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PDP Suspends Makarfi Over Alleged Anti-party Activities

By; ZAKARI ISAH,
Kaduna

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) has announced the suspension of former Kaduna State Governor and former acting PDP National Chairman, Senator Ahmed Muhammad Makarfi over alleged anti party activities.

A two-page suspension notice which was dated Sunday, May 14th, 2023, signed by the Chairman, Tudun-Wada Makarfi

Ward, Saidu Aliyu and five others, said the suspension was as a result of persistent contravention of the party's constitution.

The letter of suspension notice reads:

"You are hereby notified that as a result of your persistent contravention of the provisions of Sections 58 [3] [1, 58 [1] (h) and 58 (s) of the Constitution of the Peoples Democratic Party (as Amended in 2017), to wit; engaging in anti-party

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EFCC Trains North East Journalists On Effective Reporting Of Economic, Financial Crimes

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

The Executive Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mr. Abdulrasheed Bawa, CFE, CAMS has organized a one-day training workshop on "Effective Reporting of Economic and Financial Crimes for Journalists" as one of the modest efforts of the commission to build synergy and strengthen media understanding and appreciation of the work of the commission.

He added that the workshop training which was held on Thursday at the EFCC Area Command held at the Zonal Command Conference Hall Maiduguri, is in continuation of a series that began a few years ago. Last year, four of such workshops were held the headquarters, but the scope has been expanded to accommodate more journalists in the zonal commands of the commission.

Represented by the Assistant Commander of the EFCC, North East Zonal Office, Maiduguri, Borno State, ACE Johnson Oshodi, the Executive Chairman reiterated that it was also a privilege to connect with the men and women who have been assisting in the fight against corruption in the region, using their various platforms as a channel for informing and educating the people about the work

of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission.

The EFCC Executive Chairman further said, "media potentials to inform and educate the people is crucial for us. We believe that on our own, we cannot win the war against corruption without a buy-in by the people.

"This is why the support of the media is invaluable. We need the media to help sensitize the people on the ills of corruption and economic crimes.

"The decision of the commission to sponsor this workshop underscores the importance which it attached to the role of the media in the fight against corruption and economic crimes."

According to him, "the papers that will be presented today have been carefully selected to draw attention to areas of concern in the fight against corruption, especially money laundering and terrorism financing."

"I believe we are all aware of the new mechanism for the fight against money laundering in our country. The Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022, Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022 and the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 are new legislations designed to prevent and tackle illicit financial flows and money laundering.

"Nigerians need to be

more informed about these important legislations. Part of our objective today is to acquaint you with the important provisions of these laws and how they can be applied to check money laundering activities and the financing of terrorism.

"In terms of the financing of terrorism, we are in a region that has borne the brunt of terrorist activities in Nigeria. The insurgency in this region led to the loss of hundreds of lives and left public infrastructure in ruins. The question which many of us have asked, and which should engage our minds today, is who are the financiers of the various terrorist groups?"

"As journalists, we should not only ask questions but be prepared to use our investigative tools to find answers. As a consequence of the insurgency in this region, we now have a proliferation of Non-governmental Organizations, NGOs, doing charity work in this region."

The Area Commander further explained that, "while this is commendable, unfortunately, the activities of a few charlatans have called the altruistic commitment of others to question.

"A prominent woman, Mama Boko Haram, was investigated by the commission, prosecuted and convicted for using her NGO for fraudulent purposes. This should not

be allowed to continue. The ordeal of this region in the hands of terrorists should not be exploited for pecuniary gains.

"The Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2023 makes it mandatory for Non-Profit Organizations to register with the Special Control Unit. Against Money Laundering, SCUML. Section 56 of the Terrorism Act also empowers SCUML, which is now fully domiciled in the EFCC, to refuse or revoke the registration of any NGO linked to terrorist groups.

"As journalists, you have a duty to investigate whether NGOs operating in the region are in compliance with the law. Where you have incontrovertible evidence of non-compliance or outright criminality, it is your moral duty to expose such.

"Finally, let me assure you that the EFCC remains committed to its mandate of eradicating economic and financial crimes in Nigeria. A lot has been achieved in the 20-year history of the commission both in terms of asset recovery and the investigation and prosecution of persons indicted for corrupt practices.

"No agency in Nigeria can boast of the record of the EFCC in these areas, but I am confident that with the support of the media, more can still be achieved," Bawa said.

Sudan Crisis: CSO appeals to FG, States To Subsidise Pilgrims Hajj Flight Tickets

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Independent Hajj Reporters, a civil society organization (CSO) that monitors and reports Hajj and Umrah activities in Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, has urged the Federal and state governments to subsidize the differences in the prices of air tickets of Nigerian 2023 intending Hajj pilgrims.

On Saturday, the commission announced an increase of \$250 in the flight tickets of the 2023 Hajj intending pilgrims due to the closure of Sudan airspace because of the ongoing war in the North African country.

The 2023 Hajj fare was based on airlifting Nigerian pilgrims through Sudan airspace to Saudi Arabia, whereby flight ticket prices were calculated based on the number of flight hours to Saudi Arabia via Sudanese airspace.

"Having paid the approved Hajj fare, we know Nigerian Muslims or Nigerian intending pilgrims would have to pay the differences in the air tickets if time permits; but we are worried that with less than 10 days to the commencement of airlift of Nigerian pilgrims to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, asking pilgrims to pay the difference at this time will definitely derail the airlift exercise.

A statement by the national coordinator of the CSO Ibrahim Muhammad at the weekend said, "We are appealing to the Federal and State Governments to liaise with the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) and offer to settle the differences for the respective number of pilgrims from their states in the event that Sudan airspace remains closed before the commencement of airlift.

"We appeal that the Federal Government takes

50 percent while States pay the balance of 50 percent for the numbers of intending pilgrims from their states."

President Muhammadu Buhari had approved Saudi-based Flynas and other Nigerian airlines including Max Air, Air Peace, Azman Air, Aero Contractors, Arik Air and Value Jet to fly Nigerian pilgrims.

While the first five were selected to fly pilgrims from the 36 states and FCT, Arik and Value Jet were selected to offer charter services to pilgrims travelling through private tour operators.

So far, only Saudi's Flynas agreed to airlift the pilgrims at the pre-Sudan crisis air ticket price. Flynas is to transport 28,515. The local airliners that demand for upward review of air tickets are Max Air with 16,326 allocation, Air Peace 11,348, Azman Air 8,660 and Aero Contractors with 7,833 leaving the fate of remaining 44,167 States Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Boards pilgrims in apparent uncertainty.

The closure of the Sudanese airspace will compel airlines to fly through longer routes to Saudi Arabia which will take approximately 7 hours instead of the usual 4 hours plus. This unfortunate development has added another 2 to 3 hours flight time to the existing airlift cost template for Nigerian Intending pilgrims.

The increase in the air tickets comes after pilgrims have completed the payment of Hajj fare as announced by NAHCON. "While we commend the Federal Government's efforts in evacuating Nigerians who are stranded in Sudan, we appeal to the government to extend the same gesture to Nigerian intending pilgrims by subsidizing the 2023 Hajj air ticket," the CSO said.



75% Inmates In Nigeria Pretrial Detainees - NULAI

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

The Network of University Legal Aid Institutions (NULAI) has said that about 75 per cent of inmates in the country are pretrial detainees. Prof. Ernest Ojukwu, President, NULAI, explained that pretrial detention has led in overcrowding at the correctional centres in Nigeria.

Speaking at an event tagged 'Reforming Pretrial Detention in Nigeria (RPDN): Project Retrospective Outlook Close-out Session' organised in Abuja on Thursday, Prof. Ernest Ojukwu, noted that the figure in Nigeria is 75 per cent, saying that it has been consistent. Speaking through the Executive Director of NULAI, Mukhtar

Nasiru, he further explained, "What I mean by 75 per cent is that for every 100 people in the correctional centre, 75 of them are pretrial detainees." According to him, it means that the cases have not been decided, not been convicted, explaining that only 25 per cent have been convicted.

Prof. Ernest Ojukwu observed that NULAI in the Federal Capital Territory and Keffi, Nasarawa State, in five years, resolved about 1,400 pretrial detention cases. He added that over 500 law students have been able to support pro bono lawyers to intervene in pre-trial detention cases and over 1,400 cases have been resolved.



Kwa fielding questions from newsmen

Our Educational Development Policy Would Be Sustained - Ado Tambai

By; JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano

The executive chairman of Dawakin Tofa Local Government Council, Honourable Ado Tambai Kwa has assured that Islamic and Western education would continue to receive special consideration under his administration. He made this known when making payments to

the institutions for students he sponsored from his domain, studying at various schools. He assured that the sponsorship would be a continuous programme. Ado Tambai Kwa added that "Dawakin Tofa Local Government Council considers education as a tool that facilitates livelihood," that is why we always open more

windows of opportunities to ensure that the sector gets a boost at both Islamic and Western education," he stated. The chairman lamented that his administration would continue sponsoring students to under go various courses across the country, especially at present when the globe is gradually advancing in technology. In conclusion, Ado Tambai Kwa thanked the

representatives of the schools for being punctual about giving quality education to the young generations and charged the students to concentrate on their studies to benefit from the sponsorship. Other speakers at the event include the council's Speaker, Malam Garba Mudi, the Director Personnel Management (DPM), Malam Magaji Shehu Albasu and the representatives of the institutions that were paid.

Popular Nollywood Actor Murphy Afolabi Dies In Lagos



Late Murphy Afolabi

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

The Yoruba movies film industry has been thrown into mourning mood as a popular Nollywood actor, Murphy Afolabi reportedly passed on in Lagos.

This occurred, less than 24 hours after the death of another popular Nollywood actor, Saint Obi, Afolabi's death came barely nine days after celebrating his 49th birthday, receiving different gift from his fans globally.

The actor was said to have been pronounced dead by medical experts where he was rushed to after a tragic fall inside his bathroom at his house in Ikorodu axis of Lagos State.

The incident that was said to have led to the actor's demise on Sunday occurred at about 2:00 PM in the house which the Chairman, Lagos State Parks and Garden, Musiliu Akinsanya popularly called MC Oluomo, was said to have been a major contributor to its construction. A filmmaker and the

president of the Yoruba movies directors guild, Seun Olaiya, and the Managing Director of the popular movie marketing company, Corporate Pictures, Abdullahi Abdulrasaq. Olaiya wrote, "I swear to God just before the news, I was still hailing him. This is really a rude shock to me."

Showbiz personality and the convener of the Best of Nollywood Awards, Seun Oloketuyi, also confirmed the news to our correspondent. He said, "It is true. He passed away after taking a fall in his bathroom at his house in Ikorodu this morning."

The Yoruba movie star was the second actor to have died within 24 hours after veteran actor, Adedigba Mukail, popularly called Alafin Oro, died three months confirming his ailments. Born on May 5, 1974, Afolabi got into the movie industry in 2001. The graduate of Ire Polytechnic, Osun State, appeared in over 60 movies before his death. His film credits include 'I fa O l o k u n', 'Omowunmi', 'Jimi Bendel', 'Wasila Coded', 'Olokiki Oru', and 'Idera'.

"It is true. He passed away after taking a fall in his bathroom at his house in Ikorodu this morning."

Labour Party Crisis: CNPP Urges Warring Factions To Close Ranks

**Says party bigger than individuals*

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Conference Of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) has called on warring factions in the ongoing Labour Party (LP) leadership crisis to “find common grounds and sustain its new position as a third force in the current national politics.”

In a statement signed by its Secretary General, Chief Willy Ezugwu, the umbrella body of all registered political parties and political associations in Nigeria noted that “there is nothing unusual about a political party having a leadership tussle or any form of disagreement but its ability to close ranks and make compromises in the interest of the party is paramount.”

Consequently, the CNPP urged “the parties in the leadership crisis to always remember that no individual's desire is bigger than party's interest”, saying that “if Labour Party leaders allow external forces to control its internal affairs, the party will be the loser, especially with its new found love with majority of the Nigerian youth population.”

Continuing, the CNPP stated that “Every political

party at one time or the other gets enmeshed in leadership crisis due to conflicts of interests. However, it is the responsibility of the fathers of the party to rise to the occasion and ensure that the fortunes of the party is not adversely affected.

“The overall interests of a political party must be paramount at all times as power can only be shared when it is taken.

“In the buildup to the 2023 general elections, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) had a taste of such internal crisis, which eventually affected its outing in the last general elections very negatively. “In the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), the party is currently entangled in its own clash of interests over what certain interests in the party see as arbitrary micro-zoning of elective positions in the 10th National Assembly to individuals.

“It is therefore incumbent on a political party's fathers to weigh options and rise up to the responsibility of cushioning the impact of whatever internal conflicts that may arise without allowing external influences to drive its affairs.

“Obviously, the Labour Party went into the 2023 general elections without deliberately healing its internal grievances, which initially led to the setting up of a Security, Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee.

“Amid the then budding crisis in the party, Labour Party had constituted two committees; a disciplinary committee to handle Ogun State Executive crisis and another tagged the Labour Party Security, Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee (LPSPCRC) to handle every other matter that has to do with “grievances and mischief within the party”.

“It is then very obvious that the current crisis stems from the inability of the National Executive Committee (NWC) of the party, which constituted the eleven eminent members Committee headed by Chief Friday Toyin Ibadin, to resolve the then brewing crisis despite having a single terms of reference “to reconcile all aggrieved members with the aim of a common front to win the 2023 general elections and Peter Obi and Datti Baba-Ahmed becoming the President and vice President of Nigeria.”

“It is therefore expedient that the party elders return

the warring parties to the path of reconciliation as the current rigid approach to the conflict resolution will most likely tear the party apart.

“It has been observed that both parties in the leadership conflict have turned the ongoing Presidential Election Petition before the tribunal as their major area of propaganda whereas the provisions of the law is clear on withdrawal of such petitions.

“The Electoral Act 2022 under 'Withdrawal and Abatement of Petition', reads: Section 29. (1) An election petition shall not be withdrawn without leave of the tribunal or court. (2) Where the petitioners are more than one, no application for leave to withdraw the election petition shall be made, 'except with the consent of all the petitioners'. “The CNPP, therefore, advises the warring factions in the ongoing Labour Party leadership crisis to pursue common grounds for reconciliation rather than resorting to deployment of propaganda tools, using the election petitions at various Election Petition Tribunals across the country, as baits to gain support”, the CNPP stated.



Zulum Demands More Investments On Science-tech In Universities

**Lauds Indimi's honour by MAU*

By: SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Borno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum has emphasised the need for more investments in science and technology across universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria. He noted that science-tech has huge opportunities to create millions of jobs for Nigerian youth. Zulum made the call on Saturday, while attending the 27th convocation ceremony of Modibbo Adama University (MAU) for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic sessions, in Yola, Adamawa State.

Zulum's presence was to honour an elder statesman from Borno State, billionaire businessman and philanthropist, Alhaji Muhammad Indimi who was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by MAU. Indimi is the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council of the Borno State University located in Maiduguri.

The Modibbo Adama University's event held at the convocation square of the university, was attended by President Muhammadu Buhari, who was represented by Prof. Abdullahi Yusuf Ribadu, Governor of Adamawa State, Rt. Hon. Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri, and Shehu

of Borno, Abubakar Umar Garbai Elkanemi, amongst others.

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alh Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, former Governor of Adamawa State, Mr. Boni Haruna, and Alhaji Dahiru Bobbo were also awarded honorary doctorate degrees in Law, Management, Science and Letters.

Senator Muhammad Ali Ndume, Barrister Mohammed Tahir Monguno, Vice Chancellor of the University of Maiduguri, Professor Aliyu Shugaba, and that of the Borno State University, Professor Umar Kyari Sandabe were also in attendance.

Meanwhile, Governor Babagana Umara Zulum commended the management of the Modibbo Adama University for honouring Alhaji Muhammad Indimi. The governor also congratulated the business mogul and elder statesman, Alhaji Muhammad Indimi, who was conferred an honorary doctorate degree in Management.

Zulum appreciated Alhaji Muhammad Indimi for his contribution to supporting the development of education in Borno through scholarship programmes and other partnerships benefited by students from Borno.

PDP Suspends Makarfi Over Alleged Anti-party Activities

activities, promoting factions within the Party, and causing disaffection among members of the Party all at the Tudun-Wada Makarfi Ward of Makarfi Local Government”.

"1. Showing yourself to be highly self-opinionated and intolerant of dissenting views irrespective of their merit,

2. fractionalizing the Party using your influence as a member of the national leadership of the Party”.

"3. undermining the Party's laid down guidelines and procedures in the day to day management of the affairs of the Party,

4. engineering and promoting the arbitrary expulsion of loyal members of our Party at the Tudun Wada Ward without recourse to due

process”.

The party in the letter, also accused the former Governor, Senator Makarfi for undermining the party's mobilization during the recently concluded general elections by engineering a skewed distribution of the resources meant for campaign mobilization for the Elections.

"The Executive Committee of the Tudun Wada Ward of Makarfi Local Government Area, therefore at its meeting held on May 14, 2023, resolved to suspend you forthwith from your membership with the Tudun Wada Makarfi Ward of the Kaduna State Peoples Democratic Party pending further appropriate disciplinary action against you".the letter said.



Ahmed Makarfi

Bandits Kill Two, Burn Houses In Zango Kataf Fresh Onslaught

**Relatives search for loved ones*

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

Two people in Mawofi Village, Atyap Chiefdom in Zango Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State have been killed by suspected bandits.

A source told New Nigerian that so many houses were burnt down

by the marauding attackers who stormed the village in their large numbers on Friday night.

According to the source, "How can one explain a situation where the attackers move from one village in Atyap land to another, perpetuating their mission without any authority coming up with proactive measures to

avert the ugly situation?" He added, "It is now for the world to see and judge if these attacks are reprisals or purely attacks by the perpetrators to achieve their evil mission. Whatever happens, God is the better judge of all things and will at the appropriate time, perfect His will in Atyap land." He explained that for now,

some people are going round searching for their loved ones to ascertain the level of destruction made by the attackers.

When contacted for confirmation of the incident, the Kaduna Police Command spokesman, DSP Mohammed Jalige could not respond to a call put to his phone.



Some of the suspects

Police Committed To Protecting Lives, Property Of Oyo State Residents - CP Williams

**Parades 10 suspected criminals*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

Oyo State Commissioner of Police, CP Adebawale Williams on Friday, said that the State Police Command remains committed to the protection of lives and property of the people of Oyo State.

The Commissioner of Police stated this while speaking at a press briefing held to highlight activities of the command including the arrest of 10 suspects.

CP Williams pointed out that to this end, "continuous strategic reviews and periodic restructuring of the command's security architecture is emplaced to tackle any emerging or

evolving security challenge.

"In view of the above, the command enjoins residents and other well meaning citizens to partner with it to ensure criminal elements in the state are completely dislodged and unsettled", he said.

CP Williams added, "in tune with our proactive policing strategy and reacting to emerging security challenges the State will witness more security presence. The Command however wishes to warn against unprovoked attacks on its Officers during the discharge of their duties as it would no longer be condoned while heavy sanctions await those found culpable"

Speaking on the success recorded by the command in flushing out criminal elements from the state, he stressed that 10 suspects are now in the net of the command for offences bothering on robbery including removing cars from park, highway armed robbery, armed robbery and murder.

The Commissioner of Police stressed that three suspects namely Akodu Sunday, 53, Daramola Adegboyega 50 and Kolawole Babatunde 46, were arrested with 13 master keys as exhibits found on them.

For highway robbery, he stated that three suspects were arrested, namely, Ibrahim Abdulahi, 19, Muhammed Shehu, 18

and Umaru Monde, 38, with 4 Bajaj motorcycles recovered from them

On alleged armed robbery and murder, the CP stated that four suspects identified as, Oyetumbi Ademola 25, Michael Adeniyi 26, Gabriel Adeniyi, 80 and Kafilat Tihamiyu, 50 were apprehended.

He gave exhibits recovered from the suspects as, "one cut to size locally made single barrel gun, two Samsung phones, one ITEL phone, 1 Hyundai Elantra 1999 model car grey colour, two wrist watches belonging to the deceased Police Officer, two wedding band, one amulet and two herbal concoctions.

Appoint Professionals To Head Specialized Institutions, Gulak Tells FG

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Federal Government has been advised to ensure that only professionals are appointed to head specialized institutions to promote industrial harmony in the country. Deputy National President Chatterred Institute of Transport Administration, Alhaji Umar Iya Gulak gave the advice in an interview with newsmen in Kaduna.

Alhaji Gulak who expressed dismay over the appointment of a pharmacologist as Head of the Federal University of Transport Technology Daura, urged government to consider its reversal to avoid unnecessary controversy.

"The incoming administration should ensure from the onset appointment of professionals into

specialized Institutions to ensure round pegs in round holes.

"Jobs of engineering should be given engineers to manage and medical institutions should be manned by medically trained personnels and this should apply to all sectors including education, aviation among others". He also called for the revocation of the power purchase agreement of 2015 to check alleged non-performance which hitherto caused untold hardship for consumers despite billions of Naira spent to improve the sector.

Alhaji Gulak who prayed for the successful inauguration of the incoming administration of President-elect Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, advised opposition politicians to avoid acts that may derail the current democracy.

ECWA Pastor, Others Killed As Bandits Invade Nasarawa Communities

By; SAMSON YAKI, Lafia

The pastor in-charge of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Takalafia in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Rev. Daniel Danbeki has been killed by unknown gunmen who invaded the community on Thursday night.

More than three other residents of Takalafia community were also said to have been killed by the assailants, including women.

The attack according to information gathered, which lasted till the early hours of Friday, May 12, also recorded casualties in neighbouring Gwanja and Angwan Bege communities.

The residents of the affected communities comprise Nigerians of Mada, Yeskwe and Gwandara descents, who

are predominantly small-scale farmers.

A resident of Takalafia community simply identified as Mainasara who alleged that the assailants were Fulani herdsmen, put the number of casualties at nine.

Mr. Mainasara said the unfortunate attack has forced many residents to flee their homes for safety.

He appealed for the presence of security operatives in the affected communities to restore normalcy and ensure security of lives and property.

The Divisional Police Officer of Gitata Division, CSP Amos Enoch who also confirmed the incident, said security operatives have since been deployed to the affected communities.

"No cause for alarm; everything is under control", CSP Enoch assured.

French Govt Supports Nigeria With 7.7m Euros For Humanitarian Needs

*Budgets 6.9 Euros in 2023 for food, malnutrition, health, agric

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR,
Maiduguri

French Ambassador to Nigeria, Mrs. Emmanuelle Blatmann has disclosed that France Government last year, supported Nigeria with 7.7 million Euros for humanitarian support to address food, health, security and agricultural activities among others.

She also said that the Government of France has this year, 2023 budgeted 6.9 million Euros to tackle food, malnutrition and health as well as other conflict or insecurity issues in the North East.

France Ambassador to Nigeria, Emmanuelle Blatmann disclosed this in Maiduguri, while briefing journalists after inspecting WFP interventions facilities located at Muna IDPs Camp Clinic at Mum's Garage IDPs Camp along Mafa) Dikwa Road Maiduguri.

The French Envoy also noted that her visit to Borno State was to assess the impact of French government intervention projects and programmes or facilities executed or implemented or ongoing through one of its agencies /NGOs, the World Food Programme (WFP) interventions on acute and middle malnutrition among IDP children and mothers from six LGAs of Borno State, namely, Mafa, Bama, Dikwa, Konduga, Ngala and Gwoza.

Mrs. Blatmann after her interaction with some mothers of malnourished children at the Muna IDP Camp Clinic WFP facility when the French Envoy was conducted round the facility by officer in charge, Palmata Usman Sandabe, said there is the need for additional support to tackle multiple drivers of the conflict or insurgency such as hunger, food insecurity, health, sanitation, agriculture and climate change.

She assured that the French government will continue to support and invest in Nigeria, especially, in the North East region to bring peace, stability to save lives and bring changes to better the lives of the vulnerable people.

Ambassador Blatmann also revealed that her country has so far, intervened in 28 different projects worth 21 million Euros to address humanitarian needs, food security and health issues among about one million people in the last three years



within the North East.

She however, said that following the proliferation of the lingering crisis in Ukraine, French government through the World

Food Programme (WFP) and other partners, has set up an initiative to mitigate the impact of the crisis with regards to access to food among vulnerable

and displaced people in African countries, particularly, Borno State.

"In 2022, France spent €500m on humanitarian aid across the

world, out of which €150m was used to tackle food shortages across countries suffering the problem.

"The €3m was part of a total of €6.9m that France had so far budgeted for humanitarian aid in Nigeria, having spent €7.7m for such aid in 2022.

"We have so far budgeted €6.9m for humanitarian aid in Nigeria in 2023, and out of this, €3m is given to WFP to address food shortage and malnutrition among children in the North East.

"This amount is subject to upward review, depending on the circumstances concerning food insufficiency and malnutrition in the country. France, over the last three years, in conjunction with humanitarian aid development organisations, executed 28 humanitarian aid projects in Nigeria's North-East with €21m.

"We often hear about donor fatigue and humanitarian assistance is going down, so I am here to prove that for France is the opposite. We are moving ahead, we are increasing our assistance in collaboration with government, UN agencies, we are here to help and show our solidarity," Blatmann said.

Speaking also during the ambassador's visit to Maiduguri, the Country Director of World Food Programme (WFP) Representative to Nigeria, Mr. David Stevenson said the organisation is to support 2.1 million people under the humanitarian response plans with support from the French government.

He added that the interventions or response plans targets children and mothers that are malnourished through provision of agricultural inputs food supplements for mothers of malnourished children and also build capacity of nursing mothers to learn nutrition techniques among others.

Stevenson said the WFP targets over two million people in the subregion, 1.4 million of them in Borno State alone, in its humanitarian aid programmes, in its efforts at tackling the problem.

He however, assured of WFP and French government commitment to tackle food insecurity among the reported 4.4 million people in Nigeria's North-East, which risk food shortages in 2023, while expressing commitment of WFP to meet the needs of victims of conflict in the North East.

Book Launch: Minister Of Defence Lauds Triology Author, Jibril Ndace

**Hails former COAS Lt Gen Buratai's service legacies*

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Minister of Defence, Maj Gen Bashir Salihi Magashi, rtd, CFR has challenged media practitioners to do more in promoting the nation's Armed Forces sacrifices in national defence. General Magashi stated this in a message to the Public presentation and launch of three books titled, "DUTY Call under Buratai's Command" , "Walking the War Front with Lt Gen TY Buratai" and "The Lonely Grave" authored by Jibril Baba Ndace of the Blueprint Newspapers. The Minister of Defence who was a special guest of honour represented by his Special Adviser Technical, Major General A.T. Jibrin (rtd), commended the author for a job well accomplished. The Defence Minister said the books are much more than the by- product of a journalistic assignment.

He extolled the sterling professionalism of the author whom he described as a patriotic citizen and resourceful journalist, worthy of emulation by his colleagues.

While acknowledging the immense contributions of the former Chief of Army Staff, Lt General Tukur Yusuf Buratai, rtd, CFR to the stability of the nation's polity and his giant strides in repositioning the Nigerian Army, he tasked media practitioners to raise the bar of developmental journalism.

The Vice president- Elect Senator Kashim Shettiman represented by Senator Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, the Chief of Defence Staff, General Lucky Irabor and the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Blueprint Newspapers Alhaji Mohammed Idris Malagi, acknowledged the intellectual prowess of the author for putting the books together in honour of Lt. General Buratai, whom they described as a gallant defender of the indivisibility of Nigeria.

The honouree, Lt Gen TY Buratai, CFR thanked the author for succinctly captured narratives in the books.

He said the successes recorded in counterterrorism operations under his watch as the Chief of Army Staff were driven by vision and valour with the support by the gallant troops and the media practitioners especially some embedded Defence Correspondents, the likes of Mohammad Abdulkadri of NTA, Ben Sheman of the Voice of Nigeria and Senator Iroegbu among others.

The book reviewers, former Director, Army Public Relations, Brigadier General S.K. Usman (rtd) mni and Dr Muhammad Auwal Haruna of the Faculty of Communication, Bayero University, Kano, described the books as monumental intellectual pieces that captured the very essence of scholarship, statesmanship and leadership style of a dogged infantry General, T.Y. Buratai.

High points of the ceremony that attracted representatives of the Service Chiefs, some ambassadors, traditional rulers, serving and retired Generals, was the public presentation and launch of the books as well as the fireside chat with the author. The climax of the ceremony was the author's appreciative remarks to the honouree, his mentors Alhaji Mohammed Malagi and Air Vice Marshall Muhammed Ndatsu Umar and colleagues.



North Threatens To Dump APC, Makes Strong Demands

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Hundreds of Northerners who converged on the Arewa House Kaduna on Friday, have threatened to withdraw support for the government and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) unless the North is given the leadership of the National Assembly and other key ministerial appointments.

The Northerners attended a one day round table on Nation Building and Democracy with the theme, 'The imperative of participation, equity and equitable development of Northern Nigeria', powered by the Democratic Research Institute (DRI).

"In the communique jointly signed by Prof. Tukur Muhammad-Baba, Chairman of the Communique Committee and Dr. Benjamin Izra Dikki, Secretary, the Northerners emphasized that because the North was not in control of both the Executive and the Judiciary arms of government, their demand was non negotiable."

In a table that was contained in the communique that showed percentage of votes across the six geo-political zones, the Northwest zone gave a total votes of 2,652,235, the North Central 1,742,993 while the North East gave 1,185,458. The total contributions of the North was 63.5%.

The communique indicated that the South-West gave 25.7%, the South-south 9.10 while the South-east delivered 1.45% of the votes for the ruling APC.

The communique reads:

"Based on the contributions of the North in the just concluded General Elections, as evidenced in the table above, the roundtable, which drew participants from all the nineteen Northern states, concluded that the progress, transformation and development of the region is hinged on its stake in government, particularly access to political, economic incentives and opportunities and therefore resolves as follows:"

"Demand the leadership of the National Assembly in consonance with the provisions of section 14 and sub-sections (1), (2) and (3) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended. This is necessary because the North is not in control of both the Executive and the Judiciary arms of government. This demand is non negotiable."



"The North also demands fair share of ministerial and other appointments. Such appointments should take cognisance of competence, integrity and track record, otherwise the region is left with no option than to de-invest its support for the government and the party in subsequent elections."

Earlier in a welcome address delivered by Prof. Al-Mustapha Ussiju Medanar, he said the central objective of the Roundtable discussion was to highlight and deepen the conversations around the roles and the place of the Northern region in strengthening Nigeria's democracy and fostering nation building through key players and partners of the region, among others.

He said: "For me, it is a privilege to be a participant of this preparation for an all-inclusive recognition of the place of northern Nigeria in the Nigeria calculations and the veritable focus on the equitable development of northern Nigeria."

"The theme of today's discussion, 'Nation Building and Democracy: The Imperative of Participation, Equity and Equitable Development of Northern Nigeria' is key to addressing the socio-political challenges that face the contiguous northern region of Nigeria."

"The central objective of this Roundtable discussion is to highlight and deepen the conversations around the roles and the place of the Northern region in strengthening Nigeria's

democracy and fostering nation building through key players and partners of the region, among others."

"I must state emphatically that the northern region of the country, constituting the North-West, North Central and the North-Eastern states, respectively, is a uniquely indispensable part of the nation, Nigeria. The region consists of approximately 68.67% of the population of Nigeria; it is the sole sustenance of the country agriculturally, and remains by providence, the major contributor to the political evolution of the country from independence."

"The northern region has effectively engaged its diverse endowment in population and various capacities to benefit the nation, in all ways possible; having been a pillar of strength on many fronts for the country."

"It is indeed my great honour to welcome all of you; the Panelists, Discussants and selected representatives across the States of northern Nigeria. I am confident and sure that we will have a very vibrant discussion and tailored solution for an equitable development of our dear region."

"The decision to hold this Roundtable was a response to the current political situation in the country and the preparation for the promulgation of the 10th National Assembly, particularly its leadership. The need to avoid the crisis of misrepresentation of our people and region in the distribution of rewards for political participation in the 2023 general elections, most

especially the presidential election and to accept a common ground to hold all political office holders responsible for the job they are expected to carry out in the incoming administration."

"We must have it at the back of our minds as we go into the subject of our discussion that our region contributes more than any other, as a major stakeholder in the current political dispensations including the victories of the ruling party at the polls, and as such, the region would rightly deserve and ask for commensurate rewards from the spoil of the war fought."

"Democracy is an investment; vote is an investment. In a democratic politics, the party with the highest votes takes it all. Our region is well aware of this, and we have invested robustly in the incoming administration. The size of our votes and the consistency of our participation across the region in what we stand for is our testament. Figures do not lie; of the 8,794,726 million votes that gave the president-elect victory at the poll, 5,200,589 million representing approximately 60 percent came from our region. And for every elected Senators and HOR members from the platform the ruling party that won election, the margin of difference in their votes and that of the president-elect from each constituency is minimal; an indication of total commitment to the total cause of the party, unlike some other regions."

"The North knows its problems and challenges; and that is the reason why we made so much political investment as a means

to get the solutions we desire for our region and our people."

"Our region is beclouded by non-ending insecurity. From North-East to North Central and splitting to the North-West, the consequences of insecurity in all its ramification has left trails of poverty, death and displacements of people from their homes and survival."

"The poverty figure of the country placed our region as the most hit; with about 65 percent of the population of poor Nigerians living in our region. We are mostly referred to in the academic parlance as the least educationally

developed region of the country. Unemployment is at the highest in the region as well."

"At the back of all our discussion today would be the plight of our common region in the larger Nigeria entity. We must therefore take a stand of what must be done to return affirmative and commensurate dividends for our all-inclusive participation and investment in the Nigeria democracy and political business. We must take a decision as a region that has an equity that is well above 60 percent of the shared equity of the Nigeria business."

"As part of the plans for an intrinsic discussion, we would be having sectorial pre-discussions on various topical issues with regard to the northern region after which we will break into discussion syndicates. The panelists would arise from the syndicate meetings to make a submission of the consensus agreements from the syndicate meetings which would form the crux of the final Position paper, which is the stand of the roundtable."

"Here today, we will commence a process that will continue to strengthen the reach and take of our region without jeopardising that of others in the Nigeria entity; taking what equates to our input."

"Today, I want to hear your ideas, and frankly too. Your ideas about how to drive inclusive, equitable development of our region, because that is something that we all owe our people and what our positions have placed on us to do."

Udeze: Action Alliance Petitions Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee Over Alleged Professional Misconduct

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Action Alliance (AA) has petitioned the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee over the alleged unethical conduct and acts of a lawyer who is also a former member of the party, Mr Kenneth Udeze. In a petition filed by the National Chairman of the party, Dr Adekunle Rufai Omoaje before the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee (LPDC) holding in Abuja, the party decried Udeze's alleged illegal activities as a lawyer.

Also joined in the petition are, Malachy Chinyeaka Nwaekpe, Sylvanus Uchendu, Peter Abang, Peters Ugwuoke and Jennifer Anderson-Achilike.

Omoaje who deposed to an affidavit to support his claim against Udeze, alleged that Udeze was in the habit and practice of filling suits with fictitious names.

It would be recalled that Udeze who was a former member of the AA, has since been suspended and subsequently expelled from the party, having been found wanting of various offences.

The party has since December 14, 2022 petitioned the committee in order to investigate the allegations leveled against Udeze.

Having carefully looked into the allegations in the petition, the committee said it has found it worthy of being looked into and has subsequently served the parties involved in the petition for their responses against the allegations contained in the petition. The party had alleged

Udeze of plot to perpetuate himself in office as the National Chairman of the party, hence his decision to file suits with different fictitious names in the High Court of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Some of the cases cited by the party where Udeze allegedly used fictitious names include FCT/HC/CV/2705/2019 involving Hon. Iliya Gambo versus Kenneth Udeze and FCT/HC/CV/174/2022 involving Chief Uzewuru Nwachukwu versus Kenneth Udeze.

"It is the party's position that there's no human being bearing the name Hon Iliya Gambo and Chief Uzewuru Nwachukwu," he stated.

Omoaje added that "Kenneth Udeze used the same set of lawyers; Malachy Chinyeaka Nwaekpe, Sylvanus Uchendu, Peter Abang and Peters Ugwuoke in filling all his court processes and employed Jennifer Anderson to hold the brief of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) without being instructed by INEC.

"In order words, Udeze, Nwaekpe, Uchendu, Abang, Ugwuoke and Adanson-Achilike abused the process of court in order to cause confusion and unrest in the Action Alliance using their positions as lawyers," he stressed.

Also, Omoaje cited various court cases where Udeze allegedly used fictitious names at the court and called for thorough investigations with a view sanctioning Udeze.

By: AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

A 15-day strike ultimatum has been issued by the Joint Health Sector Unions and Assembly of Healthcare Professional Associations over alleged lack of consistency in the ongoing negotiations to adjust the Consolidated Health Salary Structure for health workers on their platforms by the federal government.

In a letter addressed to the Federal Ministry of Health and signed by the National Secretary, Matthew Ajorotu on Friday, the unions opined that the ministry has shown evidence to shift from their agreed terms and rules of engagement, relating to non-discrimination in the determination of the

wages and benefit packages of health workers in Nigeria.

The letter believes, "recent communication from the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) which attempted to sabotage the laudable report of the Technical Committee on the Adjustment of CONHESS as was done for CONMESS, by claiming its implementation, would distort existing CONMESS relativity with CONHESS."

The unions therefore, called on the federal government to consolidate on Health Salary Structure as agreed in terms of settlement of September, 2017, which had lingered since 2014, urging the government to pay peculiar allowance to health workers "under the

aegis of JOHESU/AHP" immediately and unconditionally implementation of the Consultant Cadre circular of pharmacists in all federal health Institutions. The unions also urged the federal government to pay all withheld salaries of their members in Federal Medical Center in Owerri, Jos University Teaching Hospital, Lagos University Teaching Hospital and their withheld April and May 2018 Salaries; speedy adjustment of retirement age from 60 – 65 years and the exclusion of some health workers in the payment of new hazard allowance as well as payment of COVID-19 allowance balance.

The letter demanded a negotiation of the peculiar

allowance, adding that, the planned 25% review on CONHESS would only widen the existing relativity with CONMESS to their disadvantage and distort albeit significantly the supposed edge over general salary scales in Public Service.

It explained that failure on the part of Federal Government to stick to tenets of due process spelt in their rules of engagement since the commencement of negotiations on the Adjustment of CONHESS as was done for CONMESS and the other lingering demands as highlighted above within the 15 day window, it would be clear that it is the Federal Government that should be held responsible for the fall-outs of a possible strike.



L-R: Chairman House Committee on Appropriation, Hon, Mukhtar Aliyu Betara and Deputy Speaker House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Ahmed Idris Wase, the two are co-contestant for Speakership aspirant for 10th NASS, during the Wase declaration in Abuja, Photo: BASHIR BELLO DOLLARS

Security Crack Team Launches Attack On Akwa Ibom Waterways

By: PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

Hope to rid out sea pirates on Akwa Ibom waterways and free it for viable economic ventures including fishing is on sight, as the newly inaugurated Akwa Ibom State Waterways Surveillance/Security team began operations.

The Marine Security outfit set up by Governor Udom Emmanuel on Monday,

led by the Chief Security Officer of the team, Mr. Akpan Ubak combed waterways in the state in search of sea pirates.

The team launched out at Ikot Ebidang jetty in Onna Local Government Area of the state with 15 speed boats, over 100 personnels and supported by gunboats of combined security personnel.

Speaking to journalists, Ubak said they

were inaugurated by Governor Udom Emmanuel to tackle the incessant attacks on marine business operators by sea pirates.

He said that the governor is committed to ensuring that business operators in the marine sector have a sanitized waterway devoid of hoodlums who parade themselves as owners of the riverine area, molesting, robbing, and killing innocent business owners in the sector.

Ubak thanked Governor Udom

Emmanuel for providing the necessary equipment and mobilizing the personnel's for this task.

He promised to deliver on the mandate so that marine business can thrive to further boost Akwa Ibom economy.

It would be recalled that for years running, sea pirates have been constantly attacking fishermen and others doing legitimate businesses on Akwa Ibom waterways, leading to loss of lives and values of the victims in some instances.

WHO Trains 98 Health Directors, Officers On Emergency Coordination Response In Borno

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

World Health Organization (WHO) has organized a 5-day training workshop on Emergency Coordination/Preparedness Response for 98 Public Health Emergency personnel drawn from the 27 local government areas, development partners and public health organizations of Borno State at Pinnacle Luxury Hotel Banquet Hall Maiduguri from May 7 to 11, 2023.

The Borno State Commissioner for Health, Professor Mohammed Alhaji Arab who was ably represented by the Director Public Health, Borno State Ministry of Health, Dr Goni Abba in his opening speech, acknowledged the presence of everyone in attendance and encouraged the participants to pay close attention throughout the training to build more capacity in managing emergencies of public health incidents in the state.

The Director, Public Health charged the participants to be attentive throughout the training and encouraged the participants to link up with their colleagues who were yet to be present at the training workshop after introduction of the facilitators and participants.

According to him, the participants were selected from the hierarchy of Directors PHC, LGCs PHC Surveillance Notification Officers and Laboratory Technicians/Lab Technical Assistants.

The WHO Emergency Operation Center (EOC) Manager, Dr Simon Manuel on behalf of the North East Emergency Manager, Dr Beatrice Muraguri appreciated the state team and the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) team for their continued support to the state.

She also recognized the efforts of the state team for their resilience in managing public health threats in the state, while

advising the participants to be committed and make good use of the training opportunity to refresh their knowledge on public health emergency management as well as to replicate the knowledge at their LGAs.

Dr Beatrice acknowledged the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for their support in ensuring the objective of the training is achieved.

She further welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director General, NCDC, Mrs Sylvia Ezenwa-Ahanene

The WHO North East Emergency Manager also encouraged them to take advantage of the training and make proper use of the opportunity to develop themselves for effective emergency coordination response of outbreaks at the state and LGA levels.

According to her, the training is aimed at achieving and ensuring that the

participants are able to demonstrate mastery of the PHEOC terminologies, are able to apply the PHEOC modes of operation appropriately and clearly understand IMS (incident management system)

Others include to ensure that the participants are able to enumerate and explain response management principles used during an emergency response, able to list and develop emergency management documents used during a response.

She however, said that the targeted participants were drawn from local government disease, surveillance and notification officers, state surveillance officers, LGA DSNOs, laboratory focal persons and directors of PHCs.

While three persons per LGA across the 27 LGAs, 10 persons from the state capital and 10 partner, totalling 98.



Efik Throne: Time To Reorder Your Priorities, Obong Of Calabar Advises Critics

By: VITALIS UGOH, Calabar

The Obong of Calabar and Treaty King of the Efik Kingdom, His Eminence, Edidem Ekpo Okon Abasi Otu V, has called on all those disenchanted by his re-emergence after the Supreme Court's judgement of January 13, to reorder their priorities and begin to put the will of the people above their personal interests.

It would be recalled that on January 13, 2023, the Supreme Court, in a unanimous judgement read by Justice Amina Augie, affirmed the decision of the Court of Appeal on the disputed stool, and ordered that a fresh election for the position be conducted, where Edidem Otu V was duly re-elected by the kingmakers in line with the directives of the apex court's judgement.

Edidem Ekpo-Okon Abasi Otu V made the call in reaction to unfounded news making the rounds, attempting to distort the apex court's judgement and further questioning his re-selection as the Obong of Calabar.

Speaking while playing host to the Executives of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Cross River State Council, recently, the Obong said, "This throne has been there for so many centuries and it is not something to toy with. But, unfortunately, it is not the people outside that are trying to ridicule the throne; it is a few sons and daughters of this kingdom who are doing this. But we will continue to defend our revered ancient throne."

He condemned those who do not have values and rather living by "fake news and endless bickerings," adding that, "notwithstanding, you know as

human beings, we expect all these things to happen."

He charged the NUJ leadership in the state to maintain its high standards and checkmate those who for selfish financial benefits, stoop low to do the biddings of mischief makers, against their statutory and invaluable role as purveyors of information for societal good.

In his words, the first class King further charged the NUJ in the state, saying, "You are the powerhouse in information management. People look up to you for news. But at the same time, let us have the true picture of what is happening; not fake news. Today, there is more of fake news than factual information in this country. Because some persons look at what they can make from it."

He urged the union's leadership to "come and be part of the palace; let us work together so much so that truth and factual information about the Palace of the Obong of Calabar can be disseminated to the people." He prayed for aborigines of Efik Kingdom who are sacrificing to sustain the revered ancient throne and also prayed that Journalists have the strength to exhibit moral high ground in the discharge of their duties, as well as uphold inviolable ethical standards of the esteemed profession.

Earlier in his speech, the Chairman of the Cross River State Council, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Comrade Nsa Gill, also disowned the claims in some sections of the media challenging the legitimacy of the Obong's re-selection process, noting that as a core practitioner, "I am aware that over ten years legal tussle on the throne ended after the supreme court

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y followed by the Palace and the kingmakers in reselecting and enthroning the Obong.

He noted that the fact remains that the Obong is on the throne and the throne is not vacant. "As a son of the kingdom with ample knowledge from covering the 15-year old litigation and wranglings, which lingered up to the apex court; I am appalled by the brazenness of mischief makers to peddle such misinformation on social media and some news blogs that the throne is vacant."

"We the professionals have followed the litigation with keen interest. And are happy to see it come to an end, with the will of the people prevailing over individuality and personal interests," the NUJ Chairman stated.

Re-echoing his position, Gill said, "I can authoritatively say

that the Obong of Calabar stool is not vacant."

The NUJ Chairman also intimated the revered monarch that his visit was to introduce his executive to him and also show solidarity with the leadership of the Efik Kingdom.

He assured the monarchy that journalists under his watch will continue to abide by professional ethics and at all times seek to report what is factual.

He also sought the Palace's sponsorship of annual re-training of media practitioners in the State as part of the king's social responsibility to his subjects.

In a related development, the Obutong Traditional Council of the Efik Kingdom also sauntered to the palace to pledge their community's loyalty to Edidem Otu V.

Pledging his community's loyalty to the palace, the leader of Obutong Traditional Council and clan head of Obutong Community, His Royal Highness, Etubom Iso Archibong Iso, congratulated Edidem Otu V on his re-election after the Supreme Court's judgement and his fifteenth anniversary on the throne as King.

Etubom Iso eulogised the King for his boldness, transparency, sagacity, and exemplary leadership across the Efik principalities, saying "the three houses of Obutong reaffirm our loyalty and commitment to the sustenance of the Efik Kingdom and the traditional stool," while wishing the monarch "God's divine favour, long life and good health," as he reigns on the throne.

2 Businessmen Excrete 193 Pellets Of Cocaine In NDLEA's Custody

By: RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

No fewer than 193 pellets of cocaine have been excreted by two businessmen arrested by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja.

They were said to have excreted the illicit drug after three days in observatory custody of the anri narcotics agency.

Identified as traffickers: Onoh Ebere, 49, and Christian Ifeanyi Ogbuji, 47, the



suspects, according to report, were intercepted at the Abuja airport on Wednesday, May 10, 2023.

The Director of Media and Advocacy of

the agency, Femi Babafemi disclosed this in a statement made available to journalists yesterday that the duo had arrived from Uganda via Addis Ababa, onboard Ethiopian Airlines flight ET951.

Babafemi noted that though both suspects have businesses they manage in Nigeria,

their main source of income has been drug.

They both travelled to Uganda and from

there crossed over to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where they picked the consignments, before returning to Abuja with Lagos as their final destination.

"After days in excretion room, Ebere Onoh excreted a total of 100 pellets weighing 2.137kg while Christian Ifeanyi Ogbuji expelled 93 pellets hidden in his stomach with a gross weight of 1.986kg", Babafemi said.

In the same vein, operatives of the Directorate of Operations and General Investigation (DOGI), attached to courier firms have intercepted a Saudi Arabia-bound 398grams of cocaine hidden in native dresses during outward clearance of goods.

10th NASS: Dr Adedayo Set To Impact Quality Legislation At Green Chamber

By ; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE

Activities preempting what to expect during the life span of the 10th National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are already playing out.

The gladiators have already been forming alignment, irrespective of the platform on which they were elected. They're also showcasing ability to become relevant when the Assembly commences sitting in full.

Importantly, the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) has zoned the principal posts to different geo-political regions based on its conviction, to engender cordial working relationship between the Executive and the National Assembly.

Barring any last minute change, the 10th National Assembly, which comprises of the Senate and House of Representatives, commonly referred to as the Red and Green Chambers shall be inaugurated on June 13, 2023.

This arm of government, undoubtedly, is a critical organ that needs to be at the same page with the Executive Arm, if the people are to enjoy good governance.

Suffice to allude that it is the pillar which the Executive Arm relies upon for legislations to engender good governance. Hence, this arm of government being a critical aspect, must tailor its constitutional responsibility in the direction of better legislations to be implemented by the Executive for the greater good of the greater number of the people.

However, it's instructive to say that the National Assembly shouldn't be a rubber stamp entity that is at the beck and call of the Executive Arm. A situation where the Legislative Arm has "a price tag" or better still "in the pocket" of the Executive will definitely be catastrophic for the nation. An independent legislature, without undue influence by the Executive will outrightly discharge its constitutional role and take the Executive to the cleaners when it errs.

In the build up to the inauguration of the would-be-Legislators, the National Assembly in conjunction with the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, has organized an induction seminar for all the members-elect for both the Red and Green Chambers.

The induction seminar hosted at the Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, was to expose the members- elect to

the functions of the National Assembly, its practices and procedures, as well as the services available to them.

Unarguably, one of the Parliamentarians to watch out for in the Green Chamber when the 10th National Assembly begins proceedings, is Dr. Adesola Samuel Adedayo (a.k.a Jim-sam) representing Apapa Federal Constituency of Lagos. He is one of the gladiators that will shape the proceedings of the Green Chamber in terms of quality legislations.

For the sane minds, undoubtedly, the Renewed Hope Agenda of the President - elect Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu of peace, progress and prosperity can not be actualised without quality legislations by the National Assembly.

Adedayo, a former two terms Council Chairman of Apapa Iganmu LCDA in Lagos, has a clear cut edge of the reasons he aspired to represent his constituents and he is adequately prepared for the task ahead, but not as a "yes sir, bench warmer or i support the motion" representative.

A cerebral medical practitioner, quintessential grassroots politician, the Lagos Parliamentarian -in waiting is representing a Constituency of which 60 percent is categorised as low income areas and many of the residents are peasants.

Considering the fact that a greater part of the area is slum-based, he will use the instrumentality of the law to strengthen the development by sponsoring bills that will promote better and more equitable integration of the rural areas across the country.

In a recent interview with the New Nigerian Newspapers recently, Dr. Adedayo vehemently revealed that his mission at the National Assembly is to bring the challenges of his people to national discuss.

According to him, " In that constituency, we have 10 Wards and four of those Wards are in an elites environment, that's those in Apapa GRA and Apapa Tincan Wharf, but the large percentage of the people that live in Ijora Oloye, Apapa-Iganmu, that constitute six Wards are peasants. The whole of Apapa Iganmu is actually a slum and one of the things we need to do is to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor if we don't want to run into crisis because the standard of living in that place is well below average".

Based on his antecedent of people - oriented programmes at

the Local Government Council level, Adedayo's penchant for the betterment of the poor and improving the environment to make live comfortable for all, would dictate his actions at the plenary and hallow chamber of the House of Representatives.

A team player per excellence, a humanist, a philanthropist, vibrant unionist and Pastor in charge of New Life Area, Lagos Province of Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), the Parliamentarian is ever ready to deploy his in-built strategy and strong negotiating power to lobby his colleagues to enact laws that would improve the welfare of the downtrodden.

Characteristics of him, the Iludun-oro born Kwara State indigene would use his multi tasking ability to produce superhuman quantities of high-quality work, being a successful Doctor and a community leader. Academically, he is well read and a product of Harvard Kennedy School, Executive Education, Cambridge, MA 02138, United States, 2019, Postgraduate Medical College, University of Iloriin (1981 - 1985), University of Ibadan (1974 - 1979), College of Technology,(1973 - 1974) and Esie/Iludun Grammar School (1967-1971).

Adedayo's passion for a sound health system could be attested to by some of the people - friendly health programmes accomplished during his tenure as Local Government Council chairman. A mention of few of his free health treatments include; 100 Successful Eye surgeries (mostly cataract extractions), 15 other surgical cases including hernias, herniotomies, appendicectomies, breast surgeries, removal of ovarian cysts, myomectomies and other gynaecological operations. Orthopaedic operations Dental Surgeries, Free treatment of Malaria, Typhoid, STDs and other prevalent deadly ailments.

De-worming of all children of school age in the LCDA, Free HIV / AIDS counselling and testing,

Purchase and Donation of New Ultrasound scanning Machine to ST. Theresa Catholic Clinic, Amukoko, Donation of Oxygen Concentrator to Apapa General Hospital

Cervical screening for women (3 times)

Polio mop-up campaign, Purchase of 3 Ambulances, Rehabilitation of Olojowon PHC,

Purchase of medical equipments



Dr. Adedayo

for zion PHC

Activation of Aworetan health post among others.

Poverty alleviation is another area of need that would greatly attract his attention, for he detests one going to bed in empty belly. His

Poverty Alleviation / Economic Empowerment programme while in office as Council Boss is also worth mentioning namely: Inauguration of community stakeholders forum to solicit support of the organized private sector in the areas of infrastructural development and employment for the teeming jobless populace especially the youths, Organization of skill acquisition workshop for women from the LCDA in collaboration with state Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Launching of "N10 million projects-enable in equal (i.e. 50/50) partnership with Moorgate Microfinance Bank Ltd for extension of micro credit to petty traders, artisans and women to stimulate economic activity and employment generation within the LCDA, Financial partnership with LASMI and selected Microfinance (Infinity) Bank to float a low interest N40 million micro credit facility to residents willing to embrace self employment as a means of eradicating joblessness, poverty, crime and violence in the LCDA,

Employment of about 100 street sweepers for daily clean up of the major streets in the LCDA, Securing of State Appointment for 25 otherwise jobless residents of the LCDA, Sponsorship of one day workshop/induction for successful project-enable applicants to enhance loan and sustenance of good banker/customer relationship

Engagement of 230 youths as members of environmental sanitation Gangs for weekly environmental clean-up and monitoring, Appointment of about 100 citizens into various boards and committees in advisory capacity, Sponsorship of 30 LCDA residents for state employment under LASTMA, Disbursement of over N350 million low interest micro credit loans to 8000 resident beneficiaries, just to mention but few.

Conclusion:

With the above enumerated facts and more, one can assert that Dr. Adedayo is undoubtedly one of the lawmakers whose presence at the Green Chamber would engender quality legislations, which will be driven by his passion for the betterment of the downtrodden.

Raymond Tedunjaye is the Bureau Chief New Nigerian Newspapers Lagos Office, in charge of the South-West/South-South Region.

Gombe Gov't Seeks Partnership With IsDB To Boost Private Sector Investments

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

In furtherance of its commitment to wooing more investment into the state, the Gombe State Government under the leadership of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has sent a special delegation to the ongoing Islamic Development Bank's (IsDB) Private Sector Forum and Annual Meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

The Gombe State delegation, led by the chairman of the state's Investment and Property Development Company, Dr. Umaru Kwairanga (Sarkin Fulanin Gombe) met with the IsDB's Team comprising of Dr. Mansur Mukhtar, Vice President; Dr. Ahsaru Kibria, Country Manager; Mr. Mahmudou Alpha Bah, IsDB Nigeria Office; and Mr. Abdulkadir Baba-Ahmed, from IsDB VPs Office, Jeddah.

The discussions between the two

delegations centred around the ways through which the reputable financial institution will deploy its resources and expertise to support the Gombe State Government in critical areas of economic development.

Specifically, the two teams discussed ways through which IsDB will actively participate in the next Gombe State Investment Summit (Goinvest 2.0) following the success recorded by the maiden summit held in December last year.

The Gombe delegation also sought the IsDB's support for the Muhammadu Buhari Industrial Park through Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission's investor drive and for the bank to participate in the formal commissioning of the park which is coming soon.

The Park Located in Dadinkowa, some 40km away from the state capital covers a

thousand hectares of land and is provided with facilities and amenities like water, road network and power, guaranteeing a favourable atmosphere for industries to thrive.

On the Gombe Green Sukuk, the IsDB assured to fully support the pre-development work, inventory aggregation, and the full implementation of the programme.

In the area of Agriculture, the Bank through its agricultural team will directly support the livestock-value-chain and the anti-venom manufacturing plant in the state to reduce the devastating effects of snake bites and other related health risks on the people of the state.

Balanga Dam, the second largest Dam in the state with a lot of potential is also set to benefit from the collaborative efforts. The Balanga Dam Project will be implemented with a detailed business

plan and investor proposals thereby exploiting its full potential for the growth and development of Gombe State.

The great Wawa-zange Grazing Reserve will also receive the needed attention. it is agreed that Gombe State will support MercyCorps to fast-track the development of the Business Case through the concession of the Project, putting the reserve to good use.

The IsDB's team assured of their group's readiness to support the state in all the potential areas of investments and interventions, expressing confidence that the state has proven to be a dependable development partner.

The Gombe State delegation had Dr. Ishiyaku Mohammed, Special Adviser to the Governor on Budget, Planning, and Development Partner Coordination; and Haj. Aisha Bako, Managing Director Onyx Consultant



Women, Youth Receive ICT4ag Training, Smart Phones From Kaduna AGRA Project

By: SANIALIYU, Zaria

The Agricultural Green Revolution for Africa (AGRA) Kaduna Consortium Project, has trained about 300 women and youth Community-based Advisers (CBAs) on the use of ICT4ag tools and distributed over 200 Samsung smart phones to them.

The beneficiaries paid 50 per cent of the cost of the phones as their counterpart contribution.

The aim of this initiative is to empower the CBAs and the farmers they serve, increase their resilience and efficiency, and provide them with opportunities for digital e-extension services, income generation, productivity improvement and entrepreneurship development.

The training was declared open by the Executive Director of NAERLS, Professor Emmanuel Ikani who was represented by the Assistant Director, Training and Outreach, Prof Muhammad Umar Jaliya.

He advised CBAs on the proper use of smart phones, which he said would have a positive impact on the livelihood and output of farmers in the state.

He stressed the importance of disseminating improved agricultural technologies to the end users and urged the CBAs to pay attention to the exercise.

The AGRA Kaduna Programme Officer, Dr Esther Ibrahim, applauded the high turnout of women as a sign of their empowerment.

She also emphasized the importance of the training as the CBAs are expected to share their knowledge with their farmers in their communities. She urged the other participants to pay their counterpart funds for more phones to be procured.

The principal investigator of the project, Professor C.K. Daudu, while presenting an overview of the project, noted that the distribution of the AGRA smart phones is a notable attempt to empower smallholder farmers to improve their productivity, reduce vulnerability and increase their e-extension and market resilience in the maize-based system in Kaduna State.

He added that through this innovation, around 300,000 farmers are expected to be connected and linked to



multimedia apps that will enable them to access business opportunities such as e-buying and selling of commodities to increase their income.

The training was conducted in three batches from Wednesday 10th to Friday May. The co-grantees of the project; Premier Seeds, EXAF and Pearl Mutual, as well as other partners such as KADA, MLG and IAR representatives were also present at the event.

The finance officer of NAERLS and gender strengthening enthusiast Barrister Hadiza Kabir, encouraged the youth to use the AGRA smart phones effectively to generate income as smart phones are important tools for entrepreneurship development.

The participants were also equipped with skills on how to use basic mobile applications for agriculture such as RiceAdvice Tools, ODK, UTM area

measurements, Plantex applications and standard data collection procedures among others.

The CBAs were drawn from 18 LGAs across the three zones of Kaduna state.

They expressed gratitude and thanked AGRA for this great opportunity.

The highlight of the event was the symbolic presentation of the phones and certificates of attendance to the participants.

Umahi Tasks Youths On Societal Values, Living Right

By: MKPUMA ENYINNA, Abakaliki

Governor David Nweze Umahi has called on people, especially the youth, to endeavour to live responsibly in order to bequeath good legacies on transition.

Governor Umahi made the call on Saturday during the burial ceremony of Prince Michael Ekumankama, father of the Minister of State for Health, Chief Joseph Ekumankama at his Amangwu Edda country home.

The governor while calling for sustenance of societal values among families, attributed insecurity in the society to lack of proper upbringing at the family setting.

"I will advise our young men and women to live a good life, if a man has done anything good for you, do not pay back evil for the good.

"Do not envy success, pray for success and it shall come to you for whatever a man soweth, he shall reap."

Governor David Nweze Umahi extolled the sterling virtues of industry exhibited by the late patriarch during his life time and enjoined his children to strive to sustain them.

"Let me appreciate the life that our late father lived. For a man to live up to almost 94 years in this



Gov Umahi

challenging society is something to be grateful to God.

"From the available accounts, the man lived a worthy life and you can see that reflecting in his children.

"Power and might belongs to God which means that it is God that makes leaders, but every leader that does not imbibe justice, equity and fairness, may not receive the blessings of God.

"The last election is a proof that societal norms are changing, that

the reward system is no longer in vogue and this has to change.

"We need prayers for our leaders. In few days, I will be saying like Apostle Paul, I have finished the race, what remains is for God to give me the crown of glory."

The governor lauded one of the sons of the deceased and Minister of State for Health, Chief Joseph Ekumankama for his exceptional character which he noted, was evidence of good

parenting.

He appreciated Edda people for their solidarity during the just concluded elections and assured that he would repay the trust through his representation at the National Assembly.

In his condolence message, President Muhammadu Buhari represented by Minister of Health, Osagie Ehanire while applauding late Michael Ekumankama for leaving behind good legacies, enjoined the

children of the deceased to hold on to their father's good legacies.

"Our father has lived a full clearly lifestyle, obviously he was very well endowed with knowledge and it is evident the way it is impacting on the children. For the people he has left behind, we pray that God Almighty gives them the fortitude to bear the loss."

In his tribute, son to the deceased and Minister of State for Health, Chief Joseph Ekumankama lauded the exemplary lifestyle of their late father.

"You were the foundation of my being, the originator and potter through whom God moulded me.

"I will forever cherish and miss your fatherly disposition towards us.

"Your wise counsels still lead me and would forever be greatly missed."

Another son of the deceased and Chairman of Afikpo South Local Government Area, Prince Chima Ekumankama attributed all his successes in life to good tutelage by his late father.

"Mpa, I want to say thank you from the depth of my heart for everything that you have done for us and all the sacrifices." He said.

Late Prince Michael Ekumankama died at the age of 93.

We Hope Buhari Would Sign VGN Bill Before Leaving Office

By; MUKTAR ABDULLAHI UNGOGO.

The Vigilant Group of Nigeria (VGN) was established by some of the well meaning citizens in order to support the security agencies in keeping the society safe and secured.

I am of the opinion that the organisation is making good

efforts towards ensuring that there is better livelihood in all the nooks and crannies of this great country, especially when the security agents need accurate support from the public.

It is pleasant to note that there is the presence of VGN at both levels, and the group is working selflessly to ensure that there is peace and unity every time in

order to protect lives and property or the innocent residents, which is the main reason for the establishment of the organisation.

I wish to use this medium to call on President Muhamadu Buhari to sign the VGN bill into law before quitting office to allow the group work diligently and to serve with more legal backing as

seen in other nations.

I wish to also commend our able Commander-General, Navy Captain Umar Bakori and his lieutenants for keeping the organisation's flag flying, and assure that VGN would continue to render good services to the people without bias.

Muktar Ungogo wrote this piece from No 1, Galadima Road, Kano.



President Buhari

Restructuring Ministries Of Education And Science:

A Memo To President-elect

By; Prof IDRIS BUGAJE
INTRODUCTION

'No nation can rise above its level of education', is a popular dictum. We congratulate the new President-elect, as his election has raised our hope that the educational sector will be repositioned to become functional in its output, productive to the Nigerian youths and stable in its operations. It is in this respect and having played some role in both the Ministries of Education and Science and Technology in the past 12 years, this memorandum is written to the Jagaban to appeal to him to make key restructuring of these two Ministries if Nigeria is to rise again.

Restructuring Two Ministries

The Education Ministry is probably the largest Ministry in Africa, with mandates covering both basic, secondary and tertiary education (Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics, Specialized Institutions, etc.) besides the non-formal education sub-sector consisting of Nomadic Education, Adult Education and the upcoming Almajiri Education Commission, and several other parastatals too numerous to mention. The Ministry of Science and Technology (recently they added 'innovation' to their name), on the other hand, is one key ministry that is still struggling since its creation, to give us one single innovation or global technology product that the world can call Nigerian. It has 17 Agencies and Research Institutes under its supervision gulping tens of billions of research budgets every blessed year.

Last two weeks, Nigeria received a visiting delegation from South Korea who came to Nigeria to inaugurate the BEAR-3 Project, that's 'Better Education for Africa's Rise', it's 3rd phase in West Africa, as two earlier phases had been done covering South Africa and East Africa. In 1958, five years after the devastating Korean civil war, three nations in three different continents were adjudged as being at the same level of development by all UN indices and these were Nigeria, Brazil and South Korea. Sixty five (65) years after, South Korea has not only emerged as the 10th largest economy in the world but are trying to help its former peer, Nigeria out of the woods. South

Korea is proud to put major brands as innovations on the global table, such as different LG and Samsung Products, the Hyundai brands, HUBO Robots, etc. Nigeria is yet to get one product of innovation into the national or continental levels not to talk of the global market. What went wrong? The answer to this pertinent question is the very reason for this memo to His Excellency, the President-elect, to get Nigeria back on track!

Eleven years ago, while on an official visit to Vietnam for research collaboration, I discovered that every Research Institute in Vietnam was Postgraduate Degree awarding. Nigeria's Research institutes don't enjoy this mandate, except the few of them domiciled in Universities, and this could explain why no serious research is taking place in the 17 Institutes under the Science and Technology Ministry. Most of these agencies are only doing window dressing and the researchers are poor with very few publishing High-Impact-Factor International Journal papers, with little patents registered and virtually zero commercialization of these patents. Most Researchers in these agencies have stagnated. This must change.

I propose that the Federal Ministry of Education be split into two – Federal Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the Federal Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education. The Federal Ministry of Higher Education and Research should be merged with the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology and all its 17 research agencies. More importantly, all these Research Institutes should be relocated to relevant Federal Universities and given immediate mandates to open up their laboratories to undertake Masters and Doctorate training/research with academic superintendence from the University Senates. Presently, most Agricultural Research Institutes (supervised by the federal Ministry of Agriculture) in Nigeria are run this way. The staff of these Institutes should be assessed by University standards and ranks given to them with the advantage that those hardworking may rise to Professorial Chairs. This shift will radically change the postures of Nigerian Research Institutes and make them more productive with some of the



Prof Bugaje

researches hopefully becoming innovations as seen in most Emerging Asian economies.

Presently these research Institutes are not undertaking any serious research with few patents registered not to talk of innovations. They operate without research road maps that gives targeted goals over time frames, what Malaysia called IRPA – Intensive Research in Priority Areas, since the 1990s. This is bound to change once the Research Institutes are made to operate under academic environments with effective monitoring by the University Senates.

The new Federal Ministry of Higher Education and Research should equally give priority to skills development under the Technical and Vocational education and Training (TVET) sub-sector. Employability of Diploma holders should be the new paradigm and in this respect a policy that will ensure that Nigerian students in Polytechnics must graduate not only with a Diploma but at least one certified skill (Nigeria Skills Qualification, NSQ) of the

candidate's choice. There are presently so much skill gaps in the nation's economy and we should drive the skills agenda vigorously to reverse the present importation of skilled labour from Asia in our several oil and gas, hydroelectric power, rail and other key projects.

The Federal Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education should be repositioned to effectively deliver on its current mandates in basic and secondary education and equally address the over 20 Million Out-of-School Children, vast majority of who are Almajiris. The upcoming 'National Commission for Almajiri and Out-of-School Children Education' is a very commendable effort of the National Assembly which will surely address a major concern of most Nigerians, the Almajiris. During the public hearing held this month, it was stimulating to note that even the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) supported the Bill with minor modifications.

Almajiri education was an inherited system which had its roots almost a millennium before

colonization, from the famous Sankore University in Mali, established in the year 989 AD, the World's third University and the first in Sub-Saharan Africa. What this system of education requires today is reform by introducing modern methods of teaching, infrastructural intervention and embedding skills acquisition in the training program, to end the menace of begging, which was not part of the scheme originally.

Conclusion

We look forward to a successful inauguration of the new Government, as Nigerians are hopeful that Asiwaju shall re-engineer and re-invent the Nigerian nation to be the pride of the Black Race through major restructuring, key among them shall be the overhaul of the Education and Science & Technology Ministries, the split and merger of their relevant components with clear roadmaps.

Prof BUGAJE is the Executive Secretary, National Board for Technical Education, Kaduna.



'Women' Trafficking

By Safiya I. Dantiye

A YOUNG Nigerian woman cried for help as she was unknowingly sold to a prostitution racket in Ghana. She went missing two weeks after been taken there.

Oyindamola Ola, 24, said one woman took two of them to Ghana with the promise of a good job. But the woman took her somewhere and left with her friend. She was informed a day later after the woman and her friend didn't come back that she was sold for prostitution.

"Poverty makes unscrupulous people to exploit those in a dire situation with false promises of jobs only to find the reverse where they may find it difficult to extricate themselves or run away."

She refused and they said she had to pay N500,000 as it was the amount they paid to the woman. In other words, she was sold! She said she didn't have the money and they made her to undergo some fetish rituals and took an oath, obviously to frighten her as they said she would go mad if she left without paying the amount. It is unfortunate how our young ones, especially girls, are deceived with the promise of abundant jobs in other countries. They jump at the opportunity; some pay their benefactors upfront or are held under bondage of payment later, where almost all the money they make would be given as payment.

However, outright selling of people like in the case of Oyindamola is not common. So, through this, they sell their victims and vanish. If the victims protest as they must surely do, the buyers or owners as it is, would demand reimbursement.

I wish they ask that from the seller, but perhaps since they are partners in crime, it is the victim that would bear the brunt and be intimidated into submission.

The buyers must surely know that the victim may hardly know that she was being sold like a common commodity in the market and into prostitution for that matter.

Women and young girls are being trafficked under the guise of education and job opportunities. Even women with small children fall into this, believing that they would get money to look after their children.

"Just last week, the National Agency for

the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) raised an alarm that women trafficked to Iraq as domestic servants were being exploited and sexually harassed and were requesting assistance to return home."

In any case, this exploitation and abuse of women is very wide indeed. Some years ago, a teenage secondary school girl of about fifteen years suddenly came to stay with a gate man living in the small room at the gate. He introduced her to the residents as his wife. "This is my bride," he said.

But the young girl from a neighbouring state bordering Abuja later said she didn't know anything about being married to him. She said it was one woman that brought her to him and left.

She was asked about her parents but she said the woman said she would take her to work as a house girl, abandoning her education all together. The young girl left after few months.

Poverty makes unscrupulous people to exploit those in a dire situation with false promises of jobs only to find the reverse where they may find it difficult to extricate themselves or run away.

Just last week, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) raised an alarm that women trafficked to Iraq as domestic servants were being exploited and sexually harassed and were requesting assistance to return home.

The Director-General of the agency, Fatima Waziri-Azi, said the women were trafficked to Iraq under the guise of greener pastures, and that most of them were young.

She said NAPTIP was investigating rogue labour recruiters who have been reported to be big players in the recruitment of Nigerians to Iraq for domestic servitude.

The poverty alleviation programmes of government should do more by providing people the opportunity to really get out of poverty and not to be exploited by lies.

No matter the opportunity provided, some would however seek to go somewhere to make a living or a fortune, as such they should be cautious and not to believe all the rosy stories they hear. Some that dish out such stories may be involved in crime.

Sani Kila: The Man Whom The Cap Fits

By: IBRAHIM IBRAHIM

Being in the media world for close to two decades now has afforded me the rare privilege of objective assessment of policies, governance, and individuals, and today, I'll have to recognize an incredibly innovative leader.

Sani Kila is one of the most competently thoughtful individuals I have ever known, a true friend of the media. I say this because I have worked closely with him for a decade now.

He dovetails humility with discipline and character with magnanimity. He is always there for his subordinates and can go to any length to protect them, something very rare in our crop of leaders today.

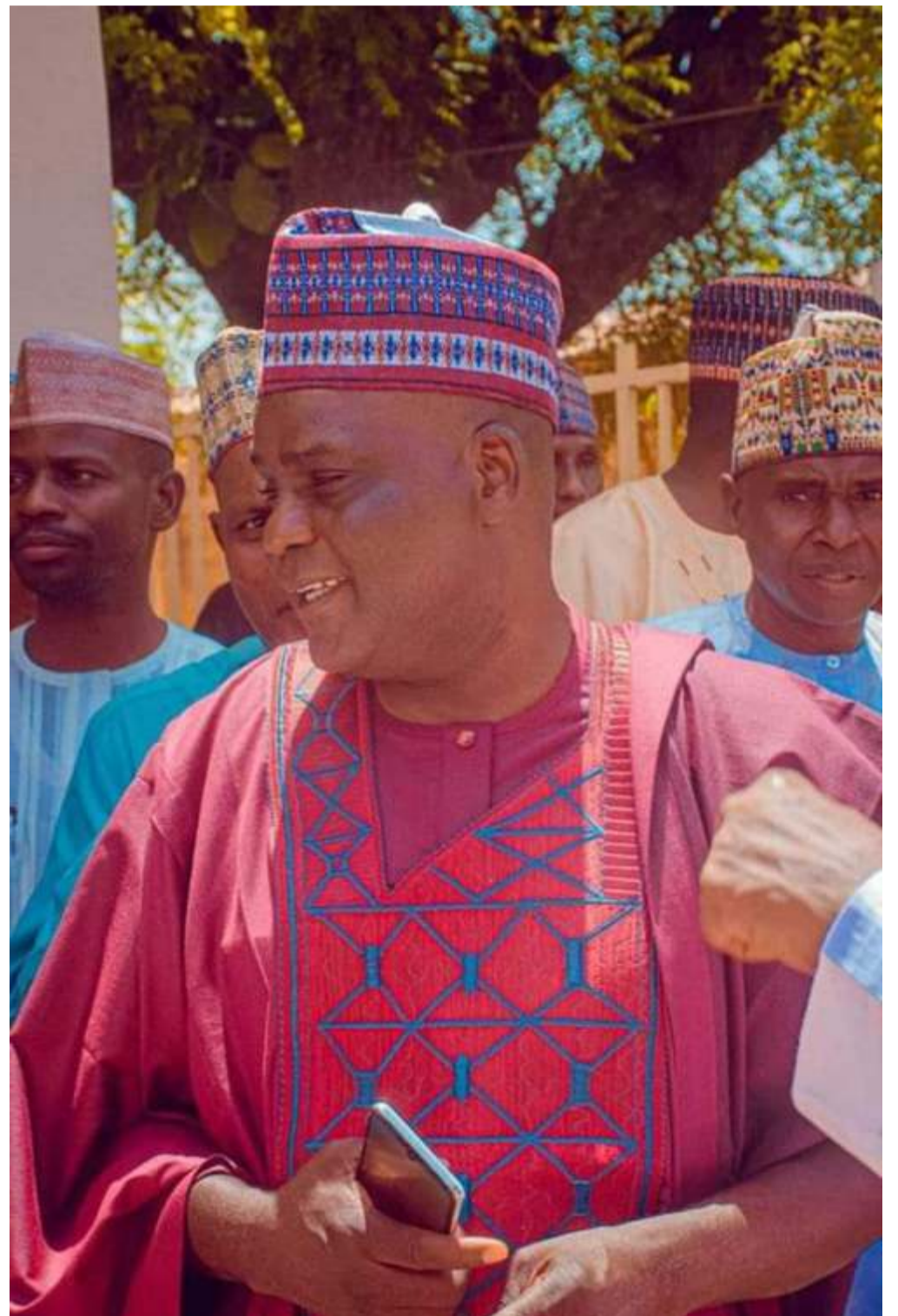
His generosity is unmatched, and an inspiration to the upcoming generation of leaders. I once asked him the secret of his success, he smiled and said;

obedience and being dutiful to parents. Sani Kila is someone that gives with his right hand without the knowledge of his left hand. Of all his good traits, of equal or greater importance, is his dependability and profound loyalty to people.

To my knowledge, you can count on the fingers of one hand people as dependably trustworthy to their principals as S. Kila. He always puts the interest of people around him above his, and has never been an accomplice to betrayal. These among other things have made L.S. Kila a shining light before his principal.

Sir, I join numerous others to celebrate you as we have been doing everyday of our lives, we assiduously pray that the Almighty fittingly places the cap on your head.

Ibrahim Ibrahim, a journalist, writes from Kaduna



Sani Kila

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

Change Must Begin With The Leader

By: HASSAN GIMBA

This writing was first published on 6 July 2020. With changes of leadership soon at the federal and state levels, I see it as relevant. The first part in particular. However, do we forget the lessons in the second part?

The world is changed by your example not by your opinion – Paulo Coelho, Brazilian Lyricist and author of *The Alchemist*.

Allah (SWT) said in the Qur'an that He does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in their hearts. It is a verse widely quoted out of context by people wanting to give their idols in power excuses. There was never a time in any history when people just woke up and all of them at the same time said to themselves: "We must change". Even revolutions and mass uprisings have guides. Someone had to mobilise them, sensitise them, and lead the way. And that person is called a leader. Therefore, those who are fond of quoting this verse as an excuse to shield their principals are either loose-brained or plain mischievous. Most likely, they won't refer to the verse if the icon does not appeal to their sentiments.

Because God raises the living out of the dead and brings forth light out of the dark, He raises from among a people their type who leads them from deprivation to well-being. Out of the palace of the Pharaoh, He raised Moses (AS). Out of the family and society of idolaters, He brought forth Abraham (AS), and out of the heathendom of Arabia, He revealed Muhammad (SAW).

Chaka the Zulu founded the Zulu Empire and for twelve years before his assassination on September 22, 1828, he molded his people into a dominating fighting force never seen before in southern Africa. Mao Zedong, known as Chairman Mao, was the founding father of The People's Republic of China and laid the foundation of what China now is. You can go on and count leaders who changed their people and their countries' fortunes by leading by example. Cuba's Fidel Castro was one; we also had Muammar Gaddafi from Libya, Dr Martin Luther King who raised the consciousness of Blacks, Dr Muhammad Mahathir of Malaysia and Mahatma Gandhi of India. These leaders raised the consciousness level of their people and changed them to better human beings, by being what they wanted their people to be. They did not look at their people in the face condescendingly and patronisingly, point a finger at them, and sing "change" while they indulged in the vices of yore. Mao viewed such leaders as "swollen in head, weak in legs, sharp in tongue but empty in belly."

In Nigeria, they promised us "change" and we fought to bring in its champions. Some lost their capital, others their health, while some paid the supreme price, but we all heaved a sigh of relief and proclaimed, "It has come!" We wanted change, and we thought fairness and justice would take the place of selfishness and impunity; that transparency and accountability would

replace corruption but, above all, that our lives and property would be secure.

We have seen how our leaders of old discarded our homemade cars, foods, clothes, hospitals and schools and embraced those of foreigners for themselves and their families. We were witnesses to our leaders collecting stupendous salaries and allowances, while our most vulnerable slept on empty stomachs. We thought the change would bring leaders who would put everything for the wealth of the land to cascade to the least of us.

Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio had two lamps, one bought by the state and the other from his salary. After finishing state work with a state lamp in the night, he blew it out and lit the personal one for his private work.

So, what has changed? Anyone who tells me I must first change before my nation changes is not fair to me. He is just mocking me. People are just a crowd. They need a leader to become a nation. I just need to be led out of the woods and that was why I voted. A crowd cannot change anything, except to cause chaos and anarchy, but a leader can.

We can attest to this even from simple clothing. Many of us wear our watches on the right because we grew up watching General Yakubu Gowon do so. Before the coming of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as president, many typical northerner's gowns (Babbar Riga) had a "just there" embroidery, but Shagari came with the Shagari style – full embroidery covering the chest down to the stomach. Now, you may be called a clown if you wore a gown with small embroidery. Nigerian men, especially those from the north, used four yards for their jumpers and trousers. Then General Sani Abacha, like a bolt from the sky, came with his tazarce and redefined how we dress. Wear a four-yard jumper now and risk being viewed as "half-naked". President Buhari too has brought back a hitherto dead mode of dressing – wearing a collar-neck shirt under a caftan. At the state level, a state I know very well is Yobe. When Bukar Abba Ibrahim was the governor, his followers took to wearing his type of red dara cap. This mimicking of leaders is seen in the way many admirers of the current governor, Mai Mala Buni, are adopting his idiosyncrasies and a certain cap he has popularized.

Did we not see how General Obasanjo's Operation Feed the Nation turned civil servants into farmers? Our parents were, as civil servants, proud and happy to engage in farming. General Muhammadu Buhari's War Against Indiscipline, though not out of inspiration (perhaps why it did not outlive the regime) as out-of-state coercion, made people toe the path of discipline and decorum. The recent change in APC's direction and possibly fortune is enough testimony that it takes a leader to change the course of events.

Honourable Minister, The School Kids Are Hungry

One grows weary sometimes of continuing to write when nothing seems to



Hassan Gimba *Monday Column*

change, and there is the temptation to just give it up. But there are many things one cannot just ignore.

I want to write about Buratai relocating to Katsina until "banditry is crushed". Yes, the same Buratai who went to Sambisa over two months ago with the promise to never return until he has finally strangled that dying horse so that we can rest from its last kicks.

I want to write about the hungry kids because they don't get meals any more. I also want to write about the school children's "feeder" wanting to build 10,000 houses for Borno IDPs. I want to write and bring to her notice that if beneficiaries of N72 billion worth of palliatives refuse to be identified because they do not want to be regarded as poor, what makes her think the proud Borno people will accept houses as alms? Please, she should use the billions instead to continue feeding the kids, for they are hungry.

I want to write about N-Power. 500,000 beneficiaries who are still crying over their unpaid allowances are being sent out of jobs they have got experience in for 400,000 other fresh-eyed hopefuls. They said N-Power is an acronym for Need for Power. Well, they have been thrown into Need for Job now. I want to write about Nigeria's alarming unemployment rate. When the N-Power portal opened, 100

applications were registered per second and by 7.38 pm that day, 1,001,045 applicants had registered.

I want to write about the prophecy of doom by the Presidential Task Force (PTF) three weeks ago – that by this time next week, Nigerians will start dying in 100s because Nigeria will enter the "second wave of COVID-19". I want to write and ask, then why are you asking our children to return to school?

I also want to write about their claim now that Nigerians did not die because the virus-infected only citizens that are between 20 and 30 years old and "being an active group", the virus died in them – just like that!

I want to write about this 20 – 30-year-old group "attractive" to the virus. I want to write and ask, why didn't they infect anyone? Are they living on an island in this country? Don't some of them have siblings, spouses, children, parents, and grandparents? Don't they mix with other "age groups" in the country?

I want to write and ask, despite these alarms, true or false, what are our governments doing to improve our health care system, especially as we are still not allowed to run to Europe?

I want to write and ask...

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

The Pitfalls of Executive Control Over the Legislature

By Jibrin Ibrahim

INCOMING President Tinubu has chosen Godswill Akpabio (South-south) and Barau Jibrin (North-west) for the senate president and deputy senate president respectively. For the House of Representatives, he has endorsed Tajudeen Abbas (North-west) and Ben Kalu (South-east) for speaker and deputy speaker respectively.

“Currently, the APC has even lesser numbers than it had previously and the spirit of asserting their autonomy could easily be evoked again to foil Tinubu's choices. But then, Tinubu is not Buhari. He is a transaction politician per excellence with a long track record; so he may be able to find a way out.”

In-coming presidents never learn. Since 1999 when President Obasanjo introduced the tradition, there have been frequent battles over the assumed “presidential prerogative” to appoint presiding officers they like and it has seldom favoured the executive. We will see if this one will be different.

This week, APC legislators that lost out of the president-elect's selection process stormed their party headquarters and bitterly complained of betrayal, lack of consultations and scheming certain zones of the country out of the largesse of National Assembly leadership. In his speech, Wase, the deputy speaker, said the party betrayed the aspirants by micro-zoning the offices without consultations. Another aspirant said: “We feel betrayed as if our contributions aren't recognised and as if we aren't members of this party.” They openly declared their intention to revolt against the proposed slate. In his response, Party Chairman Adamu pleaded with the aggrieved lawmakers to give the party time to act on their letter of protest.

Maybe, the APC should recall the drama that led to the election of Dr. Bukola Saraki and Hon. Yakubu Dogara as Senate president and House of Representatives' speaker respectively in June 2015. At the time, the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) National Publicity Secretary, Olisa Metuh, released a cynical statement telling the All Progressives Party (APC) to: “stop whining and accept the will of the people, respect the independence of the legislature, as the PDP is not responsible for their naivety and crass inexperience.” Drawing on the simple right of legislators to elect their own leadership, Saraki and Dogara simply outplayed President Buhari and his ambition to determine their leadership. Not even police takeover of access to the National Assembly could stop them.

“Of course, in 2019, President Buhari succeeded in getting his rubberstamp National Assembly that he could shout at and say jump, and they would meekly ask: how high? It must be said that in general, executives, the world over, prefer pliable legislatures that would rubberstamp policy programmes of the regime without question.”

The imposition attempt by the APC in 2015 was so irritating to legislators that

the PDP caucus that had become a minority even considered putting up David Mark for Senate President again by mobilising rebel APC members but he declined. What they did was to nominate another Senator in the APC and give him their block vote in what would amount to divide and rule. Currently, the APC has even lesser numbers than it had previously and the spirit of asserting their autonomy could easily be evoked again to foil Tinubu's choices. But then, Tinubu is not Buhari. He is a transaction politician per excellence with a long track record; so he may be able to find a way out.

The embarrassment of President Buhari in 2015 was that when he discovered that plot against his choices, he immediately scheduled for a meeting of APC legislators at the International Conference Centre, just one hour ahead of the time that the National Assembly was supposed to be inaugurated. His mistake was that he had already transmitted to the Clerk of the National Assembly the proclamation order and most elected members went to Parliament rather than the presidential meeting. The attempt to use the police to prevent the National Assembly members from entering the premises also failed as those who heard about the plot to stop them went in before the police came and those who came later and were fit scaled the fence. We all recall the athleticism of legislators scaling fences as if to show the breadth of their professional experiences.

At 10 am on that fatidic day, the Clerk of the National Assembly commenced the session for the election of principal officers in the Senate while Senator Ahmad Lawan and several of his APC colleagues were busy waiting at the International Conference Centre (ICC), Saraki was nominated for the post of Senate President and since he was unopposed and there were enough senators to make a simple majority, there was no contest. The same happened with Dogara at the House of Representatives. By the time the APC legislators who were still expecting the president to arrive at the ICC realised the futility of their action, it was all over. They rushed back to the National Assembly only to find out that the leadership question had been concluded.

“There is an assumption that executives are powerful and that it's normal for legislatures to play second fiddle to them. This is not true in political science theory. Conceptually, legislatures are the most powerful institutions in democratic regimes for a very simple reason. Legislatures are the only institutions with the power to create other powers.”

Of course, in 2019, President Buhari succeeded in getting his rubberstamp National Assembly that he could shout at and say jump, and they would meekly ask: how high? It must be said that in general, executives, the world over, prefer pliable legislatures that would rubberstamp policy programmes of the regime without question. Executives in democratic systems come to power with a popular

mandate and therefore tend to feel constrained by having to argue with, appeal to, convince and cajole legislatures before they can get their programmes approved. There has therefore always been a tension between the two arms of government based on the assumption of executives that legislatures are obstructive of the pursuit of the popular mandate of the elected president.

Not surprising, legislatures have always had to struggle to carry out their mandate without executive interference. Legislatures however act on the basis that they have the real mandate of their constituents and therefore need no lessons on what the people need. It is this context of conflicted visions of respective mandates that make some conflicts inevitable.

There is an assumption that executives are powerful and that it's normal for legislatures to play second fiddle to them. This is not true in political science theory. Conceptually, legislatures are the most powerful institutions in democratic regimes for a very simple reason. Legislatures are the only institutions with the power to create other powers.

First, legislatures have the powers of the representative function in democracies that makes them the institution that represents the sovereignty of the people. Indeed, the theory of representative democracy is constructed on the principle of the election of legislators by the people to represent them at the level of law-making. It is this legitimacy derived from the electoral process that gives them the power to map and mould the views and concerns of citizens and constituents into public policy.

Secondly, they have the monopoly of the powers to make laws through which they create other powers through the establishment of new institutions and agencies, the enactment of policy and the control of expenditure through the process of appropriation laws. In democratic theory therefore, the powers of legislatures are at least as important, if not more important than the powers of executives.

“Be that as it may, no legislature can do its work well if it does not have its autonomy.



Jibrin Ibrahim

The first element of autonomy is that the legislature elects its own leadership without imposition from a bossy executive looking for a rubberstamp parliament.”

Thirdly, they have the oversight function over the executives whose policy-implementation work they supervise and review.

Fourth, as Joel Barkan (2009) argues, legislatures, or more accurately, legislators acting individually, rather than as members of a corporate organisation that engages in collective decision-making, perform the function of constituency service. In most African countries, legislators have imposed upon them two forms of constituency service – (a) Regular visits by MPs to their districts to meet constituents and assist some with their individual needs. (b) Involvement in small to medium scale development projects that provide various forms of public goods – roads, water supply systems, schools and scholarship schemes, health clinics, meeting halls, etc. to their constituents. It is this function that Nigerian legislators have exaggerated beyond recognition as constituency projects have each year become more significant than in previous years. In addition, many are not even properly executed so constituents often have no benefits from the projects.

Be that as it may, no legislature can do its work well if it does not have its autonomy. The first element of autonomy is that the legislature elects its own leadership without imposition from a bossy executive looking for a rubberstamp parliament.

Ibrahim is a professor of Political Science and development consultant/expert, and Senior Fellow of the Centre for Democracy and Development. He is also the Chair of the Editorial Board of Abuja-based online newspaper, PREMIUM TIMES.

Drive To Increase Recruitment Has Become Imperative In Nigerian Army - COAS



By: SANIALIYU, Zaria

The Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Faruk Yahaya has said that in its efforts towards increasing the manpower requirement of the Nigerian Army to meet its constitutional responsibilities considering the numerous security challenges bedeviling the nation, recruitment has become imperative.

He stated this as the Reviewing Officer of the 84th Passing Out Parade held at Depot Nigerian Army Zaria on Saturday May 13, 2023.

Gen. Yahaya said that this will aid in surmounting the current security challenges orchestrated by non-state actors, resulting in the wanton destruction of lives and property across the country. According to him, Depot Nigerian Army, since its establishment in 1924, has continuously moulded selected able-bodied civilians into disciplined soldiers to meet the demand for the Nigerian Army and the nation at large.

However, with the changing nature of warfare, the institution quickly adopted a new approach to training of its recruits on asymmetric warfare in line with my vision of "A PROFESSIONAL NIGERIAN ARMY READY TO ACCOMPLISH ASSIGNED MISSIONS WITHIN A JOINT ENVIRONMENT IN DEFENCE OF NIGERIA".

He said it is commendable to state that as the recruits pass out today, the strength and combat efficiency of the Nigerian Army would be enhanced with about six

thousand two hundred and fifty-one (6,251) well-trained men.

"As I am certain that you have acquired the basic training that is required of you to be referred or addressed as soldiers of the Nigerian Army.

"Depot Nigerian Army, being the premier military training Institution in Nigeria, remains distinguished among its contemporaries within and outside the country".

The Army Chief assured Depot NA of his total commitment and support towards improving the standard of training, as well as the welfare of recruits, instructors and staff of this great institution.

"Depot Nigerian Army is pivotal to Nigerian Army's efforts towards addressing the various security challenges in the country and will therefore continue to receive the needed logistics and administrative support to sustain and improve its training activities. Consequently, he directed that serious attention should be given towards reviving and improving the manpower deficiency, personnel welfare, infrastructural development and training facilities for better efficiency of this premier institution.

Accordingly, this directive has been translated into action with the remodeling and renovation of recruits lines, the renovation and equipping of the Medical Centre and provision of toilet facilities at the parade ground. Others include the renovation of soldiers quarters which is being carried out in phases and the Depot

Nigerian Army Shooting Range amongst others.

He said Nigeria is faced with numerous security challenges occasioned by the activities of Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists, armed bandits, kidnappers, separatist agitators, religious extremists and other criminal elements.

He also stated that the Nigerian Army with the support of the Federal Government will continue to do everything possible to surmount the various security challenges confronting the country until Nigeria becomes safe for all.

The adoption of cyclic training, which allows each recruit to undergo every aspect of training in Depot Nigerian Army, has made you a strong force to be reckoned with and has also prepared you all for the challenges ahead as you to commence your career as soldiers of the Nigerian Army.

"To the passing out recruits, accept my deepest congratulations for the successful completion of your initial soldier training at this Institution.

"Equally, I welcome you to the Nigerian Army, where a lot would be required from you in terms of loyalty, selfless service, courage, discipline, integrity and respect for others which are the core values of the Nigerian Army.

"You are expected to always do your utmost best in order to sustain these values through high professional standards in order to enhance your individual ability and our overall combat

readiness. I therefore urge you to assimilate and retain the mental, physical and spiritual training given to you at this Institution and the ones you will be exposed to at your respective units, formations and corps.

"Let me add here that the Nigerian Army has given you much, and the country is therefore expecting much more from you in return. Majority of you are going to be deployed to counter the activities of criminal elements that has adversely affected the socio-economic development of this country.

"While deployed on Internal Security duties, I urge you to be highly professional and to operate within the framework of the principles of human rights and strict adherence to the rules of engagement in the conduct of operations.

"You must not allow the rhetoric and actions of those determined to use ethnicity and religion to advance their narrow and selfish interests.

"Anything to the contrary will affect our belief in righteousness for all, that a large, diverse and united country offers to its people. You must always remain focused, and victory will surely be ours," he said.

Gen Yahaya, reminded them of the Oath of Allegiance that was administered to them.

"By that oath, you have acquired a special status where you are subject to both civil and military laws.

"Consequently, you are to avoid any act that is capable of tarnishing the image of the Nigerian Army and, by extension, the nation as a whole," he warned.

"The adoption of cyclic training, which allows each recruit to undergo every aspect of training in Depot Nigerian Army, has made you a strong force to be reckoned with and has also prepared you all for the challenges ahead as you to commence your career as soldiers of the Nigerian Army."

A Note To Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Nigeria's President-Elect

By: JEROME-MARIO CHIJIJOKE UTOMI

With the 2023 general elections over and the intrigues that surrounded the electioneering rested, the incoming Federal Government, when inaugurated on May 29, 2023, shall, in the enlightened national interest, be faced with the task of delivering Nigeria and Nigerians from the snare of dangerous political and socio-economic delusions.

More specifically, the outcome of the Saturday February 25 Presidential election organized by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has made, Alhaji Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the President-Elect.

But even as you (Alhaji Bola Ahmed Tinubu) celebrates, it is equally an open secret that in the present circumstance, you are both lucky and unlucky.

Lucky because Nigerians via the election subjected your political ambition to serious scrutiny and, going by the result as declared by INEC, the electoral umpire, majority judged your motives as unsoiled by private ambitions but largely fired by burning desire to pursue public good. This particular fact in my view explains your victory,

However, like every success that brings new problems, you are unlucky for the reason that the result has thrust yet another responsibility on you, an extremely important destiny; to complete a process of political and socioeconomic rejuvenation of the nation which we have spent far too long a time to do. In the present day Nigeria, more work needs to be done and more reforms to be made.

It is equally a common knowledge that the election was shaped by fiscal, sociological, political and communal factors in the country; coupled with the pockets of ethno-religious upheavals and misgivings from one region against another or powerful personalities against each other; it fractured our nation's geography into polarised ethnosyncrasies and idiosyncrasies, all of which had led to agitations of different sorts and capacities that are not overtly expressed but covertly potent.

These have disjointed the amalgams of the country and made the nation that was once called The Giant of Africa now viewed by the majority of the global community with derision, discontent and disrespect.

Despite this great disappointment and frustration, this piece believed and still believes that the nation Nigeria can surmount its present challenge as well as make appreciable advancement under your leadership when inaugurated if you religiously and vigorously as promised adhere to the content of your manifesto/renewed hope mantra shared with Nigerians during electioneering.

Adding context to the discourse, it is sometimes convenient for humans to forget and uncomfortable to remember, of which you are not an exception. It is equally a time-honoured belief that to forget is perhaps one of the greatest gifts of nature. But under the present circumstance and political temperature in the country, I hold the opinion that your incoming administration must design and catalyze a thought process that considers virtue of remembrance as an invaluable asset.

Among the basket of promises made to Nigerians, there is an urgent need to remember that you promised to improve security by decentralizing the policing of the country and creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs simultaneously. You promised to transform Nigeria into an enviable country and one where there will be justice, peace and prosperity for all, with a "robust economy".

You accepted to achieve in the country "a vibrant and thriving democracy and a prosperous nation with a fast-growing industrial base, capable of producing the most basic needs of the people and exporting to other countries of the world—a country with a robust economy, where prosperity is broadly shared by all irrespective of class, region, and religion. "A nation where its people enjoy all the basic needs, including a safe and secure environment, abundant food, affordable shelter, health care, and quality primary education for all." "A nation founded on justice, peace, and prosperity for all."

On the nation's economy; you agreed to build an economy that will make the nation's Gross Development Product (GDP) grow quicker annually for the next four years while also providing jobs for millions of youths in the country. You promised Nigerians that your administration will build a new National Industrial Policy

focused on special intervention to reinvigorate specific strategic industries. "I will focus on stimulating jobs, which will be my top priority as President. I will get Nigeria to work by launching a major public works programme, a significant and heavy investment in infrastructure, and value-adding manufacturing and agriculture".

You also said that your administration will build an efficient, fast-growing, and well-diversified emerging economy with a real GDP growth averaging 12 per cent annually for the next four years, translating into millions of new jobs during this period. And in a related development promised to create six new Regional Economic Development Agencies, which will establish sub-regional industrial hubs to exploit each zone's competitive advantage and optimize their potential for industrial growth.

You pledged to formulate a new National Policy on Agriculture to boost food production while promoting the establishment of new commodity exchange boards, strengthen the one in Lagos in order to guarantee minimum pricing for agricultural products such as cotton, cocoa, rice, soya beans, corn, palm kernel, and groundnuts.

On infrastructure, you promised to "Build A New Nigeria (BANN)" by developing a National Infrastructure plan, which will cover strategic roads, bridges, rail, water, power, seaports and airports spanning the length and breadth of the country, noting that your administration would combine government funding, borrowing, public private partnership, private sector financing and concession to initiate a medium and long-term financial model for the BANN initiative.

You stated that your administration would target an electricity distribution goal of 15,000 megawatts across the country and ensure a sustainable 24/7 supply. "I will embark on a renewed action-oriented focus and take immediate and urgent



action on resolving existing challenges of power generation plants, gas purchasing, pricing, transmission, and distribution. My administration's critical goal is to have 15,000 megawatts distributable to all categories of consumers nationwide to ensure 24/7 sustainable supply within the next four years," he added".

In the oil and gas sector, you said there would be no need for a subsidy, because the market will be open and transparent. That Supply will come from local refineries, and the forces of demand and supply will determine the price of petroleum products. "My administration will establish a National Strategic Reserve for Petroleum Products to stabilize supply during unexpected shortages or surplus periods. This will eliminate any form of product shortages and prevent wild swings in prices."

You promised to continue the free school feeding programme of the APC, feeding "millions of primary school children across the country, promising to increase the spending on education to 25 per cent of the nation's budget.

Talking about tertiary education, you said that your administration would eradicate strikes by tertiary institution workers by encouraging the tertiary institutions to source for funds through grants and corporate sponsorships, with all the institutions granted financial autonomy.

Just like education, you also assured to increase the funding for health care in the annual budget to 10 per cent. According to him the National Health Insurance Scheme would be relaunched to grant health

insurance cover to most Nigerians.

For me, building a united and prosperous Nigeria will among other things demand your recognition that "the first responsibility of a leader is to find the right people". This is key to the success of your administration.

Aside from bringing the right people, the first opinion that is formed of a leader's intelligence, according to Niccolo Machiavelli, is based on the quality of men he has around him. When they are competent and loyal he can always be considered wise, because he has been able to recognize their competence and to keep them loyal. But when they are otherwise, the ruler is always open to adverse criticism because his first mistake has been in the choice of his ministers.

More importantly, there is a need to base all appointments on the provisions of Paragraph 8(1)(b) of Part 1 of the third schedule of the 1999 constitution, which among other provisions, clearly stipulate that the Federal Character Commission must ensure the equitable distribution of all appointments and positions at the federal levels among the federating units.

Finally, if your administration is able to accomplish the promises made to Nigerians, it will be your most powerful accomplishment for earning new respect and emulation. And if you fail, it will equally go down the annals of history.

Utomi is the Program Coordinator (Media and Politics), Advocacy for Social and Economic Justice (SEJA), Lagos. He could be reached via; email protected/08032725374.

Top Ranked Players Join Queue For WTT Contender Lagos

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Feelers from the list of registered players for the World Table Tennis (WTT) Contender Lagos showed that top players in the top 20 range of the world ranking are jostling to make the final list of confirmed players for the first WTT Series in sub-Saharan Africa.

The WTT Contender Lagos is the first tournament after the World Championships taking place in Durban, South Africa as players begin hunting for

ranking points to secure their places at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in France.

According to a reliable source, WTT organisers are having a tough time deciding on the number of players in top 20 that will join others in Lagos for the championships.

Some of the players that have been part of the ITTF Challenge known at Nigeria Open are queuing up to return to the city regarded as the home of table tennis in Africa.

WTT is also optimistic that the Local Organising Committee

(LOC), experienced organisers of ITTF events in the past, are capable of hosting a befitting and exemplary tournament with the supportive Lagos fans.

According to the LOC Event Director Dr. Kweku Tandoh, the quality of players already signifying their interest to be in Lagos attest to the fact that the city has become one of the hubs of top class table tennis in the world, and the LOC has been working hard to ensure a smooth event.

"We have hosted several ITTF events in the past, and the

experience we had acquired in the course of staging these befitting events has qualified us to deliver world class tournaments. We are not surprised that players are eager to come to Lagos because the feedback from our previous events have shown that we are doing things right.

"The leadership of the LOC has mandated us to again deliver another seamless tournament that will continue to make Lagos one of the places to be when you are talking of top level table tennis events in the world,"

Tandoh said.

Already, some local players aiming to pick their slots among the contenders have been warming up across Nigeria as the Nigeria Table Tennis Federation (NTTF) is planning a national trials to select some of the local-based players that will team up with their foreign compatriots in the main event scheduled for June 12 to 18 at the Molade Okoya-Thomas Hall of Teslim Balogun Stadium

Wheelchair Basketball Departs Lagos For 2023 African Para Games Qualifier



By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Nigeria Wheelchair Basketball team (NWBF) will depart Lagos yesterday for Accra to attend the 2023 International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) African Para Games qualifier.

The 2023 International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) African Para Games qualifier is scheduled for 12th to 14th May in Accra, Ghana.

The delegation comprises eight players and four officials, led by the Secretary General, Aliyu Mohammed.

The players are, Mohammed Muritala, Bailey Segun, Akinde Oluwaseun, Emmanuel Adetayo, Ajibade Kayode, Ridwan Abubakar, Ojeleye Sefiu and Taiwo Durowoju while the officials are, Olayinka Sofolahan (coach), Oluwakemi Adetinde (coach) and Opeyemi Ogunleye (Referee).

The Secretary General of NWBF, Aliyu Mohammed hailed the President for ensuring Nigeria attends the qualifier and boosting the chances of making the podium finish.

Mohammed said that if not for the gesture, the country's contingent might have not made the tournament.

He said, "The players are indeed thankful to the newly elected President, Seyi Johnson for his quick intervention.

"We were almost stranded before the intervention. Without the timely response, the men's national team would have been incapacitated and miss the chance of showcasing their skills to the world.

"This gesture has motivated the players and we are sure something positive will happen in Ghana."

The Nigeria Wheelchair Basketball team will face hosts Ghana, Gambia and Senegal.

However, the Nigeria Wheelchair Basketball women's team has secured an automatic qualification.

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Sudan: 2,518 Nigerians So Far Evacuated Back Home - FG

By: BAYOAKAMO, Ibadan

The Federal Government has hinted that 2,371 Nigerians have been evacuated back to the country from Sudan as at Saturday.

According to a statement tagged, "Summary of Flight posted on WhatsApp, Sudan, NIDCOM situation room, a total number of 15 flights have been recorded with from from Aswan, Egypt and 11 from

Port Sudan.

"As at today, (Saturday), this is where we are. Total number of flights 15, 4 from Aswan, Egypt 11 from Port Sudan," it said. The statement added, "total number of evacuees as at Saturday 2,371. New arrivals just now 140 adults comprising of 3 infants and 30 children. Total evacuation 2,518

It gave breakdown of the evacuation as follows NAF C130 with 94 passengers

from Aswan, Airpeace with 274 from Aswan, Max Air with 410 from Aswan, Asman Air with 322 passengers from Aswan, Tarco Aviation with 130 passengers from Port Sudan.

Others are Tarco Aviation with 131 passengers from Port Sudan, Tarco Aviation with 102 passengers from Port Sudan, Tarco Aviation with 133 passengers from Port Sudan, Tarco Aviation with 127 passengers from Port Sudan, Tarco

Aviation with 136 passengers from Port Sudan.

The list also contained Tarco Aviation with 128 passengers from Port Sudan, Tarco Aviation with 136 passengers from Port Sudan, Tarco Aviation with 123 passengers from Port Sudan, Tarco Aviation with 125 passengers from Port Sudan and Tarco Aviation with 147 passengers from Port Sudan."

Clearing Agents Nabbed Over 24Kg Imported Illicit Drugs From Canada

By: RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

Two clearing agents are now cooling their heels in the net of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) over their alleged involvement in the importation of 24 kilograms of cannabis indica, popularly known as Colorado, concealed in imported used cars from Canada.

The illicit substance was discovered on Thursday, May 11, 2023, during a joint 100% examination of a container marked, MSMU 7412069, at the Prime Connection Bonded Terminal, off Oshodi-Apapa expressway, Lagos.

The two clearing agents linked with the container, Chief G.O. Njokwu and Mr. Christopher Obialor, were arrested by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), in collaboration with men of the Nigeria Customs Service attached to the Tincan Island Port Command.

This was contained in a statement issued by the anti-narcotic agency's spokesperson, Femi Babafemi yesterday.

Meanwhile, NDLEA operatives raided two

notorious drug joints, Zaro bunk in Bama road, Sabongari and the Sani Abacha indoor stadium, both in Kano metropolis where a total of 160 suspects were arrested with different quantities of illicit substances.

Also, two suspects: Abubakar Sallau, 55, and Nazifi Abdullahi, 25, were arrested on Saturday 13th May, along Kano-Maiduguri road, with 5,000 pills of Tramadol 200mg, while a total of 65,200 tablets of tramadol and exol-5 were seized from the duo of Adamu Nagati, 30, and Ali Nasiru, 35.

This is even as operatives in Abuja also arrested 25 suspects in raids across Tora Bora, Gwarinpa village, 3rd avenue in Gwarinpa, Karamo, Garki market, Sabongari Bwari and New Kucigoro IDP camp, within the FCT.

A female suspect, Fatima Hassan was arrested on Friday 12th May at Agege, Lagos with 33.5kg of cannabis sativa, while 44kg of the same substance was recovered same day from the Lagos Island warehouse of a fleeing drug dealer.

The statement further read: "The previous day, Thursday

11th May, another suspect, Peter Joseph was arrested along Lagos/Ibadan expressway with 10,000 pills of Tramadol 250mg and 1,500 tablets of Rohypnol concealed inside his Toyota Sienna vehicle, with registration number NRK 961XB.

"Similarly, a total of 68,300 pills of various opioids were recovered from one Bello Nasiru Usman when the truck conveying the illicit drugs was intercepted in Awka, Anambra state".

In the same vein, 460,000mls of Akuskura in 7,800 bottles were seized from a dealer, Mohammed Kyari, 42, when he was arrested in Gamboru Ngala town, Jere LGA, Borno on Wednesday 10th May.

"While NDLEA operatives supported by soldiers raided the hideout of a notorious drug dealer, Jimoh Lekan (aka 'komokomo') in Owode, Ogun state where 134kg cannabis was recovered from his store on Thursday 11th May, their counterparts in Plateau state on Tuesday 9th May arrested a suspect Bashir Usman, 32, at the Gangare Area of Jos, with 43.951kg of cannabis".



The suspects