

# FOR PEACE on the Plateau

Health Commissioners  
Engage Development  
Partners To Boost Sector

5

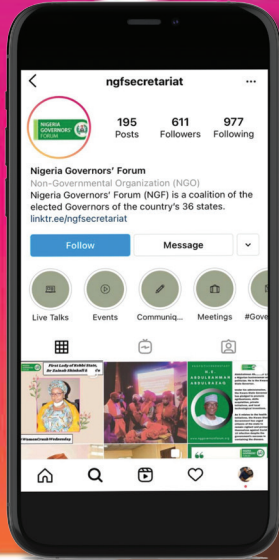


Serving Female Deputy Govs

3



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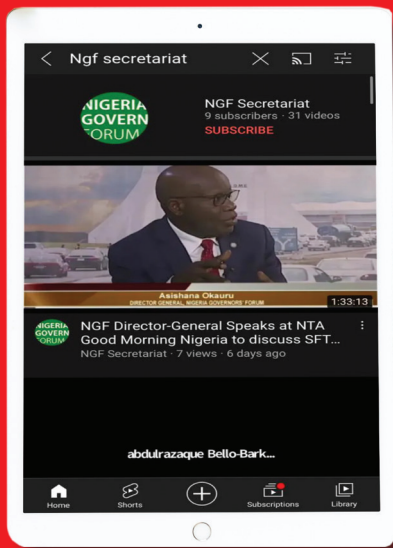
NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM



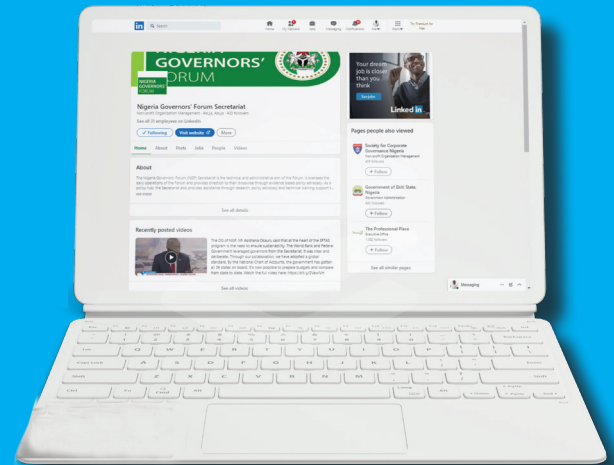
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# SERVING FEMALE DEPUTY GOVERNORS IN NIGERIA



## HADIZA BALARABE

She is a Nigerian politician and medical doctor who is currently serving as the 6th Deputy Governor of Kaduna State since 29 May 2019.

The first female governor of the state, she was born into the family of Alhaji Abubakar Balarabe in Sanga local government area of Kaduna state and had her early education at Girls College Soba, before proceeding to the University of Maiduguri where she studied Medicine and Surgery.

On 15 October 2019, as acting Governor, Hadiza made history by becoming the first Northern Nigerian woman to present the Kaduna State Government's 2020 Budget of Renewal to the Kaduna State House of Assembly.



## LOLO CECILIA EZEILO

Lolo Cecilia Ezeilo is a Nigerian politician, lawyer, philanthropist and television presenter.

The first elected female Governor of Enugu State since its creation in 1991, she has been the Deputy Governor of Enugu State since 2015.

Born in Amokwe, Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State, she is the widow of the late Igwe Malachy Ezeilo, the traditional Ruler of Ozom Aguobu Owa in Ezeagu Local Government Area of Enugu State.

She was first elected to the Enugu State Assembly in 2011, representing the constituency of Ezeagu, before she was picked by Ifeanyichukwu Ugwuanyi as his running mate in the 2015 gubernatorial election.



## IPALIBO GOGO BANIGO

She is a 68-year-old Nigerian medical doctor and politician and currently serves as the 6th and first female Deputy Governor of Rivers State.

She was born on 20 December 1952 in Degema, Rivers State. After she had her early education at Queens College, Lagos, she proceeded to the University of Ibadan where she studied Medicine and Surgery.

She had her postgraduate studies at Harvard University and the University of London where she obtained a master's degree in Public Health and a diploma in Tropical Hygiene and Dermatology, respectively. She has held many prominent offices at the Rivers State Ministry of Health.

In 1995, she rose to prominence when she became the Secretary to the Rivers State Government before serving as Head of Service of the state. She was picked by Ezenwo Wike as his running mate in 2014.

In April 29, 2021, she was among the Health Consultants present at a colloquium organised by St Rachael's Pharmaceuticals Nigeria to commemorate 2021 World Malaria Day held in Lagos, presenting some of the strategies on how to archive Zero-Malaria environment in Nigeria in the next 10 years.

## NOIMOT SALAKO-OYEDELE

Engr. Noimot Salako-Oyedele is a Nigerian politician and real estate developer.

She is currently serving as the Deputy Governor of Ogun State, Nigeria. She emerged as the Deputy Governor of Ogun State after winning alongside with Dapo Abiodun, the Governor of Ogun State, in the 2019 Ogun State gubernatorial election, under the platform of the All Progressive Congress, preceding Yetunde Onanuga, the formal Deputy Governor of the State.

Engineer Noimot Salako-Oyedele was born on January 8, 1967 to the family of late prof. Lateef and Mrs Rahmat Adebisi Salako. She hails from Aworiland, Ota, in Ota Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Engineer Noimot holds a master's degree in Public Health Engineering from the College of Science & Technology London, a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of London.

Noimot Salako-Oyedele started her career at the United Kingdom, where she served as a Graduate Engineer and Project Manager at Ove Arup & Partners between 1989 and 1995. She also served as Managing Director, NOS Nigeria Limited between 1995 and 2014.





# FOR PEACE ON THE PLATEAU

**O**n Monday August 6th, the beauty of Plateau State was recalled by several eminent personalities on Little Rayfield, another name for the location of the Plateau State Government House.

The Co-Chairmen of the Nigerian Inter-religious Council, Rev. Dr. Samson Ayokunle (CAN President) and the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Saad Abubakar, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Barrister Boss Gida Mustapha, the Governor of Ekiti State and Chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum, Dr John Kayode Fayemi, as well as Governors of Sokoto, and Niger States stormed Jos the Plateau State capital to commiserate with the people and Government of the State over the recent attacks that killed and maimed several innocent people and to interface with the grieving ones who lost loved ones.

The various stakeholders who congregated the hall include religious, political and community leaders from the Plateau ready to brainstorm and seek solutions to the security challenges of the State. But the most moving stories revolved around the nostalgic renditions of life on the Plateau, first by the Governor of Niger State, Abubakar Sani Bello who told of how lively Jos used to be and how it was a home to all northern youth at one point in their lives.

"No youth that was brought up in the north and who was worth his salt in those days, would deny the fact that he had once come to Jos on a social visit, worn warm clothing because of the weather and even bought used clothes for fashion," the Governor said. It is a story that many can relate to and it received a thunderous applause.

The Niger State Governor, whose state is also currently undergoing spats with bandits, preached peace on the Plateau and admonished the people to strive to return Jos to the welcoming environment that it used to be.

The Sokoto State Governor and Vice Chairman of the NGF Rt Hon Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, who also doubles as the Chairman of the PDP Governors' Forum gave his own perspectives of the beauty of the Plateau and even told of how the state viewed from the perspectives of the Sokoto State Government is fast becoming a shadow of its old self.

The governors all ended their speeches by urging all stakeholders to come together and address the situation and bring back the glorious days of the State. They recalled with fond memo-

ries their experiences in Jos many years ago which they hoped the current generation will also experience.

In short, the Plateau, as far as these eminent personalities are concerned, is not just the home of peace, but a home for everyone.

In his remark, Co-Chairman of NIREC, Rev. Dr. Samson Oyakunle said they were in Plateau State to respond to the recent attacks that claimed lives and properties which ruptured the peace of the State that has substantially grown over the last six years.

He said NIREC has followed with regret, the toxic narratives emanating from some religious and political leaders who instead of calming down tensions, have resorted to overheating the Plateau. He said NIREC has resolved to hand over such persons to security agencies for prosecution.

The Sultan of Sokoto also described the visit as part of their engagement towards promoting peace in Nigeria in fulfilment of their mandate and resolutions at the last quarterly meeting which was held in Abuja.

He said the meeting initially billed for Jos was shifted to Abuja following the recent unfortunate incident. However, he said Plateau State still remains a home of peace with attraction to people of diverse backgrounds who generally want to live together. The problem, he said, was the inability to halt impunity and punish criminals who use primordial sentiments like religion, ethnicity and politics to cause havoc.

When the Chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum, Dr. John Kayode Fayemi spoke, he said the Governors of the 36 States are in solidarity with their colleague, Governor Simon Bako Lalong who has put in a lot of efforts and resources to build structures for peaceful coexistence in the State as well as supported peace and reconciliation in various parts of the country.

He said they will do everything possible to support him in ensuring that peace returns and is sustained on the Plateau which is reputed for its hospitality and attraction to people from all backgrounds.

The Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr Boss Mustapha who represented President Muhammadu Buhari at the engagement, said the Federal Government remains concerned about the attacks in Plateau and has continued to support security agencies and the State Government in putting an end to the situation.

He said though the Government will not tolerate criminality and the destruction of lives and properties under any guise, it is incumbent on citizens to cultivate tolerance and love for one another,

as well as fish out criminals by reporting them to security agencies.

Boss Mustafa expressed optimism that the efforts of the Federal and State Governments will yield positive results with the support of the citizens. He also assured that the Federal Government will do its best to support the State to respond to humanitarian needs of the internally displaced persons.

Their host, Governor Simon Bako Lalong while thanking NIREC and the Governors for the visit, said the concern expressed and words of admonition shows that there is a determination to ensure that Plateau regains its enviable place as the Home of Peace and Tourism.

Lalong challenged the people of Plateau State to rise together and unite against those who want to cause divisions and hatred by using all avenues including politics.

**By Dr. Simon Makut-Macham**  
**Additional reports by Barkindo**

## THE TEAM

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Abubakar JIBIA

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# Health Commissioners' Forum Engages Development Partners To Boost Health Care Delivery



**T**he Nigeria Health Commissioners' Forum has scaled up its collaborative efforts in a bid to strategically reposition the country's health sector and explore potentials for improving health care service delivery across Nigeria.

The forum at its 2-day quarterly meeting held in Abuja, tagged: "Building a stronger health sector in Nigeria through collaboration and strategic partnership", acknowledged that Nigeria's health sector requires a revolution to strategically rebuild the sector especially in the fight against COVID-19.

The Director General of the NGF Secretariat, Mr Asishana Okauru, who spoke at the event, said that health has become a permanent agenda at the monthly meetings of the NGF where Governors are updated on priority health issues, utilizing advocacy tools such as scorecards and state specific briefs.

"The priorities in health include the acceleration of the attainment of Universal Health Coverage, improving nutrition especially of women and under-five children, strengthening routine immunization and domestication of the National Action Plan on Health Security," said Mr Okauru.

The Director General of the NGF added that over the years, the Secretariat has maintained a deep engagement with National and State MDAs as well as partners.

Also, present at the Health Commissioners Forum meeting was, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation of Nigeria, Mr Boss Mustapha.

He stated that the health of citizens equals the

health of the nation.

He commended NGF for their efforts but also acknowledged that the pandemic has disrupted the social development of the nation, has exposed the weakness of our system.

He further stated that he is enthusiastic that the topics addressed in the meeting would lead to solutions for the methods of implementation.

Speaking during the opening ceremony, the chairman of the forum, Dr Betta Edu, noted that the purpose of the quarterly meeting was to rally all the health commissioners from the 36 States of the Federation to bring up policies, decisions and networks through a joint communique that will state the forum's position on how Nigeria can achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC), how they can improve preventive care at State levels as well as solicit robust support to fight COVID-19 and other issues.

"We are here to also look into the different roles which the private sector can play to

improve health care in Nigeria. Above all, we'll be looking at strengthening the primary health care system which is the foundation of the health system in Nigeria," she said.

Dr. Edu who is also the health Commissioner for Cross River State called for more intervention and support from development partners as well as improved collaboration among stakeholders within the health sector.

"We are pleading with our partners for more support and intervention in an integrated manner. The vertical programming and silos will lead to duplication and might not help in building a resilient health system. We are pleading that our partners work with the Ministry of health at the various State levels to provide integrated health care so that we don't have overlaps and wastage."

Also speaking at the meeting, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) and chairman of the Presidential Steering Committee (PSC) on COVID-19, Boss Mustapha, highlighted the importance of collaboration at all levels to the success of the national response to COVID-19.

"I am happy that this meeting will be discussing broader health issues such as Basic Health Care provision, strengthening primary health care, HIV/AIDS control, Universal Health Coverage, health insurance, as well as various high impact interventions being implemented either directly or with our development partners.

# THE

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# PHOTOS FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONERS' FORUM MEETING





## NEWS FROM THE STATES

### Kano farmers to benefit from \$95m Agro Pastoral Project

Farmers in Kano State have been tasked to form cooperative societies to avail themselves of services, projects and programmes valued at \$95 million provided by the Kano State Agro Pastoral Development Project, KSADP.

The project, supported by the Islamic Development Bank, the Lives and Livelihoods Fund and the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, focuses on improving crop production and enhancing livestock productivity in the state, targets over one million people, mainly smallholder farmers and pastoralists.

The State Project Coordinator, KSADP, Alhaji Ibrahim Garba Muhammad made the assertion while receiving representatives of farmers groups from Zarewa, Rogo local government area, who visited the project's office in Kano.

"By forming cooperative societies, your activities will be integrated, it will be easier to access extension and

training services and you can simply get farm inputs, while it will facilitate support from financial institutions and the government".

"I want to let you know that the project, through Sasakawa services, will impact on 450,000 farmers of rice and maize selected in 14 LGAs including Rogo, your LGA, providing them with training, inputs warehousing and marketing services".

"On the other hand, we have made funds available to KNARDA, to work with 100,000 farmers providing them starter parks, trainings and marketing services, to produce other targeted commodities other than rice and maize".

Alhaji Ibrahim announced that the project intends to reduce deficit of physical facilities in selected areas and enhance linkages between smallholder farmers and value chains actors, in order to enhance storage, processing and marketing of agricultural commodities.

### Ganduje allocates 100 hectares for Nigerian Navy Base in Kano



Governor Ganduje (3rd right) with the Naval personnel during their courtesy visit

As a response to Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje's request for the Nigerian Navy's visibility in the state which will strengthen the security of the state, the Nigerian Navy approves the establishment of Kano Naval Base.

This was disclosed by the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Awwal Zubairu Gambo, when he paid a courtesy call to the governor at his office.

The Chief of Naval Staff is in Kano for the Chief of Naval Staff Annual Conference 2021, between 1st and 4th

September.

"Your Excellency I am glad to inform you that, the Nigerian Naval Board, has approved the establishment of Naval Base in Kano. Which falls among other Naval Bases approved by the Board in some selected states," he reveals.

After commending the governor for his efforts in seeing the successful operations of the Nigerian Navy, he also appreciated that, "We are equally thankful to His Excellency's effort and support, by allocating 100 hectares of land

for our new Naval Base in the state."

He further explained that, "We have already appointed the Acting Commander of the Base, who is Captain Muhammad Abubakar Alhassan. Who should, henceforth, be part of the security architecture of the state."

According to the Chief of Naval Staff, when the Base has been established, "... it will contribute to showcase the effort of the Nigerian Navy for keeping the nation as one indivisible nation."

### Ganduje signs mutual accountability framework document with FCDO Nigeria

Kano State Governor, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje and the UK's Foreign Commonwealth Development Office, Nigeria with Dr. Christopher Pycroft as the team lead, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of Kano State Mutual Accountability document (KanoMAF).

The signing of the MoU is one of the key strategies to perfect plans for better implementation of the document following Strategic Dialogue between Kano State Government and the FCDO.

The event took place at Dawakin Tofa Model Primary school, in the presence of some top govern-

ment functionaries, FCDO team and an array of other development partners.

The document's areas of interest are Human and Capital Development, which consists of health and education sectors, governance/social protection and sustainable economic transformation.

Other requisite part for

the implementation of the document, according to the strategy dialogue, is Monitoring and Evaluation.

During the dialogue session, there was open and frank discussions, particularly during the technical sessions, that were aimed at identifying constraints and windows of opportuni-

ties on how best the FCDO could support the state in addressing them.

The FCDO, as observed by Dr Pycroft, "aim to leave this meeting with a clear sense of the scope of our cooperation and how we can hold each other mutually accountable in the coming months and years ahead."



## NEWS FROM THE STATES



### Ugwuanyi extolled on job creation

Enugu State Governor, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, has been hailed by the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) over his strives to create employment opportunities in the state.

HURIWA said the administration's investments in training youths in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will ensure the state has abundant skilled manpower to support start-ups and tech companies in the country and the continent as a whole.

Its National Coordinator, Emmanuel Onubiko, and Media Affairs Director, Zainab Yusuf, said this in a statement that technology was the future and that presence of technology experts in Enugu can also ensure a place for tech giants like Google and Microsoft to operate in the state.

It said: "Enugu SME centre has partnered private sectors known for their expertise, to ensure the technical, professional, and vocational capacities of the youths are fully

built. The Enugu tech, in partnership with Utiva, dealt with training on programming and product design. This was borne out of the conviction that technology is the future, and for Enugu to thrive, it had to have a future in technology. The presence of technology experts in Enugu can also ensure a place for tech giants like Google and Microsoft to operate in the state. Enugu tech has graduated over 500 persons, with an additional 500 yet to be trained."

The group also said Ugwuanyi has etched his name in the annals of history with the announcement by his Special Adviser on SMEs, Arinze Chilo-Offiah, who is also director general of the state's SMEs Centre, that the state is set to train a fresh batch of over 500 youths in various fields of innovative endeavour.

"There is no doubt then that Ugwuanyi has etched his name on the sands of time, as a governor whose vision has sighted Enugu

State as a bride to be courted by every South East man or woman for many generations to come and is working assiduously to consummate this reality.

"The mission to put Enugu on the global map, led the governor through the SMEs centre to embark on numerous projects that were specifically designed to empower the people of Enugu and provide them with the necessary skills," it said.

HURIWA added that the Governor Ugwuanyi led administration exemplifies genuine leadership and has contributed to the socio-economic lifting of Enugu State.

"There is no gainsaying the fact that Enugu, under the dispensation of genuine leadership of Ugwuanyi, offers a good example of how a combination of sustained investment in nurturing small scale enterprises and removing all stifling bureaucratic structures can launch a state's economy onto a growth trajectory.

### Enugu Assembly passes Anti-Open Grazing Bill

Enugu State House of Assembly has passed the anti-open grazing bill brought before it.

The bill which is for a law to prohibit open grazing, regulate cattle ranching, and for connected purposes was passed during the Assembly plenary in Enugu.

The leader of the Assembly, Mr. Ikechukwu Ezeugwu, said the passage followed the consideration of the report of the public hearing, presented by the chairman of its joint committee, Mrs Amaka Ugwueze.

The Joint Committee is on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Judiciary, Public Petitions, Ethics and Privileges, Youth, Sports, and Security Matters.

Ezeugwu said that the bill would be cited as Enugu State Prohibition of Open Grazing, Regulate Cattle Ranching, and other Connected Purposes (HB.7) 2021.

The lawmaker explained that the bill would ensure security and peace in the state.

The joint committee had on Tuesday held a public hearing on the bill.

It was where residents represented by the traditional rulers, town union leaders, leaders of various groups, and institutions

gave the Assembly the support to go ahead with passage of the bill.

The House had also received and accepted the report from the member representing Isi-Uzo constituency Mrs Amaka Ugwueze that all the oral and written submissions received by the committee were in support of immediate passage of the bill.

The bill is a 16-page document with 36 sections.

Speaking after the passage, the Speaker of the Assembly, Chief Edward Ubosi, emphasized that the bill was not targeted at anybody or group but for the good people of the state and others that live in it.

Ubosi thanked the sponsors, noting that the people of the state had been clamoring for the law for a long time.

He also expressed optimism that Gov. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi would not waste time in accenting to it.

The Speaker thanked the Joint Committee Chairman, Mrs Ugwueze, the Co-chairmen, Mr Emma Ugwuerua and Mr Chinedu Okwu as well as other members for their expertise and the speed with which they handled the assignment.





# 3 YOUNGEST GOVERNORS IN NIGERIA

*It was former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair who once said that age was not as important in governance as experience. According to him, experience and youth are vital keys to becoming a successful leader. We however, take a look at the three youngest governors currently holding offices in Nigeria.*

## YAHAYA BELLO

Born on June 18, 1975, he is currently the youngest Governor in Nigeria.

A fearless politician and businessman, who airs his views no matter whose ox is gored, Yahaya has been governing Kogi State since 2015.

Also, he was the Managing Director of FairPlus International Ltd. Yahaya Bello is the youngest democratically elected governor in Nigeria, who assumed his first office at age 40.

Yahaya Bello started as a Revenue Officer II at the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) in 2001. He began at the commission as a Youth Corp member and got retained due to his diligence. Shortly after, he became a Senior Accountant and got

transferred to the Makurdi Zonal Office to head the Account Department.

Later on, he became the Assistant Chief Accountant until he resigned to venture into private business.

Yahaya is an entrepreneur and the founder of Fairplus International Limited. Fairplus



BABAGANA ZULUM



BENEDICT AYADE



YAHAYA BELLO



is a leading transport company across Nigeria. They provide road transport services of the highest quality anywhere in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. The company is into road transportation, courier services, bus hire, charter etc.

### **BABAGANA ZULUM**

He was born on August 25, 1969. Zulum is a professor and politician. He is the serving Governor of Borno State.

After elementary schooling in Mafa Primary School from 1975 to 1980 and secondary education in Government Secondary School, Monguno from 1980 to 1985, Zulum studied at the University of Maiduguri, where he obtained a degree in Agriculture Engineering.

He served as a youth corps member with Katsina State Polytechnic. He proceeded to the University of Ibadan from 1997 to 1998, where he obtained a master's degree in Agriculture Engineering. In 2005, he enrolled for a PhD in Soil and Water Engineering with the University of Maiduguri which he completed in 2009.

Babagana's first appointment was in 1989 with Borno State Civil Service as an Assistant Technical Officer in the State's Ministry of Agriculture. In 1990, Babagana moved into Borno State Unified Local Government Service as Senior Field Overseer and later Principal Water Engineer. In 2000, he took up an appointment with the University of Maidu-

guri as an assistant Lecturer where he rose to the rank of Professor.

Babagana was Deputy Dean and Acting Dean, Faculty of Engineering in 2010 and 2011 respectively. In 2011, Babagana Umara was appointed the Rector of Polytechnic. Meanwhile, he retained his teaching position in the University of Maiduguri. In 2015, he was made Commissioner of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement by Governor Kashim Shetima of Borno State, a position he held till 2018.

### **BENEDICT AYADE**

Benedict Bengioushuye Ayade was born on March 2, 1968 and he is the third youngest governor in Nigeria. Ayade has always been a stylish and smart leader right from when he was a senator.

He received his primary education at St. Stephens Primary School, Obudu and proceeded to Government Secondary School, Obudu, for his secondary education.

Ayade earned his B.Sc. (Honours) in Microbiology at Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma, Nigeria (1984 - 1988) and proceeded to the University of Ibadan (1990 - 1994) where he obtained his Ph.D, winning the Best Doctoral Dissertation Award in Environmental Microbiology.

Ayade went on to work as a lecturer at Delta State University, Abraka where he was subsequently appointed Professor. From his work in groundwater remediation in Nigeria, Ayade invented a sewage treatment plant powered by solar energy.

**BABAGANA WAS DEPUTY DEAN AND ACTING DEAN, FACULTY OF ENGINEERING IN 2010 AND 2011 RESPECTIVELY. IN 2011, BABAGANA UMARA WAS APPOINTED THE RECTOR OF POLYTECHNIC**

**...MORE GOVERNORS WILL FEATURE IN SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS**



# Fayemi and the bonding ideal

**T**he hot button in Nigeria today is to crow the secession. It does not matter if the jumped-up secessionist leader can in truth tell the boundaries of his dream nation. The really appalling aspect of the matter is that some of Nigeria's so-called leading politicians have joined the bandwagon of preaching hate and violence in the promotion of ethnic and religious cleavages. It is remarkable for me that Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State as the incumbent chairman of the Governors' Forum is espousing the bonding ideal against all odds from the diverse divisive domains.

The need for me to do this piece arose following the criticisms directed at Governor Fayemi after he felicitated with former Military President General Ibrahim Babangida on the recent celebration of his 80th birthday.

The burden Governor Fayemi bears today as "the governor of governors" transcends the hotheadedness of quondam activism. Against the background of dangerous divisions across the country, Governor Fayemi cannot but accommodate all interests within a potentially combustible nation.

At this time that the nation is being fecklessly torn apart by mundane ethnic concerns, bigotry, hate and terrorism, politicians in the mould of Governor Fayemi owe it as a duty to take charge of the central unifying role of bringing all together through shared values.

There is no gainsaying that the bonds established by Nigerians across ethnic and religious borders in the intervening years from amalgamation to independence and the civil war have grown beyond the flimsiness of a whimsical breakup.

The point is that the need for a restructuring of Nigeria must be un-



dertaken by a focused leader, and not by fly-by-night ethnic warlords no matter how well-intentioned. Governor Fayemi can stand to be counted as a champion of dialogue who would not be found wanting in getting Nigerians to talk across ethnic and religious lines towards finding a workable future for the beleaguered country. Nigeria can in no way be singled out as the only diverse nation in the world. India, for instance, had its share of diversities and even mutinies, but it still holds aloft the torch of democracy. Nigeria is now obviously saddled with a troubled democracy which some have even termed a dictatorship, but the future can be better managed through leaders who can get together by ensuring that the country's destiny is determined through conference and not by force of arms.

Past leaders of stature all over the world such as Pandit Nehru of India and Nelson Mandela of South Africa are ready examples for new Nigerian leaders to emulate. Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore boldly made the mark of taking his then fledging nation from the Third to First world status. Dr Mahathir of Malaysia repeated the feat.

This shows that it is possible for Nigeria to defeat all debates and shoot well ahead in the comity of nations, without bending the knee to defeatism, if the current parochialism



and prebendalism are put aside. The problems of the country ought to be seen as challenges that can be mastered by a committed leader, and followers who believe in the cause.

It needs to be stressed that it is not necessarily the law that makes the people to survive but the spirit. It is the willingness of the people to bond together based on shared values that strengthens the commonwealth. This way, the people who have been made to believe can always douse the evil seeds of discord. The lesson of course is to readily subjugate self in favour of the general good. Governor Fayemi stands in good stead to get his brother governors to gravitate towards the common touch. The railway track that travels all the way from Sokoto up North down to the South through Eha-Amufu, Umuahia and Port Harcourt must have over the years established so much binding mores amongst the diverse Nigerians.

The migration of Nigerians to all nooks and crannies of the nation even before the amalgamation has built together uncountable Nigerians who call anywhere, they reside in the country home. There was the case of the man who left a South-Eastern town just after the Second World War to settle in a village in the Southwest. When his people from the Southeast came to take him "home" to the East in his grand old age he refused to be relocated, stressing that moving him from the land where he was known as "Baba Ode" amounted to lifting the land!

Nigeria urgently needs men now. It's all so cheap and cool believing that one could easily withdraw to one's ethnic enclave. These matters are easier said than done. Once division starts, there is really no end to division. History cannot



### GOVERNOR FAYEMI STANDS IN GOOD STEAD TO GET HIS BROTHER GOVERNORS TO GRAVITATE TOWARDS THE COMMON TOUCH

account for all the fatalities begotten from wars that ordinary dialogue could have stemmed in the first instance.

In the rousing words of Governor Fayemi, "Another Nigeria, a better Nigeria, a more united Nigeria that we can all stand up for and be proud of, is ahead of us. We all play a critical role for the ties we all have; we still have a long way

to go, it is a journey not a destination. And in that journey, we will always find undulating lands, valleys, hills and pot-holes, but ultimately, what is important is to just continue on the journey.

I know that God, in His infinite mercy will help us overcome these challenging times; we must continue to strengthen the ties that bind our country and these are ties that predated colonialism. In spite of the challenges, Nigeria will triumph." This is the way to go.

– culled from *ThisDay*.



## How 30% Frontier Exploration, Host Communities' 3% Deplete Federation Account – NGF



Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), Dr. Kayode Fayemi has reiterated the state governors' concerns about the 30 percent allocation for frontier exploration and the three per cent for host communities as contained in the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). Fayemi said those provisions in the law assented to by President Muhammadu Buhari on August 16 greatly depleted the Federation Account.

Fayemi spoke in an interview with the Arise News Channel, the broadcast arm of THISDAY.

The NGF chairman, who is also the governor of Ekiti State, said the governors were not carried along in the enactment of the law. But he pledged that the state chief executives would cooperate with the PIA implementation committee headed by Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva.

Fayemi said court action would be the governors' last resort in trying to address their concerns over the PIA.

However, the federal government has

clarified that the proposed Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission (NURC), not the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Limited, will handle proceeds from the sale of crude oil accruing to the three tiers of government when the PIA becomes fully operational.

Fayemi said the forum believed the provisions of the 1999 Constitution should be adhered to with regard to concerns raised by the governors, including ownership structure, accountability, and transparency.

He criticised the federal government's handling of repatriated loots, saying the management of such funds is not the exclusive preserve of the federal government since the monies ought to be part of the federation account originally.

Fayemi said, "This is a matter that the entire forum has discussed extensively, and we have come to certain conclusions about what is called frontier funds.

"Whether it is three per cent or not, our concern there is that whatever you are taking into these places is a depletion of the

federation account, that money will not go to the federation account, it would be spread across the few areas that you described as volunteer basis, rather than to the entire federation.

"And we worry more about the entire federation not about selected parts of the federation. For us as governors, that is a distinction without a difference. We are talking about depletion from the federation account, whether it is three per cent or 30 per cent.

"It is money that should come to federation account, that should then be subjected to fair and equitable distribution on principles of sharing, rather than one that is going to be at the whims and caprices of this new limited company."

The Ekiti State governor said the forum would explore all available options before seeking legal interpretation. He said the Minister of Petroleum Resources had reached out to the forum to say that their concerns would be addressed as an amendment to the new petroleum law.

He stated, "It is not everything that we have to resort to court to resolve. We only do that when all options have been exhausted and we haven't secured a reprieve.

"On this particular instance, we will work with the implementation committee. And if there is any reason for us to take an alternative measure, we will cross that bridge when we get to that. But at least it has been acknowledged that these issues can be resolved, in some way, shape or

form, as we are proposing. We will wait and see before we take any further steps."

However, Fayemi commended the president for signing the Act. He maintained that the constitutional issues the NGF raised before the bill was passed into law were not addressed.

He said, "As a matter of fact, we have commended these major developments in our country because it is something that has been on the cards for us.

"So, kudos to the president for finally working with the National Assembly to get the PIA in place.

"However, we also believe that whatever we are doing should be done in accordance with the constitution so that we do not have to blame ourselves.

"The issues that governors are concerned about, and which we made clear to the National Assembly when this bill was in the process of becoming an Act, relate to ownership structure and questions of accountability and transparency so that at the end of the day, we don't subvert the original intention behind the petroleum industries act."



# Bandits must be defeated for schools to be safe – NGWF



Chairman of Northern Governor's Wives Forum (NGWF) and Her Excellency, Architect Hadiza El-rufai (middle); flanked by the Vice Chairman NGWF, Her Excellency, Amb. Mrs Folake Abdulrazaq (left) and the Senior Adviser to President Buhari on Social Investments, Mrs Maryam Uwais, during a familiarization meeting between Media Executives and Northern Governors Wives held in Abuja, recently.

**N**orthern Governors' Wives Forum (NGWF), have said that schools in insecurity-prone areas should remain closed to protect children.

Chairperson of the Forum, Hajiya Hadiza El-Rufai and Kaduna State First Lady, while interacting with newsmen in Abuja, said that the kidnapping of children from their schools was a source of concern to all, especially in a country with many out-of-school children.

"Closure of schools should be a short-term measure, like what the state governments are already doing in Kaduna state and recently in Zamfara.

"They closed all the schools as a short-term solution but it cannot be sustained that way because we must get our children to school; as it is now, it is important to keep our children safe", she said.

El-Rufai, however, said that the long-term strategy was to defeat the bandits, so that our children could go to school without feeling any danger by dealing with the bandits, because

the country could not continue this way.

She expressed the belief that the president and all the people that are supposed to do the right thing were working to end banditry, as seen in the past weeks when bandits were bombarded.

El-Rufai added that the forum had decided to tackle two issues – gender-based violence and drug abuse — confronting the society, urging the media for support to tackle the twin issues, while amplifying the voices on the forum.

The vice Chairperson NGWF, Olufolake Abdulrazaq and Kwara's First Lady, said that the forum was also executing some projects to ameliorate the plight of children in the states.

Abdulrazaq said that although children may not be able to go to school in some parts of the country, there were still things to engage them in.

She called on all stakeholders, especially men, to continue to help in championing an end to sexual and gender-based violence, add-

ing that the forum would continue to honour men who supported gender equality.

The Kwara first lady said that part of the aim of the interactive session with newsmen was for them to key into the activities of the Forum in the area of advocacy carried out around children and youths.

This, she said, was so that people could be well informed about the forum's activities, especially related to gender-based violence, so that they could know what to do and where to go, when they were faced with the challenge.

Special Adviser to President Muhammadu Buhari on Social Investments, Maryam Uwais, also added that it was important for the Federal Government to work with the NGWF to address the plight of children, noting that the government was presently running a project aimed at addressing the issues of at-risk children and youths.

Uwais explained that the project aimed at getting the states to lead, to ensure that children and youths at risk got into safe spaces.

FOR PEACE ON THE PLATEAU



NGF Chairman, Dr Kayode Fayemi being received on arrival in Jos, the Plateau State Capital



Governors Aminu Tambuwal, Abubakar Sani Bello and Kayode Fayemi on arrival in Jos



The Peace team meets with Governor Lalong of Plateau State



Governor Fayemi with the Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III



Governor Simon Lalong and Governor Kayode Fayemi exchanging pleasantries



Governor Kayode Fayemi and Simon Lalong exchange pleasantries with the SGF Boss Mustapha



Governor Abubakar Sani Bello, Aminu Tambuwal and Kayode Fayemi during prayers at the meeting



Dignitaries on the high table rising for the national anthem



Governors Fayemi and Lalong with SGF Mustapha and the Sultan of Sokoto



Governor Fayemi (2nd right) in a discussion with the Sultan of Sokoto, while the SGF, Boss Mustapha looks on



Governor Kayode Fayemi giving a speech at the peace meeting



Cross-Section of Plateau stakeholders at the peace meeting



## NEWS FROM THE STATES

### Akwa Ibom's vehicle plant, first in South-South Nigeria

Governor Emmanuel's relentless industrialization push has continued to bear fruits as the MIM-SHAC-MERKAVIM Automobile Plant in Ikot Ukap, Itu local government area, gears towards kick-starting operations.

The Managing Director Valentino Okorie told Media Aides to the Governor, that with the facility coupled and work at 90% completion, the first car assembling plant in the South South region of Nigeria would soon be ready.

He further hinted that once the SKD (Semi Knocked down facility / production line arrives, over 3000 direct staff would be employed and sent abroad for a 6 weeks training in au-



**Akwa Ibom first vehicle plant site**

tomobile assembling.

The automobile plant has 6 production lines with a

capacity to chun out 5 conventional vehicles, 18 cars/SUVs, 13 mini buses, 9 midi

buses, 5 luxurious buses. A total production of 108 cars/SUVs, 56 buses in two

weeks. 30 Luxurious buses and conventional vehicles in 1 month.

"The buses to be produced in the factory for commercial purposes, have over 25 years durability. The vehicles are built with Israeli standard technology, the best you can ever think of. The engine is formidable and known over the world. The body is alloy", Okorie added

He lauded Governor Emmanuel for taking personal interest in the project, and for providing all the needed support for it to commence production.

The Media Aides to the Governor included, Essien Ndueso, Aniekeme Finbarr, Solomon Eyo, Rev Richard Peters.

### Emmanuel seeks increased revenue allocation to states

Governor Udom Emmanuel of Akwa Ibom has called on the Federal Government to review upwards the revenue allocation to states in order to improve the economic growth and enhance industrialization in the country.

Governor Emmanuel made this known while receiving a team from the Revenue Mobilization Allocation/Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) on a sensitization visit led by the Federal Commissioner, Hon. Sunday Ayang, at Government House, Uyo.

The governor urged them to reflect on the major challenges of the states in their input and work towards its implementation to further assist states tackle pending financial issues.

"Let me appreciate this call to my office; some of the grey

areas and concerns you have pointed out, please I want to appeal that this should be an exercise that will yield results.

"Irrespective of going round we all submitted the memoranda of PIB and nothing was taken into consideration.

"So, I hope this won't be a similar exercise and that what we contribute will be taken into consideration. What we should do should help build and unite the country, coordinate economic activities for our growth and for the interest of everybody so that we can leave at peace.

"I welcome you to the state; be rest assured you will have all our cooperation and the exercise will go smoothly but please let it be an exercise that will yield success", the governor stated.

The governor pointed out that the state does not receive revenue from the large gas reserve and VAT from International Oil Companies IOC operating in the state.

"Gas is a major issue; I can't be a state that sits on the largest quantum of gas in this country and I am not getting anything. 36.1% of Oil and Gas reserve of Nigeria is in Akwa Ibom State and I am not getting anything from gas, so how is it computed, there is something wrong somewhere, it is wrongly computed.

"These are raw data that can be verified anywhere. Now there is another controversy of VAT, all VAT from these IOCs where are they paying them to, they are not paying them to us, so there are many things you should look at and develop for the federal government.

"So, VAT from IOCs, from oil and gas should actually go to the states these things are produced".

The State Chief Executive called on the federal government to review the revenue allocation of the state to address the issue of population increase, marine security along the coastal lines, erosion menace to reduce the burden of the state government.

In his remarks, the team leader from Revenue Mobilization Allocation/Fiscal Commission and Federal Commissioner Representing Akwa Ibom State, Hon. Sunday Ayang, stated that the purpose of the visit was to sensitize Akwa Ibom people on the review of sharing formula between the Federal, States and Local governments, where stakeholders will send in their

inputs to capture grey areas.

According to Ayang, the constitution makes provision for the exercise to be carried out in 5 years to further improve on revenue among the three tiers of government, noting that the team is working towards presenting memoranda before President Muhammadu Buhari for assessment and necessary actions.

"It is an honour to be here Your Excellency to discuss matters of revenue allocation formula review, the primary purpose of our visit is to sensitize the people in the state of the fact that Revenue Mobilization Allocation/Fiscal Commission is embarking on an exercise to review vertical formula of sharing the allocation revenue the three tiers of government".





## NEWS FROM THE STATES

### Sanwo-Olu approves multimillion naira upgrade of Lagos Television



The Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has approved a multimillion Naira upgrade of key infrastructure at the Lagos Television (LTV) as part of a comprehensive plan to reposition the State-owned television station for national and international competitiveness.

According to a release by Mr. Rasaan Musbau, the Director, Public Affairs, Lagos State Infrastructure Asset Management Agency (LA-

SIAMA), the Project Management Team from the Agency recently went on an inspection tour of the complex and expressed satisfaction with the pace of work.

He explained that the facility is now a beehive of activities carried out by construction workers to deliver a phased plan to revamp the 41-year-old television station.

Musbau stated that the upgrade entails the mod-

ernisation of the entire complex as the first step towards a complete turnaround of the station's facilities.

His words: "Governor Sanwo-Olu has put together an ambitious plan to completely turn around the television station and make it compete with some of the best privately-owned stations in the country. The ongoing infrastructure revamp is the first phase of the turnaround plan".

### Lagos trains 97 Students, Teachers under 2021 Agric Summer School Programme

The Lagos State Government has trained 97 Senior Secondary School Agricultural Science students, Agricultural Science teachers and Education Desk Officers under its Y2021 Agricultural Summer School Programme.

The State Commissioner for Agriculture, Ms. Abisola Olusanya, who disclosed this at the closing ceremony of the programme in Lagos,

explained that it was aimed at encouraging the youths to grow into a more productive labour force, thereby solving the problem of unemployment as well as mitigate the possible effects of a global food crisis.

According to her, 84 Senior Secondary School Agricultural Science students and 13 Education officials, including Education Desk Officers (Agriculture) and Agricultural Science teachers, drawn from the six

educational districts in the State participated in the programme.

The Commissioner, who was represented at the event by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Hakeen Adeniji, noted that each participant had undergone both theoretical training in livestock production, fisheries, crop production, agro-processing and practical training in the various value chains.

### Lagos partners ASCON on water transport

The Lagos State Ferry Services (LAGFERRY) has entered into a strategic mobility partnership agreement with the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Badagry, which entails the transportation of staff, clients and visitors of the College through the waterways from Mile 2 Terminal to the Institute by boats.

Speaking on the partnership, the Managing Director, Lagos Ferry Services (LAGFERRY), Mr. Ladi Balogun, stated that the collaboration will mutually benefit the two organisations, stressing that it will also make the College easily accessible to staff, clients and visitors, who make use of LAGFERRY boats from numerous terminals/jetties.

He added that it will boost human traffic to the College, which has in recent times witnessed a downturn in patronage, due to the ongoing road rehabilitation along the Badagry Expressway, noting that the road leading to the institution is presently impassable and discouraging clients, who are mostly from outside Lagos.

His words: "The College whose mandate is to, among others, provide residential and non-residential qualitative management training for the development of senior

executives for public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy is strategically located at Topo-Badagry, Lagos West and surrounded by water, which makes it easily accessible through boats. The journey to the institution via the waterways will eliminate loss of productive hours in traffic".

"Other benefits of the partnership worth highlighting include the fact that LAGFERRY Boats are fast, very safe, timely and convenient. They are also eco-friendly with zero carbon emission, will enhance productivity and eliminate stress among others", he added.

LAGFERRY has 20 state-of-the-art boats built to world-class standards with modern safety gadgets and regularly navigates through the waterways from over 16 Terminals/Jetties.



Gov Sanwo-Olu



# Ugwuanyi's leadership qualities applauded

**G**overnor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State has been eulogized by the 116th Rotary International (IR) President, Shekhar Mehta from India and other Rotarians, for the great service he has been providing to the state and country.

Speaking when Ugwuanyi played host to Rotarians at the Government House, Enugu, Mehta, who spoke on behalf of all the Rotarians, told the governor that "the state (Enugu) is prospering under your leadership".

The RI President, who is in Enugu with his wife, Rashi, to inspire Rotarians and non-Rotarians to give to the Rotary Foundation and increase its member-

ship in pursuit of the organization's laudable vision anchored on philanthropic gestures, thanked Gov. Ugwuanyi, a worthy Rotarian, for the honour and respect he accorded his fellow Rotarians.

He also appreciated the governor for the beautiful and peaceful ambience of Enugu as well as "the warm greetings that you provided to Rashi (his wife) for her birthday" saying: "It means a lot personally to us".

According to him, "As we were landing into Enugu, I did mention to my wife that this is a beautiful city because the houses here are very beautiful. And as we came into the city I also commended the governor that this is a beautiful city".

The IR President explained that the 116-year old organization (Rotary Club) has spread to more countries "even more than the United Nations". He said that they have a rich legacy, adding that the biggest programme the organization has is polio eradication campaign.

Mehta who disclosed that Rotary Foundation works with governments around the world as well as other Development Partners such as UNICEF and WHO, revealed that "we (Rotary) have made different changes in the lives of people, and about 3 million children have been immunized because of Rotary's polio eradication campaign".

He pointed out that "the biggest need is for us to



Gov Ugwuanyi (r) receives a Rotary banner from the Rotary International (IR) President, Shekhar Mehta



Gov Ugwuanyi and his guests in a dancing mood



work against COVID-19 and Rotarians around the world have not shied from doing their best monetarily”.

In his speech, the District Governor, Rotary International (District 9142), Okey Okonkwo, expressed gratitude to Gov. Ugwuanyi for accepting to host the RI President who visited their District in Enugu, stressing that the Enugu State Governor is “one of us who has shown so much love and support for our organization”.

His words: “There is something unique happening in this state and the joy some of us have living in Enugu is as a result of the enormous effort our governor is putting into governance.

“The safety, happiness and general peacefulness we enjoy in this state is because of his multiple actions and his commitment to ensuring that dividends of democracy are delivered in spite of all the economical, security and public health challenges the country is facing since he assumed office.

“You do not need to go far to realize that Enugu State is really in the hands of God. If you walk around the town, you will find so many testimonies that

His Excellency is really working.

“Your Excellency, we are proud of you. We are proud of the wonderful things you are doing in this state and we will continue to give you all the support you need”.

In his welcome address, Gov. Ugwuanyi on behalf of the government and people of Enugu State welcomed the RI President and his wife, Rashi, and other Rotarians to the Government House, Enugu, and reiterated his great respect for Rotary International and its core values of service, fellowship, diversity, integrity and leadership.

The governor expressed delight that the world landscape is dotted with contributions of Rotary International in the areas of healthcare, education, peace building, water, sanitation, among others, adding that these interventions prove that the organization has elevated the quality of human life, human relationships and world peace through service, leadership and strategic relationships.

“As a Rotarian, past President of Rotary Club of Emene and now Governor of Enugu State by God’s grace, Rotary

Four-Way test has been a useful guidepost to our administration. The Government of Enugu State, under my watch is committed to truth, fairness, goodwill and better friendship as well as benefit to all.

“The power of Rotary Club lies in our ability to give. I enjoin all to give generously in support of the Rotary service projects, for the power to give, is indeed the power to do good”, the governor said.

The member representing Awka North/South Federal Constituency, Hon. Engr. Sam Chinedu Onwuaso; Chief of Staff, Government House, Enugu, Rt. Hon. Dr. Festus Uzor; State Commissioner for Finance, Mrs. Ada-Onah Uyanwune, the past Rotary International Vice President, Yinka Babalola; District Governor, District 9141, Andy Uwejejan; Endowment and Major Gift Adviser, Ijeoma Okoro; past District Governors; District Governor-Elect; District Governor Nominee; District Rotaract Representative; District Rotaract Representative Nominee; Rotarians and other guests, witnessed the occasion.



Gov Ugwuanyi in a group photograph with his Rotary International guests



## NEWS FROM THE STATES

### Ekiti approves N7.6bn for roads construction, infrastructural development

The Government of Ekiti State is pleased to announce that the State Executive Council has approved a total sum of N7.6billion for the construction and rehabilitation of roads in the State.

At the weekly EXCO meeting, N921, 242,552.43 was approved for the construction of Ikole township roads while N4, 322,511,502.70 was also approved for the construction of the Ado/Iworoko road.

N2,329,440,507.94 was approved for the construction of bus terminals and pedestrian walkway/drain covers along Ijigbo road to Okeiyinmi roundabout in

the state capital, Ado-Ekiti. The contractors handling the roads have been given a timeline of ten (10) and twelve (12) months to complete the projects.

The approval for the award of contracts which followed due process and diligent vetting by the Bureau of Public Procurement is a demonstration of the commitment of Governor Kayode Fayemi's administration to advance economic and industrial revolution in the state. These strategic road projects will augur well for the enabling environment for businesses and investments to thrive, and the safety and security of lives and property.

The state government solicits the support and understanding of residents, motorists, and commuters

throughout the period of the construction works.

We wish to also remind the general public that ad-

herence to traffic diversions and regulations would assist in ensuring timely completion of the projects.



Ekiti State Governor, Kayode Fayemi (right), during an inspection tour of the new asphalt plant at the state's Public Works Corporation (PWC), in Ado-Ekiti

## Fayemi rewards outstanding Ekiti athletes, officials

Ekiti State Governor, Kayode Fayemi, has called for greater involvement of the private sector, public spirited individuals and communities in the development of sports, especially exploring local talents for national and global competitions.

This, he said would enable the country to benefit immensely not only from sports' character development but also from its contribution to the overall socio-economic development of the states and the nation at large.

Fayemi made the call in Ado Ekiti when he announced cash reward for outstanding athletes at the National Sports Festival

in Edo State and the gold medalist who represented Nigeria at the just concluded Under 20 Athletics Championship in Kenya.

Governor Fayemi said his administration had set in motion necessary legal framework and policies that would enable private individuals play active role in the development of sports in the State.

Commending the sports men and women and their officials for doing the state proud, Dr Fayemi challenged them to be more resolute to do better in future competitions in order to sustain the exploits and success stories they have demonstrated in the various competitions.

According to him, "Sports will not succeed in our country if it is not taken up at the subnational level. You don't make sports exemplar in the national capital, it is what you do in Ekiti, Ondo Delta, Rivers and the length and breadth of the country that will yield the dividends and turn our sports development to what it ought to be. That is why we have to do more in developing school sports, in moulding talents from our various community and ensuring that we supports development to the best of our abilities.

"On our part, we will keep improving the quality of sports development, it is

not the matter for government alone, private sectors, public spirited individuals, communities, all of us must rally together in order to develop sports.

"And we are doing a lot of things in this regard including the laws that we put in place, including our lottery commission and the benefits that we will derive from the lottery commission in the development of sports in the state.

"To all of you who have contributed to returning Ekiti to its place of pride in sport, I commend you and celebrate you, this is heart-warming."

At the event, Governor Fayemi announced as reward, a sum of N300,000

for each gold medalist; N250,000 for silver medalists and N200,000 for each bronze medalist. The Coaches were given monetary reward.

Earlier, the Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Hon Michael Awopetu, commended Dr Fayemi for demonstrating commitment to sports development by signing to law the Ekiti Sports development funds to develop sports in the state.

Hon Awopetu who highlighted various achievement of Fayemi led administration in sports sector, attributed strong political will to supporting sports activities to the feats the sector had recorded in recent times.



# NEWS FROM THE STATES



## Makinde increases Agribusiness Trainees to 10,000

Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde has said that he will expand the State's Youth Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness Project (YEAP) to enable the training of 10,000 youths by the CSS Integrated Farms Limited, Gora, Nasarawa State.

The Governor made this disclosure while speaking at the graduation ceremony of the first batch of 300 trainees, held at the International Skills Acquisition Centre (ISAC), Gora.

He noted that his administration has embarked on the training in order to lift youths from poverty into prosperity, stating that the Government is determined to empower Oyo State youths so that they can empower others.

A statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr. Taiwo Adisa, quoted the Governor as saying that the State was going to empower only 1,000 youths through the scheme, but that

it increased the number to 3,300 at 100 per Local Government.

He noted, however, that following the richness of the programme and its capacity to turn the economy of Oyo State into a multi-billion Naira economy through agribusiness graduates, Government will now go ahead to train 10,000 youths in agribusiness.

The first batch of trainees were trained by about 15 lecturers/professors across the fields of leadership in agribusiness, irrigation farming, Information/ Communication Technology application in agribusiness, fishery farming and management, hydroponics farming, cassava and rice value chain and poultry farming, among others.

The Governor was given an award of recognition by the chairman, CSS Integrated Farms, Professor John Kennedy Opara, who commended the Governor for

being very passionate about his people.

He encouraged the trainees to return to Oyo State and make a difference, noting that to make the Governor and the people of the State proud, they must return with the drive to achieve increased yields in different areas.

While speaking at the graduation ceremony, Governor Makinde, who expressed satisfaction with the training, commended the trainees for being good ambassadors of Oyo State, said: "I know the importance of empowering our youths. I got into business at the age of 29 and now, I am 53. Since the age of 29, I have been paying salaries.

"That is what we want to replicate in Oyo State. Gone are those days when politicians use the youths as political thugs and then abandon them to become burdens to society.



### WORDS ON MARBLE

**You can't destroy beer in your state in the name of sharia yet share from VAT on beer from other states. It is hypocrisy.**

**Free money has promoted laziness. If you want to be a governor grow your state's economy.**

**You can't contribute humongous numbers during elections that can't translate to tax earnings for your state.**

**If they can vote they should be able to work and pay tax."**

— Gov Nyesom Wike

## Oyo unveils multiple indicator cluster survey development plan

The Oyo State Governor, Engr. Seyi Makinde recently flagged off the conduct of the sixth edition of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in the State.

Makinde, who spoke through his Special Adviser on Economic Affairs, Professor Musibau Babatunde, described the statistics as a veritable tool to achieve analytical ideas for development.

He added that the survey would support the ongoing efforts of the Seyi Makinde led administration in Oyo State to prepare its development plan and to track the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the five-point agenda of the present administration.

The objectives of the Survey are to provide up-to-date statistical information on the conditions of children and women in Nigeria and specifically on child's right; provide data for SDG reporting and the African Union Agenda 2063 monitoring; provide re-

liable data for immunization coverage of children aged 0 to 47 months for both the basic vaccination and complementary antigens, and determine obstacles to utilization of routine immunization services.

The Governor asserted that the data achieved from the MICS will enable the State to assess its current position and also enable it to project into the future in the context of the twenty-year development plan of the State.

Furthermore, he said the survey will help to formulate socio-economic policies that will address the needs of households, basic educational development, child and maternal health, reproductive health, among others.

In his remarks, the State's Statistician General, Adekunle Ajuwon, lauded the programme, adding that the present administration's commitment to collation of data is commendable.



## GoHealth: Respite For Poor and Vulnerable Individuals in Gombe

The Basic Healthcare Provision Fund, BHPF of the Gombe State Government has begun to have a positive impact on the lives of the poor and vulnerable individuals across the State. The story of Sunday John, a local of Popandi Village in Gwandum Ward of Shongom Local Government Area is just one out of the numerous success stories of the Fund. A Pastor of a church in Kwarravillage of Bililiri Local Government Area, Sunday John had been having a recurrent swelling of his scrotum, which he sustained during a football competition some years ago.

The injury was further compounded when he got involved in a motor accident and since then, Sunday John had been facing serious difficulties due to the pains in his scrotum and the prospect of getting proper medical attention kept dimming by the day due to lack of money.

Being one amongst the over 25,000 poor and vulnerable people identified under the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (equity programme), Sunday John approached the Primary Healthcare Centre in Gwandum, Shongom Local Government Area of the State. He was thereafter referred to General Hospital Kaltungo where Doctors conducted series of tests and discovered a left inguinal hernia.

A successful correctional surgery was carried out by the Doctors at General Hospital, Kaltungo. Today Sunday John is back to his feet hale and hearty.

In an interview, the ever smiling Sunday John thanked Governor Inuwa Yahaya's administration for initiating the programme and prayed the Almighty God to bless the Governor, for his care and concern for the poor,

"The programme is without any aorta of discrimination; I think the initiative is the first of its kind in State because until now, I was not aware of any administration that introduced such a lofty idea".

He also called on the government to continue to look into the plight of the poor and vulnerable as it affects other areas of human endeavour.

## Gombe Partners NGF, USAID On Medium Term Sector Strategy, Implementation of 10-Year Devt Plan

In line with public financial management reform in Nigeria, Gombe State has taken the lead in an effort to produce strategic, realistic and forward looking annual budgets as envisaged by its 10-year development plan, also known as development agenda for Gombe State, DEVAGOM.

To this end, Gombe State Government in partnership with the Nigeria Governor's Forum and United States Agency for International Development, USAID is conducting a Workshop for officers in Ministries, Departments and Agencies on the State's Medium Term Sector Strategy, MTSS at the Gombe International Hotel.

Declaring the workshop open, the State Commissioner for Finance, Muhammad Gambo Magaji explained that the role of civil servants in formulating and executing government plans especially the medium-term sector strategies cannot be over emphasized.

He expressed confidence in the ability of the participants to dissect the issues at stake, saying the civil servants are the same thematic group that prepared the Gombe 10-year Development Plan, otherwise known as the Development Agenda for Gombe State, DEVAGOM.

The Commissioner stated that the success or failure of government programmes are largely determined by planning and budgeting to which civil servants play crucial roles.

The Special Adviser to Gombe State Governor on Budget, Planning and Development Partners Coordination, Dr. Ishiyaku Mohammed said that the Medium Term Sector Strategy is the implementation framework for the DEVAGOM.

He said it provides the link between policy and resource allocation, expressing optimism on the potential of the workshop to equip and empower civil servants and officials to deliver on the ambitious goals of the Inuwa Yahaya administration as captured in DEVAGOM.

Dr. Ishiyaku Mohammed said this is the first time that the Medium Term Sector Strategy process is being conducted in the state and is a model for the entire country as it derives directly

from the Gombe 10-year development plan.

"As you are aware, during the launch of the plan, His Excellency charged that there should be a very robust implementation framework for the plan so that it doesn't end up being a plan that is lying on the shelves; so what has happened now with the support of the Nigeria Governors' Forum and USAID is that we have been availed some technical support in the form of about eleven experts in financial management and policy that are now training our Directors to PRS and Directors of the different technical departments of all the eleven sectors that align with the five pillars of our 10-year development plan".

He added that at the end of the 3-day Workshop, they would have been able to produce 5 medium sectors for health, education, water and sanitation, Agriculture and infrastructure.

The development planning expert is confident that this workshop is a major step in the actualization of the Gombe State 10-Year Development Plan.

The Senior Programme Manager, Nigeria Governors' Forum, Olanrenwaju Ajogbasile and the Resident Public Financial Management, USAID State-to-State, Dr Eunice Ngozi Okpala Okoroafor commended the Governor of Gombe State for deeming it necessary to convoke the MTSS meeting in order to ensure a strategic budget planning and implementation.

To both experts, such foresight indicates leadership and uncommon commitment of the Governor to work the talk.





# Congratulations Boss Mustapha @ 65

**T**he Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) felicitates with the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) Boss Mustapha on the occasion of his 65th birthday celebration.

*Sir, you have been a close ally of the Forum, working effectively towards better governance and deliverables at the sub-national level.*

*You have been a reliable, dependable statesman, strong politician, administrator and we witnessed first hand, your love and dedication when you participated at the recent National Health Commissioners' Conference in Abuja, as well as the peace mission to the Plateau State capital alongside the Nigeria Governors' Forum delegation.*

*As you celebrate the 65th year of your birth, it is our prayer that the Almighty God will bless and keep you to continue your good work here on earth.*

**Happy Birthday.**

**Signed:**

**A.B Okauru, Director-General, NGF**





## NEWS FROM THE STATES

### Abia is on the right track, says Ikpeazu



UMUOGELE UMUAKWU NSULU ISIALANGWA NORTH LGA GULLY  
EROSION RECLAMATION WORKS AND ROAD, CULVERT BRIDGE

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has said his administration has set the state on the right track as the narratives of the state are changing for the better.

Governor Ikpeazu stated this when he received in audience, members of the Inter-party Advisory Council IPAC, Abia State chapter, led by the Chairman, Hon Ceekay Igara at Government House Umuahia.

He said that though, his government has not done everything, it certainly has recorded bold achievements in various sectors of

the state economy including the SME sector, ease of doing business and direct foreign investments, among others.

The Governor promised that his government will remain tenacious in completing its ongoing projects as well as open new vistas. He also stated that the NEWM-AP projects for the reconstruction of Ngwa Road, Ohanku and Uratta were on course while the State Government is determined to fix Port Harcourt Road, having completed drainage works on the road.

The Governor noted that Abia is blessed with great men and women who have continued to make their marks in various fields of endeavour and wondered why some desperate persons have continued de-marketing the state for selfish political reasons.

Earlier, the State Chairman of IPAC, Hon Ceekay Igara thanked the Governor for providing the platform for IPAC to interface with his government and for the enhanced security in the state and urged him to sustain it.

### ...Assures chairmen, councilors on One Ward, One Project Initiative

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has announced plans to commence the execution of one project in every political ward of the state as part his "one ward, one project initiative".

Governor Ikpeazu dropped the cheering news in a meeting he had with the Executive Chairmen of the 17 LGAs of the State and Councillors at the Michael Okpara Auditorium Umuahia.

He directed Councillors of each ward to articulate and submit through their respective Leaders of Council, one project that is dear to the hearts of the people of his ward. The Council Leaders are to liaise with the Executive Chairmen to reach his office with the list not later than two weeks for immediate action. He charged the

Chairmen to work in synergy with their Deputies and Councillors for greater development in their areas.

The Governor further enjoined them to take the issue of security seriously by holding monthly security meetings that will involve traditional rulers, heads of security agencies in their domains and selected stakeholders.

He also implored them to sensitize and mobilize them to participate actively in the ongoing continuous voters registration exercise.

The SSG, Barrister Chris Ezem, the Chief of Staff to the Governor Professor ACB Agba-zuere, the State Chairman of PDP, Rt Hon Asiforo Okere among other government functionaries were present during the meeting.

## We're committed to the development of ABSUTH, ABSU medical faculties – Ikpeazu

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has assured that his administration is committed to the development of the Abia State University Teaching Hospital, Aba (ABSUTH), the Medical Faculty and promotion of the welfare of the staff.

The Governor gave the assurance when he received in audience a delegation of the Medical and Dental

Council of Nigeria led by Professor Edmond Nwana at Government House Umuahia who were on a visitation exercise to ABSUTH.

According to the Governor, Government is committed to the payment of salary to the staff while it expects a little more patriotism, commitment and innovativeness from the management

and staff of the organization.

Dr Ikpeazu said he was determined that things will begin to look up in the institution as he was poised to do everything to ensure that the school remains afloat and bounce back stronger.

To that end, he promised that Government will provide whatever that is required to support the school to make progress and ex-

pressed satisfaction with the quality of Nigerian medical doctors.

Earlier, the Leader of the delegation, Professor Edmond Nwana commended the Governor for the giant strides recorded in the state especially the ongoing reconstruction of ABSUTH road Aba.

He said that the team has gone round to look at what

is on ground at ABSUTH medical school to ensure that standard is maintained and appealed to the Governor to do everything to keep the training program at the Medical School on course.

Professor Wanah noted ABSUTH has produced great medical practitioners who are doing well across the world.





# NEWS FROM THE STATES



Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya (left), presenting his Industrial Park Masterplan to President Muhammadu Buhari at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, recently.

## Yahaya presents Industrial Park masterplan to Buhari

### ...Wants Fast-track of Oil Exploitation Activities in Gombe, others

Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, has met with President Muhammadu Buhari at the Presidential Villa, Abuja where they discussed critical issues affecting Gombe State and Nigeria in general, including the establishment of the Muhammadu Buhari Industrial Park whose contract was awarded by the state government.

The President promised the support of the federal government to the governor towards sustaining efforts at maintaining peace and security, and enhancing socio-economic development.

The Governor later told State House correspondents that he intimated the President on the award of contract for the construction of an Industrial Park which is named after the President.

He said when completed, the park will not only boost the economic standing and

stability of the State but will create jobs for the teeming youths within and outside the State.

"We discussed on the issue of Gombe Industrial Park which we awarded the contract for contraction to start early and it has been named after Mr. President. So, I informed him and sought his support to see that we deliver on that.

"Our people are naturally peasant farmers and herders and if we're able to put up the industrial park, we'll have a big place that can provide opportunities for our youths in the industries within Agricultural production, processing, marketing and distribution so that they will have very good means of livelihood and the economy will also improve".

Governor Inuwa Yahaya explained that issue of security was discussed in

view of the fact that Gombe State has been playing a comforting role housing Internally Displaced Persons IDPs from Boko Haram inflicted states of Borno Yobe and Adamawa states thus putting a strain on the State's social infrastructures.

Also discussed was the issue of oil and gas.

The Governor noted that the political will and the passion displayed by the President Muhammadu Buhari towards the development of the oil and gas sector right from his days as a Federal commissioner of Petroleum presupposes that the President brings his influence to bear towards the take-off of full activities in the Kolmani oilfield.

"The NNPC division of frontiers exploration has done a lot of work with the deposits discovered.

## FAAC: Yahaya wants upward review of allocation to States, LGs

Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has made a case for an upward review of statutory allocation to states and local governments in the country to enable them meet with the ever-expanding challenges of socio-economic, human capital and infrastructural development.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya said this at the official flag-off ceremony of the sensitization programme on the Review of Existing Revenue Allocation Formula, by the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission held at the New Banquet Hall of the Government House, Gombe.

The Governor explained that as the sole revenue allocation agency, the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission, RMAFC is charged with the periodic review of Nigeria's revenue allocation formula in line with current realities.

"The last time such review was successfully conducted was in 1992, some 29 years ago. Since then, a lot of changes have taken place across our social, political and economic spheres, thus, necessitating a review in order to ensure a fairer and equitable allocation formula that is compatible with our current realities".

"I understand that this first phase of review will focus on the vertical allocation. That is, how revenue is shared among the three tiers of government (FG, States and LGAs). In the existing formula, all the 36 states only collect a paltry of 26.72% while our 774 LGAs collect 20.60% of all the accruals of the federation account, leaving the Federal Government with a lion share of 52.8%.

Over the past decades, the roles of State Governments have expanded while our revenue allocation has remained the same. States are forced to deal with emerging challenges like insecurity, environmental degradation, decaying infrastructure, inadequate funding for primary healthcare and basic education. As the roles of States keep expanding, there's the need for a proper review of the allocation formula to ensure states get the required resources to be able to deliver on new and existing responsibilities", the governor stressed

He revealed that the race for fiscal efficiency in Gombe State begun as soon as he took over the mantle of leadership, stressing that having inherited a state in dire financial distress, fiscal discipline became the mantra of his administration.



## NEWS FROM THE STATES

# King David Gifted Academy: A gift to the gifted

Education is said to be the best gift that any parent could give to his ward(s). Malcolm X, the late United States rights activist once said:

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today".

But, education without quality is as good as salt that has lost its taste. The result is the production of half-baked individuals parading themselves as an educated person(s) who are more harmful to society. In such a society, these supposedly products of the educational system become the greatest obstacles to the development of society.

Suffice it to say that Gov. David Umahi of Ebonyi State understood these implications, hence the establishment of King David Gifted Academy, Abakaliki. To underscore the seriousness he attached to education, the Ebonyi State Government recently declared a state of emergency on children out of school and charged Ward Councillors and Development Centre Coordinators, Council Chairmen, Stakeholders, EXCO members, etc to embark on intensive sensitization

According to Vince Gomwon:

"You cannot make people learn. You can only provide the right conditions for learning to happen".

Ebonyi is one of the economically disadvantaged and educationally-less-developed states in Nigeria, has been



Governor David Umahi with some students of the King David Gifted School

lagging in education-related activities. The few of the indigenes privileged to go through the rigors of education have proved their mettle.

Education is an important instrument for attaining the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The possibility of achieving these goals without an excellent educational foundation is zero. Thus, the need to revamp the education sector is not just necessary but sacrosanct.

Going by the plans of the education-loving Governor, the King David Gifted Academy selects 200 pupils from the state's primary schools who are the overall best in the Common Entrance Examinations annually. These young lads and lasses will be trained at no cost to their parents. They are giving full scholarships which cover everything ranging from educational materials, fees,

medicals, clothing, feeding, accommodation, etc. The only condition for continuous support up to Senior Secondary School 3, is successive maintenance of great academic records.

That singular act means that the only yardstick for admissions and scholarship into King David Gifted Academy is individual intelligence. Gov. Umahi having seen that education, and hard work, took him to the apogee of his career, has ensured that quality education is extended to all Ebonyians irrespective of creed, religion, or clan.

The beneficiaries are expected to make the state, and their families, proud by maintaining straight 9As in their SSCE. The beneficiaries are not just proud recipients of the magnanimity of the state Governor but people whom others are envious of. This ensures that there is

healthy competition among pupils in primary schools in the state.

In the time past, Ebonyi indigenes were designated as hawkers, house helps, "hewers of wood and fetchers of water", and nicknamed "Nwa-Abakaliki" (derogatory word depicting their backwardness). One of the reasons behind the establishment of King David's Gifted Academy is not only to ensure that intelligent child-hawkers are taken out of the streets during school hours but to provide quality education to every Ebonyi child regardless of their family background.

To enhance academic excellence and effective management of the King David's Gifted Academy, Governor Umahi, had a few weeks ago handed over the institution to the Catholic Diocese of Abakaliki to run. This was done with the intent to instill mor-

al and academic values in the students. This confirms what C.S. Lewis said: "Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather make a man a more clever devil".

And no society would like to live with a devil not to talk of a clever one.

It is on record that the Catholic Church has been at the forefront of running some of the best educational institutions not just in the country, Nigeria, but the world at large. Thus, with the handing over of King David Gifted Academy, Gov. Umahi intends that moral decadence, especially among these leaders of tomorrow will be curtailed.

In developed countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, etc, the government, corporate bodies, multinationals, alumni associations, and others have been offering scholarships to intelligent persons (local and international students). The essence of it is to harness the academic potentialities of the beneficiaries. They are looking at the socio-economic benefits of the beneficiaries to the society in the long run.

It is laudable to see that Gov. Umahi did not only see this whenever he travels out of the country but has been able to replicate the same in Ebonyi. It can only be a man that is out to make his people better than he met them that could do this.



# NEWS FROM THE STATES

## Massive Revenue Drive: Lalong pays ground rent to flag off exercise

Weeks after signing the newly passed Revenue Law and Property and Land Use Charge Law as well as the Plateau Geographic Information Systems Law, Governor Simon Bako Lalong has flagged off a high-powered revenue drive with a target to raise the monthly revenue base of the State to about 3 to 5 billion monthly.

While flagging off the exercise at the Plateau State Internal Revenue Service Headquarters in Jos, Governor Lalong said the revenue drive is aimed at changing the income of the State to pave way for funding more projects and programmes which are hampered currently because of lack of funds.

Lalong, who paid the ground rent charges for his personal property, said he decided to lead by example in order to demonstrate to the citizens that nobody is above the law or will be left



Leading By Example: Governor Lalong paid the ground rent charges for his personal property

out in the process.

He said "I am not asking the citizens to do as I SAY, but to do as I DO. I am not only the Governor but also Chairman of the Plateau State Revenue Council as stipulated by law. As the saying goes, leaders lead from the front. Having personal-

ly demonstrated this level of civic responsibility as the number one citizen of the State means that there is nobody that will default. All of us are subject to the law and those who run against the law will bear the consequences. I, therefore, expect all citizens particularly political leaders

(both elected and appointed) to line up behind me and do the same. The time to show leadership has come".

The Governor said he will not intervene on behalf of any tax defaulter "I plead with every citizen particularly the "big men" to comply because I will not entertain

anyone begging me to intervene when the law catches up with you. This is not about me or anyone, but about the law. It is because I do not want to beg anybody or be embarrassed that I am paying my own today" he said.

He explained that he recently signed into law the Plateau State Revenue (Consolidation) Law; Plateau Property and Land Use Charge Law; Plateau Geographic Information Services Law amongst others aimed at giving legal backing to all revenue-generating activities and improving the tax environment.

The Governor however warned against default as very soon, those wishing to access some services of the Plateau State Government shall be required to show evidence of payment of their taxes. This is very important because we cannot enjoy and claim rights and benefits without corresponding responsibility.

## Northern Govs Trip to Kenya: Lalong signs MOU on establishment of tea factory

A tea processing factory will soon be established in Plateau State, thanks to the visit of Governor Simon Bako Lalong to Kenya on behalf of the Northern Governor's Forum.

This follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Plateau State Government and the Government of Kericho County in Kenya following the visit of Governor Lalong to various Counties of the Country.

The memorandum of understanding was signed on behalf of the two governments by Prof. Danladi Atu, Secretary to

Government of Plateau State and Joes Bett, County Secretary of Kericho in Kenya and witnessed by the two Governors.

Before the signing of the agreement, Governor Lalong had taken a tour of the Ketepa Tea Processing and Packaging Company which is the largest tea farming company in Kenya that is driven by farmer cooperative society.

He was taken round the company by the Managing Director Albert Otochi who explained that the company was founded by small scale farmers who are the major shareholders

and determine its day to day running through the board of directors.

He was told that through the cooperative society, the farmers are encouraged to cultivate tea and coffee which is then bought off them by the company and processed thereby creating employment for the host communities and boosting their economy.

Governor Lalong said the initiative is to consolidate on the gains of his visit Kenya, particularly Kericho County which shares a lot of similarities in weather, topography and

agricultural endowments with Plateau State.

"We have other products that can benefit from the processing factory which can result in what could be PLATEAU TEA that will make inroads into the Nigerian market" he said.

The Governor also discussed the possibility of training long distance runners in Kericho which has been the base of Kenya's athletics strength over the years.

Lalong had also visited a private diary farm where he was taken round the production line by the Chairman of the

Farm Gen. John Koech (Rtd) who expressed willingness to share experiences with Plateau State and indeed other Northern States in modern way of cattle rearing which is not only profitable but a new way of maintaining communal harmony and better utilization of scarce land resources.

The Chairman of the Northern Governors Forum was later hosted to a warm reception at the Office of the Governor of Kericho County where members of the County Legislature and the Executive were in attendance.



# Loud Whispers

Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi

## THE TIMELESSNESS OF SCANDAL

I just came across a video and story of how a man somewhere in Ghana was making advances on a sixteen-year-old school girl on a public bus. The girl was trying to avoid him but he was persistent. There were two older women on the bus listening. When they had heard enough, they asked the man to stop. He was rude to them

and told them to mind their own business. The women thought otherwise. It takes a village to raise a child, they decided. So, they descended on the would-be predator and started to beat him up. It is unlikely that the man concerned will have the effrontery to approach a minor in public again. Hands up to those wonderful women! It is however very hard these days to know what should be public business and what should remain private.

On the one hand, we believe that privacy is very important to us as Africans, we never put our business out there for all to consume. On the other hand, we hardly ever keep things to ourselves. When I was growing up, even if it was merely whispers, everyone knew what was going on with everyone else. On

the street where we lived, there was a tailor (let me call him Bayo) who was having an affair with a married woman who sold provisions. The woman had a son who looked so much like Bayo, that the mischievous ones on the street would call him 'Omo Bayo' (Bayo's son). There was a mechanic who was rumoured to be having an affair with another married woman, and her husband allegedly laced his wife with 'Magun' (a well-known charm to guard against adultery). As a result, the 'invading' mechanic had an erection that refused to subside (the medical term is Priapism, but let us not let medical facts get in the way of juicy gossip) and he had to be ferried back to his village for treatment. Then there was the case of one of our neighbours who had three wives. The youngest wife, who was a trader who imported textiles, gave birth to a baby that was obviously mixed race. When the scandal erupted, the mother of the wife claimed her daughter had been to England recently and that is why she had a baby that looked like her white hosts. To the best of my knowledge, the woman remained married to her husband and the sun still continued to rise every day. Concerned family members gave up and started calling the new addition to the family 'Oyinbo'. There was the day our peace was disturbed by a wife screaming at the top of her voice after catching her husband in bed with his Aunt. One of my father's friends came to report his wife to my father. She had built a house without his knowledge! A five-bedroom house! My father summoned his friend's wife to settle the matter. Not only did this very mild-mannered wife admit that she had built a house, she calmly used the opportunity to inform my father (and his friend) that she was moving in to her own house because she has high blood pressure courtesy of her husband of twenty-five years and she wants to live the rest of her days with peace of mind. Accord-





ing to her, she was tired of firing maids because her husband could not be trusted to behave himself. The straw that broke the camel's back was that one of the maids got pregnant. For once in his life, my father was speechless. True to her word, she lived the rest of her days in her own house. I could go on and on. Scandals in our communities are nothing new. We have always had errant and deviant behaviour. Men impregnating their maids or sisters in law. Women pinning children of other men on their husbands. Incest in families. Men have always behaved like entitled creeps and women have always played their own tricks. As the Yoruba say, 'Àà rí irú eléyíí rí, erù l'a fi ní dá b'olóro' roughly translated as 'There is nothing new under the sun'.

Of course, in those days there was no social media, so scandals were localized, but it did not take away from the fact that S..T happened. It was expected that acts of indiscretion should be considered too shameful to bring to the public domain. Family meetings for the purposes of fact-finding and reconciliation was the furthest such information usually went. These days, the information is out there for millions of strangers to see. The scandals have been coming fast and furious lately, one after the other, accompanied by the usual commentaries online run by judgmental busy-bodies.

Even though many of us are alarmed at the rate people use social media as a substitute for good friends, family, a sympathetic spiritual guide or trained therapists, we have come to accept that it is a place many turn to in desperate need of support, solace or attention. Once the private is made public, the public then take it upon themselves to respond to the information available to them. There is often very little by way of context, just lots of information that is way too much to be shared with strangers. Like the two women who rose up to defend the young girl who was being molested on the bus in Ghana, it would be nice if the public could rise to defend the defenceless and the voiceless. Many of the cases in the public domain recently might not have

been typical victims, but they come across as hurt, angry, disillusioned, sad, desperate, and therefore deserving of empathy and compassion. We can argue about the desirability of social media as an arbiter of personal problems till the cows come home, it is an argument many are deaf to, so let us not belabour the issue. In place of the whispers and innuendo that fueled gossip on our streets when we were young, we now have the modern equivalent of town-criers.

Scandals are as old as the hills, they have simply evolved over time. People make mistakes, they do things they are not proud of, it simply makes them human beings. When we sit on our moral



## SCANDALS ARE AS OLD AS THE HILLS, THEY HAVE SIMPLY EVOLVED OVER TIME

high ground to pass judgement (often without all the facts of the matter) it does not make us better, it just makes us potential hypocrites. If we know of someone going through a hard time, let us do what we can to support them. Let us not be the ones to urge them to put their business out there, and if they do so anyway, let us still do what we can to coax them away from such a toxic space. We cannot stop the multitude of fingers itching to jump in to comment on the misfortunes of others, but we can keep our own fingers and lips still.

Another way of looking at some of the recent issues 'trending' online is that there are those who will do anything to acquire or hold on to fame. If that is the game being played, then it needs to be understood for the cynical act of survival that it is. If political, business and

religious leaders are concerned about the unwholesome engagement of young people with these antics, then something needs to be done to create better opportunities and choices.

People have been asking, 'Where are the role models? Why are there so many young people being led astray?' The wrong questions will always produce undesirable answers. The role models are not just the eighty something Grandmas and Grandpas who have led 'spotless' lives. The hardworking male student who ties Gele over the weekends to make money is a role model too, and so is the young female student who

works as a bricklayer to earn money for her fees.

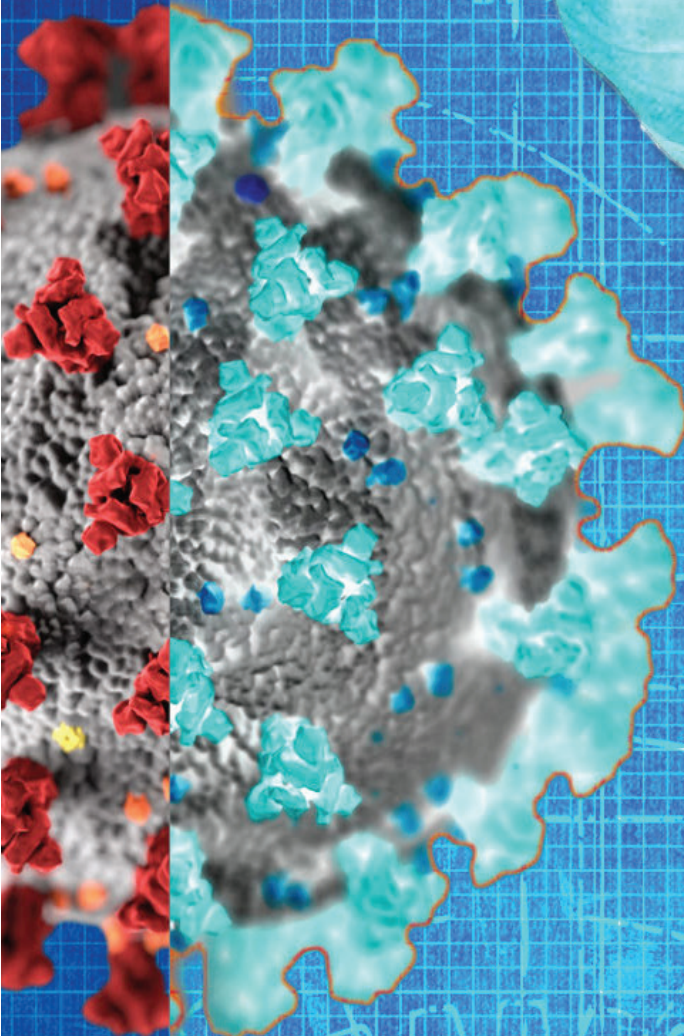
It is not only young people who are being led astray, there are many adults who cannot tell right from wrong and cannot be expected to pass the required information on to the next generation. We should be asking what kind

of values we need to bind the fabric of our communities together. The values of hard work, empathy, compassion, honesty, respect, humility, kindness. The more we invest in these values, the better prepared we will be to face the next human frailty that presents itself online or offline. By then, we would have learnt that we are all human beings with limitations, from generation to generation.

*– Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi is a Gender Specialist, Social Entrepreneur and Writer. She is the Founder of Abovewhispers.com, an online community for women. She is the First Lady of Ekiti State, and she can be reached at BAF@abovewhispers.com*



# DELTA VARIANT B.1.617.2



**YET TIME TO MASK UP**

**DON'T LET YOUR GUARDS DOWN**