



How Pesticides Depopulate Bees, Diminish Harvest

Nigeria's Shameful Absence From 2026 FIFA World Cup

Xenophobia: South Africa's Reputational Erosion Is Not Theoretical



The Guardian

Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

WEEKEND

www.guardian.ng

Vol. 42, No. 18,132

June 20-21, 2026

Guardian Nigeria

GuardianNigeria

08136370421

Guardiannigeria

N500

UPBEAT AS EKITI ELECTORATE DREAM SMOOTH POLL

PAGE 8

- Police Restrict Movement, Deploy DIG, AIG, Anti-terror Squad For Security
- Observers Raise Concerns Over Vote-buying, Disinformation
- SDP Cries Foul Over Inability To Upload Polling Agents' Credentials To INEC Portal
- Media Bodies Task Journalists On Professionalism, Safety Consciousness



Tinubu Orders Security Reinforcement At NIPSS After Deadly Attack

NEWS/PAGE 2

World Drug Day 2026: NDLEA, UNODC Refine Strategies Against Drug Menace

NEWS/PAGE 2

You Have Not Disappointed Me, Tinubu Hails Wike

NEWS/PAGE 3



Malnutrition, Drug Abuse Fueling Insecurity In Nigeria, Says NUJ

NEWS/PAGE 3

AIG Scores Gov Mbah High On Investments In Modern Security Infrastructure

NEWS/PAGE 35

Police Arrest Suspected Bandits' Logistics Supplier In Kwara

NEWS/PAGE 35



News

Tinubu Orders Security Reinforcement At NIPSS After Deadly Bandit Attack

From Terhomba Daka (Abuja) and
Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi (Jos)

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu has ordered the immediate and permanent reinforcement of security at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, Plateau State, following a deadly bandit attack on the institute's perimeter that claimed the lives of two soldiers and a police officer.

The President said the incident had further strengthened the Federal Government's resolve to safeguard strategic national institutions, support security personnel and prevent future security breaches.

Speaking on Friday during a visit to participants of Senior Executive Course (SEC) 48, 2026, at NIPSS, Vice President Kashim Shettima, who represented the President, conveyed the Federal Government's condolences to the families of the fallen security personnel and assured them of government support.

He disclosed that President Tinubu had directed the immediate activation of emergency security measures at the institute, with the Director-General of NIPSS mandated to work closely with the Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police Force and the Department of State Services (DSS) to strengthen security around the institution.

According to the vice president, the President has further ordered the submission of a comprehensive action plan, within 72 hours, detailing permanent security reinforcement measures covering surveillance systems, personnel deployment, access control mechanisms and emergency response infrastructure.

"His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has directed that emergency security measures be activated immediately, with the Direc-

Vows Support For Families Of Slain Soldiers, Policeman

tor-General coordinating with the Armed Forces, the Police and the DSS to fortify the institute's perimeter without delay.

"On the President's instruction, a comprehensive action plan and timeline for permanent reinforcement, covering surveillance, personnel, access control and emergency systems, must be submitted to the Office of the Vice President within 72 hours. Weekly progress reports will follow until full implementation. No future attack must find us unprepared," Shettima stated.

Describing NIPSS as Nigeria's foremost strategic policy institution and intellectual nerve centre, Shettima said its protection must remain a national security priority.

He noted that while the attackers sought to instill fear and disrupt the institute's activities, the incident instead showcased the resilience, discipline and courage of participants, management and security personnel. "I come to you with a heavy heart and a firm spirit. The bandit attack on the perimeter of this institution claimed the lives of two gallant soldiers and one courageous policeman. On behalf of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Federal Government, I extend our deepest condolences to their families, the Nigerian Armed Forces and the Nigeria Police Force. We mourn with you. We share your pain. And we honour their sacrifice," he said.

Assuring participants and staff of the institute of their safety, Shettima said President Tinubu had directed enhanced security not only around NIPSS but also across other strategic national institutions.

"The sacrifice of those three brave men will not be in vain. Their children

will be our children. Their welfare will be our responsibility," he pledged.

Shettima stressed that those behind the attack would not succeed in undermining the country's institutions or weakening national resolve.

He also commended participants of SEC 48 for their calm and disciplined response during the incident, saying their conduct demonstrated the leadership qualities expected of future national leaders.

"When darkness came to the gates of this institute, it expected to find people who would scatter into the night. Instead, it found men and women who stood their ground.

"You did not flee. You did not abandon your colleagues. You faced the worst that cruelty could send and responded with courage, composure and discipline," he said.

Shettima further praised the Direc-

tor-General of NIPSS, Prof. Ayo Omotayo, for his leadership and swift coordination with security agencies, which ensured rapid reinforcement of the institute and accountability for all staff and participants.

"In a moment that tested this institution to its core, your calm leadership turned crisis into control. On behalf of the President and the nation, I thank you," he said.

He also commended the Director of Studies, Nima Salman Mann, for coordinating safety efforts and maintaining order during the emergency. Earlier, Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, expressed appreciation to the Federal Government for its swift response and solidarity following the attack.

The governor approved requests by NIPSS management for the establishment of a security buffer zone around the institution and the installation of security lighting and

other protective infrastructure.

He paid tribute to the fallen security personnel and commended the courage of staff and participants who helped repel the attack.

In his remarks, Omotayo presented an incident report to the vice president, describing the visit as a demonstration of President Tinubu's commitment to the institute and national security.

He warned that the incident underscored the vulnerability of critical government institutions and appealed for enhanced surveillance infrastructure, including closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems and additional security personnel.

Representatives of SEC 48 participants, Dr. Toyin Sanni and Dr. Kabiru Abba, said the vice president's visit had reassured participants of government's commitment to their safety and strengthened their resolve to complete the programme.



Distribution of sensitive election materials to Ekiti State Local Councils in Ado-Ekiti... on Friday.

PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

World Drug Day 2026: NDLEA, UNODC Refine Strategies Against Drug Menace

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have announced weeklong activities to commemorate the 2026 World Drug Day.

This is even as the anti-narcotics agency has vowed that it will continue to target the criminal networks with the aim of effectively cutting off their lifeline.

This was announced at a joint press briefing by NDLEA and UNODC at the agency's headquarters in Abuja on Friday.

In his address at the conference, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd) noted that World Drug Day, observed globally on June 26, is a "vital occasion during which our collective efforts against the illicit drug menace are evaluated, refined, and given a definitive policy direction for the subsequent 12 months."

Speaking on the theme for the 2026 World Drug Day, "The World Drug Problem: Persisting Issues, New Challenges, Innovative Responses," Marwa said it underscores the evolving dynamic of the global drug landscape.

"It acknowledges that while old battlegrounds remain, new synthetic threats, sophisticated trafficking networks and digital illicit markets have emerged, demanding that we counter them with proactive, technology-driven, and highly innovative responses," he said.

According to Marwa, who was represented at the briefing by the agency Secretary, Shadrach Haruna, the NDLEA had long recognised that old strategies cannot solve new problems.

He added: "Under the continuous support of the Federal Government and our diverse stakeholders, we have heavily modernised our operations and balanced our enforcement capabilities with aggressive social advocacy. Our War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) initiative remains our primary ve-

- **Unveil Weeklong Programme To Commemorate Event**
- **We're Targeting Criminal Networks To Cut Off Their Lifeline – Marwa**

hide for preventive action, and it has been refitted to address these new challenges by leveraging data, community intelligence and innovative public enlightenment tools to protect our youth from falling victim to illicit substances.

"In strict alignment with this year's profound theme, we are keeping alive our tradition of a week-long commemoration. To this end, the week officially kicks off today, Friday, June 19, 2026, with this press conference. Later today, Friday, June 19, we shall proceed to the National Mosque, Abuja, for a special Juma'at Service at 1:30 p.m. to seek divine guidance and commemorate this significant week.

"Tomorrow, Saturday, June 20, our highly anticipated Walk Against Drugs—staged in collaboration with Baze University, Nile University and the MTN Foundation (MTNF)—will take place. The take-off point will be the African University of Science and Technology, Galadimawa, starting at 8:00 a.m.

"On Sunday, June 21, we will continue our spiritual intercession with a Thanksgiving Church Service at a designated worship centre to commit the week's activities into the hands of the Almighty. On Monday, June 22, at 10 a.m. here at the NDLEA Conference Room, National Headquarters, we will host the final level of our national essay competition, themed, 'Say No to Drug: Building a Healthy and Responsible Generation.' This intellectual contest highlights our focus on youth engagement and creative prevention.

"On Tuesday, June 23, we will observe NGO Day at the NDLEA Conference Room at 10 a.m. This day is dedicated to our civil society partners who remain indispensable in our grassroots sensitisation efforts. On Wednesday, June 24, beginning at 8 a.m., we will be having our Youth Out of School Programme. This is a targeted campaign focusing on high-risk environments within the FCT Area Councils,

specifically reaching out to youths in major markets and motor parks with innovative, relatable anti-drug messaging. Thursday, June 25, will be dedicated strictly to strategic planning, final reviews and briefings in preparation for the grand finale.

"Finally, the climax of the weeklong activities, the Grand Finale, will hold on Friday, June 26, at the State House Conference Centre, Abuja, starting at 9 a.m. This event will gather top government functionaries, diplomatic communities and interna-

tional stakeholders to formally unveil new policy frameworks for tackling the modern facets of the drug crisis."

Speaking on recent operational milestones by the agency, which he said directly mirror its readiness to confront persisting issues and new challenges, the NDLEA boss noted that the agency's WADA programme, launched five years ago on World Drug Day 2021, has matured into a formidable "Whole-of-Society Approach."

He further disclosed that on the enforcement front, the agency's "Offensive Action" against drug cartels, launched in January 2021, has maintained its relentless momentum.

Terrorism: Court Sentences Mother, Sister Of Eliminated Terrorist Kingpin, Battujo, To 40 Years In Prison

From Ameh Ochojila, Abuja

THE Federal High Court in Abuja on Friday sentenced two women for their involvement with terrorism to 40 years in prison.

The convicted women, Safiya Salihu and Halima Abdullahi, are mother and sister respectively of the terrorist kingpin, Kachallah Ibrahim Battujo, who was eliminated by Nigerian security forces, on June 10, 2026, in a forest near Iluke in Kabba/Bunu Local Council of Kogi State.

Justice Hauwa Joseph Yilwa handed the sentences after both women pleaded guilty to Counts 2, 4 and 5 of the five-count terrorism-related charge brought against them by the Office of the Attorney General of

the Federation.

Both women escaped conviction on Count 1, which bordered on receiving N490,300 from Battujo, fully aware it was proceeds of terrorism, as well as Count 3, which bordered on their sponsored holy pilgrimage with the proceeds of terrorism.

The Director of Public Prosecution, Oyedepo Rotimi (SAN), urged the court to strike out both counts, but convict them on the others.

According to Count 2, both women "aided and abetted the activities of Battujo, a known bandit kingpin and passed information through telephone conversations to the said Battujo, and thereby committed an offence contrary to and punishable under Section 26 of the

Terrorism (Prevention Prohibition) Act, 2022."

In addition to pleading guilty to Count 2, Battujo's mum pleaded guilty to Count 5, which bordered on concealment of information on the terrorism activities of her son.

On her part, Halima, who is sister of the eliminated terrorist kingpin, in addition to pleading guilty to Count 2, also pleaded guilty to Count 4, which also bordered on concealment of information that her brother illegally acquired firearms which she saw when she visited his forest camp.

While the punishment for each of the Counts is 20 years, Justice Yilwa ordered that the sentences run concurrently, after which the convicts will undergo rehabilitation.

Kalu Commissions Roads, Hails Aliyu's Infrastructure Drive In Sokoto

From Tunde Omolehin, Sokoto

FORMER Governor of Abia State, Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, has commissioned a network of 10 roads constructed by the Ahmed Aliyu-led administration in Arkilla New Layout, Wamakko Local Council of Sokoto State.

Kalu described road infrastructure as one of the key drivers of development in every community. "Roads are everything. I therefore commend the governor for investing heavily in road infrastructure," he said.

"I commend you for honouring me with the commissioning of 10 road projects which ordinarily would have been commissioned by 10 different guests."

The former governor also praised Governor Ahmed Aliyu for what he described as the rapid development taking place across Sokoto State.

Kalu frowned on attempts by some individuals to divide Nigeria, rather he advocated for the unity and peaceful co-existence of all Nigerians.

He also stressed the need for citizens to contribute meaningfully towards achieving lasting peace and stability in the country.

Speaking, Aliyu said the Arkilla New Layout Road Network was constructed at the cost of N3.5 billion with the aim of providing modern infrastructure that supports urban growth, improves mobility and enhances the quality of life of residents.

The governor added that the road network was designed to accommodate the growing population of the area as well as its increasing economic activities.

He expressed confidence that with the completion of the project, residents and property owners would enjoy improved accessibility, reduced travel time, enhanced safety and increased economic opportunities.

South-South Governors Congratulate Oborewori On 63rd Birthday

THE South-South Governors Forum (SSGF) has felicitated with the Governor of Delta State, Elder Sheriff Oborewori, on his 63rd birthday.

In a statement, Bayelsa State Governor and Chairman, South-South Governors Forum, Senator Douye Diri said: "Today, the SSGF joins the good people of Delta State and well-wishers to celebrate an outstanding leader and a dedicated public servant.

"Your Excellency, your transition from the longest-serving Speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly to becoming Governor testifies to your unwavering commitment to the ideals of democracy and visionary leadership. "Through your M.O.R.E Agenda model, you continue to break new grounds in infrastructure development, security of lives and property, social welfare, and in ensuring that Delta becomes more prosperous and united."

You Have Not Disappointed Me, Tinubu Hails Wike

From Azimazi Momoh Jimoh, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu has delivered what appeared to be his strongest public endorsement yet of the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, declaring that the former Rivers State governor has justified the confidence reposed in him to transform Abuja into a modern capital city.

Tinubu, who spoke through Vice President Kashim Shettima during the commissioning of Collector Road CN2 (Emmanuel Okanla Boulevard) and adjoining road networks in Katampe District on Friday, praised Wike's performance in executing critical

infrastructure projects across the territory.

"When I gave him the assignment to make Abuja a true capital city, I knew his track record. Barrister Wike, you have not disappointed Mr. President," the President said.

He commended the minister for spearheading the construction of roads, water projects, judicial infrastructure and other urban renewal initiatives that have reshaped parts of the nation's capital within a relatively short period.

"From transforming abandoned roads into new boulevards, to delivering water projects and judicial quarters, you work day and night. You do

not give excuses; you give results. The people of the FCT call you 'Mr. Project' for a reason," Tinubu added.

The President's remarks came as the FCT Administration marked the eighth day of an extensive commissioning exercise showcasing projects delivered under the current administration.

Tinubu described the newly completed road as a symbol of the Federal Government's commitment to translating the Renewed Hope Agenda into tangible improvements in the lives of Nigerians.

According to him, recent investments in solar-powered street lighting and road infrastructure have improved security, enhanced mobility and

stimulated economic activities across the capital city.

"We have installed solar street lights and today Katampe is bright at night. Abuja's city life is coming back and criminal hideouts are disappearing. This is exactly what good governance delivers: security, mobility and dignity," he said.

The President stressed that the significance of the road extends beyond its physical structure.

"A road like CN2 is more than just concrete. It represents hope. It proves to every Nigerian that government can deliver. It tells our youth that this country truly belongs to them," he stated.

He also urged residents to take ownership of public in-

frastructure by paying taxes, clearing ground rents and protecting public assets from vandalism.

"This road belongs to you; guard it for your children. Do not vandalise the street lights or turn walkways into marketplaces. If you witness any destruction, report it immediately," he said.

Earlier, Wike said the project was conceived to address a critical infrastructure gap within the rapidly developing Katampe District and to complement road networks already completed in neighbouring districts.

According to him, the decision to construct the road followed observations that existing road projects in the area would remain incomplete without the missing link provided by Collector Road CN2.

"Last year, when Mr. President commissioned the bridge and road at Guzape, this particular road did not even exist. We identified the gap and decided it had to be closed because infrastructure development must be holistic," he said.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (middle) receives in audience Minister of Health, Muhammad Ali Pate (right) and APC Gubernatorial Candidate of Bauchi State Mohammad Abubakar (left) at Presidential Villa Abuja... on Friday.

Nigerian Legion Urges FG To Establish Ministry Of Veterans Affairs

By David Meshioye

THE Nigerian Legion has reaffirmed its commitment to improving the welfare and reintegration of retired military personnel, urging the Federal Government to establish a dedicated Ministry of Veterans Affairs to co-ordinate welfare programmes and policies for retired military personnel.

The Legion also appealed to Nigerians to recognise veterans as national assets whose sacrifices deserve support and respect.

Speaking at the 62nd anniversary of the Legion, its National Chairman, Grace Morenike Henry, said "the na-

Seeks Better Welfare For Widows Of Fallen Heroes

tion that forgets those who sacrificed for her will not move forward."

She said the organisation is intensifying efforts to restore dignity, improve healthcare access, provide affordable housing and strengthen welfare support for veterans and widows of fallen soldiers.

Henry disclosed that plans are underway to establish a "Veterans Estate Project" aimed at providing affordable housing for retired military personnel across the country.

She also said the Legion is collaborating with Defence Health Maintenance Limit-

ed (DHML) and other healthcare partners to improve access to medical services for ageing veterans.

According to her, the organisation has already implemented several empowerment programmes targeted at widows of fallen soldiers.

"In November and December 2025, I shared palliatives with some widows to support them during the Christmas and New Year celebrations," she said.

She added that about 40 widows benefitted from empowerment initiatives, with 20 receiving grinding machines and another 20 re-

ceiving sewing machines, alongside food items and cash support.

Henry further revealed that additional empowerment support would be provided to 62 widows and veterans as part of activities commemorating the Legion's 62nd anniversary.

The chairman noted that the organisation is also exploring agricultural initiatives for veterans through cooperative farming schemes. She explained that the Legion is currently working to recover lands belonging to the organisation across several states to support the initiative.

PIDG Mobilises \$2.9b Private Capital For Emerging Market Infrastructure

By Benjamin Alade

THE Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) has announced that it mobilised \$2.9 billion in private capital for infrastructure projects across emerging markets in 2025, reinforcing the growing role of blended finance in driving development in underserved economies.

According to PIDG's 2025 Sustainability and Impact Report released ahead of London Climate Action Week, the organisation committed \$1 billion to 33 infrastructure projects during the year.

The projects attracted total investments of \$4.1 billion and are expected to provide about eight million people with new or improved infrastructure services.

The report highlights PIDG's continued focus on climate action, with investments spanning renewable energy, electric mobility, sustainable aviation fuel and climate-smart infrastructure. It also noted that 85 per cent of the organisation's investments in 2025 achieved gender-related targets, underscoring its commitment to inclusive infrastructure development.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, PIDG said it has supported 286 projects since inception in 2002, with three-quarters of them located in least-developed countries, low-income economies and fragile or conflict-affected states. Over the period, the organisation has mobilised \$32.7 billion in private capital and facilitated total infrastructure investments worth \$51.4 billion.

Among the projects supported in 2025 were Pakistan's first sustainable aviation fuel plant, a programme to expand affordable electricity connections for low-income households in Côte d'Ivoire, Laos' first nationwide electric vehicle charging network and ride-hailing ecosystem, and a sanitation project in Kenya that converts human waste into clean fuel.

Malnutrition, Drug Abuse Fueling Insecurity In Nigeria, Says NUJ

From Sodiq Omolayo, Abuja

THE Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) on Friday identified malnutrition, drug abuse and the unchecked influx of foreigners to Nigeria's media space as emerging factors fueling insecurity in Nigeria.

The NUJ National President, Alhassan Yahaya Abdullahi, stated this at the two-day National Security Summit organised by the body in collaboration with the Department of State Services (DSS) in Abuja.

The summit, themed 'Media and Security Agencies as Partners in Nation Building', brought together media professionals, security experts and former military

spokespersons to examine ways of strengthening co-operation between journalists and security agencies in tackling Nigeria's security challenges.

Abdullahi said journalists must continue to prioritise issues of national security and national development in their reporting, stressing that the media has a responsibility to contribute to efforts aimed at safeguarding the country.

He expressed concern over the influx of foreigners into Nigeria's media space, describing it as an issue that requires deliberate policy actions and closer scrutiny. According to him, the development has implications for national security and should

not be ignored.

The NUJ president also linked insecurity to worsening malnutrition, noting that the issue is often overlooked despite its far-reaching consequences.

He said malnutrition contributes to poor physical and cognitive development among children and ultimately affects societal stability and productivity.

"Many people may wonder why we are talking about malnutrition at a security summit, but malnutrition is a serious problem and Nigeria is among the countries most affected globally. Children who suffer from malnutrition often experience stunted growth and reduced intellectual develop-

ment, which has implications for the future of society," he said.

Abdullahi identified drug abuse as another major threat to national security, citing alarming statistics presented during the summit.

He said available data showed that drug addiction was becoming increasingly prevalent among young Nigerians and called for drastic measures to curb the trend.

"The figures are alarming and worrisome. We heard presentations showing the growing scale of drug abuse in the country. This should be a matter of serious concern for all of us because of its implications for crime and insecurity," he added.

Special

www.guardian.ng

How Pesticides Depopulate Bees,

The menace of indiscriminate use of pesticide across farmlands in the country is raising concern over the survival of bees and other pollinators with experts warning that continued decline in bee populations could deepen food insecurity, and threaten rural livelihoods, MOYOSORE SALAMI reports.

A YOUNG beekeeper, Folorunso Dosu, set out at dawn to harvest honey from a familiar tree line he had visited for months. It was supposed to be a routine visit, but on that day, something different happened: The usual humming that signaled an active hive was faint. When he climbed closer, the colony that filled the hollow trunk had almost collapsed. Dead bees littered the bark. The honey he eventually recovered was smaller in quantity and unusually dark, with a bitter smell.

He said the shift had become frequent across nearby bushes, where farmers had recently intensified spraying of chemicals ahead of planting season.

"I have been doing this for years. Before, you couldn't even stand near some trees because of bees but now most are empty," Dosu said.

Ambrosia Honey Farms CEO, Habeeb Issa, said he has witnessed both growth and setbacks in his 11 years of beekeeping, with some of the most severe losses linked to pesticide use, environmental stress, and poor farm management practices.

Issa recalled one of his most difficult experiences about four to five years ago when vandals invaded his apiary and deliberately used pesticides to kill bees at hive entrances before stealing honey.

He said the incident led to the death of thousands of bees and a significant collapse of colonies on the farm.

"I first noticed reduced activity during routine inspection, when I moved closer, I saw thousands of dead bees. It was a saddening sight," he said.

According to him, even surviving colonies suffered reduced productivity after exposure to chemicals.

Issa also said the challenges have not been limited to vandalism, noting that environmental conditions and farm management issues continue to affect production across seasons.

He cited the 2025-2026 season, where honey production dropped significantly owing to a shortened harmattan period, which he described as critical for nectar storage and honey formation.

"We had a very short harmattan season, which is very crucial for bees. The shortness affected their activity and nectar storage, so, honey production dropped by about 40 per cent compared to the previous season," he said.

He added that pest infestations such as ants and termites have also contributed to colony decline, especially where vegetation is poorly managed.

In some cases, colonies absconded after hives were overrun due to poor maintenance and delayed inspection.

Issa also pointed to pesticide use on nearby farms, particularly cocoa plantations, where chemical spraying affected bees over time.

"There were colonies on cocoa farms where pesticides used to treat the trees affected the bees in the long run," he said.

He explained that forage availability remains another major challenge, especially when bees relocated for security reasons end up in areas with limited flowering plants.

Issa said disturbances around apiaries, including livestock movement and environmental noise, also affect bee behaviour, causing colonies to reduce their activities.

He further noted that poor inspection routines and inadequate hive management have



contributed to avoidable losses. "In some cases, we lost colonies because we were unable to inspect the hives as regularly as needed," he said.

He added that weed overgrowth around apiaries has allowed ants, including weaver ants, to invade and destroy colonies.

From Pesticides To Poor Harvesting Practices

Another beekeeper, Habeebat Bamidele, told *The Guardian* that she first noticed something was wrong when hives that were once active and productive began to go quiet in areas where pesticide use was heavy.

Bamidele, who is also the Managing Director of Bambee Farms, said the change was gradual, as bees became less active across farms, some colonies disappeared completely and honey yields dropped.

"Bees are highly sensitive to chemicals. Excessive pesticide application pollutes their environment, weakens colonies, and in many cases leads to colony collapse or hive absconding.

"I have experienced situations where bees

abandoned their hives on farms with heavy pesticide use, and honey production dropped as a result because the bees became stressed and unable to forage effectively."

She said the change was gradual and consistent enough to raise concern as bees became less active and colonies disappeared over time.

Bamidele said the experience exposed poor awareness among farmers about the role of bees in agriculture.

According to her, many farmers still view bees mainly as honey producers, without recognising their role in crop pollination and food production. "Bees contribute to the pollination of over 70 per cent of food crops. However, many farmers still see bees only as honey producers."

She said this gap in awareness has led to harmful practices, including the destruction of bee colonies and pesticide use to eliminate bees, reducing pollination services and affecting food supply.

She added that while pesticides remain part of modern farming, misuse is responsible for

most damage to bee populations.

The beekeeper advocated integrated pest management practices, organic alternatives, and the maintenance of flowering plants around farms to reduce harm to pollinators.

She noted that modern beekeeping systems such as Langstroth, Flow Hive and Kenyan Top Bar hives help reduce disturbance to colonies. Proper handling techniques, including protective gear, smokers, and hygienic extraction, also improve honey quality and colony health.

Bamidele warned that continued neglect of pesticide misuse and low awareness among farmers could worsen bee decline, increasing adulterated honey in markets and dependence on imports.

"If nothing changes, we may face a future with declining bee populations, reduced honey production, and lower food productivity," she said.

She called for stronger farmer education, responsible pesticide use, and wider adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

The Guardian learnt that chemical spraying has become more aggressive, often carried out without guidance on timing or pollinator safety.

Some farmers, however, insisted chemicals are necessary to protect crops from pests and diseases.

The tension between crop protection and pollinator survival is becoming increasingly visible across rural areas.

Issa said several practices by farmers, honey hunters, and even beekeepers themselves

President of Beekeepers' Welfare Association, Zaria, Idris Muhammad Barau, said the continued use of chemical pesticides and poor awareness among farmers are contributing significantly to the decline in bee populations. Barau expressed concern over what he described as inadequate government commitment to addressing the dangers posed by chemical pesticides to bees, emphasizing that advocacy for organic alternatives should be intensified.

Feature

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Diminish Harvest

continue to worsen the decline in bee populations and honey quality across different environments.

He identified pesticide use as the most damaging factor, explaining that bees are highly exposed when they forage on treated crops.

“When bees go out to pollinate and feed on nectar, they pick up pesticides, this can kill them directly or transfer into the hive and affect the entire colony.”

He also pointed to deforestation as another major driver of colony loss, noting that clearing land for cultivation removes trees and flowering plants that support bee survival.

According to him, reduced vegetation limits nectar and pollen sources, making it difficult for colonies to sustain themselves over time.

Issa further criticised some honey-harvesting practices, particularly among honey hunters who destroy entire colonies during extraction.

He said some use fire and other destructive methods at night, which not only kills bees but also destroys comb structures and forces surviving colonies to rebuild under stress.

He added that in some cases, brood (bee larvae) is harvested alongside honey, leading to poor-quality products and contamination during processing.

Issa said beekeepers also contribute to losses through poor management practices, including irregular hive inspections and inadequate pest control.

He explained that neglected hives are often invaded by ants and other pests, which can destroy colonies if not detected early.

He also noted that some beekeepers operate without proper equipment, exposing bees to

unnecessary stress.

“Some people open hives without smokers or protective gear, and this makes the bees aggressive,” he said.

According to him, improved knowledge remains the most important step in strengthening beekeeping practices in the country.

Issa said modern hives with movable frames make inspection and harvesting easier, while reducing stress on colonies.

He also stressed the importance of proper equipment such as bee suits, gloves, and smokers, which help calm bees and reduce colony losses during handling.

On honey processing, he said hygiene remains critical to ensuring quality and safety.

Issa explained that only fully capped honey should be harvested, with moisture content below 20 per cent, while stainless steel equipment should be used during extraction and storage.

He warned against open-air processing, noting that exposure can lead to contamination and reduced product quality.

He also called for improved packaging standards, saying clean glass or food-grade plastic containers should be used to preserve purity.

Beyond technical practices, Issa said stronger public awareness is needed on the importance of bees to food security.

He called for the inclusion of bee conservation in school curricula to build early understanding of pollination and environmental protection.

Issa also urged government support through policies that protect bees, reduce deforestation, and provide financial assistance to bee-

keepers in the form of grants or low-interest loans.

He further called for improved rural security, noting that many beekeeping operations are located in remote areas where insecurity limits access to farms adding that better protection and support systems would encourage more farmers and beekeepers to expand production safely and sustainably.

President of Beekeepers’ Welfare Association, Zaria, Idris Muhammad Barau, said the continued use of chemical pesticides and poor awareness among farmers are contributing significantly to the decline in bee populations.

Barau expressed concern over what he described as inadequate government commitment to addressing the dangers posed by chemical pesticides to bees, emphasizing that advocacy for organic alternatives should be intensified.

“We have to be very sincere. The government is not ready to do anything, so you just talk and they do nothing. The earlier we begin advocating for organic pesticides for farmers, the better chance we have of having the lives of bees.”

He maintained that many farmers remain unaware of the crucial role bees play in pollination, often mistaking them for pests that damage crops. “Most farmers don’t even know what crop pollination is. They see bees as agents destroying their crops. For example, when farmers see bees on watermelon plants, they spray them because they think the bees are damaging the crop, not knowing that the bees are actually pollinating it.”

Barau emphasised the need for sustained



Barau said the continued use of chemical pesticides and poor awareness among farmers are contributing significantly to the decline in bee populations. **Barau** said the continued use of chemical pesticides and poor awareness among farmers are contributing significantly to the decline in bee populations. **Barau** said the continued use of chemical pesticides and poor awareness among farmers are contributing significantly to the decline in bee populations.

Barau also raised concerns about unsafe practices among local honey hunters and beekeepers, noting that some use pesticides to kill bees in a bid to harvest small quantities of honey because they are not aware of using protective gears.

Barau noted that while smaller organisations have continued to push awareness around bee conservation and organic pesticide use, the scale of the challenge requires broader intervention.

He, however, disclosed that the association recently secured 20,000 grants from the Czech Republic Embassy to support bee conservation efforts and promote pollination awareness.

Barau added that the initiative would focus on promoting sustainable beekeeping practices and educate farmers on the benefits of pollination and environmentally friendly pest control methods.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

Justice Yusuf Halilu of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, recently ordered the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) to pay N100 million in damages to the Department of State Security (DSS) officials—Sarah John and Gabriel Ogundele for defamation. The court also directed the organisation to publish public apologies, pay N1 million as litigation costs, and continue to incur 10 per cent yearly post-judgment interest until the damages are fully paid. JOSEPH ONYEKWERE reports that the judgment has triggered one of the fiercest debates within Nigeria’s civil society in recent years.

FOR decades, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Nigeria have frequently found themselves in confrontation with state institutions over issues ranging from corruption and human rights abuses to electoral accountability and misuse of public resources.

During military rule, many activists and journalists were detained, harassed or prosecuted for criticising government policies or exposing alleged abuses of power. Although Nigeria’s return to democratic governance in 1999 ushered in broader constitutional protections for civic participation and freedom of expression, tensions between civic actors and state institutions never completely disappeared.

This is mirrored in the case concerning the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and the Department of State Services (DSS).

There are concerns that while the judgment settled one phase of the legal battle, it immediately opened another front: a wider national argument over law, rights, power, and accountability, with many arguing that such a decision could stifle the quest for accountability and shrink civic space.

The fact of the case was that SERAP, on September 9, 2024, alleged that DSS operatives visited its Abuja office without prior notice and questioned members of staff. The organisation

Defamation Judgment Against SERAP Sparks Debate Over Shrinking Civic Space

expressed concerns that the visit amounted to intimidation and harassment, especially given its advocacy work on corruption and governance issues. The DSS subsequently denied wrongdoing and conducted an internal review of the incident.

Two officials involved in the visit, Sarah John and Gabriel Ogundele, filed a defamation action in their personal capacities, arguing that SERAP’s publications falsely portrayed them and damaged their reputations.

The matter proceeded to trial and culminated in judgment against the organisation. For the DSS officials, the ruling represented judicial vindication.

But for many civil society actors, it immediately raised questions extending far beyond the specific facts of the case. At one level, the dispute concerns whether specific publications defamed two DSS officials.

At another level, it has become a referendum on broader questions: how much protection should civil society organisations enjoy when commenting on the actions of state institutions? How should courts balance reputational rights against freedom of expression?

Can large monetary awards discourage legitimate advocacy? What constitutes responsible activism in an age of instant public communication? And where should the line be drawn between criticism and defamation? These questions explain why the case has attracted such intense attention.

SERAP files appeal Dissatisfied by the decision, SERAP, according to its Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare, has already approached the Court of Appeal seeking to set aside the entire judgment.

Represented by Tayo Oyetibo (SAN), the organisation describes the decision as “a travesty and miscarriage of justice.” The appeal challenges virtually every major aspect of the judgment. Among its arguments is the claim that the original suit was fun-

damentally defective because it was initially filed against “Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project,” which SERAP argues is not a juristic person recognised by law. According to the organisation, the claimants later amended the process to substitute “The Incorporated Trustees of the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project.”

SERAP maintains that such an amendment could not cure what it considers a jurisdictional defect. The appeal also attacks the court’s findings on identification, arguing that the alleged defamatory publications neither mentioned the DSS officials by name nor contained photographs, ranks, or unique descriptions capable of linking the statements specifically to them.

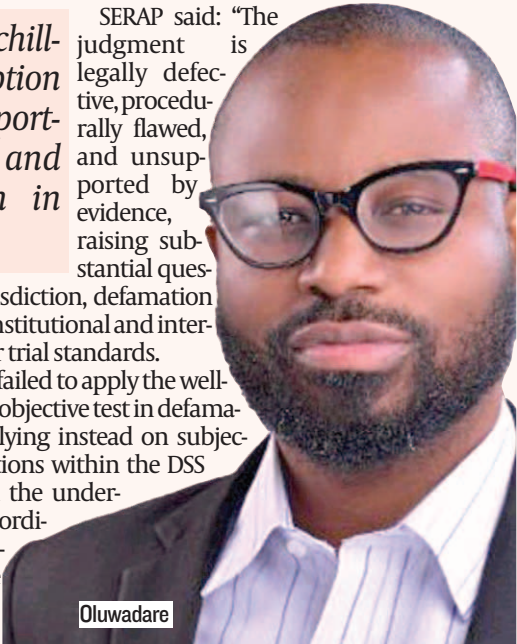
SERAP further argues that the trial court relied on a witness statement allegedly not sworn before a Commissioner for Oaths, despite an admission made during cross-examination.

The organisation additionally insists that its publications were protected by the legal defences of justification, qualified privilege, and fair comment, stressing that the statements concerned matters of public interest involving a state security agency.

Judgment could create a chilling effect on anti-corruption advocacy, investigative reporting, civic participation, and human rights activism in Nigeria

SERAP said: “The judgment is legally defective, procedurally flawed, and unsupported by evidence, raising substantial questions of jurisdiction, defamation law, and constitutional and international fair trial standards.”

“The court failed to apply the well-established objective test in defamation law, relying instead on subjective perceptions within the DSS rather than the understanding of ordinary members of the public.”



Oluwadare



Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Zulum (middle); Sokoto State Governor, Ahmed Aliyu and others when Zulum commissioned several key projects executed by the Aliyu-led administration in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Illela Local Council of Sokoto State.



Director of Media and Advocacy, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Femi Babafemi (left); Secretary to NDLEA, Shadrach Haruna and Deputy Country Representative, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Danielo Campisi at a press Conference to flag off week-long activities for the 2026 World Drug Day at the NDLEA National Headquarters in Abuja ... Friday.



Medical Director, Federal Medical Centre, Epe, Dr. Adeleke Kaka (left); Head of Clinical Services, Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Dr. Funmilayo Akinola; Chief Medical Director of Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Prof. Wasiu Adeyemo; Medical Director, Federal Medical Centre, Ebute Metta, Dr. Saheed Ogunme and Medical Director, National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, Dr. Wakeel Lawal at a press conference on the State of Healthcare funding under the Tinubu Administration.



Chairman, Craneburg Construction Company Limited, Femi Edun (left) and Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, InfraCredit, Chinua Azubike receiving the Best Project Bond in Africa Award at the 2025 EMEA Finance Achievement Awards in London, recognising InfraCredit's guarantee supporting Craneburg Construction EKS Motorway PLC's N32.50 billion, 20-year Senior Guaranteed Fixed Rate Infrastructure Bond issuance.

Metronotes

www.guardian.ng

Reckitt Nigeria Appoints Saraki, Olashore As Non-executive Directors

RECKITT Nigeria (Reckitt Benckiser Nigeria Limited) has appointed Mrs. Toyin Ojora Saraki and Prince Abimbola Olashore as Independent Non-Executive Directors. The appointment is to further strengthen the company's Board to continually advance its strategic priorities across Nigeria.

The appointments follow the passing of the company's Board Chairman, the late Chief Michael Olumuyiwa Falomo, whose leadership and stewardship contributed significantly to the growth and governance of Reckitt Nigeria over several decades. The company acknowledges his enduring legacy and service to the organisation.

Managing Director, Reckitt West Africa, Akbar Ali-Shah said: "We are pleased to welcome Her Excellency, Mrs. Toyin Ojora Saraki and Prince Abimbola Olashore to the Board of Reckitt Nigeria. Their diverse experience and perspectives will further strengthen the Board and support the company's continued focus on sustainable growth, innovation and positive impact across Nigeria."

The appointments further reinforce Reckitt Nigeria's governance framework while bringing additional expertise to support the company's long-term strategic ambitions.

Police Arrest Two Suspected Cultists, Recover Firearm, Ammunition In Oyo

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

THE Oyo State Police Command has arrested two suspected cult members and recovered a locally-made pistol and live ammunition in a renewed crackdown on cult-related violence and other criminal activities in the state.

The suspects, identified as Oparemi Kabiru, popularly known as "Ikebe", and Fasasi

Taofeek, alias "Bufalo", were apprehended by operatives of the Command's Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU), Oyo Base, during an intelligence-led operation in Oke-Apo area of Oyo Town.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Olayinka Ayanlade, in a statement made available to journalists, said the suspects were arrested on

June 17, following credible intelligence linking them and their associates to activities threatening public peace and security in Oyo Town and neighbouring communities.

The police said a search conducted on the suspects led to the recovery of one locally-fabricated pistol and two live cartridges. Preliminary investigations revealed that the sus-

pects are alleged members of the Eiye Supremo Confraternity and had confessed to participating in several violent criminal activities within Oyo town and its environs. The Command described the arrest as another major breakthrough in its ongoing efforts to combat cultism, violent crimes and other forms of criminality across the state.

By **Silver Nwokoro**

AFIRM, Polysmart Packaging Limited have called for the establishment of a national framework to guide plastic collection.

They also called for policy on recycling and intense awareness to drive more Nigerians especially youths into the recycling business.

The company made these

Firm Calls For National Framework To Guide Plastic Collection

• Awards N500,000 Each To Recyclers

calls at its Capacity Development Seminar hosted recently in Lagos in collaboration with Switch Recycling Innovations Ltd., and the Lagos State Recyclers Association.

Group Head, Quality Assurance & Control, Polysmart Group, Ernest

Ubasineke, said that a lot of plastics are being disposed of indiscriminately.

"We need a national policy and awareness. Currently, a lot of plastics are just disposed of indiscriminately. We don't have a national framework for collecting plastics. So, differ-

ent governments across the states have their own plastic waste policy. If we have a national framework around it and build more awareness, there are boxes in the streets for collecting PET bottles which will encourage a lot of people to come into the business..."

Sokoto: Zulum Commissions IDP Houses, Mini Solar Grid, Other Projects In Illela

• Describes Aliyu As One Of Nigeria's Best Performing Governors

BORNO State Governor, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum, on Tuesday commissioned several key projects executed by the Ahmed Aliyu-led administration in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Illela Local Council of Sokoto State.

In a statement signed by the Director General, Media and Publicity Government House, Abubakar Bawa, the projects included 100-housing units for internally displaced persons (IDPs), Climate Peace

Hubs, a 50-kilowatt solar mini-grid, and the foundation-laying ceremony for the construction of the Illela International Market.

Speaking at the commissioning ceremony, Zulum said the projects would go a long way in improving the lives of internally-displaced persons and enhancing economic activities in the area.

He expressed optimism that the housing scheme would provide a fresh start for dis-

placed families, while the Climate Peace Hubs and solar mini-grid would improve access to essential services and promote sustainable development in Sokoto State.

On the Illela International Market, Zulum said the project would stimulate commerce, create jobs, and promote shared prosperity for generations to come. He lauded Aliyu for transforming Sokoto State within three years and endorsed him for a

second term in office. "The governor has performed beyond our expectations. In fact, he is one of the best-performing governors in the country."

"To be sincere and candid, immediately after his election, we did not expect that the governor would perform to this level."

"I want to announce to the general public and the people of Sokoto State that indeed, Dr. Ahmed Aliyu is one of the performing governors in Nigeria," he said.

Bola-Oyebamiji Educates Teenage Girls On Menstrual Hygiene, Donates 2,000 Pads

By **Sunday Aikulola**

AS part of efforts aimed at addressing 'period poverty' and keep girls in school, President of Medical Women Association, Osun State Chapter and wife of All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship aspirant, Dr. Sekinat Bola -Oyebamiji recently donated 2000 menstrual pads to hundreds of teenage girls in Apomu Kingdom in the state.

Bola -Oyebamiji said: "the issue of menstrual hygiene is a key health issue, which every girl confronts growing up. The challenge could be more overwhelming if and where resources to handle this natural event in human life are lacking or barely existing."

She added, "we owe the girls the duty to give them appropriate knowledge and orientation that would help them function as individuals and group in the society. It would also help situations where girls are absent from school as a result of confusion and stigma of menstruation. Many girls miss school or withdraw socially because they lack pads or basic information. Today we're fixing both. If we want our daughters to lead, we must first remove the barriers that silence them every month."

Upswing Beat For TPP Fest 2026 On Leadership And Performance

By Onyedika Agbedo

TPP Africa has announced the 2026 edition of The Peak Performer Festival (TPP Fest), a leadership and performance event that will bring together executives, business leaders, HR professionals, managers and emerging leaders from across Africa.

Scheduled for June 24 in Lagos, Nigeria, the festival is themed, 'Strategy Execution in Human Environments: The Emotional Intelligence Advantage in People, Pressure and Performance Leadership.'

The event will feature two key sessions: the Strategy Execution Summit, focused on improving organisational performance and ex-

ecution excellence, and the CEO Forum, which will examine the pressures and challenges of leadership in today's business environment.

Speakers include Dr. Mosun Belo-Olusoga, Dr. Ayo Subair, Prof. Obadare Peter Adewale, Cynthia Ikponmwonsa, Omowunmi Adewusi, Jide Adeola, Ajoke Alli, Abu Yahaya, Seni Adio (SAN), and Folasade Femi-Lawal.

According to TPP Africa, the festival aims to strengthen leadership effectiveness, improve strategy execution, and foster cross-sector collaboration to support sustainable organisational performance across Africa.

Speaking on the significance of the

festival, Chairman of TPP Africa, Mr. Yinka Adebayo, stated: "Africa's future will not be determined solely by the quality of our strategies but by our collective ability to execute consistently, build capable institutions, and develop leaders who can deliver results through people."

"TPP Fest continues to provide an important platform for meaningful conversations, practical learning, cross-sector collaboration and a sense of direction that can strengthen organisational performance and leadership effectiveness in the midst of a foggy operating environment across the continent."

Also commenting on the festival, Convener of TPP Fest and Founder of

TPP Africa, Dr. Abiola Salami, said: "Most organisations do not have a strategy problem. They have an execution problem."

"Great ideas rarely fail on paper; they fail in human environments. TPP Fest 2026 is designed to help leaders understand the human side of execution, strengthen leadership effectiveness, and build the emotional intelligence required to lead people, manage pressure, and sustain performance in increasingly complex environments."

Salami further noted that this year's edition reflects TPP Africa's long-standing commitment to driving an inclusive culture of excellence across Africa by creating platforms that de-

mocratise access to leadership development, executive learning, strategic conversations, and transformational performance engagement.

According to him, the festival's growing regional participation underscores its increasing relevance across the continent.

"One of the most significant aspects of this year's edition is the growing participation of leaders from both West Africa and East Africa. This reinforces our vision of building a pan-African ecosystem where leaders can learn from one another, share practical insights, and collectively shape the future of leadership, execution, and performance on the continent," he added.

Rotary Reconstructs Six Classrooms In Ogun State

By Sunday Aikulola

As part of efforts aimed at contributing to the growth of the nation's education, members of Rotary Club of Agbara, District 9111, recently reconstructed six classrooms and built a new head teacher's office at Salvation Army Primary School, Idoeye, Igbesa, Ogun State.

Speaking at the commissioning, President, Rotary Club of Agbara, Rotarian Fati Odunayo Boluwaji recalled: "We came here in October to donate desks and benches but discovered that the school was in a very bad shape and needed urgent reconstruction. As a matter of fact, one of the classroom blocks had no roof. Weeds and trees had grown inside it and it had become a dumping ground. The only usable block contained three classrooms serving pupils from Primary One to Primary Six. It was a very challenging environment."

Boluwaji added that the club conducted needs assessment and got support from partners to execute the project.

Saying over N40 million was spent on the project, he disclosed that the existing classrooms were not

only rehabilitated, a head teacher's office was constructed along with an expanded block.

He was optimistic that with the new look of the classrooms; enrolment in the school will improve. "We have created a conducive learning environment, supported education growth and contributed to reducing potential insecurity in the community in the future."

On his part, District Governor of Rotary International District 9111, Henry Akinyele, noted that "some people may see this as just a structure, a block of six classrooms, but Rotary looks beyond the building. We look at the impact of projects."

"It is not about today's celebration; it is about the children whose dreams have been brightened. We are confident that with these facilities, some of these children may one day become leaders and governors. When I came here in October, I saw that two classes were being taught in one classroom. During rainfall, pupils had to return home because the classrooms leaked badly. It was a very difficult situation."

"I asked the Rotary Club of Agbara to see what could be done, and today they have exceeded ex-

pectations. They have transformed what was once an abandoned, roofless structure into modern classrooms where pupils can learn comfortably.

"Rotary believes strongly in sustainability. We want to return in the future and still find these facilities in good condition. Please maintain them because sustainability is key," he said.

Project Director, Rotary Club of Agbara, Paul Onabanjo, said: "When we first came here, we could not believe children were learning in such conditions. It was heartbreaking."

"The president promised that the school would be transformed before the end of the year, and today we can all see the result."

Baale of Idoeye Community observed the project would have a lasting impact on the community.

"It is with immense joy and deep gratitude that we witness the commissioning of two fully renovated blocks of six classrooms and a new head teacher's office," he said.

"These renovated blocks are more than walls and roofs. They are a statement that our children deserve the best and that Idoeye is ready for tomorrow."

MTN Rewards Aba Winners Of 'The Gathering On 100 Pitchanthon' With N5m

By David Emokpae

MTN Nigeria has rewarded winners of, 'The Gathering on 100 Pitchanthon' for emerging entrepreneurs in Aba, Abia State, with N5 million.

The firm rewarded the emerging entrepreneurs after they showcased and explained the impact of their products to society in the city at an event held at the Prime Time Event Centre, Osisioma Junction, Aba.

The N5 million prize was shared among the winners as N2.5 million to the first position, N1.5 million to the second position and N1 million to the third position.

Trashverse Recycling Technology Limited won the first prize, U.D Trend Global Limited won the second position prize, while Yadah Food Limited won the third prize.

Onyebuchi Ukwuegbo from MTN congratulated the winners and urged them to keep pushing higher and ensuring they lift others.

She also expressed gratitude to the audience for honouring the invitation, in spite of their busy schedule.

Speaking after the announcement of the winners, Chief Executive Officer of Trashverse Recycling Technology Limited, Mr. Charles Ikechukwu, thanked the organisers and described the prize as a great one.

Stakeholders To Discuss Strategies For Sustainable Growth At Summit

By Opeyemi Babalola

ESG Impact Consulting Limited, a leading sustainability and impact advisory firm, has announced the 2026 Edition of the Nigeria ESG Sustainability Summit scheduled for July 3, 2026, at Lagos Oriental Hotel, Lekki.

Themed "Beyond Greening Strategies For A Sustainable World", the summit reflects ESG Impact Consulting's commitment to advancing responsible business practices and building a more inclusive, resilient economy. It aims to move conversations beyond symbolic environmental actions toward full integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance principles across public and private institutions.

As Nigeria faces climate, economic, and governance challenges, the summit will provide a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge sharing through keynote sessions, executive discussions, and networking focused on ESG adoption and sustainable development across key sectors.

Key objectives include driving ESG mainstreaming in corporate, financial, and government institutions; mobilizing sustainable finance through green bonds, carbon markets, and impact investing; strengthening policy coherence; building technical capacity; and promoting social equity.

CEO, ESG Impact Consulting, Desmond Esorougwe, said: "A major highlight is the Nigeria ESG Exhibition and Promotion 2026, showcasing companies, startups, and government institutions driving sustainable solutions. The event will also host the National Sustainability Achievements Awards 2026, recognizing outstanding leadership in responsible business, environmental protection, social inclusion, and governance."

"ESG Impact Consulting Ltd helps organizations create long-term value through innovative ESG solutions, supporting sustainable growth and social impact," he said.



Foundation Sets To Host Luncheon To Raise N250m

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Heart of Gold Support & Care Initiative, in collaboration with the Patrick Ejedawe Foundation has unveiled plans to expand the scope of its poverty reduction and economic inclusion attempts, through a landmark luncheon targeted at raising N250,000,000.

In a statement by the convener of the charitable organisation, Mrs. Joy Patrick Ehiagwina, the luncheon will hold on Friday, June 26, 2026 at LCCI Exhibition Centre, Alausa, Lagos.

She noted that the money to be realised will be used to expand the scope of the initiatives' life-changing programmes in education, skills development, entrepreneurship, and sustainable com-

munity empowerment.

Ehiagwina declared that with the inspiring theme, "Beyond The Handouts", and a thought-provoking Fireside Chat titled "Changing the Trajectory: From Poverty Alleviation to Wealth Creation," the gathering seeks to challenge conventional charity models and promote a future where individuals are equipped to become self-reliant contributors to society.

"In a nation where millions of vulnerable women, young people, and underserved communities continue to battle poverty, unemployment, and limited access to opportunities, the time has come to move beyond temporary relief and embrace lasting solutions."

The statement added that the luncheon,

which will be chaired by the Managing Director/CEO of Intercontinental Distilleries Limited, Chief Patrick Anege, intends to bring together distinguished leaders, philanthropists, captains of industry, development partners, and well-meaning Nigerians who share a common vision of creating opportunities rather than dependence.

She, however, hinted that the Special Guest of Honour, a member of House of Representatives, James Faleke, alongside the Chairman of Ikeja Local Council, Comrade Akeem Olalekan Dauda, will join other eminent personalities including Prince Enabosi, Dr. Ogechi Noble Merry, and Captain Matthew Edache, whose remarkable contributions to humanity would be recognised during the event.

Politics

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Upbeat As Ekiti Electorate Dream Hitch-free Poll

From Seye Olumide, Ayodele Afolabi, Adewale Momoh (Ado Ekiti), Sunday Aikulola (Lagos) and John Akubo (Abuja)

FOR a state whose governorship elections were once synonymous with intense political rivalry, violence and heightened security concerns, the atmosphere ahead of June 20, 2026's governorship poll in Ekiti has remained remarkably peaceful. Perhaps for the first time since the return to democratic rule in 1999, many residents and voters across the state expressed confidence in the electoral process, noting that all indications point to a peaceful contest, unlike previous elections characterised by tension, clashes among political actors and widespread security fears.

As 1,059,360 registered voters head to the polls on Saturday to elect one of the 15 governorship candidates, *The Guardian* gathered that relative peace prevailed across the state's three senatorial districts, with political parties and stakeholders maintaining calm as electoral activities progressed smoothly up to yesterday.

This contrasts sharply with previous governorship contests when fears of violence and insecurity often forced residents indoors.

However, a major political storm erupted on the eve of the Ekiti State governorship election on Friday as the Social Democratic Party (SDP) accused the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of actions it says amount to an attempt to cripple opposition participation in the crucial poll.

The party strongly dismissed as "fraudulent and politically motivated" reports claiming it had withdrawn from the race, insisting that its governorship candidate, Ambassador Isaac Adebayo Alade, remains validly nominated and fully recognised by INEC.

In a strongly worded statement issued by its National Publicity Secretary, Araba Rufus Aiyenigba, the SDP alleged that while INEC officially issued the party with access credentials for the uploading of polling agents, the electoral body subsequently failed to activate the portal required to complete the process.

The development has triggered outrage within the party, which is now demanding answers from the Commission over what it describes as a disturbing contradiction capable of undermining the credibility of the election.

"Why issue access codes if there was never any intention to permit their use?" the party queried.

The SDP further asked why a legally recognised political party would allegedly be denied the opportunity to deploy agents across polling units, warning that such actions create a perception that the electoral process may have been tilted in favour of powerful political interests.

The 15 candidates contesting the election include the incumbent governor, Biodun Oyeibanji of the All Progressives Congress (APC); former Ambassador to Canada, Oluwadare Patrick Bejide of the African Democratic Congress (ADC); and the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Other candidates cleared by INEC are Opeyemi Falegan David of the Accord Party; Akande Oluwaseun Samuel of the African Action Congress (AAC); Ayodeji Ojo of the Action Democratic Party (ADP); Joseph Anifowose Olarenwaju of the Allied Peoples Movement (APM); Oyeibanji Olajuyin of the Labour Party (LP); Blessing Abegunde Ayobami of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP); Olaniyi Ayodele Praise of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP); Owoola Daramola Osinkolu Ayodele of the Young Progressives Party (YPP); Victor Adetunji Damilola of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP); Bidemi Olaiya Awogbemi of the Action People's Party (APP); Ambassador Isaac Adebayo Alade of the Social Democratic Party (SDP); and Olu Omotoso of the Action Alliance (AA).

Meanwhile, the Nigeria Police Force has imposed restrictions on both inter-state and intra-state vehicular movement to ensure a hitch-free election.

In a statement, the spokesman of the Ekiti State Police Command, SP Sunday Abutu, said the restriction would take effect from 12:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. today, covering all roads and highways within the state.

He advised travellers intending to pass through Ekiti to make use of alternative routes during the period.

According to him, candidates sitting for national examinations and assessments are exempted from the movement restriction.

"This vehicular restriction is aimed at preventing the movement of political thugs and other criminal elements that may attempt to disrupt the electoral process.

"The restriction applies to all forms of motorised transportation, including private cars, commercial vehicles, trucks, tricycles and motorcycles. Travellers passing through Ekiti are advised to use alternative routes.

"However, designated INEC staff and ad hoc personnel, accredited journalists, local and foreign observers, medical personnel, emergency responders and essential service providers are exempted. Such per-

- Police Restrict Movement, Deploy DIG, AIG, Anti-Terror Squad For Security
- Observers Raise Concerns Over Vote-buying, Disinformation
- SDP Cries Foul Over Inability To Upload Polling Agents' Credentials To INEC Portal
- Media Bodies Task Journalists On Professionalism, Safety Consciousness

sons must carry valid identification and clearance tags.

"Medical emergency movements are also permitted. The movement of VIPs with armed escorts to polling units and collation centres is prohibited. Quasi-security groups, vigilantes and volunteer groups are barred from providing security at polling units and collation centres."

The police also directed construction companies to suspend ongoing road works during the election period.

"Only officers and personnel of agencies that are members of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) are authorised to provide security around election facilities.

"Residents are urged to comply with these measures to ensure a peaceful atmosphere for voters to exercise their rights. The police, in collaboration with other security agencies, will deal decisively with anyone attempting to undermine the peace of the state."

The Commissioner of Police in charge of the Ekiti governorship election, CP Abayomi Shogunle, called on residents to remain law-abiding and cooperate with security personnel deployed across the state.

"The police remain committed to safeguarding lives and property before, during and after the election," he assured.

The Inspector-General of Police has also deployed Deputy Inspector-General of Police Fayode Adegoke Mustapha, assisted by Assistant Inspector-General of Police Olarenwaju Ogundowo, to coordinate security operations for the election. Abutu said the senior officers had been mandated to ensure a peaceful, credible and violence-free process.

According to him, the DIG emphasised the need for synergy and cooperation among security agencies and urged personnel to exhibit professionalism, discipline and respect for the rule of law.

He also appealed to political actors and residents to cooperate with security agencies to ensure a peaceful environment.

"The Nigeria Police Force, in collaboration with other security agencies, has put in place robust security arrangements, including adequate deployment of personnel and logistics to guarantee the safety of voters, electoral officials and election materials," he said.

Also briefing journalists, Shogunle disclosed that heavily armed policemen, counter-terrorism operatives and members of the Special Intervention Squad had been deployed to the boundaries between Ekiti and Kogi, Kwara and Ondo states to forestall any security threat.

He said the security arrangement was based on a multi-layered framework designed to detect and neutralise threats.

"Our deployment started with the outer ring covering the boundaries between Ekiti and neighbouring states. Through coordinated operations in the forests and border areas, identified threats have been removed.

"As we speak, personnel from the Counter-Terrorism Unit and the Special Intervention Squad are on the ground. These officers are specially trained to confront terrorists and bandits, which informed our decision to deploy them.

"We can monitor all roads leading into and out of Ekiti. We have equally established camps in forest areas to prevent infiltration by criminal elements."

Shogunle, however, allayed fears over the heavy deployment of security personnel, assuring residents that there would be no show of force.

Meanwhile, the European Union Support to the Democratic Governance

nance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Election Observation Hub has expressed concern over reports of vote-buying, voter inducement, political intimidation and the spread of disinformation, warning that such practices could undermine the credibility of the election.

The observation mission, comprising The Kukah Centre, TAF Africa, Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTf), Yiaga Africa, International Press Centre (IPC), Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO) and ElectHER, however, noted that the security atmosphere remained largely peaceful and calmer than in previous governorship elections.

In a pre-election statement issued in Ado-Ekiti, the group described today's election as a major test of Nigeria's new electoral framework, being the first major governorship poll conducted under the Electoral Act 2026 and the revised INEC regulations and guidelines.

The observers disclosed that they had deployed teams across the state to monitor the poll through field observations, stakeholder engagements and reviews of information in the public domain.

According to the mission, 13 political parties are participating in the election across 2,445 polling units in the state's 16 local government areas, with 1,059,360 registered voters and 1,028,929 collected Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).

The group commended political parties and candidates for largely adhering to the Peace Accord brokered by the National Peace Committee, noting that campaigns were generally peaceful despite heightened political competition arising from recent political realignments.

"Most political actors have conducted their campaigns in an orderly manner and exercised restraint over their supporters, with only isolated cases of misconduct," the statement said.

However, the observers warned that reports from the field indicated increasing incidents of voter inducement and organised vote-buying schemes.

According to the report, there were allegations of the distribution of money, food items and other materials to influence voters, as well as attempts to harvest voters' PVC and National Identification Number (NIN) details through pre-funded bank accounts in exchange for electoral support.

The alleged activities were reported in Irepodun/Ifeledun, Ikole, Ikere, Ekiti East and Ekiti West local government areas.

"The menace of voter inducement remains a significant threat to the credibility of elections," the observers noted.

The group also raised concerns over incidents of political intimidation and disruption of campaigns in Ado-Ekiti, Ikole and Oye local government areas.

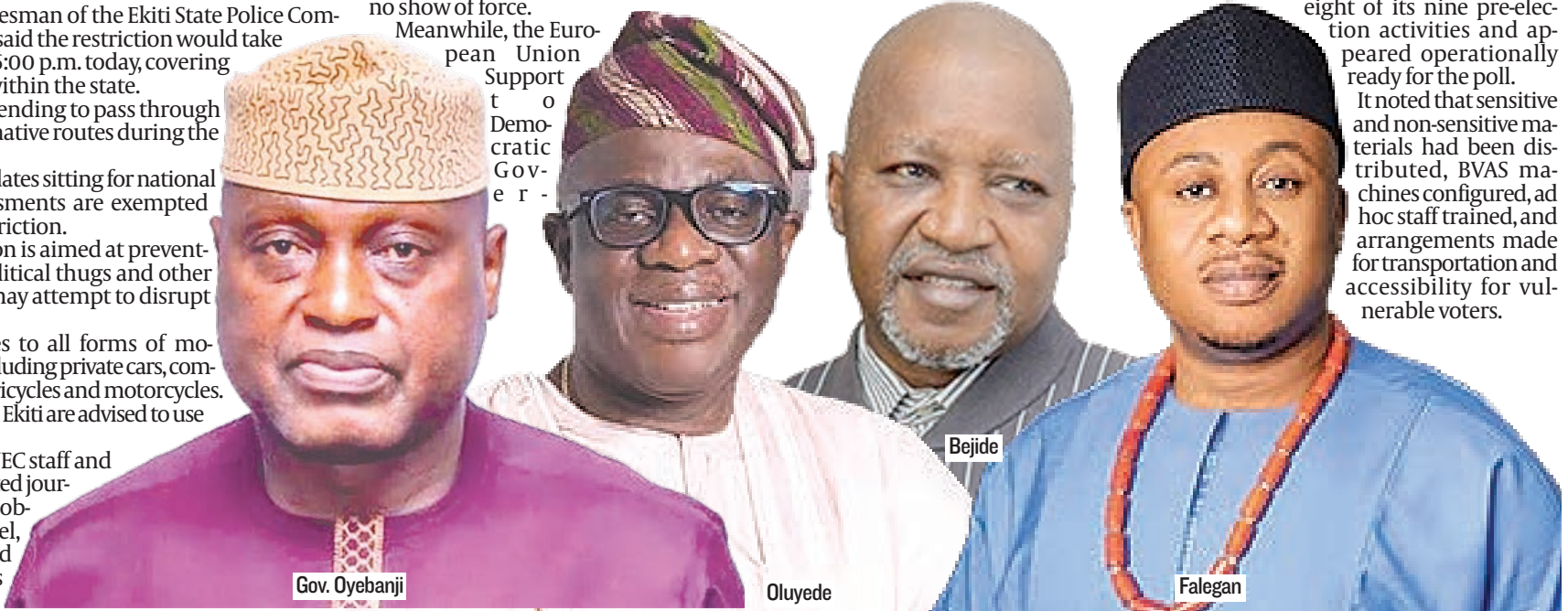
In addition, it cited reports of the alleged detention of political opponents by the police through the use of Form K without judicial processes, warning that such actions could erode public confidence in the electoral process.

The observers further expressed concern over the increasing spread of misinformation, disinformation and inflammatory content on social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok and X.

According to the report, unverified claims that a political party planned to deploy cloned PVCs had gained traction online, creating confusion among voters and heightening political tension. On INEC's preparedness, the group acknowledged that the commission had completed

eight of its nine pre-election activities and appeared operationally ready for the poll.

It noted that sensitive and non-sensitive materials had been distributed, BVAS machines configured, ad hoc staff trained, and arrangements made for transportation and accessibility for vulnerable voters.



Inside The Akpabio-Oshiomhole Rift Over 11th Senate Leadership

As Nigerians prepare for the 2027 general election, the increasingly hostile relationship in public domain between Senate President Godswill Akpabio and Senator Adams Oshiomhole reflects growing anxieties about the future balance of power within the National Assembly, **AZIMAZI MOMOH JIMOH** reports.

CONSIDERATION of possible disciplinary action against Senator Adams Oshiomhole during the Senate's forthcoming emergency session on Tuesday has brought into sharper focus an emerging contest that may ultimately define the race for the leadership of the 11th Senate.

Although the emergency sitting was officially convened to address the worsening security situation across the country, political attention has increasingly shifted to the implications of the growing tension between Senate President Godswill Akpabio and one of the most influential and outspoken members of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Oshiomhole.

At first glance, the controversy centres on Oshiomhole's comments regarding the suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and his observations about the Senate report that recommended her six-month suspension.

While Oshiomhole later clarified that he never accused the Senate of forgery, insisting that his comments had been misrepresented, the matter has nevertheless generated considerable anger within the Senate leadership.

Senate spokesman, Senator Yemi Adaramodu, has already indicated that the upper chamber would examine the remarks and determine an appropriate response, fu-

elling speculation that sanctions may be considered against the former national chairman of the APC.

Yet many observers believe the dispute extends far beyond parliamentary procedure. Rather, it appears to be an early manifestation of what could become a fierce struggle for influence ahead of the inauguration of the 11th Senate after the 2027 general election.

Unlike previous election cycles, the composition of the next Senate is already attracting unusual attention because of the calibre of politicians who have secured tickets to either return to the chamber or make a comeback after years in executive office.

Among those that appears certain to participate in the next Senate are Senate President Godswill Akpabio, Deputy Senate President Barau Jibrin, Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele; former Delta State gover-



nor, Ifeanyi Okowa; Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodinma; former Senate Leader, Ali Ndume; Tokunbo Abiru, Idiat Adebule, Wasiu Eshinlokun, Tahir Monguno and several other experienced lawmakers.

The emerging lineup suggests that the 11th Senate may be one of the most politically competitive assemblies since the return to democratic rule in 1999.

For Akpabio, this reality presents a challenge that differs significantly from the circumstances that produced his emergence as Senate President in 2023. At the time, he benefited from strong presidential backing, regional balancing considerations and the absence of multiple heavyweight contenders within the APC caucus.

The equation for 2027, however, may be considerably more complicated. Several incoming senators are expected to arrive with substantial political structures, national visibility and independent power bases developed during their years as governors, ministers or party leaders.

Political calculations within the APC have also become increasingly fluid as the party begins to contemplate succession arrangements beyond President Bola Tinubu's second term. It is within this context that Oshiomhole's growing disagreements with Akpabio have attracted heightened political significance.

The former governor of Edo State is widely regarded as one of the few senators with the national stature, legislative experience and political network capable of influencing the direction of a future leadership contest. Although he has not publicly declared any interest in the Senate presidency, Oshiomhole's name routinely surfaces in discussions about possible leadership configurations in the next Assembly.

His credentials are difficult to ignore. Oshiomhole has served as president of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), governor of Edo State, national chairman of the APC and now senator representing Edo North. Few lawmakers possess a comparable blend of executive, legislative and party administrative experience.

This partly explains why some analysts view recent developments as more than a disagreement over Senate procedures. They argue that the widening gulf between Akpabio and Oshiomhole reflects

Why Tinubu Must Bark And Bite

By **Banji Alabi**

FROM history comes the hard lesson that change always comes through a hard way. Nothing good comes on a platter of gold. From women's conception, delivery to individuals' development through education or skill acquisition and by extension to nation building, it is all about sacrifices, self denials and sometimes, application of the rod (cane). If it were possible and acceptable to acquire certificates and trophies without going through the requisite furnace of life, everybody would have had one without sweat. Or in a plain language if wishes were horses or riches no one will lack one and no one will be poor!

The above simply affirms that there are rules of engagement before individuals or nations breakthrough. Nobody pilots an aircraft without passing through the tutelage of learning or apprenticeship which must be enforced. Where the rule of engagement is compromised what follows is catastrophe of unimaginable proportion for a nation. From China, India even Rwanda to many of the Asian countries, including the Middle East, contemporary history is replete with stories of countries that hit the top only after some hard policies were enforced without discrimination and without sparing individuals or groups no matter how powerful or influential for the reason of the overall collective good and interest. Under the current administration of President Bola Tinubu, we have seen a lot of barking, but with just little bites that frankly speaking are not sufficient to drive the much needed radical change and transformation. We have seen examples in the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo who initiated many policy changes and drove them to success through chronic enforcement irrespective of whose ass is gored, bulldozing his way through. The outcome was what sustained Nigeria for a while before gradual decline set in for lack of continuity and further injection of new measures.

The Obasanjo era's benchmark was defined by an administration that was readily determined to bark, bite and go ahead to damn the consequences. During the administration between 1999 and 2007, Nigeria experienced a period of decisive, often unpopular, executive action that delivered measurable results. The Obasanjo administration secured \$18 billion in external

debt relief, consolidated the banking sector, drove GSM liberalisation and maintained single-digit inflation for much of its tenure. What defined that era was not just policy direction but enforcement. Public officials were sacked, contracts revoked and entrenched interests challenged directly when they undermined national interest. The message was clear: the state would assert itself over private networks that profited from dysfunction.

Shortly after the Obasanjo administration, steady decline began to set in. Nigeria's trajectory has been one of regression across core indicators: voters' turnout fell from 53.7 per cent in 2011 to 26.72 per cent in 2023, reflecting eroding public trust. Insecurity expanded from the Northeast to the Northwest, North Central and parts of the South, with banditry, kidnapping and oil theft operating as parallel economies. Infrastructure and power stagnated despite repeated reform promises, leaving households and businesses to self-provide. Public confidence in elections, institutions and the capacity of the state to protect citizens has weakened cycle after cycle. The pattern is consistent: each administration inherits problems, announces reforms, but fails to break the hold of networks that benefit from a weak, ungovernable state.

President Bola Tinubu's first three years show clear intent to break deadlocks that previous governments avoided. The removal of fuel subsidy and unification of the foreign exchange market ended two of the largest rent-seeking systems in the economy. These are structural steps that previous administrations discussed but did not execute.

However, policy enablement alone is insufficient. The persistent challenge remains the inability or unwillingness to confront the organised criminal and political networks sponsoring killings, kidnapping and attacks that make large parts of the country ungovernable. The Tinubu administration, for all its economic reform momentum, has not demonstrated the same capacity for ruthless disruption of these interests that characterised the Obasanjo years. Without that biting power, reforms risk being absorbed and neutralised by the same systems they are meant to dismantle.

On the way forward, it is crystal clear that Nigeria does not lack policy papers or reform plans. What it lacks is the political will

to apply consequences to actors who profit from insecurity and sabotage governance. If President Tinubu intends to be remembered as more than a reformer on paper, he must match economic reforms with security enforcement targeting financiers and sponsors of violent crime, not just foot soldiers. He must without further delay assert federal authority over sub-national actors and private networks that obstruct policing and justice. He must make visible examples of accountability to restore public belief that the state is stronger than the gangs and cartels operating within it.

Mr. President, I found it irresistible to confess to you that the Nigerian people are tired of explanations without enforcement. If domestic capacity is insufficient, the duty of the state is to secure its citizens by any legitimate means available. The first duty of government is to protect the people, not to run them. According to the famous Thomas Jefferson, "A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within." Marcus Tullius Cicero also has this to say: "When a country is at war, the duty of its leaders is to win that war by whatever lawful means." If special interest groups sponsoring killings, kidnapping and sabotage cannot be dismantled by current structures, then seeking foreign military and intelligence support is not weakness; it is responsibility. A sovereign state that cannot protect its territory and citizens ceases to be sovereign.

It would be dishonest to ignore what President Tinubu has done right. For decades, past Nigerian leaders spoke about subsidy removal and FX reform but backed down when the political cost became visible. But kudos to Tinubu; in three years, this administration took both steps, stopped the bleeding of public funds and created fiscal space that did not exist before. That takes political courage and it is the first time in a generation that Nigeria has faced its structural distortions head-on. The foundation for a different economy has been laid. The test now is to ensure that that foundation is not undermined by the same criminal networks that have captured the state's security space.

• *Alabi Esq. is a political analyst, tax consultant, the National Chairman of Ondo State Eminent Persons Group and Alternate Chairman, Nigeria Bar Association, Eti Osa chapter.*

growing anxieties about the future balance of power within the National Assembly. The tension became particularly evident during debates on amendments to the Senate Standing Orders.

Oshiomhole emerged as one of the strongest opponents of provisions that sought to restrict eligibility for principal offices to lawmakers who had served at least two consecutive terms. Although aspects of the amendments were eventually reviewed, his intervention was widely interpreted as a challenge to attempts by the current leadership to shape the rules governing future contests.

In unusually direct remarks, Oshiomhole argued that Akpabio himself would not have qualified for the office he currently occupies under such requirements. The comment represented one of the most forceful public criticisms of the Senate President since the inauguration of the 10th Senate.

The dispute also highlighted a broader concern among some lawmakers regarding what they perceive as efforts to influence the political terrain ahead of 2027. For Akpabio, maintaining control of the Senate caucus and preserving institutional discipline are essential to any future leadership ambition.

However, repeated confrontations with influential senators could complicate that objective. The challenge is further amplified by the calibre of politicians expected in the next Senate.

Former governors traditionally exert considerable influence within the upper chamber because of their political experience, financial resources and established networks across party lines. The anticipated arrival of figures such as Okowa and Uzodinma, alongside the return of several ranking senators, is expected to make the contest for principal offices considerably more competitive.

Indeed, it could be rightly argued that Akpabio's ambition to retain the Senate presidency may prove far more difficult than his initial ascent to the office. Unlike in 2023, he may have to contend not only with opposition from rival blocs, but also with ambitious power centres within his own party. The possibility of multiple aspirants from different geopolitical zones could further fragment support and make consensus-building more challenging.

Against this backdrop, any move to sanction Oshiomhole carries political risks. While it may reinforce the authority of the Senate leadership in the short term, it could also deepen perceptions that dissenting voices are being marginalised ahead of a potentially consequential leadership battle. Such perceptions may encourage the formation of alternative alliances among senators who believe the next Senate should not be dominated by a single political tendency.

For Oshiomhole, the confrontation equally carries significant implications. His reputation has long been built around challenging established authority and speaking openly against policies he considers unjust or undemocratic. That image continues to resonate with sections of the political class and the broader public. However, prolonged conflict with the Senate leadership could also isolate him within the institution and weaken his ability to influence future negotiations.

As lawmakers prepare for Tuesday's emergency session, uncertainty remains over whether the Senate will proceed with sanctions or seek a more conciliatory resolution. What is increasingly evident, however, is that the controversy has evolved beyond comments about Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan's suspension. Instead, it has become an early indicator of the intense political manoeuvring already underway ahead of the inauguration of the 11th Senate.

Nigerians Are Now Interested In SDP’s Ideas On Democracy And Governance – Adebayo

Presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the forthcoming general election, Prince Adewole Adebayo, in this interview with select journalists, said Nigerians have keyed into his party’s ideas on security, economy, infrastructure, welfare, democracy and ethics in governance, projecting that the development will pave way for his victory at the poll. ONYEDIKA AGBEDO was there.

The last time we spoke, there was a group in your party that had put forward its own presidential candidate. What is the current situation?

WE are not bothered about that. It’s the normal staple. If you recall, four years ago, a similar thing happened when some people floated Senator Hina, but eventually it was resolved in Lagos when Hina raised my hand and said we have only one candidate. So, I think the burden is on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to try not to waste its time on that and to follow the law.

But a candidate will always, like in a game of sport, have people who will tug at your shirt, try to pick your leg or whatever. It’s a contact sport; so we just focus on the goal.

My focus is to deliver the mandate given by the party, which is to give alternative perspectives to Nigerians to raise their expectation that things will turn for good, and that we will implement the Constitution, Chapter Two – the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. And that we will have economic solutions, security solutions and welfare solutions. Also, Nigeria will take advantage of the time in which we are, where new opportunities are opening up in new industries where the majority is young people.

So, those are the things they want to talk about, but with respect to all the legal requirements for nomination, we have done it. The onus is now on INEC to carry out a free, fair and credible election. Our job is to reach out to the people so that the issues we are discussing will not be the internal headaches of political parties. What you can have is a set of political parties competing on a set of ideas and the media moderating for all of us, so that we can have equal hearing and Nigerians can now decide to lay their bed the way they want to lie on it when the time comes, so that nobody says, ‘Oh, I was confused by political party rancour. I was confused by multiple issues, and I didn’t focus on the agenda.’

The agenda we are facing now, the consequences we are facing now, were the agenda that President Tinubu presented last time. People were focusing on Muslim-Muslim ticket and other things that are not important. They didn’t focus on those damaging proposals, which we told them would leave them in a serious quagmire. Unfortunately, that has come to pass now.

You’ve spoken about the expectations of Nigerians, especially in anticipation of the upcoming elections in 2027, but what do you think of the proposed six-year single term for president?

It’s a distraction. These are the kinds of talks we see when elections come. The government is like a football team that is one goal up and you have only 15 minutes left. So, they will be playing around, doing everything and kicking the ball out to wind down the clock. Six-year term or four-year term, that’s not the problem. The problem is that you must have a system that works. That you must have a political system where the voter decides the winner and where nobody watches INEC as if you are watching a secret society. Political parties raise ideas and new People; so that when you go to a congress or convention, they will raise new people that will give you hope. So,

Nigeria has people like this.

There are solutions to this kind of problems that we have, and they will come out with other things that will work. So, my focus as we are heading towards June 12 is that we must once and for all kill the demon of election rigging. We must once and for all allow the voter to vote. So, the issue of how long you stay in power and all of that is irrelevant; it is what you do when you get there that matters. So, I think the present system of four years, and if you are good enough, you go for another four years, is good enough if the people who are actually going to the government are going through free, fair and credible elections. We should focus on that now.

There are people who think SDP doesn’t have what it takes to win the presidential election. Do you think you can win free, fair elections to become Nigeria’s president? If yes, what’s driving that confidence in you?

I have other things to do if I want to entertain myself. I have a lot of hobbies, which we’ll talk about later. Number one, the thing that is bringing us back is the expectation that we will have free, fair and credible elections where people don’t buy votes and they don’t rig votes. At that time, you will know the relative strength of all political parties and where they are. The system we are running now does not give an honest person the ability to swear by any standard that the results you are getting represent the will of the people.

So, we are going around the country; the demand for alternatives is rising every day; the need for alternatives is rising every day; the necessity for alternatives is rising every day. There is no aspect of our national life that the idea the SDP is promoting does not attract. Our idea on security, our idea on the economy, our idea on infrastructure, our idea on welfare, our idea on the state of democracy and ethics in governance are the ideas that Nigerians are interested in. And SDP happens to be a party that’s popular with the Nigerian people. It’s because of SDP that we have the June 12 Democracy Day and we have the grassroots.

The only problem we have had in the past, and if politics continue like this we will have it, is that we are an ethical political party. We can’t buy votes. We can’t do that. We cannot buy votes; we can’t campaign on ethnicity and religion. So, you can’t come to the SDP and say it’s the turn of my people or the turn of my religion; we will kick you

out immediately. You can’t come and corrupt our system. You can’t bring money that we cannot defend to our party. I can’t break our rules.

So, in this kind of structure, this kind of disciplined environment, those who are undisciplined in the short term gain an advantage, but over time, when the system cannot sustain itself, and it is crushing those who are perpetrating all these illegalities, Nigerians will pay more attention to the idea that we must have free, fair and credible elections. When people begin to focus on how popular a party is, how good a candidate is, how free from scandal and problems and corruption the candidates are, how sound they are, how competent they are and if they understand issues; when we get to that stage, we are the party to beat and that is where we are trying to push the rest of the country to. That’s why we lead by example. That’s why we try our best to make sure that we don’t copy the shortcuts.

You were criticising the removal of fuel subsidies; if you are elected as president in 2027, would you return the fuel subsidy? Your position has been that the removal of fuel subsidy is what has plunged Nigerians into poverty. Do you think subsidy should come back? Is that part of your economic ideology for Nigeria?

No! The issue is that the removal of the subsidy was a big mistake, but President Tinubu has gone on to make even bigger mistakes over time. What we are saying is that when we were debating four years ago, we were the only ones saying don’t be deceived by this issue of removal of subsidy for three reasons.

One, there was no subsidy to start with. We said that there was no subsidy. What they were doing by way of removal of subsidy was price adjustment for products that they did not produce, and the ability to produce those products rested in taking care of the four refineries that we have – two in Port Harcourt,

When people begin to focus on how popular a party is, how good a candidate is, how free from scandal and problems and corruption the candidates are, how sound they are, how competent they are and if they understand issues; when we get to that stage, we are the

one in Warri, and one in Kaduna – and the amount of money we were spending on turn-around maintenance was not accounted for. So, what we had proposed was that we have a three-step approach.

One, we will make sure that the refineries work in the medium term, because we have spent enough money, and many of them will work if the government wants them to work. Second, we will take our people, especially the vulnerable people, the low-income people, the energy-poor people away from the need for petrol, because when you have multimodal transportation, which you can get within six months, and workers use their employment card to take transport to work, they will not be forced to bother too much about the price of petrol. And lastly, structurally Nigeria is able to produce more refined products than we are consuming. Our point of departure from the government was that they did not understand the multiplier effect.

The importance of petrol pricing is that it hits you in both ways. It raises your factor cost for productivity, industries, offices and all of that. It also raises your cost of living, which affects your welfare and your inflation. Now, that narrow band of managing what was around N2 trillion in subsidy is the issue. They wanted to use that as a boogeyman the way they are using kidnapping now as a boogeyman to frighten people; something they can deal with immediately. They are now using that as a boogeyman to create a new petroleum industry in which people in government are players.

Are you saying that the kidnapping happening right now is being staged or you are just blaming the government for the level of kidnapping we are witnessing?

Of course, the government is responsible for the kidnapping that is going on.

Do you have evidence to prove that?

I have evidence to prove that. Unlike many people who stay at home and comment, I go to the places where these kidnappings take place. I interact with the people and it’s very clear that only on very rare occasions – like one per cent – that the people are not already expecting it. I can give you a list of communities that have reached out to me to say we got notes from some people saying they want to kidnap us.

We have seen some strange movements; we have informed the government; they don’t respond. Now there are three reasons they don’t respond.

One is lethargy. The fact that they are not serious because the definition of security in Nigeria is regime safety, regime security, how to protect the President, Villa, governor, a few senators and businessmen; that’s all. Outside that, they don’t care.

The second problem that they have is that if you go and ask the DSS, if you go and ask many of the security agencies, we are extremely competent in the area of gathering intelligence, but when you gather intelligence, you need it to be sanctioned by somebody, and if the people who are responsible for ordering security measures don’t have time...I don’t want to go into too much details. Go and interview security personnel.

There are certain sensitive security personnel that don’t have access to even see the commander-in-chief, not to talk of discussing their security estimates. Thirdly, the structure of our law enforcement has killed the police completely. When you see Nigeria Police on the road, they are just merely decorative, because tasks which they can do, exercises which they can do, reconnaissance that they can do, are now being given to the military, thereby taking the military away from the strong theater, where they can do their own kinetics with terrorists.

And the last part, which is the shame of it all, is that it is a lucrative business for those who are in government. That is where they spend their security votes, buy for themselves houses

abroad, Mercedes or do everything in the name of saying I paid so and so billion to so and so number of bandits that you don’t see.

But eventually, when we catch the bandits, many of them will confess that the government is responsible. I am not on the side of the terrorists. The terrorists deserve to go to prison. Many of them deserve to die. The issue is that the government is an enabler; deliberately and carelessly enabling this situation.

So, I’m more focused on finding solutions to this issue, because I know that the government will be voted out in January, and they will pack their bags and go in May. So, between now and May next year, as an incoming commander-in-chief, my mind is more focused on how to action many of the solutions, which our intelligence agencies have proposed.

Read the remaining part of this article on www.guardian.ng

Prince Adebayo

Governor Hope Uzodimma And The Gamble For Imo West Senatorial Seat

As the bell tolls on the politics of 2027, those outside power are craving to supplant those holding power, while those holding power are striving to consolidate. Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, belongs to the latter category with his quest to return to the Senate, which he left barely seven years ago to sit at the helm of affairs in his state, LAWRENCE NJOKU writes.

IMO State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, seems not to understand any other language than politics. Available records indicate that he literally lives in politics. This is because since joining politics in the Second Republic through the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), where he then became the youth leader in his Imo State, Uzodimma has continued to make himself relevant in almost every political dispensation, switching parties.

With the return of democracy in 1999, he joined the PDP. He served at various levels and contested elections. In 2011, he was elected into the Senate to represent the people of Imo West. He was in the Senate until 2019 when he ran for the governorship election of his state on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC). In 2020, the Supreme Court declared him winner of the election and he was sworn in. By January next year when the elections would be going on,

Uzodimma would be completing the third year of his second term in office.

But many who are expecting him to remain in office until January 15, 2028, would be disappointed as he has indicated interest not to serve out his tenure. Instead, Uzodimma is ready to sacrifice the remaining part of it and return to the Senate to represent the Imo West Senatorial District. This was a seat the governor left seven years ago after serving for eight years (2011 - 2019) to become the governor of Imo State.

He has already clinched his party's ticket. If he wins the general poll, it means he would automatically quit the governorship seat in June next year since the Constitution and the Electoral Act do not permit a person to hold two elective offices at the same time. So, in the event of victory at the poll, Uzodimma will have to shelve the remaining months of his governorship tenure to concentrate in the Senate, which offers him opportunity to represent only one-third of the state.

Section 183 of the Constitution specifically bars a governor from holding any other executive office or paid employment simultaneously. It further provides that he can only resign from his position on taking the oath of another office.

What this means is that Uzodimma would remain on seat even after the election if he wins until the next National Assembly is proclaimed in June next year by the president.

But will Uzodimma really quit the Imo governorship seat just to represent one-third of the state? Will he really forfeit the office without an eye on who serves out the remaining part of his tenure?

Reports emanating from the state since his Senate aspiration was mooted indicate that the governor may

not be ready to leave the governorship seat without a hand in who succeeds him.

Recently, there were reports that Uzodimma's deputy, Mrs. Chinyere Ekomaru, was being pressured to resign. The unconfirmed reports said the move was part of the plot by the governor to appoint a trusted successor who would stand in the gap to complete his tenure when he goes to the Senate. The reports claimed that Ekomaru's resignation would allow Uzodimma to appoint another loyal deputy from Orlu zone and an interim governor from Owerri zone.

Ekomaru became Uzodimma's deputy in 2023. When he picked her to replace Prof. Placid Njoku, he stated that it was aimed at

If he wins the election, it means he would automatically quit the governorship seat in June next year since the Constitution and the Electoral Act do not permit a person to hold two elective offices at the same time.

adding value to his gubernatorial ticket.

"I expect Imo women to appreciate this gesture as my genuine appreciation of their innate strength and capacity to contribute to the growth of our state," he stated.

Meanwhile, as the rest of the state watch to know how he solves the challenge of enlisting a trusted "place holder" to complete his tenure and the place of Ekomaru, what has kept tongues wagging is the motivating factor behind his quest to return to a seat he left several years ago? He had told all those that cared to listen that he was going to the Senate to serve his people and President Bola Tinubu by ensuring that right laws are made for the development of the country.

"My dear people of Imo West have once again called upon me to serve, and I have accepted this noble call with utmost humility, sincerity of purpose, and unwavering commitment to the collective advancement of our people," he stated.

Uzodimma further said his aspiration was to support the Tinubu administration through, "quality representation, effective legislation, enhanced development and sustainable progress."

Pundits, however, believe that it is all about him and nothing more. They asked for a record on the number of bills he sponsored while serving as a senator for eight years. They insisted that if indeed it is for the generality of his people, how come he would not allow any other politician from his zone to continue from where he had stopped in the Senate.

Sources, however, stated that the quest to return to the Senate is to enable Uzodimma become the Senate President should Tinubu win re-election in 2027. It is believed that since Tinubu and his Vice, Kashim Shettima are Muslims, the tendency is that the party may like to retain the Senate presidency position in the South-South or Southeast with a Christian.

Uzodimma, having tasted

executive position and is currently the chairman of Progressive Governors' Forum (PGF) as well as leader of the Renewed Hope Ambassadors (RHA); a group at the vanguard of Tinubu's second term bid, would have these to his advantage when opportunities in the Senate are being discussed.

There are also strong rumours about 2031 when power would rotate to the North. The calculation is that should the current vice president remain in office until then, there is a possibility that he might want to run for presidency. Being positioned as senate president would help Uzodimma to bargain to become his running mate or any other politician endorsed by the party from the North.

Speaking on the development, a Political Scientist, Dr. Levi Agunwa, explained that politicians would always count their eggs before they hatch, stressing that there are no impossibilities around them.

He insisted that Uzodimma's style gives him out as a "desperate" politician, who would not leave anything to chance in order to acquire political power.

"Take a look into his profile; you will see someone that believes only in himself. You were in the Senate for eight years and left it to become governor. Now, less than eight years after, you want to return to the Senate.

"If we are truly practicing democracy, there is no way this kind of a thing can continue to happen. Does it mean that Imo West seat is reserved only for Uzodimma? You were in the Senate and from there moved to Imo Government House. Natural justice should be able to guide your decisions to at least allow another part of your constituency to produce the next senator in 2027," he stated.

Agunwa's position was reechoed by a chieftain of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in Imo State, Donald Eberechi, who insisted that such attitude is responsible for the distortions in the country's democratic journey.

He asked: "How come it is becoming difficult for our politicians to allow others taste political power? You saw how the Senate President attempted to twist Senate rules to his advantage the other day. That was because he wants to return in 2027 as senate president.

"Uzodimma is not going to the Senate to push for better legislation for the country. He only wants to occupy a position so as to use it for future bargains. There are many who should do better if given opportunity as senators. If I were him, I would support a younger person to the Senate, while he stays back to give advice. That is the way statesmen are made."

But should the Southeast relish in his becoming a senate president in 2027? A political analyst, Jude Obiorah, said that the zone is more interested in ruling the country, explaining that occupying the number three position had never impacted the region.

"All the region wants is to have a fair share in the power equation. A situation such as we are in, becoming senate president means nothing to the people. All that Uzodimma is angling for is to serve Tinubu and not necessarily the Southeast. So, when you have a man in such a desperate situation, it is as good as not having a representation," he said.

Obiorah cited the tenure of Uzodimma as governor in Imo State, stressing that "the better part of it has been spent in Abuja, and not necessarily in the state where he is elected to serve."

"This is also an indication that he will not like to move away from the presidency in any chosen assignment," he noted.

To him, politicians use the country's democracy to create opportunities for themselves to remain relevant in power allocations and equations.

"The practice would always hunt the system and discourage competition," he said.



Editorial

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria f GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Growing Heat Crisis Demands Urgent Action

FOR many citizens, recent rainfall in parts of the country is a matter of great relief, considering the grave discomfort occasioned by heat days or weeks past. But most parts of Nigeria are still reeling under scorching sun. Yet, Nigeria can no longer afford to dismiss extreme heat as a temporary seasonal discomfort. The latest warning by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) that temperatures could rise to as high as 45 degrees Celsius in parts of the country is yet another reminder that climate change has become an immediate national emergency.

What is unfolding across the country is not simply hot weather associated with the dry season; it is a growing environmental and public health crisis with dangerous implications for human survival, economic productivity, food security and social stability.

According to NiMet, states such as Niger, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano, Yobe, Jigawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Borno and Adamawa are expected to experience severe heat conditions. The agency also warned that inland parts of southern Nigeria would not be spared from the impacts.

The projected temperatures, between 40 and 45 degrees Celsius in the North, 35 and 38 degrees Celsius in the Middle Belt, and 33 to 35 degrees Celsius in the South are dangerously high and capable of causing serious health complications. The consequences of prolonged exposure to extreme heat are already well known. Heat stress can trigger dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, respiratory distress and cardiovascular complications. For vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women, outdoor workers and the elderly, the danger is even greater. In communities with poor access to clean water, electricity and healthcare, the risks multiply significantly.

LETTER

Suitability, And Appointment Of Chief Judge Of Imo State

SIR: By a memo dated June 6, 2026, the Imo State Judicial Service Commission (JSC) shortlisted four candidates for appointment to the office of the Chief Judge of Imo State. They also called for comments from members of the public, including the Nigerian Bar Association in Imo State.

At the end of their deliberations, which should have included reviews of all the comments they have received from stakeholders, they thereafter shortlisted two candidates as suitable for further considerations. The suitable candidates are Honourable Justice C. A Ononeze-Madu and Honourable Justice E. O Agada. It is about these two suitably found candidates that some comments have been made. Some of the comments, which came as an interview and written personal opinions were by Prince Bob Njemanze, my friend and brother, Prof Chidi Anslem Odinkalu and Chinedu Agu.

I have taken time to read all of them very carefully. Having read them carefully, one idea runs through them all, to wit: their personal preference for and defence of Honourable Justice I O Agugua, the Acting Chief Judge of Imo state as their preferred candidate for the office of the exalted office of the Chief Judge of Imo state.

As much as we all are entitled

to our own preferences, it would be clearly wrong and unacceptable to engage in writings and public posturings that would want to elevate our personal idiosyncrasies above the law and constitution of the land. In as much as we are entitled to them, the constitution as amended, the general good and future of our collectives must be the first consideration. With this at the back of my mind, I will proceed to review these opinions using Chinedu Agu's opinion titled: Imo Chief Judge shortlist: Suitability or burial of judicial independence? The choice of Chinedu Agu's opinion is because it contained almost all the issues raised by both Prince Bob Njemanze and Prof Chidi Anslem Odinkalu. This opinion was published in thenicheng.com. I will proceed on the opinion seriatim, quoting him where necessary.

'Initially, in its communication to the Nigerian Bar Association, Owerri, the JSC invited comments on the suitability of four eminent judicial officers, namely: Honourable Justice I O Agugua, the Acting Chief Judge, Honourable Justice C. A Ononeze-Madu, Honourable Justice E O Agada and Honourable Justice L C Azuama. This was in their Order of seniority. After the

Particularly troubling is NiMet's warning that the combination of extreme heat and dust particles in the atmosphere could increase the likelihood of meningitis outbreaks in northern Nigeria. This is not speculative. Nigeria has repeatedly experienced seasonal outbreaks of cerebrospinal meningitis, especially in overcrowded and poorly ventilated communities across the northern states.

Rising temperatures create ideal conditions for the spread of such diseases. Sadly, many public health institutions remain underfunded and ill-equipped to respond effectively to large-scale outbreaks.

The latest advisory once again exposes the country's poor level of preparedness for climate-related disasters. While flooding occasionally receives emergency attention because of its dramatic and visible impact, heat waves remain largely ignored despite their deadly consequences.

Nigeria lacks a coordinated national heat response strategy. There are no designated public cooling shelters; while limited public awareness campaigns, inadequate emergency health systems and weak urban planning policies to reduce heat exposure all combine to aggravate the problem.

The situation is especially difficult for low-income Nigerians. Millions live in overcrowded homes with poor ventilation and unreliable electricity supply. In many urban slums and rural settlements, residents endure long hours without power while temperatures continue to rise. Access to air-conditioning or cooling systems remains a luxury beyond the reach of most citizens. Even hospitals, schools and public institutions often lack stable electricity and cooling infrastructure, making them unsafe during periods of extreme heat.

commentaries from the NBA Owerri and other branches of the NBA in Imo State, the commission now presents only two names: Honourable Justice C A Ononeze-Madu and Honourable E O Agada for comments of the members of the public'.

The inescapable meaning of this opinion of Chinedu Agu is that clearly Imo state JSC, in the exercise of their constitutional duties called for the opinions and commentaries of the stakeholders, which included the relevant branches of the NBA. Not only did the JSC call for these opinions, they also took them in consideration before arriving at their decision of shortlisting the two candidates. It follows, by Chinedu Agu's admission that JSC's decision followed due process.

Furthermore, he admitted that the appointment of the substantive CJ of Imo state is constitutional as it is governed by paragraph 6, Part II(C) of the third Schedule constitution of Nigeria (as amended) which provides: The JSC shall have power to advise the National Judicial Council on suitable persons for nomination to office of the Chief Judge of the state.

• Chris Ehumadu Okeke is a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN).

Read the remaining part of this article on www.guardian.ng

The economic consequences of rising temperatures are equally alarming. Nigeria's economy depends heavily on outdoor labour. Farmers, construction workers, street traders, transport operators and artisans spend long hours under harsh weather conditions. Extreme heat reduces productivity, increases fatigue and heightens the risk of accidents and illness. Agricultural production also suffers as rising temperatures accelerate evaporation, dry up water sources and worsen desertification in northern Nigeria.

Food security is therefore increasingly threatened. Farmers already battling insecurity, flooding and poor infrastructure must now confront worsening drought conditions and declining soil moisture. Reduced agricultural yields could further worsen inflation and deepen hunger across the country. The impact on livestock production is equally severe, as excessive heat affects animal health, fertility and water availability.

The warning from researchers at the University of Oxford that Nigeria could become one of the countries' most affected by dangerously hot days by 2050 should compel urgent national reflection. Climate change is no longer a future concern discussed only at international conferences. It is already affecting livelihoods, public health and economic development across Nigeria. The evidence is visible in rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, destructive flooding, coastal erosion, shrinking forests and changing rainfall patterns.

Unfortunately, Nigeria's environmental governance remains weak and inconsistent. Gas flaring continues despite repeated government promises to end it. Deforestation is occurring at an alarming rate as forests are cleared for fuel wood, farming and urban expansion. Wetlands and green spaces are disappearing rapidly. Waste management systems remain inadequate, while pollution levels continue to rise in major cities. These environmental failures are intensifying the climate crisis and increasing the country's vulnerability to extreme weather conditions.

Government at all levels must therefore treat heat waves as a serious national emergency. A comprehensive national heat-health action plan should be developed immediately. Such a framework should integrate weather forecasting, emergency healthcare response, public awareness campaigns and community-based support systems. State governments should establish cooling centres in schools, community halls and public

institutions where vulnerable residents can seek temporary relief during periods of intense heat.

Urban planning policies must also change. Nigerian cities are increasingly becoming heat traps because of unchecked urbanisation, disappearing vegetation and excessive concrete surfaces that absorb and retain heat. Authorities should embark on aggressive tree-planting campaigns, restore urban green spaces and encourage climate-sensitive building designs that improve ventilation and reduce heat absorption. Environmental regulations must also be enforced strictly to prevent further destruction of forests and wetlands.

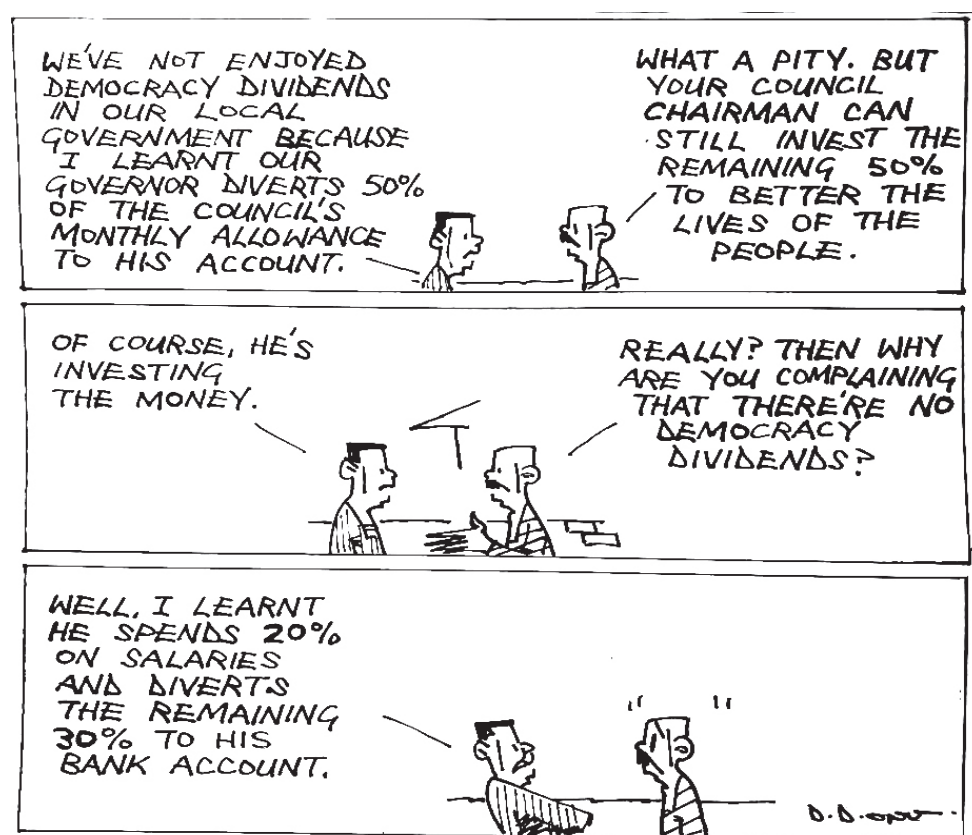
Public health education is equally essential. Citizens must be encouraged to stay hydrated, avoid unnecessary exposure to direct sunlight, wear light clothing and reduce strenuous activities during peak heat periods.

Parents and caregivers should be educated on the dangers of leaving children inside parked vehicles or poorly ventilated rooms. Schools, religious institutions, markets and media organisations should be mobilised to spread awareness about heat-related risks and preventive measures.

The private sector also has a role to play. Employers must adopt workplace safety guidelines that protect workers exposed to extreme temperatures. Flexible working hours, access to drinking water and shaded rest areas should become standard practice, especially in construction sites, factories and farms.

Climate adaptation can no longer remain a secondary issue in national planning. Nigeria must invest seriously in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, climate-resilient infrastructure and environmental restoration projects. International climate financing opportunities should also be pursued aggressively to support adaptation programmes.

NiMet's early warning is notable. But warnings alone are not enough. What Nigeria needs now is coordinated action, strong political will and sustained investment in climate resilience. Extreme heat is no longer an isolated weather event. It is a growing public health threat, an economic challenge and an environmental emergency. Ignoring it will only increase suffering, deepen poverty and expose millions of Nigerians to avoidable risks in the years ahead.



Opinion

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

June 12 Dividends Versus Nigeria's Lived Reality

By Ebuka Ukoh

'The heroes of June 12 did not struggle simply for the right to vote. They struggled for a society in which the will of the people would matter, institutions would serve citizens, and the government would be accountable, with power deriving its legitimacy from public trust. Those aspirations remain as relevant today as they were on June 12, 1993.'

THIRTY-THREE years after Nigerians voted in what is widely regarded as the freest election in their country's history, the question confronting the nation is no longer whether democracy was won. The question is whether its promise has been fulfilled, and the labours of our heroes past are not in vain. As Nigerians mark another June 12, children and teachers remain in captivity, communities continue to mourn victims of insecurity, and many citizens are asking an uncomfortable question: What exactly are we celebrating?

To ask this question is not to diminish the significance of June 12...far from it! June 12 remains one of the most important milestones in Nigeria's democratic journey. It represents courage in the face of oppression. It represents sacrifice. It represents the determination of ordinary citizens who refused to accept that their voices could be erased by military decree. It represents the struggle of countless Nigerians who paid a personal price for the democratic freedoms many now take for granted.

The story of June 12 is ultimately a story about citizenship. It is also impossible to reflect on June 12 without remembering Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola. Whatever one's politics, his story remains a reminder that democracy is not merely about conducting elections.

June 12 is also about respecting the will of the people when the results are known. The annulment of June 12 was not simply the denial of one man's victory. It was the denial of a nation's voice. It is the story of Nigerians insisting that their votes matter. Their voices matter. Their choices matter. Their dignity matters. That was the promise. The question before us today is whether that promise has been fully realised.

Democracy was never meant to be measured only by the ability to hold elections. Elections are important, but they are only the beginning...the means to a promised end. A democracy is not tested on election day. It is tested on the ordinary days that follow. It is tested when citizens travel on public roads. It is tested when children go to school. It is tested when farmers go to their farms. It is tested when families sleep at night. It is tested when citizens criticise those in power. It is tested when institutions are called upon to act fairly and impartially. And it is tested when the government is confronted with the suffer-

ing of ordinary people. This is where many Nigerians increasingly find themselves in conflict.

On the one hand, Nigeria continues to celebrate the restoration of democratic rule. On the other hand, many citizens struggle to reconcile democratic ideals with their lived realities. Across parts of the country, insecurity remains a daily concern. Communities continue to experience violence. Families continue to mourn loved ones. Children have been abducted from schools. Teachers have been taken from the very institutions meant to nurture the next generation. Parents continue to live with fears that should never accompany something as basic as sending a child to learn.

For those families, democracy can feel distant. Not because they oppose it. But because democracy, at its core, is supposed to deliver something more than periodic elections. It is supposed to provide security. It is supposed to provide accountability. It is supposed to provide equal citizenship under the law. Most importantly, it is supposed to affirm that all lives matter. This is why the continued captivity of Oyo school children and teachers should trouble every Nigerian on Democracy Day.

Somewhere, while speeches are being delivered and ceremonies are being held, families are still waiting. Waiting for news. Waiting for rescue. Waiting for answers. Waiting for loved ones to come home. No democracy should become comfortable with that reality. Somewhere today, a classroom remains incomplete because a teacher has not returned. Somewhere, a child's education has been interrupted by fear. Somewhere, parents are still waiting for the phone call that tells them their loved one is safe. These are not merely security statistics. They are democratic failures because democracy means little if citizens cannot safely exercise the ordinary freedoms that confer dignity on life.

The issue extends beyond insecurity. Many Nigerians are increasingly concerned about the health of public institutions. Questions continue to emerge about public accountability, transparency, and trust. Citizens frequently wonder whether institutions serve the public interest or merely protect themselves.

Trust, once lost, is difficult to rebuild. Democracy cannot survive indefinitely on speeches, anniversaries, and commemorations. It ultimately depends on whether those entrusted with power demonstrate through action that public trust is deserved. Citizens listen to addresses. But they judge governments by governance outcomes.

Democracy cannot thrive without trust. Citizens do not need perfection from the government. No government can provide that. What citizens need is confidence that institutions are working honestly to address problems, respond to concerns,

and uphold the public good. That confidence appears increasingly fragile.

Perhaps this explains why voter enthusiasm today feels different from what many Nigerians experienced in the lead-up to previous elections. People do not disengage because they hate democracy. People disengage when they begin to doubt whether their participation changes outcomes. That should concern every democrat regardless of political affiliation because the greatest threat to democracy is not criticism. The greatest threat to democracy is indifference. A citizen who complains still cares—a citizen who protests still hopes. A citizen who demands accountability still believes improvement is possible. The greater danger emerges when citizens stop expecting anything at all.

June 12 should therefore be more than a celebration of history. It should be a moment of national reflection. A moment to ask difficult questions. A moment to measure how far we have travelled and how far we still have to go. The heroes of June 12 did not struggle simply for the right to vote. They struggled for a society in which the will of the people would matter, in which institutions would serve citizens, and in which government would be accountable, with power deriving its legitimacy from public trust. Those aspirations remain as relevant today as they were three decades ago.

Democracy is not a destination that a nation reaches once and for all. It is a continuous project. It requires vigilance. It requires accountability. It requires participation. It requires leaders willing to listen and citizens willing to engage. Most of all, it requires a shared commitment to the idea that every Nigerian life has value. That is why the question, "What exactly are we celebrating on June 12?" is not an attack on democracy. It is, in fact, a defence of it.

The best way to honour the sacrifices of June 12 is not merely to remember them. It is to continue demanding the Nigeria they envisioned. A Nigeria where children can go to school without fear. A Nigeria where teachers return safely to their families. A Nigeria where institutions earn public trust. A Nigeria where citizenship carries both rights and dignity. A Nigeria where democracy is measured not only by the ballots cast, but also by the lives protected.

Until then, June 12 should remain both a celebration and a challenge. A celebration of how far Nigeria has come. A challenge to confront how far it still has to go. And a reminder that the true measure of June 12 is not found in speeches, ceremonies, or public holidays. It is found in whether ordinary Nigerians can live in freedom, safety, dignity, and hope. That was the promise of June 12. The question before the nation is whether we have fulfilled it.

• Ukoh, a PhD student and co-author of *Built By The Ancestors*, writes from his US base in New York.

Ambassador Akinremi Bolaji: Lasting Legacy Of Service And Leadership

By Kingsley Dike

NIGERIA as a country has had the unique good fortune of having very astute diplomats and individuals whose training, performance and force of personality not only catapulted them to national acclaim but global recognition. From Chief Simeon Adebbo, Jaja Nwachukwu, Emeka Anyaoku of Nigeria's first republic to Ambassador Peter Onu, Ambassador Hope Harriman, Ambassador Omotayo Ogunsulire, Ambassador Dove-Edwin to Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari. These individuals and many others served as foundational pillars in establishing Nigeria's Foreign policy in peacekeeping, international law and regional cooperation. But there are a new generation of accomplished Nigerian diplomats whose dedication and devotion to service and statecraft is no less. They have sustained time honored traditions of excellence and dedication to international relations, conflict resolution and more importantly as stalwarts of the Nigerian state and public servants.

Ambassador Akinremi Bolaji, who retired recently from Nigeria's foreign service was the face of this new generation. Amongst the first graduates of the Department of International, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife to join the Nigerian foreign service, they became the fulfilment of the dreams of the likes of Professor Olajide Aluko, first professor of international relations in Africa south of the Sahara, to strengthen Nigeria's foreign relations with qualified home-grown and trained personnel. They were the modern pedagogical success, of which was the principal aim of the Ife School of International Relations, to train students not

only with "knowledge for global harmony" but self-esteem, a patriotic, national and cultural flavor in the articulation and execution of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives. Ambassador Bolaji is the embodiment of this self-esteem that followed his very successful career.

In the social media era where simple interactions with the Nigerian community gone awry will sometimes paint the picture of underperforming diplomatic service, Ambassador Bolaji excelled in the field in all his foreign postings with this awe of simplicity, of setting a personal tenor that consular services must be efficient and effective through customer service and feedback from the Nigerian community and members of the public that they serve. The story is told of how Ambassador Bolaji as Nigeria's High Commissioner to Singapore will go incognito in the consular reception and holding area to interact with visitors and hear firsthand how their issues are being taken care of by the Nigerian High Commission.

From this regular interface he implemented a system that ensured faster turnaround in issuance of visas and all other consular services. As he learnt, waiting times and no feedback explanations for delays in processing were some of the problems. During his last position as Director of Reforms and Innovation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ambassador Bolaji developed a cutting-edge blueprint for its reforms based on his varied experiences, that of others and extant knowledge on the best practices elsewhere to reflect change in its culture and policies particular service deliv-

ery.

The hope is to herald a new culture of prompt service delivery commensurate with what our people get in their host countries. He was also very deliberate in making sure what is best in the foreign service is preserved. A tradition of excellence through diversity in recruitment of the best into its cadre, continuous training while on the job and a pan-African, and pax nigeriana worldview is maintained. Tradition is said to be the ultimate democracy because it extends the franchise to future generations and ensures the hard-earned wisdom of the past and today is preserved.

Ambassador Bolaji became a caricature heroic figure at the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war and the humanitarian crisis that developed with stranded Nigerian students. When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, thousands of Nigerians, especially students studying in Ukrainian universities, found themselves in a rapidly deteriorating security situation. With airports closed and safe evacuation routes limited, many Nigerians were forced to flee on foot or seek refuge in neighboring countries such as Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia. Many of the fleeing Nigerian students flooded messages online and reports of being denied access to trains and bomb shelters and faced discriminations at border crossings. The situation was hell.

As Director of the Consular and Legal Department at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bolaji was appointed coordinator of the federal government's evacuation operation for Nigerians stranded in Ukraine and the bordering states. In this role, he was

one of the senior officials responsible for organising and supervising the logistics and diplomatic elements of the evacuation of over 5000 stranded fellow citizens. He coordinated with Nigerian embassies and foreign missions in countries receiving evacuees to ensure safe transit and accommodation before flights home. Ambassador Bolaji managed the field logistics, such as gathering evacuees scattered in various hotels and border areas so they could be transported to evacuation flights, a process that sometimes meant adjusting flight schedules to ensure all were assembled and ready to depart.

It was such a flawless operation involving so many citizens with such a short time but dire consequences for delays, omission and possible abandonment in the war zone as the bombs keeping falling in several cities across Ukraine. It was a difficult time but one of the finest moments for the Nigerian foreign service responding adequately to citizens in distress, ensuring the safe return of thousands of Nigerians from the conflict zone in a period of global uncertainty. As the public face of the evacuation initiative in the media and arrival ceremonies Ambassador Bolaji was in constant communications with international and host country authorities to secure authorizations for flights and safe passage across borders.

• Kingsley Dike is a former Foreign Affairs Editor of the *Nation Newspaper* and retired intelligence analyst with the *United States Army*. He wrote from Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

Read the remaining part of this article on
www.guardian.ng

By Tajudeen Kareem

At LUTH, a new generation blood-testing system is being cast as more than cutting-edge equipment. It is a symbol of speed, precision and a bold new argument: that safe blood in Nigeria should depend less on chance and more on science.

IN a hospital where blood is needed every day — for women in obstetric crisis, for accident victims, for cancer patients, for children with blood disorders, for the countless emergencies that arrive without warning — safety can no longer rest on goodwill alone. At the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Idi-Araba, that reality now has a new face: the IH-500 Fully Automated Immunohematology System, unveiled during activities marking World Blood Donor Day 2026 and presented as a decisive leap in the science of transfusion safety. The hospital’s message was strikingly clear. Blood donation saves lives, yes. But between the donor’s arm and the patient’s vein lies a delicate, unforgiving chain of laboratory decisions — and it is in that hidden space that the IH-500 is being introduced as a game changer.

For years, blood in Nigeria’s public health system has often carried the drama of urgency: frantic calls for donors, anxious relatives searching for compatible units, overburdened laboratories working against time. At LUTH, where annual demand stands between 20,000 and 25,000 units, blood is not a background medical resource. It is frontline medicine. It is survival in red.

That is what gives the IH-500 its significance. The new machine, second to be installed in West Africa, is a fully automated platform that performs ABO grouping, Rh typing, antibody screening and crossmatching, the vital pre-transfusion checks that decide whether a unit of blood will heal or harm.

In the old order, much of that work depended on trained hands, sharp eyes and human endurance. It required interpretation, repetition and vigilance, often under pressure. It was skilled work, but work still exposed to fatigue, transcription mistakes, delays and the ordinary human limits that medicine can ill afford in moments of crisis.

The IH-500 promises something different: automation, consistency, digital traceability and speed.

The system can process up to 96 samples at once, with results available in under 45 minutes. Officials say it uses high-resolution camera-based reading through column agglutination technology, improving precision and reducing the risk of human error. Every result is digitally recorded, creating an audit trail that strengthens quality control and compliance.

In a busy teaching hospital, that kind of precision is not merely technical sophistication. It is reassurance. It is time recovered in emergencies. It is fewer dangerous mismatches. It is the difference between blood being available and blood being safely usable.

And LUTH wants the public to understand that distinction.

Chief Medical Director, at LUTH, Prof. Wasiu Adeyemo, tied the machine to a much broader campaign: the drive to build a stronger, more reliable culture of voluntary

The IH-500 promises something different: automation, consistency, digital traceability and speed. The system can process up to 96 samples at once, with results available in under 45 minutes. Officials say it uses high-resolution camera-based reading through column agglutination technology, improving precision and reducing the risk of human error. Every result is digitally recorded, creating an audit trail that strengthens quality control and compliance.

CHANGE OF NAME

UMERIE

That I wish to change name on my BVN AS **CHINAZOM PECULIAR UMERIE** to **PECULIAR CHINAZOM ENYIOHA**. That my national ID bears **PECULIAR CHINAZOM ENYIOHA**. That henceforth I wish to maintain my correct information even as it affect my BVN. That I am making this publication for record purpose and for the information of the general public especially Zenith Bank and all banks, should please take note.



Head of Department, Haematology and Blood Transfusion at LUTH, Prof. Titilope Adeyemo (left); Head of Quality and Laboratory Services, National Blood Service Agency, Ms Ozonweke Ogechukwu; and Deputy Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee, LUTH, Dr. Rufus Ojewola at the commissioning of IH-500 machine recently acquired by LUTH.

LUTH Takes Blood Donation, Management To Higher Level

blood donation in Nigeria. He said the hospital had recruited more than 2,500 new voluntary donors since January 2025 through expanded mobilisation efforts and partnerships with corporate organisations, faith-based groups and tertiary institutions. He also disclosed that LUTH aims to raise donor retention from the current 10 per cent to 60 per cent within two years, backed by a donor loyalty programme designed to encourage repeat donations.

But if one side of the story is about supply, the other is about trust. Because even the most generous donor can only save a life if the blood collected is matched with exacting care.

Associate professor and Consultant Haematologist, Dr Ann Ogbenna urged the public to look beyond the visible heroism of blood donation and consider the invisible infrastructure that makes transfusion safe. In her presentation, From Arm to Vein: Without a Misstep — Precision Transfusion Testing in the Modern Era, she described every transfusion as an “invisible chain of critical checks,” warning that without accuracy at every step, “a gift can become a danger.”

It is a haunting formulation — and one that captures the novelty of the IH-500 better than any technical brochure could. Ogbenna traced a line between earlier decades of transfusion practice and the new age of laboratory automation. She spoke of a time when blood safety depended more heavily on handwritten labels, manual record matching and visual interpretation by exhausted staff. In such an environment, the danger did not always lie in rare biological complications. Sometimes, it lay in simple, preventable human error. That, she suggested, is exactly the vulnerability modern systems are designed to close.

According to her, the IH-500 can process between 120 and 200 samples per hour, read reactions at 256 grayscale levels, and operate continuously with the kind of steadiness no human being can sustain indefinitely. Instead of handwritten labels, samples are barcoded at collection. Instead of manual transcription, records are retrieved directly through the laboratory information system. Instead of subjective visual reading, the analyser interprets reactions with digital precision.

She described the process as the “precision trifecta” of modern transfusion science: volume, image and timing.

In practical terms, that means exact sample measurement, sharper detection of faint reactions and tightly controlled incubation conditions — each one a safeguard against error. In the case of Weak D, a weakened form of the Rh blood group antigen, that precision can be especially important. A faint reaction missed in manual testing can lead to a patient being wrongly classified and exposed to future risks. The IH-500, Ogbenna said, reduces that danger by detecting subtle reactions more reliably.

The implications are especially stark in trauma care,

where time is measured not in hours but in blood loss. Ogbenna noted that with full automation, type-and-screen time can drop to under 15 minutes, compared with roughly 30 to 45 minutes under manual processes. In emergencies, speed is not a luxury. It is clinical oxygen.

Yet what makes this story compelling is not the machine alone, but what the machine seems to represent.

At LUTH, the IH-500 is being framed almost as a declaration of intent — a sign that Nigerian patients should not have to settle for blood services defined by shortage, improvisation and outdated processes. Prof. Titilope Adeyemo, Head of the Department of Haematology and Blood Transfusion, cast it as evidence that world-class care is not an abstract aspiration, but something that should be built deliberately into the everyday workings of public healthcare.

That symbolism matters.

For too long, conversations about blood in Nigeria have focused almost entirely on scarcity: not enough donors, not enough units, not enough supply. LUTH is now boldly saying that safe blood is not only about collecting enough units, but about testing them with precision worthy of the lives depending on them.

In that sense, the hospital’s twin campaign makes strategic sense. One push is aimed at the human source of blood: voluntary donors who give repeatedly, disclose honestly and remain connected to the blood centre over time. The other is aimed at the scientific system that receives that gift and prepares it for transfusion without error. Together, they form one argument: reliable blood supply and reliable blood safety must rise together.

There is, of course, a harder question waiting beyond the applause.

Advanced machines do not sustain themselves. They require maintenance, trained personnel, consumables and steady institutional funding. LUTH’s appeal to government, corporate organisations, philanthropists and the media suggests hospital leaders understand this well. Buying a machine is the easy part. Keeping it running, integrating it fully, and embedding it in a wider national blood safety framework will determine whether the IH-500 becomes a turning point or just another isolated success story.

In a healthcare system too often defined by emergency response, the arrival of the IH-500 introduces a different mood — one of order, precision and modern confidence. It suggests that blood safety need not depend so heavily on luck, haste or exhausted human vigilance. It can, instead, be built into the system itself.

“The significance of the IH-500 machine at LUTH is not only about fast delivery, it also embodies a larger ambition: to place science more firmly between danger and the patient, and to make that space safer than it has ever been before”, said Prof. Adeyemo.

• Kareem, mnipr, is a public policy analyst

Nsukka Stands Up For El Anatsui: The Man, The Myth, The Legend

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

NOT many artists find global stardom while choosing to reside outside the metropolitan centres. Like William Kentridge, who made his reputation from Johannesburg, El Anatsui conquered the planet while living and working in the Nigerian university town of Nsukka. He lived and worked in Nsukka for 47 years, where he is the Ikedire of Uhe.

Indeed, few individuals have done more to project the name of Nsukka onto the global cultural map than El Anatsui. Through his work, the town has become a destination for scholars, artists, researchers, curators, collectors, and tourists from across the world. His story demonstrates how creativity can transform geography into destiny and how a university town can become a global cultural landmark.

Anatsui is one of the most gifted sculptors in the world. His works are found in virtually every international art gallery, museum and cultural centre across the globe; among them are his aluminum cap sculptures created from waste liquor-bottle tops that demystify the notions of conventional classification in the visual arts.

He is a master of turning trash to striking art. He uses trash, elegantly called found material—milk tins, bottle caps, driftwood, iron nails, and printing plates—as well as natural elements to compose his grandiose installations.

Born in Anyako, Volta Region, Ghana, on February 4, 1944, the youngest of his father's 32 children, Anatsui lost his mother and was raised by his uncle.

He trained at the College of Art, University of Science and Technology, in Kumasi, central Ghana and also has a post-graduate diploma in education from the same school, in 1969.



El Anatsui

One of his early influences was sculptor Vincent Alkwete Kofi.

He taught at the Specialist Training College (now University of Education) in Winneba, Ghana, until 1975. That same year he moved to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he taught sculpture and basic design. After his retirement in 2011, he became an emeritus professor in 2014.

From his creative base in Nsukka, Anatsui transformed discarded materials into masterpieces that now adorn the world's most prestigious museums, galleries, and cultural institutions. His artistic innovations have earned him international acclaim, culminating in his recognition as the greatest black African artist on earth and his elevation as one of Times International's 100 Most Influential Men in the World.

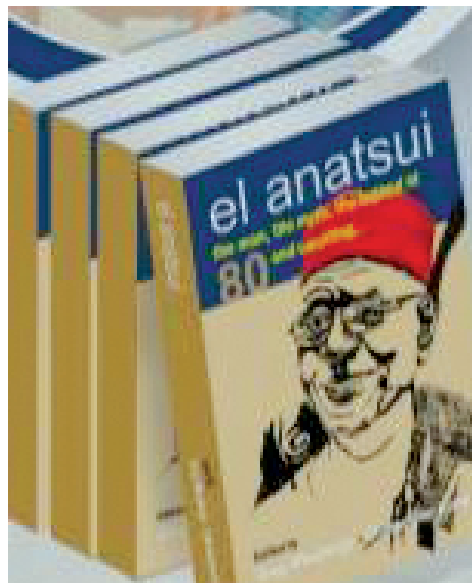
Declared a 'global star' by *The New York Times*, he is one of a few African artists, which every critic in the Western world feels compelled to make some kind of judgment.

Since the late 1990s, he has experimented with liquor bottle tops, the product of a global industry built on colonial trade routes while combining African aesthetic traditions with the global history of abstraction.

He told *The Guardian*, "when I came to Nsukka, I found the place welcoming and I didn't think of going to another university. It was the time that I came that we had the likes of Uche Okeke, Obiora Udechukwu, Chike Aniakor, and so many artists around. Nsukka art school had a very prestigious formation. I needed a place that was very exciting."

He added, "an artist survives very well in an environment where there is idea stimulation and I have a lot of stimulation in the environment from the things that are cultural and even the language. The Nsukka environment was exalting, people were experimenting, and sometimes, not experimenting but very active—one that urged you on to do something. It was a synergetic kind of, at that time."

Anatsui said, "when I create work, it is in my view a metaphor reflecting an alternative response; to examine possibilities and extend the boundaries in art. My work can represent links in the evolving narrative of memory and identity. The link between Africa, Europe, and America is very much behind my work with bottle caps. I have experimented with quite a few materials. I also work with material that has witnessed and encountered a lot of touch and human use... and these kinds of material and work have more charge than material/work



that I have done with machines. Art grows out of each particular situation, and I believe that artists are better off working with whatever their environment throws up."

On Wednesday, July 1, 2026, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), in collaboration with the University Senior Staff Club, will host the academic community, the media, cultural institutions, art enthusiasts, alumni, traditional rulers, public office holders, and the general public to the formal unveiling of the landmark book: *El Anatsui: The Man, the Myth, the Legend at 80 and Counting*.

The event holds at the Princess Alexandra Auditorium (PAA), University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The book, a monumental 411-page compendium edited by Associate Prof. Greg Mbajorgu and Chikaogwu Kanu, celebrates the extraordinary life, scholarship, humanity, and artistic genius of the great El.

More than a book launch, the event represents a celebration of a remarkable global phenomenon. The event will feature a comprehensive review of the book by renowned linguist, literary scholar, newspaper columnist, and public affairs analyst, Professor Chris Uchenna Agbedo, whose review is expected to provide penetrating insights into the significance of the volume as a cultural archive, intellectual monument, and historical document.

The unveiling ceremony will bring together an impressive constellation of distinguished personalities from academia, government, traditional institutions, the arts, and the media. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nigeria,

Professor Simon Uchenna Ortuanya, will serve as the Chief Host, while the President of the University Senior Staff Club, Professor Chukwudi Nnamchi, will host the event. The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Professor Lazarus Ogenyi, will serve as Co-Host.

Presiding over the ceremony is the revered traditional ruler, His Majesty Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe, CFR, Obi of Onitsha, whose enduring commitment to culture, scholarship, and nation-building continues to inspire generations.

Among the eminent personalities expected as Special Guests of Honour are Rt. Hon. Chidi Obeta, Member, House of Representatives; Justice Professor Peter Umeadi; Dr. Obi Asika, Director-General, National Council for Arts and Culture, Abuja; Dr. Mrs. Virgy Anohu (Adadioramma); HRH Igwe George Asadu (Okpudo, the n'Owerre); HRH Eze Ifeanyi Ekeh (Udumeze III of Lokpanta) and Chief Loretta Aniagolu, Director FIT Consult Group of Companies.

The volume itself is unprecedented in scope and ambition. Featuring contributions from over a hundred distinguished scholars, artists, intellectuals, administrators, journalists, traditional rulers, scientists and cultural practitioners from Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, South Africa, Europe, and North America, the book stands as one of the most comprehensive tributes ever dedicated to an African artist.

Its contributors include eminent academics, serving and former university administrators, internationally acclaimed artists, literary figures, historians, linguists, musicologists, philosophers, journalists, and cultural commentators.

The collection captures not only the artistic achievements of El Anatsui but also his influence as mentor, teacher, intellectual, philanthropist, institution-builder, and global cultural icon.

The significance of this publication extends far beyond the celebration of an individual: It is simultaneously a documentation of the intellectual history of the University of Nigeria, a chronicle of the emergence of the Nsukka School of Art, and a testimony to Africa's growing contribution to global artistic discourse.

As Emeritus Professor, El Anatsui continues to inspire generations at the age of 82, this unveiling offers a rare opportunity for the people of Nsukka, the University community, the nation, and the international cultural fraternity to collectively honour a man whose life and work have expanded the possibilities of African creativity.

Laitan Desmond: Reimagining Home Sounds In Open Mic

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

THERE'S something special about reimagining sounds from home and sharing them in a new space: blistering solos and smooth rhythms. This is what one of the country's music exports, Desmond Olaitan Ogunjimi, known professionally as Laitan Desmond did when he took the vibrant sound and cultural spirit of Nigeria to the Utopia Creative Hub in Sheffield recently. The open mic show saw dazzling fusion of premium music, poetry and spoken-words.

This event is a recurring community arts programme designed to showcase creative talent across Sheffield. It takes place and welcomes performers and audience members alike. Open to all creative disciplines: singers, musicians, poets, spoken-word artists, comedians, dancers, DJs, storytellers, and other performers, the event aims to provide a supportive platform for both

emerging and experienced artists, with particular encouragement for creatives from underrepresented backgrounds.

Laitan Desmond stole the spotlight with his well curated, high-energy solo, delivering an unforgettable night of music, entertainment and immersive experiences with saxophone hooks and sultry sax melodies. He poured out what could be described as "a high-life mashup—blending familiar melodies with fresh improvisations."

Donning *aso oke* trouser and *fila* on white shirt, a popular fad in Nigeria, he curated a medley of melodious saxophone highlife, which blended with rich, groovy jazzy tones. The songs came together nicely.

The horn-driven rhythms of Victor Olaiya and Rex Cardinal Jim Lawson and the smooth rhythms of Ebenezer Obey and Christy Essien-Igbokwe were vibrant and dance-inducing. The songs were insightful

and pleasing to the earbuds.

The audiences had a sweet taste of *Gbebe Mi Oluwa*, a highly philosophical song by Obey, which nudged God to his aid. The song provided a relaxed yet rhythmic take. He also performed timeless song such as *Seun Rere* by Essien-Igbokwe, *Love mu Adaure* by Rex Cardinal Jim Lawson, and *Yabomisa* by the 'evil genius' Olaiya.

Laitan Desmond, whose street-inspired sound and motivational themes (catchy hooks and an infectious work ethic) have earned him growing popularity among the Nigerian diaspora, gave continuous non-stop mixes, which captured the true essence of West African music. It was a night of non-stop highlife medley, irresistible groove, fused rhythms and jazz melodies.

The event combined elegance with excitement as guests enjoyed the immersive performances designed to celebrate African identity, culture and global influence.

Desmond is an accomplished Nigerian saxophonist with over 15 years of experience in the performing arts. A versatile artiste, he has honed his craft through collaborations with renowned bands, artistic groups, and theatrical productions across Nigeria and beyond.

With a career defined by excellence and a commitment to artistic innovation, Desmond continues to inspire through his dedication to the saxophone and his contributions to the global arts community. Artistes worked with in the past includes

With about two decades experience in the industry, his earliest musical influences are the classic highlife legends and Nigerian indigenous musicians from the *Juju*, *Fuji*, *Apala* and *Agidigbo* genres. He has also been influenced by the music of Bobby Benson, Victor Olaiya, Orlando Julius Ekemode, Adewale Ayuba, Omawumi, MIC Jazz Band, Eagle Band, Sunny Ade, Sikiru Ayinde Barrister Sunny Okosun,

Christy Essien-Igbokwe.

A graduate of music from the University of Lagos, Desmond combines formal training with innate musicality. His performances, known for their emotive depth and technical mastery, have graced stages in diverse cultural settings, showcasing his ability to connect with audiences across genres and geographies.



Desmond

Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by Shaibu Hussein

Tribeca Film Festival Unveils Winner

CURTAIN drew on the 25th yearly Tribeca Film Festival on June 14 in New York City. Presented by OKX, the festival announced competition winners, with *Cotton Fever*, *Labrador – Autopsy of Silence*, and *Jail Time Records* taking top honours in the U.S. Narrative, International Narrative, and Documentary competitions, respectively. Marcel Ruiz, Paolo Schoene, and Kiki Montilla earned Best Performance in a U.S. Narrative Feature for *Summer of Three*, while Christopher Angatookalook received Best Performance in an International Narrative Feature for *Labrador – Autopsy of Silence*. The Festival also awarded its inaugural Best New York Short honour to *Insufficient Fare*. This year’s winners reflected the global scope of the festival, with honourees representing countries across North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. The competition categories span the breadth of Tribeca’s programming,



Israel Kashim, founder KADIFF

Alicia Keys, Tribeca

with awards recognising achievement in U.S. Narrative, International Narrative, Documentary, Viewpoints, Nora Ephron, Short Film, Best New Directors, Podcasts, Games, AT&T Untold Stories, and Tribeca X. “This year’s award winners embody the spirit of Tribeca: fearless work that crosses borders, expands the form, and reveals the power of storytelling to uncover humanity in unexpected places,” said Festival Director and SVP of Programming Cara Cusumano. “As we celebrate our 25th year, these artists remind us that powerful stories do more than entertain, they deepen our empathy, broaden our perspective, and bring us closer together.” Several films earned multiple honors across competition categories. *Labrador – Autopsy of Silence* led the International Narrative Competition with awards for Best International Narrative Feature, Best Performance, and Best Cinematography, while *Summer of Three* earned both Best Performance and Best Screenplay in U.S. Narrative Competition. In the Documentary Competition, *Jail Time Records* received both Best Documentary Feature and the Albert Maysles Award for Best New Documentary Director, while *Cotton Fever* took home

the Founders Award for Best U.S. Narrative Feature and Best Cinematography in a U.S. Narrative Feature. Select categories receive the unique Tribeca Festival Art Award from a selection of artists led by curator Zoe Lukov. Supported by CHANEL, the world-class artists donated work to honored filmmakers. Winners of the Audience Award, which are determined by audience votes throughout the Festival, will be announced at a later date. Alicia Keys had the honor of closing the festival with the premiere of her new documentary *Alicia Keys: Girl From Hell’s Kitchen*. The film is both an examination of her life and career, and a look at how she put together her hit musical *Hell’s Kitchen*, loosely based on her own experiences.

Kaduna International Film Festival To Hold In August

THE 9th edition of the Kaduna International Film Festival will hold in Kaduna as from August 25 to 29, 2026. Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the festival Isreal Kashim Audu disclosed that preparations leading to the actualization of the 2026 edition started with the official unveiling of the nominations which according to him is made up of films that celebrate outstanding achievements in African and international cinema. Isreal Kashim stated that this year’s nominations reflect the festival’s growing international reach, with strong participation from filmmakers across Nigeria, Uganda, India, Sweden, Guinea-Bissau, and the United Kingdom. “The categories recognize excellence in feature films, directing, acting, cinematography, animation, documentary, indigenous storytelling, student filmmaking, editing, and production design” he said. Films nominated in the feature Film Category include, *Wrong Number* by Nakabuuka Aisha (Uganda), *Longing to Belong* by Mariam Ndagire Kizito (Uganda), *Adui* by Ayeny T. Steve (Uganda), *When Love Prays* by Ben Cassie (Nigeria), *Pink Diary* by Samuel Idiagbonya (Nigeria), and *Nini* by Samuel Idiagbonya (Nigeria). The Best

Director category features nominations for Ssesimba Taddeo for *At the Edge*, Ben Cassie for *When Love Prays*, Samuel Idiagbonya for *Nini*, and Nakabuunka Aisha for *Wrong Number*. Actors including Uzee Usman Adeyemi, Yemi Blaq, Uche Montana, Bimbo Akintola and Patience Ozokwor earned nominations in the acting category for their exceptional performances. In the Animation Category, nominated films include *Enough* by Denis Junior (Uganda), *Then I Grew Up* by Ssenani Ssentongo (Uganda), and *Amani Groove Quest* by Ibukun Akeroro (Nigeria/UK). The Indigenous Film Category highlights culturally rooted storytelling with nominations for *Oyiza* by Yemi Filmboy Morafa (Nigeria), *Daughter of the Soil and Broken Life* by Ronald Kyomuhendo (Uganda), and *Wane Ne* by Adam Mustapha Garba (Nigeria). More information can be sourced at www.kadunainternationalfilmfestival.com

Massive Entries For 2026 Imo International Film Festival

THE Jury for the 2026 Imo International Film Festival has announced the receipt of over 110 entries for this year’s festival. The Head Juror, Amayo Uzo Philips, stated that entries were received from different parts of the world, including South Africa, Morocco, France, Sri Lanka, Serbia, Nepal, and the United States of America. According to him, submissions were received in various categories including Best Short Film, Best Screenplay, Best Make-Up, Best Production Design, Best Costume Design, Best Actor (Male), Best Actor (Female), Best Supporting Actor (Male), and Best Supporting Actor (Female). Other categories include Best Indigenous Film, Best Cinematography, Best Editing, Best Picture, Best Director, Best Documentary Film, and Best Feature Film. The 2026 edition of the Imo International Film Festival, themed “Screen to Market: Turning Stories into Sustainable Enterprise,” is scheduled to hold from July 23 to 25 in Owerri, the Imo State capital. More information at www.imoiff.ng.

The Tribute That Is Long Overdue

By Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo

THERE is a tendency to think that institutions emerge fully formed. They do not. Behind every enduring institution are men and women who lend it something more valuable than money: credibility. That was the role Professor Femi Osofisan played in the story of the Nigeria Prize for Literature. When the prize was new, uncertain, and untested, he stepped forward. When it needed legitimacy, he lent his name. When it needed intellectual weight, he lent his reputation. When younger writers needed encouragement, he gave it. Like many of the giants of his generation, Femi understood that nations are built not only with roads, bridges, gas plants, and power stations. They are also built with stories, ideas, scholarship, imagination, and culture. He understood that literature matters because it helps a people understand who they are. Today, the Nigeria Prize for Literature stands as one of the world’s most valuable literary prizes and arguably the most prestigious literary



Femi Osofisan

award on the African continent. But prizes do not become institutions by accident. They become institutions because respected men and women place their reputations behind them and nurture them through their formative years. Femi Osofisan was one of those guardians. As he marks his 80th birthday, we celebrate not only a distinguished playwright, scholar, teacher, former President of the Association of Nigerian Authors, and current Chairman of its Board of Trustees. We celebrate a patriot who answered the call when Nigerian literature needed him. The agenda then was a better Nigeria. The agenda remains a better Nigeria. And so, on behalf of countless writers, readers, students, and lovers of literature, I say: Thank you for showing up. Thank you for believing. Thank you for lending your weight when it mattered most. Happy 80th Birthday, Professor Femi Osofisan. The debt we owe cannot be measured in cash. It can only be measured in gratitude, in respect, and in the enduring legacy of work worth reading. Lastly, if you want to be remembered long after your time, do something worth writing about or write something worth reading. Osofisan has done both. He will be doubly remembered. Thrice if you count Okinba Launko. Mbanefo, founder of the Nigeria Prize for Science and Literature, lives in Montreal, Canada.

Shyllon Museum Expands Reach, Deepens Impact With International Residency

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

THE Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art (YSMA) has expanded its reach and deepened impact with the recent residency partnership in the 2026 cohort of TheMuseumsLab, an initiative fostering collaboration, exchange, and professional development among museums across Africa and Europe. This collaboration signals a bold step forward—one that reinforces its role as a leading institution for knowledge production, cultural exchange and the future of museum practice in Africa and beyond. By joining TheMuseumsLab network, the museum has expanded its role as a hub for intellectual exchange and professional training, while strengthening its position within the global museum ecosystem. Themed ‘Building Futures from Memory: Museums and Memorial Sites as Agents’, TheMuseumsLab 2026 will focus on transforming museums into spaces of dialogue and social change by fostering community engagement, justice, and reconciliation. The programme is jointly organ-

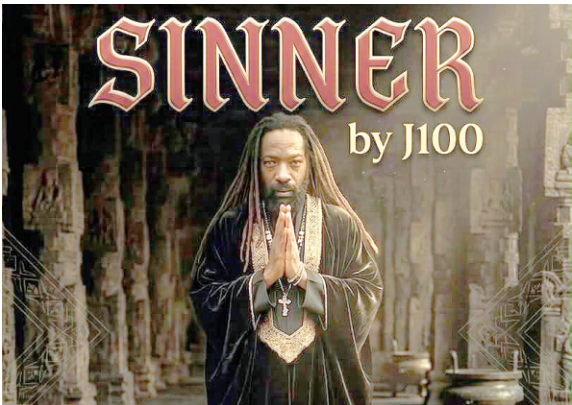
ised by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, with funding from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) and the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. Selected as one of 66 partner museums for this edition, YSMA’s entry into this distinguished network marks a significant milestone—not only for the institution but also for Nigeria’s museum landscape. Notably, YSMA becomes the first Nigerian university art museum to join this influential Afro-European platform. As part of this partnership, YSMA will host its first international residency programme in September 2026, welcoming two museum professionals from Uganda and the UK. The residency will serve as a dynamic space for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and cross-cultural dialogue, reinforcing the museum’s commitment to education, public engagement, and the advancement of museum practice. Speaking on the significance of this achievement, Jess Castellote, the

Museum Director of YSMA stated: “It affirms our commitment to positioning YSMA not just as a repository of art, but as a living institution dedicated to learning, dialogue, and exchange. Hosting a residency of this nature allows us to contribute meaningfully to the development of museum professionals across continents, while also bringing global perspectives into our local context. It is an opportunity to deepen our impact as an educational museum and to amplify African voices within international museum conversations.” Also commenting on the partnership, Solveig Rietschel, Head of TheMuseumsLab, said: “YSMA’s work reflects a thoughtful and forward-looking approach to the role of cultural institutions in society, with a strong emphasis on education, community engagement, and innovative programming. We are very excited about their upcoming residency, which will provide a vital platform for exchange between African and European professionals.”

J100 Unveils New Afro-Amapiano Anthem, Sinner

By Silver Nwokoro

RISING Nigerian artist, J100 (@adokiyej100, has officially released his highly anticipated single, *Sinner*, a captivating fusion of Afrobeat, Amapiano, and House music that showcases his unique sound and artistic versatility. Originally from Port Harcourt and currently based in Lagos, J100 continues to establish himself as one of the promising voices in Nigeria’s evolving music scene. *Sinner* delivers infectious rhythms, soulful melodies, and relatable storytelling that resonate with listeners across different audiences. The release comes under Chartbusters Worldwide Entertainment Limited, led by Obafemi Adekola, reinforcing the label’s commitment to discovering and promoting exceptional African talent.



Research, Direct Observation Drive Innovation In AI's Creative Process — Adeyemi

Adewole Ampitan Adeyemi is an experienced digital product Designer with over seven years of expertise delivering fintech, AI and scalable digital products. Throughout his career, he has designed high-impact products for leading companies including Interswitch Group, Cyberspace, DOT, and Descinder. Driven by a passion for community and mentorship, Adewole contributes to the global design community as the founder of DesignFlow, an open-source project that guides UI/UX designers through the end-to-end product design process. In this interview with OPEYEMI BABALOLA, he argues that the future of Artificial Intelligence in product design will depend less on speed and automation but more on how well products understand the realities of the people using them.

How has real user behaviour challenged what AI systems assume about users?

ONE important thing we must understand in the rise of AI systems within product design is that real user behaviour cannot be abstracted away or treated as secondary. That is where many assumptions begin to fail and I would share some personal experience with you. While working at Interswitch Group on

Quickteller Business and agency banking platforms, especially during usability sessions and field observations, I repeatedly encountered behaviours that the data alone could not fully explain. For example, fraud detection models

often flagged shared devices as suspicious activity. But in reality, one phone might serve an entire household, or belong to an agent processing transaction for dozens of customers in a single day. Similarly, some credit and behavioural models assumed users received structured monthly salary deposits, whereas many users actually earned income daily, mostly through cash-based transactions. Those experiences revealed a clear gap between model assumptions and lived reality. Many AI systems are designed around the assumption that users are individual, continuous, and consistently measurable. But real users are often collective, intermittent, adaptive, and only partially observable. Their behaviour is shaped by context, infrastructure, culture, and economic realities that structured datasets do not always capture well. That is why UX research and direct observation remain essential, even in AI-driven systems. The discipline of getting close to real behaviour is often what reveals the difference between what the model interprets as a signal and what is actually happening in people's lives.

How does designing for African users differ from designing on global data patterns?

This question is close to my heart, because most of my UX career has been spent on exactly that gap. Designing for African users, especially from direct ethno-

graphic research in Lagos markets, taught me that behaviour is deeply shaped by environment and context in ways global data patterns often fail to capture. Global product assumptions usually come from highly connected environments where infrastructure is stable, device ownership is personal, and digital trust is already established. But in many Lagos markets, I observed users operating under very different realities. For example, I met merchants sharing devices, relying on multiple SIM cards, checking transactions with neighbours before trusting confirmations, and developing personal workarounds for unstable connectivity. These behaviours would look unusual or inefficient if you only viewed them through analytics dashboards. But in context, they made complete sense. One major difference is trust. Many global systems assume that once a transaction says "successful," the user moves on. But in our market observations, trust was social and behavioural. Users often needed reassurance beyond the interface itself. I also learned that African users are incredibly adaptive. They do not necessarily use products the way designers expect. They improvise constantly around infrastructure limitations, cost, connectivity, and familiarity. That experience changed how I approached design completely. I learned to design mobile-first not as a trend, but as a constraint that sharpened every decision. A 2 MB onboarding video is not elegant; it is a refusal

to serve the user. Designing for sub-3G environments, low-end devices, and shared phones forces clarity. It strips products down to what actually matters. Ironically, those constraints often produce better products for everyone, not just the original audience. Designing purely from global patterns can create products that scale technically while excluding people socially. What African users expose are not edge cases, but weak assumptions hidden inside many modern products. Their realities force designers to confront questions about trust, resilience, accessibility, and adaptability that apply far beyond Africa itself. That was the biggest shift for me. I stopped seeing African constraints as limitations to design around and started seeing them as pressures that reveal what good design actually requires.

What gap was DesignFlow Kit solving, and how is your approach different?

I developed DesignFlow Kit as an AI connector rather than simply an AI generator. Instead of just producing screens or artefacts, it connects research insights, design decisions, and delivery workflows so that when one-part changes, the others remain aligned. That distinction is what makes it different. After nearly eight years leading design across Cyberspace, DOT, and Interswitch: running sprints, design reviews, handovers, and governance processes, I kept seeing the same pattern repeatedly. As design systems and AI tools became better at generating outputs, the real bottleneck was no longer production. The harder problem was maintaining coherence as products evolved. For example, Research findings would get lost between sprints. A user insight uncovered in week two would quietly disappear by week six. Design decisions made during workshops would never fully make it into engineering handovers. Design system rules drifted out of sync faster than teams could maintain them. The issue was never the absence of artefacts. It was the breakdown of continuity between them. DesignFlow Kit was built to address that gap.



Adeyemi



NRCRI
Delivering the Roots of Prosperity

Nigeria's Prof. Chiedozi Egesi Among 40 Global Agri-food Pioneers Honoured by World Food Prize Foundation

THE World Food Prize Foundation has named Nigeria's Professor Chiedozi Ngozi Egesi among 40 distinguished innovators recognized as the 2026 Top Agri-food Pioneers (TAP), marking the 40th anniversary of the prestigious World Food Prize.

The 2026 cohort comprises 40 outstanding individuals from 30 countries across six continents, ranging in age from 16 to 81. The honorees reflect the diversity of talent driving innovation in food and agriculture worldwide and are advancing solutions across the agri-food sector, demonstrating that impactful leadership can emerge from any region and at any stage of life.

Professor Egesi, the Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike, Abia State, is widely regarded as one of Africa's leading agricultural technology pioneers. A renowned cassava breeder, his career has been defined by transformative contributions to crop improvement, biotechnology, and seed systems across the continent.

As head of the NRCRI, Professor Egesi provides scientific and institutional leadership, championing the integration of modern genomics, digital technologies, and biotechnology into Nigeria's agricultural systems. His research has led to the release of dozens of improved cassava varieties, including biofortified and climate-resilient cultivars that have benefited millions of smallholder farmers.

He has also been instrumental in translating

cutting-edge science into practical agricultural solutions through pioneering work in molecular breeding, genomic selection, and gene editing for African staple crops.

Reacting to the recognition, Professor Egesi expressed gratitude to the World Food Prize Foundation and dedicated the honour to the many institutions and individuals who have contributed to the success of agricultural innovation efforts across Africa.

"I am deeply humbled and sincerely grateful to the World Food Prize Foundation for recognizing me as one of the 2026 Top Agri-food Pioneers. This honour reflects not only my personal



Congratulations TO THE 2026 TOP AGRI-FOOD PIONEERS

You've been TAPped!



#FOODPRIZE26

WWW.WORLDFOODPRIZE.ORG

journey but also the collective efforts of many outstanding individuals and institutions committed to transforming agriculture through science, innovation, and partnership," he said.

According to him, achievements in cassava breeding have been made possible through collaborations with international, national and state agricultural institutions, universities, extension agencies, private-sector partners, farmer organisations, researchers, technicians, students, and farming communities.

"This recognition strengthens my resolve to continue working towards improved cassava varieties, resilient food systems, enhanced livelihoods for farmers, and a more food-secure Africa. The journey continues, and the best is yet to come," he added.

Professor Egesi also played a pivotal role in

securing Nigeria's first permit for the field evaluation of genetically modified cassava. He is recognised globally for fostering collaborative research partnerships with leading institutions, including Cornell University and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), helping to strengthen agricultural research networks across Africa.

Another Nigerian recognised among the 2026 Top Agri-food Pioneers is Raphael Mrode, who was honoured for his contributions to dairy cow genetics and breeding.

The recognition of both Professor Egesi and Mrode highlights Nigeria's growing influence in global agricultural research and innovation, as well as the country's contributions to advancing food security and sustainable agricultural development.

Grammy Organisers Expand Global Reach With Five New Categories, Major Rule Changes

By Daniel Anazia

AHEAD of the 69th Grammy Awards, scheduled for February 7, 2027, organisers — The Recording Academy — have announced a sweeping set of rule changes and five new award categories in a move aimed at better reflecting the evolving global music landscape.

The new categories, which will debut at the 2027 Grammy Awards, are Best

Asian Pop Music Performance, Best R&B Collaboration or Duo/Group Performance, Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album, and Best Latin Song.

According to the Academy, the additions that affect artiste eligibility, voting procedures, and award classifications are aimed at ensuring the Grammy Awards continue to reflect the evolving global music landscape

while broadening recognition for creators across genres and disciplines.

The introduction of Best Asian Pop Music Performance is expected to generate significant interest globally, particularly among fans of K-pop, J-pop, C-pop, and other Asian-language music that have witnessed explosive international growth in recent years.

In a statement, the Academy said the

changes emerged from its annual review process involving music creators and industry professionals within its membership. One of the most notable revisions is an update to the Best New Artiste category, where the maximum number of times an artiste can be submitted has been increased from three to four. The adjustment acknowledges the changing nature of artiste development, where

breakthrough success often takes longer.

Chief Executive Officer of The Recording Academy, Harvey Mason Jr. described the changes as a reflection of the industry's continued growth and diversification. "These updates speak to the breadth of today's music industry and the many genres, crafts, and creators shaping the future of music," he said.

Frederick Leonard's *Stolen Miracle* Trailer Ignites Debate Ahead Release

By Daniel Anazia

NOLLYWOOD actor and filmmaker, Frederick Leonard, has sparked widespread conversation online following release of the trailer for his forth coming movie, *Stolen Miracle*, a drama built around a controversial and emotionally charged storyline.

Since the trailer debuted on social media, it has generated intense reactions from movie lovers, with fans divided over both the plot and its realism. While some viewers have praised the film's suspenseful storytelling and bold narrative direction, others have questioned the central premise, triggering a heated debate across multiple platforms.

At the heart of the story is a

woman who allegedly fakes a pregnancy, setting off a chain of events that appears destined to unravel secrets, trust, and relationships. The plot immediately caught the attention of audiences, many of whom expressed curiosity about how such a deception could be sustained within a marriage.

Already showing on Frederick Leonard TV Youtube, one of the most recurring reactions online has been the question: "How can a woman fake a pregnancy and her husband never notice?" The comment, echoed by numerous users, has become one of the driving forces behind the trailer's viral engagement.

Despite the skepticism, many fans have defended the film, arguing



that cinema exists to explore extraordinary situations and provoke conversation. Supporters have described the production as a potential masterpiece, applauding Leonard for tackling a storyline that departs from conventional Nollywood themes.

Others have noted that the controversy itself may be contributing to the film's growing anticipation, with the trailer attracting significant engagement as audiences debate whether the plot is believable or intentionally designed to challenge perceptions.

Movie analysts say the reaction highlights the increasing appetite among Nigerian audiences for films that blend drama, mystery, and social commentary. In recent years, Nollywood filmmakers have become more willing to experiment with unconventional narratives capable of generating conversations beyond the screen.

Tears In Arochukwu As Nollywood Star Ekubo Is Laid To Rest

By Daniel Anazia

IT was a heartbreaking goodbye as Nigeria's entertainment industry bid farewell to actor, Alexx Ekubo, whose talent and presence brought joy to many. He was laid to rest on Thursday in his hometown of Arochukwu, Abia State, following an emotional funeral ceremony attended by family, friends, colleagues, and admirers.

The 40-year-old actor, one of Nollywood's most recognisable faces, passed away on May 11, at Evercare Hospital after a battle with advanced metastatic kidney cancer. The burial followed a wake-keep held on Wednesday, June 17, which drew an outpouring of grief and tributes from across the entertainment industry.

The funeral service and interment on Thursday marked the final chapter in the life of a star whose charm, talent, and vibrant personality earned him a special place in the hearts of fans across Africa.

Hundreds of mourners gathered in Arochukwu, many dressed in black commemorative T-shirts bearing Ekubo's image, as they paid their last respects to the actor. The atmosphere was filled with emotion as family members, friends, and colleagues reflected on his life, career, and lasting impact on Nollywood.

Several actors, filmmakers, and entertainment personalities travelled from different parts of the country to honour the late movie star. Among those who publicly shared their grief was actress Angela Okorie.

The actress shared footage of her journey on social media and called on fans to keep Ekubo's family in their prayers during the difficult period.

Since news of his passing broke, tributes have continued to pour in from colleagues and fans, many describing him as a gifted actor, loyal friend, and inspirational figure whose presence illuminated every room he entered.

Among attendees were Ekubo's bossom friend and colleague Ik Ogbonna, Michael Godson, AY, Ini Edo, Omoni Oboli, Yomi Casual, Funke Akindele, and Segun Arinze.



Japaa, New Hit Song By Mr Bigger, Is Out

By Sunday Aikulola

VETERAN songwriter, theatre artist, linguist and entrepreneur, Mr Bigger Ibekwe, popularly known as Mr Bigger, has released a new hit song, titled, *Japaa*.

Japaa, the Yoruba word for emigration, is a single, which, according to the artist, is a discussion on the dilemma arising from the mass ambition of Nigerian youths to migrate to foreign lands

The song, according to the artist, is prompted by concerns about the future implications of mass exodus of youths, who are the nation builders and leaders of tomorrow.

The song emphasises the need for all to stay back and build the country. With a deeply thought-provoking topic, the song, in an afro-beat presentation, inspires great dance steps.

Mr Bigger, a gospel artist of repute, has consistently commented on and shown great concern over Nigeria's social maladies through some of his secular songs.

In his song, *One Niger*, he stresses the need for a united, corruption and nepotism-free country, while in *Yahoo-Yahoo*, he condemns internet fraud and the Nigeria Police's tendency to label every Nigerian youth as an Internet fraudster.

In *Umuaka* (Children), Mr Bigger extols the virtues of children and childhood, advising the children that "Readers are Leaders".

Highlighting why he wrote the song, *Oti-Nkpu Jesus* (The Jesus Praise Singer), as he is also known in the music evangelical sphere, Mr Bigger emphasises the need for government to recognise the dangers of losing its able-bodied workforce to other countries of the world.



By Daniel Anazia

RAP sensation, Tochukwu Gbubemi Ojogwu, well known as Odumodublvck, is once again commanding attention across the social media, as a viral performance clip of his song, *Industry Machine*, continues to generate widespread conversation among music lovers and fans.

The now-trending reel, which captures the 'Okporoko Rhythm' pioneer performing on a dimly lit stage before an energised crowd, has rapidly gained traction online, with many describing the moment as one of the most captivating live rap performances currently circulating on digital platforms.

At the centre of the excitement are the song's hard-hitting lyrics, particularly, the line: "Dem be dey find me for court all along... E no cost," which has become a rallying chant among fans.

Across TikTok, Instagram, and X, users have been reposting the clip, quoting the lyrics, and flooding comment sections with one recurring phrase: "Big Kala."

The viral momentum has also translated into growing curiosity about the track itself, with many fans asking where they can stream the song and seeking to learn more about it behind the now-famous performance. According to industry observers, the reaction reflects *Declan Rice* hitmaker's unique ability to transform live performances into cultural moments.

World Music Shutdown Concert Unites Make Music Lagos, Alliance Francaise

By Tobii Awodipe

MUSIC lovers, industry stakeholders and culture enthusiasts will today experience an unforgettable celebration as the highly anticipated Make Music Lagos World Music Day Shutdown Concert takes centre stage today, marking the grand finale of the 2026 World Music Day (Fête de la Musique) festivities in Lagos.

Organised by Make Music Lagos, in partnership with Alliance Française de Lagos and supported by the French Embassy in Nigeria, the yearly concert has grown into one of the city's most significant live music events, bringing together established

stars, emerging talents, and thousands of music fans in a celebration of creativity, culture, and artistic expression. The celebration reinforces its mission to democratize music access while driving artiste development, cultural exchange, and industry collaboration across Nigeria.

Celebrated in more than 1,000 cities across over 120 countries, World Music Day is a global initiative that promotes free musical expression, supports emerging talent, and uses music as a vehicle for community engagement and cultural connection.

This year's programme features a diverse lineup of activities designed to engage dif-

ferent segments of the music ecosystem. Activities include the Songwriters' Workshop, which took place on June 12, and a full day of industry-focused programming on June 18, including the Music Business Conference (MBC), Album Listening Party, and Catalogue Review Sessions.

Today's concert, according to the organisers, promises to be an exciting blend of sounds and performances from some of Nigeria's most respected musicians, including Johnny Drille, Made Kuti, The Cavemen, Rotimi Keys, Dotti the Deity, and Ifé, alongside a lineup of emerging performers from across the country.



At FIFA 2026 Concert, Davido Honours Abducted Oyo Pupils, Teachers With Symbolic Jacket

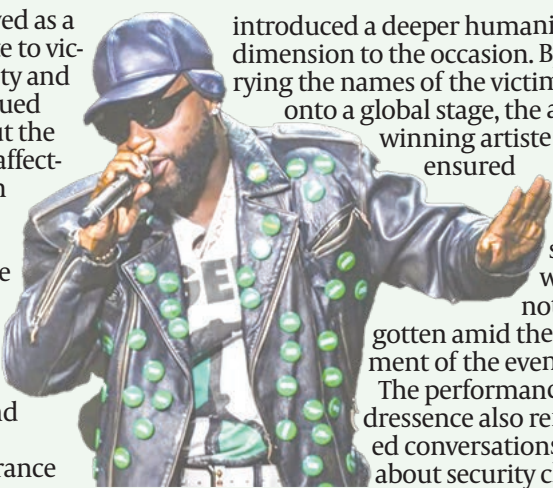
By Daniel Anazia

AFROBEATS superstar David Adedeji Adeleke Jnr., well known as Davido, turned his performance into a moment of remembrance and advocacy after appearing on stage at the ongoing 2026 FIFA World Cup Countdown Concert in Los Angeles, wearing a custom-made jacket bearing the names of abducted pupils and teachers from Oyo State.

His striking fashion choice quickly captured global attention, with images and videos from the event spreading rapidly across social media platforms. The emotional

significance of the gesture was not lost on attendees at the concert. The symbolic outfit immediately became one of the most talked-about moments of the event, with fans, celebrities, and advocacy groups praising the Assurance hit-maker for drawing international attention to a painful national issue. The move underscored the growing role of entertainers as voices for social consciousness, particularly in an era when celebrity influence often extends beyond music and entertainment. Beyond the music and spectacle,

the gesture served as a poignant tribute to victims of insecurity and a call for continued awareness about the plight of those affected by abduction in Nigeria. Observers noted that while FIFA concerts are typically associated with celebration, culture, and sporting unity, Davido's appearance



introduced a deeper humanitarian dimension to the occasion. By carrying the names of the victims onto a global stage, the award-winning artiste ensured that their stories were not forgotten amid the excitement of the event. The performance and dressence also reignited conversations about security chal-

lenges affecting schools across the country. In recent years, attacks and abductions targeting educational institutions have generated widespread concern among parents, educators, and civil society groups, prompting calls for stronger measures to protect students and teachers.

While the performance delivered the energy and excitement expected from one of Africa's biggest music exports, the jacket served as a powerful reminder that some stories transcend entertainment.

Rybeena Unveils Mr Bee Deluxe

By Silver Nwokoro

STILL basking in the euphoria of acclaimed 2025 project, Nigerian music sensation, Rybeena, popularly called Mr Bee, has announced the release of his forthcoming album – Mr Bee Deluxe, setting the stage for what promises to be a defining year in his career. The artiste has also reaffirmed his long-term commitment to Dapper Music & Entertainment, officially renewing his partnership with the music powerhouse on June 15, 2026, following a successful two-year run together.

This announcement comes after an impressive year for Rybeena, whose Mr Bee project was ranked the 9th Best Project of 2025 by Pulse Nigeria. The body of work earned praise for its blend of contemporary sounds and notable collaborations with Joeboy, Shoday, and Fuji

music legend King Dr. Saheed Osupa, further establishing him as one of the most exciting talents of his generation. As anticipation builds for Mr Bee Deluxe, the artiste is also doubling down on the partnership that has helped shape much of his recent success.

It was learnt that since joining forces with Dapper Music & Entertainment, Rybeena has steadily expanded his audience, strengthened his position within Nigeria's competitive music landscape, and emerged as one of the industry's most promising young voices. The renewed partnership has also reflected a shared vision for sustained growth and greater achievements in the years ahead.

Speaking on the renewed partnership, the Group CEO of Dapper Group, Damilola "Dapper" Akinwunmi, expressed confidence in the



artiste's trajectory and the opportunities that lie ahead.

He said: "Rybeena has done in two years what takes most artists far longer, and this new deal is us putting real weight behind where he is headed. We are not in the business of managing names; we are in the business of building careers. With everything lined up to drop this year, the proof is about to speak for itself."

While reflection on his

journey with the company, Rybeena, who expressed appreciation for the support he has received while teasing what fans should expect in the months ahead, said: "People talk about what a label is when things get loud. For me it's simple: Dapper backed me, built with me, and I'm staying to finish what we started. This year is proof. The 'Mr Bee' deluxe is just the opening."

Tems Takes Global Spotlight At Obama Presidential Centre Opening

By Daniel Anazia

GRAMMY-winning singer Temilade Openiyi, known professionally as Tems on Thursday, June 18, added another milestone to her rapidly expanding global résumé as she performed at the official opening of the Barack Obama Presidential Centre in Chicago, United States.

The globally celebrated singer, songwriter, and record producer joined an impressive lineup of international performers and cultural figures including Stevie Wonder, John Legend, Bono, Bruce Springsteen, Jennifer Hudson, Christina Aguilera, C'mon, The Roots, Eddie Vedder, Marc Anthony and U2's The Edge at the high-profile event, which marks the formal unveiling of the centre dedicated to the legacy of former U.S. President Barack Obama and former First Lady Michelle Obama.

Tems' inclusion in the celebration as the only



Nigerian act on the lineup and one of a small group of international artists selected, underscores her growing influence as one of Africa's most prominent musical exports.

Over the past few years, she has successfully transitioned from a rising Nigerian star to a globally recognised artiste, earning acclaim for her distinctive sound, powerful vocals, and genre-defying artistry.

The event attracted political leaders, business executives, entertainers, philanthropists, and cultural stakeholders from across the world, making it one of the most significant public gatherings in the United States this year.

For Tems, the performance represents another landmark moment in a career already defined by international achievements. From collaborating with some of the biggest names in global music to winning prestigious awards and performing on some of the world's most celebrated stages, she continues to break barriers for African artists on the international scene.

The Barack Obama Presidential Center opening blends music, culture, history, and community engagement, reflecting the values and vision associated with the Obama legacy.

TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

Judy Austin's Ex-Husband Is In 'Cifia' Pains!

T4T saw an emotional video online during the week where ex-husband of the actress wife of popular actor, Yul Edochie, Judy Austin, was crying. He was actually weeping. Please note that there is a difference between crying and weeping. Mr. Obasi was weeping as he narrated how Judy Austin was allegedly cheating on him while still in the marriage.

"Every time we are at home watching Nollywood movies that Yul (Edochie) featured in, she will say, "I love this man". Obasi said he was uncomfortable with his then wife's somewhat obsession with Yul, but she, according to Obasi, said Yul's voice reminded her of an uncle named 'Chinedu' who Obasi knew about.

He dropped the bomb later in the podcast that he got to know that both the actor and his ex-wife were already seeing each other even when Judy was still in the marriage. The weeping continued and the anchor of the podcast had to hand over a very big hand towel to Obasi to wipe his tears which were now flowing like River Niger in a high tide. Men don't cry, truly, they weep!

As a man, T4T feels for the heartbroken Obasi, it is obvious that he wants his wife back, but a woman *wey don already born two abi na* three children for Yul Edochie so naim bros still dey fixated on? The Obasi marriage while it lasted, produced two children, that should be some sort of consolation for Mr. Obasi unless anoda tin dey inside. Yul is even magnanimous enough to marry Judy along with her two kids from her previous marriage, and they are being taken care of unless the social media display na for show only, but T4T doubts.

Dear bros Obasi, telling us the real Igbo names of Judy Austin won't change anything because we already knew that the 'Judy Austin' was a Nollywood 'show show' name. It is time for you to move on. There is an Urhobo proverb

which says: "When a fish is bigger than another fish, it swallows it". *Person wey strong pass you don collect ya wife*, and even married her officially, sacrificing his old marriage too. As you are troubling Judy, so is Yul's ex (*abi na estranged sef*) wife *dey drag am upandan*. She even has a mob (Queen May Fans *abi kini*) dragging and squeezing Yul the same way one does a wet cloth.

On a lighter note, Judy Austin's Igbo name as revealed by the ex-husband thick *sha*. Very very *igbotic*, so, how did she arrive at this sweet Judy Austin? Go and verify, na una sabi.

Anambra Pastor, Wives And Criminal Liability

THE social media space was literally on fire with the buzz that security personnel on the orders of the Anambra state government had arrested pastor Harrison Charles over allegations of marrying multiple women and promoting wife-swapping within his church. Police investigations are ongoing, the various news reports said.

T4T had to quickly scan through other reports including the statement by the state government to find an additional alleged crimes Pastor Charles is being charged with and or even arrested for; he found none.

Let us quickly interrogate the alleged offences again: "marrying multiple women and promoting wife-swapping within his church". T4T was expecting to read that he raped women or even defiled minors or perhaps married the "multiple women" against their will using some kind of threat and cohesion, but he did not see any. Perhaps, what looked like a criminal offence is the "wife swapping" that allegedly takes place in his church. As weird as the wife swapping is, that it even happened in a supposed church of Christ makes it weirder, but then, does it amount to a criminal offence if the pastor claims it was the 'God' he serves, the one who gave him the 'power' to open a church and also directed him to have wife swapping as one of his church

doctrines?

Well, T4T did not stop there, he called a senior law officer and asked when "marrying multiple women and promoting wife-swapping within in a church" became a serious criminal offence that could earn one some nice prison time? He took some minutes thinking it over, he answered he does not know anywhere in the Nigeria criminal justice that criminalises what T4T sought to know.

But there is a caveat, he said. If the state could prove, with the assistance of the wives the pastor married that they were forced into the union by threat or manipulation, and also, if all but one couple who swapped his wife or husband later felt unhappy about the exercise, then, Anambra may have a case.

Further research by T4T got this: "Wife swapping is generally not a criminal offense among consenting adults in most Western nations. However, in regions governed by strict moral or religious laws—including parts of Nigeria and the Middle East—it can lead to arrests on charges like public disturbance, adultery, or inciting social disturbances".

"If the arrangement involves non-consensual elements, human trafficking, manipulation, or fraud—such as the recent high-profile case investigated by authorities in Anambra State involving a clergyman—it becomes a serious criminal investigation."

So, it is left for the Anambra government to prove that church members were coerced and or manipulated into performing the exercise. All said, the case is still wide open. Well, this is T4T's submission: *if nor be juju and stupidity, T4T will go to church with im wife*, and 'man of god' will say he should leave her for another man to take home, and T4T will also take another person's wife home. *Which kain juju be dat wey the Anambra pastor use for the church members?* Anyway, this is one more reason T4T fled from anything called religion. Im nor get wife wey dem dey swap.



By Maria Diamond

MORE often than not, a typical black woman wears hair extensions, natural or synthetic on almost a daily basis and for some, every now and then. Based on the fact that hair extensions have become a way of life and style that defines the black woman's magical look, it is imperative for her to always consider the weather season before styling her hair. **Your Hairstyles for each season is a huge part of your Identity**

Black Woman Hair Magic In The Rainy Season

Show me your hairstyle in the rainy season and I will tell you who you are -an organised woman or the anything-goes kind, to say the least.

The saying and notion that a woman's hair is her crowning glory and beauty may not be as completely correct in this dispensation as rephrasing it to: 'a woman's hairstyle is her crowning glory and beauty'. Now, that is absolutely correct.

The Organised Woman for all-season

Of course, you have the hair, but what you make of it is the crowning glory that unleashes your inner facial beauty, more importantly, knowing what to make of your hair for all-season; whether it's the rainy season, dry season or even the hot season. For instance: The weather is intensely hot and you wear a bulky hairstyle, all dropped down covering your face and neck, you're definitely begging for self-discomfort and skin irritation.

Or during the dry season and you wear a frizzy-prone hairstyle, which is definitely a call for a dry and dull look. While the implication for wearing certain hairstyles that melts down with drops of rain is as

good as a meltdown day.

Thus, this rainy season what hairstyle is appropriate?

A Woman's Go-to Hairstyle In The Rainy Season

Dutch/French Braids - No woman of any colour, facial structure or hairline can ever go wrong with Dutch braids. This classic inverted couple strands hair weave style sits up neatly on the head and with a durable water resistance edge control to put all loose ends in place, even a broken hairline does not stand a chance.

Dutch braids in all its partitions, brings the totality of your face to a pop up perfection while staying intact and even more beautiful with drops of water.

Cornrows/Stitch Braids - This versatile hairstyle tightly braided in a stitch row is the trending black girl magic and a perfect water resistance braid that stays in place while it rains cats and dogs.



PHOTO: Pinterest

Pixie Curls - This springy hairstyle in all its forms thrives in water and is particularly perfect for women who want to wear the hair extension wig long or short. The lightweight curls bounce in water and retain their shine and curls when dried.

Ponytail - Every woman loves ponytail hairstyles especially in this era of edge control hairline structuring, the result is usually a sleek knot. However, for the rainy season it is best to use pixie curls hair extension to wrap up the tail in one wholesome neat knot.



Stakeholders and participants at the 'Creative Convergence' conference in Zambia recently...

Zambia Partners ACM For 'Creative Convergence'

By Maria Diamond

TO accelerate Africa's creative economy in a historic unified front, the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts, Zambia, Africa Creative Market (ACM), and the National Arts Council of Zambia (NAC) recently hosted a joint press conference at the Lusaka Showground under the shared theme "Creative Convergence".

The event, which was moderated by founder, FashionEVO, Dr Yetty Ogunnubi and the Director, National Arts Council of Zambia, Mr Maanka A. Chipindi, was attended by high profile personalities from all walks of life including cross-sector programme partners from Nigeria, South Africa, and other international territories, as well as essential local sector groups, including the Leaders of National Arts Associations, the National Association of Media Arts (NAMA), and the Zambia Association of Musicians (ZAM).

During the conference, the organisers officially unveiled Zambia as host of three landmark events: the Creative Industry Business Summit (CIBS), in partnership with the Africa Creative Market (ACM), from June 29 to July 2, 2026, followed by the Kwimbo National Arts Festival on July 3 and 4, 2026, which will bring together multi-disciplinary creators spanning fashion, music, film, digital arts, comedy, theatre, dance, literary

arts and visual crafts.

This joint initiative establishes a deliberate pipeline connecting local grassroots talent to continental and global business ecosystems.

By integrating policy infrastructure, business matchmaking, and cultural celebration into a single marketplace, the collaboration positions Zambia as the definitive hub for Africa's creative trade.

Convener of the Africa Creative Market and President of the Ascend Studios Foundation and WIFT Africa, Dr. Inya Lawal noted that the venture is aimed at standardising business operations across the continent: "We noticed that for a long time, the private sector was working in silos, same with government, as well as the development sector, and academia. We got together and decided to create a platform where there would be a level playing field, where everyone feels equal, and where we can come together not just to talk but to facilitate investment and grow the creative economy."

Lawal noted that since its inception in 2022, ACM has facilitated over \$200 million in investments across Africa. She explained that the joint venture selected Lusaka because "Zambia is ready. We see an industry that is ready to take over and sprout."

In her remark, Director of Arts at the

Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts, Zambia, Ms Esther Ng'ambi, emphasised that the convergence represents a coordinated institutional alignment between the Ministry and its statutory boards to execute a unified strategy for local creative advancement.

Delivering government's keynote, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Arts, Mr Kangwa Chileshe, declared that Zambia has established the necessary regulatory frameworks to safely attract large-scale international investments.

Chileshe said: "Over the last five years, the Government of the Republic of Zambia, through the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts under the leadership of President Hakainde Hichilema, has made significant strides in transforming the creative arts sector into a viable economic driver through comprehensive policy, legislative, and institutional reforms. Zambia is ready to host, ready to partner, ready to invest, and ready to shine."

Chileshe also highlighted key investment incentives executed by the state, including the complete removal of import duties on music and film equipment, alongside Zambia's official accession to the ATA Carnet system, which permits the temporary importation of commercial creative goods duty-free.

My Tasty Naija Food Festival UK Takes Nigeria On Gastronomy Tourism

By Maria Diamond

AS Nigerian culinary and culture continues to travel across the world, My Tasty Naija Food Festival is set to propagate this experience as it welcomes all and sundry to the second edition of the yearly event in London and Manchester.

Following the success of its inaugural London event in 2025, the festival this year will hold in two cities in the United Kingdom. The London event holds on Saturday, July 5, while the Manchester edition is billed for Saturday, July 11, at Nigerian House Manchester.

Remarking, Convener Abass Tijani (DJ Abass) said, "the vision for My Tasty Naija has always been to celebrate Nigerian food and culture across the UK. Our YouTube

show features Nigerian restaurants from London and across the UK. The goal is to take the festival experience to different cities each year and eventually to Nigeria and other parts of the world."

With demand continuing to grow, this year's festival will welcome up to 3,000 attendees in London and 1,500 attendees in Manchester.

Visitors can look forward to great food, live entertainment, exhibitors, cultural showcases, networking opportunities, and the return of the popular My Tasty Naija Junior Chef Competition and Food Competition.

This edition is sponsored by Nigerian Eats UK and GeftMe - a digital fundraising platform that makes giving to verified causes in Nigeria simple, secure, and impactful.



Chevron, NCDMB, Bristow Launch Cadet Pilot Training Programme In Nigeria

• To Train 10 Cadet Pilots, Strengthen Local Aviation Capacity For Offshore Operations

CHEVRON Nigeria Limited (CNL), in partnership with the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) and Bristow Helicopters, has launched a helicopter pilot development programme that will train 10 Nigerian cadet pilots and two trainees from CNL's neighbouring communities, advancing local capacity in Nigeria's oil and gas aviation sector.

Speaking on behalf of the company, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Chevron Nigeria, Mid-Africa Region, Olu-soga Oduselu, said "the programme, which is the first of its kind in the industry, reflects Chevron's commitment to building critical local capability for oil and gas industry."

Facilitated by Bristow Helicopters, the programme includes technical and non-technical training designed to prepare participants for helicopter operations that support offshore energy activities.

The non-technical phase began on June 15, 2026, with Blueshell Energy Training Services, while the technical phase will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

NCDMB said the initiative



Chairman/ Managing Director, Chevron Nigeria and Mid-Africa Region, Jim Swartz

aligns with its objective of developing globally competitive Nigerian professionals and strengthening the country's local content capacity. The regulator added that this initiative positions Nigeria as a net exporter of local content. NCDMB officials also encouraged the trainees to maintain a strong safety culture and fully embrace the opportunity.

Bristow Helicopters emphasised the importance of safety, discipline and operational precision in prepar-

ing pilots for offshore aviation roles.

The programme concluded its launch activities with participating trainees signing a code of conduct and reaffirming their commitment to discipline, professionalism and integrity throughout the training. Chevron and its partners said the initiative is a forward-looking investment in the future of Nigeria's oil and gas industry, where safe and efficient aviation services remain vital to offshore operations.

ShortStory

The 24-Hour Marriage! (1)

By Segun Durowaiye
(08055356855)

It was all pomp and pageantry that special day when Diran Thompson and his beautiful heart-throb, Sade, became husband and wife, joined in holy matrimony. They were both very happy after the union, but something really disheartening and dishonorable tore them apart and put an end to a once blossoming relationship.

They were both university graduates. Diran was a Master's degree holder in Industrial Relations, while Sade studied Sociology, had her first degree at the Lagos State University. Diran attended the University of Jos. They met at a birthday party two years ago in Lagos Island. Sincerely, Diran was a ladies' man any day. Tall, dark-skinned and handsome, Diran had all the qualities ladies want in a man. After his masters, he got a good job in a reputable Insurance company located on the Island. His pay-packet was big and sumptuous.

What drew Diran and Sade together that particular birthday party was physical attraction. Diran fell in love with Sade because she was very beautiful and enchanting, while Sade too was swept off her feet by the sheer handsomeness, charisma and wealth displayed by the young man. Before one could say 'Love', the two people had started chatting like two long-lost friends, cooing sweet nothings into each other's ears.

One thing led to another and they both made up their minds to walk down the aisle and they became husband and wife. They signed the dotted lines four months after knowing each other. It was like a marriage made and consummated in heaven. Millions were spent at the grand marriage ceremony. All the money-bags and celebrities were there. The society wedding was the talk-of-the-town. Thus, Diran and Sade held each other's arms, with smiles radiating their brows and savoured every moment of their marriage ceremony. It was a blissful and happy day, or so it seemed.

It was getting to around 11.15p.m. when the newly-wedded couple bade their well-wishers

good night and retired to the comfort of their bed-room to have their privacy. Romance without privacy is tantamount to nothing but boredom, particularly when newlywed couple are involved. So, under the envious eyes of many well-wishers, families and friends, the bride and groom, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, merrily walked out of sight into their cosy bedroom to share their first marital privacy.

"Cupid! This is a great marriage, Sade!" Diran exclaimed with undiluted joy and excitement.

"Diran darling," Sade replied, "I enjoyed every moment of it! Never knew that such a multitude of well-wishers would grace the occasion!"

"Honey," Diran cooed softly, "I am really happy and delighted that everything went the way I expected! Among our well-wishers I could count close to 17 ladies I had dated in the past! It's a big surprise! Once a Casanova, always a Casanova! That reminds me of my romantic escapades in the past before I met you." Diran adjusted himself very well on the luxurious bed and began a long speech to the shock and dismay of his new wife.

"Never knew I could be lucky to marry such a beautiful lady like you, Sade!" he continued, "I had been so loose in my love life. Sincerely, right from my secondary school days I was called Maradona by my classmates going by the way I used and dumped many young girls of my age-group. Some of my friends even nicknamed me Romeo, considering the careless and easy way I seduced many young girls. I was the lover boy in town. No girl could escape from my sugar-coated tongue. My pride is my manhood. It became even worse when I got admission into the university. I dated many young girls and ladies alike that I lost count of the number of the opposite sex I'd made love with. If I can remember, they should be close to 70 girls I dated during my university days.

To be concluded.

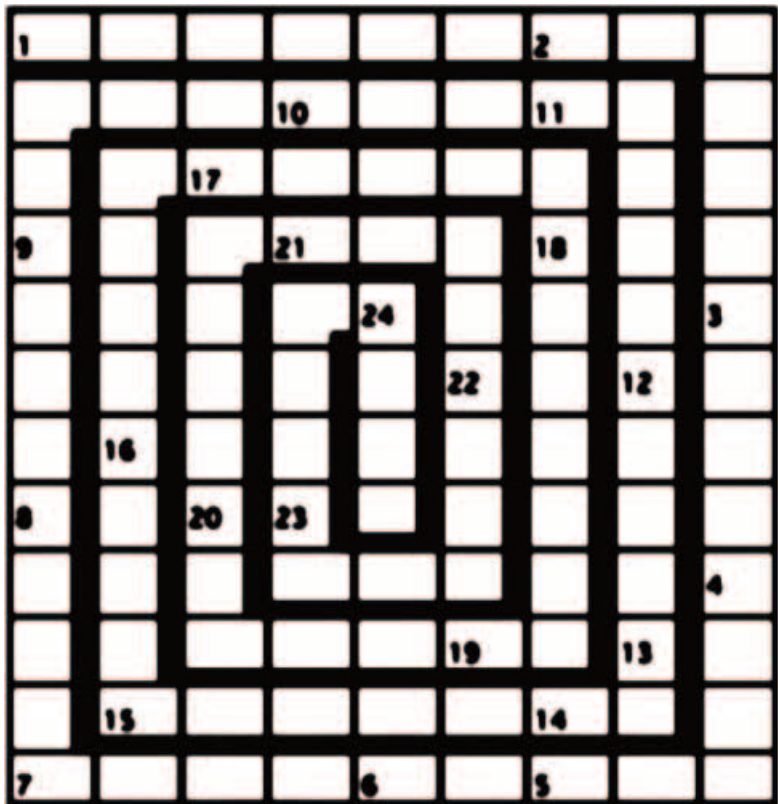
Interested sponsor/sponsors for this **SHORT STORY** column should please contact:
08023015115 or 08055356855.

with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
olulana3@yahoo.com

Overlapping Word Game

Solution

- 1 Ganjuwa
- 2 Ado Ekiti
- 3 Tirade
- 4 Deserve
- 5 Vest
- 6 Stable
- 7 Least
- 8 Tureta
- 9 Taribo
- 10 Oguta
- 11 Takkie
- 12 Endure
- 13 Real
- 14 Almost
- 15 Tarka
- 16 Akamkpa
- 17 Pasture
- 18 Retrieve
- 19 English
- 20 Shortage
- 21 Ageless
- 22 Essence
- 23 Escudo
- 24 Dope



Overlapping Word Game

- 1 Gov. Abdullahi Sule's state, (8).
- 2 An amount wasted, (7).
- 3 Become involved in, (6).
- 4 Citizen of Germany, (6).
- 5 Place where insect shelter, (4).
- 6 Injure by overexertion, (6).
- 7 Lacking the power to move, (5).
- 8 A slight earthquake, (6).
- 9 Child whose parents are dead, (5).
- 10 Small hollow in the stomach, (5).
- 11 Add detail to something said, (9).
- 12 Charged, (5).
- 13 Shallow concave object, (4).
- 14 Reorder a pack of cards, (7).
- 15 Clear enough to read, (7).
- 16 A small flaw, (7).
- 17 Become smaller, (6).
- 18 Small rucksack, (8).
- 19 Resulting from motion, (7).
- 20 Hanging rod of ice, (6).
- 21 Number after ten, (6).
- 22 Responsible for doing, (7).
- 23 Cause to overbalance and fall
- 24 Jump high suddenly, (4).

Word Search

Local Govt. in Benue State

Apa	Gboko	Makmuni
Oju	Buruku	Okpokuru
Ukun	Ohimini	Ushongo
Guma	Kwande	Gwer East
Agatu	Makurdi	Katsina Ala
Tarika	Vandeika	Ogbadigbo

V	A	E	D	N	A	W	K	A	V	W
U	N	A	P	A	L	M	I	K	F	E
K	D	O	F	M	A	A	N	I	T	S
U	E	G	B	U	A	K	U	E	S	T
R	K	B	O	G	N	U	M	D	A	I
U	T	A	G	A	I	R	I	N	E	N
B	A	K	N	T	S	D	K	A	R	I
U	R	O	O	E	T	I	A	V	E	M
R	I	J	H	W	A	G	M	B	W	I
U	K	U	S	U	K	U	N	D	G	H
K	A	G	U	R	U	K	O	P	K	O

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Society

www.guardian.ng

Birthdays

AJAYI, Oluwatimileyin Joshua will be 40 on June 21, 2026. Born on June 21, 1986, he attended Santos Nursery and Primary School in Ogun State. He thereafter proceeded to Santos Comprehensive High School, also in Ogun State. A cerebral strategist with unquenchable thirst for knowledge, Ajayi also attended Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State for his tertiary education.

A prominent Nigerian media entrepreneur and the Founder/Publisher of Brand Communicator, the country's leading multi-award winning publication for brands, marketing, and sustainability, he is the Chief Executive Officer of Awesome Communications.

A highly respected figure in the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) industry in the country, Ajayi has emerged Nigeria's Top 50 PR

Power List in collaboration with *The Guardian* for multiple consecutive years, recognising his extensive influence in public relations and brand communication.

Ajayi is the convener of Women in Marketing Communications Conference and Awards (WIMCA) – the largest gathering of female marketing and communication professionals in Nigeria. He is also the founder of Brandcom Awards – a platform that celebrates excellence across organisations, agencies, and marketing leaders. An active player in steering industry conversations, Ajayi is the convener of MarkHack (a platform connecting marketing, media, and technology). He advocates prioritising human experience, culture, and trust over algorithms in the age of Artificial Intelligence.

Brand Communicator has also emerged PR Magazine of the Year many times at the Lagos



Ajayi

PR Industry Gala and Awards (LaPRIGA).

FALORE, Mrs Bolajoko Morolake (née Thompson), educationist and Proprietress of Mind Builders School will be 70 on Tuesday, June 23, 2026.

She was born on Saturday, June 23, 1956, into the notable Gureje-Thompson family of Eti-Oni, near Ilesa, in present-day Atakumosa East Local Council Area of Osun State.

Her father, Chief Samuel Olatunde Thompson, was a distinguished education administrator who served for many



Falore

years as Bursar of Ilesa Grammar School and later retired as the Bursar of Oduduwa College, Ile-Ife. Beyond his professional accomplishments, he was also a respected traditional ruler who became the *Oloni* of Eti-Oni in September 1957 and reigned honourably until his passing in 1992.

She began her educational journey at St. John's 'B' Primary School, Iloro, Ilesa, and later attended Methodist High School, Ilesa, where she completed her secondary education in 1974. Thereafter, she joined the pioneer set of the UPE-sponsored

Teacher Training Programme at the then Government Teacher Training College (GTTC), Ilesa.

After qualifying as a Grade II Teacher, she began her teaching career at St. John's School A, Iloro, she later proceeded to Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo State, where she obtained National Certificate in Education (NCE) in 1981, and thereafter pursued a full-time university degree and eventually obtained a Master's degree. After completing the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme at the Government College, Ikoyi, between 1982 and 1983, she got married on April 2, 1983, to her longtime friend of over 10. Shortly after the marriage, she began teaching at the Queen's College, Yaba, Lagos State.

In pursuit of higher education and professional growth, she enrolled at the then University of Ife, where she obtained her university degree in 1988. She

later earned a Master's Degree in Educational Administration on a part-time basis from the University of Lagos, Akoka.

Thereafter, she joined the then newly established Atlantic Hall, which was temporarily located at Maryland, Lagos, as one of the pioneer teachers.

Her career later took her to the Inspectorate Division of the Lagos State Ministry of Education, where she served as an Inspector of Education; the experience exposed her to the operational and administrative requirements of establishing and managing quality schools. After about 10 years of meritorious service, she voluntarily retired as a Senior Inspector of Education in 1997 to pursue that lifelong dream.

Compiled by Gbenga Akinfenwa, oluwaagbenga.akinfenwa@guardian.ng or gbengaherkin@yahoo.com

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

Events



Businessman, Alhaji Tayo Ajao (left); retired Permanent Secretary, Osun State, Alhaji Moshood Tayo Giwa; former National Commissioner, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Lai Olorode; a Lagos-based building contractor, Alhaji Lateef Akin Jabbar, and Maintenance Manager, Skyward College of Nursing Sciences, Iwo, Alhaji Kamaldeen Hamza Olorode, after *Eid-El-Kabir* Prayer, at The Wings Schools Central Mosque Playing Ground, Iwo, Osun State ...recently.



Managing Director / Chief Executive Officer, Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA), Mrs Abimbola Akinajo (left); Chairman/Chief Consultant, Global Transport Policy, Dr. Oluwasegun Musa; and Chairman of the day, Air Commodore Ademola Onitiju, (rtd), at the yearly Global Transport Policy (GTP) Multimodal Roundtable in Lagos ...on Wednesday.



Director, Academy Press Plc, David Pritchard (left); Fatima Betara; former Managing Director, Academy Press Plc, Gbenga Ladipo; his wife, Funmi; Managing Director, Academy Press Plc, Kemi Ogunnubi and Managing Director, West African Book Publishers, Folashade Omo-Eboh at the send-off party of Gbenga Ladipo, in Lagos

PHOTO: MARVELLOUS OBASA



President, St. Kizito Commandery 727, Sir Barnabas Bem Vangerwua, (left); President, Lagos Grand Commandery, Brig. Gen. Paulinus Nwankwo, and Sir Benedict Okhumale at the second Quarter Joint Grand Board of Trustees (GBOT) of Knights of St. John International (KSJI) and Ladies Auxiliary (LAUX) Archdiocese of Lagos held at St. Kizito Commandery Church, Iju, Lagos ...recently.



Special Assistant to the District Governor, Desmond Otakpomowen (left); Past Assistant Governor, Abiodun Akingbade; District Executive Secretary, Omotunde Olaleye; Rotary International District 9112 Governor, Lanre Adedoyin; Chairman of World Greatest Meal Committee, Tokunbo Opanubi; Secretary to the World Greatest Meal Committee, Sharon Onyeneke and Chief of Staff to the District Governor, Akeem Sunmonu at the donation of \$13,000 to the Rotary Foundation PolioPlus Fund programme.

ODU Mourns Passing Of Sarat Olatinwo

THE Offa Descendants' Union (ODU), under the leadership of Alhaji (Dr) Azeez Salako Muideen Olaniyi, mourns the passing of Alhaja Sarat Adewumi Olatinwo (née Ijaya), who died on Friday, June 5, 2026.

She was a respected matriarch, whose life was characterised by faith, kindness, wisdom, and unwavering devotion to her family and community. She lived a life of honour and service, leaving behind a legacy of good character and positive impact that will continue to inspire future generations.

ODU, in a statement signed by its National Public Relations Officer (PRO), Taofeek Olalekan



The late Alhaja Olatinwo

Olaosebikan, "extends its heartfelt condolences to Prof. Waheed Olatinwo, the entire Olatinwo and Ijaya families, and all those affected by this painful loss. The union shares in their grief and prays for comfort and strength during this difficult period. ODU prays that Almighty Allah forgives her shortcomings, accepts her good deeds, grants her *Aljanah Firdaus*."

UNILAG Students, Staff Members Benefit From FastCare's Free Medical Initiative

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

HUNDREDS of students, academic staff, and campus residents of University of Lagos (UNILAG) benefitted from free, high-quality healthcare services at the university campus, Akoka, during the recently concluded FastCare Medical Outreach.

The day-long health intervention, which took place recently, was specifically designed to address immediate medical needs, ease the financial burden of healthcare, and promote proactive wellness within the busy university community.

The highly successful initiative was organised by FastCare, a flagship Virtual Doctor Consultations app powered by HealthStation, a leading

health technology and medical services provider in Nigeria.

Through this outreach, HealthStation demonstrated its ongoing commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), community development, and accessible healthcare by bringing vital medical services directly to the campus ecosystem.

Attendees received top-tier medical attention entirely free of cost. The core of the outreach centred on crucial preventative care, featuring specialised blood pressure tests to screen for hypertension and rapid diagnostic malaria tests, a vital intervention given the high prevalence of malaria in the country.

Speaking on the impact and vision behind the event, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of HealthStation said the initiative was borne out of a clear necessity. The rigorous academic environment of a top-tier institution like UNILAG often leaves both students and staff with very little time or financial leeway to pri-

tise their personal well-being.

By positioning FastCare directly on campus, HealthStation aimed to break down the barriers of cost and distance, encouraging early detection of potentially serious health conditions and treating acute illnesses like malaria before they escalate. The FastCare App also enables follow-up consulta-

tions and emergency services.

"At HealthStation, we believe that premium health tracking and medical care should not be a luxury," a company spokesperson stated during the event.

"Through FastCare, we are combining medical expertise with community outreach to catch health risks early. Seeing hundreds of UNILAG community members leave here healthier and more informed proves that these interventions are deeply necessary." The event saw a massive turnout, drawing praise from the university's leadership, student union representatives, and other campus medical bodies. Faculty leaders commended both FastCare and HealthStation for delivering a seamless, highly organ-

ised, and high-impact health programme that directly improved the immediate welfare of the UNILAG community without disrupting the academic calendar.

Beneficiaries expressed deep gratitude for the efficiency and empathy shown by the visiting medical team. Many students noted that the free malaria testing and medications saved them significant out-of-pocket expenses, while staff members appreciated the convenience of getting thorough blood pressure screenings and speaking with a doctor right outside their offices.

Following the success and high engagement at the University of Lagos, HealthStation management has indicated that this is just the beginning.



Chief Executive Officer (CEO), HealthStation Limited, Mazi Kelechi Uloh with management staff and other team members at the event.

From The Rector

Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor Delta State. www.ibrucentre.org

Role Of The Church In A Decaying World (2)

By Stephen Wolemonwu

Sacred Causes

REJECTION of God's Word: Hosea 4:6 declares: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Ignorance of God's word leads to moral blindness. When Scripture is sidelined, society loses its compass.

• **Conformity to Secular Culture:** Romans 12:2 urges believers: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." Yet many Christians assimilate worldly values instead of resisting them, diluting the distinctiveness of the gospel.

• **Pride and Selfishness:** Proverbs 16:18 warns: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Pride breeds entitlement, selfish ambition and disregard for God's authority — all precursors to decay.

The Church As Light In Darkness

• **Moral Leadership:** The Church must speak truth to those in authority, rebuking corruption, injustice and moral decadence. Silence in the face of evil is complicity.

• **Institutional Advocacy:** Through communiqués of the Catholic Bishops'



Stephen Wolemonwu

Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) and initiatives like Caritas Nigeria, the Church advocates for justice, peace and social welfare.

• **Watchdog Function:** The Church serves as the conscience of the nation, reminding leaders and citizens alike of higher moral standards; we must not become the "wagging tail dog, but the watchdog."

• **Partnerships:** Collaboration with institutions like the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and civil society groups strengthens the fight against corruption and injustice.

• **Alternative Values:** By promoting honesty, contentment and hard work, the Church offers a counter-narrative to materialism and greed.

• **When Salt Loses Its Savour** Christ's warning in Matthew 5:13 is sobering: "If salt loses its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?" The Church risks irrelevance when it mirrors the very decay it is meant to resist.

• **Materialism** A n d Prosperity

Gospel: Galatians 1:6-9 warns against preaching "another gospel." When wealth becomes the central message, the cross is emptied of its power.

• **Leadership Tussles:** Internal strife and power struggles weaken the Church's witness. Division within the Body of Christ undermines its credibility.

• **Quest for Wealth and Fame:** When leaders chase celebrity status, spiritual authority is diluted. The shepherd becomes indistinguishable from the world's entertainers.

• **Tribalism and Nepotism:** Favoritism fractures unity. The Church ceases to be a universal family when ethnic or tribal loyalties take precedence over the gospel.

• **Lack of Accountability:** Without transparency, mistrust festers. Scandals erode confidence in spiritual leadership.

• **Entitlement Mentality:** the Church must adhere to Christ modelled servant leadership. When leaders demand privilege instead of serving, they betray the very essence of discipleship.

A Call To Renewal

Decay is real — both secular and sacred. Yet the Church is called to be salt and light. To recover its savour, the Church must therefore:

• Return to the authority of God's word. Resist conformity to secular culture. Model

servant leadership rooted in humility.

• Speak prophetically against injustice. Live out alternative values that inspire hope.

• The challenge is clear: The Church must either shine in the darkness or risk being swallowed by it.

Conclusion: Ecclesial Responsibility In A Decaying World

The Church must reclaim her vocation as salt and light. This requires:

Prophetic Boldness: Speaking truth to the authorities without compromise.

Holiness of Witness: Returning to the gospel of sanctification pure living.

Ecumenical Unity: Catholics, Anglicans, methodist and other denominations must breakdown their unnecessary church walls and collaborate against corruption.

Historical Consciousness: Learning from epochs where the Church preserved civilisation amid collapse is indispensable. Ultimately, the Church's relevance lies not in popularity, but in fidelity to Christ's mandate: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven," (Matthew 5:16). When the world decays, the Church must not dissolve into it; when the night deepens, the Church must not dim, but blaze forth with Christ's light.

• **By The Ven. Stephen Wolemonwu, Rector, The Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor** stephenwolemonwu@gmail.com, 08035413812.

Muster Political Will, Fish Out Abductors Of Oyo Pupils, Teachers, Familoni Tells FG

By Chris Irekamba

BISHOP of the Missionary Diocese of Oyo South, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Rt. Rev'd Olufemi Familoni, has urged the Federal Government to muster political will and fish out the abductors of Oyo school children, and teachers abducted from three schools in Oriire local council in the

state on May 15, 2026.

The Bishop spoke, last Sunday, at the ordination service for Deacons, Canons, Archdeacons and the Sub-dean in the Diocese.

He said: "We are eagerly waiting and praying that our children and teachers will be rescued from the bush. The situation is becoming so disturbing. But we are also urg-

ing government not to relent in their efforts."

Familoni also urged the government to equip local vigilance groups with sophisticated weapons in the face of the prevailing insecurity in the country.

To contain, what he described as increasing loss of lives due to banditry and kidnapping, Familoni urged the govern-

ment to increase its support for these local vigilance groups, saying they have proved to be more effective in fighting insurgency.

Giving examples with the Amotekun security outfit, the pioneer Bishop argued that reports had shown that the Amotekun security force had helped to curb many cases of banditry.

Lazarus Muoka: Our Biennial Programme Is Uniquely Designed By God To Affect Lives

By Chris Irekamba

THE General Overseer of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries, Pastor Lazarus Muoka, has described the forthcoming programme of the church titled, "...And The Enemies Submitted," holding on June 27 and 28, 2026, at The Chosen Revival Ground, along Oshodi-Apapa Expressway, by Ije-

sha-Bus Stop, Lagos, as a uniquely designed programme by God to positively affect lives.

In a statement signed by the Public Relations Officer, Pastor Louis Chidi, and made available to journalists, Pastor Muoka admonished members and non-members to keep their ways right ahead of the programme, while be-

lieving God to provide solutions to their problems.

Happening once in two years, Muoka called participants to be pure in their innermost being and in every area of their lives if they truly want to receive from God.

"Keep your ways right, so that God of heaven will cause your enemies to submit, because June 27 and 28

are going to be great. Come for all things are now ready. Youngman what you are looking for is ready. Woman what you are looking for is ready. Are you sick or barren, what you are looking for is ready? God of Chosen will give you solution because he has done it for people in time past."



Diocesan Bishop, Rt Rev'd Olufemi Familoni (third left) and his wife, Dr Modupe Familoni (fourth left) with the newly ordained priests after the ordination service... last Sunday.

Interceding For Your Children

By Charles Ighele

AFTER Adam fell and gave A planet earth to the devil, the devil then became the god of this world. Putting his systems of doing things on planet earth, he enthroned his own people in all the mountains (politics, business, family, religion, media, education and entertainment). Parents owe enormous responsibilities to their children both material and immaterial. Among the material responsibilities parents owe their children are providing food, clothing, shelter, and others. The immaterial responsibilities include giving godly advice, counseling and interceding (praying).

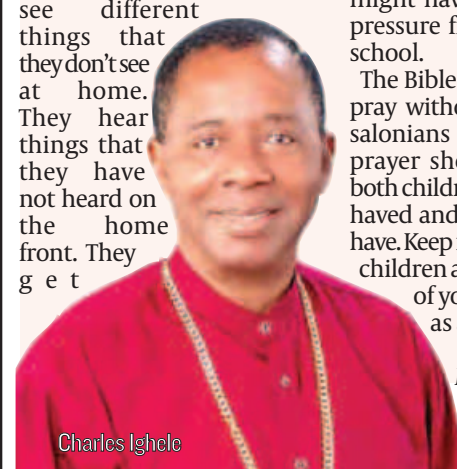
When children are off to school or to other places they come in contact with different people of divergent views, philosophies, behaviour and mindsets about things. They see different things that they don't see at home. They hear things that they have not heard on the home front. They g e t

advice from their friends in school telling them to smoke, go to club, drink alcohol and have boyfriends or girlfriends. Some are even under pressure from friends to join secret cults in the higher institutions. And because they are still young at heart they might bow to the pressures mounted on them by their friends.

As parents, among the immaterial responsibilities you owe your children is prayer. When your children are not with you or when you are not with your children, you owe them a duty to pray for them ceaselessly. I often hear parents say things like "my son cannot do this," "my daughter cannot do that." "I know my son/daughter very well." And I have always stated to parents clearly that they do not know their children. Your child who was an introvert before going to school might have changed due to pressure from his friends in school.

The Bible admonished us to pray without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5:17, this ceaseless prayer should be made for both children who are well-behaved and those who misbehave. Keep interceding for your children at all times. It is part of your responsibilities as a parent. Love you!

• **Bishop Charles Ighele is the General Superintendent of Holy Spirit Mission, Lagos.**



Charles Ighele

Getting Ready For The Great Programme

Text: Amos 4:12: "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

EVERY divine visitation demands adequate preparation. Throughout the Scriptures, whenever God was about to do something remarkable among His people, He always called them to prepare themselves. God is a God of order, and He expects His children to approach His presence with seriousness, expectation, and readiness. As our great programme, titled: "...And The Enemies Submitted," holds on June 27 and 28, 2026, it is important that everyone begins to prepare spiritually, mentally and physically, so that, we may receive all that God has in store for us.

A programme of this nature is not merely another gathering or religious activity. It is an opportunity for God to save souls, heal the sick, restore the backslidden, break yokes, revive the church and bless His people. Great programmes have often marked turning points in the lives of men and women who came with the right attitude and expectation. Therefore, we must not approach this crusade casually, but with earnest preparation and prayer.

The Lord instructed Moses before He descended on Mount Sinai. In Exodus 19:10-11, we read: "And the Lord said unto Moses, go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai." The people were commanded to sanctify themselves because God's presence was coming among them. Likewise, as we anticipate this great programme, we should sanctify ourselves and prepare our hearts for a fresh encounter with God.

One of the most important preparations we must make is the preparation of the heart. Proverbs 23:26 says: "My son, give me thine heart." God is interested in the condition of our hearts. He desires sincerity, humility and genuine repentance. Sin hinders blessings and prevents men from enjoying the fullness of God's presence. Therefore, this is a time for self-examination. It is a time to make peace with God and with fellow

Living Waters

By Pastor Lazarus Muoka

Founder/General Overseer

The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries Worldwide

For more messages and testimonies visit: www.tlccrm.org 08056889396



men. It is a time to forsake every sinful habit and return wholeheartedly to the Lord.

Isaiah 55:7 says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." God is ever willing to forgive and restore those who sincerely turn to Him. No one should come to this programme with a burden of unconfessed sin. Let every heart be cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Another essential preparation is prayer. Earnest prayers precede every God's successful move. The disciples tarried in prayer before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Acts 1:14 says: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Prayer prepares the atmosphere for divine manifestations. Prayer opens doors that no man can shut. Prayer brings down the power of God.

As we approach this great programme, every believer should dedicate time to prayer. Pray for the ministers who will be used by God. Pray for sinners to be convicted and saved. Pray for the sick to be healed and for captives to be delivered. Pray for the presence and power of God to overshadow the entire programme. James 5:16 says: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

We should also prepare ourselves with faith and expectation. Many people attended meetings during the earthly ministry of Jesus, but only those who exercised faith received miracles. Hebrews 11:6 says: "But without faith it

is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." God still rewards those who seek Him diligently. Therefore, come expecting salvation, healing, deliverance, restoration, and spiritual revival.

The woman with the issue of blood received her miracle because she came with expectation. She said within herself: "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." (Matthew 9:21). Her faith was rewarded. Likewise, God will honour the faith of everyone who comes to this programme with a believing heart.

Preparation also involves inviting others. God has not blessed us to keep the good news to ourselves. There are many souls around us who need Christ. Some are burdened, sick, discouraged and bound by the enemy. This programme may be God's appointed time for their salvation and deliverance.

Jesus commanded His followers in Mark 16:15: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Let every member become an evangelist. Invite friends, neighbours, relatives and colleagues. Pray for them and encourage them to attend. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, and Philip brought Nathanael. Through simple invitations, many have come to know the Lord. May God use us to bring many souls into His kingdom.

We should also prepare to dwell in unity and love. Division hinders the flow of God's blessings. Psalm 133:1 says: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" God commands His blessing where unity prevails. Let all bitterness, envy, malice and

unforgiveness be put away. Let us labour together with one mind and one purpose, seeking the glory of God above personal interests.

Further, we must prepare ourselves to hear and obey God's word. It is not enough to attend meetings; we must be doers of the word. James 1:22 says: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." God expects obedience. Whenever His word comes forth, it demands a response. Those who obey His word experience transformation and blessings.

The days in which we live are perilous, and many are becoming careless and indifferent towards spiritual matters. Yet, God is still calling men and women to Himself. This programme may be a turning point for many lives. It may be the hour of salvation for some, the time of healing for others, and the season of restoration for many families. Therefore, none should neglect such an opportunity.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 says: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Let every worker, every choir member, every usher, every prayer warrior and every believer put forth their best efforts. Let us serve with diligence and enthusiasm, knowing that we are labouring for God's kingdom.

Above all, let us look unto Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. He alone is the source of every blessing. He remains the same yesterday, today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8 says: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." The same Saviour who healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, and saved sinners in Bible days is still mighty to save and deliver today.

As the great programme approaches, may every heart be ready. May every family be prepared. May every believer pray and labour for the success of the programme. Let us come with holiness, faith, expectation, and thanksgiving. And as we prepare to meet God, may He visit us in a mighty way. May souls be saved, lives be transformed, the sick healed and His name be glorified.

May it be said concerning this programme that the Lord, Himself, was amid His people and that none who came seeking Him returned empty-handed.

In Jesus' name! Amen!

May the Lord grant that this forthcoming crusade will bring abundant salvation, revival, healing and a great harvest of souls for His kingdom. God bless you.

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

'Disobedience Brings Sorrow, Shame, Reproach'

MY name is Gift Luke, I joined The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries in 2010. I am grateful to God for making my family and I, members of this great movement.

Last Tuesday, when I came back from morning-cry, I began to pray; asking God to give me testimony. God turned around and said He has done a lot for me, but I have not testified. I said I have testified in my branch, He said I should testify at the headquarters, so that, the whole world would hear it. This is the reason I came.

My Testimony:

It was in 2014, when I saw our G.O. in a revelation and he said: "My daughter, go and preach the gospel, go and make sure that my house is clean, go and visit my people, whatever problem they share with you and whatever counsel you give to them, that is the final. In any problem, call me with this number." He called his phone number for me and

in that process, I woke up and found out it was in a dream.

I thought, it was an ordinary dream; so, I did not take it seriously and, therefore, did not obey the instructions given. The result was that my family and I began to suffer terribly things. We then lacked money to pay house rent, to eat became very difficult, because of that we relocated to where my husband bought a piece of land. There was nothing in place, so, we put tarpaulin and began to sleep there. We slept there for six years.

One day, I took my children to school and as I was returning, I saw one man and he said to me stubborn woman, go and do the work of God. I said, I am already doing God's work. He said no that I should go and preach the gospel, adding that my family and I are suffering because I have refused to do so.

It was at this juncture that I remembered the dream and

summoned courage and began to preach the gospel, beginning from that June I came across the man. One week after doing this, my brother that have refused to help me, suddenly called and asked after my welfare and that of my children. He, then, gave my daughter scholarship from nursery school to secondary school.

Moreover, they (my brothers) paid for accommodation for my family and that is how we came back to Lagos. Praise, the Lord!

In addition, when I was pregnant of my second son, I fell down and the head of my baby in the womb went to my back. Doctors and nurses did all they could for the baby to return to the womb, but to no avail. As at this time, I had already spent five days in the hospital, at the night of the fifth day I saw the angel of our G.O. He came to me and said I should declare who I am, I did that, and God manifested and the baby went

back into the womb and I delivered safe and sound. Praise, the Lord!

Again, I discovered that in my husband's family, they do

not have many men, so, I asked God to give me more boys and God answered by giving me four boys and a girl. Praise, the Lord!

May all glory be unto the Lord in Jesus' name. I pray for our G.O. and all Chosen members worldwide, to make heaven in Jesus' name. Amen!



Brother Nsikan Umoh and wife, Ijeoma Umoh, with their twin babies — Goodness and Mercy Umoh — after 12 years of waiting on the Lord for the fruit of the womb

Living Only For God's Glory (2)

BELIEVERS are "...a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." Our peculiarity demands conscientiousness in our work life. Though strangers and pilgrims, we must maintain our distinctiveness, reflecting God's marvelous light in our lives. Besides, wherever we find ourselves, we should live with the understanding that we have to be law-abiding.

We must avoid the politics and idolatry at work or marketplace, and instead embrace a godly work ethics. We should also not do the kind of work the people of the world do to make money. Rather, our goal must remain to "do (our) own business, and... work with (our) own hands... (to) have lack of nothing." Our honesty, sincerity and godly lifestyle should earn the world's testimony.

As peculiar saints, we are not to be lawless. Those who forget their uniqueness and peculiar characteristics and become lawless, indulging in abominable practices, "shall receive to themselves damnation." As pilgrims and strangers, our conscience is a good companion that makes us to live the way we ought. It must be alive and awakened. We live in holiness while exhibiting the following: honest

and hardworking; observant and objective; loyal and law-abiding; incorruptible and influential; noble and nurtured; exemplary and experienced; submissive and sincere; selfless and strategic.

Believers are commissioned to "follow (Christ's) steps" in leaving a gracious legacy behind for others to follow by preserving God's word. For this to become a reality, we must adhere to the following principles: one, follow His steps (verse 21). This is to emulate Christ's example. Two, be freed from sin (verse 22). As we follow Christ, we will be sinless just as He was. Three, remain faultless while suffering (verse 23a). We must not allow suffering to force us to compromise our salvation, sanctification and eternal destiny through angry words or sinful practices.

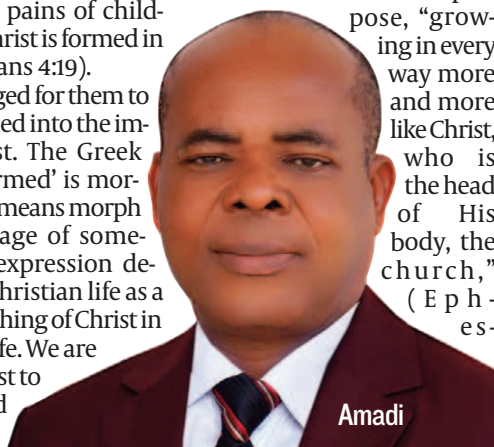
Four, faithfulness in surrender (23b). When suffering for upholding sound doctrine, we should surrender faithfully like Christ. Five, fruitfulness through sacrifice (verse 24). We must willingly make sacrifices to bring multitudes to God's kingdom. Six, fellowship with the Saviour (verse 24b). Through Christ's sacrifice, we are dead to sin and alive in righteousness. Seven, faith in His stripes (verse 24c).

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

Key verse: Galatians 4:19:
"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," (KJV).

GOD'S purpose for every Christian is for him/her to be like Christ. This was also Paul's desire for the Galatians that Christ be formed in them. These converts were the fruit of his evangelistic efforts. He had laboured for their salvation, and now feels like a mother going through labour pains again: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you," (Galatians 4:19).

Now, he longed for them to be transformed into the image of Christ. The Greek word for 'formed' is morphoō, which means morph into the image of something. This expression describes the Christian life as a kind of morphing of Christ in a believer's life. We are to allow Christ to live in us and through us.



Amadi

That Christ Be Formed In You (2)

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: Galatians 4:8-20

God's purpose for every believer is to be transformed into the image and character of Jesus Christ: "For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son, so that, His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters," (Romans 8:29, NLT). Paul was eager to see his beloved spiritual children

advance in that purpose, "growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church," (Ephesians 4:15, NLT).

Paul would never cease caring and travelling in anguish until the life of Christ was formed in them.

Spiritual maturity is a gift of God to us. While we cannot earn this gift, we exert effort to receive it. The early church was not sustained by excitement, but by devotion. They gave themselves continually to doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer so that Christ would be formed in them. These were not the occasional practices; they were pillars upon which their lives were built.

At salvation, the life of Christ indwells believers and Paul affirmed: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me," (Galatians 2:20). But the transformation "until Christ is formed in you" is a lifelong process (1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:21; 2 Peter 1:4). Paul told

the Colossians: "Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your creator and become like Him," (Colossians 3:10). The process of spiritual growth was being hindered in the Galatians through outward religious performance instead of true inward change (see Colossians 2:20-23). Believers don't become righteous through their own efforts, observing rules and regulations, but by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit: "And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image" (2 Corinthians 3:18, NLT).

Paul told the Philippians that nothing is more important in the Christian life than knowing Christ and becoming like Him ((Philippians 3:8-9, NLT). Everything else is worthless when compared

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor
W. F. Kumuyi



Eight, fearless under the Shepherd (verse 25). Christ, our Shepherd, delivers us from our enemies. Nine, fortified for service. We are empowered and emboldened to serve God effectively without weakness under His guidance.

• **Further reading (King James Version):** 1 Peter 2:11,12; Romans 15:5,6; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:14,15; 2 Thessalonians 1:11,12; 1 Peter 4:11; Philippians 1:9-11. 1 Peter 2:11; 1 Chronicles 29:14; Psalm 119:19,54; Hebrews 11:9,10,13-16; Micah 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Peter 2:15; 3:16. 1 Peter 2:9,13-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:11,12; 1 Timothy 3:7; Romans 13:1-5; 1 Timothy 4:2; 1 Peter 2:19. 1 Peter 2:21-25.

with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus, our Lord. Paul said, he discarded everything else for the sake of Christ and he described them as garbage, so that he could gain Christ and become one with Him. Christ is formed in you when there is nothing left to see, but Him living in you (Romans 8:9-11; Galatians 3:27). Christ is formed in you when He is everything to you and all you need (Romans 7:4). To lead members to Christlikeness should be

the role of every Christian minister. The church should train and equip the saints until they come to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

• **Today's nugget: Knowing Christ Jesus, Our Lord. Prayer: Lord help me to come to the measure of fullness of Christ. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com, Rev. Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.**

LDS Church Donates Medical Equipment To FMC Cancer Centre

By Isaac Taiwo

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has donated medical equipment worth millions of naira to the Cancer Centre of the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Ebute-Metta, Lagos, in a move to strengthen cancer diagnosis, treatment and patient in the country.

The donation, facilitated by the Africa, West Area, Presidency of the Church, Elder Adeyinka Ojediran, was formally handed over at a ceremony held in the hospital premises.

Speaking at the event, Elder Ojediran said the intervention was driven by the church's commitment at alleviating human suffering, preserving life and strengthening communities through humanitarian service. According to him, healthcare support remains one of the church's major humanitarian priorities because it reflects the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, whose ministry focused on healing and caring of the vulnerable.

He explained that the equipment was made possible through the faithful contributions of church members across the world, including Nigeria, adding that the donations were inspired by the desire to serve humanity rather than seek recognition.

The equipment are LEEP machine, ultrasound machine, thermal ablation equipment, defibrillator and crash cart, biomedical safety cabinet, medical refrigerator, colposcopes, chemotherapy chairs, hospital

beds, infusion pumps, drip stands and vital signs monitors.

Ojediran noted that the equipment would enhance early cancer detection, improve treatment outcomes and strengthen healthcare delivery, particularly in the management of cervical cancer and other life-threatening diseases.

He said: "These are not merely items; they are instruments of healing, tools of hope and vessels of life-saving care."

He urged stakeholders to ensure proper utilisation and maintenance of the equipment to guarantee long-term benefits for patients and the healthcare system.

Responding, FMC Medical Director, Dr Shared Adebawale Ogunme, described the donation as historic and transformative for the Cancer Centre, adding that the church donated 17 categories of equipment comprising 93 items that would significantly improve preventive cancer services, chemotherapy administration, in-patient care and workplace safety for healthcare personnel.

"With the donation of this equipment, the church has given renewed hope to countless patients and their families who will benefit now and in the years ahead," Ogunme said.

As a mark of appreciation, Ogunme conferred on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the title of "Friend of the Cancer Centre," making it the first organisation to receive the recognition from the facility.

Adoration (67)

The Benefits Of Adoration (Cont)

WE must steadfastly persevere in the faith, while waiting for God to bring about justice and to vindicate us (cf. v.173; Prov 3:31; 23:17; 24:1; Jer 12). Patience, while undergoing trouble or suffering is possible through the help of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22; Rom 8:3-4; cf. Eph 4:1-2; Col 1:11; 3:12), who assures us that God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked (cf. Rom 8:28; Heb 12:1-2,5-13).

"I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." (Ps 27:13) "Would have lost heart, unless I had believed." Trusting in God and being confident in His love and goodness are indispensable for persevering in faith. As believers we may be severely tried, yet nothing can bring us to despair and defeat as long as we keep our eyes on God in faith and hope. Amid darkness, we must "wait on the Lord" (v.14; see 42:5,11; 43:5; 62:5; Is 40:27-31; Mic 7:8), draw near to Him and remain steadfast through His Spirit (see Eph 6:10; 2Tim 2:1; Jas 5:11). We are rest assured that, in His own time, God will manifest His goodness to us.

(5.3) **Even In Old Age You Shall Still Be Productive**

"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper," (Ps 13).

"The rivers of water." The outcome of those who faithfully seek God and His Word is life in the Spirit. Since water often represents the Spirit of God (e.g., John 7:38-39), those who are instructed by God and who abide in His word will receive an unfailing source of life from the Spirit. The phrase "whatever

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus
Prof. Mercy Olumide



he does shall prosper" does not mean that problems or failure will never occur, but rather that a godly person will know God's will and favour (see 3John 2).

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. 8: For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit," (Jer 17:7,8).

"The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.13: Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.14: They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing," (Ps 92:12-14).

Palm trees are known for their long life. To flourish like palm trees means to stand tall and to live long.

• **Email: ymolumide@gmail.com. Facebook: Yetunde Mercy Olumide**

From Collins Olayinka, Geneva, Switzerland

THE current national minimum wage of N70,000 will complete its three-year cycle in July next year, with talks expected to kick off next month, one year ahead of a new and improved national wage floor.

As expected, warning shots have started to be fired at the government and employers of labour by both the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC).

The organised labour movement is of the view that the economic facts and the fund available to the three tiers of government align with workers' expectations. To them, the next round of negotiations may be among the easiest in the country's history.

They believe that workers have given more than they should. They have endured more than enough. They have shouldered responsibilities that exceed their earnings.

With these heavy-lifting issues recognised by the state governors, labour believes that not only is public sympathy on their side this time, but also that governors of good conscience will also be on their side when negotiations begin in July.

One fact in the public domain is the increased allocation from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC), which manages revenue accruing to the federation and has the sole responsibility for sharing the funds.

The jump in revenue was boosted by the removal of petrol subsidy and the liberalisation of the foreign exchange market by President Bola Tinubu upon assuming office in 2023. These two key decisions led to rapid inflation, which topped 30 per cent last year, with food inflation reaching 40 per cent amid stagnated wages.

Currently, the Federal Government receives 52.68 per cent of the allocation, while states receive 26.72 per cent and local councils receive 20.60 per cent.

Data extracted from the monthly FAAC communiqués show that in January 2026, states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) got N703 billion, while in February they received N652 billion.

In March, they received N658 billion; in April, N685 billion and in May, N700 billion.

Cumulatively, the total amount disbursed to the states and the FCT was between N3.34 trillion and N3.40 trillion from January to May 2026.

Between 2011 and 2019, Nigeria's minimum wage increased by 300 per cent, from N7,500 to N30,000. The initial 140 per cent hike to N18,000 in 2011 was intended to offset inflation, which averaged 10.83 per cent that same year.

At the time, the N18,000 monthly wage was equivalent to \$156.52. Today, at the N1,380-to-one-dollar rate, no Nigerian worker should earn less than N215,997 as minimum wage using \$156.52 as the baseline.

But the early signs point to stormy negotiations ahead. Why? The renewed debate over a new national minimum wage may have exposed sharp divisions between government, labour unions and employers, with the private sector warning that any politically driven wage increase could destabilise businesses and worsen unemployment.

Minimum Wage: The Facts Behind Fresh Fireworks

As Economic Straits, Structural Hurdles Persist

***Data Suggests N215,997 As New Minimum Wage**

***Nigeria Needs Wage Automatic Adjustment Framework, Says Oshinowo**

***NASU Warns Against Flat Wage Model**

Speaking at the ongoing International Labour Conference (ILC) organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland, the Director General of the Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA), Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde, said minimum wage negotiations must be grounded in 'economic realism' rather than political pronouncements, arguing that the country's fragile macroeconomic environment makes arbitrary wage fixing dangerous.

He said any sustainable wage framework must rest on four pillars: the overall state of the economy, workers' needs and household welfare, the sustainability of enterprises and productivity levels.

According to him, failure to balance these factors risks either worsening poverty among workers or pushing firms into insolvency.

"You cannot isolate wages from inflation, exchange rates and productivity. If the economy is unstable, even a high nominal wage becomes meaningless in real terms," he explained.

This comes amid growing pressure from labour unions and political actors calling for a new minimum wage review, with some proposals placing monthly pay at around 100,000. The employers' representative dismissed such figures as 'political estimates,' insisting that wage levels must emerge from structured tripartite negotiations involving government, labour, and employers.

Oyerinde warned that agreements reached without full tripartite participation risk not being implemented.

"If it is not negotiated with all parties at the table, it will not be binding on the private sector," he said.

He also insinuated that previous wage arrangements were concluded without the full participation of employers.

While the debate has intensified amid rising inflation, currency depreciation and increased operating costs, Oyerinde argued that these issues affect the business community equally.

He submitted that these pressures have significantly eroded business margins, with many firms only recently recovering from years of losses.

He cited sectors such as manufacturing and consumer goods as particularly affected, noting that companies had struggled with foreign-exchange volatility and rising debt-servicing costs.

Despite the concerns, he acknowledged that some firms have responded by voluntarily adjusting wages in line with economic conditions, with several companies reportedly increasing salaries multiple times over the course of a year to retain staff.

The NECA scribe also turned to broader structural challenges in Nigeria's economy, particularly electricity supply, energy costs and security concerns.

He declared that without addressing the foundational issues inhibiting the manufacturing sector, wage increases alone would not translate into improved living standards.

He said: "Manufacturing is not competitive because of power and energy constraints. A unit of production in Nigeria cannot compete with the same unit produced elsewhere under stable conditions."

He also pointed to global economic shocks, including energy price volatility and geopolitical tensions, as additional pressures affecting domestic inflation and business stability.

On the role of government, he gave a mixed assessment. While acknowledging that the current administration inherited deep structural distortions, he said reforms were beginning to show early signs of traction, particularly in regulatory engagement and economic coordination.

He highlighted ongoing collaboration between the private sector and institutions such as the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council, noting that regulatory bottlenecks were gradually being addressed.

He, however, cautioned that progress would be slow and uneven given the scale of Nigeria's economic challenges.

Speaking along the same line of thought, a former Director General of NECA, Segun Oshinowo, said minimum wage negotiation should be re-examined in a neoclassical, economic-policy-driven economy that cannot put a lid on inflation.

He argued that Nigeria urgently needs a framework that accommodates automatic inflation adjustment—a form of wage indexation—otherwise the labour market will always be in disequilibrium relative to the rest of the economy's markets.

"The advantage of this approach is that it will also stem the frequent calls for minimum wage negotiations and adjustments. The issue of affordability will, of course, emerge."

He maintained that if the economic

my could easily adjust to price movements in the other markets, why not the labour market?

"Should this be implemented, it will of course set in motion a series of actions that will affect the utilisation of human capital in the economy, either for good or bad—right-sizing, etc. There is nothing wrong with it, as it is part of the overall process of establishing an equitable equilibrium in economic management," he explained.

To the President of the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), Dr. Hassan Makolo, adopting a flat minimum wage model will do the system more harm than good.

He called for a comprehensive overhaul of Nigeria's minimum wage framework, saying that the new wage structure must reflect economic realities and include full consequential adjustments across all salary levels.

Makolo stressed that the upcoming negotiation process must go beyond what he described as a 'mere award' for the lowest-paid workers, arguing that such an approach undermines collective bargaining principles.

He emphasised that a proper minimum wage system must be accompanied by consequential adjustments affecting all categories of workers.

According to him, "a minimum wage is predicated on consequential adjustment," adding that failure to implement such adjustments distorts salary structures and weakens industrial harmony.

He argued that previous wage implementations in the country had fallen short of international labour practice, leaving gaps in remuneration across different levels of the public service.

Raising concerns about Nigeria's current economic situation, the labour leader pointed to rising costs of transportation, fuel and basic household goods as evidence that workers' real incomes have significantly declined.

He observed that many civil servants were already unable to afford basic commuting costs, with some reportedly parking their vehicles due to fuel affordability challenges.

Responding to suggestions that N100,000 could serve as an appropriate new minimum wage benchmark, Makolo dismissed the figure as insufficient in the current economic climate.

He noted that some state governments are already paying above that threshold, warning against setting a wage floor that does not reflect existing disparities or cost-of-living pressures.

He stated that in the education sub-sector, salary disparities within tertiary institutions often mean that highly qualified professionals earn less than workers in other sectors performing less specialised roles.

He called for the education sector to be given special consideration during wage reviews to avoid further industrial tensions.

As consultations on a new minimum wage approach continue, government, employers and organised labour appear to agree that Nigeria's economic future will depend on difficult compromises between protecting workers' purchasing power and ensuring business survival.

Smatt-Oyerinde

Joe Ajaero

Months After Commissioning, Opebi-Ojota Bridge, Other Projects Await Full Use

By Suliyat Tella

WHEN the Ojota-Opebi Link Bridge, Multi-agency office complex and Lagos State Geographic Information Service (LAGIS) building and data center were commissioned in April 2026, residents and commuters expected a new route that would ease movement between Ojota, Maryland, Mende and Opebi, especially for the road users. It was also expected that the other facilities commissioned would be put to use. But months after, one form of work or the other is still being carried on the sites of the projects.

The multi-agency office complex, officially named the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Administrative Complex (BATAC), is situated within the Government Secretariat precinct in Alausa, Lagos, while the Lagos State Geographic Information Service (LAGIS) building and data center in Alausa, Ikeja. The LAGIS is designed to modernise geospatial data management, streamline land administration, and boost transparency in property transactions.

When The Guardian visited BATAC and LAGIS during the week, artisans were sighted on site still working.

Also, months later, many residents and road users say they are still waiting to fully access the bridge, which remains closed.

The bridge, designed by the Lagos State government to connect Opebi, Mende, Maryland and Ojota, was expected to provide an alternative route to existing roads along the corridor and reduce pressure on areas such as Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way.

According to Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, the project was designed to ease movement across a major traffic corridor in the state.

"Stretching about 5.04km, this project combines elevated bridge sections with connecting roads to create a more direct route for commuters. It also includes space for pedestrians and cyclists," the governor said in a post on X on April 6, 2026.

He said the impact of the project would be felt through shorter travel times, reduced congestion and more predictable journeys for individuals and businesses.

Construction of the project officially began on January 26, 2022, when Sanwo-Olu flagged off the work, describing it as one of the state's legacy infrastructure projects.

But months after its commissioning, some residents and commuters who spoke with The Guardian said they were still waiting to fully experience the benefits promised by the bridge.

Speaking with The Guardian, a commuter, who simply gave his name as Jeremiah, said he had attempted to use the bridge but found that it was not yet fully open to motorists.

"I think they just commissioned it for campaign. They only used it that day of the commissioning. Only dispatch riders use it because it was blocked from the Opebi end" he said.

Similarly, Damilola Taiwo, who regularly uses the route, said he had expected the bridge to reduce the time spends connecting or driving through Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way. "But since the commissioning, it has not been open so we have been unable to use.

"I ply that route regularly, but since the commissioning of the bridge, I have tried to use it twice, but I turned back as it was not opened for use," he added.

For residents around Mende and Maryland,

the incomplete access has also meant that the old routes remain the main option for commuters.

Mathew Ebigba, a trader and artisan at Cane Village, Mende, Maryland, said residents had looked forward to the project when construction started because of the expected changes it would bring.

"I grew up here, so I am very familiar with this place. When they started the construction of the bridge, we were happy that it would ease things, that you don't have to go to Maryland to turn to connect Opebi," he said.

According to him, the bridge currently has limited use, with only dispatch riders able to access some parts of it.

"They have blocked it from the Opebi end and at the entrance in Ojota. But from what we are hearing, they said they will open it next year," he said.

Beyond the concerns about access, the construction of the bridge also changed the lives of some artisans and traders who operated around Cane Village.

Before construction began, many traders and artisans worked around the area beneath the existing bridge structure. Ebigba said they were asked to leave when work on the project started.

He said the relocation affected their businesses because some customers struggled to locate them after they moved.

According to Ebigba, the traders later approached the local council over the possibility of returning to the area after the bridge was completed.



Badagry Youths Decry Mowo-Ikoga Road, Threaten Occupation Over Neglect

By Gbenga Salau

BADAGRY residents has expressed their displeasure over the deplorable state of Mowo-Ikoga Road with a peaceful protest, wondering why the governments has failed to fix the road that is a critical link between Lagos State and Ogun State. They vowed to escalate their action if urgent government intervention fails to commence by July 1.

The protesters led by legal practitioner and social activist, Barrister Medemaku Abayomi Noah, expressed frustration over what they described as over a decade neglect of the road, saying repeated appeals to authorities had yielded no meaningful reconstruction work on the road.

According to them, the road has deteriorated into a dangerous

stretch, with frequent flooding during rainy seasons and recurring accidents that have reportedly claimed lives, including school children and other residents.

They also lamented the economic strain the situation has placed on the community, noting that transportation has become slower, costlier, and more hazardous.

Speaking during the protest, Medemaku described the situation as unacceptable, accusing political leaders at the local, state, and federal levels of offering "empty promises" while residents continue to suffer. He said the youths would sustain weekly demonstrations every week until concrete action is taken to begin full reconstruction of the road.

He further warned that if no visible steps are taken by the end of

June, residents would escalate their action by occupying the road indefinitely, effectively turning it into a sit-in protest until government responds.

A commercial driver who participated in the protest also expressed deep frustration, saying residents had endured years of hardship and disappointment despite multiple appeals for intervention.

He referenced earlier palliative works carried out before the election of Sesi Oluwaseun Whingan, a member of the House of Representative, noting that while such interventions once provided temporary relief, residents had expected a permanent solution after his assumption of office.

He added that many voters felt let down by the continued poor condition of the road, though he

acknowledged that limited palliative efforts had once helped ease movement along the corridor.

Commuters who witnessed the protest commended the youths for what they described as a long-overdue action, lamenting that the road's poor state has drastically reduced vehicle lifespan and turned a journey of less than ten minutes into a frustrating commute of over thirty minutes.

A passers-by said this is why we voted Sesi Oluwaseun Whingan, the current House of Representative Member but for the past three years in office what has he done to his people.

"You only see them when election is coming, making promises of heaven and earth but by the time they emerge, they forget all the promises."



I Will Be Lying If I Say I Did Some Things To Enjoy Longevity – Adeyeye

Pastor Olusola Adeyeye, a Senior Pastor at The Redeemed Christian Church of God and a member of the church's Board of Trustees, will be celebrating 80 years in a few days time. In this chat with GBENGA SALAU, he spoke on his journey to full time ministry and clocking 80 years.

How do you feel celebrating 80 in a country where life expectancy is 50 plus?

IFEEL elated and very grateful to the Most High God because it has been by the grace of God. It is not by power, by might or by my wisdom; it is simply the grace of God. And this is why I am eternally grateful to God to have preserved my life this far. It must be God and it can only be God and I return all the glory to him. **God plays key roles in people's lives, but what are the things you have done humanly that aided your longevity?**

It is a great question and if I am to be honest with you, I will be lying if I say I did some things that gave me the privilege to enjoy longevity. I must repeat that it is just the grace of God and I consider it an unmerited favour and grace of God. The truth of the matter is that all I am enjoying is the unmerited favour of God. It is amazing and I say to God be the glory.

What has life taught you these past 80 years?

Life has taught me in the past 80 years that you need God in every facet of your life. It has taught me that the only way out of any trouble is the way of the Lord. No matter the trouble and challenge, if you have God, all you need to do is to celebrate and rejoice because it is written that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. It is not that every knee may bow, not that every knee can bow or any challenge can bow, no! The Bible says in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. And that is just it in my life.

How will you describe life in the last 80 years?

Life is simply a gift of God and we are only privileged to live it according to the precept and help of God. And in the last 80 years, life has been so beautiful and wonderful. It is a long story. For instance, this is a man at birth that my parents never knew I could survive one month. History even told me that I was sick to the point of death and my parents were only expecting me to breathe my last breath before burial. But suddenly a man of God came to town and I was prayed for and miraculously, life came back and I survived. And since then, I have been enjoying the grace of God, health and abundant life.

Do you have any regrets?

I have several regrets as there are a lot of things that I did wrongly particularly when I did not know God. When I did not realise the need to get born again and be led by the Holy Spirit, because when you are led by the Holy Spirit then all will be well; it will be a most perfect life kind of. But if you do not have Christ, because life without Christ is full of crisis, when you do not know the Lord and begin to live your own way, the devil will be in charge. But when you are born again and give your life to Christ, the devil will not have the upper hand over your life, because the Lord will take the lead and guard you and all will be well with you.

Nigeria is regarded as a religious nation but it seems when it comes to leadership, we are not getting it right as a nation. As a pastor, do you think the church is taking the right step by just praying alone?

I would ask you a question: Aside from praying, what do you think the church should have done? The truth is that the bible says the hearts of men are desperately wicked and a question ends it – who can know it? And that is the truth.

It is unfortunate that most of them (leaders) do not have God and do not know God and are led by the devil. This is because the Bible says

whoever commits sin is of the devil.

Any leader, man or woman that has not given his or her life to Christ is of the devil and you can be sure that there is no good thing in the kingdom of the devil. What we are lacking and the troubles in Nigeria are orchestrated by the devil and this is allowed because of our sins. If we repent from the sins and turn to God, in a short while all the troubles will disappear. That is the truth.

Thank God for the people who are praying; if not for the prayers, it would have been worse than you could have ever seen. But thank God for His grace and for giving us some people who are praying either in secret or openly. It is the power of prayers that is holding this nation; if not, this nation would have been on fire by now.

What one loving memory do you like to recall?

The most important memory for me was the day I gave my life to Christ. The day my sins were forgiven, that moment when the load of sins over my life were terminated and I became free and a child of God, that is the greatest memory, which gladdens my heart. Each time I remember the day I got born again and decided for Christ, joy unspeakable floods my heart.

How did you meet your wife?

My first marriage came up in 1974 but some-

Life has taught me in the past 80 years that you need God in every facet of your life. It has taught me that the only way out of any trouble is the way of the Lord.

times in 2017, she went to be with the Lord and two years after I decided to remarry. I thank God for my first marriage because through it I have the best of choice of children. And I thank God that my first wife, just like my second wife, was a loving and a caring woman who passionately and intentionally stood by me to ensure that we overcome the difficulties of life and through the grace of God we were able to overcome the challenges that stared us at the face.

How did you come into full-time ministry as a clergy?

It all happened in 1996. I was in the United Kingdom for my annual holiday to rest, meet some friends and partners. This is because at that time, I had been a book seller, motor dealer and God has helped me so much. And I was thinking the next thing was to establish a car assembly plant in Nigeria. So, I went on holiday hunting for partners that will join me to establish a car assembly plant in Nigeria but when I got to the UK, it was during the winter and it was so severe that I could not travel around as I had intended. I had to stay indoors, rest, eat and pray as well as study the scriptures. But after some days my love for God was on the increase.

And thereafter, on one of the days around 4a.m., I got ministered to that the Lord is calling me to full time ministerial life, that I have been busy counting money but now it is time to win souls for the Lord. That was how I received the call and when I came back to

Nigeria, I went to meet my leader, who encouraged and prayed with me. That was how the journey into full ministry started with The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG).

How has been the journey over the years?

It has been beautiful and God has been so faithful to me. I have been a parish pastor, area pastor, state pastor, state overseer for years, regional evangelist and at present a member of the Board of Trustees of the church. I am also the coordinator of the Royal Fathers Fellowship of the RCCG. It is a fellowship that we have never had that way before in any church in Nigeria. And to the glory of God, it is growing in leaps and bounds.

Despite the growing number of churches in Nigeria, criminality is on the rise in the country, why?

The devil is the root cause of the issue and he is busy going all around every day. And the Bible says he goes around looking for whom to consume. The devil has no other business than that. The Bible says the devil cometh not but to steal, kill and destroy. He does that on a daily basis and he has no holiday and resting day and he goes about to mobilise as many as possible and those that will yield themselves to him to do one evil or the other.

With so many churches one might wonder why all the evils have not gone.

But nobody can kill Satan until his time comes and God will deal with him accordingly. As long as Satan is alive and all over the place there will be issues. But the truth is that God is up to the task. As Satan goes about causing havoc here and there, God is also using his people to counter all his activities all over. And that is why God has raised some leaders for us like Pastor Enoch Adeboye, Bishop David Oyedepo and Pastor Williams Kumuyi and I can go on. You have men like these all over the world and I thank God for the efforts of men like these scattered all over the world. And that is why we have the relative peace we have at the moment all over. **What is your advice for young clergy men?** The younger ones should put Christ first and totally yield their lives to God and let Him be gloried in their lives so that all shall be well.



Adeyeye

Folashade Ayeni... Betting On Kogi's Soil To Feed Nigeria

By Suliyat Tella

THERE is a 50-hectare farm in Kakun, Kogi State, where one of Nigeria's quietest but most important battles is being fought. The enemy is hunger. The weapon is the oil palm. And the general is a woman named Folashade Ayeni.

As CEO of Babaeko Farms, Mrs. Ayeni runs a mixed crops enterprise built around oil palm cultivation, with one clear objective: produce palm oil at scale to help close the gap between what Nigeria consumes and what it produces. It is a gap that should embarrass every Nigerian. This country was once the largest palm oil producer in the world. Today, we import a significant share of what ends up in our pots. Mrs. Ayeni belongs to a growing class of agripreneurs who refuse to accept that as permanent.

Her influence now extends well beyond the farm gate. She was recently elected Chairman of Durotoluwa Multipurpose Cooperative Society in Kabba/Bunu Local Council of Kogi State. It is a position that matters more than its modest title suggests. Cooperatives are the connective tissue of rural agriculture. They are how smallholders pool resources, access inputs, negotiate fair prices, and learn from one another. When a cooperative works, an entire community farms better. When a woman leads one, every girl in that community sees what is possible.

That last point deserves emphasis. Across Nigeria, women carry a huge share of the agricultural workload. They plant, weed, process, and sell. Yet they hold a fraction of the land titles, the credit, and the seats at the table where decisions are made. This is not just unfair to women. It is a drag on national food security. No country can feed over 200 million people while sidelining half of its farming workforce. Leaders like Mrs. Ayeni are not just running businesses. They are correcting an imbalance that has cost Nigeria dearly.

She is also doing her homework. Earlier this year, Mrs. Ayeni travelled to Zambia and toured farms across the country to study what is working elsewhere on the continent. She returned with concrete lessons: irrigation systems that liberate farmers from dependence on rainfall, cooperatives run with business discipline and proper records, aggregation centres that link farmers directly to processors, and mechanisation that multiplies the productivity of a single farmer. None of it, she notes, was magic. It was organisation, investment, and consistency.

Her conviction is that Kogi State can replicate and surpass it. The state has the land, the water, and the climate for oil palm, cassava, maize, and rice. What it needs is the deliberate

transfer of best practices and serious backing for farmers who have proven they will do the work.

The implications stretch far beyond Kogi. Food security is national security. A country that cannot feed itself negotiates everything else from a position of weakness. Every hectare of oil palm planted in Kakun, every cooperative strengthened in Kabba/Bunu, is a small repair to Nigeria's sovereignty over its own dinner table.

There are lessons here for three audiences. Government, at state and federal levels, should treat women farmers as the strategic asset they are, with access to land, credit, and extension services delivered in disbursements rather than speeches. Investors should look at the palm oil shortfall and see what it actually is: a large, hungry market waiting for serious players, with people like Mrs. Ayeni already on the ground. And young Nigerians, especially young women, should look at her trajectory and understand that agriculture is no longer a fallback. It is a frontier. Folashade Ayeni did not wait for the system to fix itself. She planted. She organised. She travelled to learn and came home to apply. In a country where hunger is too often discussed and too rarely confronted, that is leadership worth writing about. More importantly, it is leadership worth replicating, from Kabba/Bunu to every farming community in Nigeria.

Earlier this year, Mrs. Ayeni travelled to Zambia and toured farms across the country to study what is working elsewhere on the continent. She returned with concrete lessons: irrigation systems that liberate farmers from dependence on rainfall, cooperatives run with business discipline and proper records, aggregation centres that link farmers directly to processors, and mechanisation that multiplies the productivity of a single farmer. None of it, she notes, was magic. It was organisation, investment, and consistency.



FORMER Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Professor Mahmood Yakubu, arrived in Doha on Wednesday to assume duties as Nigeria's ambassador to Qatar. He transitions from leading one of the country's most contentious domestic offices to representing Nigeria on one of the world's most strategic diplomatic stages.

Yakubu, the first INEC Chairman to serve two terms, concluded his tenure in October last year. He was among the 32 ambassadorial appointees whose names President Bola Tinubu forwarded to the Senate for confirmation in November last year. After the Senate confirmation, the President, on March 6, approved the names of 65 ambassadors-designate. Yakubu was assigned as Nigeria's ambassador to Qatar.

Upon his arrival in the Qatari capital on Wednesday, the new envoy was received at the airport by Ambassador Ibrahim Yousif Abdullah Fakhro, Director of the Protocol Department at the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This gesture signalled Qatar's formal acknowledgement of his posting.

Significantly, 13 African ambassadors also joined Fakhro to receive Yakubu. The Secretary General of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, Dr Philip

Ex-INEC Chairman, Mahmood Yakubu Arrives In Qatar as Nigeria's New Ambassador

Mshelbila, and Michael Ndukaihe Ihekweba, President of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation in Qatar were also present.

Yakubu's posting to Qatar has been described by analysts as strategic, citing the cordial relationship and strong economic ties between the two countries. Nigeria and Qatar formally established diplomatic relations in 2010, with both opening embassies in Abuja and Doha in 2013. The visit by former President Muhammadu Buhari to Qatar in 2016, followed by Qatar's ruler, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani's visit to Nigeria in 2019, laid the foundation for a wide range of collaborations.

President Tinubu's visit to the country in 2024, during which several agreements and Memoranda of Understanding were signed,

Energy is a natural area of cooperation between Nigeria and Qatar. The key diplomatic goal would be to leverage Qatar's expertise as a top LNG exporter and Nigeria's vast natural gas reserves to advance mutual energy initiatives. Which is why Dr Mshelbila's presence at the airport was no coincidence. Yakubu now has the task of aligning Nigeria's Decade of Gas initiative with Qatari technical expertise and investment capital.

further deepened the political and economic ties between the two countries.

Energy is a natural area of cooperation between Nigeria and Qatar. The key diplomatic goal would be to leverage Qatar's expertise as a top LNG exporter and Nigeria's vast natural gas reserves to advance mutual energy initiatives. Which is why Dr Mshelbila's presence at the airport was no coincidence. Yakubu now has the task of aligning Nigeria's Decade of Gas initiative with Qatari technical expertise and investment capital.

Beyond energy, Yakubu will need to translate President Tinubu's economic reform programme - anchored on foreign exchange unification and subsidy removal - into concrete foreign direct investment flows from Qatar.

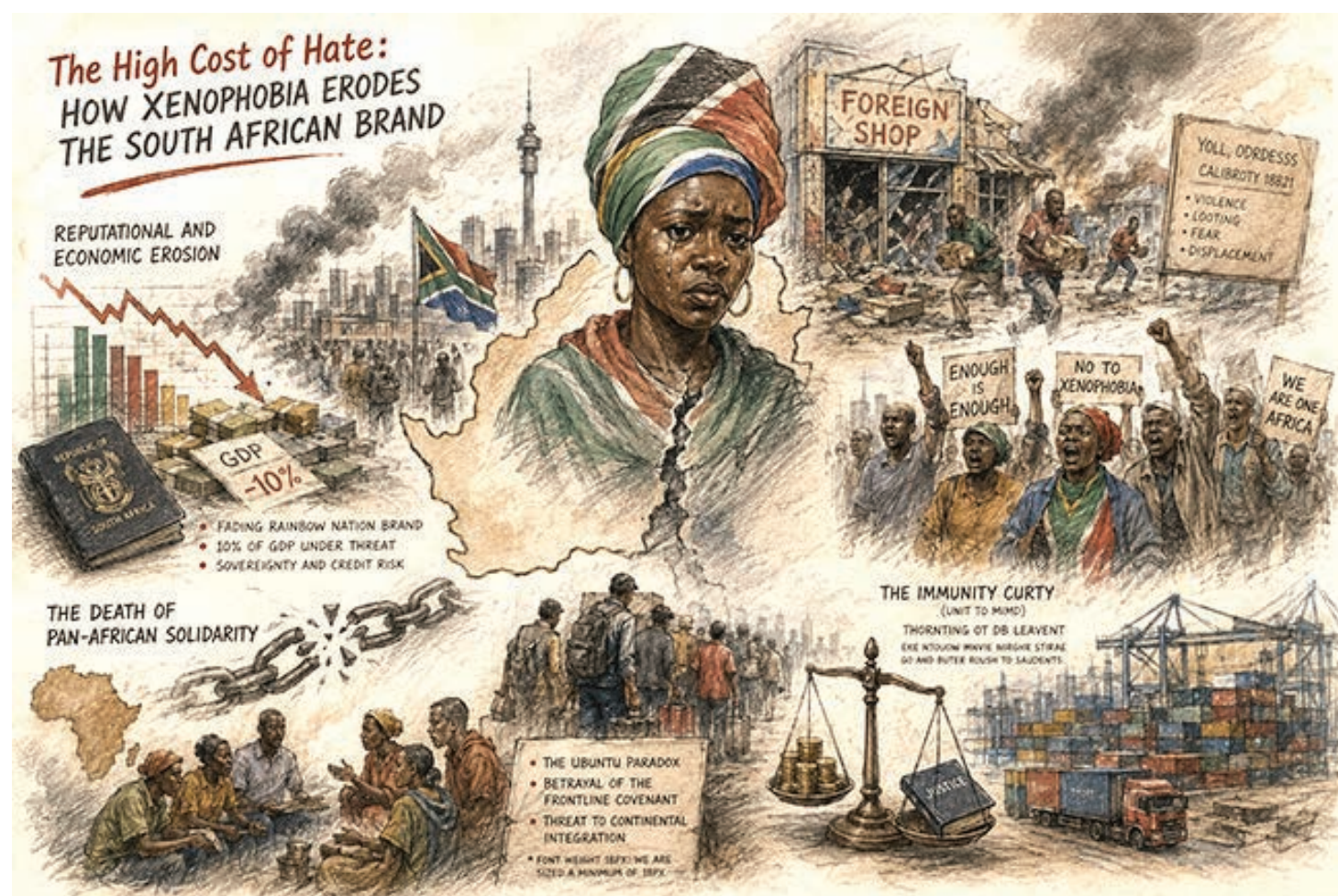
The Qatar Investment Authority, the Gulf state's sovereign wealth fund, manages assets in excess of \$500 billion. Taking advantage of this opportunity for viable Nigerian projects in agriculture, aviation, real estate, and digital infrastructure would be viewed as a significant diplomatic dividend.

Nigeria's presence in the Gulf is growing rapidly, shifting away from its traditional concentration in Western Europe and North America.



Nigeria's Ambassador to Qatar and immediate past Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu (8th left), being received on Wednesday in Doha by the Director of the Protocol Department, Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Ibrahim Yousif Abdullah Fakhro, joined by 13 African Ambassadors from Guinea, Algeria, Burundi, Morocco, Tanzania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal, Togo, Benin and the Central African Republic.

Xenophobia: South Africa's Reputational Erosion Is Not Theoretical



By Tim Akano

JUNE 11, 2026 was a sad day for Africa. And June 30th is just a few days away, the judgment day for African immigrants in South Africa.

I watched the world cup football opening match between Mexico and South Africa with mixed feelings. Seeing an African country playing on Day one was historic, and its symbolism cannot be underestimated. On the other hand, seeing hundreds of Africans wearing the Mexican jerseys in the stadium and millions of African football lovers across the remaining 50 African countries praying for Mexico to defeat their African brothers was humbling, and equally historic and symbolic.

I ask: how did Africa get here? As a facilitator of a pan African NGO tagged ONE AFRICA INITIATIVES (OAI), this bitter divorce between South Africa and Africa is dangerous, because when you remove Africa from South Africa, what you get is South, and South Africa, indeed, went south on the field on the opening day.

And for a country that derives almost 10% of her GDP from travels and tourism, the reputational damage caused by xenophobia to the Brand South Africa is monumental.

But then, at a time like this, when the umbilical cord that connects the economic fetus of South Africa to the political economy placenta of the rest of African is about to be broken, silence is no longer golden. Trust is like an egg, once broken, it can never be salvaged again.

Those who are irrevocably committed to the ideals of One Africa's transformation have to step forward with truth in plain language, not an ambiguous sophistry that says volume but means nothing.

I lead a foundation tagged One Africa Academy initiatives which consists of thousands of African youths from all over Africa. I owe this unbiased piece to them before the situation deteriorate further.

First, to Africans who feel betrayed by the few overzealous and hot-tempered South Africans who have given June 30th as the deadline for certain categories of Africans to leave South Africa, I would like them to emphasize that over generalization of the issue is unhelpful.

Not all South Africans share this Xenophobic behaviour.

Two, two wrongs don't make a right, wishing South Africa Bafana Bafana failure in the ongoing world cup will not do the image of

Africa any good, it's like washing Africa's dirty linen in public.

Three, I am not sure Africa leaders have exhausted all peaceful means to resolve the issue before each country began the evacuation of their nationals.

Having said that, we also need to blame some few Nigerians and other Africans who go to South Africa to do drugs, prostitution and other criminal activities. We should not sweep the issue of one misguided Nigerian who went to South Africa to crown himself KING. The action of one Solomon Ogbonna Eziko, the self-crowned Igbo King of East London, South Africa, an action which begot this latest wave of xenophobia is a gross act of irresponsibility, insensitivity and lack of proper home training.

It is an abomination in the African culture to have two kings in one kingdom. I recall a similar situation in Ghana, where one Eze Dr Chukuwudi Jude Ihenetu crowned himself as IGBO KING IN GHANA. In both instances, both South African and Ghana youths were justified in rising to defend the sanctity and sacredness of their culture and institutions.

I call on all our Igbo brothers in the diaspora to discontinue forthwith the practice of installing a king of Igbo extraction outside of their ancestral home. Freedom of association is human rights, but when a handshake is going beyond the elbows, danger is by the corner.

I can vividly see famine of Vision, and the betrayal of African Brotherhood on the leadership of Thabo Mbeki and Cyril Ramaphosa.

The two of them know what the South African youths of today don't know: how Nigeria, which is 7000km away from South Africa became a frontline state in the war against apartheid. Ghana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, etc all gambled with their independence, while fighting for South Africa.

Thabo Mbeki knows how much of Africa resources went into ANC bank accounts, in ANC's Long Walk to Freedom.

Assuming the youths don't have the details of their history, it is incumbent on Thabo Mbeki and President Cyril Ramaphosa to speak truth to the mobs on the streets. This is what Mandela would have done, if he were alive today.

South Africa stands today as a paradox — a nation liberated by the blood and treasure of an entire continent, now turning its fists against the very brothers who

bankrolled its freedom. This is not mean social crisis. It is a color of a collapsing civilisation.

When Zambia opened its borders to ANC cadres in exile, when Tanzania gave land for training camps, when Nigeria donated millions of dollars to the anti-apartheid movement at a time when Nigerians needed those funds for infrastructure development — they did not ask for repayment. They asked only for solidarity. The covenant was simple: Africa's liberation is indivisible. What is owed to one is owed to all. That covenant has been desecrated.

The mobs that torch Nigerian businesses in Johannesburg, that drive Zimbabwean street traders from their livelihoods in Durban, that chant "foreigners go home" in the streets of a nation that would not exist in its current form without foreign sacrifice — these are not merely criminals. They are amnesiac heirs who have squandered their inheritance before understanding its provenance.

But the greater indictment belongs not to the mobs. It belongs to the leadership — or rather, the absence of it. South Africa suffers not just from xenophobia. It suffers from a famine of vision so acute, so prolonged, that its political class can no longer distinguish between a scapegoat and a solution. When unemployment rises, blame the foreigner. When services collapse, blame the immigrant. When corruption hollows out every institution, find an African face to carry the guilt that should rest on indigenous shoulders in government corridors.

This is the oldest deception in political history — redirect popular rage outward so it never turns inward toward those responsible. And in South Africa, it works with devastating efficiency, because the leadership vacuum is so profound that no credible voice rises to reframe the narrative.

Consider what is being destroyed in the process. South Africa's greatest asset — beyond its minerals, beyond its infrastructure — is its continental symbolism. It was the miracle nation. The rainbow promise. The proof that negotiation could triumph over annihilation. Every African carried a piece of that victory. Mandela was not just South Africa's president — he was the continent's vindication.

That symbolic capital is being burned. Every video of a Mozambican trader beaten, every Nigerian pharmacy set ablaze, every Malawian family fleeing in the night — these images travel across the continent at

the speed of a WhatsApp forward. And with each image, the mythology of South Africa as Africa's beacon dims further. What was once admiration curdles into contempt.

The economic consequences compound the moral ones. African nations that once sent their best students to South African universities are building bilateral agreements with Rwanda, Ghana, and Mauritius instead. African investors who once considered Johannesburg as their continental headquarters are routing capital through Nairobi and Kigali. The reputational erosion is not theoretical — it is measurable, it is accelerating, and it is self-inflicted.

What South Africa needs — and what its current leadership cannot provide — is a statesman with the audacity to stand before his own people and say what Mandela would have said: "These Africans you attack are your brothers. Their parents paid for your freedom. Your rage is legitimate but it is misdirected. The enemy is not the Ghanaian selling bread on your corner. The enemy is the system that keeps you poor while those in power grow obscenely wealthy."

That speech has not been given. That leader has not emerged. And in the vacuum, the demagogues thrive.

Africa is watching. History is recording. And the judgment will be unsparing — that South Africa, at the moment it most needed greatness, chose smallness. That it answered the generosity of a continent with hostility. That it inherited Mandela's legacy and squandered it on the altar of cowardice dressed as populism.

The liberation of South Africa was a pan-African project. Its shame is becoming one too.

"A nation that forgets those who built it deserves neither its freedom nor its future."

Going forward

THE statistics says it all that all is not well in South Africa.

Here's the youth unemployment figures: for individuals ages 15-34 years, unemployment rate is 55.6%; for ages 15-24 unemployment is 60.9%; and for ages 25-34 it is 40.6%. That is the crux of the crisis.

Regarding land demography, the whites which accounts for about 7% of the population controls over 70% of the agricultural land.

I call South Africa a Partial Differentials Equation (PDE), i.e. mathematical equation that is too complicated to solve.

The crisis is real, but the June 30th 2026 evacuation solution is like cutting off the head in an attempt to cure headaches!

The leadership needs creative solutions. Technical and Vocational training (TVET) is one solution. As I write, there are more than six million job opportunities globally in Artificial Intelligence, data analysis, and programming today. Within 9 months South Africa can produce one million ICT professionals to work remotely and earn dollars.

Two, to reduce crime, the hands that sin should be cut off. Government should stamp out corruption among the law enforcement agencies so that criminals among immigrants can not purchase justice.

Three, allowing the white farmers to exit is not a smart policy. Government should use progressive taxation to tax land owners 50% tax in order to get money to fund mass education of the youths which must be free and compulsory.

There are other creative solutions that can be made available to President Cyril Ramaphosa, if he chooses to behave as a statesman.

Four, President Cyril Ramaphosa should call a meeting of selected African Presidents to discuss this issue of June 30th quit notice to certain African countries.

We have come a long way, what Africa should be striving to achieve today is ONE AFRICA, fragmentation of Africa through errors of commission or omission is dumb, unintelligent and counterproductive.

• Akano, President, One Africa Initiative, can be reached through Timakanot@gmail.com

By Tunde Akanni

FREEBORN must enjoy freedom of movement is the closest English equivalent I can muster for the headline here. And I'm savouring that so salaciously. In Abuja for that matter. Abuja, the former haven of Abacha's killer Strike Force. Here, I now function as an agent of a state actor, the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, FCCPC, promoting and enforcing socio economic rights.

My familiar turf, not minding the perils, was advocating fundamental human rights as the spokesperson for the nation's premier civil rights body, the Civil Liberties Organisation, CLO. What a dramatic twist from being on the government watchlist of a government to working for government, striding the full gamut of rights advocacy?

To the glory of the Almighty Allah, the scintillatingly inviting character of Lagos and the Southwest in terms of infrastructural escalation as well as radical posturing are now being democratized. All fully fired by the popular concern for Bashorun MKO Abiola, most reputed for his victory at the polls on June 12, 1993, 33 years back.

You would only be surprised by my excitement if you share same age bracket with the children in my house or younger. These children always marvel that I find it difficult switching away from celebrating MKO Abiola, winner of June 12 Presidential Election anytime I have cause to discuss him. MKO! He was the lone star of his generation.

I was a reporter on the Features Desk of National Concord and doubled as a member of the MKO Abiola Zakat Committee. As a Concord reporter, I belonged in the elite cadre of pressmen in Nigeria. Never a sweat-soaked shirt on any Concord journo. My desk had an airconditioned Volkswagen Jetta Executive Sedan attached to it with a driver, Mr. Remi, whose brotherly compassion for me derived largely from being an Ile Ife man. I reciprocated his love too, always declining my editor's subtle enlistment of my approval for her suspicion of any misconduct by Mr. Remi. Most times outside of the vicinity of Features Desk, Mr. Remi would hail me, aburo mi o se o. Mrs. Ewaen Osareren, my editor, motherly to me till date never knew the bond between Mr Remi and me.

No shakara could demean any Concord journo. On one occasion, a colleague, Ada Ibekie, a business correspondent had requested that I hold forth for her at a particularly creamy press conference organized by ARCO Petrochemical Company at its Victoria Island office. Dem never born Atlantic city!

It was during Ramadan. Over with the session,

K'omolu Yan Fanda

I picked my folder and made for the door. We, Concord journos, carried ourselves so high. A colleague from another media organisation wondered if I wasn't going to wait for the PR consultant to do further briefing familiar to all cultivated. "My driver is waiting for me" I announced proudly". "Oh really?"

The following Monday, Nduka, the PR Consultant, hurried down to Concord. I had a copy to turn in and so was neck deep into the crafting when Nduka sauntered into my office. He pleaded to excuse me out noticing the seriousness on my face. "Seriously, I wanted to catch up with you after the press conference but I learnt you had driven off." The chauffeur driven car was a big deal even to the big man, the consultant. Our encounter was a smart, brief one but the relationship endured accounting even for the freshness with which I recall the story here.

Being a member of the Abiola Zakat Committee earned me so much personal fulfilment and abundant respect within Concord. It earned me even much more outside especially in the Southeastern States' Muslim communities where I shared out the zakat of the inimitable philanthropist and winner of the historic June 12 1993 presidential election rated as the freest and the fairest in the nation's political history.

The Abiola Zakat Committee provided me with the enablement to do annual tour of Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Cross River, Rivers and Imo States. Having done my national youth service in Imo State in 1986/87, it was always some kind of homecoming, visiting Owerri.

Sharing Zakat for Abiola was a most honourable and abundantly rewarding role I combined with being a Concord staff. We must fly if any road trip must extend beyond four hours. If we had cause to pass the night anywhere, our hotel must be the best in town. I remember Sam Omatseye once jokingly remarking that Concord doesn't send out staff to go start doing mindless wandering like a sex worker. Trust witty Sam.

Even in its beleaguered state, Concord was the enabler for me to veer into rights advocacy. Press invitees to any major event was never complete without Concord. I was the reporter mandated to cover a major conference on Police and Human Rights organized by CLO at Badagry. A week later, after my report was out, Concord fell under the jackboot. It was proscribed.

I was a spectacular victim of the proscription. Didi Adodo and Olaitan Oyerinde, both late

now, then of the Iron and Steel Senior Staff Association of Nigeria, ISSAN, had given me an advert to give voice to their union's support for Abiola's mandate. Typical union's steely language prevailed in the text. Concord's advert dept insisted I should get them to expunge some strong expressions in addition to signing an indemnity form. They acceded to the company's request but we were all rather too late. Soldiers had swarmed over everywhere around Concord just within the two hours of shuttling between Concord and the Dopemu office of ISSAN. No entry to anyone any longer. Unfortunately, the cash for the ad was in the drawer of my table in the office. Thankfully, Didi and Olaitan reasoned with me.

My romance with the unions and CLO recommended me as a trusted comrade that could be recruited into the struggle especially with the prior, strong personal introduction and integration dexterously done by my childhood friend and colleague all the way, Ismail Ibraheem, now a professor at the University of Lagos.

Thus began my sojourn in full time human rights advocacy. Together with the rest of my colleagues, I was under a ceaseless threat of security operatives' harassment, arrest and detention. At some point I spent a week in detention at the notorious Panti Police station where, for the first time in my life I tasted what has come to be popularly known as yamarita.

Even as a Visiting scholar to Columbia University in 1998, there was no lowering the flag of struggle. I was part of the New York ceremony of renaming Nigeria Corner as Kudi Abiola Corner graced by Bola Ahmed Tinubu, by the grace of God the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria today. He was a most wanted activist back home then. Leveraging on the visibility of Columbia University as an Ivy League, I addressed sessions on the state of the Nigerian Press within the context of the tyranny of military rule. I shared sessions with others including Babafemi Ojudu at some other times.

Thirty-three years later, most merciful Allah who took us through the thickets of pro-democracy struggle has enthroned us with the mandate to enlarge the coast of freedom for Nigerian citizens. From being anxious for such petty rights as free speech we have come a long way to driving the actualization of socio-economic rights backed by law.

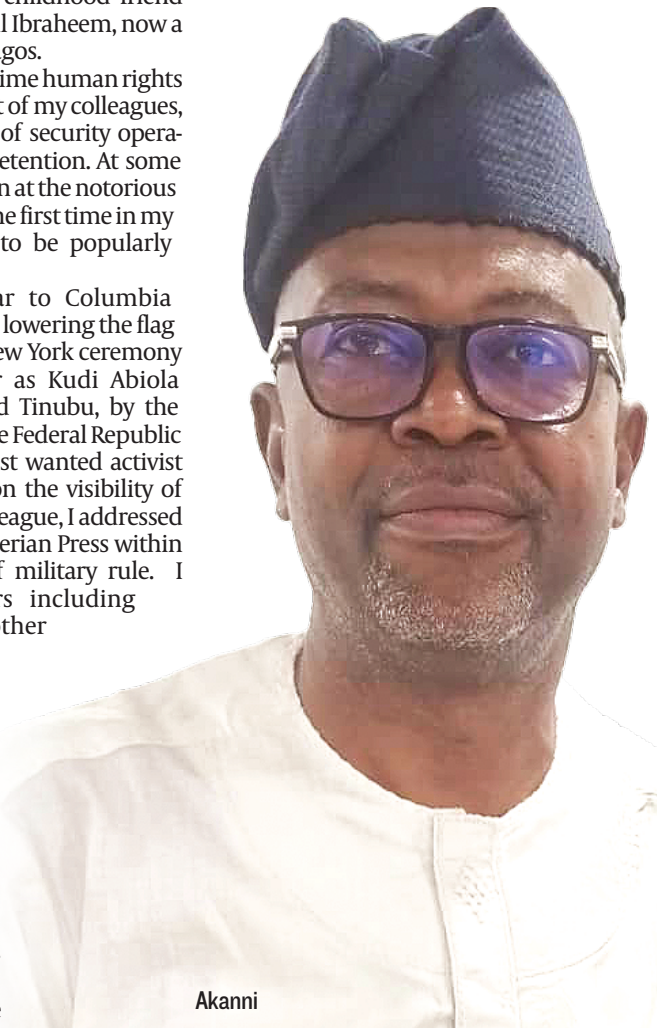
Beyond the trenches, we have

since taken time to improve on ourselves to relentlessly strive for power forcibly wrestled from the people by roguish soldiers who doubled as blackmailers consigning human rights and prodemocracy activists into bins of history.

Clearly ahead of all other government agencies and commissions, FCCPC, where yours sincerely has berthed for sabbatical, offers, not only the strongest visibility to socio-economic rights in the country but also the enforcement, taking full advantage of the relevant statutory provisions in the laws of the land. I survived the persecution of the days of human rights advocacy to be part of the advocacy and enforcement of socioeconomic rights.

Nigeria go better!

• **Tunde Akanni, PhD, former CLO's Spokesperson and LASU'S first Professor of Journalism and Development Communication is currently on sabbatical leave at FCCPC, Abuja.**



Akanni

Citizenship, Capital And The Folly Of Economic Tribalism

By Ladipo Anuoluwapo

THERE is a dangerous drift in Nigeria's public conversation. It surfaces periodically, usually whenever a company becomes exceptionally successful, acquires significant market share, or emerges as a dominant player in a particular sector. Suddenly, the debate ceases to be about business practices, competition, regulation, innovation, or economic contribution. Instead, it descends into a crude interrogation of ancestry. Who owns the company? Where did the founder's parents come from? Is the business truly Nigerian?

These questions may sound harmless, even patriotic. Yet beneath them lies a troubling tendency that threatens to undermine the very foundations of a modern economy. Nations do not become prosperous by questioning the ancestry of investors. They prosper by creating systems that reward productivity, innovation, compliance, and value creation.

Unfortunately, some of the arguments currently circulating in sections of Nigeria's public sphere suggest

an alarming willingness to substitute economic analysis with ethnic arithmetic.

This is particularly ironic for a country whose citizens have repeatedly suffered from similar prejudices across the African continent, particularly in South Africa and Ghana.

For decades, Nigerians have protested the xenophobic attacks directed at their nationals in parts of Africa. They have objected to claims that Nigerian businesses, professionals, and entrepreneurs are somehow "taking over" local economies merely because they have become successful.

When Nigerian banks like Access and Zenith expanded across Africa, establishing operations from East Africa to Southern Africa, Nigerians viewed it as evidence of enterprise and competitiveness. When Nigerian fintech firms, manufacturers, and service providers entered new markets, it was celebrated as a sign of economic maturity. Rightly so.

No country should punish success merely because it originates elsewhere.

Yet some Nigerians now appear willing to embrace the same logic they reject when it is directed against them.

This raises an important question: what exactly makes a company Nigerian? Is it the nationality of its founder? The place where it was incorporated? The country where it pays taxes? The nationality of its employees? The location of its investments? Or the communities whose prosperity depends on its existence?

These are not academic questions. They lie at the heart of contemporary debates about citizenship, capital, and economic identity.

Nigeria's own economic history provides useful context. Some of the country's most enduring corporate institutions did not begin as indigenous enterprises. From banking to manufacturing and consumer goods, foreign capital played a significant role in the development of many companies that are now regarded as national institutions.

The response of the Nigerian state was neither hostility nor exclusion. Rather, successive governments pursued policies aimed at increasing

local participation and ownership through deliberate indigenisation programmes.

The objective was not to destroy businesses but to ensure broader Nigerian involvement in them. That strategy transformed the corporate landscape.

Today, companies such as First Bank, Union Bank, Bhojsons UAC, and Nigerian Breweries are deeply embedded in Nigeria's economic life, irrespective of their historical origins. Their significance derives not from where they started but from what they have become. The same principle should apply elsewhere.

Families such as the Chagourys, the Leventises, and the Bouloses have spent decades—indeed generations—investing in Nigeria. Their businesses employ Nigerians, pay taxes in Nigeria, and commit capital to Nigerian projects.

The Chagoury Group's involvement in major infrastructure projects, hospitality investments, and urban development initiatives such as Eko Atlantic reflects a long-term commitment to the country. Whether one

agrees with every aspect of their business interests is beside the point. The more important question is whether such families, after generations of economic and social investment in Nigeria, should still be viewed through the lens of foreignness. A modern nation-state ought to answer in the negative.

The debate becomes even more problematic when it targets businesses whose achievements should ordinarily inspire national pride.

Take the controversy surrounding Optasia and its Nigerian affiliate, Nairtime. Rather than engage with substantive questions about regulation, competition, market conduct, or consumer welfare, some critics have chosen to frame the discussion around ownership and ancestry. Yet this is a business that emerged from Nigeria and expanded into more than two dozen African countries.

In an era when policymakers frequently lament the limited export of Nigerian technology and intellectual capital, one might expect such expansion to be celebrated as evidence that Nigerian-based innovation can compete beyond national borders.

Tribute

www.guardian.ng

From Kingsley Jeremiah, Abuja

If there was an opportunity to write an epitaph on the grave of Alhaji Prince Adeleke Oduola, who died last month at 93, it would be that the foundations of progress are often laid not just by institutions, but by individuals whose lives quietly shape the course of communities and generations.

A man whose journey mirrors the resilience, transformation and aspirations of a generation that bridged colonial Nigeria and modern statehood, Oduola's life stands as a compelling testament to perseverance, adaptability and enduring legacy, which many Nigerians must learn from.

Born on November 25, 1932, into the Layiokun Compound of the Lajomo Ruling House in Osogbo, Oduola's early life was shaped by both privilege and vulnerability. His father, Ibiloye Aremu Adebola, was a cotton farmer and one of the three Baba Isales serving under then Oba Alabi Kolawole, the Ataoja of Osogbo. The family resided within the palace, a symbol of status and cultural significance, until the monarch's death in 1933, just months after Oduola's birth.

Yet, his arrival was marked by circumstances that would shape his formative years in unexpected ways. His mother, Oyenihun Apeke, became intensely protective of him, a disposition that would significantly delay his exposure to formal education and the wider world.

It was not until 1943, at the age of 10, that Oduola began his formal education at Methodist Primary School, Isale Aro. Even then, his schooling was anything but conventional. His mother's unwavering vigilance saw her waiting outside the school premises throughout the day, a practice that soon proved unsustainable. After just three years, his father made the difficult decision to withdraw him from school, redirecting him instead towards farming and practical life.

Though his formal education was truncated, Oduola's intellectual development did not end. Through adult education programmes and the influence of friends such as Babalola Oladejo, a teacher at a training college, he continued to learn, cultivating a mindset that would later define his adaptability and success.

His teenage years came against the backdrop of global economic hardship. The Great Depression had dealt a heavy blow to his father's fortunes, dismantling what had once been a thriving cotton trade linked to the British Cotton Growing Association. With farmhands gone and resources dwindling, young Oduola faced a future that demanded initiative and courage.

At just 16, he made a bold decision of relocating to Lagos in search of opportunity. There, he found temporary refuge with Gafar Igbalaye, a relative connected to Chief Rasheed Adejare Igbalaye. But the emotional toll of his sudden departure on his family led to his eventual return home, under an agreement that he would be free to pursue a trade of his choosing.

That decision marked the beginning of a lifelong journey through enterprise and reinvention. He apprenticed as a tailor under his brother, Gbadamosi Adebisi, but tragedy struck when his brother died in 1950. Undeterred, he completed his training under Alimi Ajani and practised tailoring for several years.

From tailoring, he ventured into petty trading. It was during this period that his entrepreneurial instincts began to sharpen. A partnership with his friend led him into the trans-

From Palace To Power: How Oduola's Journey Shapes Generations

port business, but inexperience resulted in financial losses. Even after acquiring another bus under the name "Felele Transport," the venture faltered, plunging him into debt.

For many, such setbacks would have been definitive. For Oduola, they were instructive.

He pivoted once more, this time into trading music records at Dugbe Market in Ibadan. It was here that chance and character intervened. A customer, R.A. Ajibade of Obadeyi Construction Company, recognised his potential and introduced him to the world of construction.

Between 1962 and 1964, Oduola trained under Ajibade, gaining hands-on experience that would redefine his career trajectory. In 1964, he established Odus and Sons Building and General Contractors, marking his formal entry into the construction industry.

His first major project at the Osogbo Farm Settlement proved transformative, earning him recognition in both government and private circles. Over time, he built a reputation for reliability and competence, securing contracts from notable figures including Chief Mrs. Faderera Akintola.

By 1980, his business interests had expanded into automobile sales with the establishment of Oduola Motors at Oke-Fia, dealing in brands such as Peugeot, Toyota, Datsun and Volkswagen. Yet, as the demands of construction grew, he eventually refocused his energies on contracting the field where he had found his greatest impact.

Parallel to his business pursuits was a deep and enduring engagement with politics. Oduola's political journey began in 1953 when he joined the Action Group alongside a circle of like-

minded friends. Driven by a shared vision of development for Osogbo, they became active participants in the turbulent politics of the Western Region. Their involvement brought them into direct contact with Chief Obafemi Awolowo during the crises of the 1960s. Aligning with Awolowo came at a cost, as members of the rival Nigerian National Democratic Party targeted them, forcing Oduola and his associates to operate discreetly under the guise of the Oroki Social Club.

His political philosophy remained rooted in progressive ideals. Though he stepped back during the Second Republic to focus on family and business, he later re-emerged during the military era, playing key roles in political transitions. Notably, he con-

tributed to the emergence of Isiaka Adeleke as the first civilian governor of Osun State in 1992 and later supported the rise of Olagunsoye Oyinlola.

Yet, beyond business and politics, Oduola's most enduring contribution may lie in the preservation and structuring of Osogbo's traditional leadership system. Beginning in 1958, he became deeply involved in efforts to formalise the ruling houses entitled to the Ataoja throne. Over nearly two decades, he worked tirelessly with members of the Layiokun Compound to secure recognition for the Lajomo Ruling House.

Their persistence paid off, as the structure evolved first into four, and later five recognised ruling houses; a development that has since shaped the succession process in Osogbo.

His life, encapsulated in the phrase "Oju Pon Koko Ma Fo," a Yoruba expression evoking vigilance and resilience, is a testament to the power of perseverance in the face of adversity.

From a sheltered child in a palace courtyard to a self-made contractor, political strategist and custodian of tradition, Alhaji Prince Adeleke Oduola's story is not merely a tribute. It is a chronicle of survival, adaptation and legacy, which many Nigerians must emulate.

At just 16, he made a bold decision of relocating to Lagos in search of opportunity. There, he found temporary refuge with Gafar Igbalaye, a relative connected to Chief Rasheed Adejare Igbalaye. But the emotional toll of his sudden departure on his family led to his eventual return home, under an agreement that he would be free to pursue a trade of his choosing.



TranESS Introduces New Industrial Energy Storage Solutions

By Sulaimon Salau

TRANESS has unveiled new innovative energy storage solutions designed to accelerate the country's transition toward reliable, sustainable, and cost-effective power.

Unveiling the product at the Commercial & Industrial (C&I) Channel Launch themed: "Reimagining Energy for Commerce and Industry," in Lagos, the company reinstated its commitment to empowering Nigerian businesses with advanced energy storage technologies that enhance energy resilience, reduce operating costs, and support long-term sustainability goals.

The Team Lead, TranESS Nigeria, Abiodun Wasiu, said the DYQUE 125kW / 241kWh Commercial & Industrial Energy Storage System, is a next-generation all-in-one intelligent solar-plus-storage solution engineered

specifically for commercial and industrial applications.

According to him, the DYQUE system integrates PCS, MPPT, battery, Battery Management System (BMS), thermal management, and fire protection into a single plug-and-play platform, eliminating the need for complex on-site commissioning while reducing deployment time.

"Its modular string-type architecture supports flexible AC-side parallel expansion, allowing customers to scale their energy storage capacity according to project requirements," he stated.

Designed for seamless hybrid operation, Wasiu said the DYQUE solution supports integration with solar PV systems, battery storage, and diesel generators, while enabling uninterrupted switching between on-grid and off-grid modes.

OmoekOH Boosts Lagos SME Sector With N200m Grants For Young Entrepreneurs, Innovators

By Sulaimon Salau

THE growth trajectory of Lagos' small and medium enterprises got a major boost as OmoekOH, a Lagos-based community of young builders, distributed N200 million in grants, business support packages, and tools to young entrepreneurs and innovators at its inaugural Wealth and Impact Summit.

Held at the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and the Creative Arts, National Theatre, Iganmu, the summit attracted over 5,000 youths, traders, tech enthusiasts, and business owners.

It was convened by Imran Oladimeji Hamzat of OmoekOH, a movement launched just three weeks

ago to recognize and empower young creatives, founders, and employees who have been building from "their little corners".

The Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, represented by Akinyemi Bankole Ajigbotafe, Commissioner for Wealth Creation and Employment, commended the initiative. "This summit is designed to provide a platform where ideas meet opportunity, mentorship, and capital. It aligns with our administration's determination to create an enabling environment where enterprises can thrive," the Commissioner stated.

inDrive Opens Applications For New Role In Lagos

By Eno Bassey

A GLOBAL mobility and urban services platform, inDrive, has announced the opening of applications for the position of Chief Wahala Officer (CWO). This initiative is aimed at spotlighting the everyday transportation and delivery challenges faced by Lagos residents, while celebrating the resilience, humour and ingenuity with which they navigate these issues.

According to inDrive's management, the CWO role involves identifying various forms of Lagos Wahala, helping to alleviate transportation and delivery stress, navigating the city's notorious traffic and representing the concerns of Lagosians during frustrating transport moments.

Two applicants with the best qualifications for the CWO

role will also be selected and rewarded with a cash prize of N1 million and N500,000 respectively.

Speaking on the campaign, the Country Manager, inDrive Nigeria, Oladimeji Timothy, noted that beyond its entertainment value, the Chief Wahala Officer initiative seeks to strengthen connections between the company and the communities it serves by encouraging authentic storytelling and user participation.

Oladimeji explained that the initiative is designed to resonate with Lagos residents who regularly contend with traffic congestion, delivery delays, unpredictable weather, and other challenges of navigating the city.

"At inDrive, we believe that understanding people's everyday experiences is essential to building solutions that truly serve them.

Experts List Strategic Steps For Energy Security For Nigeria, Others

By Sulaimon Salau

INDUSTRY experts, market analysts and stakeholders have listed the strategic steps that would drive Nigeria and other West African countries into energy security against any recurrence of crisis in the global oil market.

The experts spoke at a webinar organised by the Major Energies Marketers Association of Nigeria (MEMAN), in partnership with S&P Global Energy, Thursday and titled "The Iran War Aftermath: Reading the Tea Leaves – Mitigating Future Oil Market Shocks in West Africa."

MEMAN, in a communique by its Executive Secretary,

Clement Isong after the webinar quoted the speakers as stressing the need for West African countries to strengthen their energy systems against future disruptions by prioritising three major strategic actions like: building domestic refining capacity, developing strategic stock, and deepening and expanding alternative energy options, including greater utilisation of gas resources.

The speakers include the Africa Head of Fuels and Refining, S&P Global Energy, Stanislas Drochon; Senior Leaders, Nigerian Downstream Industry, Olumide Adeosun and Senior Price Reporter, EMEA

Gasoline and West African Refined Products, S&P Global Energy, Mathew Thracey-Cook.

A key presentation referenced a reset in global energy priorities, where energy security, affordability, and sustainability are increasingly being weighed against one another.

The discussion emphasized that, in Africa, the energy transition must remain a just transition, one that recognizes the continued relevance of fossil fuels in the short to medium term while accelerating the deployment of cleaner and more diversified energy solutions.

According to the commu-

nique, the recent geopolitical disruptions served as a reminder that energy security is not only an economic concern but also a national security imperative. Speakers noted that countries with stronger refining systems, adequate reserve stock, and diversified supply sources are better positioned to withstand external shocks and protect consumers from sudden market volatility.

The three major policy directions highlighted by experts were: Expanding local refining capability to reduce dependence on imported refined products and strengthen regional self-sufficiency.

They also harp on establishing and maintaining strategic reserves to provide a buffer against global supply disruptions and short-term market shocks.

Noting that deepening and expanding alternative Energies is also considered important. This, according to the experts, involves accelerating investment in cleaner and alternative energy sources, while prioritizing locally sourced options such as gas and biofuels to improve energy access, affordability, and resilience.

The webinar also examined market pricing trends, supply chain vulnerabilities, and the role of regional collaboration in stabilizing energy markets across West Africa. Industry participants agreed that stronger policy coordination.



The Commission Chief Executive (CCE) of Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Mrs. Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan, and the Chairman of the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), Dr. Zacch Adedeji, at the NRS headquarters in Abuja

Arridex Floats West Africa's First Multi-tech 3D Industrial Omnifactory In Lagos

By Sulaimon Salau

INDUSTRIAL manufacturing in Nigeria and West Africa at large has reached a historic milestone in 3D printing, as Arridex formally floated its breakthrough "Omnifactory" in Lagos.

The newly opened facility stands as the region's very first multi-technology industrial additive manufacturing facility, paving the way for a major shift toward localized production and self-reliance.

The launch follows a strategic rebranding of the company's corporate identity

from RusselSmith to Arridex.

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu who officially launched the plant, said: "Today, I opened West Africa's first multi-technology industrial additive manufacturing facility in Lagos. By producing industrial components and spare parts here in Lagos, Arridex is helping to reduce our dependence on imports, strengthening critical industries and supporting economic growth."

"I commend the Arridex team for their vision and commitment to building

solutions that serve not only Nigeria but the wider African continent. Lagos will continue to support investments that create opportunities, grow local capacity and position our state as a hub for innovation and industry," he stated.

The Arridex Omnifactory aims to reshape industrial supply chains by housing several advanced 3D printing and fabrication techniques under a single roof. Utilizing cutting-edge systems like Laser Powder Bed Fusion (L-PBF), Cold Spray,

Fused Filament Fabrication (FFF), and Selective Laser Sintering (SLS), the Lagos facility is built to create high-precision, on-demand industrial components and replacement parts. Beyond standard gear, the site's large-format machinery is robust enough to engineer full-sized marine parts and massive structural items for heavy industries.

Group Chief Executive Officer, Arridex, Kayode Adeleke, said: "We did not set out to build the biggest company, but a resilient one.

'Our Commitment To Customer Education, Empowerment Is Real'

By Sulaimon Salau

MTN Nigeria has reinforced its commitment to transparency and consumer education through Data on Trial held recently. This was a first-of-its-kind public engagement platform designed to address consumer concerns about mobile data usage, billing transparency, and digital consumption.

The event brought together consumers, media professionals, content creators,

technology experts, and independent auditors for an open examination of how data is measured, consumed, and billed across MTN's network. Opening the session, the Chief Executive Officer of MTN Nigeria, Dr. Karl Olutokun-Toriola, underscored the growing importance of data in today's digital economy and the importance of trust and greater understanding of how modern technologies drive data consumption.

"Data on Trial was created based on a simple belief. Trust, with our customer, grows when they are given access to the information and they are allowed to make up their mind about it. Today's event is an opportunity for everyone to understand the facts, understand the technology behind what delivers technology in real time. And to ask the most difficult questions and hear different perspectives. This is important because the econ-

omy is more digitally driven. "Data is very important today, and as technology evolves, the quantity of data consumed also evolves," he continued. "The applications we use, the quality of content we consume, and the increasing number of connected devices all contribute to higher data usage. It is therefore important that consumers understand what drives their data consumption and how it is measured."

BizAgro

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

‘Over 80% Of Rural Women Unaware Of Climate Finance Opportunities’

ABY Victoria Nwachukwu

DESPITE the existence of climate, agriculture and women’s economic empowerment policies at both national and state levels, stakeholders say weak implementation, limited awareness and financing barriers have continued to prevent many women from benefiting from government interventions.

Sadly, over 80 per cent of rural women farmers reached through a climate project, are reportedly unaware of available climate finance opportunities.

These concerns were raised during a national policy engagement forum on climate change, gender and agriculture convened by the International Centre for Environmental Health and Development (ICEHD), under its grassroots women climate action by rural women farmers in Nigeria project, supported by the African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF).

The forum brought together government representatives, civil society organisations (CSOs), development practitioners, women

farmers and policy advocates to review existing policy frameworks and identify implementation gaps affecting women, particularly those in rural communities.

Representatives of Lagos State government agencies acknowledged the disproportionate impact of climate change on women farmers and highlighted ongoing interventions aimed at improving resilience and economic inclusion.

While the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA) outlined training programmes, agricultural support initiatives and capacity-building efforts targeting women, representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA) and the Lagos State Agricultural Development Authority (LSADA) stressed the need for gender-responsive climate policies, stronger community engagement and improved access to productive resources for women farmers.

While speaking, the ICEHD Programme Officer, Shalom Wusu, said the organisation’s

work over the years had shown that women remain disproportionately affected by climate change despite the existence of several policies designed to support them.

According to her, rural women farmers continue to face challenges ranging from flooding, drought, irregular rainfall patterns, pest infestations and declining soil fertility, all of which undermine food production and household livelihoods.

She explained that the forum was organised to critically examine climate, gender and agricultural policies and develop practical recommendations that would improve productivity and resilience among women and vulnerable groups.

Wusu said ICEHD’s intervention, which began in Abuja before expanding to Lagos and Imo states, had trained women on climate adaptation, climate-smart agriculture and agroecology, while also providing farm tools and other support to strengthen their resilience.

The concern surfaced repeatedly throughout the forum. While government representatives highlighted existing programmes,

training initiatives and support schemes targeting women, participants argued that many intended beneficiaries remained unaware of available opportunities or continued to face barriers accessing them. The discussions pointed to a persistent gap between policy commitments and the realities experienced by women at the community level.

A review of the Lagos State Climate Action Plan (2020–2025) presented during the forum described the policy as one of Nigeria’s most comprehensive sub-national climate frameworks.

The plan seeks to build a climate-resilient, low-carbon and sustainable Lagos through interventions in energy, transportation, waste management, infrastructure development and climate adaptation.

Presenting an analysis of the policy, Chief Executive Officer of the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria (WEAN), Dr Angela Daniel, noted that while the plan contains provisions for gender mainstreaming, significant gaps remain between policy commitments and actual implementation.



Educating women farmers on climate finance opportunities

NFSP Awards Over N3.2m Grants To UniAbuja Students For Food Security Research

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Nigeria Food Security Scholars Programme (NFSSP), an initiative of the Nigerian Food Security Project (NFSP) has awarded project-based grants totaling N3, 211,500 to 25 final-year students of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Abuja.

The research grants, designed to support research-driven solutions to Nigeria’s food security challenges, is targeted at supporting research in food security, agricultural supply chains, climate resilience, post-harvest loss reduction, sustainable food systems, and related areas.

The scholarship presentation ceremony was attended by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Hakeem Fawehinmi; the Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Professor Akeem Oyerinde; Professor Abideen Abiodun Alarape, Head, Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management and Chairman of the SCRIH Scholarship Selection Committee; members of Supply Chain Research and Innovation Hub (SCRIH); faculty members; and other stakeholders.

The Executive Director of NFSP, Ajibola Oladiipo, said the initiative is designed to ensure that research from higher institutions directly contributes to addressing food security challenges.

“We strongly believe in the value of research

and want to ensure that research emerging from academic institutions is grounded in the realities of food security challenges. Our goal is to encourage students to align their projects with practical solutions that can contribute to addressing food security issues. We are committed to funding and scaling solutions that are commercially viable,” he said.

The Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Professor Oyerinde, said the initiative aligns with efforts to tackle food insecurity through research and innovation.

“The primary goal of this initiative is to address food insecurity in Nigeria through research. We selected 25 outstanding students who will receive support to work on issues including women and youth participation in agriculture and post-harvest loss reduction,” he said.

He described the initiative as the first of its kind in the university, noting its significance for both student development and institutional advancement. He added that the students have been grouped into thematic research clusters and are conducting studies expected to produce practical insights for the agricultural sector.

Under the programme, students will carry out their research projects under faculty supervision, with quarterly coaching and review sessions organised by SCRIH.

2,180 Disability Communities To Benefit from Climate-Smart Agriculture Training

From Tunde Omolehin, Sokoto

NO fewer than 2,180 persons from disability communities across six states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) will benefit from training on sustainable climate-smart agricultural practices aimed at improving livelihoods and strengthening resilience to climate change.

The initiative is being implemented through a partnership between The Leprosy Mission Nigeria and The Leprosy Mission Sweden, with support from the Swedish Mission Council (SMC).

Speaking during a one-day PIAC/Stakeholders meeting organised for members of the Project Advisory Committee in Sokoto, the State Programme Officer of The Leprosy Mission Nigeria, Mr. Ameh Jerry, said the project seeks to enhance community resilience through climate change adaptation, sustainable liveli-

hoods, and the promotion of gender equality, human rights, and the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

According to him, the programme will be implemented in Sokoto, Kebbi, Kogi, Niger, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and will train 30 master trainers on climate change management, environmental sustainability, conflict sensitivity, and religious tolerance to support effective implementation of the project.

“In Sokoto State, the project will focus on four disability communities located in Kara, Bodinga, Gwadabawa, and Amanawa. Our goal is to equip beneficiaries with modern agricultural techniques that will improve climate resilience and adaptation,” Jerry said.

He explained that the intervention aligns with six of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and will support vulnerable populations through vocational training and climate-smart agricultural initiatives.

The programme targets 1,860 beneficiaries in 20 communities across six states, intending to improve resilience to climate change through adaptive farming practices and sustainable resource management by 2028.

Jerry further disclosed that 300 community-based organisations and civil society groups would be strengthened through capacity-building programmes to enable them to advocate for environmental sustainability and adaptive agriculture policies.

As part of efforts to promote economic inclusion, the project will support 42 self-help groups comprising women, youths, and persons with disabilities by linking them to resources, markets, and fair-trade opportunities.

He added that 180 women, youths, and persons with disabilities would receive digital technology training to enhance their market access and business opportunities.

“Additionally, at least 200 young women and

men will be trained and certified in agribusiness and other vocational skills, equipping them with employable competencies in agriculture and the formal sector,” he said.

The programme also includes support for 60 community farmers living with disabilities, including women and youths, who will receive assistive technologies to improve their functional abilities and boost productivity in their economic activities.

In his remarks, the State Programme Manager of Leprosy and Tuberculosis Control at the Sokoto State Ministry of Health, Dr. Sanusi Ridwan, commended The Leprosy Mission Nigeria for bringing the initiative to the state.

He expressed confidence that the project would contribute significantly to improving the socio-economic well-being of vulnerable groups while promoting climate resilience and inclusive development in the affected communities.

Police Arrest
Suspected Bandits’
Logistics Supplier
In Kwara

Seeks Creation Of Warri State

From **Mansur Aramide**, Ilorin

THE Kwara State Police Command has arrested a man suspected to be a supplier of logistics to bandits in the state.

This is as security agencies intensify efforts to dismantle criminal networks and their support structures.

According to the state Police Command, the arrest was made by operatives of the Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU) after what it described as credible intelligence and sustained covert surveillance.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Adetoun Ejire-Adeyemi, said the operation forms part of ongoing efforts to implement the strategic policing vision of the Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Rilwan Disu, which emphasises intelligence-led crime fighting and the disruption of criminal enterprises.

“The suspect was apprehended in Ilorin and is believed to be linked to the movement and supply of materials destined for criminal groups operating in forested areas and remote locations across the state,” the police chief said.

Fashola To Headline
NBA Ikeja Law Week
As Governance
Reform Takes Centre
Stage

By **Yetunde Ayobami Ojo**

FORMER Lagos State Governor, Babatunde Raji Fashola, will deliver the keynote address at the 2026 Annual Law Week of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Ikeja Branch, with governance reform, economic policy and institutional accountability forming the core of deliberations.

The Chairman of the Annual Law Week Planning Committee, Mr. Chukwudi Kachikwu Enebeli (SAN), disclosed this while speaking with newsmen in Lagos.

He said Fashola would speak on the theme, ‘Law, Leadership and the Ballot: Governance Beyond Politics,’ during the opening plenary of the Law Week themed, ‘Altering the Status Quo: Going Against the Norm.’

Enebeli said that the event is scheduled to hold from June 19 to June 25 at Ikeja, noting that Fashola’s address would draw from his experience as a two-term governor of Lagos State and former Minister of Works and Housing, focusing on governance systems that prioritise performance, institutional continuity and sustainable development beyond political cycles.

FG, NESUG Seek Green Finance To
Drive Climate Action, Jobs

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

THE Federal Government and stakeholders have called for increased green financing, stronger environmental governance and sustainable investments to address climate change, create jobs and accelerate economic growth in Nigeria.

The call was made at the Nigeria Environmental Summit (NESt 2026) in Abuja with the theme, ‘Unlocking Nigeria’s Green Economy: Driving Climate Action and Strengthening Environmental Governance.’

The Minister of Environment, Mallam Balarabe Abbas Lawal, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Dr Salihu Usman, said Nigeria must position itself to benefit from emerging climate

and green investment opportunities.

Lawal said climate funds, carbon markets, public-private partnerships, blended finance mechanisms, renewable energy, ecosystem restoration, sustainable agriculture and waste-to-wealth initiatives could support environmental sustainability, economic transformation and job creation.

“We must unlock green finance opportunities and strengthen environmental governance through policy reforms, regulatory enforcement, accountability, stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships that will accelerate Nigeria’s transition to a climate-resilient and sustainable economy,” he said.

The minister noted that cli-

mate change continued to manifest through flooding, drought, coastal erosion, biodiversity loss, pollution and pressure on ecosystems and livelihoods.

He added that innovative financing mechanisms were critical to achieving Nigeria’s environmental and development goals.

Lawal commended the Nigerian Environmental Summit Group (NESUG) for providing a platform that brought together government institutions, development partners, investors, academia, civil society organisations and the private sector to advance environmental solutions.

Also speaking, Cluster Lead, Disease Control, World Health Organisation

(WHO), Nigeria, Dr. Mya Ngon, stressed the need to place health at the centre of climate and environmental decision-making.

Ngon cited Nigeria’s 2024 Climate and Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment, which showed that climate-related factors could account for up to 21 per cent of the country’s disease burden.

She said the findings reinforced the need to pursue green economy solutions while protecting public health.

NESUG Executive Secretary, Rita Michael-Ojo, called for stronger collaboration among governments, businesses, development partners, communities and citizens.



Commissioner of Police in-charge of Ekiti State governorship election, Abayomi Shogunle addressing police officials in preparation for governorship election in Ado-Ekiti... on Friday.

PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

Father’s Day: Anglican Archbishop Enjoins Fathers To Raise Godly Children

By **Chris Irekamba**

THE Archbishop of Ecclesiastical Province of Aba and Bishop, Diocese of Isiala Ngwa South Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev. Isaac Chijioke Nwaobia has reminded Christian fathers of their sacred responsibility of nurturing, guiding and raising Godly children in the fear and knowledge of the Lord.

He also tasked fathers to register and get their PVC’s for the next general election.

The Archbishop stated this on the occasion of Fathers Day celebration coming up tomorrow in various churches. He said that children are a heritage from the Lord and as such fathers and men should stand as faithful stewards and spiritual leaders within their homes, churches and communities.

In his goodwill message titled, ‘Faithful Steward of God’s Heritage,’ which was taken from Psalm 127:3-5, the cleric stressed that in an age characterised by moral deca-

dence, family instability and spiritual compromise, God expects Christian fathers to exhibit godly examples for their children to emulate.

Nwaobia emphasised that as faithful stewards of God’s heritage, fathers should remain steadfast in prayer, diligent in service, committed to family values and unwavering in their Christian witness.

“Let our homes become centres of godliness, our churches places of vibrant fellowship and our communities recipients of Christ’s trans-

forming love through our lives,” Nwaobia said.

He also extended his warmest felicitations to all the fathers, husbands and men of the Diocese of Isiala Ngwa South on the occasion of the 2026 Father’s Day Celebration.

While congratulating them for the successful hosting of their maiden Men’s Summit, Nwaobia praised them for their commitment to spiritual growth, unity, leadership development and kingdom advancement.

AIG Scores Gov Mbah High On Investments In Modern Security Infrastructure

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE Assistant Inspector-General of Police (Training and Development), Mr. Ifeanyi Uche, has commended the Governor Peter Mbah administration for investing heavily in manpower development and modern security infrastructure such as a Command and Control Centre, surveillance systems, drones and other hi-tech crime-fighting tools.

The AIG gave the commendation on Friday during a training organised by the Enugu State government for hundreds of personnel from the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Nigeria Security and

Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Enugu State Forest Guards, and the Neighbourhood Watch in the state.

The five-day training, themed, ‘Building Smarter, Safer and Secure Communities,’ focused on data gathering and cybersecurity. Facilitators included the Chairman of the INTERPOL Africa Working Group on Cybercrime and trainers from the NPF National Cybercrime Centre.

Speaking with newsmen after touring the Enugu State Command and Control Centre with the participants on the final day of the training, Uche said criminal activities had evolved from conven-

tional offences to technology-driven crimes, making it imperative for security agencies to embrace digital tools in crime prevention and investigation.

“Most crimes today are technologically generated. To effectively combat them, law enforcement agencies must deploy technology and acquire the necessary skills to use it.

“I have seen firsthand the technological infrastructure that we have on the ground here in Enugu State. I can tell you clearly that I am so impressed with what I have seen. That is why, outside here, we all know that Enugu State is one of the safest states

in Nigeria. And the testament is what I’ve seen today.

“The world has actually embraced smart policing. And what we are seeing today is so wonderful because this is one of the few states where we are using technology to fight crime. The governor has done so much and has done so well in fighting crime using technology.

“The old era of analogue ways of fighting crime has gone. With what we have on the ground, such as hi-tech drones and a Command and Control Centre that sees all the nooks and crannies of the state, it’s wonderful and I commend the governor for doing a good job,” he stated.

Creative Thinking In
PR Must Solve
Business Problems
– Njideka Akabogu

By **Gbenga Salau**

PUBLIC relations professionals must move beyond generating big ideas and demonstrate how creativity contributes to solving business problems and delivering measurable outcomes, according to communications strategist and Regional Manager, East Africa at ID Africa, Njideka Akabogu Eke-Uche.

Speaking at the African Public Relations Association (APRA) X PR Fundi Masterclass on Creative Thinking in PR and Comms: Strategic Campaigns, Akabogu said communicators can no longer afford to treat creativity as separate from business objectives if they hope to earn a seat at the decision-making table.

“We need to be able to demonstrate that our creativity is a problem-solving tool,” she said, noting that practitioners must understand the industries they serve and tie communication strategies to organisational priorities.

According to her, anyone can come up with exciting ideas, but the real value of communications lies in understanding the problems businesses are trying to solve and developing campaigns that address them.

Akabogu also challenged the perception of PR as a short-term fix, stressing that reputation and trust are built over time.

ESI Urges Students To Choose Purpose Over Peer Pressure

By **Ngozi Egenuka**

THE Convener of the Ehiliz Support Initiative (ESI), Mrs. Elizabeth Ehigiamusoe, popularly known as Ehiliz, has called on secondary school students to remain focused on their goals and resist societal pressures that could derail their future aspirations.

Speaking during the 2026 edition of the ESI Annual Youth Summit, a two-day sensitisation programme held across selected public and private schools in Lagos State, Ehiliz said the initiative was designed to equip Senior Secondary School Three (SS3) students with the right mindset as they prepare for life beyond secondary education.

The summit, themed, ‘Purpose Over Pressure,’ brought together students from public schools on the first day and private schools on the second day.

According to Ehiliz, the theme encourages young people to live according to their goals, values and vision rather than succumb to negative influences such as cultism, gangsterism and other social vices.



CHANGE OF NAME

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria Guardian Nigeria Guardian Nigeria - C00264288

ADEBAYO: I, formerly known as Adebayo Aderemi Titilope now wish to be addressed as Adeleke Aderemi Deborah. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

ADEMOLA: I, formerly known as Ademola Morenike Fathia. now addressed as Odeyoyin Fathia Morenike. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADETUMERUN: I, formerly Adetumerun Jimoh Adewale now to be addressed as Adetumerun Jimoh Adewale.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, Oleka Iheanacho want to add my middle name Emmanuel to my names, henceforth known as Iheanacho Emmanuel Oleka as it appears in my NIN. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

AKINGBADE: I, formerly known as Akingbade Abosede Beatrice now wish to be addressed as Ologunore Abosede Beatrice. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AYANO: I, formerly known as Ayano Ayomide Mary now wish to be known as Felemu Ayomide Mary. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AYODELE: I, formerly known as Ayodele Bukola Christiana now wish to be known as Idjeleba-Abohwoyere Bukola Christiana. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHISIMDI: I, formerly known as Vera Chisimdi Ugwuogo, now wish to be addressed As Chisimdi Vera Ugwuogo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, Ajayi Grace Olufunmilayo is the same person as Ajayi Grace Funmilayo with passport no A01673345. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, Mrs. Catherine Oyunboere Ajayi, Ajayi Oyunboere Ajayi and Catherine Oyin Lawrence is one person, now Mrs. Catherine Oyunboere Ajayi. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: That, I Mr Akin Ajayi Olotu, Olumakinde Ajayi, and Ajayi Akin Olotu is one person, now addressed as Akin Ajayi Olotu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: This is to confirm that 'Chika Nicolette Samuel' and 'Nicolette Chika Samuel-Nwoha' belong to one and the same person. Now to be known and addressed as Nicolette Chika Samuel-Nwoha henceforth. All documents bearing both names refer to the same person and remain valid. University of Lagos; Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN); and the general public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I confirm that Abi Antoun Assaad and Assaad Abiantoun refer to same person; henceforth I wish to be known as Assaad Abi Antoun. Public note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as Chima, Onyinyechi Anne instead of Chima, Anne Onyinyechi Uchenna.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION DATE OF BIRTH: That I, Sulaiman Tobiloba Azeez was born 17th May 1990 and not 17th May 1988 as previously recorded. All former documents remain valid. Immigrations. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH: That I, Titilayo Oluwaseun Oyedeji was born on 01/07 1978 and not 01/07 1976 as previously stated. All former documents remain valid. Banks, general public take note.

CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH: I, Iheanacho Emmanuel Oleka state that my Date of birth is 31st January 1978 not 27th January 1978. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Ibrahim Muritala Olaitan instead of Ibraheem Muritala Olaitan. All former documents remain valid. NECO, SSCE and public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME That my name was wrongly spelt as Leigh Pelumi Ayomide instead of Leigh Oluwapelumi Ayomide. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as Chima, Onyinyechi Anne instead of Chima, Anne Onyinyech. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as Fadegbola Adesijibomi Ogundimu Instead of Fadegbola Adesiji Ogundimu on my NIN. Former document(s) remain valid. Public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured in my BVN as Otubo Uche Emmanuel instead of Otubo Uchenna Emmanuel. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

DAVID: I, formerly known as David Sunday now wish to be addressed as Adawoutou Kossi. My DOB is 01-01-2000 not 01-01-1999. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

DIM: I, formerly known as Dim, Nancy Chidinma, now wish to be addressed as Okorie, Nancy Chidinma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EDOKWE: I, formerly known as Edokwe Martina Ngozi now wish to be known as Ulasi Ifeyinwa Rita. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

EJEHIOKHIN: I, formerly known as Miss. Gloria Ejehiokhin Idon now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Gloria Ejehiokhin Idon - Omolola. All former documents remain valid. General public take note .

OGBIDI: I, formerly Miss Ogbidi Violet now Mrs. Ewanfoh John Violet. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. General Public, take note.

EREIYUKOMEN: I formerly known as Eseile Doris Ereyukomen now wish to be addressed as Eseile Doris Ereyukhomwen. My DOB is, 24-04-1972 not 24-03-1977. Former documents remain valid. General public note.

FOLORUNSO: Formerly known as Miss Elizabeth Yemi Folorunso, now wishes to be addressed as Mrs. Elizabeth Yemi Fagbohunge. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

GEORGE: I, formerly known as Miss. Emem Janet George now wish to be known as Mrs. Janet Emem George Olowu. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

GESINDE: I, formerly known as Miss. Segilola Kikelomo Gesinde now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Segilola Kikelomo Laguda Nnennaya. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

HAMMED: Formerly known as Hammed Muyideen Adeniyi. Now wish to be known and address as Oyemade Adeniyi Samuel. All former documents remain valid, public take note.

HIPPOLYTE: I, formerly, Agbapuruonwu Hippolyte U now wish to be known as Agbapuruonwu Princeton Uzoma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

HUNSU: I, formerly Miss Hunsu Senami Oluwabunmi now Mrs Richardson-Allen Senami Oluwabunmi. All former documents remain valid, Public and concerned authorities, take note.

IFEAJUNA: I, formerly known as Ifeajuna Elizabeth Nwanyife, now wish to be known and addressed as Attoh Elizabeth Nwanyife. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IFECHUKWU: I, formerly known as Jason Ifechukwu Ugwuogo, now wish to be addressed As Ifechukwu Jason Ugwuogo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

IGWE: I, formerly known as Miss Igwe Ifunanya Marvellous, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Anonye Ifunanya Marvellous. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IMAFIDON: I, formerly known as Miss Imafidon Edebharia Esther now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Onate Edebharia Esther. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

JOHN: I, formerly known as John Aniebiatabasi Isaiah Blessing now wish to be addressed as Aniebiatabasi Isaiah. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

KADEJO: I formerly known as Taofeeq Adeyinka-Barry Kadejo now to be addressed as Barry Taofeeq Kadejo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

MAUTIN: I, formerly known as Kokoyi Segun Mautin now wish to be addressed as Emmanuel Segun Solomon. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NWANKWO: I, formerly known as Nwankwo Precious Ugochi now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Bright Precious Ugochi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NWOYEKA: I, formerly known as Nwoyeka Bibian Chidiebere now wish to be addressed as Obi Bibian Chidiebere. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OFFEM: I, formerly known as Offem Promise Onen now wish to be known as Onen Promise Robert. My DOB is 08/091998 not 20/02/1996. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

OGBUEHI: I, formerly known as Ogbuehi, Matilda Onyemaechi, now wish to be addressed as Okorie, Matilda Onyemaechi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OGE: I, formerly known as Oge Modesta Chinyere now wish to be addressed as Ogenwaeze Modester Chinyere. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

OGUCHI: I, formerly Oluchi Chilee Ifeoma Oguchi now wish to be addressed as Igwebuikie Oluchi Chilee Ifeoma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OJO: I formerly known as Ojo Victoria Oluwayemisi now wish to be addressed as Chukwunedum Victoria Oluwayemisi.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKESANJO: I, formerly known as Okesanjo Azeez Oladapo now wish to be addressed as Okesanjo Oladapo Abdulazez. All former documents remain valid. Banks, general public take note.

ONWUBUALILI: I, formerly known as Chioma Loveline Onwubualili, now wish to be known as Chioma Loveline Ude. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

PETER: I, formerly known as Mr. Peter Paul now wish to be addressed as Mr. Paul Iorwuese Nyom.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

REARRANGEMENT OF NAME: My name is Ijeoma Ikechukwu Ojiogo and not Ikechukwu Ijeoma Ojiogo as wrongly written in some of my documents. All documents remain valid. General public take note.

REMOVAL OF NAME: MOMOH: I, formerly known as Momoh Muhammed Farouk, now to be addressed as Momoh Muhammed. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ROTIMI: I, formerly known as Rotimi Yetunde Deborah now wish to be addressed as Olomu Yetunde Deborah. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UDOM: I, formerly known as Udom Blessing Edidiong, now wish to be addressed as Oha Blessing. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UMUNNAKWE: I, formerly known Umunnakwe Onyinyechi now wish to be addressed as Nnorom Onyinyechi perpetua . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UTOH: I, formerly known as Utoh Olivia Obiageli now wish to be addressed as Michael-Hussaini Olivia Obiageli .All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UZOH: I, formerly known as Miss Uzoh Promise Chioma, now wish to be known as Mrs. Onwufor Promise Chioma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UZONNA: I, formerly known as Miss Uzonna Chiamaka Precious now addressed as Mrs Chiamaka Precious Nnadi. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

News

Group Kicks Against Plot To Thwart Councillorship Rotation Principle In Enugu

By David Emokpae

A GROUP, the Okaa-Omee General Assembly Amankwo in Oji River Local Council of Enugu State has raised the alarm over an alleged plot to disrupt the arrangement for the rotation of the councillorship seat for Inyi Ward 3 between Amankwo community and Obune community.

In a petition to the Executive Chairman of Oji River Local Council titled 'Malicious Denial of Amankwo Village Political Rights and Damaging of Inyi Ward 3 Councillorship Rotation Principle,' the group accused Obune community of plotting to usurp the turn of Amankwo community in the forthcoming local council polls in the state.

It appealed to the chairman to come to the aid of Amankwo community and allow it to produce the next councillor for Inyi Ward 3, "which is our right this time around."

The petition dated May 27, 2026, and signed by the Chairman of the group, Mr. Jude Onyebueke; Secretary, Mr. Patrick Ike and other stakeholders from the community reads in part: "Inyi Ward 3 in Oji River LGA of Enugu State is made up two distinct villages, Obune and Amankwo Inyi. "The two brother villages had shared, by rotation, ward councillorship positions since Adam. One village goes for a term or two depending on the state government policy and the other goes in the same vein."

SERAP Faults Revocation Of Sowore's Bail, Alleges Harassment Over Rights Advocacy

By Silver Nwokoro

THE Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has expressed concern over the reported revocation of the bail granted to activist and journalist, Omoyele Sowore, by the Federal High Court in Abuja over alleged cyberbullying linked to social media posts concerning President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

SERAP also raised concerns over the reported issuance of a bench warrant for Sowore's arrest in connection with charges instituted by the Department of State Services (DSS).

SERAP, in a statement by its Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare, described the revocation of Sowore's bail as the latest escalation in a pattern of continued harassment and reprisals allegedly carried out in retaliation for what he termed the legitimate and peaceful exercise of Sowore's human rights.

According to Oluwadare, SERAP is concerned that Sowore continues to face what it described as spurious charges and targeted reprisals, including alleged harassment through the abuse of judicial processes because of his human rights work and advocacy for reforms, accountability and the rule of law.

The organisation argued that measures of this nature, particularly in cases involving criticism of public officials and matters of public interest, could have a chilling effect on journalists, activists.

NAMA Seeks PENCOM's Clarification Over Retiree Benefits, Debunks Pension Neglect

By Olusegun Koiki

THE Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) has dismissed allegations that it owes pension benefits to more than 1,000 retirees. The agency insisted that it remains committed to the welfare of its former employees and currently seeking clarification from the National Pension Commission (PENCOM) on outstanding pension-related issues.

The agency stated this on Friday in a statement by the Director, Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, Dr. Abdullahi Musa.

Musa said that claims of non-payment of retiree benefits by some players in the sector lacked the necessary legal and administrative context surrounding pension administration in the agency.

The statement hinted that under the current management led by Farouk Umar, retiree welfare had remained a priority.

Leading to the commissioning of a comprehensive actuarial assessment to determine pension adjustments for the years 2007, 2010, 2019 and 2024.

NAMA said the assessment exercise had been successfully completed and that implementation of the report was already underway through established administrative channels.

The agency further disclosed that it had maintained regular consultations with retiree representatives and other stakeholders on pension-related matters over the years.

It noted that at a meeting held on June 10, 2026, management and representatives of retirees jointly agreed that clarification should be sought from PENCOM on certain technical issues requiring regulatory interpretation.

Super Eagles - Missed At The World Cup

THE Super Eagles of Nigeria are badly missed at the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Although, this ongoing edition of the world's biggest single sports event has been a feast of unexpected results, drama and suspense-filled matches, it has also been a great revelation for those keeping a close eye on things happening around it. Though Nigeria's national team are not participating here, the absence of the Super Eagles at the championship is felt every time players of Nigerian-descent representing other countries perform well. I am still researching to find out the exact number. From the names listed in the various teams we know the Nigerian players that are in the England, United States, Austria, France and, possibly, other national teams. Nigerians may actually make up the largest number of nationals representing other countries at the World Cup. At the last count, 12 Nigerians have been identified in the championship. They can easily form an imaginary Diaspora Super Eagles. One analyst even imagined a team of the Diasporas combining with the Super Eagles that failed to make it to the World

Cup. Sam Okpodu, former international player, former coach of the Falcons and a former Chairman of the Black Coaches Association of the USA, said that a combination of Victor Osimhen, Folarin Balogun (USA) and Bukayo Saka (England) in the frontline of the Super Eagles team would have been unstoppable at this World Cup. In short, Nigeria is a 'field of dreams'. Nature and the environment have endowed the people with gifted football players that are athletic, physically strong and unashamedly expressive. Add to those organic elements some high level technical and tactical skills, the Super Eagles will conquer the world. Incidentally, people forget how many global trophies the country has won at various age groups in the past 4 decades. This becomes a huge psychological advantage and incentive to become World Champions. Their 1996 Olympic Gold Medal achievement is a clear testimony of that possibility and a solid platform to build the required mentality needed to win at World Cup level. That's how good Nigerian players are currently. More are in the works and on the way! They are missed in the ongoing World Cup.

Then, comes the human angle side of football - the support on the streets and in the terraces. Here, Nigeria dwarfs every other Black nation on earth! Nigerians constitute the largest African population in the three hosting countries - USA, Canada and Mexico. Nigerians, excessively loud and vociferous, would have filled the terraces with their numbers and the air with their voices in the host cities where their national team would have been playing. They would have painted the cities White and Green, and turned the streets into mini carnivals with their food, fans, fashion, drums, singing and dancing! Dr. Rafiu Ladipo, who, by the way, more than deserves a national honour by now for his patriotic and meritorious services to Nigerian sports for several decades, would have kept the rest of the world dancing on their feet to the rhythm of the thumping drums of Nigeria's global Afrobeats music ambassadors now bestriding the world like Eagles! The loudness, the brashness, the boldness, the boastfulness, and the swagger of



the Nigerian football fan would have added a different dimension in the terraces and streets to the ongoing feast of football. On the fields on play, most matches have been very closely contested. Many of those involving the African teams have ended in draws against teams once considered superior to them. The gap between the teams has narrowed down very significantly. Africa is no longer the continent that goes to the championship only to make up the numbers. Africa is now knocking on the door of true contention for the title.

Canice, Emmanuel Battle For 47th CBN Senior Tennis Championship Crown

From Ernest Nzor, Abuja

TOURNAMENT top seed, Abua Canice, will battle with number three seed, Michael Emmanuel, in the men's final of the 47th CBN Senior Tennis Championship, which ends today on the courts of Package B of the MKO Abiola Stadium, Abuja. The women's final will see the fifth seed, Etoro Bassey, trading strokes with seed six, Ogunjobi Success, for the ladies' crown. To get to the final, Bassey defeated Emmanuel-Essien Bright 2-1 (6-0, 1-6,

6-4), while Ogunjobi Success sent ladies top seed, Mohammed Khadijat packing via a 2-1 victory (6-4, 4-6, 6-1). Playing in the men's singles semifinals, top seed, Canice, who is eyeing his first CBN Senior Tennis Trophy, out-stroked seed eight, Yusuf Abubakar, in two straight sets, 6-3, 6-4, while the defending champion and tournament seed three, Emmanuel, who is playing a back-to-back CBN Senior Tennis final, beat Jimoh Joseph 2-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Tough U.S. Visa Policy May Stop Top Nigeran Stars From Commonwealth Games Trials In Lagos

By Gown Akpodonor

THE stage is set for the biggest track and field event in Nigeria, the Nigerian Track and Field Championships. This year's edition will serve as selection trials for the Commonwealth Games, which will hold next month in Glasgow, Scotland. The Nigerian Championships bring together the best of Nigerian athletes both home and abroad with the sole aim of punching their tickets to the Commonwealth Games. According to SportsNow.com, a few of Nigeria's top athletes will be absent due to visa issues occasioned by the new stringent measures put in place by USA President Donald Trump, there will nevertheless be

no shortage of stars. In the women's 100m, it will be a battle royale between Blessing Ogundiran, the only Nigerian in the line-up this year who has broken 11 seconds (10.98) in 2026, and teen sensation Miracle Ezechukwu, who holds a lifetime best of 11.26 set this year. Ogundiran is one of only two Nigerians to have broken 11 seconds this season, and the 26-year-old looks like the athlete to beat. The big question on the lips of Nigerian track and field watchers is whether Ezechukwu can spring a surprise and stop Ogundiran from clinching her second 100m title, three years after running 11.50 to win in 2023. In the men's version, Fakorede Adekalu, Chidera Ezeakor, and Enoch Adegoke will headline in the absence of world leader and Nigerian record holder Kanyinsola Ajayi, as well as defending champion Israel Okon.

Business

Echono Lists Impacts Of Research, Innovations On Development At Anniversary Lecture

THE nexus between research, innovation and national development formed the thrust of the Obafemi Awolowo University's 65th Anniversary Lecture recently delivered by the Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono. Drawing from the anniversary theme, 'Legacy of Excellence - Future of Impact,' which appropriately reflects the ideals and enduring heritage of OAU as one of Africa's foremost centres of learning widely recognised for its unwavering commitment to academic excellence, Echono said the institution has lived to the ideals of its founding fathers as the breeding ground for erudite scholars, legal luminaries, successful businessmen, diplomats, accomplished technocrats and administrators. "For us at TETFund, we shared a common vision of excellence with the Great Ife, especially at a time like this, when we are driving the imperative of research and innovation to improve the competitiveness of our tertiary institutions. "Please permit me to pay tributes to the pioneer and successive Vice Chancellors of the university for sustaining the legacies of the university's founding fathers. The Great Ife has remained a symbol of commitment and purposeful leadership. I want to particularly commend the current Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. Adebayo Simeon Bamire, for bringing a unique combination of his intellectual prowess and administrative experience to bear in the administration of the university. "He is providing focused and purposeful leadership for ensuring the stability of the institution and the preservation of its unique identity. This is how a Scholar-Administrator can build bridges between the university and the larger community," Echono said. Speaking on the concept of research and innovation, the Executive Secretary described research as a systematic process of



investigation aimed at discovering new knowledge, validating existing ideas, solving identified problems or improving current systems and practices. Citing Creswell (2014), he added that research - scientific, social, technological, medical, educational or policy-oriented - basically involves a process of steps used to collect and analyse information to increase people's understanding of a topic or issue. Innovation on the other hand, he said, refers to the practical application of ideas, discoveries or research findings to create value. According to him, innovation transforms theoretical knowledge into useful products, services, systems or methods that solve societal problems. "Although research and innovation are often discussed separately, they are closely connected. Research creates knowledge while innovation turns that knowledge into practical and useful results. Without research, innovation lacks depth and lasting value, and without innovation, research findings may remain in libraries and journals with little real impact on society," he said. Echono stated that a country's progress largely depends on its ability to generate knowledge, apply science, foster innovation and convert ideas into practical solutions for society. "It is obvious that leading economies have advanced by investing in research and innovation, impacting sectors such as industry, healthcare, agriculture, transport, security and digital technology. Globally, the focus has shifted from reliance on natural resources to prioritising knowledge, technology, creativity and innovation," he stated. He decried that Nigeria, like many developing countries, is confronted with the challenges of practical and knowledge-driven solutions. "Notably, issues such as unemployment, insecurity, weak industries, inadequate infrastructure, limited healthcare facilities, food insecurity and low technological capacity hinder progress. However, these challenges also present opportunities for research institutions and innovation agencies to drive meaningful change," Echono said. On the role of research and innovation in national development, he held that no country can achieve sustainable economic growth and technological progress without investing in knowledge and practical innovation, stressing that a very strong nexus exists between research, innovation and national development. "It is widely acknowledged that research and innovation play a crucial role in the development of all societies and the success of

all nations. The importance of research and innovation has grown significantly in the 21st century due to globalisation, technological advancement, digital transformation and increasing competition among nations. There is increasing drive to invest heavily in research institutions, technology hubs, innovation parks and higher education systems because it is recognised that knowledge is one of the most valuable resources in the modern economy. "The application of research and innovation cuts across virtually every aspect of human life. In healthcare, medical research has led to the development of vaccines, treatment procedures, diagnostic equipment and disease prevention strategies that continue to save millions of lives globally. "In agriculture, research and innovation have contributed to improved crop varieties, mechanised farming systems, irrigation technology, and food preservation methods that support food security and increase agricultural productivity. Notably, countries such as Brazil, India and China have invested significantly in agricultural research institutions, resulting in major improvements in food production and export capacity. "Similarly, innovation in engineering and transportation has transformed urban mobility, infrastructure development and industrial productivity. In the same vein, digital innovation has equally revolutionised communication, financial systems, education delivery, governance and commerce worldwide. Research and innovation provides governments and institutions with reliable data for planning and policy formulation. Evidence-based policymaking enables governments to make informed decisions rather than relying solely on assumptions or political considerations," Echono said. Furthermore, he attributed national security and social stability to supports from research as studies on conflict management, migration, social behaviour, cybersecurity and intelligence gathering help governments develop more effective approaches to addressing insecurity and developing response to social unrest. To him, universities should not be limited to teaching existing knowledge, but equally generate new ideas that improve society. "Thus, for Nigeria to achieve meaningful socio-economic development, it is absolutely imperative that it prioritise and strengthens its research and innovation ecosystems. As we pivot into the 21st century, the development of an appropriate level of research and innovation capacity will obviously continue to be a critical requirement of the development process," he said.

TheGuardianSports

www.guardian.ng

Delta's 46 Athletes To Face U.S.-based Stars At 2026 C'wealth Games National Trials In Lagos

By Gowon Akpodonor

A TOTAL of 46 athletes and 10 foreign-based stars will fly Team Delta's flag at the 2026 Commonwealth Games National Athletics Trials holding in Lagos.

Eight young athletes of Team Delta will compete in men's 100m/200m. They are Osama Chibueze, Bright Gift, Saturday Godswill, Egbon Destiny Chinedu, Joachim Uyovwiyoma, Amreremenore Edesiri and Kwashi Aye Courage.

Onyia Jeffrey Miracle will compete in Boy's Long Jump. In Boys 400m, David Udoh, Erhieyovwe Kennedy, Isaac Chukwuwiki Miracle, Okocha lkechukwu, Ighogboja Michael, Onojuvwewho Moses, and Kwashi Aye Courage are the state's flagbearers, while Ugherakpoteni Timothy will compete in Tipple Jump for Men. In Long Jump Men, Romeo Bernard, Gowon Gift Ogheneruno, Nkemakolam God'swill, Martin

• Believe In Yourself, Ikpokpo Tells Young Athletes

Ugwu, and Onyia Jeffrey Miracle are the athletes to watch from Team Delta squad.

In High Jump Men, Oddo Melvin and Ikweki Praise are the state representatives, while Daniel Ovie Possible is the sole representative in 110 Hurdles.

In the 400 Hurdles for Men, Ihwiwhu Oghenekowho John and Daniel Ovie Possible will slug it out with the U.S.-based stars, just as Abujei Chinedu will compete in Shot put men /Javelin.

Bosa David Kosisochukwu will battle in Discus Men alongside Ofuoku Nyerhovwo Ben, while Success Okeleke will slug it out with others in Shot Put. In Javelin men event, Ofili Ebube Franklin is the state flagbearer. In the women's event, Team Delta has formidable stars to battle with the large pool of foreign-based stars.

In the 100m/200m, Jennifer Chukwuka Obi, Chioma Nweke, Ejiro Peter, Faith Chukwuma and Odika Chinonso, Ufuoma Merit are the stars to watch, while in the 400m, Elizabeth Olumide Titilayo and Innocent Mary are the state flagbearers.

In the 400m hurdles, Siviana Ossai is the star to watch, just as Emerald Makuachukwu will compete in Shot Put/Javelin.

Ademola Temitope will try her luck in Hephathon, while Kanu Emmanuel and Chukwuodon Christabel Oluchi will do battle in Discus.

Olise Favour Amaka will compete in Long Jump, while Anochie Rejoice is Team Delta's athlete in 800m.

The 400H/100H has Precious Uduvweghre, just as Ajagbawa Frances is the state athlete in Tipple Jump/High jump event.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Delta State Athletics Association, Malik Itiako Ikpokpo, is confident the state athletes will give their best in the National Trials, which will hold at Yaba Technical College from June 20-22.



Director General of the National Sports Commission (NSC) Bukola Olopade and the home-based athletes expected at the National Trials

400m speed star is one of the top athletes Nigerians are looking forward to watch at the National Trials in Lagos

2026 FIFA World Cup: Messi's Hat trick, His 200th Cap And Long Shadow Of Immortality

By Paul Okoku

TWENTY-ONE years after a young Argentine mesmerised the world in Holland, Lionel Messi returned to football's grandest stage to remind us that some legends do not age, they simply become history in motion. Some players pass through football. A few transform it. The rarest become part of its eternal story. The first time I watched Lionel Messi play, he was not yet a global icon. He was simply a gifted teenager wearing Argentina's colors at the 2005 FIFA World Youth Championship in the Netherlands.

Nigeria was in the final. The coach was my childhood friend and former teammate, Samson Siasia. I traveled expecting to watch a football match. Instead, I witnessed the first chapter of a footballing epic. As I sat in the stadium that day, I remember thinking: This boy is different. Not because he was faster. Not because he was stronger. But because he seemed to see football a few seconds before everyone else.

Twenty-one years later, that feeling returned.

On a warm World Cup night in Kansas City, Lionel Messi did what poets dream about and athletes spend lifetimes chasing. He turned time itself into a spectator. Three goals. One hat-trick. Two hundred appearances for Argentina. Six World Cups. And another page added to a story that

long ago escaped the boundaries of sport. Argentina defeated Algeria 3-0. But the score was merely the frame. The masterpiece was Messi.

Every World Cup introduces new stars. Every World Cup says goodbye to old heroes. Yet every generation encounters a player who refuses to follow football's natural timeline. Against Algeria, Messi reminded the world that greatness is not merely about talent. It is about endurance. It is about reinvention. It is about remaining extraordinary long after ordinary players have become memories. Messi refuses to become a faded glory. He remains a living chapter in football's unfinished story. While others are remembered in the past tense, he continues to write new chapters in the present. Lionel Messi's hat-trick against Algeria was not simply a football achievement; it was a lesson in longevity, excellence, sacrifice, and the enduring power of purpose.

Twenty-one years after he led Argentina to defeat Nigeria in the final at Holland 2005, Lionel Messi is still teaching the world what greatness looks like. Talent may introduce you to the world. Character determines how long the world remembers your name.

The Boy From Holland Becomes Man Of History

In 2005, Messi lifted the FIFA World Youth Championship trophy. In 2026, he arrived at his sixth World Cup. No player in football

history has ever played in six FIFA World Cups, except Christian Ronaldo.

Think about that. Entire careers begin and end during the period Messi has remained relevant. Managers have come and gone. Generations have changed. Football itself has evolved. Yet somehow, Messi remains. Not surviving, but thriving. A Hat Trick Written By Destiny Against Algeria, Messi scored all

three goals. The hat-trick was the first of his World Cup career. The performance elevated his World Cup goal tally to 16, tying the record previously held by Miroslav Klose. It was also his 120th goal for Argentina. But statistics alone cannot explain why the night felt special. Some performances are measured by numbers. Others are measured by meaning. This was one of those nights.

Nigeria's Suspension: NBBofC Probes Alleged Petition To BoxRec

By Christian Okpara

THE Nigerian Boxing Board of Control (NBBofC) has appointed an independent investigator to examine allegations contained in a petition reportedly submitted to BoxRec, the international boxing records database, which recently suspended the Nigerian body.

NBBofC President, Dr Rafiu Oladipo, in a statement yesterday, said that the board did not receive any official copy of the petition from BoxRec before the platform suspended or delisted NBBofC-sanctioned schedules and fights.

Oladipo admitted that the board later obtained a 21-page copy of the petition through independent sources after conducting its own inquiries.

The petition was reportedly authored by Mr Onyeka Eboma Elum, who described himself as a concerned stakeholder.

The NBBofC president stated that the petitioner, Elum, is not a member of the board and has not held a valid NBBofC boxing license for more than five years, "following his decision to pursue political ambitions."

Oladipo expressed concern that BoxRec did not provide it with a copy of the petition or an opportunity to respond before taking action, arguing that this denied the organisation the right to a fair hearing.

Despite its reservations, the NBBofC said it has resolved to conduct a comprehensive investigation into every allegation contained in the petition.

Okumagba: 'Nigerians' Support For Ghana's Black Stars Against Panama Paid off

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE Chairman of the Unified Supporters Club of Nigeria, Vincent Okumagba, has said that the Black Stars of Ghana triumphed over Panama in their opening game of the ongoing World Cup in Toronto, Canada, partly because of Nigerians' support.

Ghana defeated Panama 1-0 in their first group match in the early hours of Thursday in Toronto, Canada.

Caleb Yirenkyi scored the only goal deep in stoppage time by finishing a sweeping counterattack with a tap-in goal to give Ghanaians a last-gasp win over Panama in rainy Toronto.

The goal was followed by a melee before the referee blew the full-time whistle.

Speaking with The Guardian shortly after the match, Okumagba stated that though Ghanaians came in their thousands, members of the Unified Supporters and Nigerian residents in Toronto and its environs played a huge role in the victory.

"I am happy our support for Ghana's Black Stars eventually paid off," Okumagba said yesterday. "At a point, some Ghanaian supporters looked tired, and they stopped drumming, but as usual, we kept hitting our drums harder to ginger the players on the pitch. It paid off in the end, and we are very happy."

Ghana's victory over Panama brought the number of African teams that won their first group match in the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire had earlier defeated Ecuador 1-0, while four other African countries secured a draw. Morocco, Egypt, Cape Verde and DR Congo all got one point each, while four other African teams, South Africa, Tunisia, Algeria and Senegal, fell to their opponents.

Okumagba said they are going to continue their support for African teams in the World Cup since the Super Eagles could not make it to the party.

The battle of Toronto was not an easy one for Ghana. Panama were the superior team before half-time, while Ghana dictated more of the play after the interval in the Group L encounter.

Africa's next game was the Bafana Bafana of South Africa's encounter with the Czech Republic in their second group match after losing 2-0 to host, Mexico, in the tournament's opening match.

Refugee Stars At World Cup: 'My Brother Hid In A Rice Sack'

WHEN Antonio Rudiger entered the fray as a substitute during Germany's World Cup opener - a 7-1 victory over Curacao at the Houston Stadium - he knew his large extended family would be watching on proudly, writes the BBC. But things could have been very different if the Real Madrid defender's parents had not managed to flee Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war for a new life in Europe.

"There was only the decision to get out of there," Rudiger told BBC Sport Africa. "I spoke many times with my brother about it, and he told me the stories of what he saw there and what a march they made from Kono (the family's home district in the far east of Sierra Leone) to the capital city to find a bit of safety."

The distance between Kono and the capital, Freetown, is approximately 210 miles (340km), and the journey proved perilous, with Rudiger's uncle taking extreme action to prevent his nieces and nephews from being swept up by rebels and turned into one of the thousands of child soldiers forced into battle during the conflict.

"(He) hid them in a bag of rice and then went back to get them and then to continue the journey," Rudiger added. "And sometimes they had to lie low, pretending they were dead to not get shot or to not get abducted."

Rudiger, the youngest of six siblings, was born in Berlin after his family were accepted by Germany as refugees, while other relatives began new lives in other places, such as the UK and the US.

Call to Glory

With gratitude to God for
a life well lived, we announce
the transition to glory of

**CHIEF (MRS) OLUFUNKE
ABOSEDE BOLARINDE**

(NEE OLUGBODE)

25 October 1953 to 15th June 2026

the beloved wife of the
esteemed Chairman
of our Board of Directors,
Chief Samuel Bolarinde.

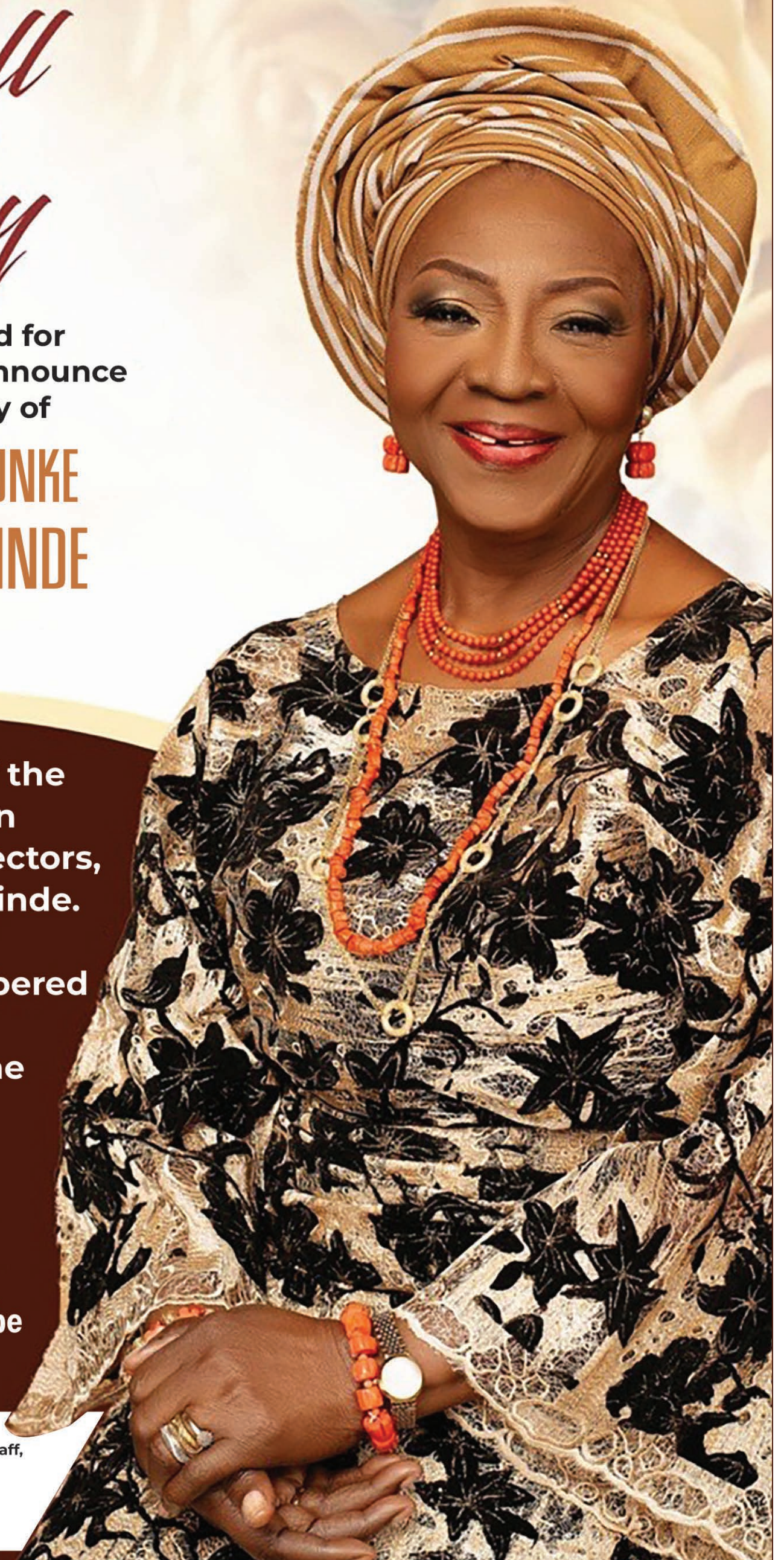
She will be remembered
for her warmth,
compassion, and the
positive impact
she had on all who
knew her.

**Burial Arrangements will be
announced by the family**

Signed:

The Board of Directors, Management, and Staff,
Sunlink Energies and Resources Limited.

 **SunlinkEnergies**





INSIDE STUFF WITH MARTINS OLOJA

(08052097817 SMS only) martins.oloja@guardian.ng Continue on X: @MartinsOloja



Nigeria's Shameful Absence From 2026 FIFA World Cup

FOOTBALL is diplomacy. It is big business. It is public relations. It is identity. But when the 48-nation World Cup kicked off in the United States, Mexico, and Canada on June 11, 2026, Nigeria—the most populous black nation on earth—was not on the pitch. That is darkness over the black race. The tournament has started without us. The 2026 FIFA World Cup is the biggest yet. 48 teams, 104 matches, 16 cities across three countries. It is the most lucrative edition in history. It is the most watched. It is the first with Cape Verde, Curaçao, Uzbekistan, and Jordan making debuts. **Nigeria is not there.**

For the second consecutive World Cup, the Super Eagles failed to qualify. Africa got nine automatic slots plus one playoff berth. South Africa took Group C. Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, DR Congo, and debutants Cape Verde qualified. Nigeria finished second in Group C behind South Africa, then lost the CAF playoff final to DR Congo on penalties in November 2025. The NFF petitioned FIFA over DR Congo's eligibility, but the appeal was dismissed. So Victor Osimhen, one of Africa's most significant footballers is home. Alex Iwobi, Calvin Bassey, Wilfred Ndidi, Ademola Lookman, Samuel Chukwueze are home. They watch as Rema's 'Calm Down' blasts through World Cup stadiums and flags wave for Nigerian sound, but not for Nigerian football. The culture made it. The team did not. Osimhen has broken his silence: "It's bad, not just for me but for the rest of the guys. We've missed out twice in a row". He has never played a World Cup. Many in this golden generation haven't. John Terry, former England Captain put it bluntly: "Nigeria will be a big miss... They're a great nation... Nigeria probably would have gone further". FIFA's own ranking agrees: Nigeria is the second-highest ranked team not at the 2026 World Cup, 26th in the world, behind only Denmark. That is the reproach.

How Did We Get Here? **The Autopsy of a Campaign**

Nigeria's qualifying group had South Africa, Benin, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Lesotho. On paper, manageable. In reality, disaster.

The math: South Africa finished with 18 points. Nigeria had 17. One point. One match. The 1-1 draw at home to Lesotho on November 16, 2023 set the tone. South Africa had an ineligible player, **Teboho Mokoena**, against Lesotho and were docked points—yet still topped the group.

The playoff: Nigeria beat Gabon 4-1 in the semi-final, then drew 1-1 with DR Congo on November 16, 2025 and lost 3-4 on penalties. DR Congo went to the inter-confederation playoff, beat Jamaica 1-0 in extra time, and booked a ticket. They now sit in Group K with Portugal, Colombia, and Uzbekistan. **The diagnosis:** experts have said most of Nigeria's struggles have been attributed to administrative instability rather than a lack of footballing quality. We have the players. We don't have the system. We have an unaccountable and untouchable system. **The talent paradox:** Osimhen watches, Balogun Scores. While Osimhen says "I feel bad not playing at 2026 World Cup", Folarin Balogun scores twice for the United States in a World Cup opener.

Balogun was born in the U.S. to Nigerian parents, raised in England. He chose America. That choice is America's gain. And, respectfully, it is also Nigeria's loss". He is not alone. The 2026 World Cup has no fewer than fifteen players of Nigerian heritage representing other nations. Nigeria is absent on the fixture list, but Nigeria is not absent from the World Cup.

Our sons play for England, Germany, Canada, the U.S, France, Switzerland, Austria, even South Africa, etc. Our sound fills stadiums. Our flag is missing. That is not just failure. It is systemic leakage.



Osimhen and Lookman

Where smaller nations did what we could not: The Cape Verde Lesson:

Cape Verde has about 600,000 people. It is 4,033 square kilometers. It has limited freshwater, little fertile land and few mineral resources. Yet Cape Verde is at the World Cup. And their goalkeeper is receiving global attention just for his spectacular first match performance.

How? At qualification series, they topped a group with Cameroon, Angola, Libya, Eswatini, Mauritius. They went 7-2-1, beat Eswatini 3-0 to qualify on October 13. They won all five home games without conceding. They drew 0-0 with European champions Spain on their World Cup debut.

It is obvious that Cape Verde has built a football ecosystem capable of competing despite limited domestic market, geographic fragmentation, high travel costs, small player pool. They did not copy more developed nations. They designed a football system around its realities.

They turned "remoteness into a football development strategy". They tracked diaspora talent in Portugal, Netherlands, France. They are ranked 69th, but they are in Group H with Spain, Uruguay, and Saudi Arabia. Cape Verde has 505,044 residents. 1.5 million live abroad. They organised that diaspora. We have 220 million at home and 17 million abroad. We disorganise ours.

Morocco Built Facilities. We Built Excuses Morocco is ranked 7th in the world. They reached a World Cup semi-final in 2022 when Qatar was the host. They qualified for 2026 on September 5, 2025. They already drew with the almighty Brazil in their first match in 2026. How? They have built the **Mohammed VI Football Complex**. A \$65 million national training centre. 30 pitches. Covered stadium. Medical centre. University. They host CAF, FIFA events. They plan.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's national stadium in Abuja has been closed for repairs more times than it has hosted qualifiers. The pitch in Uyo is good. The travel, camping, bonuses, technical crew—chaos. "Administrative instability" kills talent. What happened to Teslim

Balogun, Onikan stadiums in Lagos? What about the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan?

We have Osimhen, Lookman, Boniface, Iwobi, Ndidi, Bassey, Aina, Chukwueze, Onyeka, Ajayi. On paper, a Round of 16 team. On grass, we lost to DR Congo on penalties after finishing second to South Africa.

The Coaching Carousel: Why we can't hire—or Keep—a world-class coach? Since 2018, Nigeria has had Gernot Rohr, Augustine Eguavoen twice, José Peseiro, Finidi George, and Eric Chelle. Chelle beat Gabon in the playoff semi, but could not get past DR Congo. The NFF sacks, hires, owes salaries, interferes. World-class coaches want structure, not drama. We offer drama.

Meanwhile, South Africa stuck with Hugo Broos. Morocco with Walid Regragui. Senegal with Aliou Cissé. Cape Verde with Bubista since 2020. Continuity breeds qualification. Our coaching is not just about the man on the bench. It is about the men in the Glass House. When the NFF challenged DR Congo's qualification, FIFA dismissed it. That is energy spent on petitions, not pitches.

Football as diplomacy, business, public relations: we lost all.

Diplomacy: The World Cup is 48 nations in one place. Presidents meet. Deals are done. Nigeria's seat is empty. When South Africa played host in 2010, it reset global perception. In 2026, Morocco, Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Ivory Coast, South Africa, DR Congo, Cape Verde are flying Africa's flag. The most populous black nation is missing.

Business: The 2026 World Cup is the most lucrative edition to date. Each qualified team gets millions before a ball is kicked. Players' market value jumps 30% after a good tournament. Sponsors pay. Tourism spikes. Nigeria gets zero. Instead, we watch Rema trend at stadiums we should be playing in.

Public Relations: At the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the message was clear: Nigeria may not have been represented on the field, but its sound was impossible to ignore. That is public relations by accident. We need public relations by design. Football washes a nation's face. Ours remains dirty.

Identity: This is a World Cup for participants who haven't had the opportunity of playing in the tournament. "I would have loved to see a top team like Nigeria there because they've got some great individuals. They're a great nation". John Terry said it. The world knows it. We are a great nation in absentia.

The darkness over the black race

When Brazil is at the World Cup, black Brazilians celebrate. If France wins with Mbappé, Olise, Camavinga, Dembele, etc the diaspora will celebrate. When Cape Verde drew Spain, 600,000 people stood taller.

Nigeria is 1 in 5 Africans. 1 in 6 black people globally. When we miss the World Cup, the psychological deficit is continental. Young kids in Lagos, Accra, Kingston, Salvador wear Osimhen shirts. They expected to see him against Mexico, not watch his livestream frustration.

"Every man got a right to decide his own destiny," Bob Marley said. Balogun decided his. What about the destiny of 220 million

Nigerians who just want to see their team? We denied them. That is darkness.

It is not just the men: the pattern repeats

The U-17 team did not qualify for the third consecutive tournament. Record champions, missing. The U-20 women qualified, but the pipeline is leaking. If we cannot get the foundation right, the roof will keep collapsing.

The tragedy in three acts

Act 1: The players: Osimhen: "We've missed out twice in a row". He is 27. He may never play a World Cup. That is generational theft.

Act 2: The nation: We are "the second-highest-ranked team not participating". Ranked 26th, behind Denmark at 21st. Too good to miss, yet we missed.

Act 3: The future: 2026 had 9+1 slots for Africa. We could not grab one. 2030 will be in Morocco, Portugal, Spain. Closer (to) home. If we miss that, shame becomes stigma.

Turning reproach to redemption?

End administrative instability: The NFF needs independent directors, fixed tenure, financial transparency. No more "emergency" committees.

Build facilities: One Mohammed VI Complex equivalent in Abuja. Six regional centres and pitches that won't embarrass us.

Hire and back a coach: Give a 4-year contract. No interference. Pay on time. Pick one: European tactician or proven African. Then shut up and support.

Organise the diaspora: Cape Verde did it. We have Balogun, Akpom, Olise, Eze, Musiala, Saka, Tomori, Udogie, Adarabioyo, Alaba, Promise, Akanji, etc. Some are gone. Some are 50-50. Create a real "Diaspora Desk" with FIFA-compliant switching, not Twitter begging.

Respect the local league: No country qualifies without a domestic base. NPFL must have TV, VAR, salaries paid. Players should move from Enyimba to Europe, not from street to Europe. **Treat football as foreign policy:** The National Sports Commission should sit in FEC with Foreign Affairs. When we host qualifiers, the president or his men should attend. When we win, we leverage.

We can't normalise the shame. Nigeria missed 2022. Nigeria missed 2026. If we miss 2030, an entire generation—Osimhen, Chukwueze, Lookman—retires without a World Cup. That is not just shameful. It is unforgivable.

But that should make our leaders angry. Not performative anger for cameras. Not anger that finds a scapegoat and moves on. The cold anger that audits everything. The anger that asks: How does Morocco build a \$65 million football academy while we can't keep grass green in Abuja? How does Cape Verde, with "limited freshwater, little fertile land and few mineral resources", organise a diaspora and qualify, while we leak talent to England, Germany, and the United States? Instead, we got silence. No emergency session at the National Assembly. No presidential address. No resignations at the NFF. The students, the fans, too, have gone quiet. They mocked the draw with Lesotho in 2023. They raged after DR Congo knocked us out on penalties in 2025. But by June 2026, the rage had curdled into memes. At least Rema is playing in the stadium. We laughed. We scrolled past. We accepted. A people can survive bad leaders. They cannot survive the death of their own anger.

Yes, football is not life and death. But for a country fighting poverty, insecurity, and bad headlines, football is hope. Football is the one thing we agree on. Sadly, that has been taken away. When will Abuja get angry about our reproachful situation?

What  **The Guardian** stands for

Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

- The Guardian is an independent newspaper, established for the purpose of presenting balanced coverage of events, and of promoting the best interests of Nigeria. It owes allegiance to no political party, ethnic, community, religious or other interest groups. Its primary commitment is to the integrity and sovereignty of the Federation of Nigeria, and beyond that, to the unity and sovereignty of Africa.
- The Guardian will at all times uphold the need for justice, probity in public life, equal access to the nation's resources and equal protection under the law of Nigeria for all citizens.

- The Guardian journalist must whole-heartedly subscribe to the 1979 Code of Conduct for Nigerian journalists as amended in 1998.
- The Guardian believes, therefore, that it is the moral duty of every journalist to have respect for the truth and to publish or prepare for publication only the truth and to the best of his knowledge.
- It is the duty of The Guardian journalist to resist and refrain from earning other than his just salary or allowances from his employers: not to demand, and to refuse any reward if offered in cash or kind for publishing news or comments.
- The motto of The Guardian is Conscience Nurtured by Truth.

Please report any of our erring journalists to these dedicated telephone numbers: 014489600, 07098147948, 07098147951 Or our e-mail: Complaints@guardian.ng