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GOV. OBOREVWORI'S **MORE** AGENDA HAS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SHODDY JOBS. REPORT SUBSTANDARD JOBS/CONTRACTOR BY TEXTING AND SENDING PICTURES ONLY TO THE TELEPHONE NUMBER BELOW

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MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC PLANNING, DELTA STATE

The

Towards Truth and Unity

Pointer

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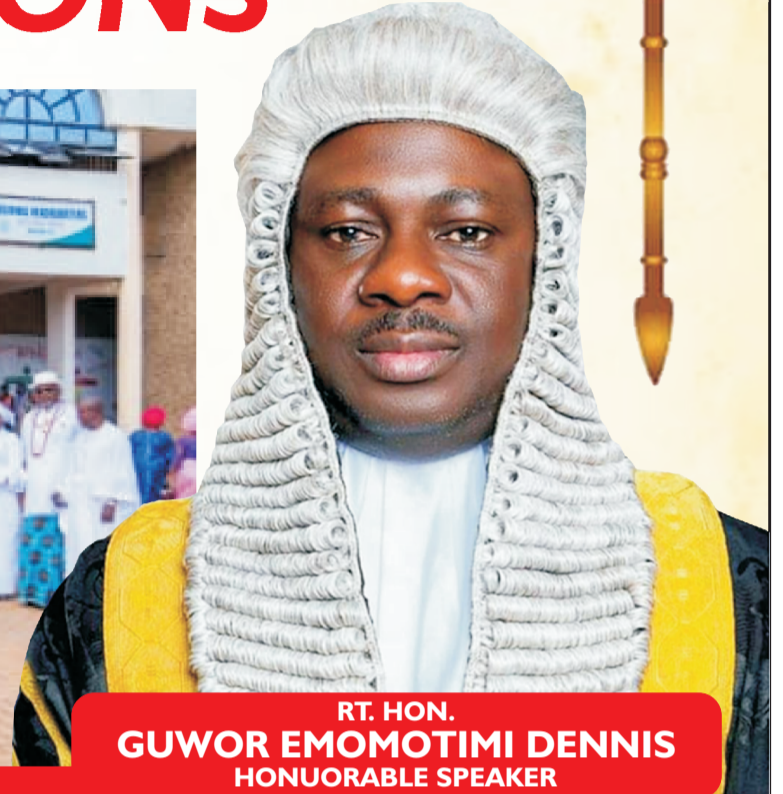
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Delta State House of Assembly Service Commission

FELICITATIONS



RT. HON.
GUWOR EMOMOTIMI DENNIS
HONOURABLE SPEAKER

The Chairman of the **Delta State House of Assembly Service Commission, Ebireri Ohwo Sunday**, on behalf of the members, management, and staff of the Commission, heartily felicitates with the Honourable Members of the Delta State House of Assembly on the occasion of the Third Anniversary of the 8th Assembly.

Over the past three years, the legislators have demonstrated exceptional commitment to their constitutional responsibilities through effective lawmaking, oversight, and representation. Their dedication has contributed significantly to the peace, stability, and development being enjoyed across the state.

The harmonious working relationship among the three arms of government has further enhanced good governance and accelerated the growth and progress of Delta State.

As a Commission, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to supporting the legislature in its service to the people of Delta State. We congratulate the Rt. Honourable Speaker, Principal Officers, and all Honourable Members on this milestone and wish them many more years of fruitful legislative accomplishments and celebrations ahead.

Congratulations and best wishes.



RT. HON.
AKPOWOWO ARTHUR
HONOURABLE DEPUTY SPEAKER



EBIRERI OHWO SUNDAY
Chairman, Delta State House of
Assembly Service Commission.

S I G N E D

CHIEF (DR.) MRS. PHILOMENA OYEANONE JP. - MEMBER
CHIEF (DR.) TIM. CHUKUNWOSA UMUOKORO - MEMBER
MRS. MOWOE KONBOYE FOH - MEMBER
CHIEF INNOCENT OKOFU - MEMBER
MR. ANDREW ORITS UKAYWE - MEMBER
CHIEF MOSES ASUAI CHUKUDI ONOWU - MEMBER
UWASIKE AUSTIN Esq. - SECRETARY

The Pointer News

Oborewori Mourns Ex-Health Commissioner, Otumara

DELTA State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori has expressed deep sorrow over the death of former Commissioner for Health, Dr Joseph Sisanmi Otumara, who passed away on Friday, June 12, 2026. He was 65.

In a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Sir Festus Ahon, Governor Oborewori described the late Otumara as an accomplished medical practitioner, distinguished administrator, astute politician and committed public servant whose contributions to the development of Delta State would remain indelible.

The Governor said the death of Dr Otumara was a painful loss not only to his family and the Itsekiri nation but also to Delta State and the All Progressives Congress (APC),

where he played several strategic roles.

According to the Governor, Otumara's remarkable career in public service, healthcare administration, and politics reflected his unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people and the progress of the state.

"On behalf of the government and people of Delta State, I mourn the passing of Dr Joseph Sisanmi Otumara, a distinguished statesman, seasoned administrator and former Commissioner for Health whose service to Delta State was exemplary.

"Dr Otumara dedicated his life to the service of humanity, first as a medical doctor and later as a public servant who occupied several important positions with diligence,

integrity and exceptional competence.

"His contributions to healthcare delivery, local government administration and political development in Delta State remain invaluable. His death is a great loss to the state and the nation," the Governor said.

Oborewori extended heartfelt condolences to the deceased's family, the people of Warri South, the Itsekiri nation, friends and political associates. He prayed to God to grant them the fortitude to bear the loss.

He also prayed for the peaceful repose of Dr Otumara's soul, noting that his legacy of service, leadership and commitment to humanity would continue to inspire future generations.



Delta State Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr Charles Aniagwu (2nd right); shortly after a cyber security training for staff of the Ministry Information by Bincom Development Centre.

Police Rescue Kidnap Victim, Nab Three Robbery Suspects

The Delta State Police Command has recorded major breakthroughs in its ongoing war against crime, rescuing a kidnapped victim unharmed, arresting three suspected armed robbers linked to a cult group, and recovering a locally fabricated pistol and hard drugs in separate operations across the state.

The Command disclosed the successes in a statement issued yesterday by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Bright Edefe, who said the operations underscored the determination of the police to rid the state of criminal elements.

In one of the operations, operatives of the Special Anti-Kidnapping and Cyber Crime Squad (SAKU) rescued a male kidnap victim without the payment of ransom after a coordinated intelligence-driven operation.

The victim was reportedly abducted by armed men in Okpanam on June 10. Following a report received by the police on June 11, operatives immediately launched a strategic operation, deploying intelligence assets to track down the kidnapers and secure the victim's release.

According to the police, sustained pressure mounted on the kidnapers through intelligence gathering and tactical deployment forced the suspects to abandon their captive and flee their hideout.

"As pressure mounted on the kidnapers through sustained intelligence gathering and operational deployment, the suspects abandoned the victim and fled from their hideout. The victim was rescued unharmed, debriefed and reunited with his family," the statement said.

The Command added that efforts were ongoing to identify and apprehend the fleeing suspects.

In a separate operation, officers attached to the Distress 01 Patrol Team of the Department of Operations arrested three suspected armed robbers

during a routine patrol in Asaba.

The suspects, identified as Ewendeze De-Grace, 19, Eruweghene Amede, 20, and Chukwuemeka Arinze, 21, were intercepted while travelling in a tricycle on June 12.

A search conducted on the suspects led to the recovery of a locally fabricated Beretta pistol.

"The suspects were subjected to a search during which one locally fabricated Beretta pistol was recovered. They were immediately arrested," the police stated.

Preliminary investigations, according to the Command, revealed that the trio are members of the notorious Aro Bagger Confraternity. The suspects and the recovered firearm remain in police custody as investigations continue.

In another crackdown targeting drug-related crimes, operatives of the Kwale Division raided a suspected drug distribution point in Kwale following credible intelligence.

The raid led to the arrest of a 45-year-old woman, identified as Ananyi Vivian, while two male suspects reportedly escaped upon sighting the police.

Police investigations revealed that the premises were being used for illicit drug activities.

"During interrogation, the suspect admitted being aware of the illegal activities taking place at the location," the statement noted.

The police said efforts were ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects and dismantle the network behind the illegal drug operation.

Commending the officers involved in the successful operations, the Commissioner of Police, Delta State Command, CP Yemi Oyeniya, praised their professionalism, vigilance and dedication to duty.

"The command remains unwavering in its resolve to combat all forms of crime and criminality across Delta State," the Commissioner said, urging residents to continue providing timely and credible information to security agencies.

New Prices

Change of Name - N5,000
Date of Birth Inclusive - N6,000
Effective January 1, 2025

2027: Performance Will Speak For Oborewori

—Aniagwu

BY PATRICK MGBODO

HEAD of the 2027 general elections, the Delta State Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr Charles Aniagwu, yesterday expressed confidence that Governor Sheriff Oborewori's performance in office would secure him a second term.

In an interview on the Arise Television programme, Mr Aniagwu said Governor Oborewori's greatest asset ahead of the generations is his performance in the governance of the state, stressing that his projects will speak very loudly for him.

"Across the 25 local government areas of the state, Governor Oborewori's projects will speak very loud" Aniagwu said, adding that even the governor's main opposition in the 2023 general elections, Sen Ovie Omo-Agege, also realised it and decided not to contest again for the governorship.

"If you come to Delta, you will know that Oborewori is performing. When you go to most communities, you will see the footprints of the governor" Aniagwu said, adding the subsisting zoning arrangement in the state is also in favour of the governor.

"Anybody picking the form from the Central knows that, firstly, you have lost over 60 per cent of the score because of the zoning sentiment. For the remaining 40 per cent, his performance will take it away from you. So, why would you want to just go and waste your money?"

Speaking on some of the governor's projects, the state's spokesman said "Oborewori has completed the Trans Warri-Ode-Itsekiri road project, which comprises about 15 bridges" adding that the state government has also tackled the storm challenges in cities across the state.

On the political front, Aniagwu explained the loss of Sen Ovie Omo-Agege and Sen Ned Nwoko in the All Progressives Congress (APC) primary election, stressing that their downfall was occasioned by their isolation from the party before and during the exercise.

"How can you proceed to want to win an election in a political party where you did not consult the leaders of that party? You know that ward leaders have a strong voice in terms of voting preferences and patterns in their respective wards" Aniagwu said.

Democracy Day: Group Urges FG, States To Prioritise Security, Livelihoods

BY RITA OYIBOKA

THE Coalition of Delta State Civil Society Organisations (CODECSO) has called on the Federal Government and state governments to place greater emphasis on the security and economic well-being of Nigerians, insisting that the success of democracy should be measured by the welfare of the people.

In a Democracy Day message signed by its President, Dr Martins Kedienhon, the coalition urged leaders at all levels to redirect governance towards addressing the pressing concerns of citizens, particularly insecurity and economic hardship.

According to the coalition, June 12 offers an opportunity not only to celebrate Nigeria's democratic journey but also to reflect on the challenges confronting the nation and renew commitments to people-centred governance.

"Democracy is meaningful when it guarantees the security of lives and property, protects fundamental rights, and creates opportunities for citizens to earn a decent livelihood," the statement said.

CODECSO noted that while Nigerians continue to celebrate the endurance of democratic rule, the government must ensure that the benefits of democracy are felt by ordinary citizens, especially vulnerable and underserved populations. The coalition stressed that the true measure of democratic success lies in the well-being of the people, urging authorities to strengthen institutions, promote accountability, and formulate policies that directly improve living conditions across the country.

It further emphasised that security and economic empowerment should remain at the forefront of governance at the federal, state, and local government levels.

"Security and economic empowerment must remain at the forefront of governance at all levels," the group stated.

The civil society coalition also called on Nigerians to remain committed to national unity, peace, justice, and active citizenship, saying collective efforts were needed to build a nation where every citizen feels safe, valued, and empowered to contribute to national development.

"On this Democracy Day, let us renew our commitment to unity, peace, justice, and active citizenship. Together, we can build a Nigeria where every citizen feels safe, valued, and empowered to contribute to national development," the statement added. The group expressed optimism that with responsible leadership and collective commitment, Nigeria could overcome its challenges and achieve sustainable development. "Good people, good nation. Nigeria will be better," Kedienhon stated.

The Pointer News

Kidnapping: Parents, Schools Take Security Measures

BY TRACY IKPONMWOSA/TEJIRI ESIRI/
IFEOMA EMAGHA

The abduction of over 40 schoolchildren in Oyo State has triggered a wave of heightened security responses across Nigeria's education sector, forcing parents, school administrators, and students into new, often restrictive safety routines as fear of school-based kidnappings deepens nationwide.

Recall that on May 15, 2026, at least 39 students and seven teachers were abducted from three schools, Baptist Nursery and Primary School, Yawota; Community Grammar School, Esiele; and L.A. Primary School, in the Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State.

In interviews with our correspondents, parents, teachers and school owners in Asaba to Benin, and other urban centres spoke about the new security measures they are taking.

According to a parent, Mrs Onoji Ochuko, the situation has fundamentally altered her daily responsibility as a mother. "The insecurity has made me more careful about my child's movement. I now personally ensure my child gets to school safely, and I always stay in contact with the school," she said.

Mrs Aghogho Omodio shared a similar shift in behaviour, noting that she has completely stopped allowing her child to move independently. "I no longer allow my child to travel alone. I either drop my child off myself or arrange trusted transportation. I also teach my child basic safety rules," she said.

Students, meanwhile, are increasingly aware of the risks beyond school gates.

A student of Dennis Osadebay University (DOU), Asaba, Fiona Okpotu, said school environments feel relatively safe due to visible security presence.

"I feel safe in school because security personnel are always around. My parents advise me not to talk to strangers and to be alert at all times," she said.

Chiemelie, a 14-year-old student near the Dennis Osadebay University axis, said dismissal periods no longer feel carefree. He explained that students now leave school quickly or wait in designated areas until authorised pick-up arrangements are confirmed.

In response to rising concerns, school proprietors have intensified internal security systems.

The proprietor of Royal Court Academy, Asaba, Mr Samuel Okafor, said schools are now operating under tighter surveillance protocols.

"We have strengthened security by employing guards and monitoring everyone who enters the premises. Visitors must register before gaining access," he revealed.

Similarly, the proprietress of Golden Gate Academy, Warri, Mrs Mary Ojembe, said schools have been compelled to upgrade safety procedures but insisted that government support remains critical.

A proprietress in Asaba, Mrs Chinyere Nwosu, said schools now screen all visitors after morning assembly and enforce stricter student collection procedures.

She added that while security agencies continue patrols in some areas, more visible protection is needed around school zones, especially during closing hours.

Calls for government intervention are also growing louder.

A principal in Asaba, Mr Uche, warned that while private schools are trying to improve security infrastructure, public schools remain critically exposed.

"First, police patrols. We need a patrol van around 7-8am and 2-4pm. Second, response time. When we call, it should not take 45 minutes. Third, fund fencing and CCTV for public schools. Private schools are trying, but most children are in public schools, and they're exposed," he said.

A civil servant, Mrs Linda Obi, said her household has completely restructured school logistics due to safety concerns.

According to her, her husband now handles morning drop-offs while she pays for a registered school bus for return trips. "It has increased our expenses," she said, "but as parents, we feel more comfortable knowing exactly how our children move around the city."

An estate surveyor, Mr Efe Osubor, said he constantly trains his children on situational awareness, warning them against strangers and encouraging them to identify safe public spaces.



The traditional ruler of Udu Kingdom, HRM Engr Michael Orugbo (left) with the Chairman of Oshimili North Local Government, Delta State, Chief Innocent Esewezie (right).

Monarch Confers Chieftaincy As Ojeogbue Hails Esewezie's Recognition

THE Chairman of Oshimili North Local Government Area, Chief Innocent Esewezie, is among illustrious Deltans who were honoured with a chieftaincy title by the traditional ruler of Udu Kingdom, HRM Engr Michael Orugbo.

Chief Esewezie was honoured with the title of Ovie Omo of Udu Kingdom and was celebrated by indigenes of the community where he once lived and mixed with friends and others.

While investing Chief Esewezie with the title, HRM Orugbo pointed out that the local government chairman has demonstrated brotherhood and humanitarian activities that qualified him to be recognised and honoured with the title.

He also spoke of his contributions to the development of the Udu kingdom and Delta State in general and urged him to continue in that stead, especially in championing

the MORE Agenda of the state government.

Commenting on the well-deserved recognition, the Chairman of All Progressives Party (APC) in Oshimili North Local Government Area, Hon. Ojeogbue Nnabuife, noted that it was in recognition of the numerous achievements of the local government chairman and prayed for God's continuous sustenance of his life.

He pointed out that the recognition came at a time the council boss clinched the party's House of Assembly ticket for the Oshimili North Constituency in the 2027 elections, adding that the chieftaincy title will spur him to do more for the people.

The party chairman also expressed the hope that if he emerged victorious in 2027, Chief Esewezie would join in the ongoing development programmes of the Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori administration.

Pastor Under Probe For Snatching 75 Married Women

ANAMBRA State government has confirmed the arrest of a cleric, Pastor Harrison Charles, owner of Day Spring Assembly in Awada, Onitsha, who has been accused of snatching up to 75 married women from their husbands.

Pastor Harrison's victims, who are mostly members of his church, have accused him of forcing them to swap wives and also taking church members' wives for himself.

Since the Anambra State government began the crackdown on fake pastors, which led to the arraignment of eight of them in court, several victims of fake pastors have been coming out to reveal their ordeals at the

hands of the clerics.

Special Adviser to the Governor of Anambra State on Media, Dr Ejimofor Opara, confirmed Harrison's arrest in a Facebook post.

He said the cleric has been handed over to the police, adding that a joint investigation between the Anambra State Police Command and the state government has commenced.

Ejimofor called on anyone with information on the pastor's activities to report to the state government.

He said: "Pastor Harrison Charles, owner of Day Spring Assembly in Awada, Onitsha, was arrested by operatives of Agunchemba following a viral video containing several allega-

tions against him.

"He is currently being investigated by the police, in collaboration with the Anambra State Government.

"During his arrest, about eleven babies were found in his home. He claims to be the father of these eleven babies, stating they are from eleven of his wives.

"He also claims he does not know the number of wives he has married or the total number of children he has.

"While investigations continue, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Community Security, Mr Ken Emeakayi, has urged anyone with additional information to report it to the State Government.

Ndokwa Youths Fix Roads, Demand Govt Action

BY CHINEDU AMEDE

MEMBERS of an Ndokwa youths group code-named the "Ndokwa Village Angry Youths Movement" have embarked on the voluntary maintenance of bad spots on major sand streets and roads, as well as the clearing of drainage systems within the Kwale metropolis, the headquarters of the Ndokwa West Local Government Area.

According to the National Secretary of the group, Comr Michael Onwumah, on behalf of their National President, Comr Henry Franklyn, and other members, their voluntary community service was triggered by the members'

zeal and commitment to leading by example and complementing the government's efforts.

He told our reporter that, as a critical pressure group, the members felt committed to living by example for others to emulate, pointing out that it was unpatriotic to leave everything to the government.

He, however, requested other Ndokwa elites, politicians and non-politicians alike to be united and work hand in hand towards complementing the efforts of the government in the overall development of the various Ndokwa communities. In other statements, Comr Onwumah explained that

their name "Angry Youths" was derived from their grouse.

He remarked that the youths were most angry that despite the presence of over seven oil-exploring companies within the area, there were still lots of unemployed youths. Moreover, the angry youths recalled that Ndokwa generates electricity via the Independent Power Plant (IPP) situated in Okpai Kingdom, Ndokwa East Local Government Area, which powers the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and many other states of the country, while Ndokwa remains without electricity.

SUNDAY



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PERSONALITY

Let Us Pause, Reflect On Our Democracy In Nigeria —Uduehi

OUR personality this week is a mother and sister, Dame Esther Uduehi, who is the Founder/President of the League of Women Voters of Nigeria (NILOWV). She has a distinguished career as a public servant, retiring as a Permanent Secretary in the defunct Bendel State (now Edo/Delta States). Before joining the civil service, she served first as a graduate teacher and rose to the position of school principal.

As a Permanent Secretary, she served in various Ministries and Departments, including Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Manpower Development and Establishment, Education, Commerce and Industry, and Civil Service Commission.

In this discussion with her on Democracy Day celebration in Nigeria, she did not hold back on what she feels about the celebration, capping it with, "Nigeria has taken many steps backwards in its democratic experiment, and there is a need for her to retrace her steps. Hear her:

"As Nigeria marks yet another Democracy Day, it is sad that we don't really have much to celebrate because the country has taken many steps backwards in its democratic practice, and there is an urgent need for it to retrace its steps if we must make any headway. We obviously can't afford to continue in the way we are going.

"As we mark this year's Democracy Day, therefore, I challenge the government, Federal, State, Local, and its citizens to reflect on the kind of democracy being practised in the country since the official Democracy Day was announced, to honour the struggle for Democracy, and the sacrifices made to get to where we are now.

"Rhetorically, let me ask Nigerians. What is Democracy in the true context and purpose of its founding fathers, and where have we gone since the first June 12 celebration?

"For me, democracy is government of the people, chosen by the people, and for the good of the people. It, therefore, presupposes that the government should work for the common good of all its citizens and people

in a country that practices the system of government. It is also expected that in a democracy, the citizens of a country should have the opportunity to freely express their views, freely contest in an election, be voted for, or vote for anybody of their choice, without fear of intimidation, while



Dr (Mrs) Esther Uduehi

the government takes care of the wellbeing of its citizens.

"But what do we have in our present democratic practice in Nigeria? People are no longer free to express their views, even when they are badly hurt, and if they do, they are threatened and intimidated. People are, therefore, afraid to talk or speak truth to power. A lot of them are frustrated and hungry, as the poverty level in the country has risen to the roof.

"We have congresses across political parties, and I stand by to watch Nigerians queue on the line, and I ask, what are they queuing for? No freedom to contest in an election, so the country has taken so many steps back; it needs to retrace its steps.

"But, do you know what? In all of these, our women and mothers are the most wounded,

"We have congresses across political parties, and I stand by to watch Nigerians queue on the line, and I ask, what are they queuing for? No freedom to contest in an election, so the country has taken so many steps back; it needs to retrace its steps.

as they are often denied the opportunity to express themselves freely, contest in an election, or be voted for, even when they are very qualified. That's how bad it is in our current democratic practice.

"I dare to say that, with the present situation of democratic practice in Nigeria, there is not much to celebrate. I am sad that the press, which is supposed to be the watchdog of the people and the country, has not done much in this regard. I expect the press to say and publish the truth always, to save Democracy in this country.

"You see, at some point, I imagine, could it be that the press is the one fighting the people, as it looks bought over, or compromised?

"As you are well aware, Democracy thrives when institutions like the Judiciary are strong and are not compromised. I have, therefore, not stopped to brood over the role of the Judiciary, particularly the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), in our current democratic practice in this country.

"Why is the NBA not talking in the midst of what is sadly happening to our Democracy? Or, have they too, compromised; are they afraid? Why are they not talking when people are disenfranchised?

"Time was when we had the NBA talking; it was a voice that was loud, even during the military regime, when many people were afraid to do so for fear of the military government back then. Sadly, all that has changed now.

"For me, as Nigeria marks yet another Democracy Day, let us, for a moment, stop

to think and reflect on our democratic experiment and journey.

Let us ask ourselves, where did we start from, where did we get it wrong, where are we now, and where are we going to? Is this Democracy working for the common good of all, or for a select few?" she asked.

"But what do we have in our present democratic practice in Nigeria? People are no longer free to express their views, even when they are badly hurt, and if they do, they are threatened and intimidated. People are, therefore, afraid to talk or speak truth to power. A lot of them are frustrated and hungry, as the poverty level in the country has risen to the roof.



He described the incident as a grave assault on children's right to education and safety. Fall said the continued captivity of the children and their teachers was deeply troubling, stressing that schools must remain safe spaces for learning rather than targets of violence and fear.

Nigerian School Children As Endangered Species (2)

...CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK

THE recent adoption of those innocent school children, which have been variously described as shameful, barbaric, traumatic and heartrending, has thrown affected families, relatives, government and the average Nigerian citizen into despair. The graphic images of those children lying down helplessly in the cold forest ground are quite unsettling.

Following the continued captivity of the kidnapped pupils and students, the National Headquarters of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) declared an indefinite strike across the State.

Under the directive, all primary and secondary teachers in Oyo State were ordered to completely withdraw their services beginning from June 1, 2026. Academic activities were suspended until the victims are safely and unconditionally released.

In addition to the industrial action in Oyo State, the NUT leadership also instructed all state wings of the Union across the country to mobilise for nation-wide solidarity rallies on Tuesday, June 2, 2026. These rallies were scheduled to culminate in the Government Houses in each state.

Also in solidarity, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) and National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) joined in a nationwide protest against the abduction of teachers and students in Oyo and Borno states, demanding their immediate and unconditional release.

National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), joined by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), on Monday, June 1, 2026, protested against the May 15, 2026, abduction of 42 pupils and teachers from public schools in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State. The protesters decried the government's negligence

and delayed action.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has also lent its voice to call on the Federal Government to declare a national security emergency as killings, kidnappings and terrorist attacks continue to spread across the country, warning that the nation is drifting deeper into crisis.

The apex Christian body said the worsening insecurity has reached a dangerous level, urging authorities to take urgent and decisive action to halt the bloodshed, rescue adopted citizens, protect vulnerable communities and restore public confidence.

The association equally announced a three-day national prayer program scheduled to run from June 12 to 14, 2021, with the 14th designated as "Black Sunday" in honour of victims of terrorist attacks and other forms of violence across the country.

The Nigerian Senate waded into the matter by calling on the Federal Government to intensify efforts and deploy all necessary resources for the immediate rescue of teachers, pupils and students abducted by terrorists in Oyo and Borno States.

The Red Chamber also called on the Federal Government to strengthen and expand the Safe School Initiative through enhanced surveillance, intelligence gathering and improved security deployment around vulnerable schools and communities across the country.

Seyi Makinde, Governor of Oyo State, blamed the adoption of the school children on a major gap in intelligence gathering and information-sharing. He warned residents against withholding critical security information from law enforcement agencies.

In its efforts to stem the incidence of kidnapping in Nigerian schools, the federal government, on June 4, 2026, launched a renewed offensive against terrorism

and kidnapping, declaring that no effort will be spared to rescue adopted school children and teachers in Oyo and Borno states.

In the wake of the adoptions, President Bola Tinubu ordered the deployment of a specialised rescue team and approved the recruitment of 1,000 Forest Guards to strengthen security across vulnerable communities.

The United Nations, through its Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohamed Fall, expressed concern over the recent abductions of school children and teachers in Oyo State, calling for their immediate and safe release, while urging Nigerian authorities to intensify efforts to secure schools nationwide.

He described the incident as a grave assault on children's right to education and safety. Fall said the continued captivity of the children and their teachers was deeply troubling, stressing that schools must remain safe spaces for learning rather than targets of violence and fear.

Reaffirming the UN's commitment to supporting initiatives aimed at creating safe, inclusive and violence-free learning environments across Nigeria, stressing the importance of protecting children's rights and guaranteeing access to education in conditions of safety and dignity.

Nigerians are tired of rhetoric and promises by the Federal Government. What Nigerians yearn for is action. The Federal Government, in collaboration with the Oyo State government and international security agencies, should do whatever it can to rescue the adopted school children in Oyo and Borno States, respectively, as a matter of urgency. How do we expect those children to grow up being proud of their country, Nigeria?

Sunday Inspiration

BY EVELYN ZORZOR

Your Experience Isn't Rule Book

ONE of the most subtle mistakes people make is turning their personal story into a universal formula. It often begins innocently.

I recently read an article from Tochukwu Nkwocha, and it made a lot of sense, this is inspiring and laying the foundation for this particular edition.

Something worked for you, a decision you made produced a good outcome, a risk you took paid off, and a principle you followed helped you survive a difficult season. Over time, what started as a testimony slowly transforms into a rule book, and before long, you begin speaking as though your experience is not merely one possible path but the path.

The problem is that life rarely operates that way. Human beings are tempted to believe that because they understand their own story, they understand everybody else's. We naturally interpret the world through our experiences. The challenge arises when we forget that our experiences are limited, incomplete, and deeply shaped by circumstances that may never exist in another person's life. Your story contains wisdom, but it does not contain all wisdom. Your journey was influenced by factors both seen and unseen.

Your personality, upbringing, opportunities, relationships, strengths, weaknesses, timing, environment, access, privileges, disappointments, and even the doors that opened unexpectedly all played a role in where you are today.

Some of those factors were products of

your choices. Others were simply realities you inherited or encountered.

When people ignore these complexities, they begin to oversimplify life.

They start assuming that everyone who fails to achieve what they achieved must be lazy.

Everyone who struggles where they succeeded must be foolish. Everyone who chooses differently must be lacking courage, wisdom, discipline, or faith.

But life is far more nuanced than that.

Two people can apply the same principle and experience completely different outcomes. Two people can work equally hard and arrive at different destinations. Two people can pray the same prayers, make similar sacrifices, and still walk through entirely different seasons. This is not always because one person did something wrong.

Sometimes life unfolds differently because people are carrying different realities. A mature person understands this. They know how to share their experiences without becoming enslaved to them. They know how to offer insight without presenting themselves as the final authority on every situation. They understand that wisdom is not proven by how loudly one speaks but by how carefully one listens.

There is a profound difference between saying, "This is what helped me," and saying, "This is what everybody must do."

The first is humility. The second is arrogance disguised as wisdom.

Unfortunately, this mindset appears

everywhere. In marriage, people assume their successful relationship automatically qualifies them to judge every struggling couple. In parenting, people forget that children possess different personalities, challenges, and emotional needs.

In business, successful entrepreneurs often tell their stories as though hard work alone explains every outcome, forgetting the countless variables that contributed to their success. In matters of faith, some people become convinced that because God worked in a particular way in their lives, He must work identically in everyone else's.

Even suffering is not exempt. Someone survives grief through one process and begins criticising those whose healing looks different.

Another overcomes hardship through sheer determination and concludes that everyone facing difficulty simply needs to try harder. In doing so, they forget that not all burdens weigh the same, and not every battle is fought under equal conditions.

One of the greatest signs of wisdom is recognising the limits of your own perspective. The older and wiser people become, the more they realise how little they actually know about another person's journey. They become slower to judge, slower to prescribe solutions, and quicker to acknowledge complexity.

They understand that principles matter, but context matters too. They understand that truth is not weakened by compassion.

They understand that empathy does not require abandoning wisdom. Most

importantly, they understand that people need more than instructions; they need understanding.

The world already contains enough voices telling people what they should have done. What many people desperately need is someone willing to understand what they were carrying when they made the choices they made. So tell your story.

Share your lessons.

Offer the wisdom your experiences have taught you. Your testimony may become a light for someone navigating a dark season. Your journey may inspire another person to keep moving forward. Your mistakes may help someone avoid unnecessary pain.

But hold your story with humility. Remember that it is a testimony, not a template. It is a perspective, not a universal law. It is one chapter in the vast library of human experience.

The moment we stop treating our experiences as the standard by which everyone else must be measured, we become better listeners, wiser teachers, and more compassionate human beings.

Because true wisdom does not insist that every life should look like ours.

True wisdom recognizes that while people may learn from our stories, they were never meant to become copies of them.

This version deepens the philosophical and human elements of the original while preserving its central message and flow.

In your journey to living and letting others live, you are complete and enough!

Human Angle

COMPILED BY
NWACHUKWU JUMAI



Police Arrest Guard For Defiling 16-Year-Old

DETECTIVES attached to Agbado Division of the Ogun State Police Command have arrested a 32-year-old suspect, identified as Abraham Aneka, a security guard, over allegations of defilement, criminal intimidation, and attempted robbery involving a 16-year-old girl in the Abule-Ijoko area of Ogun State.

The suspect was arrested following a swift and intelligence-backed response by operatives, which also led to the recovery of a single-barrel locally made firearm allegedly used to threaten the victim.

The incident was reported at Agbado division in the early hours of June 10, 2026, by a family member of the victim, who alleged that on the night of June 9, 2026, the teenage girl was on her way home when she was accosted by the suspect.

The suspect, armed with a locally made single-barrel gun, allegedly threatened her before forcibly taking her to his residence at Abule-Ijoko.

Upon receipt of the complaint, detectives of Agbado Division immediately launched a coordinated response. The suspect was promptly tracked, arrested, and the firearm allegedly used in the commission of the crime was recovered. The scene of the incident was also visited as part of ongoing investigative procedures.

Confirming the arrest, spokesperson of the command, DSP Oluseyi Babaseyi, said preliminary investigation revealed that the suspect allegedly had unlawful carnal knowledge of the minor without her consent and further attempted to dispossess her of her belongings.

The victim was thereafter issued a medical form and taken to a hospital for medical examination and treatment.

He said the case has been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Elewera, Abeokuta, for discreet and comprehensive investigation, while the suspect remains in custody pending the conclusion of the investigation and subsequent prosecution.

Parents Nab As Six-Month-Old Baby Tests Positive For Cocaine

A British couple have been arrested after the youngest child, a six-month-old baby, tested positive for cocaine.

According to Mail Online, the pair left their three young children in a Costa del Sol hotel to go out partying.

The baby has now been taken into temporary social services care, along with their siblings, aged four and two years old.

Sources close to the ongoing investigation have described the situation the youngsters were found in as 'worrying,' saying the hotel room they were in was in a mess and the eldest child was looking after the others.

Although the regional Junta de Andalucia government has taken temporary charge of the children, they are understood to have been taken to Malaga's Materno Infantil Hospital for a check-up.

It is not yet clear whether police waited for their parents to return to their hotel before arresting them or located them while they were still out partying.

The hotel they were staying at, which is in the popular resort of Benalmadena, has not been named.



Court Remands Woman For Killing Boyfriend Over Phone Charger

A Magistrate Court at Nomanland in Kano State has ordered the remand of a woman, Yasmin Shehu, in a correctional facility over the alleged killing of her boyfriend following a dispute reportedly sparked by a phone charger.

The defendant was arraigned before Magistrate Court No. 27 by state counsel led by the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Abdulkareem Kabir Maude (SAN).

The charges were read and translated to the accused by the court registrar, Mohammed Tudun Wada.

According to the prosecution, the incident occurred during an altercation between the defendant and the deceased, identified as Aminu Wali, inside a room.

The prosecution alleged that the disagreement, which began over a phone charger, escalated into a physical confrontation.

During the altercation, the deceased reportedly sprayed tear gas on the defendant.

However, the accused allegedly seized the canister, sprayed it back at him and subsequently struck him on the head, leading to his death.

The prosecution applied for an

adjournment to enable the Ministry of Justice to issue legal advice on the matter.

Counsel to the defendant, Barrister Abdurazak Abubakar, requested copies of the court processes and charges filed against his client. Ruling on the applications, the presiding magistrate, Hauwa Abba Musa, granted the requests and ordered that the defendant be remanded in a correctional centre pending further proceedings.

The case was adjourned until July 7, 2026, for continuation of the hearing.

Court Sentences Five To Death Over Lawyer's Murder

THE Edo State High Court sitting in Benin City has sentenced five persons to death by hanging for their involvement in the abduction and murder of a legal practitioner, Iyoha Osobase.

The court, however, discharged and acquitted one of the defendants, Solomon Esuiké, citing insufficient evidence linking him to the crime.

Delivering judgment in Charge No B/CD/136C/22, The State versus Valentine Dibie and Five Others, the presiding judge, Justice Efe Ikpomwonba, held that the prosecution proved its case against five of the defendants beyond a reasonable doubt.

The court consequently convicted the five defendants on charges of conspiracy; kidnapping and murder, imposing various prison terms and sentences, including death by hanging.

"It is clear that the prosecution successfully proved its case against five of you (the defendants) beyond a reasonable doubt. However, the evidence presented against the second defendant, Solomon Esuiké, was insufficient to sustain the charges against him. He is hereby discharged and acquitted," the judge stated.

The judgment brought to a close a criminal trial that had attracted significant attention within Edo State's legal community since the killing of Osobase in 2020.



Cultists Stab Student To Death In Campus Clash

A 300-level student of Prince Abubakar Audu University (PAAU), Anyigba in Kogi State, David Ocholi, has been killed on campus.

Ojima was killed during Final Year Brethren (FYB) celebrations. According to the anti-cultism organisation, Naija Confra, trouble started when some students believed to be members of a cult group reportedly appeared in their numbers at the height of the celebration, and started intimidating students with uncomplimentary remarks.

In a daring move, one of the alleged cultists reportedly stepped on the foot of a rival cult member, leading to an altercation. The rival cult member allegedly brought out a "weapon" and stabbed the "Chief Butcher" Ocholi David Ojima, also known as "Dior".

"During the school's FYB Jersey Day event, it was reported that Aye cultists were present and were reportedly intimidating students while shouting, 'I be Jew fade...'. The Aye cultists first had an encounter with Vikings (DNKI) cultists who outnumbered them, and the Ayes backed down," the organisation reported.

"They later encountered a Jurist cultist who had parked his car nearby, and they tried to intimidate him with the same phrase, 'I be Jew fade.'"

"One of the Aye cultists reportedly stepped on the Jurist cultist's foot, which angered him and led to the fight."



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Sunday Politics



Delegates of the APC Youth Alliance from across the 25 Local Government Areas of Delta State, led by Comrade Nduka Anuchi, recently convened in Asaba

Delta APC Youth Alliance Solidifies Grassroots Drive

BY CHIKA KWAMBA

IN a boost for grassroots mobilization, the Coordinator of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Youth Alliance, Comrade Nduka Anuchi, has expanded the all-inclusive Renewed Hope for MORE Agenda across Delta State's 25 local government areas.

This development follows a strategic visit to the Delta State APC Youth Leader, Comrade Christopher Agali, where he underscored the importance of driving a structured political campaign that spans both urban centers and rural grassroots communities.

Addressing coordinators, women leaders, youth leaders, and ward executives from the 25 local government area in a meeting held in Asaba, the Delta State capital, Anuchi highlighted the significance of the gathering and urged all delegates to uphold the party's structure.

"The government has given us the mandate to mobilize all local government coordinators, youth leaders, and women leaders. That is our task, and that is why we are here today. We are here to familiarize ourselves with one another, understand our local governments, recognize our positions, and know exactly where we belong."

"As coordinators of various local governments, we need to take whatever message we receive here back to the grassroots. This meeting is to prepare and plan our upcoming visit to the Delta State Deputy Governor,

Sir Monday Onyeme" Anuchi said.

He urged them, to work together and put group in order so that they can achieve their goals. I know everything will work out in our favor if we unite, mobilize our local government areas, and ensure everyone has a valid voter's card.

Also speaking, the Deputy Leader of the Aniocha Legislative Arm, Hon. David Omah, reaffirmed his commitment to supporting the pressure group.

He advised the youth to rally round their coordinator and provide the necessary moral support, urging them not to despise the days of little beginnings, to remain steadfast, and to strictly avoid anti-party activities.

The Secretary of the group, Engr Oghenetega Efurhiewe, applauded the delegates present, urging them to return to their communities to mobilize and establish solid structures across the 25 local government areas.

He also expressed absolute confidence in the leadership of Comr. Nduka Anuchi and other executives.

In their respective speeches, the Ika South Women Leader, Wanda Monye; Aniocha North Coordinator, Onyenuwe Anwuli; Oshimili South Women Leader, Amb. Lawretta Omeleze-Eso; Ndokwa West Coordinator, Nwaoko Frank; and Delta State Senatorial Districts Coordinator, Hon. Tobi Pidis, extolled the coordinator for his leadership prowess.

They emphasized the importance of the Permanent Voters Card (PVC) and delivering the Renewed Hope for MORE Agenda vision through active grassroots engagement.

Rivers Guber: 'I've No Godfather' –Fubara

THE governorship candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) in Rivers State, Blessing Fubara, has declared that he has no godfather but God.

Fubara disclosed this while noting that he and his brother, Governor Sim Fubara of Rivers State have a different perspective.

He spoke on a television programme while dismissing claims that his political ambition

is an extension of Fubara's political project.

According to Fubara, "I don't have a godfather but I have God the father. You would also agree with me that if my ambition is determined by the grounds you are mentioning it would mean I have no clear vision or focus for what I am working toward.

"My brother, Nigerians, and indeed the wider world saw what happened between him

and his party. We have different political ideologies and individual perspectives.

"It's a trying moment for us in Rivers State and there are all sorts of narratives. They come with different narratives and try to set up a perspective for the people to run with but we are focused with our eyes on the ball that the sole of Rivers State must be rescued."

June 12 Inspires Democratic Consolidation — SDP

THE Social Democratic Party (SDP) has said that the June 12, 1993 presidential election remains a powerful symbol of Nigerians' commitment to democracy, good governance and national unity.

In a Democracy Day statement in Abuja, the party's National Publicity Secretary, Rufus Aiyenigba, said the June 12, 1993 presidential election reflected Nigerians' collective aspiration for justice, accountability and national unity.

Aiyenigba said Nigerians, irrespective of ethnic, religious and regional differences, voted overwhelmingly for the late Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale (MKO) Abiola as a symbol of hope and national renewal.

"The Nigerian people spoke loudly with their votes against poverty, injustice, poor governance, nepotism and oppressive rule," he said.

According to him, the people of Kano voted for Abiola over their kinsman, Alhaji Bashir Tofa, demonstrating the pan-Nigerian appeal of both Abiola and the SDP.

He said the outcome of the election underscored the party's broad national acceptance and enduring relevance more than three decades later.

"The national appeal the party enjoyed then remains intact today, three decades after that historic election," he said.

Aiyenigba described the annulment of the election as a major setback that denied Nigerians the benefits of democratic governance and national integration.

He recalled that the decision triggered widespread protests, political instability and the detention of Abiola, who later died in custody.

"The ill-advised annulment provoked unprecedented national resistance and denied Nigerians the gains of a freely expressed democratic mandate," he said.

The SDP spokesman commended former President Muhammadu Buhari for recognising June 12 as Democracy Day and lauded the National Assembly for institutionalising the date.

"It is commendable that Buhari stood on the side of history by declaring June 12 as Nigeria's Democracy Day," he said.

Aiyenigba, however, lamented that many of the aspirations associated with the June 12 mandate remained unrealised due to policy failures by successive administrations.

He said Nigerians continued to grapple with poverty, unemployment, insecurity, corruption, poor governance and declining confidence in public institutions.

According to him, an SDP-led government under Abiola would have laid a solid foundation for national prosperity, social justice and democratic accountability.

He expressed regret that Nigeria lost the opportunity to benefit from Abiola's leadership but maintained that the party's vision for national development remained alive.

Aiyenigba said the party's leadership, under its National Chairman, Prof. Sadiq Gombe, and its 2027 presidential candidate, Mr Adewole Adebayo, was committed to repositioning the country for sustainable development.

Group Urges INEC, Govt To Deepen Public Trust In Democracy

THE African Electoral Integrity Initiative (AE2I) has urged the Executive, Legislature, Judiciary and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to take deliberate steps to strengthen public trust in Nigeria's democracy ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The Executive Director of AE2I, Dr Daniel Omofoman, made the call at a news conference themed "Sustaining Democratic Trust" in Abuja.

Omofoman urged the executive to uphold transparency and accountability, the legislature to pursue responsive lawmaking and the judiciary to maintain its independence.

According to him, democracy thrives not only through elections but through citizens' confidence in institutions,

leadership, the justice system and the electoral process.

He stressed the importance of social justice, saying democracy could not flourish where laws were applied selectively or where institutions were weakened by political interference.

He called for equitable access to education, healthcare, employment, security and economic opportunities to tackle poverty and youth unemployment.

"Citizens are more likely to trust democratic institutions when they experience the tangible dividends of democracy in their daily lives.

"Good roads, quality schools, accessible healthcare and reliable public services are essential pillars of democratic legitimacy," he said.

On political party administration,

Omofoman urged parties to deepen internal democracy through transparent primaries and cautioned against violence, hate speech and unhealthy political rivalry.

Addressing security concerns, he advocated a decentralised policing system to tackle insecurity at the grassroots.

"I believe the National Assembly is already working on state police, but I would recommend county or local area council police to take policing down to the root.

"We must decentralise the system, equip them and actively engage local people," he said.

Also speaking, the President of Nigerian Youth in Politics, Blessing Oyefeso, said the organisation was partnering with AE2I to rebuild young

people's confidence in the electoral process ahead of the 2027 polls.

Oyefeso disclosed plans to deploy more than 300,000 youth electoral guards and observers to support security agencies and the Independent National Electoral Commission in reducing voter apathy and promoting peaceful elections.

The President of the Female Youth Network, Ebere Ebenezer, commended INEC's Continuous Voter Registration portal but called for greater transparency in future elections.

"We are begging INEC for transparency. The same way the portal has been seamless is the same way we want the electronic transmission of results to be.

"We do not want technical glitches on Election Day; we want to see results uploaded in real time," she said.

SUNDAY FEATURES

World Day Against Child Labour: 18 million Futures Lost To Streets, Hawking Trays

BY PRISCA OKWECHIME/HANNAH PRAISE/EMMANUELLA INNOCENT

AS Nigeria joined the rest of the world to mark World Day Against Child Labour on June 12, stakeholders across the country have issued an urgent call to the federal and state governments, demanding immediate action to address the toxic combination of poverty, weak law enforcement, and limited access to quality education that continues to push vulnerable Nigerian children into forced labour.

With more than 18 million children reportedly out of school, correspondents of The Pointer took to busy junctions in Asaba and other urban centres where children as young as 10 are seen hawking sachet water, carrying heavy loads, and begging on the streets while their peers were in classrooms.

At Okpanam Road near the Midwifery area, a young boy, Godiva Sinde, who hawks pure water, said he works to support his mother. "I de help my mummy sell pure water make she fit get money," he said.

He described a daily routine of working from morning till night. "I no de go school. Na from the money I de make I take de chop. Outside too harsh," he said.

Asked what he needed to change his situation, he replied: "Only money, Ma."

A street child at Anioma Market, Godson Emeka, shared his daily struggles and the circumstances keeping him on the streets. According to him, poverty remains the major reason many children engage in street trading instead of attending school.

"My parents do not have enough money to take care of all of us. My mother sells small items, while my father does not have a stable job. I come out every day to help support my family. Some children here do not even live with their parents anymore; they stay with relatives or survive on their own," he said.

Speaking about his daily activities, Godson explained that he hawks sachet water, soft drinks, and snacks. He also carries loads in markets and occasionally washes cars whenever the opportunity arises.

Describing a typical day, he said he wakes up early to complete household chores before heading out to the streets to sell goods. According to him, he spends most of the day walking through markets and busy roads and sometimes remains outside until late evening if sales are poor.

Godson lamented the many challenges street children face, including hunger, insecurity, and lack of access to education.

"Sometimes I go hungry when sales are bad. Walking on the roads is dangerous because of vehicles, and some people insult or chase us away. There are days when I feel afraid because of thieves or people who want to take advantage of children. I do not attend school regularly because I have to work, and I feel sad when I see other children wearing their uniforms and going to class," he said.

He appealed for support that would enable children like him to leave the streets and return to school. "I would like to go to school every day without worrying about money. If my parents had a good job or someone had helped with my school fees and books, I would not have to be on the streets. I just want a chance to learn, have enough to eat, and have a better future," he said.

A street child in Jakpa Road, Warri, Enebeli Daniel, shared how he ended up begging after losing both parents. "My parents are dead, and I live with my aunt," he said. "She does not take proper care of me. Most times, I



do all the housework, but there is not always enough food."

He said survival forced him into begging. "I started begging because I needed food and basic things," Daniel appealed for assistance. "I want to go to school and become somebody in life. I need help to have a better future."

13-year-old Chinedu, who works in a local market, said he carries goods and helps traders arrange shops. "The money helps me eat, but I wish I could go back to school like other children," he said.

He lamented hunger, insecurity, and lack of shelter. "Sometimes we sleep in open places and are afraid of being attacked or harassed," he said.

Also, 14-year-old John, who has worked on the streets for over a year after losing his father, said he survives by carrying loads and selling sachet water. "When it rains, there is nowhere to stay, and sometimes people chase us away," he said.

In an interview with our correspondent, 14-year-old Chijoke, who sells pure water at a busy junction, said he was forced to abandon his education after his father lost his job. "I leave home very early every morning to sell water. Some days I make enough money, but some days I don't," Chijoke said. "Whatever I make helps my family buy food for the day."

When asked why he is not in school, the teenager said: "I stopped attending school two years ago because my parents could no longer pay my school fees and other things I need for school. I really want to go back to school if I get the opportunity again."

He also revealed that life on the streets is dangerous, adding that older street boys frequently threaten him and take his earnings.

For 14-year-old Esther, who hawks snacks in traffic, her daily routine is exhausting. "I wake up around 6 a.m. to help prepare the things I sell. I spend most of the day on the road and return home in the evening tired," she said.

Esther, who dreams of becoming a doctor, said she often misses school because of her work. "Life is difficult already when I have to work almost every day," she said.

When asked what could change her situation, she replied: "I want to go to school regularly and not worry about selling things before my family can eat. I wish to be treated like the

child that I am and also be protected."

She added that, as a girl child, she is frequently exposed to harassment from older boys and men in her environment.

A young parent, Mr Sunday Edeh, blamed worsening economic hardship for the persistence of child labour, while stressing that parents must still take responsibility. "No parent wants to see their child suffering on the streets, but the reality is that many families can barely feed themselves," he said. "Some children help their parents by hawking after school or during weekends."

He added that education must remain the priority. "Even in difficult situations, we must prioritise our children's education because that is the only way to secure their future," he said.

A primary school teacher, Mrs Mabel, said poverty remains the main driver of child labour across Nigeria. "Many parents are struggling to survive. When there is not enough money to feed the family, some children are forced to work instead of attending school," she said. "The problem is not just about the child; it starts from the home and extends to society."

She noted that although schools continue to encourage enrolment, many children drop out due to the inability to afford education. "The government has introduced several programmes, but many children are still not benefiting from them. We need better monitoring and stronger support systems," she added.

Child rights advocate Mrs Jennifer Okon expressed concern that intervention programmes are failing to reach the most vulnerable children.

"The challenge is not the absence of policies. Nigeria has laws against child labour, but implementation remains weak," she said. "Many rescued children eventually return to the streets because the conditions that pushed them there have not changed."

She added that rehabilitation efforts often focus on short-term relief rather than long-term solutions. "Without proper follow-up and support, the cycle continues," she said.

Teacher Collins Godwin said child labour persists because responsibility is not shared effectively among homes, schools, and the government. "Some parents, due to poverty, allow children to work instead of attending school. Schools struggle with inadequate facilities, while the government must enforce child protection laws and improve access to education," he said.

Another respondent, Mr Jude Monye, added that many intervention programmes fail due to weak enforcement and poor funding. "There is a gap between policy and implementation at the grassroots level," he said.

He stressed that rescuing children is not enough. "Without rehabilitation, education, and family support, many children return to labour," he said.

Mrs Grace Okonkwo called for economic empowerment and affordable education. "If education is made truly affordable and parents are empowered economically, fewer children will be forced into labour," she said.

Mrs Light James urged a stronger focus on rehabilitation, warning that many children fall back into exploitation after rescue due to weak support systems.



Govt House Watch

BY SUNNY EGEDE

Ndokwa Nation, Oborewori And Reward For Performance



IN politics, endorsements are often sought with fanfare, but the most meaningful votes of confidence are those earned through visible performance, inclusive governance and sustained engagement with the people. Such was the message that resonated at Government House, Asaba, when leaders of the Ndokwa Nation recently gathered under the umbrella of the Ndokwa Neku Union (NNU) to publicly affirm their support for Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori.

The visit, which brought together traditional rulers, political leaders, lawmakers, elders and stakeholders from across the Ndokwa ethnic nationality, was more than a routine courtesy call. It served as a reflection on governance, development and the growing relationship between the Oborewori administration and one of Delta State's most strategic ethnic nationalities.

At the heart of the meeting was a unanimous vote of confidence passed on the governor by the apex socio-cultural organisation of the Ndokwa Nation. According to the President-General of the NNU, Chief Amaechi Asugwuni, the endorsement was recognition of what he described as Oborewori's inclusive, equitable and development-oriented leadership style.

For many observers, the significance of the endorsement lies not merely in its political implications ahead of the 2027 electoral cycle, but also in what it reveals about communities' expectations and the standards by which leaders are increasingly judged.

Over the years, the Ndokwa Nation has advocated greater attention to infrastructure, education, electricity and economic development. Consequently, the delegation's commendation of the governor was tied directly to projects and interventions that have impacted the area.

One of such projects is the completion and handover of Ndokwa House, a landmark facility regarded by stakeholders as a symbol of unity and progress for the ethnic nationality. Beyond its physical structure, the building serves as a central hub for consultation, planning, and collective decision-making for present and future generations.

Equally noteworthy is the completion of the Asaba-Kwale-Ughelli Road, a project widely acknowledged as a game changer for transportation and economic activities within the state. The road has improved connectivity between Asaba and various Ndokwa communities while providing an alternative route for commuters and businesses.

Infrastructure remains one of the most visible indicators of governance, and for communities that have long sought improved access and connectivity, such projects naturally attract appreciation. However, beyond roads and buildings, the delegation highlighted another factor that has endeared the governor to many stakeholders which has to do with his (the Governor's) accessibility.

Chief Asugwuni praised Oborewori's open-door policy, noting that requests for meetings and consultations had consistently received positive responses. In an era where citizens often complain

about the widening gap between leaders and the people, accessibility has become a valued leadership quality.

Yet, even amid commendations, the Ndokwa leaders did not shy away from raising pressing concerns. Foremost among them was the challenge of electricity supply, a longstanding issue affecting many communities in the area.

The delegation renewed calls for the step-down of power from the Okpai Independent Power Plant, arguing that communities situated close to major power-generating facilities should not continue to grapple with inadequate

electricity supply.

Their concerns underscore a recurring paradox in Nigeria's energy landscape. Communities that host critical energy infrastructure often remain underserved despite their strategic importance to national power generation. Addressing such disparities has become increasingly important in fostering public trust and ensuring equitable development.

Significantly, the Ndokwa leaders coupled their demands with a strong condemnation of vandalism targeting electricity infrastructure. They acknowledged that acts of sabotage had contributed to the setbacks experienced in restoring power to affected communities.

"As a people, we condemn in the strongest possible terms, every act of vandalism directed at public infrastructure," Asugwuni declared, emphasising that development cannot thrive where public assets are routinely destroyed.

The statement reflects a growing recognition that development is a shared responsibility. While governments are expected to provide infrastructure, communities also have an obligation to protect public investments from criminal elements.

Responding to the delegation, Governor Oborewori welcomed both the commendations and concerns expressed by the Ndokwa people. He reaffirmed his administration's commitment to equitable development across all parts of the state and assured stakeholders that the government remained focused on addressing their needs.

The governor acknowledged the challenges surrounding electricity supply and admitted that repeated acts of vandalism had slowed efforts to restore power in some communities. Nevertheless, he disclosed that additional funding had already been approved for ongoing electrification projects and promised that work would commence in affected areas.

He also revealed that the state government was engaging the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) and other relevant stakeholders to find lasting solutions to the electricity challenges confronting Ndokwa communities. For many residents, such assurances offer hope that a long-standing problem may soon receive the attention it deserves.

On the issue of educational development raised by the delegation, the governor urged stakeholders to focus on strengthening existing institutions, noting that the Ndokwa Nation already hosts a federal university. While requests for additional institutions remain valid aspirations, the sustainability and quality of existing facilities are equally important considerations.

Perhaps one of the most notable aspects of the governor's response was his emphasis on inclusiveness. He reminded the delegation that Ndokwa sons and daughters currently occupy strategic positions in his administration, including the offices of the Deputy Governor, Commissioner for Energy and Commissioner for Finance. The message was clear: every ethnic nationality in Delta State must feel a sense of belonging within the broader framework of governance.

As conversations gradually shifted towards the political future, Oborewori maintained that his administration remained focused on delivering projects rather than engaging in excessive political rhetoric. According to him, continuity, stability and inclusiveness remain the pillars of the state's political arrangement.

His declaration that he is "Governor for all Deltans" resonated strongly with the gathering as he said, "what I do for Ndokwa, I will do for Isoko, Ijaw, Urhobo, Anioma and every other part of the state," stressing that development projects are spread across the state without ethnic bias.

That statement captures a fundamental principle of governance in a diverse society like Delta State. Development that is perceived as fair and inclusive often strengthens social cohesion and reduces feelings of marginalisation.

Ultimately, the visit by Ndokwa leaders was more than an endorsement ceremony. It was a platform for dialogue, accountability and partnership. It demonstrated that communities are willing to support leaders when they see evidence of commitment and performance, while also reminding the government that citizens expect continuous engagement and responsiveness.

As Delta State moves closer to another political cycle, the interaction between Governor Oborewori and Ndokwa Nation offers an important lesson: trust is built not merely through promises, but through projects, accessibility and the willingness to listen.

For the Ndokwa Nation, the vote of confidence was a recognition of perceived progress. For the governor, it was both an endorsement and a challenge—to sustain the momentum of development and continue delivering the dividends of governance to every corner of Delta State.





I Want To Be Loved

DEAR JUMAI,

I honestly need advice on this issue. I've been dating my boyfriend since our university days, but he graduated two years ago. Ever since he left school, things have changed between us. Whenever I complained about his lack of attention, his response was always that he was busy trying to get his life together and focused on work.

At first, I tried to be understanding and patient, hoping things would improve. But over time, I started feeling alone in the relationship. It felt like I had a boyfriend, yet I had nobody to lean on.

Whenever I asked what the problem was, he always blamed work. Even when I needed support and reached out to him, he would say he didn't have much

to offer at the moment.

During my final year, I struggled through many challenges on my own and exhausted my savings taking care of myself because there was little or no support from him.

Eventually, I got tired. I told him I was no longer interested because all I wanted was clarity, not confusion. Since then, he has continued to text and call, but I have blocked him. Right now, I just want to be loved intentionally and treated like I truly matter. Stephanie

*Dear Stephanie,
Your desire to be loved intentionally is not too much to ask for. Relationships require effort, communication, and emotional support from both people involved.*

While it's possible that your boyfriend was genuinely facing challenges, being busy does not completely excuse a long-term pattern of emotional absence.

What seems to have hurt you most is not the lack of money or gifts but the feeling of carrying the relationship alone. Over time, unmet needs can create frustration, resentment, and emotional exhaustion.

If you have reached a point where you no longer feel valued, supported, or emotionally connected, it is understandable that you chose to walk away. Wanting clarity does not make you demanding; it means you know what you need in a relationship. For now, focus on yourself and your healing. Sometimes, ending a relationship is not about finding someone better immediately; it is about refusing to remain in a situation that consistently leaves you feeling lonely. The right relationship should bring peace, mutual effort, and a sense of being seen and appreciated. Never settle for a love that leaves you questioning your worth.

My Boyfriend Proposed To My Best Friend

DEAR JUMAI,

I never imagined I would be writing this. My boyfriend and I dated for three years after meeting in our first year at the university. He was close to my family and friends, especially my best friend, Amara. Because I trusted them completely, I never questioned how much time they spent together.

A few months ago, my boyfriend became distant. He called less often and always blamed it on stress whenever I asked what was wrong.

Then, one Saturday afternoon, a mutual friend called and asked if I had seen the photos online. When I checked social media, I was shocked to see my boyfriend on one knee proposing to my best friend at a restaurant. I couldn't believe it. My hands trembled as I looked through the pictures. I called them both repeatedly, but neither answered. Later, my best friend admitted that they had developed feelings for each other months earlier and had been seeing each other behind my back.

The proposal wasn't even the most painful part—it was the betrayal. These were two people I trusted completely. Since then, I have blocked them on all social media and cut ties with both of them. I don't want any explanations, and I genuinely wish them well. However, I am heartbroken and struggling to trust anyone again. Did I make a mistake by trusting my boyfriend and best friend so much? — Angel

Dear Angel,

What happened to you was deeply painful, and your feelings are completely understandable. The hurt comes not only from losing a relationship but also from being betrayed by two people you trusted. Trusting your boyfriend and best friend was not a mistake. Healthy relationships are built on trust. The problem was not your trust; it was their decision to betray it.

You have every right to create distance from both of them if that helps you heal. For now, focus on yourself, lean on supportive friends and family, and give yourself time to recover. Remember, their actions do not define your worth. In time, this experience will become a lesson in valuing honesty, loyalty, and self-respect. Healing may take time, but you will get through this and learn to trust again.

Mother Ate My School Fees

DEAR JUMAI,

I am a 21-year-old university student and the first child in my family. Last semester, I saved money from a part-time job and combined it with support from my uncle to pay my school fees. Since my mother usually handled family finances, I transferred the money to her account for safekeeping.

When the registration portal opened, I asked my mother to send the money, but she kept saying there was still time. As the deadline drew closer, I became worried and continued asking.

Eventually, she broke down in tears and confessed that she had used my school fees to settle a debt she had been secretly struggling with.

I was devastated. Not only had she spent the money without telling me, but I also lost an entire semester because I couldn't register on time. I stopped speaking to her for weeks. Although I understand she was under financial pressure, I still feel hurt that she never trusted me enough to tell me the truth.

My mother has apologised repeatedly and is asking for my forgiveness. I want to move on, but whenever I remember the semester I lost, the pain returns. Am I wrong for still feeling hurt, even though she is my mother? — Favour

Dear Favour,

You are not wrong for feeling hurt. Losing a semester because of a decision made without your knowledge is a painful experience, and your disappointment is understandable.

While your mother's actions were wrong, they seem to have come from desperation rather than a desire to hurt you. Her mistake was not only spending the money but also hiding the truth from you.

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what happened. It means allowing yourself to heal while acknowledging the pain. Trust may take time to rebuild, and that is perfectly normal.



My Roommate Is Gay

DEAR JUMAI,

I recently found out that my roommate is a lesbian, and it happened quite unexpectedly. It was a normal Tuesday, and neither of us had classes that day. My roommate and I are in different departments, so we spent the day relaxing in our room.

I was eating and scrolling through my phone while she chatted with me. At some point, she went to the kitchen, leaving her phone on the bed beside me. I wasn't snooping through her phone, but a message suddenly popped up on the screen. It read: "Have you told Teni how you feel?"

A cold feeling came over me. I sat there confused, staring at the message in disbelief until she returned. The moment she walked in, I asked her what it meant. As soon as she realised what had happened, she began apologising repeatedly. She said she hadn't intended for me to find out that way and kept saying she was sorry. I was completely bewildered.

Since that revelation, I have felt uncomfortable around her. Looking back, I now realize there were signs I had ignored because I assumed that was just her personality.

I started connecting the dots: how she reacted whenever I talked about boys or my relationship status, how she would become withdrawn and refuse to speak to me for the rest of the day, and how she often bought me gifts without me asking. It was only then that I began to understand why she behaved the way she did. What should I do? — Teni

Dear Teni,

The way you handled the situation appears thoughtful

and respectful. From your account, you did not embarrass, insult, or publicly expose your roommate, and that is commendable.

It is understandable that you may feel uncomfortable after discovering that someone you live with has romantic feelings for you, especially when those feelings are not reciprocated.

You were honest about your position and communicated your boundaries clearly, which is important in any relationship or living arrangement. Everyone has the right to decide what kind of relationships they are comfortable with. At the same time, it is important to remember that having feelings for someone does not automatically mean that person intends to make them uncomfortable or cross boundaries.

If continuing to live together creates ongoing tension or discomfort, it may be best for one of you to find alternative accommodation. However, any transition should be handled respectfully and without hostility.

It is also important not to judge or mistreat your roommate because of her sexual orientation. Focus instead on the issue at hand: your comfort level and the boundaries you wish to maintain.

Continue to communicate calmly, respectfully, and firmly. The fact that you chose to address the matter privately rather than publicly shaming her reflects maturity on your part.

Moving forward, prioritise your peace of mind while treating her with dignity and respect. With clear boundaries and mutual understanding, both of you can navigate the situation in a way that minimizes hurt and preserves respect.

Sam Duvwode

Bonano Analysis

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Excuse The People, Blame The Preachers

THERE is a temptation, whenever the excesses of religion in Nigeria are discussed, to blame the people first. We say Nigerians are too gullible, too emotional, too desperate, too easily manipulated by men who speak in God's name.

But Bonano can safely posit that it is only half the truth; the more uncomfortable truth is that many of the distortions now visible in the church did not begin in the pews, they began at the pulpit. If the flock is confused, it is often because the shepherd has lost direction.

That is why the crisis in Nigeria's Christian space should no longer be discussed merely as a problem of wayward members or the last days. It is, in large part, a leadership crisis. The church has become deeply entangled in false teaching, personality worship, internal power struggles, political bargaining, and the commercialisation of faith.

Bonano will contend that, in too many places, the gospel of repentance has been replaced by the gospel of profit; the work of discipleship has given way to branding, and the pastor, once seen as a servant of the people, is increasingly treated as a chief executive, celebrity, or untouchable oracle.

This is not to deny that Nigeria still has many sincere pastors and faithful congregations doing quiet, sacrificial work in difficult communities. It is to say, however, that the public image of the church is now being shaped less by its most humble servants and more by its loudest profiteers.

And when preachers fail, the consequences go far beyond Sunday services. They damage public morality, weaken trust in religion, and deepen the cynicism of a population already wounded by bad politics, poverty and insecurity.

Scripture is not silent on this. Titus warned about "rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers" who ruin households "for the sake of dishonest gain." That warning feels painfully contemporary in Nigeria. Consider the recent controversy over so-called "miracle products" sold by one of the church's televangelists.

Nigeria's drug regulator, NAFDAC, publicly warned people against buying products marketed with healing claims such as "miracle water" and "River Jordan water," saying they lacked approval and were being promoted with bogus therapeutic claims. Whether defended as an expression of faith or not, the larger issue is this: when religion begins to mimic the methods of quack commerce, the preacher ceases to be a shepherd and becomes a trader in hope.

The tragedy is that this pattern thrives in an environment of widespread hardship. Nigeria's economic crisis has created a massive market for spiritual shortcuts. Hungry people are easier to seduce with visions of instant breakthrough.

The unemployed graduate, the indebted trader, the barren woman, the sick pensioner, the family crushed by inflation, all become targets for a kind of ministry that feeds on desperation. Religion, in such settings, can become less a path to truth than a business model built on fear, need and emotional vulnerability.

The consequences are now visible in deeply disturbing ways. In Anambra, Governor Chukwuma Soludo's administration recently arraigned eight pastors under the state's Homeland Security law as part of a crackdown on alleged deceptive and criminal practices tied to religious spaces.

Whatever one thinks of the legal approach, the fact that a state government now feels compelled to move against "fake pastors" shows how serious the crisis of credibility has become. When the state begins to do what the church should have done through discipline

Whatever one thinks of the legal approach, the fact that a state government now feels compelled to move against "fake pastors" shows how serious the crisis of credibility has become. When the state begins to do what the Church should have done through discipline and accountability, it is a sign that spiritual self-regulation has badly weakened.

and accountability, it is a sign that spiritual self-regulation has badly weakened.

Even more painful are the cases in which spiritual authority becomes a shield for abuse. In May 2026, a Kwara State High Court convicted Prophet Ajiboye Olayinka and sentenced him to life imprisonment over the sexual assault of three minors, with an additional sentence linked to illegal abortions.

Bonano will argue that cases like this are not merely criminal scandals, they are moral indictments of religious cultures that teach blind submission, suppress scrutiny and turn "anointed" leaders into figures beyond questioning. Where there is no accountability, abuse will always find sanctuary. **To be continued.**

Simply Food

How To Make Ukwa (Breadfruit)

UKWA is a very popular food in the eastern part of Nigeria; the Igbo people are very familiar with the two recipes that I would be talking about below.

Ukwa could be cooked with potash and just eaten like that or it could also be separated from the water for just the seeds to be mashed with some ingredients and thereafter served with the plain cooked ukwa.

By the way, you can purchase ukwa from our online store. In case you live outside Nigeria and can't find it around you.

Below are the ingredients for preparing Ukwa (African Breadfruit), what you have below would serve three people. You can increase or decrease depending on the number of persons you are looking to serve.

Ingredients For Ukwa

1. Six cups of Ukwa
2. Potash (akanwu) teaspoon
3. Fresh pepper (about 5)
- Ogiri (optional) (a local ingredient)
4. Maggi (half cube)
5. Salt to taste
- Red oil (100ml)
6. Two cups of maize.

How To Prepare Ukwa

Wash the Ukwa seeds, It is necessary to wash severally in a bowl with lots of clean water.

Set a cooking pot on heat, add five cups of water and start cooking the ukwa (breadfruit). Once it boils, add the potash. Dissolve the potash in one cup of water, filter in the clear water and throw away the residue.

It is needful to note that Ukwa does not ever get soft (done) without the use of the catalyst (potash).

I tried this in secondary school and we cooked for more than three hours before we realized that something was missing.

There is another ingredient that serves the same purpose as potash; it is in the form of ash gotten from the burning of palm fronds. It is locally called ngu and a popular choice among the Igbos.

If you want to make Ukwa with ngu apply the same method as though you are using potash, dissolve in a cup of water allow for a minute or two then use the filtrate.

Cook till the ukwa is soft for consumption and you can serve.

This is one of the two ways to eat African breadfruit in Nigerian, some people like to add a pinch of salt while some part of Igbos doesn't use salt for this particular recipe.





Pointer Woman

BY: RITA OYIBOKA

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Onoyona: One Woman, Multiple Frontiers Of Healing, Humanitarian Action

THERE are those who witness suffering and look away. And then there are those who witness suffering and dedicate their entire existence to its eradication. Dr Philomena Onoyona belongs unmistakably to the latter category, a woman whose life's work defies easy categorisation because she has refused to limit herself to a single title, a single role, or a single battlefield in the fight for human dignity.

She is a humanitarian, a social worker, an educator, a healthcare executive, a nonprofit leader, an advocate, and an ordained Anglican Deacon. But to list her titles is merely to sketch the outline of a life that has been poured out repeatedly for others.

The fuller picture reveals something far more compelling: a woman whose mission is nothing less than restoring hope, empowering communities, developing future leaders, and transforming lives through the intertwined forces of faith, education, healthcare, and charitable service.

With more than a decade of distinguished leadership experience spanning healthcare, social services, workforce development, ministry, education, and nonprofit management, Dr Onoyona has emerged as a respected voice in community development both in the United States and internationally.

Her expertise touches family advocacy, women's empowerment, youth mentorship, healthcare education, and faith-based outreach, a breadth of impact that few can claim and even fewer can sustain.

The academic foundation supporting this remarkable career is equally impressive. Onoyona holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Human and Social Services from Walden University, complemented by a Master of Philosophy in the same field, a Master of Social Work (MSW) from Clark Atlanta University, a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kennesaw State University, and a Diploma in Theology.

Her doctoral research, which examined "Family Members' Perceptions of Elder Abuse at U.S. Nursing Homes," has provided meaningful insights into elder care, social services, family advocacy, and long-term care policy, areas where vulnerable populations desperately need informed voices advocating on their behalf.

In her professional capacity, Dr Onoyona serves as the Executive Director of Allwell Healthcare of Georgia, where she oversees healthcare services, workforce development programs, and community-based support initiatives. But her influence extends far beyond executive leadership.

She is also a Lecturer and Healthcare Workforce Educator at Allwell Healthcare Certification Inc. and an Instructor at Sorted Academy, institutions through which she has trained and mentored hundreds of healthcare professionals and aspiring caregivers.

The programs she teaches, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Patient Care Technician (PCT), healthcare workforce readiness, and professional development, are not merely courses on a syllabus. They are bridges for individuals seeking to escape poverty through meaningful employment, bridges for communities needing qualified healthcare workers, bridges for families hoping to build better futures. Every student she trains represents a life being transformed, and every certification earned represents hope made tangible.

Her commitment to equipping others with lifesaving skills extends further still. As a certified instructor in Basic Life Support (BLS), Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), First Aid, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training, Dr Onoyona has brought emergency response education to healthcare professionals, businesses, churches, schools, and community members alike.

She understands that in the critical moments between life and death, preparation is everything, and she has made it her mission to ensure that preparation is accessible to all.

But credentials and professional titles, however impressive, cannot fully capture the woman. To understand Dr Onoyona, one must understand the social worker at her core, the advocate who has dedicated her career to serving older adults, women, youth, immigrants, low-income families, and individuals facing social, economic, and emotional challenges. Her passion for service transcends professional obligation; it flows from something deeper, something that has driven her to extend her advocacy into public leadership, mentorship, ministry, and charitable outreach.

She has seen poverty up close. She has witnessed abuse that would break the average person's heart. She



has stood with families trapped in cycles of domestic violence, educational barriers, healthcare disparities, unemployment, homelessness, and social exclusion. And rather than becoming numb to these realities, she allowed them to forge an unshakeable conviction: true leadership is measured not by personal achievement, but by the ability to uplift others and create opportunities where none previously existed.

This conviction gave birth to the Hope Restored Advocacy Centre, a nonprofit organisation Dr Onoyona founded to provide advocacy, support services, educational resources, and empowerment opportunities for individuals and families experiencing crisis, abuse, neglect, poverty, homelessness, and other life challenges.

Through Hope Restored, she has championed initiatives that promote family stability, social justice, community engagement, mental wellness, and access to critical resources. The name says everything: hope, once lost, can be restored.

Yet even as Hope Restored was transforming lives domestically, Dr Onoyona recognised that the needs of underserved communities extended beyond American borders.

Driven by faith, compassion, excellence, and an unshaken commitment to humanity, Dr Philomena Onoyona continues to dedicate her life to helping others discover hope, achieve their fullest potential, and build stronger communities for future generations.

This awareness led her to establish the Dr Philomena Onoyona Foundation, a platform for sustainable humanitarian outreach, youth development, educational support, healthcare awareness, poverty alleviation, leadership training, women's empowerment, and community transformation.

Through strategic partnerships and community-based initiatives, the Foundation provides both practical assistance and long-term solutions- not handouts, but hand-ups that empower individuals to become productive contributors to society.

The two organisations work in concert, addressing immediate crises while simultaneously building infrastructure for lasting change. It is a holistic approach that reflects Dr Onoyona's understanding that poverty, abuse, and neglect are rarely isolated problems; they are interconnected challenges requiring interconnected solutions.

In a development that surprised absolutely no one who knows her, Dr Onoyona recently answered a higher calling through ordained ministry. She was ordained as a Vocational Deacon in the Anglican Church, a role that has expanded her lifelong mission of service to include spiritual care, pastoral support, discipleship, evangelism, and faith-based community outreach.

Her ministry reflects a deep commitment to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, ministering to the broken-hearted, strengthening families, and helping individuals discover hope, healing, and purpose through faith.

For Dr Onoyona, this ordination was not a departure from her previous work but its natural culmination. She believes that ministry and social service are inseparable because both seek to address the holistic needs of individuals, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and socially.

Through her ordained ministry, she continues to serve God's people while promoting compassion, servant leadership, integrity, justice, and community transformation. The deacon's stole rests easily on shoulders already accustomed to bearing the weight of others' suffering.

It should come as no surprise that Dr Onoyona's contributions have earned her recognition across multiple fields: healthcare education, social work, nonprofit leadership, community advocacy, humanitarian service, women's empowerment, and faith-based ministry.

She is frequently invited to speak at conferences, churches, community forums, educational institutions, and leadership events on topics ranging from social justice and healthcare to education, leadership, women's participation in governance, family advocacy, community development, faith, and personal empowerment.

When she speaks, people listen, not because she demands attention, but because she has earned it through years of faithful service, because her words are backed by action, and because her life embodies the principles she proclaims. She is an author, a speaker, and a mentor whose influence continues to multiply as those she has trained and inspired go out to serve others in turn.

Driven by faith, compassion, excellence, and an unshaken commitment to humanity, Dr Philomena Onoyona continues to dedicate her life to helping others discover hope, achieve their fullest potential, and build stronger communities for future generations.

Her professional roles- Executive Director of Allwell Healthcare of Georgia, President of Hope Restored Advocacy Centre, Founder of the Dr Philomena Onoyona Foundation, Lecturer and Healthcare Workforce Educator, Instructor, certified BLS/CPR/First Aid/AED instructor, social worker, community advocate, ordained Anglican Deacon, humanitarian, author, speaker, and mentor- are not merely positions she holds. They are expressions of a single, unified purpose.

Her motto, "Transforming Lives Through Faith, Service, Education, Advocacy, and Compassion," is not a slogan but a summary. It is the thread that runs through every lecture she delivers, every patient she serves, every family she advocates for, every student she trains, every sermon she preaches, and every life she touches.

The world may often feel overwhelmed by problems too large for any one person to solve, but Dr Philomena Onoyona stands as evidence that one person, fully engaged, faithfully committed, and compassionately driven, can indeed make an extraordinary difference.

She is not waiting for someone else to act. She is not postponing justice for a more convenient season. She is not content to simply witness suffering and look away. She is building. She is serving. She is restoring hope. And by her example, she is inviting all of us to do the same.

Lifestyle *With* CHIBUZOR ISICHEI
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Pharm Enebeli stressed that many of the adverse consequences associated with hospital malnutrition could be prevented through routine screening, early intervention and other ways involving physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dieticians, researchers and policy makers.

Malnutrition: Silent Epidemic In Our Hospitals

DUE to the poor state of the economy Nigerians are grappling with, it is an understatement to say that so many people cannot afford three square meals daily, let alone afford medications. Therefore, many are left with nothing. They endure hunger and, at best, are malnourished.

Malnutrition, they say, is when the body doesn't get the right amount of nutrients it needs to grow, fight diseases and work well. Most people think that malnutrition is just growing too thin or starving, but it is not. Doctors have identified different causes of malnutrition. They go beyond food to include poor diet quality, disease and poor care.

Experts described malnutrition as a mismatch between what the body needs and what your diet gives you, saying, "you can be fat and malnourished and you can be thin and malnourished too".

And worse still is Hospital Malnutrition, which happens when a patient is admitted in the hospital and cannot get

sufficient nutrients from food to heal the body and recover from ailment.

Ordinarily, malnutrition starts in the home. It starts as a result of poverty, poor diet, drought, and bad feeding habits. In the case of hospital malnutrition, patients are left weaker. The issue also arises in most cases at home when there is no money for nutrient-rich food; only garri, fufu and noodles are available.

For example, studies show that 30 to 50 per cent of patients in Nigerian hospitals are malnourished before admission, and another 20 to 30 per cent become malnourished during admission, thereby increasing hospital stay and death risk.

It is as bad as that. It has been called a "Silent Epidemic" in hospitals because everyone is busy treating the main disease and forgets the patients also need good food as medicine.

Recently, the West African Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (WASPEN) raised an alarm over the rising



incidence of hospital malnutrition in Nigeria.

Speaking during a virtual Press Conference to announce the 5th Annual WASPEN Clinical Nutrition Conference at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Asaba, Delta State, the Founder and President of WASPEN, Dr Teresa Pounds, said the condition has become a silent epidemic that continues to threaten patients' recovery and place additional strain on the healthcare system.

Dr Pounds described hospital malnutrition as the most overlooked threats to patients' safety and quality healthcare delivery in West Africa.

She noted that poor nutrition screening practices and the absence of multidisciplinary nutrition support teams have continued to worsen the condition of patients in hospitals.

Pounds revealed that studies indicate between 30 and 45 per cent of patients admitted into hospitals are already malnourished at the point of admission, with the prevalence even higher among elderly patients. According to her, hospital malnutrition often goes undetected despite its significant contribution to prolonged illness, delayed recovery and increased complications.

Also speaking, the Chairman of the WASPEN Clinical Nutrition Conference, Pharm Paul Enebeli, described malnutrition as a major but frequently neglected challenge within hospitals.

He noted that poor nutritional status contributes significantly to longer hospital stays, increased complications and higher medical expenses for patients and their families.

Pharm Enebeli stressed that many of the adverse consequences associated with hospital malnutrition could be prevented through routine screening, early intervention and other ways involving physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dieticians, researchers and policy makers.

Health experts say that Hospital Malnutrition is an additional sickness one catches from being in the hospital, adding that it is not a disease you were admitted for. They believe that it is a new problem that staying in the hospital creates.

Explaining, they said, "You can come to the hospital mildly malnourished from home, no screening, poor feeding in the ward with the consumption of many drugs to cure you, and while leaving the environment, you will be severely malnourished"

They said that in many Nigerian hospitals, doctors focus on BP, treating infections, x-ray and nobody weighs or asks you if you have eaten. By the time it is late, malnutrition has already advanced"

In medical books, malnutrition is both a condition and a disease. It is a disease and also the mother of many other diseases. That is why hospitals that ignore nutrition are basically treating patients with "one hand tied behind their backs"

The good news, however, is that malnutrition is curable because food is medicine. The body rebuilds fast if you feed it right. Doctors treat the disease causing malnutrition through the prescription of supplements, dieticians design the food plan using affordable local foods, and your family makes sure food is eaten every day.

Hospital malnutrition is said to be shockingly common, as doctors call it the "Silent Epidemic in Hospitals" because everyone talks about infection but nobody weighs the patients or asks about his/her feeding habits.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) says hospital malnutrition kills more patients than hospital infections in many countries, adding that it is very common, as one out of every two to three patients in a Nigerian hospital is affected.



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We warmly congratulate
RT. HON. EMOMOTIMI DENNIS GUWOR,
Speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly and
Chairman of the Conference of Speakers of State
Legislatures of Nigeria, on his three years of
purposeful and impactful leadership.

Your tenure has been marked by dedication,
legislative excellence, and a steadfast commitment
to good governance and the development of
Delta State.

Congratulations on this remarkable milestone.
We wish you continued success, wisdom, and
greater accomplishments in service to the people.

SIGNED:

Engr. Ifeanyi Michael Anoka FNSE
Commissioner For Power & Energy.

Dr. Daniel Odinigwe Odigie,
Commissioner for Science and Technology

Prof. Nyerhowwo Tonukari
Hon. Commissioner for Higher Education

Dr. Kingsley Ashibogwu JP
Hon. Commissioner for Secondary Education

Mr. Jamani Tommy Ejiro
Hon. Commissioner for Environment

Mr. Onoriode Agofure
Hon. Commissioner for Transport

Chief Barr. Funyei Manager, Esq.
-Former Commissioner for Special Projects

Hon. Godknows Angele
-Hon. Commissioner for Housing

Barr. Trakiriwei Harry ThankGod
-Former Commissioner for Youth Development

Hon. Ebikeme Clark
-Hon. Commissioner for Riverine Infrastructure

Hon. Smart Ijeoma Ufoh
-Hon. Commissioner for Technical Education

Dr. Ifeanyi Michael Osuoza
-Hon. Commissioner for Special Duties
(Government House)

Entertainment



BBNaija: 'I Rejected Rooboy Because He's Not Kind Of Man I Want Around My Son'—Thelma

FORMER Big Brother Naija Season 10 housemate Thelma Lawson has explained why she turned down her colleague, Rooboy's proposal on the show. Recall that Rooboy approached Thelma for a romantic relationship during the show last year but was rejected.

Speaking during the final episode of the reunion aired on Friday night, Thelma explained that she rejected Rooboy because he is not the kind of man she wants around her son.

She mentioned that Rooboy's tattoos and lifestyle as a hypeman shows he's not the ideal role model she wants for her child. She said, "Rooboy could not even spell correctly. I do not want him around my son. He is too loud and his tattoo are not the lifestyle that I want. We can be friends, just friends."

Thelma claimed Rooboy was upset about the rejection and began speculating that she was "a bitter person."

Rooboy admitted that he asked Thelma out but added that he wasn't upset about the rejection.

He accused Otega of betraying him for his own selfish interest. "I told Thelma that I liked her and would like to date her. I was talking to Otega as a brother not knowing he was also in the picture," he said.

"We Thought It Was A Scam" — Mayorkun's Mother Recounts How Davido Changed Her Son's Life

THE mother of popular Nigerian singer Mayorkun has opened up on how a simple cover video posted online changed her son's life forever.

Speaking on the Talk with B podcast, she recalled how neither she nor other members of the family expected Mayorkun's career to take off after he recorded and shared a cover of Davido's song on social media.

"There is nothing God cannot do. We weren't expecting it. He just left for his cousin's place at Lekki, and when he got there, he went to the music room and was playing Davido's song and posted it on the internet.

Before you know it, it went viral. He did a cover for 'Money' and posted it on Instagram, and it got to Davido," she said.

According to her, the family was initially skeptical when Davido reached out to Mayorkun, believing it could have been a scam.

However, Mayorkun's brother, Ayobami, insisted that the message was genuine.

"At first, they were like, 'Is it him or not?' But the moment they recognised his voice, they jumped in excitement. Davido told him he liked the song and asked for his measurements. Before we knew it, he sent him a whole box of gifts," she added.

She further revealed that shortly after, Davido invited Mayorkun to record music with him, leading to the creation of the hit song Eleko, which launched the singer into the spotlight.

The proud mother noted that the success of the song transformed Mayorkun's life almost overnight, with residents of their Ajah neighbourhood even nicknaming them "Oriyami Eleko."

The story has since stirred reactions online, with many Nigerians praising Davido for supporting young talents and helping launch Mayorkun's successful music career.

Smids, National Theatre Partner To Nurture Young African Storytellers

SMIDS Animation Studios and the National Theatre have partnered to create opportunities for Nigerian children to develop cultural, creative and digital skills while nurturing a new generation of African storytellers.

The organisations disclosed this in a statement issued by Smids in Lagos.

It said the second edition of Toontopia, a children's animation festival held recently at the renovated National Theatre connected young participants with African narratives and opportunities within the creative industry.

The National Theatre is now known as the Wole Soyinka Centre for Arts and Culture.

It said the collaboration had expanded access to animation, storytelling and cultural education for children.

The Chief Executive Officer of Smids Animation Studios, Mrs Dami Solesi, said the initiative was conceived to address gaps in children's media consumption and promote stronger representation of African identities.

"This year also marks 10 years of our summer camps and, whenever we ask children what they are watching, it is uncommon for them to mention African or Nigerian animations.

"We believe children should remain connected to their history and culture and see themselves reflected in the stories they consume.

"That philosophy is central to everything we do," she said.

Solesi said the festival combines screen-

ings, workshops and practical learning sessions designed to expose children to artistic expression and technical skills that could influence future career choices.

According to her, Toontopia has evolved beyond entertainment into a platform where children can explore illustration, animation, storytelling and other creative disciplines while building confidence and self-expression.

The General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of the National Theatre, Mrs Tola Akerele, said the partnership reflected the institution's commitment to inclusive programming and deeper engagement with younger audiences.

"It is very important to us because part of our responsibility is to ensure our programmes are accessible to everyone.

"Last year, we had 70 children; this year, we have 200," she said.

Akerele said the programme aligned with the National Theatre's broader vision of promoting innovation, education and family-oriented cultural experiences, adding that more child-focused activities were planned for later in the year.

Also speaking, the Head of Product and Strategy at Stanbic IBTC Bank, Mr Taiwo Ala, said supporting children's development through creative learning was an investment in Nigeria's future competitiveness. "It is important that we channel the minds and energy of our children in the right direction.

"They are here acquiring skills that can position them to compete globally in the future," Ala said.



Veteran Nollywood Actor, Kola Oyewo Dies

Nigeria's entertainment and academic communities have been thrown into mourning following the death of veteran actor and scholar, Professor Adekola Akangbe Gabriel Oyewo, popularly known as Professor Kola Oyewo.

He was 80 years old.

The news of his passing was announced on Friday by his son, Adetoyese Oyewo, through a message shared on Facebook, where he paid tribute to the late actor's life and achievements.

In the announcement, Adetoyese described his father as a man whose life was marked by "love, wisdom, strength and kindness," expressing deep sorrow over the loss.

"It is with a heavy heart that I share the passing of my beloved father," he wrote.

He said that although

the family was grieving, they remained grateful for the life Professor Oyewo lived and the impact he made on countless individuals throughout his lifetime.

According to him, the late actor's legacy would continue through the memories shared by family members, friends, colleagues and admirers whose lives he influenced.

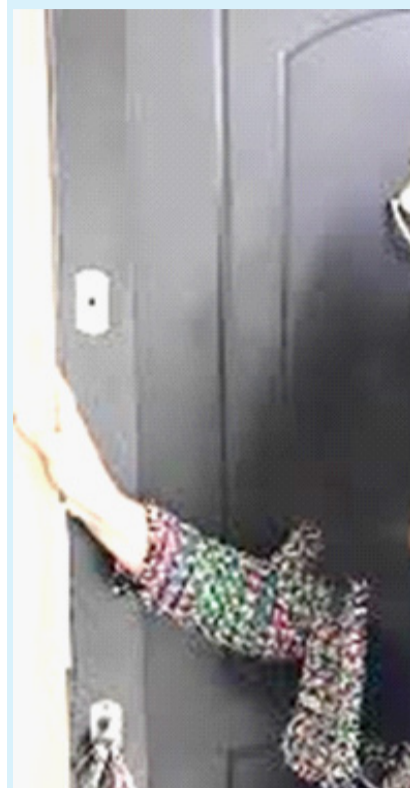
Adetoyese also appealed for prayers and support for the family during the mourning period, saying they were celebrating a life dedicated to service, learning and the arts.

Professor Oyewo was widely recognised as one of Nigeria's leading figures in theatre and performing arts, earning respect both as an accomplished actor and as an academic.

Over several decades, he contributed significantly

to the development and preservation of Yoruba theatre, while also helping to promote Nigerian culture through his work on stage, screen and in the classroom.

His career spanned acting, teaching and cultural advocacy, making him a prominent voice in the growth of theatre arts in Nigeria.



Nadia Buari Closes Secret Journal

GHANAIAN actress Nadia Buari has disclosed the content of a secret journal she kept on the late Alexx Ekubo.

The actress, who joined several celebrities mourning the actor's death, opened up about a "secret journal" where she documented moments and memories involving Alexx.

According to Nadia, she intentionally gave the actor another name in the diary to protect his identity.

Nadia Buari says she documented her friendship with Alexx in a personal diary, using the code name "Liam".

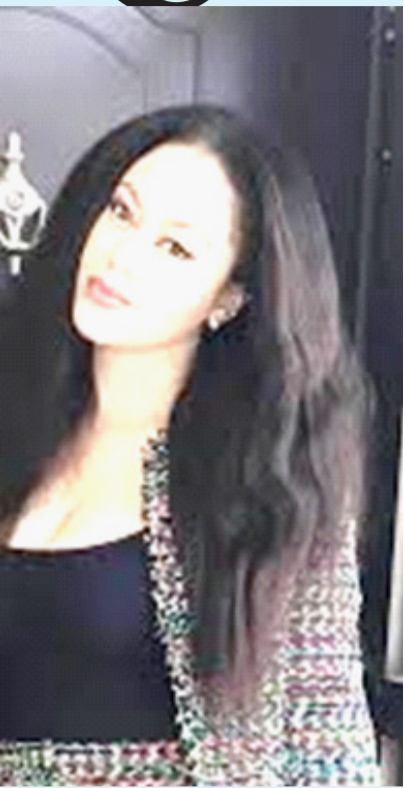
In her tribute to Alexx on Instagram, Nadia disclosed that she had been writing about Alexx in her journal for a long time and decided to rename him "Liam" in case the diary ever got lost.

Recalling the moment she told him about it, she said the actor smiled warmly and admitted that he liked

"I Was Supp



Entertainment



'She's My Greatest Mistake'

— Mandy Kiss Accuses Funmi Awelewa Of Destroying Her Life

CONTROVERSIAL Nigerian social media influencer, Mandy Kiss, has called out her former godmother, actress Funmi Awelewa, for allegedly ruining her life.

Mandy Kiss made the allegation while responding to a Tiktok report about her falling out with several celebrities including Funmi Awelewa, Papaya and Toyin Abraham.

In response, Mandy Kiss in an Instagram video clarified that she only had issues with Papaya, stating that Awelewa and Toyin Abraham wronged her.

While tagging Awelewa as her greatest mistake, she claimed that her godmother "ruined my life".

"It was only Papaya that I had issues with. Even though I didn't mean to hurt her but she blocked me everywhere after I innocently reposted a post about her from a blog. I honestly don't know that she's the one that the blog is referring to.

"For my ex godmother, that one is my greatest mistake. She really ruined my life," she said.



Thailand's Princess Dies After Spending Over Three Years In Coma

THAILAND has been thrown into mourning following the death of Princess Bajrakitiyabha, one of the country's most respected royals, after more than three years in a coma.

The 47-year-old princess passed away on Thursday evening, according to an official statement released by the royal household.

Princess Bajrakitiyabha dies at 47 after spending more than three years in a coma.

Her death marked the end of a heartbreaking chapter that began in December 2022 when she suddenly collapsed while exercising with her dogs.



Supposed To Have Retired 14 Years Ago

THE general overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor EA Adeboye, has shared an insight as to why he was yet to retire from his role as the leader of the popular Nigerian church.

Speaking during a sermon, the Nigerian cleric, who marked his 84th

birthday celebration in 2026, revealed he was supposed to have retired 14 years ago.



Onicha-Ukwuani Celebrates Annual Ikenge Festival June 16

BY CHINEDU AMEDE

THE people of Onicha-Ukwuani in Ndokwa West Local Government Area will, on Tuesday, June 16, commence the celebration of their 2026 Annual Ikenge Festival.

According to a joint statement by the Onotu Uku of Onicha-Ukwuani, Chief Ogwu George, and the Secretary, Chief Edi O.N., the Cultural Nkwor Square will be the venue of the ceremony.

The statement added that God Almighty will be the Chairman of the occasion, while the Deputy Governor of Delta State, His Excellency Sir Monday Onyeme, will serve as the Father of the Day.

The community leaders stated that the ceremony showcases the rich cultural heritage of Onicha-Ukwuani, with displays by Ogene dance groups and Ochu masquerades from the five communities that make up the clan.

The Onotu Uku, Chief Ogwu George, and the people of Onicha-Ukwuani have invited all neighbouring communities, friends, well-wishers, and members of the public to come and celebrate with them.

Davido Reacts After Reno Omokri Called Him Out For Honouring Abducted Oyo Schoolkids At FIFA Concert

SINGER Davido has doubled down on his support for the abducted schoolchildren and teachers from Oyo state despite criticism from former presidential aide Reno Omokri.

The Afrobeats star had made a powerful statement during the FIFA World Cup Countdown Concert held at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles. During his performance at the high-profile event, Davido stepped onto the stage wearing a specially customised black jacket bearing the names of the 39 kidnapped schoolchildren and seven teachers abducted from Ahoro-Esinle and Yawota communities in Oyo state.

On the back of the jacket were the words "Bring Them Home," while a white shirt underneath boldly displayed the name "Nigeria."

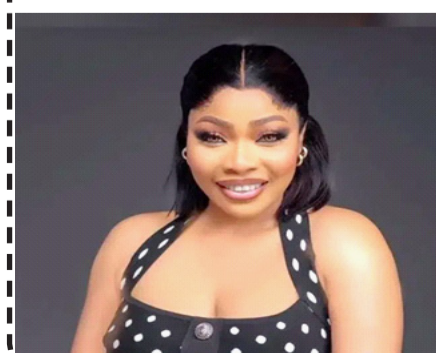
According to him, excessive attention could potentially embolden criminal groups rather than pressure them into releasing their captives. Quoting former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Omokri maintained that "publicity is the oxygen of terrorism."

He suggested that while Davido's intentions may have been noble, the public campaign could inadvertently give the abductors the recognition they desire.

Interestingly, Davido chose not to directly engage Omokri's arguments. Instead, the singer responded in a way many interpreted as even louder than words. Hours after the criticism emerged, he shared multiple images from the concert on his social media pages.



The Fight Has Just Started – Doris Ogala Declares



ACTRESS and African Action Congress (ACC) Governorship candidate for Abia State, Doris Ogala is celebrating a legal victory over Chris Okafor, the founder of the Grace Nation Bible Ministry.

Doris shared on Instagram that the Lagos State High Court has dismissed the case brought against her by the clergyman.

Okafor had sued the actress over allegations of cyberbullying, harassment, publication of personal materials, attempted extortion and dissemination of false information against him.

Announcing the court's decision, Doris, who's eyeing the Abia State governorship seat in the 2027 elections declared that the fight has just begun.

"Yes ooo who says God no dey. The court dismissed Chris Okafor's case against me. Now it's war. JESUS is the ultimate ooo. Tori dey ooo," she wrote. Doris, who claimed to be Okafor's ex-lover, had called out the pastor in December, 2025. She accused him of dumping her for a younger woman despite allegedly promising her marriage.

Fashion Splash

WITH JUMAI NWACHUKWU

Styling Your Adire



Anoter beautiful way to work in style.



This up-and-down is elegant. It can be styled as an official outfit.



Adire on a jumpsuit is what every lady jumps to. This is absolutely beautiful. One can wear this when hanging out with friends.



Sewing your Adire in a baggy, combat-style is another level of beauty.



This Adire styled with a white shirt, is gorgeous and can also be worn to the office.



Simple and perfect to style for a casual outing

The Pointer Perspective

Technical Education As Renewed Hope For The Future

BY FLORENCE NWABUONWU

IN a rapidly changing world driven by innovation, technology, and economic competition, nations that prioritise technical education are better positioned for growth, industrial advancement, and sustainable development. Today, as unemployment rises and industries seek skilled manpower, technical education has emerged not merely as an option but as a renewed hope for the future.

For many years, society placed excessive emphasis on white-collar jobs while undervaluing vocational and technical skills. This mindset created a widening gap between education and employability. Universities continued to produce graduates, yet industries struggled to find competent technicians, artisans, technologists, and skilled professionals capable of driving productivity and innovation.

Technical education offers a practical solution to this challenge. It equips individuals with hands-on skills, entrepreneurial capacity, creativity, and problem-solving abilities required in real-life situations. From engineering and ICT to construction, agriculture, renewable energy, automobile technology, fashion, and digital innovation, technical education prepares people not only to seek jobs but also to create them.

In Nigeria and across developing nations, the need for technical education has become more urgent than ever. Economic realities have shown that certificates alone cannot guarantee success. What the world now demands are

skills, competence, adaptability, and innovation. A technically skilled population strengthens industries, boosts local production, reduces dependence on imported expertise, and stimulates economic growth.

Technical education also plays a vital role in youth empowerment. Many young people today face uncertainty due to limited employment opportunities. However, with proper technical training, they can become self-reliant entrepreneurs, employers of labour, and contributors to national development. A young person trained in welding, electrical installation, software development, carpentry, mechatronics, or digital technology possesses a valuable

tool for survival and economic independence.

Furthermore, the future of global development rests heavily on science and technology. Countries leading in technological advancement invested early in technical and vocational education. Nations such as Germany, China, and South Korea transformed their economies by building strong technical education systems that aligned with industrial needs. Nigeria can equally achieve a remarkable transformation if deliberate attention is given to this sector.

The current emphasis on economic diversification and industrialisation further highlights the importance of technical education. As the world embraces artificial intelligence, automation, green energy, and digital transformation, technical knowledge becomes increasingly indispensable. Schools and training institutions must therefore evolve to meet

modern demands by providing updated equipment, digital learning opportunities, qualified instructors, and industry partnerships.

Government, private organisations, parents, and stakeholders all have important roles to play in repositioning technical education. Investment in technical colleges, vocational centres, and skill acquisition programmes should be intensified. Scholarships, grants, modern workshops, and public awareness campaigns are necessary to remove the stigma often associated with technical careers.

Equally important is changing societal perception. Technical education should no longer be viewed as an alternative for those who cannot pursue conventional academic paths. Rather, it should be recognised as a prestigious and strategic pathway to innovation, productivity, and national prosperity. The world's greatest inventors, builders, and industrial pioneers were people driven by practical skills and creative thinking.

As Nigeria journeys toward sustainable development and economic stability, technical education stands as a beacon of hope. It empowers individuals, strengthens industries, reduces unemployment, and builds a more productive society. The future belongs to nations that invest in skills, technology, and human capacity development.

Indeed, technical education is not just education for today; it is a renewed hope for the future.

Florence Nwabuonwu is the Public Relations Officer, Ministry of Technical Education, Delta State and Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Delta State Chapter.

Technical education should no longer be viewed as an alternative for those who cannot pursue conventional academic paths. Rather, it should be recognised as a prestigious and strategic pathway to innovation, productivity, and national prosperity. The world's greatest inventors, builders, and industrial pioneers were people driven by practical skills and creative thinking.

Sunday Outlook

Fufu: What Food Chemistry Reveals About Benefits, Risks

FUFU is more than a staple in West and Central Africa. For millions, it is daily comfort food made by fermenting and pounding cassava, yams, plantain, or cocoyam into smooth, stretchy dough eaten with soup.

As a chemist, what interests me most is what actually happens to cassava during fermentation — and why that chemistry explains both fufu's nutritional value and its hazards.

Chemistry of Fermentation: Detoxification and Flavour/ Raw cassava contains cyanogenic glucosides, mainly linamarin and lotaustralin. When the cassava tissue is broken, the enzyme linamarase hydrolyses these compounds to release hydrogen cyanide, a toxin.

Proper fermentation is nature's detox system. Lactic acid bacteria like *Lactobacillus plantarum* and *L. fermentum* lower the pH from around 6.0 to 3.0-4.0. In these acidic conditions, cyanohydrins break down and HCN gas escapes. Studies show controlled fermentation can reduce cyanide by up to 92 per cent. Without adequate fermentation, cyanide remains. In Imo State, Nigeria, fufu samples contained 4.40-5.5 mg/kg cyanide. Chronic low-level exposure is linked to konzo and tropical ataxic neuropathy, especially when diets are low in protein and sulfur amino acids needed for cyanide detoxification.

Fermentation also changes flavour, texture, and digestibility. Microbes produce lactic acid, diacetyl, and hydrogen peroxide, giving fufu its characteristic sour taste and reducing spoilage. But pH and microbial activity are a double-edged sword: too short a fermentation leaves cyanide behind, while too long increases the risk of aflatoxin growth.

Hazards Beyond Cyanide

Cyanide isn't the only concern. Fufu is a wet, fermented mash with high moisture, making it prone to microbial contamination. Research in Cameroon found fufu stored at room temperature developed pathogenic bacteria like *Bacillus cereus* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, and fungi like *Aspergillus flavus* and *A. niger* within weeks. By Week Six, untreated samples were unacceptable both microbiologically and sensorially.

Improper storage and reheating of leftovers are also common causes of digestive upset. Heavy metals are another issue. Samples of cassava flour from Osogbo showed lead levels up to 0.34 mg/kg, above Nigeria's permissible limit of 0.1 mg/kg. Long-term consumption of contaminated fufu can disrupt homeostasis and damage health, particularly the kidneys and nervous system.

Nutritional Chemistry: What You Gain and Lose

Cassava is calorie-rich but low in protein, fat, and micronutrients. Fermentation causes a 20 per cent overall drop in protein and losses of magnesium, potassium,

and iron. However, it can increase calcium and, if the process is controlled, reduce anti-nutrients like phytates and tannins that block mineral absorption.

Food chemistry research now offers solutions. Blending cassava with cowpea or cabbage raises protein from 0.47 g to 4.92 g per 100g. Yellow-fleshed cassava and starter cultures increase β -carotene, vitamin A, B1, and iron while reducing cyanide. Biofortified cassava fufu retains up to 90 per cent of its carotene.

Making Fufu Safer: Chemistry-Based Steps

Adequate fermentation: 48-72 hours with starter cultures ensures cyanide reduction without excess aflatoxin risk. Proper cooking: Boiling for at least 10 minutes volatilizes residual HCN and improves safety.

Hygiene and preservation: Sodium benzoate at 0.1 per cent extends shelf life by keeping microbial counts low for 6 weeks. Fortification: Adding cowpea, cocoyam, or cabbage addresses protein deficiency common in cassava-based diets.

Why This Matters

Fufu sits at the intersection of culture, nutrition, and safety. Chemistry shows how traditional methods detoxify a toxic crop, but also how small changes in time, pH, and hygiene create big differences in health. With most farmers and processors lacking formal food safety training, science-based guidelines are urgent.

If we see fufu not just as "pounded cassava" but as a fermented food shaped by pH, microbes, and chemical reactions, we can protect tradition while reducing risk. That is food chemistry at work: making a safer, more nutritious staple for the future.

Leonard Ogugua Fidelia
Department of Chemistry
Federal College of Education (Tech), Asaba





Some people support what he said, and I must admit that I see his point. We cannot come to a point where we play God and pick the life that suits us. What then makes a human special if you can select them like puppies from a pet shop?

What If You Could Pick Your Child Before Birth?

If you could, would you pick your child before birth? What if parents could look into the future before a child was born and decide which traits they wanted and which they did not? What if they could select intelligence, beauty, athletic ability, gender, health, or even personality the same way people choose the biggest piece of meat from a shared plate?

It sounds like science fiction. Yet recent events have shown that humanity may be inching closer to difficult conversations about exactly that.

No, I am not analysing a Nigerian social media saga. But remember that Nigerians are already choosing child-free lives, embracing surrogacy despite having healthy wombs, and freezing their eggs for a future date.

Whether we admit it or not, we are drifting toward a reality where couples walk into clinics asking doctors to "mix" their ideal baby like "agbo".

Now, back to what we were saying, the debate exploded recently following the story of YouTubers Jesse and Ashley Ridgway. In October 2025, he married Ashley, and shortly afterwards, in March 2026, the couple announced they were expecting their first child.

A month later, they revealed that prenatal genetic testing had shown their baby had a 95 per cent chance of being born with Down syndrome.

The news, they said, felt like a devastating "gut punch." For weeks, they researched, consulted doctors and genetic counsellors, and wrestled with what they described as an impossible decision. By late May or early June 2026, they chose to terminate the pregnancy and publicly announced it.

The couple explained that their decision was shaped by concerns about the realities of raising a child with Down syndrome. Perhaps most emotionally, the husband spoke about a fear that resonated with many parents: the possibility of outliving his child.

While many people sympathised, many others were outraged.

But if most parents are honest, very few would voluntarily choose hardship for their child.

Nobody dreams of having a child who will face serious

health challenges. Nobody feels fully prepared for parenthood in the first place, let alone for raising a child with significant disabilities.

If given the opportunity to choose, most people would likely select the healthiest embryo available. That seems natural, perhaps even rational.

Yet that simple option to choose opens a rabbit hole of ethical questions. The idea of selecting a child is no longer entirely far-fetched. And if selection becomes possible, what exactly would people prioritise?

Some would choose a male child. Others would choose a female child. Some would prioritise intelligence, others beauty. Some would seek athletic ability. Many would choose health above everything else. But where is the line?

At what point does preventing suffering become designing human beings?

The challenge is that life rarely follows a script. Imagine choosing the healthiest embryo available. What happens if that child grows into a teenager and develops a serious illness?

What happens if they are involved in an accident and become disabled? What happens if it is not your child at all, but your spouse, who suddenly requires round-the-clock care? Would we apply the same logic then? Life is unpredictable.

Science, for all its advances, remains imperfect. No test can guarantee a future free from suffering. No genetic screening can eliminate uncertainty. This is why the debate is not simply about disability. It is about how much control human beings should have over life itself.

For many people, including those with religious convictions, there are boundaries that should not be crossed. They argue that some aspects of human existence are not meant to be engineered, altered, or optimised.

Others counter that if technology can reduce suffering, refusing to use it may itself be unethical. Both sides raise difficult questions.

Nigerian social commentator Solomon Buchi entered the debate with a strongly worded condemnation of the Ridgways' decision. "Aborting a child because they have

Down syndrome is deeply wrong," he argued.

His position rests on a simple principle: if society claims to believe in equality regardless of race, sex, or other characteristics, then that principle should also extend to babies with disabilities.

His conclusion was equally straightforward. "Every life has worth."

Some people support what he said, and I must admit that I see his point. We cannot come to a point where we play God and pick the life that suits us. What then makes a human special if you can select them like puppies from a pet shop?

However, critics argued that he underestimated the immense emotional, financial, and physical realities faced by families raising children with significant special needs, and they are not wrong.

Imagine raising a child who would never be able to care for themselves, live a normal life, marry or even raise their own children. Imagine knowing that when you are gone, your child would have to rely on the uncertain kindness of siblings or strangers to survive. Imagine knowing you are birthing a child who will suffer till they die.

Both perspectives contain truths that are difficult to dismiss.

The Ridgways' story ultimately forces me and you to confront a question that grows more relevant with every scientific breakthrough. Not whether parents want the best for their children. Of course they do.

The real question is this: if we gain the power to choose what kind of child we want before birth, will we know where to stop? And perhaps more importantly, are we prepared for the consequences of the choices we make?

Because once humanity begins deciding which lives are preferable and which are not, the conversation stops being about medicine.

It becomes a conversation about what it means to be human and worthy of a parent's love. Does it mean to be beautiful, intelligent, and healthy? Or maybe the question I should ask should be to you. If you had the option to pick your child before birth, would you?

The Pointer Next Generation

With JUDITH OBIANUA
08063633263

Why Kill Bishop?

I was scrolling through Facebook, and I came across a post about a Catholic Bishop who was killed. According to the story, he was shot to death in his residence at the Bishop's Court. It kept me thinking: how do people feel when taking another's life? The Bible says, "Touch not my anointed and do my prophets no harm".

What actually pushes people to commit violence? According to research, criminologists, psychologists, and historians show that what pushes someone to that point of killing a person of high moral authority, like a bishop, is deep personal grievance and perceived injustice, which is the most common root. The person feels the victim hurt them, their family, or their community in a way that cannot be

fixed.

The only thing that cannot be reversed is death. Once you kill someone, that person cannot come back again. Death is eternity. Why take the life of a man of God, an anointed child of God? One thing they fail to understand is that there are consequences in laying hands on a servant of God. No matter what the person might have done, you are not supposed to be the one to take a life that you did not create.

Some people believe that ending one's life is getting justice for a wrong done to them. Should we say that these people are antichrists or enemies of God? Or do they think killing a bishop is "serving God"? In war zones, bishops get targeted because they represent an ethnic group,

side, or institution. But this case is not about power, if I may say so. A bishop is an anointed man of God who has dedicated his life to the purpose of the kingdom of God. He is a living sacrifice: no wife, no children, no property, just working for the kingdom. What actually could lead to such an abominable act?

I remember in the Bible, David did not lay his hand on Saul because Saul is an anointed man of God, despite his attempt to kill David. God delivered Saul into his hands, yet he did not harm him. I don't think this bishop committed crimes like Saul, yet David still spared his life. Or should we say the person is in psychosis and believes the bishop is a demon? For him to think that way, it means he is mentally delusional.

Or was he paid to carry out such an evil act? That is also insane. Laying hands on an anointed man of God is a deadly sin. The painful part of it is that the killer will go and confess and ask God for forgiveness. After all, our God is a merciful God.

The bishop controls land, church funds, and influence. Someone might want to take control or hide a crime, and murder becomes his tool to get what he wants. This is criminal, not ideological.

I will say it was a planned act, well planned, and an insider may have played a crucial role. Without an insider, the operation would not have been carried out successfully. That is why it is important to know who you bring into your home as a cook, cleaner, or laundry worker.

I recall back in 1978, the Pope was killed.

Pope John Paul I, who was poisoned by his cook. The Pope served only 33 days before he was killed. Men no longer have human feelings; rather, they hunger for blood as if they are gods. The quest for power has become the order of the day, even in the so-called house of God. A place of safety is now a lion's den. According to the Psalmist, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go to the house of God." In our days, how do we feel when they say let us go to the house of God?

We hear constant news of violence and jungle justice in Nigeria today, which makes extreme acts feel less shocking. A person already angry sees violence as a normal solution. "If they can do it, why can't I?" has become the slogan. People do not just wake up and kill a bishop; there must be a grievance that leads to such a killing.

That is why correction, teaching forgiveness, and showing children how to handle injustice without violence is critical today. There is a game youths play called Free Fire, and it teaches them to "shoot and win". But life must teach them to "talk to resolve". The Sixth Commandment of God says, "Thou shalt not kill." Why do we still kill one another? Why hatred? We ought to love one another. They preach Christ, yet inside them is filth, filled with jealousy, envy, anger, and hatred.

St Paul says, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" God forbid. One should not take advantage of the scripture that says God is merciful and compassionate; He is also a consuming fire.

I will say it was a planned act, well planned, and an insider may have played a crucial role. Without an insider, the operation would not have been carried out successfully. That is why it is important to know who you bring into your home as a cook, cleaner, or laundry worker.

Features

Umutu Origin, History And Development

...continued from last week
Conclusion

THE history of Umutu ranges from the pre-Nigerian amalgamation to the present-day Nigeria. Umutu people started with a war-like posture, which caused their being drifted from one place to another until they finally settled on the side of the River Ethiope and established themselves on the side of the River, having built up areas on the southern side of the River and farm lands on the other side, northern side across the River Ethiope.

They carried out deforestation of farm land across the river up to the valley where the present railway bridge cuts across the Umutu/Agbor Road.

UMUTU DEITIES

IFJIJOKU DEITY:

Serving Of "Ifijioku" God Of Farm Crops) Situated/ Located At Okanigba Quarters Under A Very Big Tree.

The deity is served every year in the month of October/ November. It is served during the harvesting of new yams in the community. The chief priest of "IFJIJOKU" is the third person in command among the council of elders (okwas).

Preparatory To The Serving Of "Ifijioku"

Before the celebration of "Ifijioku", the age group known as "Otu Onuegbe" will go to clear (brush) the site of "Ifijioku Shrine".

The age group known as "Otu Olile" will also go to the bush in search of honey. We refer to this as "Igbu Ndu" in our Ukwuani language.

In celebrating "Ifijioku", certain age grade will supply tubers of yams, jars of palm wine. The goat to be slaughtered for "Ifijioku" will be supplied by the women folk from both Umutu-Uku and Umuojielei quarters. The dry fish and the ingredients for the cooking will also be supplied by the womenfolk.

There will be two old tubers of red yams, which will be used in the pounding of the food.

The age grade of Otu Boi Nwa Omede/Otu Ossai Esu will supply two bottles of local gin: Umutu-Uku, one bottle, and Umuojielei, one bottle.

The age grade of "Ibalawo" will supply two jars of palm wine; Umutu-Uku -one jar of palm wine, Umuojielei -one jar of palm wine.

The age grade of "Otu Nmanya" will supply 10 tubers of yam; Umutu-Uku - five tubers of yam and five old tubers of red yam; Umu Ojielei - five tubers of yam and five old tubers of red yam.

Ouse Ogbe Deity

The "Olise Ogbe Deity" is carried out in January every year. The Ozojinogues, the Onotu-Uku and Eze-Ugo are responsible for the serving of the deity.

Items required in serving the deity include one goat, 10 tubers of yams, one jar of palm-wine and Kola-nuts.

First Stage Of Sacrifice

Pounded yams are prepared in Okpala-Uku's palace with fish pepper soup to match. Then, the food is carried to Olise Ogbe Shrine House".

Some parts of the goat slaughtered are cooked with yams. Some of the parts of the goat are also shared raw to the Okpala-Uku, the Onotu-Uku, Eze Ugo, Ochieze and the Ozojinogwes present at the venue of the sacrifice.

The chief priest of "Olise Ogbe" is "Ogornmor Okpala-Uku" - Chief Priest to Okpala-Uku.

The Ejie-Uku And Her Executives/Functions

The "Ejie-Uku Title" is given to a confessed witch, who is determined to stop other witches from operating in the community. Other known confessed witches join her to constitute the Ejie-Uku forum.

The Ejie-Uku and her executives are saddled with the responsibilities of protecting the community from evil incursions. They also handle all cases of accusations of witchcraft activities reported to them. They also advise the Onotu-Uku and the Okpala-Uku on the necessary sacrifices to be performed by women to prevent evil spirits and witchcraft from harming the citizens.

In return, they report their activities to the Okpala-Uku and the Onotu-Uku from time to time.

Nkpedei Deity

The Nkpedei Deity is situated in the main market. It is a very powerful shrine because he came out physically to rescue the Umutu community from the hands of the soldiers during the civil war in 1967. Anytime a Umutu indigene is in problem either in the Umutu community or outside, and his name is mentioned, he quickly responds to rescue one.

Testimonies have been made by people about how Nkpedei rescued them from one problem or the other.

Serving Of the Shrine

The sacrifice of Nkpedei is carried out every month as soon as the moon is set. After a few days of the moon set, the Okpala-Uku directs his Ogor-Nmor (Chief Priest) to go and perform the sacrifice. Two or three canon shots will be fired in front of the Nkpedei Shrine house. The representatives of the age grade of "Otu-Mpu" will be in attendance at the sacrifice venue with the

●As Recorded By Okwa Oji Nwachukwu



Chief Priest (Ogor-Nmor).

The items required for the sacrifice are one big bottle of local gin, big bottle of red oil, Kola-nut, Canon gun shot and Native chalk (nzu)

Igor-Ani Otuleka Otherwise Known As (Ebu Umu Orji)

The shrine is situated along Akoku-Uno road at the outskirts of Umutu, it is between Umutu-Ogo and Akoku-Uno. It is about five kilometers from Umutu and four kilometers from Akoku-Uno. The shrine is jointly owned by Akoku-Uno, Obeti, Umuaja and Umutu Communities.

This is a process of dedicating every firstborn child in a family to the gods of Umutu for protection. Without performing this rite according to our forefathers, the child dies on stepping into any part of Umutu land.

Origin Of Ani Shrine Deity (In Umutu Kingdom)

The origin and history of "Ani Shrine" could be traced back to late Onya Nwa Inneh, who was a great hunter in Umutu. While he was on his hunting expedition, he came across (discovered) the river Ethiope which is a source of drinking water. Having discovered the River Ethiope, he felt that a camp where people could live should be built very close to the River Ethiope. The site of the camp was the "Ani shrine HUT" known as "Akpa Asua Eto" built in the Umutu main market.

Late Onya Nwa Inneh uprooted an "Aboshi" life plant and planted it in front of the "Ani shrine hut" as a landmark for the "Ani shrine". The "Aboshi life plant" planted by Onya Nwa Inneh is still there in front of the "Ani shrine hut" in the Umutu main market. We call it "Isu Ani" in our Ukwuani language.

Umu Oshioziem is known from time immemorial as the custodian of "Ani shrine" and is therefore saddled with the responsibility of serving the "Ani shrine".

The first Chief Priest of "Ani shrine" was late Onya nwa Inneh, who hailed from Oshioziem sub-family unit of Ogwenzei/Okofashi family in Umutu.

Among those who were chief priests of "Ani shrine" include the Okwa Ottah Ifa, the late Ugbo Osemeke, the late Chief Etu Oshionya, the late Chief Otuya Akpe and Okwa Daniel Abamba, the current Chief Priest of "Ani shrine" till date.

Historical Perspective Of The Chief Priests Of Olu Ezenmor

The deity is exclusively owned by the Umu-Ejie family in Umutu. It is customary that the most senior person in the family serves the deity.

The late HRH Opia Oduogwu, who died in 1939, was the first Chief Priest. Others are OpiaOgboli Ogene, the late HRH Oduogwu Opia, who died in 1987, the late Enemuwe Eze Akwa Ekwa, the late Nwosa Eze, the late Nzete Nwa Eze and the late Victor Eze Nwosa.

Historical Perspective of Chief Priests Of Orjiokalese

The Orji Okalese deity is exclusively owned by the Asabina subfamily in Umu Abbi. Otulugbu Eworo of Umu Ezuku sub-family unit was the first Chief Priest of Orji Okalese deity. He served the deity for a very long time before his death.

Others are Omolu Ottah, Oshi-Iji Nzei Agana Ineh Ogwu,

Chief Otunyo Osakuni, Chief John Nzei Omolu aka Ukpe, Iyogiliyo, Mr Joseph Ogolime Onyolu, Mr Roger Onyolu and Mr Kester Nwador, the current Chief Priest

The Family Descendants In Umutu

Umu Abbi Family. These include Umu Asabina, Umu Ugboni Ojugbeli, Umu Ezuku, Umu Ukpene Okochi, Umu Alama, Umu Odagwe Anie and Umulwu

Umu Oginye Family. They include Umu Ossai Ogwugwa, Umu Chime Ezhiedi, Umu Nwajeli, Umu Egwe, Umu Odigwe Ugbeleme and Umu Ottah Ogwugwa.

Umu Ejie Family. They include Umu Enenya, Umu Nwosodi, Umu Opia Ashiwe, Umu Ojugbeli, Umu Onyeme Isasa, Umu Obioje, Umu Edike Ese

Umuonyia. The family

descendants in Umu Onyia include Umu Okpala-Okei, Umu Aboh, Umu Achi Ezhiedi.

Umuokpala-Ideh. The family descendants in Umu Okpala-ideh include Umu Ubeleme, Umu Anamali, Umu Oshioigune, Umu Ogwezi Ijor, Umu Ossai Ezhiedi, and Umu Chime Odagwe.

Ogwenzei/Okofashi. The family descendants in Umu Ogwenzei/Okofashi include Umu Oluku, Umu Okofashi, Umu Oknye Efete, Umu Okpala Chime, and Umu Oshioziem.

The "Onoku Deity"

The "Onoku Deity" is located by the entrance to Umutu Main Market, by Igili Road. The deity is celebrated every three (3) years as the Western demands.

Preparatory For Onoku Festival

All women, ranging from Ada, Ejie-uku and other women who are juju priests (nde mani nwor) will go to scrub the house of uno-onoku.

There will also be a wake kept in the evening prior to the celebration of the Onoku festival on the following day. The wake will feature folklore stories in front of the Uno-Onoku house from night till dawn.

On the day of the ceremony, one native cow is slaughtered at the Uno-Onoku house. Some of the parts of the cow slaughtered are cooked, and some of the parts are shared raw to the Okpala-uku and his council of elders (okwas), the Onotu-Uku and his council of chiefs, the Ada and the six families in Umutu.

Sharing Formula For Slaughtered Cow

One hand of the cow goes to the Okpala-uku, one leg of the cow goes to the Onotu-uku/chiefs, one hand of the cow goes to the Okwas, one hand of the cow, ose and nkipirika (intestines) go to the six (6) families in Umutu, the neck of the cow goes to otu omenka both men and women, and the head of the cow must be dropped into the river Ethiope.

The Deities

Odimodi, Nwa-Nzeanania

The two deities are still at our ancestral home - Akoku-Uno. The Umutu community is yet to discover or locate the particular spots where the two deities were installed. It is high time the community leadership located these two deities to be going to Akoku-uno to appease them.

The "Odimodi Deity" is a very powerful deity because it gives a signal of impending danger by crying. Nwa-Nze Ananofia Deity is also a powerful deity that prevents Umutu sons and daughters from being lost in a strange land.

Eze-Igala Deity

The Eze Igala deity is specially meant for a woman who defiled it. The Onotu-uku is in charge of serving it. The Onotu-Uku can delegate any chief to serve it on his behalf.

The items required for appeasing Eze-Igala for defiling it include one goat, 10 tubers of yams, five big dried fish, one jar of palm wine, five kola nuts and a small piece of red and white oboosi cloth

Sharing Of Fishes And Yam Brought

The Onotu-uku takes one fish, and Eze-Ugo takes one tuber of yam.

Note: The food prepared in the Eze-igala shrine house cannot be removed from there to somewhere else to eat. Any man who ties his wife's cloth and goes to the Eze-igala shrine house has defiled the shrine.

Use Of Cutlass/Battle Axe/Dagger To Fight In Umutu Kingdom

It is highly prohibited for one to use dangerous weapons such as a cutlass or battle axe, or dagger to fight in Umutu. Penalties are laid down for an offender.

The fines include one goat, 10 tubers of yams and the ingredients for cooking, one jar of palm wine, 10 kola nuts and a wedge of N20,000.00 only.

Compiled by Chief Francis Inehishie

"This is a process of dedicating every firstborn child in a family to the gods of Umutu for protection. Without performing this rite according to our forefathers, the child dies on stepping into any part of Umutu land."

Sunday The Pointer

Underage Keke Riders Take ... Commuters Raise Alarm

BY CHIKA KWAMBA/JUDITH OBIANUA/CHIDINMA ANIEKWE/CHARLES MADUEMEZIA/LESLEY OKWUNZE/OCHUKO ENAMUOTOR

She could hear her heart pounding in her chest. Seated at the back of the sky-blue rickshaw, Chiamaka regretted her decision. But she was in a hurry, and the threatening rain left her with little choice when the rider, whom she suspected to be underage, pulled over and beckoned her to board.

After a brief fare negotiation, all seemed well until they approached the Inter-Bau axis. The rider refused to slow down even as a Dangote articulated truck loomed ahead. It was then that Chiamaka realised she might never reach her destination alive if she did not act quickly. "Stop!" she screamed at the oblivious rider after repeatedly pleading with him to reduce his speed.

This scenario has become increasingly common in Asaba, the Delta State capital, where underage keke riders have become a growing concern on the roads. In this edition of Sunday Digest, our correspondents spoke with stakeholders and residents about the trend. While many recounted frightening encounters, others called for urgent government intervention to stem the tide.

The founder/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Humanity Hoops Africa, Yusuf Abubakar, expressed his deep dissatisfaction with the standard of living and the system of governance in Nigeria, particularly regarding its impact on the youth.

According to him, "Underage youths engaging in tedious businesses to fend for themselves is unacceptable and demands a high level of concern. Let us look at their involvement in driving commercial autorickshaws (popularly known as keke). Riding keke as a primary means of earning a living at such a tender age is disheartening.

"Our government must look into this and provide a safety net, even though almost everyone needs help right now. For instance, we have graduates with excellent grades roaming the streets without jobs.

"If graduates are struggling, what then becomes the fate of those who have not even finished secondary school? What about dropouts? Do they not have a future? Of course, they do. But what is our government doing when 16 and 17-year-old children are left to ride keke?

"This is also why we record so many accidents; these minors lack self-control and emotional maturity. They drive recklessly and have never attended a proper driving school. They simply learn how to move the keke by the roadside, grab the handles, and hit the road, putting public safety at serious risk.



"There is an immense amount of work to be done. To mention just a few urgent steps, the government needs to look deeply into this issue and establish a formidable regulatory structure to curb underage commercial driving.

"Right now, many of these youngsters are exposed to severe vices, including smoking marijuana, substance abuse, hard drugs, and alcoholism. Yet, they consume these substances and still operate commercial vehicles, carrying unsuspecting passengers.

They approach major T-junctions without caution or regard for oncoming traffic because they are not in their right senses, thereby endangering the lives of innocent commuters daily," he said.

In a chat with a Keke rider, Mohammed Haruna, from Adamawa State but based in Asaba, he stated that the unstructured nature of the transport system makes it difficult to regulate the involvement of underage youths.

Haruna noted that because it is an open business for everyone, and many operators move from different states and cities specifically to become commercial drivers, they can neither be easily monitored nor stopped.

He reiterated the significance of having a functional union to help guide and protect their interests. Furthermore, he disclosed that while they had an association in the past, its leaders lacked transparency, coordination, and accountability, often embezzling the funds contrib-

uted by members.

Also speaking, the Councillor representing Oleh Ward 2 in Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State, Hon. Efeturi Efemena, described the situation as sad and terrible.

"Anytime I have the opportunity to board a keke, I feel sad seeing underage youths driving," he said, adding, "Most of these youths are not well-trained on how to handle a keke, meaning they are not professionals and do not understand traffic signs. Consequently, most of the accidents we witness on our busy roads or expressways are caused by them."

He urged the government to intervene, stating, "The government should wade in and do something about it. If possible, they should establish a policy that prohibits underage persons from plying our busy roads as commercial drivers.

"Parents are also major actors in this menace. Some of them care less about their children's welfare, leaving them to cater for themselves. While other parents are trying, they get carried away by the daily struggle of putting food on the table," Efemena posited.

Correspondingly, another respondent, who spoke with The Pointer, Amb Lawretta Omeleze-Eso, argued that it is the sole responsibility of parents to care for their children, irrespective of the economic climate. She urged parents to only give birth to the number of children they can adequately cater to.

"Our economy is poor, and it has severely affected

Continues on Page 23

"This is also why we record so many accidents; these minors lack self-control and emotional maturity. They drive recklessly and have never attended a proper driving school. They simply learn how to move the keke by the roadside, grab the handles, and hit the road, putting public safety at serious risk.



Digest The Pointer

Over Delta Roads

Continued from Page 22

the living conditions of the average Nigerian. Most of these children engage in these activities to support and contribute to their family's welfare, which is not supposed to be the case, especially at their age. In a sane society, these children should be in school learning to improve themselves and secure a better future.

"As a country, let us put in more effort to take these children off the streets. The truth is that our current society does not favour these kids. That is why you see them on the streets hawking sachet water and other items during school hours, performing menial jobs that equate to child labour just to support their families and survive," she said.

An officer of the Delta State Traffic Management Authority (DESTMA), Odiara Okwudili, confirmed that he has encountered underage rickshaw riders. "I have entered keke where an underage person was the rider. What I noticed is that they are inexperienced, with no knowledge of traffic rules.

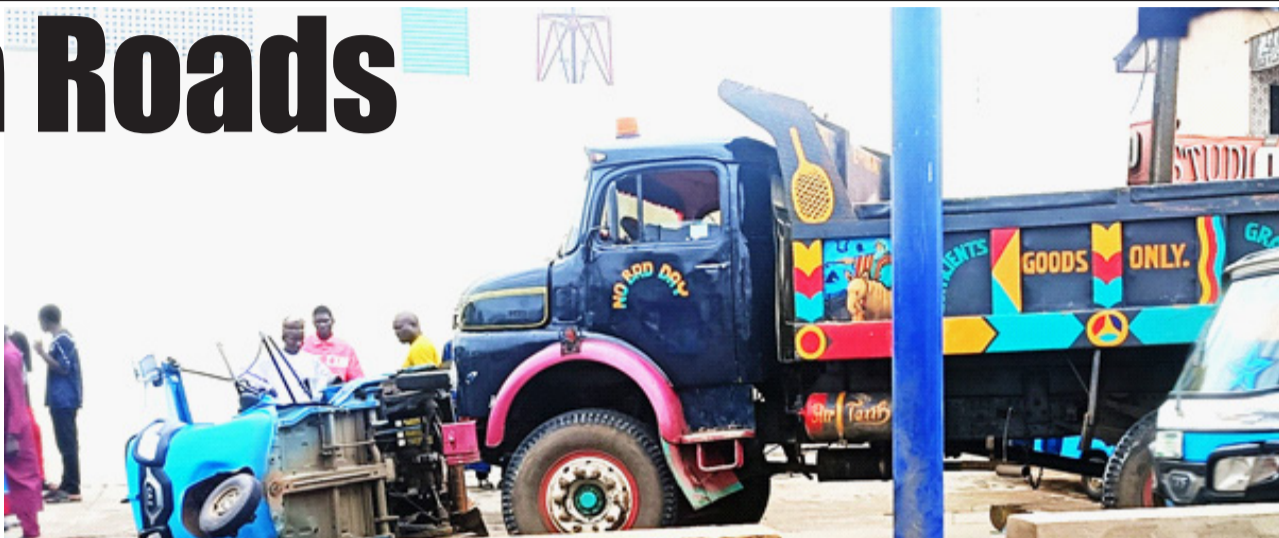
According to him, underage Keke riders are predominant among persons from a section of the country. "There was a day I entered keke, and I discovered that the rider was teaching another person while carrying passengers, and the two of them were minors. They should be like 14 or 15 years or thereabout. You can tell their age by merely looking at them. They are very young, and these children should be in school, not pursuing money.

"Come to think of it, some of them are doing it due to their family condition. For some, it used to be their father's occupation, but because he is no more and as the first son, he takes up the occupation to assist the family. While some are into it because their friends are doing it" he said.

According to another officer, Mr Polycarp Uzodike said, "Even if an accident occurs, the police cannot arrest such a rider because he is a minor and cannot take full responsibility for his actions. It is very risky for both passengers and the riders. Underage riders drive as if they are experts; they are never careful.

"The truth is that they cannot stand for themselves when trouble occurs. They can easily be deceived and carried away. It will be difficult to identify them because age is not written on one's forehead" he said.

Some Keke rider, Mr Paul Chidi and Mr Felix Chijioke, who spoke with our correspondent in Asaba, identified poverty and the high rate of unemployment in the country as some of the factors responsible for underage persons riding keke. They argued that the



youngsters are doing their best to survive legitimately in an economy characterised by unbearable hardship.

Another Keke rider, who simply identified himself as Emmanuel, called for the proper profiling of riders to ascertain their eligibility to ride on public roads, especially for commercial purposes, stressing that the taskforces and the keke unions should rise to the occasion.

Also, a teacher, Eunice Aniekwe, said she has not encountered underage riders, but expressed caution should she meet one. "If I am found in that situation, I'll try to talk the driver to slow down, and if they don't, I'll ask to be dropped.

"There should be a proper registration of riders. Also, the government should provide job opportunities for them to avoid cases like these because it is unemployment that prompts these children to do things like these.

Grace Abalaka and Ogwu Amarachi are entrepreneurs in Asaba. Speaking with our correspondent, they strongly aligned with previous respondents on the need for strict age verification, stressing that a union-based gatekeeping system can go a long way to ensure underage drivers are restricted from driving.

Another respondent, Favour Ogwu, who is a student and based in Asaba, shared her experience with an underage rider, noting that she felt unsafe throughout the journey. She called for government intervention through laws that deter underage riders on roads.

Other commuters, who spoke with our correspondents in separate interviews, including Blessing, Queen Melissa, Success Akomire, Lesley Okwunze, Zara and Favour, said they felt anxious whenever they encountered underage keke riders. In such awkward circumstances, these respondents said they often plead with the underage riders to drive slowly, while praying to get to their destinations in one piece.

"The truth is that they cannot stand for themselves when trouble occurs. They can easily be deceived and carried away. It will be difficult to identify them because age is not written on one's forehead" he said.

Also, a keke rider with six years of experience who preferred to stay anonymous expressed empathy for the underage keke riders who he said mostly migrate from the northern part of the country to the south for greener pastures. "I feel that most of them, especially when they come to this side. They have no means of livelihood, so they really have no choice" he said.

Abulahi Mohammed is a 23-year-old rickshaw rider who started the vocation since he was 19. Speaking with our correspondent, he stressed the dangers associated with underage driving. "My cousin had an accident because he didn't know how to ride it well"

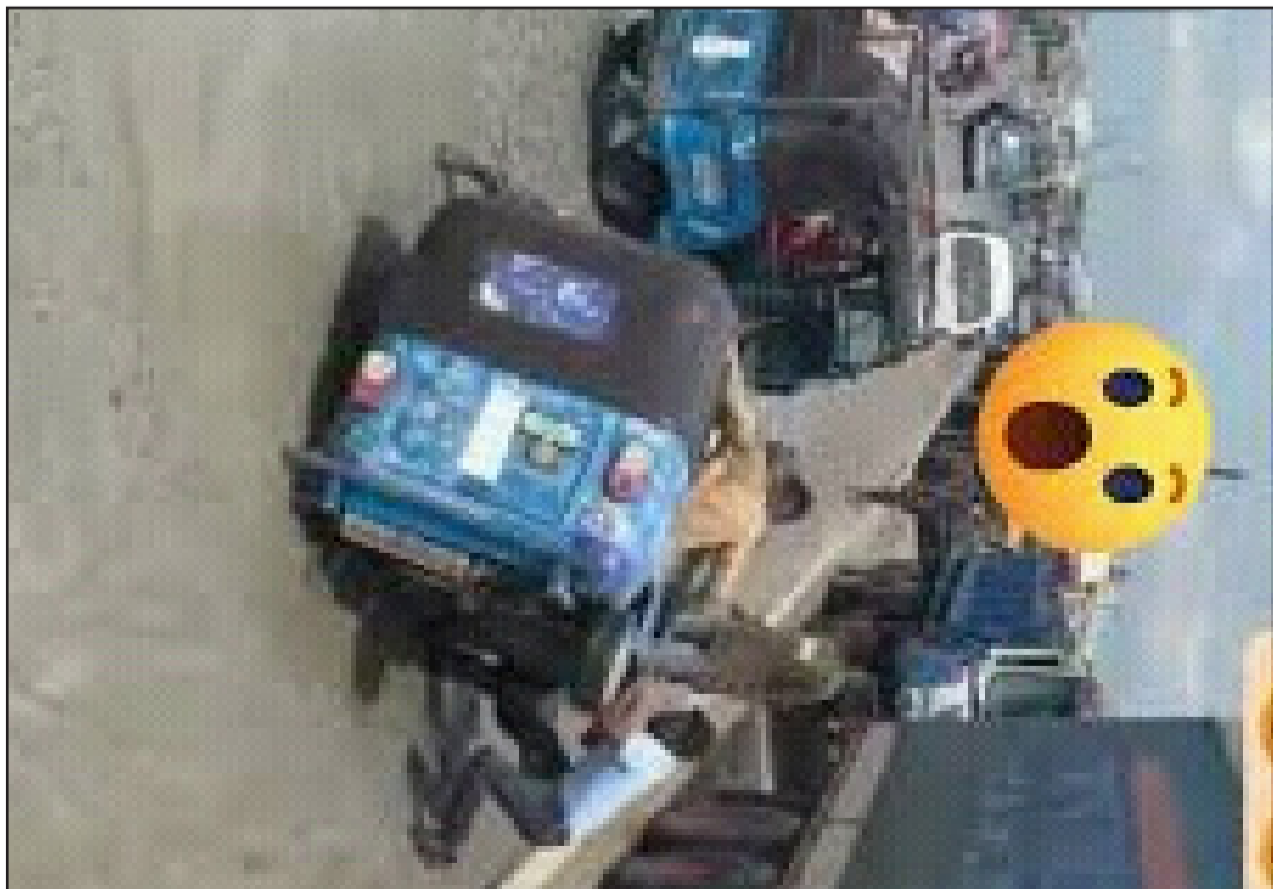
For Mallam Ibrahim, a 35-year-old keke rider in Asaba who has been in the business for five years, "I see boys around 17 or 19 driving inside Okpanam and Anwai axis, mostly in the afternoon.

"This is often because of the financial hardship at home. The boys are forced to hit the road to help feed their younger siblings" he said, adding that such young riders are often erratic and could cause serious hazards on the road at the slightest provocation.

Similarly, Michael Egwu (22), who just started the keke riding business barely a year ago, stressed the prevalence of underage keke riders in Asaba, the Delta State Capital. "There is an 18-year-old boy near Cable Point who drives his father's keke every evening. They want quick daily cash to buy clothes and look big among their peers because jobs are scarce" he said.

Narrating her encounter, Chiamaka Nwachukwu (21), said, "I entered a keke from Summit Junction last month, and the boy looked roughly 16 or 17. My heart was racing. He was driving roughly near big tipper trucks, so I forced him to drop me at Inter-Bau. They don't look at side mirrors, they speed blindly, and they panic during traffic gridlocks.

Also, Kingsley Adebayo, another respondent who spoke with our reporter, said, "I see them often when I am closing from work and heading back towards DLA Road. I have entered one. Although I didn't alight because it was dark and keke scarce, I scolded him for over speeding.



The Pointer News

Foundation Seeks Inclusive Governance

AS Nigeria marks the 2026 Democracy Day, From Above Humanitarian Foundation (FAHF) has congratulated President Bola Tinubu, the Federal Government, and Nigerians on the nation's democratic journey, while calling for improved security and inclusive governance.

In a statement issued in Port Harcourt, the Executive Director of the Foundation, Amb Blessing Abel, described June 12 as a significant reminder of the sacrifices made by Nigerians in pursuit of democracy, justice, and national development.

She said that while the country has continued to sustain democratic governance, more efforts are needed to address insecurity, economic hardship, hunger, and other challenges affecting citizens across the country.

According to her, the dividends of democracy should be reflected in the well-being of the people through improved security, access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and social protection.

"On this Democracy Day, we congratulate President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the Federal Government, and all Nigerians for keeping faith with democracy. We also salute the resilience of citizens who continue to contribute to nation-building despite prevailing challenges," she said.

Amb Abel noted that women, children, youths, farmers, and Persons Living With Disabilities (PLWD) remain among the groups most affected by insecurity and economic difficulties, stressing the need for policies that promote inclusion and shared prosperity.

She urged government at all levels to strengthen efforts towards protecting lives, supporting vulnerable populations, and creating opportunities that would improve the quality of life of ordinary Nigerians.

The Foundation reaffirmed its commitment to humanitarian service and community development, while expressing optimism that Nigeria would continue to make progress through unity, accountable leadership, and active citizen participation.

"Democracy can only thrive where there is peace, security, inclusion, and hope for the people. Together, we can build a more prosperous and equitable nation for all," Abel stated.

D'North Senatorial Seat 2027: Ofunne Outlines Reform-Driven Campaign

Political Scientist and the People's Redemption Party (PRP) candidate for the Delta North Senatorial District in the 2027 general elections, Hon Bob Ofunne, has reaffirmed his commitment to providing intellectual and people-centred leadership for the district, promising to champion policies that address development and democratic accountability.

Ofunne disclosed this in a telephone conversation with journalists in Asaba, the Delta State Capital.

According to him, "My participation in the senatorial race is rooted in over two decades of active engagement in the political development of Delta North and a lifelong commitment to democratic ideals.

"This is a call to greater service and responsibility. I urge all our people to join hands with me as we work together to build a stronger and more prosperous Delta North.

My background as a Political Scientist has shaped my belief that leadership must be anchored in knowledge, integrity, competence, and service to the common good.

"As the founding member of The True Democrats (TTD), I was inspired by the conviction that democracy should serve as a tool for the liberation and empowerment of citizens rather than merely a vehicle for political competition. As the PRP candidate, my commitment remains unwavering."

He noted that his objective is to help redeem the people's mandate and ensure that representation in the Senate truly reflects the aspirations, hopes, and interests of the people.

"The challenges facing Delta North require more than political rhetoric. Addressing issues of development, security, education, youth empowerment, infrastructure, and economic growth demands strategy, foresight, and a clear understanding of the needs of the people," the PRP candidate emphasised.

"I am not contesting this election in pursuit of power for its own sake. I am running because I believe the voice of Delta North deserves to be heard, respected, and championed with intellectual rigour, courage, and passion. Our people deserve representation that focuses on solutions rather than slogans."

Ofunne also used the opportunity to appeal to constituents across the district to actively participate in the democratic process by obtaining their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).

"I want to urge every eligible citizen of Delta North to go and obtain their PVC. Democracy begins with participation, and participation begins with the power to vote. Your PVC is more than a card; it is your voice, your power, and your instrument for shaping the future of our communities."

According to him, one of the greatest challenges facing democracy today is that many citizens have not fully appreciated the value and power of their votes.

NBM Demands Tighter Security In Schools

PATRICK MGBODO

THE Body of Founders (BOF) of the Neo-Black Movement of Africa Worldwide has called on the Federal Government and security agencies to urgently strengthen security around schools across the country.

NBM urged the government to deploy military personnel and other security operatives to protect students and teachers from persistent attacks by terrorists and kidnappers.

The group made the call amid growing concerns over the escalating wave of abductions, killings and attacks on educational institutions across Nigeria, describing the trend as a grave threat to the nation's future and educational development.

Speaking during a press conference held in Asaba, the BOF Coordinator, Akpo Diekomaoh, said Nigerian children deserve to learn in a safe and secure environment free from fear, violence and intimidation.

Addressing journalists on the theme, "Bring Back Our Children and Teachers," Diekomaoh lamented the continued targeting of school children and educators by criminal elements, warning that the persistent insecurity facing schools could have devastating consequences for national growth and social stability.

According to him, attacks on schools not only disrupt education but also undermine the country's long-term development prospects.

"Children represent the future of every nation and deserve to live, learn and thrive in a conducive environment free from fear and violence. The con-

tinued abduction of children and teachers is unacceptable and threatens the future of our country," he said.

The BOF coordinator stressed that every Nigerian child must have access to education in a protected environment, urging government authorities to move beyond blame games and focus on practical solutions that would secure the release of all abducted pupils and teachers currently in captivity.

"We should not be engaged in accusations. Rather, we should focus on reconciliation of our actions and restructuring the security apparatus to secure the release of these children and teachers," he said.

Diekomaoh called for increased investment in the protection of vulnerable persons, especially school children in remote communities who are often exposed to attacks due to inadequate security presence. He advocated the deployment of military personnel and trained security operatives to schools, particularly those located in isolated and high-risk areas, noting that such measures had yielded positive results in some parts of the country.

The BOF coordinator further advocated the re-organisation of Nigeria's security architecture, including the strengthening of community and local policing structures, to enhance intelligence gathering and rapid response to security threats.

The group urged the Federal Government, state governments, security agencies, community leaders and civil society organisations to collaborate in developing sustainable strategies aimed at safeguarding schools and restoring public confidence in the nation's education system.



Members of the Neo-Black Movement (NBM) during a press conference in Asaba, Delta State

June 12: Insecurity, Hardship Threaten Democratic Gains, IHRC Warns

THE International Human Rights Commission (IHRC)/Corporation INTERPOL Centre USA in Nigeria has warned that rising insecurity and economic hardship could undermine Nigeria's democratic gains if urgent measures are not taken to improve citizens' welfare.

In a post-June 12 reflection, the Head of IHRC Diplomatic Mission in Nigeria, Amb Duru Hezekiah, said democracy must be judged not only by the conduct of elections but by its ability to deliver security, economic opportunities and improved living conditions for citizens.

According to him, June 12 remains a powerful symbol of Nigeria's democratic journey and should inspire renewed commitment to policies that directly impact the lives of ordinary Nigerians.

"Democracy must go beyond the ballot box. It must be reflected in the safety of our communities, affordable living conditions, respect for human rights and opportunities for citizens to thrive," Hezekiah said.

The commission acknowledged ongoing efforts by President Bola Tinubu's administration in economic

reforms, infrastructure development, and security interventions, but stressed the need for faster, more visible outcomes.

IHRC expressed concern over persistent attacks on communities and farming areas, noting that insecurity continues to threaten livelihoods, food production and economic stability.

Hezekiah also urged leaders to remain focused on governance and service delivery as political activities gradually build towards the 2027 general elections.

"Elections are important, but democracy must ultimately deliver security, justice, opportunity and prosperity. Nigerians deserve a country where businesses can grow, farmers can work without fear, and young people can access meaningful opportunities," he stated. The commission reaffirmed its commitment to promoting peace, democratic governance, humanitarian development and human rights protection, while calling on all stakeholders to work together towards a more secure, inclusive and prosperous Nigeria.



We, the critics, on the other hand, have also pointed to the poverty rate and the food insecurity numbers. Both groups walk away with exactly the story they wanted, and the report's most important insight, the relationship between the two Nigerias, goes largely undiscussed.

One IMF Report, Two Nigerian Economies

TWO Nigerians are living inside the same set of numbers, and the latest IMF Article IV report on the country captures both without quite admitting that they barely speak to each other.

The first Nigeria is the one that appears in boardroom presentations and finance ministry briefings. It grew by an estimated 4 per cent in 2025. The gross international reserves climbed to 46 billion dollars, up from 40 billion the year before. Net reserves nearly doubled, from 23 billion to 35 billion.

The current account posted a surplus, and banks have been recapitalised. Nigeria has been removed from the FATF grey list. By the metrics that international observers tend to watch first, this Nigeria looks like a country that has done the hard work and is being rewarded for it.

The second Nigeria is the one most of us actually live in, or know intimately through family, neighbours, and the daily arithmetic of survival. In Nigeria, 63 per cent of the population lives below the national poverty line. Roughly 27 million people were food insecure as of the fall of 2025. Inflation, after months of gradual decline, climbed back to 15.4 per cent in March 2026, driven by fuel and food prices that refuse to stay put.

Also in this same Nigeria, some households are skipping meals, farmers are struggling to keep pace with input costs, and urban families are watching their incomes get quietly devoured by transport fares, food prices, and the basic costs of simply staying alive in a city.

What strikes me is how rarely the report, or anyone reading it, is forced to sit with both pictures at the same time. It is far easier to pick one Nigeria and talk about that one. Government communicators reach for the reserves and the growth figure.

We, the critics, on the other hand, have also pointed to the poverty rate and the food insecurity numbers. Both

groups walk away with exactly the story they wanted, and the report's most important insight, the relationship between the two Nigerias, goes largely undiscussed.

Let us start with the Nigeria of the reserves, because there is no point pretending those gains are fake or manufactured. They appear real, and they matter to the national economy. A country with stronger reserves has more room to manoeuvre. It can defend its currency without panic, reassure investors who have spent years treating Nigeria as a high-risk bet, and give policymakers a cushion to plan from rather than constantly fighting fires. After years of Nigeria lurching from one foreign exchange crisis to another, this kind of stability is nothing.

Now, let us go to the Nigeria of the bus stop and the farm, because this is where the report becomes genuinely uncomfortable, even for an institution as careful with its language as the IMF. The fiscal picture tells you something important about how seriously the first Nigeria is actually being managed.

The consolidated government deficit rose to 4.4 per cent of GDP in 2025. Oil revenue fell short of expectations. Capital spending was under-executed, and some of it had apparently been happening outside the formal budget altogether, only brought into the books later through what the report describes, in suitably bureaucratic language, as repeal-and-reenactment bills. Strip away the technical phrasing, and what you are left with is a simple, familiar story. Public finance in Nigeria remains too messy, too opaque, and too easily adjusted after the fact to be the kind of credible foundation that turns macro stability into something Nigeria can feel.

If the government cannot keep its own spending in order, every promise about where the benefits of reform will eventually land becomes harder to believe. And the people in the second Nigeria, the ones at the bus stop

calculating whether they can afford both transport and lunch today, have very little patience left for promises that depend on shady budget management eventually sorting itself out. The IMF's monetary policy advice sits squarely in the gap between the two Nigerias and illustrates it perfectly. The Fund wants the Central Bank to maintain a tight monetary stance until disinflation is firmly established. On its own terms, this is not unreasonable advice. Inflation that moves quickly is brutal for people with no buffer, and the first Nigeria's job is partly to create conditions where prices stop punishing the second Nigeria so severely.

But tight monetary policy, on its own, cannot do what the second Nigeria actually needs. It can slow the rate of price increases, but cannot grow yams. It cannot move fertiliser from the port to the farm. It cannot secure a farming community in Benue or Plateau so that planting season actually happens without fear. Monetary policy is a tool in Nigeria's first toolbox, while in the second, Nigeria needs power, security, and roads, and no amount of careful interest rate management substitutes for any of those. The IMF welcomes Nigeria's commitment to a flexible exchange rate and wants the country to phase out remaining restrictions and multiple currency practices. For Nigeria, this is a technical conversation about market efficiency and investor confidence.

The second factor shows up in the price of rice, medicine, and the spare parts that keep a generator or a tricycle running. The logic is sound; holding the naira at a value the market does not believe in eventually becomes a hidden tax on everyone. Still, the people paying that hidden tax are overwhelmingly in the second Nigeria, while the people debating the policy mostly live in the first. What is the paradox we live in?



Behind the smiles and carefully curated posts on social media, many young people are quietly struggling with anxiety, depression, self-doubt, and burnout as they try to keep up with social expectations both online and offline.

curated posts on social media, many young people are quietly struggling with anxiety, depression, self-doubt, and burnout as they try to keep up with social expectations both online and offline. Youth advocates say the issue goes beyond personal ambition. It reflects deeper concerns about the economy and the limited opportunities available. When the future feels uncertain, the pressure to make it becomes even heavier.

The popular phrase "I must make it" raises an important question: are young people truly chasing success, or are they simply trying to survive? The intense pressure to "make it" has made many Nigerian students overly focused on money. As a result, some no longer attend lectures, care about their results, or stay committed to their academic goals.

Despite everything, Nigerian youths continue to show deep resilience that often goes unnoticed. Beneath the pressure, uncertainty, and daily struggles, many are quietly finding ways to survive and still dream. Some are learning digital skills late at night after lectures, others are starting small businesses with little or no capital, and many are creating content in hopes of building a better future for themselves. At the same time, countless students are still trying to keep up with school, attending classes, writing exams, and

holding on to the hope that their efforts will eventually pay off.

Even when support feels limited, and the path ahead seems unclear, they keep going. They adapt to difficult situations, improvise when resources are lacking, and push forward even on days when motivation is gone. It is not always loud or visible, but in their persistence, sacrifices, and quiet determination, there is a powerful story of endurance. Despite the weight of expectations and the reality of hardship, they continue to hold on to their dreams, refusing to give up on the possibility of a better life.

The pressure to make it may define this generation, but so does their determination. Behind the social media highlights is a generation working quietly and consistently toward a better future, slow and steadily, one hustle, one step at a time.

The pressure to "make it" may define this generation, but it does not define its weakness. It reveals a group of young people navigating uncertainty with courage, creativity, and quiet endurance. Behind every hustle, late-night study session, and social media smile is someone trying to build a future that feels stable and meaningful. Perhaps the real question is not how fast young people are making it, but how long they can continue carrying so much pressure alone and what it would look like if they didn't have to.

Invisible Struggles Of Nigerian Youths

BY MARVIS ESEBERUO

AT 19, Sandra's day begins before sunrise. Between attending lectures, managing her online thrift business, and completing assignments, she barely has time to rest. Yet every time she opens social media, she is welcomed by videos and pictures of her peers living what looks like perfect lives, catching flights, wearing designer outfits, and celebrating achievements. Instead of motivation, it leaves her with anxiety and one question: "Am I doing enough?"

Across Nigeria, thousands of young people are dealing with the same quiet pressure. One phrase continues to echo among them: "I must make it." Success is no longer seen as a long-term goal; it now feels more like an urgent deadline they cannot afford to miss.

Economic hardship has only made things worse. With the rising cost of living, limited job opportunities, and increasing financial responsibilities, many young people are forced to find creative ways just to get by. Students now juggle lectures with different

online businesses and side hustles. Graduates take on multiple jobs. Aspiring entrepreneurs risk their savings in hopes of building something that can secure their future. While these efforts bring in extra income, they also reflect a growing reality: many young people no longer feel they can rely on their degrees alone.

A 200-level physiology student, Yemi Precious, described the pressure as overwhelming: "Sometimes it doesn't even feel like pressure at first. It starts small. You see someone your age achieving something, then another posting a new win, and without realizing it, you begin to measure your own life against theirs. You tell yourself you're fine, that everyone moves differently, but on quiet nights when everything slows down, the thoughts still come back. Am I behind? Am I doing enough? It's not always loud or dramatic, but it sits there in the background, shaping how you see yourself and what you think you should have achieved by now"

Behind the smiles and carefully

Campus Mirror

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SSANU Warns FG Over Agreement Renegotiation

THE Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) has expressed concern over the prolonged delay in concluding the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement between university unions and the Federal Government, warning that its members are becoming increasingly agitated as the process drags on.

National Vice President and Chairman of SSANU, Western Zone, Dr Abdussobour Salaam, said the union had exercised considerable patience over the years but cautioned that members' tolerance was rapidly wearing thin.

Speaking at the 79th Zonal Executive Council meeting of the union held at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Salaam said the meeting brought together representatives from 26 universities across the South-West to deliberate on issues affecting members, including career progression, remuneration, conflict management, and the unresolved 2009 agreement.

"Our charge here is to see that those pressing issues that affect our members, particularly the issue of renegotiation of our 2009 agreement, which has been long in coming, are resolved within the shortest possible time," he said.

According to him, the renegotiation process, chaired by former Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Alhaji Yayale Ahmed, was nearing completion despite several challenges encountered along the way.

"We are almost concluding the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement with the Federal Government. The renegotiation is chaired by Yayale Ahmed; we are almost done with it, but it has not been without challenges," Salaam stated.

He disclosed that certain government officials had at some point threatened to derail the exercise but commended President Bola Tinubu for sustaining the platform that enabled negotiations to continue.

"At a point in time, we had some government officials who were almost truncating the whole process, but we thank President Bola Tinubu for providing this platform of renegotiation," he said.

The SSANU leader recalled that the 2009 agreement stipulated periodic review every three years, lamenting that successive administrations failed to adhere to the timeline.

Discriminatory Cut-Off Marks Hurting Polytechnics –ASUP, Others

STAKEHOLDERS in Nigeria's polytechnic education sector have decried what they described as persistent discriminatory admission policies and systemic neglect of polytechnics.

For the 2026 admissions, the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board sets the minimum baseline for university admissions at 150, while polytechnics and colleges of education are pegged lower, at 100.

They warned that the trend is discouraging enrolment, depriving the country of critical technical manpower and undermining efforts to drive industrial development.

The concerns were raised at the maiden International Conference of the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics, Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti Chapter, held virtually.

The event brought together academics, administrators, union leaders, alumni and industry stakeholders.

In a communiqué issued at the end of the conference and signed by the Chairman of the Conference Organising Committee, Dr Peter Ajewole, and the Secretary, Dr Ige Ayeni, participants lamented that disparities in admission cut-off marks between universities and polytechnics continued to fuel a talent drain from institutions specifically designed to meet Nigeria's technical and industrial manpower needs.

They noted that negative perceptions and discriminatory practices against polytechnic education have contributed significantly to declining enrolment across the sector.

The conference further observed that the perception of polytechnic education as inferior to university education remained one of the greatest barriers to attracting academically talented students.



UNIDEL Extends Post-UTME, Direct Entry Application Deadline To June 30

THE University of Delta (UNIDEL), Agbor, has extended the deadline for the sale and submission of its 2026/2027 Post-UTME and Direct Entry application forms from June 15 to June 30, 2026, to enable more eligible candidates to complete their admission processes.

The extension, approved by the university management, is expected to provide prospective applicants who are yet to obtain or submit their application forms an additional opportunity to meet the admission requirements and conclude their registrations without hindrance.

In a notice made available to the public, the university urged candidates who chose or intend to choose UNIDEL as their first-choice institution, as well as other qualified applicants yet to complete their registration, to take advantage of the extension and finalise all application procedures before the new deadline.

The management advised prospective candidates to visit the university's admission portal and carefully follow all stipulated guidelines for the completion and submission of their applications.

It noted that the extension was aimed at ensuring that no eligible candidate is denied the opportunity of seeking admission into the institution due to time constraints.

The university further called on parents, guardians, members of the university community and the general public to take note of the development and assist in giving it wide publicity.

UNIDEL is one of Delta State's public universities and has continued to attract admission seekers from across the country owing to its expanding academic programmes and growing reputation for quality education.

DELSU Makes Plagiarism Screening Mandatory For Final-Year Research

DELTA State University (DELSU), Abraka, has made plagiarism screening compulsory for all final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students, directing them to subject their projects, dissertations, and Theses to verification before final submission.

The directive was contained in an official bulletin issued by the university, which stated that all affected students must upload their completed research works through the institution's ICT Directorate portal for plagiarism assessment.

According to the bulletin, submitted Projects, Dissertations and Theses will undergo plagiarism screening, after which detailed reports will be forwarded to students through their registered email addresses.

The university stated that only students whose research works fall within the approved plagiarism threshold would be cleared to proceed with the binding and final submission of their academic work.

It further disclosed that students

who successfully meet the plagiarism compliance requirements would be issued Plagiarism Clearance Certificates upon graduation.

The institution advised all final-year students to comply strictly with the directive, stressing that plagiarism screening has become a mandatory component of the research submission process.

The measure is aimed at promoting academic integrity, originality in research, and adherence to global best practices in scholarly work.

TETFund Awards N7.5bn Research Grants To 174 Teams

THE Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has announced the award of N7.5 billion in research grants to 174 research teams drawn from tertiary institutions across Nigeria.

The grants, awarded under the 2025 National Research Fund Cycle, followed a rigorous and highly competitive selection process involving proposal submissions, evaluations, and physical oral defence sessions conducted in Abuja.

Speaking during a press briefing at the Fund's headquarters in Abuja, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Sonny Echono, disclosed that the successful projects were selected after extensive scrutiny by the National Research Fund Screening and Monitoring Committee (NRFS&MC).

According to him, the grants cut across critical sectors of national development, including health, agriculture, food security, education, energy, science and engineering, national defence, technology, blue economy, conflict resolution, gender inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

He said the grants awarded to individual research teams range from N13.69 million to N49.98 million,

reflecting the scale and strategic importance of the approved projects.

"A total of 174 grants were awarded to various research teams across thematic areas of national priority at a total sum of N7.5 billion," he said.

He explained that the selection exercise began with the submission of concept notes, after which shortlisted applicants were invited to submit full proposals and defend them orally before the final approval of successful projects.

The Federal University of Technology, Minna, emerged as the institution with the highest number of successful applications, securing 18 research grants, while the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, followed with 11 grants.

Other institutions that recorded strong performances include Ahmadu Bello University with 10 grants, the University of Ilorin with eight, Bayero University Kano and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, with seven each, the University of Jos with six, and the University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, and Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, with five grants apiece.

Aviation Today

WITH CHIKA KWAMBA
07036457960

Ground Handling Companies Suspend Services To Max Air Over Debts

THE Aviation Ground Handlers Association of Nigeria (AGHAN) has suspended ground handling services to Max Air over debts.

The Chairman of AGHAN, Mr Olaniyi Adigun, disclosed the suspension in a statement in Lagos.

Adigun said that the suspension, which took effect from Thursday, was the first major enforcement move by the association against defaulting airlines.

According to him, the decision became necessary following Max Air's refusal to engage with aviation handling companies on the reconciliation and settlement of its indebtedness.

Adigun said that while other airlines owning the ground handling firms were talking with them and reconciling their accounts, Max Air failed to respond positively.

He said that the association could no longer sustain the financial burden imposed by the airline's prolonged non-payment for services rendered to it.

"We took decisive action on Max Air because the airline refused to negotiate with us.

"While the other debtor airlines are negotiating with us, Max Air has refused to negotiate with handling companies.

"Some of the other debtor airlines are already on the verge of signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with our members on debt payment.

"This action should serve as a signal to other airlines that ground handling companies can no longer continue to provide services without payment," he said.

Adigun, however, said that Max Air's ongoing transport of Muslim pilgrims would not be affected by the suspension.

He noted that the handling charges for the pilgrimage flights were paid directly by the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria.

Adigun said that AGHAN had given a series of ultimatums to indebted airlines, warning that failure to settle outstanding obligations could lead to withdrawal of services.

Efforts to obtain Max Air's reaction to the development were unsuccessful as of the time of filing this report.

VMO Aero Clarifies Circumstances Of Asaba Aircraft Landing Occurrence

VMO Aero has provided additional details regarding an occurrence involving one of its aircraft during a flight from Lagos to Asaba on June 10, 2026.

In a statement signed by its Accountable Manager, Oluwaseun Ayodeji, the company said the aircraft departed Lagos and, during its initial approach into Asaba Airport at about 7:43a.m. local time, the flight crew determined that the approach parameters were not within the required limits for a safe landing.

The aircraft involved was a Bombardier Challenger CL-601 business jet with registration N989BC. Aviation industry sources said the aircraft is on lease in Nigeria from Best Aircraft Deals LLC, a U.S.-based aviation brokerage and aircraft services firm involved in aircraft sales and acquisitions.

According to the company, the crew subsequently carried out a missed approach in line with established aviation safety procedures and repositioned the aircraft for another approach.

VMO Aero stated that the aircraft later landed on a roadway in the Ogwashi-Uku area near Asaba.

The company said it is engaging with the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB), the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and other relevant authorities to support a comprehensive review of the occurrence and the implementation of any necessary corrective actions.

It confirmed that there were no injuries to any persons, no damage to property and that the aircraft subsequently returned safely to Lagos.

VMO Aero said it appreciates the seriousness with which the authorities view any event that could affect the integrity of flight operations and regulatory compliance, and expressed regret for any inconvenience caused to members of the public.



Delta Road Jet Landing, Take-Off, Security Threat –Expert

AVIATION security expert John Ojikutu has described the landing and subsequent take-off of a private aircraft from a road in Ogwashi-Uku as a security threat requiring investigation.

Reacting to the incident, Ojikutu described the development as a serious security concern requiring broader scrutiny.

Ojikutu, the Chief Executive Officer of Centurion Security and Safety Consults, said the Bombardier Challenger CL-601 aircraft, registration N989BC, was operated by VMO Aero Limited.

According to him, the matter extends beyond aviation safety and should involve security agencies, particularly the Department of State Services (DSS).

"The Aircraft is said to be foreign-registered, but does it have valid Security Clearance, or did its flight plan have one. Was the weather at Asaba inclement that had caused its 'mis-approach'?"

"Can those he dropped at Ogwashi-Uku be well identified by the Security agencies, or the nationality of everyone on board, including the pilot, be made known?" he queried.

"The act is a security threat and not necessarily a safety issue for the NSIB alone, but one that must include the DSS," Ojikutu stressed.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has grounded the privately operated

aircraft and suspended its operator's permit following the emergency landing on a roadway near Asaba, Delta State.

In a preliminary report, the NCAA said the aircraft experienced difficulties while attempting to land at Asaba Airport and executed a missed approach at about 7:43 a.m.

The NCAA said the aircraft subsequently landed on a roadway in the Ogwashi-Uku area near Asaba. All four crew members safely exited the aircraft without injuries.

The Authority disclosed that the aircraft later departed the location at about 11:02 GMT and returned to Lagos without obtaining regulatory approval.

According to the NCAA, Air Traffic Control was informed only after the aircraft had become airborne, an action it described as a violation of aviation regulations.

"Upon its arrival in Lagos, the NCAA immediately grounded the aircraft pending the outcome of its investigation," the Authority said.

NCAA said the flight crew had also been placed under regulatory review as investigators examine the emergency landing and the subsequent unauthorised departure.

The Authority said it had suspended the operator's Permit for Non-Commercial Flight and commenced a review of operational, maintenance, airworthiness and flight records.

It added that further regulatory action would depend on findings from ongoing investigations.

Also, the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) said it had activated emergency response procedures and deployed investigators to the incident site.

NSIB Director-General, Capt. Alex Badeh said the bureau swiftly recovered and secured the aircraft's Cockpit Voice Recorder and Flight Data Recorder.

"The team commenced an investigation into the incident involving the private aircraft that landed and subsequently departed from a roadway during a flight from Lagos to Asaba.

"As part of this rapid response, the aircraft's Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) and Flight Data Recorder (FDR) have been successfully retrieved and secured for detailed analysis," he said.

Badeh said investigators were obtaining operational, maintenance and air traffic control records linked to the aircraft.

"NSIB is coordinating with all relevant stakeholders and authorities in line with the Civil Aviation Regulations and ICAO Annex 13," Badeh stated.

According to him, investigative activities include recorder analysis, records examination, personnel interviews and review of additional evidence.

Boeing Trains Nigerian Engineers To Boost Aviation Safety

BOEING has confirmed the start of advanced technical training for 16 engineers from United Nigeria Airlines and ValueJet, aimed at strengthening aviation safety and workforce development in Nigeria.

In a statement by Boeing's Vice President, Commercial Sales and Marketing, Mr Anbessie Yitbarek, the first tranche of the programme will run in Lagos from June 16 to July 29.

Yitbarek said the initiative formed part of efforts to improve operational readiness, safety standards and technical expertise across Africa's aviation sector.

He explained that the engineers would undergo intensive training covering the Boeing 737 Next-Generation aircraft's avionics, airframe, powerplant and electrical systems.

According to him, participants will also receive instruction on aircraft characteristics, system operations, component locations, servicing connections, indications and testing procedures. The programme includes ramp and transit maintenance practices designed to enhance commercial aircraft dispatch reliability and operational efficiency.

Yitbarek said trainees would be awarded European

Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) theoretical training certificates upon completion of the course.

He added that a second tranche of the training programme would be conducted later in the year.

The Boeing executive noted that the initiative stemmed from a 2024 Memorandum of Understanding between Boeing and Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace Development. He said the agreement was designed to advance Nigeria's aviation industry through technical collaboration and capacity-building initiatives.

"Investing in technical capability and safety leadership is essential to supporting the long-term and sustainable growth and resilience of Africa's aviation sector.

"Nigeria is one of Africa's most important aviation markets, and Boeing is proud to support the development of highly skilled local engineering talent that will help strengthen operational reliability and safety standards across the region," Yitbarek said.

The training will also cover safety precautions, human factors and operational best practices for engineers working under EASA Part 66 regulations for B1 and B2 licensed maintenance personnel.

Sports

WITH IFEANYI UWAGWU

Three Red Cards - Are Referees Getting Tough At This World Cup?

GONE are the days when World Cup games were littered with red cards. Or so we thought.

Three reds were shown in the opener on Thursday as Mexico beat South Africa 2-0.

South Africa's Yaya Sithole and Themba Zwane were sent off, and then Mexico's Cesar Montes was dismissed in stoppage time.

Maybe we had been spoiled. The World Cups in Russia and Qatar each had just four red cards. The 2026 tournament has nearly matched that already.

It had been 20 years since three players were sent off in one match, in the 2006 finals when 28 players saw red overall.

That was a remarkable tournament - with three players dismissed in three separate games, and the all-time record of four reds was set in the last-16 match between

Portugal and the Netherlands.

Are we about to go back to those days? Will the 2026 World Cup be remembered for red cards being thrown about like confetti?

Yaya Sithole was the first player to be sent off when he brought down Brian Gutierrez In 2017, Pierluigi Collina was appointed as Fifa's head of referees, heralding a new era.

Collina often talks about how decisions should serve as justice - for both teams.

Players should stay on the field unless they have done something which truly deserves a red card.

For instance, under his stewardship the law around denying a goal-scoring opportunity (Dogso) when a penalty has been awarded has been relaxed significantly, because the team is still getting a really good scoring opportunity. It is now

very difficult to get a red card.

So it should be no surprise that the 2018 and 2022 World Cups each produced just the four red cards.

Refereeing at the start of a tournament often seem to sets the tone. Should we be drawing any conclusions from this match?

In his pre-tournament briefing, the Italian was focused on timewasting and general player behaviour.

There was no talk of tough stance being taken that would be likely to result in a huge spike in red cards.

Sometimes red cards are simply justified. Well, most of them anyway.

Sithole's dismissal for fouling Brian Gutierrez was a simple decision for referee Wilton Sampaio. The Mexico attacking midfielder was through on goal. Sithole may not have meant to bring him down, but he did. There was no doubt the South African had denied his opponent a clear goal-scoring opportunity.

The second dismissal was much more controversial, given to Zwane on a video assistant referee review for violent conduct.

Zwane tussled with Roberto Alvarado, with the Mexican going to ground holding his head.

It looked like a coming together off the ball, but the referee was sent to the pitchside screen by the video assistant referee (VAR), Colombia's Nicolas Gallo.

As Sampaio was shown the replays at the monitor, it was difficult to make out what had happened.

Was there really a hand to the head? And if so, was it accidental or did he swing the arm?

When assessing violent conduct, the VARs are told to look for a clenched fist as a sign of aggression. This does not have to be present, but it is an indicator.

Zwane appeared to connect with an open hand to the side of Alvarado's head, not with a closed hand.

It looks exceptionally harsh, and not the kind of clear and obvious decision VAR was introduced for.

Or maybe this is exactly the kind of thing Collina had told his referees and VARs to look out for, falling into the category of poor player behaviour.

Fifa has brought in red cards for players who cover their mouths in confrontations, and those who leave the field in protest at a decision. Collina wanted goals disallowed for blocking on set-pieces. Perhaps the actions of Zwane fall into this sort of category, a way for Collina to try to reduce the dark arts within the game.

The third red card, again for Dogso, seemed controversial initially.

Khuliso Mudau broke towards the area and looked to skip past Montes, but the South African was stopped in his tracks by a rash tackle.

Mudau was in a slightly wide position so a yellow

card seemed the most likely outcome. Sampaio produced the red. Surely the VAR would step in again?

On second viewing it seemed very likely that Mudau's next touch would be to control the ball inside the area. There was no covering defender close. Mudau would probably have had one touch, and then a shot. The VAR was not likely to get involved and tell the referee he had made a clear and obvious error. An incident from the Premier League last season is a good comparison. It came in Crystal Palace's 3-3 draw with Bournemouth in October. Marcos Senesi brought down Ismaila Sarr, with the Palace striker moving into a similar position to Mudau.

Referee Jarred Gillett produced the yellow card, but the VAR sent him to the screen to upgrade it to a red. Gillett rejected the review, but the Premier League's Key Match Incidents Panel voted that he was wrong. It should have

been a red card.

Maybe it provides an indication that Sampaio was right. His decision was certainly supportable.

There was a law change this summer which did not get the same attention as some others.

The wording to Dogso was slightly altered to say that a referee should take into account the position of other attackers, as well as defenders.

As Mudau had a teammate in the centre who he could have passed to, this can now be considered.

It would be easy to say this World Cup is about to be blighted by referees throwing around red cards.

There is a danger we fall into a trap, whereas this game may well prove just to be an outlier. A statistical anomaly across a 104-game tournament.

The two on-field red cards probably were, on balance, both correct decisions.

Let's not panic about the referees just yet.



Dempsey Slams Marsch Over U.S. Anthem Claim: Stay In Lane

UNITED States legend Clint Dempsey had some choice words for former national team assistant Jesse Marsch, who suggested Thursday that some American players needed encouragement to sing the anthem ahead of games.

Speaking ahead of Canada's World Cup opener against Bosnia-Herzegovina -- which ended in a 1-1 draw -- Marsch, who coaches Canada and was an assistant to Bob Bradley with the USMNT in 2010-11, said: "In the U.S., sometimes we had to

beg players to sing the national anthem." When he learned about Marsch's remarks, Dempsey, an analyst for Fox at the World Cup, responded in the fiery way that characterized his play during his time with the U.S.

"He really said that?" Dempsey asked on air Friday ahead of the match between Canada and Bosnia-Herzegovina. "Man, I can't take this guy too seriously. It was an honor for me growing up and represent my country. When the national anthem happened, I wasn't

someone who normally would sing. I put my hand over my heart, and I'd pray to the good man upstairs.

"I'm someone who's bled for this country. I broke my nose playing for this country. I've come back from two heart procedures and played for this country.

"I'm not going to take advice from someone who switched to the other side and singing another country's national anthem. And as my boy Titi [Thierry Henry] would say, stay in your own lane. It looks like he's in a dang moped, so worry about your own team."

Marsch has had a contentious relationship with U.S. Soccer since being passed over for the national team head coach position in 2023 after Gregg Berhalter's contract expired following the 2022 World Cup.

In recent years, Marsch has aired his frustrations with U.S. Soccer more than once, saying in May 2024 that he wasn't treated very well by the federation for which he played and coached.

Dempsey and Landon

Donovan, who are tied for the all-time scoring lead for the U.S. with 57 goals, were on the 2010 World Cup team that made it to the round of 16 in South Africa, with Marsch serving as an assistant.

Marsch was using the anecdote about U.S. players to highlight the passion and commitment he has seen within the Canada squad since taking over as manager of their national team a little over two years ago.

"These guys [the Canadian players] sing the national anthem, belt it out to the top of their lungs," Marsch said Thursday. "Because they want to show the country how proud they are to be here, to be Canadians and to represent what Canada is." On Friday, Marsch guided Canada to the first point in its World Cup history against Bosnia-Herzegovina. Canada will play Switzerland and Qatar to round out Group B play as it looks to reach the knockout round for the first time.

Information from The Associated Press was used in this report.



President Federation Cup: Mangut Applauds Nasarawa Utd's Resilience In Victory Over Plateau Utd

NASARAWA United technical adviser Mbwas Mangut has commended his players following the President Federation Cup quarter-final victory over Plateau United.

The Solid Miners defeated Gbenga Ogunbote's side 2-1 at the Bwari Sports Complex, Abuja to seal a place in the last four.

After controlling much of the first half, Nasarawa United broke the deadlock in the 44th minute when wing-back Abubakar Abdullahi climbed above the defence to nod in John Victor's deep throw-in.

The Lafia-based side appeared on course to secure the win, but the Peace Boys struck back with an equaliser in the 85th minute.

Substitute Ada Umar, however, had the final say, netting the winner seven minutes from time to hand Nasarawa United a hard-fought victory.

Mangut reflected on his side's hard-earned victory after the game.

"To concede that late and still find a winner shows character, especially against my former employers, a tough and difficult opposition," Mangut told the club's media.

"Yes, Ada Umar changed the game the moment he came on. We are in the Semi-Finals, and that's all that matters. "We now turn our focus to our next task, and we pray and hope for the best."

Nasarawa United will face Ikorodu City in the semi-final.



Sports

WITH CHRISTIAN EZE



Ex-Chelsea Star Appointed Assistant Manager At Premier League Club

BRENTFORD have announced the arrival of ex-Chelsea and Republic of Ireland winger Damien Duff as assistant manager.

Duff, who has been away from football since leaving his role as Shelbourne manager last year, will link up with Brentford boss and fellow Irishman Keith Andrews at the Premier League club.

The pair will be tasked with improving on last season's ninth-placed league finish with the Bees having missed out on European qualification on the final day of the season.

Andrews and Duff previously worked together in the coaching set-up for Ireland with Duff having recently spent time at the west London club alongside the Brentford manager.

"I've known Damien for a long time," Andrews told the club's official website.

"I've seen him up close throughout his coaching journey. We've been on courses together and

worked together as coaches with the Republic of Ireland national team.

"Damien will bring experience, presence and a real level of detail to our coaching department. He will add to the great group we already have and I'm very pleased that he is joining us."

Duff heroically led Shelbourne to the League of Ireland title in 2024 but was unable to steer the club to the same heights the following season, leading to his surprise departure.

It was Shelbourne's first title in 18 years, coming just three years after gaining promotion to the top flight. He described the title win as the 'pinnacle of his career' amid a host of standout highlights.

After launching his senior career at Blackburn, Duff signed for Jose Mourinho's Chelsea in 2003 in a £17million deal.

He went on to win two Premier League titles and the League Cup during his time at Stamford Bridge.

Onyeka Set To Join Bundesliga Club On Loan

FRANCIS Onyeka is set to join newly promoted Bundesliga club SV Elversberg on loan ahead of the 2026/27 season.

According to transfer expert, Florian Plettenberg, talks between his club Bayer Leverkusen, and SV Elversberg are at an advanced stage.

"Francis Onyeka is on the verge of joining SV Elversberg.

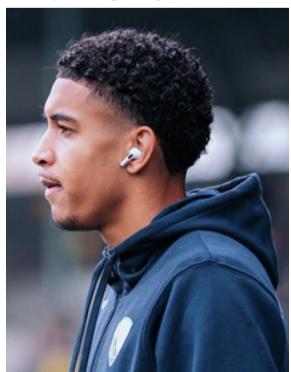
The 19 y/o forward is set to join the Bundesliga newcomers on loan from Bayer 04 Leverkusen. Talks between the clubs are in the final stages," Plettenberg wrote on X.

The 19-year-old spent last season on loan at VfL Bochum in Bundesliga 2, where a string of impressive performances attracted interest from several clubs across Germany.

Onyeka scored eight

goals and provided one assist in 30 league appearances, emerging as one of the most exciting young prospects in the division.

Elversberg, who secured a historic promotion to the Bundesliga this season, see Onyeka as a perfect fit for their attacking style and believe he can add significant quality to the squad ahead of their maiden campaign in Germany's top flight.



Aribo Ends Four-Year Stay At Southampton

NIGERIA international Joe Aribo has departed Sky Bet Championship side Southampton following the expiration of his contract.

Aribo spent four years at St Mary's Stadium after joining the Saints from Scottish Premiership club Rangers in 2022. The 29-year-old midfielder spent the second half of last season on loan at Leicester City, where he made six appearances, and started just one match.

During his time at Southampton, Aribo scored nine goals in 95 league appearances.

Southampton confirmed Aribo's departure on their official website.

"We can confirm the Men's First Team players departing upon the expiry of their contracts," reads the statement.

"A fourth 2024 promotion winner to leave, Joe Aribo's four-year stay at the club will also come to an end.

"Amassing 111 appearances in total, the Nigeria international appeared 40 times in 2023/24, scoring on four occasions to lift the club back to the top flight.

"The club would like to place on record its gratitude



for the effort and commitment shown by Oriol, Will, Ross, Alex, Joe, Jamie, Charlie and Elias during their time as Saints, and wish them all the best for what comes next in their

careers." Aribo will now seek a fresh start elsewhere after enduring a challenging four-year spell with Southampton on the South Coast.

Joshua, Fury Are Both Old Fighters —Former Heavyweight Champion

FORMER two-time heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman has described Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury as old fighters.

The two Brits are expected to square off later this year, yet they must first come through their respective warm-up fights.

Fury has already made

his comeback by unanimously outpointing Arslanbek Makhmudov in April, but 'The Gypsy King' now looks set to fight one more time before his clash with AJ.

He's expected to return in August, with unbeaten 41-year-old Nelson Hysa having been named as a potential opponent.

Either way, Joshua must defeat his confirmed opponent, Kristian Prenga, in order to secure a long-awaited domestic dustup with Fury.

The 36-year-old will face Prenga in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on July 25, fighting for the first time since engineering a sixth-round finish over Jake Paul in December.

Following that victory, Joshua was involved in a tragic car crash that took the lives of his two close friends, forcing him to spend the subsequent months resting both mentally and physically.

Ahead of the potential fight Rahman told B4 Champ (via Boxing News) that the damage both Fury and 'AJ' have taken in previous fights play a factor in their po-

tential encounter. "It's a pick 'em fight. I just feel like the damage both of these guys have suffered can manifest itself in any given fight.

"You know how they say you can get old in one fight? They're both old fighters, and they're starting to look old, so it can happen in any given moment. "Anthony Joshua definitely has the power to hit Tyson and hurt him. Tyson has had amazing recuperative powers his entire career, but at [some] point he's got to go.

"If Joshua drops him, maybe he don't get up in 10 seconds."

Rahman admits that Fury, too, has the power to hurt his expected opponent, suggesting it can only make for an intriguing affair if they ultimate-



Arteta Set To Become Premier League's Highest-Paid Manager

ARSENAL are closing in on a new contract for Mikel Arteta that will elevate him into the very highest bracket of world football managers, with TEAMtalk understanding the Spaniard is set to become the Premier League's highest-paid head coach.

Sources have told TEAMtalk that talks over Arteta's new deal have progressed significantly in recent weeks and there is growing confidence on all sides that an agreement will be finalised before the start of the new season.

As TEAMtalk has previously revealed, the Arsenal hierarchy have long been determined to secure Arteta's future and reward the remarkable progress made

under his leadership.

Now those plans are moving towards completion with the club's owners, the Kroenkes, fully supportive of the plans.

Arteta's current contract has just 12 months remaining and is worth around £10million per season, but his new agreement is set to see that figure effectively doubled.

The proposed package would move him close to the level previously occupied by Pep Guardiola, whose Manchester City contract was worth around £20million per year.

That equates to a package worth a staggering £384,000 a week.

Guardiola remains the Premier League's highest earner until his departure

from City officially takes effect on July 1.

After that, Arteta is expected to move to the top of the managerial pay scale in England, while also placing himself alongside the game's elite coaches globally.

New Chelsea boss Xabi Alonso is also among the division's top earners, with TEAMtalk understanding his salary is

currently around Arteta's existing terms.

The club view the deal as a deserved reward for the transformation Arteta has overseen since taking charge in December 2019 and, with sources explaining as to why they feel the 44-year-old – who now boasts a 60.03% win percentage record – is worth every penny.





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Barcelona File Lawsuit Against Real Madrid President Perez

BARCELONA have on Friday announced that the club have filed a lawsuit against Florentino Pérez, president of arch rivals Real Madrid.

This comes in response to the inflammatory recent comments laid out by the Spaniard regarding Barca as a club.

Pérez of course turned heads across world football last month, in taking firm aim at those in a position of power at the Spotify Camp Nou during a press conference.

Calling into question the legitimacy of the Blaugrana's La Liga title triumph, before highlighting the 'Negreira Case' once more, the Real chief vented:

"I've won 7 Champions Leagues and 7 La Liga titles... I should have won 14 La Ligas but we were robbed. This season, they robbed us of 18 points in La Liga, we did a video on RMTV showing all the incidents.

"We are going to submit a dossier to UEFA so that they put an end to the case. The Negreira case, a sports corruption scandal, is still causing repercussions. There are referees from that era who are still officiating."

And as alluded to the above, late this week, Pérez's rivals on the other half of the Clásico divide have hit back.

According to Get Football News Spanish, in a statement released across Barcelona's social media platforms on Friday, the club announced: "Barcelona informs that, on this day, the mandatory conciliation claim prior to the filing of a criminal complaint for an offence of slander under Article 205 of the Penal Code has been submitted against the President of Real Madrid, Mr. Florentino Pérez, as a result of the statements made by him at the press conference held on 12 May and in an interview with a media outlet the following day.

Trabzonspor Submit Bid For Super Eagles Invitee

TURKISH Süper Lig club Trabzonspor have submitted an offer for former Super Eagles invitee Anthony Dennis.

According to reports, Göztepe have placed an initial €7 million valuation on the 21-year-old midfielder, who has attracted interest from several European clubs following his impressive performances over the past two and a half seasons.

Dennis, who joined Göztepe in July 2023, made 31 league appearances and scored three goals during the 2025/26 Süper Lig campaign.

Trabzonspor are believed to be in a strong position to secure the midfielder's signature, with no formal offers yet received from clubs outside Turkey. Dennis has previously been linked with Villarreal, FSV Mainz 05 and Beşiktaş.

Negotiations between

Trabzonspor and Göztepe are expected to begin in the coming days.

Trabzonspor manager Fatih Tekke is reportedly eager to add the Nigerian to his squad, and the club are prepared to push hard to complete the transfer.

Dennis remains under contract with Göztepe until June 2027, while Transfermarkt currently values him at €8 million.



Super Eagles' Failure Still Hurts; I'm Ashamed Watching 2026 FIFA World Cup —Ikhana

FORMER Nigeria international and coach, Kadiri Ikhana, says he feels ashamed watching the ongoing 2026 FIFA World Cup finals in Mexico, the United States and Canada while the Super Eagles remain absent from football's biggest stage.

The 74-year-old CAF Coach of the Year (2003) lamented Nigeria's failure to qualify for a second consecutive FIFA World Cup, describing it as a painful reflection of the country's lack of seriousness despite possessing superior talent to several teams currently competing at the tournament.

Speaking exclusively to Completesports.com, the former Enyimba and Kano Pillars coach also expressed admiration for Super Eagles head coach Eric Chelle, praising the Malian tactician's impressive record and the team's improved style of play under his leadership.

"I feel ashamed watch-

ing the World Cup. Yes, I'm ashamed watching countries that are not up to the Super Eagles' level playing at the World Cup while we sit back at home glued to our television sets watching," Ikhana said in an eQWAmBittered tone during an exclusive interview with Completesports.com.

"Look at South Africa. What is special about their team that they are playing in the World Cup? Or Cape Verde? This is self-inflicted pain because we didn't show seriousness when we ought to have done so. "In a continent that produced 10 teams, Nigeria could not qualify. And this is the second time in a row that the Super Eagles are missing the World Cup finals."

Regarded as one of Nigeria's most successful and decorated coaches, Ikhana, who won NPFL titles with two different clubs as a coach — Enyimba (2005) and Kano Pillars (2008) said that

he has become a strong admirer of Eric Chelle because of the progress recorded since he took charge of the national team. Chelle has overseen the Super Eagles through 25 matches across competitions, suffering only two defeats.

"I didn't like him before, but now I'm fully in support of him. Two defeats in 25 games is not a poor performance, and I think he's taking the team somewhere big.

"If you ask whether the team is heading back to its glory days, I won't say no because every coach is

judged by his team's performances.

"Look at the way the team is playing now — well-coordinated and enterprising football.

"And if a coach loses eight games in 25 matches, he would still be considered to have done well. This man has lost only two in 25 games, which means he is doing very well, and I stand with him."

Ikhana, who won the 1979 Nigerian top-flight league title with Bendel Insurance as a player and also lifted the FA Cup in 1978 and 1980 with the Benin Arsenal, concluded.



2026 World Cup: Watkins Must Be Ruthless On The Pitch For England —Owen

LIVERPOOL legend Michael Owen has advised Ollie Watkins to shed his overly nice attitude

on the pitch and play with a ruthless, aggressive edge for England at the 2026 World Cup.



In a chat with news- men,, Owen stressed that Watkins is at his absolute best when he plays aggressively, making him a true nightmare for defenders. "So, what's the secret to unlocking Ollie? The problem with him — and I tell him this all the time — is that he's too nice," Owen wrote in his Daily Mail column.

"He's the nicest man in the world! To be a top centre-forward, and truly rip the guts out of your opponents, which you have to want to do, you've got to be a bit horrible on the pitch.

"You've got to be ruthless. You've got to have an edge. Off the pitch, you can be lovely, and he is.

But when you cross the line, you've got to be brutally clinical."

Ollie Watkins has established himself as one of the most prolific strikers in Aston Villa's recent history. He recently completed his sixth season at the club, breaking the 100-goal milestone in all competitions. Known for his pace, work rate, and clinical finishing, he has been a consistent driving force for the Villans.

Watkins enjoyed one of his most productive campaigns, netting 21 goals in all competitions. His red-hot form in the spring propelled Villa to major silverware, highlighted by their historic UEFA Europa League victory.

2026 World Cup: It's A Dream Come True —Balogun Reacts

USA striker Folarin Balogun has disclosed that his brilliant brace in their 4-1 opening match victory against Paraguay at the 2026 World Cup was a real dream.

Balogun scored a sensational first-half brace, leading the US-MNT to a dominant victory over Paraguay in their Group D opener.

The Monaco forward's stand-out performance made history, marking the first time an American player scored two goals in a World Cup match since the inaugural tournament in 1930.

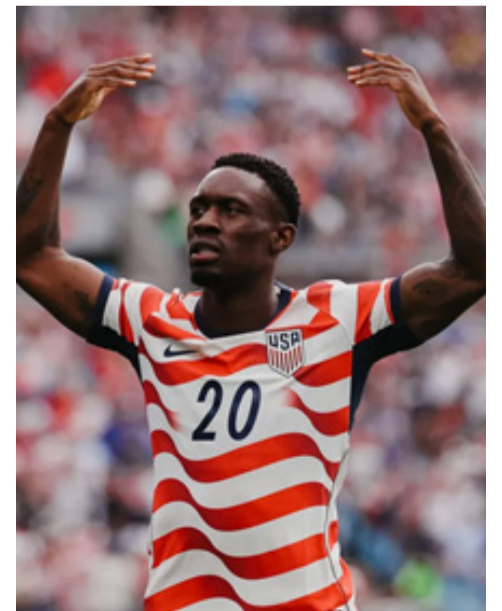
Speaking about his sensational start to the tournament, Balogun in a chat with FIFA.com, stated that playing on the world stage, and proving to fans that he made the right choice in committing to the United States, was the fulfill-

ment of a lifelong ambition.

"It's an amazing occasion. It's an amazing night and something I dreamed of for a long time. I committed to the US and a part of it was wanting to play on the biggest stages and repay the fans," the Monaco forward told FIFA.

"It means everything to me to play in front of the home fans... a World Cup on our home soil... I'm very happy and very proud of everyone. It means the world to get the first-game nerves out of the way and the way we did. I'm sure it will do us a lot of good.

"It's just how the cherries fell... I know I scored against them before and to do it again on a bigger stage is a dream come true," added Balogun, who was named the Michelob Ultra Superior Player of the Match.





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Black Stars Are In World Cup To Compete, Fight For Title —Ghana FA President

GHANA Football Association (GFA) President Kurt Edwin Simeon-Okraku says the Black Stars are in the United States to compete and fight for the title as the 2026 FIFA World Cup kicks off.

Speaking at a farewell dinner for the team at the Hilton Hotel in Alexandria,

Virginia on Wednesday, President Kurt Edwin Simeon-Okraku told hundreds of Ghanaians in the diaspora that he is very upbeat about Ghana's chances in Group L.

"We strongly believe in this team, and we know that we are not here to be counted among the numbers but to compete and

fight for the title," President Okraku said. The CAF 2nd Vice President praised the squad's quality and mentality ahead of Ghana's opener against Panama in Toronto on June 17.

"I strongly believe in these players and, over time, they have proven that they have the quality, the talent, the

hunger and the desire to make Ghana proud."

With doubts surrounding the Black Stars after recent tournaments, President Okraku struck a defiant tone. "This is our time to shine. The stakes are high. A lot of people don't believe, but I do. I feel energized and very upbeat about our chances in this tournament. We are Ghana, and we shall conquer."

The farewell event was attended by the Mayor of Alexandria, Alyia Gaskins, members of the Diplomatic Corps, Black Stars Head Coach Carlos Queiroz, and the full playing body.

President Okraku thanked the Ghanaian community for their support: "Thank you for your show of love towards the team. We are ready to battle for glory." Ghana have since arrived in Providence, Rhode Island, to continue preparations before facing Panama, England, and Croatia in Group L.



Canada Earns First-Ever World Cup Point After 1-1 Draw With Bosnia

CANADA claimed their first ever World Cup point as the co-hosts came from behind to rescue a 1-1 draw against Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sky Sports reports.

Canada's first appearance at the World Cup was at the 1986 tournament in Mexico where they lost all their three group fixtures.

The North Americans then made their second appearance in Qatar 2022 and also lost all their three group matches.

For long periods, Canada thought it wasn't their day. After Bosnia led through Jovo Lukic's close-range header

from a corner, some wasteful finishing and equally stunning Bosnia-Herzegovina defending frustrated the co-hosts.

Jonathan David and Tani Oluwaseyi missed golden first-half chances to score. In the second half, former Arsenal defender Sead Kolasinac and Nikola Katic both cleared off the line as the pressure from Jesse Marsch's side grew.

But Southampton striker Cyle Larin's finish from inside the box – his first touch after coming onto the pitch 121 seconds earlier – sent Toronto into delirium and rescued a point for the co-hosts.

Balogun Living World Cup 'Dream' As U.S. Thrash Paraguay 4 - 1

United States striker Folarin Balogun said his two goals in Friday's 4-1 World Cup victory over Paraguay made for a "dreamy night."

After the U.S. went ahead on an own goal from Paraguay's Damián Bobadilla, Balogun struck twice before halftime to become the first U.S. men's national player to score two goals in a World Cup game since the inaugural tournament in 1930.

Balogun netted his first goal in the 31st minute as Christian Pulisic's deflected centering feed sat up perfectly for him to score from 14 yards. Then, deep into first-half stoppage time, Balogun collected a through ball from Malik Tillman, shrugged off a challenge from a defender, dribbled to his left and de-

livered a venomous strike into the top left-hand corner of the goal.

Mauricio scored for Paraguay in the 73rd minute, but the USMNT's Gio Reyna capped the opening night for the World Cup co-host with a sublime stoppage-time goal struck with the outside of his right foot.

Afterward, Balogun said he hadn't fully grasped what transpired.

"A real dream, it's a dreamy night," he said. "I've not been able to take it all in. I'm sure when I get back to my hotel, I'm going to be able to be in the moment and experience how much of an amazing night this is."

The U.S. forward's performance was noted by Pulisic, who said he is grateful to have a striker of Balogun's ability play-

ing alongside him.

"The kid's insane. He's lethal right now," Pulisic said. "We're really lucky to have him. Let's just hope it keeps coming like this."

Pulisic said he has also noticed Balogun's work outside the box, even though the U.S. forward is often facing center backs who are much bigger than he is.

"Everyone will look at the goals, but the way he's fighting against these center backs, [he's] holding up the ball, getting fouls," Pulisic said.

The performance capped Balogun's remarkable journey to the U.S. team.

In 2023, he filed a change of association with FIFA to play for the U.S., having been born in New York to Nigerian par-

ents before growing up in England and representing the country at the youth level.

Fans encouraged him to make that decision as he pondered his international future. Friday's performance was a way of paying back the fans.

"When I committed, I've always said the fans gave me so much motivation, showed me so much support," he said. "For me, the most important thing has always been to repay that. "I feel like today is a great opportunity, and I just want to continue to show the fans I made the right decision. I'm completely proud, and I want to continue to make the fans proud as well."

Balogun has had memorable performances in a U.S. jersey, including a goal in the 2023 Concacaf Nations League final against Canada. But scoring in a World Cup is next level and a dream come true for the Monaco forward.

"I visualized my debut in the World Cup scoring, but the reality did surpass that of scoring two goals," he said. "And the second goal was a fantastic goal as well."

After its big opening night, the U.S. will next take on Australia in Seattle before returning to SoFi Stadium to face Türkiye to round out the group stage.



England Have Training Equipment Stolen

England were victims of a theft of their training equipment before their arrival in Kansas City on Saturday.

The Football Association is trying to ascertain what was stolen, with balls and boots among the items feared to have been taken, after vehicles transferring equipment to their Swope Soccer Village base in Kansas City were broken into.

Thomas Tuchel and his squad will arrive in Kansas City on Saturday afternoon and the equipment was due to be in place beforehand.

Police officers, who are in touch with the FA, were on site on Friday night dealing with the matter.

It is understood two arrests have been made in connection with the episode.

A spokesman for Kansas Police said: "We are investigating a possible theft of equipment from a team vehicle that arrived in Kansas City with items missing this evening. The investigation is ongoing."

The theft could potentially disrupt some of Tuchel's preparations for their World Cup opener against Croatia on Wednesday.

The England players will undertake their first full training day on Sunday.



Asaba Monarch Launches Free Transport Scheme For Residents

• Commissions Electric Vehicles

THE Asagba of Asaba, HRM Prof Epiphany Azinge SAN, yesterday launched a free transport scheme for all residents of the Delta State Capital, with the commissioning of electric vehicles.

The monarch's gesture, which will run at no cost for three months, was in partnership with EV World Africa, and would continue at low-cost after that window.

During the commissioning ceremony, the revered monarch reiterated his commitment to the welfare of the Asaba people, even as he expressed optimism that the state government would key into the initiative.

"Today is very historic and memorable because it truly underscores our determination to forge ahead as a community, driving purpose to the best of our ability," he said.

HRM Azinge recalled the recent launch of the Asaba Free Community Ambulance Service, which has received tremendous support from sons and daughters of Asaba.

He recalled meeting the EV World Africa management team in Lagos about three months ago during his engagement with corporate Nigerians, an engagement that has yielded fruit in many ways.

"Commissioning these three electric vehicles today is a testament that Asaba, as a state capital, will certainly explode positively," the Monarch declared.

He thanked Engr Seun Oluwade for the three-month free-fare electric bus services that will convey residents of Asaba, stressing that the route will cover Inter-Bau Roundabout to Kainebisi, Prof. Chike Edozien Junction, Ezenei, Ogbelilo-Og-

beke Square, and other inner-city routes.

"I am pleased that this is unfolding in our lifetime and we are driving it passionately. We won't relent. This initiative will be of great benefit to the Asaba Kingdom.

"The SUVs will run at very low cost since they do not use fuel, engine oil, and other costs. Even after three months of free fare, the bus will continue to charge low fares, HRM Azinge said.

He poured the blessings on Engr Oluwade and the EV World Africa management team for the innovation, acknowledging the resources, time, and effort invested.

Speaking earlier, Ogbueshi Victor Isichei commended HRM Asagba Azinge for the initiatives being brought into the Asaba Kingdom. "Your reign as the 14th Asagba of Asaba marks the reawakening and resurgence of Asaba.

"It is time to move forward. You lead by example and always cast the first stone. We took your initiative by answering the call to bring modest development, changing the mobility transportation system from analogue to digital."

Engr. Seun Oluwade briefed the monarch on the charging station at Summit Road, the routes the electric vehicles will ply, and the innovative development and opportunities ahead.

He appealed for individual and government support to ensure Asaba, as a state capital, remains at the forefront of digital transportation, adding that the electric bus will run at zero fare for three months and sought the royal blessings of the monarch.



Asagba of Asaba, HRM Epiphany Azinge SAN, inspecting an electric vehicle before its commissioning for the free transport intervention in the Delta State Capital

Inclusive Democracy Begins With Youth Participation — Okorodudu

THE Executive Director of Projects, Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC), Olorogun (Dr) Ebenezer Okorodudu, has called on Nigerian youths to move from the sidelines to the centre stage of democratic participation.

Okorodudu, while delivering an address at the Political and Economic Summit organised by the Christian Youth Coalition Network (CYCON) in Asaba, said the future of Nigeria depends on the active involvement of young people in leadership and nation-building.

The summit was themed, "Inclusive Democracy: The Youth at the Centre Stage." He stressed that democracy loses its legitimacy when a significant segment of society, particularly the youth, is excluded from governance and decision-making processes.

Speaking before a gathering of church leaders, youth executives, and young professionals, the DESOPADEC Executive Director described youth exclusion as a systemic challenge fueled by institutional barriers, political gatekeeping,

economic disadvantages, and cultural norms that concentrate leadership in the hands of older generations.

He noted that despite Nigeria's youthful population, representation of young people in elected and appointed offices remains disproportionately low.

Okorodudu emphasised that the Church has a critical role to play in reversing this trend by serving as a platform for civic education, leadership development, and moral reawakening.

Drawing from biblical examples including David, Joseph, Jeremiah, and Josiah, he argued that God has consistently entrusted young people with transformational responsibilities, urging Christian youths not to wait for the future before embracing leadership roles.

He challenged young Nigerians to reject political apathy, acquire their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs), participate actively in electoral processes, and uphold integrity in public and private life.

According to him, democracy requires more than voting; it demands informed participation, accountability, and a com-

mitment to justice and good governance.

He warned against vote-buying, political manipulation, and the growing trend of using youths merely as instruments of political mobilisation without granting them real influence.

Addressing the economic dimension of democratic participation, Dr Okorodudu stated that economic empowerment is essential for political independence.

Present at the summit were several distinguished dignitaries, including the Secretary to the Delta State Government, Dr Kingsley Emu, who represented the Governor of Delta State, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori; Dr Timothy Umukoro, APC State Assistant Secretary, who represented the APC State Chairman, Chief Solomon Arenyeka.

Others include Mrs Rosemary Nwaebuni, General Manager of The Pointer Newspapers; Mrs Edna Emeni, Editor-in-Chief of The Pointer Newspapers; Rev. M. C. Opono; Rev. Jite Enunayaye; and several other notable guests from across the state.

Consumers, Businesses Groan As Cooking Gas Prices Surge

BY MESHACK UDOKA/OVIE OKPETSAGHA

RESIDENTS of Asaba, Delta State, are grappling with a sharp and sustained increase in the price of cooking gas across the nation, a development that is reshaping household budgets, altering consumption patterns, and forcing many families to consider cheaper alternatives such as charcoal and firewood.

Many households now report paying between ₦1,700 and ₦2,000 per kilogram, compared to about ₦1,100-1,300 per kilogram a few months ago, a jump they describe as unsustainable.

Speaking with our correspondents, a trader and mother of five, Mrs Esther Okafor, said the impact has been immediate and disruptive.

"The increase has seriously affected my family. Before now, ₦5,000 could buy at least 5kg of cooking gas to last for weeks, but now the same amount can barely buy 3kg. We have to cut down on unnecessary cooking and manage what we have," she said.

She added that her household has adjusted by cooking in bulk to reduce frequency and conserve gas, while also scaling back on small daily routines, including boiling hot water for her children in the mornings.

A tricycle (keke) driver, Mr Vincent, also said the rising cost has forced him into a difficult budgeting pattern.

"I used to refill my cylinder completely, but now I buy only what I can afford at the time. Sometimes I spend ₦3,000 to ₦4,000 just to keep cooking for a few days," he said.

For other residents, the situation has triggered a shift away from gas entirely.

A widow, Madam Joy, responsible for all household expenses, said her family has partially reverted to charcoal.

"We still use gas occasionally for light meals, but charcoal has become our alternative for main meals. The cost of living is rising every day, and many families are looking for ways to survive," she said.

At the retail level, gas plant operators confirmed that the price hike is being driven largely by increased supplier and logistics costs.

A manager of a gas outlet along Nnebisi Road, Mr Chinedu Nwankwo, said the cost of procurement has risen sharply in recent weeks.

He disclosed that the price of 50kg cylinders, previously sold at about ₦60,000-₦65,000, now goes for approximately ₦85,000-₦90,000. According to him, the outlet currently sells gas at about ₦1,800 per kilogram, while customer demand has dropped significantly.

A gas plant attendant, Mr Emmanuel, said operators are also struggling to maintain margins amid rising operational costs.

"People think gas station owners are making huge profits, but that is not always the case. Transportation costs, supplier prices, and operational expenses have all increased," he explained.

Ex-Army Major General Dies In Bandits' Captivity

THE Katsina State Government has confirmed the death of retired Major General Rabe Abubakar, who died while in the custody of bandits, describing the incident as a tragic loss to the state and the nation. The announcement was contained in a statement issued yesterday by the Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Nasir Muazu, and made available to journalists.

The government said the retired military officer died from complications arising from diabetes and hypertension while in captivity.

According to the statement, several efforts were made by the state government and security agencies to secure his release, but the attempts were unsuccessful.

The statement read, "The Katsina State Government, with a heavy heart and deep sense of loss, wishes to inform the general public of the tragic passing of Retired Major General Rabe Abubakar.

"It is with profound sadness that we confirm the General's death while in the bandits' captivity. Despite the relentless and concerted efforts of the State Government and various Security Agencies to secure his safe release, the situation ended in this tragedy.

"The Retired General died a natural death from complications of diabetes and hypertension.

"His abduction and subsequent death are not only a loss to his family and Katsina State but a monumental loss to the entire country."