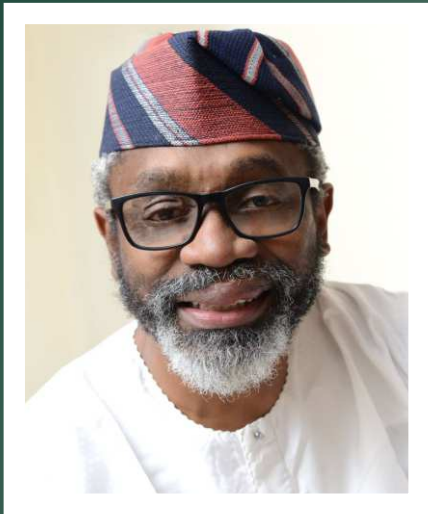


ATTRACTIONS

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INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE

...building Bridges Across Cultures And Peoples



RT. HON. FEMI GBAJABIAMILA
Chief of Staff to Nigeria's
President

- When Diplomacy Takes Flight: Nigeria, South Africa and the Search for a Way Beyond Xenophobia



SEN. HOPE UZODINMA
Imo State Governor

- Nigerian-Born Victoria Barnabas Chinonyerem Crowned Mrs. Canada Globe Classique 2026-2027



Nigeria-Canada Relations Redefining Relations in Investment and Trade Diplomacy, Driven by the Nigerian Diaspora



His Worship Patrick Brown
Mayor of Brampton, Canada



Amb. Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu!
Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs

WORLD CUP 2026

When Africa Demonstrated
Promise

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan

...A Move Towards Collective
Self-Preservation



ALSO IN THIS EDITION

- Life's Growth Series
- The Magic of Sleep and Rest
- Security, Sports, Entertainment



ATTRACTIONS INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY **AIM** MAGAZINE



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...Our Commitment

Our Mandate is to Continuously Strive to Bridge Cultural and Geographic Boundaries Through the Sharing of News, Creative Ideas, Skills, Education as well as Entertainment and Sports via Our General Interests Platform.

OUR COMMITMENT

Our Commitment is to, at all times, remain committed to the Above Mandate, While Sticking to the Time-honoured Virtues of Pure Journalism, including Factual, Objective and Balanced Reportage that Continually Embraces Factuality and Shuns Sensationalism

CORE VALUES

Professionalism, Integrity, Factuality and Timeliness

PAGE 3 GIRL

ATTRACTIONS
INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Meet Victoria Barnabas, Newly Crowned Miss Canada Globe Classique 2026-2027

Barnabas marked a historic milestone as the first Black Woman to win the prestigious title. A proud recipient of the Maple Leaf Excellence Award in the National Impact Category under the Canada Legacy Honors and the Face of Milton Fashion Week 2026.

Barnabas is an economist, sociologist, model, mother, and a woman of faith.

She is also a woman of strength, grace, and compassion, whose journey reflects resilience, purpose and a deep desire to make a difference.

As a wife, mother, and community advocate, she carries herself with quiet confidence that reflects both her experience and growth.

Her life has been shaped by moments that required courage, faith, and perseverance. Through it all, she has remained grounded in her values and committed to becoming a source of light and encouragement to others. The new Queen believes that true beauty is not only seen, but felt through kindness, empathy, and the willingness to uplift those around us.

Her heart naturally leans toward service, and she finds fulfillment in being a voice for those who cannot always speak for themselves. Whether through her interactions, presence, or advocacy, she strives to create a meaningful impact wherever she goes.

Today, the new Miss Canada Globe Classic 2026 stands as more than a titleholder. She stands as a woman with purpose, one who is determined to use her voice, her platform, and her story to inspire hope, spread love, and remind others that they are not alone.

ADVOCACY PLATFORM

Her platform is centered on one powerful mission: To empower and uplift. She is deeply committed to advocating for voiceless children, the motherless, the homeless, children with special needs, and children living in war-torn countries who live in fear and lack basic necessities such as food, water, clothing, lack of proper healthcare, adequate education and safety.

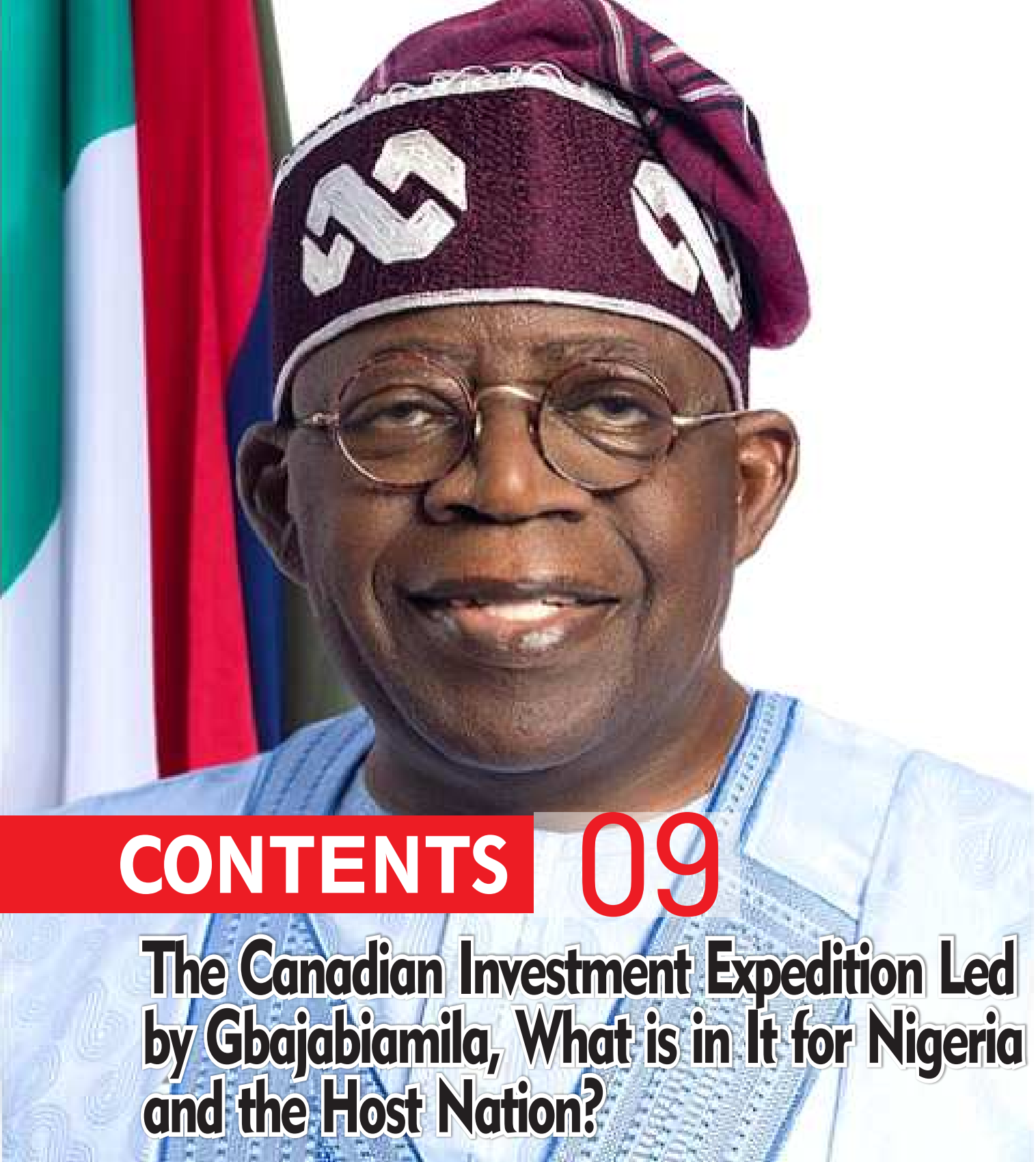
This cause is not just something she speaks about; it is something she feels deeply. Barnabas is moved by the reality that so many children grow up without love, support or the opportunity to simply be children. For her, advocacy is about being a voice, a light, and a source of hope for those who are often forgotten.

She is also advocating for Women In Need (WIN) because the world has got a great number of women that have been abused and marginalized. The voices of such women should be heard and they need to be seen and cared for. Every woman deserves to feel safe, respected, and mentally healthy.

Through her platform, she seeks to raise awareness, inspire compassion, and encourage action, believing that even the smallest act of kindness can change the life of a woman or a child. She is committed to using her platform to make a meaningful difference for one child, one woman, one story, and one act of love at a time.

...More Stories on pg 6

Victoria Barnabas



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EDITORIAL

Attractions Magazine: Ascending A New Level

NiDEC 2026: A New Song for Nigeria and Canada

This mid August, Gbajabiamila, Mr. President's Chief of Staff, leads a high-powered Nigerian delegation to Toronto, Canada. Nigeria and Canada seek to turn growing trade ties into a New Investment Partnership.

For both countries, the time appears ripe for a new chapter in a relationship that has traditionally been anchored on diplomacy, trade, education, migration and people-to-people exchanges.

That new chapter will take centre stage in Toronto from August 12 to 15, 2026, when Nigeria hosts the maiden edition of Nigeria Diaspora Investment Economic Conference (NiDEC 2026), bringing together government officials, investors, business leaders and members of the Nigerian diaspora under the theme, "Invest Nigeria, Thrive Abroad."

Leading Nigeria's delegation is the Chief of Staff to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, who will be accompanied by a high-powered team that includes Governors, senior government officials and other distinguished Nigerians. Of course, the impression one gets is that this is not one of those conferences. I hope you understand.

In this edition, we have paid more than just a bit of attention on the conference, which, I am told promises a more practical thing than the ones that usually end on MDAs' shelves and cupboards.

Among the Governors listed for the mission are Babagana Zulum of Borno, Chukwuma Soludo of Anambra, Uba Sani of Kaduna, Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau and Dauda Lawal of Zamfara. I have been trying to analyze the composition of the Governors as if it mattered; but that is the way we, Nigerians, are wired: we look for Federal Character, ethnic coloration and religious identities in every national list...except, of course, the Super Eagles team.

Well, that's not the issue here. The composition of the delegation, if you ask me really, underscores the seriousness with which the Tinubu Administration is approaching the conference. It is not simply another diplomatic gathering. It is an attempt to place investment, capital mobilisation, economic partnerships and the Nigerian Diaspora at the centre of the country's international economic engagement.

Just as most people seem to think, this conference looks like what might turn out as a relationship with considerable economic potential. First, the economic relationship between Nigeria and Canada already possesses a substantial foundation.

According to Canada's Global Affairs Department, the two countries recorded C\$2.9 billion in bilateral merchandise trade in 2024, making Nigeria Canada's second-largest trading partner in Africa that year.

Canada exported approximately C\$534 million worth of goods to Nigeria, while Nigerian exports to Canada were valued at approximately C\$2.3 billion. Canada's principal exports to Nigeria included cereals, motor vehicles and parts, and industrial machinery, while Nigeria's major exports to Canada included petroleum oils, cocoa and soya beans.

The figures reveal both the strength and the imbalance in the relationship. Nigeria exports substantially more merchandise to Canada than it imports, but the larger opportunity may lie beyond the traditional exchange of commodities.

The question for policymakers and business leaders is, therefore, no longer simply how much the two countries trade, but how much more value they can create together.

We hear that the current engagement seeks to transition our economic diplomacy from trade to investment. It is a welcome idea. But, just as the average Nigerian knows, sometimes ideas do not work in Nigeria. Again, that one is just by-the-way.

Canada is already an important source of investment capital for Nigeria, although there is considerable room for expansion.

Canadian direct investment in Nigeria stood at C\$32 million in 2024, representing a substantial 68.4 per cent increase over the preceding year. Canadian portfolio investment in Nigeria was considerably larger, standing at approximately C\$590 million, up about 1 per cent from the previous year.

These figures suggest that Canadian investors already see opportunities in Nigeria, but the scale of those opportunities is yet to be fully exploited. The conference will seek to push the narrative in the right direction.

Nigeria's enormous consumer market, strategic position in Africa, abundant natural resources, large youthful population and expanding technology ecosystem provide an investment proposition that extends across multiple sectors:

Agriculture and agro-processing, solid minerals, energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, financial services, healthcare, education, digital technology and logistics are among the areas where stronger Canadian-Nigerian partnerships could generate mutually beneficial outcomes.

For Canada, Nigeria offers access not only to a market of more than 200 million people, but also to one of Africa's most strategically important economies.

For Nigeria, Canada brings capital, technology, expertise, global business networks and institutional experience that can help accelerate economic diversification.

Why the Timing Matters

The timing of the Toronto conference is particularly significant.

Canada itself is seeking greater diversification in its international trade relationships. In 2025, Canadian two-way merchandise trade with Africa rose by 22.5 per cent to a record C\$18.7 billion, while Canadian exports to Africa increased by 18 per cent. Significantly, Canada's own official trade review identified growth in exports to Nigeria and Algeria as major contributors to the increase.

This creates an important convergence of interests.

Nigeria is looking for more foreign investment, technology and access to international markets.

Canada is looking to deepen commercial relationships beyond its traditional markets.

The Nigerian Diaspora in Canada sits naturally at the intersection of these ambitions.

The Diaspora in this instance, remains an Economic Bridge between the two countries.

This is the most compelling dimension of NiDEC 2026. Its main focus is on Nigerians living outside the country:

The Nigerian Diaspora. This is not merely a source of remittances. Increasingly, it represents a reservoir of professional expertise, entrepreneurial experience, international networks and investment capital.

The Toronto conference, therefore, presents an opportunity to move the Diaspora conversation from remittances to investment; from consumption to production; and from individual success stories to structured economic partnerships.

A Nigerian engineer working in Canada, a technology entrepreneur in Toronto, a medical professional in Ontario, an investor in

Contnd on pg 6

Nkem Anyata-Lafia

The Village That Forbids Mirrors

Every year, for one week, the residents of a remote village in West Africa cover every reflective surface in their homes. Mirrors are wrapped in white cloth, rivers are avoided at dawn, and polished metal utensils are turned face down. Outsiders believe it is superstition. The villagers insist it is survival.

According to elders, anyone who sees their reflection during the "Week of Returning Faces" begins to resemble a deceased relative—not physically at first, but in voice, habits, and memories. Some even recall events they never lived through.

When an anthropologist secretly uncovers an old mirror to test the legend, she starts speaking a language she has never learned and recognizes people who died decades before she was born. As the week unfolds, she must decide whether the phenomenon is



psychological, supernatural, or evidence that memory itself can outlive death.

The Embassy That Represents No Country

In the heart of a bustling capital stands a beautiful embassy with guards, diplomats, official cars, and a flag unlike any other.

No government admits to owning it.

Its staff issue visas that are never stamped by immigration authorities, yet everyone who receives one eventually disappears from public records. Families cannot prove they ever existed. Photographs fade. School certificates vanish. Even digital archives are mysteriously altered.

A young investigative journalist, tracing the disappearance of a respected professor, discovers that the embassy serves not a nation but forgotten

people—those erased from history by wars, dictatorships, and disasters. The embassy offers them a second existence, at the cost of leaving the old one behind forever.

To expose the truth would restore countless lost identities—but destroy the only refuge they have ever known.

What does this remind you of? Of course, it does sound like that saga in Nigeria where one man, Adeniyi Matthew, set up a government office, ran two Agencies, attracted staff and postings from some branches of the Nigerian government, was listed and allocated funds in the budget for the year and...bang, the Agency never existed!

The Man Who Attended His Own Funeral

In one of the strange episodes reported in Nigeria, a man who had been presumed dead after disappearing from his community for several days reportedly returned home—only to discover that his family and friends were already mourning him.

According to the account, relatives had identified a body they believed was his and proceeded with funeral arrangements. The burial ceremony had even begun when the supposedly deceased man suddenly appeared among the mourners, leaving the gathering in stunned silence.

For several moments, nobody knew whether to cry, run or

celebrate.

The man reportedly had to convince his bewildered relatives that he was, indeed, alive. The body that had been identified as his was subsequently discovered to belong to another person.

What began as a funeral ended as an extraordinary reunion—with the man effectively becoming a guest at his own send-off.

This is the kind of story that sounds impossible until one remembers that, sometimes, real life writes the strangest and oddest stories.

Contnd from pg 5

NiDEC 2026: A New Song for Nigeria and Canada

Alberta or a financial expert in Montreal can potentially become more than a contributor to household income back home. Each can become a bridge between Nigerian opportunities and Canadian capital, technology and expertise.

That is perhaps the larger promise of the conference.

Since coming on board, President Tinubu has consistently shown that he wants to tap something rich from Nigeria's Diaspora, like they do in India and The Philippines.

Gbajabiamila's role, therefore, is both politically and economically expedient.

The decision to entrust the Nigerian delegation to the President's Chief of Staff sends a political and economic signal that has not been lost on many.

It suggests that the Federal Government sees Diaspora investment as an issue requiring high-level coordination and presidential attention.

Gbajabiamila's mission in Toronto will consequently extend beyond ceremonial representation. It will be an opportunity to communicate the investment priorities of the Tinubu Administration directly to Nigerian professionals, entrepreneurs,

investors and potential international partners.

The presence of five State Governors also gives the conference a practical dimension. Investors are ultimately interested in specific projects, locations, incentives, infrastructure, market access and returns. State governments, therefore, have a critical role to play in presenting bankable opportunities rather than simply making general appeals for investment.

The conference could thus become a marketplace of ideas where Nigerian states compete—not merely for political visibility—but for investment, technology and productive partnerships.

The Opportunity.

Away from the Toronto conference, we have an array of our usual lineups in this edition of your soar-away international magazine. As I always say, there's something for everyone. Ranging from Entertainment to Football, Politics to Lifestyle and from History to Literature, your favorite picks are on the menu.

I thank you for always coming on board as you peer through this rich sea of vision, sounds and vistas.

@Nkemanyatalafia

You are welcome on board.

The Man Who Bought Yesterday

In one of Africa's fastest-growing cities, rumours spread about an elderly watchmaker who doesn't repair clocks—he sells time.

His most expensive product is called "Yesterday."

For an astonishing fee, clients can buy back one ordinary day from their past—not to change history, but to experience it once more exactly as it happened. Parents revisit a child's first smile. Widows hear a spouse's laughter again. Businessmen relive the moment before a costly mistake.

The catch is devastating: every purchased yesterday permanently erases one day from the buyer's future. No one knows which day will disappear.

As demand grows among politicians, celebrities, and grieving families, society begins to ask whether nostalgia has become the world's most dangerous luxury.

Now if you were to buy back one day in your yesterdays, which day would it be?

Contnd from pg 3

Nigerian-Born Victoria Barnabas Chinonyerem Crowned Mrs. Canada Globe Classique 2026-2027

Nigerian-born Victoria Barnabas Chinonyerem has been crowned Mrs. Canada Globe Classique 2026, marking a historic milestone

as the first Black woman to win the prestigious title. Sharing the exciting news, the newly crowned queen expressed profound



gratitude to God, describing the achievement as a journey of faith, perseverance, dedication, and growth. She also paid tribute to her husband, children, family, mentors, coaches, and supporters whose encouragement helped make the moment possible.

Victoria extended special appreciation to the organizers of the Mrs. Canada Globe pageant for providing a platform that empowers and celebrates women across Canada and beyond.

As she embraces her new role, Victoria said she accepts the crown with humility and a deep sense of responsibility, pledging to use her platform to make a meaningful impact. She also serves as a spokesperson for the Women In Need (WIN) Foundation International, reinforcing her commitment to advocacy and community service.

Congratulations to Victoria Barnabas Chinonyerem on this remarkable achievement and for making history on the global stage.

Publisher's Desk: LIFE'S GROWTH SERIES



Israel, Iran, America and the Rest of Us: Beyond the Twelve Days of Listlessness and Lessons Part 2

In the last edition, I wrote about what I described as the Twelve Days of Listlessness and Lessons —those anxious days when the world watched missiles replace dialogue and military might overshadow diplomacy. I concluded then that everyone had lost something. We lost peace. We lost lives. We lost trust. Above all, we lost another opportunity to prove that reason is still stronger than force.

Today, I return to that conversation because the story did not end with the ceasefire. The missiles may have fallen silent for a while, but the questions they raised continue to echo across the Middle East and far beyond.

What is unfolding today between America, Israel and Iran is no longer simply a regional confrontation. It is a contest over power, deterrence, influence and the future shape of the international order. Every move made in Tehran is watched in Washington. Every decision taken in Jerusalem is measured in Moscow, Beijing, Brussels and the capitals of the Arab world. The Middle East has once again become the stage upon which global rivalries are performed.

One lesson has become increasingly clear: military superiority may win battles, but it rarely settles history.

Israel possesses one of the world's most sophisticated military establishments. The United States remains the most powerful military nation on earth. Iran has demonstrated resilience through asymmetric warfare, regional alliances and missile capabilities. Yet none of these strengths has produced the one outcome every ordinary citizen desires—lasting peace.

Power has proven capable of destroying cities, but not of removing fear.

It can delay threats, but it cannot eliminate suspicion.

It can silence weapons temporarily, but it cannot silence grievances that have accumulated over decades.

Perhaps, this is why history repeatedly reminds us that diplomacy is never a sign of weakness. It is the highest expression of strength.

The world should also pay attention to the economic cost of perpetual confrontation. Every missile launched represents resources that could have built schools, hospitals, research centres and industries. Every military mobilisation unsettles financial markets, disrupts supply chains and fuels uncertainty far beyond the region. Even countries thousands of kilometres away eventually pay through higher energy prices, inflation and slower economic growth.

Meanwhile, another battle is being fought—not in the skies, but in the realm of information.

Every government presents its version of victory. Every military operation is accompanied by competing narratives. Social media amplifies patriotism, misinformation and propaganda with equal speed. In such an environment, discerning truth has become almost as difficult as achieving peace.

This should concern us all.

A world that cannot agree on facts will struggle to agree on solutions.

Yet amid all the strategic calculations lies the forgotten stakeholder: the ordinary human being.

The child whose school has closed.

The mother waiting for news of her son.

The businessman watching years of investment disappear overnight.

The family wondering whether tomorrow will bring another siren.

These people are neither generals nor politicians. They did not declare war. Yet they continue to bear its heaviest burden.

As I reflect on the present situation, I find myself returning to the same conviction that guided my previous essay.

Civilisations are not judged merely by the weapons they build, but by the wisdom with which they choose—or refuse—to use them.

America, Israel and Iran each possesses reasons they consider compelling. Each speaks the language of national security. Each believes its actions are justified. History, however, rarely remembers conflicts only through the arguments of governments. It remembers them through the consequences they leave behind.

The challenge before the international community is, therefore, greater than negotiating another ceasefire. It is to rebuild trust where distrust has become institutional, to strengthen diplomacy where suspicion has become policy, and to remind humanity that no technological advancement can replace moral responsibility.

The future of the Middle East will not ultimately be determined by who possesses the most advanced missiles or the strongest air force. It will be determined by who demonstrates the courage to pursue peace when war appears politically easier.

The world has already witnessed enough demonstrations of military power.

What it desperately needs now is a demonstration of political wisdom.

For if the last conflict taught us anything, it is this: every war eventually returns to the negotiating table.

The tragedy is that countless lives are often lost before humanity remembers where it should have begun.

Until next time, be the peace you desire from everyone around. Surely, the world will be the better for it.

Finbars Aruwuonye

Secretary General Muslims Christians Initiative for good Governance & Peaceful Globe

US Hits Trading Partners with More Tariffs

Washington, US

President Donald Trump's administration has announced a new wave of tariffs ranging from 10% to 12.5% on 60 trading partners, including Nigeria, China, Japan, Canada and the European Union. Taking effect in July 2026, these duties replace an expiring 10% global levy and target countries for allegedly failing to properly ban or enforce rules against forced labour imports.

The move is the White House's first step in efforts to rebuild President Donald Trump's near-global tariff wall after the U.S. Supreme Court in February struck down his "reciprocal" duties of 10% to 50% imposed last year under a national emergencies law to try to shrink the U.S. deficit.

Andy Burnham Assumes Office as Prime Minister in UK, Starts Policy Tinkering

London, UK

Following the assumption of office as the 7th leader of the United Kingdom in just the last 10 years, Andy Burnham finally took over as the UK's Prime Minister in mid-July. He has already announced plans to scrap his predecessor's digital ID scheme, focus on the cost of living and shift power away from London by establishing a "Number 10 North" in Manchester.

The immediate-past Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, had resigned his office last month after what was obviously a loss of confidence by fellow party members and a growing distaste for his leadership style among British nationals who had criticized what many had termed the lacklustre leadership style of the former Labour Leader.

Nigeria's President Expands the Army, Creates New Divisions

President Bola Tinubu has approved the expansion of the Nigerian Army from 8 to 12 Divisions. He also approved the

recruitment of 28,000 additional military personnel.

According to Presidency sources in Abuja the move is designed to decentralise command, strengthen border security and improve response times to emerging threats nationwide.

In a recent statement signed by the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, the Presidency said the expansion would see four new Divisional headquarters established in Makurdi, Ilorin, Jalingo and Benin City.

Under the new 12-division structure, Onanuga said the Nigerian Army will be deployed as follows: 1 Division Headquarters in Kaduna, covering Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Jigawa states; 2 Division Headquarters in Ibadan, covering Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo states; 3 Division Headquarters in Jos, covering Plateau, Bauchi and Gombe states; 5 Division Headquarters in Makurdi, covering Benue, Nasarawa and Kogi states and 6 Division Headquarters in Port Harcourt, covering Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River states.

The structure includes 7 Division Headquarters in Maiduguri, covering Borno and Yobe states; 8 Division Headquarters in Sokoto, covering Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states; 9 Division Headquarters in Ilorin, covering Kwara and Niger states; and 10 Division Headquarters in Jalingo, covering Taraba and Adamawa states.

There will also be 81 Division Headquarters in Lagos, covering Lagos and Ogun states; 82 Division Headquarters in Enugu, covering Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi and Imo states; and 83 Division Headquarters in Benin City, covering Edo, Delta and Bayelsa states.

The Presidency further revealed that the four new divisional commands would significantly improve command and control, decentralise operational decision-making, enhance counter-insurgency and internal security operations, strengthen border security and ensure faster military response to emerging threats.

It said implementation will proceed in two phases.

The first phase, covering the establishment of the 5th, 9th and 10th Divisions and the reorganisation of existing formations, is to be

completed by September 2026.

The second phase, involving the establishment of the 83rd Division and further reorganisation, is expected to be concluded by December 2026.

The expansion is backed by a 28,000-personnel recruitment drive and is part of a broader security investment that has also included the acquisition of critical military platforms and equipment, improvements in troop welfare and sustained support for operational readiness and force modernisation.

"Tinubu commended the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Waidi Ibrahim Shuaibu, and all officers and soldiers for their dedication and professionalism," the statement read.

Tinubu also reaffirmed his Administration's commitment to ensuring the Armed Forces remain adequately equipped, motivated and capable of protecting the country.

Lightning Strikes Trigger Fresh Wild Fires in Western Canada

Ontario, Canada

Fresh wildfires have broken out in western Canada and forests continued to burn in Ontario as the country battled what the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, called one of the most intense wildfire seasons on record.

Nearly 34,000 lightning strikes over the past week led to a series of fires and evacuation orders in Southern British Columbia. There were 25 evacuation orders and 90 active wildfires in the Province as of Friday morning, and authorities said warming and drying conditions could cause them to grow.

Hugh Murdoch, the incident commander of a cluster of fires near Kimberley, 320 miles (520km) from Vancouver, said: "The weather forecast is far from favourable. There is no significant help from Mother Nature whatsoever in the foreseeable."

Wildfires fuelled by intense heat and lightning storms attributed to warmer temperatures have burned remote forests across Canada this summer. Smoke from them drifted across large US east coast and Midwestern cities in recent weeks.

Cover Story

The Canadian Investment Expedition Led by Gbajabiamila, What is in It for Nigeria and the Host Nation?

In this edition, we have taken time to look at what we have termed: "The Toronto Trade Mission." President Tinubu's Chief of Staff, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila is leading a group of very influential and distinguished Nigerians, including some State Governors, to Canada for an Investment Conference. We are closely following developments in the conference and, as sure as day, will let you into all about the conference as couched below by our Managing Editor, Nkem Anyata-Lafia, in what he titled: **THE TORONTO MOMENT: Nigeria, Canada and the New Investment Frontier**. You can take it off from here. You can always send us feedback via our many platforms. You are welcome to this month's Cover Concerns, as we call it here.

THE TORONTO MOMENT:

Nigeria, Canada and the New Investment Frontier

As Femi Gbajabiamila leads a high-powered Nigerian delegation to Canada, an old relationship enters a new era—one where diaspora, capital, technology and opportunity could redefine the economic ties between two countries.

Toronto is a city accustomed to people arriving with big dreams.

Every day, its airports, railway stations and highways receive people from different corners of the world—entrepreneurs looking for opportunity, professionals seeking a new beginning, investors searching for the next promising market and families building new lives far from where their stories began.

Among them is a community whose story is particularly intertwined with another country thousands of kilometres away.

Nigeria.

Now, something different is happening.

The Nigerian community in Canada is being asked to look beyond the familiar story of migration, professional success and remittances and consider another possibility: becoming a powerful bridge between Canadian capital and Nigerian opportunity.

That possibility will come sharply into focus in Toronto from August 12 to 15, 2026, when Nigeria hosts the maiden Nigeria Diaspora Investment Economic Conference (NIDEC 2026) under the theme, "Invest Nigeria, Thrive Abroad."

And Nigeria is not arriving quietly.

Leading the country's delegation is the Chief of Staff to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, alongside governors and other distinguished Nigerians.

The message is difficult to miss.

Nigeria wants Canada to see it not simply as a country with a large population and enormous needs, but as a country with enormous investment possibilities.

It wants its Diaspora to see itself not simply as Nigerians living abroad, but as an important component of the country's economic future.

And it wants the relationship between Abuja and Ottawa to evolve from diplomatic friendship and conventional trade into a deeper partnership built around investment, enterprise, technology and shared prosperity.

A Relationship Waiting for Its Next Chapter

Nigeria and Canada have known each other for a long time.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries date back to 1962. Over the decades, the relationship has expanded across diplomacy, education, development cooperation, trade, migration and people-to-people contacts.

But economics may now be preparing to take centre stage.

The numbers provide an interesting starting point.

In 2024, bilateral merchandise trade between Nigeria and Canada reached approximately C\$2.9 billion.



Nigeria exported about C\$2.3 billion worth of merchandise to Canada, while Canadian exports to Nigeria were valued at approximately C\$534 million.

Canada's exports included cereals, motor vehicles and parts, machinery and other manufactured products. Nigeria's exports included petroleum products, cocoa and soya beans. On paper, these are impressive figures. But they also tell another story. Much of the relationship remains based on the traditional architecture of international trade: raw materials going one way and manufactured products going the other. The bigger question is whether the next phase can be about something much more ambitious.

Can Nigeria and Canada build companies together?

Can Canadian technology help transform Nigerian resources into finished products?

Can Nigerian entrepreneurs use Canada as a gateway to international markets?

Can Canadian investors use Nigeria as a gateway into the vast African market?

And perhaps most importantly, can the Nigerian Diaspora become the bridge connecting these possibilities?

The Diaspora That Became an Economic Asset

There is something unique about Nigerians abroad. They often carry two worlds within them. They understand the country they left, but they have acquired new knowledge from the countries where they live.

They understand Nigerian business culture, social networks and consumer behaviour, but they also understand international corporate systems,

Contnd on pg 37

Uganda Declares Ebola Outbreak Over as DR Congo Battles Escalating Epidemic

KAMPALA, Uganda

Uganda has officially declared an end to its latest Ebola outbreak after successfully completing the required 42-day monitoring period without recording a new case, bringing relief to a country that has faced repeated outbreaks of the deadly disease.

The Ugandan Ministry of Health declared the outbreak over on 28 July 2026, after recording 20 confirmed cases and two deaths. Fifteen of the confirmed cases were linked to transmission from neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), while the remaining cases occurred among contacts.

The development is being viewed as a significant public-health success, with Uganda's extensive experience in Ebola surveillance, rapid response and contact tracing helping to prevent the outbreak from developing into wider community transmission.

However, the regional picture remains deeply concerning. The DRC is currently facing a much larger and rapidly expanding Ebola outbreak, particularly in eastern parts of the country. The outbreak involves the Bundibugyo strain, for which there is currently no approved vaccine or specific treatment, adding to the difficulties confronting health authorities.

The World Health Organization and Africa CDC have intensified surveillance, case detection, contact tracing and cross-border preparedness, particularly along the busy movement corridors



linking the DRC and neighbouring countries. The continuing movement of people across porous borders remains a major concern for the wider region.

The situation has also attracted renewed international attention, with the United States announcing temporary travel-related measures involving people arriving from Uganda, South Sudan and the DRC as part of efforts to reduce the possibility of international transmission.

For Africa, the contrasting developments offer both encouragement and caution: Uganda's success demonstrates that determined surveillance and rapid intervention can stop Ebola, while the crisis in the DRC underscores how quickly the disease can exploit insecurity, weak health systems and population movement.

Lumumba Wants South Africa to Compensate Victims of Xenophobic Attacks



Asaba, Nigeria

Renowned Pan-African scholar and legal expert, Professor Patrick Loch Otieno (PLO) Lumumba, has strongly condemned the recurring xenophobic attacks targeting foreign nationals in South Africa. While speaking on the sidelines of the Delta State Economic and Investment Summit in Asaba, Nigeria, the eloquent public speaker said the South African authorities must be compelled to compensate victims of

xenophobic attacks in their country.

Addressing delegates and reporters at the summit, Lumumba described the violent acts as a direct betrayal of the spirit of Pan-African brotherhood and unity. He called on the South African government to publicly apologize to the continent and compensate victims who suffered financial losses and displacement during the attacks.

Rather than advocating for retaliatory measures, Professor Lumumba urged African nations and citizens to respond with diplomacy, unity, and understanding to counter xenophobic sentiments.

Beyond addressing human rights concerns, Lumumba connected the issue to broader continental economic integration. He urged African governments and private sector leaders gathered at the summit to look inward by boosting intra-African trade, empowering local businesses, and advancing initiatives like a unified continental currency to build a self-reliant African economy.

Camp Hope Canada Chapter Reaffirms Commitment to Re-Election Bid of its Lawmaker Global Leader as Coordinator Pays Courtesy Visit

Imo Gov's Bid to Return to the Nigerian Senate

Canada Chapter Coordinator of Camp Hope Organization Worldwide and pioneer member of the movement, Hon. Humphrey Achor, has recommitted to the re-election efforts of the Founder and General Overseer of the Organization, Rt. Hon. Chukwugozie Canice Moore Nwachukwu, while also supporting the returning of the incumbent Imo State Governor, Sen. Hope Uzodinma, to the Nigerian Senate.

Hon. Achor, who delivered the position of the group recently in Abuja during a courtesy visit to Rep. Nwachukwu, member representing Oru East/Orsu/Orlu Federal Constituency of Imo State at the Nigeria's House of Representatives, reflected on the efforts of the group to enthrone some of the current leaders of Orlu Zone in various elective positions.

He renewed commitment and efforts to further strategic planning and discussions that would ensure unimpeded victories for candidates of the group, including its General Overseer Worldwide and the Imo State Governor.

Describing the visit as both timely and significant, Hon. Achor reiterated deep and unflinching confidence in the Rep member's re-election bid, commending his consistent developmental interventions and encouraging him to sustain the momentum in delivering even greater progress and prosperity for the people.

He further conveyed the determined support of the Camp Hope Canada Chapter and the wider Camp Hope Organization Worldwide, affirming that the indomitable structure remains fully mobilised and committed to securing victory for its Founder and General Overseer, as well as for Governor Hope Uzodinma in his bid to return to the Red Chambers of Nigeria's National Assembly. According to him, Camp Hope has successfully delivered in previous electoral engagements and is fully prepared to do so once again. The Canada chapter is fully behind Rep. Nwachukwu, and according to him, his reelection is non-negotiable.

Responding, the lawmaker expressed profound appreciation for the visit and the encouraging assurances, as both leaders reminisced on the formative days of Camp Hope Organization Worldwide and the journey that has shaped it into a formidable political structure.



He commended Hon. Achor for his steadfast commitment and exemplary leadership of the Canada Chapter, urging continued synergy among all chapters and the entire Camp Hope family in advancing their shared vision.

He also extended his heartfelt gratitude to members of the Camp Hope Canada Chapter for their loyalty and dedication, reaffirming that the collective mission remains alive and that the work towards a greater future for the people continues.

Excerpts from Governor Uzodinma's Speech and Other Speeches at a One-day Strategy Training Session for Leaders And Stakeholders of Orlu Zone APC For the Reelection of President Tinubu and APC at all Levels in the 2027 General Elections

Speaking at the event, Governor Uzodinma, who was represented by Sir Nnamdi Anyaehie, his Chief of Staff, said, inter alia:

"Today, I flag off a one-day Training and Strategy Session for critical officials of the Party in the 137 wards of Imo West Senatorial zone.

"I charge you as Party executives and leaders to campaign vigorously in order to ensure the victory of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and all other APC candidates in the 2027 General Elections.

"I charge you the executive members of our Party to vigorously, boldly and shamelessly canvass support for the Party's candidates.

"I assure you that the victory of the Party in the next elections is guaranteed. This is due to the Party's clear and undisputable achievements at both the national and State levels.

"The APC has earned the right to win across Imo State due to our good governance and people-focused initiatives over the past years.

"I urge you as critical officials of the Party to campaign boldly with the Party's achievements, because they are enough to secure us overwhelming victory.

Speaking earlier, Hon. Engr. Frank Onyejiaka, Chairman, Imo West (Orlu Zone) Senatorial District, the organizer of the strategy training, inter alia, said:

"The session was designed to prepare critical officials for the commencement of the 2027 campaigns.

"All the LGA Executive Committee members, Ward Chairmen, Secretaries, Publicity Secretaries, Youth Leaders and Women leaders from the 137 Wards in the Senatorial District are in attendance.

"The Strategy and Training session became necessary in order to equip these critical officials with the right

information about the Party and its achievements over the past few years.

"I urge the Party officials to align with all the standard bearers of the Party to ensure their victory.

"Any Party official who fails to deliver their polling stations and Wards would be deemed incapable of representing the Party.

"I am happy to inform you that the Party is prepared and equipped to retain all the seats we won in the 2023 elections and also recover any seat that is not under the control of our Party at this moment.

"It is your primary responsibility as Party officials to ensure that this happens and I am confident that you will not fail the Party.

"I thank our Governor for supporting our Party's programmes and also for making the work of campaigning for the Party easier through his transformational governance initiatives and people-oriented leadership."

Speaking on behalf of the Orlu Zone APC candidates of the Imo Assembly, Rt. Hon. Amara Chyna Iwuanyanwu, Deputy Speaker, Imo State House of Assembly, inter alia, said:

"I thank the Orlu Zonal Party leadership for organizing this commendable pace-setting initiative which I believe other zones should replicate to strengthen the Party's local structures."

Speaking, Hon. Barr. Rex Anunobi, Honourable Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Investment, Imo State, inter alia, said:

"I will begin with reeling out some of the legacy projects of the "Renewed Hope Agenda" of His Excellency, President Bola Tinubu, GCFR, and the "Shared Prosperity" Administration of His Excellency, Distinguished Senator Hope Uzodinma, CON.

"No other Party can boast of a quarter of these

achievements."

Speaking, Hon. Ikechukwu Umeh, APC National Ex-Officio (Southeast), inter alia, said:

"Let me enlighten the delegates on their responsibilities as Party officials.

"The most important test of your capability as a Party official is your performance in the coming elections.

"I will reiterate the numerous achievements of the APC government, and encourage you to make sure that these achievements are well pronounced across the nooks and crannies of your various constituencies."

Speaking, Chief Nze Cosmas Maduba, APC candidate for Nkwere/Isu/Nwangele/ Njaba Federal Constituency, inter alia, said:

"I thank the Party officials for their commitment to the Party and I wish you a happy deliberation, as I am confident of our Party's readiness to win the next elections across all the wards in the Senatorial District."

Some other leaders also addressed the gathering, including:

~ Hon. Chief Ozioma Ebonine, representing Njaba State Constituency in the Imo State House of Assembly

~ Hon. Kyrian Uchegbu, Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Board member for Imo State

~ Engineer Toni Adikaibe, Chairman of Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON)

~ Chief Paul Duru, Executive Chairman, Nwangele LG Council

~ Other Executive Chairmen of LG Councils in Orlu Zone

Candidates of the Party from Orlu Zone

To God be the glory!

With additional reports by Comrade Ogubundu in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria

Lifestyle

Managing America's Obesity Challenges and the Day After

By Nkem Anyata-Lafia

Obesity has become one of the defining public health challenges of the 21st century in the United States. Once viewed largely as an individual lifestyle issue, it is now widely recognized as a complex medical, social, economic, and environmental problem affecting millions of Americans across all age groups.

From rising healthcare costs to declining productivity and reduced quality of life, the consequences extend far beyond the individual, making obesity a national concern that demands collective action.

According to public health data, more than two in five American adults live with obesity, while childhood obesity has also reached alarming levels. The implications are profound. Obesity significantly increases the risk of developing chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, sleep disorders, and musculoskeletal problems. It also places enormous pressure on healthcare systems, employers, families, and government resources.

The causes of obesity are multifaceted. Easy access to highly processed, calorie-dense foods, increasingly sedentary lifestyles, urban environments that discourage physical activity, socio-economic inequalities, stress, inadequate sleep as well as genetic predispositions all contribute to the growing epidemic.

Addressing obesity, therefore, requires far more than urging people to "eat less and exercise more." It demands comprehensive, evidence-based policies that create healthier environments and support long-term behavioural change.

Over the years, America has responded through a combination of public education campaigns, nutritional labelling requirements, school feeding reforms, community fitness initiatives, medical interventions and increasing access to weight-management services. More recently, advances in anti-obesity medications and bariatric surgery have transformed treatment options for many individuals struggling with severe obesity.

Yet these interventions bring a new challenge: what happens after significant weight loss?

For many Americans, losing weight is only the beginning of a much longer journey. Maintaining healthy weight requires sustained lifestyle changes, continuous medical monitoring, psychological support and regular physical activity. Studies consistently show that without long-term support, many people regain a significant portion of the weight they lose. The body's biological mechanisms often resist weight loss by slowing metabolism and increasing hunger, making maintenance particularly difficult.

The "day after" successful weight management also includes addressing emotional and psychological issues. Many individuals continue to struggle with body image, anxiety, depression or social stigma even after achieving substantial weight loss. Others face practical concerns such as excess skin, nutritional deficiencies following bariatric surgery, or the financial burden of ongoing medications that may not always be covered by insurance.

Healthcare providers, therefore, increasingly emphasize obesity as a chronic disease rather than a temporary condition. Just as hypertension or diabetes require lifelong management, obesity

demands continuous care rather than short-term treatment. Regular follow-up consultations, nutritional counselling, mental health services, peer support groups, and personalized exercise programmes are becoming essential components of successful long-term management.

Technology is also playing an increasingly important role.

Smartphone applications, wearable fitness devices, telemedicine consultations, artificial intelligence-driven nutrition coaching and remote patient monitoring are helping individuals maintain accountability and receive timely support.

These innovations have the potential to bridge healthcare gaps, particularly in underserved communities.

Employers and educational institutions likewise have important responsibilities. Workplace wellness programmes, healthier cafeteria options, flexible opportunities for physical activity and policies that encourage active living can help reduce obesity risk while improving overall productivity and employee well-being. Schools remain critical in shaping lifelong habits through quality physical education, balanced nutrition and health literacy.

Government policy will continue to influence the future of obesity management. Investments in preventive healthcare, improved food policies, urban planning that promotes walking and cycling, taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages where appropriate, and equitable access to affordable healthy foods can collectively reduce obesity prevalence over time. Public-private partnerships can further accelerate innovation while ensuring that effective treatments remain accessible to those who need them most.

Ultimately, America's obesity challenge cannot be solved by medicine alone. It requires a cultural shift that recognizes health as a shared societal responsibility. Communities, healthcare providers, policymakers, educators, employers, families and individuals must work together to create environments where healthy choices become the easier choices.

The day after obesity treatment should not be viewed as the end of a journey but the beginning of a lifelong commitment to health. Success will be measured not merely by pounds lost, but by healthier communities, reduced chronic disease, longer life expectancy and improved quality of life for millions of Americans.

America has made important strides in understanding obesity as a complex disease rather than a personal failing. The next chapter lies in ensuring that every individual who embarks on the path to healthier living has the support, resources and opportunities needed not only to lose weight but to sustain wellness for life. That is the true measure of progress in confronting one of the nation's most pressing public health challenges.



Hope Rises for Type 2 Diabetes Sufferers as New Technology Comes to the Rescue

By Moses Ezenwa C.

LONDON, UK

For the hundreds of millions of people living with Type 2 diabetes worldwide, managing the condition has long meant a daily regimen of finger-prick blood glucose tests, complex medication schedules, and constant dietary vigilance. However, a wave of recent technological breakthroughs is shifting the paradigm of diabetes care—offering not just better management, but new avenues for long-term health and disease remission.

The Evolution of Smart Monitoring

The days of relying solely on periodic manual blood sugar tests are rapidly fading. The widespread adoption of Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGMs)—small, wearable sensors that track blood sugar levels in real time—has fundamentally transformed daily self-care.

These devices stream continuous data directly to smartphones, warning users of rapid spikes or drops before symptoms occur. Recent advancements in sensor longevity and non-invasive technologies promise to make blood sugar tracking entirely frictionless in the near future.

AI and Data-Driven Personalization

Beyond raw monitoring, artificial intelligence is delivering personalized insights tailored to individual biology:

Predictive Analytics AI algorithms analyze historic blood sugar trends alongside meal logs, physical activity, and sleep patterns to predict how specific foods or stressors will affect glucose levels hours in advance.

Smart Insulin Delivery

For individuals requiring insulin, automated insulin delivery systems combine CGMs with algorithms to adjust insulin delivery automatically, minimizing human error and dangerous glycemic fluctuations.

Digital Therapeutics Next-generation mobile health platforms leverage behavioral nudges and real-time metabolic coaching, helping users make sustainable lifestyle adjustments that hit targets far more consistently than traditional quarterly check-ups.

Beyond Control

The Shift Toward Remission

Perhaps the most significant promise of emerging medical technology lies in cellular and targeted interventions. Novel drug delivery devices, micro-dosing technologies, and targeted metabolic therapies are



helping patients achieve long-term disease remission—a state where blood sugar levels remain in a non-diabetic range without requiring continuous pharmaceutical intervention.

Medical researchers are also combining bioelectronic therapies, such as low-intensity ultrasound targeting metabolic pathways in the liver, with traditional therapies to reset glucose regulation at a biological level.

Looking Ahead Accessibility and Impact

While technology is unlocking unprecedented hope, health leaders emphasize that global impact depends heavily on equitable access. As manufacturing costs decrease and integration into public healthcare systems grows, these digital tools are becoming increasingly accessible to wider populations rather than remaining premium options.

With continuous monitoring, predictive software, and targeted therapies advancing rapidly, Type 2 diabetes is transitioning from a burdensome chronic sentence to a manageable—and in many cases, reversible—condition.

Mother of two becomes the first UK patient to receive 'groundbreaking' new diabetes drug. New drug offers future hope that people with type 1 diabetes will not need to take insulin

Lie Down, Get Cleaned: Human washing machine hits Japan market

After wowing World Expo visitors, a human washing machine is now on sale in Japan, a company spokeswoman said Friday. Users lie down in the pod, close the lid and get cleaned like clothes in a washing machine...



After wowing World Expo visitors, a human washing machine is now on sale in Japan, a company spokeswoman said Friday.

Users lie down in the pod, close the lid and get cleaned like clothes in a washing machine — but without the spin — while music plays.

A prototype of the device, called the human washer of the future, attracted long queues at the six-month Expo that wrapped up in Osaka

in October after welcoming over 27 million people.

Made by Japanese firm Science, the device is an update of a product displayed the last time Osaka hosted the event, in 1970.

“Our (company) president was inspired by that as a 10-year-old boy at the time,” Science spokeswoman Sachiko Maekura told AFP.

The machine “not only washes your body but also your soul,” she added, while also monitoring users’ heartbeats and other vital signs.

After a US resort company contacted Science to see if the prototype would be commercialised, the firm decided to produce it for real.

A hotel in Osaka bought the first machine and is preparing to offer the service to hotel guests, the spokeswoman said.

Other customers include Yamada Denki, a major consumer electronics retail chain in Japan, which hopes the machine will draw people to visit its outlets, she said.

“Because part of the appeal of this machine is rarity, we plan to produce only about 50 units,” Maekura said.

Local media reported that the retail price will be 60 million yen (\$385,000).

2027: Five South-East Governors Resolve To Back Tinubu's Re-Election, Says Uzodinma

Owerri, Nigeria

Governor Hope Uzodinma of Imo State, Nigeria, has said the South-East could no longer be swayed by political rhetoric when evidence of federal intervention across the zone was visible.

The Governor, who is also Chairman of the South-East Governors' Forum, disclosed that the five Governors of the South-East have resolved to support President Bola Tinubu's re-election in 2027, citing what he described as the President's unprecedented commitment to the development of the region through landmark infrastructure and economic initiatives.

Uzodinma said the governors had reviewed the performance of the Tinubu administration as it relates to the development of the South-East and unanimously agreed that the region would continue to identify with the President and the Renewed Hope Agenda because of the tangible dividends already delivered.

Speaking during a meeting with the Imo State Elders Council and traditional rulers in Owerri, the governor said the South-East could no longer be swayed by political rhetoric when evidence of federal intervention across the zone was visible.

"We, the five Governors of the South-East, have reviewed all options and decided that we will work with President Bola Tinubu because we want to be part of the Project Nigeria," Uzodinma said.

He added that the Governors would soon pay a joint courtesy visit to President Tinubu to further strengthen their partnership with the Federal Government.

According to him, the decision was informed by the Administration's record in addressing long-standing developmental concerns in the South-East, including the establishment of the South East Development Commission (SEDC), a demand that had remained unmet since the end of the civil war.

The Governor noted that President Tinubu signed the South East Development Commission Act into law on July 24, 2024, inaugurated its Governing Board in February 2025, and ensured that the Commission commenced operations with funding.

He also highlighted the rehabilitation and commencement of commercial operations on the Port Harcourt–Aba rail line, describing it as the first practical step towards reconnecting the South-East to the national rail network.

Uzodinma further praised the President's approval of a \$3 billion reconstruction of the Eastern Rail Corridor stretching from Port Harcourt through the South-East to Maiduguri,

saying the project would significantly boost commerce and regional integration.

On road infrastructure, the Governor commended the Federal Government for executing the Phase 2A and 2B access roads to the Second Niger Bridge, including the dual carriageway linking Umunya, Ogbunike, Ogidi, Nkpor and Asaba, with seven bridges along the corridor.

He also referenced the approval of the 108-kilometre Otuocha–Anam–Abaji Road and the 150-kilometre Oba–Nnewi–Uga–Ihube/Okigwe Junction Road, projects he said would strengthen economic connectivity between Anambra, Imo, Abia and other parts of the country.

Uzodinma argued that beyond projects specific to the South-East, the region had equally benefited from national policies of the Tinubu administration, including increased allocations to States, student loan programmes, improved security efforts and fiscal reforms aimed at reducing the cost of doing business.

"The South-East has decided. Our people judge governments by performance and not by political sentiments. The evidence is on the ground," he said.

Turning to State matters, Uzodinma urged the Imo State Elders Council and traditional rulers to remain committed to the implementation of the State's Charter of Equity, insisting that the law remains the foundation for lasting peace, justice and political stability in Imo State.

He recalled that upon assuming office in 2020, he inherited a deeply divided State and initiated reforms aimed at restoring order, rebuilding trust and ensuring inclusiveness in governance.

According to him, the enactment of the Charter of Equity by the Imo State House of Assembly was designed to institutionalise fairness in the rotation of political power and guarantee that every part of the State has a sense of belonging. "The Charter of Equity is real, and I need your mandate to implement it because that is what will bring lasting peace to Imo State," he said.



Governor Hope Uzodinma, Imo State

The Governor maintained that the next Governor of Imo State must emerge in line with the Charter of Equity and possess the character, integrity and commitment required to preserve the gains recorded by his administration.

He stressed that whoever succeeds him must be God-fearing, fair-minded and committed to sustaining the principles of equity, justice and good governance, rather than reversing the progress already achieved.

Uzodinma warned against attempts to undermine the Charter of Equity for personal political interests, declaring that he would personally defend the law to safeguard the future stability of the state.

"I will take the fight personally to protect the Charter of Equity. I will stop at nothing," he declared.

The Governor also advocated greater investment in skills acquisition and vocational education, saying that equipping young people with practical skills remains one of the most effective ways of tackling unemployment, reducing crime and driving sustainable economic growth in Imo State.

He urged traditional rulers to continue supporting government initiatives aimed at maintaining peace, promoting development and ensuring that the State remains on the path of stability and inclusive progress.

WORLD CUP 2026: When the World Gathered to Push Beyond Differences and Unite on the Football Pitch

By Nkem Anyata-Lafia

For one extraordinary month, the world pressed the pause button on its divisions.

Wars did not suddenly end. Political rivalries did not disappear. Economic inequalities remained painfully visible. Nations continued to disagree over trade, immigration, climate change and security. Yet, from the towering skyline of New York to the vibrant streets of Mexico City, from Toronto's multicultural neighbourhoods to countless living rooms, fan parks and village squares across the globe, humanity found a rare common language.

It was football.

The FIFA World Cup 2026, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, was more than the biggest sporting event ever staged. It became a remarkable reminder that while politics often divides, sport still possesses an unmatched capacity to unite.

In an era defined by uncertainty and polarization, billions of people willingly shared the same emotional journey. They celebrated breathtaking goals, mourned heartbreaking defeats, applauded extraordinary skill and embraced complete strangers simply because the beautiful game demanded it.

For ninety minutes at a time, passports became secondary.

Three Nations, One Stage

Never before had three countries jointly hosted football's greatest spectacle on such a scale.

The tournament itself reflected a powerful lesson in international cooperation. The United States, Canada and Mexico—countries with distinct political systems, cultures, economies and histories—worked together to organise one seamless sporting festival.

The symbolism could hardly have been stronger.

At a time when immigration debates dominated headlines and diplomatic disagreements occasionally strained relations across North America, the World Cup quietly demonstrated what collaboration could achieve when shared purpose replaced political rhetoric.

Borders became gateways instead of barriers.

Airports welcomed supporters wearing dozens of national colours. Volunteers spoke multiple languages. Restaurants served international cuisines. Streets echoed with songs from every continent.

Football succeeded where politics often struggles.

The Stadium Without Enemies

Inside every stadium, remarkable scenes unfolded repeatedly.

Argentine supporters exchanged scarves with Spanish fans.

Nigerians danced alongside Mexicans.

Japanese spectators continued their admirable tradition of cleaning the stands after matches, inspiring supporters from other nations to do the same.

Children collected flags not because they belonged to one country, but because each represented a unique story.

Even fierce sporting rivalries rarely crossed the line into hatred. Competition remained passionate, but respect endured.

Every match reminded spectators that opponents on the pitch need not become enemies beyond it.

Perhaps that is football's greatest gift to humanity.

A Billion Conversations

The World Cup no longer belongs solely to those fortunate enough to

buy match tickets.

Technology transformed the tournament into a truly global conversation.

Families gathered around television sets in Lagos, London, Buenos Aires, Doha, Tokyo and Sydney.

Millions watched on smartphones while travelling to work.

Social media platforms exploded with instant analysis, humorous memes, tactical debates and emotional celebrations.

Artificial intelligence translated interviews almost instantly.



Distance became almost irrelevant.

The same goal celebrated inside a packed stadium in North America was replayed, discussed and admired within seconds by viewers thousands of kilometres away.

Humanity experienced a shared emotional heartbeat.

Football Beyond Politics

Sport has never existed entirely outside politics.

History reminds us that governments have often used major sporting events to project influence or national prestige. The 2026 World Cup was no exception.

Yet despite geopolitical tensions, football repeatedly demonstrated its remarkable ability to create spaces where ordinary people connected long before governments did.

Fans stood shoulder to shoulder without asking one another about religion.

They celebrated without questioning ethnicity.

They embraced without demanding political affiliation.

The only passport required was love for the game.

That lesson matters enormously in today's fractured world.

Heroes Without Borders

Every World Cup creates heroes.

Some lift trophies.

Others simply win hearts.

...to be continued in next edition

His Worship Patrick Brown: Profiles in Service

A Mayor Building Bridges in One of Canada's Most Diverse Cities

By Finbar E. Aruwuonye

In the evolving story of modern Canada, few cities better capture the promise of multiculturalism than Brampton, Ontario. And few municipal leaders have become as closely identified with that promise as His Worship Patrick Brown, the Mayor of Brampton.

For many Africans—and particularly Nigerians—living in Brampton, Mayor Brown represents more than the occupant of City Hall. He is increasingly seen as a mayor whose administration understands that diversity is not merely a demographic statistic, but a source of strength, enterprise, culture and community.

Brown has served as Mayor of Brampton since his first election in October 2018 and was re-elected in 2022. His public-service career, however, stretches much further back. He began as a municipal councillor in Barrie in 2000, later served as a Member of Parliament and subsequently as a Member of the Ontario Provincial Parliament and Leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. But it is perhaps in Brampton that his public-service philosophy has found its most distinctive expression.

A City of Many Peoples

Brampton is not an ordinary Canadian municipality. It is a city shaped by immigration, entrepreneurship and the meeting of cultures from virtually every part of the world. South Asians, Africans, Caribbeans, Europeans and people from many other regions call the city home. For Nigerians and other Africans, this multicultural character has made Brampton an important centre of community life in Canada.

Mayor Brown's administration has made inclusion and the fight against discrimination important elements of its municipal agenda. In 2020, City Council approved the creation of the Black African and Caribbean Social, Cultural and Economic Empowerment and Anti-Black Racism Unit following a motion moved by Mayor Brown. The initiative was designed to help address systemic anti-Black racism while strengthening the social, cultural and economic position of Black communities.

That step has particular resonance for African Canadians. The Nigerian Canadian Association, for instance, publicly welcomed the initiative, with its Vice-President, George Chukwu, expressing the association's optimism that it would enable Nigerians and other Black residents to participate more fully in building Brampton. It is developments such as these that help explain why Brown's name is increasingly spoken of with goodwill in African communities.

Leadership Beyond City Hall

Brown's conception of municipal leadership extends beyond roads, buildings and budgets. His public interventions have frequently addressed questions of public safety, economic development, infrastructure, recreation, immigration and the integration of diverse communities. When he sought re-election in 2022, his platform emphasised public safety, infrastructure investment, recreation and attracting new businesses to Brampton. The approach reflects the realities of a rapidly growing city.

Brampton needs leaders who can simultaneously address the concerns of long-established residents and those of newcomers seeking opportunity. It needs to create space for entrepreneurs while investing in social infrastructure. And it must preserve community cohesion in a city where cultural differences are visible, vibrant and constantly evolving.

That is where Brown's political experience has become an important asset.

A Bridge Across Cultures

There is another dimension to Mayor Brown's appeal among African communities: the symbolism of a political leader who has repeatedly engaged with Canada's diverse cultural communities.



His Worship Patrick Brown, Mayor of Brampton

For Nigerians, this matters. The Nigerian diaspora in Canada is made up of professionals, entrepreneurs, academics, healthcare workers, students, tradespeople and families whose contributions extend across virtually every sector of Canadian life. Their expectations of public leadership increasingly include recognition, inclusion, security and meaningful participation in civic affairs. A Mayor who acknowledges these aspirations is likely to earn more than votes. He earns goodwill. And goodwill, in a multicultural democracy, is itself a form of civic capital.

Service as a Continuing Journey

Patrick Brown's political journey has not been without challenges. Like many public figures who have spent considerable time in public life, he has experienced both political triumphs and difficult periods. His career has nevertheless continued through different levels of government and ultimately into municipal leadership in Brampton. His supporters point to that resilience as part of his political character. His record in Brampton has included initiatives around municipal finances, healthcare investment, public safety and community development. The Peel Police Services Board, for example, describes him as a tireless advocate for

Brampton and the Peel Region.

The Nigerian Connection

Perhaps the most compelling testimony to Brown's leadership comes not from political speeches but from the communities that interact with his administration.

Across Brampton, Nigerians have built businesses, raised families, established professional networks, founded churches and community organisations, and contributed significantly to the city's social and economic life. Mayor Brown has continuously demonstrated support for all the above. It was little wonder, therefore, that he was physically present at the last Nigeria Fest in 2025. That presence was a tangible show of solidarity with Nigeria and Nigerians.

Our appreciation of Mayor Brown, therefore, reflects something larger than personal admiration. It speaks to the value placed by immigrant communities on leaders who recognise their presence and contribution.

For Nigerians in Brampton, the Mayor's office is a point of contact with the civic structure of their adopted country. When that contact is characterised by openness and respect, it reinforces the idea that citizenship is not simply about where one originally came from, but about what one can contribute to the place one now calls home.

Profiles in Service

The story of Mayor Patrick Brown is ultimately a story about public service in a changing society.

Brampton's future will be determined by its ability to harness the energy of its extraordinary diversity. Its African and Caribbean communities will continue to grow. Its Nigerian population will continue to make its mark. New Canadians will continue to arrive with dreams, skills, businesses and expectations.

The challenge for leadership is to make every community feel that it belongs.

That is the broader significance of Mayor Patrick Brown's tenure.

His legacy will not be measured only in kilometres of roads constructed, dollars invested or projects completed. It will also be measured in the bridges built between communities; in the confidence of newcomers that they have a place in the city; and in whether Brampton succeeds in turning diversity into a shared civic advantage.

For Africans and Nigerians who have found a home in Brampton, that is a story worth celebrating.

And for Patrick Brown, it offers a fitting description of public service: leadership that seeks not merely to govern a city, but to bring its many peoples together in building one.

Mariam Muritala, A Visionary Entrepreneur Making Impacts, Building a Generation of Change Makers



Ms Mariam Muritala

Mariam Muritala is a visionary entrepreneur. She is a Foreign Trained Legal Professional and the dynamic founder of Canadavendors, a thriving business Development and Advertising Agency created to spotlight and support small businesses within Canada and beyond.

With a background in Commercial Law and a passion for community-building, Ms Muritala has become a leading voice in empowering underrepresented entrepreneurs to scale their businesses through visibility, education and connection.

Driven largely by her belief in the transformative power of commerce, Maryam launched Canadavendors to bridge the gap between talented local vendors and the global market. Her work has helped thousands of entrepreneurs gain exposure, boost revenue and build sustainable brands amid global competition and varieties of alternatives.

Beyond her business endeavours, Maryam is an advocate for immigrant entrepreneurship, women in business and inclusive economic development.

She regularly speaks at industry events, mentors aspiring founders and collaborates with organizations to foster diversity in entrepreneurship.

Mariam's leadership continues to inspire innovation and collaboration, making her a respected figure in Canada's entrepreneurial ecosystem and a beacon for small business empowerment globally.

In 2022, Mariam was honoured with the CIBWE Top Black 100 Women to Watch in Canada Awards and she was also conferred with the Brampton Citizen Awards (Inspirational Category Awards).

Mariam Muritala left early footprints on the shores of Nigeria through diverse efforts in education, leadership training and public sector governance initiatives. Her understanding of global dynamics in leadership and entrepreneurship has propelled her current work in Canada to even greater success, which has attracted the attention of all to her events and speaking sessions. These have also in return prompted awards, distinguished mentioning in high quarters and recognitions.

Surely this delectable damsel with brains and beauty remains a potential global brand for the future.

Tracing Legislative and Executive Update on State Police Reform in Nigeria

By Abdulkadir Iliyasu, Esq.

Background

The establishment of a decentralized (dual) policing system in Nigeria has reached a critical legislative and policy juncture. Both chambers of the 10th National Assembly have voted in favour of the State Police Constitutional Alteration Bill, which amends the 1999 Constitution (as amended) to permit state-level police forces alongside the existing federal structure.

However, full operationalization requires ratification by at least 24 State Houses of Assembly and Presidential Assent, complemented by an operational framework currently being drafted under a seven-week Federal Government roadmap.

Key Legislative Developments

1. Votes in the National Assembly

Senate Approval: The Senate approved the State Police Constitutional Proposal on June 24. While the House of Representatives passed the Executive State Police Constitutional Alteration Bill on July 23, reporting 311 affirmative votes (surpassing the required two-thirds threshold of 240 votes).

2. Constitutional and Procedural Controversy

Voting Procedure Objections: Opposing lawmakers, civil society groups (e.g., RULAAC), and political parties (such as the ADC) have raised serious procedural concerns. Allegations indicate that votes were tallied using non-standard methods (including votes submitted via electronic messaging platforms/WhatsApp from absent members).

Demands for Recommitment* Concerned legislators and opposition groups are demanding an emergency parliamentary session and a fresh, transparent legislative process, alleging that clause-by-clause consideration was bypassed.

The Executive Roadmap and National Policing Bill

To ensure state police forces do not operate without uniform national standards, the

Presidential Working Group on the National Policing Bill—chaired by the Chief of Staff to the President, Rt.Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila—has rolled out a seven-week milestone-driven programme that includes call for memoranda and other such activities that will culminate in the mid-September presentation of the new draft to Parliament.

Proposed Operational Safeguards and Framework

To address widespread concerns regarding potential political abuse by State Governors, regional disparities and jurisdictional conflicts, the framework includes strict legal checks:

State Readiness and Certification: A State must demonstrate financial sustainability, proper training facilities, vetted recruitment protocols, equipment, custody controls, and clear pension plans before receiving operational certification.

Dual-Policing Governance

State Police Services will operate alongside the Federal Police under an expanded National Police Council.

Independent Oversight Establishment of State Police Service Commissions to handle recruitment, discipline, and complaints independent of direct executive control.

Legislative Safeguards

State Police Commissioners will require confirmation by State Houses of Assembly.

Transitional Provisions

States that are not immediately ready or financially capable will continue to rely on the Federal Police until they meet national minimum standards.

Next Steps in the Ratification Pipeline

State Assembly Ratifications Transmission to the 36 State Houses of Assembly to secure the required 24 approvals.

Harmonization and Assent

Enactment of the overarching National Policing Bill to govern operational standards across all certified state police units.

House of Representatives Declares War on Rising Foodborne Diseases, Adopts Hon. Osawaru's Motion for Nationwide Surveillance



Hon. Billy
Osawaru Archives
- NALTF

Abuja, Nigeria

The House of Representatives has taken a decisive step toward addressing the growing threat of foodborne diseases in Nigeria, following the adoption of a motion sponsored by Hon. Chief Dr. Billy Osawaru, Member representing Orhionmwon / Uhumwonde Federal Constituency, Edo State. Presenting the motion recently on the floor of the Green Chamber, Hon. Osawaru expressed deep concern over the alarming increase in illnesses and deaths linked to contaminated and unsafe food across the country. He noted that foodborne diseases have become a serious public health challenge, placing enormous pressure on Nigeria's healthcare system while

endangering the lives and livelihoods of millions of citizens. The federal lawmaker highlighted that unsafe food contaminated by bacteria, viruses, parasites, toxins, and harmful chemicals continues to expose Nigerians to preventable diseases, leading to avoidable hospitalizations, long-term health complications, and loss of lives. He stressed that vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems, are

particularly at risk.

Hon. Osawaru further drew attention to reports by the World Health Organization (WHO), which indicate that unsafe food causes hundreds of millions of illnesses and hundreds of thousands of deaths globally every year, with the African Region recording the highest burden of foodborne diseases per population. These alarming statistics, he noted, underscore the urgent need for Nigeria to strengthen its food safety systems and disease surveillance mechanisms.

Following the adoption of the motion, the House directed the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in collaboration with relevant regulatory agencies, to intensify nationwide surveillance, routine inspections of food production, distribution outlets, and public enlightenment campaigns on food safety and hygiene practices.

The House also emphasized the need for adequate funding to strengthen food safety monitoring systems, improve laboratory capacity, support disease surveillance, and enhance rapid-response mechanisms capable of detecting and containing foodborne disease outbreaks nationwide.

Hon. Billy Osawaru reaffirmed that protecting the health of Nigerians remains a collective responsibility and called on all stakeholders—including government agencies, food producers, vendors, and consumers—to uphold the highest standards of food safety. According to him, ensuring access to safe and healthy food is not only a public health necessity but also a fundamental requirement for national development, productivity, and sustainable economic growth. The motion reflects the commitment of Hon. Billy Adeswa Osawaru and the 10th House of Representatives to advancing policies that safeguard the lives and well-being of Nigerians through proactive legislation and effective public health interventions.

Retelling the Badenoch Story

By Dave Okoroafor

Many people do not like Kemi Badenoch for her audacity and her unwillingness to soften hard truths. But the truth is that Kemi is exactly the kind of daughter most parents - including many of those who loathe her - would want to raise: a complete human being with great self-esteem, an accomplished woman who stands up for herself and her convictions.

Kemi has worked hard and deserves every petal of the flowers she receives. She completed an integrated Master of Engineering (MEng) degree at the University of Sussex in 2003 and earned a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of London in 2009.

I once listened to her on the BBC's Desert Island Discs, where she recounted the story of her migration from Nigeria and how she worked in different IT roles as a software engineer and systems analyst at notable organisations before entering politics.

Her story speaks to the immense power of farsighted parenting and the potential rewards of taking calculated risks. Kemi completed her secondary education in Nigeria before her well-travelled parents, who were living there at the time, sent her to the UK at the age of sixteen to continue her education.

Her father, Femi Adegoke, was a medical doctor and publisher, while her mother is a professor of physiology.

Living in Nigeria and sending a sixteen-year-old girl to the UK in 1996 was (and still sounds) like a considerable risk, even today with all the advances in information technology. Yet, they dared.

Yes, she lived with a family friend, but she still had to carve out her own path and remain focused until she became the woman she is today: a leading British politician, a potential future British Prime Minister, and the Chief Troubler of the Labour Party.

Whether one agrees with her politics or not, Kemi Badenoch's journey is a



reminder that discipline, education, resilience, and self-belief can open extraordinary doors.

Her story transcends political success and demonstrates what can happen when parents invest in their children REGARDLESS OF THEIR GENDER, and those children seize the opportunities placed before them.

NTAC DG, Buba Yakub, Joins Party Stalwarts to Endorse President Tinubu's 2027 Re-election Bid, Says APC Presidential Candidate Has Demonstrated Capacity Beyond Measure

Abuja, Nigeria

Director General of the Nigerian Technical Aid Corps (NTAC), Rt. Hon. Yusuf Buba Yakub, has described President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's bid for re-election in 2027 as both justified and evidence-based, insisting that the President's performance in office has earned him the confidence and support of millions of Nigerians.

Speaking on Thursday in Abuja during the inauguration of National Officials and the presentation of the Constitution of the Tinubu Integrated Support Group (TISG), the NTAC Director General said the President's far-reaching reforms and developmental initiatives have continued to attract widespread commendation across the country.

According to Rt. Hon. Buba, the trajectory of the 2027 presidential election is already tilting in favour of a leader who has demonstrated exceptional capacity in economic management, infrastructure development, student welfare initiatives, and the significant improvement in revenue allocations to states and local government councils.

He maintained that the achievements recorded under President Tinubu's administration have laid a solid foundation for sustainable national development, adding that continuity would further consolidate the gains already made.

The NTAC boss further called on members of the Tinubu Integrated Support Group and other supporters of the All Progressives Congress (APC) to remain united and committed to ensuring a resounding victory for President Tinubu and all APC candidates in the 2027 general elections. He also pledged his time, energy, and resources towards the success of the President's re-election campaign. The NTAC DG was represented at the event by his Media Aide, Nkem Anyata-Lafia.



Representative of the NTAC DG, Nkem Anyata-Lafia, as he presents the DG's address at the event



Earlier in his welcome address, National Chairman of the Tinubu Integrated Support Group, Dr. William W. Audu, who traced the evolution of the group to the Buhari years, commended the growing support the organisation has continued to receive from Nigerians across diverse ethnic, religious, and socio-political backgrounds.

Dr. Audu expressed profound appreciation to the NTAC Director General, Rt. Hon. Buba Yakub, for accepting to be the Father of the Day and for his steadfast support and commitment to the objectives of the group, describing his contributions as invaluable to its

growth and nationwide mobilisation efforts.

Other speakers at the occasion, including Mr. Festus V. Fuanter, Esq., a former National Working Committee member of the APC and Chairman of the Governing Council of the National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna, who stood in for the Chairman of the occasion, lauded the organisers of the event for their mobilisation efforts in support of a leader he said has gained the confidence of Nigerians and the international community in just three years in office.

Highlights of the event included the unveiling of the organisation's Constitution and the inauguration of its National Officials.

Among those in attendance were the representative of the Benue State Governor, Hon. Francis Ngutswem, Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Associations and Support Groups; a representative of the Director-General of President Tinubu's Support Groups, Dr. Tanko Yakkassai; Alh. Ibrahim Danbaba, Deputy National Chairman of the group; Hon. Saida Umara Sadique Zaria, who represented Hon. Aisha Idris Aliyu, Chairman of Bassa Local Government Area of Kogi State, among others.

When Diplomacy Takes Flight: Nigeria, South Africa and the Search for a Way Beyond Xenophobia

How Nigeria's Citizens' Diplomacy, evacuation of vulnerable nationals and renewed high-level engagement are testing the resilience of one of Africa's most consequential bilateral relationships

There are moments in the life of nations when diplomacy is no longer conducted only across polished conference tables or through carefully worded communiqués. Sometimes, diplomacy takes flight.

In June and July 2026, aircraft carrying Nigerian citizens out of South Africa became more than instruments of transportation. They became symbols of a government confronting a difficult question: how does a country protect its citizens abroad without allowing a crisis to permanently damage a relationship with another African nation?

For Nigeria, that question has acquired renewed urgency as xenophobic and anti-foreigner sentiments have once again placed Nigerians and other African migrants in vulnerable positions in South Africa.

By 15 July, the Nigerian Government announced that it had evacuated 1,490 Nigerians in seven batches, using a combination of Air Peace and South African Airways flights. The operation was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Nigerian High Commission in Pretoria, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, the National Emergency Management Agency, the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria and other agencies.

But the story is bigger than the numbers.

It is a story about citizenship, dignity, African solidarity, migration, security and the complicated inheritance of Nigeria's relationship with post-apartheid South Africa.

A Crisis That Refuses to Disappear

Xenophobia in South Africa is not a new phenomenon. The country has experienced repeated episodes of anti-immigrant violence and hostility, particularly since the infamous attacks of 2008 and subsequent outbreaks in 2015, 2019 and later years.

Nigerians have frequently found themselves at the centre of these tensions, partly because of their sizeable presence in South Africa and partly because of perceptions—sometimes justified in individual cases, but dangerous when generalized—that Nigerians are disproportionately associated with certain forms of criminality.

The danger lies precisely in that generalisation.

A criminal is an individual, not a nationality.

And an immigration violation is a matter for immigration authorities and the courts, not for mobs.

That distinction has increasingly become central to Nigeria's diplomatic argument.

South African authorities have, in turn, raised legitimate concerns about undocumented migration and criminal activities involving some foreign nationals. During recent diplomatic discussions, South Africa cited the processing of more than 500 Nigerian nationals through its criminal justice system for various offences as of 7 July 2026.

Nigeria's challenge has therefore been to defend its citizens without appearing to defend criminality, while South Africa's challenge is to enforce its laws without permitting legitimate immigration concerns to become a licence for collective punishment.

That is where diplomacy becomes indispensable.

Citizens' Diplomacy Takes Centre Stage

The defining feature of Nigeria's response in 2026 has been the emphasis on what Abuja describes as Citizens' Diplomacy—the principle that Nigeria's foreign policy must ultimately serve the welfare and security of Nigerians wherever they live.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu moved early in the crisis, directing Nigeria's diplomatic missions in South Africa to establish a crisis notification mechanism for Nigerians affected by xenophobic attacks and anti-foreigner sentiments. The directive followed a telephone conversation between Nigeria's Foreign Minister, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, and South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola.

The significance of that intervention goes beyond the establishment of a telephone or notification system.

It represents an attempt to move Nigerian consular diplomacy from reaction to preparedness.

For Nigerians living thousands of kilometres from home, the embassy is often the first—and sometimes only—visible manifestation of the Nigerian state. In moments of crisis, the effectiveness of that mission can determine whether a citizen feels abandoned or protected.

The evacuation programme consequently became the practical expression of Nigeria's diplomatic posture.

The Federal Government made clear that voluntary evacuation was available to Nigerians who felt unsafe. Air Peace subsequently played a major role in the humanitarian operation, while South African authorities facilitated aspects of the departure process.

By mid-July, 1,490 Nigerians had been brought home.

For those who boarded the aircraft, diplomacy was no longer an abstract concept.

It was a flight home.

The Difference Between Repatriation and Evacuation

There is an important distinction that has sometimes been lost in the public conversation.

Not every Nigerian returning from South Africa in 2026 was fleeing xenophobic violence.

South Africa separately announced that it had processed 586 Nigerian nationals for repatriation, describing them as persons found to be residing illegally in the country. The South African Government said those affected were issued emergency travel documents through the Nigerian High Commission and were subject to five-year prohibitions on re-entry under its immigration laws.

This creates two parallel realities.

There are Nigerians who need protection from violence.

There are Nigerians who may have breached immigration laws.

And there are Nigerians who are law-abiding residents, business owners, professionals, students and families who simply want to live and work peacefully.

A sophisticated diplomatic response must distinguish among all three.

Nigeria cannot credibly demand that South Africa ignore criminality or violations of immigration law. Equally, South Africa cannot allow immigration enforcement to become indistinguishable from xenophobic intimidation.

The dividing line must be due process.

That principle was reflected in South Africa's own public statements. Its authorities have declared violence and intimidation against foreign nationals unlawful and have said that xenophobia, Afrophobia and hate speech have no place in a constitutional democracy founded on the ideals of Ubuntu.

The Ghost of Nigeria's Role in South Africa's Liberation

There is also an emotional dimension to the Nigerian reaction.

For generations of Nigerians, South Africa's freedom from apartheid is inseparable from Nigeria's own history of African solidarity.

During the apartheid years, Nigeria provided political, diplomatic and material support to the anti-apartheid struggle. Nigerian governments supported liberation movements, contributed resources and hosted South African activists and exiles.

The relationship that emerged after apartheid was therefore not merely transactional.

It carried historical memory.

That history explains why attacks on Nigerians in South Africa can provoke unusually strong emotions in Nigeria.

For many Nigerians, the question is not simply: Why are migrants being attacked?

It is also: How did two countries that stood together during the struggle against apartheid arrive at a point where African citizens are attacking one another?

That question deserves more than anger.

It demands introspection.

Beyond the Evacuation Aircraft

Evacuating citizens is an essential emergency measure, but it cannot by itself solve xenophobia.

An aircraft can take a Nigerian away from danger.

It cannot eliminate the social and economic conditions that produce hostility towards migrants.

South Africa faces deep challenges involving unemployment, inequality, pressure on public services, housing shortages and insecurity. Migrants can become convenient targets when political and economic frustrations search for an identifiable face.

Nigeria, too, must examine its own responsibilities.

to be continued in next edition



Oriire: 56 Days That Tested Nigeria's Security Architecture

How the rescue of abducted pupils and teachers in Oyo State offers a glimpse into what coordinated, intelligence-led security can achieve—and what Nigeria must do next

By Udenze Chynedu Udenze

There are few things that can test the credibility of a nation more severely than the kidnapping of children from their classrooms.

A school is supposed to be among the safest spaces in any society. It is where parents surrender their children to teachers with the expectation that they will return home wiser, safer and better prepared for the future.

But on May 15, 2026, that expectation was violently shattered in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State. Armed men invaded schools around the Ahoro-Esinele and Yewota communities and abducted pupils, students and teachers. What followed was not merely another kidnapping incident. It became a national security test—one that stretched for 56 agonising days before the victims were finally rescued. When the children and their teachers regained their freedom on July 10, relief travelled far beyond Oyo State.

For their families, it was the end of a nightmare.

For Nigeria's security establishment, however, it was also the beginning of a much larger conversation:

What does the Oriire operation tell us about managing security in a country confronting increasingly sophisticated forms of criminality and terrorism?

A Nation Held to Account

The Oriire abduction immediately generated public anxiety because it involved schools and children.

The Oyo State Government mobilised the military, police, civil defence personnel, the Western Nigeria Security Network—Amotekun—and other local security structures. The Nigeria Police Force also deployed additional tactical and intelligence assets. The Inspector-General of Police, Tunde Disu, visited the affected communities and directed intensified operations.

At the federal level, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu intensified the response and dispatched a high-powered delegation to the area as the government came under mounting pressure to secure the victims' release.

The incident, therefore, became a test of something more fundamental than military capabilities. It became a test of governmental coordination. Nigeria has no shortage of security institutions. There is the Nigerian Army. The Nigerian Navy. The Nigerian Air Force. The Nigeria Police Force. The Department of State Services.

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps. The intelligence agencies. The Office of the National Security Adviser. State-based security structures. And a growing network of community and vigilante formations. The challenge has often been less about the existence of institutions than about how effectively they work together. Oriire offered a different model.

The Long Road to Freedom

The victims spent 56 days in captivity. That period was particularly significant because the abductors were believed to have exploited difficult forest terrain around the Old Oyo National Park. The environment presented a formidable operational challenge. Dense vegetation, vast distances, limited road access and the ability of armed groups to exploit local terrain can complicate conventional military operations.

The security agencies, therefore, had to balance two competing objectives: locating the kidnappers and rescuing the hostages without exposing the children and teachers to additional danger.

That is where intelligence became more important than firepower.

According to the Nigerian Army, the eventual operation followed more than a month of intelligence gathering and targeted operations against the kidnappers' network and hideouts.

The eventual rescue was a multi-agency operation involving the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy Special Forces, Nigerian Air Force Special Forces, police tactical units, intelligence agencies, the National Counter-Terrorism Centre, NSCDC, Amotekun, hunters and vigilantes, among others.

The lesson is unmistakable;

Modern security is increasingly a team sport.

No single agency can effectively manage a security environment in which criminals move across state boundaries, communicate through technology, exploit forests and receive logistical assistance from networks embedded within communities.

The Rescue That Changed the Narrative

On July 10, the long wait ended.

The children and teachers were rescued.

The Nigerian Government described the operation as a rare, multi-agency effort, while the military subsequently handed the victims over to the Oyo State Government after a period of medical observation and psychological assessment.

Independent reporting put the number rescued at, at least, 45—39 schoolchildren and six teachers—while other Nigerian reports gave a total of 44 victims. The important point is that the abducted pupils and teachers were successfully recovered after 56 days.

The rescue was, therefore, more than a successful operation.

It was a demonstration that Nigeria's security institutions can achieve complex outcomes when intelligence, coordination and patience converge.

But it would be dangerous to stop there.

A successful rescue is not the same thing as a successful security strategy.

From Reaction to Prevention

For decades, much of Nigeria's security conversation has been dominated by reaction.

An attack occurs. Security forces deploy. Victims are rescued—or sometimes not. Suspects are arrested—or escape. Communities mourn. Government officials issue statements. And attention eventually moves to the next crisis. Oriire should encourage Nigeria to break that cycle. The real objective should be to prevent the next school from becoming another Oriire.

That requires a shift from reaction to prevention.

Security intelligence must become more deeply rooted in communities.

Local residents often know when unfamiliar people enter an area. They notice unusual movements, strange vehicles, abandoned camps and sudden changes in behaviour.

The state must create mechanisms through which such information can reach security agencies safely and quickly. But intelligence gathering cannot depend entirely on goodwill.

It requires technology, trained personnel, databases, surveillance capabilities and analytical capacity. Protecting Schools Must Become a National Security Priority The Oriire incident also raises a fundamental question about school security. If armed groups can enter schools and remove children, then school protection must be treated as part of the national security architecture. Nigeria's Safe Schools programme and other initiatives have sought to address this challenge, but the scale and geographical spread of the problem require sustained attention.

Schools located near forests, border communities and known criminal corridors require particularly strong security assessments. There must be risk mapping. There must be early-warning systems. There must be emergency communication channels. Teachers and school administrators should know what to do during an attack. And communities around vulnerable schools must be integrated into security planning.

The objective should not be to turn schools into fortresses. It should be to ensure that security is sufficiently intelligent and preventive that armed groups never reach the school gate in the first place. The Forests Cannot Remain Security Blind Spots

One of the most important lessons from Oriire is geographical. Nigeria's forests and expansive ungoverned spaces have increasingly become strategic assets for criminal and terrorist groups. The forests provide concealment. They provide mobility.

They provide space for hostages. They complicate surveillance. And they create jurisdictional difficulties when criminal networks move across state boundaries.

The response cannot simply be occasional military raids.

Nigeria needs a comprehensive strategy for its forests.



to be continued in next edition

Trending Stuff

From Being Sidelined for P-Square to Becoming a Music Icon, Flavour Shares His Journey.

Nigerian highlife star, Chinedu Okoli, popularly known as Flavour Nabania, has opened up about one of the toughest moments in the early stages of his music career, revealing how he was once asked to stop performing so the now-defunct music duo, P-Square, could take over the stage.

Speaking on the World Wide podcast, Flavour recalled that the incident happened while he was entertaining guests at a nightclub.

According to him, the club manager approached him during his performance and instructed him to leave the stage immediately because P-Square had arrived.

The singer said he had no option but to end his performance. He explained that he switched off his microphone and stepped aside as the duo prepared to perform. He remembered the loud cheers from the audience as Paul of P-Square took the microphone and began singing their hit song, Temptation.

Flavour admitted that the crowd's reaction surprised him, as he wondered why he never received the same level of excitement despite performing similar music at the venue. However, rather than allowing the experience to



discourage him, he said it became a source of motivation that pushed him to work harder and strive for greater success.

Reflecting on the experience, the award-winning singer said he chose to turn the disappointment into inspiration, adding that the setback played a significant role in shaping his determination and ultimately contributed to where he is in his career today.

According to him, the club manager approached him during his performance and instructed him to leave the stage immediately because P-Square had arrived

Tension at Faze's 90s Lounge as 2Baba, Natasha Cross Paths



Sources familiar with the event said Natasha arrived at the lounge with security personnel, reportedly heightening tensions among members of 2Baba's camp.

What was expected to be a celebration of Faze's 90s Lounge opening in Abuja reportedly turned tense on Friday night following the appearance of singer Innocent Idibia, popularly known as 2Baba, and his estranged wife, Natasha Osawaru.

The development reportedly led to an unexpected security situation at the venue, where 2Baba was scheduled to perform.

Sources familiar with the event said Natasha arrived at the lounge with security personnel, reportedly heightening

tensions among members of 2Baba's camp.

A member of 2Baba's team confirmed that a confrontation occurred at the venue, although the exact circumstances that triggered the incident remained unclear.

A member of the lounge's management also confirmed that a group of security personnel and other men allegedly attempted to move 2Baba away from the premises.

The situation reportedly escalated when members of the singer's security team intervened to prevent the move.

The incident added another public dimension to the strained relationship between 2Baba and Natasha, who have reportedly been apart amid ongoing family issues.

However, it remained unclear why Natasha attended the event or whether her presence was connected to 2Baba's scheduled performance.

Despite reports of a physical confrontation, sources said no serious injuries were recorded. It was also unclear as of press time whether anyone had been arrested in connection with the incident.

The reported drama briefly overshadowed the opening of Faze's 90s Lounge, turning what was expected to be a high-profile entertainment gathering into an unexpected scene involving one of Nigeria's most recognisable music personalities and his estranged wife.

Details surrounding the incident remained sketchy, with conflicting accounts emerging over what happened inside the venue and why security personnel became involved.

Social Media and the Erosion of Our Humanity

Dr. Jarlath Uche Opara

“We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us.” — Marshall McLuhan

David and his wonderful family sit around the dinner table. The aroma of freshly prepared sea food fills the air, yet silence reigns. Not the comfortable silence of contentment, but the silence of divided attention. David is busy replying to work emails. His wife, Patience, on the other hand, is scrolling through her phone sifting through social media updates. Paul, their first child, is watching short videos and Grace, their daughter, deeply immersed in an online game! This is a family seated around the same table at dinner time, yet emotionally operating in different worlds. This quiet scene has become one of the defining portraits of the twenty-first century families, and sadly so, it seems very normal.

Before now, we scarcely realized how analogue our lives had been. Accessing information demanded patience. Connecting with people required deliberate efforts. Responsibilities were accomplished through processes that today would seem painfully slow. Yet, nobody considered that way of life inadequate. It was a comfort zone, and we lived in it contentedly, never imagining that another world was waiting just a click away. Looking back, one is struck with genuine bewilderment at how suddenly things have evolved in this digital age. Does anyone get to imagine how we managed to live without the Internet? How did we survive without social media, smart phones, instant messaging or video calls? Today such a life appears almost unimaginable, agitating our minds further on how drab life could have been without these inventions, but yet, we flourished for centuries without them. Families were built, friendships endured, businesses prospered, Universities emerged and civilizations rose long before anyone carried the world in their pocket. With the digital revolution, what once took hours or even days now takes seconds. News travels across continents in an instant, beyond the speed of light, one may add.

On the positive flipside, business meetings no longer require boarding flights; webinars and video conferences have collapsed geography. Faces are seen, voices are heard and decisions are made across oceans as though everyone occupied the same room. The world is no longer merely a global village; it has become a real-time neighborhood, living, as it were, in our homes, our pockets, our offices and even in our cars! These are extraordinary achievements. Without exaggeration, the Internet and social media have transformed Education, Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, including commerce, governance, scientific research, emergency response and all human collaborations. AI is now the real deal; an entirely different kettle of tea for another day! During pandemics and natural disasters, as we saw a few years ago, the Internet enabled people to work, learn, worship and remain connected across impossible distances and global divide.

Technology itself is not the villain. Come to think of it, it is really one of humanity's greatest accomplishments of all time. However, every revolution carries within itself some amounts of unintended consequences. The Industrial Revolution brought unprecedented productivity but also pollution. Nuclear science illuminated cities while reminding us of humanity's capacity for destruction. Digital Revolution has given us extraordinary connectivity while quietly eroding something infinitely more fragile—our sheer humanity. Social media arrived bearing attractive, low-hanging fruits. We eagerly stretched out our hands to pluck them, scarcely noticing that they were slowly enticing us, but also pulling us away from authentic human relationships. It has shrunk physical distances while widening emotional ones. It has connected billions of people yet left countless individuals feeling profoundly alone.

As Theodore Roosevelt wisely observed, "Comparison is the thief of joy." Social media has industrialized comparison. We measure our ordinary lives against carefully edited fragments of everyone else's life. We compare our behind-the-scene happenstances with other people's highlight reels. What should inspire often breeds dissatisfaction, anxiety and a certain degree of quiet despair.

Never has silence been so loud. Cafés are filled with people looking into screens instead of one another's eyes. Families gather around the same dining table while each member occupies a different digital universe. Friends travel together only to spend more time documenting the journey than experiencing it. Physical conversations are gradually thinning by the day in the presence of interlocutors who hardly realize who is by their sides. At accident scenes, some people instinctively reach for their phones before extending a helping hand. We have become remarkably skilled at recording life while gradually forgetting how to live it.

The problem begins when technology ceases to be a bridge toward human presence and quietly becomes a substitute for it. Human beings were not created merely to exchange information; they were created to share life. No algorithm, however sophisticated, can replace a comforting hand on a grieving shoulder, the warmth of laughter shared without distraction or the quiet ministry of someone who simply listens because they genuinely care.

More than two thousand years ago, Aristotle observed that "Man is by nature a social animal." We are wired not merely for communication but for communion. The consequences of this erosion of human connection extend far beyond emotional discomfort. Researchers increasingly associate chronic loneliness with anxiety, depression, poorer physical health, reduced productivity, cognitive decline and even shortened life expectancy.

We have solved many technological problems while exposing one of our deepest human crises. The answer, however, is not to reject technology but to reclaim our humanity within it. We must rediscover the forgotten virtues of presence, patience, attentive listening, empathy

and genuine fellowship. Technology should enhance relationships, not replace them. It should amplify compassion, not diminish it. Martin Luther King Jr. warned that humanity risked becoming "guided missiles and misguided men." Iran, Israel and the United States are today running a circus show as a result of a very warped understanding of the import of technology and its advancement for the service of mankind. Here Luther's words ring with renewed urgency for a redirection of energies and foci. Our devices have become smarter, our networks have become faster, our reach has become global, but the damning One Billion Dollar question remains whether our hearts have kept pace.

The digital revolution has transformed how we communicate. It must never transform who we are. Civilization will not be judged by the speed of its Internet, the sophistication of its algorithms or the intelligence of its machines. It will be judged by whether, in an age of unprecedented connectivity, we still knew how to look one another in the eye, extend a helping hand, and remain profoundly, irreducibly human.

In conclusion, I'd love to aver, as they say in courts, that social media has given us sophistication. It has given us comfort. Our ability to multitask effectively has been honed. Things are done effortlessly in comparison with yesterday. Everything is now within earshot, at a click the world is reached. These are very breathtaking milestones by the advent of social media. However, to me, it becomes pyrrhic victory for us if by all the above accomplishments our humanity is gone, our sense of compassion and empathy diminished and the warmth our hands are meant to give becomes just tools for key pads of our phones. We must not allow the good things of life that social media brings to eclipse the humanity in us. We are human first before the entrance of social media and technology and that "humanness" should not be traded off for all the pleasure of the new digital age. If this is allowed to happen, the consequences might be a gradual annihilation of the humanity in us and the difference between us and animals may be just be a hair breadth.

Dr. Jarlath Uche Opara, a public affairs analyst, renowned media columnist and author, wrote in from Abuja, Nigeria.

jarlathuche@gmail.com

...concluding part of the story begun in last the edition

Nigeria's Health Financing: Lessons from Canada's \$32.5bn Tobacco Settlement (Concluding Part of last edition's publication)

But to scale up, Nigeria needs legal groundwork, such as building airtight cases around healthcare costs, drawing on Canada and U.S. litigation. Civil society mobilisation is also key. Groups like Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) and the Nigerian Tobacco Control Alliance (NTCA) are necessary to sustain advocacy pressure. Robust data is also critical to document the true cost of tobacco – hospitalisations, lost productivity, premature deaths. Furthermore, international collaboration with global networks that have taken on Big Tobacco before will smoothen the process and help to counter Big Tobacco's legal tactics.

Nigeria should also emulate Canada's Tobacco Claims process, which allows individuals who developed illnesses because of smoking, or from second-hand smoke (SHS), or family members of those who died from tobacco-related diseases to seek compensation directly, with no upfront legal fees. This is separate from the recent settlement funds. Such an approach would bring justice to victims while amplifying public support.

Perhaps the toughest fight is not against cigarettes but against the new wave of smokeless products and vapes, which Big Tobacco falsely markets as safer. Any Nigerian settlement must explicitly fund counter-marketing campaigns, research, and enforcement to dismantle this harmful narrative. Canada was careful to exclude industry-backed "harm reduction" foundations from its deal. Nigeria must follow suit.

Nigeria's young population is already a prime target for flavoured vapes and e-cigarettes. Failure to act risks a generation addicted to nicotine, burdened by disease, and robbed of potential. But success could deliver a turning point – funding healthcare, empowering advocacy, and saving millions of lives.

The question is whether Nigerian leaders will put lives above the lobbying power of Big Tobacco. Canada has shown it can be done. If Nigeria follows through – with political will, legal rigour, and strong civil society support – it can not only transform its health financing but also send a powerful message across Africa that the era of tobacco impunity is over.

Egbe is a tobacco control advocate at Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA).



Dr. Jarlath Uche Opara

The PFIPC Scandal and the Urgent Reforms Required

When Prince Adeniyi Adeyemi Matthew walked into the Phase III Section of the Federal Secretariat in Abuja with a forged letter and emerged with an office, signage and a semblance of government legitimacy, he did not act alone.

That is the uncomfortable truth of the “Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council” (PFIPC) saga. Adeyemi has been charged with eight counts of fraud and forgery. But the bigger scandal is not one man's alleged audacity. It is how a non-existent Agency got close to N1.3 billion in the 2026 budget, secured office space in the heart of government, hosted top government functionaries from Nigeria and abroad and allegedly operated multiple accounts.

This is not a story about Chief of Staff Femi Gbajabiamila versus Prince Adeyemi. This is a story about systemic failure. And until the system is properly fixed, it is quite probable that the next Adeyemi is somewhere forging another letterhead.

There are several systemic breaches in the saga that public finance analysts and other commentators have already pointed out, but they nonetheless require restating. There is a failure of due diligence in budgeting. The 2026 Appropriation Act contained N1.3 billion for the “Presidential Economic Advisory Council/PFIPC.” The problem, however, is that PFIPC has no legal backing and was never established by the Federal Government.

Top sources in the National Assembly claim the allocation entered “through a backdoor arrangement” without budget defence. For whatever his statement is worth, Adeyemi, in his interview with social media influencer VeryDarkMan from his hideout, said he was detained for 23 days while the budget was being prepared. “I did not prepare or defend any budget, and nobody went to defend it on my behalf,” he said.

That means the appropriation to the fake Agency bypassed the Committees that should have asked probing questions such as: “Which Agency is this?” What is its mandate? Who are its staff members?

Since the rebirth of democracy over 27 years ago, Nigeria's budget process has been criticised for “insertions” and “undue inflation”. PFIPC is now the clearest example of why that matters. A ghost Agency should not be able to get real money. If the Budget Office, House of Representatives and Senate all missed this, our first line of fiscal defence needs a long, hard look.

There is also the issue of appointment and office verification. Adeyemi allegedly used a forged appointment letter bearing Gbajabiamila's purported signature and a counterfeit presidential letterhead to present himself as Director-General. Gbajabiamila's lawyers insist he has “never had any contact whatsoever with Adeyemi”. Yet somehow, that letter was accepted at the Civil Service headquarters without adequate verification. It secured him an office at the Federal Secretariat for over a year. Up until this month, a sign for PFIPC was still up, directing visitors to the Council's purported office inside the Ministry of Health wing.

Just think about that. The administrative hub of the Federal Civil Service could not detect a fake appointment. If letterheads and signatures of top government functionaries are that easy to forge and accept, then no MDA is safe. Tomorrow, it could be a fake NCC or NDDC Director. And next week, possibly a fake University Vice-Chancellor.

The third system failure is about banking and due diligence. Adeyemi allegedly opened an account with the Central Bank of Nigeria for the non-existent Agency. Adeyemi himself asked the most damning question in a viral video: “The same acclaimed non-existent Agency has a domiciliary account, a pounds sterling account and a Treasury Single Account, all domiciled in the Central Bank of Nigeria. Is it even possible to open an account with fictitious documents in a commercial bank in Nigeria today, let alone at the CBN?”

He also allegedly operated 34 bank accounts linked to fictitious Agencies. Banks and government revenue platforms are required by law to conduct Know Your Customer (KYC) checks. How did 34 accounts get opened? Who approved the TSA linkage? The EFCC has recovered items and made arrests, but the institutions that enabled the financial plumbing have not been named.

But how does the Chief of Staff come into all of this? Where does he fit in, for the life of me? Adeyemi alleged that Gbajabiamila demanded 48 per cent of a N27.4 billion take-off grant and collected N400 million through proxies.

Gbajabiamila says he has never met Adeyemi in his life and no proxy has acted on his behalf. His lawyers call the allegations “false and gravely defamatory” and have slammed a N10 billion suit on Adeyemi. Adeyemi himself admitted in the VDM interview that he never met Gbajabiamila.

Truth is, the Chief of Staff's office does not issue appointments. Presidential spokesman Bayo Onanuga had pointed that out in a statement. The matter of

appointment is the prerogative of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, which is the clearing house for all appointments made by the President. Even then, the Chief of Staff's letterhead and signature were also found to have been forged.

It was the Office of the Chief of Staff that first blew the whistle on the fake Agency after the Nigeria Investment Promotion Council flagged it. Gbajabiamila caused a disclaimer to be issued on Adeyemi, following which he was arrested by the police and arraigned in court.

It is instructive that President Bola Tinubu has directed the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to investigate the entire scandal. That is a commendable step. The President also did not leave the duration of the investigation open-ended; he ordered that the probe be concluded within one month. It was also gathered that KPMG may be brought in if there are larger accounting issues to untangle.

Also, whereas the House of Representatives has elected to launch its own investigation into the matter, the Senate has suspended its probe, backing the President's action.

My point is that the investigation and the legal process must run their course. The Chief of Staff should not be guillotined, literally. There should be a presumption of innocence until he is proven guilty.

But the more important point is this: even if every allegation against the Chief of Staff is false, as it appears to be, the fact that his name and signature could be forged and used to access government property still suggests some vulnerability in the administrative controls of government.

All of that has made reform of the system imperative.

Arresting Adeyemi so he can answer for his serious misdeeds is necessary. However, that would not be sufficient. Stopping there would be akin to treating malaria with paracetamol.

In my view, at least four immediate reforms are required at this point.

One is a budget integrity law. No allocation should appear in the Appropriation Act without being scrutinised by the relevant Committee and published with a sponsoring MDA, a legal instrument and a staff list. A “ghost Agency” clause should trigger an automatic audit by the Auditor-General.

Secondly, there is a need for an appointment verification portal. Every federal appointment letter must be logged on a public, verifiable portal managed by the SGF. MDAs should not accept physical letters without a portal code. That way, forgery becomes instantly detectable.

Thirdly, the Federal Secretariat must have stronger access control. A forensic audit of all offices, signage and allocations in the secretariat is desirable. Any office space allocated in the last three years without SGF or Head of Service's approval should be revoked and investigated.

Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, there is the need for financial institution accountability. The CBN and commercial banks must explain how accounts were allegedly opened for PFIPC and 34 other Agencies. The Bank Verification Number (BVN) and Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) database should be cross-checked before any government-linked account is activated.

In the final analysis, Prince Adeyemi allegedly gamed the system. But systems are gamed because they are weak. The PFIPC scandal is a stress test, and the system failed at three points: budget, appointment and banking.

Rahman is Senior Special Assistant to President Tinubu on Media and Special Duties.



Prince Adeniyi Adeyemi Matthew

President Barrow Restates Gratitude to Nigeria on Technical Aid Scheme as Foremost Gambia's Engineering University Graduates 951

How the rescue of abducted pupils and teachers in Oyo State offers a glimpse into what coordinated, intelligence-led security can achieve—and what Nigeria must do next

By Olubunmi Ojo A.

President of the Republic of The Gambia and Chancellor of the University of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (USET), His Excellency Adama Barrow, has restated his country's profound gratitude to the Government and people of Nigeria for the sustained support provided through the Nigerian Technical Aid Corps (NTAC) Scheme, as USET graduated a total of 951 students during its 2nd Combined Convocation Ceremony held in Banjul recently.

Speaking at the ceremony themed "Innovation for Impact: Science, Skills and Sustainable Development," President Barrow commended Nigeria's development cooperation efforts and acknowledged the positive contributions of Nigerian professionals serving under the Technical Aid Corps Scheme to the growth of critical sectors in The Gambia, particularly higher education.

The President also appreciated development partners and stakeholders for their contributions to the advancement of USET and charged the graduands to remain connected to their alma mater by giving back to the institution. He further encouraged the University's Governing Council and Management to continue advancing innovation for lasting impact and sustainable development.

Representing Nigeria at the event, the Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Technical Aid Corps, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Buba Yakub, conveyed the goodwill and greetings of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, to the Government and people of The Gambia.

The NTAC Director-General reaffirmed President Tinubu's commitment to strengthening Nigeria's development cooperation with The Gambia through strategic technical assistance, knowledge transfer, capacity building and the deployment of skilled Nigerian professionals.

A defining highlight of the convocation was the visible impact of the NTAC Scheme on higher education development in The Gambia, with several Nigerian Technical Aid Corps Volunteers now occupying strategic academic leadership positions in the country's tertiary institutions.

Among them are the Vice Chancellor of USET, Engr. Prof. Nazmat Surajudeen-Bakinde, Prof. Ado Yusuf Abdulfatah, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs), USET, Prof. David Gundu, Director Academic Planning and Quality Assurance as well as Prof. Akinlabi, Director Grants/Research and Prof. Kayode Adekeye, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), University of The Gambia. Their rise to such positions of responsibility underscored the enduring success



President Of The Republic Of The Gambia, Adama Barrow (M), Flanked by government officials, Heads of Government Institutions, and Representatives of Multilateral Agencies during the 2nd Convocation Ceremony of the University Of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (USET), held at the Sir Dawda K. Jawara International Conference Centre, Banjul, the Gambia, On Saturday, June 19, 2026. on the president's immediate right are the Chairman of the Governing Council of the University, Mr. Ebrima Cham; Rt. Hon. Yusuf Buba Yakub, Director-General, Nigerian Technical Aid Corps (NTAC); and the UNDP Country Representative, The Gambia, Ms. Mandisa Mashologu. On the president's left are the Vice-Chancellor of USET, Engr. Prof. Nazmat Surajudeen-Bakinde; the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Technology, Prof. Pierre Gomez; and the Minister of Technical Education of Sierra Leone, Dr. Haja Ramatulai Wurie.

and relevance of the NTAC intervention in The Gambia.

In her remarks, Prof. Nazmat Surajudeen-Bakinde, herself a product of the NTAC Scheme, paid special tribute to the Government of Nigeria and the Director-General of NTAC for their unwavering support to higher education development in The Gambia. She acknowledged the significant contributions of Nigerian professionals to the growth and transformation of tertiary education in the country.

The NTAC DG also commended The Gambia's Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Prof. Pierre Gomez, for his steadfast commitment to the success of the partnership between NTAC and The Gambia. He recalled that



Prof. Gomez initiated discussions aimed at strengthening collaboration with NTAC as early as his second day in office, demonstrating remarkable dedication to educational advancement and human capital development.

The ceremony featured the conferment of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates on 951 graduands across various disciplines. The University also presented Awards for Academic Excellence to

President Adama Barrow presenting an award of Recognition to Rt. Hon. Yusuf Buba Yakub, Director-General, Nigerian Technical Aid Corps (NTAC)

outstanding students, with awardees attaining impressive academic performances ranging from 70.03 per cent to 91.50 per cent.

Awards of recognition were equally presented to deserving dignitaries and distinguished personalities. Among the recipients was the Director-General of NTAC, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Buba Yakub, who received his award from President Adama Barrow in recognition of NTAC's outstanding contributions to capacity building and educational development in The Gambia.

In her valedictory address, the Valedictorian expressed appreciation to the World Bank for its support to the institution and thanked the Vice Chancellor and Management of USET for their encouragement and commitment to student success. While congratulating her graduating colleagues with the declaration, "We made it!", she urged the continuing students to remain

resolute, uphold integrity and pursue excellence, adding that "Here at USET, we don't take the best; we make the best."

Also in attendance were the Chairperson of the Governing Council of USET, Engr. Ebrima Cham, the Honourable Minister of Technical and Higher Education of Sierra Leone, Dr. Haja Ramatulai Wurie, members of the diplomatic corps, senior government officials, academics, development partners and other distinguished guests.

The event once again highlighted the enduring impact of the Nigerian Technical Aid Corps Scheme as a strategic instrument of Nigeria's foreign policy and South-South Cooperation, fostering human capital development, institutional strengthening and lasting bilateral relations between Nigeria and The Gambia.



A cross-section of graduating students of the Institute of Vocational and Entrepreneurship Studies, USET, the Gambia



President Adama Barrow as he approves the award of a Doctoral Ddegree, Honoris Causa, in his capacity as Chancellor of USET, to Engr. Umar Jigo, who is standing on the elevated platform to the President's right.



Rt. Hon. Yusuf Buba Yakub delivering a speech at the event.



President Adama Barrow delivering his speech during the event.



Hon. Buba, Mr Cham, Governing Council of USET Chair and President Barrow (m)



A Cross-Section of participants at the event.



President Adama Barrow (Far Right), Chairman of the Governing Council of USET, Mr. Ebrima Cham, and NTAC Director-General, Rt. Hon. Yusuf buba Yakub, during the 2ND Combined Convocation Ceremony of the University of Applied Science, Research and Technology (USET), held at the Sir Dawda K. Jawara International Conference Centre, Banjul, the Gambia, on Saturday, June 19, 2026.



President Barrow (m), Mr. Cham, Chair of the Governing Council of USET; Rt. Hon. BUBA of NTAC and UNDP's Gambia Rep.; Ms. Mashologu (Mr. President's Right); and on his left, the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Technology, The GAMBIA, Prof. Gomez Pierre.



The New Axis of Power: Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan Build a New Defence Front

Inside the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement—and why the emergence of a NATO-like security arrangement could reshape the strategic map from the Gulf to South Asia

By Theodore Tzenov

It is public knowledge that there are moments in international affairs when a document signed behind closed doors can say more about the future than a battlefield.

The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, signed on August 7, 2026, by Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan, is one such document.

Signed in the Saudi holy city of Mecca by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the agreement establishes a new framework for collective security among three countries with very different geographical realities but increasingly converging strategic interests.

Its most striking provision is also its simplest:

An armed attack against one of the three countries will be regarded as an attack against all three.

That language immediately evokes NATO's famous Article 5—the principle that an attack against one member constitutes an attack against the alliance.

Indeed, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has acknowledged that the provision is technically similar to NATO's Article 5.

But there is an important qualification.

This is not NATO.

And the three countries have not announced the creation of an "Islamic NATO", despite the phrase already gaining currency in international commentary.

What they have created is potentially something more interesting: a new regional security mechanism whose influence could grow considerably if additional countries join.

Why Now?

The timing is hardly accidental.

The Middle East has entered another period of profound strategic uncertainty.

Iran's confrontation with regional and global powers, instability around the Gulf, attacks affecting maritime routes, continuing conflicts across West Asia and questions about the reliability of traditional security guarantees have encouraged regional powers to reconsider how they protect themselves.

Saudi Arabia has particular reasons to think differently about security.

The Kingdom sits at the heart of the Gulf's strategic geography and remains one of the world's most important energy powers. Its security is, therefore, not simply a Saudi concern; disruptions around the Kingdom can affect energy markets, shipping and the wider global economy.

Pakistan, meanwhile, occupies the strategic bridge between South Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia.

Türkiye sits at another critical intersection—between Europe, the Middle East, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

Put the three together and the geography alone is striking.

The pact connects the Gulf, South Asia and the eastern Mediterranean through a single strategic framework.

Three Countries, Three Strategic Assets

The power of the arrangement lies partly in the different capabilities each country brings to the table.

Saudi Arabia: Money, Geography and Energy



Saudi Arabia brings enormous financial resources, strategic geography and its position as one of the world's most important energy producers.

Riyadh has spent years investing heavily in military modernisation, air defence, missiles, drones, naval capabilities and domestic defence production.

But the Kingdom has also been seeking a broader strategic architecture that does not leave its security entirely dependent upon any single external power.

The Mecca agreement fits into that wider search.

Türkiye: The Military-Industrial Powerhouse

Türkiye brings something different.

It is a NATO member with one of the largest armed forces in the alliance and has developed a formidable indigenous defence industry.

Turkish drones, armoured vehicles, missiles, naval systems and other military technologies have become increasingly important in international defence markets.

Ankara has also cultivated defence relationships across Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and beyond.

For Türkiye, the new agreement provides another platform for strategic influence while reinforcing its relationships with two major Muslim-majority powers.

Pakistan: Military Experience and Strategic Depth

Pakistan brings extensive military experience, a large standing armed force and a strategic relationship with the Gulf stretching back decades.

It is also a nuclear-armed state.

That fact inevitably gives the new arrangement a strategic dimension that distinguishes it from many conventional defence partnerships.

But the pact should not automatically be interpreted as a commitment to extend Pakistan's nuclear umbrella to Saudi Arabia or Türkiye.

No such nuclear-sharing arrangement has been announced.

That distinction matters.

The Article 5 Question

This is where the agreement becomes particularly intriguing.

NATO's Article 5 does not simply mean that every member automatically declares war when another member is attacked.

It establishes a collective-defence obligation, but each member determines what assistance it considers necessary.

The Mecca agreement appears to operate within a similar

logic.

According to Turkish Foreign Minister Fidan, the agreement's response mechanisms can range from intelligence-sharing and other forms of assistance to military support, depending on the circumstances.

This gives the pact flexibility.

And flexibility may be one of its greatest strengths.

The three countries are not identical in their foreign-policy priorities.

Saudi Arabia has its Gulf interests.

Pakistan has its South Asian security concerns.

Türkiye has interests extending into Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

A rigid military alliance could, therefore, become difficult to manage.

A flexible collective-security arrangement gives each country room to manoeuvre.

Is Iran the Unnamed Target?

This is perhaps the question international observers will ask most frequently.

The answer from Ankara is emphatic:

No.

Türkiye has insisted that the agreement is not directed against Iran—or any other specific country. Fidan said the pact does not identify an adversary unless that country poses a direct threat to one of the members.

That clarification is diplomatically important.

Iran is itself a major regional power and shares important economic and geopolitical relationships with all three countries to varying degrees.

Saudi Arabia and Iran have also made efforts in recent years to reduce tensions.

Türkiye maintains significant diplomatic and economic relations with Tehran.

Pakistan shares a border with Iran.

None of the three, therefore, has an obvious interest in announcing an explicitly anti-Iran alliance.

Yet strategic analysts will inevitably examine the pact against the background of Iran's regional activities and the broader security environment.

In geopolitics, intentions matter.

But capabilities and consequences matter too.

A pact can alter the strategic balance even when its creators insist that it was not designed to target anyone.

And Then There Is Egypt.

The story may not end with three countries.

Türkiye has indicated that Egypt could join the arrangement, once technical issues are resolved.

That possibility is strategically significant.

Egypt possesses one of the Arab world's largest militaries and occupies an extraordinary geographical position linking North Africa, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Middle East.

If Egypt were eventually incorporated, the pact's geographical reach would expand dramatically.

The alliance would then stretch from the eastern Mediterranean through the Arabian Peninsula and into

Contnd on pg 40



Agentic Ai: The New Engineering Model For Business Profitability

Artificial Intelligence has evolved beyond traditional chatbots and content-generation systems into a new paradigm known as **Agentic AI**. Unlike conventional AI systems that primarily respond to prompts, Agentic AI systems can autonomously plan, reason, make decisions, utilize tools, execute tasks, learn from outcomes, and continuously adapt their actions to achieve defined objectives.

Agentic AI represents the next generation of intelligent systems capable of functioning as digital workers, virtual assistants, business analysts, project managers, customer support representatives, and operational coordinators. These systems combine Large Language Models (LLMs), memory frameworks, planning engines, workflow orchestration, tool integrations, and feedback mechanisms to deliver end-to-end task execution with minimal human intervention.

This document provides a comprehensive overview of Agentic AI, its operational framework, engineering architecture, implementation models, and enterprise applications.

Agentic AI refers to Artificial Intelligence systems that are capable of independently pursuing goals through reasoning, planning, decision-making, and action execution.

Traditional AI systems typically perform a single interaction cycle:

Input → Processing → Output

For example:

User Request: "Write a business proposal."

AI Response: Generates the proposal and stops.

Agentic AI extends this capability significantly:

User Goal: "Help me secure funding for my fintech startup."

The Agentic AI system may:

Analyze funding requirements.

Review business plans.

Research potential investors.

Generate pitch decks.

Develop financial models.

Draft investment outreach emails.

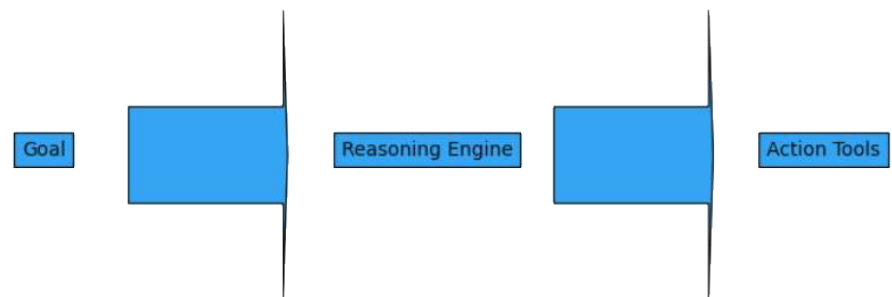
Track investor responses.

Refine documents based on feedback.

Continue working until the objective is achieved.

The primary distinction is that Agentic AI is goal-oriented rather than response-oriented.

Core Engineering Model of Agentic AI

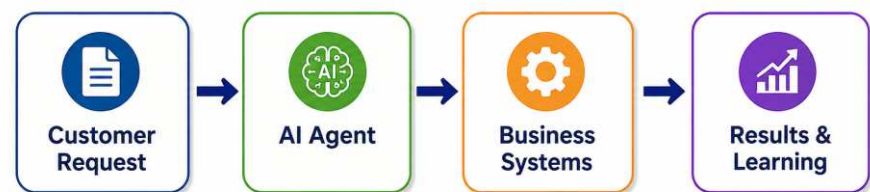


The engineering architecture of Agentic AI consists of five major layers:

1. Goal Definition Layer
2. Reasoning & Planning Engine
3. Memory Layer
4. Tool Integration Layer
5. Feedback & Learning Layer

Business Profitability Framework

Business Profitability Framework



Agentic AI creates profitability through four measurable outcomes:

- **Revenue Growth** through intelligent sales engagement.

Agentic AI creates profitability through four measurable outcomes:

Revenue Growth through intelligent sales engagement.

Cost Reduction via process automation.

Faster Decision Making using real-time analytics.

Better Customer Experience through personalized interactions.

Real-World Business Applications

Financial Services: Intelligent credit analysis, fraud detection, customer onboarding and collections.

Travel & Tourism: Automated itinerary planning, visa advisory support, customer engagement and dynamic pricing.

Healthcare: Patient scheduling, diagnosis assistance and resource optimization.

Retail & E-commerce: Personalized recommendations, inventory management and customer support.

The Future of Agentic AI

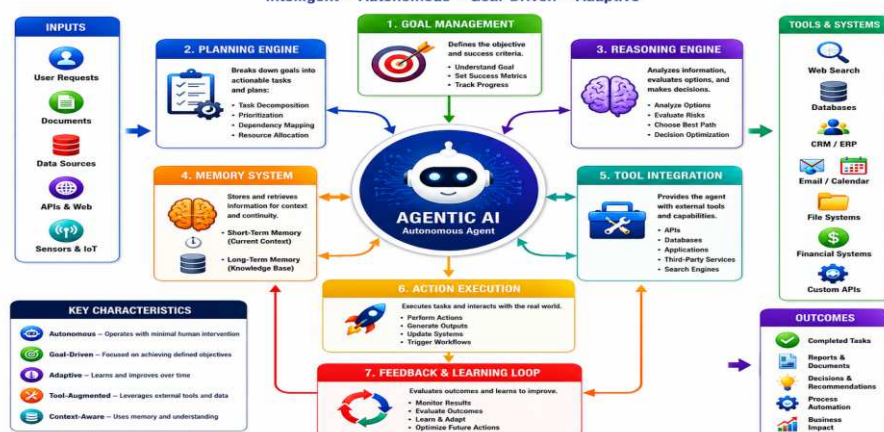
The future belongs to organizations that combine human expertise with intelligent AI agents. Rather than replacing employees, Agentic AI augments human capabilities, enabling teams to focus on strategy, innovation and customer relationships. Businesses that adopt Agentic AI early will enjoy higher productivity, improved profitability and sustainable competitive advantage.

Key Takeaway:

Agentic AI is not simply another software tool; it is an intelligent digital workforce capable of planning, reasoning, acting and learning. The organizations that master this engineering model will define the next generation of business success.

CORE COMPONENTS OF AGENTIC AI

Intelligent • Autonomous • Goal-Driven • Adaptive



Artificial Intelligence is evolving from simple automation into Agentic AI—systems capable of planning, reasoning, taking actions, learning from outcomes, and collaborating with humans to achieve business goals.

Unlike traditional AI that only responds to commands, Agentic AI acts as a digital workforce capable of executing complex business processes. Organizations that successfully deploy Agentic AI can improve revenue, reduce operational costs, increase customer satisfaction, and accelerate innovation.

DARING TO STAND OUT

The Story of the 25-Year-Old Graduate of Political Science, who has Ventured into Oil Production and Hair Treatment is everything to Inspire

Ogadimma Okereke, the young President of Lomie Hair Clinic and Solutions, likes to simply call herself the CEO of her Company. If the story of the 25-year-old graduate of Political Science, who has ventured into oil production and hair treatment is anything to inspire, her determination to make a mark in a totally different field from that of her studies is even more awesome.

Our team of Editors caught up with the young entrepreneur in Abuja where she spoke of her foray into the oil and hair business and the successes and challenges that have come with the choice of her current role.

In this interview titled the Audacity of Personal Convictions, Dimma, as she is better called by close friends, family members and colleagues shares insights on her art, occupation and the vision for the years ahead for her brand.

Please, enjoy it.

Let's meet you, Ma. What's your name?

My name is Ogadimma Okereke

I *understand that you have a line of products, a particular brand. Can you talk about it, Ma?*

Okay. That is Lomie Hair Clinic and Solution, a Nigerian hair-wellness brand. It is committed to promoting healthy hair and scalp. Beyond just talking to people about how their hair can grow, we also focus on scalp health as well.

How long have you been in the business?

Basically, five years—two years of personal analysis and tests, and then three years fully in business.

Can you share some insights into your growth and motivation process? How did you come about this, up to the stage where you are today?

Yes, of course. My curiosity for healthy hair—and a little belief, or should I say disbelief, in the notion that African women's hair cannot grow—gave me that inspiration. I wanted to know why most people or history held that African women's hair couldn't grow. From there, I picked up a lot of interest, started my investigations, went through training, and that was how Lomie came about.

Today, if you were to rate yourself, how would you rate where you are in terms of the products you are trying to push across to the world—or have actually pushed across to the world? What do you think your rating would be?

Am I supposed to rate myself?

Well, when you started five years ago, there was a place you had in mind to reach or levels you hoped to attain. Five years later, what are you seeing?*

Lomie is doing well, I would say. We are doing well because we offer good therapeutic treatments and we also provide education on hair care and scalp care. Additionally, we provide consultations and create employment opportunities as well.

Is it an African thing basically, or a Nigerian thing, since you are based in Abuja, Nigeria? What is your market like?

Currently, we are still in Nigeria, but the vision is to build Lomie into one of the top African hair wellness brands in the near future.

A global brand, not just Africa?

Yes, absolutely.

What attempts have you made to further this dream and vision?

I try to make sure that our foundation is clear. First of all, our products should stand out and be premium, and the people we have cared for should be able to give good testimonials before we look outward.

In very plain language, can you explain what your products do? For instance, the five or six products that you have—what does each do for the hair and scalp?

Yes, of course. We have six products in our hair routine:

Lomie Oil Conditioner (Pre-Treatment Oil): Helps prep your scalp and keep it at a safe rate before you shampoo your hair.

Shampoo: Used after the pre-oil to cleanse both the hair and scalp, ensuring a proper balance before the next step.

Lomie Hair Mask: Helps build moisture in your hair, leaving it soft and shiny.

Lomie Detangle Cream: Used during your combing session, preferably on semi-wet or damp hair, to reduce breakage and friction.

Growth Oil: Nourishes the scalp.

Growth Cream: Helps seal in moisture and adds shine to the hair.

Wao! Because you haven't expanded beyond Africa yet, do you think the same principles that apply to Black hair would also apply to Caucasian or white hair?

Yes, of course, because of the carefully selected ingredients in our products.

Are they natural products? How much is natural and how much is synthetic?

Yes, 80% is natural.

So, from where do you source your raw materials?

Africa, right here.

So you think it will apply globally when you expand worldwide?

Yes, because of our foundations and our formulations.

What in your background prepared you for the hair care and treatment business you are now undertaking?

My personal experience.

Can you talk about it?

There is a whole lot. First, people used to classify me as a "half-albino"—a lady with brownish hair, which I wasn't okay with. I also suffered severe scalp issues such as dandruff, an itchy scalp, flaky scalp, and an extremely dry scalp. With all these challenges, I became more interested in scalp health and how hair can grow once the scalp is healthy. When I started treating it, it went fine. That's how I was able to grow my hair from 3 inches to 26 inches within five years.

As a growing company, are you open to partnering with people or looking for opportunities for investment, partnerships, or collaborations to help take your brand's message and success story to other parts of the world?

Oh yes, everything is about networking these days; and because we don't just sell products; we also educate people about healthy hair, healthy scalps, and premium products. Our products are suitable for men, women, kids, adults, relaxed hair, processed hair, transitioning hair, and various scalp issues.

What about quality assurance and registration processes to ensure the products are certified for human use? How far have you gone with those?

We are currently working on it, Sir.

Thank you very much, it has been a pleasure talking with you. What is your final message for people who have dreams and are looking for ways to pursue them, especially despite financial limitations?

I would say consistency and personal motivation—do not give up. It is not always easy, but do not give up. Every day you wake up, commit it into God's hands, and watch it thrive. I always tell people that as long as you can dream it, you can achieve it, and God can fund it. There is no dream that God cannot fund, unless you don't want it.

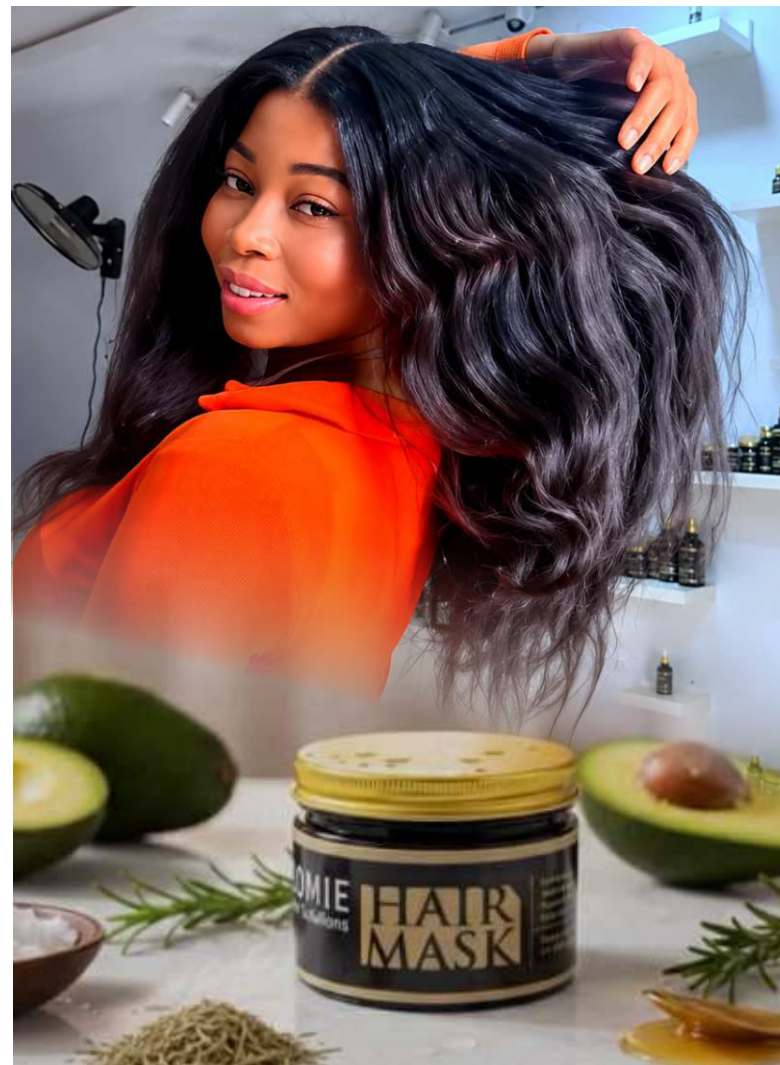
Having said that, where do you see Lomie Hair Solutions in the next 5 to 10 years?

Worldwide—at least among the top five, I would say!

Congratulations, Ma

You are very welcome, Sir. I hope I did my best to offer answers to your questions?

That was fine



MAGICAL RECOVERY:

Healing the Body through Rest and Sleep



Angela Ngozi Onovo

Today, I would like to deviate a little to offer some perspectives on some natural phenomena that we humans continue to neglect but which are, nonetheless, as important as any foods or medicines. I guess from the topic you already have an idea about what I intend to discuss here. Or maybe I should start by saying that today's topic arose as a result of my interactions during this past week with some of my clients to whom good, old, sound sleep is becoming some kind of luxury! Please, fasten your seat belts let's hit the airwaves straight with our thoughts, habits, knowledge and even biases and prejudices that we have haboured in our hearts and beings since only-God-knows-when.

To open the floor, rest and sleep are among the most powerful yet often underestimated tools for restoring and maintaining human health. In a world that celebrates constant activity and productivity to meet deadlines and stay on top of one's game, the body's need for deep rest is frequently overlooked.

However, scientific research and centuries of traditional wisdom agree on one essential truth: healing happens most effectively when the body is given time to rest and the mind is allowed to enter restorative sleep.

Sleep is not merely a passive state of inactivity; it is an active and highly organized biological process. During sleep, the body engages in essential repair work. Cells regenerate, tissues heal, and the immune system strengthens its defenses against illness. Growth hormone, which plays a key role in tissue repair and muscle development, is primarily released during deep sleep stages. This makes sleep especially vital for recovery from injury, illness, and physical exertion.

The brain also undergoes significant restoration during sleep. It processes emotions, consolidates memories, and clears out metabolic waste that accumulates during waking hours. Without sufficient sleep, cognitive functions such as concentration, decision-making, and emotional regulation begin to decline. Over time, chronic sleep deprivation can contribute to anxiety, depression, and a weakened ability to cope with stress.

Rest, even beyond sleep, is equally important in the healing process. Intentional periods of rest during the day allow the nervous system to shift from a state of constant alertness to one of calm recovery. Practices such as deep breathing, meditation, or simply sitting quietly can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which supports digestion, lowers blood pressure, and promotes overall physiological balance.

Modern lifestyles often disrupt natural sleep patterns. Excessive screen time, irregular schedules, stress, and poor sleep hygiene can interfere with the body's internal clock, known as the circadian rhythm. When this rhythm is disrupted, the body struggles to enter the deep, restorative stages of sleep that are essential for healing.

Establishing consistent sleep routines, reducing exposure to blue light before bedtime, and creating a calm sleep environment can

significantly improve sleep quality.

Nutrition and physical activity also play supporting roles in sleep and rest. A balanced diet rich in whole foods helps regulate hormones that influence sleep, while regular exercise promotes deeper and more restful sleep cycles. However, timing is important; intense physical activity too close to bedtime may have the opposite effect and delay sleep onset.

Ultimately, healing the body through rest and sleep requires a shift in mindset. Rest should not be viewed as laziness or wasted time, but as a necessary investment in long-term health and well-being. When the body is consistently given the opportunity to rest and sleep deeply, it responds with improved immunity, faster recovery, enhanced mental clarity, and greater emotional resilience.



In embracing rest and sleep as essential components of health, individuals can unlock the body's natural ability to heal itself. True wellness is not only built through action and effort, but also through the quiet, powerful restoration that happens when we allow ourselves to rest.

Now, if you have been in the habit of running it straight from one day to another without stopping, without letting go and without waiting to refuel and re-fire, now you know better. Between laziness and quality rest, I now know you can always tell the difference in a world where you are either chasing something per time or something is chasing you.

Please, stay fit, drink a lot water, take deep breaths and relax the muscles in rest and sleep....Keep a date with your Health Angel next edition as we unveil the miracles of Date Seeds as I promised in the last edition.

Bye!



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Worthy Felicitations

to a True and Worthy Leader, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist, Patriot and Global Icon,

The President, Board and Management of Attractions Media Ltd., Publishers of Attractions International Monthly (AIM) Magazine and promoters of Attractions Online Television (AOT) and Blog, heartily felicitate with our indefatigable Leader, Partner and Mentor, High Chief John Chukwu, the iconic President and Chairman, Jecmek Shipping and Clearing Inc., the Company that has in the last 8 years continued to facilitate and deliver to Nigerians in Canada the yearly Nigerian Community Summer Fest, on your well-deserved installation/coronation as ONWA N'ETIRI ORA OF AKATA KINGDOM, Imo State, Nigeria.

Indeed, Sir, this new feather to your cap, which is trailing many more that you have received from different cultures and places over the past years, remains an eloquent testament of your outstanding performance and recognition by your own very people who have from time immemorial continued to celebrate you in diverse forms and means before capping those celebrations with the current title of ONWA N'ETIRI ORA Na Akata Kingdom. Certainly, this honour is a call to do more of what you have achieved for the people of Akata, the Igbo race and the world at large!

Again, Onwa, as you carry the honour of this high office, Sir, we at Attractions Media Ltd., really wish to convey how proud we feel at this auspicious moment to be associated with a business colossus, management expert and a proud Igbo traditional czar like your kind self.

As we convey our unalloyed support and congratulations on this new milestone, we are positively persuaded that you will deliver on the noble demands of this nascent office to the joy of your people and to the glory of the Igbo race at home and in the Diaspora.

We are equally convinced that this new cap will roundly beget more and, therefore, pray that our good Lord will offer you the strength, the wisdom and every resource you require to excel in this new role and other future roles.

Once again, ONWA AKATA, accept our hearty congratulations and the assurances of our abiding support and loyalty at all times.

Mr. Finbars E. Aruwuonye
President



High Chief
John Chukwu
(Onwa N'Etiri Ora Na Akata Kingdom)President and Chairman, Jecmek Shipping and Clearing Inc.,Ca.

Inside Nigeria's Capital Sprawling Real Estate Business

An In-Depth Analysis of Infrastructure-Led Growth, Off-Plan Dynamics, and Regulatory Reform in the Federal Capital Territory

By Akaolisa Ezechigbo

The sky over Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is dominated by tower cranes and rising scaffolding. Across the capital, vast tracts of land are being converted into residential estates, commercial towers, and mixed-use developments. Driven by ongoing urbanization, corporate relocations, and sustained capital deployment by high-net-worth individuals and diaspora investors, Abuja's real estate market has evolved into one of the country's most active investment ecosystems.

However, behind the high-end marketing campaigns and luxury model homes lies a complex, multi-tiered market shaped by shifting demographic patterns, construction cost inflation, and heightened regulatory scrutiny.

The Spatial Spectrum

From Central Prime to Suburban Corridors

Abuja's real estate market operates on a distinct geographic price gradient, defined by proximity to the Central Business District (CBD) and the quality of underlying infrastructure.

The Ultra-Prime Core (Maitama, Asokoro, Wuse II, Jabi)

Prime districts remain heavily supply-constrained. Land scarcity in these mature neighborhoods has pushed detached property valuations to record levels. High acquisition costs have prompted a structural shift toward urban infill—where older single-family plots are redeveloped into high-density luxury apartments and townhouses.

Emerging Mid-Tier Zones

(Guzape, Katampe Extension, Jahi, Wuye): Functioning as the primary expansion frontier for middle-to-high-income buyers, these districts benefit directly from recent municipal road network completions. "Nwike is trying" is all you hear these days with regards to the FCT Minister's drive for high accessibility and well-laid road networks in the capital city and its suburbs.

Developers are heavily concentrated in these zones, offering terraced duplexes and serviced multi-family units that cater to young professionals and corporate executives.

Outer Growth Corridors (Lugbe, Idu, Karsana, Life Camp, Karmo)

Driven by major road upgrades, such as the expansion of the Outer Southern Expressway (OSEX) and airport access routes, outer corridors are experiencing rapid suburbanization. These areas represent the engine room for volume housing, offering relative entry-level affordability despite ongoing challenges in last-mile utility connections.

Structural Drivers Fueling the Boom

Several macro factors drive capital into the capital's property market:

Infrastructure Expansion as a Yield Catalyst:

Recent aggressive road construction and arterial link updates under the FCT Administration have opened previously underserved Districts. Proximity to completed infrastructure now serves as the primary predictor of short-term capital appreciation, with newly connected pockets gaining noticeable rent adjustments.

Construction Cost Inflation and Off-Plan Sales

High costs for imported materials, cement, and steel have forced developers to rely heavily on off-plan pre-sales to fund construction phases. While off-plan purchases offer entry discounts for buyers, they require strict builder vetting to mitigate execution and delay risks.

Shift Toward High-Density Typologies

High land costs across prime and sub-prime Districts have altered architectural design. Townhouses, terraced duplexes, and multi-



story apartment blocks are rapidly replacing traditional detached single-unit villas to maximize floor area ratios.

Resilient Rental Yields

Backed by steady housing demand from civil servants, diplomats, corporate consultants, and non-governmental organizations, rental demand for secured, fully serviced 2- and 3-bedroom apartments remains consistently strong.

The Regulatory and Legal Landscape

(Navigating AGIS and Land Title)

Real estate execution in Abuja remains tied to land administrative processes managed by the Abuja Geographic Information Systems (AGIS) and the FCT Administration.

It is important that all due diligence be consummated before any investment takes place. Thankfully, there exist layers of checks for the investors. In any case, care must be taken not to fall into any wrong hands in trying to do so.

In summary, Abuja real estate business has got something for everyone depending, of course, on the size of one's money bags and depth of their pockets. It is important that everyone should key into the business since housing is, ultimately, everyone's priority and, as they say, "the money is always better making more money than just lying in the volts of a faceless bank."

Ezechigbo (07055898380 WhatsApp, please) is a Real Estate Consultant based in Abuja.

The Inspiring Story of Madiba Nelson Mandela, the Man who Kept Hope Alive Even when Tomorrow was not Certain

By Finbar E. Aruwuonye

I do not know how to begin the story of a man who most of our genzees today will hardly reckon with. I am reminded of how one of Brazil's best at the Mundial in 1994, Romario, had the careless temerity to dismiss the opinions of the legendary Edward Dos Nascimento (Pele) on football merely because he, Romario, thought Pele was already outdated and was only fit for the museum! I need not tell you how the listening world had reacted to that statement by Romario, who I want to, particularly, note did not end the way he ought to have ended in the round leather game; especially against the consideration of his obvious immense football talents.

So, I run here the risk of remembering Madiba, especially when I know I have such a cosmopolitan audience of readers and followers most of whom are too young to remember anything about the Great Nelson Mandela of South Africa, the Man Who Lived for Tomorrow, which is actually the main title of this page and today's writeup. God, I was there at Robben Island and I saw firsthand the patch where Mandela lay as a bed and what his later mattress looked like.

Let's have the story at whatever costs!

LIVING FOR TOMORROW:

The Man Who Spent 27 Years in Prison Preparing for a Future He Could Not See
There are people who live for today because tomorrow is uncertain. And then there are those rare human beings who endure today precisely because they believe tomorrow can be better.

Nelson Mandela belonged to the second category.

In 1964, Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment by South Africa's apartheid government. He was 46 years old. The sentence was intended to remove him permanently from public life and bury his political influence behind prison walls.

He would spend the next 27 years in captivity.

For much of that period, Mandela lived under conditions designed to diminish the human spirit. He was confined on Robben Island, subjected to hard labour and separated from his family. His mother died while he was imprisoned. Later, his eldest son was killed in a car accident. Mandela was not permitted to attend either funeral.

Yet something remarkable happened behind those prison walls.

He refused to allow his future to be dictated by his circumstances.

Mandela studied. He read. He debated. He educated younger prisoners. He learned Afrikaans, the language of many of his political opponents, because he wanted to understand the people with whom he would eventually have to negotiate.

He was not merely waiting to be released.

He was preparing for the day after his release.

That distinction would eventually change history.

Outside prison, South Africa was changing. International pressure against apartheid intensified. The African National Congress remained a powerful symbol of resistance. The country became increasingly difficult to govern under the old system.

Then, on February 11, 1990, after 27 years behind bars, Mandela walked out of Victor Verster Prison as a free man.

The world expected bitterness.

Instead, it witnessed extraordinary restraint.

Mandela understood that revenge could destroy the very country for which he had sacrificed his freedom.

He, therefore, chose reconciliation.

In 1994, the man who had once been regarded by the apartheid state as a dangerous revolutionary became South Africa's first democratically elected Black President.

But perhaps the most remarkable part of Mandela's story was not his election.

It was what he did with victory.

He did not use power simply to punish those who had imprisoned him. He

worked toward building a South Africa in which former enemies could occupy the same political space.

His life demonstrated a profound truth:

Tomorrow is sometimes built by people who are willing to suffer today without knowing whether they will personally enjoy the fruits of their sacrifice.

Mandela could have emerged from prison consumed by the past. Instead, he emerged carrying a vision of the future.

He had spent 27 years losing time—and yet he had not wasted those years.

He had transformed imprisonment into preparation.

That is why the phrase “Living for Tomorrow” is more than an inspirational slogan when applied to Mandela's life. It is a description of a philosophy.

To live for tomorrow is to plant a tree whose shade you may never sit under.

It is to educate a child knowing that another generation may benefit more than you do.

It is to build an institution whose greatest achievements may come after you have left.

It is to forgive when revenge appears easier.

It is to keep preparing even

when circumstances offer little reason for hope.

And perhaps most importantly, it is to understand that the future belongs partly to those who are willing to sacrifice something in the present to make it possible.

Nelson Mandela spent 27 years behind bars. But prison could imprison his body without imprisoning his imagination.

When he finally walked into freedom, he did not walk out empty-handed.

He carried with him an idea of tomorrow.

And that idea helped change a nation.

Sometimes, the greatest way to live for tomorrow is to refuse to surrender today.

If this has made any impressions on your mind, keep a date with me in the next edition.

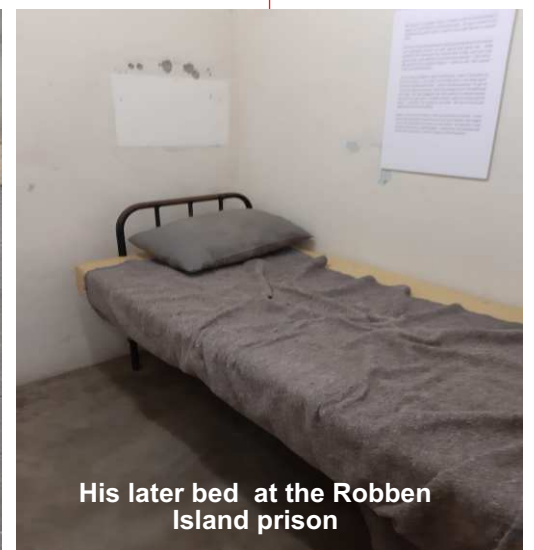
The goal here is to unveil a better you, one which will change the world for the best!



"Nelson Mandela is a universal symbol of freedom and reconciliation, an icon representing the triumph of the human spirit."



Mandela's first bed where he slept for years in prison



His later bed at the Robben Island prison

According to writer Brendan Brown on Science Blog,

Animals

Scientists painted black cows with white stripes to test whether zebra markings deter biting flies — and the painted cows drew 50 per cent fewer flies, adding weight to the theory that zebras evolved their colouring not for camouflage or heat, but as a living insect repellent

A simple experiment with paint suggests evolution's answer to one of biology's most enduring mysteries.

The Story That Reveals

Scientists painted black cows with white stripes to test whether zebra markings deter biting flies — and the painted cows drew 50 per cent fewer flies, adding weight to the theory that zebras evolved their colouring not for camouflage or heat, but as a living insect repellent.

For most of the history of evolutionary biology, nobody has really known why zebras have stripes.

This is not for lack of trying. The specific pattern is one of the most obviously puzzling features of any mammal on Earth — vivid, symmetrical, apparently costly to maintain, and completely useless for the sort of things stripes usually do in nature. Camouflage against savanna vegetation, the most intuitive explanation, does not work: zebras are actually strikingly visible at the distances at which lions and hyenas hunt them. So biologists have proposed alternative after alternative. Thermoregulation. Social recognition. Confusing predators during the chase.

One by one, most of these theories have quietly collapsed. And in 2019, a group of Japanese agricultural researchers painted six black cows with white stripes and pushed the last remaining serious candidate a step closer to being accepted.

The cow experiment

The study was led by Tomoki Kojima at the Aichi Agricultural Research Center in central Japan, and published in PLOS ONE in October 2019.

The design was clean. Six Japanese Black cows — a breed that is naturally uniformly dark — were assigned to three treatments using a Latin-square rotation: painted with black-and-white zebra stripes, painted with black-only stripes (to control for any effect of the paint itself), or left unpainted. The cows spent time in each treatment on natural pasture where biting flies were abundant. Researchers photographed the animals at regular intervals and counted the number of flies visible on their bodies in each image.

The results were direct. Cows in the zebra-stripe condition attracted approximately half as many biting flies as the same animals when unpainted or when painted with black-only stripes. The cows also showed substantially fewer fly-repelling behaviours — the head throws, ear beats, leg stamps, skin twitches, and tail flicks that cattle use to shake off biting insects. They were, measurably, being bothered less.

The specific paint pattern did the work. The stripes were doing something.

What the stripes are actually doing to the flies

The current best explanation for the effect involves the specific visual mechanics of how biting flies land.

Flies do not simply fly straight at a target. In the final approach, they rely on optical flow — the way visual patterns move across their compound eyes as they close in — to judge distance, speed, and the precise moment to slow down for landing. Uniform surfaces produce smooth optical flow. Striped surfaces produce something the fly's visual system cannot interpret cleanly. The alternating light and dark bands create false movement signals, disrupting the fly's ability to gauge how close it actually is to the surface.

The result is that flies approach striped surfaces at the wrong speed, often overshooting or bumping off without properly landing. Over the course of an afternoon in a fly-heavy pasture, this small optical mismatch adds up to a substantial reduction in successful landings.

None of this requires the fly to be repelled by the stripes in any active sense. It just requires the stripes to make landing physically harder.

What used to be believed

The insect-deterrent theory has taken decades to reach its current standing, because it has spent most of that time competing with three other serious explanations that biologists once found more plausible.

Camouflage was the obvious first guess — the idea that vertical stripes might

break up the zebra's outline against tall grass, or match the pattern of trees at dawn and dusk. It was tested repeatedly across the twentieth century. It did not survive. Zebra stripes do not reduce visibility to lions or hyenas at their normal hunting distances. At close range, zebras stand out even more against savanna vegetation than uniformly-coloured antelopes.

Thermoregulation was another leading candidate. Some researchers proposed that the alternating light and dark bands might set up small convection currents across the zebra's skin, cooling the animal in the sun. A 2018 study by Gabor Horvath and colleagues, published in Scientific Reports, tested this directly using metal barrels covered in different patterns. Zebra stripes did not cool the barrels. The thermoregulation theory is now widely considered unsupported.

Predator confusion — the idea that a herd of zebras in motion produces a visually chaotic pattern that makes it hard for a predator to pick out a single target — has held up somewhat better, but has been shown in controlled studies to have only modest effects.

Meanwhile, throughout the same period, evidence was accumulating for the insect-deterrent hypothesis. Tim Caro at the University of California Davis showed in 2014

that stripe patterns across equid species correlate strongly with the geographic distribution of biting flies. Species and subspecies of horses and zebras from fly-rich regions are more heavily striped than those from fly-poor regions. In 2019, Caro and colleagues put striped and plain coats on live horses and directly observed reduced biting-fly attacks on the striped coats.

The Japanese cow experiment was the next step. It tested the hypothesis on an animal that never evolved the pattern at all, and got the same result.

Why one experiment doesn't settle a theory

None of this means the zebra stripe question is now closed.

Evolution rarely produces features for a single reason. It is entirely possible that the ancestral zebra population had multiple selection pressures — flies, predators, heat management, social signalling — pushing in the same direction, and that the modern stripe pattern reflects the accumulated influence of all of them. Isolating one factor as the explanation is a specific kind of scientific overreach that most working evolutionary biologists are careful to avoid.

What the cow experiment does is make one specific claim more difficult to argue against. If painting stripes on a plain black animal halves the flies that land on it, then stripes have a demonstrable insect-deterrent effect that operates independently of anything else about the animal wearing them. Whatever else zebras evolved their stripes for — if anything else — the flies were probably part of it.

What is happening in a Japanese pasture right now

The Aichi Agricultural Research Center is currently exploring whether the practical technique can be scaled up.

The idea is not academic. Biting flies cause substantial losses in the global cattle industry, reducing weight gain in beef cattle and milk yields in dairy cows. Insecticide use to control them contributes to environmental contamination and drives resistance in fly populations. If painted stripes can reduce fly landings by 50 percent without any chemical involvement, the implications for animal welfare and pesticide reduction are genuine.

The team's original paint job wore off within a few days and had to be reapplied. Researchers are now working on longer-lasting formulations. Somewhere in central Japan, at any given moment, there is now a small pasture with several confused-looking cattle in poorly-drawn white stripes, quietly participating in an experiment that has, over the past decade, closed off most of the alternative theories about why zebras look the way they do.



Brandon R. Brown pursued doctoral training in superconductivity, with postdoctoral work in science communication

Scientists painted black cows with white stripes to test whether zebra markings deter biting flies — and the painted cows drew 50 per cent fewer flies, adding weight to the theory that zebras evolved their colouring not for camouflage or heat, but as a living insect repellent.

Prepared to Serve

Hon. Engr. Daniel “Dan” Osuegbu: Profiles in Competence

Hon. Engr. Daniel “Dan” Osuegbu is a distinguished Nigerian engineer, visionary technology leader, and serial entrepreneur with over 30 years of outstanding international experience in Electrical Engineering, Aerospace, Space Systems, medical devices, energy, and smart grid technologies. A proud son of Nigeria with deep roots in Imo State, he has consistently demonstrated exceptional competence, innovation, and commitment to national development through technology transfer, job creation, and social impact initiatives.

Education

Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Electrical Engineering, University of Kentucky, USA (1996).

Professional Career Highlights

Engr. Osuegbu began his career at Lexmark International (formerly IBM Printer Group), where he spearheaded advanced testing technologies for laser printers and toner cartridges still in use today. He progressed rapidly through the Medical Device sector:

Champion R&D Engineer at Philips Medical Systems, later promoted to Project Manager overseeing a \$50 million product line and leading a team of 15 Engineers.

Director of R&D at Johnson & Johnson, managing a \$100 million surgical instrument portfolio.

In Aerospace, he held strategic leadership positions, which include:

Program Director at Goodrich Aerospace, managing a \$3 million DoD contract for F-16 and F-22 Fighter Jet Engine Control Units.

Senior Program Director at Honeywell Combustion Division, advancing jet engine control and power systems.

Director of Flight Control Systems at Rockwell Collins, contributing to the Boeing 787 Dreamliner program and other platforms including Learjet, Gulfstream G450, and Northrop Grumman unmanned systems.

In Space Systems he was also:

Director of the COTS (Commercial Orbital Transport System) Program at Orbital Sciences Corporation, playing a key role in NASA test flights and satellite design.

Director for the OSAM-1 Autonomous Satellite Servicing Mission at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (Greenbelt, Maryland), contributing to this high-profile \$10 billion project focused on ground system electronics and satellite repair technology.

Key leadership role at True Anomaly (Long Beach, California), where he applied satellite design expertise to successful DoD surveillance satellite missions.

Entrepreneurship & National Impact (Nigeria-Focused)

Founder & CEO, ePower Solutions Inc. (USA) and ePower Solutions Africa Services Ltd (Nigeria) — Established as Nigeria's pioneering Smart Grid company. The firm developed theft-reduction smart metering solutions, installed systems worth millions of dollars, and holds proprietary smart meter management software. It continues to champion micro-grids and embedded power solutions to support Nigeria's 10,000 MW+ electricity generation target.

Co-Founder, Staff Group West Inc. — A leading US national engineering and technical recruiting firm that places approximately 2,000 Engineers annually.

Founder & Director, AfroOrbit — A forward-looking Nigerian space startup developing affordable satellite internet (“mini Starlink” model) and reusable rocket technology (NaijaFalcon) with planned

launch capabilities at Epe, Lagos. This initiative aims to bridge Nigeria's digital divide and position the country as a leader in African space technology.

Co-Founder, EmpowerUp Global (Non-Profit) — With his wife, launched free healthcare clinics in Imo State. The foundation successfully screened over 600 patients for hypertension, diabetes, and other conditions since its first clinic in 2017, with plans for broader national impact.

Vision for Nigeria

Engr. Osuegbu brings a rare blend of world-class technical expertise, proven leadership in high-stakes government and commercial programs (NASA, DoD, Boeing), and a passionate commitment to Nigeria's technological sovereignty.

He is dedicated to:

Accelerating digital infrastructure and broadband access.

Advancing indigenous space capabilities.

Strengthening power generation and smart grid systems.

Creating high-skill jobs for Nigerian youth.

Driving innovation, STEM education, and public-private partnerships.

A results-driven performer, innovator, and energy solutions expert, Hon. Engr. Dan Osuegbu is ready to serve Nigeria with integrity, excellence, and transformative impact in a Ministerial or any capacity — particularly in Science, Technology & Innovation, Communications & Digital Economy, Power, or Aviation/Space sectors. Please, meet Engr. Dan, as he is fondly called by colleagues, friends and family, he is prepared to serve.



**Engr. Daniel
"Dan"
Osuegbu
Electrical
and
Aerospace
Engineer**

Developing a Consistent National Doctrine on Hostage Situations in Nigeria

Why Nigeria needs one coordinated playbook for preventing abductions, managing crises and bringing victims home safely

By Nkem Anyata-Lafia

Few security challenges have tested Nigeria's resilience in recent years as severely as kidnapping and hostage-taking. From schoolchildren and teachers to farmers, travellers, community leaders and entire rural populations, Nigerians have increasingly found themselves vulnerable to groups that regard human beings as commodities for ransom, instruments of terror or tools of political pressure.

The scale of the problem makes one thing increasingly clear: Nigeria needs a consistent national doctrine for managing hostage situations.

Recent developments demonstrate both the seriousness of the challenge and the possibilities of a coordinated response.

Early this August, Nigerian security forces rescued at least 308 abducted persons from forests in north-central Nigeria in what President Bola Tinubu described as the country's largest single-day hostage recovery operation. The operation involved the military, police and counter-terrorism units.

The lesson is significant.

Hostage situations cannot be treated as ordinary criminal incidents. They require a carefully coordinated national response involving intelligence agencies, the armed forces, police, negotiators, medical personnel, prosecutors, financial investigators, state governments and, importantly, the families of victims.

Nigeria has already begun moving in this direction. The National Counter Terrorism Centre, under the Office of the National Security Adviser, established a Multi-Agency Anti-Kidnap Fusion Cell to improve intelligence-sharing and operational coordination among security and law-enforcement agencies.

But the country now needs to take the next step: developing a clearly defined National Hostage Management Doctrine.

Such a doctrine should establish who takes command when a hostage crisis occurs; how intelligence is gathered and shared; how families are supported; how communications with kidnappers are managed; when negotiations may be considered; when a rescue operation becomes necessary; and how victims are medically and psychologically rehabilitated after release.

It should also address the difficult question of ransom.

Families confronted with the possibility of losing a loved one understandably want to do whatever is necessary to secure that person's return. Government, however, must consider the wider consequences of ransom payments, including the possibility that they can finance organised criminal and terrorist networks. Nigeria's counter-kidnapping framework must, therefore, balance the immediate imperative of saving lives with the long-term objective of dismantling the kidnapping economy.

Equally important is prevention.

A national doctrine should not begin when a person has already been abducted. It should begin with intelligence-led identification of kidnapping networks, financial tracking, surveillance of known criminal routes, protection of vulnerable

communities and rapid intervention when warning signs emerge.

Nigeria's counter-terrorism architecture already embraces a coordinated, whole-of-government approach, while the NCTC's current strategic plan places emphasis on intelligence, operational coordination and stronger institutional frameworks.

The challenge is to translate these principles into a hostage-specific operational culture that is understood across the



security and emergency-response system.

Most importantly, the victims must remain at the centre.

A successful hostage policy should not end with the moment a captive walks out of a forest or rescue vehicle. Survivors may emerge traumatised, injured, malnourished and psychologically scarred. Their families may also require counselling, financial assistance and protection from further threats.

Nigeria, therefore, needs a doctrine built around one fundamental principle:

Every hostage is a Nigerian life to be recovered—not merely a security statistic.

A consistent national doctrine would provide commanders with clarity, families with confidence and security agencies with a common framework.

The ultimate objective should be a Nigeria in which kidnapping is not merely reacted to after it happens, but systematically prevented, disrupted and defeated.

The country has demonstrated that its security agencies can mount major rescue operations.

The next challenge is to ensure that every hostage crisis is met with the same level of coordination, professionalism, urgency and determination

Insecurity: Developing a National Strategy for Nigeria's Forests

From hiding places for criminals to protected assets for security, livelihoods and tourism

By Demian I. Igboke

For years, Nigeria's forests were largely discussed in the language of conservation.

They were repositories of biodiversity, sources of timber and non-timber products, homes to wildlife and potential destinations for tourists and researchers.

Today, another description has entered the national conversation:

Security territory.

Across parts of Nigeria, dense forests and difficult-to-access reserves have increasingly provided concealment for kidnappers, bandits and other armed groups. The challenge has become so serious that the country's forests can no longer be treated simply as environmental spaces. They have become part of the national security equation.

The scale of the challenge was dramatically illustrated in August 2026 when Nigerian security forces rescued more than 300 hostages from forested terrain around Kainji Lake National Park in what was described as the country's largest single-day hostage recovery operation. The operation involved the military, police and counter-terrorism units.

The development raises a fundamental question:

What should Nigeria's forests look like in the age of modern insecurity?

The answer may require the country to develop something it has never fully possessed—a comprehensive national forest security strategy.

THE FOREST SECURITY GAP

Nigeria already has institutions responsible for forestry. The Federal Ministry of Environment's Department of Forestry is mandated to advise government on forest conservation, utilization and renewal, support forest development and work with state forestry services, communities, civil society and the private sector. The Federal Ministry also identifies the development of a National Forest Policy as part of its responsibilities.

But environmental management and national security have traditionally operated in different institutional lanes.

That separation is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

A forest is simultaneously an ecological system, an economic resource, a community space and, potentially, a security environment.

If criminals can disappear into a forest after attacking a community, then the forest has become part of the operational geography of crime.

The security response must, therefore, understand the terrain just as well as the criminals do.

THE OYO WARNING

The kidnapping of more than 40 pupils, students and teachers from schools in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State in May 2026 brought the issue sharply into public consciousness.

In response, President Bola Tinubu approved the immediate recruitment of 1,000 forest guards for deployment across Oyo State's forest reserves.

The Federal Government said the measure was part of a broader strategy to strengthen internal security and combat criminal activities in forested areas.

The Oyo initiative is significant because it points towards a potentially important shift:

Nigeria may have to stop treating forest security as a peripheral responsibility and begin treating it as a core component of national security.

FROM FOREST GUARDS TO FOREST INTELLIGENCE

Recruiting forest guards can be useful.

But a modern national forest-security strategy cannot depend on manpower alone.

Nigeria needs intelligence.

It needs accurate mapping of forest reserves and difficult terrain.

It needs communication systems that work beyond urban centres.

It needs aerial surveillance, satellite imagery, drones and other appropriate technologies.

It needs trained personnel capable of distinguishing between legitimate forest users and criminal movements.

And, crucially, it needs intelligence from the communities living around the forests.

A farmer, hunter, forestry worker or village resident may notice unusual movements long before a security agency receives a formal report.

That makes local communities an important component of the national security architecture.

Nigeria's Defence Minister, General Christopher Musa, has already advocated a whole-of-society approach to national security, emphasizing collaboration among government institutions, the private sector and communities.

The principle applies particularly strongly to forest security.

THE CASE FOR A NATIONAL FOREST SECURITY GRID

Nigeria could consider establishing a national forest-security framework linking the Federal Government, states, security agencies, forestry authorities and local communities.

Such a system could involve:

1. A national digital forest map

Every major forest reserve, national park and high-risk woodland should be accurately mapped and classified according to accessibility, security risk, ecological importance and proximity to vulnerable communities.

2. Forest intelligence units

Specially trained personnel could combine environmental knowledge with security

intelligence to monitor high-risk areas.

3. Technology-enabled surveillance

Where appropriate, satellite imagery, drones, communications technology and other lawful surveillance tools could help identify unusual patterns of movement and support rescue operations.

4. Community intelligence networks

People living around forests should become partners in protecting them—not merely spectators to security operations.

5. Coordinated command

Military, police, intelligence, civil defence, forestry and state-level structures should have clearly defined responsibilities and mechanisms for sharing information.

6. Controlled access

Sensitive forest areas should have properly marked boundaries, access protocols and records of legitimate activities.

7. Rapid-response capability

When a kidnapping occurs near or inside a forest, authorities should have pre-planned routes, intelligence and specialist teams capable of responding quickly.

BUT SECURITY ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

There is a danger in approaching the forest exclusively as a battlefield.

Nigeria's forests are also economic and environmental assets.

They support communities.

They contain biodiversity.

They can generate employment.

They can support agriculture and sustainable forestry.

They can become tourism destinations.

The Federal Ministry of Environment's forestry vision is to bring 25 percent of Nigeria's total land area under

sustainably managed forest cover, while promoting environmental stability and socio-economic benefits.

Therefore, securing the forests should not mean abandoning their economic and environmental functions.

Quite the opposite.

The ultimate objective should be to make the forests productive, accessible where appropriate and safe.

TURNING HIDEOUTS INTO ECONOMIC ASSETS

There is another dimension to the problem that deserves greater attention.

The same forests that criminals exploit can potentially become sources of legitimate wealth.

Imagine properly secured forest reserves offering:

eco-tourism;

hiking and adventure tourism;

wildlife observation;

research;

sustainable forestry;

medicinal-plant development;

community enterprises;

carbon and climate-related projects.

Security would then become an enabler of development.

Instead of asking only how to remove criminals from forests, Nigeria could ask a larger question:

How do we return the forests to the people?

A NEW NATIONAL SECURITY DOCTRINE

Nigeria's 2026 Budget Speech already points towards a broader redesign of the country's security architecture. President Tinubu described a new counterterrorism doctrine centred on unified command, intelligence gathering, community stability and counter-insurgency, explicitly identifying forest-based armed groups among the threats to be targeted.

That provides an important policy foundation.

The next step could be to translate the principle into a dedicated National Forest Security Strategy.

Such a strategy should not belong to one ministry.

It should be jointly owned by security agencies, environmental authorities, state governments, traditional institutions, local communities and relevant private-sector stakeholders.

The strategy should also distinguish between forests that require intensive security intervention and those that primarily need conservation and environmental protection.

One size will not fit all.

THE KAINJI TEST

The recent Kainji Lake operation offers an important lesson.

If more than 300 hostages could be recovered from a heavily forested environment through coordinated military, police and counter-terrorism action, then Nigeria has demonstrated that complex forest operations are possible.

But rescue operations should not become the country's primary forest-security model.

The bigger objective must be prevention.

The question should be:

How can Nigeria make it increasingly difficult for criminal groups to establish, maintain and exploit forest sanctuaries in the first place?



Strange Bank Transfer: Atiku Cries Out

Abuja, Nigeria

Former Vice President of Nigeria and Presidential Candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in the 2027 General Elections, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, has raised the alarm over a suspicious credit alert into one of his private bank accounts domiciled with one of Nigeria's leading commercial banks.

Atiku has consequently alerted security Agencies about the incident, citing the need to protect his integrity, openness and honesty.

The Senior Special Assistant on Public Communication to Atiku Abubakar, Phrank Shaibu, disclosed this in a statement issued on Friday and made available to newsmen in Abuja.

Shaibu said the transfer originated from a person completely unknown to the former Vice President, with the narration, "Contribution Electioneering Campaign."

According to him, neither Atiku nor his campaign solicited, authorised or had any knowledge of the individual or entity behind the unauthorised payment.

"The circumstances surrounding the transfer are deeply troubling to His Excellency," the statement read, noting that the account is strictly private and its details are not in the public domain.

Shaibu questioned how unknown persons obtained the confidential banking details of a private citizen, warning that if the private banking information of a former Vice President and leading presidential candidate could be accessed and used for reasons yet unknown, then the financial privacy of no Nigerian is



safe.

He further raised the possibility that the confidential information may have been obtained through persons with privileged access, describing such an occurrence, if established, as "a grave abuse of power capable of exposing the account holder to kidnappers, terrorists, bandits, fraudsters and other criminal elements."

**Alhaji Atiku
Abubakar, Former
Vice President of
Nigeria**

Contnd from Pg 9

The Canadian Investment Expedition Led by Gbajabiamila, What is in It for Nigeria and the Host Nation?

technology, finance and investment. In Canada, this dual identity could become an economic advantage. For decades, Nigerians abroad have sent money home, supported families, built houses, established businesses and contributed to communities. But the next phase could be different.

The question is no longer simply: How much money can the Diaspora send home?

The bigger question is:

How much wealth can the Diaspora help create?

That distinction is enormous; remittances support households and investment creates enterprises. Enterprises create jobs. Jobs create incomes. And productive businesses create sustainable economic growth. This is the deeper philosophy behind the Toronto gathering.

Why Gbajabiamila's Mission Matters

The choice of President Tinubu's Chief of Staff to lead the delegation gives the conference an unmistakable political significance. This is not simply a commercial delegation.

It is economic diplomacy operating at the highest level. Gbajabiamila's presence sends a message to Canadian businesses and investors that the Nigerian government is prepared to engage seriously with questions of capital, investment and economic partnership. But there is another important dimension. The delegation includes State Governors.

That could prove crucial.

Investors ultimately do not invest in abstract countries. They invest in projects, businesses, locations and opportunities. A Canadian investor interested in agriculture wants to know where the farmland is. A mining company wants to know where the mineral deposits are. A technology company wants to know where the talent and infrastructure are. An infrastructure investor wants to know what project is available, what the

regulatory framework is and what returns can reasonably be expected.

The Governors, therefore, have a rare opportunity in Toronto. They can sell their States—not politically, but economically. They can present projects. They can identify opportunities. They can compete for capital.

And they can demonstrate that Nigeria's investment story does not end in Abuja, but extends into the States.

Canada's Search for Opportunity

Nigeria is not the only country with something to gain. Canada is increasingly looking beyond its traditional commercial relationships and strengthening economic engagement with Africa.

In 2025, Canada's two-way merchandise trade with Africa rose to approximately C\$18.7 billion, a 22.5 per cent increase over the previous year. Nigeria was among the African markets contributing to Canada's export growth. That is important. It suggests that the Canadian commercial interest in Africa is not theoretical. The market is already moving. Nigeria, therefore, arrives in Toronto at an interesting moment. Canada needs new markets and investment opportunities. Nigeria needs capital, technology and partnerships. The Nigerian Diaspora understands both environments. The pieces are already on the table.

What remains is to put them together.

Beyond Oil

Perhaps the greatest opportunity lies in changing what the two countries trade. Nigeria has spent decades exporting commodities while importing finished products. But a new economic relationship should be built around value chains. Imagine Canadian expertise helping Nigerian farmers move beyond exporting raw agricultural products into large-scale food processing. Imagine Canadian mining technology contributing to the responsible development of Nigeria's solid minerals.

Contnd On Pg 42

Peter Obi @ 65: The Enduring Legacies of a Leader Who Chose to be Selfless

By Great Imo Jonathan

By way of sensible comparison and for the sake of the 2027 general elections in Nigeria with special regards to the Nigerian presidency, Tinubu goons have continuously lied that he built lagos. But they did not tell you that he did not build a single major bridge in lagos out of the 204 bridges in that commercial nerve-centre of our country. But, peter obi, without an iota of noise, quietly built about 28 bridges in anambra out of the less than 40 in the state.

It is time to know more about peter obi from the standpoint of the above emphasized truth.

Let me start by saying that none of those who have become president or governor from 1999 till date was as rich as peter obi by 1999. Tinubu could not even come near. I challenge his cronies to show us records of his businesses and bank balances before his foray into politics. It is public knowledge that politics made many of our so-called nigerian leaders like tinubu, nyeso wike and dave umahi, all of who now talk tough against peter obi, who had arisen to the billionaires circle long before entering politics. Without mincing words, obi has always been way above their class and real pay grade outside politics.

Here's a breakdown of 100 verifiable areas of peter obi's achievements, split into private sector and governorship. I have grouped them by categories and cited sources.

1. Private Sector and Business Achievements before Government

Banking & Finance

1. Youngest Chairman of a Nigerian bank: Became Chairman and highest shareholder of Fidelity Bank Plc at age 34 in 1994.
2. Moved Fidelity from Tier-3 to Tier-2: Led Fidelity Bank to Tier-2 status by 2000.
3. Set blueprint for Fidelity's IPO: Laid groundwork for Fidelity Bank to go public in 2005.
4. 17 years of consistent dividends: Fidelity paid dividends to shareholders for 17 consecutive years under his early leadership.
5. No CBN bailout: Fidelity never required a Central Bank bailout during economic recessions.
6. Fidelity became Tier-1 bank: Helped position Fidelity among Nigeria's Tier-1 banks alongside First Bank, UBA, Zenith.
7. Chairman, Guardian Express Mortgage Bank Ltd.
8. Chairman, Future Views Securities Ltd.
9. Chairman, Paymaster Nigeria Plc.
10. Director, Guardian Express Bank Plc.
11. Director, Chams Nigeria Plc.
12. Director, Emerging Capital Ltd.
13. Director, Card Centre Plc.
14. Chairman, Board of Securities and Exchange Commission [SEC].

Trade & Manufacturing

15. CEO, Next Nigeria International Ltd in the 1990s.
16. Founder, Next Cash and Carry: Built one of Nigeria's largest indigenous retail malls.
17. Expanded Next International to UK: Opened branches in the UK by 1995.
18. Next International UK revenue: Retail business generating over £85m annually.
19. Import franchise business: Headed a market management company that imported Heinz Salad Cream, Ovaltine, South African Breweries into Nigeria.
20. Chairman, Next International Nigeria Ltd: Leading international manufacturer and marketer of leather products.

Professional Memberships & Roles

21. Member, Nigerian Economic Summit Group [NESG].
22. Member, Nigerian Chartered Institute of Bankers.
23. Member, British Institute of Directors.
24. Member, Commonwealth Business Council [CBC].
25. Member, West African Business Committee [WABC].
26. Member, British Nigerian Business Council [BNBC].
27. Member, Nigerian-South African Chamber of Commerce [NSACC].

2. Achievements as Governor of Anambra State [2006-2014]

A. Rule of Law, Law & Order, Discipline in Government

28. Reduced cost of governance: Cut ministries from 37 to 20 and merged parastatals to reduce duplication.
29. Cut overhead costs: Reduced official cars and banned sirens for officials except in emergencies.
30. Direct engagement with projects: Personally engaged with development partners from inception to delivery.

31. Transparency with donor funds: Met benchmarks for transparency, accountability, and faithful use of donor funds.

32. Peer review participation: Anambra was first state to undergo national peer review via State Peer Review Mechanism with DFID.
33. Discipline in payments: No teacher, civil servant, pensioner, or contractor owed gratuity, pension, salary, or certificate as of Dec 2013.

B. Educational Development

34. Returned 1040 primary schools to original mission owners [Catholic/Anglican].
35. N6 billion grant to missions to maintain returned schools.
36. Funded rehabilitation of schools until they met standards.
37. Improved education standards: Became known for improving standards across the state.
38. Vocational & technical education priority: Established Anambra State Technical and Vocational Education Board [ASTVEB].
39. Renovated technical colleges and vocational training centers.
40. Best Governor on Education award: Awarded by National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria in 2014.
41. Paid for NECO exam fees for 148 inmates across correctional centers.

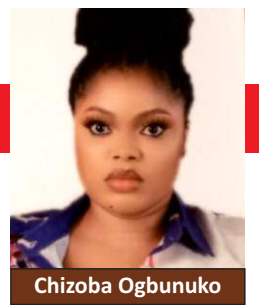
42. Donated to schools: N10m to College of Health Technology Nnewi, N5m to Vocational Academy Ozubulu.
43. Advocated education for inmates.
44. Kenneth Dike Library construction.
45. Developed Igbariam Campus of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu University with faculty buildings, roads, electrification.

C. Health

46. Established ASHIS: Anambra State Health Insurance Scheme for affordable healthcare.
47. Free maternal & child healthcare services.
48. Constructed healthcare facilities across the state.
49. Accreditation of health institutions: 12+ institutions



"Let me start by saying that none of those who have become president or governor from 1999 till date was as rich as peter obi by 1999"



Chizoba Ogbunuko

RANDOM THOUGHTS AND CELEBRITYGISTS

This month again we are taking a greater dive into what's trending in the world of leisure and free time. It is the Big Brother Naija Season and, I tell you, things are gradually hitting up. But I will spare you feelers from there today and allow things to get hotter. You know what I mean...tea is better served hottest! Just let the lips and the mouth do the magic of cooling, temperature reduction strategy, if you like. It is usually part of the fun, you know. So, let's check out what's in and out for us today, folks. Funke Akindele-she no dey rest?-has got something really new as we shall see soon.

Funke Akindele Returns With "The Four"

Nigeria's box-office queen, Funke Akindele, is back with another major cinematic project—and this time, she is bringing an impressive collection of Nollywood stars with her.

The actress, filmmaker and producer has unveiled the cast of her forthcoming movie, *The Four: No One Fights Alone*, which is scheduled to hit Nigerian cinemas on December 11, 2026.

The announcement has already generated considerable interest among Nigerian movie lovers, coming from a filmmaker whose recent productions have established her as one of the industry's strongest commercial forces.

Beyond the glamour of another celebrity-filled Nollywood production, *The Four* is also another indication of how Nigeria's film industry continues to expand its ambition, audience and commercial reach.

For Akindele, the new project represents another opportunity to combine entertainment with the kind of large-scale production that has made her one of Nigeria's most recognisable screen personalities.

As anticipation builds toward December, the big question is whether *The Four* will reproduce the box-office magic associated with some of Akindele's previous productions.

For Nigerian cinema audiences, the answer will come when the lights go down and the film begins.

Until then, Funke Akindele has once again given Nollywood something to talk about.

December 11 is sure a date with the former running-mate to former PDP's Lagos State guber candidate. Bravo, sis...the Ministry, as they say, is moving forward. She sure knows her game no matter what anyone may say.

2BABA, ANNIE AND NATASHA: WHEN PRIVATE LOVE BECOMES PUBLIC THEATRE

Like we say it here in Nigeria: Wonders shall never end!

Nigeria's celebrity relationship saga takes another turn this week as social media, old memories and new alliances keep fans guessing

Few Nigerian celebrity stories have travelled through as many emotional chapters as the relationship saga involving Innocent

"2Baba" Idibia, his former wife Annie Macaulay-Idibia and Natasha Osawaru.

Just when many Nigerians appeared to have moved on from the drama, the story has found another chapter—this time on social media.

Recent reports say 2Baba unfollowed Natasha and re-followed Annie on Instagram, a development that immediately triggered speculation among fans and entertainment watchers.

Then Annie entered the conversation again.

Her latest social-media appearance generated fresh speculation about whether the former couple could possibly be heading towards some form of reconciliation—or whether Nigerians were simply reading too much meaning into an ordinary celebrity post.

That question is at the heart of the Nigerian celebrity culture.

How much of what celebrities post is actually meant for the public—and how much does the public simply imagine?

The Social Media Courtroom

In the old days, celebrity relationships were discussed mainly through magazines, radio and television.

Today, Instagram, TikTok, X and other platforms have changed everything.

A single follow can become news.

An unfollow can become a headline.

A photograph can trigger thousands of theories.

And silence can sometimes generate more speculation than a statement.

The 2Baba-Annie-Natasha story demonstrates how celebrity relationships now exist simultaneously in two worlds: the private world inhabited by the people involved and the public world constructed by millions of online observers.

The difficulty is that the two worlds do not always tell the same story. Until next edition, let's see where this story goes. But I bet you, wherever the story goes I will follow it for your reading pleasure.

For now, nice folks, it's ciao from me, **Trending Treasure**



The 2Baba-Annie-Natasha story demonstrates how celebrity relationships now exist simultaneously in two worlds: the private world inhabited by the people involved and the public world constructed by millions of online observers.

Contnd from pg 26

The New Axis Of Power: Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan Build a New Defence Front

South Asia.

Other countries could also become interested.

And that is where the agreement could evolve from a trilateral pact into a wider regional security architecture.

The R4 Connection

There is already a broader diplomatic framework linking Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt, sometimes referred to as the R4 grouping.

The four countries have been exploring cooperation on regional security and other strategic issues.

The new defence pact could, therefore, be viewed not as an isolated development but as part of a gradual process of institutionalising cooperation among influential Muslim-majority states.

That is why the agreement deserves more attention than its three signatures might initially suggest.

It may represent the beginning of something rather than the completion of something.

What Does This Mean for NATO?

The obvious question is whether the new pact challenges NATO.

The short answer is: not directly.

Türkiye remains a NATO member.

Its participation in the Mecca agreement does not mean that Ankara is leaving NATO or replacing its Western security commitments.

Instead, Türkiye appears to be pursuing what might be described as strategic diversification.

It can remain inside NATO while simultaneously developing security partnerships with countries outside the alliance.

That reflects a broader feature of contemporary international politics.

Countries increasingly want multiple strategic options.

The age in which states were expected to belong neatly to one geopolitical camp is giving way to a more complicated world of overlapping partnerships.

Türkiye is particularly well positioned to exploit this environment.

A New Kind of Muslim Security Architecture?

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has gone further, calling for a NATO-like military alliance among Muslim countries and arguing that such a framework should not become an exclusive club.

Whether that vision becomes reality is another matter.

The Muslim world is not a single geopolitical bloc.

Its countries have different alliances, rivalries, economic interests and security priorities.

Saudi Arabia has its own relationship with the United States.

Türkiye remains a NATO member.

Pakistan maintains important relations with China, the United States and the Gulf states.

Egypt has its own regional calculations.

Iran, despite being a major Muslim-majority state, follows a distinctly different strategic path.

Creating a broad Islamic military alliance would, therefore, be enormously more complicated than signing a three-country defence agreement.

The Mecca pact may be the beginning of such a conversation.

It is certainly not yet the end of it.

India Will Be Watching

There is another country for which this development carries particular significance:

India.

Pakistan's membership means that any future crisis involving Pakistan and India would inevitably raise questions about

how the new collective-defence commitment might operate.

That does not mean Türkiye or Saudi Arabia would automatically enter a conflict involving Pakistan.

The agreement does not provide such a simple automatic-war mechanism.

But the strategic calculation in New Delhi will certainly take the new arrangement into account.

Türkiye has already developed close defence ties with Pakistan.

Saudi Arabia, however, also maintains important relations with India.

This is precisely why the pact is more complicated than the phrase "Islamic NATO" suggests.

Its members have interests that overlap—but do not perfectly coincide.

The China Factor

China also has a role in the background.

Pakistan is one of Beijing's closest strategic partners.

Saudi Arabia has developed increasingly important economic and diplomatic relations with China.

Türkiye, too, maintains economic relations with Beijing while seeking strategic autonomy.

The new pact, therefore, sits within a much larger transformation of international power.

The emerging world order is no longer characterised solely by Western alliances on one side and rival blocs on the other.

Instead, countries are building networks of overlapping partnerships.

A country can be a NATO member, cooperate with China, deepen ties with Gulf states and maintain relations with Russia—all at the same time.

This is the new complexity of global diplomacy.

What Could the Pact Actually Do?

For the agreement to become more than a political declaration, institutions will matter.

The countries have agreed to establish mechanisms for regular meetings among their foreign and defence leaderships and a permanent Secretariat in Saudi Arabia.

The practical agenda could eventually include:

intelligence sharing;

joint military exercises;

defence-industrial cooperation;

counterterrorism;

maritime security;

air-defence coordination;

military technology cooperation;

cyber defence;

border security; and

coordinated responses to external threats.

The effectiveness of the pact will ultimately be measured not by the ceremony in Mecca but by what happens in the years ahead.

Can the three militaries actually coordinate?

Can intelligence be shared efficiently?

Can defence industries cooperate?

Can political differences be managed?

And, most importantly, would the three governments actually provide meaningful assistance if one were attacked?

Those questions remain unanswered.

Why Africa Should Pay Attention

For African countries, the development is not merely another Middle Eastern story.

Africa is already experiencing a major transformation in its

security environment.

From the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, African security is increasingly interconnected with developments in the Middle East.

Türkiye has become an important defence partner for several African countries.

Saudi Arabia is expanding its economic and diplomatic footprint across Africa.

Pakistan has historical military and diplomatic relationships with several African states.

A stronger trilateral security arrangement could, therefore, eventually influence defence cooperation, arms markets, maritime security and diplomatic alignments beyond the immediate region.

For Nigeria, Africa's largest democracy and a country with longstanding ambitions for continental leadership, the development deserves close observation.

Nigeria has traditionally advocated multilateralism, African solidarity and strategic autonomy.

The emergence of new security blocs raises an important question for Abuja:

Will Africa increasingly respond to global insecurity through continental arrangements—or will African states increasingly seek external strategic partnerships individually?

The answer could shape the future of African security.

A Pact Born in an Age of Uncertainty

Perhaps the most revealing feature of the Mecca agreement is what it says about the times in which we live.

Countries no longer assume that yesterday's security arrangements will automatically protect them tomorrow.

They are hedging.

They are diversifying.

They are building alternative partnerships.

They are investing in domestic defence industries.

And they are searching for collective mechanisms that give them greater strategic room.

Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan have now taken one of the most visible steps in that direction.

Whether the Mecca pact becomes a durable regional alliance or remains a limited trilateral arrangement will depend on what happens next.

But one thing is already clear.

A new security conversation has begun.

The agreement has connected three strategically important countries across three regions.

It has introduced a collective-defence principle comparable, in technical terms, to NATO's Article 5.

It may eventually expand to include Egypt and possibly others.

And it has demonstrated that the architecture of global security is becoming increasingly multipolar.

The world is not necessarily moving toward another Cold War.

It may be moving toward something more complicated:

a world of overlapping alliances, flexible partnerships and competing security networks.

The Mecca pact is one of the clearest new signs of that emerging order.

And for the rest of the world—from Washington to Beijing, New Delhi to Cairo, Moscow to Abuja—the question is no longer whether the global security map is changing.

It is.

The question now is:

Who else will redraw it?

Gbajabiamila: Celebrating an Astute Leader @ 64

On June 25, 2026, Rt. Hon. Oluwafemi Hakeem Gbajabiamila, Chief of Staff to Mr. President and Speaker of the 9th House of Representatives, celebrated his 64th birthday anniversary.

As usual, friends from across the world took out time to celebrate one they call Leader, Mentor, Boss and Egbon.

A lawyer by profession, who spent over two decades at the Green Chamber of the National Assembly through which he was at different times Minority Leader, Majority Leader and later Speaker, Gbaja, as he is fondly called by close associates and admirers, is a man of many parts, who came prepared

for leadership and service, and as it is, he has seen it all.

Here is to better years ahead from all of us in the house here at Attractions International Monthly (AIM) Magazine and Attractions Media Ltd.



Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, Chief of Staff to Nigeria's President

Cheers to The Multiple Queen Herself, Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu who ascended the 59th Ladder Recently



Amb. Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu!

For the House of Attractions it was an opportunity to send great should-outs to the Queen of Many Hearts and Professions, as the doyen of Nigeria's diplomatic service, Amb. Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu!

The widow of the legendary Igbo Leader (Eze-Igbo Gburugburu), Chief Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu (Ikemba, Dike Di Ora Mma) and daughter of former Anambra State Governor, Chief Onoh, turned 59 years old on August 5, 2026.

The occasion was for many an opportunity to

celebrate a woman whose families on all sides and herself have been a source of joy and life's progress for so many across the world.

In fact, for Amb. Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu life is a fairy tale that she merely represents its living form, and she is living it well...rising from her High Commissioner days in Ghana to an Ambassadorial seat in Spain and from where she returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, first, as Minister of State and now substantive Minister.

Keeping flying high Queen, the world has got your back!

Congratulations from all of us here. You certainly make us feel good about who we are everyday....

For Sen. Lindsey Graham it was time to say goodbye to America and the world just two days after he celebrated his 71st birthday

The renowned US lawmaker and lawyer passed away in Washington on July 11, 2026 after what was described as a brief illness. He was born on July 9, 1955.

As a repository of experience and leadership wealth, the world will surely miss the South Carolina Senator, who was first elected to the United States Senate in 2003 and has kept coming

since.

Our prayers are with his family in these trying times. We pray for comfort and peace for his close family and for all those he left behind.

Jorge Messi Bids the World Farewell

Emotions have continued to pour out from across the world for a man who gave football and the world the gift of one of the round-leather game's greatest attacking midfielder, Lionel Messi.

Jorge Messi passed away on August 7, 2026, at 68 in his hometown of Rosario in Argentina after a long battle with illness.

For the younger Messi, who is gradually keeping behind the sad memories of a World Cup he wished to have won back-to-back he lost a father, confidant, manager and friend.

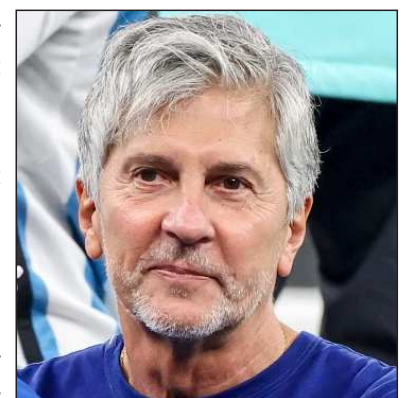
It was Jorge Messi, the steel company manager, who first took his 13-year-old son to sign his first, second and subsequent football contracts starting from Barcelona, Spain.

Stories abound of how the older Messi managed his son's career with an eye for lasting success. At a time, and for a long time at that, Jorge Messi was said to have continued to offer growth hormone therapies to his son to make him grow bigger....

In any case, Lionel despite his almost petite stature has shown football and the watching world that he came prepared for the limelight....

We offer our heartfelt commiseration to a man and family that have contributed to our joys and excitement and even money, for some, every week these past many years.

May Pa Jorge Messi's kind soul find rest in the bosom of Abraham, Amen.



Jorge Messi

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The Canadian Investment Expedition...

Imagine Canadian investors partnering Nigerian technology companies to develop solutions for African markets.

Imagine Nigerian businesses using Canadian financial and professional networks to expand into North America.

Imagine universities, hospitals, technology firms and research institutions building long-term partnerships.

All of the above possibilities are different kinds of relationships.

They are no longer simply Nigeria selling to Canada and Canada selling to Nigeria.

It becomes Nigeria and Canada creating together a partnership for mutual benefits, progress and development in line with the truest forms of economic diplomacy.

The Solid Minerals Question

Few areas demonstrate this potential more clearly than mining.

Nigeria possesses substantial mineral resources, yet the country has historically struggled to convert its geological wealth into broad-based industrial prosperity.

Canada, meanwhile, has deep experience in mining, mineral exploration, engineering, financing and resource development.

The convergence is obvious. The opportunity is not merely to extract minerals. It is to build value chains around them.

Exploration. Processing. Manufacturing. Technology. Logistics. Research.

Jobs and the rest of them!

If Canadian expertise and capital can be combined with Nigerian resources and markets, the result could be significantly more valuable than simply exporting minerals in their raw form.

The Investment Test

But Toronto will ultimately not be judged by speeches. It will be judged by what happens after everyone goes home. That is the real test.

Will memoranda become contracts?

Will contracts become factories?

Will factories employ Nigerians?

Will Canadian companies establish long-term operations in Nigeria?

Will Nigerian companies gain access to Canadian markets?

Will Diaspora professionals become investors?

Will State governments turn presentations into bankable projects?

Will investment actually move? All the above are the questions that matter. This is because Nigeria has attended many conferences around the world. What the country needs now is not another conference that ends with applause. It needs transactions that begin with applause and end with production.

The Reform Imperative

There is, however, another side to the investment conversation. Nigeria cannot simply ask investors to come. It must make them want to stay.

Capital seeks certainty. Investors want predictable regulations, efficient institutions, reliable infrastructure, transparent processes, access to foreign exchange, security of investment and confidence that agreements will be respected. The more Nigeria improves these fundamentals, the stronger its case becomes. The Toronto conference should, therefore, not only be an opportunity to sell Nigeria to Canada.

It should also be an opportunity for Nigeria to listen.

What do Canadian investors need?

What barriers prevent investment?

Which sectors are most attractive?

What reforms would make Nigeria more competitive?

A successful investment conference should be ideally a two-way conversation. And no one expects anything less in the upcoming engagement.

A New Role for Nigerians Abroad

There is perhaps no more compelling image from this entire story than that of the Nigerian Diaspora.

For years, Nigerians abroad have been described primarily as migrants,

professionals, students or remittance senders.

The next chapter may require a different description: economic partners.

The Nigerian in Toronto who runs a technology company can become a bridge to Lagos. The Nigerian engineer in Alberta can connect Canadian expertise to Nigerian infrastructure projects. The Nigerian doctor in Ontario can help build healthcare partnerships. The Nigerian financial professional can help connect Nigerian businesses to global capital. The Nigerian entrepreneur can become a channel through which Nigerian products reach international consumers. This is the untapped power of the Diaspora. It is not simply money. It is knowledge, networks, credibility and access.

The Toronto Moment

When Femi Gbajabiamila and the Nigerian delegation arrive in Toronto, they will, therefore, be carrying more than official documents and investment proposals. They will be carrying a proposition. A proposition that says Nigeria is ready to move from an economy primarily defined by what it exports to one increasingly defined by what it can produce, innovate and build.

A proposition that says the Nigerian Diaspora can become an active participant in national development.

A proposition that says Canada can do more than trade with Nigeria.

It can invest in Nigeria. Partner with Nigeria. Build with Nigeria. And grow with Nigeria.

The stakes are significant

Nigeria's merchandise trade with Canada has already reached C\$2.9 billion.

Canadian portfolio investment in Nigeria stood at about C\$590 million in 2024, while Canadian direct investment, though much smaller, rose significantly during the same year. These numbers are not the destination.

They are the beginning.

And Then Comes the Day After

Perhaps the most important day of NIDEC 2026 will not be August 12, 13, 14 or 15. It will be August 16. The day after the conference.

That is when the cameras will go away. When the delegates will fly home. When the speeches will end. And when the real work begins. The work of following up investors. The work of removing bureaucratic obstacles. The work of structuring projects. The work of signing agreements. The work of building factories. The work of creating jobs. The work of converting relationships into businesses.

That is where Nigeria's Toronto story will ultimately be written. Because the true measure of diplomacy is not always found in communiqués. Sometimes it is found in factories. Sometimes in jobs. Sometimes in technology.

Sometimes in a young entrepreneur who receives capital to expand a business.

And sometimes in two countries discovering that what separates them geographically can actually connect them economically. In these scenarios lies the import of this Toronto Story.

THE ROAD FROM TORONTO

Nigeria and Canada have spent more than six decades building a diplomatic relationship.

The next six decades could be about building an economic partnership.

The foundation exists.

The markets exist.

The people exist.

The Diaspora exists.

The capital exists.

The opportunity exists.

What is required now is execution.

If Nigeria can combine its market, resources and entrepreneurial energy with Canada's capital, technology and expertise—and if the Nigerian Diaspora can serve as the bridge—the Toronto conference could become remembered not as another international gathering, but as the moment Nigeria and Canada began writing a new economic story together.

The real destination is not Toronto.

The real destination is shared prosperity.

The Man Lightning Could Not Kill

Seven times, lightning struck the same man. Seven times, he survived

There are some stories that sound so unbelievable that the first instinct is to dismiss them as fiction.

The story of Roy Cleveland Sullivan is one of them.

Sullivan was an American park ranger in Virginia, United States. Over a period of about 35 years, lightning struck him seven separate times—and he survived every one of them.

His extraordinary encounters with lightning began in 1942 while he was working at Shenandoah National Park.

A watchtower was struck by lightning and caught fire. As Sullivan fled the burning structure, another bolt struck him in the leg. He survived, although he lost the nail on his big toe.

For most people, one such experience would be enough to make them terrified of thunderstorms for the rest of their lives.

But Sullivan's story was only beginning.

In July 1969, lightning struck him again—this time while he was driving his truck. The electrical charge knocked him unconscious, singed his eyebrows and damaged his wristwatch.

A year later, in July 1970, lightning found him again while he was in his garden. His left shoulder was badly seared.

Then came April 1972.

Sullivan was inside a park guardhouse when lightning struck. The bolt set his hair on fire.

But somehow, he survived.

In August 1973, lightning struck him yet again while he was driving. Once more, his hair caught fire and his legs were injured.

By then, Sullivan had acquired a nickname that sounded almost like a joke: “Spark Ranger.”

The sixth strike came in June 1976 while he was out walking. Lightning injured his ankle and burned his hair.

Then, on June 25, 1977, came the seventh and final recorded strike.

Sullivan was fishing from a boat when lightning struck him. This time, he suffered burns to his chest and stomach.

Seven strikes.

Seven survivals.

The odds were so extraordinary that Sullivan eventually became recognized by Guinness World Records as the person who had survived the most lightning strikes.

And there was an almost comic twist to the story.

Sullivan's wife was also struck by lightning while hanging clothes in their backyard.

Sullivan happened to be nearby helping her—but, remarkably, he escaped that particular strike unharmed.

After the seventh strike in 1977, the lightning apparently stopped pursuing him.

Sullivan lived for another six years and died in 1983 at the age of 71.

His extraordinary story remains officially documented by Guinness World Records and the U.S. National Park Service. The National Park Service itself describes Sullivan as the ranger who was struck by lightning seven times over four decades—and lived through every strike.



Roy Sullivan, a Virginia national park ranger

Three Days In The Dark: The Nigerian Man Who Refused To Die



He was trapped inside a sunken tugboat, nearly 100 feet beneath the Atlantic. His 11 colleagues were dead. Then rescuers heard something that should have been impossible—a human being was still alive. At first, there was nothing. Just darkness. Then, somewhere inside the wreckage of a sunken tugboat lying on the floor of the Atlantic Ocean, a pair of terrified eyes opened. Harrison Okene was alive. It was May 26, 2013, and Okene, a 29-year-old Nigerian cook, had been working aboard the Jascon-4, a tugboat involved in operations off the coast of Nigeria. The vessel suddenly capsized and sank. Okene had been in the bathroom when disaster struck. Within moments, the boat was swallowed by the ocean. His colleagues had little chance. Eleven crew members died.

But Okene was not among them. In the chaos, he managed to escape the bathroom and found his way into another part of the vessel. There, by extraordinary chance, he discovered a pocket of air trapped inside the wreck.

He was approximately 30 metres (nearly 100 feet) below the surface.

There was no light.

No food.

No fresh air supply.

No way of knowing whether anyone knew he was alive.

And around him was the silent evidence of the disaster: the bodies of his colleagues.

oxygen inside his tiny refuge would run out.

Meanwhile, a search-and-rescue operation was under way.

Divers eventually reached the wreck.

One of them was a commercial diver who entered the sunken vessel looking for bodies.

Then something extraordinary happened.

The diver's camera captured movement.

At first, the rescuer appeared to believe he was looking at a corpse.

But the “dead man” suddenly moved.

It was Harrison.

Alive.

The rescue footage, later released publicly, shows the astonishing moment the diver discovered Okene. The rescuer reached toward him, and Okene grabbed his hand.

The diver's reaction was one of disbelief.

He had expected to find bodies.

Instead, he had found a survivor.

But rescuing Okene was not as simple as pulling him out.

He had been trapped deep underwater for approximately three days. Bringing someone rapidly to the surface from such a depth could be fatal because of the effects of pressure and decompression.

The rescuers, therefore, had to place him inside a diving bell and gradually bring him through a controlled decompression process.

When Drake Bets, Should Football Worry?

By Ariri Fintan Ariri

Sure, the World Cup may have come and gone, but the stories and anxiety the Mundial generated will keep reverberating for a long while.

Take the story of the celebrity, Drake, and his betting passion. Attention to this kind of passion can only be globally seen when celebrity, superstition and millions of dollars collide on the football pitch as we have seen lately.

Football has always been about more than 22 players chasing a ball.

It is about passion. Identity. National pride. Hope.

And, increasingly, money.

Few sporting events demonstrate this better than the FIFA World Cup, where billions of dollars move around sponsorships, broadcasting rights, merchandising, tourism—and betting.

But during the 2026 World Cup, another kind of football economy captured global attention.

It involved one of the world's biggest music stars, millions of dollars and a curious phenomenon that football fans have come to call the “Drake Curse.”

The story begins with Aubrey Drake Graham, the Canadian rapper better known simply as Drake.

For years, Drake has become notorious for publicly betting large sums of money on sporting events. Whenever he backs a team or athlete, social media often erupts—not necessarily in support of his chosen side, but in anticipation of what fans jokingly expect to happen next.

A defeat.

The theory is simple: if Drake supports you, be afraid.

It is, of course, superstition rather than science.

But football is a sport in which superstition has always had a comfortable home.

Players have lucky boots. Supporters have lucky shirts. Coaches have rituals. Fans sit in the same seats and repeat the same routines because they believe, somehow, that their behaviour might influence what happens on the pitch.

Drake's betting history has simply given that superstition a celebrity face.

THE \$1.5 MILLION WORLD CUP BET

The latest chapter arrived at the climax of the 2026 World Cup.

Drake backed Argentina to win the final against Spain, reportedly placing a \$1.5 million bet on Argentina to win in normal or extra time.

Argentina lost.

Spain won the World Cup after a 1–0 victory in extra time.

And Drake's million-dollar prediction disappeared with the final whistle.

According to a compilation of his publicly reported football bets, his World Cup adventure was a mixture of wins and painful losses. His earlier football bets included a \$770,000 wager on Canada to defeat South Africa, which reportedly produced a \$231,000 profit. But his \$1 million wager on Argentina to defeat France in regulation time in the 2022 World Cup final lost, as Argentina eventually prevailed on penalties.

Then came 2026.

Another Argentina bet.

Another defeat.

Another feast for the internet.

WHEN A BET BECOMES A GLOBAL STORY

What makes the Drake phenomenon interesting is not simply the money.

It is the culture surrounding the money.

A conventional football bettor loses a bet and perhaps tells a few friends.

Drake loses a bet and millions of people around the world discuss it.

His celebrity transforms a private financial decision into public entertainment.

His bets become social-media events. His choices are analysed. Memes appear. Fans joke about betting against whichever team he supports.

The result is an extraordinary situation in which a football match can have two simultaneous contests: the contest on the pitch—and the contest in the betting market.

For some spectators, the question is no longer only, “Who will win?”

It becomes:

“Who did Drake bet on?”

BUT IS THERE REALLY A DRAKE CURSE?

Probably not.

At least, there is no scientific evidence that a Canadian rapper's betting habits can influence the outcome of a football match thousands of kilometres away.

Football is governed by players, tactics, fitness, mistakes, refereeing decisions, luck and thousands of other variables.

The “curse” survives because humans are naturally good at finding patterns.

When a famous person repeatedly associates himself with losing teams, people remember the failures more vividly than the successes.

That is how superstition grows.

And Drake himself has previously pushed back against the idea.

He has pointed out, humorously, that the supposed curse cannot explain everything—for example, the Toronto Raptors won the NBA championship in 2019 despite his high-profile association with the team.

Still, facts have never been particularly effective at killing a good football superstition.

THE BUSINESS BEHIND THE BETS

There is another dimension to the Drake betting story that deserves attention.

Modern sports betting is no longer confined to betting shops.

It lives on smartphones, social media and celebrity endorsements.

A famous personality can turn a wager into content.

A screenshot of a bet can generate headlines.

A loss can produce memes.

A win can generate even more publicity.

That makes celebrity betting part of a much larger commercial ecosystem.

For football, this is both an opportunity and a challenge.

Betting companies gain visibility.

Fans become more engaged with matches.



But the growing normalisation of gambling also raises questions about how young supporters perceive betting and whether entertainment is gradually being confused with financial risk.

Drake's story, therefore, belongs to more than the sports pages.

It belongs to the conversation about celebrity influence, digital culture and the enormous business surrounding modern football.

FOOTBALL'S MOST POWERFUL CURRENCY: HOPE

Perhaps this is why betting has become so deeply connected with football.

Every match begins with uncertainty.

Nobody knows exactly what will happen.

That uncertainty is the game's magic—and the bettor's temptation.

A supporter believes his team will win.

The bettor turns that belief into money.

The bookmaker turns uncertainty into odds.

And the celebrity turns the wager into entertainment.

The World Cup magnifies all of it.

For one month, the world watches the same matches, debates the same players and dreams the same dreams.

Millions celebrate.

Millions suffer.

And somewhere in the background, fortunes are won and lost on predictions that can collapse with one goal.

THE DRAKE LESSON

The Drake betting saga may ultimately be remembered as one of football's great curiosities rather than a serious sporting phenomenon.

But it tells us something important about the modern game.

Football is no longer only about what happens for 90 minutes—or 120 minutes—on a pitch.

It is also about what happens on phones, betting platforms, social media feeds and celebrity accounts before, during and after the match.

And perhaps the greatest irony of the Drake story is this:

The rapper may have lost millions on football bets.

Super Falcons Bow Out of Wafcon After Cameroon Defeat

Nigeria's Super Falcons finally crashed out of the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations after losing 1–0 to Cameroon in a fiercely contested quarter-final in Casablanca last week. It was a sad end of a team that had given its most ardent admirers several reasons for real heartaches from the beginning of that tournament.

The defending champions had entered the knockout stage with renewed confidence following a hard-fought 1–0 victory over Zambia and an emphatic 6–2 demolition of Egypt. All of these had lent everyone a new hope that the Nigeria's multiple queens of football had found their feet again.

But against the Indomitable Lionesses, the Falcons were unable to convert their opportunities, as Cameroon secured the decisive goal and ended Nigeria's title defence.

The defeat also means Nigeria will not automatically qualify for the 2027 FIFA

Women's World Cup through the WAFCON semi-finals.

Coach Justin Madugu has taken responsibility for the setback, apologising to Nigerians and acknowledging the team's shortcomings in the crucial encounter.

Despite the disappointment, the Super Falcons remain Africa's most successful women's national team, with a record ten continental titles.

For Nigeria, attention now turns to rebuilding, learning from the campaign and preparing a new generation of Falcons capable of restoring the country's dominance on the African stage.



Before The Kick-off: The New Faces Rewriting Nigerian Football

A peep into the big signings, emerging stars and ambitious transfers ahead of the 2026/27 NPFL season

There is always a moment in football when the old season has finally disappeared into history, but the new one is yet to reveal its secrets.

That is the moment when clubs begin to rebuild.

New coaches arrive with new ideas. Established players move in search of fresh challenges.

Young talents suddenly find themselves carrying the hopes of ambitious clubs.

And supporters begin to ask the question that dominates every pre-season:

Who have we signed?

As the 2026/27 Nigeria Premier Football League season approaches, that question is already generating excitement across the country.

The transfer window has opened, clubs are strengthening their squads and the league's 20 teams are preparing for another long campaign. The first transfer

window runs from July 15 to September 14, with clubs expected to complete player documentation and registration requirements ahead of the season.

This is, therefore, not merely a period of player movement.

It is the beginning of another battle for supremacy.

THE BUSINESS OF BUILDING A TEAM

Football clubs rarely recruit players simply because they are available.

Behind every signing is a calculation.

A striker may be recruited because a club needs goals.

A midfielder may be brought in to provide creativity.

A defender may be signed because last season exposed weaknesses at the back.

And sometimes, a player arrives because a coach believes he can become the difference between finishing fifth and qualifying for continental football.

This is why the transfer window is often a season within a season.

The matches have not started, but clubs are already competing.

The winners of the transfer market will eventually be judged on the pitch.

KATSINA UNITED'S EXPERIENCE AND LEADERSHIP

One of the notable early moves has been Katsina United's acquisition of former Akwa United captain Ubong Essien, popularly known as Kante.

The experienced player joined Katsina United ahead of the 2026/27 campaign, bringing leadership and familiarity with the demands of top-flight Nigerian football.

For a club preparing for another demanding season, such a signing can represent more than simply adding another name to the squad.

It is about experience.

A player who has already worn the captain's armband can provide something that statistics cannot always measure—the ability to organise, encourage and influence younger teammates when matches become difficult.

KWARA UNITED: A TEAM BEING REBUILT

Kwara United has also signalled its intention to reshape its squad.

Head coach Ashifat Suleiman disclosed that the club planned to recruit about 10 new players, while retaining 20 members of the previous squad.

That suggests a deliberate attempt to achieve balance rather than completely dismantle the existing team.

The strategy is understandable.

Kwara United survived relegation last season after finishing 16th.

The new campaign, therefore, presents the club with a simple objective: avoid another relegation battle and build a team capable of competing higher up the table.

The new signings will have to prove whether recruitment can translate into results.

BENDEL INSURANCE AND THE QUEST FOR A BIGGER SEASON

Bendel Insurance enters the new campaign with a different kind of pressure.

The Benin-based club finished fifth last season with 56 points—three points short of the top three places that would have provided a route to continental football.

Coach Kennedy Boboye has made no secret of his desire for improvement.

As preparations began, the coach indicated that new faces were expected and challenged his players to deliver better performances in the coming season.

For Insurance, therefore, recruitment is not simply about survival.

It is about closing the gap.

A club that came close to the continental places now has to ask whether the right additions can provide the extra quality required to move into the top three.

THE NEWCOMERS ARE ALSO SHOPPING

The transfer activity is not restricted to established NPFL clubs.

The 2026/27 league welcomes four newly promoted teams—Sporting Lagos, Inter Lagos, Doma United and Ranchers Bees.

Their arrival adds another layer of intrigue to the transfer market.

Newly promoted clubs know that the NPFL is a different proposition from the lower division.

They require stronger squads, greater depth and players capable of coping with the intensity and pressure of top-flight football.

The league has already held an orientation programme for the four clubs, stressing issues including club licensing, infrastructure, financial health and contractual obligations.

For these newcomers, recruitment could determine whether promotion becomes a permanent achievement or a one-season adventure.

THE YOUNG AND THE HUNGRY

Perhaps the most exciting part of every Nigerian transfer window is not necessarily the famous name.

It is the relatively unknown player who arrives quietly and leaves the season as a star.

Nigeria has an extraordinary reservoir of young footballing talent.

Across academies, grassroots competitions and lower divisions are players waiting for the opportunity to announce themselves.

Some of them will be signed for modest sums.

Some will begin the season on the bench.





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