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By: MIKE ODEH JAMES, Kaduna

As endorsements and criticism of choices made keep making headlines, the spokesman of Northern Elders Forum (NEF), Dr. Hakeem Baba-Ahmed has advised that members should be allowed to determine the leadership of the 10th National Assembly (NASS).

He gave the advise, at a one-day colloquium organised by the Democratic Watch Initiative, under the chairmanship of Dr. Bukola Saraki, held yesterday at the Arewa House in Kaduna.

"First, the best thing is to respect the independence of the legislature and allow members to choose their leaders. Elected legislatures waiting for

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World Day 2023: 40% Adult Africans Hypertensive, Only A Quarter Taking Medicines - WHO

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti has said that in the African region, close to 40% of adults aged 30-79 years are hypertensive and only a quarter of these are taking medicines.

He added that Optimal Blood Pressure Control is only attained in 11 per cent of patients on medication.

A statement signed and issued by Igwebuike Kingsley, WHO Communications, Borno State and made available to newsmen on Wednesday, said, "Hypertension is an important risk factor for cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) mostly heart attack, stroke, and heart failure which account for a significant burden of premature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

"Hypertension is easy to diagnose and there are safe and cost-effective treatment including pharmacologic and behavior change interventions. WHO has prioritized decentralized management and care for NCDs including management of hypertension, using the WHO Package of Essential Noncommunicable disease interventions for primary healthcare.

"In addition, the WHO has published a guidance on the technical specification for automated blood pressure monitoring devices to ensure improved access to accurate, affordable blood pressure

devices which is often a significant barrier to proper medical care in low-resource settings.

"We need to regularly check our blood pressure and incase it is raised, adhere to medications as prescribed by the health provider," Moeti said.

The statement said this year, the theme is, "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer" while every year, the global community commemorates the World Hypertension Day on the 17th of May, aimed at drawing attention to combatting the low level of awareness of hypertension as well as the limited availability of calibrated devices for accurate blood pressure measurement.

He identified the condition dubbed as the 'silent killer' and often times people with hypertension will not have any specific signs or symptoms directly attributed to the condition. While symptoms are usually foreboding of damage on specific organs in the body including the heart, brain, eyes and kidneys, resulting from poor control.

"We can fight hypertension and the responsibility starts with us as individuals and as communities taking control of our health and well-being.

"We need to adopt healthy lifestyles such as reducing salt intake, increasing portions of fruits and vegetables consumption, increasing physical activity, and avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol



consumption," Moeti added. He further explained that effective prevention and control of hypertension requires a multi-sectoral approach, hence this approach should involve collaboration between the health sector and other sectors, such as education, finance, and agriculture, to address the social determinants of hypertension. The Regional Director added that governments in Africa can lead the way by implementing their commitments through policies and programmes that address the root causes of hypertension, promote healthy environments, and improve access to healthcare services. According to him, this will

require a significant investment in healthcare infrastructure, training of healthcare workers, and increasing access to affordable medications.

Moeti noted that early detection through routine screening at all health service delivery levels is important and calibrated and validated blood pressure measuring devices should be available in all health facilities.

"In addition, quality assured medicines should be available for management of hypertension, particularly at the primary level, as well as a robust mechanism to collect data to monitor outcomes from treatment and care.

"In conclusion, addressing

hypertension in Africa requires a multi-faceted approach that involves individuals, communities, and governments working together. For example, interventions such as promoting healthy diets and increasing physical activity can be implemented in schools.

"We must work together to join the global effort to address hypertension and its related health consequences. For those living with hypertension, regularly measure your blood pressure accurately, control it, and live longer.

"By taking action today, we can prevent and control hypertension and improve the health and well-being of millions of people in Africa," Moeti said.

Brain Drain: Comptroller James Advocates Capacity Dev, Technology Transfer For Qualified Nigerians

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

The Comptroller of Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) Rivers State Command, Sunday James has advocated human capacity development and transfer of technology to qualified Nigerians by expatriates as part of measures to halt brain drain syndrome.

He therefore, called on the private sector of the economy to take advantage of government's provision in the Expatriate Quota Grants to Companies that have expatriates who are on quota to allow Nigerians understudies human capacity development on the job, to enable successful transfer of skills and technology.

James, who gave the admonition in preparation for a sensitisation workshop for stakeholders in the state by the command, lamented

that many qualified Nigerians are deprived such opportunities to grow career wise and take over after a period of understudy as stipulated.

The Comptroller, In a statement by the Rivers State Command Spokesperson, made available to New Nigerian Newspaper on Tuesday, said Nigerians must fight brain drain especially for qualified Nigerians that are employable to encourage sound academic pursuit and learning instead of mere certification.

It reads, "The Nigeria Immigration Service Rivers State Command in preparation for stakeholders meeting advocates for Human Capacity Development for qualified Nigerians in the private sector of the economy employee of Companies, Organisations for technology transfer based on government provision in the

Expatriate Quota Grants to Companies that have expatriates who are on quota to allow Nigerian understudies undergo human capacity development on the job to enable successful transfer of skills, technology as envisaged and enshrine in the Expatriate Quota Grants provision.

"Many qualified Nigerians are deprived such opportunities to grow career wise and take over after a period of understudy as stipulated.

"In our quest for engaging with companies in Rivers State, it is important they understand, the provision and enforce same, for the betterment of the nation, avert frustration and to avoid brain drain as a result of lack of job satisfaction and lack of career advancement at home.

"The Comptroller of Immigration Service Rivers State Command

James Sunday, PCC is of the opinion that qualified Nigerians at home should enjoy the fruit of their labour and not be exploited, frustrated and compell to leave the country in the name of looking for greener pastures.

"It is out of place for a qualified Nigerian to be looking outside the shore of the country for a job that is satisfactory when Non-Nigerians takes flight to take up employments in Nigerian Companies, Industries and Organisations.

"After all, the bulk work and even the core jobs are assigned the Nigerians only to be supervised by an expatriate, if only the Expatriate is better informed, then there should be transfer of skills and technology after a period of mentorship or understudy and proper process put in place for career advancement for take over, which is the primary reason for the understudy program

clause in the Expatriate Quota Grants approved by the Ministry of Interior and enforced by the Nigeria Immigration Service.

"The Rivers State Command of the Nigeria Immigration Service is encouraging functional industries, companies and organisations in the private sector of the economy and by extension public sector to collaborate with the Nigeria Immigration Service to give qualified Nigerians sense of worth and dignity for their labour, which is the hallmark for excellent academic performance and employability.

"We must fight brain drain especially for qualified Nigerians that are employable to encourage sound academic pursuit and learning instead of mere certification".

The advise is in preparation for a sensitisation workshop for stakeholders in the state.

Hajj Airlift: CSO Urges Improved Security Across Airports, Hajj Camps

By; JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano

The Independent Hajj Reporters (IHR), a Civil Society Organisation (CSO), has called for more security measures to be in place at airports and Hajj camps during this year's exercise.

The IHR is a media related CSO that monitors and reports Hajj and Umrah activities within and outside Nigeria.

Its National Coordinator, Ibrahim Muhammed, yesterday,

said in a statement that this would dissuade the perpetration of criminal activities in places where intending pilgrims would transit from.

He called on agencies responsible for security across all departure centres to be up and doing to ensure the safe airlift of the pilgrims.

The National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) has fixed May 25 for the inaugural transportation of Nigerian intending pilgrims to Saudi

Arabia.

"Nigerians may recall that pilgrims from Niger State had to be ferried to Abuja because of security challenges in Minna and inadequate security around Minna Airport.

"Also, Kaduna bound aircraft had to be diverted to Kano due to security concerns while a convoy of vehicles conveying intending pilgrims in Sokoto State was attacked by suspected bandits leading to the death of a security agent," he said.

Muhammed also said preparations for this year's airlift is already being challenged by the Sudanese conflict and urged authorities to ensure that adequate security personnel are deployed to all departure centres.

He advised all State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Boards and Agencies to borrow a cue from NAHCON by coming up with a standing committee on security with a mandate to ensure full protection of all intending

pilgrims and facilities being used for transit.

"Various security outfits exist across all the states and local government areas and it is our belief that it will not take too much to select capable hands to work 24/7 until all pilgrims are airlifted.

"The same scenario should be replicated during return journeys. No resources or efforts put to ensure adequate security is too much," he concluded.

Why I Didn't Celebrate My Victory -- Sen Uba Sani

By; FUNMI ADERINTO, Kaduna

Kaduna State Governor-elect, Senator Uba Sani has clarified that he has been concentrating on his duties as a lawmaker at the National Assembly, after receiving his Certificate of Return, from where he has continued to attract developmental projects to the state.

Senator Uba Sani who made this known in an interview with some Kaduna-based broadcast-journalists, conducted in Hausa and aired last Thursday, dispelled rumours that he has left Kaduna since his election.

"I have been performing my legislative duties as a Senator since after the election. I'm still a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria who is representing Kaduna Central Senatorial District at the Upper Legislative Chamber. Immediately I received my Certificate of Return, I returned to Abuja to continue from where I stopped," he added.

Senator Uba Sani disclosed that the N3 billion Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) intervention for the construction of Faculty of Engineering at the permanent site of Kaduna State University (KASU) has been increased to N5 billion.

According to him, it is not in his character to embark on merry-making to celebrate his victory, as the opposition would have wanted, because that is not the right thing to do. The Governor-elect pointed out that prayers were offered by both Islamic clerics and Christian clergy, to seek God's guidance in the discharge of the burden that has been placed on him as the number one citizen of Kaduna State.

"The opposition said that I didn't mark my victory with all kinds of celebrations. They don't know the personality called Uba Sani. It's not in my character to embark on such celebrations.

"During Ramadan Fasting, Imams congregated, read the Glorious Qur'an and thanked

Allah for the victory. They also prayed that, just as He granted me victory, the Almighty should also assist me in governing Kaduna State in a just and equitable manner.

"Three days afterwards, a group of pastors also came and prayed for me and our dear state. We didn't embark on partying. This was how I celebrated my victory. My religion tells me that Allah bestows success on whosoever He wants, not because I am better than everyone," he added.

He also dispelled the accusation that he has been dodging to be served court documents regarding the ongoing petition that was filed by the People's Democratic Party (PDP), challenging his victory. According to him, the law stipulates that court documents can be served by substituted service, in the event that the respondent is not available, adding that personal



service is not compulsory. The governor-elect also promised to carry all segments

of Kaduna State along, when he assumes office on May 29, 2023.

el-Rufai Revokes Rights Of Occupancy Of Makarfi Properties

By; IBRAHIMADAMU, Kaduna.

Barring any last minute change of plan, Kaduna State Government has taken a step to demolish some landed properties of Senator Ahmed Makarfi spread across the state capital. New Nigerian learnt that notice of revocation was sent to officials of the

property by Kaduna Geographic Information Service (KADGIS) on Thursday May 18, 2023.

One of the affected property slated for demolition is Cane Properties located at Plot 11 Murtala Square.

Director of Cane property Alhaji Ibrahim Makarfi when contacted confirmed the

development, adding that the company had already contracted its lawyers.

Sources in KADGIS confided in our correspondent that the demolition notice was in line with statutory regulations in the Land Use Act which empowered state governments the rights to approve and revoke landed properties within their

jurisdiction for exigency and developmental reasons.

New Nigerian Newspapers could not however verify the reason for revoking Makarfi's property, a former Governor of the state and national leader of People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Bayelsa: Timi Frank Files Criminal Complaints Against Sylva

***Urges court to direct police to investigate ex-minister's conflicting certificates**

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Former Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has filed a criminal complaint case against the immediate past Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva at a Chief Magistrate Court Abuja.

In the suit filed by his Counsel, Edward Omega Esq. of Graylaw Practice LP chambers, Frank urged the Chief Magistrate of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to cause a direct criminal complaint to be issued against Sylva over alleged inconsistencies in his name and doubts over participation in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme.

Frank, who is the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), Ambassador to East Africa and Middle East, averred that based on documents before him, the actual identity of the former minister seems to be in doubt.

The suit reads in part: "Over the years, the complainant (Frank) has also shown his resolve in fighting and exposing corruption in public places and holding public officers accountable to their oath of office.

"The defendant (Sylva) on his part once served as the Executive Governor of Bayelsa state between 2008 till 2012 and recently resigned his position as Minister of State for Petroleum Resources sometime around 30th March 2023.

"Facts and documents available to the complainant reveal that the actual identity of the aforesaid defendant is in serious doubt.

"Recently, the complainant while undertaking a private investigation visited the United States District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania where Chief Timipre Sylva instituted a libel case against one Jackson Ude.

"In the course of hearing, Chief Timipre Sylva signed a verification of interrogatories answers dated April 1, 2022 and attached various documents in proof of his identity.

"The said academic documents include a First School Leaving Certificate with No. 092915 dated 1st July, 1976 issued to Anagha Timipere who finished from Ajeromi Central School, Araromi-Apapa, Lagos State.

"Also, the defendant claims to hold a West African Examination Council (WAEC) General Certificate of Education with certificate No. PO851528 and Candidate No. 21735215 dated December 1981 issued to Marlin Anagha Timipre...

"The complainant equally discovered that the erstwhile Minister of State for Petroleum Resources parades a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English with Second Class (Upper Division) from University of Port Harcourt dated 19th August, 1986 issued to Anagha Timipre Marlin. "The defendant equally holds a Doctorate in International Relations (Honoris Causa) from UBIS University in Geneva, Switzerland, dated 22nd September, 2011 and issued to Chief Timipre Sylva.

"The certificates mentioned above have visible anomalies and do not depict the true identity of Chief Timipre Sylva. It is confusing as to who Chief Timipre Sylva is.

"There is no evidence anywhere showing that Chief Timipre Sylva ever changed his name from Anagha Timipre Marlin to Timipre Sylva in 1986 after he purportedly



Timi Frank

graduated from University of Port Harcourt.

"Investigation by the complainant further reveals that there is also no record that the defendant has National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Discharge or Exemption Certificate, as the case may be, either in the name of Anagha Timipre Marlin or Timipre Sylva.

"Records abound in public domain that Chief Timipre Sylva intentionally presented the aforementioned inconsistent, conflicting or forged academic documents before the Bayelsa State Gubernatorial Screening Committee in 2007 as well as the Nigerian Senate and House of Representatives in 2019 under oath for purposes of screening into the positions of Governor of Bayelsa State and Minister of State for Petroleum Resources.

"In a bid to escape the long arms of the law, Chief Timipre Sylva concocted a Deed Poll and Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette dated 11th and 12th May, 2022 to cover up his alleged offences.

"In the documents...Sylva attempted, albeit belatedly to make the general public believe that the manifestly conflicting names: Anagha Timipere, Marlin

Anagha Timipre, Anagha Timipre Marlin and Chief Timipre Sylva appearing on the academic certificates he has been parading for decades all belongs to him.

"The complainant believes that the said Deed Poll and Official Gazette are nothing but mere pieces of paper...procured by Sylva to mislead people and wriggle himself out of being investigated, prosecuted and jailed for the alleged offence.

"The Complainant is worried like every other reasonable Nigerian as to why the defendant waited till May 2022 before procuring the Deed Poll and Official Gazette...

"That the complainant is crying for justice in this matter and only an intervention by the Court can answer the cry.

"That it will be in the best interest of Justice to bring the defendant to answer to the complaint.

"Based on the foregoing, the complainant humbly prays the Honourable Court to direct the Nigeria Police Force to carry out investigation of the alleged offences concerning the defendant.

"Whereof the action of the defendant constitutes the offence of forgery contrary to Section 366 of the Penal Code."

Kano NNPP Governor-elect Opens Doors To Whistle Blowers



Engr Abba Yusuf

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

In a bid towards securing information that may have been hidden from the general public within the last eight years of the Governor Abdullahi Ganduje-led All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kano State, doors have been opened by the incoming New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP), for such information to be discreetly made available. This was contained in a statement signed by A. B. Baffa, Chairman, Gubernatorial Transition Committee (GTC), set up by the NNPP, made available to our correspondent yesterday.

"The NNPP Gubernatorial Transition Committee, GTC that was set up by His Excellency Engr. Abba Kabir Yusuf, the Governor-Elect of Kano State is inviting concerned members of the public that have any relevant

information which would help the incoming administration to have more insight into what happened in the last Eight Years (2015 -2023) to submit such information, in writing, to the Secretariat of the GTC at the Presidential Wing of Tahir Guest Palace, No. 4 Ibrahim Natsugunne Road, Kano," the statement said.

According to the statement titled, "Invitation for Information Memo from the Public" the GTC hinted that alternatively, information memos may be sent to the following email address: "Kano.GTC2023@gmail.com"

"All submissions should be made from Thursday 18 to Monday 22 May, 2023 (between the hours of 9am to 9pm everyday).

"No 7, Sharada Phase II, Kano 08189093534, 08162229733

Kano.GTC2023@gmail.com".

IBM Unveils New Technology

By; PETER NOSAKHARE, Kaduna

IBM has announced its Quantum-safe Roadmap, a technology that is a comprehensive set of tools, capabilities, and approaches combined with deep expertise for an end-to-end journey to make organisations safe.

IBM disclosed this while launching the 'IBM Quantum Safe Technology' at its annual Think event.

According to IBM, the

Quantum-Safe Roadmap aims at using technology to equip industries with the cybersecurity capabilities required for this new era.

IBM said that it has developed three out of the four quantum-resistant algorithms for standardisation announced by the National Institute of Standards and Technology last July, which was the world's wake-up call to start the quantum-safe transition.

Kaduna Deputy Gov Declares Open National Summit On Peaceful Coexistence

By: FUNMIADERINTO, Kaduna

The Deputy Governor of Kaduna State, Dr Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe, on Tuesday, declared open the 4th National Summit on Peaceful Coexistence and Nation Building. The summit on peaceful coexistence and nation building

is a two-day Interfaith conference which took place at Asaa Pyramid Hotel, in Kaduna. The summit also seeks to deepen understanding and strengthen religious harmony among the adherents of the different faiths in the country. It is a religious harmony through dialogue on leaders of

the Islamic and Christian faith, as well as other eminent personalities from across the country. In attendance at the venue, were the Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, the Emir of Zazzau, His Highness, Ambassador Ahmad Nuhu Bamali and other top government officials.



Obaseki Hails Judiciary For Peace, Stability In Edo

**Urges more action to strengthen independence, welfare*

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has hailed the judiciary for their contributions to the peace and stability being witnessed in the State, calling for increased action to strengthen the judiciary and make it more independent.

Obaseki spoke when he received the leadership of the Edo State Judiciary, led by the Chief Judge, Hon. Justice Joe Acha, at the Government House, Benin City. The Chief Justice was on a customary farewell visit due to retirement.

Reiterating the need for sustained reforms for a more sustainable justice system, the governor said, "The structure and demographics of the judiciary is something we need to think about for sustainability. I'm glad that the amendment extending the retirement age is being considered. We need to

take a long-term view of the judiciary and see how people appointed will be able to sustain the law for a longer period."

He continued: "When I assumed office, I made it very clear that for us, the judiciary is the bastion on which our democracy rests and that without law and order, we cannot have a vibrant democracy. I'm glad that we have all witnessed what has happened in Edo in the last six and a half years.

If we did not take steps in the very early stage of our administration to enforce law and order in this state, I'm not sure we would have had the level of socioeconomic development we have today. That we do is as a result of the support we received from the judiciary. So, whatever that we have achieved as the executive arm of government is largely due to the working relationship we had with the judiciary."

Obaseki added, "It is very clear, therefore, that we must take concrete measures to strengthen our judiciary and make it more independent. I'm glad that with Justice Acha, we have been able to begin to create a roadmap for the judiciary - a roadmap that should focus on the welfare, training, and improving the work condition of the judges and other tiers of the judiciary in Edo State just as we've done for the executive. We need to develop a work plan that insists that the ordinary Edo citizen has unfettered access to justice and strengthens those courts that provide that access, particularly the lower courts."

According to him, "We must ensure that we improve the conditions of the judiciary to the best in terms of benefits, housing, office and post-retirement conditions and I'm glad that Justice Acha has started that process which I hope your

successor will ensure that we finalize and institutionalize."

The governor further noted, "I am glad on how you have adopted technology and the other investments that we have agreed to make in the judiciary. I'm hopeful that the infrastructural refurbishment which you have started, making sure that our judges in the outstations live and work contentedly and also ensuring that we provide adequate security for them, we will improve on and sustain the growth recorded."

"I appreciate our retiring Chief Judge who has worked very hard and his colleagues in the judiciary, and the cooperation we have received from you for the last two years. Be rest assured that you started a process and you must benefit from them. I know there are NJC guidelines that can inform us of the parting packages which we will

commence implementing with you."

Earlier, Justice Acha expressed appreciation to the governor for his support to the judiciary, noting, "As is customary, I have led the leadership of the judiciary to pay you a farewell visit. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 291 subsection 1, provides that a High Court Judge must retire upon attaining the age of 65 years. Come the 19th of May, I will be 65 years old."

He added, "I could not have wished for a better governor. Your passion to turn Edo State into an Eldorado is legendary. I immediately discovered that we share the same passion for the overall development of Edo State. You not only intervened in some of our critical infrastructural and personnel needs, the welfare of judges and staff of the judiciary has been greatly enhanced and we have made tremendous progress."



Umahi Is Saviour To Ebonyi People - Prince Arthur Eze

By; MKPUMA ENYINNA, Abakaliki

Governor David Nweze Umahi has been described as a saviour sent from God to change the face of Ebonyi State.

Business mogul, Prince Arthur Eze made the statement while commissioning an 18 span flyover at Abaomege junction Onicha Local Government Area named after him on Tuesday.

Also commissioned by Prince Arthur Eze was the Abaomege -Ukawu-Ugwulangwu-Okposi road.

Prince Eze while appreciating Governor Umahi for immortalizing him through the flyover, applauded him for massive infrastructural transformation of the state.

"Our people suffered so

much some years ago when they were talking about state creation.

"God brought this man, a saviour and he has changed the face of Ebonyi State, I could not recognize Abakaliki again, God gave him the vision, one day he will become the President of this country."

Earlier, Governor Umahi thanked Prince Arthur Eze for being a succour to all manner of persons over the years.

He appealed to him to make himself a rallying point for Ndigbo in the forthcoming Presidency of Ahmed Bola Tinubu.

"I am using the opportunity to beg you to be the face of Ndigbo in Tinubu's administration, if you put yourself forward, the Igbo man will not be neglected.

"You have raised a lot of

people, I have never seen any man that has outperformed you in this regard."

"History is made today, I think it should be three years back when we invited Arthur Eze to lay the foundation of this Flyover. For so many reasons, one he was very key to our struggle.

"He took me in his vehicle to the Villa to meet President Goodluck Jonathan and he said this is the man that will be the Governor of Ebonyi State and Mr. President ticked my name.

"The history of the development of Ebonyi State will not be complete without mentioning Arthur Eze."

The Governor called on people, especially, the younger generation, to learn to show gratitude for any good action and

abstain from paying back evil for good.

"Anybody that has helped you in life, we should continue to appreciate them and that is why we named this flyover bridge, Engineer Prince Arthur Eze flyover.

"A man that has made so many politicians, he gives money in millions of dollars and he doesn't ask you to pay him back."

The Commissioner for Works and Transport, Engr. Ogonnaya Obasi Abara said the Prince Arthur Eze Flyover became necessary to ease cross border movement of trucks between Cross River and Ebonyi states.

Prince Arthur Eze arrived Ebonyi State with his private jet Boeing 5N-PZE via the Ebonyi International Airport, Onueke at noon.

Emergency Response: WHO, Borno Govt Train 155 LGA Rapid Response Teams

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and Borno State Government in collaboration with University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital (UMTH) have trained 155 Local Government Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) from all the 27 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state, including the security compromised LGAs.

Declaring the four-day training open, the Director of Disease Control in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Aliyu Shettima Mailafiya, who commended the WHO for their efforts, revealed that the participants would receive training on Rapid Response to Emergencies to prevent and effectively control disease outbreaks.

The training which is also supported by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and AFENET is to ensure proactive measures are taken in mitigating the outbreak of diseases in the state that has suffered over a decade of Boko Haram insurgency.

The State Coordinator, WHO Field Office in Borno, Dr Ibrahim Audu Salisu, in his remarks to the participants pledges continuous WHO's Support to the government of Borno.

"WHO has been working closely with Borno state

Ministry of Health and State Primary Health Care Development Agency to build the capacity of key state and LGA officials on Epidemic Preparedness and Response".

"WHO and partners have also been providing relevant tools and materials for the frontline teams to work and remain active in all parts of the state regardless of the situation in the area or time of the year", he said.

He further explained, the RRT training is part of the efforts to ensure that new team members are adequately equipped to respond swiftly and effectively to alerts or disease threats in communities and health centers. He urged the State and LGA PHC Directors and key health officials attending the training to ensure they conduct step-down training to other team members and frontline staff who were not able to attend this training.

It would be recalled that the high-ranking and revered traditional leader in the state, the Shehu of Borno, His Royal Highness, Abubakar Ibn Garbai Al-Amin El-Kanemi, during the commemoration of WHO 75th Anniversary commended WHO for bringing remarkable transformation to the health system and eradicating diseases in the state.



Business mogul, Prince Arthur Eze commissioning an 18 span flyover at Abaomege junction Onicha Local Government Area named after him on Tuesday.

Family Of Absconded Abobaku Cries Out, Says Oro Cultists Still On His Trail

By; AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

The family of Ayelabola of Ile Ife has urged the Governor of Osun State, Ademola Adeleke to copy from his Ogun State counterpart, Dapo Abiodun who had last year signed into law a bill titled 'Oba, Chiefs, Council of Obas and Traditional Council Law of Ogun State Bill 2021'.

The family according to a statement released and signed by Chief Michael Ayelabola on behalf of the family, said their son who had been on the run after he was declared wanted by some the Oro cult group after the death of previous Ooni of Ife is yet to regain freedom.

"The bill that was signed into law on Monday, January 10,

2022 by Gov. Abiodun is aimed at respecting human dignity and promoting modernity in the installation and burial of traditional rulers. It is also expected to curb fetish practices in the process of installing and burying traditional rulers in the state", the statement reads in part.

The statement added that, "We

are pleading with our legislators in the Osun State House of Assembly and our amiable Governor, Demola Adeleke to replicate such bill in Osun State in order to stem the ritualistic and oppressive activities of the Ogboni Cults in Obaship institutions in Osun State and Yorubaland".

"Our son who was involved in

the Abobaku saga is still being chased by the Oro Cult group up till now hence we are pleading with the government to save the soul of our son. We learnt there was a similar situation in Ondo State after the demise of the King in Ile-Oluji, as Oro cults are still on the trail of the nominated Abobaku there", said Chief Ayelabola.

Borno Civil Servants Write Promotion Exams

*Dep Gov says exercise not meant to witch hunt any worker

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri
The Borno State Deputy Governor, Hon. Umar Usman Kadafur on Tuesday, said that the ongoing state civil servants promotion exams organised by the Borno State Civil Service Commission (BSCSC) is not meant to witch hunt or victimise any civil servant.

He added that the exercise is purposely organized to ensure adherence and enhance compliance to civil service rules on promotion of public servants towards bringing sanity into the system, while urging them not to panic. The Chairman Sub-Committee on Promotion Examinations, Alhaji Wakil Abba said the first batch of the

professional workers comprises of medical doctors, nurses, midwives, engineers, lawyers and allied staff out of a total of 3,226 civil servants selected and qualified to write the promotion examinations, started on Tuesday, while other categories described as non professional workers sat on Wednesday and Thursday respectively.

The deputy governor was received at the venue by Chairman State Civil Service Commission, Dr Bulama Mali Gubio who is also the former Head of Service, Borno State, Bar. Yakubu Bukar, Chairman Examinations Committee and his members as well as the examiners among others.



You're Outdated! PEPC Slams Tinubu's Lawyer, Olanipekun

**Atiku's lawyer gets
thunderous applause*

By; JACOB ONJEWU
DICKSON

The Presidential Election Petition Court (PEPC) yesterday in Abuja, told Chief Wole Olanipekun SAN, lead counsel to Bola Ahmed Tinubu that he was citing old laws against the request by the Presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Abubakar Atiku for live coverage of proceedings of the court.

Chairman of the court, Justice Haruna Simon Tsammani drew the attention of Olanipekun to a portion of the Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers being wrongfully cited to justify Tinubu's opposition to live coverage of proceedings in Atiku's petition.

At yesterday's proceedings, Tinubu, APC and INEC had separately kicked against the request by Atiku for live coverage of proceedings of the Court to engender public trust and confidence in the court.

Atiku through his lead counsel, Chief Chris Uche SAN had cited the monumental importance of the petition nationally and internationally to back up his demand for live telecast of the proceedings.

But in his bid to justify his vehement opposition, Olanipekun had cited paragraph 4.6 of the Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers which he claimed prohibited Judicial Officers from broadcasting, televising proceedings during court session.

He cited the disputed law following the submissions by Chief Chris Uche SAN, that there was no law or statute barring live telecast of court proceedings.

As Olanipekun was about to read the portion of the law, Justice Tsammani cut in and told the legal luminary that he was citing a wrong law.

Justice Tsammani told Olanipekun SAN that the portion he was citing to justify his arguments against live coverage had been amended and the portion being cited had been deleted completely.

The Chairman of the Court maintained that the portion being claimed by Chief Olanipekun SAN was no longer in the new Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers and as such, not applicable.

While making a case for live broadcast of Atiku's petition, Uche SAN had drawn the attention of the Court to Justice Oputa Panel of

Inquiry that was telecast live and hailed all round in the country.

The Senior lawyer said that non of the respondents would be prejudiced if the petition is broadcast live.

Specifically, he said that there was no single law or statute against live broadcast of court proceedings adding that the fact that it has never been done before should not be misconstrued to mean that it cannot be done this time.

The submissions of Uche SAN had drawn thunderous applause from the crowd who for some minutes clapped before the court announced that clapping was not allowed in Courts.

Atiku had approached the Court hearing his case against the outcome of the February 25 presidential polls, for an order allowing live broadcast of the day to day proceedings regarding his petition because of its monumental importance.

Atiku and the PDP in the application specifically prayed the tribunal for "An order Directing the Court's Registry and the parties on modalities for admission of Media Practitioners and their Equipment into the courtroom."

The application filed on their behalf by their team of lawyers led by Chief Chris Uche, SAN, is predicated amongst other grounds that: The matter before the Honourable Court is a dispute over the outcome of the Presidential Election held on 25th February 2023, a matter of national concern and public interest, involving citizens and voters in the 36 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, who voted and participated in the said election; and the International Community as regards the workings of Nigeria's Electoral Process". They contended that being a unique electoral dispute with a peculiar constitutional dimension, it is a matter of public interest whereof millions of Nigerian citizens and voters are stakeholders with a constitutional right to receive.

The Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, President-elect, Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the All Progressives Congress APC in response kicked against the request of the former Vice President for live telecast of his petition challenging the declaration of Tinubu as winner of the 2023 presidential election.

Arewa Christian Youth Recommend Lalong To Tinubu As SGF



By; AMOS MATHEW,
Kaduna

The Arewa Young Christian Forum of Nigeria has urged the incoming administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu to appoint Governor Simon Lalong of Plateau State as Secretary to the Government of the Federation.

The group, which made this known at a press conference on Wednesday in Kaduna, said a Christian from the North Central deserves the position to compensate the region for apparent neglect.

According to the President of the group, Comrade Agada Nathaniel, after extensive deliberations, it concluded that the governor is the most qualified out of other distinguished North Central sons and daughters.

He went further to add that, "After extensive deliberations, the Arewa Young Christian Forum of Nigeria, given the reality on the ground, states that the position of SGF should be reserved for a Christian from the North Central region of the country," the

statement said.

"Our position is hinged on creating an inclusiveness atmosphere for all the country's geopolitical regions. We must admit that given the present political arrangement, the North Central region has been left out temporarily.

"We wish to make it clear that credible persons of repute have contributed immensely to the growth and development of democracy in Nigeria from the North Central region. These persons have proven their commitment to advancing democracy in Nigeria in ways too numerous to mention.

"Given the above fact, we believe that the outgoing governor of Plateau State, and Chairman of the APC Presidential Campaign Council, Rt. Hon. Simon Lalong indeed fits the bill for the position of SGF."

The group added that Governor Lalong's track record of administrative competence as a one-time speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Governor of Plateau State, and Chairman of the Northern States

Governors Forum speaks volumes.

"Rt. Hon. Simon Lalong has been instrumental in entrenching peace and political stability by administering policies that address the political, religious, and ethnic concerns in North Central and Northern Nigeria as a whole," the statement noted.

"His leadership acumen is such that he reverberates competence, commitment, and sound judgment in matters of national interest. He has been tested and trusted in various capacities, and we do not doubt his suitability for the position of SGF.

"The implication of the appointment of Rt. Hon. Simon Lalong, as the SGF is that it would create the much-needed political and religious balance in the governance structure in Nigeria.

"We wish to use this medium to call on the APC leadership to see this proposition as ideal and necessary, given the peculiarities of time and the need to bring about a sense of inclusiveness in the governance structure in the country.

"This is aside from the fact that Rt. Hon. Simon Lalong is a highly respected individual who has tremendous influence in North Central and has successfully built bridges across the divide. "His experience would be put to good use as the SGF in ensuring that the engine room of the government is adequately oiled to deliver on the critical mandate of the incoming administration of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"The necessity of now requires proactive actions that would give Nigerians the much-desired renewed hope now and in the future. And one such move would be the appointment of a Christian of North Central origin in Rt. Hon. Simon Lalong as the SGF.

"It is our conviction that Rt. Hon. Simon Lalong will deliver on the critical mandate of the Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration in renewing the hopes of Nigerians for a better and progressive Nigeria."



COMMUNITY FOCUS

Schools Safety, Security: Girls Engage Kaduna Community On Roles In Policy

By; ALEX UANGBAOJE, Kaduna

As part of efforts to ensure an effective implementation of the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools in Kaduna State, some young girls on Wednesday, engaged Ungwan Maigero Community in Kaduna State on their roles and responsibilities.

In May 2015, The Nigeria Government endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD), which outlines recommendations to better prevent attacks on education, protect schools from military use and respond to and mitigate the impact of attacks on schools.

The Federal Executive Council (FEC), in 2019, followed up by approving the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-free Schools to guide the implementation of the SSD nationwide. The National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools in Nigeria provides guidance and sets a standard for implementing comprehensive school safety plans; prevention and response mechanisms at the national, state, local government and school levels.

The Girls between the ages of 10 to 24 who are Advocates for Safe School (GASS) project were trained by Stand With a Girl Initiative (SWAG) with support from Rise Up.

According to them, Ugwan Maigero community, is a home to majority of Kaduna State University students, as such there is need to the community to come up with a strategy to protect girls in the area again every form of violence.

Addressing Traditional, Religious, Youth leaders and community security outfits, at the Palace of Sarkin Yaki of Maigero, Leader of the Volunteers, Fatima Muftau, told them that the essence of their visit was to inform them of the importance of providing a safe and secured space for girls in and around the school environment.

She noted that an enabling environment for girls in schools will not only provide security and protection, it will also increase enrolment and retention of girls in schools and reduce threats of domestic violence.

Fatima, said girls are more likely to escape early pregnancy and marriage, and get better



opportunities to fulfill their highest potential and become self-reliant when the environment is safe for them.

According to her, the time for waiting on government to take action first on issues that concern girls is over, as community also owned it as their responsibilities to protect their girls.

She therefore called on all community leader to commit to their roles in making sure girls are protected in and around school environment.

Stand With A Girl (SWAG)

Initiative is youth-led organization dedicated to ensuring that every girl in Nigeria, no matter where she is born or found is empowered to fulfill her maximum potentials with the goal is to promote a safe and supportive environment for the social, economic, academic and healthy development of girls in Nigeria.

GASS project is implemented in Kaduna State. SWAG Initiative trained and mobilized 20 between ages 10-24 to advocate to the Commissioner for Education and other

stakeholders to domestic and implement the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools in the State by December 2023.

Responding, various Speakers at the meeting commended the girls for standing up for other girls, requesting that the advocacy should also be extended to the boys who are the major perpetrators of vices against the girls.

They noted that most crimes against the girls today are being perpetrated most by teenage boys who are under different

kinds of influences, calling on government to step up their effort and support communities in their drive to curtail crime in the communities by providing the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

On his part, Head of Maigero Community (Sarkin Yaki), Elisha Wayas, assured the girls that their message was well received and shall be conveyed to his people to strategize on how to tackle the issue headlong.

He said they are always welcome to the community and that are free to come in at anytime as every

Declare State Of Emergency In Nigeria's Education Sector, UNIFEMGA Tasks FG

**Disburses N50m to over 800 students*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Obafemi Awolowo University Muslim Graduates' Association (UNIFEMGA) has tasked the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency on the education sector in the country.

UNIFEMGA gave the task in a communique issued at the end of its 2023 Annual National Re-union signed by its National President, Engineer Olanlege AbdulFattah and the PRO, Shamsideen Adenopo.

The association stressed that Nigeria has a long way to go as far as development is concerned and needs to go extra miles to actualize the goal. "Nigeria should declare a state of emergency in the educational sector so that we can produce high

quality manpower for the industry and for the purpose of self employment and entrepreneurship", it said. UNIFEMGA added, "The universities are producing graduates that lack skills for employment and creative ability. There is need for universities to generate income to complement government efforts."

"The sector cannot be funded alone by government. There is urgent need to invest in higher education by both the state and private sectors for national development while authorities at the higher Institutions need to be more prudent in their spending".

It urged the Federal and State Governments to adhere to the UNESCO recommended budgetary

allocation to the educational sector to improve educational development in Nigeria, saying, the issue of brain drain, obsolete equipments, constant disruption of academic calendars by both labour and students' unrest, archaic curriculum are some of the few challenges facing tertiary institutions in Nigeria and the incoming government must urgently address it.

UNIFEMGA also stressed that Nigeria should strive to improve significantly on all the major rankings so that Nigeria can reclaim its lost glory. For the business environment to thrive government should provide the enabling environment such as focusing on the issues of electricity, infrastructural development and human capital development.

On activities of the association, the communique said that, "to date from the inception of the programme in 2009/2010, the Association has disbursed about N50 million to over 800 students of the Institution".

It stressed that the conference equally witnessed the presentation of 120 scholarships and grants to OAU students totaling the sum of N9.43million by the Association as part of its welfare gesture to the students on campus.

At the reunion, the association also launched its new website and a new history book and had its keep fit exercise and novelty match as well as its Annual General Meeting (AGM) where its activities in the past one year were reviewed.



Auta

Southern Kaduna Senate: Tribunal Adjourns Mike Auta's Case Against Marshall

By: AUSTINE AGBO EMMANUEL, Kaduna

The Kaduna State Election Petition Tribunal has adjourned the case filed by Engr. Mike Ayuba Auta of Labour Party (LP) against Barrister Marshall Katung to June 1 and 2, 2023.

One of the counsels representing Auta, Sir Ben Churchill Aniekwene while addressing journalists shortly after the adjournment, said the pre-hearing session for the case has closed and the case has been adjourned for hearing.

He said Auta and the Labour Party are urging INEC to overturn the earlier declaration and announce their candidate winner of the February 25 National Assembly election, haven scored the highest number of votes cast.

He said, "What happened today is beautiful. Pleading has been closed. The pre-hearing session that commenced much

earlier before today was closed and the report issued and the matter adjourned for 1st and 2nd June for hearing.

"The petition has a compound of prayers. Substantially, we are urging that the third respondent which is INEC should overturn the election, cancel the election and return us as candidate duly elected, haven scored majority of votes that were cast in that Senatorial district.

"Our candidate, Mike Auta won the election and we have our proof. So that's our major prayer, that Auta should be declared winner of the election and nothing more," he said.

It would be recalled that Engr. Auta dragged Marshall and the Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC) before the tribunal demanding for overturning the February 25 Senatorial election over alleged rigging.

Imo NAWOJ Lauds Uzodimma's Aide For Returning \$1.3m Belonging To American In Jordan

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) Imo State Chapter has commended the Special Adviser to Governor Hope Uzodimma on Persons With Disabilities, Dr Samuel Emehibe for returning 1.3 million dollars belonging to a Polish American upon arrival on pilgrimage in Jordan.

Imo State NAWOJ in a statement signed by its Chairperson, Dr Dorothy Nnaji and the Secretary, Comrade Chika Ewurum, noted that despite the economic hardship and excruciating financial challenges facing most Nigerians, Dr. Emehibe has not only proven that men of integrity still exist, but has also given Imo State an image boost.

In the statement, the association appreciated the impression the Special Adviser has given to the state.

"I noticed the Polish American left a bag that was wrapped. I called him several times, but he did not pay attention until someone helped to wave

him down and pointed towards me, I raised the bag for him to see, he immediately left his two kids and ran to me", he said.

Dr Emehibe added, "He hugged me and told me the bag contained one million Three hundred

thousand United States dollars meant for a project. "In appreciation, he offered me five thousand dollars but I refused it. For the sanctity of the religious obligation and as such conduct will add to improve the global impression of Nigerians as a people who value honesty".

Dr Emehibe maintained that the governor, Senator



Hope Uzodimma, has always anchored the need to lead a life that promotes true value of friendship, sincerity and integrity, as is the core value that builds society, adding that following the governor's charge to the appointees to strive to be good ambassadors, he reckoned the need to help his fellow pilgrim protect his huge funds.

Applauding the governor,

Senator Uzodimma for sponsoring over one thousand citizens of the state to Holy Land, Imo NAWOJ urged Nigerians, the people of the state especially other batches of pilgrims to the Holy Land to strive to be good ambassadors and to show spirit of love for humanity and contentment in the face of material inducement.

Family Of Absconded Abobaku Cries Out, Says Oro Cultists Still On His Trail

By; AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

The family of Ayelabola of Ile Ife has urged the Governor of Osun State, Ademola Adeleke to copy from his Ogun State counterpart, Dapo Abiodun who had last year signed into law a bill titled 'Oba, Chiefs, Council of Obas and Traditional Council Law of Ogun State Bill 2021'.

The family according to a statement released and signed by Chief Michael Ayelabola on behalf of the family, said their son who had been on the run after he was declared wanted by some the Oro cult group after the death of previous Ooni of Ife is yet to regain freedom.

"The bill that was signed into law on Monday, January 10, 2022 by Gov. Abiodun is aimed at respecting human dignity and promoting modernity in the installation and burial of traditional rulers. It is also expected to curb fetish practices in the process of installing and burying traditional rulers in the state", the statement reads in part.

Lagos Agency To Recycle Condemned Engine Oil As Cosmetics Raw Material

By; MATTHEW UKACHUNWA, Lagos

The authority of Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA) has unfolded the agency's pilot project to recycle condemned engine oil aggregated from mechanics to raw materials for cosmetics production.

General Manager of LASEPA, Dr. Dolapo Fasawe, announced the development at True Leaders Training Series executive workshop which took place in Lagos this month.

She assured that the project will kick off in the course of this year.

"I implore all of us to teach and train the next generation to adopt waste management practices

The statement added that, "We are pleading with our legislators in the Osun State House of Assembly and our amiable Governor, Demola Adeleke to replicate such bill in Osun State in order to stem the ritualistic and oppressive activities of the Ogboni Cults in Obaship institutions in Osun State and Yorubaland".

"Our son who was involved in the Abobaku saga is still being chased by the Oro Cult group up till now hence we are pleading with the government to save the soul of our son. We learnt there was a similar situation in Ondo State after the demise of the King in Ile-Oluji, as Oro cults are still on the trail of the nominated Abobaku there", said Chief Ayelabola.

Adding that Governor Abiodun has done so well to bring back sanity and rationale into the chieftaincy institution in Ogun State by introducing the Traditional Council Reform Law, urging the Osun State Government to do the same.

that are sustainable; they will grow up with it, and put the knowledge learnt to good use," Fasawe emphasized.

Using Lafarge PLC as an example, she asked the workshop participants to "look up their model in harnessing waste to power its everyday business operations and manufacturing."

The LASEPA chief encouraged the participants to take a cue from Lafarge's best practices in transitioning to a circular economy.

The training which focused on advancing sustainability and circular economy was organized for facility managers by Lagos Business School Sustainability Centre and its partners.

Firm Donates Plot Of Land To 100 Hours Cook-a-Thon Record Breaker

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

In-motions Business Limited, an Uyo-based real estate firm has announced donation of a plot of land to Hilda Baci, the new holder of the longest cooking marathon of 100 hours.

A statement by the Managing Director of the company, Mr. Gideon Ekanem in Uyo on Tuesday, said that the company is awarding a plot of land worth over 3.5 million Naira, located at one of their properties in a choice area in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital.

On the rationale behind the gift, the statement has it that, "In - Motion's Foundation rests upon the pillars of diligence and perseverance, as we consistently align ourselves with these virtues.

"Hilda Baci embodies the very essence of resilience within our society today, and we wholeheartedly join the entire nation and our fellow Akwa Ibomites in exuberantly celebrating her extraordinary achievement.

"In recognition of this remarkable feat, we are delighted to present Hilda with a free plot of land in Wana Court Estate, the first true Green and Smart Estate in Akwa Ibom State".

"May this well-deserved honor serve as a testament to your unwavering determination.

"Wana Court Green Estate is a chain of green real estate currently selling plots in Uyo, Port



Harcourt, and Lagos".

Recall that the Cook-a-thon (Cooking Marathon) was an attempt by Hilda, who had shown her culinary skills on various Television Cook shows and represented Nigeria at the Jollof Faceoff Competition in 2021, emerging as the winner, to break an existing world record.

The Nigerian foodpreneur who targeted to break the Guinness World record of 87 hours, 45 minutes, and 00 seconds set by Chef Lata Tondon in Rewa, India, in 2019, not just surpassed the said record, but exceeded her set 96 hours with an additional 4 hours, bringing it to a total 100 hours.

The event which attracted

support and admiration from Nigerians and others across the world, including Hilda's State Governor, Mr. Udom Emmanuel, held at Amore Gardens, Lekki, Lagos, and showcased Hilda's culinary skills using various local and intercontinental recipes to put Nigeria on the global culinary map.



10th NASS: Respect Independence Of Legislature, Allow Members Choose Leaders - Arewa Elders Spokesman

■ Charges Northerners to stop campaigning for candidates

final verdicts from the courts who are lobbying groups and members of the public to be elected by colleagues or President-elect forget that if successful, they will be leading legislature. Groups which lobby Tinubu for 'theirs', should know they will pay a price in the long run. That is how politics is played," he said.

According to him, the Northern voter has done his job.

"Some voted because of convictions over qualities of candidates, some because they were induced; some along faith lines and others along party lines.

"The result was that the North was the

only region that gave all the candidates huge votes, indeed, they made the difference in terms of who became elected at presidential levels.

"The northern voter has done his job. Some voted because of convictions over qualities of candidates, some because they were induced; some along faith lines and others along party lines," he said.

Baba-Ahmed explained that the result was that the North was the only region that gave all the candidates huge votes.

"I deed, they made the difference in terms of who became elected at the presidential levels. Individuals and

groups lobbying for positions for northern legislators should be conscious of a number of things.

"The North does not want just any legislator from the North to become Speaker. We should hope that he has the highest personal integrity and a good idea of how his position can help him. All of them contesting should submit to a process by which their fellow contestants nominate them and then support.

"The same thing should be done at Senate level. If they who know each other better than us cannot decide who will serve our interests as Northerners

best, then we stop campaigning for all of them.

"We do not want legislators who want to be in positions of power to fulfill personal ambition. Individuals and groups lobbying for positions for Northern legislators should be conscious of a number of things," he charged.

According to him, "The same thing should be done at Senate level. If they who know each other better than us cannot decide who will serve our interests as Northerners best, then we stop campaigning for all of them. We do not want legislators who want to be in positions of power to fulfill personal ambition".



MURIC Backs Christian Senate Presidency

**Says all Muslims should step down for Southern Christian*

By: AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

The Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) on Wednesday, called on all Muslims vying for the Senate Presidency to step down for a Christian counterpart from Southern Nigeria. Prof. Ishaq Akintola, Executive Director, MURIC, in a statement

stated that as a major stakeholder in the affairs of Nigeria, they have followed with keen interest the imbroglio which greeted the Muslim-Muslim ticket and how it ended in Nigeria having a Muslim president-elect and a Muslim Vice President-Elect.

He added, "In view of this

outcome and considering the multi-religious character of our dear country, Nigeria, it is our considered opinion that the post of senate president should go to a Southern Christian."

According to him, Nigeria needs the cooperation of both Muslims and Christians, saying that only such

collaboration can engender peace and development in the country.

He is of the opinion that Muslims should not take all the top posts despite being the majority group in the country, stressing that Muslims must be ready to share power with their Christian compatriots.



Hon Badmus Kilamuwaye

Prelate Emeritus Of Methodist Church, Dr Mbang Dies At 86

By: PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

The Methodist Church Nigeria has announced the passing on of the Prelate Emeritus, His Eminence, Dr Sunday Coffie Mbang at the age of 86 years.

A letter signed by the Conference Secretary of Methodist Church Nigeria, Rt. Revd Babatunde Taiwo to all Arch Bishops/Trustees and Lay President of Methodist Church Nigeria, stated that Dr Mbang died yesterday after an impactful earthlv

ministry of 44 years.

According to Dr Taiwo, Prelate Emeritus Mbang was enrolled at Trinity College Umuahia in 1962 Mbang, who was described as the longest serving Head of Methodist Church, Nigeria, was until his demise, the Emeritus President of World Methodist Council, Trustee of Methodist Church Nigeria and Nigeria Inter Religious Council.

First Patriarch Champlain and Bishop, only person to be both Patriarch and Prelate. First Black

President of World Methodist Council who will be surely missed by the Church and his associates," Dr Taiwo stated.

He added that details of the burial will be announced later.

Prelate Emeritus Mbang, was among the founders of Father's of Faith, who prayed and endorsed Governor Udom Emmanuel's successor, Pastor Umo Eno, now Akwa Ibom State governor-elect



His Eminence, Dr Sunday Coffie Mbang

Ogun Guber polls: APC, Gov Abiodun Frustrating Our Election Petition, NNPP Raises Alarm

**Warns them to Stay Away*

**SW Zonal Publicity Secretary disowns apology letter*

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The New Nigeria Peoples Party, (NNPP) yesterday, alerted that All Progressives Congress (APC) is planning to frustrate its ongoing election petition against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), APC and Governor Dapo Abiodun over the omission of NNPP from the ballot papers used in conducting March 18 governorship election in the state.

The Southwest Zonal Publicity Secretary of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP), Hon. Badmus Kilamuwaye raised the alarm in a statement made available to journalists.

According to Hon Kilamuwaye, APC in allegedly trying to frustrate the election petition by dabbling into NNPP affairs unnecessarily in Ogun State, warning that it is time for APC and Governor Abiodun, "to stay clear of NNPP matter. "I want to also call on the APC-led administration

under Governor Dapo Abiodun to stay clear of the NNPP matter, which they are trying to dabble in, to frustrate the ongoing petition against the APC, Dapo Abiodun and the INEC for the omission of our party name on the ballot papers used in conducting March 18th", he said.

The NNPP South West Zonal Publicity Secretary added, "The action taken on the ongoing matter is a collective fight to rescue the NNPP faithful members within and diaspora".

"I fervently call all our faithful members in Ogun state, to keep calm because this struggle is a rescue mission and together we win. And to the former Ogun state Chairman, should be extremely careful and be warned"

He stressed further, "Thank you very much the good people of Ogun NNPP; His Excellency Olufemi Ajadi Oguntoyinbo, NNPP Ogun state guber candidate; the zonal Southwest leadership led by Prince Ayoade; NNPP national executive council led by

Ag. Abba Kawu Ali and our indefatigable national leader His Excellency Senator Dr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso for their unrelenting efforts to rescue Ogun state NNPP". On the purported apology letter written by him to the former Ogun State NNPP Chairman, Hon Kilamuwaye, he said he has never for any reason, written an apology letter to the former Chairman of the NNPP in Ogun state, Comrade Sunday Olaposi Oginni.

Hon Kilamuwaye alleged that the apology letter was orchestrated by someone trying to impersonate him. New Nigerian recalls that crisis engulfed the party after the national leadership expelled the former chairman, Comrade Sunday Olaposi Oginni for alleged anti-party activities.

The crisis took another dimension on Tuesday, with the arrest of Hon Kilamuwaye by the Police who detained him over alleged frivolous allegations, but was granted bail on Wednesday by a Magistrate Court, Isabo, Abeokuta.

Nigeria Governors Forum, UNICEF Laud Zulum's Leadership Awards On Primary Healthcare

By: SADIQABUBAKAR Maiduguri
The Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) and UNICEF are proud to announce that Borno State was awarded as the overall champion in the inaugural Primary Healthcare Leadership Awards.
 The award honours strong leadership and commitment of governors who have made significant investments in Primary Health Care (PHC).
 These investments have been instrumental in transforming the lives of women, girls, and children across Nigeria.
 The best-performing state in the country, Borno, will receive \$700,000, a testament to the transformative power of its effective leadership and strategic

investment in Primary Health Care (PHC).
 A statement issued by UNICEF Communication Officer, Borno State, Folashade Adebayo and made available to newsmen yesterday in Maiduguri, added that the Zonal prizes go to Kwara for North Central, Jigawa for North West, Borno for North East, Ebonyi for South East, Rivers for South – South, and Ondo for South West.
 The first runners up in these zones are Bauchi, FCT, Zamfara, Abia, Edo, and Ogun. Each zone's winner will be awarded \$500,000, and the first runners-up in each zone will receive \$400,000.
 "The courage, vision, and dedication shown by the leadership in the winning states is truly inspiring," said Christians

Munduate, Representative of UNICEF Nigeria.
 "Their commitment to improving Primary Health Care has brought about significant and positive impact on the lives of its constituents, particularly women, girls, and children.
 Borno State's double victory underscores the power of strategic investment and collaboration in building a healthier future for Nigeria. I congratulate all the winners for their exemplary commitment to Primary Health Care." She added.
 The Director of Nigeria Governor's Forum added, "This is an important moment to acknowledge the governors' dedication to Primary Healthcare. Their initiatives serve as a testament to the power of collaboration and strategic

investment in building a healthier future for Nigeria."
 The PHC Leadership Challenge, which culminated in these awards, was born from a historic gathering in November 2019, hosted in Seattle by philanthropists Bill Gates and Alhaji Aliko Dangote.
 Organized by NGF, National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), and UNICEF, with generous support from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and Aliko Dangote Foundation (ADF), the challenge aimed to enhance governors' commitment to human capital development and to Primary Health Care, mobilize State resources, promote accountability, and foster innovation for gender-specific health outcomes.



A'lbom Judges, EFCC Trade Blames Over Slow Prosecution Of Criminal Matters

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

At a meeting of the National Judicial Council (NJC) Corruption and Financial Crime Cases Trial Monitoring Committee (NJC COTRIMCO) and designated judges, the prosecuting officers of EFCC and ICPC, judges in Akwa Ibom State and officials of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), traded blames on why prosecution of criminal matters in court are delayed.

During the meeting in Uyo yesterday, the Akwa Ibom State Chief Judge, Justice Ekaette Obot pointed frequent transfers of prosecuting officers as reason to the delay in the prosecution of most of the criminal matters in the state.

Obot said relevant security agencies in the country should regulate properly the transfer of the Prosecuting Officers of Financial and Other Related Crimes Agencies to avoid delay of criminal matters in Court.

"if the relevant authorities could regulate the transfers of these

Prosecuting Officers such that when one is posted to Akwa Ibom, Abuja, Abia or any other state, he stays there for at least five or six years before being transferred, it will go a long way to hasten the process.

"Officers should stay long enough in a station to conclude matters they are prosecuting," Obot said.

Justice Gabriel Etteh in his comments during the interactive session said that most of the prosecuting officers are often transferred in the middle of prosecuting matters.

Etteh added that by the time a replacement will be sent, a considerable time has been lost and the replacement in most cases would be nonchalant over the matter.

"My Lord, apart from the arbitrary transfer of the prosecutors, which is a big issue, some of these officers are not hardworking, I must say.

"Imagine an officer coming to a court just to ask for adjournment with flimsy excuses. This lack of enthusiasm from the prosecuting officers is frustrating prosecution of criminal matters," Etteh

said. In his contribution, Justice Bassey Nkanang, said the attitude of prosecutors of financial crime agencies most times make judges to be at cross road.

Nkanang stated that in most cases the prosecutors failed to show up for their cases, even after being served and the defense counsels would mount pressure on the Judge to terminate the case because of lack of seriousness on the part of the prosecutor.

He said striking out cases that touch on financial crimes would send a wrong signal, but when a matter is delayed in court, there is a tendency that it would be struck out.

In defence, the Chief Prosecutor of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mr Takon Ndifon had accused the state government of stifling the agency of discharging its duties in the state.

He noted that the Akwa Ibom Government had secured Court injunction barring the agency from investigating any of the high ranking official suspected to be involved in financial crime

"The State is against the

EFCC and ICPC. The State Government has gotten Court injunction barring us from investigating their high ranking officials.

"They are even the ones frustrating these matters from going to Court, it's not as if the monies when recovered would go into our pockets but to the State coffers, which would be used for development.

"If we are given free hands and allowed to investigate high profile cases in Akwa Ibom that require investigation, we can sanitise the system, but how can we do that when there is an injunction? Though we have appealed that order. It's still pending," Ndifon said.

The Chairman of NJC COTRIMCO, Justice Abimbola Ladipo, said he had heard the prayers of each group and would channel them to the Council to take actions.

Ladipo, however, called on the state Chief Judge to always have meetings with the judges and the prosecuting officers to know their problems and if there was need, she should make a report

Seme Customs Impounds Unregistered Pharmaceutical Products Worth Over N27m, Petroleum Product

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

Operatives of the Seme Area Command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) have impounded cartons of unregistered pharmaceutical products worth N27,861,538, New Nigerian Newspapers has learnt.

According to reports, the consignment were intercepted by the operatives while conducting stop and search along Abidjan-Lagos Corridor.

The products were concealed inside a truck with registration number GL 6663 GH belonging to a major Nigerian conglomerate on May 9, 2023 at about 08:30pm by officers of the command.

The Customs Area Controller (CAC), Comptroller Dera Nnadi, mni, told journalists that the seizure contravened Customs' ban on importation of pharmaceutical products through the land border without approval.

Nnadi disclosed that the products also does not have National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) registration numbers, while five out of the seven seized products have expired.

He explained further: "The truck was taken to the station at Seme for proper examination and upon the conduct of the examination, the following unregistered pharmaceutical products were discovered:

"MORPHINE SULFATE 100ml x 1076 bottles; A M O D I A Q U I N E SUSPENSION 60ml x 94 bottles; VERMOX 500mg x 2970 packages x 1 sachet x 1 tablet; MEPACRINE TABLETS 100mg x 390 packets x 1000 tablets; CLOFENAC SR 100mg x 298 packets x 10 sachets x 10 tablets; LOSARTAIL POTASSIUM 50mg x 1485 packages x 2 sachets x 28 tablets and VIREST 400 ACICLOVIR tablets. B.P 400mg x 499 packages

x 5 sachets x 5 tablets.

"The Command and indeed every Nigerian is worried about this particular seizure considering the dangerous use of morphine which is a derivate of opium. This drug can be deployed to illicit use to aid criminals.

Command also seized 1,200 Jerry cans of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) equivalent to 36,000 litres with a Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N11,271,690.93.

Nnadi upon resumption as CAC in January had pledged to adopt new strategies that could boost trade while enforcing the nation's anti-smuggling laws along the corridor, in line with the ECOWAS protocols on free movement of goods and persons.

According to him, officers and men of the Command have since keyed into reform policies which has translated into remarkable achievements recorded.

He reiterated the Command's commitment to fight smuggling under any guise, stating that those trying its resolve will continue to meet their Waterloo as it remains resolute at ensuring adequate surveillance of the borders.

Also, the Command handed over seven large sacks containing 553 parcels of cannabis sativa intercepted in a Ford Bus and two suspects arrested in connection with the seizure of April 21, 2023, to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

Two other suspects had earlier been handed over to sister security agency for necessary action.

The NDLEA Commandant, Seme Badagry Command, Abubakar Wada, while receiving the seizures, commended Customs for the achievement.

He expressed satisfaction with the synergy between the two agencies, stating that their working relationship will continue to get better in order to achieve more results.



Deputy Senate President Senator, Omo Agege (2nd right) receiving his community members during their appreciation visit to him over the assent of their bill by the president at NASS, in Abuja. Photo: BASHIR BELLO DOLLARS

NBS And The Scorecard Of An Eclipsing Administration

By: JEROME-MARIO CHIJOKE UTOMI

With a few days to the May 29 inauguration of the new administration in the country, it is glaringly evident that President Muhammadu Buhari led Federal Government of Nigeria has successfully completed its constitutional two terms of eight years.

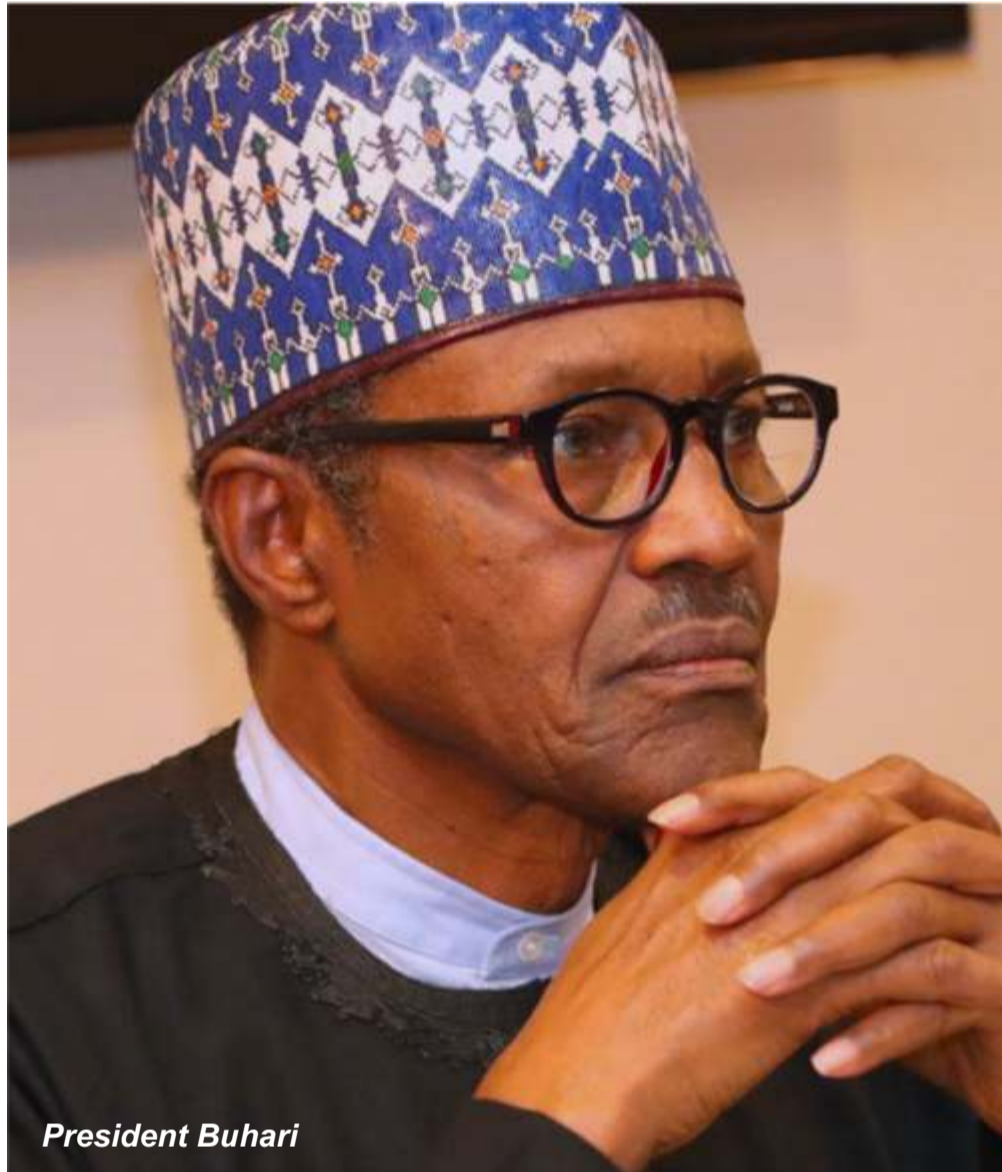
Though there exists no codified, metered or iron cast way of assessing the administration's performance, it is, however, assumed that an administration that spanned eight years must have milestone(s) of achievement to point at. Indeed, while there are flicker and recognizable flashes of achievements in some sectors of the nation, interim particulars in my view, suggest that infrastructural provision is the administration's greatest accomplishment.

The crucial point, then, is how do one define what constitutes infrastructural success and how was it achieved? What are/were the opportunity cost of the purported success?

In February 2021, President Buhari reportedly established the Infrastructure Corporation of Nigeria (InfraCorp), with initial seed Capital of N1 trillion, provided by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) and the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC). InfraCorp was also expected to mobilize up to an additional 14 trillion Naira of debt capital.

Through InfraCorp, Buhari catalyzed and accelerated investment into Nigeria's infrastructure sector via originating, structuring, executing and managing end-to-end bankable projects in the country. Today, the administration has to its credit; 56km Lagos-Ibadan Standard Gauge Rail completed and commissioned, within a Nigerian-record-time of four years (2017 to 2021). 186km Abuja-Kaduna Standard Gauge Rail Line completed and commissioned in 2016, 327km Itakpe-Warri Standard Gauge Rail completed and commissioned in 2020, 33 years after construction began. Also, the administration going by media reports invested over a billion dollars in three flagship projects: Lagos-Ibadan Expressway (for completion in May 2023), Second Niger Bridge (for completion in May 2023), Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano Expressway (two of three sections for completion in May 2023) among others.

Even when this piece holds the opinion that the administration demonstrated understanding of the pivotal role infrastructural provision plays in providing the society with the services that underpin the ability of people to be economically productive, it will on the other hand objectively qualify the aforementioned achievements as sparse and insufficient, particularly when juxtaposed with a catalogue of adequately



President Buhari

unattended sectors (education, security, Power, Niger Delta region Labour and Employment etc).

In fact, each time I reflect on President Buhari's 8 years administration, the fears expressed by a friend in 2015 about the present administration comes flooding.

Adding context to the discourse, my friend amidst euphoria triggered by the declaration of the 2015 presidential election result, cautioned me with these few words; "men will change their ruler expecting to fare better; this expectation induces them to take up arm against him, but they only deceive themselves, and they learn from experience that they have made matters worse".

Still, in that milieu, I had reminded him that the result ushered in a season of integrity in the country, he again replied thus; no single attribute could be identified as a 'virtue'. Remember! He added, 'Politics has its own rules'.

Eight years after that conversation, I cannot categorically say that my friend was right or wrong in his prediction. But the present instinct in the country explains two things; first, apart from the fact that the shout of integrity which hitherto rend the nation's political space has like light faded, jeer has since overtaken the cheers of political performance while fears have displaced reason -resulting in an entirely separate set of consequences – irrational hatred and division.

The reason for this spiraling feeling is

understandable!

Take as an illustration, in 2020 alone, there were outright abridgment of the masses' welfare by the Federal Government via increase of Value Added Tax (VAT) from 5 to 7.5 per cent, re-introduction of Stamp Duty Charge, re-introduction of Stamp Duty on house rents and C of O transactions, electricity and petrol price hikes crisis among others. These were inextricably linked both in their causes and solutions.

Each of these challenges has its roots in the administration's payment of little attention or lip service to expert warnings about the poor state of the economy, and further fed by Federal Government's persistent formulation of policies with no clear definition of problem, the goals to be achieved, or the means chosen to address the problems and to achieve the goals; adoption of coquettish tactics that make the masses fall in love with excitement while they (leaders) remain inwardly detached; keeping them in control. There are very recent examples.

According to a recent report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), it stated that in April 2023, the headline inflation rate rose to 22.22% relative to March 2023 headline inflation rate which was 22.04%. Looking at the movement, the April 2023 inflation rate showed an increase of 0.18% points when compared to March 2023 headline inflation rate. Similarly, on a year-on-year basis, the

headline inflation rate was 5.40% points higher compared to the rate recorded in April 2022, which was 16.82%. This shows that the headline inflation rate on a year-on-year basis increased in April 2023 when compared to the same month in the preceding year (i.e., April 2022).

Likewise, the report added that on a month-on-month basis, the All-Items Index in April 2023 was 1.91%, which was 0.05% points higher than the rate recorded in March 2023 (1.86%). This means that in April 2023, on average, the general price level was 0.05% higher relative to March 2023. The percentage change in the average CPI for the twelve months ending April 2023 over the average of the CPI for the previous twelve months was 20.82%, showing a 4.37% increase compared to the 16.45% recorded in April 2022.

While the above qualifies as an occurrence that its pain is deepened by the fact that it was avoidable, it is important to further underline that if there is a particular area where the present administration cannot boast of clean hands, it is in the incessant debt accumulation (foreign and domestic).

It is a common knowledge that in January 2023, Patience Oniha, Director general, Debt Management Office (DMO), while fielding questions from journalists at the public presentation and breakdown of the highlights of the 2023 appropriation act in Abuja, noted that the incoming Federal Government would inherit about N77 trillion as debt by the time President Muhammadu Buhari's tenure ends in May.

Aside from signaling an indication that Nigerians should expect tough time ahead or better still, may not anticipate a superlative performance from the incoming administrations as they will from inception be over burdened by debt, what is, however, 'newsy' is that each time the present Federal government went for these loans, Nigerians were usually told that the loan seeks to stimulate the national economy, making it more competitive by focusing on infrastructural development, delivery of inclusive growth and prioritizing the welfare of Nigerians to safeguard lives and property; equipping farmers with high tools, technology and techniques; empowering and enabling mines to operate in a safe and secured environment and training of our youths through revival of our vocational institutions to ensure they are competitive enough to seize the opportunities that will arise for this economic revival."

Again, it is evident from the above that the nation did not arrive at its present state of indebtedness by accident but through a well programmed plan of actions and inactions that engineered national poverty and bred indebtedness. The state of affairs dates back to so many years in the life of the present Federal Government.

Continued on Page 22

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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.
- Series discount is subject to the stipulated number of insertions, and it is payable only at the end of a campaign (to be deducted from balance pay).
- COPY DATE:** for all the Title Heads is two working days for the North and three working days for the South.
- Cancellation of previously booked advert will be accepted in writing within four working days notice, less than 24 hours to the date of publication will attract 50% surcharge.
- 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.
- The management of New Nigerian Newspapers Limited reserves the right to reject an advert or any publication in any of its titles where such materials are considered distasteful for public exposure or libelous.

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

SPACE	COLOUR			BLACK AND WHITE		
	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	32,285.71	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

Yari: Yeoman For The Job Of Senate President

By ESTHER AGADA, NKECHI ANADU, FOLASHADE OGUNREMI & ZAINAB SHUAIB

We are the mothers of the nation; we gave birth to the incoming senators and members of the House of Representatives in the 10th National Assembly (NASS). We are women who vote. We are the women who voted for the President-Elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Vice President-Elect, Sen. Kashim Shettima. We are the women who voted for members of the incoming 10th National Assembly. We are the Women For Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari. Here, we lend our individual and collective voices to the matter of electing the leadership of the 10th NASS.

It is common knowledge that the primary duty of NASS is to make qualitative laws for a greater Nigeria – devoid of ethnic, tribal, religious and related sentiments. Hence, each constituency and senatorial district strives to elect the best hands to represent them at NASS, which in turn does it utmost to elect the very best from members as NASS leaders.

A huge uproar greeted – deservedly so – the recent decision of the governing All Progressives Congress (APC) decision not only to zone the uppermost positions of the 10th NASS to some regions but to hand-pick or micro-zone these top jobs to specific individuals. Nigerians were told that the National Working Committee (NWC) of the APC and the President-Elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu took the zoning decisions ostensibly after consulting the power blocs and relevant stakeholders both within the party and the body-politic, thus heating up the polity, instead of healing and soothing the nation following the just concluded 2023 General Elections, and setting lofty, progressive agenda for the 10th NASS.

The natural question to ask is: If indeed the widest consultation possible was carried before the APC NWC announced the zoning formula with specified names for the positions so far allotted, why did all hell broke out after the announcement? The reasonable inference we could draw from the current, deep and wide disaffection over the issue is that the President-Elect and the APC NWC did not consult as widely as required under the situation at hand, and allow superior logic to carry the day. Perhaps that list released by the APC National Publicity Secretary, Barr. Felix Morka, is a first shot indicating the zygotic fusion or formation of a Tinubu cabal which aspires to run ring around the President-Elect and indeed all Nigerians in the Tinubu Presidency for the next four years. We sincerely pray and hope that last sentence falls wide off the mark, though. Time will tell...

Now, we are women and we are democrats. We understand the inner and outer workings of the party system and the democratic processes. Indeed as progressive party women we deign to party supremacy as a veritable principle of any political party worthy of the appellation.

However, we humbly beg to differ, respectfully, on the way the APC NWC and the President-Elect have sprang that bothersome 10th NASS leadership list on us and indeed all Nigerians as stakeholders in the Tinubu Presidency and the Nigerian Project.

To be sure, if indeed the APC NWC and the President-Elect consulted widely and secured a party, national consensus on the list in question, the instant hoopla which trailed its release would not have occurred.

That most marginalised candidates for the leadership position of the 10th NASS have snubbed the list and recalibrated their campaigns indicate that they were not consulted before the zoning was done, let alone their consents on it obtained by the APC NWC and the President-Elect as the whole country was told. This singular act has generated the sense that the incoming Tinubu Administration has been hijacked by certain vested interests.

Who is trying to pull a wool over the nation's eyes in this matter, a Tinubu Cabal at its embryonic stage? Does this emergent cabal consider itself above the constitutional strength of 109 democratically elected distinguished senators and 360 honourable members of the 10th Assembly of the Again, time will tell..!

Anyway, it is pertinent to point out that executive interference in the parliament is an anathema in true democracies. If a fit and proper democracy is what the President-Elect stands for – and indeed we want to believe that a true democrat in the person of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu believes in true democracy, the rule of law and separation of powers as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution as amended – he would admit that with that zoning list a false start has occurred towards imposing leaders on the 10th NASS, and he will quickly move to correct it. That, we strongly believe, he will still do.

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu should not start his presidency on a crisis note via such an important organ of democratic governance – the Legislature Doubling down on that discredited zoning list may seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof is destruction – a holy book cautions.

Permit us to point out to the APC NWC and the President-Elect that Nigerians are excited by the healthy contest which has ensued among candidates seeking to lead the 10th NASS. All citizens of goodwill are looking forward to Proclamation Day and a rancor-free election of the National Assembly leadership on that auspicious, national event.

Our fellow Nigerians have faith in these senators and members-elect as democrats to elect their parliamentary leaders in the best spirit of comradeship possible. This is because all candidates in the contest have repeatedly exhibited maturity in their campaigns and assured at every turn that they would respect the outcome of the leadership tussle in the spirit of sportsmanship since it is within themselves as lawmakers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and therefore expected to be democratically free and fair, especially if the Executive and other non-parliamentary forces do not insert themselves into such a simple, straightforward process of electing NASS leaders.

It is important to note that what most candidates running to lead the 10th NASS, including Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar – the majority of the incoming legislators, across party lines and indeed Nigerians nationwide –

are asking for is a level-playing field in the contest. No more, no less! And that is not exactly a difficult demand by our lawmakers in their own parliament, is it? The future of our children and Nigerians at large is at stake here.

Perhaps the two decades and three years of civil rule has lulled those behind the ongoing attempt to undermine the independence of the National Assembly into a deep slumber, hence they can no longer glance at the rearview mirror of our democratic journey since 1999 to see where we are coming from.

Do these aspirants-cabalist need their individual and collective memories juggled to startle them to remember the dark age of Military Rule in this country and the terrible experience Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and other pro-democracy icons – individuals and groups – went through to return Nigeria to civil rule?

Do these wannabes-fixer of parliamentary leaders for the 10th NASS realise that the fundamental institution which distinguishes democratic governance from Military Rule and autocratic dictatorship is the National Assembly? Where is the democracy if the 10th NASS cannot freely choose its own leaders?

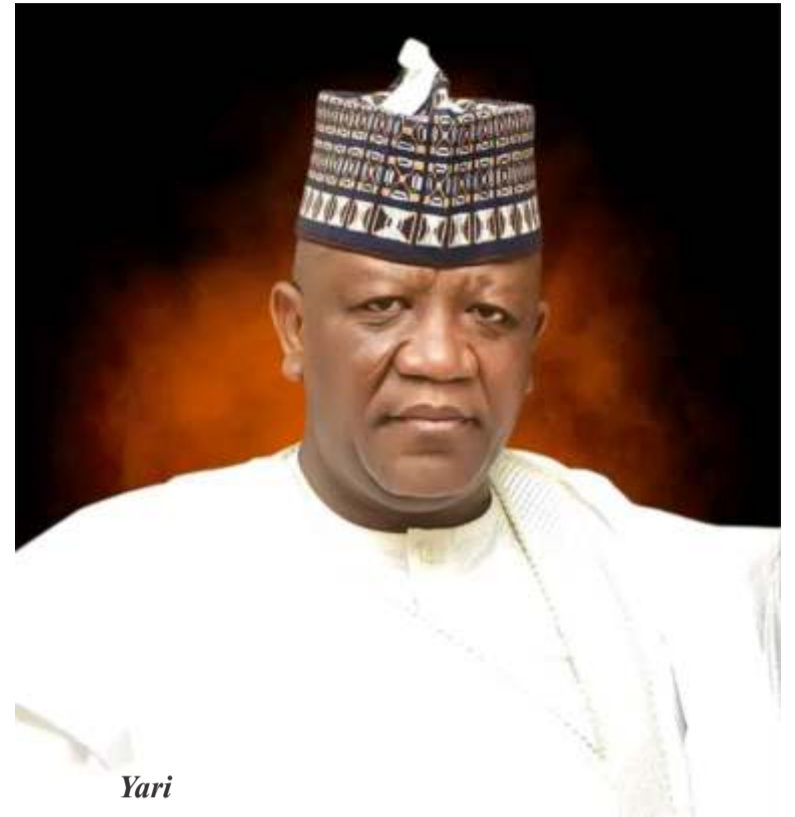
We want to believe that the President-Elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, can clearly recall where the rain started beating us as a nation, where we collectively began to dry ourselves on this democratic journey and to what extent we have succeeded to slice off slivers of undemocratic tendencies from the body-politic.

The President-Elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, needs to put his democratic credentials before the Nigerian People, once again, by distancing himself from the ongoing attempts to foist leaders on the incoming 10th NASS – because Asiwaju belongs to the People.

To institute the leadership structure of the 10th NASS, the Women For Yari Movement is for an open, transparent contest in which only members of the parliaments are involved and without any third-party meddling. Only a National Assembly leadership chosen in this legal, constitutional way can ensure a Nigeria that works for all, with no hijack of it from any quarters.

Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar subscribes to such a free and fair process. It is an existential principle he was trained to learn, accept, deploy and inculcate in his pupils as a lowly, humble Grade II school teacher with the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) in Talata Mafara, Zamfara State (1985-1993).

Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari



Yari

Abubakar did not depart from that path of openness and fairness as ANPP state party secretary (1999-2003), state party chairman (2003-2007), party National Financial Secretary (2007), Member Representing Anka/Talata Mafara Federal Constituency (2007-2011), two-term Executive Governor of Zamfara State (2011-2015; 2015-2019) and as Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum (2015-2019).

Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar will NOT take to learning a new 'dance' in imposition, micro-zoning and allied undemocratic practices at this stage of his career as an elected public official.

As a democrat, Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar values the rule of law and has therefore publicly pledged to respect the outcome of a free, fair 10th NASS leadership election.

In any case, Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar is the best man for the job. As President of the Senate in the 10th NASS, Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar will render yeoman's service to the Senate, the National Assembly, the Peoples of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and our dear nation herself, thus putting Nigeria first.

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu would have in Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar as Senate President a nationalist and patriot who will rally his fellow senators and the lower chamber of the National Assembly to actualise the "Renewed Hope" vision of the incoming President.

Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar is a highly experienced and dependable hand in the nation-building project. As Senate President, all patriotic elements, men and women of goodwill can count on him steer the ship of state aright for the common good.

As Senate President, Yari is for you, Yari is for me, Yari is for all!

We are patriots! We are the Women For Yari Movement!

Long live Distinguished Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar!

Long Live the National Assembly!

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

Esther Agada, Nkechi Anadu, Folashade Ogunremi and Zainab Shuaib are members of Women For Yari Movement

Dr Maksha: The Unquestionable Loyalty Of Adamawa Trusted APC Man

By: TOM GARBA

As they say, "silence is golden", to me it's not only golden, it is the wisdom that has the power and the ability to create affluence and wealth that can influence people positively. This is the power Dr. Ismaila Nuhu Maksha got, an Adamawa State silent achiever and a humanist who is passionate about supporting the less privileged and the downtrodden. Maksha is an achiever, a critical All Progressives Congress (APC) stakeholder in Adamawa State the party is fortunate to have as an enigma unto good works.

He worked out success in many electioneering periods in the interest of the party because he believes in the party manifestos and constitution as a platform for poverty alleviation and National development.

Maksha is a brainy gift not only to APC but to the nation at large, he has worked and still working for the party at both the National and state levels. An unflinching loyalty he maintains and reserved for the party system.

As a registered member of APC from the Gashaka polling unit in Hong LGA, of Adamawa State, Dr Maksha has grassroots verifiable contributions for the development of the party.

He provided the Local Government, Thilbang ward party offices and his APC Youth supporters group offices with chairs, which is to show his high level of allegiance and belief for the party right at the grassroots.

As a major stakeholder of the party in his ward, this humble and God Fearing politician has contributed generously to ensure success, this earned him a good name with led to the formation of a volunteer support group (Dr. Maksha Support Group) with a registered members numbering about seven thousand spread within Hong and Gombi LGAs, sustaining the group with his resources to campaign for APC. He donated new motorcycles for the APC campaign even though he was not directly looking for a political post.

Because of his steadfast allegiance to the party, Maksha held several political meetings with various religious, youth, and community groups preparatory to the election which garnered the votes for APC in his LGA, especially his Gashaka Polling unit; Wuro- Dole, Fadama Rake, Bangshika, Dulchidama polling units even though the party lost.

His unwavering love for APC Maksha is without mincing words to say that he has paid his dues to be called for any national

assignment and to serve the country at whatever level.

He is recognized for his staunch political consistency and beliefs in the rule of law, justice, and fairness. It is beyond question that he is another beacon of hope, a glorious flying horse for APC.

A trailblazer with all the threads of good leadership. Giving life to APC, the party he sojourned fighting tooth and nail to sustain its glorious future for Nigeria and all Nigerians.

Beyond Political records of building his party, the humble, tranquil, optimistic, and very kind to all those who come his way. Dr. Maksha is an ace Public Health Practitioner.

His dazzling skill in the field of Public Health has taken him beyond the shores of Nigeria as a seasoned Public Health practitioner with previous long-term experience in clinical practice and Health Services Management and Administration.

He earned the Member of the Federal Republic (MFR) honor because of his selfless service to humanity in the medical line.

He is a Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants/Chartered Management Consultant (FIMC/CMC) and holds a Master's degree in Public Health (MPH -Health Services Management) from the University of London and; Diploma in Public Health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MB, BS) degree from Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria.

The excellent Man recently retired from the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) after over 22 years of service in different capacities as Regional Health in Emergency Specialist with the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Office in Jordan.

Where he provided professional support in the areas of Human Rights Based Programming in health and emergencies ensuring quality preparedness, response, and prevention of Public Health Emergencies and oversight to 16 MENA countries (Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Iran, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, State of Palestine, Jordan, Djibouti, including those in L3 emergencies with a specific focus on the Whole of Syria operation.

Also, as a Health Specialist (Health Systems Strengthening and Partnerships), Project Officer of Health and Nutrition, Immunization Specialist, and

Project Officer of Primary Health Care and Disease Control at the National (Nigeria) and international levels (Liberia, Sierra Leone, and MENA).

Adamawa CSO creates awareness on good governance

As a national Officer in UNICEF Nigeria-Bauchi Zonal Office, he has visited virtually all the nooks and crannies of the 6 States in the North East and is very familiar with the Challenges of the terrain in addition to working in other States in the zonal office including Kano.

He pioneered the use of Photovoltaic Solar Refrigerators for vaccine storage jointly with the Engineering Department of ATBU in 1997. He won the Best Project Officer prize in the Health Program for the UNICEF -Nigeria Country Office for the Year 2001.

As an international officer, he worked in the Liberia Country office to respond to the Humanitarian crisis situation as the Section Chief for Health (including EPI, HIV/AIDS, and WES) and Nutrition. He got a commendation note from the then Executive director UNICEF for his role in negotiating peace corridor with rebel groups for a mass measles vaccination during the humanitarian crisis.

In Sierra Leone he was on the team that was responsible for post humanitarian conflict and recovery response and the UNICEF Country office health emergency focal point and technical coordinator for the Ebola Viral Disease (EVD) outbreak in 2014 during which he conceptualized, and presented the three days 'lock down' response strategies that won the presidential and Health partners (including major donors) approval for the implementation and is a proud holder of UNICEF staff award letter to that effect.

In Nigeria, he has worked at all levels of primary, secondary, and tertiary Health institutions as a clinical medical practitioner, and hospital administrator including supervising a 600-bed capacity referral hospital where he supervised over 500 staff including specialist consultants, and as public health director in Gongola/Adamawa State. He also has a long experience in the area of Maternal, Neonatal, and



Dr Maksha

Child Health and was an honorary Registrar in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital in Zaria, Nigeria. He is a Nigerian, married for almost 32 years, and has children and grandchildren and a very committed Christian.

In and outside Adamawa Many young people who have faith in Maksha have long yearned for him to be part of a system. Before now he has sponsored over three hundred Youths (Mainly Orphans) to finish their Senior secondary schools and University through his NURAH Education Foundation scholarship pet project he established since 2004. Several youths irrespective of State, Tribe, and Religion have benefited tremendously from his goodwill through employment opportunities and entrepreneurial development.

Maksha took early retirement from international civil service with UNICEF to return and serve his nation in any way possible, and offered his professional services pro-bono during the Corona outbreak with the Presidential Task Force (PTF) he joined APC not because he wanted a position or a job but because he believed in the party agenda for change.

It is utterly inconceivable that a

man like Maksha because of a political feud among the APC family in Adamawa to utterly say is not a member of the party. These are some of the sentiments that hinder growth in the nation's economy and its polity. This Man has given so much to the growth and development of APC and the nation. Let all the anti-progress APC members understand that with or without any position Maksha remains a bonafide member of APC because this is his political face as a starter in partisan politics.

This is also to say that with such affinity and allegiance to APC, Dr Maksha is another good Nigerian that the present government of Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu should bring on board to help in having an effective and progressive administration. As such, it is only fitting that the incoming President considers utilizing the political sagacity of Maksha and his prowess in the Field of Medicine and management in his administration and ignores the blabbing noise of political haters.

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National Assembly Sovereignty: Joke Taken Too Far

By Owei Lakemfa

As an undergraduate in Great Ife, the Obafemi Awolowo University, I was a member of the Students Representative Council, the parliament. Whenever we met, the generality of the student body surrounded the venue to observe. The idea was that the parliament represented the students, so they have a right not only to observe, but also influence it. In a far limited sense, that is what is called the gallery; except that while the gallery can be cleared, same does not apply to the parliament.

The idea that parliamentarians are autonomous and should not be influenced either in picking their officers or legislating, was ridiculous.

Given that background and consciousness, I find it a huge joke for some legislators-elect to demand that the leadership of the 10th National Assembly should be determined by members alone without influence from outside, including, the ruling party and the President-elect.

It is wishful thinking to expect the incoming Executive to be disinterested in who becomes the Senate President, Speaker or their Deputies. Even the legislators diverting the country's attention on such a matter know they are joking. Otherwise, they would not be littering our cities with their billboards and posters soliciting to be elected into the leadership of the National Assembly when they know the general populace, being neither Distinguished Senators nor Honourable Members, are not eligible to vote in the hallowed chambers.

I have not read about these legislators or their horde of supporters making a case for pro-people programmes the next Assembly should pursue; how to check the financial recklessness of previous assemblies, or the content of the character of those aspiring to lead the Assembly. It is all about zoning, sharing offices, and by extension, cornering the resources of the country.

Some even warn that the scenario of the 8th Assembly when Senator Bukola Saraki broke ranks and got himself elected against the position of the party, should not be repeated. I ask: why not? Was the rebel Saraki leadership not far better than the out-going rubber stamp Assembly leadership?

The idea that only National Assembly members should determine who the Senate President or House Speaker should be is as ridiculous as saying politics should be left to politicians alone. Even when the Constitution empowers the President to pick ministers, he cannot be allowed to do so without pressures and



interference from various groups, parties, communities and interests, including the National Assembly. Indeed, it will be ridiculous to expect one man alone to pick a minimum of one minister from each of the 36 states without outside interference.

Even if we all close our eyes and play deaf to the process of NASS members electing officers, that would not mean the Assembly will be independent; a parliamentary leadership that wants to sell out will do so irrespective of whether its ascension was backed or rejected by 'outsiders'. In any case, the idea of whether the NASS is independent or not would not be determined by its antagonism to the Executive.

The fact is that the way the NASS runs is so compromised that it cannot be independent of the Executive. First, it pays its members all sorts of allowances and emoluments, outside what is officially approved. And that is to the extent that the net payment to a member of the House of Representatives comes to some N10 million (\$21,621) monthly and that of the Senator, N14 million (\$32,272) monthly.

Secondly, the Assembly pads the National Budget so heavily that President Muhammadu Buhari in his 2022 Budget claimed that the NASS inserted 6,576 new projects in the budget, including over 1,500 into the budget of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture alone. These insertions are done without regard to needs, feasibility studies, conceptualisation, design, costing or availability of funds. This, as we are

aware, is an annual ritual in the NASS.

Thirdly, the parliamentarians hijack executive responsibilities by awarding themselves 'constituency projects' which they cost, award, implement, supervise and approve by themselves.

Perhaps a more fundamental issue is the electoral process that produced many of the NASS members which we all know cannot stand the most basic of scrutiny. Some were not even candidates produced through normal party primaries; and for many, their elections were characterised by financial inducement, blatant vote-buying, intimidation and violence. In summary, the process which produced some NASS members was criminal.

For many legislators, investing huge sums in getting elected into parliament is a worthy investment because the returns are very high; perhaps the highest and safest investment in the country.

So, what we truly need in Nigeria is not the so-called independence of the legislator from the Executive, but his independence from an un-parliamentary culture. A critical step is to make it so unattractive that only those interested in serving the people will seek election into parliament. I am never tired of making a contrast between the Nigerian Senator who for the work of making laws collects an obscene net of \$32,272 monthly or \$387,264 annually, and his Cuban counterpart who receives not a single cent for doing the same work. While the Nigerian Senator claims to be doing legislative work full-time and lays claims to other monies, including for vehicles,

the Cuban Senator has a full-time work and being a legislator is part-time. So, in Cuba, after a normal day's work, while his fellow workers are going home to their families or for relaxation, the Senator is heading to the National Assembly for the voluntary part-time work of making laws. Therefore, where in Nigeria a Senator may be willing to buy votes, employ thugs and violence in order to get elected or re-elected, the Cuban Senator does not buy votes, and may not even be too keen to get elected. Yet, the quality of law making in Cuba, is not inferior to that in Nigeria. If anything, going by the pro-people laws in Cuba, the Cuban National Assembly is far superior to that of Nigeria.

This is not about a socialist or non-socialist system, it is about basic human decency. For instance, Mahmud Ahmadinejad, the two-term President of Iran who left office in August 2013, did not retire into stupendous wealth like former Nigerian Presidents. He merely returned to his work as a lecturer in the Civil Engineering Faculty of the Iran University of Science and Technology. When he returned to his teaching job after a ten-year absence, he told his colleagues and students: "I am very happy to be back, as if I am home."

Again, unlike former Nigerian Presidents and state governors who have convoys of expensive cars, including bullet proof ones, Ahmadinejad has been seen going to work in crowded buses. He has no fear of being mobbed because he was and remains part of the Iranian people.

NBS And The Scorecard Of An Eclipsing Administration

As noted in my recent and similar intervention, the nation was warned with mountains of evidence that this was coming, it was also pointed out that under the present condition of indebtedness, it may be thought audacious to talk of creating a better society while the country battles with the problems of battered economy arising from indebtedness, yet, our leaders who are never ready to serve or save the citizens ignored the warnings describing it as a prank. Now we have learnt a very "useful" lesson that we can no longer ignore.

In 2019, the rising debt profile of the country dominated discussion when the Senate opened debate on the general principles of the 2019 Appropriation Bill. Most of the contributors to the referenced debate asked the executive to exercise some level of caution on its borrowing plan in order not to return the country to a heavily indebted nation it exited in 2005 through Paris Club debt relief.

Senate Leader, Senator Ahmed Lawan, (as he then was) kicked off the debate when he read "A Bill for an Act to authorize the issue from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation the total sum of N8,826,636,578,915 only, of which N492,360,342,965 only, is for Statutory Transfers, N2,264,014,113,092 only, is for Debt Service, N4,038,557,664,767 only, is for Recurrent (Non Debt) Expenditure while the sum of N2,031,754,458,902 only is for contribution to the Development Fund for capital Expenditure for the year ending on 31st day of December, 2019."

While noting that the budget deficit will be funded through borrowing, Lawan among other things stated; "about 89% of the deficit (N1.65 trillion) will be financed through new borrowings while about N210 billion is expected from the proceeds of privatization of some public enterprises. Debt Service/Revenue Ratio which was high as 69% in 2017 has led to concerns being raised about the sustainability of the nation's Debt.

Reacting to Lawan's words, many Nigerians raised the alarm on the country's rising debt profile. They noted that though the budget estimates should be given expeditious consideration and passage in view of the time already lost, the borrowing plan contained in the Bill should be properly scrutinized. They insisted that scrutinizing the borrowing plan became necessary to prevent the country from exceeding its borrowing limit when juxtaposed with the ratio of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Even some Senators in their submissions frowned at the nation's increased borrowing proposals on our yearly budget which they described as becoming unbearable. "Yes, money must be sought for by any government to fund infrastructure but it must not be solely anchored on borrowing which in the long run, will take the country back to a problem it had earlier solved. "Besides,

there are other creative ways of funding such highly needed infrastructure."

Others at that time were particularly not happy that the debt profile of the country would soon rise to \$60 billion from less than the \$20 billion it was before the present government came to power in 2015. While they noted that the components of the \$60 billion debt profile include \$23 billion external debt and \$20 billion local debts, these concerned Nigerians observed with dissatisfaction that another \$12 billion was already being processed for presentation to the National Assembly to finance Port Harcourt to Maiduguri rail lines.

Still on the 2019 budget borrowing proposal, it noted that "Nigeria is gradually turning to a chartered borrowing nation under this government all in the name of funding infrastructure. "This must be stopped because the future of the country and in particular, lives of generations yet unborn are being put in danger." Even with the high level of indebtedness of the country, "the government in power is planning to further devalue the Naira to about N500 to one US dollar." They concluded.

Similarly in February 2022, Economic experts going by media reports urged the Federal Government to seek a debt moratorium and reduce the cost of governance to reduce funds expended on debt servicing, as it stands as the best available option.

This, according to them, will enable the government to suspend payment for now and re-strategize – particularly, the government cannot continue to service its rising debt profile at the expense of meeting the competing needs of the people, a similar expert warning was recently handed by Economic analysts that the Federal Government's soaring borrowings could eventually suffocate the country if not mitigated.

Indeed, from the above torrents of explanation/concern expressed by these experts, this piece clearly agrees that 'Nigeria's debt stock has finally become an issue that calls for more drastic approach to support the fiscal and monetary authorities to tow the nation's economy out of the doldrums.

Qualifying the above sad account as a bad commentary is the awareness that despite these prophecy of foreknowledge which deals with what is certain to come, and prophesy of denunciation, which on its part, tells what is to come if the present situation is not changed; both acting as information and warning respectively, the President Muhammadu Buhari led Federal Government has become even more entrenched in borrowing, ignoring these warning signals.

In 2020, one of the reputable national newspapers in Nigeria in its editorial comment among other observations noted that Nigeria would be facing another round of fiscal headwinds this year with the mix of \$83 billion debt; rising

recurrent expenditure; increased cost of debt servicing; sustained fall in revenue; and about \$22 billion debt plan waiting for legislative approval. It may be worse if the anticipated shocks from the global economy, like Brexit, the United States-China trade war and interest rate policy of the Federal Reserve Bank go awry. The nation's debt stock, currently at \$83 billion, comes with huge debt service provision in excess of N2.1 trillion in 2019, but set to rise in 2020. This challenge stems from the country's revenue crisis, which has remained unabating in the last five years, while the borrowings have persisted, an indication that the economy has been primed for recurring tough outcomes, the report concluded.

The situation says something else.

Another news report within the same time frame indicated that the federal government made a total of N3.25tn in 2020, and out of which it spent a total of N2.34tn on debt servicing within the year. This means, the report underlined, that 72 per cent of the government's revenue was spent on debt servicing. It also puts the government's debt servicing to revenue ratio at 72 per cent.

It was in the news that PricewaterhouseCoopers, a multinational professional services network of firms, operating as partnerships under the PwC brand, in a report entitled; 'Nigeria Economic Alert: Assessing the 2021 FGN Budget.', warned that the increasing cost of servicing debt will continue to weigh on the federal government's revenue profile. It said, "Actual debt servicing cost in 2020 stood at N3.27tn and represented about 10 per cent over the budgeted amount of N2.95tn. This puts the debt-to-revenue ratio at approximately 83 per cent, nearly double the 46 per cent that was budgeted. This implies that about N83 out of every N100 the federal government earned was used to settle interest payments for outstanding domestic and foreign debts within the reference period. In 2021, the FG plans to spend N3.32tn to service its outstanding debt. This is slightly higher than the N2.95tn budgeted in 2020."

Today, such fears raised cannot be described as unfounded just as this author doesn't need to be an economist to know that as a nation, we have become a high risk borrower.

Looking at the above facts, this piece holds the opinion that the present debt profile presently crushing the country may not have occurred by accident.

And, even as the nation goes on borrowing spree and speeds on 'borrowing lane', and at a time the World Bank indicates that "almost half of the poor people in Sub-Saharan Africa live in just five countries: and they are in this order, namely; Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Madagascar, the situation becomes more painful when one remembers that no

one, not even the Federal Government can truly explain the objective of these loans and whether they were utilized in the masses best interest.

It would have been understandable if these loans were taken to build standard rail system in the country that will assist the poor village farmers in Benue/Kano and other remote villages situated in the landlocked parts of the country, move their produce to the food disadvantaged cities in the south in ways that will help the poor farmers earn more money, contribute to lower food prices in Lagos and other cities through the impact on the operation of the market, increase the welfare of household both in Kano, Benue, Lagos and others while improving food security in the country, reduce stress/pressure daily mounted on Nigerian roads by articulated/haulage of vehicles and drastically reduce road accidents on our major highways.

Again, it would have been pardonable if the loan were deployed to revitalizing the nation's electricity sector, to re-introduce a sustainable power roadmap that will erase epileptic power challenge in the country and in its place restore the health and vitality of the nation's socioeconomic life while improving small and medium scale business in the country.

What about the nation's refineries?

The present administration as part of its campaign promise in 2015, agreed to ensure a better deal for Nigerians. Specifically, it promised to take measures that will strengthen corporate governance in the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, as well as in the oil and gas sector as a whole. This is because of the belief that weak structures made it possible for the endemic corruption in the management of both the downstream and upstream sectors of the oil and gas industry. But eight years after such demand was made and Jonathan gone, the three government-owned refineries in the country have not been able to function at full capacity as promised by the present administration.

Today, if there is anything that Nigerians wish that the FG should accomplish quickly, it is getting the refineries to function optimally as well as make the NNPC more accountable to the people. What happened under president Jonathan has become a child's play when compared with the present happenings in Nigeria's oil/gas and electricity sectors.

What the above tells us as a country is that more work needs to be done and more reforms to be made. It also reminds us that as a nation, we are poor not because of our geographical location or due to absence of mineral/natural resources but because our leaders fail to take decisions that engineer prosperity.

Utomi is the Programme Coordinator (Media and Politics), Advocacy for Social and Economic Justice (SEJA), Lagos. He could be reached via; jeromeutomi@yahoo.com or 08032725374.

Argentina 2023: Flying Eagles Arrive Mendoza

By: AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

Nigeria's Flying Eagles arrived in the city of Mendoza on Wednesday evening, four days before their opening match of the FIFA U20 World Cup finals against the Dominican Republic.

The team led by Head

Coach, Ladan Bosso touched down at Aero Puerto International Airport, Mendoza and was received by NFF's Head of International Competitions, Dayo Enebi Achor and officials of the Local Organizing Committee of the championship.

The Nigeria Football

Federation (NFF) had set up a pre-World Cup training camp for the Flying Eagles in Buenos Aires, the capital city of Argentina, where the team defeated an Argentine second division team, Almirante and battled out a 3-3 draw with fellow World Cup finalists Colombia in friendlies.

Nigeria, who will be making their 13th appearance at the FIFA U20 World Cup finals, open their World Cup campaign in group D against Dominican Republic on 21 May, and will also play Italy and Brazil in that order in the group phase.



The Flying Eagles

NOC Sets June 24 For Olympic Day Celebration

**Urges all states to follow suit*

By: AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

Plans had been concluded by the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC) in conjunction with the Sports-For-All Commission to organise the 2023 edition of the Olympic Day celebration on Saturday, June 24, 2023, in Nigeria.

According to the public relations officer of NOC, Tony Neziyana, All States have been informed to organise the event in their States accordingly.

"Let's move," is an Olympic initiative to encourage the world to move beginning on June 23. The objective of Olympic Day is to create a Global Movement that inspires people to make time for daily physical

activity.

"The world is moving faster than ever, but people are moving less. Research has found that over 80 per cent of young people are unable to reach the recommended daily activity for optimum mental and physical health.

"Together, we can help change this. We aim to make Olympic Day the annual day of Global Movement by encouraging people to simply make time to move.

"The Olympic Movement is coming together to provide a wealth of inspiration to get active from a 30-minute guided workout with iconic athletes to grassroots initiatives around the world. Please join the

movement and let's move."

The event is an ideal platform to highlight the benefits of physical activity which allows people to learn about Olympic values and to put them into practice in their everyday life. Engaging in exercises promotes health and fitness for individuals. Jogging and walking burn calories, tone muscles shape your body and help de-stress your mind.

The Olympic Day event is not a competition to win prizes, but to serve as a reminder that exercise holds a lot of promise in helping mankind to stay healthy through sports as a way of life.

Due to the extenuating circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic in the last few years, the NOC

and Sport For All Commission had to organise the previous events only in Lagos to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the general atmosphere now conducive for us to organise the programme with other States, we hereby encourage you all to participate in the programme.

In Lagos, the celebration will be flagged off by the President of the Nigeria Olympic Committee, Engr. Habu Ahmed Gumel.

He would be supported by other dignitaries.

NOC encourages corporate and philanthropic individuals to donate financially or support us with their products because of the mileage it will give to the company.

Gusau Celebrates Sani Toro, Emmanuel Okala

By: AYO OJEDOKUN Lagos

President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau has felicitated with a two-time Secretary General of NFF, Alhaji Sani Ahmed Toro and former international goalkeeper Emmanuel Okala on their respective birthday celebrations.

Alhaji Toro, who holds the traditional title of Yerima of Toro town in Bauchi State, hit the landmark platinum jubilee age (70) on Monday, same day that 'Man Mountain' Okala turned 72.

"Words are not enough to describe the accomplishments of these two men. Alhaji Toro was the first Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Professional Football League, on the launching of the professional game in Nigeria, and served as Secretary-General of the nation's football-governing body during an unforgettable period. "Emmanuel Okala remains a household

name until this day, despite having left the national team more than 40 years ago. I am happy for both Alhaji Toro and Emmanuel Okala and I pray for longer lives in good health and sound mind for both of them."

Alhaji Toro, an unassuming but thorough and diligent administrator, was Secretary-General when Nigeria qualified for the FIFA World Cup finals for the first time (1993) and also when the Super Eagles won the Africa Cup of Nations for the first time on away ground (Tunisia, 1994). He was also in office when the U23 team won Africa's first-ever Olympic football gold in Atlanta, USA in 1996.

Okala was the Green Eagles' number one goalkeeper for several years, and was in goal when Nigeria won the All-Africa Games football gold in 1973. He was also a member of the Green Eagles' winning squad at the 1980 Africa Cup of Nations – Nigeria's first triumph in the continent's flagship football championship.



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Kwara Wins NGF Healthcare Delivery Award, Rated Best In North Central

By; BILIQIS ONAOLAPO OLAJUMOKE, Ilorin

Kwara State has been rated the best state in basic healthcare delivery in the entire North Central region, beating Abuja the Federal Capital Territory and other states, to clinch the first position.

At an event held in Abuja on Wednesday night, the

state won the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF)'s Primary Healthcare Leadership Challenge award for the improvement recorded in the sector in the last four years.

The NGF Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge was consummated in 2019 as part of the 'Seattle Declaration', which

assesses overall performance of primary healthcare delivery using indicators like 'government's support and commitment, quality of service delivery, improvement in the health indices and outcomes, community participation and ownership, among others'.

Commissioner for Health, Dr. Raji Razaq and the

Executive Secretary of the Kwara State Primary Health Care Development Agency Dr. Nusirat Elelu received the award on behalf of the state.

Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq also attended the award ceremony alongside many other serving and former governors from different parts of the country.



Successful Transition Key To Better Democratic Governance - Youth Group

By; JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano

A youth group known as, Youth For Democracy And Good Governance (YDG) has described the 2023 general election as free and fair where new leaders emerged at different levels without violence.

The group's secretary-general, Malam Auwal Mai Nasara expressed this during a chat with newsmen in Kano, adding that "successful election and transition from democratically elected government to the other, is the key to good governance".

He said that Nigeria is

now on a solid democratic foundation and from what has happened, "our democratic dispensation is getting more strength, especially with the 2023 elections held on February 15 and March 18 respectively, that brought the next leaders at the national, states as well

as parliaments.

Malam Mai Nasara stressed that their group is also working seriously to ensure that democracy in Nigeria is benefiting the electorate in various channels.

He called on the new leaders to keep Nigeria's democracy on track for national growth.

Argentina 2023: Flying Eagles Arrive Mendoza

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Kaduna Electric Confirms NERC Notice

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

Kaduna Electric has said that it acknowledges the 60-day notice of intention to cancel its electricity distribution license by the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC).

The notice, according to a report by the management of KAEDCO said that it is in line with the regulatory power of the commission.

According to the report, "It is coming on the heels of an initial engagement between the Commission and Shareholders/lenders to Kaduna Electric-in-Receiverhip in sustaining the mutual objectives of the Federal Government for an intervention in a number of Electricity Distribution Companies including Kaduna Electric

for a turnaround of the DisCos and sale of core interests to new investors.

It explained that the board and management have continued to work on the intervention objectives, challenges remain, stressing that stakeholders continue to engage on addressing them

KAEDCO, therefore, assured their customers of ongoing engagements between the commission and shareholders including the Bureau of Public Enterprises and Lenders in order to address the long-running and current issues at Kaduna Electric.

It also assured of continued provision of electricity in their Franchise Area, Kaduna, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara states - with the utmost sense of duty professionalism.

10th NASS: Nigeria Needs Christian South-South Senate President - MUSWEN

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The umbrella body for all Muslim organisations and Muslim interests in the South West of Nigeria, Muslim Ummah of South West Nigeria (MUSWEN), on Wednesday, said Nigeria needs a Christian South-South Senate Presidency in the coming 10th National Assembly.

In a statement made available to journalists in Ibadan by its Executive Secretary/CEO Prof. Muslih Tayo Yahya, MUSWEN emphasized that this correct the erroneous jittery on the Muslim-Muslim Presidency in the country MUSWEN stated that, "this reassuring move is most laudable. This bold move has the propensity of further uniting Nigeria across both tribal and religious lines.

"It is a very laudable and progressive move that is capable of engendering peace and national cohesion. The Muslim Ummah of South West Nigeria (MUSWEN), the umbrella body for all Muslim organisations and Muslim interests in the South West of Nigeria, hereby lends its support to this Christian South-South Senate

Presidency agenda", it said MUSWEN added, "We use this opportunity to call on well-meaning Nigerians to support the President-Elect, H.E. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Vice President-Elect, H.E. Sen. Kashim Shettima in their onerous task of taking Nigeria to great heights.

"Elections are over, this is the time for national reconciliation. In the spirit of our greater tomorrow, let us all join hands to usher in a new dawn in Nigeria as we inaugurate the new administration of our President-Elect and Vice President-Elect on Monday 29th May, 2023".

It recalled that, "recently, the All Progressives Congress adopted Senator Godswill Akpabio, a Christian second-term Senator representing Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria, for the position of Senate President in the upcoming 10th National Assembly.

"This decision, as reported, was made to have an inclusive zoning arrangement ahead of the inauguration of the 10th National Assembly leadership".