

through the commercial banks, we urge them to do more to ensure that illicit and proceeds of crime are not deployed by vote buyers in the forthcoming general elections.

"The APC has made Nigerians to believe that the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Mr. Godwin Emefiele, is their enemy whereas the obvious collaboration between some unpatriotic individuals in the and commercial banks actually led to the hoarding of the redesigned naira notes as media reports indicated that banks stashed the new notes in their vaults rather than distributing allotted funds from the CBN through their Automated Teller Machines (ATMs).

"Clearly, the APC, through its Governors in three states — Kaduna, Kogi and Zamfara — has again demonstrated that it is not ready for a free, fair and credible elections in 2023 despite being a beneficiary of such credible process in 2015.

"Even when the party is aware that

monetary policy is outside the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, the party went ahead to use the apex Court to coerce the Federal Government and its monetary agency, into submission with a view to thwarting the cashless policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

"The CNPP is therefore afraid that if the Supreme Court continues to allow itself to be willing instrument of destabilisation ahead of forthcoming elections, Nigerians will lose the current enthusiasm and faith in the political process.

"This could be a recipe for crisis which could unnecessarily heat up the polity.

"President Muhammadu Buhari has thus far shown his readiness to ensure free and fair elections and it will be a national calamity for the courts to be willing tools in the hands of politicians to disrupt the ongoing process", the CNPP stated.

# Civil-Military Media Dialogue: COAS Commends Nigerian Journalists In Nations' Peace Building, Progress, Stability

By: SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. General Yahaya Umar Farouq has said that media as an important component in the nation's progress and development process, plays very significant role in the society and having been involved in the Nigerian Army's (NA) non-kinetic lines of operation towards ensuring a peaceful and secured Nigeria, as a nation.

Farouq explained that, "this is because the media plays an essential role in objective reportage and perception management and It is in recognition of this fact and the quest to achieve effective dissemination of Nigerian Army's operational achievements and civil military cooperation activities that the Army Headquarters, Department of Civil Military Affairs organizes quarterly media chats to acquaint the general public on the civil military cooperation activities conducted by the Nigerian Army."

COAS who was represented by the Commander, NA Infantry Corps, Jaji, Kaduna and also immediate past Theater Commander, Operation Hadin Kai JTF, Headquarters Theater Command, Maimalari Cantonment Maiduguri, Major General Chris G. Musa added that, "it is a well-known, modern military operations take place in complex environments characterized by challenges that work against the public well-being of the affected societies.

"This media chat is timely, as it is coming up about two weeks before the 2023 general elections, where the Nigerian Army will be tasked to provide security in support of civil authority. While in providing such support, the military's involvement is often questioned by sections of the society and the media chat provides an avenue to clarify the extent of our involvement and also helps to shape public perspective on the roles of the army in this situation.

"I would therefore, stress the importance of having the media involved in the Nigerian Army's non-kinetic lines of operation towards ensuring a peaceful and secured Nigeria, as the media is an important component in a nation's progress and development.

"I am proud of the achievements and efforts of the department in projecting the Nigerian Army's non kinetic drive, in line with my Vision of "A Professional Nigerian Army.

Ready to Accomplish Assigned Missions within a Joint Environment in Defence of Nigeria" with the pillars of the vision hinged on Professionalism, Readiness, Administration and Cooperation.

"The Nigerian Army's remaining professional even during these non-kinetic tasks remains sacrosanct. Today's event is apt and a way of illustrating the importance of the critical roles of the media in the Nigerian Army Non-kinetic lines of operation.

"The media chat would provide an avenue for the department to engage various media practitioners with a view to charting new ways for a more mutually benefiting relationship between the Nigerian Army and the media, as well as improving media reportage for enhancement of the Nigerian Army Operations along the Non-Kinetic lines.

"The choice of Maiduguri being the epicenter of the Nigerian Army's Counter Terrorism and Counter insurgency as the venue for this year's First Quarter Media Chat is instructive. It is also aimed at showcasing CIMIC activities undertaken by the Nigerian Army in order to continue to win the hearts and minds of the civil populace.

"Therefore, the timing and choice of venue is right as it will also keep the general populace abreast with the activities of the AHQ DCMA.

It gives me immense pleasure to be here on the occasion of Army Headquarters Department of Civil Military Affairs, Civil Military Cooperation Quarterly Media Chat for First Quarter 2023 holding here in Maiduguri.

"I commend the Department of Civil Military Affairs, for this noble initiative. The media chat is organized in pursuant of the Nigerian Army's drive in keeping the media informed of its Civil Military Cooperation activities, to dispel rumors while also providing accurate and timely information to the media in tandem with international best practices.

"Prominent among these challenges are population displacement, degraded infrastructure, economic collapse, human sufferings and sometimes death, root causes or underlining reasons behind the conflict.

"Understanding and perceptions of the warring parties by way of getting facts that must be balanced and careful to



disseminate by being neutral, factual, accurate and objective apart from, being professional ethically as reputable media practitioners .

"Consequently, the military is confronted with non-combat tasks and immoral or demoralizing media reports sometimes as the media play it's role such as social responsibility which bears directly shapes or influences impacts on the public opinions and perceptions.

"The military, in conjunction with humanitarian organisations such as United Nations Agencies, International Non-Governmental Organizations, International Organizations, Civil Society Organisations (CSOS) and civil authorities play specialized roles in alleviating the suffering of the general populace and lessening the effects of military operations," Lt. Gen. Farouq said.

The COAS further stated that, "the engagement of other stakeholders through collaborative interactions would further enhance service delivery. And the Nigerian Army has recognized the importance of cooperation amongst stakeholders as an essential component of mission success.

"Therefore, stakeholders are persistently confronted with the complexities of managing divergent interests especially in the face of media influence and other non-state actors. While the need for Civil

Military Relations is further strengthened by the continuous involvement of the Nigerian Army in Peace Support Operations and Internal Security Operations such as counter insurgency, anti-banditry, anti-kidnapping vis-a-vis other humanitarian services," Yahaya added.

The COAS acknowledged the good works of the Department of Civil Military Affairs in ensuring the media are carried along in the activities of the Nigerian Army towards securing the nation who;e thanking the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, for his continuous support to the Nigerian Army and for providing the conducive environment necessary for us

to carry out our constitutional mandate. He also thanked the Honourable Minister of Defence Maj Gen. Salihi Magashi (rtd) and Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. LEO Irabor for always providing strategic guidance and support to the Nigerian Army as well as officers and soldiers for their loyalty and enthusiasm in the discharge of their duties in service of our fatherland.

"We remember the unquantifiable sacrifices of our colleagues who have paid the ultimate price in the line of duty of bringing peace to our dear country," Farouq paid tribute to the fallen heroes that paid their supreme while in active service.



# Dangote Hits Ogun, Kaduna Trade Fairs, Promises More Investments

## *\*Buhari Dedicates Kaduna Fair To Dangote Group*

By; JACOB ONJEWU  
DICKSON

As part of strategies to expand market share and reach more customers, the management of the Pan-African conglomerate, Dangote Group has announced its partnership with Ogun and Kaduna states Chamber of Commerce and Industry to stage this year's International Trade fairs with a promise to invest more in Nigeria's economy. To this end, the Group Chief, Branding and Communication, Dangote Industries Limited, Mr. Anthony Chiejina said subsidiaries under the group are featuring prominently at the two fairs which kicked off at the

weekend in Kaduna and Abeokuta, Ogun states respectively.

While the Trade fair organized by the OGUNCCIMA will be formally declared open today (Monday) by the Ogun State Governor, Chief Dapo Abiodun, President Muhammadu Buhari declared opened the Kaduna Trade Fair at the weekend with a charge to the people and businesses to make use of the opportunities offered by the fair. Represented by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Muhammad Mahmud Abubakar, the President commended Dangote Group for its contributions to national development and then

dedicated the Kaduna fair to Dangote Group.

While declaring open the Fair, a symbolic Dangote truck, assembled by the Dangote Sinotruck West Africa Limited was presented to the President as a mark of commitment of the Dangote Group to the economic development of the nation and Africa as a whole.

Companies from the group that are exhibiting at the fair include Dangote Cement, Dangote Sugar, Dangote Petroleum Refinery, NASCON Allied Industries Plc, makers of Dangote Salt and seasoning and Gata Tradings and Dangote Sinotruck West Africa Limited.

According to Mr. Chiejina

visitors to the group pavilion at both fairs will have the opportunity of buying products of the companies at reduced prices. There will also be free samples of the products for the visitors.

He said the two trade fairs are coming at an opportune time as dealers of the various products are afforded an opportunity to stock their shops noting that the companies under the group had embarked on some strategies as parts of the plan to stay above competition in the industry, by constantly meeting the needs of the consumers and the distributors.

He assured the distributors and customers that the company will always strive to meet their expectation and will keep

improving on its quality, in line with international standard and also make it available at pocket friendly prices.

It would be recalled that Mr. Chiejina, in a statement, recently said Dangote Petroleum Refinery will be commissioned before President Muhammadu Buhari leaves office in May 2023 while Dangote Cement Plc. signed an agreement with China's Sinoma International Engineering to build a new Six million tonnes per annum cement plant in Itori, Ogun state. Mr. Chiejina encouraged guests, customers and dealers to visit Dangote stand at the fairs to buy and for intending distributors to register with and of the group's subsidiaries.

# Governor Emmanuel Constitutes Committee On Drugs Control

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

Worried by the menace of illicit drug use and its attendant consequences in the society, the Akwa Ibom State Governor, Mr. Udom Emmanuel, has inaugurated a thirteen-member Drug Control Committee to curb the menace in the state.

The committee with his wife, Mrs. Martha Udom Emmanuel as Chairman, Mrs. Esther Ukpe of the Ministry of Economic Development as Secretary, has three advisory members from specialized Institutions and eight other members drawn from relevant agencies of government.

According to Emmanuel, the inauguration of the committee, is in line with a federal government policy for an agency complementary to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), to be replicated in every state of the federation.

At the Inauguration ceremony in Uyo, the Governor lauded Family Empowerment And Youth Re-Orientation Path Initiative (FEYReP), a pet project of his wife for the provision of succour to the less privileged members of the society, battling cancer and gender based violence.

He also acknowledged the effort of the

state Commander of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), who is also a member of the committee, in combating drugs-related crimes in the state.

The governor urged them to bring to bear such vigour to deliver on the mandate of the committee and pledged optimum support of the state government to enable it realize its set objectives.

"So let's take this as a major burden, in our heart, if we stamp out drugs in our communities today there won't be armed robbery, there won't be kidnapping, anybody who goes on kidnapping or robbery is under the influence of drugs.

"All hands must be on deck, let us not



*Akwa Ibom Drug Control Committee*



*Inauguration of the committee*

spare anybody because the day your child falls into that thing you are finished and all your suffering on that child is gone. No child on drugs can be useful to a parent.

"For NDLEA, a job well done means more job to be done. Let us know where those who sell these drugs are, those who promote it, those who sell it and those who use it. We can fortify your team. We have a crack team that cuts across all armed forces we can go after them." He stated.

The committee, according to the governor, is to liaise with NDLEA and relevant agencies towards scaling awareness for prevention of drug abuse in the state, support the framework for all drugs reduction activities, advise government in the intra state intervention options, generate data and report best

drug prevention programmes, and other activities that may be deemed fit and necessary to minimize the influence, impact and effect of drugs abuse in the society.

Fielding questions from journalists shortly after the inauguration, Mrs. Martha Emmanuel thanked the governor for setting the committee in motion, assuring that the state would be better for it as the committee is poised to intensify campaigns to ensure drastic reduction in drug abuse in the state.

Mrs. Emmanuel emphasized that the committee would make effort to sensitize drug traffickers and abusers with the intent to salvage or rehabilitate, where necessary to otherwise ensure adequate legal actions against unrepentant drug abusers.

# UNICEF, BOSUBEB Organize One Day Media Dialogue On Global Partnership For Accelerated Grant Projects In Borno

By: SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

The UNICEF Chief of Maiduguri Field Office, Phuong T. Nguyen has on Wednesday at a one-day media dialogue session with journalists across the country in Maiduguri, the Borno State Capital, amplified the achievements of the Global Partnership for Education Accelerated Funding project at the Conference Hall of Amada International Hotel, Maiduguri.

In her welcome address, she said, "Your presence here today is a proof that journalists are indeed the fourth estate of the realm and that the wellbeing of children remains an editorial priority."

"The devastating impact of poverty, insecurity and COVID-19 is still taking its toll on the education sector, particularly on access, quality and learning outcomes for children who;e some staggering statistics. Across north-east Nigeria, only 29 per cent of schools have teachers with the minimum qualification.

"The average pupil-teacher ratio is 124 to 1. Almost half of all schools need rehabilitation. Only 47 per cent of schools in Borno have furniture with lower proportions in Yobe (32 per cent) and Adamawa (26 per cent).

"In Adamawa, only 30 per cent of schools have adequate learning materials for pupils with lower proportions (26 per cent) in Borno and (25 per cent) in Yobe. It is therefore, little wonder that, according to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS 2021) less than half of children (48.6 per cent) complete their primary school education in North-East Nigeria.

"About 1.9 million boys, girls and youth affected by conflict are without access to basic quality education in the region. This is inclusive of 56 per cent of all displaced children who are out of school," Nguyen said.

However, The Chief of Maiduguri Field Office added that, "The challenges of out-of-school children and the learning crises in the education sector remain issues that UNICEF and stakeholders are working to address to ensure that every child has the opportunity that education confers and be equipped with skills to survive and contribute positively to the society.

"We are not only here to talk about the challenges, we are also here at this media dialogue to share the achievements made in the education sector.

"One major accomplishment is the teachers' training programme of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Accelerated Funding (AF) project.

"This is an initiative of the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) and the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN).

"The training programme has supported



over 18,000 unqualified teachers working in North-East Nigeria to study and pass the TRCN's qualifying examination.

Last Saturday, these teachers were inducted and licensed across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. The 12-month course was funded by the GPE AF and supported by UNICEF, Teaching at the Right Level (TARL) Africa and the

perhaps targeting large teachers across the country.

"At least 1 million girls and boys will benefit as these newly certified teachers return to their classrooms equipped with modern and effective teaching methods, including the skills to provide gender-sensitive and psychosocial support to learners.

Nigeria Union of Teachers,

"UNICEF is excited that we might finally be turning the tide against high dropout rate as well as facilitating access and retention of children in school. Millions more children will surely have better learning outcomes with a large cohort of motivated, trained, prepared, and equipped teachers in classrooms across the North-East.

"Other aspects of the GPE AF project also target improving access to education.

*Continued on Page 8*

## Road Accident Claims 3 Along Kaduna-Abuja Highway

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

Three travellers lost their lives, while two others sustained injuries on Wednesday, along Kaduna-Abuja road.

A resident of Kakau village, along Kaduna-Abuja express road, Malam Nasir Idris said the accident was caused by over speeding.

According to him, the accident was caused by a tyre burst as the bus

ran into a ditch.

"I was on my farm along the Kaduna-Abuja road when suddenly, I heard loud noise. As I rushed there with several other villagers, dust first covered everywhere. When the dust settled, three dead bodies were lying down," he said.

However, the sector Commander, Federal Road Safety Corps, Kaduna could not answer his calls as at the time of filing this report.

## 2023: Umahi Lauds Ezza North For Overwhelming Solidarity

By ; M K P U M A ENYINNA, Abakaliki

Governor David Nweze Umahi of Ebonyi State has commended people of Ezza North Local Government Area for their solidarity to his administration.

Governor Umahi made the commendation during a Local Government Rally for Ezza North at Ebiaji on Wednesday.

Reacting to the massive mobilization to the rally, Governor Umahi charged the people to endeavour to translate their solidarity to votes in the forthcoming general elections.

He enjoined them to disregard overtures from their son who claims to be contesting for

Governorship under All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), noting that it is solely the turn of Izzi people to produce the Governor in 2023 for the sake of equity, justice and fairness.

The wife of the governor, Mrs Rachel Umahi called on Ezza North people to vote for Right Honourable Francis Nwifuru on the assurance that the Izzi people would repay the votes in 2031.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship flagbearer, Right Honourable Francis Nwifuru assured the people that he would repay their votes with massive projects if elected in the March guber polls.

The Chairman of Ezza North Local Government



Umahi

Area, Chief Moses Ogodu Ali Nomeh, pledged that the people and stakeholders of the Council would leave no stone unturned to ensure comprehensive victory for

APC in the elections.

Traditional rulers of the council later blessed and adopted all APC candidates as theirs, going into the general elections in Ebonyi State.

## UNICEF, BOSUBEB Organize One Day Media Dialogue On Global Partnership For Accelerated Grant Projects In Borno

Classrooms in at least 50 schools have been renovated and 50 temporary learning spaces constructed. Today, you will have the opportunity of visiting some of these schools, seeing and interacting with some of the newly certified teachers in action.

"Over 500,000 children have been provided with learning materials. The capacity of 438 education officials have been strengthened on education-in-emergency leadership, and result-based planning and budgeting.

"We will discuss further other achievements of this project during the dialogue. I know you are ready for the

and with solid learning outcome. Once again, I welcome you to this important media dialogue," Nguyen said.

While the Executive Chairman, Borno State Universal Basic Education Board (BOSUBEB), Prof. Bulama Kagu at the media dialogue said, "There is no doubt that the Global Partnership for Education Accelerated Funding (AF) project is contributing to improvement of the education sector in Borno State.

"As you all know, the insecurity occasioned by the Boko Haram insurgency in the last one decade or so has affected the development of virtually every sector of the economic with



field mission. UNICEF appreciates your collaboration to ensure that no child is denied quality and inclusive education,

education been worse hit.

"Consequently, sizeable number of teachers were killed while some were

abducted and large-scale destruction of many schools resulted to overcrowded classroom with fewer teaching staff. Borno SUBEB is happy that the achievements of the Global Partnership for Education Accelerated Funding (AF) project will enhance the quality of learning for children in our schools.

"Some of the activities of the project include; distribution of learning materials, renovation of classrooms, construction of temporary learning spaces, capacity building for education officials, training programme for teachers especially on teaching at the right level (TaRL) and strengthening of SBMCs, as well as strengthening of EMIS.

The Executive Chairmen added that, "The Global Partnership for Education Accelerated Funding (AF) project is a

comprehensive and integrated intervention that will be a game changer in the history of education in Borno State. "Borno SUBEB appreciates the support of the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), the Teachers Registration Council (TRCN), UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for supporting and promoting quality education especially through the recently concluded teacher upgrading programme and certification those of teachers into the teaching profession.

"Borno SUBEB, we stand ready for more partnership to improve the standard of education for our children. While UNICEF and other development partners are ever welcome to support the revitalization our education sector in the state," Bulama said.



# 2023 Polls: IGP Usman Constitutes Election Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation Team

By ; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

The Inspector General of Police Usman Alkali Baba has approved the setting up of an Election Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Team for deployment across the states of the federation, to identify, analyze and mitigate threats.

Additionally, it will as well carry out on-the-spot assessment and appraisal of the security emplacements ahead of the 2023 general elections.

The setting up of the team is in furtherance of the IGP's drive for safe, secured, and credible general elections as well as ensure adequate security coverage before, during and after the 2023 general elections. The Force Public Relations Officer CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi made the disclosure in a release on Wednesday.

According to the release, "The IGP has similarly appointed the Vice President (INTERPOL) and Head, National Crime

Bureau (NCB), AIG Garba Baba Umar, psc, as the National Coordinator of the team of experienced and seasoned Police Officers with vast knowledge in election security management.

"He shall be assisted by other team members including the AIG Force Secretary, AIG Habu Sani, CP Election Monitoring, CP Basil Idegwu, the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi.

"The team also comprise 7 other Commissioners of Police, 15 Deputy Commissioners of Police, 30 Assistant Commissioners of Police, 30 Chief Superintendents of Police, and 16 Strategic Officers of other ranks.

"The IGP, while reiterating the commitment of the Police to ensuring that the elections are safe, secure, credible, and in line with global best practices, tasked the team to, amongst other things, ensure the propriety of deployments, give real-time coverage of the

electoral process, and safeguard against hostile external and internal influence using INTERPOL, anti-cybercrime and intelligence tools and assets of the Nigeria Police Force.

"In the same vein, the IGP reaffirms the establishment and viability of the Electoral Offences Desks domiciled at the State Criminal Investigation Departments (SCID) of all commands across the nation headed by the Assistant Commissioners of Police in charge of the SCID. The Electoral Offences Desk is saddled with the responsibility of collating, investigating and prosecuting all matters relating to electoral offences nationwide.

"The Inspector-General of Police, therefore, calls on well-meaning Nigerians, international communities, and all stakeholders to support the NPF teams in all areas, particularly on



intelligence sharing and regular engagements, to achieve success in the 2023 General Elections".

# 2023 Election: NSCDC Assures NYSC Corps Of Adequate Safety In Lagos

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

The Lagos State Coordinator of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and corps members in the state have been assured of Adequate safety before, during and after the forthcoming 2023 general elections.

The State Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Usman Ishaq Alfadarai gave the assurance on Wednesday, during a courtesy visit on the State Coordinator of NYSC Mrs. Yetunde Baderinwa at the Corps temporary camp, Iyana-Ipaja.

Alfadarai further assured the NYSC of the Command's continuous support in the deployment of personnel to the Camp at all periods when their services are needed due to sincere importance the command attaches to the



The NSCDC Commandant being presented a plaque by the NYSC State Coordinator

lives of corps members, staff and their property.

A release by the public relations officer of the NSCDC DSC

Abolurin Oluwaseun on Wednesday stated that the

with the NSCDC in the state.

Commandant also sought the support and co-operation of the State Co-ordinator to continue to sustain the already established harmonious working relationships between the Corps and the Command, create better enabling environment and improved working relationships, which will spur the Command to render effective security services, in line with its mandates. Responding, the NYSC Coordinator commended the diligence and uprightness of the officers and men of the Command posted to the Iyana - Ipaja camp, for upholding the rules and regulations of the camp, in conjunction with other security agencies.

She also sought for more collaborations



# COMMUNITY FOCUS

## Rising Cost Of Cooking Gas: Households In Lema Community Resort To Charcoal, Firewood



By; Funmi Aderinto, Kaduna

Many households in Lema Community, a suburb in Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State have resorted to the use of charcoal and firewood to prepare meals for the family as a result of surging prices of cooking gas and kerosene which were hitherto the preferred sources of energy for cooking.

According to Oxford Dictionary, firewood is simply defined as a felled tree cut into pieces so that it can be burned on a fire while charcoal is similarly said to be a porous black solid, consisting of an amorphous form of carbon, obtained as a residue when wood, bone, or other organic matter is heated in the absence of air.

Firewood litters the environment and the smoke is unhygienic, housewives have no choice, but to make do with what they can afford to ensure members of their families are fed.

It's no news that most households, particularly the low-income earners have abandoned the use of gas because of economic bottleneck experienced across the country, what has become news is going back to embrace a tradition of preparing meals that had long been abandoned, preferring to use an open space instead of a compactly closed kitchen, turning the pots completely black in the process.

However, many households also gather charcoal after the use of firewoods for economy reason, as bag of charcoal is sold between four thousand and five thousand Naira, depending on the size.

Families that cannot afford a bag of charcoal go for economic package of

charcoal which varies from N100 to N200 depending on the quantity of the product.

To some, instead of economy package of charcoal, they gather charcoal from used wood and utilize it for cooking.

In early days, the use of firewood and charcoal were paramount, the days when almost every household used either charcoal or firewood as means of cooking fuel.

In spite of that, there was still enough wood in the bush to sustain this method of cooking for centuries, but then time changed with the advent of paraffin stoves and cooking gas. Though, firewood and charcoal are still available, due to security challenges in the country firewoods has now become a scarce commodity as dealers due to fear of either being kidnapped for ransom or even killed by bandits have cut down their frequencies of going into the forest for lumbering for the purpose of making charcoal out of it.

Initially, many households migrated towards kerosene stoves, but with time kerosene as fuel became costly and scarce. Not only this, fuel stations where kerosene was available were always scenes of confusion and rowdiness, making it difficult for those who could even afford it to purchase the commodity. With time an average urban dweller began to count the costs and weigh the options and differences between the use of gas and buying of kerosene which cost N4000 to N5,000 per keg.

According to Mrs Lydia Ayuba who believes gas is expensive but uses it for her cooking, but has however, resolved use firewoods and charcoal to put bathing water on fire to sustain her

cooking gas.

"I have always been using gas right from the start. Gas is now more expensive than firewood and charcoal though I am still using it in order to save my gas," she submitted.

Mama Moses, a roadside "akara" and cooked beans seller says she patronizes firewoods because it is cheaper, but with time she began to feel uncomfortable with smoke associated with using it.

"When I visited my doctor, he told me to stop using firewood because of its adverse effects on my eyes, but he eventually told me to avoid smoke that comes from using firewood," she added.

She continued, "if I used gas for making akara, the whole profit would have gone because gas is too expensive. Therefore, I cannot afford the use of cooking gas."

"The cost of 12.5kg is N9,000 while 6.kg cost N4,800 and above depending on the size of the cylinder," she explained.

In the case of Hajiya Amina Isa, who said most people who used gas could be classified as middle class, adding that low class families struggled to meet up with the high cost of cooking gas, particularly in the hard times of today.

"Also the environment in which I cook can't allow me to be using firewood because this place is an open place. I prefer gas though the cost is higher than that of firewood," she confessed.

However, not all firewood users agreed that gas was better, Mrs Gideon who sold cooked rice and used firewood because her gas cooker, according to her was faulty." Firewood is way better than cooking gas because it cooks food well and it is also faster.

"Firewood is better than gas. A pack of

firewood is N100 to N200 to cook for my family.

"Though, firewood has so many difficulties attached to it. Part of this causes sight defects. Sometimes, I blow into the wood so as to produce fire and while I am battling with that I inhale a lot of smoke.

"I would call on the Federal Government to help Nigerians to reduce the cost of the product," she pleaded.

A clergyman who preferred to remain anonymous for this publication said when he could no longer bear the cost of N900 per Kg of gas, he told his wife to revert to charcoal, despite the inconveniences associated with it.

On the part of Hajiya Haruna who confided in our correspondent that she had resorted to the use of firewood to cook her food rather than buying cooking gas.

A housewife, Mrs. Mediant Bello, said she had gone back to the use of her kerosene stove since the gas prices went off the rooftop, adding that the situation kept getting worse, instead of improving. Meanwhile, firewood seller Mrs Musa Ibrahim said that many customers patronized her since the price of cooking gas rose.

"We sell firewood from N100, N200, N500 and above, several housewives have joined my customers now," she said.

A charcoal seller, Malam Ibraheema said that there was no much difference from what he used to sell before, observing that charcoal prices too were going higher.

"Charcoal price is getting higher now as the quantity we used to buy at N140,000 now sells for N150,000 and there is little difference from what I sell now compared

# 2023: Sardaunan Badarawa Pulls Crowd In Igabi, Chikun, Kajuru Campaign Tours

By: IBRAHIMADAMU, Kaduna

People's Democratic Party (PDP) Kaduna Central Senatorial Candidate, Hon. Usman Ibrahim known as Sardaunan Badarawa was received by crowd of supporters in Igabi, Chikun and Kajuru in continuation of campaign tours in quest to be elected into the Red Chamber in 2023 general election.

Sardaunan Badarawa was accompanied in the tour of the three local governments by his campaign team, party chieftains and volunteers amidst cheering and chanting of solidarity and support songs. In Igabi, Hon. Ibrahim was received by a mammoth crowd who turned out in their numbers to catch a glimpse of the politician whom they noted for touching their lives in so many positive ways.

While assuring the Senatorial hopeful of their supports, the people of Igabi, particularly PDP's family in the local government pledged to mobilize human and material resources for the success of the candidate at the poll.

The people of Igabi decried rising insecurity, emboldened by activities of bandits, asking the Senatorial flag bearer to make the problem first item of his agenda at the Upper House of the National Assembly.

Sardaunan Badarawa while assuring Igabi constituent of legislative attention if elected, disclosed an effort in the pipeline in collaboration with a security firm specialized in using cutting edge technology to combat non-conventional warfare.

In Chikun, Sardaunan Badarawa in his address harped on restoration of value and dignity of the electorate whom he stated had been taken for granted by the present administration in the state.

He said Chikun had always been a home of the party since the return of democracy in 1999, adding that PDP had never lost an election in the local government, assuring voters of a better deal if elected.

"We will concentrate our efforts on things that matter most to you and your families so that you won't have an atom of regret over your support for my candidature.

"Education, health, youth and women empowerment will top our priorities as soon as we get elected and sworn in because these basic necessities if prioritized would stimulate growth and development within the community at grassroots level.

"I have observed a complete absence of road infrastructure here with dilapidated and potholes-ridden roads all over which shows that the present administration in the state has abandoned the people of Chikun, an important crossroad linking the heart of the city and other zones with southern part of the state.

"We will ensure a complete reversal of this ugly trend where some sections are chosen for development over others," he assured.

In Kajuru, a section of the state with her shares of incidence of banditry and other forms of insecurity, the PDP Kaduna central candidate assured the people that the problem would be tackled head-on.



While at the palace of the traditional ruler of Kajuru, Sardaunan Badarawa stressed the important role the traditional institutions play in sustainable security as driving force for socio-economic activities and tourism which he noted as potentials of the area.

He promised to work with all traditional heads in the constituency as partners in achieving set goals.

He added that other basic dividends of democracy that would make life worthwhile shall form the bedrock of his development plan for the local government.



# Ibini Community Deserves Absolute Peace - Hon Aidam

By: VITALIS UGOH,  
Calabar

The leading and workaholic House of Representatives Candidate for Akamkpa/Biase Federal Constituency, Hon Austine Aidam made a triumphant entry to IBINI Community of Erei South in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Addressing the good people of IBINI, he said, "I am running for House of Representatives to contribute my quota in building a greater Nigeria for even the generations yet unborn."

According to him, "we all have reasons to be worried about the future of this country. But this is not the time to surrender and wallow in despair. Rather, this is the moment, when all patriots and citizens of goodwill must show courage, rise above those lines of divisions that have kept us apart over the years and ask this very important question: "where do we go from here?"

He went on saying, "In all the positions that I have had the good fortune to occupy, I have been driven by the deep conviction to serve, to help, to proffer solutions and to leave behind a legacy of courage, of hard work and of unyielding commitment to making a difference he stated"

He noted that, "perhaps more importantly, I have gone into each of these positions with clearly thought-out plans, decided well in advance. Working with some of the best brains around, I took my time to study situations, decide on what to do, and agree on the best implementation strategies."

According to him, "on every occasion, I have had to break through the walls of doubts and cynicism from those who thought that it could not be done; those who thought that the odds were too stacked against us and we wouldn't stand a chance. But each time, we were able to prove them wrong because we had the courage of conviction and we had God on our side."

He said, "In all of this, the good people of Ibini deserve absolute peace likewise potable drinking Water and electricity. I shall ensure these things come to pass by the grace of God almighty and to achieve all this the people of Ibini have a part to play through their PVC by voting Ntufam Sandy Onor, Ntufam Ekpo Okon, myself and Mr David Oyube Attoe said Hon Austine Aidam JP."



## Make Naira, Fuel Available Or Face Nationwide Protests, Oodua Youth Warns Emeifele, Kyari

By; AMOS MATHEW, Kaduna

A pan-Yoruba cultural group, Oodua Youth Parliament (OYP) has handed a three-day ultimatum to heads of the nation's apex bank and refinery, Godwin Emeifele and Mala Kyari to solve the current problems of naira and fuel shortages across Nigeria or face organized protests. In a statement, Speaker of the pro-Yoruba cultural movement Abdulmajeed O. Oyeniyi decried hardship experienced by Nigerians due to what he described as deliberate sabotage by Emeifele and Kyari to achieve an ulterior motive of some influential individuals in corridor of power bent at foisting their will on hapless people of this country.

He wondered why officers appointed to discharge most important functions that have serious socioeconomic effects on lives of Nigerians could turn around to be sources of devastating nightmare, urging the two public officials to urgently resign their appointments within three days or faced with a protest action that may not be palatable and too hot for them to handle. Oyeniyi however commended the Osun State Commissioner of Police Patrick Kehinde whom he described as a competent and exemplary cop.

While commending CP

Kehinde for handling professionally the brewing anger, resulting from scarcity of naira and fuel which he noted would have degenerated to public disturbance and above all jeopardizing peace in the state.

The Oodua parliamentarian recommended Kehinde for upward promotion, national honour and recognition for loyalty and distinct service to fatherland.

"Nigerians are going through a lot, ranging from economic devastation as a result of deliberate action of heads of CBN and NNPC who are bent on triggering nationwide disaffection and public apathy to satisfy the whims of some selfish individual in the corridor of power.

"It is sad and disheartening seeing the pains and anguish caused Nigerians who should have been preparing for a general election but are occupied with queuing up for the whole day while spend the night at filling stations or cash dispensing machines.

"It is heartless and insensitive to subject people to such inhumane treatments over their constitutionally-given rights in a very crucial time of an election Month. "What will these two public officers gain for causing general hunger, starvation and crumbling basic economic activities in the country?"

"We are sounding a note of warning to them that their time is up for either they make these most important products available or face an effective protest, capable of consuming them," he warned.

## Fuel Scarcity, Currency Switch: Kwara Gov Okays Palliatives For Vulnerable Groups

*\*Deploys free buses along specific students' routes*

By BILIQIS OLAJUMOKE ONAOLAPO, Ilorin

Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq has approved palliatives for various vulnerable groups in the state to cushion the effects of the ongoing fuel scarcity and the currency change in the country.

The palliatives will include cash transfer to widows, pensioners, transporters, marketers, smallholder farmers, and other vulnerable people and it will be done through the Kwara State Social Investment Programme (KWASSIP) for proper coordination and accountability.

"The Governor has

therefore directed KWASSIP to work out the details and deploy this modest support as soon as possible to mitigate the effects of the situation," according to a statement. "The Governor has also directed the deployment of free buses along specific routes used by students and staff of tertiary institutions in the

capital city where the effects of the fuel scarcity have been most pronounced.

"Further details of this palliative will be released by relevant government departments/committees. The free bus rides for the students will begin on Monday, February 13, 2023."



(L-R): Kaduna North Senatorial candidate, Labour Party, Ibrahim Sidi Bamalli, Kaduna State governorship candidate, Labour Party, Hon Jonathan Asake, chairman Northern Elders Forum, Prof. Ango Abdullahi and the deputy governorship candidate, Rt. Hon Bashir Aliyu Zangon Aya, during the presentation of their 5-point manifesto and courtesy visit to Prof. Ango in Zaria, recently.

## Gbajabiamila Congratulates Ajaero On Emergence As NLC president

By; IYOKPO J. EGBODO, Abuja

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, has congratulated Mr. Joe Ajaero on his emergence as the new president of the Nigeria Labour Congress

(NLC).

Speaker Gbajabiamila also congratulated other members of the national executive committee of the NLC.

In a statement by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Lanre Lasisi, the Speaker said he believed

Mr. Ajaero would bring his experience to bear in his new position as the president of the NLC. Gbajabiamila wished Ajaero a successful tenure, urging the new NLC president to be innovative in his leadership.

## Katsina APC Scores Reception By Electorate During Statewide Campaign High

By; SULAIMAN AHMED MISAU, Katsina

The All Progressive Congress (APC) in Katsina State has expressed satisfaction over the resounding welcome by the party faithful during its governorship electioneering campaign across the state.

The Director General of the Dikko-Jobe 2023 governorship campaign, Architect Ahmed Musa

Dangiwa stated this while answering questions from newsmen in an interview.

He said the APC governorship candidate and his entourage have successfully visited all the thirty four local government areas including three hundred and sixty one wards across the state.

The Director General stated that, the Dikko-Jobe campaign train was able to visit security frontline areas of Jibia,

Safana, Batsari, Kankara, Faskari and Sabuwa successfully.

Architect Ahmed Musa Dangiwa expressed gratitude to traditional leader, Imams, party elders and their party supporters across the State for their love to APC.

The Director General urged other camping committees for National and State Assemblies candidates to continue with their separate

campaign at various constituencies.

He equally advised all APC faithful as well as APC lovers who are yet to collect their permanent voter cards to do so immediately before the fifth of February this year. Architect Musa Dangiwa said APC was determined to do more in every aspects of human survival and therefore urged people in the state to vote for all APC candidates.



# I'll Prioritise Oyo South Senatorial People's Health – Kolapo Kola-Daisi

*\*Kicks off free medical outreach for over 10,000 constituents*

**By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan**  
The Accord Senatorial candidate for Oyo South Senatorial District Mr Idris Kolapo Kola Daisi on Wednesday, said he will prioritise the health of the people of the Senatorial District. Mr Kolapo Kola Daisi stated this in Ibadan while speaking at the flag off of his three-day free medical outreach declared that remained his priority. The Oyo South Senatorial candidate disclosed that no fewer than 10,000 people in the Senatorial District are to benefit from the 3 three-day free medical outreach.

According to Mr Kolapo Kola - Daisi, the free medical outreach is to cover areas such as checkups for diabetics, eye checks and free eyeglasses, hypertension checks, free medical aid, free consultation and general checkups. He stressed that the outreach was one of his "E je ka Dasi" projects for the people of his Senatorial District to be on continuous basis and shall be sustained every year when he is

elected as the Senator representing Oyo South Senatorial District.

Emphasizing that the health of his constituents remained his priority, the Senatorial candidate said the timing for the outreach was good considering the stress many have been experiencing due to the cash and fuel scarcities.

"We want to reach out to thousands of people on their health issues. This exercise would be continuous and it shall be sustained every year when we get to the office. We are even considering taking the medical outreach to people in their various communities so that there won't be needs for them to travel far to access health care and treatments", he said.

Kolapo Kola-Daisi added, "Our people need to be healthy and this shall be part of our mandate when we get to the office because it is an intervention that we think is necessary for our people."

Speaking, leader of the team from Medical Aid for Africa, Dr. Sabu Geoge disclosed that one



Beneficiaries at the Kolapo Kola-Daisi Free Medical outreach in Ibadan

of the goals of the outreach was to increase awareness of people on hypertension and the importance of taking medicine on regular basis.

"One of the biggest challenges we have seen is that people believe hypertension is a disease someone can treat a little bit of time because it doesn't have

specific symptoms. So many people stop taking the medicine because they think it has been cured with the medicine they have taken.

"People need to know that the silent killer disease is with them once they are diagnosed with it. They need to take the medicine strictly and for them to know that

the medicine is not expensive and can get it locally."

In his remarks, the Director General of Kolapo Kola-Daisi campaign group, Chief Sunday Babalola said the outreach as a pointer to one of the cardinal programmes of Kola-Daisi which is free health for women and children in the constituency.

## 2023: Politicians, Electorate Danger To Elections Success - Prof Jega

**By: AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna**

The biggest danger to the success to this year's general elections are politicians and electorate, the former chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Attahiru Jega, has said.

Speaking on Tuesday in Abuja while delivering a keynote at the public sensitisation on peaceful co-existence and the need to have hitch-free elections, organised by the Abuja National Mosque Da'awah and Welfare Foundation (ANMDWF), Prof Jega observed that the so-called political class as active partisans and candidates, contestants in elections, are the category of stakeholders with perhaps the least noticeable improvements in the ways they engaged with the electoral process since 1999.

He explained that their mindset is to achieve victory at all cost; win elections by deploying 'all means necessary' and seeing



electoral contests as a "do-or-die" affair, saying that they have done since 1999, they have continued to do, and are likely to do in 2023.

He opined that what may constitute the major challenge to

the 2023 general elections is what he called "their criminal and fraudulent predispositions increased" so long as their impunity has remained unchecked.

A former INEC boss believes,

"Politicians and the electorate are the biggest danger to the success of February 25 and March 11 general elections."

According to him, this year's elections are generally acknowledged both at home and

abroad are the most consequential elections to be held globally.

Jega explained, "To my mind, the most worrisome challenges going into the 2023 general elections are the attitude and disposition of the so-called political class (politicians and political party bureaucracy or aristocracy); and the attitude and disposition of the electorate, the eligible voting citizens, as they engage with the electoral process."

He observed that another major concern is the attitude and disposition of the electorate, including citizens who qualify to register and to vote.

Increasingly, he stated that even if they register to vote, they hardly make the effort to vote, as declining voter turnout statistics of general as well as off-season elections indicate, suggesting that this may be as a result of a crisis of rising expectations; and/or inadequacy, or lack of sensitization, political and voter education.

# Tinubu Has Better Credentials To Govern Nigeria - Adesiyan

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

**A** Chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and forever Minister of Police Affairs, Alhaji Jelili Adesiyan has said the APC Presidential candidate Asiwaju Bola Tinubu is the best Presidential candidate in Nigeria for the 2023 polls.

Alhaji Adesiyan stated this while featuring on the Oyo state NUJ Correspondents Chapel Guest Forum platform held at the Chapel's Secretariat in Ibadan.

The APC Chieftain pointed out that of all the Presidential candidates for this month's Presidential election, Asiwaju Tinubu has a better credential to govern Nigeria

According to the former Minister of Police Affairs, Asiwaju has demonstrated his leadership credentials while he was the governor of Lagos state for 8 years, adding that if he can replicate what he did at Lagos, Nigeria as a country will be better.

"Among all the candidates we have in Nigeria for this year's

Presidential election, including the four prominent ones, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu has the best credentials to govern Nigeria. There is no doubt that Tinubu is the best for Nigeria now", he said.

The former Minister added, "Asiwaju Tinubu is the most equipped, most knowledgeable and experience among all the Presidential candidates we are having in the country presently. He is the only unifier and real lover of Nigerian masses"

Alhaji Adesiyan stressed that with Asiwaju Tinubu as the next Nigeria President, he will implement all those things that will bring better life to Nigeria and Nigerians.

"Asiwaju Tinubu is going to become the next President of Nigeria. He will win the next Presidential election coming up this month. Tinubu will correct all the abnormalities in Nigeria"

On the criticism of Asiwaju Tinubu by some elements, Alhaji Adesiyan said it is expected bearing in mind that the APC Presidential candidate stands as



Alhaji Jelili Adesiyan (middle) at the Oyo NUJ Correspondents chapel programme

the most formidable among all the other candidates eyeing the 2023 Presidency.

He then tasked journalists in the country to continue to be objective in their reports and be

fair to the nation's growing democracy.

## ...Will Soon Storm Ibadan For Presidential Rally - Senator Folarin

*\*Says he remains the greatest, most compassionate leader*

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

**A**ll Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate and Coordinator for APC Presidential Campaign Council in Oyo State, Senator Teslim Folarin on Tuesday, said Asiwaju Bola Tinubu is eager to storm Ibadan for his Presidential rally.

Senator Folarin in a statement issued by the Chairman, Media and Publicity for the Presidential Campaign council in the state, Alhaji Kehinde Olaosebikan on the postponement of Asiwaju Tinubu rally disclosed that the APC Presidential candidate is the greatest and most compassionate leader in this year's general election.

The APC governorship candidate emphasized that the APC Presidential candidate would be in Ibadan very soon for the postponed presidential rally and that Asiwaju Tinubu remained committed to always putting the interest of the masses first in all his policies and

actions as the President of Nigeria.

"Just as he did in Lagos State. Bola Tinubu would engender brilliant and sustainable masses friendly policies and programs that would make Nigeria greater in all aspects and guaranteeing better life for all Nigerians", he said.

Senator Folarin maintained that the deferment of the APC Presidential campaign was in solidarity with the masses of the



state who have been subjected to unwarranted sufferings as a result of the horrendous scarcity of naira notes and fuel, adding, "Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was eager to campaign in Ibadan".

He stressed that "the profound enthusiasm shown to receive Asiwaju Tinubu in Ibadan and

the eventual affectionate concern being expressed by the people since the announcement of the postponement by the people of Oyo State have further confirmed the love our people have for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and their determination to vote for him en-masse on the 25th of this month".

The APC governorship candidate while thanking the people of Oyo state for the loving concern shown on the postponement hinted that the leading presidential candidate would storm Ibadan with his running mate, Senator Kashim Shettima and other big wigs of the party as soon as all the issues surrounding the cashless policy and the redesign of Naira notes are resolved and Oyo State people have seamless access to

Naira notes and fuel.

The Director General of the All Progressives Congress APC presidential and gubernatorial campaigns in Oyo State, Dr. Isiaka Kolawole also assured that the postponement of the rally would not in any way affect the quality of the rally whenever it takes place.

Dr. Kolawole who stressed that though the campaign council had concluded all the arrangements for a grand rally with the stage and all the necessary equipment and facilities put in place before the postponement assured that the postponement would rather make the rally grander than it would have been

"As I promised when I addressed the press on our preparations on Sunday, we are determined to make the rally the best in all ramifications. It is going to be grand, classy and groovy. We are the pacesetters, we are setting a new pace with the rally and you would all see it when it happens. The postponement would not limit us".

# Kaduna Inter-Agency Consultative Committee On Election Security Holds Strategy Session

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) Kaduna State, co-chaired by the Commissioner of Police, Kaduna State Command, CP Yekini .AAyoku psc(+), mni,

and the stand-in Resident Electoral Commissioner, Alh. Auwal Mohammed Mashi held another in its series of strategic session to ramp up its preparedness towards the conduct of top-notch and hitch-free election in the state. This was contained in a

statement signed by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Muhammad Jalige, dated February 8, 2023. It said that the meeting which had in attendance; the heads of all the security agencies which are members of ICCES in the state, undertook a critical review

of the level of preparations of all the critical stakeholders involved in the electoral process.

The committee took far reaching decisions that will ensure the integrity of the upcoming general elections is not in any way impeached.

The Commissioner of Police

assured members of the public that the security agencies are working synergistically to ensure the right security ambience is created before, during and after the elections.

He therefore, called for the support and cooperation of all and sundry towards the success of the elections.





# Women Have A Role To Play In Development Of Society - Dr Maryam Abacha

By; IMRANA ABDULLAHI, Kaduna

Hajiya (Dr.) Maryam Abacha, the wife of the former Head of State, late General Sani Abacha, has called on the society, especially men, to give women the opportunity and freedom to seek for Western education, learn skills and work for the development of the nation.

Maryam Abacha made the remarks on Tuesday, while interacting with journalists at her residence in Abuja.

Dr. Maryam said women influence building a better society because they are caretakers and can contribute significantly to the growth and development of society if given the opportunity.

She used the medium to make a special appeal to men to allow their wives seek education, learn skills and work for the betterment of themselves and the society at large.

Dr. Maryam said men in the Northern part of Nigeria do not support their wives to achieve their desired goals, stressing that lack of support from men is bringing set back to the region.

However, she advised women to be humble and to protect their dignity when they have the opportunity, "protecting your dignity is very useful," she said.

She recalled how she advised her husband to help Nigerian citizens, while urging women to always help their husbands with advice and information that is

reasonable.

She called on men to listen to their wives' advices, adding, "if you do so, it would benefit you."

"I have often given advice to my husband, and he used, which eventually benefitted the country."

Maryam said, "It is good for women to join their husbands in making reforms that will benefit society."

She advised anyone who finds himself in a position of authority to make sure he serves the community and not be an oppressor, because according to her, life is dynamic.

"Whenever you get a chance in life; be it being affluent or having power, be fair, just, kind and honest to everyone irrespective of status. Life is unpredictable," she said.

She told the journalists that, anything a person has decided to do in life, should be done with good intentions, "surely God will help you", she said.

She urged women to read the stories of those who preceded them to understand the mistakes they made and to learn from them.

Hajiya (Dr.) Maryam Abacha outlined the development she brought when she held the leadership of the Nigerian Army Officers Wives Association (NAOWA) and during her tenure as the First Lady of Nigeria.

During her tenure as president of NAOWA, she said, many programmes were initiated to

support soldiers and their women by educating, teaching and supporting their children.

She also initiated and presided over the formation of joint military and police officer's wives' associations and equally encouraged the growth of other human development activities.

She saw to the creation of the Joint Armed Forces and Police Officers Wives Consultative Committee (JOFOPOWOCO) which was renamed, Defense and Police Officers Wives Association (DEPOWA) to enhance the cordial relationship between the presidency and the various arms of the Armed Forces and the Police

Hajiya Maryam while holding the office of First Lady, sustained welfare programmes, including, the Family Support Programme (FSP), a programme focused on health, education, agriculture, income generation, disability and destitution, among others.

She also initiated the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), the National Programme on Immunization, the Legal Aid Clinic Programme, the National Hospital for women and children, contributions to the State House, government programmes, the establishment of a liaison office for former heads of state and spouses, among others.

After that, in the health sector,



Maryam Abacha

she initiated and sponsored many seminars and workshops on Health; HIV/AIDS; immunization on children, and a programme designed to eradicate six childhood killer diseases in Nigeria.

She was appointed a member of the World Health Organisation

(WHO) of Polio-Free Africa, a distinguished African leadership committee established to eradicate polio in Africa.

The advice of the former First Lady of Nigeria, Hajiya Maryam Abacha gave birth to the Federal Ministry For Women and Social Development.

## Naira Policy: Anti-sabotage Group Condemns 13 Political Parties Threatening Boycott Of 2023 Elections

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

An anti-sabotage organisation under the aegis of The Natives have said the 13 political parties threatening to boycott the 2023 general elections if the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) extend deadline for new Naira notes policy beyond February 10 are stinking and insensitive to the plights of Nigerians.

The Natives described the said thirteen political parties as "agents of sabotage which are unmindful of the suffering of the Nigerian masses as a result of CBN current policy."

Some registered political parties had reportedly threatened to boycott the forthcoming general elections should CBN extend the deadline.

At press conference on Monday, spokesperson of the forum and national chairman of Action Alliance, Chief Barr. Kenneth Udeze, flanked by other parties' national chairmen, some presidential candidates, governorship, senatorial, House of Representatives as well as House of Assembly candidates, announced the decision, saying the Naira policy will enhance the credibility of the 2023 election.

But responding to the development through a statement signed Wednesday in Abuja, by The Natives President General, Hon. Smart

Edwards, condemned the action of the parties and declared that Nigerians do not know whether the said political parties exist on the ballot papers.

According to Edwards, no prominent and well rooted grassroot political party will support a policy implementation that is inflicting hardship on Nigerians, this parties are like one-man portfolio political parties and therefore not in contention.

The statement called on Nigerians to identify individuals and their political organisation behind the threat to sabotage them and inflict more pains on the masses.

"Nigerians are fighting in the banks, attacking themselves on the queues, throwing stones at public buildings, petty traders and commuters are frustrated yet platforms seeking people's votes are making insensitive statements as regards general elections when citizens are grieving. We make bold to say these political parties are simply insensitive and lack grassroots empathy.

How does a Keke driver transact business with his passengers successfully? How will drivers pay to enter markets, how will passengers transport back to their respective homes when Mobil networks are unstable and so on? What do you expect of a petty Tomato sellers? When the implementation at the

urban locations are poor as seen, one can only imagine the pains at hinterlands, byways and villages.

"Nigerians are compelled to surrender their living and livelihoods to outrageous POS operators whose network only appears after hours of frustration. This is a poor impression of a good vision.

"The citizens who are groaning under the redesigned of Naira policy do not know whether these insensitive political robbers exist on the ballot papers. If they cannot see the pain the entire country is experiencing through the ill motivated sabotage of people's livelihoods either by the banks, printers or providers of the money, then the relevant of these political parties should be questioned," the statement said.

The group also faulted the CBN for employing wrong strategies for the implementation of the new Naira policy and their inability to wield the big stick against bank saboteurs.

"The talk is no longer about the redesigning, the banks have made it is faulty. If the purpose is good, the implementation looks satanic. How do you withdraw money from the whole country and refuse to let them access their money, creating chaos and panic among ordinary Nigerians, some locals think

government has no money, some believe their money has been trapped in financial crisis?

"We stand unequivocally with the Governor Nasir el-Rufai of Kaduna state for his forthrightness, boldness and the ability to speak up for the masses by speaking truth to power.

"We also salute the APC Governors that rose to consult the President, as well as commend the compassionate approach of President Muhammadu Buhari by appealing to the Nation and its citizens. This is how to govern, when factoring how poorly managed the intention was by CBN, the outcry and a search for solution within seven days is applauded, so we would welcome a resolution by the Supreme Court against this 13 Party Comedy.

"Therefore, The position of these 13 political parties is pointless, shameful and insane. We don't hope there are Nigerians in these political parties.

The outburst of the APC presidential candidate (Bola Tinubu) was in line with the yearning of the people across the country and the swift response of both the government and security agencies was a stitch in time."

The group urged the CBN to urgently arrest the situation, saying there are millions of Nigerians whose nightmares are as a result of currency shortage, who also want them to expose the bank sabotage.



# N10.1 Trillion Tax Revenue: FIRS Has Again Broken The Jinx

By: IJANADA JANTIKU

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), government's agency responsible for assessing, collecting and accounting for tax and other revenues accruing to the Federal Government of Nigeria, have been recording tremendous successes and living up to its mandate especially under the leadership of the Executive Chairman, Muhammad Nami.

Prior to the present leadership, the FIRS was seen to be limited in capacity as it could not efficiently facilitate an effective tax collection system through bringing more tax paying entities into the national tax net. And this reflected in low revenue generation for the Federal Government year in, year out.

But amazingly, in 2020, the agency received commendations for exceeding its revenue target in the second quarter (Q2) of 2020; it generated N19.15 billion above its N1.27 trillion target and this was just few months after Muhammad Nami assumed office. More intriguing is the fact that that was the first time in five years (since Q2 of 2015) that the FIRS would be surpassing its revenue target.

In 2021, the Service achieved a record tax collection of N6.405 trillion, representing over a hundred per cent of its collection target for the year and also marked the first time that agency crossed the six trillion mark. And this was despite the economic downturn experienced in the world as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This was good, but the tax collection agency did not rest on its oars rather it went further to prove that with the right kind of visionary leadership, it can do better and that there are better days ahead for the country. And this it did by building on the success already recorded. More recently, the agency re-wrote Nigeria's tax collection history when it announced in its "FIRS 2022 Performance Update" report that it collected over N10.1 trillion in tax revenue in the year 2022, signifying over 96 per cent of its collection target for the year, marking the highest tax collection ever recorded in its history and the first time that the FIRS will cross the N10 trillion mark in tax revenue collection.

Out of the N10.1 trillion collected in revenue, oil sector collection stood at N4.09 trillion (representing 59% of the total collection) while non-oil tax contributed N5.96 trillion (representing 41%). Also, Companies Income Tax contributed N2.83 trillion; Value Added



Tax N2.51 trillion; Electronic Money Transfer Levy N125.67 billion and Earmarked Taxes N353.69 billion. Also according to the report, the N10.1 trillion realized from tax is exclusive of tax waived on account of various tax incentives granted under the respective laws, which amounted to N1.8 trillion. Of course you would agree with me that this unprecedented milestone is not a sheer bit of luck, it did not just happen by chance. It is as a result of deliberate, well thought out plans, strategies and efforts put in place which has now metamorphosed into a jinx breaker in the history of the apex tax administration agency in Nigeria.

The report shed more light on this. It stated that "the Muhammad Nami-led management upon assumption of office came up with a four-point focus, namely: administrative and operational restructuring; making the service customer-focused; creating a data-centric institution; and automation of administrative and operational processes".

It further noted that over the period of 2020 to 2022, "the management

introduced reforms bordering around this four-point at different times and this is what is now gradually yielding fruits. Notable amongst this is the restructuring of the administration of the Service for maximum efficiency and achievement of internal cohesion such that all functional units now work in unison towards the achievement of set goals.

"The Service had also automated most of the administrative and operational processes. A major leap was the full deployment of the TaxPro Max for end-to-end administration of taxes in June 2021. The module for the automated TCC went live 1st January 2023 while taxpayers had already downloaded over 1,000 TCCs this year without having to visit FIRS office.

"It also noted that the Service had operationalised its data mining and analysis system thereby allowing for data-backed taxpayer profiling".

Another breakthrough that was instrumental to this historical feat in the FIRS is the opening of 25 new satellite tax offices across the country as part of the agency's goal to "bring tax services nearer to the taxpaying public while bringing

FIRS nearer to the public". According to the FIRS, the purpose of the new tax offices was to "help bring many taxpayers into the tax net, help fill companies income tax, and value added tax as well as monitor compliance with other taxes,"

All these conscious efforts summed up together, birthed the new era that we are witnessing today in the FIRS under the leadership of a seasoned tax consultant and administrator who has proven to be more than equal to the task. The FIRS Boss' top notch reforms and strategies have not just ushered the agency into a whole new era but also paved way for it to achieve much more than it had achieved in the previous years.

And like the agency rightly said, its goal is to build on the current reforms, identify more areas where it can improve in the delivery and efficiency of its collection, and plug loopholes while deploying innovative reforms in data and artificial intelligence.

By achieving this, it will harness and even improve on its momentum in 2023 to provide sustainable tax revenue that would fund government's projects, services, programmes and amenities.

# When Government Prompts the Citizenry to Violence

By Owei Lakemfa

A Lebanese man on September 16, 2022, wielding a gun, held up the Byblos Bank in Ghazieh, Southern Lebanon. No, not to rob the bank or its customers. Just to retrieve part of his money trapped in the country's banks!

So, to retrieve part of his money, he had to hold up the bank and take hostages. As news of the holdup spread, crowds gathered in front of the bank to cheer him on.

Two days earlier, there had been two other holdups in Beirut and the town of Ale. Although all the weapons turned out to be toy guns, but nobody will confront a desperate armed man believing the gun he is carrying is a toy.

"In Abuja, I saw the trending video of a naked, elderly man in a bank weeping inconsolably because he could not retrieve his money to take care of his family. He ignored the entreaties of bank officials. Rather, he demanded to be killed: "Make dem shoot me make I die. Make I forget my children, make I forget my wife (shoot me and let me die, kill me and let me forget my children, let me forget my wife)", he wailed in Pidgin English."

In August, 2022, a man held up a Beirut bank just to withdraw his own funds to treat his sick father. He went home a free man when the bank dropped its lawsuit against him. Also, a Lebanese woman seized a bank in Beirut demanding her frozen deposits in order to pay the medical bills of her sister.

These were surreal images and I felt sorry that Lebanon, once considered the banking capital of the Arab world, which was why it was called the "Switzerland of the Middle East", could have become a failed state.

Never in my wildest imagination could I have conceived not too dissimilar scenes in Nigeria just four months down the line. This was because I did not reckon with a man called Muhammadu Buhari, a retired general and former military dictator, who runs the regime in Nigeria as elected President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

His regime decided to change the three highest denominations of the naira with effect from December 15, 2022. The end date was fixed at January 31, 2023. While in compliance, the populace returned the old bank notes to the bank, the new notes did not flow in sufficient quantity. The mass media quoted Kaduna State Governor, Nasir el-Rufai, as claiming that while the Central Bank mopped up N2 trillion old notes, only N300 billion new notes were in circulation. Whether this claim is true or not, the fact is that a financial crisis is sweeping through the country and Lebanon-like scenes are being enacted. Although guns have not surfaced in bank halls, they have in the streets where armed policemen engaged citizens protesting the cash shortage and the failure of banks to pay customers.

Also, in the historic city of Benin, where protesters had taken to the streets, armed soldiers have had altercations with the students of the University of Benin over access to Automated Teller Machines (ATM) which has become the primary means of collecting money.

In Abuja, I saw the trending video of a naked, elderly man in a bank weeping inconsolably because he could not retrieve his money to take care of his family. He ignored the entreaties of bank officials. Rather, he demanded to be killed: "Make dem shoot me make I die. Make I forget my children, make I forget my wife (shoot me and let me die, kill me and let me forget my children, let me forget my wife)", he wailed in Pidgin English.

"What is going on is the undisguised sale of the naira to buy the naira. As at Sunday February 5, 2023 in Abuja, the Point-of-Sale (POS) operators were charging at least 15 per cent of whatever money customers were withdrawing. Also, the POS in almost all fuel stations were non-functional. I observed fuel station operators who insist on cash, counting whatever money they make, and selling the currency to Nigerians at 15 per cent interest rate!"

Some days earlier, a lady stripped to her underpants in a bank hall, demanding access to her money so her daughter can return to school. In another bank, a man climbed the counter, removed his top and decided to sleep there unless he was given some of his money. In another bank hall, a machete-wielding man was said to have been subdued.

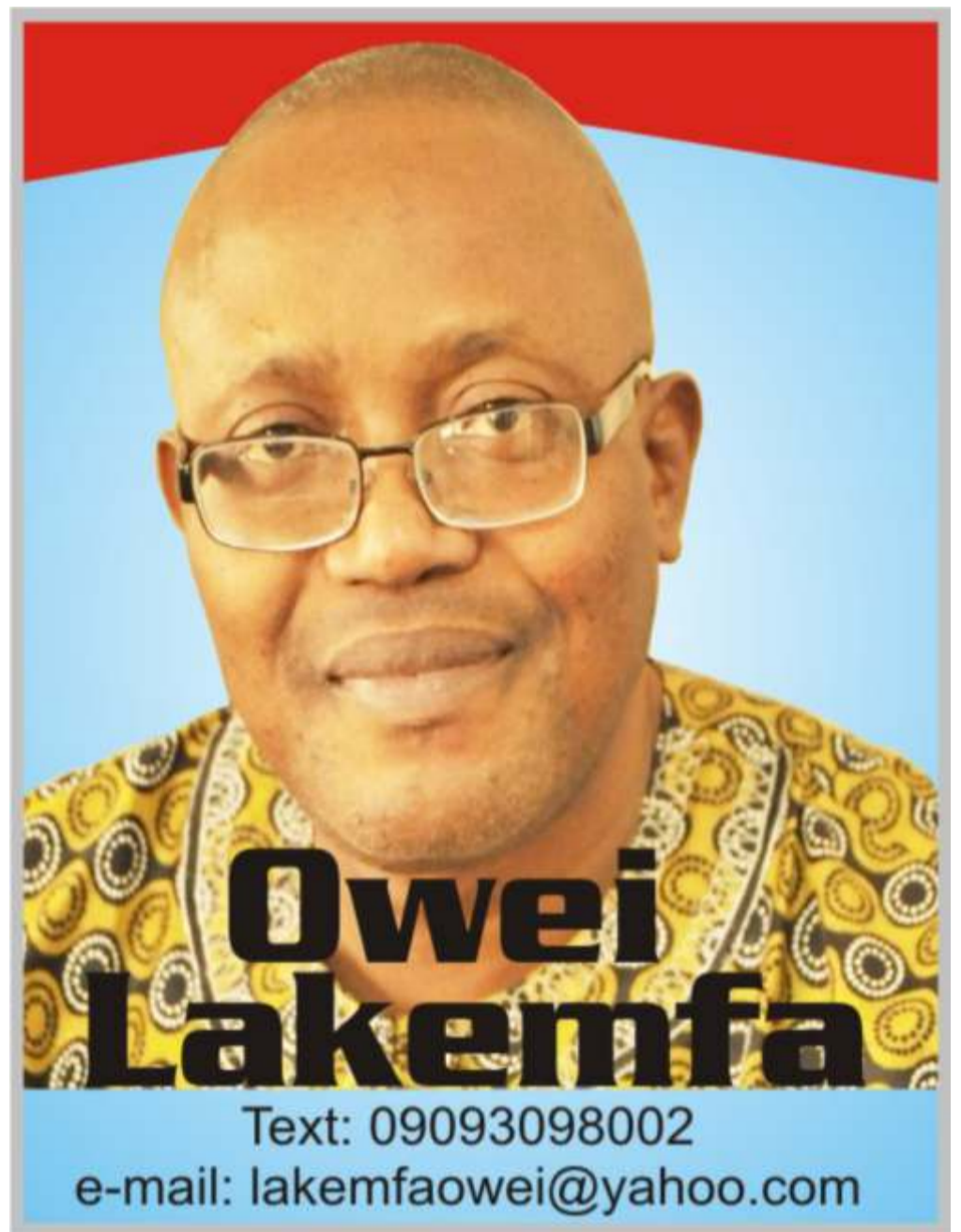
In some cities, angry Nigerians took to the streets in protest, leading to the burning of some ATMs and bank's buildings.

What is going on is the undisguised sale of the naira to buy the naira. As at Sunday February 5, 2023 in Abuja, the Point-of-Sale (POS) operators were charging at least 15 per cent of whatever money customers were withdrawing.

Also, the POS in almost all fuel stations were non-functional. I observed fuel station operators who insist on cash, counting whatever money they make, and selling the currency to Nigerians at 15 per cent interest rate!

The mass media reported that as at Saturday in Lagos, N5,000 old notes attracted a N1,000 commission while N6,000 new notes attracted as much as N2,000 commission; that is, a Nigerian is forced to lose one third of his money just to have the naira in his hands!

"Eleven governors elected on the platform of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) on Thursday met President Buhari to work out an urgent solution, including the concurrent use of the old and new notes till the end of the year. Buhari, while having no solution, requested that the current state of anarchy be allowed to continue for another one week when the old notes would have ceased to be legal tender. As usual, he blamed others for the failures of his



government."

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) claimed enough new bank notes have been given to banks. It followed this up with some clips of its officials leading security men to exposing some banks hoarding the new notes. If this was a serious move, then over 75 per cent of the bank managers would have been behind bars.

Meanwhile, some bank officials are feeding the ATMs with naira in wraps so currency cannot be dispensed. Many banks are also debiting customers without remitting their money or reversing the transactions. So, what is going on is the mass robbery of Nigerians with no government or security agency to defend them.

The induced currency crisis has crippled small businesses while the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) says if the currency crisis persists for another three weeks, there is the likelihood of a 25 per cent monthly drop in sale of locally produced goods.

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the concurrent use of the old and new notes till the end of the year. Buhari, while having no solution, requested that the current state of anarchy be allowed to continue for another one week when the old notes would have ceased to be legal tender. As usual, he blamed others for the failures of his government.

Thirty-nine years ago, as Military Head of State, Buhari carried out a similar currency change which was disastrous for many Nigerians. In his 1984 album titled: 'Owo Tuntun' (New Money) which is now trending on the internet, Fuji musician, Alhaji Kollington, the Kebe Kwara, sang: "I no longer understand the world. We have ended the new currency swap on May 6 (1984). The currency change has been effected, yet we are all still hungry...A lot of people queued at the banks for 7-8 days without being able to change to the new currency...All times the sinner is made to pay for his sins, the innocent is also made to suffer."

Africans have a saying that a god that cannot better the lot of the people, should at least not worsen it; the lot of Nigerians under Buhari has worsened. But I am confident that collectively, we shall survive his regime.

# NITT DG/CE'S Football Competition Begins

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria

The Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria Inter Departmental Football Competition tagged, "DG/CE's Cup" has begun.

The maiden football competition was organised by the sports committee of the institute. Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Director General/Chief Executive, Dr. Bayero Salih Farah represented by Engr. Elkaka Ngbole stressed the need for physical

exercise.

"We need to exercise our body not only for physical and mental fitness, but also for optimal productivity", he said.

The DG urged the sports committee to consider expanding the competition to other sporting activities for more inclusiveness.

He also implored the players to play safe as the competition was a friendly one

In his remarks, the Sports Committee Chairman and Director, Transport School, Dr. Ibrahim Baba

Mundi, thanked the DG/CE for upgrading the Institute's sports centre.

He reiterated the importance of physical exercise. Dr. Mundi stated that "the essence of the competition is to reinvigorate the spirit of sportsmanship, which will also enhance productivity."

He also enjoined the players to be mindful of the friendly nature of the competition by playing safe.

Transport School had qualified for the next round after beating



## Volleyball To Address Unemployment In North East, Says Lt Col Usman

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Commanding Officer of the Admin Battalion, Nigerian Army University, Biu, Lieutenant Colonel Julius Gidanmana Usman said the BIU Invitational Volleyball Challenge 2023 would empower unemployed youth in the North East through the discovery of their natural talents.

Lt Col Usman disclosed this, while briefing newsmen on the BIU

Invitational Volleyball Challenge in his office at the Nigerian Army University in Biu on Sunday.

The BIU Invitational Volleyball Challenge is scheduled for 9th to 12th February, 2023 at the Nigerian Army University Volleyball court and the ABOGO Large Cantonment in Biu, Borno State. The championship is aimed at harnessing the great potentials in the barracks youths which hitherto has remained untapped.

The Patron of Scorpion Spikers VC expressed optimism that the Invitational Challenge will expose players to a high level of competition adding that younger players stand the chance of getting selected ahead of the 2023 Nigeria Volleyball Leagues.

Lt Col Usman stressed that the present Board of Nigeria Volleyball Federation led by Engineer Musa Nimrod is a strong advocate of developmental programs in the country.

## Licensing Of Space Objects: Nigeria Loses 1 Trillion from Illegal Operations, Agbakoba Tells Science Minister

By; MATTHEW UKACHUNWA, Lagos

Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Dr. Olisa Agbakoba, has alleged that Nigeria is losing over one trillion Naira from the operations of space-related corporations.

Agbakoba disclosed the development in a letter he wrote to the Minister of Science and Technology, Senator Adeleke Mamora.

The senior advocate said that his team is compiling a list of those corporations, and that they will share the list with the ministry, the National Space Research Development Agency of Nigeria (NASRDA) and the Office of the Attorney-General of the Federation.

The letter which bore the subject heading: "Licensing of Space Objects in Nigeria," was

written on 6th February 2023.

Agbakoba stated in the letter that Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) is pressed for revenue and needs new streams of income to meet all obligations.

He said, "To support the government's efforts to generate revenue, the National Space Council issued Regulations on Licensing and Supervision of Space Activities, 2015 approved by President Buhari.

"The regulation establishes a licensing regime that requires corporations managing and controlling space objects (which includes satellites, space crafts, and launch vehicles) to be licensed and registered with the National Space Research and Development Agency of Nigeria (NASRDA).

Regrettably, most

corporations operating space objects in Nigeria have failed to comply and operate illegally. Our findings established that Nigeria is losing over N1 trillion from illegal operation of these corporations.

"We are compiling a list of these corporations which we intend to share with your Ministry, NASRDA, and the Office of the Attorney General of the Federation. It is important that these corporations comply with extant regulations, failing which after 14 days we will initiate legal proceedings for them to comply."

A copy of the letter was sent to Dr. Halilu Ahmad Shaba, Director-General/Chief Executive of National Space Research and Development Agency.



Agbakoba

# Kaduna Moves To Tap Into \$512.14bn Global Sports Market

## *\*Holds two-day policy dialogue*

By; JACOB ONJEWU  
DICKSON

In its bid at diversifying the economy and empowering youth, the Kaduna State Government is making efforts to get a chunk out of the \$512.14 billion global sports market for the year 2023.

This came to the fore at the opening ceremony of the Kaduna State Sports Industry Policy Dialogue, with a theme, "The SocioEconomic Impact Of A Robust Sports Industry Policy On The Development Of People And Nation" held at the Stonehedge Hotel, Kaduna on Thursday February 9, 2023.

In his welcome address, the Commissioner, Ministry of Sports Development Kaduna State, Hon. Idris Samaila Nyam, said that the state has what it takes to be the sports hub of the country.

"Ladies and gentlemen, having heard the investment of the Kaduna State Government to develop its Sports industry, you would agree with me that we have what it takes to be the sports hub of the country.

Permit me to ask you a simple question that I believe would guide our thoughts and opinions as we deliberate on the items that would make up the policy document for sports development in Kaduna State.

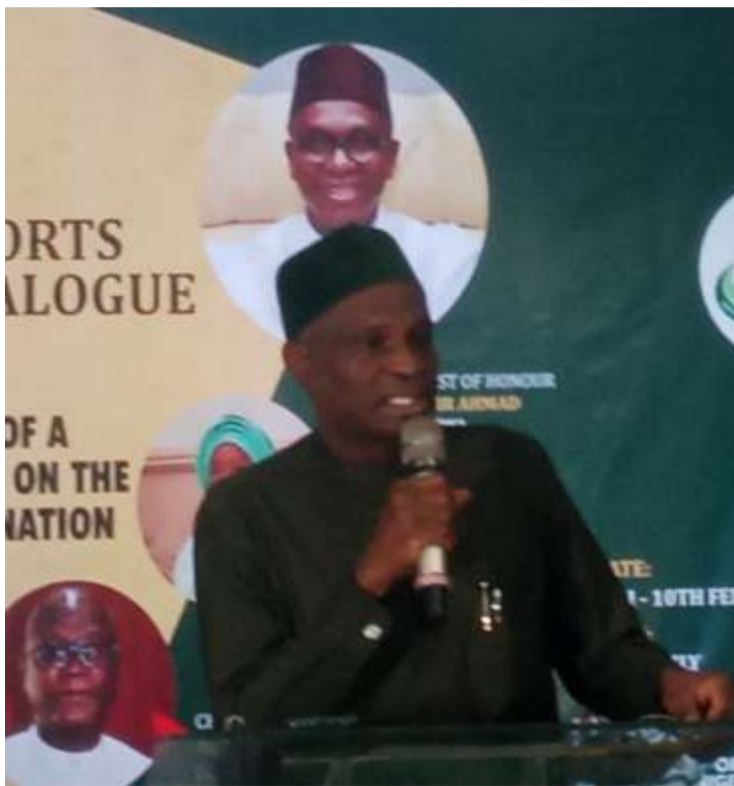
"Did you know that the Global Sports Market grew from \$486.61 billion in 2022 to \$512.14 billion in 2023 at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 5.2%?"

"According to the Business Research Company, the sports market is expected to grow to \$623.63 billion in 2027 at a compound annual growth of 5.0%.

"The key components of global sports – Participatory Sports is projected to gain \$136.7 billion of global annual sales by 2025 while Spectator Sports will gain \$55.1 billion of global annual sales by the same year," he said. According to him, besides its immense social benefits, the consumption of sports delivers billions of dollars in revenue globally, greatly impacting economies.

"It is no wonder why developed countries continue to invest in and tap into the potent power of Sports to deliver both social and economic value.

"Having recognised the social



and economic values in sports, the Federal Government began driving the Industrialisation of Sports – that is, a change in the perception of private and public sector towards Sports, with policies and directives to create an enabling environment for the business of Sports to thrive.

"As a result, President Muhammadu Buhari approved the categorisation of Sports as a business economy in 2020 while the Federal Executive Council approved the National Sports Industry Policy in 2022.

"The Policy, which is aimed at revamping the sports sector as a government-led and private sector driven industry under the 3I's and 1P strategy (Incentives, Investment, Infrastructure, and Policy), recognises the need for business-focused strategies at subnational levels to leverage the potentials and opportunities

from the sports industrialisation agenda.

"I am happy to inform you that Kaduna is the first State to localise the Policy with the goal to encourage the investment and participation of the private sector towards the successful development of a thriving Sports industry," he said.

The commissioner said that Kaduna State sees sports not just as leisurely activity or an amateur engagement but as a business! And our sports infrastructure vividly represents the commitment of the Kaduna State Government to provide an enabling environment to equip athletes for the international stage.

He stressed that Kaduna State stands out as a pacesetter in driving economic growth and development through its various strategic initiatives and long-

term plan including the 2021-2025 Kaduna State Development Plan, Infrastructure Master Plan, and Industrial Plan.

"Listed as one of the best states to do business by the World Bank, Kaduna State's investment drives and reforms have attracted actual investments and pledges worth over \$4.3 billion in the last six years.

"Because the cross-sectorial attributes of sports ensure that investment in it cascade to other key areas in the State's development plan like Education, Health, Infrastructure, Security, Urban Development, etc, we are confident that Sports is a strategic piece for Kaduna State in its industrialisation agenda.

"Beyond participatory sport

which focuses on athlete development, there is a much bigger sport industry which focuses on providing a core foundation for sustainable sports development and the goal of Kaduna State is to excel across the industry value chain!" He assured.

Honourable Nyam said that It gives him great pleasure to welcome all to the Kaduna State Sports Industry Development Policy Dialogue, themed, 'The Socio-Economic Impact of a Robust Sports Industry Policy on the Development of a People and Nation.'

"Let me specially appreciate everyone who flew in from different parts of the country to be a part of this event which is a first of its kind around Sports in Kaduna.

"The aim of this Summit is to get

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the input of key stakeholders in Sports for a Policy document that we hope would make Kaduna the most viable State for sports in Nigeria with full citizen participation and industry attractiveness for investment.

"I recall that in the 70s and early 80s, Kaduna State was the sports hub of not just the north but the entire country as it was home to talented sports men and women in both field and track events. As a matter of fact, Kaduna State has produced many successful athletes who have put the name of Nigeria on the global map.

"In the area of Football, we have legends like Celestine Babayaro, Rashidi Yekini, Garba Lawal, Tijjani Babangida, and young players like Sadiq Umar, among others.

"Under Weightlifting, Maryam Usman, four-time African Champion and gold medalist at the Commonwealth Games and Olympian bronze medalist is an athlete to brag about.

"Scott Nnaji, Ujiri Masai, and Mohammed Tijjani are notable names in Basketball. This is to mention but a few of the several people who have emanated from Kaduna State and made impact in the world of Sports.

"To restore the state's former glory and encourage young people to take up Sports professionally, the Kaduna State Government has begun investing in sports infrastructure that would ensure an enabling environment for local talents to flourish and sports to thrive.

"As a result, we have renovated and remodeled many sporting facilities including the impressive Murtala Mohammed Square to international standard. And I can boldly tell you that it would be one of the largest sporting facilities in the country by the time it becomes fully operational.

"In line with our Sports Policy, efforts to remodel the Kaduna Township Stadium, Zaria and Kafanchan stadiums are underway. Already, we have neighbourhood sport centres with various game pitches that are common to each Local Government Areas. We also boast of a mini stadium in Kafanchan.

"Lest I forget, a major achievement of this administration is that we recently took over the management of Ahmadu Bello Stadium from the Federal Government.

"Another interesting thing to note is that the Kaduna State Government is planning to set up two Sports Academies in the northern and southern senatorial zones to hone the skills, and



build capacities that athletes need to maximise their performance, perform their tasks competently, and compete on the global stage.

"Hence, the dire need to create a proper structure that will see the growth and development of the sports industry in Kaduna State.

"That is why we organised this event to get the technical input of all key stakeholders - Sport Administrators, State Association Chairman, Owners of Professional Clubs, Government Agencies, Sports Policy, and Business Experts, Private and Institutional Investors, for the Policy



document. We hope to see all challenges adequately addressed and

insightful recommendations made to help us deliver on the goals and

objectives of a reformed and repositioned Sports Industry in Kaduna State," he said.

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## Kaduna Guber: Asake Visits Emir Of Zazzau, Promises To Unite, Develop State

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

As head of the March 11 governorship election, the Labour Party (LP) candidate for Kaduna State, Hon Jonathan Asake has paid courtesy visit to the emir of Zazzau and chairman of the state's traditional council, Amb. Ahmed Nuhu Bamalli in his palace.

Asake who presented his campaign manifesto to the emir, said that the Labour Party has the most beautiful and realizable plan to unite and develop the state at this critical moment of its trajectory.

He said the 5-point blueprint was carefully researched and put together to provide direction for the development of the state based on the social philosophy of the Labour Party.

"We have beautiful plans stated in 5 pillars. The first is security of lives and property. The second is sports, women and youth empowerment. The third is human capital development. The fourth is inclusive economic & infrastructural development. The fifth is institutional reforms," he said.

In a statement by his media aide, James Swam, the governorship candidate assured the emir and people of Zaria of his commitment to justice and fairness.

He reiterated that if voted into office, the LP would ensure "the common man is protected from the menace of insecurity, hunger and poverty that has been deliberately allowed through bad policies to ravage the people."

Asake expressed displeasure with the inability of the current government in the state to tackle insecurity, assuring that that would be the major focus once in office.

In his response, the emir bemoaned the spate of insecurity, especially kidnappings in Giwa Local Government Area. He said peace is paramount for development of the state and the country.

The Emir of Zazzau also called for mutual respect among different groups, saying the ultimate is that there should be sustainable peace at the end of the elections.

The LP governorship candidate

also visited the chairman, Northern Elders Forum, NEF, and Magajin Rafin Zazzau, Prof.

Ango Abdullahi as well as the Madakin Zazzau, Manir Jaafaru and the Dan Barhim Zazzau,

Ahmad Bashir Aminu and other eminent sons and stakeholders in the ancient city of Zaria.



Labour Party governorship candidate in Kaduna State, Hon Jonathan Asake presenting his 5-point manifestos to the Emir of Zazzau, His Royal Highness, Ahmad Nuhu Bamalli, during a courtesy visit to the palace in Zaria, recently.

## Ensure Free, Fair Elections, Hayab Tasks Nigerians

By; AMOSTAUNA, Kaduna

The Country Director, Global Peace Foundation Nigeria (GPFN), Rev. John Joseph Hayab, has enjoined Nigerians to join hands with intensive efforts to halt electoral violence in the 2023 elections in whatever form it appears.

He lamented that the record of cases of attacks on security and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) facilities in some parts of the country is a manifestation of election-related violence, saying that it appears to be on the path to overtaking the heights electoral violence has reached and needs to be stopped.

Speaking at the formal inauguration of Kaduna State Mediation Working Committee in Kaduna on Thursday, the

Country Director said, "Without being pessimistic, the record of cases of attacks on security and INEC facilities in some parts of the country, a manifestation of election-related violence, appears to be on the path to overtaking the heights electoral violence has reached and needs to be stopped. It is, therefore, rational that we join hands with intensive efforts to halt electoral violence in the 2023 elections in whatever form it appears."

He added that it needs to be emphasized that while the long-awaited 2023 general election is here, what is essential is for Nigerians to swing into action towards ensuring all forms of electoral violence are mitigated in Kaduna State and beyond.

Sadly, he opined that electoral violence, as records have shown, has increased in Nigeria with

twice as many elections-related fatalities in 2022 compared to 2019.

According to him, the onerous task ahead is to work to safeguard a violence-free election and mitigate triggers to electoral violence in Kaduna state given the sad history of massive losses that have been associated with election violence.

Hayab enjoined the members of the committee to see their inauguration as an opportunity to serve on the KSPMC is a call to duty which requires a high level of commitment and sacrifice from all of them as their gathering is no doubt an indication that they are ready for the task ahead.

He noted that electoral violence is an issue of grave concern to every well-meaning and peace-

loving Nigerian because as seen over the years, it is potent with colossal impact with a high propensity to take diverse forms, spread and escalate beyond politics.

He explained that it is known to deepen ethnic, religious and regional grievances thereby setting the stage for more conflict if not allayed, adding that it was why they must not relent in their efforts to stop violence associated with elections.

Hayab stated that Kaduna state has recorded a modest level of violence associated with elections in recent times, but has a high potential for mass mobilization, as reported by INEC.

He expressed delight that there is an increase in voter registration which is indicative

of growing interest in electoral participation, particularly by the young who are regrettably the chief weapons often engaged to commit electoral violence.

"The growing number of youth without jobs and the current hardship faced in the nation are other causes for concern as the election approaches," he lamented.

As key stakeholders, he said, that it is expected that their joint engagements will be a key tool to anticipate, prevent and mitigate electoral violence in the state.

He explained that their focus is on the security of the environment looking out for incidents and early warning indicators that could tell them where risks of electoral violence heighten within the state and how to tackle them.