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Beware Of Planned Provocation, Utterances To Truncate Inauguration Of Tinubu, Group Warns

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Tinubu/Southwest Media Veterans Support Group (TSMVSG) yesterday, raised alarm of alleged planned provocation and utterances to truncate the inauguration of Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and Nigeria democracy. TSMVSG raised the alarm in a statement made available to journalists in Ibadan by its

spokesperson, Femi Odere in reaction to a viral video clip of comments by Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, the Chairman, Council of Elders of Ohaneze Ndigbo.

The group declared that with such comments from Chief Iwuanyanwu, there is the need for Nigerians, especially the Yorubas to resist any provocation towards truncating Nigeria democracy and

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Lagos Govt To Demolish 340 Distressed Buildings

CBN Directive On Weekend Operations Reduces Long Queues At Banks

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Release Of Man Accused Of Raping Boy Raises Suspicion In Zaria Community

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158 Anti-Corruption CSOs, Activists To Buhari: EFCC Under Bawa Cesspool Of Internal Corruption

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Asia Bound Businessman, 15 Others In NDLEA Net Over Large Kilogrammes Of Assorted Illicit Drugs

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RAMADAN

DAY 5

CITY/TOWN	FAJR	SUNRISE	MAGRIB
Abuja	5.23	6.33	6.38
Aba	5.29	6.39	6.37
Abakaliki	5.24	6.34	6.35
Abeokuta	5.41	6.51	6.56
Afikpo North	5.26	6.36	6.36
Akure	5.33	6.43	6.48
Akwanga	5.22	6.32	6.38
Ankpa	5.25	6.35	6.38
Argungu	5.29	6.39	7.00
Asaba	5.29	6.39	6.39
Auchi	5.30	6.40	6.44
Awka	5.28	6.38	6.38
Azare	5.08	6.18	6.34
B/Kebbi/Gwandu/Jega/Yauri	5.32	6.42	6.59
Bali	5.09	6.22	6.25
Bama	4.55	5.05	6.20
Baruwa/Gashaka	5.08	6.18	6.23
Bauchi	5.12	6.22	6.31
Benin	5.35	6.45	6.44
Bida	5.28	6.38	6.47
B/Gwari	5.24	6.34	6.47
Birnin Kudu	5.11	6.21	6.35
Biu	5.02	6.12	6.22
Calabar	5.25	6.35	6.33
Damaturu	5.01	6.11	6.27
Bichi/Danbatta	5.14	6.24	6.39
Daura/Kazaure	5.13	6.23	6.44
Dukku	5.07	6.17	6.30
Dutse	5.11	6.21	6.36
Dutsinma	5.28	6.38	6.47
Enugu	5.31	6.41	6.36
Funtua/Malumfashi/Chafe	5.20	6.30	6.46
Gashua	5.03	6.13	6.31
Gembu	5.07	6.17	6.24
Gombe	5.08	6.18	6.27
Gumel	5.11	6.21	6.36
Gusau/Gummi/Anka	5.23	6.33	6.49
Hadejia	5.14	6.24	6.35
Ibadan	5.36	6.46	6.55
Ife	5.14	6.44	6.53
Ijebu Ode/Ikorodu	5.38	6.48	7.00
Ilesha	5.28	6.38	6.49
Ilorin	5.35	6.45	6.55
Jalingo	5.06	6.16	6.26
Jos	5.18	6.27	6.35
Kafanchan	5.21	6.31	6.38
Kano	5.17	6.27	6.41
Katsina	5.25	6.35	6.47
Keffi/Nasarawa	5.22	6.32	6.40
Kafin Maiyaki	5.18	6.28	6.41
Kontagora	5.30	6.40	6.50
Kaduna	5.22	6.32	6.41
Lafia	5.19	6.29	6.37
Lagos	5.44	6.54	6.5
Lere/Saminaka	5.18	6.28	6.36
Lokoja	5.29	6.39	6.44
Maiduguri	4.56	6.06	6.21
Makurdi	5.22	6.32	6.35
Minna	5.28	6.38	6.46
Misau	5.09	6.19	6.31
Monguno	4.55	6.05	6.20
Mubi	4.58	6.07	6.21
Nafada	5.05	6.15	6.28
Ngala	4.53	6.03	6.19
Nguru	5.08	6.18	6.3
Nsukka	5.20	6.30	6.39
Ogbomosho	5.08	6.18	6.29
Okene	5.26	6.36	6.45
Onitsha	5.27	6.37	6.40
Osogbo	5.36	6.46	6.53
P/Harcourt	5.28	6.38	6.38
Potiskum	5.05	6.15	6.31
Shagamu	5.39	6.49	6.55
Sokoto/Gwadabawa/Wurno	5.30	6.40	6.56
Suleja/Jere	5.26	6.36	6.40
Talata Marafa	5.28	6.38	6.53
Umuahia/Uyo	5.25	6.35	6.37
Warri	5.34	6.44	6.44
Wukari/Takum/Ibbi	5.19	6.29	6.28
Yauri	5.30	6.40	6.55
Yenagoa	5.33	6.43	6.41
Yola	5.02	6.12	6.22
Zaria	5.17	6.27	6.41
Zuru	5.14	6.24	6.28
Benin Cotonou	4.58	6.08	6.24
Cameroun Yaounde	5.14	6.24	6.19
Niger Niamey	5.07	6.17	6.12

SOURCE: Islamic Research and Timing Organisation, Kaduna

Guber Polls: Adamawa Groups Directorate Thanks PDP Supporters, Condemns REC's Attitude

**Optimistic court will declare Atiku winner of presidential polls*

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

As the Adamawa Governorship Election continues to generate negative comments from all works of life, especially the two leading parties, People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressive Congress (APC), the Presidential and Governorship Campaign Council (PGCC) PDP has condemned in strong terms the action and inaction of the Adamawa Residence Commissioner (REC), Barr. Hudu Yunusa Ari. In a statement, Political Adviser to Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri, Hon. Abdulraman Bobboi who is the Director, Support Groups, PGCC said Barr Ari's scandalous leaked audio conversation with the Collation Officer

of Fufore LGA on how to alter election results in favour of the APC Governorship candidate is totally condemnable. He described Ari's action as abysmal that should never be heard of or linked to an electoral officer. "While the peace-loving people of Adamawa are waiting for the Governorship re run election for the state in 69 Polling Units as declared by INEC, the PDP will win with great margin, the Directorate PGCC condemns in totality, the action of the Resident Electoral Commissioner in Adamawa, especially the leaked scandalous conversation between the REC and the Collation Officer in Fufore LGA. "The actions and inactions of the REC and his cohorts have heated up the polity, causing tension in the state that could have

sparked election violence, if not for the usual peaceful approach of the PDP," the statement said. While calling on all the PDP supporters to remain calm and steadfast as the party is vigilant, ensuring that no one steals its mandate, he urged their supporters in all the 69 Polling Units (PU) that the re run governorship election will be conducted as declared by INEC should turn out to vote for the PDP candidate, Rt Hon. Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri. Bobboi in the statement, expressed the directorate's profound gratitude to all the over 200 support groups in Adamawa, who gave their unflinching support to all the candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state during the 2023 general elections. "The directorate is not

unaware of the sacrifices made by the support groups which gave the PDP overwhelming victory at the polls. "The victory which the support groups also championed its course, will go a long way in consolidating on the gigantic developmental strides of Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri in the state with the backing of the PDP House of Assembly members, while the NASS members will work for the interest of the state at both the Red and Green Chambers. "The Directorate is optimistic that the PDP will be declared winner of the 2023 Presidential Election at the court, having there are substantive evidence that its candidate, the former Vice President of Nigeria, Alh. Atiku Abubakar win the race," the statement said.



Christ Evangelical And Life Intervention Ministry, Pastor Yohanna Buru doled out bags of grains to Muslim and Christian journalists in Kaduna.

Release Of Man Accused Of Raping Boy Raises Suspicion In Zaria Community

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria

Kwarbai Community in Zaria City, Kaduna State has been thrown into confusion, following the sighting of Shehu Umar, former Ciroman Baraya, who was being arraigned by a court in Kaduna and was expected to be in prison custody for allegedly raping a boy. Shehu Umar was arraigned before a Kaduna Chief Magistrate Court on January 3, 2023 for Cognisance contrary to

section 259 of Kaduna State Penal Code Law 2017. A family member of the victim, Hamza Zubairu who spoke to New Nigerian in Zaria yesterday, on behalf of the community, expressed serious concerns over the release of Shehu Umar without concluding trial. He said, while the families of the victim are anxiously waiting for the court appearance, they were shocked to see the accused at home. Hamza Zubairu said, when

they intensified investigation on the circumstances surrounding his release they discovered that two persons, Maryam Talatu Adama of No 1 Zambiya Crecent, Kwarbai and Umar Aminu of Kwarbai were the surety for his bail. " Unfortunately all the surety are fake as the said address is false". He alleged. It would be recalled that the incident happened on the 9th December, 2022 when the suspect being a neighbour, called a boy to enter his room at Unguwar

Kwarbai, Zaria City to pick money for him on top of a table, which the boy obeyed and he allegedly followed him and closed the door and threatened him with knife to kill him if he refused his demand. The suspect surprisingly was in Court on Wednesday March 15, 2023 and left as the case was adjourned to April 13, 2023. The family appealed to the Kaduna State government and relevant stakeholders to intervene on the matter to allow Justice to prevailed.

Zamfara Police Nabs 40 Suspects Over Alleged Looting, Vandalisation Of Govt, Individual Property, APC Office

By: RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

No fewer than 40 suspected hoodlums have been arrested in connection with the looting of government, individuals facilities and office of the All Progressive Congress (APC) by police operatives in Zamfara State, New Nigerian Newspapers has learnt. Dangerous weapons which include cutlasses, knives and clubs were also recovered from the suspects.

The police alleged that the suspects took advantage of the announcement of Governorship result on Tuesday 21st March 2023 and embarked on

Jubilation that later turned to violence, leading to the destruction of property. Spokesperson of the Command SP Mohammed Shehu in a statement on behalf of the Commissioner of Police disclosed that the houses of politicians were mostly affected during the looting spree.

He identified the suspects to include one Yahaya Abubakar, aged 50years old and 39 others.

The police image maker disclosed that some of the looted and vandalised property were recovered by police detectives.

Shehu listed them to include 36 bundles of wrappers, eight cushion chairs, three set of television, one 5000 litre

tank, one solar panel, six bags of POP cement, one Golf 3 vehicle, two speakers, one caterpillar radiator, two rugs carpet, one freezer, one bundle of armoured cable wire and three window burglary proofs.

They include one big gate, one office centre table, one centre table drawer, one air conditioner, seven Ron rods, four doors, one ceiling fans, four signboards banners of APC, pieces of office cotton, office chairs and bag of rice.

According to the police spokesperson, "The Commissioner of Police, CP Kolo Yusuf psc, who led Joint Police and other security agencies brought

the situation under control and thereafter arrested twenty six (26) suspects in connection with the incident. Area Commanders and DPOs also embarked on similar exercise in their respective area to avert escalation.

"The ongoing investigation by the Police detectives led to the arrest of another fourteen (14) suspects and recovery of looted and vandalised property as underlisted above.

"The Commissioner of Police while appealing for calm, reassures for diligent investigation with a view to arresting fleeing suspects and their collaborators for prosecution as well as recover the looted property".



The suspects and some recovered exhibits

Kogi APC: Ward Exco Denies Purported Letter Suspending Muri Ajaka

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The leadership of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) Ward 1, Ajaka in Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area of Kogi state has denied knowledge of the purported letter of suspension on the Deputy National Publicity Secretary, Yakubu Murtala Ajaka.

The APC leaders said said falsehood by the mischief makers becomes more glaring from the inclusion of the name and signature of the late Ward Welfare Secretary, Danjuma Sani, who died on 13th April, 2022.

In a disclaimer letter addressed to Hon. Yakubu Murtala Ajaka, dated Friday, 24 of March 2023, and signed by the APC chairman Ajaka ward 1, Omale Danladi and the ward secretary, Suleiman Abubakar, the party leaders queried the time and place where the ward executive members met to take decision to suspend the Hon. Yakubu Murtala Ajaka.

While regretting the inconveniences and pandemonium caused the governorship aspirant as a result of the purported suspension, the ward executives assured him of "unalloyed support for you before, during and after the elections and to further assure you that, with your unmatched records and by the grace of God, your victory in the forthcoming elections is assured."

The letter which is copied to the APC national chairman, North-central APC chairman and the Kogi state APC chairman reads: "We, the leadership of our great party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), Ward 1, Ajaka in Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area of Kogi state wish to and hereby deny the purported letter of your suspension alongside all the allegations contained therein in entirety, as they are completely frivolous, false and a calculated attempt by political enemies to tarnish the image of the generality of Ward 1 Party Excros and to distract and frustrate your selfless political ambition.

"The falsehood and mischief of the mischief makers becomes more glaring from the inclusion of the name and signature of our deceased Exco member by the name Danjuma Sani Ejika (Welfare Secretary) who died on 13th April, 2022 on a purported document containing the names and signatures of Ajaka Ward 1 Exco members present at the purported meeting whereat the decision to suspend you was reached.

"What is more, the place, date and time when we, the Ajaka Ward 1 leadership of our great party reached the purported decision to suspend you is not stated on the letter.

"While we regret all the inconveniences and pandemonium occasioned by this mischievous act of the political enemies, may we use this medium to reiterate our unalloyed support for you before, during and after the elections and to further assure you that, with your unmatched records and by the grace of God, your victory in the forthcoming elections is assured."

Suspension: SGF Is APC's Big Shot That Racketeers Are Trying To Smear - Chidama

By: TOM GARBA, Yola

Pharmacist Jessey Chidama has described the purported suspension of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Barr Boss Mustapha as the hand work of bad elements in the party using political miscreants to damage his image.

According to him, Mustapha is a big shot that party miscreants will be used to bring him down, because of primordial sentiments and pauper incentives.

Chidama who is a loyal party man and pay his due of serving the APC well lamented how the party is watching with less interest how suspension has become the order of the day in the party.

He recalled how the party's governorship candidate, Senator Aishatu Ahmed Dahiru Binani was said to have been suspended by her ward and local government excos for no just cause.

According to him, also, the Senator representing Adamawa Northern Zone, Mr Ishaku Abbo was suspended by the ward exco. Also from the blues, the North East National Vice Chairman of the

party, Comrade Mustapha Salihu was manhandled by his Yola Ward officials. Chidama who is the traditional title holder of the Farin Ganin Daura and Garkuwan Talakawa, said that nobody in the party has been a source of support more than Mustapha, challenged all APC card carrying members to prove him otherwise.

The Hon APC stakeholder further called on state and national officials to sanitize the party by purging out bad elements by suspending them to serve as deterrent to others.

According to him, most of the party's ward exco are stooges being used to disrespect party senior men by hopeless politicians who are mostly from the APC opposition faction.

"I have never seen a party loyal man than Mustapha. He is a die-hard man to the core. I know what he has been doing to support the party. As his loyal man, he is the ideal kind of leader we want in this country.

"I'm calling on those influencing ward exco to desist, because Mustapha is a man of destiny chosen by God to fulfill purpose," Chidama said.



Ex Pension Boss, Maina Lives Like A King in Kuje Prison, Group Alleges



Maina

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Federal Government has been called upon to take immediate action to reprimand the Nigerian Correctional Center for allowing the former Chairman of the defunct Pension Reform Task Team (PRTT), Alhaji Abdulrasheed Maina, serving his sentence in Kuje prison, to live like a king with the help of the prison staff.

A non-governmental organization (NGO) called Youth Network Against Corruption made this call, asking the Federal Government to keep a close eye on Maina, who has spent more than two years in Kuje Prison in Abuja. According to the NGO, Maina is allowed to do whatever he wants in the correctional center.

The General Secretary of the association, Mr Silas Iliya, disclosed this to the press in Abuja.

He alleged that, because Abdulrasheed Maina gives the prison staff financial inducements, they let him use up to three phones. He makes calls whenever he wants.

Mr Silas said Maina is using his newfound privileged status from prison to continue harming Nigeria by continuing to control illegal money in his possession.

Therefore, the secretary of the group called on the authorities concerned, especially the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Nigeria Police Force to pay close attention to the way the Kuje Prison authority gave Maina the opportunity to do whatever he wants while serving his sentence.

Silas said that apart from the large room where Maina

is staying, which is luxurious and fitted with the latest air conditioning gadgets, the prison administration has given him the liberty of visitation whenever he wants.

"Our finding has confirmed that even women visit him whenever they want. That is wrong, because he is a criminal and is taken to the detention center as a punishment so as to change his behaviour, not that he should be made a king, and be given preferential treatment over other detainees," he said.

"Since Maina was taken to prison, he has never known what a cell room is like. He first stayed in the prison hospital. Then later he was moved to a room in the hospital which has modern luxury.

"This man is living like a king in prison. Even though there are important people in the prison like the former member of Parliament Faruk Lawal and Mr Abba Kyari, they are living in a cell, while Maina is treated as a privileged person with absolute rights," said Silas.

He also called on the prison authority to immediately return Maina to a cell like any prison inmate, and also take over the phones he uses as the correctional service guidelines demand.

Abdulrasheed Maina, who now lives in Kuje correctional center, was convicted after the Federal High Court found him guilty of laundering pension funds.

Justice Okon Abang found Maina guilty on all the 12-count money laundering charges the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), preferred against him and his company, Common Input Property and Investment Limited, and sentenced him to eight-year jail term.

Beware Of Planned Provocation, Utterances To Truncate Inauguration Of Tinubu, Group Warns

the coming inauguration of the President elect, Asiawaju Bola Tinubu.

Specifically, the group stressed, "we should therefore, brace ourselves for more of these vituperation as the inauguration of President-elect Asiawaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu draws closer."

It pointed out that the overarching game plan of those behind the provocative utterances, "is to create a crisis atmosphere so that our democracy can be truncated", saying, "but we aware that what happened at the Soludo event was another one of those predetermined, calculated attempts to draw the ire of the Yoruba people in order to create an

unstable sociopolitical atmosphere in the polity to achieve their pathological fixation for an Interim government. We're too discerning to fall for that bait.

"Our attention has been drawn to the comments made by Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, the Chairman, Council of Elders of Ohaneze Ndigbo in a video clip that has gone viral. Chief Iwuanyanwu made these comments on Saturday, March 25th at a ceremony in Anambra State where he was a special guest of Governor Chukwuma Soludo's one-year commemoration in office", it said.

TSMVSG added, "we urge our people to resist

any attempt to be provoked because their overarching game plan is to create a crisis atmosphere so that our democracy can be truncated".

"Let us continue to take the insults and abuses from the likes of Chief Iwuanyanwu while Asiawaju Tinubu and his team concentrate on an inauguration that will usher in a new dawn of unprecedented accomplishments across the country as he did in Lagos".

In the video, Chief Iwuanyanwu reportedly said, "I want our people in Lagos to know that on Wednesday, I called a meeting of the Ohaneze Council of Elders

worldwide and we x-rayed the events in Lagos... We have resolved that never, never again can we allow anybody to take the life of an innocent Igbo person. All of us are going to fight the person. Never again. We are going to fight the person."

"We are in Nigeria. And we have invested in Nigeria. Our investments are so much. We are not going to take the pressure of people telling us to go. We are not going anywhere. And I want to tell those in Lagos to realize that there's no war between us and Yorubas. Yorubas are just political rascals. And we're going to handle them."



L-R: Katsina State Deputy Governor-elect, Hon. Farouk Jobe; Governor elect, Dr Dikko Umaru Radda; Director General Campaign Organisation, Ahmed Dangiwa and aide to the Governor elect, Nura Tela, during Interactive Forum with the Media at his house in Abuja on Saturday. Photo: BASHIR BELLO DOLLARS

Ex- Chief of General Staff Diya Dies At 78

By: RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

The death has occurred in Lagos of the former Chief of General Staff, Lt. General Oladipo Diya (rtd).

Family sources said he died at the early hours of March 26, 2023, barely a week to his 79th birthday.

Diya, who was former Chief of General Staff under the late Head of State, General Sani Abacha, was said to have died after a brief illness.

The former Vice President's was pronounced dead by medical experts on Sunday after a thorough check on him.

This development was confirmed

through a statement released on social media by his son, Oyesinmilola Diya.

It read, "On behalf of the entire Diya family home and abroad; We announce the passing on to Glory of our dear Husband, Father, Grandfather, brother, Lt- General Donaldson Oladipo Oyeyinka Diya (Rtd) GCON, LLB, BL, PSC, FSS, mni.

"Our dear Daddy passed onto glory in the early hours of 26th March 2023. Please keep us in your prayers as we mourn his demise in this period. Further announcements will be made public in due course."



Late General Oladipo Diya (rtd)

Safe School Programme Will End Attacks, Kidnapping Of Pupils, NSCDC Assures

By ; RAYMOND
TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

The Commandant General of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Dr Ahmed Abubakar Audi has reiterated that the National Safe School Response Programme will definitely bring an end to series of attacks on schools and kidnapping of school children in the country. He also assured that operatives of the corps will continue to provide the needed schools' security to enhance a safe teaching and learning environment.

Audi gave the assurance at a one-day stakeholders workshop organised by the Corps, with the theme, "Ensuring Schools Security For Sustainable National Development", at the Corps National Headquarters,

Abuja.

The CG hinted that participants were carefully selected from various MDAs who are co-stakeholders in the Safe Schools Initiative programme such as Ministries of Finance and Education, the Nigeria Police, Department of State Services (DSS), National Orientation Agency (NOA), the Nigeria Governors' Forum among others.

He stated that the workshop will provide a forum for stakeholders to thoroughly examine the draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document for the purpose of validation and full national implementation.

Represented by the Assistant Commandant General in charge of Operations, ACG Philip Ayuba, the CG described the Safe Schools Programme of the

Federal Government as laudable, reiterating that, it will bring an end to series of attacks on schools and kidnapping of school children in the country.

In a statement by the Director of Public Relations of the Corps made available to journalists, Audi said the workshop also seek to harvest inputs, welcome suggestions and process the various contributions of other stakeholders towards the commencement of Safe Schools Operations in Nigeria.

He pointed out that as the lead agency in the programme, the NSCDC in May 2021, conducted a vulnerability survey of all schools in the country and have published the statistics obtained of all vulnerable schools for necessary action.

The Corps helmsman

maintained that in continuation with its resolve to ensure security in schools, the NSCDC with assistance from the Federal Ministry of Finance, flagged off the National Safe School Response Coordination Centre on the 13th of February, 2023 to commence the national implementation of the programme.

He expressed optimism that at the end of workshop, participants will come up with a carefully and thoroughly examined SOP that will serve as a blueprint for the program's implementation.

The representative of the Minister of Finance and Coordinator of National Safe Schools Programme, Hajiya Halima Iliya, commended the NSCDC for prioritising schools security and also leading in

setting up of a Coordination Centre for the Safe Schools Programme at the NSCDC National Headquarters.

She pledged on behalf of the Minister to facilitate the funding of the programme before end of the present administration, as efforts are underway to ensure releases of necessary funds before the government of the day winds off.

In the same vein, the Chairman of the SOP drafting committee, Prof Tyoor Terhemba, expressed confidence in the composition of the participants for the workshop and encouraged them to make the best use of the technical session for useful contributions to the draft policy document.

Tyoor said the document will be produced, published and made available to key actors who would be trained to carry out major response activities.



Tinubu Will End Insecurity In North Central - Christian Group

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

A group under the auspices of the North Central Christian Coalition (NCCC), has said that electing Bola Ahmed Tinubu President, is more about security suffered mostly in the Middle Belt and corporate existence of Nigeria.

The coalition explained that security is the foundation of socio-economic development and growth, including sustainable development—undisturbed or undisrupted.

Sir Festus Nyiwo, National Coordinator of the coalition in a statement, said, "If security is well taken care of, the private sector, including farming, would hardly need government interference to develop and grow; it could naturally assume a life of its own, attracting the much needed foreign investments."

The statement congratulated the President-elect, Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his hard-fought and earned victory in the polls, saying that from the onset, they beamed

their searchlight on all the presidential candidates and arrived at the choice of Senator Asiwaju Bola Tinubu Ahmed as best suited to deal with the complex issues bedeviling our country.

"We did not just lay our heads on the easy pillow of convenience as a basis for an outright rejection of the Muslim-Muslim ticket, but consciously lifted the veil to see what lay underneath it," the statement explained.

The coalition expressed belief that following Bola Ahmed Tinubu's, demonstrated antecedents in areas of governance, security, and international peace-keeping efforts and sacrifices, it added that Tinubu defended democracy during the dark days of the Abacha's military dictatorship in the 90s.

The statement said that he substantially bankrolled NADECO, a pro-democracy movement that was at the forefront of democratization struggles in the 90s, and

insisted on the actualization of MKO's June 12 mandate rather than serve in Abacha's regime. Significantly, too, Tinubu, the fact that he berated renowned historian, Prof Banji Akintoye, over a threat by his group to pull the South West geopolitical zone out of Nigeria, assured that he is not a separatist in any shape or form, believing in the corporate existence of the country.

He stated that Tinubu defended democracy during the dark days of the Abacha's military dictatorship in the 90s and substantially bankrolled NADECO, a pro-democracy movement that was at the forefront of democratization struggles in the 90s, and insisted on the actualization of MKO's June 12 mandate rather than serve in Abacha's regime.

As a pan-Africanist, the statement explained that, Tinubu helped restore democracy in The Gambia, resolved the building political crisis, and the safe return of President Adama Barrow to The Gambia

to assume his mandate, by lending his plane to fly Yahaya Jammeh and his family to exile at the behest of ECOWAS leaders.

The statement said that they mobilised massive support for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, in the February 25 Nigeria presidential election in the North-Central region based on the assured belief that the Christian community in Nigeria, particularly, in the North Central region, will be well accommodated as per his Manifesto and their campaign promises to the electorate.

The coalition also believed in Bola Ahmed Tinubu's demonstrable antecedence in governance over the years and his unique attributes to identify and place talents in offices for optimal productivity, saying that the group believed that the offices of the Chief of Staff, the Secretary to the Federal Government, the Senate presidency, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and other notable ministries and parastatals or agencies will be a good place to start.

MOWCA Solicits Support Of Korean Govt To Establish Regional Shipping Line

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

The Secretary General of Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA), Dr. Paul Adalikwu has sought the support of the Korean government towards establishing a regional shipping line to serve the interest of West and Central African countries. Adalikwu who made this request in Abidjan during a visit to the Korean Embassy Côte d'Ivoire, also highlighted the long standing working relationship between MOWCA and the Korean government through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The MOWCA SG told Lee Jinmoon, First Secretary and Consul, Republic of South Korea Embassy in Abidjan that a regional shipping line will be of collective benefits to the

25 member countries and partner institutions like KOICA.

He said such initiative can serve expansion of maritime business opportunities and creation of employment for the thousands of skilled youths who have undergone training within and outside the continent. He highlighted the importance of South Korea as a maritime powerhouse that emphasizes sharing its experience with developing countries and international organisations like MOWCA.

In addition to the shipping line, Adalikwu said MOWCA is looking at developing capacity in areas of dry docking- ship repairs and maintenance and local manufacturing of ancillary equipment and working gears like life jackets.

Adalikwu disclosed that under his watch measures

have been taken to engage with international partners and Agencies to develop cooperation, particularly with International Maritime Organisation (IMO), African Development Bank (AfDB) and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

He reiterated MOWCA's drive to promote cost-effective maritime transport services, maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea ensuring the training of maritime personnel, sustainable funding of the shipping industry and facilitating transit of cargoes to landlocked member countries.

He reiterated that MOWCA is committed to actualise the completion of its ongoing projects such as the Coast Guard Function Network, improving the Centre for Information and Communication, and the

Regional Maritime Development Bank

While seeking support of the Korean government, the SG recalled that between 2005 and 2008, MOWCA received support from KOICA in the form of training of experts, donation of vehicles, computers/servers as contained in the report of its 13th Session of the General Assembly held in Dakar from 29th to 30th July 2008

Lee Jinmoon thanked Adalikwu for the visit and reassured of his country's cooperation with development organisations and maintaining robust diplomatic ties with other countries.

He promised reporting Adalikwu's visit and requests to the Korean Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire who was out of Abidjan on a mission at the time of MOWCA delegation visit.

Kaduna Pastor Shares Bags Of Grains To Journalists

By; USMAN NASIDI, Kaduna

Few days after the massive distribution of foodstuff to over 1,000 less privileged Muslims in Kaduna State North Western Nigeria, the general overseer of Christ Evangelical And Life Intervention Ministry, Pastor Yohanna Buru has again doled out bags of grains to Muslim and Christian journalists in the state. During the distribution of the foodstuff to some journalists held on Friday at Nagwamatse House Kaduna, Pastor Buru explained that both Muslims and Christians are fasting at this season and hence the need to strengthen them with foodstuff in promoting peace building through stories related to peace journalism in the country.

He said, "it's really a thing for joy that both the Ramadan and Lenten season has joined Muslims and Christians to use the holy months in praying and fasting for peace and unity in the country."

According to him, journalists are like other humans on earth, they need support, care, love and that is why they brought them the grains to encourage them to have food throughout the month.

He added that, Christians are also doing their lent at this season, which is going to last for 40 days, while Muslims are doing their Ramadan fasting that would last for 30 days.

"Fasting and praying has joined us to be more committed towards using the season, seeking for God's forgiveness and guidance.

"Ramadan is a time for spiritual reflection, self-improvement, and compassion towards others and we pray that this month may be a time of peace and joy within your community. "As we enter this holy month, we recognise this is also a time to reflect on our collective responsibility towards creating a better world for all.

"This year, we encourage you to practice patience, kindness, and generosity towards those around us and focus on celebrating peace, people, and the planet.

"Let us strive to make positive impact in our communities and stand in solidarity with our global communities of faith and harmony irrespective of our tribe, culture, religion, race or region for peace and stability in the country.

"Together, we can make a difference and provide hope for a brighter future of Nigeria. We must remember that we are one family under God. We all worship one God. We both have holy scriptures Bible and the Quran, We all believe in paradise and hell," he stressed.

While responding, on behalf of the journalists that received the gift Mohammed Sabiu and Andrew Mshelia expressed satisfaction and called on wealthy individuals to always help the needy during seasons like this.

"This year Ramadan comes amidst high cost of living, due to scarcity of Naira notes across the country.

"We appeal to the government to create opportunity for massive employment to reduce idleness and laziness among youth across the country," they said.



Dr. Adalikwu (right) presenting a document to the Korean Ambassador in Abidjan.

2023 IWD Symposium: Create More Supportive Environment For Women - Thani

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Creative Director of 50 Shades of Beebah, Habeebatullah Thani has advocated creation of a safe space for women in society.

Thani made the call at this year's edition of the 50 Shades of Beebah Women's Circle, an event in commemoration of International Women's Day 2023 themed "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality,"

According to Thani, this became

imperative in view of the fact that in the recent time, women are making things happen in governance and other sectors.

"I am so glad that women are making things happen today. It is inspiring to see women become trailblazers in governance, agriculture, social engagement, and even more", she said.

Thani added, "Over the years, we have experienced the tremendous contribution of women to our social and economic development as a

nation. In light of this, we must continue to create supportive environments for women, as we are excited to witness more innovations from them."

She stressed, that the role of women in driving significant conversations and influencing change across the board in society and that it is headed in the right direction as it covers how technological advancement can further boost the visibility of women.

Ex APC Zonal Chairman Congratulates Kaduna State Governor Elect, Uba Sani

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria

The All Progressives Congress (APC) former Chairman Zone 1, Alh. Abubakar Rilwan has described the election of Senator Uba Sani as Kaduna State Governor elect, as a mark of the beginning of new epoch in the history of state.

He stated this in Zaria on Saturday, saying he represents 'renewed hope' for the prosperity of a richly endowed Kaduna State, yearning for an astute administrator, who has shown great aptitude in harnessing the capacity of capable lieutenants to turn around the fortunes of the state.

According to him, the governor elect demonstrated his aptitude while in the Senate and he is confident that he will replicate similar feats in giving meritorious service

to the people of Kaduna State.

The former zonal chairman joined other citizens of Kaduna State in congratulating the governor elect and his deputy, wishing him Allah's guidance, good health and every success in renewing Kaduna State's hope and unity.

Alhaji Abubakar Rilwan also congratulated Hon. Abbas Tajuddeen the (Iyan Zazzau) for his well deserved re-election as truly Member National Assembly representing Zaria Federal Constituency for the 4th consecutive term.

Rilwan said his re-election is a testimony of his good representative of his constituency.

He also congratulated all the elected APC members in Zone 1 and Kaduna State in general.

APC-IG Congratulates Governors Elect, Members Of State Assemblies

By; JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano

The National President of the APC Initiative for Good Governance (APC-IG), Ambassador Musa Mohammed Tsoken has congratulated all the All Progressives Congress (APC) governors elect and the members of the state assemblies on their victory during March 18 elections.

Speaking with newsmen on Thursday, Ambassador Tsoken described the recent election as one of the best and well planned polls that brought APC to power at both national, states and parliamentary arms for the development of Nigeria in a democratic dispensation.

Musa Mohammed Tsoken added that APC-IG, as one of the most formidable support groups of the All Progressives Congress, has worked selflessly for the success of the party, where a president, majority of the governors as well as the national and states members of the legislative arms emerged from the party, which is a landmark achievement.

"On behalf of the national executive officers, states coordinators and the 774 local government leaders of APC Initiative for Good Governance, I congratulate our governors elect and members of the state assemblies that were victorious on the March 18 polls across the country, and I wish to reassure them that APC-IG would continue to work harder for their successful delivery in their respective domains". He concluded.



Musa Tsoken

Plateau APC Gubernatorial Candidate Set To Challenge PDP Victory At Tribunal

By; BUHARI B. BELLO, Jos

The All Progressives Congress (APC) gubernatorial candidate in Plateau State, Professor Nentawe Yilwatda, is set to challenge the result at the Election Petition Tribunal, saying he cannot allow the collective aspirations and interests of the people of Plateau State to be subverted.

The governorship candidate, in a statement, signed by the spokesman of his campaign for group, "Generation Next Campaign Council" Shittu Bamaayi, quoted Nentawe as saying that he would be the last person to allow the people of Plateau State to be short-changed, in any way by its enemies.

According to him, the conspiracy theory perpetrated against him by two former governors and one from outside the state, would certainly crash like

a pack of cards very soon, adding that he is ready to go the whole hog legally in protecting and promoting the collective will and interest of the state.

Nentawe stated that having gone into partnership and agreement with the people to chart a new course for the state, it is unacceptable to allow the so called result of the governorship election to stand.

He stated that it is heart warming that some facts are beginning to emerge on how the people's decision and choice was frustrated by organised riggers from within and outside the state.

Nentawe cited the case of total vote discrepancies recorded in Mangu and Jos-South local government areas, as well as the recovered BVAS machines which were hitherto declared missing in Jos North Local Government Area.

The APC governorship



Nentawe

candidate described the so-called result of the election as a temporary setback, saying it has not dampened him but further strengthened and

emboldened his mission and vision for the state.

Nentawe charged his teeming supporters to be steadfast, "as Our mandate will be reclaim soon."

Terrorists Kill Pastor, Abduct Wife In Kaduna

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

The minister in charge of ECWA Church, Buda Two, Kasuwa Magani in Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Rev. Musa Mairimi, was on Thursday shot dead by bandits.

Rev. John Joseph Hayab, the Kaduna State Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) who confirmed the incident on Saturday, explained that the attackers stormed the community on Thursday

and killed the clergy in his residence.

He lamented that the bandits also abducted the deceased wife.

According to him, over 100 people who were abducted are still in the terrorists' camp for over six months from local government areas of Kauru, Jaba, Kachia, Kagarko and Kajuru have regained their freedom.

According to him, "The insecurity especially killing and kidnapping of innocent souls is so disturbing that it is no longer news because

many are left to carry their crosses while many have been killed in the hands of the terrorists, many homes have been completely destroyed with valuables and nothing is being done to alleviate the sufferings of the common people affected."

He lamented that CAN is so disturbed with the rate kidnapping of innocent souls are ongoing at this hard time that people hardly put food on their table.

The disturbing situation, according to him is that the government was not

doing enough to ensure the killings in the state is curtail to enable rural dwellers go about their normal lives to provide to their families.

He believed that insecurity was a major problem that hinders many eligible voters to come out to exercise their franchise of electing candidates of their choice. He called on the security agencies to be more proactive in ensuring that the society is free from the activities of bandits that have brought untold hardship to the people.

NNPP Stalwart Optimistic Abba Would Lead Kano To Greatness



Yar Gadau

By; JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano

A New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) stalwart, Alhaji Sadi Musa Yar Gudau has said that the newly elected governor of Kano State would lead the state to greatness, especially when there is conducive atmosphere for governance. He stated this in a chat with newsmen in Kano, shortly after the official declaration of the Kano gubernatorial election, where he said that Abba Kabir Yusuf is a leader who handles everything with extra-care. Alhaji Sadi Musa Yar Gudau announced that

democracy in Nigeria is gaining more strength, because the electorate know how to elect competency, not a particular political party. He called on the good people of the state to support the incoming administration. Sadi Yar Gudau congratulated Abba Kabir Yusuf and his deputy, Comrade Aminu Abdulsalam as well as all those who won their elections under the platform of New Nigeria People's Party, and the party's national leader, Engineer Dr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, whose ideologies he said, remain for national progress.



All Progressive Democrats Movement Congratulates Kaduna Gov Elect

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria

The Kaduna State Coordinator, All Progressive Democrats Movement, Comrade Halimat F.O. Abubakar has congratulated Kaduna State Governor-elect, Senator Uba Sani and his deputy, Dr. Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe for winning the just concluded governorship election in the state. This was contained in a statement signed by the State Coordinator and made available to New Nigerian on Thursday. The coordinator said that, she was happy upon hearing the good news of the well-deserved victory of Sen. Uba Sani. She said that she was not surprised by his victory, considering his track records and antecedents as a sagacious politician, lawmaker and master of the art of governance and politics. Also, the movement congratulated Hon. Jamil Abubakar Albany and

Hon. Nasiru Idris for winning Basawa and Sabon Gari Constituency into the State Assembly respectively.

"I commend the good people of Kaduna State for entrusting Sen. Uba Sani to lead the state and I am very sure they won't regret it". She said.

The movement appreciated members of the All Progressive Democrats, the good people of Basawa Constituency and Kaduna people at large for their overwhelming support.

"The movement will share common patriotic and developmental vision on how to bring development, prosperity and unity in the states and the Country at large." She said.

Comrade Halimat attributed the political



Comrade Halimat Abubakar

ascendancy and victory of Sen. Uba Sani to his loyalty, patriotism and godliness.

She prayed that Almighty Allah guides and protects him, while hoping that the

governor-elect will build on the legacies of his boss and leader, Governor Nasir el-Rufa'i to move Kaduna State to greater and enviable heights.

Kogi Guber Aspirant, Ohiare Reveals Plan For Logistic Hub, Others

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

An All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship aspirant from Kogi State, Sanusi Ohiare has promised to make the state the logistic hub of the country when elected as the governor of the state. The frontline governorship aspirant made the promise on Saturday in Abuja, after he was screened successfully

by the APC screening committee ahead of the party's primary slated for next month.

Speaking with newsmen shortly after the exercise, Ohiare who was until February 17 an Executive Director of the Rural Electrification Agency (REA), said if elected, his administration will leverage the geographic location of the state to turn its fortunes around. According to the

governorship hopeful, "Kogi has certain advantages, for instance, the River Niger and River Benue used to be an old trade route. We have plans to work with the federal government and private sector to build an inland port. This inland port comes with a lot of other benefits and investments. "We have a railway that runs between Itakpe and Warri, we will get it connected to Abuja,

effectively to Kaduna and Kano and build an airport. The idea is to make Kogi the logistics hub of the country.

"Kogi can serve the northern part of the country in terms of business and trade. So, if we can do this, we have the Ajaokuta- Kaduna-Kano rail line that is being built and hopefully in the next year or so it will be ready.

"We want to tap into that to build industries along this route. This will help to generate jobs, it will help to increase our revenue."

To his plan, Ohiare said efforts would be made to boost the state's internally generated revenue.

He, however, said his intention was not to increase taxes but widen it "so we can get more people to pay taxes and of course use this money judiciously so that people can what we are using the money to do in terms of infrastructure and their welfare."



Pray Fervently For Nigeria, Yahaya Bello Charges Muslims

By; ADAMA JOHN,
Lokoja

The Governor of Kogi State, Yahaya Bello has congratulated the Muslim Ummah on the sighting of the moon which signifies the commencement of this year's Ramadan fast.

The governor urged the Muslim ulama to dedicate the season to pray fervently for the state and country in general.

In a statement issued in Lokoja by his Chief Press Secretary, Onogwu Muhammed, Governor Bello charged Muslims to align themselves with the universal values of peace, kindness, love and respect for others which the Islamic faith promotes.

He noted that the Ramadan period which is globally revered should be utilised by Muslim faithful across the nation to pray for progress and peace while admonishing them to engage in good deeds and acts of Ibadah.

"I wish to congratulate the Muslim Ummah for



Gov Bello

witnessing another month of Ramadan and to wish them a blessed and peaceful Ramadan.

"The holy month of Ramadan, for millions around the world, has always been an opportunity to renew and strengthen their faith through rigorous fasting, devout prayers, reading of the Quran, reflective meditation and carrying out charitable deeds.

"All these acts closely

conform to the universal values that the Islamic faith promotes namely, peace, kindness, love and respect for others", the Governor said.

Bello called on Muslims to devote more time to prayer and acts of charity as they similarly strived to improve their self-discipline motivated by hadith.

He further admonished that this year's Ramadan which coincides with the

transition of democratic leadership of the nation and many states should be used to pray for peace, unity and progress of the nation.

He added that Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, self-improvement, and heightened devotion and worship, as followers of Islam were expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W).

Use Ramadan To Pray For Oyo State, Nigeria, Makinde Tasks Muslim Faithful

By; BAYO AKAMO,
Ibadan

Governor Seyi Makinde on Thursday, called on Muslim faithful to use

the opportunity of this year's holy month to pray relentlessly for Oyo State and Nigeria and the leadership at all levels.

Saluting Muslims in Oyo

State and across Nigeria on the commencement of this year's holy month of Ramadan, the governor urged them to imbibe the teachings contained in the

Holy Quran regarding the blessed month, including showing kindness and generosity.

Governor Makinde maintained that the month of Ramadan is a period of spiritual uplift and complete devotion to Allah, adding that Muslims should take full advantage of the holy month to strengthen their commitment to Allah and their service to humanity.

"I congratulate

Muslim faithful in Oyo State and around the globe for witnessing yet another blessed month of Ramadan. We thank Allah (SWT), who has made this possible.

"Ramadan is a period of complete devotion to Allah (SWT) and I urge my Muslim brothers and sisters to take full advantage of the period to strengthen their commitment to Allah (SWT) and their service to humanity", he said.

The governor added, "they must endeavour to increase in the acts of kindness and generosity by showing love and extending hands of support to the poor and the needy, as it was the practice of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

"I pray to Allah to accept all your acts of worship in this blessed month and reward us all abundantly. "Ramadan Kareem."



Gov Makinde

Ignore Fake News, CJN Didn't Meet Tinubu in UK - Barrister Raji

**Says rumours malicious attempt to tarnish image of Supreme Court, CJN*

By; BAYO AKAMO,
Ibadan

A prominent legal practitioner, Barrister Ahmed Raji (SAN) has described as fake, news report by an online media that the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kayode Ariwoola was sighted at the United Kingdom in a wheelchair, purportedly in a meeting with the President-elect of Nigeria. Barrister Raji (SAN) in a statement on Friday, warned politicians in the country to stop painting the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kayode Ariwoola and the judiciary in bad light for their personal interests over the 2023 elections.

He emphasized that the online media report that the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kayode Ariwoola was sighted at the United Kingdom in a wheelchair, purportedly in a meeting with the President-elect of Nigeria, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, "is false and aimed at tarnishing the image of the apex court."

He emphasized that, "Justice Ariwoola went to London on Saturday for his routine medical check-up and returned to Nigeria on Thursday morning"

The legal luminary stressed that the said report was "another

malicious attempt by some individuals to tarnish the image of the Supreme Court and the CJN after they have made attempts at attaching his name to some political parties in order to preempt outcomes of the legal tussles before the apex court".

"It is in the news since Tuesday evening that Tinubu was traveling to Europe for medical reasons as well as for lesser hajj, further reports indicated that he is in France to meet with his medical doctor, why would somebody now link that to the CJN that has left Nigeria for UK since Saturday to observe his own medical session and just came back today (Thursday) as meeting? he said.

Barrister Raji added, "our politicians need to allow due process take control, election matters are in the law courts, that does not mean that the law Lords will not live their normal lives as human beings, Tinubu is in France and the CJN was at London, where is the contact?, he asked"

He tasked Nigerians not to be hoodwinked by politicians to paint the judiciary in bad color, so as to achieve their personal interests, as far as the 2023 election is concerned"



Justice Kayode Ariwoola

Lagos Govt To Demolish 340 Distressed Buildings

By; RAYMOND
TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

No fewer than 340 buildings identified to be distressed have been marked for demolition in Lagos if their owners refuse to take necessary actions on the structures. The move is part of measures to sustain drastic reduction in cases of collapsed buildings by the Lagos State Government. The buildings in different sizes were discovered, during a check by officials of the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA), to have obvious signs of distressed and poses threat to both occupants as well as their neighbours in the community where they were erected.

To avert any disaster that could occur if the buildings were allowed to remain standing especially during mid-rainy season, the state government has given owners and developers of the identified structures 90 days to comply with the notices handed to them during inspection of the buildings.

Stating what could happen after expiration of the window, the General Manager, LASBCA, Gbolahan Oki, on Saturday, hinted that the state government would have no option than to remove these buildings in interest of public safety and in line with the regulatory provisions of the Law.

Oki stated that the identified distressed

structures were discovered through a thorough monitoring exercise aimed at preventing collapse and its attendant effects such as loss of lives and properties.

He added that these Identified structures have signs which indicates that they might not be fit for human habitation, some of those signs includes cracks, spalling, bulging, exposed reinforcement, sinking and tilting, hence the need to conduct Non-Destructive Test (NDT) to ascertain their structural stability.

The LASBCA boss noted that though statutory notices were duly served on the owners/ developers to carry out the much need Non Destructive Tests, but rather than comply the directives, building owners rejected it's officials appeal and continued their lifestyle.

Oki said that the publication is therefore a final notice given to the affected building owners to conduct the NDT and carry out the recommendations of the Test which may include re-engineering/renovation or removal as the case may be.

He maintained that in the case of removal, a Demolition Permit should be obtained from the Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority before removal while Renovation Permit should be obtained from the same Agency (LASPPPA) in the case of re-engineering or renovation.

Oki disclosed that should the owner allow LASBCA to remove it, he would have to pay for the services rendered by the agency officials

Asia Bound Businessman, 15 Others In NDLEA Net Over Large Kilogrammes Of Assorted Illicit Drugs

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

No fewer than six suspected drug traffickers have been arrested within the month of March by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in connection with large kilogrammes of illicit drugs amongst them a businessman, Molokwu Nwachukwu.

Nwachukwu, who frequents China, Dubai, Pakistan, and Vietnam was said to have been arrested with 36 parcels of cocaine at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Lagos.

He was said to have concealed the parcels of cocaine in different parts of his check-in bags, hand luggage and two pairs of slippers, while heading to Southeast Asia.

It was gathered that the suspect was nabbed at the screening point of the MMIA Terminal 2 while attempting to board his flight to Vietnam on Wednesday March 22, 2023.

The whitish powdery substance that tested positive to cocaine with a gross weight of 1.00 kilogram were recovered from the handles of his bags and soles of two pairs of slippers in his luggage.

The NDLEA spokesperson, Femi Babafemi, in a statement said the suspect claimed that he travels frequently to China, Dubai, Pakistan and Vietnam, from where he imports baby wears he distributes from his Onitsha, Anambra State base.

In the same vein, NDLEA operatives at the Lagos airport thwarted attempt by a suspect, Chimezie Innocent Nwafor to export 2.10 kilogrammes of methamphetamine to Brazil.

Follow up operations led to the arrest of three more suspects linked to the consignment at Oyingbo market, Yaba, Lagos. They include: Ifeanyi Onu; Simon Nwuzor and Omini ThankGod Peter.

The meth consignment was molded into 25 bars of local black soup called Dudu Osun and packaged in a carton for export Brazil.

Similar attempt to export a cocaine consignment consisting of 300grams of raw cocaine and 200grams of phenacetin, a chemical

agent used to adulterate and increase the volume of cocaine, concealed in packs of air freshener, going to Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, was also foiled by NDLEA operatives attached to the SAHCO export shed at the Lagos airport on Monday 20th March, 2023.

A suspect, Onyeze Obiora has already been arrested in connection with the seizure.

Another bid by an intending passenger to Reggio, Italy, Osasere MacDonald to export 500grams of tramadol 225mg concealed inside a carton of indomie noodles on

Tuesday 21st March was equally frustrated by vigilant officers who seized the drugs and arrested him.

On the same day, operatives of the Tincan Port command of the Agency also intercepted 107 kilograms of Cannabis Indica popularly known as Colorado hidden in a container bearing four used vehicles imported from Toronto, Canada.

Few days later, Friday, March 24, Apapa Command of the Nigeria Customs Service apprehend and handed over to NDLEA two suspects: Ademola Adekunle and Dayo Olatunji linked to the consignment.

The statement further read: "In Edo, operatives on Friday 24th March intercepted in Auchi, Etsako West LGA, a DAF trailer marked ZUR 378 XJ (Kebbi) with 69 bags of Cannabis Sativa weighing 700kg concealed under bags of fertiliser. While the bags of fertiliser were to be delivered in Funtua, Katsina state, the cannabis consignment was to be dropped in Kaduna.

"Both the driver of the truck, Babangida Mande and his assistant Mandir Abdullahi are already in custody. Another suspect, Ijarekhai Ogbewee was arrested on Thursday



Pic of the Asia Bound Businessman and the suspected drugs recovered from him

23rd March at Ishokha Quarters, Otuo, Owan East LGA, with 32kg of the same substance.

"A female drug dealer, Mrs. Kudirat Bello was nabbed in Igbesa area of Ogun state on Monday 20th March, with different quantities of methamphetamine, cannabis and rophynol along with N119, 600.00 monetary exhibit.

"In Delta, 96 compressed blocks of cannabis weighing 82kg concealed inside jumbo bags of cassava flour were recovered at Basket Market, Asaba, while a total of 164, 750 pills of opioids mainly tramadol were seized from two suspects: Henry Abuchi and Daniel Ugwoke, in parts of Taraba state.

"No fewer than 45 blocks of compressed cannabis weighing 23kg were recovered along Okene – Abuja highway from Abubakar Muhammad, in a Toyota Hiace bus coming from Lagos and going to Maiduguri on Tuesday 21st March in Kogi state.

"In Lagos, a total of 1,030.6 kilograms of cannabis were recovered from at least three suspects: Bolaji Adesina; Femi Ojo and Jamiu Useni during raid operations in Mushin area of the state".

CBN Directive On Weekend Operations Reduces Long Queues At Banks

By; JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano

Long queues have reduced in Kano city and some local government branches of the commercial banks as a result of the directive given to all commercial banks to operate during weekends by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Our correspondent who monitored the activities of

the banks in Kano city and some branches at the local government areas, reports that almost all the banks in the city opened on Saturday on compliance to the apex bank's order.

On Saturday, almost all the commercial banks in Kano city opened where the queues as spotted by New Nigerian reduced, especially when customers withdrew

money without obstacles, while the over the counter transactions were successful, which is a clear indication that the CBN directive to open banks at weekends made great impact to the provision of cash to people across the country. Our correspondent reports that yesterday, branches of First Bank and Unity Bank at Dambatta, Bauchi

and Kura local government areas opened for business.

Customers said that the CBN directive to operate at the weekend has eased the sufferings of the people needing cash for daily expenses, while some of them called on the Central Bank to make more cash available to banks to reduce suffering.

CORRECTION OF NAME

BARNABAS: I, Formerly known as BARNABAS BITRUS now wish to be known and called BITRUS BARNABAS. All former documents remain valid. UBA Plc., and the general public should please take note.

Productivity: Rivers State NIS Inaugurates Welfare Committee

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos.

Efforts of the Rivers State Command of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) at encouraging productivity among its officers has taken a new dimension as it has set up a welfare committee for the command. The five-man committee is saddled with the task of

designing a welfare initiative for operatives of the service.

A statement by the public relations officer of the command on behalf of the Comptroller James Sunday stated that welfare package will be sourced from the Corporate Social Responsibility of friendly organisations that relates with the service in the area of health care, affordable

lifestyle for staff in supplying food stuff and other consumables for the wellbeing of officers and men of the command at affordable rates.

The statement added that, "As a prudent way of engaging our officers and men, their health care and family is of essence, hence the need for this welfare committee.

"No officer is tasked, rather friendly companies assist in supplying consumables that are essential for the needs of the officers. We appreciate the leadership of the Comptroller General of Immigration Service Isa Jere Idris for taking officers welfare utmost in his leadership mandate".



Members of the committee

Alleged Anti-party Activities: Kogi APC Approves Suspension Of NWC Member, Murtala Yakubu

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The All Progressives Congress (APC), Kogi State chapter, has approved the suspension of a member of the National Working Committee of the party, Murtala Yakubu (Ajaka) by the executive members of Ajaka Ward 1 of the party.

Yakubu, who is the Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the party, had been suspended by the entire executive members of APC, Ajaka Ward 1, Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area of Kogi State, in a letter dated March 20, over alleged anti-party activities, insubordination, gross misconduct, unguided

statement, running parallel party structure and encouraging factionalism in the party.

Reacting to the action of the ward executives, the leadership of the party in the state, in a statement signed by the State Secretary, Hon. Joshua Emmanuel, affirmed Yakubu's suspension, saying that, consequently, he had been barred from participating in all party activities.

The statement, titled, "Approval and implication of the suspension of Hon. Murtala Yakubu (Ajaka) by the APC", reads in part, "The Kogi State Executive Committee (SEC) of the All Progressives Congress (APC) received a Notice

of Suspension of Hon. Murtala Yakubu (Ajaka) from the IGALAMELA/ODOLU Local Government Area Executive Committee which acted on the basis of his suspension by the Ajaka Ward 1 Ward Executive Committee.

"The Kogi State Executive Committee of the APC, having perused the facts as alleged and established both the veracity and the gravity of the anti-party activities made out against him, has approved the disciplinary action, ie. suspension, meted to him by the appropriate organs below.

"For the avoidance of any doubt, we reiterate that the Ajaka Ward 1 Executive Committee and the

Igalamela-Odolu Local Government Area Executive Committee of the party acted in accordance with Article 21 and other relevant provisions of the APC Constitution in the entire circumstances of this matter, and we uphold the same.

"In view of the foregoing, we hereby wish to notify the Zonal and National Executive Committees of our party as well as the general public that consequent upon his suspension, Hon. Murtala Yakubu (Ajaka) is now barred from participating in all party activities.

"The foregoing for your information, records and next actions."

Timi Frank Congratulates Osun Gov Adeleke, Lauds Appeal Court Justices



Timi Frank

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

A former Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Comrade Timi Frank, on Saturday, congratulated the Governor of Osun State, Senator Ademola Adeleke, over the reinstatement of his mandate by the Appeal Court.

Frank in a statement in Abuja, also lauded the Justices of the Appeal Court that courageously decided the case and upheld the victory of Senator Adeleke as the duly elected Governor of Osun state, despite attempt by the tribunal to fraudulently upturn the mandate.

He however called on Adeleke to be focused on his development strides by wiping the tears of the people and delivering the state from backwardness now that distraction of the court case has been put to rest by the judgement of the court.

He thanked the Appeal Court justices and by extension the Nigerian judiciary for mustering the courage to uphold the Truth and Justice, saying, "We want to see this in them in other election's petition cases."

Frank, who is the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), Ambassador to East Africa and Middle East, urged the Judiciary to know that in areas where they have done well, Nigerians and the world will hail them but when they do wrong, Nigerians will call them out.

He said: "We hope the Judiciary will bring this courage to bare in doing the needful in deciding the Presidential election petition cases now before them.

"The Judiciary must realise that the only hope Nigerians have today is in them. We hope they will

not dash that hope.

"We know there will be pressure on them by the powers that be to do the wrong thing, but they must be guided by the bigger picture which is to free the people from exploitation and slavery in taking their final decision.

"History will not forget the Justices that decided the Adeleke Versus Gbeyege Oyetola Appeal for sticking to the truth.

"Despite the oppression, they remained courageous. However, this is not the end of their task. A greater task beckons and that task is to redeem the damaged image and lost glory of the judiciary.

"We believe there still exist some incorruptible judges with good conscience. This is not the time for the judiciary to sell justice. It is time to give justice back to the people.

"Nigerians and the world look forward to the Judiciary to restore the presidential mandate which has once again been stolen from the people the same way they upheld Adeleke's victory and restored his mandate.

"It is an open secret that the Independent National Electoral Commission totally disregarded their own guidelines and did not follow the rule of law during the presidential and National Assembly elections.

"The Justices of the Appeal Court now have the opportunity to write their name in gold by restoring the lost confidence to the judiciary again.

"Majority of Nigerians have in recent time lost hope and confidence in the judiciary but with this judgement the hope and confidence of the people has been rekindled.

"We hope the Judiciary keeps and sustains this renewed confidence now rejuvenated through this courageous judgement."

Obi Laments Stealing Of PDP's Mandate, As Nasarawa Women Go Topless In Protest



By: SAMSON YAKI, Lafia

The presidential candidate of Labour Party in the just concluded presidential elections Mr Peter Obi has lamented the manner in which the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has deprived the wishes of the masses in the just concluded general elections in the country. Obi bared his mind on the topless protest staged by women in Nasarawa State, demanding

the restoration of their stolen mandate.

He described the crook electioneering process as gross political sabotage, saying that it is grievous injustice meted out to the common man.

"I just came across a sad, heartbreaking video where Nasarawa women staged a topless protest as a means of registering their displeasure with the election results.

"The purpose of election is for

citizens to participate in democratic governance through the representatives they elect. A grievous injustice occurs when citizens are denied the opportunity to vote in a free, fair and credible process or their mandate is stolen from them.

"Our women who should be honoured and respected, and their rights protected, have been degraded and left to seek justice the only way they can trust by calling on their creator.

"I remain committed to 40% affirmative action for women in political appointments and will encourage the same in the corporate world. As a nation, we must do better and ensure that the mandate of the people is not stolen from them", Obi said.

It would be recalled that the gubernatorial elections that announced the incumbent governor as the winner in Nasarawa was enmeshed in gross irregularities.

The election, which had results of eleven LGAs with the PDP candidate leading with a wide margin of over 24,000 votes, was put on hold for over 24 hours only to cook up votes from the remaining two LGAs to announce Gov. Sule as the winner.

During the process, the media and PDP agents were sent out of the collation centre to give them free hands of operation.



Nasarawa women protesting alleged rigging of gubernatorial polls.



158 Anti-Corruption CSOs, Activists To Buhari: EFCC Under Bawa Cesspool Of Internal Corruption

By; ADO ADEBOYE, Akure

Nigerians across various sectors have called on President Muhammadu Buhari to, in the few days left for his administration, strive to leave a legacy of a functional system where there is respect for the rule of law and all actors act only in full compliance with the Constitution, Acts of the National Assembly and all other laws of the country.

Delegates from 158 Anti-Corruption Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organisations, faith-based groups, youth and community-based organisations, who gathered in Abuja at a one-day national conference yesterday, said the anti-corruption efforts of the Buhari administration would eventually be assessed by the conduct of key officials, especially those saddled with the responsibility of taming corruption in Nigeria.

After exhaustive deliberations by the expanded gathering with keynote address by the Dean, Faculty of Arts, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Prof. Wasiu Ademola Oyedokun-Alli, and presentations from speakers, including the Chairman of the Centre for Anti-Corruption and Open Leadership, Debo

Adeniran, among others, the Conference adopted a communique, which specifically expressed concern that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, under the leadership of Mr. Abdulrasheed Bawa, had allegedly become a cesspool of internal corruption, among other diverse issues.

While congratulating Nigerians on the outcome of the various elections, the Organisations faulted the Independent National Electoral Commission for not keeping strictly to the promises made to Nigerians.

They, however, condemned what they described as the various attempts by some politicians and people of vested interests towards pushing the country dangerously to the edge of the slope, particularly the promotion of ethnic and religious divisions among Nigerians.

The communique said, in line with genuine concerns among informed Nigerians, "Conference restates that a convict, as Mr. Bawa is seen to be currently, according to the judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction, which has not been vacated, cannot continue to preside over an important law enforcement agency like the EFCC established to fight corruption."

Delegates from the 158 organisations also alleged that Bawa's actions as a public officer had been high-handed, prejudicial, contemptuous of Nigerian courts and oppressive to the human rights of persons under the EFCC investigation, while also condemning, in its entirety, his "deliberate disobedience of court orders." "Conference expressed gross dissatisfaction with the Naira redesign policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria which in the last three months has crippled economic activities and put Nigerians under unprecedented and untold hardship due to the scarcity of the local currency as well as the incessant failure of the online banking system," the communique stated, adding that there must be consequences for the needless hardship Nigerians were made to contend with in the face of a policy that was not well thought out.

On anti-corruption efforts, the communique said, "Corruption undermines growth, erodes trust in governments, fuels support for extremism and hinders the fight against poverty and inequality. Therefore, we as Nigerians, have a responsibility to prevent, detect and expose any form of corruption. In fighting corruption, we

cannot, but also be mindful of the dictates of our laws, as a country under a democracy.

"The war against corruption in the country, particularly under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, has its milestones, prospects and challenges, hence, the need for us to consciously review same, while also setting an agenda for the incoming administration in the country. The subject of corruption and the war against it is of crucial importance to us, as stakeholders, in the Nigerian project."

The organisations also demanded that states and other tiers of government must set up genuine machinery towards cooperating and consolidating the efforts of the Federal Government in tackling the various security challenges presently facing the country.

They admonished the incoming administration to work hard to ensure that Nigerians remain united in peace and justice to all.

The National Conference was convoked to discuss the State of the Nation, covering several fundamental issues, especially as they affect education, security, corruption challenges and other general interests.

Our Mandate Was Stolen With Violence, Killings, Desecration of Electoral Rules - Ebonyi PDP

By; MKPUMA ENYINNA, Abakaliki

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Ebonyi State has lamented that the mandate of the party was stolen by the ruling party, All Progressives Congress (APC), during the March 18 gubernatorial election in Ebonyi State.

According to the acting chairman of the party in Ebonyi State, Barr. Ifeanyi Nworie, while briefing newsmen in Abakaliki over the outcome of the election, he said that the election was marred by violence, killings, electoral manipulations, intimidation and desecration of electoral rules.

He noted that the outcome of the election is not acceptable by the party and they will do everything within the ambit of the law to reclaim the stolen mandate.

Barr. Nworie expressed dissatisfaction over the spurious manufacturing of electoral results which upturned the victory of Dr. Ifeanyi Chukwuma Odii, saying Dr. Odii was duly elected by majority of the votes cast.

"Gentlemen of the press, it is obvious that what happened on 18th was a melodramatic replay of what happened during the Presidential/National Assembly Election of 25th February, 2023. We wish to hereby state categorically and unequivocally that the APC perfected a pre-determined charade in collaboration with INEC announced concocted results, which were absolutely condemnable and unacceptable to us. INEC never acquitted itself creditably with patriotism and the high sense of responsibility expected of it."

"The people of Ebonyi State attest to the fact that there is a pall of gloom, disquiet and discontentment in the state since the release of the concocted results which the

Independent National Electoral Commission in Ebonyi State manufactured to deny the PDP candidate his hard-earned victory following his very impressive showing due to his mass followership by Ebonyi people and his state-wide acceptability. They have murdered the sleep of Ebonyians but the murderers will not sleep until they restore the people's mandate to the legitimate owner.

"Consequently, it has become expedient for us to express our disgust, indignation and dissatisfaction over the spurious manufacture of results that upturned the victory against our illustrious and promising candidate, Dr. Ifeanyi Chukwuma Odii. We unflinchingly state that our candidate was duly elected by a majority of the lawful votes cast in the election for the office of the Governor of Ebonyi State."

"Our opponents in APC resorted to electoral manipulations, violence, killings and the desecration of electoral rules. In Ezza North LGA, the Chairman of PDP in the Council Area was murdered by elements believed to be APC thugs on election day. The same thing happened in Onicha Igboeze, where a PDP agent was shot dead in similar circumstances," he said.

The chairman further stated that before the commencement of 2023 general elections, the ruling All Progressives Congress stripped them of campaign venues, unleashed multiple attacks carried out to disrupt and rig the election. He therefore, stated categorically that they are going to court to reclaim the mandate.

"We note that in the build up to the commencement of electioneering campaign in the country, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) stripped the opposition of level playing field by denying them campaign venues, generated and unleashed multiple modes of conflict

and sporadic attacks determinedly perpetrated to perfect disruptions, violence, vandalism, snatching of electoral materials, voter intimidation and suppression, manipulations of results and a plethora of fraudulent practices during the elections. The APC eminently applied the services of the Ebubeagu security operatives which transformed to Neighbourhood Watch to oppress members of the opposition political parties in the state and intimidate voters on the election day.

"The APC, which had ingloriously declared that it would take victory at the polls at all costs, largely and stridently executed their nefarious acts of threats, palpable dislocation of peace and security, and satiated the Ebonyi environment with a pall of fear. Notwithstanding, the All Progressives Congress' declaration of readiness to take victory at all costs, disruption of the process, violence, killings, ballot box snatching, the people came out owing to their love for our candidate and gave his votes that ought to and should expressly give him victory. Eventually, the APC lived up to their declarations by ingloriously manipulating the results in their favour."

"It is an established fact that electoral processes in other climes are endowed with acclaimed standards that accord them acceptability. It naturally flows from actual occurrences of freedom from disenfranchisement, fairness, and credible outcome devoid of doubts."

"In the light of the foregoing, the 2023 governorship election in Ebonyi State was marred by irregularities, glaring cases of violent intimidation of the opposition, unlawful management and dispositions of the umpire that rendered them unacceptable and void as it lacked substantial compliance with the Electoral Act 2022, the electoral guidelines and Constitution of the



Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended.

"The APC government had on several occasions threatened violence to Ebonyians, which they carried out during the conduct of the election."

"Civil society groups and foreign observers have pointed out the elections conducted in Ebonyi State were marred by irregularities and we're not in consonance with the provisions of the Electoral Act."

"A large number of our supporters were unlawfully arrested by security agencies. We call on Security Agencies to release them immediately and unconditionally."

"We call on security agencies to unconditionally release all our members and supporters in various detention facilities in the state."

"Arising from these monumental irregularities, we state that the declaration of any other candidate instead of Dr. Ifeanyi Chukwuma Odii is of no effect whatsoever. The results in our possession indicate otherwise."

"We make it clear that we are absolutely determined to prove that, based on the valid votes cast at the

Governorship election of 18th March 2023, the Dr Odii scored the highest number of votes cast at the election and not less than one-quarter of the votes cast at the election in each of at least two-thirds of all the local governments in the state. As such, he ought to be declared and returned as the winner of the Governorship election."

"We urge the people of Ebonyi State to remain calm and be assured that the mandate they have given to Dr. Odii but was stolen will certainly be recovered. Our legal team has been adequately briefed and nothing will deter us from retrieving the mandate," he said.

Reacting to the development and other similar occurrence alleged to have been carried out by APC, the state chairman of the party, Hon. Stanley Okoroemegha debunked the allegations, stating that the election was peaceful and transparent and wondered why some persons decided to paint the image of the party in a bad light, adding that fair treatment and level playing ground was given to all political parties during the election.

Group Tasks Nigerian Govt On Safe Water Systems To Avert Another Pandemic

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

To mark the world water day, a Non-Government Organisation (NGO), the Rural Community Development Outreach (RCDO), based in Nigeria with membership across the rural communities in the six geo-political regions of Nigeria, has called on the Federal Government of Nigeria to pay attention to the water crisis in Nigeria which presently threatens the lives over 78 million children and millions more in the rural communities of Nigeria. In a statement signed by the National Coordinator, Engr Ikenna Ellis-Ezenekwe and National Secretary, Okwudili Onyeke and made available to the press in Abuja, the group disclosed that over 78 million of Nigeria's children are in danger and find themselves at risk of water related diseases. This is according to estimates by the United Nations Children Fund under (UNICEF). According to the group, there exists an existential threat looming dangerously that may overpower the Nigerian

health care sector.

"Already Nigeria is one of the 10 countries that carry the heaviest burden of child deaths from diseases caused by inadequate attention to water supply, sanitation and hygiene such as diarrhea diseases. In Nigeria, one third of children do not have access to at least basic water at home, and two thirds do not have basic sanitation services.

"Not minding that Nigerian households, according to the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, spent over N4trillion on water sanitary, hygiene and services annually in 2019 and 2020. The majority of the rural communities in Nigeria find themselves without access to safe usable water. Many are left with no options than to use polluted and highly contaminated water streams for drinking water and other uses.

"As the world celebrates water day, it will be morally just for the federal government of Nigeria and the people in leadership positions to reexamine the trouble posed by continued unavailability of safe water in rural communities around the

country. It is the civil right of every Nigerian, both young and old, to have access to safe water that will not cause a pandemic", it said.

A study sponsored by UNICEF in 2021 disclosed that only 6% of the healthcare facilities in Nigeria have safe water facilities while only 11% of schools have safe water facilities. This is as the then Federal Minister of Water Resources, Engr. Suleiman Adamu indicated only 28 out of the 36 States of the federation have urban water utilities or State Water Agency.

Only 16 out of the 28 States have fully functioning urban utilities while 12 were partially functional. The Minister added that access to public water supply declined from 32% in 1990 to less than 7% in 2015.

In Lagos, less than 6million out of the over 20million population have access to public water, as the majority depend on private boreholes, wells and packaged table water. In Enugu, only 10,000 of the residents have access to potable water. In Abia, there is no access to potable water. In Kano, less than 40% of the

population have access to potable water. In Kebbi, less than 20% of the population have access to public water. UNICEF study puts the daily consumption of water by each Nigerian at 9liters per day.

The group noted that most state governments have adopted the concept of sinking water boreholes as a solution to the unavailability of safe water.

"But boreholes do not address the safety problem, Government should look beyond the sinking of water boreholes as solutions to safe drinking water. This government must conceive a plan. A real implementable plan for delivering safe drinking water to every home in Nigeria particularly the rural communities. It should be considered as important as building roads and hospitals".

"For the health and wellbeing of the Nation, it is pertinent for better attention to be paid to safe water systems. Nigeria cannot develop without a well thought out plan on safe water systems", it said.

Yahaya Bello Cautions Kogi Guber Aspirants Against Divisive Tendencies



Gov Yahaya Bello

By; ADAMA JOHN, Lokoja

All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship aspirants in the forthcoming primaries in Kogi State are to focus on their strength in wooing party members, rather than relying on support from power that be.

The advice is coming from the governor in a statement signed by the state Commissioner for Information and Communication, Mr. Kingsley Femi Fanwo made available on Saturday in Lokoja.

According to him, the advice has become necessary in view of the pendulous publications of insinuations on the suspension of a member of the Party's National Working Committee (NWC) from the state, Hon. Murtala Yakubu.

The statement added that the governor, as leader of the party in the state, warned against "bickerings" that could undermine the peace and unity that the APC had enjoyed in the state under his leadership.

He therefore, urged the aspirants to test their strengths in wooing party members to support and vote for them during the primaries coming up in April and to stop whipping

up sentiments.

"Our party will ensure a fair playing ground for the best candidate to emerge in the primary election and together we shall win the governorship election, with a wide margin, in November", he said.

The Nigerian Pilot recalls that the NWC member, Murtala Yakubu (Ajaka) was suspended by the Executive Council of the APC, Ajaka Ward 1, Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Yakubu who is also the Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the party, was suspended via a letter dated March 20.

His alleged offences as contained in the letter include anti-party activities, insubordination, gross misconduct, unguided statement, running parallel party structure and encouraging factionalism in the party.

The state Secretariat of the APC in a statement signed by the State Secretary, Joshua Emmanuel, upheld Yakubu's suspension and consequently, barred him from participating in all party activities in the state. The suspension has however generated a lot of controversies rocking the APC boat in the state especially with the party's governorship primary fast approaching.

Trauma Care Foundation, JDPC Train Kaduna Residents On Emergency Response

By; ISAAC ODEH, Kaduna

Trauma Care International Foundation in collaboration with Justice Development and Peace Caritas (JDPC) has trained over 100 Kaduna residents on emergency response to enhance safety in the society.

The Programme Manager, Trauma Care International Foundation, Onyeka Anorue during an interview with journalists shortly after the training, explained that it was organised to teach practical steps to preserve lives before seeking proper medical care.

"We are trying to raise a generation of people when emergency occur they know what to do and how to manage the situation pending the arrival of

medical emergency services. We brought this training to the people on how to attend to emergency like accident, asthma and others".

According to her, the foundation is trying to create a safer environment and safer world where people would know what to do when emergency occur.

She therefore, appealed to the participants to train others from the knowledge they have garnered, adding that they were trained to train others for a safer tomorrow, she said.

The Coordinator, JDPC, Rev. Fr. Joshua Achir noted that the training was aimed at saving lives in order to reduce death rate in the society.

"Sometimes when there is emergency situation,



people don't know what to do, now that they have been trained, we want them to step down the knowledge to others for a safer society".

Fr. Achir further said that the training addressed issues around emergency and disaster preparedness, prevention, mitigation,

recovery and relief, use and administration of First Aid treatment.

One of the beneficiary, Nanchin Nathaniel who described the training as eye-opener, said that the knowledge garnered will be very important in their everyday activities.

Tribute To Comrade Christiana Bawa: A Shining Star In Unionism

By: ADAMU YUSUF

Success is often achieved by those who don't know that failure is inevitable.

I must congratulate my mentor, friend, sister and a mother, former Secretary of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and National Association of Nigeria Nurses And Midwives (NANNM), Kaduna Council, Comrade Christiana John Bawa for her transfer to a greater office of NANNM, Headquarters Abuja.

Her transfer to Abuja created a wide vacuum that would be very difficult to fill at NLC Kaduna State Council but only few know this.

History

"This is the time to tell the world that Kaduna State government is anti-worker and it wants to destroy the civil service in the name of reform. Enough of the sacking of workers..." I recall her saying.

John-Bawa said all NLC affiliates in the state would join the strike. Among them are the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG); the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW); the National Union of Electricity

Employees of Nigeria (NUEE) among others.

Committed

Comrade Christiana is one of the most committed, experience, hardworking, fearless, courageous and dauntless woman i came across in 2019.

- Christiana John Bawa intermediates Comrades with her wealth of experience particularly on struggle, years of service, knowledge on trade act and industrial relationship during her time in Kaduna activated the moral of our Comrades who went to sleep.

Media Relationship

Christiana understand the importance of media in the struggle, she always encourage whatever activities is going on, media must be involved because nothing is achieved without the media.

Struggle

Christiana dedicated her entirely life to labour



Christina Bawa



Christina Bawa

struggle, she contributed her quota that gave advantages to Kaduna State Council of NLC became first in the whole country for labour activities in 2021 under Chairperson

Comrade Ayuba Magaji Suleiman.

Christiana As A Woman

She is a woman with a golden heart, she doesn't believe in African time, she touched many hearts during her stay in Niger and Kaduna states councils respectively.

During the NLC interactive session with governorship candidates, she asked a question to Labour Candidate on African time that took him time to answer.

Hates

Christiana hates only those that are lazy and cannot deliver, her goal is to move the Council to a greater height. She respect people's faith, she believes in commitment not religion, region or ethnicity

My first meeting with former Secretary of NLC, Kaduna State Council, Christiana John Bawa was during the inauguration of

Chairperson NLC, Kaduna State Council, Comrade Ayuba Magaji Suleiman as first Exco at NUT Conference and since then, we became family.

I will always remember her voice calling Tijjani and Talatu. (Tijjani is the Messenger of the council, while Talatu is the secretary in her office).

In life, we often hear that 'perseverance pays off'. It is no secret that each generation wishes to nurture and raise the next generation in a way that is greater than themselves. And to do this, elders often teach the values of hard work, focus, dedication and perseverance.

My dear Comrade, I wish you a successful stay in your new place of work!

Adamu Yusuf, immediate paste Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Kaduna Council Chairman, sent in this tribute.

Alleged Racism: When Seplat Board Failed The Nation

By Law Mefor

It is no longer news that the Federal God has revoked the visa, work, and residence permits of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Seplat Energy PLC, Mr. Roger Brown, following his indictment by the Ministry of Interior over alleged racist practices, favouring of expatriate workers, discrimination against Nigerians, and breach of corporate good governance.

In the revocation letter to the company dated March 3, 2023, the Federal Government said its decision was founded on a petition by aggrieved employees of the company. The Ministry equally underscored the fact that Mr. Brown snubbed investigative invitations and claimed to be unavailable even though one learned he was in Abuja for other purposes at the time.

“As a result of these, the Honourable Minister has determined that Mr. Brown's continued stay in Nigeria is contrary to the national interest. Consequently, the Ministry has withdrawn the Work Permit CERPAC, Visa, Residence Permit and all relevant documents that authorised Mr. Roger Thomson Brown's entry or stay in Nigeria”, the letter stated.

Strangely, no sooner had the letter become public than the Seplat Board of Directors went to press in a statement dated 9th March and signed by its Chairman, Mr. Basil Omiyi. Besides deprecating the reports, Seplat also claimed that the allegations “have not been brought to the attention of Mr. Roger Brown or Seplat Energy for a reaction”.

The statement went further to say, “The orchestrated media reports are calculated to spread false information. Seplat Energy will be engaging with the Ministry to reject the impressions created by these allegations. The Board believes that these allegations are a spurious and vindictive reaction to the enforcement of corporate governance standards in the Company by the Board of Seplat Energy.... On 8th March 2023, the Board of Seplat Energy unanimously passed a vote of confidence in Mr. Brown, who continues to discharge his duties and responsibilities as CEO from the Seplat UK office”.

Also, following a Federal High Court, Lagos, order restraining Roger Brown from parading himself as the CEO of Seplat and equally restrained the Omiyi-led Board, especially the Independent Non-Executive Directors, from “continuing to run the affairs of Seplat in an illegal, unfair, prejudicial, and oppressive manner pending the hearing and determination of the Petitioner's Motion on Notice for an interlocutory injunction”, Seplat came out with another statement regurgitating its earlier

positions, except that it added that “Mr. Brown has delegated authority to Mr. Samson Ezugworie, Chief Operating Officer, to act as CEO during the period that he is required to step back from his executive duties”.

In further defence of Mr. Brown, the Board singled out for reaction, the allegations about the site visit for a number of its major shareholders to the Company's operations, cancelled catering and landscaping contracts, and introduction of a new job performance rating, added also that “since Mr. Brown became CEO in 2020, Nigerian nationals have been appointed to the company's most important positions, including Chairman, Senior Independent Non-Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operating officer”.

Is Seplat taking sides with the alleged oppressor?

Seplat's swift rise in defence of its CEO over and above a lawful decision of the Federal Government of Nigeria and despite weighty allegations against him says a lot of things about the state of affairs in the company. It speaks of complicity and duplicity. It speaks of complacency also. It speaks of disdain for the Nigerian government. It speaks of incompetence. It speaks absence of emotional intelligence. It speaks to a lack of empathy for their employees. And it indeed speaks about both illegalities and the condonement of illegalities.

It is so disappointing that a respected organisation like Seplat claimed that the FG did not communicate with Mr. Brown before coming out with the sanctions whereas investigative reports by some reputable Nigerian news steads have confirmed that the Ministry of Interior indeed invited him twice vide letters dated 9th and 15th February, but he ignored them.

Two, the speed with which Omiyi and his Board dismissed the allegations as “spurious and vindictive” gives a clearer view of why something that should have been settled in-house got to the Ministry of Interior, and eventually into the open to the embarrassment of the company. Also, the letter conveying the sanction to Seplat was dated 3rd March, while the news broke around 8th March. Yet there was no effort to discuss this with the staff despite an internal staff survey that showed very high employee discontent. So, how did the Board conclude that the allegations were spurious?

Meanwhile, in the petition by Seplat employees exhibited in the court processes filed by aggrieved Seplat shareholders over the matter, the workers accused Mr. Roger Brown of intimidation, bullying, and sacking of Nigerian staff of Seplat; intimidation of

senior staff and members of the senior management team; abuse of corporate governance, the relegation of host communities, relocation of Seplat technology office to Aberdeen; bullying of Nigerian staff by foreign nationals; and refusal to fully relocate to Nigeria despite collecting huge amounts for that purpose, among others. Yet the Omiyi-led Board only picked out the issues of cancellation of landscaping contracts and visit by South African investors in its statements. This, coupled with branding the allegations as spurious simply shows the levity with which Seplat Board treats serious matters and speaks about its proclivity for playing on the intelligence on right thinking Nigerians.

If one may ask, what is spurious, and what is vindictive? Is it that the names of people and events mentioned in the said petition by staff and affidavits deposed by the applicants in support of the aforementioned pending suit do not exist? Is it that Busola Ogunbawo, Chuks Igelenye, Mirim Kachikwu, Alero Onosode, Afolabi Folurunsho, Samuel Orimoleye, Yetunde Taiwo, John Ebi, who were all senior staff plus 14 middle level and junior staff were not systematically sacked or forced to resign within six months of Mr. Brown's assumption of office as CEO and without the approval of the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC, formerly DPR)? Is it that while he is quick to disengage Nigerians upon the attainment of the age of 60 based on his alleged discriminatory retirement practices, he still retains the likes of Mr. Rymll Peter (67), Mr. Carl Franklin (62), Mr. Thomas Hywel (61), and Mr. Burge Peter Christopher (over 60) in the services of the company?

Or is it the allegation that since he rose from the position of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to the CEO effective 2020, he refused to hand over the London to a Nigerian, Mr. Emeka Onwuka, who succeeded him in line with the established policy and practice of Seplat, but instead hired and handed it over to his fellow Irish, Mr. Alaisdair Mackenzie? Or is it that Seplat's assets have now become the subject of attacks and vandalism in the Nigeria Delta due to the collapse of proactive host communities engagement for which Seplat was hitherto known?

Is it also that Mr. Brown unilaterally moved the technical/subsurface department of Seplat to Aberdeen, which cost Seplat a fortune, and appointed his fellow Irish and British nationals as heads of this critical department, thereby deliberately robbing Nigerians of the career and training opportunities to grow in the industry contrary to the provisions

of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry content development Act (NOGIC)?

The legal issues:

Meanwhile, deserving of special attention in this matter is the issue of the alleged violation of extant laws of Nigeria. The Ministry of Interior stated in their letter to Seplat that “Investigation and records in the Ministry also revealed that Mr. Roger Brown had CERPAC that was not based on validly issued Expatriate Quota approved by the Ministry of Interior resulting to the violation of relevant Immigration Laws and Regulations”.

This is a very serious matter. Yet Seplat has trivialized it. Section 58 Immigration Act 2015 provides, “It is an offence for any employer of persons liable to repatriation to discharge any such persons without giving notice to the Comptroller-General of Immigration, or for any such employed person to be redesignated, or change his employment, without the approval of the Comptroller-General of Immigration, and upon conviction, the employer if not a citizen of Nigeria and the employed person, as the case may be and his dependents shall if the Minister thinks fit, be deported and the business of the employer may be wound up as prescribed by this Act”.

Section 105(1) also provides, “Where an offence under this Act or any other relevant law committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed on the instigation or with the connivance of or is attributable to any neglect on the part of a director, manager, secretary of the body corporate, or any person purporting to act in any such capacity, the officer or person is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term of three years or to a fine of Two Million Naira or both...” while Section 105 (2) clearly states that “Where a body corporate is convicted of an offence under this Act, it is liable to a fine of Five Million Naira and a court may issue an order to wind up the body”.

In conclusion, while the Honourable Minister of Interior deserves commendation for revoking Mr. Brown's documents, let it be known that Nigeria is a country governed by laws. Let the laws be applied to the letters. Importantly, one cannot also agree more with the civil rights group, Make a Difference Initiative (MADI) that Seplat CEO, Roger Brown; the Board Chairman, Mr. Basil Omiyi; and the Independent Non-Executive Directors under him should honourably resign or be shown the door. It is in both the national interest and corporate interest of Seplat.

Dr Mefor, a Forensic/Social Psychologist, is a fellow of the Abuja School of Social and Political Thought.

Votes, Violence and Validity: Nigeria's 2023 Sub-national Elections

By Jibrin Ibrahim

ON 18 March, following a one-week delay by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enable it to comply with a Court of Appeal judgement, Nigerians returned to the polls to cast their ballots in governorship and state house of assembly elections. Voters in 28 states had the chance to elect new, or re-elect existing, governors in the March 18th 2023 vote, with the remaining eight states operating off-cycle processes, three of which are scheduled to take place later this year. This is a summary of the report of the Election Analysis Centre of the Centre for Democracy and Development on the elections.

“In zones across the country, vote trading was more pronounced than during the presidential elections, with both cash and goods used by all political parties in an effort to entice voters to cast their ballots at their direction. In total 25.3% of observers noted vote buying at their polling units across the country with the highest figures reported in the southeast (41.4%) and northwest (35.4%).”

BVAS was largely deployed and functional across the country for accreditation. Linked to the improved deployment of BVAS, the uploading of declared polling unit results to the INECs results viewing platform (IREV) was significantly improved as compared with the 25 February polls, with 23% of declared polling unit results available on the platform by 1810 on election day. By 1400 on 19 March, that had increased to an average of 85% and ranged from 98% in Oyo to a low of 68% in Kano. This provided real results for political parties and citizens to follow the distribution of votes. Nonetheless, diminished trust in the electoral institution will shape wider perceptions when it comes to the acceptance of the results returned, particularly in races where a narrow margin of victory is recorded or where presidential results are not replicated at the sub-national level.

The conduct of these elections was also impacted by the increased levels of violent incidents and vote trading recorded. The patchy deployment of security personnel in states such as Bayelsa, Enugu and Bauchi reduced the ability or willingness of security agencies to intervene to prevent critical violent incidents further undermined the credibility of this poll. Across the country, 8% of observers noted there were no security personnel at their polling units. Voter suppression, voter intimidation and the destruction or theft of election materials predominantly by political party agents and politically aligned thugs was recorded across all six geopolitical zones. These violent incidents were often focused in political strongholds of opposition or perceived opponents which suggests that the use of BVAS – which limits overvoting when properly used – has resulted in a more

concerted effort to stymie citizens casting their votes in opponent's strongholds than to try and stuff ballot boxes in order to rig the outcome of an election.

“Vote buying, the violence and intimidation that many voters experienced in casting their ballots and the mistrust that many voters have in the capabilities of INEC following the 25 February elections, despite improvements this time, cannot be disassociated from the outcomes from the 28 governorship and 36 state houses of assembly races.”

The threat or use of violence – not just offline but also online through the use of identity drive misinformation and disinformation on social media – in some polling units to intimidate, suppress and destroy election materials had a multiplier effect, further reducing voters' appetite to cast ballots, a reality that likely shaped engagement with the process in states like Lagos and Rivers in this election. In the first six hours of polls being open on 18 March, CDD's war room team came across a flurry of voter intimidation videos, particularly from Lagos state where it was ensconced in rhetoric about belonging and ethnic identity, an illustration of the ways that voter intimidation took place both online, as well as offline.

In zones across the country, vote trading was more pronounced than during the presidential elections, with both cash and goods used by all political parties in an effort to entice voters to cast their ballots at their direction. In total 25.3% of observers noted vote buying at their polling units across the country with the highest figures reported in the southeast (41.4%) and northwest (35.4%).

In Anambra state, party agents were observed using materials, phones and other souvenirs to entice voters. In the south-south, multiple party agents reported a desire for voters to show proof of their vote before being paid, with party agents reportedly compiling a list of their voters in Esan Central LGA, Edo state.

In Kano, the value of goods, if not cash, was as high as N5,000, with 90% of observers reporting incidents of vote buying in the polling units they observed. In polling units in Dutse, Ringim and Birnin Kudu LGAs of Jigawa state observers highlighted that some voters were actively soliciting funds in exchange for their votes.

Vote buying, the violence and intimidation that many voters experienced in casting their ballots and the mistrust that many voters have in the capabilities of INEC following the 25 February elections, despite improvements this time, cannot be disassociated from the outcomes from the 28 governorship and 36 state houses of assembly races.

“The development of electoral democracy in Nigeria confronts regular and determined efforts by some members of the political class to undermine it for

their selfish interests. It therefore requires continuous reforms to strengthen and build its resilience.”

APC candidates have been returned in fifteen states: Gombe, Jigawa, Katsina, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Yobe, Sokoto, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Ebonyi, Benue, Niger, Borno, and Cross River. The party was able to return incumbents in five of these states – Gombe, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun and Yobe – and retain control of states that it had lost during the presidential election – Gombe, Katsina, Sokoto and Yobe were won by PDP, while Lagos was won by Labour Party (LP).

PDP candidates have so far been successful in: Akwa Ibom, Oyo, Bauchi, Delta and Enugu, States that the party controlled before the elections, with an incumbent re-elected in Oyo despite losing the state to the APC during the presidential elections. The New Nigeria People's Party was also able to parlay its strong showing in the presidential election to win the governorship elections in Kano State while LP won in Abia. The elections produced a governorship setup with five parties producing governors (in addition to All Progressives Grand Alliance in Anambra). This mirrors the multi-party configuration in the National Assembly. Initial analysis of the results reinforces the unique nature of local politics. Available results show a correlation between governorship and state house of assembly results among declared states. Of note is the incumbency factor, with six of the 11 incumbents seeking re-election already returned elected. Greater interest in state politics is also reflected in emerging data. Turnout for the three states there is full data for show increases when compared to the presidential: Akwa Ibom 27.8% versus 24.9%, Jigawa 44.8% versus 40.6% and Katsina 39.4% versus 31%. While a different average can be expected when all the results have been formally declared, it appears the direct impact of governors on citizens, the high number of term-limited governors and the decision of state party chapters to respond to the presidential result led to an increased turnout.

Nigeria's identity divisions have been more pronounced in these elections, with narratives amplified by online discourse further contributing to accentuating this. Whether to promote conventional zonal arrangements or to whip up ethnic concerns to support voter bases, this has played a part in heightening a sensitive political climate and led to an acrimonious voting process. Instances of systematic disenfranchisement on the basis of ethnicity, and the expectation that will translate into votes for another party, will also lead to more partisanship and division in incoming administrations.



Jibrin Ibrahim

The development of electoral democracy in Nigeria confronts regular and determined efforts by some members of the political class to undermine it for their selfish interests. It therefore requires continuous reforms to strengthen and build its resilience. We recommend the following measures:

A lot of the challenges confronting electoral democracy in Nigeria are the direct result of illegal and often criminal action taken by key members of the political class and their surrogates who violate the Electoral Act and other laws and regulations, engage in violence, murder, fraud, disruption of elections, hate speech and so on. Accountability for such action is important and the long-standing proposal by the Uwais Electoral Reform Committee to establish the Electoral Offences Commission should be implemented as soon as possible; Establish a Political Parties Regulatory Commission which will focus on building the strength and capacity of parties so that INEC can focus exclusively on the organisation of elections;

Strengthen democracy-promoting institutions, including the Independent National Electoral Commission which requires more autonomy, especially in relation to the appointment of its members and related support institutions such as the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the National Human Rights Commission who serve as guardrails of competitive party and electoral politics;

Create a National Cohesion and Integration Commission to promote Inter-ethnic and Inter-Religious Understanding with functions and powers modelled on the Kenyan commission with same name;

Establish an independent committee, like the Uwais Electoral Reform Committee to look into improvement of election management in the country.

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ADVERT RATES FROM JANUARY 1, 2022

SPACE	COLOUR			BLACK AND WHITE		
	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL PAGE	395,176.32	29,638.22	424,814.54	323,433.00	24,257.48	347,690.48
HALF PAGE	248,970.00	18,672.75	267,642.75	203,175.00	15,238.13	218,413.13
QUARTER PAGE	164,670.00	12,350.25	177,020.25	94,724.44	7,104.33	101,828.77
10" x 6 Col	364,320.00	27,324.00	391,644.00	245,005.20	18,375.39	263,380.59
10" x 5 Col	333,960.00	25,047.00	359,007.00	224,588.11	16,844.11	241,432.22
10" x 4 Col	242,880.00	18,216.00	261,096.00	163,336.80	12,250.26	175,587.06
10" x 3 Col	182,160.00	13,662.00	195,822.00	122,502.60	9,187.70	131,690.30
9" x 6 Col	327,888.00	24,591.60	352,479.60	220,504.68	16,537.85	237,042.53
9" x 5 Col	273,240.00	20,493.00	293,733.00	183,753.90	13,781.54	197,535.44
9" x 4 Col	218,592.00	16,394.40	234,986.40	147,003.12	11,025.23	158,028.35
9" x 3 Col	163,944.00	12,295.80	176,239.80	110,252.34	8,268.93	118,521.27
8" x 6 Col	291,456.00	21,859.20	313,315.20	196,004.16	14,700.31	210,704.47
8" x 5 Col	242,880.00	18,216.00	261,096.00	163,336.80	12,250.26	175,587.06
8" x 4 Col	194,304.00	14,572.80	208,876.80	130,669.44	9,800.21	140,469.65
8" x 3 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
7" x 6 Col	255,024.00	19,126.80	274,150.80	171,503.64	12,862.77	184,366.41
7" x 5 Col	212,520.00	15,939.00	228,459.00	142,919.70	10,718.98	153,638.68
7" x 4 Col	170,016.00	12,751.20	182,767.20	114,335.76	8,575.18	122,910.94
6" x 6 Col	218,592.00	16,394.40	234,986.40	147,003.12	11,025.23	158,028.35
6" x 5 Col	182,160.00	13,662.00	195,822.00	122,502.60	9,187.70	131,690.30
6" x 4 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
6" x 3 Col	109,296.00	8,197.20	117,493.20	73,501.56	5,512.62	79,014.18
6" x 2 Col	72,864.00	5,464.80	78,328.80	49,001.04	3,675.08	52,676.12
5" x 5 Col	151,800.00	11,385.00	163,185.00	102,085.50	7,656.41	109,741.91
5" x 4 Col	121,440.00	9,108.00	130,548.00	81,668.40	6,125.13	87,793.53
5" x 3 Col	91,080.00	6,831.00	97,911.00	61,251.30	4,593.85	65,845.15
5" x 2 Col	60,720.00	4,554.00	65,274.00	40,834.20	3,062.57	43,896.77
4" x 6 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
4" x 5 Col	121,440.00	9,108.00	130,548.00	81,668.40	6,125.13	87,793.53
4" x 4 Col	97,152.00	7,286.40	104,438.40	65,334.72	4,900.10	70,234.82
4" x 3 Col	72,864.00	5,464.80	78,328.80	49,001.04	3,675.08	52,676.12
4" x 2 Col	48,576.00	3,643.20	52,219.20	32,667.36	2,450.05	35,117.41
3" x 3 Col	54,648.00	4,098.60	58,746.60	36,750.78	2,756.31	39,507.09
3" x 2 Col	36,432.00	2,732.40	39,164.40	24,500.52	1,837.54	26,338.06
2" x 2 Col	24,288.00	1,821.60	26,109.60	16,333.68	1,225.03	17,558.71
1" x 1 Col	6,072.00	455.40	6,527.40	4,083.42	306.26	4,389.68

TERMS OF ADVERT PLACEMENT

- All adverts are expected to be prepaid in cash or bank draft in favour of New Nigerian Newspaper's Limited.
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- Advertisers/Agencies are to provide their Camera ready artwork in electronic copies, in e.g. PDF, or JPEG format.
- Advertisers will be surcharged 20% of the applicable rate where artworks are not provided.
- Adverts may not be published if the visuals given are considered too poor as to affect the reproduction.
- Alterations to original order should be conveyed in writing at least 24 hours to desired alteration date.
- Colour guides are to accompany coloured adverts.
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TECHNICAL DATA

6 COLUMNS

Depth	38.1 (CM)	Depth	-	15 (Inches)
Width	25.4 (CM)	Width	-	10 (Inches)

POLITICAL RATE

SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FRONT PAGE MAST HEAD EAR PIECE	461,622.86	34,621.71	496,244.57
FRONT PAGE SOLUS	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
FRONT PAGE STRIP	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
BACK PAGE EAR PIECE	420,889.54	31,566.72	452,456.26
FULL PAGE (COLOUR)	465,967.54	34,947.57	500,915.11
FULL PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	364,037.14	27,302.79	391,339.93
HALF PAGE (COLOUR)	303,285.71	22,746.43	326,032.14
HALF PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	247,500.00	18,562.50	266,062.50
QUARTER PAGE (COLOUR)	203,877.14	15,290.79	219,167.93
QUARTER PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	111,692.74	8,376.96	120,069.70

LOOSE INSERTS

S/NO	SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
1	Handling for the first 40 copies	120,000.00	9,000.00	129,000.00
2	Per 1000 Copies (1 Page)	28,000.00	2,100.00	30,100.00
3	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine 2-8 Pages)	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
4	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine above 8 pages)	80,000.00	6,000.00	86,000.00

CLASSIFIEDS

S/NO	POSITION	SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
1	Registration of Trustees	3" x 2 Cols	6,857.14	514.29	7,371.43
2	Loss of Documents	2" x 2 Cols	4,400.00	330.00	4,730.00
3	Change of Name	Per Box	2,000.00	-	2,000.00

SPECIAL POSITION

SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL WRAP AROUND	6,750,000.00	506,250.00	7,256,250.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	4,500,000.00	337,500.00	4,837,500.00
PAGE 2 OR 3	400,000.00	30,000.00	430,000.00
PAGE 4 OR 5	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
PAGE 6 OR 7	325,000.00	24,375.00	349,375.00
FRONT PAGE MAST HEAD EAR PIECE	225,000.00	16,875.00	241,875.00
FRONT PAGE SOLUS	312,500.00	23,437.50	335,937.50
FRONT PAGE STRIP	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
BACK PAGE EAR PIECE	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00
BACK PAGE STRIP	250,000.00	18,750.00	268,750.00
CENTRE SPREAD (COLOUR)	837,500.00	62,812.50	900,312.50
DOUBLE SPREAD (COLOUR)	700,000.00	52,500.00	752,500.00
CENTRE SPREAD (BLACK & WHITE)	575,000.00	43,125.00	618,125.00
DOUBLE SPREAD (BLACK & WHITE)	550,000.00	41,250.00	591,250.00
FRONT PAGE (10" X 6)	3,250,000.00	243,750.00	3,493,750.00
ROP STRIP (COLOUR)	125,000.00	9,375.00	134,375.00
ROP STRIP (BLACK & WHITE)	85,000.00	6,375.00	91,375.00

PROPERTY AND IT, VACANCY, AGRIC, AND EVENTS/EDUCATION RATE

COLOUR				BLACK AND WHITE		
SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
7 X 3	108,571.43	8,142.86	116,714.29	62,857.14	4,714.29	67,571.43
6 X 3	102,857.14	7,714.29	110,571.43	57,142.86	4,285.71	61,428.57
6 X 2	45,428.57	3,407.14	48,835.71	32,857.14	2,421.43	34,707.14
5 X 3	53,428.57	4,007.14	57,435.71	37,428.57	2,807.14	40,235.71
5 X 2	42,571.43	3,192.86	45,764.29	24,857.14	1,864.29	26,721.43
4 X 3	47,714.29	3,578.57	51,292.86	30,571.43	2,292.86	32,864.29
4 X 2	33,142.86	2,485.71	35,628.57	21,714.29	1,628.57	23,342.86
3 X 3	34,571.43	2,592.86	37,164.29	23,142.86	1,735.71	24,878.57
3 X 2	22,857.14	1,714.29	24,571.43	14,285.71	1,071.43	15,357.14
2 X 2	16,000.00	1,200.00	17,200.00	9,142.86	685.71	9,828.57
2 X 1	7,714.28	578.57	8,292.85	4,975.71	373.18	5,348.89

Fallacies Of Religion, No-man's-land, And Why Nigeria is Unbreakable (1)

By; HASSAN GIMBA

One of the factors that determined the just concluded elections in Nigeria is religion. Oh, agreed, in our politics, religion has always been a factor in determining winners and losers. But never before was it flagrantly flaunted and made to be the driving force than in 2023.

Unfortunately, shepherds led their flocks by the nose, feasting on their ignorance of their faith. What happened buttressed the fact that where there is ignorance, charlatans make hay or, more succinctly put, the one-eyed leads in the country of the blind.

The constitutional democracy we are practising is neither Islamic nor Christian. No doubt, like many other things in life that are secular, certain fundamentals of religion guide it because humans know intuitively that certain things are right or wrong, but that's that. And this is why the prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace be upon him), who revealed that humans are born with the knowledge of God but circumstances make us what we are after, told us to listen to our hearts (conscience) even when a preacher does his preaching - or something akin to that, and this is what Sir William Blackstone called "Natural Law."

Sir William Blackstone was an English jurist, judge and Tory politician most noted for writing the Commentaries on the Laws of England.

This is how he defined natural law: "Thus when the Supreme Being formed the universe and created matter out of nothing, He impressed certain principles upon that matter, from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be... so that when He created man and endowed him with freewill to conduct himself in all parts of life, He laid down certain immutable laws of human nature, whereby that freewill is in some degree regulated

and restrained, and gave him also the faculty of reason to discover the purport of those laws. These are the eternal and immutable laws of good and evil, to which the Creator Himself in all his Dispensations conforms; and which He has enabled human reason to discover, so far as they are necessary for the conduct of human actions... that we should live honestly, should hurt nobody, and should render to everyone his due." (Christian History of the Constitution, 1960, p. 142).

He further said: "This Law of Nature, being coeval with mankind and dictated by God Himself, is, of course, superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid to derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original."

He went on to define Revealed Law as the law given to us by God in Scripture. He then clarified that all man-made laws must be in the right relationship with the previous two laws (Natural, Revealed). Scripture supports the order of the way God gave the law to humans, first natural, then revealed, then governmental. Both Islam and Christianity believe humans, as a creation of God, have a right to life and to possess property. Humans have the right to self-defence to protect their rights to life and ownership of property, and it is considered jihad in Islam to do so.

And this is what, for example, Lockean (John Locke) Enlightenment philosophers call Natural Law. A good example is the killing of Abel by Cain. Was there a recorded religious law before the act that frowned on murder? Natural Law philosophers would tell you that Cain's crime was depriving Abel of a natural right - the right to life.

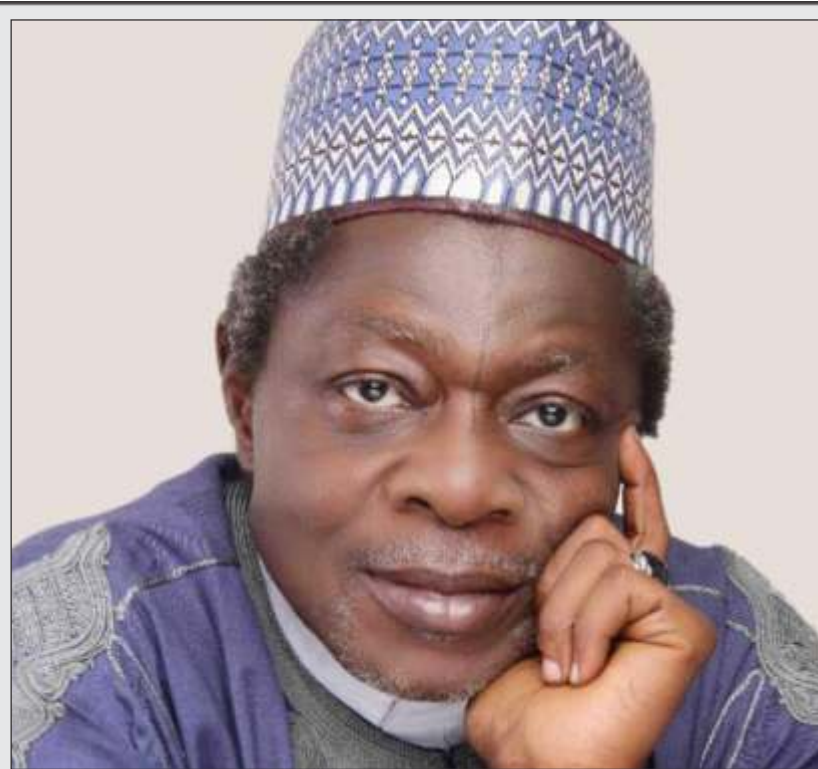
And so, these are the bases of all religions and all

governments, especially ours, formulated by man for man. They are based on our intrinsic understanding of what is good or bad, which syncs with the word of God but is not fundamentally based on it. This is why it is called secular, that is, not overtly or specifically religious. The word secular is derived from the old French *seculer*, from Latin *saecularis*, from *saeculum* 'generation, age', used in Christian Latin to mean 'the world'.

And so this is why all types of religious adherents, including atheists, can contest together and against one another. Had the government been religious, there would never have been any argument. No Muslim is fit to contest for anything in a Christian government, just as no Christian would be eligible to contest with Muslims in an Islamic government.

Elsewhere, I observed that there is nothing religious about any of the tickets or candidates. To begin with, any position that is Islamic will not be contested for by a Christian and vice versa. And this is why no Muslim president will begin minuting on a file with the name of Allah or a Christian in the name of Jesus. Each one of them will preside over Nigeria according to the dictates of the manmade constitution. Nothing more, nothing less.

The two leading Muslim contenders have all identified with Christians. For instance, Atiku Abubakar has praised the agenda for national development brought to him by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) while Tinubu has tried to assuage their fears over the Muslim-



Hassan Gimba *Monday Column*

Muslim ticket by telling the Christians that his wife is a pastor and some of his children are Christians. His running mate, Kashim Shettima, had earlier told Muslims that their interests were to be taken care of by the Sultan of Sokoto while saying he had rebuilt thousands of churches as well as taken thousands of Christians to Jerusalem.

For these reasons, we should not allow ourselves to love or fight any of them based on their ethnicity or religion because none of these defines any of them. And this is why those being presented as the representatives of the competing religions neither know the religion nor practise it in its undiluted form.

And so, our government is not what the Imams, Bishops, or the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) want us to

believe. They speak based on their interests and dance to the drumbeats of those who fill their pockets. It is only the Muslim/Christian who is ignorant (a *jahil*) of Islam/Christianity that will believe they are fighting Allah's/Jesus' cause based on the brouhaha we just witnessed.

Another contentious issue we witnessed was when some people designated Lagos as a "No-man's-land". They, therefore, swore to take it and make it theirs. Surely, that's what happens when you appropriate what has no owner; you become the new owner. But is Lagos a "No-man's-land" or does it have an "owner"?

Next week we are going to look towards answering this puzzle.

Hassan Gimba is the Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Neptune Prime.

ICC: Europe's Lapdog in a Theatre of the Absurd

By Owei Lakemfa

THE International Criminal Court (ICC) on March 17, 2023 added a comic dimension to the tragic war in Ukraine by issuing warrants of arrest for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Commissioner for Children's Rights, Maria Lvova-Belova. The ICC, a body notorious for the persecution of people in the bad books of the European Union (EU) and its allies, is accusing Putin of "unlawful deportation of population...from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation".

"So, the ICC jumps when the EU asks it to do so; the only question it would ask is: 'How high boss?' Therefore, the ICC has neither independence nor self-esteem, and certainly does not command the respect even of its owners. Let me give an example. When the ICC in 2021 strayed into investigating Israel for its on-going genocide against the Palestinian people, its sustained murder of civilians, including children, and the continuous theft of Palestinian land, then UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson firmly told the ICC to back off as it was exceeding its bounds."

It claims that: "There are reasonable grounds to believe that Mr. Putin bears individual criminal responsibility for the aforementioned crimes (and) for his failure to exercise control properly over civilian and military subordinates who committed the acts, or allowed for their commission...". The 'court' is also accusing 39-year-old Ms Lvova-Belova of the same alleged crimes. The ICC also said "there are reasonable grounds to believe that each suspect bears responsibility for the war crime of unlawful deportation of population...from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, in prejudice of Ukrainian children".

The ICC warrants do not disclose what it means by deportation of population. Does it refer to the Prisoners of War or the hordes of mercenaries Russia captured and moved to its territories? Or is it populations of Russian-speaking Ukrainians who were evacuated from war zones just like those moved or evacuated from Ukraine to neighbouring countries like Poland? Can Ukrainian President Zelensky be accused of deportation of populations to other European countries? These are in the realms of speculation, but what is not speculative is that asking countries around the world to arrest the Russian President is a sick joke. Any country that tries it can be annihilated; it would be the same as arresting a sitting United States President. These countries are not superpowers for nothing. So, the ICC's quixotic moves can only be in the service of its EU owners.

I must, however, say that this is a new low

for the ICC whose speciality is the arrest and persecution of African leaders who refuse to toe the path set for them by the West. The war in Ukraine is one that pitches Russia against the EU and the latter owns the ICC. Since its 2002 establishment, the EU has been responsible for 63 per cent of all ICC funds. In 2009, for instance, just five members of the EU: Spain, Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom (UK) paid 44 per cent of the ICC budget. In 2020, the main funders of the ICC were Germany, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

"The same 2002 the ICC was born, the US Congress in warning it against investigating its war crimes across the globe, including places like Afghanistan and Iraq, passed the American Service-Members' Protection Act. The Act banned financial assistance to any member country of the ICC which may want to hand over US personnel. The law also authorised the US to use force to free any American that may be held by the ICC. The Americans went on to force dozens of countries to sign bilateral agreements not to handover over any American to the ICC."

So, the ICC jumps when the EU asks it to do so; the only question it would ask is: 'How high boss?' Therefore, the ICC has neither independence nor self-esteem, and certainly does not command the respect even of its owners. Let me give an example. When the ICC in 2021 strayed into investigating Israel for its on-going genocide against the Palestinian people, its sustained murder of civilians, including children, and the continuous theft of Palestinian land, then UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson firmly told the ICC to back off as it was exceeding its bounds. Although the ICC probe also covered rockets fired by Hamas and other Palestinian groups into Israel, the British Prime Minister in a letter declared that: "This investigation gives the impression of being a partial and prejudicial attack on a friend and ally of the UK."

Apart from the EU and some of its allies like Japan, plus the horde of African countries pressured by the EU to join the ICC, no self-respecting country has joined; not China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Russia, Sudan, Syria; not even the US whose allies built the contraption. In fact, the US which has gone to war almost non-stop for two centuries and has most military bases in the world, would not allow even murderous American mercenaries like those of Blackwater, to be tried outside its own courts.

The same 2002 the ICC was born, the US Congress in warning it against investigating its war crimes across the

globe, including places like Afghanistan and Iraq, passed the American Service-Members' Protection Act. The Act banned financial assistance to any member country of the ICC which may want to hand over US personnel. The law also authorised the US to use force to free any American

that may be held by the ICC. The Americans went on to force dozens of countries to sign bilateral agreements not to handover over any American to the ICC. To counter the ICC's joke, the Russia Investigative Committee countered with its own symbolic investigation of the ICC prosecutor and judges who issued the warrants of arrest. It said neither Putin nor Lova-Belova were criminally liable and that Heads of State in the world enjoy absolute immunity under a 1973 UN Convention.

"The ICC was simply used by the EU to remove an uncooperative African president, and after incarcerating him for eight years, set him free while his rival was in power in Cote d'Ivoire doing the wishes of the Europeans, including subverting Africa's move for a common West Africa currency. Even after he was declared innocent, the Europeans still prevented Gbagbo from returning home until their stooge was ready to cage him." Almost all cases brought to the ICC concern Africans and their then-sitting Presidents like Omar al-Bashir of Sudan, Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and his then Vice President (now President) William Ruto, and Laurent Gbagbo of Cote d'Ivoire.

President Gbagbo's case is illustrative of the way the ICC functions. There was an electoral dispute between Gbagbo and opposition leader Alhassan Quatara with each claiming to have won the elections. The latter's rebel army with the backing of



French and United Nations troops, marched on the Presidential Palace on April 11, 2011 and captured Gbagbo who became a Prisoner of War. But he was not treated as such, neither was he accorded his right to be tried in his country. Rather, the foreign troops, contrary to UN protocols on a President's diplomatic immunity, bundled Gbagbo out of his country and deposited him in an ICC jail for five years without trial while his rival was installed as the country's President. He was subsequently subjected to a charade in the guise of judicial trial and after another three years, declared innocent.

The ICC was simply used by the EU to remove an uncooperative African president, and after incarcerating him for eight years, set him free while his rival was in power in Cote d'Ivoire doing the wishes of the Europeans, including subverting Africa's move for a common West Africa currency. Even after he was declared innocent, the Europeans still prevented Gbagbo from returning home until their stooge was ready to cage him. The African Union (AU), realising that the ICC is primarily an instrument of neo-colonialism, on January 31, 2017 asked the 34 African countries who signed up to the ICC to make a collective withdrawal. Lives are being needlessly lost in Ukraine, what the world needs is a negotiated peace settlement not a clownish performance by a howling lapdog.

2023 Ramadan: Foodies Project To Cater For Over 2,000 Muslims - Thani

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The CEO of the Beeba House of Stitches, Habeebatullah Thani yesterday, hinted that over 2,000 less privileged Muslim faithful are to benefit in this year's Ramadan Foodies Project in Ibadan.

Thani in a statement in Ibadan, said the Foodies Project is her work of Ibadah during the holy month of the fasting.

According to her, the project, which started in 2018, has catered for the feeding of over 12,000 people in different locations in Ibadan including Arisekola Mosque Iwo Road, Iyanu Oluwá Mosque Olorunsogo, Sabo Ibadan, Mapo hall Oyo state Ibadan, Dugbe Mosque, Cocoa House Ibadan.

"Feeding the fasting during Ramadan is even closer to the Prophet's (saw) heart than providing

food to those in need over the other months of the year, so when you feed the fasting, you are not only spreading joy to those in need, you are also gaining countless rewards for yourself", she said.

Thani added, "Ramadan Foodies' is an initiative birthed by the Beeba House of Stitches and Adam's Street Treats which is aimed at providing food and drinks to fasting Muslims in the month of Ramadan".

"The project Ramadan Foodies' is a philanthropic gesture targeted towards allaying the burden on fasting Muslims during the Holy Month".

She stressed, "The project aims is catering for the dinner needs' of fasting Muslims during the Holy month, and our target is to adequately feed two thousand (2000) fasting Muslims during this Ramadan with support of raw foods, fruits, and drinks".



Thani

Thani stressed, "we are however open to other means of donations such as raw foods, fruits and beverages amongst others", adding, "this month of fasting is a time for spiritual reflection,

prayer, and charity. It is also a time when many Muslims face financial challenges due to the high cost of food, especially during the pre-dawn and post-sunset meals.

Let's Work Together To Make Oyo State Better, Makinde Urges Folarin, Adelabu, Others

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

Governor Seyi Makinde on Saturday, tasked Senator Teslim Folarin, Chief Adebayo Adelabu and other governorship candidates in the state to forget about the last election and jointly move Oyo State ahead.

Speaking at a Fresh FM 105.9, Ibadan live programme, the governor declared that it is now time to move Oyo state forward as elections are over and time for governance for the state to progress.

Emphasizing that he is open to working with the ideas of his co-contestants wherever they are found to be superior to his, Governor Makinde pointed out that he is ready to sit down with any of his co-contestants in the March 18 polls on move Oyo state to greater heights, particularly if there are areas they have ideas and plans to move the state forward.

Describing his electoral success as a victory for the people of the state, the governor said everyone must now come together

in the interest of Oyo state and as well go ahead to put the sticky points learnt during the campaign period into practice.

"The issue of the electioneering campaign is behind us now and we are to battle the issue of governance now. This is our state and commonwealth and we must make sure we move our state forward. Very soon, we will begin to deploy the available resources to the areas that have not been touched and keep engaging with the people", he said.

The governor added, "we also appreciate the fact that we have improved our budget performance, which means that anything we put in the budget, we will do it,"

"We have said that we would look at the infrastructure that targets our economy and since I became the governor, I have been to the Ikere Gorge Dam twice. It is one of the potentials we have but we have to fix the road first".

The governor stressed, "the road from Iseyin to Ikere is bad but before we

get to Ikere, we have to prioritise. The road from Oyo to Iseyin, which is a federal road, is of more economic importance than that of Ikere, and that was why we had to fix that first.

He noted, "apart from the power generation and fishery potentials in the Dam, it is also a place of tourist attraction. I can assure you that Ikere Gorge Dam will be a priority under Omituntun 2.0."

"I promised that LAUTECH is so central to the economy of Ogbomoso and that was why I said I would do everything possible to own LAUTECH and allow the economy of Ogbomoso to be integrated into the wider economy of the state. That was why we felt we needed to link Ogbomoso to the food basket of the state by coming up with the Ogbomoso-Fapote-Iseyin road. So, there will be continuity in this second term."

Assuring that his administration will reach more areas with development by and

touching a wider population of Oyo State residents in his second term in office, Governor said the recruitment of teachers and other non-teaching staff, building of more education infrastructure will receive major priority under Omituntun 2.0.

"We will employ more teachers in the primary schools and pay attention to the infrastructure in the schools through the local government areas. If you observe Omituntun 1.0, we started working from the first day. Thankfully, there is an improvement in our Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) because we have successfully boosted it from N1.9b to about N3.5b now, which means we can do a project worth N18bn in a year.

"Very soon, we will begin to deploy the available resources to the areas that have not been touched and keep engaging with the people. We also appreciate the fact that we have improved our budget performance, which means that anything we put in the budget, we will do it,"

Rainstorm Destroys Houses, Injures Many People In Kogi

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

Rainstorm has rendered residents of Iyara Community in Ijumu Local Government Area of Kogi State homeless. Some of the locals have also sustained various degrees of injuries during the incident.

The rainfall which started around 4pm on Friday, according to a source, said that some classrooms of the Community High School Iyara were destroyed.

The source further explained that there was no loss of lives in the

rainstorm, saying that those injured are presently receiving treatment at the community's health centre.

Alhaji Aliyu Badaki, the President of Iyara Development Association (IDA), described the incident as a real shock and sadness, saying that it was unfortunate.

He appealed to NEMA and SEMA to quickly intervene and cushion the effect of the disaster, stressing that the damage done by the storm was massive and beyond what the community can handle.

Nigeria Autocratic, Not Democratic - Amadi

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

Director, Abuja School of Social and Political Thoughts, Dr. Sam Amadi has opined that Nigeria is autocratic, following proof of the just concluded general elections that it is no longer a democratic state.

Dr Sam, a former chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission made the assertion in Abuja at the 2nd Ariyo Dare-Atoye Memorial Election Management and Governance Dialogue series, themed, "Is Nigeria a democracy? Reflection on the 2023 general election".

In a statement he issued on Sunday, Amadi believed that the outcome of the 2023 general elections was not a reflection of the people's choice, alleging that the conduct of the elections would further hew down public trust and participation of Nigerians in future elections in the country.

He described the elections as 'total desecration', wondered why politicians could not allow for a seamless, peaceful, and keenly contested electoral process, instead resorted to violence.

He lamented that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) refused to transmit results on the IREV, among other anomalies that greeted the 2023 general election, saying that they were lucid indicators that the elections were overtly flawed and the fundamental principles of democracy completely omitted during the elections.

According to him, "Nigeria is not yet a democracy because the fundamental features of democracy, the three of them coming to these elections, fair institutions that should provide equality for everybody, and guarantee basic freedoms have been denied largely in this election."

Kwara Gov sympathises With Residents Over Rainstorm, Flooding Incidents

By; BILIQIS OLAJUMOKE ONAOLAPO, Ilorin

Kwara Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq has sympathised with residents of Ilorin and some communities in the state who were affected by the rainstorm and flooding of Thursday night. The Governor described the incidents as unfortunate. “The Governor is sad about the havocs that the rainstorm wreaked on public and private properties, especially in Ilorin metropolis, Oke Ero, and some other

areas,” according to a government statement on Friday. “The Governor is aware of and commends the ongoing efforts of relevant government agencies to evacuate the many fallen signposts and clear the highways for free movement of traffic. “While the state government will collaborate with the Federal Government to continually tackle the question of flooding, the government appeals to members of the public to avoid littering the drainages or blocking free flow of water.”

“The Governor is sad about the havocs that the rainstorm wreaked on public and private properties, especially in Ilorin metropolis, Oke Ero, and some other areas,” according to a government statement on Friday.”



From left: Head, Products and Innovations, 9 Payment Service Bank (9PSB), Akeem Salami; Principal, Ajao Estate Senior Grammar School, Isolo, Mrs Adebola Olabiran; Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, 9PSB, Branca Mracajac; and the School Vice Principal, Akinyemi Joseph; during the bank's financial literacy day for the students, held at Ajao Estate, Isolo in Lagos. March 23, 2023. Photo: AKINOLA ARIYO

Kaduna Referees Council Elects New Exco



By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Kaduna State Referees Council has elected its executive members that would run the affairs of the council for the next four years in the state. The electoral officer sent by the Nigeria Football Referees Association (NRA), Alhaji Bello Kano, announced Sani Muhammed as the chairman, who will be deputized by Mr. Nkung Donatus Mandi in the 12-member exco. In his acceptance speech, Sani Muhammed (FIFA), stressed the need to collectively work together as the task ahead is demanding during this challenging time. "Therefore, we need to work together neither as rivals nor enemies, but members of one community that was built by the compassion towards each other's commitment to decency and our faith in our neighbours, which we inherited from our elders that create good atmosphere for a free and fair officiating particularly in Kaduna State and Nigeria as well as the world at large". He declared. The new chairman expressed appreciation on the vote of confidence that members of the council bestowed on him and plans to honour it. "Thank you for having faith in me to this important responsibility. Let's take our council to greater heights of success. We shall try our best to fulfill your expectations and we shall never let you down and your concerns are heard and shall be addressed", Muhammed added. He however, highlighted some of his vision to drive the state referee's council to include giving importance to accountability of resources, as well as repackaging the personality of members. "Training and retaining of our members, discipline of our members, effective & deliberate plan for a successful annual registration procedure as well as effective and adequate preparation for fitness test of our referees". He added. He further assured that, "With a recruitment drive for young and future generation of referees and planned conscious and deliberate effort to work with F.A and other stakeholders". Those elected during the Saturday March 25, 2023 election were, Chairman - Sani Muhammed, Deputy Chairman - Nkung Donatus Mandi, Vice Chairman - Adamu Rabi, Vice Chairman 2 - Hon Jumare Tanimu, Secretary - Ishaya Patrick and Asst Secretary - Peter Ali. Others are, Treasurer - Leo Martin, Financial Secretary - Yusuf Abubakar Garba, Training Officer - Kassimu Yahaya Ikara, Asst Training Officer - Aneke David, PRO - Lawal Abbas and Welfare - Philips Ankuma.



NFF Apologizes To Nigerians For U-23, Super Eagles' Poor Outings

By; AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has apologized to the generality of Nigerians over the poor outings of the U-23 Men National Team (Olympic Eagles) and the Senior Men National Team (Super Eagles) in crucial international matches this

week.

The Super Eagles fell 0-1 to Guinea Bissau's Djurtus in a 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying match at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, two days after the U-23 boys failed to beat Guinea in a first leg, final qualifying fixture for the U-23 Africa Cup of Nations.

President of NFF, Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau,

stated that the Federation was nonplussed by the below-par outings, but would immediately work hard to ensure the teams turn their qualifying games around in a positive way.

"We tender an unreserved apology to Nigerians for the poor results. We worked and planned hard for good results but things turned out differently on the pitch. Our focus now is

on redeeming the situation in the return matches early next week."

Gusau expressed confidence the U-23 boys will take their chances in Rabat on Tuesday against Guinea to qualify for the U-23 AFCON, and that the Super Eagles will win in Bissau on Monday to return to the top of their qualifying group for the 2023 AFCON.

AFN Postpones All Comers Competition U-18, U-20 National Trials

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

While making reference to the circular AFN/COR/GC/001/Vol.II 1/66 dated 13th March, 2023 inviting all states athletics associations, Clubs and all Stakeholders to Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) All Comers Competition/U-18 and U-20 National Trials, AFN has announced postponement of the widely publicized event.

This was contained in a statement made available to our correspondent yesterday, signed by Mrs Rita Mosindi (Secretary General).

It explained that the event scheduled to hold between March 24 to 25, 2023, has been postponed, due to the recently concluded general elections.

"I wish to inform you that due to the late conclusion and declaration of results of Gubernatorial Elections in some states in the country, the Federation considered it paramount to shift the dates of the above Competition and Trials to 30-31 March, 2023 at the same venue, Ahmadu Bello Stadium, Kaduna," it said.

AFN explained that in view of the foregoing, the closing dates for entries has been extended further till midnight March 26, 2023 to give room for states and clubs that were unable to meet the earlier set deadline to take advantage of the extension.

"The Federation regrets any inconvenience the postponement may have caused," it said.



Super Eagles' players cooling off after their match with Guinea Bisau

Disappointed Gusau Says Total Commitment Now Pre-requisite For Wearing Nigeria's Colours

By; AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau announced on Saturday that visible total commitment implying patriotic fervour will now be a key factor, apart from competence and current form, for any football player who wishes to wear the nation's green-white-green jersey at any level. Gusau's words, spoken to players of the Super Eagles on Saturday morning, was a direct reference to Friday's 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying defeat to Guinea Bissau at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, which pushed

the Eagles down to second place in their qualification group.

Mama Balde's 29th minute goal was the only strike in the encounter, condemning the Eagles to defeat in front of fervent home fans. The Eagles created a dozen chances in the second half but failed to get the ball into the Wild Dogs' net.

"Let us be very clear about one thing: no player will ever be encouraged against his wish to wear Nigeria's colours at any time. If an invitation is extended to you at any time but you are not physically, psychologically or mentally up to it, you are free to decline.

"Nigeria demands good

performances and positive results from any of the teams going forward. I was sorely disappointed by your performance against Guinea Bissau and I know that Nigerians at home and in the diaspora are more than disappointed. Things must change starting with the return match in Guinea Bissau on Monday. Our country is too big to be getting these poor results at international level."

Recalling that the U23 Men Team, Olympic Eagles, also failed to score against Guinea in a Africa U23 Cup of Nations qualifier at the same venue on Wednesday, Gusau said the message is for all the teams, down to the U15 side known as Future

Eagles.

"Total commitment that we can see in your body language and output will now be a key factor in who wears Nigeria's jerseys. If some players are not ready to give their all at a particular time, others will be and will deliver for our country."

Team captain Ahmed Musa apologized to the NFF and Nigerians for the defeat and assured that the players are ready to redeem themselves in the return match on Monday. Meanwhile, the Nigeria delegation to Monday's match in Bissau departed from the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport yesterday.

By; AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

The original FIFA Women's World Cup™ Trophy, to be competed for by 32 teams from across the globe from July 20 to August 20 this year, landed in Nigeria's federal capital, Abuja on Saturday afternoon.

Already, the coveted prize has been taken to the three other African countries that will participate in the finals: Morocco, South Africa and Zambia.

Nigeria is the fourth leg of the 32-leg journey that the trophy will undertake, before heading to Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand – the two countries that are the joint hosts of the biggest FIFA Women's World Cup™ in history.

The trophy was on display at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja from 12 noon yesterday, with a photo session for a

number of invited guests.

Only four countries have won the glittering trophy: USA, Germany, Norway and Japan. USA have been victorious on four occasions and Germany have lifted it twice. Japan and Norway were champions once each.

This year's finals will be staged in 10 venues across two countries in two different confederations – the first time a FIFA World Cup™ championship will be staged across two confederations. There are six venues in five different cities in Australia and four venues in Aotearoa New Zealand, with only Sydney in Australia having two venues. These are the Sydney Football Stadium and the Stadium Australia, which is the venue for the Final match. More information regarding the FIFA Women's World Cup Trophy Tour is available at [FIFA.com/TrophyTour](https://www.fifa.com/TrophyTour).

FIFA Women's World Cup Trophy Tours Nigeria

Stop Distracting With IREV Order To RECs, Atiku's Aide Mocks INEC Chairman

**Says, "You Should Have Verified Presidential Polls Data On IREV Before Issuing Certificate Of Return To Tinubu"*

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Following the order handed down by the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), that all Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) should verify data on IREV before issuing certificate of return to governors elect, the SA Youth to former Vice President and People's Democratic Party (PDP), Presidential Candidate in the 2023 general elections, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, Ambassador

Aliyu Bin Abbas said that he should have adhered to same before declaring Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu President Elect. Ambassador Abbas expressed this in a statement made available yesterday.

"Dear Brother Mahmoud Yakubu, National Chairman INEC. This Directive should begin with the Certificate of Return you personally issued to Bola Ahmed Tinubu, that is when we can now begin to take you serious. Don't just use this as diversionary," he said.

He alleged that the, "This is tactics to take our attention

away from #FraudFeb2523 Masterminded, orchestrated and executed by your leadership in favour of Bola Ahmed Tinubu and APC".

INEC, had directed Resident Electoral Commissioners (REC) in states and the FCT to ensure comparison with IREV data before issuance of Certified True Copies of form EC8A.

With this development, some Governors-elect might not get their certificate of return at the end of the day if the records on the BVAS and I-REV are conflicting.



Ambassador Ailyu Bin Abbas

LASTMA Apprehends Suspected Fake Traffic Officer, Recovers Fake Identity Card, Reflective Jackets

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

Operatives of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) over the weekend, nabbed another serial fake traffic officer around Ikoyi area of Lagos.

In a press statement released by the Director, Public Affairs Department of LASTMA Mr. Adebayo Taofiq quoted the General Manager Mr. Bolaji Oreagba confirmed that the suspect was nabbed at Olu Holloway Road by Alfred Rewane area of Ikoyi by a Lastma Monitoring/Surveillance team led by Mr. Ashafa Moyosore (Zonal Head).

Mr. Oreagba confirmed further that the Agency carried out a special monitoring/Surveillance operations about the suspect and got him arrested in response to complaints from motoring public (Obinna Kingsley & Adewusi Adebola) via Lastma hotlines/social media handles.

Investigation conducted revealed that the arrested suspect have been extorting huge sum of money from motorists for various traffic offences ranging from seat-belt, obstructions, illegal over-taking and One-way at different locations around the Lagos Island.

"It is disheartening getting complaints from road users particularly motorists on activities of these unscrupulous elements



The suspect

impersonating and extorting money from them".

Mr. Oreagba urged the general public to be wary of these fake traffic officers stating that the Agency operates a cashless policy as any violators apprehended are charged to Court with a 'Referral Notice' issued to them.

"Let me warned motoring public to desists from inducing traffic officers in any form (money) as both the giver and taker are liable before the law".

The General Manager however warned other impersonators disguising as Lastma personnel to immediately desist from such illegal acts as more surveillance personnel have been strategically deployed to hunt for them.

The arrested suspect Mr. Omotutu Bamidele (55yrs) confessed to have been impersonating with a reflective jacket as a Lastma officer and extorting money from motorists particularly private car owners/ drivers at highbrow areas across the State.

Mr. Bamidele who confirmed to be living with his junior brother inside in one of the Army Barracks in Lagos confessed further to have operated around Ikoyi, Obalende, Apongbon Bridge, Iporin, Olowu areas apprehending both commercial and private cars for various traffic infractions including driving against traffic (one-way).

The suspect who hailed from 'Atijere Town' in Ondo State said he and his colleagues are making an average of N35,000 from extortions on daily basis.

"Any motorists particularly private car owners i caught dropping someone at any undesignated bus stop paid between N15,000 to N20,000 while those caught for driving against traffic (One-way) paid a minimum of N35,000".

One Mr. Adewusi Adebola (a

complainant) confirmed that the suspect (Omotutu Bamidele) apprehended him for 'obstruction' on the 6th of March, 2023 around Spac bus stop by Awolowo Road, Ikoyi and collected N20,000 from him for dropping his colleagues.

While Obinna Kingsley complaint via one of the LASTMA social media handles (Twitter) that he was forced to transferred N50,000 to the arrested suspect (Omotutu Bamidele) for 'Obstruction' on Awolowo Road by Obalende Bridge towards Tafawa Balewa Square (T.B.S).

According to Mr. Adewusi Adebola owner of a Toyota Corolla (LSR 299 AY) "Honestly speaking i had written series of negative stories about activities of Lastma on social media particularly on 'Twitter' since the ugly incidents happened until i was called by Lastma Management that the man I reported that extorted money from me was a fake traffic Officer and that he has been arrested".

Meanwhile, the Director, Legal Department (LASTMA) Barr. Akerele Kehinde disclosed that the arrested suspect would be charged to court with all items recovered from him (fake identity card & a reflective jacket) on Monday, 27th of March, 2023) in accordance with the Criminal Code Law of Lagos State.