



Living in Abuja:

**BIG STORY PAGES 4 & 5**

# The making of a capital city of gross inequality, rags, riches



**FG gives traders one month to crash prices of goods**

NEWS PAGE 30

**Government increases SUBEB matching grants to N3.5 billion**

NEWS PAGE 7

**Afe Babalola cautions against 18 years limit for WAEC, NECO**

NEWS PAGE 28

**EKEDC explains disconnection of UNILAG after ₦180m payment**

NEWS PAGE 7

**Foreign inflow down by 57.22% as investors appraise portfolio**

BUSINESS PAGE 16

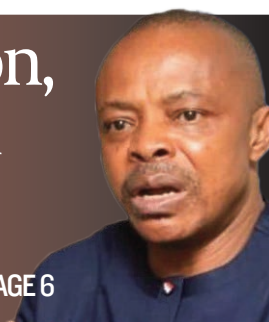


**Over 55,910 civilians killed in Nigeria in four years, says report**

NEWS PAGE 6

**Ajaero vows to fight on, says police invitation mere distraction to labour struggles**

NEWS PAGE 6



**Doctors' strike: FG threatens to invoke 'No Work, No Pay' rule**

NEWS PAGE 3



**TO MAKE PROFIT IS GOOD BUT TO SHOW COMPASSION IS BETTER**

"...some people are very angry with us because we have refused to sell petrol higher than the current price. Why should we make Nigerians suffer? Tell me, why should we make life harder for our citizens?"

- Mele KYARI, GCEO | NNPC





# Panorama

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

## Lawmakers write Canada, demand prosecution of Nigerian over death threat

**N**IGERIAN lawmakers have written a petition to the Canadian government seeking the prosecution of Amaka Sunnberger over her threat against Yoruba and Edo people living in Canada. Sunnberger, a Nigerian, was heard in a viral video threatening to poison any Yoruba or Benin person she comes across at her workplace. The petition, jointly signed by the Chairman of the Nigerian-Canadian Parliamentary Friendship Group, Biodun

Omoleye, and the Chairman of the House Committee on Diaspora Matters, Tochukwu Okere, on behalf of the committees, called for the investigation and prosecution of Sunnberger. In the petition, dated August 28, and addressed to the High Commissioner of Canada to Nigeria, James Christoff, the lawmakers de-

scribed the comments by Sunnberger as "hate speech and genocidal". Ms Sunnberger is believed to have made the comment against the Yoruba and the Benin people, two popular ethnic groups in Nigeria, during a virtual meeting on TikTok. Abike Dabiri, the chairperson of a federal agency, Nigerians in Diaspora Com-

mission, disclosed on Wednesday that a group of Nigerians in Canada were reporting the woman to the Canadian authorities. Ohanaeze Ndigbo has, however, said there was no sufficient evidence that the lady was Igbo, adding that she didn't in any way portray the Igbo character of thoughtfulness, discretion, self-censure and equanimity.

## Why I returned \$10,000 found in aircraft at Kano airport'

From **Murtala Adewale (Kano)**  
**A**RARE spirit of honesty was exhibited by a Kano-born Auwal Ahmad Dankode who returned a lost \$10,000 (about N16 million) to the rightful owner. Dankode discovered the hard currency on Wednesday on an Egypt airline plane while cleaning the cabin.

Dankode is a junior staff of Nigeria Aviation Handling Company (NAHCO) at Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano. Narrating why he chose to return the envelope despite the harsh economic reality in the country, the aviation worker said he was inspired by values of honesty and sincerity inculcated from home. "I was conducting a rou-

tine cleaning of the aircraft that had just landed when I saw the money in an envelop. So, I picked the envelop and reported it to the airline company's manager long before the rightful owner came and the money was returned."



Dankode

## New DSS DG assumes office, pledges covertness

From **Odita Sunday (Abuja)**  
**T**HE newly appointed Director General of the Department of State Services (DSS), Adeola Oluwatosin Ajayi, assumed office yesterday with a pledge to refocus the Service towards covertness and studied silence. This was according to a statement by the Director of PR and Strategic Communications, Department of State Services National Headquar-

ters, Abuja, Dr Peter Afunanya, on Thursday. The new DG also pledged commitment to surmount challenges confronting Nigeria's economic, political and security environments. The governor of Kogi State, Ahmed Usman Ododo, has congratulated Ajayi, ex-State Director of DSS in Kogi, on his appointment by the President.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

- **2023 - Gabon**  
After Ali Bongo Ondimba's re-election, a military coup ousted him, ending 56 years of Bongo family rule in Gabon.
- **2023 - Nigeria**  
Designer of Nigerian Flag, Pa Taiwo Akinkunmi died aged 84
- **2021 - Afghanistan**  
The last of American troops left Afghanistan ending U.S. involvement in the war
- **2018 - Croatia**  
Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder, Luka Modric, received the award of UEFA Player of the Year in Monaco after his Champions League exploits. He beat Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo and Egypt's Mohammed Salah to the award
- **2016 - Nigeria**  
Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg visited Lagos on his 1st trip to Africa. He was at Yaba tech hub where he met with developers and startups. He also jogged on the iconic Ikoyi-Lekki link bridge.
- **1997 - USA**  
Americans learned of deaths of Princess Diana, boyfriend, Dodi Fayed and their driver, Henri Paul, in a crash in Paris. Due to time difference, it was morning of August 31 when Diana was pronounced dead.
- **1995 - China**  
Beijing conference opened where women vowed to fight for empowerment & equality.

## TODAY'S QUOTE

“Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do same for you.”

Call me Diana, not Princess Diana. I'd like to be a queen in people's hearts. It's vital that the monarchy keeps in touch with the people.  
**PRINCESS DIANA**

## RANDOM FACTS

- A new material called "magnetoelectric multiferroic" has the potential to make a smartphone battery last for three months.
- Lypophrenia is a vague feeling of sadness seemingly without cause. This often occurs when a person misses someone.
- Gynophobia is the fear of women.

... DAY 3777

**OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING**

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor

@TopeTempler

**4 YEARS**



# TheGuardian WEEKEND

Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

AUGUST 31 — SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

## SPECIAL FEATURE



**Workbooks-in-textbooks...**  
Money Making Method Or Improved Learning Outcome?

## Politics

Despite Act, Finance Remains Impediment For Youths, Women Participation In Politics



How Non-state Actors Can Deepen Democratic Culture, Values In Nigeria

## Interview



Prof. Emmanuel Ufuophu-Biri: Stakeholders' Voices Could Shape Minimum Admission Age To Tertiary Institutions

## Showblast



**When Nigeria, Ghana Gathered** To Deepen Cineastic Collaboration, Development

## WeekendBeats



ROSF Honours **Onyeka Onwenu** With Evening Of Songs

## Health

**Andropause...** How The Silent Male Menopause Impacts Ageing Men

## Newsfeature

Lax Penalties As Impetus For Surge In Ritualistic Crimes In Nigeria



## IBRUCENTRE

Rescuing Your Loved One Who Is Blindly In Love, By Bishop Charles Ighele

Signs Of His Coming Are Everywhere, By Pastor Lazarus Muoka

Return To God, Renew Your Life (1), By Pastor W. F. Kumuyi

Cultivating A Life Style Better Than Religiousness, By Ven. Stephen Wolemonwu



## ARTS

Royal Dreams Come True For Ronke Ladipo

Broadcast Content Across Borders

The Journey Of Tribal Tapestry: Uncovering Deeper Connections, Broader Ancestral Links



These and more in The GuardianWeekend. Grab your copy just for N500



## Doctors' strike: FG threatens to invoke 'No Work, No Pay' rule

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

THE Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has expressed disappointment over the seven-day warning strike embarked on by Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors (NARD), despite negotiations and plea attempts by the Federal Government to address its concerns and ensure continued industrial harmony.

Consequently, government has threatened to evoke the 'No Work, No Pay' policy for the number of days the strike was observed, in line with extant labour laws.

However, Minister of State for Health, Tunji Alausa, has appealed to NARD to call off the strike, since government is working hard to rescue their kidnapped colleague, Dr Ganiyat Popoola.

Assistant Director, Information and Public Relations, Federal Ministry of Health, Ado Bako, stated in Abuja, yesterday, that the measure was not intended to undermine the legitimate concerns of the medical professionals, but to ensure that essential healthcare services were not unduly disrupted to the detriment of the public.

Bako stated that significant strides had been made in recent negotiations, and that the government demonstrated good faith by addressing many of the concerns highlighted by NARD.

He recalled that over the past months, the ministry, in collaboration with relevant security agencies, including the Office of the National Se-

### Says all hands on deck to rescue Popoola

curity Adviser (ONSA), had been working tirelessly to ensure the safe rescue of Popoola, adding that high-level discussions and coordinated efforts were underway, and that government remained confident that the measures would lead to a positive outcome.

The statement reads, "The ministry finds the decision to proceed on this strike action, in the midst of ongoing discussions, deeply regrettable. We believe that continued dialogue is the best approach to resolving any outstanding issues."

"In view of this, the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare wishes to bring to the notice of NARD that, in line with extant labour laws, the Federal Government will evoke the 'No Work, No Pay'

for the number of days the strike was observed."

The ministry encouraged the resident doctors to return to the negotiation table to address the challenges facing the healthcare sector.

"As always, the ministry remains open to constructive dialogue and is committed to working together with all stakeholders to achieve a fair and sustainable resolution. The ministry will not relent in its efforts to guarantee the safety, improve the welfare and working conditions of all healthcare workers, including resident doctors," he added.

NAN reports that Alausa made the appeal to NARD during his visit, yesterday, to the National Eye Centre in Kaduna, where Popoola was serving before

her abduction on December 27, 2023, alongside her husband and nephew.

On August 26, 2024, NARD commenced industrial action to demand the rescue of Popoola, a Registrar in the Department of Ophthalmology at the centre.

While her husband was released in March after discussions with the abductors, Popoola and her nephew remain in captivity.

Alausa said the Federal Government and security agencies were ramping up efforts to rescue Popoola.

"We are on top of the matter and have been in communication with the National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu, regarding the issue," he said. "I have spoken with the Commissioner of Police, and everyone is working hard to see that she is released."



President Bola Tinubu (left) receiving Letter of Credence from the High Commissioner of the Republic of Ghana, Vice Admiral Seth Amoama, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja...yesterday

## Minister seeks UN support to boost energy targets

By Waliat Musa

MINISTER of Power, Adebayo Adedun, is seeking the support of the United Nations to achieve the country's energy targets by providing technical assistance, capacity building and financial support.

Adedun made the call, yesterday, during an international dialogue session with representatives from Britain, Brazil, Pakistan, Tonga, Philippines, Uruguay, Moldova, among others, organised by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

This was as the Federal Government granted a 50 per cent subsidy on electricity for public hospitals across the country. This decision aligns with the commitment made by the minister to subsidise electricity in hospitals and universities, even for those on Band-A feeders.

According to Adedun, the country is committed to achieving 'Net Zero' by 2060

### FG approves 50% electricity subsidy for public hospitals

with a short-term target under the Vision 30:30:30, to attain 30 gigawatts of grid energy supply with a 30 per cent Renewable Energy mix by 2030, and a long-term goal of universal energy access.

He stressed that the targets presented an opportunity for Nigeria to adopt cleaner and more sustainable energy solutions, as the country strives to achieve energy security and meet the demands of its growing economy.

The minister mentioned that the Federal Government implemented a multi-prolonged approach to tackle issues across the country's electricity value chain and set the sector on a path to recovery and prosperity.

He explained: "As Nigeria strives to achieve its energy transition targets, it is faced with many challenges, which include mobilisation of finance for project development, inadequate technical and commercial capacity

across the value chain, limited local content in products and services, and infrastructure limitations that hinder the adoption of variable renewable energy technologies on the national grid."

Setting the sector on the path of recovery, he said, the government has streamlined legislative and policy processes to reduce bureaucratic red tape and encourage active participation from sub-national entities, thereby fostering investment and project execution.

He added that the sector was leveraging public and private funds to de-risk project investments and attract more substantial finance commitment, enabling larger and faster project rollout.

"We are embracing technology and innovation to help investors identify optimal investment opportunities. We have initiated a national programme to fast-track infrastructure development to

build a robust, viable and resilient grid network. We are also fostering strategic partnerships and collaborations with investment communities and development partners to leverage global expertise, share resources and co-invest in the energy sector," he said.

ANNOUNCING the subsidy approval, yesterday, the Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Dr Tunji Alausa, explained that the initiative was to lower operational costs for public hospitals and ease the financial burden on patients.

Alausa shared this news during his visit to the National Neo-Psychiatric Hospital in Barnawa, Kaduna State, where he inaugurated electronic health records and alternative power sources, including a solar-powered borehole and the solarisation project at the Lawal Jafaru Isah Emergency Complex and the Dialysis Unit.

## Lagos identifies major cause of building collapse

### As LagosHoms presents exit certificates to subscribers

By Gbenga Salau and Shakirah Adunola

LAGOS State Material Testing Laboratory (LSTML) has said the circumvention of established protocols of materials testing is a major contributor to building collapsing in the state.

Also, LagosHoms has presented exit certificates to mortgagors, who have completed their payment after 10 years.

The General Manager of LSTML, Olayinka Abdul, stated, yesterday, that she felt it had become imperative to discuss the alarming rise of sharp practices by some residents against materials testing protocols.

According to her, with Lagos rapidly developing, there is equally an urgent need for rigorous standards, testing processes and procedures.

"Our agency is entrusted with ensuring that the materials used in these projects meet the highest standards of quality and safety. This unique responsibility cannot and must not be compromised as it concerns the safety of lives and property."

"Regrettably, however, we have observed an increase in sharp practices, where certain individuals and groups have attempted to circumvent the established protocols of materials testing. These actions not only threaten the integrity of construction projects but also endanger the lives of citizens who rely on safe and durable infrastructure," Abdul stated.

She said some of the most concerning practices the agency had encountered included intimidation and pressurising of its personnel. "There have been instances where individuals have sought to manipulate the testing process through intimidation and pressuring our personnel to overlook critical tests or to falsify results. This is not only illegal but also an attack on the ethics of our profession."

"There have been tampering with samples. We have encountered cases where samples of construction materials have been tampered with before testing. This deceitful practice undermines our efforts to ensure that the materials are safe and suitable for use," Abdul stated.

She added that with the topography of Lagos, being majorly riverine, having unique challenges and peculiarities such as soil salinity, waterlogging and erosion in most areas, by testing materials, "we can identify those that are best suited to withstand the demanding conditions present in these environments, ensuring that our structures are durable and sustainable as built."

THE LagosHoms mortgage scheme allows individuals to own a home on a rent-to-own basis with an initial deposit, and the balance spread over 10 years.

The exit certificate indicates that the mortgagors have completed the payment and can take full ownership of the home.

## Nigeria, Niger sign security deal, despite rift

NIGERIA and Niger have signed a deal on security, the Nigerian military said, yesterday, despite tension between the neighbours since a military coup d'etat in Niger a year ago.

"Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to resuming and strengthening collaboration, with a view to ensuring regional stability and security," a Nigerian military statement revealed after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by the country's defence chiefs in Niamey, Niger capital, on Wednesday.

Ties between the two countries soured after Niger's junta toppled Mohamed Bazoum in July 2023 coup,

which also split the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), raising questions about the fight against Islamist violence in the region.

ECOWAS, led by Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, threatened to invade Niger, if diplomatic efforts to restore the democratic government failed, prompting Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali to pull out of the 15-country bloc in January.

They said ECOWAS had failed to help them tackle Islamist violence, signing a military agreement to form a parallel body, the Alliance of Sahel States.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

TheGuardian

For Advert Enquiry, Call:

0802 301 5115  
0803 193 0899

ABUJA OFFICE  
0806 529 0744

GUARDIAN PRINT  
01 4489621-2

GUARDIAN COMMERCIAL  
01 4489646  
08136243622

GUARDIAN DIGITAL  
0814 380 8843

GUARDIAN LIFE  
0803 056 7059





# The Big Story

## Living in Abuja:

# The making of a capital city of

Nigeria sits atop the Global Homelessness Rankings with 25 million of her citizens lacking proper housing. Economic instability, insecurity, rapid urbanisation, and lack of affordable housing in urban centres are some of the reasons Abuja is feeling the pang of homelessness with thousands dwelling in the city's over 6,000 uncompleted buildings. As the standard of living plummets, **KINGSLEY JEREMIAH** writes that affordable housing is becoming a luxury in the Federal Capital Territory, and the failure to strictly implement the Abuja Masterplan is throwing up fresh town planning challenges.

**M**IDDLE-AGED Aminu Usman, a farmer from Dan Kurmi Village, in Maru Local Council of Zamfara State, was forced to relocate to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) due to climate issues, which affected his yield, and insecurity, which threatened his life and that of his loved ones.

In the Dawaki area of Abuja where he took up "residence," he became a commercial motorcyclist. For the entire four years that he has so far spent in Abuja, he sleeps beside the Dawaki Village Mosque, which is 28 kilometers away from the Aso Rock Villa, and the National Assembly, where the future of poor, and homeless people like him is determined by the powers that be.

Usman takes his bath once a week at night, defecates openly wherever he finds cover and relies on street drug hawkers when he is sick. Despite the harsh weather and environmental conditions that he puts up with, he has not visited any medical facility since relocating to Abuja.

On rainy days, Usman and his colleagues squeeze themselves into the mosque and makeshift kiosks used by yam sellers on the streets as he continues his search for a better life for himself, his wife, five children, and his mother, who lost her husband (Usman senior) to terrorism.

According to the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Nigeria's desert features now cover 64 per cent of the country's land-mass, due to rising population, overgrazing, and climate change. The United Nations specifically identified Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Kebbi, Kaduna, Sokoto, Yobe, Adamawa, and Zamfara as frontline states.

As this situation intensifies, in addition to terrorism and disasters like flooding and rising cases of windstorms, 3.4 million people like Usman have fled their homes, according to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), and these people add to the pool of 24.4 million homeless people, which qualifies Nigeria as home to the highest number of homeless people globally.

At about 11:47 p.m. on June 14, when Usman granted this interview, a handful of other commercial motorcyclists were already perched atop their motorcycles strewn across the street. This is where they call home!

For these people, while the state of poor infrastructure in rural communities has triggered rural-urban drift, many factors including insecurity, inequality, flooding, windstorms, economic crisis, and overpopulation are worsening their plights.

Usman's daily



Residents convert their vehicles to make-shift apartments on Wole Soyinka Street in Gwarimpa

PHOTOS: KINGSLEY JEREMIAH

average earning is N9,000 (\$5.41), and after his expenses, he is left with about N5,000 (\$3). This brings his monthly earnings to N155,000 (\$93.15).

From this N155,000, he remits N124,000 (\$74.52), which is 80 per cent to his family (wife and kids) and widowed mother in Zamfara State, after which he is left with just N30,000 (\$18.03) for his general monthly upkeep, which is barely enough to feed him.

In a country where the national average Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) as of April 2024 stood at N1,035 (\$0.62) per adult, per day, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Usman is not eating well, hence, highly susceptible to ill health.

With Abuja remaining one of the fastest-growing cities in Africa in terms of population and wealth, with a seven per cent yearly population increase, the cost of a single room in the Dawaki area of the city now stands at about N650,000 (\$390).

Usman, therefore, would need to save up for about two years without eating to be able to afford the rent since what he earns cannot even guarantee a healthy meal.

Like Usman, Owobo Adenike, who got married about 15 years ago, hoped that relocating to Abuja would bring better opportunities for her husband, an automobile mechanic, who was residing in Kabba, Kogi State. However, the city's rising living costs have made their situation increasingly challenging. Worst still, the inflation rate in the country has surged from 12 per cent in 2009 when they got married, to 34.2 per cent in June 2024.

Within this period, the marriage has produced four children, and the burden of school fees has been added to the load that Adenike and her husband

“

Usman takes his bath once a week at night, defecates openly wherever he finds cover and relies on street drug hawkers when he is sick. Despite the harsh weather and environmental conditions that he puts up with, he has not visited any medical facility since relocating to Abuja. On rainy days, Usman and his colleagues squeeze themselves into the mosque and makeshift kiosks used by yam sellers on the streets as he continues his search for a better life for himself, his wife, five children, and his mother, who lost her husband (Usman senior) to terrorism

”

must shoulder. In 2017 after they exhausted their savings on school fees, they were handed a quit notice by their landlord.

With homelessness staring them in the face, they moved into a makeshift house that served as a mechanic workshop by day, and their shelter by night.

Reflecting on their predicament, Adenike stressed: "We wouldn't be able to send our children to school if we didn't take this approach."

Their story highlights the growing struggles of many families in Abuja as they grapple with economic pressures exacerbated by rising costs of living.

At the height of her frustration, she said: "I contemplated leaving my marriage but for my children."

Adenike's predicament is worsening as the family now struggles to feed due to the high cost of food items, which makes it a serious battle to pay her children's school fees.

While the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that 18.3 million children are out of school in Nigeria, Adenike fears her children could soon join that infamous number.

Early in the year, a report by Stativerse listed Nigeria as the *numero uno* country with the highest amount of homeless people in the world for 2024.

According to the report, 25 million Nigerians lack proper housing, and this

has been aggravated by certain factors prominent among them, which are economic instability, insecurity, poverty, rapid urbanisation, and conflict.

Also adding to the growing number of homeless people is an insurgency in the core North, herder-farmer clashes in the Middle Belt, and the stark absence of affordable housing in urban centres.

Completing the top three positions on the Global Homelessness Rankings is India in second place with 18 million homeless people, and Mexico in third with 14 million.

Homelessness may be a global challenge that spans continents affecting millions, but at the heart of the brewing homelessness crisis in Abuja, is the lack of affordable housing, which has forced thousands to take up residence in uncompleted buildings that are replete in the country's capital.

With about 12 per cent of the country's population being homeless, the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) not long ago confirmed that the more than 6,000 uncompleted buildings in the area serve as makeshift residences for a high number of homeless individuals.

**Abuja is emerging capital city of shanties**

**I**N 2023, the Department of Development Control, under the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) started demolishing illegal structures in parts of the capital city.

As a follow-up, in May this year, it issued a 24-hour demolition notice to owners of 500 unauthorised markets and makeshift structures along the Karmo - Dei-Dei Road.

That there are over 500 shanties within a single corridor simply tells a story of how rapidly shanties are cropping up in Abuja. Every part of the city has a shanty to mirror the classical inequality in Nigeria.

Interestingly, as the cost of living soars, most residents in the city centre are relocating to the suburbs where new shanties are routinely sprouting up and gradually defacing the once serene and beautiful capital city. As they proliferate, they are also providing accommodation for criminal elements.

In backing its threat with action, the FCTA in May, showed up at the News-Engineering area of Dawaki and razed down illegal structures.

Before the team arrived at the Panteka side of Dawaki, which borders Labobo Hotel on Panaf Drive, Gafir Isah and others within the shanties had already pulled down their structures, and neatly arranged their materials around the area.

When the enforcement officers finally appeared there, they barely saw any structure to dismantle. But after they left, Isah and the



Homeless residents sleep on their bike in Dawaki area of Abuja.



# gross inequality, rags, riches



A homeless resident passes the night at the Gwarimpa Bus Stop in Abuja



other people started rebuilding their structure, and the people trickled back to business in a matter of hours.

Elsewhere, Alidu, a vulcaniser along the Chibok Road, and other roadside business owners, who had kiosks along the road simply moved them for a brief period and later regrouped shortly after the demolition team departed the area.

Some residents of Unguwan Yan Lambu in the Wuse Zone 3 area of Abuja have lived there for 27 years. This predominantly dry-season farming community gradually became a haven for many displaced by insecurity and climate change-associated catastrophes.

But on May 9, 2024, bulldozers sacked their community, displacing about 1,000 people who sought refuge there after escaping from the snares of terrorists and herders.

The Coordinator of the Department of Development Control in the FCT, Felix Obuah, explained that the administration was poised to rid the territory of shanties and in the process chase away criminals that had taken over that corridor, and also to restore Abuja's beauty.

"We can't allow this again. We aim to beautify the city and make Abuja a city that we will all be proud of," he said.

Having been displaced from their ancestral homesteads by factors including banditry and natural disasters, the chairman of the sacked community, Mohammed Musa, is appealing to the government that the displaced occupants need aid to move on in life.

This is not the first time that the government will be clearing shanties in Abuja. Every time there is a new administration the Department of Development Control wakes up to its duties.

Between January and October last year, the FCTA demolished 11,705 shanty colonies across Abuja city. In 2021, it demolished about 2,000 illegal structures in a single enforcement around the Mpape area of the city of Abuja.

**More people finding 'shelter' in vehicles**

At about 11:28 p.m. on an evening in June, many vehicles lined up along Wole Soyinka Avenue, in the Gwarimpa area of Abuja, close to Setraco with their trunks open, and mosquito nets dropping down. A good number of these vehicles are 1991-generation of Volkswagen Golf cars used commercially for intra-city and inter-state transport.

Omale Ogah, a commercial driver who rented a one-room apartment around the Trade More Estate in the Lugbe area of Abuja, simply turned his car into a home after the area was hit by flooding last year. He has since relocated his family to his village in Kogi State.

"I can't afford a new place in Abuja. Since I don't pay rent in the village, I will focus on taking care of my family with my earnings," Ogah said.

By adopting this lifestyle over a year ago, Ogah believes he can limit his bills and find a way to cope with rising inflation in the country.

He visits his family twice a month and replenishes his stock of clothing. While the clothes are kept in a compartment in his car, Ogah feeds, bathes, and defecates in found spaces, especially on the streets.

**Lavish estates everywhere, but the poor have**

“Homelessness may be a global challenge that spans continents affecting millions, but at the heart of the brewing homelessness crisis in Abuja, is the lack of affordable housing, which has forced thousands to take up residence in uncompleted buildings that are replete in the country's capital

**no place**

DRIVING through Abuja from the Phase Three Junction of Kubwa, one is greeted by a series of massive estates. Turning right, the sight of beautiful housing developments like Efab Metropolis, Mab Global, Gwarimpa, Brain and Hammers, and Fynstone are simply striking. Further up at the Dutse Junction, and down through Dawaki, Jahi, Ketamte extension, to the expansive estates in Lugbe, Guzape, and the impressive edifices in Maitama and Asokoro, the opulence is unmistakable.

As one wonders where the money for these magnificent houses comes from, the answer is boldly inscribed on the walls of some of these buildings. On some of them, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) claims that they are proceeds of money laundering and corruption.

In sum, this illustrates how deep corruption and inequality have penetrated the country. There are plenty of houses, yet the poor have nowhere to live.

A simple Google search reveals staggering recoveries made by the EFCC. On May 19 this year, the agency returned 14 properties to the Enugu State government, and 324 houses to the Kano State pensioners. From one former minister alone, Diezani Alison-Madueke, the EFCC recovered \$153 million and 80 houses.

Under the former EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, 836 properties were recovered, according to the Presidential Committee on Audit of Recovered Assets (PCARA). In 2017, 222 houses were recovered from a pension probe, and the Senate reported that 38 houses were allegedly traced to a former Chairman of the Nigerian Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF), Ngozi Olojeme.

While public servants loot the treasury, the average Nigerian sinks deeper into poverty. The 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Survey, published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) alongside the National Social Safety-Nets Coordinating Office (NASSCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), showed that 63 percent of Nigerians (133 million people) are multi-dimensionally poor.

**25 million homeless people versus 28 million housing deficits**

NIGERIA faces a significant data issue in the housing sector, which the NBS along with the Real Estate Developers Association of

Nigeria (REDAN), are working to correct.

Multiple sources, corroborated by the Co-Founder of Dukiya Limited, Bayo Lawal, indicate that Nigeria's housing deficit was 7 million in 1991 and has risen steadily to 28 million units in 2023.

According to Vice President, Kashim Shettima, N21 trillion (\$12.6 billion) would be required to effectively bridge this gap.

During the eight years of Buhari's administration, the National Social Housing Scheme completed more than 13,000 homes across nine states, with plans for 20,000 more. Even if all planned houses are completed, it translates to 21,625 units built yearly.

At this rate, it would take Nigeria approximately 1,296 years to meet the current housing deficit. In 2024, President Bola Tinubu approved N126.5 billion (\$76 million) for the delivery of a total of 100,000 houses nationwide in 18 months. Nigeria would need to spend N1 trillion (\$600 million) yearly to close the gap in 21 years.

While tonnes of money are poured into grossly ineffective social welfare schemes, corruption has ensured that the people get little or no benefits while the bulk of these monies end up in private pockets.

For instance, after less than a year of the Tinubu administration, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Betta Edu, was suspended from office and is being investigated for diverting N585 million (\$352,000) of public funds into a personal bank account and misappropriating another N3 billion from the National Social Investment Programme Agency (NSIPA).

Thus far, the EFCC has recovered approximately N39.8 billion (\$1.8 million) out of N44.8 billion (\$26.9 million) allegedly embezzled by Halima Shehu, the former National Coordinator of NSIPA.

Additionally, Edu's ministry awarded a N438 million (\$263,228) contract to review the social register, raising concerns about alleged ties to another cabinet member, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo. Edu's predecessor, Sadiya Farouq, is also being questioned over a N37.1 billion (\$22.2 million) fraud involving a contractor, James Okwete, an associate who benefited from numerous contracts during her tenure.

The homeless crisis and related issues are a key

part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which countries like Nigeria are committed to overcoming by 2030. Without a holistic approach that reduces corruption, tames inequality, honour pledges for adaptation and mitigation, and addresses climate issues, taking off poor citizens from the streets would remain elusive. This move is critical to addressing the rising crime rate and the social unrest that is already being witnessed.

**With Abuja Masterplan 'abandoned,' end not in sight for shanty proliferation**

A RECENT report put the housing deficit in Abuja at 600,000 as the city accounts for 10 per cent of Nigeria's overall housing shortage.

Abuja's current travails with shanty settlements can be traced to the failure to implement the original Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Master Plan, according to Abuja-based infrastructure and development expert, Joe Tsavsar. He pointed out that this failure began during the military era when the FCT's development was mismanaged.

"The initial masterplan, which outlined a phased development approach, was abandoned during the military regime after which the then FCT minister appointed unqualified area council chairmen; neglected the masterplan, and concentrated development only in Phase 1. This deviation distorted the masterplan and led to the emergence of the shanties that we see today," Tsavsar explained.

He further highlighted that if the phased development had been followed, Abuja would now be in Phase 3, with adequate infrastructure in place to support the planned population. This would have allowed the area councils to develop, providing affordable housing for low-income residents and reducing pressure on the city's centre.

"The failure to develop the area councils allowed civil servants to exploit the situation, converting their properties for various uses and artificially inflating values. The combination of military-era incompetence and the greed of civil servants is what has led to the current situation," Tsavsar added.

Tsavsar believes the solution to the menace lies in developing infrastructure across all phases and area councils as originally planned. This would naturally balance population distribution and reduce demand for properties in the city centre.

However, he is skeptical about this happening due to the vested interests of politicians and civil servants who own much of the valuable real estate in Abuja.

"There is no political leadership that is willing to address this issue. Until we have leaders that are willing to sacrifice for the country, much like Jesus did for mankind, this nation will not progress," Tsavsar concluded.

A registered Quantity Surveyor practicing in Abuja, Eneojo Salami noted that demolitions by FCT authorities have caused increased homelessness, leading many to resort to crime and survival tactics.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)



A make-shift mechanic workshop becomes residence for the homeless at night in the Lugbe area of the Federal Capital Territory



# Over 55,910 civilians killed in Nigeria in four years, says report

From Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi, Jos

RESEARCHERS from the Observatory of Religious Freedom in Africa (ORFA) have reported over 55,910 civilian deaths in Nigeria during a four-year study from October 2019 to September 2023.

Operating under the Foundation Platform for Social Transformation, ORFA is committed to monitoring religious freedoms and documenting rights violations across Nigeria.

The research highlights the escalating violence, particularly in the North Central zone and Southern Kaduna, where mass killings, abductions, and family torture are reported to occur with minimal intervention from security forces.

The authors of the report

- Identifies Fulani ethnic militia as key perpetrator of violence
- Says 1,665 abducted in 2020; 5,907 in 2021; 7,705 in 2022; 6,255 in 2023
- 'How armed groups, non-state actors are exploiting govt's weaknesses'

called on the international community to pay close attention to the findings, stressing the need for increased global involvement in combating the human rights violations that underscore a narrative of besieged communities and government indecision.

The ORFA report coincides with the release of yet another by SB Morgen (SBM) Intelligence yesterday, which notes that Nigeria's security crisis has become increasingly complex, with armed groups and non-state actors exploiting the state's weakened influence. This includes Boko Haram's resurgence in the North-East, armed gangs in

the North-Central and North-West, secessionist violence in the South-East, and gang-related issues in the South-West. It added that amid these diverse security threats, widespread kidnap for ransom has emerged as a common thread.

The findings, disclosed by Frans Vierhout, Data Scientist at ORFA, identify the Fulani Ethnic Militia (FEM) as a key perpetrator of violence in Nigeria.

The report underscores the alarming trend of mass violence that has largely gone unchallenged as security agencies focus on remote targets rather than addressing the immediate needs of local

communities.

Also, the data shows that FEM's violent activities are predominantly concentrated in the North-Central zone and Southern Kaduna, areas that have suffered significantly from their attacks.

It notes that military resources are concentrated in the North-East and North-West of Nigeria, hundred miles from the scenes of the FEM atrocities.

According to the report, "Across the country, over 11,000 incidents of extreme violence took place during the data period, with more than 55,000 killings and 21,000 abductions. In the North-Central zone alone, 3,007 incidents of extreme violence occurred. Two thousand ten incidents involved killings, 700 were abduction incidents and 297 were a combination of killings and abductions."

The report notes that the Fulani Ethnic Militia killed "at least 42 per cent of all civilians, while Boko Haram and ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province) combined killed 10 per cent. FEM, an ethnic religious terror group, is considered by many security experts to be a 'twin' of Islamists killing and kidnapping civilians in Northern Nigeria. Land-based community attacks form the largest category of civilian killings (81 per cent)."

It adds: "FEM invade small

Christian farming settlements to kill, rape, abduct, and burn homes. 2.7 Christians were killed for every Muslim in the reporting period. Islamist extremists kill both Muslims and Christians. However, Christian death tolls are far higher. Proportional loss: in states where attacks occur, proportional loss to Christian communities is exceptionally high. In terms of state populations, 6.5 times as many Christians are being murdered as Muslims."

It pointed out that the ORFA data project also uncovers a troubling trend in abductions across Nigeria, with incidents rising during the four years. The statistics indicate that 1,665 people were abducted in 2020, 5,907 in 2021, 7,705 in 2022, and 6,255 in 2023.

Furthermore, the data shows Christians are 1.4 times more likely to be abducted than Muslims, with an estimated 5.1 Christians abducted for every Muslim within local populations.

This pattern underscores the targeted nature of these kidnappings, especially by the FEM, which often focuses on Christian communities. It also reveals that analysts like Rev Dr Gideon Para-Mallam recognise this as a component of a larger strategy to destabilise and terrorise vulnerable groups.

The report notes that, by the end of 2023, the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported that 3.3 million Nigerians had been forcibly displaced from

their homes and were surviving in makeshift camps.

ACCORDING to the report by SB Morgen (SBM) Intelligence, a geopolitical research firm, between July 2023 and June 2024, no fewer than 7,568 people were abducted in 1,130 incidents across the country. In that same period, kidnappers demanded at least N10,995,090,000 (approximately \$6,871,931) as ransom but received N1,048,110,000, a mere 9.5 per cent of the money demanded, indicating that kidnappers have become less targeted in their victimology.

The report submits that as the country's economic challenges deepen and more individuals fall below the poverty line, more people have taken to kidnapping for ransom for survival. To prevent this crime from becoming an entrenched norm, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated effort to disrupt the financial flows that sustain these criminal activities. Only then can Nigeria hope to address the growing threat of kidnapping and restore a sense of security to its citizens.

Of the 1,130 reported kidnapping cases, Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina have the highest numbers of incidents and victims. Zamfara recorded 132 incidents with 1,639 victims, Kaduna had 113 incidents with 1,113 victims, and Katsina reported 119 incidents with 887 victims.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)



Vice President Kashim Shettima (right) with the outgoing EU Ambassador to Nigeria, Samuela Isopi who visited the Vice President at the Presidential Villa, Abuja...yesterday.

## Ajaero vows to fight on, says police invitation mere distraction to labour struggles

From Gloria Nwafor (Lagos) and Ameh Ochojila (Abuja)

AFTER the hue and cry over allegations of terrorism financing, the president of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Joe Ajaero, yesterday honoured police invitation for questioning and submitted himself to interrogation by police investigators. Ajaero left the Labour House to honour the invitation at about 9:00 a.m. and returned at about 11:30 a.m.

But upon his release and return to the Labour House, headquarters of the labour movement, Ajaero said the invitation by the Nigeria Police Force over allegations of terrorism financing was only a distraction to labour struggles, insisting that the welfare of Nigerian workers was the major focus at hand following the hardship in the country.

Police had invited Ajaero last week for an "interview on charges connected to alleged criminal conspiracy, terrorism financing, treasonable felony, subversion and cyber-crime but the NLC president applied for a shift of the date to yesterday.

Addressing workers who had kept vigil at the Labour

- 'I was only asked about tenant in NLC building, not terror financing'
- Ajaero promises to pursue implementation of minimum wage
- Court strikes out suit against #EndBadGovernance protesters

House since early morning, Ajaero said he was drilled by the police investigation concerning a foreigner who rented an office at the NLC headquarters in Abuja.

Ajaero was accompanied to the Force Intelligence Response Team (IRT) office at Guzape in Abuja yesterday, by his lawyer, Femi Falana and another human rights lawyer, Deji Adeyanju, the NLC leadership, presidents of affiliate unions, the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) and leaders of civil society organisations.

He said the police invitation was part of the challenges that come with labour leadership. "You can't do this job we do without expecting this. Even at the unit level, we have faced this before. Back in 1997 and 1998, some of us were in cells together, enjoying ourselves during the Abacha regime. But what matters now is the fight for workers' rights.

"What is important is the circumstances that took me to that place and whatever it is, we are out to continue the struggle. We have got mini-

mum wage, which has not been implemented, so we have to press for its implementation as soon as possible. Every other thing that will make the welfare of Nigeria workers worthwhile, we will be involved in it," Ajaero said.

Reflecting on his long history of labour activism, Ajaero recalled being detained alongside human rights lawyer, Falana during the military regime of Sani Abacha in 1998.

When asked about what transpired at the meeting with the police, Ajaero said the police asked him to state all he knew about the foreigner who had been declared wanted.

"I wouldn't know the intent of the police in bringing me to question, it is only them that know their intention. As the issue is still being investigated, I am not going to serve as a judge," he said.

NLC General Secretary, Emmanuel Ugboaja, said: "Ajaero is a leader, not a terrorist. Where would he get the money to sponsor or finance terrorism? Is it work-

ers' money? It is unfortunate that the government has chosen to go down this path. Perhaps they want to distract us with these baseless allegations so that we won't focus on the issues affecting workers and the Nigerian people.

"The police should concentrate on addressing the insecurity that is seriously affecting Nigerians. The government should focus on resolving the issue of hunger that is killing our citizens. They should use their time and energy to find solutions to the numerous problems we face as a country."

Also speaking, Falana stated that Ajaero "is innocent of the heinous allegations leveled against him by the police," adding that what transpired at the meeting with the police investigators did not reflect the content of their invitation which created suspicion.

The IRT had asked Ajaero on August 19 to appear before it to answer charges of alleged criminal conspiracy, terrorism financing, treasonable felony, subversion and cyber-crime. The invitation came af-

ter a raid on the NLC headquarters in Abuja on August 7 during which security operatives broke into the building's second floor and ransacked a bookshop.

A member of Ajaero's legal team, Maxwell Opara, also disclosed that Ajaero was not questioned on the allegations for which he was invited. He said the police questioned the NLC president about a tenant in the NLC building rather than the severe crimes initially mentioned.

Opara also called for the release of minors detained during the recent #EndBadGovernance protests.

MEANWHILE, a Federal High Court in Abuja has struck out a suit instituted against the anti-hunger protesters by the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), Inspector General of Police (IGP), Department of the State Service (DSS) and the Chiefs of Army and Defence Staff. The suit filed by about 17 Nigerians against the last nationwide protests was thrown out by the court for want of diligent prosecution. Justice Peter Lifu terminated the suit yesterday following the absence of the 17 plaintiffs and 26 defendants in court and without

legal representation from the two parties. Although the suit was fixed for hearing, Justice Lifu was however shocked that none of the 17 plaintiffs showed up nor were they represented by any legal practitioner.

To worsen the matter, the defendants, comprising Omoyele Somore, Take It Back movement, Nigerians against hunger, and other CSOs that participated in the protest had no legal representation while no excuses or explanations were offered for the boycott of the proceedings. Furious by the development, Justice Lifu held that it had become apparent that the plaintiffs were no longer interested in the matter and subsequently struck it out.

The plaintiffs, drawn from the six geopolitical zones of the country, had approached the court seeking an order to terminate the protest because their fundamental rights to freedom of movement, human dignity, right to own property, economic, social and cultural development and right to national peace and security were being breached.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)



## NBA pledges to ensure govt policies meet citizens' aspirations

By Ngozi Egenuka and Silver Nwokoro

**N**IGERIAN Bar Association (NBA) has pledged to ensure that government policies and programmes meet the yearnings and aspirations of citizens.

According to the association, the provision of good governance, transparency in financial expenditures, reducing drastically the cost of governance and the welfare of the people is the priority of the association.

This pledge was made, yesterday, by the newly inducted NBA President, Mazi Afam Osiwe (SAN).

Osiwe, who was sworn in, yesterday, as the 32nd president of the association to mark the beginning of a new era, said his administration would strive to ensure that the government would re-

spond appropriately to the challenges of security of lives and properties, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, provision of gainful employment and all basic amenities of life, especially food, shelter, clothing, qualitative and affordable education, healthcare, other infrastructure and access to justice.

He also added that his administration would meet the challenges head-on and transform them into opportunities for the growth and progress of their members.

Osiwe noted that his administration would ensure that the Justice Sector Reform is looked into by establishing a committee, which would not only spearhead the NBA Advocacy for Justice Sector Reforms, but also advocate appropriate investments in

modernising court infrastructures, including the construction and renovation of selected court facilities to provide conducive environments for the speedy dispensation of justice.

He lamented that recurrent delays in the issuance of NBA Stamp and Seal had become an embarrassing problem that must be tackled head-on to avoid its reoccurrence.

Osiwe added that his administration would look into constitutional amendment, monitor local governments, and protect legal businesses, among others.

He added: "The NBA shall constructively engage with various tiers of government and other stakeholders by presenting proposals and blueprints for dealing with issues as they arise. The NBA shall maintain its leading role in

matters of public interest and engage in rule of law advocacy.

"We are particularly committed to ensuring that the efforts of previous administrations of the NBA are not just remembered but are actively consolidated by way of institutional memory, to create an association that truly works for all its members and, by extension, for all Nigerians. The journey of our association is one of evolution, marked by significant strides in promoting the rule of law, defending human rights, and advocating legal reforms."

"Our promise to run a united and inclusive bar is a task that must be accomplished. Our efforts must at all times not only be geared towards keeping the bar united but moving it forward."



Special Adviser to Enugu State Governor on Project Development and Implementation, Uchenna Nwatu (left); Speaker, Enugu State House of Assembly, Uchenna Ugwu; Governor of Enugu State, Dr Peter Mbah; and the Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Engr. Gerald Otiji, during the commissioning of a mega asphalt plant installed by the Mbah Administration in Enugu, yesterday.

## WHO canvasses equitable access to cervical cancer care

By Victor Gbonegun

**W**ORLD Health Organisation (WHO) and other partners in the health sector have expressed concerns that inequitable access to vaccines and high-performance screening tools is hampering efforts to reduce the growing burden of cervical cancer in Africa, which accounts for the highest rates of new cases and deaths due to the disease.

They lamented that of the more than 76,000 cervical cancer deaths globally in 2022, nearly a quarter estimated at 23 per cent were in Africa.

According to them, despite

being preventable and treatable through human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination and screening, and curable when detected early, cervical cancer remains the most common cause of cancer-related deaths in Africa.

Speaking at the 74th session of WHO Regional Committee for Africa Forum, WHO's Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, said: "The burden of cervical cancer in Africa is a stark illustration of the impacts of global inequities, which exacerbate barriers, including scarce resources, lack of prioritisation by funders, and ultimately, limited capacity to manage

the threat. Affordable and accessible HPV tests and vaccines are critical if we are to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem in the region and narrow the wide gap in health inequality globally."

The forum, which will end today, August 30, in Congo's capital city, brings together health ministers from the 47 countries of the WHO African Region, health ministers, partners to discuss and approve regional policies and adopt key resolutions to guide the Organisation's work on the continent.

The forum highlighted the urgent need for equitable ac-

cess to affordable HPV vaccines and HPV DNA testing, to accelerate progress towards elimination.

Reports show that to date, only 28 countries in the African region have introduced HPV vaccines into routine immunisation programmes, with just four of these achieving 90 per cent vaccination coverage in 2023.

For screening, surveys revealed very low coverage of about 11 per cent. Only 17 countries have introduced HPV-based screening, albeit not nationally, highlighting the importance of an integrated person-centred approach.

## Facilitate direct flights, Tinubu charges Brazilian envoy, departs for China

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

**P**RESIDENT Bola Tinubu, yesterday, urged the newly appointed Brazilian Ambassador to Nigeria, Carlos Jose Areias, to prioritise the establishment of direct flights between Nigeria and Brazil.

Tinubu gave the charge shortly before he departed Nigeria for China on an official visit aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and exploring economic opportunities.

Before his departure, President Tinubu also received a Letter of Credence from Ghana's High Commissioner to Nigeria, Vice-Admiral Seth Amoama (rtd).

Addressing the Chinese envoy, Tinubu recalled his discussions with his Brazilian counterpart, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, on direct flights on the margins of the African Union Summit, which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Nigerian leader expressed commitment to working closely with Brazil to strengthen bilateral relations and advance shared priorities, welcoming the country's presidency of the G20 in 2024.

He told the envoy: "In my recent discussions with President Lula, we agreed to energise the economic development of our two countries,

and I look forward to continuing that collaboration."

In his remarks, Areias said President Lula looked forward to welcoming President Tinubu to the G20 Leaders' Summit scheduled for November 18 and 19, 2024 in Rio de Janeiro.

He also conveyed President Lula's invitation to Nigeria to join the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty.

He explained that the initiative, based on the value of food security, was the main proposal of the Brazilian presidency at the G20 to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030.

"I am in a country similar to Brazil, and I feel very much at

home here with the culture, music, and people of Nigeria.

"I will do whatever I can to improve Brazil-Nigeria relations. Ten years ago, the volume of trade between our two countries was in the region of \$10 billion, and I will work hard to improve the number. "Africa is top priority for President Lula and Nigeria is the most important country for us," the Brazilian Ambassador said.

In his chat with the Ghanaian envoy, Tinubu commended Ghana's active participation in ECOWAS and reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to strengthening relations with its West African ally.

## FG signs pact with Boeing for Nigerian airlines

From Joke Falaju, Abuja

**M**INISTER of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo has signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Boeing to facilitate aircraft acquisition by Nigerian airlines.

The Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, during the signing of the MOU with Boeing's Vice President of Commercial Sales and Marketing for Africa, Anbessie Yitbarek, said the aircraft company would leverage its extensive network of financiers and lessors to help Nigeria airlines acquire newer generation Boeing aircraft, thus modernising their fleets.

The signing ceremony took place, yesterday, in Seattle, Washington, USA, in the pres-

ence of key Nigerian aviation stakeholders, including executives from major Nigerian airlines, the top management team of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority and representatives from the Airline Operators of Nigeria.

A statement signed by the Special Adviser to the Minister on Media and Communications, Mr Tunde Moshood, said the MOU would enhance the operational efficiency and safety of Nigerian airlines and position them for growth in the global aviation market.

He added that the aircraft company would also provide enhanced technical support to assist airlines in the introduction of new or used Boeing aircraft and ensure smooth integration into existing operations.

## Govt increases SUBEB matching grants to N3.5b

By Moyosore Salami

**F**EDERAL Government has approved an upward review of the statutory allocation of Universal Basic Education matching grants accessible by state governments for infrastructural projects to N3,554,642,584.46.

The adjustment followed the passage of the 2024 Appropriation Bill and the assent to the bill into law.

The Executive Secretary, Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Dr Hamid Bobboyi, stated this, yesterday, during a five-day financial training for SUBEB chairmen and board secretaries in Ibadan.

In his remarks, Bobboyi said the increased matching grants to states came from two per

cent of the consolidated revenue fund allocated to support basic education in Nigeria.

The grant complies with Section 11(2) of the UBE Act, 2004, while state governments are expected to provide an equivalent amount of N3,554,642,584.46 as counterpart funds to execute the first to fourth quarters, 2024 UBE intervention projects.

He said that previously, the yearly matching grants amounted to approximately N1.3 billion per state, explaining that with the new allocation, each state would receive N3.3 billion, doubling the previous amount and that states were now required to provide an equivalent counterpart fund to access these grants for the 2024 intervention projects.

## EKEDC explains disconnection of UNILAG after N180m payment

By Waliat Musa

**E**KO Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC) has clarified that the payment of N180 million by the University of Lagos (UNILAG) for July defrays only a small fraction of the outstanding debt owed by the university.

The DisCo confirmed the disconnection of the electricity supply to the university, stating that the debt owed by the institution was over one billion naira.

EKEDC, in a statement signed by its General Manager, Corporate Communications and Strategy, Babatunde Lasaki, which was made available to *The Guardian*, yesterday said UNILAG was disconnected from the grid on Tuesday, Au-

gust 27, 2024, due to recurring accumulated outstanding payments and following multiple engagements with the UNILAG team.

The DisCo stressed that in adherence to regulatory requirements and procedures, disconnection notices were served at different times to the university, and principal staff of the institution.

"To set the record straight, UNILAG's migration from Band B to Band A tariff followed due process, with adequate engagements and communication regarding the implications. The tariff increase reflects the institution's average 23 hours of supply availability, aligning with Band A criteria," he said.

## NASME worries as poor nutrition affects women

From John Akubo, Abuja

**N**IGERIA Association of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (NASME) has raised concern over recent data showing that 100 million Nigerians are faced with food insecurity, with a significant gap in nutrition affecting 7.3 million women.

They expressed their worries as stakeholders gathered, yesterday, in Abuja at the 2024 Enterprise Support Organisation (ESOs) for Nutrition. They also expressed fear over its ripple effects on mothers and their babies.

Speaking as one of the panelists on the issue, the Chairman of the Plateau State chapter of NASME, Olu Awolowo, said the bigger chal-

lenge was the ripple effect from the crisis that included over 24,000 daily births being threatened due to undernourished mothers, 46 million women of childbearing age at risk and 262,000 yearly deaths of babies as well as 50,000 annual deaths of women.

He said: "This crisis demands immediate attention and action to address the nutritional needs of vulnerable populations, particularly women and children," he said.

He said the objective was to empower ESOs to effectively integrate nutrition-focused strategies into their support for SMEs, thereby increasing the availability, affordability, and desirability of safe and nutritious foods in underserved markets.



www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria f GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardianigeria

## Rights group, residents seek justice for slain Lagos monarch's son

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Centre for Human and Social-Economic Rights (CHSR) and residents of the Ojumu community, Lagos, have cried out for justice over the gruesome murder of Prince Kazeem Ademola Akinloye, the son of the Ojumu of Ajiran land, Oba Tijani Akinloye, Sateru II, around the Lekki area of Lagos State.

Akinloye was murdered in broad daylight on Monday, August 26, around Chevron Drive.

According to reports, the deceased was waylaid by assailants who shot and macheted him to death.

President of CHSR, Alex Omotehinse, told journalists at the Ikoyi cemetery, Obalende, after the internment of the deceased that the motive of the assailants could only be ascertained after a thorough



Akinloye

police investigation.

He, however, added that it is imperative to emphasise that the manner of his death followed the pattern of the murder of Mr Sheriff Ishola Salami at Moba town adjacent to Ajiran on Tuesday, April 18, 2023.

He said: "It should be in the public interest for the police to prioritise the investigation of the assassination of Prince Kazeem Ademola Akinloye and the earlier incident involving Mr Sheriff Ishola Salami to ascertain the immediate and remote causes, considering concerns and fears elicited among the inhabitants and cross sections of residents of the Ojumu community of Ajiran land."

"It must be reiterated that the killers of Salami are yet to be investigated, apprehended and brought

to book 16 months after the incident. Despite the efforts by the family, the leadership of the Ojumu community and our organisation to get the police to conduct an investigation and unearth the immediate and remote circumstances surrounding the assassination, there has been a deliberate attempt by the police authorities in Lagos to cover up," he alleged.

He added: "We call on the Inspector General of Police, Mr Kayode Egbetokun and the Governor of Lagos State, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, to openly condemn the assassination of Prince Kazeem Ademola Akinloye and to order a full investigation to be conducted by officers of high integrity that would not be compromised."

A friend of the deceased, Mr Dayo Joshua, who expressed shock over Akinloye's gruesome murder, said there is palpable fear across the area as no one is safe considering the way Akinloye was killed.

## Troops kill eight terrorists during gun battle in Kaduna

From Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna

TROOPS in Kaduna State have neutralised eight bandits in Birnin Gwari Local Council.

They also recovered arms and ammunition following a gun battle.

In a statement yesterday, the Commissioner of Internal Security and Home Affairs in Kaduna State, Samuel Aruwan, said: "In line with operational feedback to the Kaduna State Government, the troops commenced a fighting patrol to the Kampanin Doka general area, and on arrival at the location, made contact with bandits. The troops promptly engaged and neutralised seven of the bandits.

"On securing and searching the area, three AK-47 rifles, eight AK-47 magazines (four empty and four loaded with 120 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition), one magazine carrier, six motorcycles, three mobile phones, two Baofeng radio sets and three pairs of civilian clothes were recovered by troops.

## Truck crashes into electricity poles, injures man in Rivers

From Obinna Nwaoku, Port Harcourt

AN AGED man was injured yesterday when a construction truck carrying a heavy-duty diesel generator

lost control and smashed into two electricity poles, which collapsed on him.

The incident occurred at Kalabari Street (formerly Udi Street) in the Mile One area of

Port Harcourt.

According to sources, the aged man who was walking along the street was left unconscious afterwards.

The victim, whose identity

remains unknown, was rushed to a nearby medical facility for urgent attention.

The incident, which occurred at about 1:30 p.m., also damaged parked vehicles in the neighbourhood.

An eyewitness and Point of Sale (PoS) operator explained that the truck was speeding when the incident happened.

She revealed that the truck's cargo got caught on some overhead wires and pulled them, destroying nearby poles. She also mentioned that the vehicle's speed caused the pole to collapse, hitting the innocent man.

The eyewitness, who requested anonymity, stated that the incident would have been more disastrous if there had been electricity flow when it happened.



Incident scene

## Community leaders lament declining state of infrastructure in Ikorodu

By Mariam Olatunji

SOME community leaders and residents in Ikorodu, Lagos State, have raised the alarm over the deplorable state of infrastructure in the area.

The leader of the Agura Gberigbe community on the Ikorodu Central axis, Ahmed Akodu, lamented that the only access road to the place is ridden with potholes.

According to him, commuters who use the road have experienced damage to their vehicles. Many people who cannot afford the high cost of daily maintenance have sold their cars.

Akodu mentioned that Gbodu junction, a main route to the Agura-Gberigbe area, is

constantly flooded during the rainy season. This has made commuting difficult for vehicle owners, commercial motorcyclists, and students and has forced other residents to use longer routes with higher costs.

He said property owners are no longer finding renters, and commercial activities are at an all-time low. The potholes are getting deeper, making access to the community more difficult.

He said: "The road started deteriorating in 2009, and there has been no remedial effort from the government to revive it and bring it back to its former glory. We are appealing to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to come

to our aid so that we will not be cut off from the state."

The leader of Asolo/Agbede-Olunla in the Ikorodu West area, Olabamiji Ishaq, also a property owner, stated that the lack of specific infrastructure has caused significant damage to properties in the community, which will require substantial effort and money to repair. He explained that the heavy rainfall in June and July led to the collapse of the reinforcement holding his building and fence. He expressed regret that if the

government had provided the community with a better drainage system, such

extensive damage wouldn't have occurred to his property.



Sanwo-Olu

**The Guardian Classifieds**  
Change of Name  
Property  
Guardian Jobs  
SME's/Business Page  
**Metro Mart**

ENQUIRIES:  
**LAGOS OFFICE:**  
08028411767  
07069747993

**LOSS OF DOCUMENTS**

This is to notify the general public that the Original Shipping documents for **BENTOS PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS LIMITED** with Bill of Lading Number **SHSE41162700** which was lost in transit and the efforts to track and trace the documents have proven abortive.

The affidavit and public declaration are for record and official purposes. The concerned authority should take note.

**By Management**



# Police nab Lagos nurse over failed cosmetic surgery

By **Eniola Daniel**

THE police in Lagos have arrested a nurse after a 36-year-old woman, identified as Mrs Abiola, died following a Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL) procedure.

The incident occurred in the Lekki area of Lagos.

The doctor involved is currently on the run.

The spokesperson for the Lagos State Police Command, Benjamin Hundeyin, said a private driver reported at Maroko Police Division that on Monday, August 26, 2024, at about 3:00 p.m., his madam, Mrs Abiola of Sangotedo Ibeju-Lekki, asked him to convey her to a clinic located at Lekki Phase I for a BBL injection.

He said that on arrival, the owner of the clinic



The suspect

instructed a nurse to inject her madam. After that, she became unconscious and started gasping for breath.

According to him, the victim was rushed to a hospital in Lekki Phase I for treatment, where she was confirmed dead by the doctor on duty.

“Based on the report, the incident scene was visited by a team of detectives. The hospital was also visited, where the corpse was inspected, photographed and evacuated to a public morgue for autopsy. The doctor is currently on the run.

“Meanwhile, the said nurse was arrested on Tuesday, August 27, at about 11:40 a.m., and an investigation is in progress,” Hundeyin added.

## 30 juveniles in Oregun correctional centre get digital literacy skills

By **Benedicta Igwe**

A NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisation (NGO), Inmates Educational Foundation, in partnership with Creative Digital Technologies, Nigeria Youth Future Funds, and Leap Africa, has trained 30 juveniles on digital literacy skills at the Oregun Correctional Centre, Ikeja, Lagos.

Speaking after the six-week intensive training, the Executive Director of Inmates

Educational Foundation, Mahfuz Alabidun, said the training covered essential topics such as understanding Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), Basic Computer Operations, Internet Navigation, Word Processing, Spreadsheet Skills, Presentation Software, and Final Project Presentations.

He said the programme also included exciting games like chess, puzzles, Rubik skills, and dart skills to enhance

cognitive development and teamwork.

He disclosed that the programme, which was the first of its kind, is meant to equip juveniles with vital digital literacy skills to prepare them for a smoother reintegration into society upon release.

“We are proud to have made a positive impact in the lives of these young inmates. We aim to empower them with the skills and confidence needed to succeed in today’s

technology-driven world.

“The programme is meant to highlight the importance of collaboration and support from organisations and individuals committed to making a difference in the lives of juveniles in correctional centres,” he said.

Mahfuz also encouraged brands and companies to support activities that foster young offenders’ personal growth, education, and career success in correctional centres.

## Shippers’ Council, FRSC to tackle insecurity over haulage, transport infrastructure

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

THE Nigerian Shippers’ Council (NSC) and the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) have pledged to engage the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) to address security threats posed by extortionists in the haulage industry and hoodlums who vandalise port transport infrastructure.

Both agencies also pledged to work with all stakeholders to improve the haulage sector’s operational environment, ensuring the necessary infrastructure is

secure while maritime trade facilitation in Nigeria continues to thrive without disruption.

They made the pledge in Lagos during a sensitisation programme on ‘Safe-to-load on Nigerian Roads’, organised by NSC in collaboration with FRSC.

The programme aimed to promote safety in cargo transportation on Nigerian roads.

The Executive Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of NSC, Pius Akutah, emphasised the critical need

to address road safety and security challenges and protect transportation infrastructure, which are vital to the country’s economic activities.

Akutah highlighted the concerns stakeholders raised regarding road transport’s safety and security, particularly the haulage industry, noting that these issues are not only about preventing accidents but also about safeguarding the infrastructure that supports trade.

Akutah pointed out that the

vandalisation of container trucks, especially those integral to the port transport infrastructure, is a significant concern that demands immediate attention.

“We cannot afford to have players in this sector who invest so much in these infrastructures and face destruction by hoodlums. Once a vehicle operates within the value chain of transport infrastructure to support trade and economic activities, it becomes a critical infrastructure that must be protected,” he stated.

## Eight NDLEA officers rewarded for intercepting illicit drugs, arresting suspects

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Brig Gen Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd), yesterday approved a special promotion for eight officers of the Marine Command for their brave and professional conduct.

The officers were rewarded for their bravery during a recent operation to arrest drug traffickers and interdict canoes and boats moving illicit drugs from Ghana to Nigeria through the Lagos waterways.

Speaking at a brief ceremony to decorate the eight officers with their new ranks and also hand them commendation letters at the agency’s National Headquarters in Abuja, Marwa said: “Every time we have a breakthrough, it tells the world a story about the new NDLEA we are working hard to build. It also reinforces our conviction as an organisation that we are on the right track. So, an occasion like this is a source of pride for me.”

The promoted officers are Dick Aaron Dick; Alabi Mayowa; Gabriel Ubokikwan; Aso Daniel John; Abdul Emmanuel Sule; Ngabolo Victor Sonpano; Jonah Emmanuel Sule, and Membe Timipa Gabriel.

Speaking on behalf of the beneficiaries, the team leader Aaron Dick expressed gratitude to the NDLEA boss for transforming the agency into an efficient and result-oriented organisation through purposeful and exemplary leadership. He said the special promotion and commendation will motivate him and his colleagues to do more and inspire other agency personnel to be exceptional in discharging their duties.

Justifying the essence of the promotion and commendation, the NDLEA boss said: “In this case, we have officers who exhibited bravery and an unwavering sense of duty in the face of adversity on the waterways to thwart an attempt by a criminal gang to smuggle 60 jumbo bags of illicit drugs from a neighbouring country.



Promoted NDLEA officials with Marwa and seized drugs

By **Eniola Daniel, Benedicta Igwe** and **Precious Lawrence**

THE family of Micheal Ilevbabor, who gave birth to a quadruplet, has appealed for financial assistance.

The father, Micheal Ilevbabor, who brought them to the Rutam House headquarters of *The Guardian*, Lagos, on Wednesday, August 28, 2024, said the family spends at least N600,000 monthly to care for the children.

He said they can no longer afford the financial burden.

Efe, Ohi, Akhavbiomo, and Omolegho were born on April 29, 2022, in the Lagoon Hospital in Lagos State.

Ilevbabor, who hails from Edo State, said: “It has not



Ilevbabor and the children..

PHOTO: ENIOLA DANIEL

been easy coping and taking care of them. They

were delivered seven weeks earlier than expected, so

they must be incubated for seven weeks.

Unfortunately, the government hospital did not have enough space for them. We had to look for a hospital with four incubators in one room.

“It was not easy for the payments and other things. The payments cost more than N15 million for the seven weeks, and we tried our best with family and friends, co-workers, and alma matter who helped us to raise money. So far, taking care of them has not been easy.

“The cost of diapers, food, health care and others are

killing me, and that is why I have to cry out for help. We have Efe, whose English name is Audrey. Ohi, whose English name is Hann, Akhavbiomo, whom we also call Kimberly and Omolegho, whom we call Eudora.”

When asked how he reacted to the news of their birth, Ilevbabor, who is a security expert, said: “Initially, my wife gave birth to three, and I had gone out to buy stuff for them, only to be told that she had given birth to another child, making them four. I was lost for words; I didn’t know what to say or how to react.

“They have their education coming up. It’s not an easy task to pay their fees. I am begging Nigerians and everyone to assist us. They are our first issue. We waited for four years after marriage before my wife conceived.

I married in April 2018, and we gave birth in 2022.”

Ilevbabor can be reached on 08054154133, while his wife, Glory, can be reached on 08133901465. They can be assisted through the Account Name Michael and Glory Ilevbabor. The Account Number is 0562919982. The bank is Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB).





**FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA  
GOVERNMENT OF BENUE STATE  
MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT  
AGRO-CLIMATIC RESILIENCE IN SEMI-ARID  
LANDSCAPES PROJECT (ACRESAL)**

**Credit No.: IDA-70150**

**Request for Bids  
Goods**

**(One-Envelope Bidding Process)**

**UPGRADE OF GIS AND DATA MANAGEMENT  
LABORATORY**

**(RFB Reference No.: NG-BENUE STATE ACRESAL-431797-GO-RFB)**

**ISSUED DATE: Tuesday, August 30, 2024**

- The Federal Government of Nigeria has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for the **UPGRADE OF GIS AND DATA MANAGEMENT LABORATORY**.
- The Benue State Agro-Climatic Resilience in Arid and Semi-Arid Landscapes Project (BNACReSAL) now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for:

S/N	Description of Goods	Quantity	Location	Delivery Period
1	Upgrade Of GIS and Data Management Laboratory	Various	BNACReSAL), Opposite N.T.A Network Centre, Ahmadu Bello Way, Old G.R.A, Makurdi, Benue State	60 days

- Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" **September 2023 fifth Edition** ("Procurement Regulations") and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Benue State Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes Project (BN-ACReSAL) and inspect the bidding document during office hours i.e. **09:00 to 17:00 hours** at the address given below.
- The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **One Hundred and Twenty-five Thousand Naira (NGN125,000)**. The method of payment will be Bank draft in favor of The Project Coordinator, Benue State - Nigeria Agro-Climatic Resilience in Arid and Semi-Arid Landscapes Project or pay directly into this bank account; Benue State ACReSAL interest Account, Polaris, Account Number: 4060015438 and bring the payment evidence to the address below. The bidding document will be sent to the bidder by email or courier on request at the cost of the bidder.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **11:00 am Monday September 30, 2024**. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on **11:00 am Monday September 30, 2024**.
- All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security of: **2% of Bidder's Bid Price**.
- Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
- The address(es) referred to above is (are):  
Benue State Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes Project (BN-ACReSAL),  
Ministry of Water Resources & Environment,  
Opposite N.T.A Network Centre,  
Ahmadu Bello Way, Old G.R.A, Makurdi,  
Benue State.  
Telephone: +2348068696786  
Electronic mail address: [benueacresal@gmail.com](mailto:benueacresal@gmail.com)

**Signed**

State Project Coordinator  
BN - ACReSAL



**INVITATION TO SUBMIT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATION  
FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESS SUPPORT, AND HEALTH SERVICES**

**CLOSING DATE: 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (1700 hrs. WAT)**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental humanitarian organization established in 1951 and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits both migrants and society.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) invites interested and eligible vendors to submit Expressions of Interest (EOIs) in respect of provision of the requirements described below. The purpose of the EOI is to identify vendors that wish to participate in a forthcoming solicitation process.

Public and private organizations are invited to express their interest in partnering with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to provide vocational skill training, internships, on-the-job training, and job placement opportunities for returning Nigerian migrants and youths, spanning various sectors and regions within the country. Key sectors targeted are healthcare, agriculture, creative arts and entertainment, construction, real estate, telecommunications, retail manufacturing, engineering, hospitality and tourism, logistics and supply chain, technology, and IT. This list is not exhaustive, and other sectors are also welcome.

The programs will be implemented in several geographic regions, with primary focus on Lagos, Kano, Yobe, FCT, Kaduna, Imo, Oyo, Delta, Edo, and Ogun States.

The EOI should include the following information:

- Brief presentation of company including number of staff, turnover, years in business
- A concise overview of your organization's primary area of focus for potential collaboration with IOM. Clearly specify whether your organization can offer vocational skill training, job placement, or internships. Indicate whether you can provide one or multiple of these services. The following categories:
  - Category 1: Education and Vocational Training
  - Category 2: Employment and Job Placement / internships/
  - Category 3: Business and Entrepreneurship Support
  - Category 4: Health and Psychosocial Support.
- Please confirm if you can provide any of the categories or services mentioned above, either individually or in combination.
- Attach Valid certificate of registration (Certificate of Incorporation) or other applicable license/ documentation for government institutions
- Reference list demonstrating qualifications for participating in this upcoming bidding process
- Contact information: full name and address, country,

telephone number, e-mail address, contact person and website (if applicable).

**Note:** Prices are not required at this stage.

The Request for Expression of Interest Quotation (REOI) which includes Instructions to Bidders, Vendor Information Sheet and Code of Conduct for Suppliers that Bidders will need to follow to prepare and submit their Expression of Interest for consideration by IOM can be accessed through the following links:

**United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM):**  
<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/244692>

**IOM Country Office Website: [eoi-from-public-and-private-organizations-for-education-training-employment-business-support-and-health-services.pdf](https://www.iom.int) (iom.int)**

Interested Bidders can also send email to [iomlagostenders@iom.int](mailto:iomlagostenders@iom.int) to request for the Bid Documents.

**Submission of Bids:**

Expressions of interest shall be sent by email as follows:

Email address: [IOMLagosTenders@iom.int](mailto:IOMLagosTenders@iom.int)

- File Format: pdf
- File names must be maximum 60 characters long and must not contain any letter or special character other than from Latin alphabet/keyboard.
- All files must be free of viruses and not corrupted.
- Max. File Size per transmission: 10mbs
- Mandatory subject of email: EOI/IOM/NG20\_01\_ Category
- Multiple emails must be clearly identified by indicating in the subject line "email no. X of Y", and the final "email no. Y of Y".

In the subject line of your email, please specify the partnership category or categories you are interested in. For instance, you might write "EOI/IOM/NG20\_01\_ Category 1" or "EOI/IOM/NG20\_01\_ Category 1,2 and 4" if applying for multiple categories.

You should receive an email acknowledging receipt. IOM reserves the right to accept or reject any Expression of Interest, and to annul the selection process and reject all Expression at any time, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Companies/Service Providers.



**The Guardian Newspapers Limited,  
the flagship of the print media, invites you to  
advertise your product/corporate  
advertisements on our BACK PAGE**

**This is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to promote  
your company to our ever-growing readership.**

**For more information, kindly contact  
Ricketts on 08023015115 or  
Jenniepher on 08023195673**





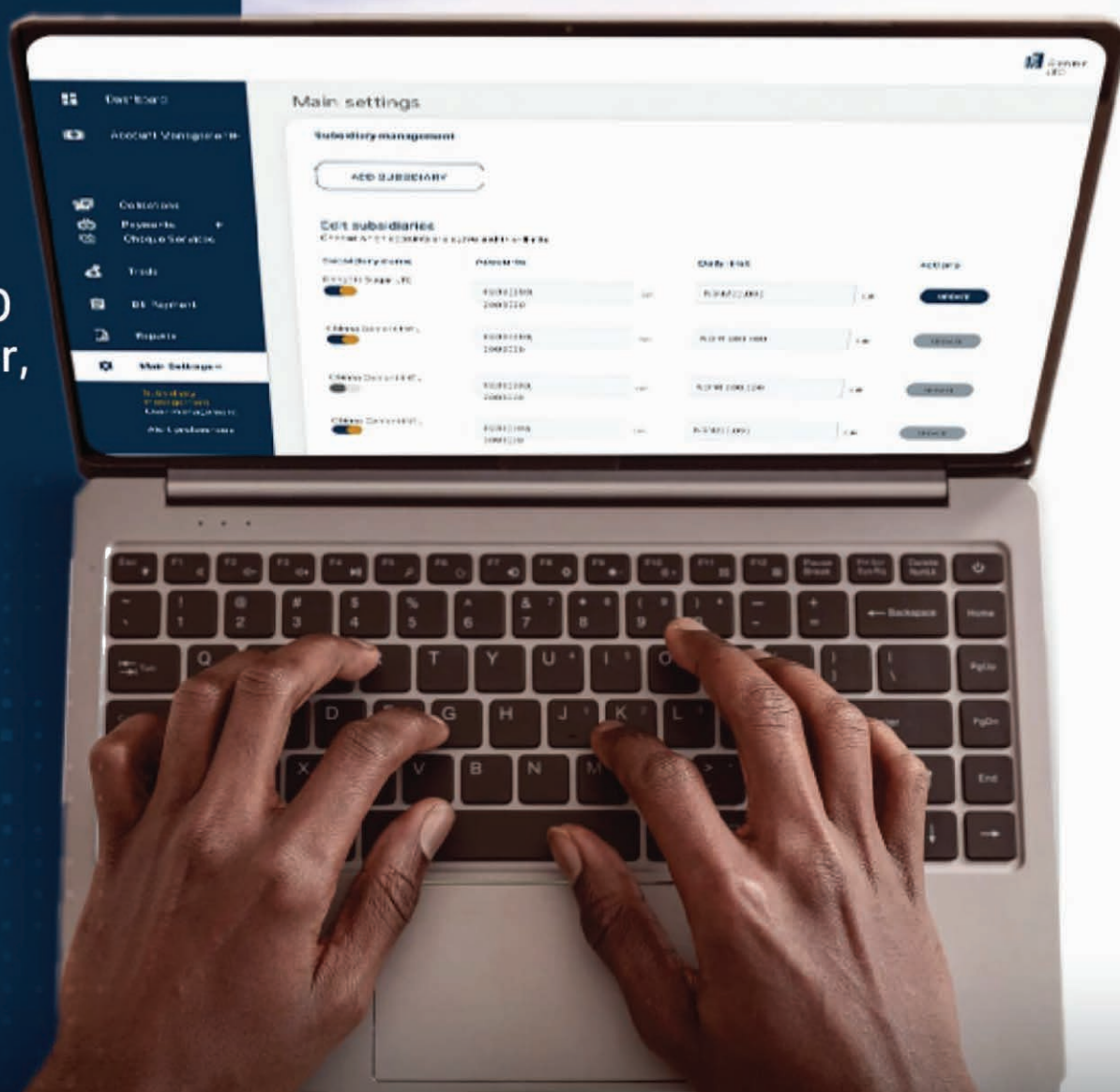
# U.S Visa Payment Made Simple with FirstBank

Paying your U.S. visa application fees is easy with FirstBank.

Visit any of our branches, use our Corporate Banking app, FirstDirect2.0, or follow the payment link on your Application Confirmation Slip.

Visit the nearest FirstBank branch or log into FirstDirect2.0 if you are a Corporate Customer, to get started.

**FirstBank**  
Since 1894



FIRSTBANK IS AN FBN HOLDINGS COMPANY



**- You First -**



FOUNDER: ALEX U. IBRU (1945 – 2011)  
Conscience is an open wound; only truth can heal it. Uthman dan Fodio 1754-1816

# Editorial

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

## Between the Police and leadership of Labour Congress

THE accusations and counter accusations bordering on criminality between the Police and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) can be better managed than confusing the issues to heat the polity unduly. Both parties must play by the rules. While the police are expected to exercise professionalism in their conduct, the leadership of the NLC should not attempt to undermine duties of the police. This is especially necessary in a country presently embattled on many fronts, including tackling terrorism, kidnapping, insurgency and sundry other crimes in which innocent Nigerians are being murdered daily. There should be no grandstanding on the part of the two feuding parties. Nigerians are only interested in the truth about their safety and security.

On August 7, 2024, the Nigeria Police raided the National Secretariat of the Nigeria Labour Congress, also known as Labour House, located in the Central Business District of Abuja, in what was explained by the Police as a manhunt for a criminal suspect.

In an initial statement released on August 9, the Force Public Relations Officer, ACP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, said the raid was not targeted at the NLC Secretariat, but at a criminal suspect traced to a rented shop within the building. The statement said the raid followed an ongoing investigation of which the prime suspect was traced to

the Labour House.

Explaining the raid, the Police said: "Detectives armed with the appropriate legal authority conducted an operation at the location, which turned out to be the NLC building." The prime suspect, the Police said, was a foreigner who fronted criminal activities in the country and across other African countries. The police thus asked for cooperation and support of the NLC leadership in its investigations, in the effort to make the country safe. The NLC, on August 10, however, disputed the position of the Police regarding the raid, claiming the Police actually forced their ways into its offices, after close of work.

"The Police claim to be conducting a nationwide investigation that comprises other countries, yet, their so-called intelligence led them to our building well after office hours. If they were acting in good faith, why did their investigation take them specifically to the 10th floor, where the offices of the NLC president and general secretary are located? This is nothing short of harassment under the guise of an investigation," the NLC's General Secretary, Emmanuel Ugboaja, stated.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) also condemned what it considered an illegal invasion of the workers' house. Executive Secretary of the commission, Tony Ojukwu, SAN, said such behaviour in a country governed by the Rule of Law was unacceptable.

The trading of accusations is actu-

ally needless, if not for the existing suspicion and lack of trust between the police and the Labour Congress. There are better ways to enforce law in a democracy. The Police could have better handled the raid and come out clean with their intentions. The NLC Secretariat is a major landmark in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and the insinuation that the Police did not know the location of the Secretariat is not convincing. Why climb to the 10th floor that houses offices of the NLC president and general secretary to look for a suspect?

Again, why did it take the Police close to 48 hours to own up to the raid, after the NLC had ignorantly blamed the invasion on the Department of State Security (DSS)? Why didn't the Police give notice to the NLC, the officially recognised workers' body with whom the government is regularly engaged, of an impending raid to capture a foreign national allegedly holed up in its Secretariat, if indeed they (Police) were armed with appropriate legal authority?

Matters took a turn on August 19, when the Police issued invitation to the NLC president for questioning over terrorism financing, treason, and other offences, with a warning that failure to honour the invitation would lead to activation of warrant of arrest. Ajaero reported to the headquarters of Police

Intelligent Response Team (IRT) in Abuja yesterday. Reports have it that he wrote his statement after interrogation, and left the headquarters an hour later.

Indeed, charges of terrorism financing, treason and related offences are not to be taken lightly. We do not want to contemplate that the Police will make these grave allegations without a basis. Therefore, we urge the two sides to close ranks and follow due process in handling the matter, without resorting to strong-arm tactics that will further overheat the polity. Matters relating to security and safety of the country are sensitive and must be taken seriously by all. The Police must be encouraged to do its job, but that must be done professionally and within the ambit of law.

Labour has alleged intimidation and harassment, which is not the right path for government to take. The Amnesty International (AI) has condemned the threat to arrest Ajaero, describing it as a fresh attempt to intimidate and harass the leadership of the workers' union.

This should not be the case here. While the Police should be transparent and allow due process to dictate the procedure in resolving the face-off, Labour should be reminded that Nigerians also need a safe country for them, including labour, to ply their trade.

### LETTER

## NDLEA and protest against scarcity of cannabis

SIR: In the thick of the protests that swept across most states in Nigeria, it was shocking to see a protester bearing a placard with the message, "Cana Price Too High." The protest was dubbed #EndBadGovernance and was organised to vent public displeasure against the increased rate of inflation, poverty, hunger and the perennial insecurity plaguing the country. How did "Cana" come into the picture?

It will interest people to know that "Cana" is a street name for cannabis or marijuana, a widely used illicit drug. A bit of background will help to place the placard's message in proper perspective. The abuse of cannabis is one of the factors driving Nigeria's high drug use prevalence, which was estimated to be 14.4 per cent in 2018 according to an NBC/UNODC survey.

One of the embarrassing

findings of the National Drug Use and Health Survey of 2018 was the fact that 10.6 million Nigerians abused cannabis, thereby making us the country with one of the highest abusers of the psychoactive plant. Worse still, cannabis cultivation has gained ground across many states in the country, including Ondo, Ekiti, Osun, Delta, Ogun and Edo.

Over two generations, smoking cannabis became so entrenched in our society that young people considered it fashionable to smoke weed openly and in videos. That placard was a stark reminder of the need for society to ensure that cannabis use and its cultivation are eradicated in Nigeria.

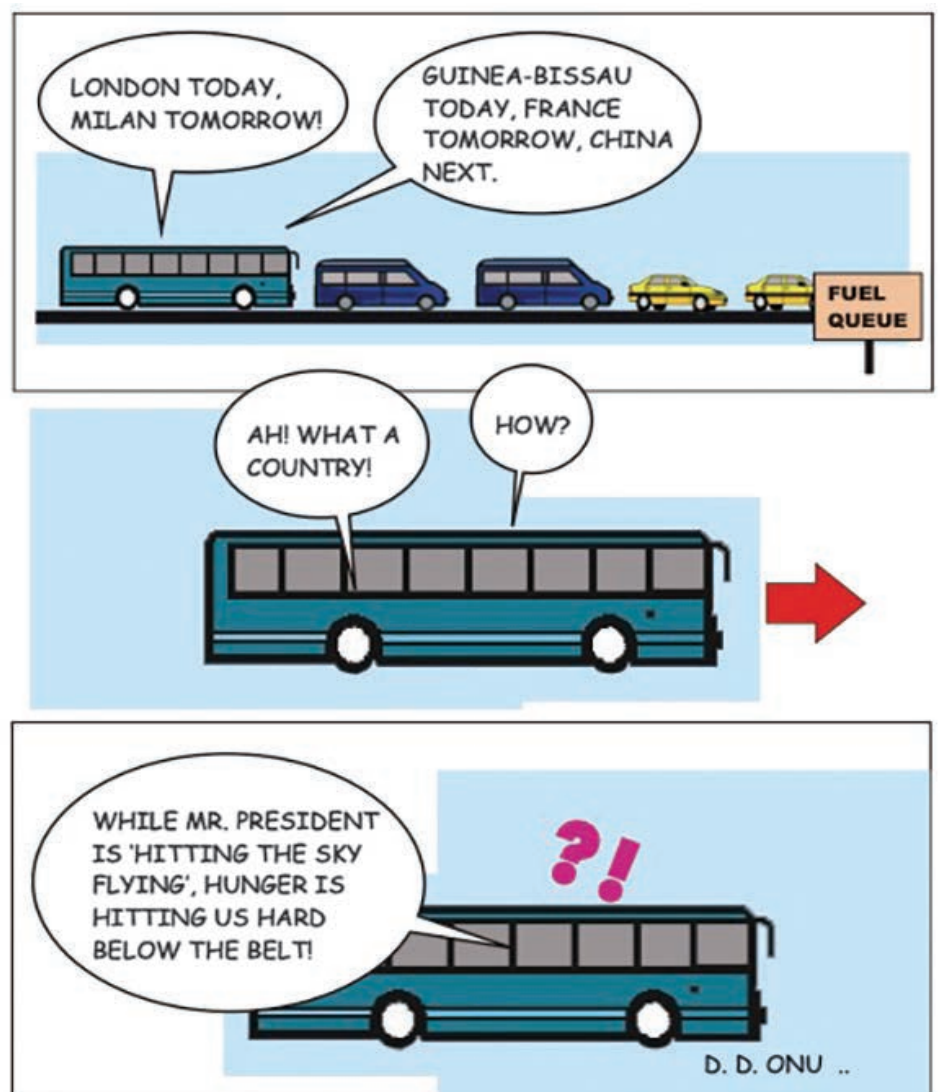
The other latent message from that placard is that cannabis users are beginning to feel the heat of the efforts to curb the availability of "weed" by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). No doubt,

operatives of the anti-narcotic agency have stepped up their raids on cannabis farms across the states in the past three years.

The relentless efforts of NDLEA have led to seizures and destruction of large quantities of cannabis consignments across the country. The implication is an effective disruption in the supply chain, which makes it difficult for cannabis to get to the users. That has inevitably led to scarcity and a spike in the price of the substance in the illicit drug market.

However, we must not be deceived that the anti-narcotic agency can salvage the situation alone. I recommend we all join hands together to fight this scourge, from the government down to the family. We can only win the war against illicit drugs by working together and in close collaboration with NDLEA.

Kalthum Alhassan wrote from Kano.





## Opinion

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

## Akin Mabogunje in his student's ink (2)

By Tony Afejuku

I present to my readers today the second and concluding part of Professor Isaac Megbolugbe's treasured memorial essay on his former teacher and mentor, the late Professor Emeritus Akin Mabogunje, one of the early winners of the prestigious Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM), our country's highest award for intellectual accomplishment. One thing that I find striking in the essay is that it came from the fecund imagination of Professor Isaac Megbolugbe, a former ripe student who became a junior colleague of his fallen master to whom he remains ever grateful. Professor Isaac Megbolugbe is a well-bred Omoluabi. Our today's students, whatever their status, must see him as a model of gratitude that is gratitude. His example deserves to be copied without qualms by all and sundry. Kindly enjoy, dear readers, this essay that dwells on the meaning of inspired and inspirational gratitude. Before you do so, let me acknowledge the telephone conversation Jacob Oshodi, a spiritual Sehaji, had with me in respect of the late Professor Akin Mabogunje, whom he remembered when Jacob Oshodi (now eighty-nine years old) was an Engineering staff of WNTS (Western Nigerian Television Service), Ibadan in the 1960s. He remembers him with fondness. The rest is silence...

## His knowledge process

MABOGUNJE began his knowledge journey of the Nation's development with the mastery of the historical methodology in the study of Geography. He travelled across the British landscape to observe the various patterns of land use, especially in the rural areas. He noticed the regime of production in each field, which was controlled by the village community. The technology of production which was ploughing with six or eight oxen ploughs required the

kind of coordination and synchronization that necessitated the level of control he observed.

As helpful and needful as his ability to observe and describe was, he realised very quickly that to practise policy advisory work demanded expertise way beyond his historical perspective to knowledge and competency, which he had mastered during his Master's degree education. So, he began his research for PhD, so that he could master the research method.

The choice of research method depends on the research question, the field of study, and the resources available. Researchers may use a combination of methods to achieve their research goals.

In essence, the research method offers the tools and techniques used to systematically investigate a phenomenon, gather data, and derive meaningful insights from that data. Mabogunje realised once again that he needed to buck down and really master the research method with further training and seasoning with post-doctoral education in the US. This was the time when geographers became spatial scientists and therefore required rigorous training in theoretical and quantitative education that was already characteristic of the scientific method.

For almost a year, Mabogunje buckled down to further master his field. Ultimately, the fruit of that work ethic and commitment to excellence was his Urbanisation in Nigeria (1968) book, which provided a theoretical focus and incisive treatment of Nigerian urbanisation and its problems. He argued that the forces of urbanisation are the same worldwide, but their intensity varies, leading to the emergence of urban

systems and affecting individual urban centers' growth and development. This insight has been validated by the field of urban science, which has made significant progress in understanding cities and urban centers worthy of the highest level of theoretical reasoning and rigorous computation and modelling.

## His practice of policy advisory

The practice of policy advisory for Mabogunje began when urban and regional development became his focus, much like a medical doctor's clinical practice. His mastery of the scientific method, evident in his 1968 book on urbanisation, made cities and regions his clients, and their healthy development his priority. By integrating historical research, and scientific methods, he thought comprehensively and in an interdisciplinary fashion, addressing issues holistically without boundaries.

His 1980 book, 'The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective,' demonstrated exceptional spatial thinking, which he conveyed through analogies to medical concepts during our extensive conversations. Over 50 years, he refined his practice acumen and ability to communicate spatial concepts across disciplines. As his disciple, I learned to reason and communicate like him, enabling in-depth discussions. In hindsight, I wish I had accepted his invitations to serve in the federal government, honoring his legacy.

His practice platform and performance Professor Mabogunje's illustrious career in public policy advisory spans over five decades, a testament to his unwavering dedication and unshakeable principles. With a platform built on integrity, work ethic, and keen insight, he earned the trust and

respect of every government administration in Nigeria, regardless of party affiliation, military or civilian.

His practice platform was rooted in impartiality, unbiasedness and non-partisanship. Mabogunje worked with various governments, providing objective guidance and expertise. His profound knowledge and understanding of public policy made him an invaluable asset to policymakers. Unwavering commitment to ethical standards earned him the respect and trust of leaders across the political spectrum. Tireless dedication and perseverance characterised his approach, ensuring effective and efficient policy implementation.

His performance as a public policy artist of high regard was evident in his contributions that shaped policy decisions, leaving a lasting legacy in Nigeria's development. Respected by all, he fostered bipartisan cooperation, demonstrating the power of unity in policymaking. Effectively navigating diverse political landscapes, he consistently delivered results. Inspiring generations of policymakers and public servants, his influence up to now extends beyond his own accomplishments. He molded me in his likeness and artistry.

In conclusion, Professor Mabogunje's platform and performance serve as a beacon of excellence in public policy advisory, a testament to the transformative power of integrity, expertise, and dedication. His legacy continues to inspire and inform policy decisions, ensuring a brighter future for Nigeria, whenever the time of renewal comes as King Solomon declared in Ecclesiastes 3:1. Concluded.

Afejuku can be reached via 08055213059.

## Government, thugs and their portents

By Alade Rotimi-John

ONE of the insightful takeaways from the #EndBadGovernanceInNigeria protests is our involuntary recognition of the baleful utility of thugs or of persons with intimidating appearance or mannerisms in our public affairs. Thugs are described as persons who treat others violently and roughly. They are often for hire. They clinically perform the instruction of their hirer.

Thugs are variously referred to as "punk", "hoodlum", or "hooligan." Historically, this appellation derived from society's understanding of the anti-social behaviour of a certain band of assassins who were active in northern India where they worshipped Kali, the Hindu goddess and offered their victims to her.

In our clime, thugs have been long coming in their practice and have even impinged on our socio-political consciousness particularly since the return of civilian rule in 1999. Blandly referred to as "Area Boys" in Lagos, their phenomenon received a serious, inviolable banishment order of the Brig-Gen Buba Marwa administration in Lagos State. But that effort has not found favour with succeeding civilian administrations as the menace of "Area Boys" has been fortuitously revived. Government seem to have turned a blind eye to their escapades.

Successive governments may have found use for their rascality or rogue predisposition. Area Boyism's dreadful spread across Nigeria with its federalising predilection has today found accommodation for the epic expression of a role. It is now the enforcement arm for putting down officially-perceived "insurrection" or for threatening fire and brimstone upon all those who may not be amenable to government's prescription or directive for the maintenance of law and order.

The important or inescapable motifs for us here are the conjured image and the social or symbolic representations of the unfortunate attenuation of governmental power and authority. So much incalculable damage is being done to the myth of government and the dialectic of governance. The

mystique of government is being impaired by a curious collusion of authority and outlawry. The reactionary danger today is visibly too heavy a cross to bear by this fledgling democracy - this rickshaw contraption. Government has surrendered governance to the service of reactionary terror and violence.

During the #EndBadGovernanceInNigeria protests, persons strangely opposed to the public protestation of a pervasive hunger overhang, untold hyperinflation, an unbearably high cost of basic foodstuffs, the general downturn in the economy due to policy mis-steps, etc were induced into the ranks of the true protesters just to confuse the situation.

A column of protesters could be heard approbating and reprobating at the same time; shouting exact opposites of the cause for which they ostensibly set out. The protest atmosphere became a melange of conflicting positions; of serious cerebral disputation on one hand, and of unserious frills and thrills, on the other, amidst palpable threats of violence or of bodily harm. The police in some places were the handmaiden of such confusion as security cover was afforded the "fifth columnists" even as their purpose was to combust the atmosphere and thereby earn a bad press for the true protesters.

For most parts however, the police reportedly conducted themselves admirably as they resisted their proverbial unprovoked temptation to be trigger happy. Government's predilection for suppressing dissent and restricting freedom of speech is identified as the reason for surreptitiously promoting this unclassical rear-guard formation thereby compromising the efficiency or in-built neutrality of the police.

Drawing from ignoble history, one notes the many legislations that had to pour forth from the United States Congress aimed at neutralising the physical excesses of the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan; especially the forcible prevention of voting. Suffrage had been lamely deemed not to include the right to have one's ballot counted. This contention had to be dismissed through legislation which insisted that a right to vote of necessity entails the right to

have the vote recorded.

If the brazen violation of right guaranteed under a Constitution does not injure or oppress unless accompanied by a blow from an Agbero or Area Boy, the protection afforded by the law is illusory. Over time, requests were honoured for strong anti-Ku Klux Klan legislation for striking down segregation in the U.S. As disclosed by its public acts, many were unalterably opposed to the evident purposes of the Ku Klux Klan.

That odious body represented one of the high manifestations of the race problem in America.

In Nigeria, the Area Boy/Agbero propensity is an affront to our collective sensibility. It ought to be officially observed as such and shot down.

The portents are frightening for Nigeria as we allow Agberos, Area Boys, and thugs, by whatever name called, to set the pace for our joy and grief, ecstasy and horror, and for our mirth and malevolence; or, more paradoxically, to lead the offensive regarding our quest for a sane, stable and orderly society. Published literature is even rumoured to pour forth soon from their stable for teaching us the essence or purpose of life; and of the value of service to humanity. We have all been enjoined to read the books to improve our stock of knowledge and to fire our collective imagination.

In it all, the valorisation of self and of the supportive government that has allowed inanity and strong arm tactics to flourish even in a pervasive situation of want, lack and deprivation is expected when the "published works" are launched in the usual atmosphere of primitive ostentation.

Incredibly inept holders of public office have upturned the art and practice of governance into an enterprise of a few vain, vicious, mean-spirited moguls even as the vessel of State is put in real danger and everything looks like a complete shipwreck.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) perturbed by what he considered the overbearing nature of Disraeli in the British Parliament asked impatiently: "How long will John Bull allow this absurd monkey to dance on his chest?" Rotimi-John, a Lawyer and Commentator on Public Affairs, is the Deputy Secretary-General of Afenifere. He can be reached via: lawgravitas@gmail.com



# Opinion

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria fGuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardnigeria

## Reforming court rules for speedy justice: Catalyst for economic growth

By Collins Okeke and Gukongozi Esther Ugwuezi

As the Nigerian bench and bar prepare for a new leadership with the retirement of Justice Ariwoola as Chief Justice of Nigeria and the scheduled inauguration of Mazi Afam Osiagwu, SAN as President of the Nigerian Bar Association, one critical area that demands immediate attention is the speed of justice delivery.

Nigeria's justice system is notoriously slow, with available statistics indicating that simple cases can take between 6 to 10 years to conclude. This glacial pace has far-reaching implications, deterring potential investors and negatively impacting revenue for both legal professionals and the nation as a whole.

The antics of lawyers, judicial attitudes, court rules, and procedures have significantly contributed to this sluggish pace, not only denying citizens timely access to justice but also hindering the country's economic growth.

To address these challenges, it is imperative to reform court rules and procedures, focusing on enhancing the efficiency of justice delivery. This article explores the need for such reforms and their potential impact on Nigeria's economy. **The adjournment culture: A barrier to swift justice**

One of the most significant obstacles to speedy justice delivery in Nigeria is the deeply entrenched "adjournment culture." Lawyers often exploit procedural devices such as adjournments, call-overs, extension of time and frivolous applications to delay proceedings. Judges, who are also lawyers by training, often em-

pathise with these tactics. This unspoken collusion between the bench and the bar effectively deprives litigants of their day in court and perpetuates a slow, inefficient justice system.

**Embracing case management: A path to efficiency**

To counter the adjournment culture and accelerate justice delivery, Nigerian courts must adopt a robust case management approach. This involves judges taking an active role in controlling the pace of litigation by setting and enforcing strict timetables, ensuring cases progress efficiently, identifying key issues early in the proceedings, disposing of meritless claims promptly, and limiting the scope of discovery and evidence. By implementing these measures, judges can streamline proceedings and prevent unnecessary delays, thus significantly reducing the time required to resolve disputes.

**Harnessing technology for seamless court operations**

Reforming court rules should also involve leveraging technology to enhance efficiency and accessibility. Key technological improvements should include implementing electronic filing systems, enabling online fee payments, providing remote access to court proceedings, automating case assignment, and utilising case management software. These technological advancements can significantly reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, enable round-the-clock court operations, and help judges and court staff better manage their caseloads and track case progress.

Promoting alternative dispute resolution

(ADR).

Incorporating ADR mechanisms, such as mediation and arbitration, into the court system can help alleviate the burden on courts and provide faster, more cost-effective dispute resolution options for litigants. By mandating ADR for certain categories of cases, such as simple debt claims and tenancy disputes, courts can focus their resources on more complex matters while ensuring that all cases receive appropriate attention. This approach not only speeds up the resolution process but also promotes a more collaborative and less adversarial legal culture.

**Simplifying procedures and enhancing judicial feedback**

Simplifying court procedures and using plain language in drafting rules can make the justice system more accessible and user-friendly. Additionally, judges should provide timely feedback to parties and their counsel, indicating their provisional views on issues and encouraging settlement discussions when appropriate. This proactive approach can help narrow down contentious issues, promote cooperation between parties, expedite case resolution, and reduce the overall time and resources spent on litigation.

**The economic imperative for swift justice delivery**

A slow, inefficient justice system has far-reaching consequences for Nigeria's economy. Businesses are reluctant to invest in an environment where commercial disputes cannot be resolved promptly, leading to a loss of investor confidence. The World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings consistently place

Nigeria among the lowest-ranked countries, partly due to the difficulties in enforcing contracts and resolving commercial disputes.

By reforming court rules to prioritise speedy justice delivery, Nigeria can create a more attractive investment climate, foster private sector growth, enhance its reputation in the international business community, improve its standing in global economic rankings, and unlock its vast economic potential.

**Conclusion**

Reforming court rules and procedures to ensure speedy justice delivery is not merely a matter of legal efficiency; it is a crucial step towards building a more prosperous and inclusive Nigeria. By adopting case management techniques, leveraging technology, promoting ADR, simplifying procedures, and enhancing judicial feedback, the Nigerian justice system can overcome the challenges posed by the adjournment culture and deliver swift, effective justice.

As Nigeria seeks to diversify its economy and attract foreign investment, a well-functioning, efficient judiciary will be a key enabler of economic growth and development. The time for action is now, and all stakeholders – including the government, judiciary, and legal community – must work together to implement these much-needed reforms.

By doing so, Nigeria can unlock the potential of its justice system to drive economic progress, improve the lives of its citizens, and position itself as a leading destination for global investment and business operations.

*Okeke and Ugwuezi are from Olisa Agbakoba Legal.*

## How banks could have avoided FX gains tax

By Magnus Onyibe

In a society where a few live in luxury while many struggle in poverty, it's not surprising that feelings of envy, jealousy, and even resentment arise among the less fortunate towards those who are well-off. This is particularly true when it comes to banks, which serve as intermediaries, receiving deposits from those with surplus funds and lending them to those in need—for a fee. However, it seems that while these deposit money banks are growing wealthier, their customers are becoming poorer, making them easy targets for criticism.

A notable critic is the chairman of Geregu Electricity Power Company, Mr. Femi Otedola, who recently expressed concern that around five banks, likely from the top-tier category, have allegedly spent over \$500 million on private jets for their executives. The banks, on the other hand, argue that these jets are necessary for their executives to save time, avoiding the delays and inconveniences of commercial flights. They also point out that these jets are often part of leasing pools, generating income for the banks when not in use by their executives.

An analysis of this situation suggests that the issue of banks making substantial profits while others in society struggle financially is multifaceted. Banks are profit-oriented institutions, primarily focused on delivering returns to their shareholders. During economic downturns, they often become more cautious, reducing lending and taking on less risk, which can worsen economic hardships. This behaviour can widen the wealth gap, as bank profits do not typically benefit the broader population, contributing to income inequality.

To address the challenges posed by the banks' significant profits, stricter regulations and policies may be necessary. This could be why an excessive profit or windfall tax has been introduced through the amendment of the Finance Act 2023, which imposes a levy on banks' Foreign Exchange (FX) gains. The tax rate on these gains has been increased from 50 to 70 percent.

This move comes in response to the significant FX income banks generated following the naira's devaluation after the current administration took office.

The new policy has faced initial criticism, particularly from banks that have described it as double taxation. KPMG Nigeria, a tax and audit advisory firm, criticised the 50 per cent windfall tax on banks' foreign exchange revaluation gains recorded in 2023, warning it could lead to legal challenges, as Nigeria's tax policy does not support retroactive taxation.

Similarly, PwC Nigeria, raised concerns that the unpredictability of the windfall tax on already reported 2023 profits might deter investment. Prominent lawyer, Dr. Olisa Agbakoba, also criticised the proposed amendment to the Finance Act, arguing it was poorly conceived and outside the National Assembly's authority. He added that the policy's burden would likely fall on

the banks' customers.

While banks and audit firms are opposing the tax, Femi Otedola, the largest shareholder in First Bank of Nigeria (FBN), has voiced his support, arguing that revenue from windfall taxes could be directed towards essential public services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure, benefiting all citizens and reducing social inequality.

Chairman of United Bank for Africa (UBA), Tony Elumelu, and CEO of First City Monument Bank (FCMB), Ladi Balogun, also expressed support after meeting with President Bola Tinubu and his economic team, saying that extraordinary income should help alleviate poverty, aligning with the government's intentions.

The Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) and the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN) have also endorsed the FX Windfall tax on banks. CITN Chairman Chief Samuel Agbeluyi noted that windfall taxes, or "prosperity taxes," are not new and have been applied in situations where certain sectors, like telecommunications during COVID-19, performed exceptionally well.

Despite being swiftly enacted into law, critics argue that effective implementation will be challenging due to the issues they have identified.

In hindsight, proactive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts by the banks might have mitigated this situation. Banks have previously engaged in commendable public good projects, such as the renovation of the National Arts Theatre and contributions to the CACOVID initiative during the pandemic, which provided medical care and palliatives to Nigerians.

I am aware that the anticipated revenue from the FX tax is intended to partially fund the 2024 national budget deficit of N9.18 trillion, with N6.2 trillion expected to come from the windfall bank tax to help reduce the deficit. This supplementary budget, intended for infrastructure, education, and other critical areas, was passed by the National Assembly alongside the amendment of the Finance Act 2023, which imposed a 70 per cent tax on FX gains—now part of the Finance Act 2024—along with penalties for non-compliance, including three years of imprisonment and a 10 per cent fine.

However, many economists believe that taxing capital gains is inefficient. The dilemma is that without taxing capital gains, people might shift taxable income into this category. This creates a complex situation: if our banks are overly taxed, they might lose their competitive edge internationally, especially as they expand across Africa and generate foreign exchange for the country. This makes the tax a tricky issue.

In "Das Kapital," Karl Marx explores the consequences of the rich and the poor coexisting in society without balance. He argues that society is divided into two main classes: the bourgeoisie (the rich) and the proletariat (the poor). Marx believed the bourgeoisie exploited the proletariat by paying them less

than the value of their labor, generating profits for themselves. In modern Nigeria, given the large profits banks are reporting, they could be seen as the bourgeoisie, extracting value from the Nigerian banking public, who resemble the proletariat. This concentration of wealth among banks supports Marx's view that capitalism leads to wealth concentration in the hands of a few, while the majority remain poor and powerless, potentially leading to unrest.

We saw a glimpse of such unrest during the naira redesign exercise introduced by the CBN in 2022/23, which caused a severe naira shortage. Bank managers hoarded the currency in their vaults, selling it at a premium incurring the wrath of the masses who set some bank buildings on fire. Public anger was also directed at P.O.S. operators who charged high fees for naira withdrawals as they were physically attacked.

Overall, Marx's ideas about the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie are relevant to Nigeria's banking system, where banks appear to be profiting significantly while much of the population remains economically marginalised. The naira redenomination exercise and the resulting public anger towards bankers and Point Of Service (POS) operators highlight the tensions between these classes. The CBN might be trying to diffuse this tension through the profit tax on banks, which is now causing discomfort for financial institutions, especially deposit money banks.

The banks' difficulties are compounded by the timing of this policy, which coincides with a new CBN recapitalisation requirement. Banks must now increase their capital base to N500 billion for an international license and N200 billion for a national license, prompting them to scramble to raise funds from the Nigerian public, who are currently facing high inflation nearing 40 per cent.

Adding to the challenges, the CBN has issued a directive that all funds in dormant accounts must be transferred to the CBN for safekeeping. Faced with multiple policies that could harm the financial services sector, bankers suspect malice from ex-bankers now leading the Ministry of Finance and the CBN, specifically Minister of Finance, Wale Edun, and CBN Governor, Yemi Cardoso. These policies are seen as stripping banks of idle funds in dormant accounts and windfall money that could have supported their recapitalisation efforts.

This suspicion is intriguing, especially since the CBN allowed banks to report their FX windfall in their 2023 annual accounts before implementing the FX gains tax policy.

It feels like a trap, particularly because banks had no warning, despite two of the four deputy governors, Philip Ikeazor and Emem Usoro, coming from the banking sector.

*Onyibe is a Public Policy Analyst, Development strategist.*

Read the remaining part of this article on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)



# Responsibility and challenges in child upbringing

THERE are and will always be all kinds of children. They consist of those that are well brought up and those that are ill-bred. There will be good children and vagabonds will abound. There are deprived ones, evincing lack of parental responsibility and care. A legion of them flooded the streets during the recent tagged EndBadGovernment protests which they seized as cover to break into shops and department stores, looting. There are on the other side of the divide a host born into indulgence in the name of love and chest-beating showmanship, but with attendant blighted future.

It cannot be for nothing that the Scriptures admonish parents: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverb 22:6) Dake's Annotated Reference Bible; King James Version (Proverb 22:6). And here following is an account I received during week which is thought-provoking. It is a letter written to all parents. The writer starts with her experience observing child upbringing in the United Kingdom and the same discharge of parental responsibility in Nigeria. The account is better in her own words and it reads:

"Dear All—Let's be real. I wish to start by adding the benefit of my time as a student and then resident in the UK. Living in Abuja now. The first thing that I discovered about UK-born White, English undergraduates was that all of them did holiday or weekend job to support themselves—including the children of millionaires amongst them. It is the norm there—regardless of how wealthy their parents are. And I soon discovered that virtually all other foreign students did the same—except status-conscious Nigerians.

"I also watched Richard Branson (owner of Virgin Airline) speaking on the Biography Channel. To my amazement, he said that his young children travel in economy class—even when the parents (he and his wife) are in upper class. Richard Branson is a billionaire in Pound sterling. A quick survey would show you that only children from Nigeria fly business or upper class to commence their studies in the UK. No other foreign students do this." When the writer lived in the UK, and until recently, there was no aircraft attached to the office of the Prime Minister in the UK. "He travels on BA (British Airways, a commercial airliner). And the same goes for the Royals." The Queen did not have an aircraft for her exclusive use.

"These practices simply become the culture which the next generation carries forward. Have you seen what Kate Middleton (the wife of Prince William) drives? VW Golf or something close to it. But there is one core difference between them and us (generally speaking), they (even the billionaires) work for their money, most of us steal ours.

"If we want our children to bring about the desired change we have been praying for on behalf of our dear country, then please, please let's begin now and teach them to work hard so they can stand alone and most importantly be content and not having to 'steal' which seems to be the norm these days. We have Nigerian children who have never worked for five minutes in their lives insisting on flying 'only' first or business class and using the latest cars fully paid for by their 'loving' parents.

"I often get calls from anxious parents: 'My son graduated two years ago and is still looking for a job, can you please assist?' 'Oh, really! So where exactly is 'THIS CHILD?' is my usual question. 'Why are you the one making this call dad/mum?' I am yet to get a satisfactory answer, but between you and I, chances are that the big boy is cruising around Abuja with a babe dressed to the nines, in his dad's sparkling new SUV with enough 'pocket money' to put your salary to shame. It is not at all strange to hear a 28-year-old who has NEVER worked for a day in his or her life in Nigeria but 'earns' six figure 'salary' from parents for doing absolutely nothing.

"I see them in my office once in a while, 26 years old with absolutely no skill to sell apart from a shiny CV, written by his dad's secretary in the office. Of course, he has a driver at his beck and call and he is driven to the job interview. We have a fairly decent conversation and we get to the inevitable question—So, what salary are you looking to earn? Answer comes straight out—N250, 000. I ask if that is per month or per annum. 'Of course, it is per annum.' Oh, why do you think you should be

earning that much on your first job?' 'Well, because my current pocket money is N200, 000. 00 a month and I feel any employer should be able to pay me more than my parents.'

"No wonder corruption continues to thrive. We have a society of young people who have been brought up to expect something for nothing, as if it were a birthright. Even though the examples I have given above from parents of considerable affluence, similar patterns can be observed from Abeokuta to Adamawa. Wake up mum! Wake up dad! This syndrome—'my children will not suffer what I suffered' is destroying your tomorrow. You are practically loving your child to death.

"I learnt the children of a former very senior public functionary with all the stolen (billions) monies in their custody, still go about with security escort as wrecks. They are on drugs; several times because of the drug, they collapse in places. The escort will quickly pack them and off they go. What a life! No one wants to marry them.

"Henry Ford said, 'Hard work does not kill.' **We are getting everything wrong in Nigeria now, including family setting. It is time to prepare your children for tomorrow, the way the world is going, only those that are rugged, hardworking and smart working that will survive. How will your ward fare?**"

All that is narrated in the foregoing is borne out of ignorance of the purpose of life on earth on the part of the parents concerned and the children who are the beneficiaries of misplaced love. As the writer has rightly observed the attitude of the parents is "my children will not suffer what I suffered." The suffering of the parents itself had its origin, all in ignorance, not even just of the purpose of life, but also of the unswerving mechanisms that govern life in which they will find their role as parents. There may have been over-breeding by equally ignorant forebears of the parents themselves necessitating scarce resources being spread thin. That was also where the forebears had a faint sensing of the place of education, using the old Western Nigeria as an example.

Children were sent to school with the proviso that after school hours or/and during holidays, the wards would join them on the farms. In 1954, wards joining parents on the farm soon became a campaign weapon. The NCNC campaigned that the free primary school education of the ruling Action Group was designed to deprive parents of their children joining them on the farm. They also incited voters against capitation tax levied on taxpaying adults to fund education and health. It was one of the four reasons the Action Group lost the Federal parliamentary election into the Federal House of Representatives of that year but won the

elections into the Regional Assembly of 1956 and other subsequent elections as enlightenment through education ensued and spread.

The other three reasons were land acquisition for agricultural development particularly of rubber plantation for domestic use as well as for export. The land owners organised to vote against the Action Group. Another reason was the Customary Court reform which ended illiterate and old men being President and members of customary courts in the region. They were replaced by educated people. The aggrieved backed by Mabolaje/NCNC alliance mobilised to vote against the party. The fourth reason was the 1953 law which brought about the democratisation of the local government councils. The law required that councillors were thenceforth to be elected. Hitherto, they were nominated and handpicked. As of that time elections were held into only Lagos Municipal Council in the whole country. These were the hot potatoes which the Opposition sold to the electors. However, as the bandage dropped from the eyes of the electors, especially as more illiterates began to benefit from the government adult education programme, the ruling Action Group party won all subsequent elections from 1956. This distinction by way of digression has to be made so that the 1954 federal polls are not confused with the 1951 elections into the Western House of Assembly which Awolowo's Action Group won, beating

the NCNC with a wide margin: AG, 38 seats to NCNC: 24. Independent parties' alliance with AG, 15 and similar alliance with NCNC: 3. The total number of seats was 80.

According to the *Daily Times* publication of 08 January, 1952: "Action Group majority in the Western House of Assembly was publicly and officially acknowledged at the first meeting of the Western Regional Legislature held here this morning. Forty nine of them with badges pinned on their dresses waited outside the hall and posed for photograph. They insisted on sitting together as a party and the Civil Secretary, Western Region, granted their request."

What I am getting at is that in the early days, many struggled to pay their way until the free education revolution in the Western Region came about in 1955. The next stage of struggle was to have secondary education and university studies. Many had to be sponsored by the church and their communities. Many after the secondary school education fought their way to Europe where they combined work with studies. They returned to form the first crop of the elite circles, and these were and still are those who, remembering what they went through, mostly vowed that their children would not go through their thorny and harrowing paths to get to the summit of the mountain.

In the realisation of their resolve, they took away the struggle from their children, the souls lovingly put under their care by the Creator in answer to their supplication. They did not know that their own experiences were good for them and, indeed, greatly beneficial to them. Lacking in knowledge, they sought to spare their chil-



dren of similar struggle and experiences. They were unaware that life is a struggle. Today, children have been made to develop a sense of entitlement and make demands on their parents. In struggle lies the unfolding of talents and abilities. It is through friction with material substances that we gain in consciousness to move into self-consciousness which is the whole purport of life. This cannot be achieved by standing aloof and distancing oneself from struggle. Dr. Stephen Lampe puts it this way in his book, *The Spirit of Truth Brings the Everlasting Testament*: "The variety of experiences acquired between the Spiritual Realm and the earth activate consciousness and then self-consciousness." In the struggle we break from within to recognise the omniscience and omnipotence of the Most High. The more successful we are the more we recognise the greatness of the Most High Creator—that it is immeasurable; it is inconceivable.

Daniel Swarovski, industrialist and author, says in his treasure book, *The Time is Ripe: reflections, essays and lectures*: "The tendency of physical and mental laziness is contrary to the necessity of life on earth which requires movement, for without work, without industry we cannot master life. . . Many strangers to nature find the necessity to work irksome. And politicians try to soften the blow, wooing the masses for votes. . ."

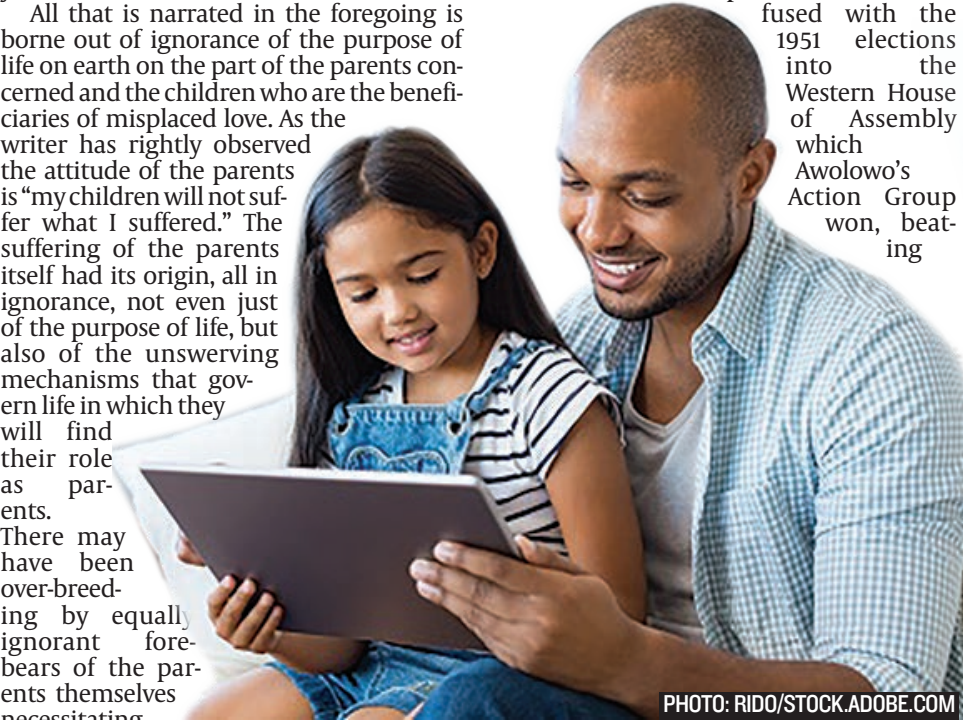
According to the enlightenment of these times, each human being is here on earth at his own request or because of his own fault to atone for, and he is led to the parents and circumstances that he deserves and which will facilitate the fulfillment of the purpose of his sojourn. The journey is far and great the exertion, it is revealed in higher knowledge. Children may therefore not make claims on their parents. The incomparably unique Work, *In The Light of Truth*, The Grail Message, states: "Parents merely provide the possibility for an incarnation, and nothing else. And every incarnated soul must be grateful for the opportunity offered!

"The soul of the child is only the guest of its parents. This fact alone gives sufficient explanation to enable one to know that in reality a child can claim no rights in regard to its parents! It has no spiritual claim on its parents! Earthly rights, however, have arisen solely out of a purely mundane social order, brought about by the State so that it need not take any obligations upon itself."

As I have stated often, man is a spirit. The wrappings around him in which he manifests as a body are his garments he needs for his sojourn on earth and which he discards at death. He enters the Beyond as soul in which he is encased, another set of wrappings made of substances of that plane. The Message states: "Spiritually, the child is a complete personality in itself. Apart from its physical body, which it needs as a tool for its activity on this gross material plane, it has received nothing from its parents—only a dwelling which the already independent soul can make use of.

"Still through procreation the parents assume the obligation to care for the dwelling place they have thus created, and to maintain it until the soul which has taken possession of it is itself capable of undertaking its maintenance. The natural development of the body will indicate when the moment for this has come. Whatever is done beyond this is a gift from the parents."

Because of the relatively inner maturity of a sizeable population in Europe, permitting them considerable inner radiance, the White community is closer to the truth with children learning early in life that they are on their own; they do holiday or weekend job to support themselves. We Africans may be beating them in class and examinations; intellectual sagacity is different from inner maturity which is evinced in their refinement, nobility of spirit, etiquette and standards, and the beauty of their environment as well as their sense of orderliness. Of course, there is no gainsaying that decline has set in everywhere, in all parts of our world.



**We are getting everything wrong in Nigeria now, including family setting. It is time to prepare your children for tomorrow, the way the world is going, only those that are rugged, hardworking and smart working that will survive. How will your ward fare?"**



**CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE** Brent crude: \$79.95| WTI crude: \$75.98

**FOREX MARKET UPDATE** I&E window: N1593.93

## Foreign inflow down by 57.22% as investors appraise portfolio

From Joseph Chibueze, Abuja

NIGERIA's foreign capital Inflow fell to \$770 million in April 2024, indicating a drop of 57.22 per cent from the \$1.80 billion recorded in March 2024.

The April 2024 Monthly Economic Report published by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) attributes the decline to a reduction in investments in money market instruments.

According to the report,

"A lower foreign capital inflow was recorded in the review period primarily because of lower investments in money market instruments."

It noted that portfolio investment inflow, which declined to \$330 million from \$1.16 billion in March, was responsible for the drop as investors shunned the purchase of money market instruments.

The report noted that

other forms of investment, especially loans, also declined with inflows falling to \$430 million from \$620 million in the previous month.

According to the report, foreign direct investment (FDI) also nosedived, as it also dropped to \$10 million, down from \$20 million in March, following a reduction in equity investments.

In terms of the composi-

tion of foreign capital inflows, other investments constituted the largest share at 55.84 per cent, followed by portfolio investments at 42.71 per cent, and direct investments at a mere 1.45 per cent.

The drop in foreign capital inflows implies that Nigeria is heavily dependent on loans, which has worsened the country's debt position.

Sectoral analysis of capi-

tal importation showed that the banking sector dominated. It received 70.46 per cent of the total inflows.

This was followed by trading, which accounted for 12.89 per cent, production/manufacturing recorded 5.77 per cent, telecommunications 4.94 per cent, and shares 4.35 per cent. The remaining inflows were distributed across various other sectors.

Lagos State maintained the lead as the primary destination for these investments, attracting

83.13 per cent of the total capital inflow, while the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) accounted for the balance.

The report also showed that the United Kingdom emerged as the largest contributor, accounting for 54.59 per cent of the total inflows. South Africa was next with 13.22 per cent. Mauritius followed with 9.22 per cent; the Netherlands with 6.57 per cent; the United Arab Emirates with 5.77 per cent, and the United States with 3.44 per cent respectively.



Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Vetiva Capital Management Ltd, Chuka Eseka (left); Managing Director, NB Plc, Hans Essaadi; Secretary/Legal Director, NB Plc, Uaboi Agbebaku; Independent Non-Executive Director, NB Plc, Adeyinka Aroyewun, and Chief Executive, Stanbic IBTC Capital Limited, Oladele Sotubo during the signing ceremony of Nigerian Breweries Plc's ₦599.1 billion rights issue at the company's headquarters in Lagos... yesterday.

PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

## SEC approves two digital exchanges to protect investors

By Helen Oji

TO protect investors and boost confidence in the capital market, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) yesterday, granted two digital exchanges an 'Approval-in-Principle' to commence operation under the Accelerated Regulatory Incubation Program (ARIP).

The two exchanges are Busha Digital Limited and Quidax Technologies Limited. The approval positioned the exchanges as legally recognised crypto platforms in Nigeria.

Besides, the apex capital market regulator also announced the admission of five firms, which are Trovotech Ltd, Wrapped CBDC Ltd, HousingExchange.NG Ltd, Dream City Capital and Blockvault Custodian Ltd to test their models and technology under the SEC's Regulatory Incubation Program (RI).

The SEC said the cohort comprises two Digital Asset Exchanges, four Digital asset Offering platforms and one Digital Asset Custodian.

The commission, in a statement yesterday, reiterated that only approved digital exchanges and platforms are legally authorised to carry out the business of crypto trading in any form in Nigeria.

According to SEC, Busha operates a digital exchange that facilitates the buying and selling of crypto assets with fiat currency, which enables individuals and businesses in Nigeria and other developing

economies to access basic digital asset investment services.

It noted that Busha's customers use mobile and web applications to buy, sell, store, send, receive, trade, invest and make payments in cryptocurrencies.

For Quidax Technologies Limited, the commission said it operates a cryptocurrency trading platform, which leverages blockchain technology to list and trade already issued crypto tokens (assets) in Nigeria.

In addition, the SEC pointed out that the referenced Approvals-in-Principle are a precursor to the grant of full registration by the SEC and are meant to ensure that appropriate protection and transparency are in place with respect to each product or service.

The SEC further stated that the firms are not the only entities that have applied to ARIP and the RI programme, noting that other applications received are being assessed and would be granted Approval-in-Principle on a case-by-case basis as they meet the requirements.

The statement reads: "The SEC uses this medium to reiterate that only approved digital exchanges and platforms are legally authorized to carry out the business of crypto trading in any form in Nigeria. In this regard, the ARIP and RI remain the only avenues for well-intentioned entities to legitimately introduce their digital products and services to the Nigerian Capital market.

## FG sets committee to enhance risk management practice

THE Federal Government has established a committee to assess and manage the various risks confronting the country.

This initiative was announced by the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Bank of Industry, Dr Olasupo Olusi, during the yearly conference of the Chartered Risk Management Institute (CRMI) in Lagos, yesterday.

Olusi, who was honored with an honorary fellowship at the event, noted that the committee is expected to submit findings within four weeks to the presidency.

Also, CRMI gave its first set of Honorary Fellowship Awards to the Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Dr Kadir Obafemi Hamzat, the Governor of the central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Dr Olayemi Cardoso, Executive Chairman of Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) Dr Zaccheus

**\*CRMI honours Cardoso, Adedeji, Agama**

Adedeji, Director-General, Meteorological Agency (NiMet) and DG, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Dr Emomotimi Agama.

Others awarded were the Group Managing Director, Zenith Bank, Dr Adaora Umeoji, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer Access Bank, Dr Roosevelt Ogbonna and the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Fidelity Bank, Dr Nneka Oyeali-Ikpe.

Another highlight at the event was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the Federation of African Risk Management Associations (FARMA) with Risk institute heads represented by South Africa, Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco, Senegal, Benin Republic, and Kenya present.

Olusi said: "I'm delighted to say that President Bola Tinubu, who understands the impor-

tance of risk management and its implication for our economy at large has recently set up a committee to look into ways we can manage risks, credit risks better and he gave us a mandate to report to him back to him within the next four weeks."

Further, he thanked the institute for bestowing him a fellowship.

He said: "It is my pleasure to receive the highest honor of the institute, the Honorary Fellowship of Chartered Risk Management along with other dignitaries here today, on their behalf and myself, we say a big thank you to the Institute for conferring us with its most prestigious award. I want to assure you that we shall all continue to advocate strong risk management in our various establishments."

The conference, themed:

'Emerging Crisis in Africa: Way Forward,' also featured remarks from the President and Chairman of Council at CRMI, Dr Ezekiel Oseni.

He disclosed that the institute had sponsored a risk management bill currently under review in the National Assembly, which has already passed its first reading.

"One of the key initiatives of the Institute is sponsoring a bill at the National Assembly, as I promised last year. The bill has already passed its first reading. This legislation aims to mandate every Ministry, Department, and Agency to establish a risk management function. We envision every ministry and state government having a dedicated risk management department. This legislative move is a practical step towards positioning risk management as a fundamental component of governance in Nigeria," Oseni said.

## PEBEC calls for improved productivity as 20 MDAs rank higher

From Joseph Chibueze, Abuja

THE Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) has released the report on the 2024 Half-Year transparency and efficiency compliance on ease of doing business in Nigeria.

The report, which took cognisance of the prevailing economic situation, occasioned

by the reforms introduced by the new government, noted, "While businesses have faced some challenges as a result of ongoing reforms, we are optimistic that staying the course and completing these key reforms will result in significant improvements in the business climate across Nigeria in 2024."

It said that sustained eco-

nomie growth driven by improved productivity across multiple sectors is the only antidote for the current economic challenges.

The report showed that the number of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) that scored above 50 per cent in their efficiency compliance increased from eight as revealed in the 2023

report to 20 MDAs in 2024.

A key learning from this year's half-year report showed that the 90-day Regulatory Reform Accelerator (RRA) played a critical role in driving the performance of MDAs in the half-year compliance report. However, a key observation was that MDAs, which showed consistency with the monthly

Transparency & Efficiency reports, were able to better deliver the Reform Accelerator.

The top-ranked MDAs were led by the Nigerian Content Development Management Board (NCDMB) with an 80.1 per cent score, followed by the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) with a 78.2

per cent score, and the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS) with a 74.8 per cent score.

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) and Nigeria Customs Services (NCS) secured the fourth and fifth positions, scoring 73.9 per and 73.2 per cent, respectively.



Elevate  
Africa  
Presents

THE  
AFRIC

WE SEE

October 10th - 11th, 2024

Abuja, Nigeria



## NGA applauds Axxela, NNPC on piped natural gas infrastructure devt

By Benjamin Alade

THE Nigerian Gas Association (NGA) has applauded Axxela Limited and NNPC Gas Marketing Limited (NGML) for the successful commissioning of the first phase of their 72.5km natural gas pipeline project in Lagos.

This infrastructure connects the Eko Atlantic City, a pioneering development in Victoria Island, to piped natural gas (PNG), marking a significant milestone in expanding Nigeria's natural gas infrastructure.

President of NGA, AkachukwuNwokedi, highlighted the importance of this achievement in supporting Nigeria's energy

transition.

"The successful commissioning of this 5km pipeline network, connecting Eko Atlantic City to PNG, is a testament to the visionary leadership at Axxela and NGML to fostering energy efficiency and promoting sustainable urban development in Nigeria. This milestone enhances the energy security of the Victoria Island metropolis and sets a benchmark for future urban energy solutions in Nigeria."

The newly commissioned pipeline stretches from Outer Marina to Kuramo Beach and is a crucial component of Axxela and NGML's broader infrastructure initiative.

## PFA to bridge housing deficit with pension mortgage scheme

VERITAS Glanvills Pensions Limited (VG Pensions) has moved to make homeownership more accessible for its clients through its pension mortgage scheme

This is in response to the housing crisis, with an estimated 28 million housing units needed as of January 2023 and a yearly shortfall of 900,000 units, according to the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria.

The licensed Pension Fund Administrator rolled out new guidelines to assist clients in utilising their pension contributions to secure residential mortgages.

According to the administrator, the company is helping to bridge the housing gap, while also supporting financial security and retirement planning for Nigerian workers.

The company stated that under the guidelines, eligible RSA holders can apply up to 25 per cent of their total RSA balance toward the equity contribution needed for a residential mortgage.

The company said to qualify, an RSA holder must have contributed to the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) for a minimum of 60 months (five years) and be actively employed, with at least three years remaining until retirement.

## Stakeholders renew calls for renewable energy deployment

By Waliat Musa

AS Nigeria's energy deficit continues to stifle economic growth and leave millions in darkness, stakeholders have urged the nation to pivot towards renewable technologies.

They argued that only by embracing sustainable energy solutions can Nigeria lay the foundation for a future resilient to be able to reduce power shortages.

The stakeholders, who made the call at the Major Energies Marketers Association of Nigeria (MEMAN) Competency Centre Renewable series on energy transition through solar energy, yesterday, said the integration of solar energy into the country's energy mix will reduce dependency on fossil fuels and support the country's climate change mitigation goals.

They argued that by embracing these technologies, Nigeria can create a more resilient and sustainable energy infrastructure that not only meets the needs of its growing population but also aligns with global efforts to mitigate climate change.

They added that solar energy's thermal storage capabilities are the key technology for balancing supply and demand on the grid, which in turn enhances energy security.

Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Abiola Kosegbe, said the deficit in the energy needs of Nigerians and Lagosians can't be over emphasised, hence, the need to advance into renewable technologies to fill the huge gaps experienced in the country.

## GDL seeks to finance 1.5 million new homeowners in 15 years

By Tobii Awodipe

FINANCIAL institution, Growth and Development Limited (GDL), has rolled out HouseMoni, a rent-to-own homeownership scheme.

The financial services group said this scheme is designed to address the dearth of appropriate financing for home ownership in Nigeria, offering a financially sustainable path to owning a home.

Intending to finance up to 1.5 million new homeowners over the next 15 years, the group said its goal is to make homeownership a reality for more people.

Head, GDL's Impact Business and Divisional Managing Director, GDL Homes, Yemi Adekoya, said the scheme has two categories, Classic and Community.

## Renewed interest in Julius Berger, 26 stocks lifts capitalisation by N118b

By Helen Oji

FOLLOWING renewed investors' appetite in Julius Berger and 26 stocks, the Nigerian equities market closed in an upbeat yesterday, as the overall capitalisation rose by N118 billion.

Indeed, the All-Share Index (ASI) rose by 204.23 points, representing a gain of 0.21 per cent to close at 96,407.88 points. Also, market capitalisation gained N118 billion to end the day at N55.379 trillion.

The upturn was driven by price appreciation in large and medium capitalised stocks amongst which are Julius Berger Nigeria, Oando,

Eterna, International Breweries and R.T. Briscoe Nigeria.

On market outlook, analysts at SCM Capital Research, said: "We foresee a mixed trading week, and advise investors to invest in high-quality stocks with strong fundamentals backing them."

As measured by market breadth, market sentiment ended positive, as 27 stocks gained relative to 23 losers. Oando emerged the highest price gainer of 9.98 per cent to close at N69.95 kobo. Julius Berger Nigeria followed with a gain of 9.97 per cent to close at N172.60 kobo, while Cornerstone Insurance

advanced by 9.88 per cent to close at N2.78 kobo.

Eterna rose by 9.86 per cent to close at N30.65 kobo while DAAR Communications also appreciated by 9.84 per cent to close at 67 kobo.

On the other side, SCOA Nigeria led others on the losers' chart with 9.79 per cent to close at N1.75 kobo. Japaul Gold & Ventures followed with a decline of 7.41 per cent to close at N2.50 kobo while Tantalizer shed 6.76 per cent to close at 69 kobo.

Fidson Healthcare lost 5.45 per cent to close at N13, while Prestige Assurance depreciated by 5.26 per cent to close at 54 kobo. Also, the total volume traded increased by

113.19 per cent to 966.973 million units, valued at N7.420 billion, and exchanged in 9,851 deals.

Transactions in the shares of Consolidated Hallmark Holdings led the activity with 505.789 million shares worth N673.41 million.

FBN Holdings (FBNH) followed with account of 64.091 million shares valued at N1.411 billion, while Access Holdings traded 46.886 million shares valued at N890.331 million. Prestige Assurance traded 26.181 million shares worth N14.277 million, while Universal Insurance traded 23.317 million shares worth N8.493 million.



Managing Director, Savannah, Nigeria, Pade Durotoye (left); Manager, All Contracts, Tetracore Energy Group, Oladele Alani; Managing Director, RainOil Gas Limited, Emmanuel Omuojine; Moderator, Panel Session & Head, Procurement and Admin, Axxela, Abimbola Olumide Zachariah; Managing Partner, Olaniwun Ajayi LP, Tominiyi Owolabi and Chief Executive Officer, PowerGas Africa, Sumeet Singh, at the Nigeria Oil and Gas Outlook 2024 in Lagos.

PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

## NCAA urges continuous training for improved safety in aviation

By Felicitas Oforjajah

THE Director-General of the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Captain Chris Najomo, has emphasised the need for continuous training and knowledge impact in the highly regulated aviation industry.

Represented by the Lagos Regional Manager, Bukola Teriba, at the yearly cabin safety workshop, themed: 'Culture, Attitude, and Cabin Safety,' which was held in Lagos, yesterday Najomo emphasised that everyone has a role to play when it comes to safety,

necessitating the importance of impacting more knowledge with the airlines.

"Safety is a continuous change. We know that the industry is highly regulated and is in compliance with the ICAO standards and regulated practices. The NCAA is about training and retraining, that's why we have made provisions for continuous training. Training is a continuous accumulation of knowledge."

"No knowledge is lost, and safety is our priority. We would ensure the airspace is space and know that the

importance of the cabin crew is not just to serve tea, coffee, or meals; it's all about preventing accidents and incidents on board the aircraft and giving the occupants of the aircraft the confidence that they are safe," Najomo said.

Head, Cabin Safety Inspector, NCAA, Maria Umoh-Ordor, who reiterated that culture is the way of life of a people and attitude is the way, said that professionalism is paramount in the daily operations of a cabin crew.

"So what we want to bring out is that as a cabin

crew or as a cabin safety professional, you should rise above your culture and your attitude to be a professional. Professionalism is the focus here. We've been having workshops, but we haven't had them for over five years because of exigencies.

The last one we had was in 2016, and as we were planning to have another one, COVID came, so, it slowed us down. That's why we made up our minds that this year we must have the workshop. It's something we envisaged that we should be having yearly," Umoh-Ordor said.

## BUA blames dealers for frustrating pricing, says Nigeria's cement cheapest

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

BUA group of companies has blamed cement dealers for frustrating its N3,500 per bag initiative.

The Chairman of the board of directors of the company, Abdul Samad Rabi, who stated this in Abuja yesterday at the yearly general meeting of the company, hinted that plans are underway by BUA to build a mini-power project to reduce its operational costs.

He said: "When we introduced the N3,500 per bag initiative, we did that to make access to cement easy and allow more Nigerians to be able to buy the commodity. But we then realised that the price was around N8,000 in the market.

**\*To build mini-power project to crash prices**

It was then clear to us that we were subsidising the dealers. They bought at reduced prices but refused to sell at the recommended price. Again, Nigerians were buying it at more than N3,500. So, we aimed to reduce the price and we did that but Nigerians did not feel the impact because the dealers sold at higher prices."

Rabi, who disclosed that the BUA group is still exploring ways of reducing the price of cement, said part of the plan is the building of a mini LPG-fired power project, which would be completed next year and help reduce the operational costs of the company.

"We are currently building a mini-power plant. We are doing this because energy costs are too high and that contributes largely to the high cost of cement in Nigeria. When the project is completed, the energy cost element will reduce and that will reflect in the price of the commodity," he explained.

The BUA chief noted that even at N6,500 per bag, Nigeria still has the lowest price within the West African sub-region.

His argument: "At N6,500 per bag, that is about N130,000 per tonne, which is 20 bags. That sum to about \$80. There is no country where a tonne of cement costs \$80. So, one can

say that Nigerians buy the cheapest cement."

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of BUA Group, Yusuf Binji, identified the CBN's currency redesign policy, the elections, and foreign exchange volatility, as the major challenges that confronted the company in 2023.

He added: "Like every manufacturing business, some of our manufacturing inputs are dollar-dominated, and with the devaluation and continued depreciation of the naira, we recorded rising energy and other raw materials costs. In addition, the depreciation of the naira led to the revaluation of existing liabilities on the balance sheet, which resulted in an exchange loss of N70 billion.



# AgroEconomy

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

## Lagos engages 3,000 businesses to supply food, others for *Ounje Eko* food market

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

WITH the implementation of *Ounje Eko* Food Discount Market Phase II set to begin on Sunday, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has said the state has engaged 6,000 personnel and over 3,000 businesses to supply food items, transportation, logistics and other necessities to bolster the local economy.

The discount market is an initiative of the Lagos State government to cushion the impact of rising food prices on citizens, especially with food inflation reaching 40.9 per cent, placing the price of staple food items beyond the reach of many households, and its attendant social implications.

Earlier this year, the state government implemented phase I of the project across the 57 councils and local council development areas (LCDAs), including Alausa, Secretariat and Lekki Phase I. The temporary markets operated on Sundays to provide selected food items at a 25 per cent. The initiative, held over six editions, reached over

### As phase II commences Sunday

250,000 beneficiaries across the state.

While announcing commencement of the second phase at a media briefing, the Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Systems, Ms. Abisola Olusanya, said

the new phase, which commences on September 1, 2024, will run for eight weeks across 64 locations, including the 57 LGAs/LCDAs, Alausa Secretariat, Lekki Phase I, University of Lagos (UNILAG), Lagos State University (LASU),

Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH), Lagos State University of Education (LASUED), and Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH).

She said: "The markets will operate from 10:00am to 5:00pm. Markets at the

Alausa Secretariat and the institutions, such as UNILAG, LASU, LASUSTECH, LASUED, and LASUTH, will hold on Fridays, while the market for Mushin LGA, to be held at the Fresh Food Hub in Idi-Oro, will operate on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

"The food items available at the markets will include a maximum cap purchasable of 5kg each for rice, beans, and garri, two loaves of bread, one crate of egg, 2kg of tomatoes and 1kg each for pepper, Bell pepper (*tatashe*) and onion per individual. It is important to note that the prices of these food items have increased over the past few months, varying from one location to another.

"For instance, a 50kg bag of local rice (short grain) sells for N75,000 in Ikeja and Lagos Island, N68,000 in Badagry, and N70,000 in Ikorodu. Therefore, to accommodate these disparities, the prices of food items sold at each market location will align with the prevailing local market prices, as the items will be sold by local vendors."



Vendors at the food market

## APWEN unveils 'home gardening' scheme to aid food security

By Victor Gbonegun

THE Dean, Faculty of Engineering, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Prof. Akindele Alonge, has challenged practicing engineers under the aegis of Association of Professional Women Engineers of Nigerian (APWEN), Lagos chapter to get involved in modernising agriculture practice and production to tackle food insecurity.

He also charged Nigerians to embrace home gardening by practicing one form of agriculture or the other in their residential locations, noting that such practice requires less effort.

The don who was the keynote speaker at APWEN Lagos public lecture and Annual General Meeting (AGM), said Nigeria needs to do more in modernising agriculture practice by developing tools and equipment that aid farmers in tackling challenges. He also said education curriculum review was necessary and leveraging digital technology.

Speaking on the theme: "Empowering Nigerian women engineers and communities to promote sustainable agriculture solutions and food security in Nigeria", he said engineers should improve value addition in the agriculture value chain by assisting in developing farming tools, make agriculture as a business to make money, feed friends and families.

He stressed the importance of promoting gender equality by not sidelining women in agric practice, ensuring access to resources like funding, land and technologies, monitoring and evaluation of impacts made in enhancing agriculture, community engagement and training of young Nigerians to be involved in farming activities, as well as in taking advantage of international funding opportunities for agriculture.

Chairman, APWEN Lagos Chapter, Atinuke Owolabi, said empowering Nigerian women engineers and communities to promote sustainable agricultural solutions and food security in Nigeria reflects APWEN's commitment to addressing pressing issues and fostering growth.

Owolabi said in support of the First Lady, Oluremi Tinubu initiative of "Own a Garden" Competition, the association is excited to introduce the APWEN Lagos Home Gardening Initiative to tackle food insecurity.

"This initiative promotes essential skills for practical home gardening, focusing on empowering women engineers and local communities. It aims to enhance food security, encourage self-sufficiency, and foster environmental sustainability through practical and accessible gardening practices."

## Oyo, NABG, others seek more partnerships to boost agricultural yields

From Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan

THE Oyo State Government, Nigeria Agribusiness Group (NABG), Innovation Lab for Policy Leadership in Agriculture and Food Security (PiLAF) and Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission have called for stronger partnerships and collaboration among agricultural stakeholders to enhance agricultural yields.

They made the call at a two-day regional agribusiness sensitisation initiative organised by NABG with support from PiLAF, in collaboration with DAWN Commission, held at Adis Hotel, Bodija, Ibadan.

The Co-Principal Investigator of PiLAF, Prof. Adegbeniga Adekoya, who delivered the opening remarks, emphasised the critical role of policy leadership and innovation in achieving food security and sustainable agriculture nationwide.

Speaking virtually, the Chairman of NABG, Kabir Ibrahim, said NABG was focused on ensuring farmers receive fair value for their produce.

"This initiative is part of an ongoing effort by NABG across various regions. We aim to sensitise smallholder farmers on the importance of standardising their products for marketability, practicing climate-smart agriculture,

and adopting good agricultural practices to enhance export opportunities and improve national food security. It is crucial to adhere to policy guidelines on seeds, fertilisers, and soil management to ensure successful agricultural practices," Ibrahim said.

In his keynote address, the Executive Adviser to Oyo State Governor on Agribusiness and Director-General of the Oyo State Agribusiness Development Agency, Dr. Debo Akande, emphasised that agriculture should be seen as a business, highlighting the essential role of small-scale farmers in Nigeria's agricultural future.

## FG to incorporate agric insurance in food security plans

From Joke Falaju, Abuja

TO avoid climate change induced post harvest losses, the Federal Government has begun arrangements to incorporate Agricultural Insurance Scheme into the National Agricultural Growth Scheme and Agro-Pocket Programme (NAGS-AP) to enhance sustainability and food security.

The Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Sabi Abdullahi, who revealed this during the Agricultural Insurance Train-the-Trainer Workshop held in Abuja, pointed out that the purpose of integrating the

initiative into the NAGS-AP programme was to protect the investment and interventions being made by the government and the financing partner, the African Development Bank (AfDB), via NAGS-AP, in addressing the sustainability and security of our local food systems.

"We commenced this programme in the 2023 dry season with wheat cultivation. So far, we have been fortunate to have favourable production due to good weather, resulting in a bountiful harvest. "It is more evident than ever that we need a climate risk mitigation solution to close the

many protection gaps arising from climate change risks, such as floods, droughts, pests, diseases, etc capable of leading to crop failure or harvest losses," he said. Abdullahi noted that these risks have now become central issues affecting the government, financiers, and the beneficiary farmers, who stand to lose the most from seasons of bad harvests, adding that such adverse conditions can wipe out investments and the labour invested in the programme leading to significant food price inflation as being witnessed today.

The minister pointed out that

TGI Group's advocates inclusive growth, sustainable solutions through agric, others

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Tropical General Investments (TGI) Group has highlighted the importance of inclusive growth, modernisation and private sector solutions for developing Nigeria and Africa, by focusing on sectors such as agriculture, where value addition can significantly benefit both African economies and the U.S. market.

Speaking at the 21st African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum in Washington D.C., the Vice Chairman of TGI Group (Africa), Farouk Gumel, emphasised the need for AGOA to evolve by fostering greater inclusion and social impact.

"The essence of AGOA is about creating jobs and promoting inclusive growth. We must focus on sectors such as agriculture, where value addition can significantly benefit both African economies and the U.S. market."

Gumel highlighted the trade figures between Africa and the U.S., noting that while the total trade is approximately \$44.8b, a substantial portion comes from a few countries and specific sectors.

He stressed the importance of diversifying this trade to include more countries and industries that create jobs and drive inclusive growth. "For AGOA to achieve its goals, African nations and their people must truly benefit from it."

Meanwhile, at the Africa Social Impact Summit (ASIS) in Lagos, Gumel, who participated in a session, titled: "Enabling Private Sector Solutions in Forced Displacement Contexts - The Nigerian Experience," explained the firm's approach to integrating displaced communities into operations by providing resources like seeds and fertilisers and partnering with organisations such as UN-HCR.

one of the unfortunate incidences of the 2023 wet farming season is the plight of ginger farmers in Kaduna who suffered immensely from the outbreak of the ginger blight disease, losing over 90 per cent of their total harvest for the season.

He, therefore, pointed out that the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Tinubu is to arrest the situation through deployment of climate-smart agriculture for the establishment of a resilient food security system because climate-smart agriculture remains the only means for adapting to climate change.



www.guardian.ng

## Transport &amp; Tourism



MARITIME



AVIATION



HOSPITALITY &amp; TOURISM



MOTORING



ROADS &amp; RAILS

## S'East: Low patronage, insecurity, multiple taxation choke hospitality sector

*The hospitality industry is a major employer of labour in the South-East region. But of late, rising insecurity, low patronage, and multiple taxation constitute a choke-hold, which is threatening to snuff life off the hitherto bubbly hub, LAWRENCE NJOKU reports.*

IN May this year, a newly built 40-room hotel, sitting on 1,960 square metre of land, with Dubai-standard furnishing and registered with power of attorney was put up for sale somewhere in Enugu State.

This was barely six months after the facility was opened for business with attendant pomp and pageantry.

An inquiry indicated that the owner was no longer interested in the hotel business and decided to put it up for sale "to enable him to invest the money in another business." He put the selling price at over N900 million.

Part of the challenge that necessitated the selling of the facility, it was gathered, was the high cost of energy, and low patronage among other competing demands that must be met if the business must stay afloat.

Around the Independence Layout axis of the state, one of the hotels that was the toast of residents three years ago has also closed shop following the owner's inability to cope with rising costs of operations and emerging security threats that have drastically reduced patronage.

Findings by *The Guardian* indicated that along that axis alone, about four hotels that closed operations two years ago, have had their facilities converted to other uses other than providing hospitality for visitors and residents of the state.

Such big hotels as The Hotel, Jook, and Astra have closed in Enugu. In Anambra State, there is the Jonaeb Inn; Barnhill; Old English; Tourist Garden; White View; Nkisi Resort, and Marble Arc among others, while Grace Court Suite and Mayor Hotel have closed shops in Ebonyi state. Grace Court is now a hostel for students.

Even as low patronage occasioned by rising insecurity and other operational challenges are forcing these operators out of business in the South-East region, the majority of those that are still in operation can barely generate enough funds to effectively run their operations and meet other statutory demands such as payment of staff PAYE tax, development levy, and companies withholding tax to the government.

And in their bid to get them to live up to their responsibilities to the government, some state governments have deployed their revenue enforcement teams to seal them up even with guests inside.

The return of democracy in 1999 boosted the hospitality business in the South-East region. Consequently, hotels which before then existed in few locations in the region, especially in the state capitals leveraged the civilian rule to spread even into rural communities to the extent that the sector became one of the highest employers of labour, and a major source of revenue generation for governments in the South-East.

At some point, the Hotel Owners Association in the zone put the number of registered hotels since 1999 at over 2,500.

A breakdown of the figure showed that Imo State has the highest with about 550 hotels; Enugu State 357; Anambra State 370; Abia State 246 and Ebonyi State 130 hotels. It added that the figure could be more as some of the hotels were not registered with the association. This number does not also include guest houses and brothels operating in the suburbs.

A hotelier, Somadina Nwanna, stated that the rising number of hotels in the zone at the onset of the Fourth Republic was because politicians and businessmen saw the hotel business as "very easy to set up with a fast return on their investments."

He added: "Go and check the records or history of any hotel that you know in the South-East, you will agree with me that many of them belong to politicians who have occupied public office in the past or are still serving. Hotel is the first thing a politician from this region ventures into, and I have come to ask why they do that. There are only a few of these hotels that belong to businessmen in the region, and each time you come across such hotels you will know the kind of people that patronise them."

"These hotels have also created jobs. The hotel I am managing was built in 2005, and it has a 40-room capacity, conference halls for meetings, a swimming pool, and a gym. I can tell you that when we came on board, we had over 80 workers here, including cleaners, gatemen, gardeners, security, cooks, porters, receptionists, drivers, and many others. These were people who ordinarily should be on the street looking for government employment, but they were absorbed by hotels and made to have something to do with their time. So, the hotels here remain one of the greatest employers of labour in the region. This is because our people are not building factories or industries, and are also paying little attention to production."



Jook Hotel, Enugu.

The former governor of Imo state, Ikedi Ohakim, lent credence to the rise in the hotel business in the region when he stated that hotel rooms rose from 2000 in 2007 to 10,000 in 2011 when he was governor, attributing it to good governance and conducive atmosphere for investment.

Ohakim, who was then campaigning to return to the Imo State Government House, said that the sector helped to create jobs for many residents of the state, and contributed to revenue generation during his administration.

He urged state governments in the region to improve efforts at creating a conducive environment for investment in the sector.

Findings by *The Guardian* showed that the sector, which fared well over the years is now on tenterhook as a result of the economic downturn and insecurity that has continued to ravage the region since 2021, forcing most of these hotels to either close shop or fail to operate at full capacity. This development has led to a reduction of staff strength, and a slump in revenue accruing to the states from the sector.

Also on the decline, is the quality of staff that serve in most of the hotels. While many hire low-quality manpower, others hire students on a part-time basis as a means of saving costs. In some of these facilities, basic hotel services are also no longer available.

Nwanna, who agreed that the hospitality sector has been seriously challenged, claimed that a substantial part of the zone's economy is driven by the hospitality industry.

"I have 70 rooms here and before now, we were enjoying full booking at least from Friday to Sunday. This hotel is located in the heart of Awka and is very accessible. But as we speak, I can count the number of times that we have received 50 guests in a single day. It is only when people are holding meetings that they lodge, and a few others that came for different purposes that you can count up to 50 guests. There were weeks when we received just 40 guests in a week. So, when it is like this, you shed weight by reducing the staff strength. Remember I told you we started with over 100 staff, but for now, I don't have more than 30 workers because of low patronage."

"Last year, only five meetings were held in our conference hall. We have a big hall that seats 300 guests, so it can also be used for wedding receptions or other such large gatherings, but all through last year, that hall was used twice. Since the beginning of this year, we have hosted only one meeting in the conference hall, and one wedding reception at the big hall, and it is not as if our charge is that high; it is the situation of the economy. People are beginning to do whatever they can lay hands on. Those doing wedding receptions may prefer to hire canopies and put them in open fields rather than looking for hotel spaces, which they will pay for," Nwanna stated.

**"Most conferences that ordinarily were supposed to be held in the zone were moved to other regions. People were afraid to lodge in hotels because they feared they might be prone to attacks. There are many big hotels that I know were shut down due to insecurity. They are in Imo, Abia, Enugu, and even Anambra states. Some of them while contending with insecurity ran into the murky waters of bad economy, which compounded their operations. The high cost of diesel and fuel and other services coming when there is low patronage is simply killing. So these are the issues"**

He stressed that managing a hotel business has become a tedious task, adding: "You will also need to be careful not to out-price your services while trying to make a profit and maintain your facilities."

In November last year, the governorship candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2023 election in Imo State, Samuel Anyanwu, alleged that many hotels have either shut down in the state in the face of unknown gunmen menace, or other forms of violent crimes.

"Before now, the state capital had over 340 recognised hotels. Some of these hotels have either been sold or shut down. Their staff members have been sacked and the revenue from them is not coming any longer. This is a result of unknown gunmen who took over the streets and made life uncomfortable for the people. So, what you get is that because of fear, many people don't like holding activities in the hotels any longer," he said.

Aside from insecurity, another hotel operator in Enugu State, Edson Madugha, listed multiple taxes by agencies of government, including the state waste management agency, ministry of health, and internal revenue boards as part of the challenges that the sector is faced.

"You can pay as much as N200,000 at the end of the day despite all that we pass through. Under normal circumstances, we are not supposed to hire armed men to guard hotels, but situations are forcing us to do so. There is also the challenge of water and steady power supply. The government takes five per cent on any purchased item and maintains that we are not the ones that are paying, but the government forgets that it is built into our costs, which discourages anyone who wants to patronise us."

"Some hotels have closed down and that is because they can no longer meet their obligations due to low patronage and high cost of services. You will buy diesel at a high cost and your guests expect power non-stop. So, even if you solve insecurity, other teething issues still challenge us. So, if we say that the sector has been badly wounded, it is not a joke. Hotel business is no longer thriving even though it has provided employment more than any other sector," he said.

An Environmental Rights Advocate, Nelson Nwafor, further observed that insecurity, which got to its climax in 2011, deterred tourists and businessmen from visiting the region leading to a decrease in demand for hospitality services.

"Most conferences that ordinarily were supposed to be held in the zone were moved to other regions. People were afraid to lodge in hotels because they feared they might be prone to attacks. There are many big hotels that I know were shut down due to insecurity. They are in Imo, Abia, Enugu, and even Anambra states. Some of them while contending with insecurity ran into the murky waters of bad economy, which compounded their operations. The high cost of diesel and fuel and other services coming when there is low patronage is simply killing. So these are the issues," Nwafor said.

He pointed out that movements of other businesses out of the South-East region to other parts of the country where there is relative peace has taken a toll on the sector, stressing that it has exposed many of them to competition that they cannot withstand.

He added: "To address this, there is a need to improve infrastructure to attract visitors. There is a need to improve security and introduce friendly policies that will encourage development in the sector. The harsh economic realities are dealing with everyone and businesses will continue to feel the negative impact of these developments."



# Minister laments exclusion of physically challenged, elderly from access to train stations

Stories by Benjamin Alade

THE Minister of Transportation, Senator Said Alkali, has queried the design of the train stations, which does not give easy access to the physically challenged and the elderly people to use train services.

Alkali, while undertaking an unscheduled inspection of the Kubwa (Abuja) Train Station earlier this week, challenged the design of the train station.

Even though the Minister later disclosed that his visit was informed primarily by the report of vandalism of the main power supply from the national grid to the train station.

He said the power source vandalism has plunged the Kubwa station into darkness and its management had to rely on alternative sources to power their operations.

Alkali also said he wanted: “to see that the security and wel-

fare of passengers are not compromised.”

The inspection visit by the minister was undertaken in the company of the ministry’s Permanent Secretary, Adeleye Adeoye, the Director, Rail Transport Services, Fimbarr Zirarr; the Director, Press and Public Relations, and aides of the minister.

The Minister expressed dismay that many staff members were not at their duty post.

The minister thereafter proceeded to see the vandalised power installation.

On the vandalised power installation, Senator Alkali called for a quick liaison between Nigeria Railway Corporation (NRC), the station manager and Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) for a quick restoration. He also urged them to ensure maximum security for the facility.

Alkali, while inspecting the station’s facilities, discovered that the staircase that passengers use when disembarking from trains coming inward to Kubwa, Abuja from Rigasa in Kaduna, is not friendly to the physically challenged and the elderly.

He immediately instructed the Director, Rail Services, to note so that the right things are done “at the level of the Ministry, the NRC, and the contractor.”

The minister also inspected the communication rooms where he found out that the communication equipment installed there had stopped working.

## RTEAN unveils cashless payment application for travelers

THE Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN), in collaboration with Sterling Bank and Wema Bank, has rolled out a new cashless payment application for travelers known as KarryGo to drive a seamless transaction process in the country.

The objective of KarryGo is to modernise the process for payment services across the country by offering a cashless solution that enhances convenience, security, and accountability.

The platform would reduce fraud, by generating electronic manifests during ticket and payment transactions. It also offers features like fast ticketing, non-Internet POS systems for remote areas, and instant e-receipts to eliminate the use of paper tickets.

Speaking on the key feature, the Regional Manager, KarryGo, Oluwabunmi Rasaki, said that the unique

code will be generated for cashless transport payment, and the QR code is typically linked to the user’s payment method and can be scanned by the users or at a designated terminal to complete the transaction.

Rasaki noted that the QR code also can be obtained from the KarryGo application or website for instant and seamless payments for transportation services using the app.

According to her, the application also allows users to quickly and conveniently pay for their fares without needing cash, making the entire transportation process more efficient and convenient.

With instant transaction payment, users can simply tap their smartphone or scan a QR code to complete their payment, eliminating the hassle of handling physical money or waiting in line at ticket counters.



Corps Marshal, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Malam Shehu Mohammed (left), with the Executive Secretary, Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC), Akutah Ukeyima, during a one-day sensitisation programme on Safe to Load on Nigerian Roads in Lagos.

## Red Line metro rail commences partial passenger operations

THE Lagos Rail Mass Transit (LRMT) Red Line commenced partial, invitational passenger operations from August 28.

He said the Lagos Rail Mass Transit (LRMT) Red Line started partial, invitational passenger operations from August 28.

“The trains will run four trips a day between Oyingbo and Agbado. The Red Line, one of the six rail lines and one monorail prescribed for Lagos in her Strategic Transport Master Plan (STMP) is a vital transport project connecting Lagos with Ogun State where many workers and business owners in Lagos reside.

“This milestone marks the culmination of planning, training and technical and ground staff, installing all the security features and a successful six-week trial run conducted without passengers to ensure the system’s safety, reliability, and efficiency,” the statement read in part.

The statement detailed that the partial operations will involve carefully selected groups of non-paying passengers from August 28 to September 27. These groups will participate in trial runs, providing crucial feedback on the system’s performance, efficiency, and overall user experience.

This feedback is essential to refine the operations before the Red Line opens fully to the public, ensuring that the service upholds the highest standards of safety, reliability, and commuter satisfaction.

In another post on their official X account, the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) on Tuesday shared a registration link for Lagosians interested in participating in the partial, invitational rides on the Red Line.

To join the trial rides, interested individuals must first visit the provided registration link and submit the required details for potential selection.

The registration process requires participants to provide a valid email address, full name, phone number, age bracket, preferred test ride date, trip group (morning or evening), and their choice of boarding station from any of the eight available stations: Mushin, Agege, Agbado, Oyingbo, Iju, Yaba, Oshodi, and Ikeja.

## LASTMA reaffirms prompt response to toll-free centre inquires

THE General Manager of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA), Olalekan Bakare-Oki, has reinforced the agency’s strong commitment to delivering swift and efficient responses to all inquiries and reports received through its Toll-Free Call Center (080000527862 /080000LASTMA).

This assurance forms part of the new management’s strategic approach to enhancing the efficiency of traffic management across Lagos State.

During an operational meeting at LASTMA Headquarters in Oshodi, Lagos, Bakare-Oki, addressed Zonal Heads and field officers, emphasising the critical importance of responsive communication with the motoring public.

He stressed that every call received by the agency is treated with the highest level of urgency.

The Toll-Free Call Center, operational daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., serves as a crucial link between LASTMA and the public, enabling motorists to report incidents, seek assistance, and access real-time traffic updates.

“We are acutely aware of the challenges faced by Lagosians

on our roads, particularly due to ongoing road construction and rehabilitation projects by the government. We are committed to providing timely and effective solutions. Our toll-free call center is a vital tool in this regard, and we continuously strive to ensure that every call is answered promptly, with the appropriate actions taken immediately,” Bakare-Oki stated.

The General Manager also confirmed that since the toll-free call center’s inauguration in June 2024, the agency has received and addressed over 1,750 calls from the public.

These calls have included feedback on the performance of LASTMA officers at various traffic hotspots across the state.

In addition to improving response times, the new LASTMA management is placing a strong emphasis on capacity building within the agency. This involves comprehensive training programmes for staff at all levels to enhance their skills and ensure they are well-equipped to handle the evolving demands of traffic management in the rapidly expanding metropolis of Lagos.

## South East, S’South record highest intercity fares in seven months

SOUTH East and South South geo-political zones have recorded the highest intercity fares within the last seven months.

Data monitored by *The Guardian* in its transport fare watch of the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) for seven months up till the July edition released recently revealed.

For July, on state profile analysis, for intercity bus travel (state route charged per person fare), the highest fare was recorded in Anambra with N9,566.89, followed by Gombe with N8,299.44. The lowest fare was recorded in Kwara with N5,518.38, followed by Ebonyi with N5,596.11. Taraba State recorded the highest bus journey within the city (per drop constant route) in July 2024 with N1,457.28 followed by Ondo with N1,200.94. On the other hand, Adamawa recorded the least with N500.00, followed by Abia with N505.35.

For June, there was no data recorded for intercity fares by regions but the average fare paid by commuters for bus intercity journeys per drop was N7,029.23 in June 2024, indicating a decline of 0.52 per cent on a month-on-month basis compared to N7,129.46 in May 2024. On a year-on-year basis, the fare rose by 24.72 per cent from N5,686.49 in June 2023. In air travel, the average fare paid by air passengers for specified routes for a single journey was N89,886.84 in June 2024, showing an increase of 0.51 per cent compared to the previous month (May 2024). On a year-on-year basis, the fare rose by 14.18 per cent from N78,721.62 in June 2023.

Also, for May, there was no data recorded for regions on transport fare watch for intercity fare travels, but the average transport fare paid on motorcycle transportation for May was N473.51 in May 2024 which shows a decline of 0.62 per cent when compared with the value recorded in April 2024 (N476.49). On a year-on-year basis, the fare increased by 2.45 per cent when compared with May 2023 (N462.18). For water transport (waterway passenger transportation), the average fare paid in May 2024 was N1,385.95 which remains the same when compared to the previous month (April 2024). On a year-on-year basis, it increased by 32.61 per cent from N1,045.15 in May 2023.

Besides, for April, there was no data recorded for the region but the average transport fare paid on Okada transportation was N476.49 in April 2024, which increased by 0.92 per cent when compared with the value recorded in March 2024 (N472.16). On a year-on-year basis, the fare increased by 3.07 per cent when compared with April 2023 (N462.29). For water transport (waterway passenger transportation), the average fare paid in April 2024 increased to N1,385.95 from N1,384.32 which indicates an increase of 0.12 per cent monthly. On a year-on-year basis, it increased by 34.45 per cent from N1,030.83 in April 2023.



# Politics

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

## Umbrella in tatters: Beyond PDP BoT's visit to Fubara, Rivers

*The recent visit by the leadership of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to Governor Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers State has been deemed as a panic measure to salvage the party's stake in the heated Rivers' politics. But stakeholders said there should be a lot more from the 'August visitors' than just aiming to keep the embattled party in power, ANN GODWIN reports.*

THE Board of Trustees (BOT) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) recently visited Governor Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers State in a manner that opened another chapter in the political crisis in Rivers State.

The visit led by the Chairman of the Board, Alphonsus Wabara, was the first since the crisis between Fubara and his erstwhile godfather and Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, started last year. The visit was on the heels of rumours that embattled Fubara was at the verge of joining another party, and the divided PDP more endangered in the state.

Besides, the visit gave the party's advisory council the opportunity to feel the pulse of the governor, who inherited 32 PDP-member lawmakers at inception, but could only account for five currently. The other 27 have parted ways with Fubara and the PDP.

It will be recalled that Fubara has been locked in bitter rivalry with Wike over the control of party structure in Rivers State. An alleged congress that returned only those loyal to the former governor (Wike) and against the incumbent is at the centre of the conflict.

The PDP, it was gathered, had always regarded its governor as leader of the party in the state, and as such handed over the structures of the party to run and control. This has, however, not happened in the case of Fubara as the Minister allegedly holds firmly the lever of control. The party has also not done much to address the perceived anomaly.

Fubara, who came into office 15 months ago, and apparently with a determination to change the narratives, has since been mired in the contention of how to rescue the structure from Wike and in the long run control his administration.

Meanwhile, Wike has leveraged the party's goodwill to expand his support base in the state. He was recently said to have inherited the structure of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) formerly controlled by Senator Magnus Abe since he (Abe) in January this year, re-joined the All Progressives Congress (APC) and reconciled with him.

Both men had agreed to work together to reclaim the state for President Bola Tinubu in 2027.

There were rumours also about an ongoing

ing political romance between Wike and the Labour Party (LP) in the state. The rumours became rife after the party's 2023 governorship candidate, Beatrice Itubo was seen posing in a picture with Wike and Abe at the Abuja residence of the FCT Minister.

Although Fubara had in the past 15 months waded through the obstacles in his way to governance in the state, he had done this with little or no support from the national and state leaderships of the party.

In June this year, he had cried out and criticised the party for failing the state, expressing his displeasure over its silence on his conflict with the Wike. He had stated that the state would now defend its democracy independently.

Fubara's frustrations with the PDP were compounded by the attitude of the state chapter, which has continued to play the card of the national headquarters. The state party leadership does not attend functions that are organised by the governor and vice versa. This is seen as absurd given that when the current FCT Minister was governor, his party executives attended all his functions.

Although the governor was said to have remained calm and calculative, part of his challenges, however, has been where to pitch his tent as the October 5 local government election draws near in the state.

But while in his dilemma, subtle moves reportedly began to woo him to ditch the PDP and join other political parties, where he could be valued and appreciated, especially with the organic support he has mustered in the state.

Close watchers had mentioned the Action People's Party (APP) among the opposition political parties that have knocked on the doors of the governor for possible membership and linking the attack on its newly built secretariat in Rivers State recently as part of the move to discourage it from accepting the governor into her fold. APP's profile in the state is said to be rising by the day.

Political pundits stated that it was in apparent response to the developing scenarios that Wabara last week led other members of the PDP's BoT on a visit to the governor.

The visit, which many have described as a panicky courtesy visit, saw Wabara assuring the governor that the party would seek constitutional resolution on the political crisis tearing its membership in the state.

The visit was the first time the advisory organ of PDP is paying and speaking with the governor since the political impasse between him and the Minister started in October 2023.

Wabara, who held long discussions with the governor and stalwarts of his camp, remarked that the PDP was scared of losing Rivers

“It is a tradition that state governors inherit the party structures, so if the NWC of PDP has to work with the governor and wants Rivers to be a PDP state, they must hand over the structure to the governor, else we the members will seek our future and destiny on another platform”

State, warning that “if PDP loses Rivers State, the future of Nigeria will be lost with no abiding hope”.

He noted that the governor had been patient with the inactivity of the party leadership while the crisis persists, assuring that something would be done to bring the matter to an end.

The PDP Governors forum was also not left out in the concerns of losing Rivers State and therefore, swiftly restated their support for governor Fubara at their just-concluded meeting in Jalingo, Taraba State, at the weekend.

The governors assured of their readiness to engage the NWC of the party to revisit the congresses in the state with a view of correcting the anomaly while insisting that Fubara must be allowed to take his rightful position in the party in the state. They had expressed similar sentiments when they met in Enugu a month ago.

But are the assurances from the BOT and governors of the party anything to rely on to continue with the party? Is the governor ready to jettison the PDP and seek protection on another platform? Will leaving the PDP add anything to his political career? There are arguments that continuing with the PDP, allegedly still in the firm grip of Wike, may be an end to his political career.

A lawyer and political analyst, Dr Chukwuma Chinwo, however, explained that the governor was free to move to any other party of choice, stressing that he is protected by the constitution.

Chinwo said that Section 109 (1) (g) of the constitution, which deals with declaring the seat of lawmakers who defect from the parties that elected them to another party vacant, is

not binding on the governors, deputy governors and vice presidents.

He said: “The constitution holds

nothing against them, they can defect to any part of their choice, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar defected in 2006 and the supreme held that the provision deals with only those in the legislature, and several governors like former Governors David Umahi and Ben Ayade all defected, so that is not an issue”

Chinwo noted that it was strange that the PDP leadership is “acting the way they are acting knowing that all over the world, structures of the party are handed over to the governor of the State because he is the leader of the party.”

He, however, advised Fubara to take a decision as soon as possible to enable his followers to know where they stand and prepare for the forthcoming local government poll.

Also, the former spokesman of PDP in the State now Commissioner for Environment, Tambari Sydney Gbara, revealed that some political parties are wooing the governor to join them.

Gbara said the intensified lobbying is not unconnected with Fubara's leadership qualities, which has garnered massive organic support from the people.

He told *The Guardian* that the governor is a very ‘big asset’ in the political sector at the moment because of his approach to solving issues, declaring that as far as the governor was concerned, the contentious congress that triggered the crises was null and void.

He urged the NWC of the PDP to hand over the structure of the party to the governor, threatening that the members may be pushed to seek fortunes on another platform.

He said: “It is a tradition that the state governors inherit the party structures, so if the NWC of PDP has to work with the governor and want Rivers to be a PDP state, they must hand over the structure to the governor, else we the members will seek our future and destiny in another platform”.

The State Chairman of APP, Sunny Wokekoro, however, taunted the PDP BoT, stressing that it decided to visit the governor for fear of losing him to another party.

He stated that the party was best positioned to capture the governor should he decide to leave the PDP, stressing that the coming local government election was a litmus test for the party.

A former Media Adviser to Wike, Ogunabo Inko-Tariah, said Governor Fubara is very calculative and knows what he is doing.

He explained that at the moment, the governor is still in PDP and watching the actions of the party's leadership. He, however, admonished the Governor's followers to be firm with him, assuring that they would surely win the battle.

But the APC-led Tony Okocha, alleged that Fubara's government is a sham, adding that the governor was not prepared to govern the state.

Okocha pointed out that the crisis in the state was scaring investors away and slowing development, adding that the party would not fold its hands and watch the governor drag the state to the mud.

All eyes are now on the governor to know his next move. Whatever he does before the October local government election will determine his fate in 2027. He is already ruling without a party structure and a factionalised State Assembly. It may seem that he

would go for a total grip of the local governments using the election, despite the stiff opposition from the APC to consolidate his stay in power.



Fubara

Wabara

Wike



# Education

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

## Making Nigerian varsities globally competitive, relevant

*The dwindling fortunes of Nigeria in the global ranking of higher institutions exposed how the country has failed, in its education system, to lead the continent. Stakeholders argued that real and sustained investment in the sub-sector, as well as improved teaching quality will help the country regain its competitive edge, IYABO LAWAL reports.*

**N**IGERIAN universities have not fared well in global ranking over the years largely because they don't have what it takes to compete with foreign universities in terms of funding, infrastructure, manpower, and ability to attract foreign students.

Every year, the Times Higher Education (THE) releases its ranking of the best universities in the world. The organisation, which started in 2010, examined this year, the results of more than 1,900 institutions in 104 countries and regions worldwide.

The World University Rankings stand as premier global benchmarks, evaluating research-intensive universities across key pillars-teaching, research environment, research quality, knowledge transfer, and international outlook.

The evaluation exercise assessed the institutions in their core missions of teaching, research and community service.

With a troubled education system bedevilled by incessant strike actions, obsolete library materials, ill-equipped laboratories, dilapidated structures and dearth of qualified teachers, stakeholders noted that producing globally competitive graduates may be a mirage.

Analysis of the latest THE ranking showed that Covenant University (CU) is among the top 1,000 universities in the world. The University of Ibadan (UI) followed as second-best institution in the country, while FUTA clinched third.

Other institutions that achieved the top ranking in Nigeria include University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN); University of Lagos (UNILAG); Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti (ABUAD); University of Benin (UNIBEN); Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB); Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomosho; Lagos State University (LASU); Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, and University of Port Harcourt.

A total of 39 Nigerian universities made the list, while the University of Oxford maintained its position at the top of the table for the eighth consecutive year.

On the African continent, no Nigerian university made the top 10 category. South Africa dominated it with eight, while Egypt and Ghana have one each.

The comprehensive analysis for the 2024 ranking considered over 134 million citations from 16.5 million research publications, along with feedback from 68,402 scholars worldwide.

The poor performance of Nigeria in the global ranking of universities has generated concerns from stakeholders, who blamed the government and institutions for the development.

They identified the challenges to include poor funding, inadequate facilities for learning and research, as well as poor regulation.

Education is among the least considered sectors in Nigeria in terms of budgetary allocation. Despite its strategic place in national development, and the recommendation by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to developing countries to allocate at least 26 per cent of their yearly budgets to education, successive governments in Nigeria have failed to do so.

On the average, less than nine per cent of federal budgets have been allocated to education since the inception of the Fourth Republic.

In 1999, education was given 11.12 per cent of



NUC Building, Abuja.

the federal budget; 2000, it reduced to 8.36 per cent; reduced further to 7.1 per cent in 2001; 5.9 per cent in 2002; and 1.83 per cent in 2003. In 2004, education got 10.5 per cent; it took 9.3 per cent in 2005; 11 per cent in 2006; 8.09 per cent in 2007; 13 per cent in 2008; 6.54 per cent in 2009; and 6.4 per cent in 2010. In 2011, 1.69 per cent was allocated to the sector; 10 per cent were allocated in 2012; 8.7 per cent in 2013; 10.6 per cent in 2014; and 9.5 per cent in 2015.

In 2016, education got 7.9 per cent of the budget. This was reduced to 6.1 per cent in 2017 before it was increased to 7.1 per cent in 2018. Allocation to the sector nosedived to 6.5 per cent in 2020, while it got 5.7 and 5.4 per cent in 2021 and 2022 respectively. In 2023, it got 8.2 per cent, while in 2024, it got 6.39 per cent.

Amid poor capacity to attract education grants, these paltry allocations are expected to cater for 52 federal universities, 40 federal polytechnics, 27 federal colleges of education, and 104 unity colleges.

The same story of poor budgetary allocation to education is applicable in most of the states.

Data from the National Universities Commission (NUC) showed that the over 200 universities in the country only have about 35 per cent of the required number of teachers for effective teaching and learning.

Besides, a good number of those who teach in government institutions are the same teachers that private universities rely on

through part-time arrangements.

This notwithstanding, the Federal and state Governments are still building new universities, and granting approvals for new institutions.

Stakeholders were, however, divided on the objectivity or otherwise of the rankings. While some said it promotes healthy competition among the institutions, others argued that ranking puts undue pressure on universities.

They identified factors such as poor funding, proliferation of universities, inadequate manpower and facilities, as some of the problems responsible for lack of competitiveness among the country's universities.

"One of the greatest factors working against the ranking of Nigerian universities is that too many were established by government, or private entities driven by vanity rather than vision and planning for proper university education.

"There is also a significant deficit in staffing, facilities and work/learning environment. Lecturers are badly treated in terms of remuneration and respect by the government and society, but overworked at the same time. "How can they give the best when they earn such poor wages and have to do other things just to make ends meet? What time do they have to conduct cutting-edge research, produce quality publications, supervise undergraduate and postgraduate students, mentor younger colleagues, and participate in international networks and conferences with such distractions and disabilities, unlike their counterparts elsewhere?"

A Professor of History and Pro-Chancellor of Chrisland University, Prof Ayodeji Olukoju, said getting Nigerian universities into the ranks of Africa's best requires adequate funding, strategic planning and commitment to maintaining standards.

He advised the Federal Government to set aside five federal universities as flagship for support over a specific period.

Olukoju stated that such universities should streamline their systems to attract and retain the best scholars and researchers in the country, while also attracting their foreign-based counterparts to enrich the

pool of expertise through short-term visits, or to engage them in online teaching. "Specific programmes in these flagship universities possessing a certain critical mass of internationally recognised scholars and researchers should also be developed as flagship programmes. Such clusters of dedicated high fliers across faculties and departments will boost the ranking of those institutions," Olukoju said.

He added that the leadership of designated universities should be selected purely on merit and not based on ethnic, religious or political sentiments.

Olukoju reminded that no university can actualise its full potential when its leadership is a product of patronage politics influenced by internal and external politicians.

He said: "Nigerian universities cannot attract foreign students and staff if our campuses are not attractive, facilities are poor, institutions are not well funded, and staff go on strike, invariably disrupting academic calendar."

On his part, former Vice Chancellor, University of Ibadan, Prof Idowu Olayinka, said to make the nation's universities more competitive, government must increase its level of funding to the institutions, make admissions purely merit-based, and prioritise staff welfare, including remuneration and provision of facilities for teaching, learning and quality research.

"Government must allow the universities to govern themselves using the template known to law, Olayinka said, warning that a situation where the Federal Ministry of Education is surreptitiously usurping the role of Governing Councils of federal universities is an invitation to chaos and anarchy, which can reduce the universities to glorified secondary schools.

In the same vein, erudite scholar and former Vice Chancellor of the Bells University, Ota, Prof Adebayo Adeyemi, said improved remunerations not only attract brilliant students, it retains existing staff and reduces exodus of lecturers abroad.

He also canvassed improvement in infrastructural facilities, including students' hostels, lecture halls, offices, in designated facilities for teaching and research; provision of well-equipped, functional and modern laboratories.

But a Professor of Geography at Bayero University, Kano (BUK), Usman Haruna, said while rankings are used to attract students and talented researchers, assess research proficiency and review institutional strategy, they have led universities to over-invest in those metrics that might boost their ranking scores, such as a few multi-institution projects that, until this year, have contributed disproportionately to success in the THE World University Rankings.

He said: "The well-known rankings are often subject to methodological changes that can harm institutions, heaping undeserved blame or praise on university administrators.

"Even if there is no publicly declared methodological change, puzzling fluctuations can be produced by recalibration, re-centring, procedural tweaking and the influx of new institutions. Quite a few careers have come to grief after an inexplicable collapse in ranking scores, while some universities have risen to undeserved, and sometimes, temporary prominence with the help of performance in one or more of the big-league tables," Haruna stated.

**To make the nation's universities more competitive, government must increase its level of funding to the institutions, make admissions purely merit-based, and prioritise staff welfare, including remuneration and provision of facilities for teaching, learning and quality research**



# World Report

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

## UN calls for de-escalation as Israeli West Bank raids continue

FIVE more Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in a second day of raids in the occupied West Bank, with the UN calling for de-escalation.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said they were "five terrorists who had hidden inside a mosque" in Tulkarm, near the boundary with Israel.

Israel began what it said was a major counter-terrorism operation in the West Bank on Wednesday. There have been conflicting death tolls as the operation unfolded across multiple cities.

The IDF said yesterday that nine militants had been killed, five in Jenin and Tulkarm, and four in al-Faraa refugee camp. The Palestinian health ministry

said yesterday that 12 people had been killed in IDF attacks so far.

UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres has called on Israel to immediately halt its operation, saying it was "fuelling an already explosive situation".

He urged Israeli forces to "exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable".

The IDF said the five Palestinians were killed after "exchanges of fire" in Tulkarm.

It identified one of the fatalities as Mohammed Jaber, also known as Abu Shujaa, who was reportedly the local leader of the Tulkarem Brigade, which is backed by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant

group.

The IDF said Jaber was linked to a number of attacks on Israelis, and was planning more.

Elsewhere, in Jenin, ambulances are stopped and checked by military jeeps parked around the government hospital as security forces continue their operation in the city's refugee camp.

The camp is a base for armed groups, as well as a home to unarmed civilians, and has been the scene of many fierce gun battles in the past.

There's little news coming out from the camp at the moment, with Israeli forces blocking access and Palestinian phone networks down.

Residents, medics and

journalists have been trying to read the situation inside from the occasional explosions and bursts of gunfire heard since last night.

One person inside told the BBC that it appears calm at the moment, and they can hear drones buzzing overhead.

It is the second day of what Israeli media say could be a days-long operation in the West Bank.

The Israeli military said it had made arrests and seized weapons.

Homes and infrastructure were damaged in the attacks, Palestinians said.

It is the largest such action in the West Bank since the days of the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, two decades ago.

## Telegram boss banned from leaving France in criminal probe

TELEGRAM boss and founder, Pavel Durov, has been placed under formal investigation in France as part of a probe into organised crime on the messaging app, Paris prosecutors say.

Mr Durov, 39, has not been remanded in custody, but placed under judicial supervision, and has to pay a €5m (£4.2m; \$5.6m) deposit.

The Russian-born billionaire, who is also a French national, also has to show up at a French police station twice a week and is not allowed to leave French territory.

Mr Durov was first detained upon arrival at Le Bourget airport north of Paris last Saturday under a warrant for offences related to the app.

In Wednesday's statement, the Paris prosecutors said Mr Durov was put under formal investigation over alleged offences that included:

Complicity in the administration of an online platform to enable illicit transactions by an organised gang.

Refusal to communicate with authorities and complicity in organised criminal distribution of

sexual images of children.

In France, being put under formal investigation does not imply guilt or necessarily result in a trial - but it indicates that judges consider there is enough of a case to proceed with an investigation.

Mr Durov has so far made no public comments on the latest developments.

His lawyer, David-Olivier Kaminski, said Telegram complied in every respect with European digital regulations and was moderated to the same standards as other social networks.

It was "absurd" to suggest his client could be involved "in criminal acts that don't concern him either directly or indirectly", he added.

It is unprecedented for the owner of a social media platform to be arrested because of the way in which that platform is being used, and it has fuelled a fierce debate online about freedom of speech and accountability.

We have previously seen tech bosses hauled in front of lawmakers for confrontational grillings about their practices and failings, but not met by law enforcement at airports.

## Liberian ex-chief justice acquitted of murder

LIBERIA'S former justice minister and chief justice, Gloria Maya Musu-Scott has been acquitted of the murder of her niece by the country's Supreme Court.

The 70-year-old and three female relatives had been sentenced to life in prison for the brutal killing in February 2023 of 29-year-old Charlotte Musu.

The case gripped the nation as Ms Musu-Scott had been one of Liberia's most famous judges and politicians, a champion of women rights and at the time of her conviction had just won a significant case against the electoral commission as part of the then-opposition party's legal team.

A jubilant crowd greeted them outside the jail as they were freed after serving more than eight months.

Shortly afterwards, Ms Musu-Scott said she and her family rejoiced in their release but she lamented the state of the justice system.

"There are a lot of innocent persons in jail in this republic. So I say thank you to the lawyers. But I say to them, there is still work to be done."

Ms Musu-Scott served as Liberia's justice minister and later as the chief justice of the Supreme Court until her retirement in 2003.

She later transitioned to politics and was a lawmaker in Maryland County until 2012.

She was still a member of the Unity Party - whose leader Joseph Boakai became president in January and had been part of the legal team that successfully challenged the electoral commission's refusal to allow parties to see the voters' roll.

Ms Musu-Scott and her three relatives were found guilty by a lower court in December of stabbing her niece and also for conspiracy and making a false report to the police. They were sentenced to life in January.

The former chief justice had denied the charge, saying the 29-year-old had been killed by an "assassin" who had entered her home in the capital, Monrovia.

Delivering the appeal verdict on Wednesday, Chief Justice Sie-A-Nyene Yuoh ruled that there was not sufficient evidence to link the former judge and her relatives to the crime.



The Israeli military has conducted raids in a number of West Bank cities over the past two days

## Strongest typhoons hit Japan as millions evacuate

JAPAN has been hit by one of its strongest typhoons in decades.

Torrential rain and gusts of 252 km per hour (157mph) hit the south of the country, although the typhoon has now weakened to a "severe tropical storm".

At least four people have been killed with more than 80 injured.

"I just wanted to survive," says one woman caught in the storm, while another person calls it "out of this world".

More than five million people in the south of the country have been told to evacuate.

At least 237,000 homes are without power and more

than 700 flights are cancelled.

Typhoon Shanshan, now downgraded to a "severe tropical storm," is still causing havoc with rain and gusts hitting southern Japan.

Shanshan has triggered landslides and roof collapses, resulting in at least four deaths. At least 94 people are injured, and one person is still missing. A body was found in the sea, but it's unclear if it's the missing person.

Trains suspended, highways closed, and over 700 flights cancelled. Companies like Toyota have halted production across Japan.

Shanshan is moving slowly,

which means more heavy rain is on the way. Some areas could see over 700mm of rain. The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) is warning both western and eastern Japan to brace for more landslides and flooding.

Travellers on the ground in Japan say rainfall is now a concern after severe tropical storm Shanshan caused major travel disruption.

Norimasa Sakanoshita, 47, who travelled from Tokyo to attend a meeting in Fukuoka, says: "This typhoon is scary. In terms of disaster, we are getting a large amount of rain so I don't know what will happen going forward," he

tells Reuters news agency.

A tourist from New York, Leila Wong, who's traveling across Japan with her family, says she was stranded in Fukuoka after trains to Tokyo were canceled due to heavy rain and winds.

Transit systems have announced cancellations, delays and disruption as severe tropical storm Shanshan makes its way through Japan.

Shinkansen bullet trains have been suspended in parts of Kyushu for all of today and tomorrow.

Rail operators say that services could be impacted all weekend as storm conditions persist.



# Media & Marketing

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

## Adisa unveils plans for AAAN, seeks collaboration

By Sunday Aikulola

**P**RESIDENT, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Lanre Adisa, has identified talent development as key to unlocking advertising potential, even as he stressed the need for collaboration within the marketing communication ecosystem.

Speaking during an interactive session with journalists in Lagos, he expressed concern over the dearth of talents in the nation's advertising industry.

Adisa, who is also the Chairman, Heads of Advertising Sectoral Groups (HASG), noted, "I am not saying we are not trying, but what we are doing is not enough with the reality that we are facing. The question is how can we attract talent as an industry? We have to find a new way at looking at this and we have to be deliberate about it. The industry must have an agenda of training talents at a larger scale. Go to India or Brazil, there are abundance of talents."

Even in South Africa, he noted, "many young people leaving secondary school attend the advertising school. So, there is a constant supply of talents there and they measure it against international standards."

Describing his new roles as a call to duty, he agreed when one spends over three decades in an industry, it should be of great interest to see that the industry thrives. Saying the last AAAN executive repositioned the industry and renewed stakeholders' confidence, he disclosed the mantra of his campaign is stronger together.

To him, "there is a need for collaboration. We are not enemies. We have to work together within the ecosystem. Recently members of the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) visited the AAAN, that is a welcome development and there are lots of things we can do together."

Speaking further, he said he would also work on three strategies: Relevance, expansion, and values.

Concerning relevance, he noted, "people should respect what we do."



Adisa

## Over 1,700 journalists killed globally in 18 years, reveals UNESCO

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

**B**ETWEEN 2006 and 2024, more than 1,700 journalists were killed around the world, with close to nine out of 10 cases of these killings remaining judicially unresolved, according to the UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists.

According to UNESCO-supported research, the most recent five-year period from 2019 to 2023 recorded an increase in physical attacks like assaults, arrests and harassment, and legal actions including defamation lawsuits and criminal prosecutions of journalists reporting on environmental issues. This increase is in comparison to the number of attacks recorded in the previous five years from 2014-2018.

Between January 2019 and June 2022, UNESCO documented 759 individual attacks against journalists, including five killings, during 89 elections in 70 countries.

It said 70 per cent of journalists are subject to attacks, threats or pressure while covering environmental issues. It also said six journalists were killed in connection with their reporting on environmental issues.

Every two years, the awareness raising campaign for the commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists coincides with the findings of the UNESCO Director-General's Report outlining the current state of global and regional impunity.

In a statement released ahead of International Day To End Impunity For Crimes Against Journalists, the agency said impunity for lethal and non-lethal attacks against journalists perpetuates a cycle of vio-

•Agency set to celebrate day to end impunity for crimes against journalists



Audrey Azoulay, Director General, UNESCO

lence, which is a key indicator in ensuring public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms. The International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) is an occasion to commemorate the memory of killed journalists, highlight the risks that journalists take to do their job, call for accountability for crimes committed against them, and reaffirm commitment to the protection and safety of journalists in the

course of doing their work.

The global commemoration of this day will hold at the African Union (AU) headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, co-hosted by UNESCO and the AU. The event is scheduled for November 6 and 7 under the theme of Safety of Journalists in Crises and Emergencies.

UNESCO and the AU will also co-host a "Day of Action" on November 7 to allow stakeholders and participants organise and attend different types of activities. These activities will be action-oriented initiatives, such as the launch of reports and projects, a chance to hold strategic partnership meetings, trainings, workshops, and exhibitions, discussing continental, regional, and subregional action plans, and conducting information sessions.

This event will commemorate the 10th anniversary of the first IDEI, held in 2014 at the European Court of Human Rights, after the landmark establishment of the November 2 as the IDEI by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 68/163.

This event will also commemorate the 20th anniversary of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in 2004, whose role is pivotal in safeguarding freedom of expression and safety of journalists in Africa.

The UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/163 in 2013, proclaimed November as IDEI, a date which commemorates the assassination of two French journalists in Mali on 2 November 2013.

## Ogwezzy, Oladunjoye advocate disability inclusive reporting

By Sunday Aikulola

**P**ROFESSOR of Mass Communication University of Lagos and member Editorial Board, The Guardian, Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika and Publisher of BOnes Service, Blessing Oladunjoye, have stressed the need for media professionals to tell more stories of Persons With Disabilities (PWD).

They spoke at a seminar for students of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, organised by Oladunjoye. The training was supported by the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) under its Report Women! News and Newsroom Engagement, and was themed 'Disability Reporting'.

To Ogwezzy-Ndisika, "we must tell their stories. There is ability in disability. They have a role in development. All they need is give them opportunities.

Give them access. They don't deserve the pity parties that we organise. They are interested in their rights. We can have disability desks in newsroom."

She encouraged students to engage with PWDs and do impactful stories about them.

On her part, Oladunjoye noted not all disabilities are visible. Using pictures and various illustrations, she highlighted mechanisms that should be implemented to ensure equal participation of PWDs.

She also discussed different models of disability, including charity, medical, social, and rights-based models.

She explained essential terminology and principles related to disability, offering practical tips for reporting on disability, interviewing PWDs, and avoiding common pitfalls in disability reporting.



Prof. Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika (left); Blessing Oladunjoye and Dr Suraj Olorunfesi.

## CEMESO, IPC task journalists on social responsibility

By Sunday Aikulola

**A**HEAD of September 21, 2024 Edo State gubernatorial elections, Executive Directors Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO), Akin Akingbulu, and International Press Centre (IPC), Lanre Arogundade have stressed the need for journalists to be socially responsible in the coverage and reportage of events.

Speaking at a recent media engagement held in Edo State, Akingbulu urged members of the fourth estate of the realm to fulfill their duty in providing professional coverage and voter education.

He also stressed importance of understanding the local electoral landscape and consistent engagement to ensure citizens are well-informed and prepared to participate in

the election.

Saying the people of Edo State, along with other democratic stakeholders, are eager for a free, fair and credible election, he further encouraged media professionals to contribute positively to this process by promoting peaceful conduct, preventing malpractices, and ensuring the

participation of all citizen groups.

On his part, Arogundade highlighted the Nigerian Media Code of Election Coverage, which outlines guidelines for equitable representation, professionalism, social responsibility, and ethical conduct.

To him, "the code emphasises

accurate and impartial voter education, dissemination of information in indigenous languages, and clear identification of political advertisements."

He underscored the media's responsibility to uphold highest standards of ethics and professionalism in voter, civic education and election cover-

age.

Akingbulu also disclosed the event is part of the European Union Support for Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Phase II Project, which aims to strengthen Nigeria's democratic processes by enhancing the media's role in providing fair, accurate, and inclusive electoral coverage.

He explained CEMESO, in collaboration with the IPC, is working to improve the professionalism of media practitioners.

This, he said, includes building capacity to tackle misinformation and disinformation, diversifying civic and voter education and ensuring inclusive electoral coverage, particularly for women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).



Participants at the workshop



## Interview

# CJN must correct public perception of judiciary, restore discipline, Akintola says

*Chief Niyi Akintola is a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) and former Deputy Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly in the Third Republic. In this interview with ROTIMI AGBOLUAJE, he urged the new Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun to correct the public perception of judicial officers and restore discipline in the bar and the bench.*

The Federal Government recently announced a 300 per cent increment in the salary of judicial officers. What do you have to say about this?

WE have been on it for a while. Before now, only former President Olusegun Obasanjo has done some increase for judicial officers. Salaries of executive and legislative members have been increased, but for years, salaries of judicial officers were not increased. That has done damage to the integrity of judicial officers. To God be glory, it is commendable in President Bola Tinubu's administration. Under Tinubu's administration as governor, salaries of judicial officers were increased too. Justice Mohammed Uwais (Retd) came out publicly to commend Tinubu and charged other states to emulate him. It entrenched discipline and independence. The recent increase will encourage judicial officers.

**Can states pay that increment?**

Our judicial system is centralised, even though the centralisation is an aberration. All the salaries come from the National Judicial Council (NJC). That was introduced under the Abacha regime because of the attitude of the state governments.

**What are the expectations of the legal community from Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun?**

She has her job well cut out for her. Nobody should expect anything less. She is from a good home, maritally and biologically. She does her work without publicity or flamboyance. She is a woman of impeccable character. She is unassuming, not giving to frivolities.

**What form of reforms do you expect from her?**

First, discipline at the bar and bench is key. Indiscipline is very rampant at the bar. Another one is the issue of corruption. She needs to correct the perception of the public within judicial officers. There must be cooperation between the bar and the bench. You cannot have a better judiciary if the bar is bad. Judicial members are drawn from the bar. The CJN is expected to stamp her authority on the bar and the bench. She has seen it all.

Let's talk about the verdict delivered by the

Supreme Court on local government autonomy. Many have spoken on the judgment. How will you react to it?

It has come and gone. We thank God for President Tinubu. We thank God for the Attorney General of the Federation and the Supreme Court. Even though the judgment itself has created some problems, which many people did not anticipate. It is now a subject of controversy within the country. People have been asking whether it was right for the Supreme Court to amend the provision of Section 162 without the National Assembly doing so. My short answer to that is that the Supreme Court is not just a court of law. It's also a court of policy. So, speaking of Section 162 (6), even though many people didn't expect it, it is not an abnormality. I mean, the Supreme Court is competent to make a firm decision when the interest of the country is at stake.

In the first place, it was a popular judgment. People have been expecting something like that. But what people don't realise is that it's not only the state governors that have been taking local governments' funds. Federal Government agencies are not left out. People have not been addressing the fact that agencies of the government too have been taking the money. The practice of many of the governors taking local government funds didn't start today. You have to look at the historical background of the issue. This local government system we are operating was formulated through the Ibrahim Dasuki Reform of 1976 during the Olusegun Obasanjo military regime. Obasanjo had good intentions but never anticipated the problems that came with it.

There is no federal system of government in the world that has three tiers of government. So, it is normally two tiers. But in the wisdom of the military, they imported it into the 1999 Constitution-Section 7, which tends to create a kind of anomaly within the federal system. Having said that, it must be emphasised that the constitution we are operating recognises three lists. They are the Exclusive Legislative Lists, the Concurrent Legislative Lists, and the Residual Legislative List. The Residual list is not written. This was left for something uncovered by the present constitution, which the state can take advantage of within the context of the 1999 constitution.

But having said that, the state governments didn't even stop at taking local government money. All those areas that are meant for the local government to operate, the state and the federal governments took over them. That has been more damaging than the local government funds. For instance, issues of liquor licences, markets, motor parks, and primary school education have been taken over by the states and Federal Government.

**What is the business of the Federal Government in primary school education?**

But there's an abnormal body called the

Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in Abuja that regulates and controls primary school education in the federation. UBEC will sit down in Abuja and be making decisions for the whole country. When I was in



Akintola

primary school, I had six years of primary school education. My counterparts in the North had seven years. But now, somebody somewhere thought that what's happening in Sokoto State should be happening in Oyo State and other parts of the country. That shouldn't be in a federation. The body intends to build about 100,000 schools for local governments, without knowing their needs. So, primary school education which is supposed to be the function of local governments has been taken over by a Federal Government agency called UBEC. The body does so many things on behalf of the states. Those things are not for free; they deduct the money from the source out of the local government funds.

Sometimes, the Minister of Agriculture will wake up and want to buy tractors for the local government without asking whether they need the tractors or not. The Minister will buy all of them and deduct the money from the source. The Ministry of Health will buy vaccines for the local governments without asking for their needs and priorities. They draw the money from the source.

Now, the state government has taken over markets, parks, liquor licences, and number plates. It's so funny that a state like Ekiti went and enacted a law empowering the housing corporation of the state to name streets. I'm in court against the Ekiti State Housing Corporation over the issue.

**Now, what's the benefit of this Council fiscal autonomy verdict?**

At least, the common man in the grassroots will know how much is being given to the local government and he'll be able to hold the local government chairman accountable. However, don't forget that there's a principle that says that the oppressed will continue to feel happy that he's being oppressed. If the money comes now to the local government, I foresee that the local government chairmen will go to their governor, and ask the governor, 'What do we do with this money?' This is because they are happy to be oppressed. They are used to it.

To that extent, the benefit is that the money will come to the local government without the governor tampering with it, at least, on paper. On the flip side, the adverse effect of it is that we are likely to have zero allocation again for some local governments. We have passed through this before.

**What do you mean by zero allocation?**

The local government in urban areas will be getting zero allocation because the salaries of all workers, teachers and others that are being deducted from the source by the Joint Account and Allocation Committee (JAAC) will stop.

Those local governments in the rural areas will be the beneficiaries because they will have a surplus. We went through that here in Oyo State before.

**Can you elaborate more on this?**

In the 80s in Oyo State, Ibadan Municipal Council was getting zero allocation while local governments in Oke-Ogun were smiling to the bank. This is because 92 per cent of all the primary school teachers in the state are in Ibadan. After paying this money to the local governments directly, those local governments in municipal cities like Kano, Ibadan, and Sokoto were not able to pay workers because there was too much burden on them. When the issue became riotous in the 80s, I was contacted by the Chairman of the local government. I advised him to ask workers who are not from his local government to go back. So, he did that. The military governor then ordered his arrest. Because it was happening in Oyo, Kano and Sokoto, the military governors had to think of how to find a way out. That was when they introduced this JAAC. All the expenses of all the local governments like teachers' salaries, health workers' salaries, and ad-hoc staff emoluments were paid from the source. All of them were bearing the burden. It had been in existence before the 1999 Constitution, but it has become contentious. Now, when the money starts coming directly to the Councils, local governments like my own will benefit.

**Is it not possible to redistribute staff across local governments?**

How do you distribute them to a place where they don't need them? Another anomaly is that, despite the abolition of the local government service commission, some states operate local government service commissions illegally. In a state like Ekiti, the local government service commission still exists. This is not contained in the 1999 constitution. It was there in the 1979 constitution, but it is not there now.

**Some people believe this may empower the Federal Government to have control over local governments. Is that not antithetical to federalism?**

It is possible. However, all of us - the civil societies, professional associations, the media and others - will keep on interrogating the government over the issue. I was discussing it with two ministers and I pointed out this problem.

Read the remaining part of this interview on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)



First, discipline at the bar and bench is key. Indiscipline is very rampant at the bar. Another one is the issue of corruption. She needs to correct the perception of the public within judicial officers. There must be cooperation between the bar and the bench. You cannot have a better judiciary if the bar is bad. Judicial members are drawn from the bar. The CJN is expected to stamp her authority on the bar and the bench. She has seen it all.





# Friday Worship

[www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

 Guardian Nigeria [f GuardianNigeria](#) [08136370421](#) [Guardiannigeria](#)
By **Shakirah Adunola**
*In the name of the Almighty, the  
Beneficent, the Merciful*

*“O mankind, eat from whatever  
is on earth (that is) lawful and  
pure.” (Qur’an 2:168)*

PROFESSOR of Islamic Jurisprudence at the University of Abuja (UNIABUJA), Luqman Zakariyah, has urged the current Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr. Doris Nkiruka Uzoka-Anite, to revisit the report and activities of the Technical Committee on the Development of a Roadmap and Operational Framework for Halal Certification in Nigeria.

The Don said the revisit becomes necessary as Nigeria's halal ecosystem continues to evolve significantly, gaining acceptance from both Muslims and non-Muslims for its effectiveness and wide range of benefits.

Zakariyah made this statement during International Halal Seminar organised by the Halal Certification Authority (HCA) at Radisson Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

Themed: ‘Exploring Halal Industry for a balanced growth and development’, the one-day event brought together important stakeholders in the halal industry both within and outside Nigeria.

He lamented that lack of full government intervention in regulating and authenticating the halal industry in Nigeria has left many local manufacturers with no clear directions, especially in terms of certifying their products with halal authorization.

Prof Zakariyah recalled that former Minister of State for Industry, Trade and Investment, Ambassador Mariam Yalwaji Katagum, commissioned the technical committee to harness the immense opportunities in the global halal market for Nigeria.

“There are more efforts expected from the Federal Government on standardization of the halal industry in Nigeria. This issue has gone beyond religious stride. It has become economic, social and wellness affairs. The effort of the Technical Committee established by the former Minister of State for Industry, Trade and Investment needs to be revisited and implemented. Such effort should not go in vain.

According to him, Nigeria is well-positioned to become the halal hub of Africa if government works with major stakeholders to increase halal certification.

Speaking on the topic, ‘Halal Procurement Procedure: (HPP): The Nigeria Outlook to the Global Demand,’ he said it is only the Shari’ah

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

“Surely, the religion with Allah is ISLAM, complete submission”... Qur’an 3:19

“Surely, the religion with Allah is ISLAM, complete submission”... Qur’an 3:19

## Revisiting halal certification roadmap

Procurement Procedure that can serve as a viable option because other procedures are not clear of inaccuracies.

“The term halal encompasses everything Muslims’ concerns. Anything forbidden or prohibited in Islamic law is referred to as haram (Khan et al., 2019). Halal include not only consumables, services and products but also dealings with clients in commerce, trades, and finances. Muslims must ensure that the halal rules of conducts are observed in every instance of their lives.

“Halal procurement involves activities like supplier management, quality checks, and ensuring compliance with Shariah practices. Establishing a halal procurement procedure is essential to align purchasing activities with Shariah practices. Supplier management is crucial in the development of halal procurement practices. The integration, evaluation, and selection of suppliers are key activities in halal procurement.”

The keynote speaker encouraged private

stakeholders to ramp up awareness activities on halal, noting public awareness is still low in Nigeria.

Also speaking at the event, Dr. Dahiru Adamu, a lecturer at Bayero University, Kano (BUK) and biomedical consultant asserts that Nigeria still has a long way to go in terms of certification in the Halal industry.

He said: “Nigeria’s fair share in the global Halal market is infinitesimal. We are not where we are supposed to be and that is because there is no infrastructure for Halal Certification within the country. We have facilities for every other thing, we have little or no resources and facility for Halal Certification.

“If you consider what we are endowed with in Nigeria, it is really enormous, so, if we can get things right, in respect to the Halal industry, it is going to be a plus for us. Our government needs to provide the Halal industry with infrastructural facilities.

“When we say Halal Certification infrastructure, we are talking about the technical poli-

cies and laws put together to regulate the industry, ensure harmony and prevent conflict. It also involves conformity, training of assessors and standards on which certification will be based. We should also collaborate to ensure the attainment of set goals. All these put together translate to infrastructure in this context.”

He noted that Nigeria needs to tap into the prosperous Halal industry to further boost her economic growth. However, he expressed concerns on security and other problems facing the country.

Earlier in his welcome address, Chairman Management Team, Halal Certification Authority, Prof. Ibrahim Oreagba stressed the huge opportunities in the halal industry, saying, “The global halal industry as a whole is estimated to be worth around USD2.47 trillion (excluding Islamic finance) and is now one of the fastest-growing markets. Such expansion of the industry is because the global halal market of over 2 billion Muslims is no longer confined to Muslims only.

“Similarly, the halal industry is no longer confined to food and food-related products, but rather includes pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, health products, toiletries, and medical devices as well as service sector components such as hospitality, logistics, marketing, print and electronic media, packaging, branding, and financing. Hence, the theme is very apt at this point to explore the numerous opportunities inherent in adopting a halal lifestyle.”

Read the remaining part of this article on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)



Participants at the 4th International Halal Seminar organised by the Halal Certification Authority in Lagos.

## Islamic centre empowers 100 imams with leadership, vocational skills

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

AL-HABIBIYYAH Islamic Centre, Lagos in conjunction with the Ikorodu Division Muslim Community (IDIMCO) has empowered over 100 Imams including some other Muslim leaders in the state with leadership and employment skills to enable them perform optimally in their spiritual and temporal duties.

With ‘leadership and empowerment’ as theme, the one-day conference held at the NASFAT Islamic Centre in Ikorodu on Wednesday drew participation from across private and public sectors with emphasis on financial independence, leadership skills, training and resources related to job creation, as well as vocation skills development and general upskilling.

In his opening remarks, Coordinator of Al-Habibiyyah Islamic Centre, Abdulrahman Thabit, noted that the event represented the commitment of the organisation in creating a genuine leadership for the Muslim community through various programmes that support the growth and development of Imams and other Islamic leaders across the state.

Thabit said, “Despite being established as a result of their role, the Imams still need to be guarded because there are more to life than what they think. This platform gives them the opportunity to see things from different views rather than seeing it from one perspective which offers limited opportunities.

“They have so many untapped opportunities that come with their positions as Imam which include what they can do to benefit themselves and their congregation.”

Speaking further, Thabit urged the Imams to be a servant leader who listen and act according to the practice of prophet Muhammad as well as the teaching of the holy Qur’an.

He said: “Imams are established because they are appointed as leader. And most of these leaders emerge either through situational or accidental means. Many people wrongly assumed that because they are Imams, they are already leader. This is not so. For them to be effective as leaders, this is why we are emphasising that they must be trained. So, this programme was just to enhance their performance and give them more insights into the position of leadership.”

While stressing the important role Imams play in the Muslim community, he enjoined them to be a good ambassador that promote positive things about the religion so that their followers can become better through their teachings.

In his lecture, Executive Secretary, Lagos State Scholarship Board, Abdurrahman Lekki, identified poor leadership as one of the major challenges affecting the country’s growth.

To address the crisis, Lekki called for the creation of a national curriculum on leadership skills across all spectrum from Primary to tertiary institutions.

He said: “We have a preponderance of people in the country who are potential leaders that need to be trained and that is why we need to design a national curriculum on leadership which will entail leadership development, capacity building, among others right from the cradle to the tertiary institution level.”

“Of the countries in the world that have policy on national curriculum that covers all spectrum is Kuwait. In terms of

political leadership emergence, one of the countries with detailed and structured national curriculum is China. And when it comes to leadership being a part of culture of a people, Japan has been the only country that has successfully act it out. This tells us that as Nigerians, we really need to do a lot in the area of leadership development.”

Lamenting the devastating impact of bad leadership in the country, Lekki argued that for Nigeria to escape its current leadership quagmire, it must prioritise effective leadership, which he said, “is the foundation of progress. It drives innovation, motivates others, and navigates through obstacles. By demonstrating effective leadership, current leaders can inspire the next generation to take up leadership roles.”

He also called for a comprehensive review of the Arabic Studies curriculum in madrasahs, where students typically spend eight years before graduating, emphasising the need to prioritise relevant courses and curriculum that is tailored to meet the needs of the students.

He said, “Essentially, the idadiyah which is four years can be completed in one year because we need to give priority to some content of the Islamic studies and Arabic appreciation which include, ability to read, and understand the basic concepts of the Arabic language. For the Thanawiy, it can be completed in one and half years.”

For participants, the highlight of the conference was the awareness about the opportunities abound in learning vocational skills under National Directorate of Employment (NDE).



**UNIMED urges Nigeria to harness \$100b global market of medicinal plants**  
**Says market will hit \$5tr in 2050**  
From **Adewale Momoh, Akure**

THE University of Medical Sciences (UNIMED), Ondo City, Ondo State, has revealed that with the abundance of medicinal plants in the country, Nigeria must exploit its global market currently estimated at about \$100 billion. The institution, while disclosing that the global market of medicinal plants will be worth \$5 trillion by 2050, expressed determination in the exploration of herbal medicine. It stated this, yesterday, during the African Traditional Medicine Day, with the theme, "Development and Promotion of Indigenous Herbal Medicine to Facilitate Universal Healthcare in Nigeria," organised by the Centre for Herbal Medicine and Drug Discovery and held at the Laje campus of the university. The keynote speaker, Zainab Shariff, in a paper titled "Development and Promotion of Indigenous Medicinal Plants to Facilitate Universal Healthcare in Nigeria" emphasised the need for value addition to the existing medicinal plants in Nigeria to make them exportable. She said: "Nigeria is not indicated in the export of medicinal plants despite its large biodiversity. All hope is not lost, however, if the nation can identify hectares of land for cultivation of medicinal plants."

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

**OPC marks 30th anniversary, laments flawed democracy**

By **Opeyemi Babalola**  
THE Oodua People's Congress (OPC) has decried the shoddy state of democracy in Nigeria, saying that 25 years of uninterrupted democracy have yielded little progress in addressing the concerns raised by its visionary leaders and the Founder, the late Frederick Fasehun. OPC National President, Wasiu Afolabi, who made the remarks, yesterday, during an event to mark the 30th anniversary of the group, said that the neglect of people's grievances had hindered the nation's development and perpetuated social injustices. He said that OPC played a pivotal role in the struggle for democracy during the military's dictatorship era. "OPC has received virtually zero-benefits in this democracy for which it sacrificed so much to produce. This makes OPC to look like the head used to crack the coconut but is denied the benefit of tasting the fruit of its labour and the sacrifice. This injustice must be corrected. Let the OPC and its members benefit from the democracy that they fought and died for."

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

# Afe Babalola cautions against 18 years limit for WAEC, NECO

From **Ayodele Afolabi, Ado-Ekiti**

FOUNDER of Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD), Afe Babalola, has cautioned the Federal Government against pegging admission into tertiary institutions to 18 years, saying that doing so could hamper the development of gifted children. The legal icon, who spoke, yesterday, at ABUAD campus in Ado-Ekiti, while reacting to a statement credited to the Education Minister, Prof. Tahir Mamman, on 18 years minimum age for writing WAEC and NECO examinations, and university admission, said that such policy is against the autonomy of the universities on the discretion to grant exception in cases of gifted children. Mamman had during a television programme said that the minimum age of admission into higher institutions would 18 years. He said: "The meeting that we had with JAMB was to allow underage candidates this year and for it to serve as a kind of notice for parents. "JAMB will admit students that are below that age, but from next year, the board is going to insist that anybody applying to go to university in Nigeria should meet the

required age, which is 18. "In any case, NECO and WAEC, henceforth, will not be allowing under-age children to write their examinations." Babalola, who disagreed with the minister that students below 18 years are not mature for university education, said that age is not maturity. He added: "Children are now demonstrating exceptional academic intelligence which is not common in their ages. I strongly believe that no child deserves to have his or her dreams impugned upon by reason of age alone. "Maturity is not a function of age. Rather, it is a function of

the mindset, emotional intelligence and the ability to understand oneself and the world. Maturity is earned from training the mind, not from aging. Consequently, we have many adults who are all but not matured in the way they think, act, or relate with others and the world they live in. "University autonomy includes, among other things, the discretion to waive the minimum age requirement for students who pass the minimum admission requirements and possess exceptional academic potentials.

"This is also obtainable in the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Norway and South Korea. It should not be within the competence of the Federal Government to direct that students of certain ages are disqualified from entering into tertiary institutions after they had met all other admission requirements." The Founder and Chancellor of ABUAD insisted that the decision lies between the students and the university, saying that there have been instances that students admitted at the age of 16 graduated with First Class.

He said that it is the duty of the university to exercise that discretion and it would continue at ABUAD for gifted children.



Lagos State Head of Service (HoS), Olabode Agoro (left); Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, and Executive Secretary, Lateef Jakande Leadership Academy (LJLA), Ayisat Agbaje-Okunade, during the graduation ceremony of the 2023/2024 cohort of LJLA in Ikeja, Lagos.

## Conference of Speakers seeks support on implementation of e-parliament

From **Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan**

THE Conference of Speakers of State Legislatures of Nigeria has called for collaboration with strategic partners to support the implementation and adoption of E-parliament in State Assemblies across the country. Its Chairman, Adebayo Ogundoyin, made the appeal in Abuja while delivering a keynote address during a one-day reflection session organised by the Conference in collaboration with its strategic partners - Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) and Engaged Citizens Pillar

(ECP). He, however, stressed the need for a unified digital platform to streamline legislative activities, improve data management, and facilitate communication among legislators, committees, and stakeholders. According to him, the e-parliament will enhance transparency and accountability, improve citizens' engagement and participation, streamline legislative processes, increase access to legislative information, among others. Ogundoyin, while urging the strategic partners to join forces with the

Conference of Speakers to drive the initiative, share expertise and resources to ensure successful implementation, expressed optimism about the potential for the e-parliament to transform the legislative landscape in Nigeria. He acknowledged and commended PERL and ECP, as well as other strategic partners, for advocating and implementing various legislative reforms that have significantly improved the capacity and effectiveness of state legislatures. "I would like to commend our strategic partners for their remarkable pro-

grammes and activities that have continued to improve the legislative processes and ultimately promote good governance in the country. "As we gather here today to reflect on our journey so far, I am reminded of the significant progress we have made in championing legislative reforms at the state level. "The Conference of Speakers of State Legislatures of Nigeria has been at the forefront of this effort, and I am proud to say that our collaboration with PERL and others has been instrumental in driving this progress," he further said."

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

## Bill on local council administration scales second reading in Lagos

By **Shakirah Adunola**  
THE Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa, has mandated the House Committee on Local Council Administration and Community Affairs to look into the amendment of Local Council Administration Law and report back to the House within a week. This decision was the culmination of the lawmakers' debates during the second reading of a bill for a law to provide for "Local Council System, Establishment and Administration and to Consolidate All Laws of Local Council Administration and for Connecting Purpose." The bill, which aims to strengthen and streamline the operations of local councils in the state by ensuring effective governance and service delivery at the grassroots level, is to amend the existing laws on council administration in the state.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

## Ondo guber poll: ZLP's candidate, Mimiko, allays fears of rigging

From **Adewale Momoh, Akure**

THE governorship candidate of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) for the forthcoming off-cycle governorship election in Ondo State, Dr Abass Mimiko, has said that Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa should not expect that President Bola Tinubu will manipulate the election in his favour. Mimiko, who allayed the fears of the people that the election would be riddled with vote-buying, urged the electorate not to fall for the trick that Tinubu would release funds for the All Progressives Congress (APC) solely for the purpose. The ZLP candidate, who is

### NURTW rallies support for Aiyedatiwa

the younger brother of former Governor Olusegun Mimiko, stated this while addressing newsmen at the Correspondents' Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Secretariat in Akure, the state capital. He also said that he does not need the endorsement of his elder brother to emerge victorious at the poll. He urged the people of the state to vote for the candidate of their choice and should not be intimidated by the power-of-incumbency dummy. He said: "As it is now, we are the third force. The PDP, APC, and ZLP are the alternatives

Ondo State has. "President Bola Tinubu is not coming to rig elections for the APC. Don't let anybody deceive you that the President will come and impose on you. "The President wants his country to run and run successfully. And he has taken some very bold steps. It's unfortunate that we have states like Ondo that are not seizing the momentum. "I don't want my brother to give me any endorsement. What I need is the people, the endorsement of the masses, and the people of Ondo State. I won't vote for somebody

whose brother is raising his hand saying I became governor; come and vote for my brother! No! MEANWHILE, the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in Ondo State, yesterday, declared support for the governorship bid of Aiyedatiwa. According to the state Chairman of the union, Ademola Odudu, who expressed the union's confidence in Aiyedatiwa's leadership, hailed his achievements in road infrastructure development and his dedication to addressing the con-

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)



Olu of Warri to host dialogue on Africa’s transformation

IN bid to chart a new narrative among global impact makers, the Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III, and wife, Olori Atuwatse III, are set to lead notable leaders and visionaries to drive positive change on the Africa continent.

According to a statement endorsed by the royal couple, the initiative, called ‘Elevate Africa,’ is designed not only to showcase Africa’s potential, but to also create a platform where African voices can lead the conversation on their own development.

Among the distinguished speakers at the event is the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Rokel Commercial Bank, Sierra Leone, Dr Walton Ekundayo Gilpin, who will share insights on financial empowerment in Africa.

The event will also feature the Deputy Minister for Mines and Mineral Resources of Sierra Leone, Umaru Napoleon Koroma, who will discuss sustainable mining practices, a critical issue for the continent’s future.

Bayelsa recognises, celebrates outstanding teachers

THE Bayelsa State Universal Basic Education Board (Bayelsa SUBEB) has unveiled award-winning teachers and head teachers from Sagbama, Yenagoa, Kolokuma/Opokuma and Ogbia local council areas as it held the second edition of the BayelsaPRIME Teacher Appreciation Day.

Speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of the board, Victor Okubonanabo, noted that the “Teacher Appreciation Day is an opportunity to recognise the role of teachers in building leaders of tomorrow.” He called on teachers across the state to do their utmost in improving the quality of education in their various schools, as every teacher is recognised and appreciated.”

Also, the Commissioner for Education, Dr Gentle Emelah, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Mr Okene Simon-Peter, noted that Governor Douye Diri remains committed to the growth of schools, skills and quality education in the state.

One teacher and one head teacher emerged as award winners from the four local councils under the BayelsaPRIME reform programme.

APC plots to recapture Edo, South-East states

By Precious Olughodi

THE National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Umar Abdullahi Ganduje, has said that his party would recapture Edo State in the forthcoming September 21, 2024, governorship election.

Speaking to members of the Kano Correspondent Chapel of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) in his office, yesterday, Ganduje said: “I believe our campaign is in high spirits.

- ‘Oshiomhole’s third term plot dead on arrival’
- Edo people don’t watch cable TV, Okpebholo will not feature, Tenebe claims

We are getting ready for that election, and we will be able to recover our state because it was an APC state; but due to internal wrangling, we lost it to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

“As for Ondo State, it’s already an APC state, and after the former governor died with several problems, we were able to resolve those issues. We conducted

primaries and succeeded in getting the person that they wanted,” he said.

Ganduje added that the North and South-East geopolitical zones claim that they have been marginalised, but “what we are telling them is that this marginalisation has been self-created. How can you have five states ruled by four political parties? What

will be your political bargain?”

HOWEVER, a PDP chieftain in the state, Oteghe Adams, has said that Adams Oshiomhole’s plot for an alleged “sinister third term”, through Okpebholo, is dead on arrival.

In a statement by the PDP leader yesterday, Oteghe said: “The compromised APC hierarchy is inescapably beset with defeat in the September 21 gubernatorial election, and consequently overwhelmed with consternation and traumatic episodes.

“Oshiomhole, in his sinister third term agenda, has seized and crashed both the *de facto* and *de jure* functions of ‘party leaders’ and the directorate of the APC governorship campaign council.”

MEANWHILE, featured on an *Arise News* Morning Show programme yesterday, the Edo APC Chairman, Emperor Tenebe, said that Edo people do not watch the channel, considering that it is meant for the bourgeoisie.

The Edo APC Chairman’s submission was coming on the heels of the request by the *Arise News* Morning Show anchors to have the governorship candidate of the APC, Monday Okpebholo, on the programme.



Mrs. Ifeyinwa Ighodalo (left); Edo PDP governorship candidate, Dr. Asue Ighodalo; Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki and Deputy Governorship candidate, Osarodion Ogie, during the official flag-off of the 2024 PDP Governorship campaign in Ubiaja Township Stadium, Ubiaja, Esan South East Local Government, yesterday.

Mbah inaugurates minimum wage implementation committee

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

GOVERNOR Peter Mbah of Enugu State, yesterday, inaugurated a committee for the implementation of the New National Minimum Wage for civil and public servants in the state at the Government House, giving the committee one month to submit its report.

The Head of Service, Kenneth Ugwu, was made the Chairman of the committee; the representative

Commissions mega asphalt plant in Enugu

of the Office of the Secretary to the State Government, Sandra George, was appointed the Secretary and the Commissioner for Finance and Economic Development, Dr. Nathaniel Uramah.

The Commissioner for Labour and Employment, Chika Ugwuoke, and the Accountant-General of the state, Anthony Okenwa, among others, were appointed members of the

committee.

On the labour side, the Chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Enugu State chapter, Fabian Nwigbo, and Chairman of the state chapter of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Benedict Asogwa were also appointed members.

Inaugurating the committee, Mbah reiterated his commitment to workers’ welfare, urging it to con-

sult widely with relevant stakeholders, especially the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to ensure that the workers take ownership of the eventual report.

ALSO, Mbah, yesterday, commissioned a mega asphalt production plant built by his administration. This is part of the effort of his administration to realise his promise of constructing 10,000 roads in eight years.

Otti flags off reconstruction of Ohafia-Arochukwu Road

From Gordi Udeajah, Umuahia

FOLLOWING a seeming break of the jinx that held the reconstruction of the dilapidated 41.4 kilometre Ohafia-Arochukwu Federal Road, which has been abandoned for over three decades despite contracts awarded for the reconstruction of the road by successive governments, Governor Alex Otti of Abia State, yesterday, flagged off the road reconstruction during a ceremony at Ohafia.

Speaking during the flag-

- Accuses successive federal, state govts of neglect
- Orji Kalu kicks, faults Otti’s claims

off, Otti said that for several decades, coming into Arochukwu from anywhere was an uphill task, prompting the cliché that ‘there is no easy and short route to Arochukwu.’

He said: “Today, we have come to begin a holistic process that will put an end to this age-old nightmare, and give fellow Abians living in the over 60 communities and clans around this corridor a new lease of life.”

Otti said that this road, built in the 1960s by the administration of the late Premier of the defunct Eastern region, Dr Michael Okpara, is a major artery connecting several communities and towns within this part of the Eastern region.

“It became a major economic enabler, leading to a boom in agriculture, commerce, and tourism, as individuals and families came in their numbers to either

trade or visit the many important national heritage sites in Arochukwu, including the ‘Osu gwodo gwodo’ Waterfall, the Ibini Ukpabi Shrine and other places of interest for research and leisure purposes.

The governor consequently stated that his administration sincerely took this bold initiative to see to the reconstruction of the road to save the Federal Government the embarrassment it has brought it before international visitors and tourists.

Edo guber candidates to sign peace pact Sept. 12

From Sodiq Omolayo, Abuja

CANDIDATES of 17 political parties participating in the Edo governorship election will be signing the peace accord on September 12, 2024, in Benin City, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said.

Those expected to commit themselves to a peaceful poll include the candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Asue Ighodalo, All Progressives Congress (APC), Monday Okpebholo, Olumide Akpata of the Labour Party (LP), among others.

The occasion will be presided over by the former military Head of State, Abdulsalami Abubakar.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, who disclosed this at an emergency meeting with the leadership of political parties, yesterday, in Abuja, said that the decision to sign the peace accord early is to enable the National Peace Committee (NPC) to monitor compliance by the parties before the election.

Yakubu said: “After consultation with the NPC under the leadership of our respected former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, the signing of the peace accord for the Edo State governorship election will be held on Thursday, September 12, 2024, in Benin City.”

Obaseki, Rema perform groundbreaking for Edo Arena

From Michael Egbejule, Benin City

EDO State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, has performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the Edo Arena, a state-of-the-art conference hall and event centre. The afrobeat sensation, Divine Ikubor, popularly known as Rema, also performed at the occasion.

The Edo Arena, which is to be called ‘The Dome’, is sited at the former Garrick Memorial School Ground, Ekehuan Road, in Benin City, the Edo State capital.

Rema arrived in his hometown of Benin, on Tuesday, ahead of his highly anticipated homecoming concert scheduled for Friday, August 30, 2024.

Obaseki and Rema were joined by the governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Dr Asue Ighodalo, and the Commissioner for Tourism, Arts, Culture and Diaspora Affairs, Uyi Oduwa Malaka, among other top government functionaries.

The elated music sensation thanked the people for their relentless love and support, commending Obaseki for his bold reforms and projects that have improved lives and transformed the state in the last eight years.



## Shettima embargoes congratulatory messages on 58th birthday

Asks for funds to be donated to charity

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

VICE President Kashim Shettima has placed an embargo on all kinds of congratulatory advertisements on pages of newspapers to celebrate his 58th birthday next week.

But in a restraining appeal yesterday, Shettima pleaded against what he described as “elaborate pageantry” to mark the day.

He rather implored family members, friends and associates, who may wish to place goodwill messages as advertisements to kindly donate the funds to charity

organisations and vulnerable citizens instead.

Issued by his Senior Special Assistant on Media and Communication, Stanley Nkwocha, the statement reads in part: “On Monday, September 2, 2024, His Excellency, Vice President Kashim Shettima, GCON, will turn 58 years old. This exceptional day marks another landmark moment for him to reflect and gauge how much ground he has covered in the course of his stewardship to the nation and its people, as a leader and public servant.

## Drive education reforms, FG tasks TETFund

From Owede Agbajileke, Abuja

THE Federal Government has charged the new Board of Trustees, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and governing councils of federal tertiary institutions to utilise their knowledge and capabilities to drive meaningful reforms in the sector.

Minister of Education, Prof Tahir Mamman, stated this yesterday in Abuja while inaugurating the TETFund Board of Trustees and governing councils of some federal tertiary institutions.

He challenged the new appointees to leverage their professional networks to draw in essential resources

and support for the institutions, underscoring the government’s reliance on them to overcome the significant challenges confronting the tertiary education sector.

His words: “Your appointment is a clear recognition of your track records, established integrity, and experience. These appointments reflect the diversity of our nation, professions, expertise, and experience in various areas.

“I want to thank you for accepting this invitation to join in the task of advancing our tertiary institutions so they can fulfill their commitment to quality teaching, learning, research, and service to our communities and our nation.

## Group knocks CCT ex-boss for allegedly recording zero conviction

From Sodiq Omolaoye, Abuja

THE Northern Patriotic Front has faulted the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) on its supposed zero conviction record over the past four years.

According to the group, the CCT’s alleged failure to secure convictions during the tenure of its former chairman, Danladi Umar, despite hundreds of pending cases, has undermined public trust in Nigeria’s anti-corruption

efforts.

The organisation also urged the media aide to the former CCT chairman, Usman Atekojo, to desist from any act capable of “jeopardising the integrity and image of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu over the recent replacement of his boss.”

Recall that the President, in a press statement by his spokesman, Ajuri Ngelale, replaced the CCT leadership with Dr Mainasara Umar Kogo.

## Appoint minister from Plateau, APC tells FG

From Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi, Jos

MEMBERS of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 17 council areas of Plateau have urged President Bola Tinubu to constitutionally appoint a minister from the state to fill the vacancy that has existed for over eight months.

Under the aegis of Plateau APC Like-Minds, they made the demand in a statement yesterday, issued by its leader, Hassan Isa Maimadara.

The group expressed its admiration for Tinubu’s leadership and vision for a prosperous Nigeria, adding that a minister from Plateau State would actualise the Renewed

Hope Vision of the President for a better Nigeria.

They said: “We recall with pride the pivotal role Plateau State played in your electoral success, delivering an impressive 307,195 votes, exceeding the 25% requirement and surpassing many other states.

“However, we humbly bring to your attention the pressing need to appoint a minister from Plateau State to fill the vacancy that has existed for over eight months. This void has left our state without representation in the Federal Executive Council, despite our significant contribution to your electoral victory.

# FG gives traders one month to crash prices of goods

By Tobi Awodipe

THE Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) has given a one-month deadline to traders and relevant stakeholders to crash prices of goods.

Its Executive Vice Chairman, Tunji Bello, gave the ultimatum at a one-day stakeholders’ engagement on exploitative pricing, yesterday.

He said they would begin enforcement actions at the end of the deadline.

Bello explained that the meeting was convened to address the increasing trend of unreasonable pricing of consumer goods and services, as well as the unethical practices by market associations.

Citing a finding by the commission, he said a fruit blender known as Ninja, is priced at \$89 (N140,000) in Texas, but being sold at N944,999 in a supermarket in Victoria Island, Lagos.

Questioning the basis for the arbitrary hike, he said the unwholesome practices, including price fixing, threaten the stability of the economy.

His words: “Under Section 155, violators, whether individuals or corporate entities face severe penalties, including substantial fines and imprisonment if found guilty by the court. This is intended to deter all parties involved in such illicit activities. However, our approach today is not punitive. I call on all stakeholders to embrace the spirit of patriotism and

cooperation and it is in this spirit that we are giving a moratorium of one month before we will start firm enforcement.”

On his part, Chairperson, National Association of Nigerian Traders, FCT chapter, Ifeanyi Okonkwo, said the charges on imported goods at the ports play a significant role in price hikes.

He urged the commission to

establish a task force and include the association in its enforcement efforts.

Saying the government was aware of most of the problems raised by stakeholders, Bello stated that traders have genuine issues and that the government has the responsibility to address the problems, adding that some of the faults still go to the traders.



Wife of former President, Dame Patience Jonathan (left); former Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, and Commandant of the National Defence College, Rear Admiral Olumuyiwa Olutu, during the Defence headquarters’ annual gender conference in Abuja...yesterday.

## Again, Kefas promises to defeat insecurity in Taraba

From Charles Akpeji (Jalingo) and Saxone Akhaine (Kaduna)

GOVERNOR Agbu Kefas has reiterated his administration’s commitment to combating violent extremism and terrorism financing in Taraba State.

This, if achieved, he believes would create a peaceful environment for the development of the state.

The declaration was made yesterday in Jalingo, the state capital, through his Chief of Staff, Jeji Williams, at a two-day workshop, organised by the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (CISLAC), with support from GIABA – ECOWAS Commission.

## Shehu Sani lauds Gobir residents for bravery

The workshop, which focused on early detection, reporting, prevention and proactive responses to violent extremism and counter-terrorism financing, drew participants from security agencies, media, traditional and religious institutions, among others

His administration, according to the governor, would leave no stone unturned in its efforts to address the evolving nature of insecurity in the state.

Earlier, the Project Manager of CISLAC, Jimoh Abubakar, who outlined the workshop’s objectives to include foster-

ing conversations at the grassroots and community levels on countering terrorism financing, noted that terrorism financing often occurs at the community level, sometimes unnoticed, which he said, often undermines peace and security across the federation.

BESIDES, rights activist and former National Assembly lawmaker, Shehu Sani, has commended the people of Gobir communities in Sokoto State for heeding calls to confront the bandits threatening their existence.

In a viral video, thousands of residents stormed the forest

to confront the hoodlums.

Reacting to the film, Sani said: it’s high time the people took over the fight against banditry frontally without fear, stressing: “No better time for People’s Shahada Actions than now.”

The ex-lawmaker, who expressed anger over the killing of the Emir of Gobir and the incessant kidnap by ravaging bandits in the northern region, noted the “failure on the side of security agencies to tackle issues of insecurity, especially banditry, compelled him to make the call for People’s Shahada Actions as the potent solution to contain the excesses of bandits.”

## ITUC-Africa opposes clampdown on journalists, CSOs

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

AFRICAN Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) has cautioned the continent’s leaders against wanton arrest and detention of civil society and media practitioners.

Its General Secretary, Joel Odigie, who gave the warning yesterday in a statement, said the labour group was worried that the abilities and possibilities of non-state actors and human rights defenders to contribute towards attaining Africa’s aspirations were coming under renewed attacks by some governments.

The regional confederation

claimed that in Nigeria, some government agencies confiscated some bank accounts and labelled individuals persona non grata on allegations of funding the August 1-10 #EndBadGovernance protest.

The body also pointed out that the government of Zimbabwe rounded up CSOs and trade union leaders on the pretext that it wanted to prevent alleged planned protests during the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of State Summit in Harare.

On the unsavoury experiences of journalists, ITUC-Africa observed that investigative journalists, activists

and protesters were not spared.

Odigie added: “Several journalists were rounded up, abducted and arrested in a Gestapo manner from their homes in the wee hours, staked and taken to unknown destinations and denied legal rights and representation. Criminalising citizen activism by these African governments and others are alarming and unacceptable.”

ITUC-Africa stressed that it sees trumped-up accusations and actions against CSOs, journalists, activists and citizens as weighty, sweeping, and dangerous, stating: “We reject them and call on the Kenyan, Nigerian, Zimbabwean and other

African governments to rethink and retrace their approaches and actions to dealing with internal governance issues rather than seek scapegoats.”

It insisted that protests are tools for ensuring citizens’ participation in democracy and securing accountability.

The organisation maintained that regime change in a civil rule should only happen via the constitutionally and legally prescribed instruments within the continent’s different democracies, pledging: “We shall continue to oppose undemocratic changes in power on the continent. We shall remain a critical and robust voice for participatory democracy and good governance.”



www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria



Falconets

Colombia 2024 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup

## Falconets land in Bogota ahead of opening clash with Korea

NIGERIA'S U-20 girls, Falconets, have taken up residence at their Wyndhad Hotel, Bogota, where the team will reside for their first two matches of the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup, tagged Colombia 2024. After

scoring 27 goals in a total of eight premium games (six competitive and two friendly matches), the 2010 and 2014 runners-up arrived in high spirits while looking forward to their first match of the tournament against Korea Republic, on Monday.

The Koreans have finished in third place in one championship in the 22-year-old competition, and have promised to provide stiff opposition for the perennial finalists. Nigeria is one of only four countries to have featured in every edition of the finals since the compe-

titition was launched in Canada as an U19 event in 2002. The Falconets have further group phase encounters against three-time champions, Germany (also in Bogota) and Venezuela (in Cali), on September 4 and September 7 respectively.



Lukaku

## Chelsea confirm Lukaku's £30m exit as Antonio Conte hails 'unique' star

ROMELU Lukaku's permanent Chelsea exit has been confirmed with the "unique" striker joining Antonio Conte's Napoli in a £30m deal yesterday. The Blues have been desperate to offload the Belgium international for a long time and have finally managed to get him off the books at Stamford Bridge. Chelsea signed Lukaku for a club-record £97.5m three years ago – in what was his second stint at the club – but it didn't work out and he was sent out on loan twice. It was a huge headache for Chelsea – given Lukaku was earning £325,000-a-week – but he's finally gone and Conte is delighted to bring the 31-year-old to

Napoli. "What can I say about Romelu," Napoli boss Conte said in a press conference after the club announced his arrival on social media. "He is a unique centre-forward. Usually, the big strikers are a bit slow, or you have to use them as a target in the penalty area, or they don't have the best legs to exploit the space on the pitch. "I have always described Lukaku as an American Football Player, he's 1.90m tall, but very fast. "He is a powerful player, we need someone who can hold it up, bring other players in, and find combinations, while also being a

player who can attack spaces and cause damage. "That's why I consider him to be unique. Having already said that he's a good guy, I would put my hand on an open flame for him, and he knows the responsibility that has for me, for Napoli, and for the fans." Lukaku's exit may open the door for Chelsea to sign Napoli's star striker, Victor Osimhen, although it should be noted that Al-Ahli are also strongly linked to him. Napoli representatives flew to London last week for crunch talks with Chelsea over both Lukaku and Osimhen.

## Winners to get N1m as Lagos Scrabble Classics hold Sept 28

By Chinedu Onuoha

ORGANISERS of this year's Lekki Scrabble Classics have announced that the event will hold on September 28 and 29, at the Peninsula Hotel, Lagos. They have also announced a N1 million prize money for the winner of the classics. The Lekki Scrabble Classics have been at the forefront of pushing the spikes high and spreading quality in its strategic contribution to Scrabble development in Nigeria and globally.

At this year's championship, players are expected to compete in over 18 rounds of games in two main categories of A and B.

Spot prizes, gifts, and other consolation rewards will be received by deserving participants at the end.

Category A will accommodate players with ratings of 1,300 and above, while those who fall into ratings from 0-1,299 will jostle for winnings in Category B.

This year's edition has been certified by the Nigeria Scrabble Federation (NSF) and the continent's governing body, the Pan African Scrabble Association (PANASA).

Speaking ahead of the event, the president of the Lekki Scrabble Club, Samuel Anikoh, described the classics as the

flagship tournament of the club, which he also described as the most prestigious Scrabble club in Nigeria.

"You will be pleased to find a more impressive tournament organised by a scrabble club. The event has evolved over the last few years, and this year boasts a N1 million star prize in the Division A category.

"Of course the classy, comfortable and serene environment for the event will make playing scrabble a delight for all the participants, with breakfast and lunch provided. I can assure you that's not something you can get anywhere else," he said.

James Eruje won the 2022 edition of the classics after waving off a final challenge from Olufemi Gbadebo in the last round of games on Table 1, while current African champion, Enoch Nwali, stamped his authority on the last edition in 2023 to claim the top title.

### National Youth Games

## Fatodu: We're ready for South-West zonal preliminaries

By Jerry Isaac

LAGOS State has declared its readiness for the forthcoming National Youth Games' South West zonal preliminaries for the ball games, which began in Oshogbo, Osun State, yesterday and will end on September 1, 2024. Officials of the state's sports commission told The Guardian that Lagos is sending a formidable contingent of 188 athletes, both male and female, who are determined to secure one of the nine available slots for the national games. Director General of the Lagos State Sports Commission, Lekan Fatodu, said his body has been meticulously screening and training the young athletes to ensure transparency and adherence to the competition's age regulations.

Speaking on Lagos' preparation for the games, Fatodu said: "Our selection process is a demonstration of excellence, and we are confident that our athletes will not only excel in Oshogbo, but will also bring home gold for Lagos."

### UEFA Champions League

## Liverpool draws Real Madrid, Arsenal as Man City plays PSG

LIVERPOOL will face Champions League holders Real Madrid on their return to the competition following the draw for the new-look format. Manchester City and Arsenal both play Paris St-Germain in

their fixtures, while Aston Villa take on Scottish champions, Celtic. Each team plays eight fixtures in the "league phase," with this year's men's tournament seeing a radical change, in-

cluding the end of a group stage. The high-tech draw held in Monaco, yesterday, with Portugal forward Cristiano Ronaldo pressing the all-important button to make a

computer algorithm determine the fixtures.

A UEFA video shown before the draw used stars from across the game showing their confusion at the new format, before former Swedish

star, Zlatan Ibrahimovic praised it for "more football" in a comical interaction with UEFA President, Aleksander Ceferin.

The order of matches will be confirmed tomorrow, after the Europa League and Conference League draws have been made.

In yesterday's draw, Aston Villa will play against Bayern Munich, Leipzig, Juventus, Club Bruges, Celtic, Young Boys, Bologna, and Monaco.

Arsenal are drawn against Paris St-Germain, Inter Milan, Shakhtar Donetsk, Atalanta, Dinamo Zagreb, Sporting Lisbon, Monaco and Girona.





## World U20 Championships

# Nigeria's poor run on the world stage continues in Peru

By Gowon Akpodonor

AS it was at the Paris 2024 Olympics, where Nigeria failed to win any medal, the situation at the ongoing World U20 Championships in Lima, Peru, points at similar fate after long jumper, Pristina Ochonogor failed to win a medal on Wednesday night.

Nigerians were expecting Ochonogor, who made it to the final at the Paris Olympics, to grab at least a bronze medal at the junior championships in Peru, but she failed to repeat her 6.79m lifetime best, which she achieved at the UJ Esuene Stadium in Calabar, Cross River. The 18-year-old Ochonogor jumped 6.21m in the fifth round in Wednesday's final, but that was not enough as she finished fifth. Australia's Delta Amidzovski leaped a distance of 6.58m in the fifth round to win the gold with USA's Sophia Beckmon second with her 6.54m fifth-round effort while Poland's Julia Adamczyk also relied on her fifth-round jump (6.34m) to win the bronze.

The story was even worse for Team Nigeria in the women's 100m final, where Justina Eyakpobeyan also failed to fulfill expectations as she came in seventh (11.63).

Eyakpobeyan told *The Guardian*

shortly after her disappointing race that she was hurt about 10 minutes before the race.

The women's 100m final was won by Jamaica's Alana Reid (11.17) with British Virgin Islands Adaejah Hodge second (11.27) and Kishawna Niles of Barbados third (11.37).

As of yesterday, Nigeria's hopes of winning her 15th gold medal at the World Athletics U20 Championships was on the shoulder of Ella Onojuvwevw, who raced into the final of the women's 400m.

Onojuvwevw, who was also at the Paris Olympics, fulfilled expectations by picking one of the two automatic tickets on offer for the final in a semifinal heat that looked like a dress rehearsal for the final with all three pre-Championships favourites in action.

The fastest in the group pre-Championships at 50.52, Lurdes Gloria Manuel of the Czech Republic won in 51.91 and was followed by Onojuvwevw, who is also the second fastest coming to the championships, in 51.99, while USA's Michaela Mouton, the third fastest (50.96) coming to Lima, ran 52.72 to place third and qualify for this morning's final as one of the two non-automatic qualifiers.

Onojuvwevw is expected to fish out something good for Nigeria in the 400m final slated for 12.45 am, when a majority of Nigerians will

be asleep.

Before Wednesday's harvest of poor results, Nigeria's 4x400 mixed relay team had crashed out, while Israel Okon Sunday pulled out of the 100m semifinal due to injury.

The unexpected poor performance by Team Nigeria in Peru has jolted many athletics followers. "I still don't understand why most Nigerian athletes cannot equal or surpass their pre-tournament performance on the world stage, unlike in the past," veteran athletics writer, Uzor Odigbo queried.

"Something must be wrong. As for those running below par...12s in 100m...54s in 400m in Peru, I wonder how their selections happened. Instead of improving, they were running backward. Their coaches must explain.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)



Ella Onojuvwevw qualified for the women's 400 metres final at the ongoing World U-20 Athletics Championships in Lima, Peru. The final was decided in the early hours of today.



## Noni Madueke finally earns Three Lion's call-up, dumps Super Eagles

NIGERIA'S faint hopes of luring Chelsea star, Noni Madueke, to switch allegiance to the Super Eagles was extinguished, yesterday when England's interim Manager, Lee Carsley named the midfielder in his squad for the Three Lions coming international.

In his first squad since being named England interim manager, Carsley chose Madueke in a squad filled with youngsters as the Three

Lions gears up for Nations League games against the Republic of Ireland and Finland.

Among the new stars in the England setup are some of the players who featured for England's U-20 team under Carsley. They include Lille winger, Gomes; Newcastle defender, Livramento; Nottingham Forest midfielder, Gibbs-White, and Madueke. Manchester City playmaker Jack Grealish,

who was cut from England's preliminary Euro 2024 squad, has been recalled, as well as Manchester United defender Harry Maguire.

England take on the Republic of Ireland in Dublin, on September 7, and Finland at Wembley, on September 10, in the Nations League.

Carsley was appointed to the role following Gareth Southgate's resignation after Euro 2024.

Carsley, who played for the Republic of Ireland, spent three years as England's Under-21s boss after his appointment in 2021.

Six members of Carsley's first squad - Gomes, Madueke, Gibbs-White, Cole

Palmer, Anthony Gordon, and Levi Colwill - won the Under-21 European Championship under him in 2023.

Gomes, 23, left Manchester United for Lille in 2020. At United, he broke into the first team in 2017, aged 16 years 263 days, the youngest player to make his debut from the club since Duncan Edwards in 1953.

"Angel is very technical, he controls the game with his skill and his technique. He is very determined, has a great attitude, and loves football," Carsley said.

"I think he is a player people will be excited to see."

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

## Chelsea, Al Ahli at crossroads as Osimhen's transfer saga ends today

By Christian Okpara

HOW will the Victor Osimhen transfer saga end? This will be known later tonight when the European transfer closes around midnight.

However, the two teams interested in luring the Nigerian striker to their clubs are not relenting in pursuing the Napoli man.

Reports, yesterday, said that Chelsea have offered Osimhen a weekly salary of €350,000, which is €150,000 short of what the former Golden Eaglet is demanding. On the other hand, Saudi's Al Ahli have reportedly tendered a yearly salary worth €30 million (which is €625,000 per week) on a four-year deal with a release clause.

According to Italy's *Gazzetta dello sport*,

Chelsea have put together a proposal that matches the €70 million bid that Napoli has received from Al Ahli. But the report added that Osimhen's representatives have rejected Chelsea's salary offer, which means that the Saudi side are now very much in the running for the player's signature again.

The Osimhen camp is waiting for Chelsea to up their offer as the Super Eagles star is more disposed to remaining in Europe than going to Saudi Arabia at this stage in his career.

So, it is now up to Chelsea to up their offer to the player, or for Osimhen to accept what the Premier League side is offering, otherwise the forward "will listen to Al Ahli's offer" amid Osimhen's frustrations with how the process is playing out with his European suitors, following Paris Saint-Germain's failed pursuit earlier in the summer.

## 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 wholeheartedly 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](mailto:Complaints@guardian.ng)