

Edo, Dangote Cement strengthen partnership for sustainable growth

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

OKPELLA

The Edo State Government and Dangote Cement Plc have renewed their commitment to deeper collaboration

aimed at driving sustainable economic growth in the state.

This followed a strategic business meeting held at the company's expansive cement factory in Okpella, which brought together officials from the Edo State Investment Promotion Office

(ESIPO) and the management of Dangote Cement.

The meeting was part of Governor Monday Okpebholo's broader vision to foster industrial development and strengthen the state's investment climate.

Leading the government delegation, the Managing Director of ESIPO, Hon. Amen Odigie, reaffirmed the administration's resolve to support existing businesses through dedicated after-care services.

He praised Dangote Cement's contributions to job creation, infrastructure, and local development, describing the company as a key player in Edo's economic landscape. Odigie said the purpose of the visit was not merely ceremonial, but a practical step towards listening, understanding the company's operational

realities, and identifying new areas for collaboration. He stressed that under the leadership of Governor Okpebholo, the state was taking deliberate steps to build a more

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...that the people may know

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Okpebholo raises Edo workers' minimum wage to N75,000

● **Reaffirms commitment to welfare** ● **As Labour rejects N70,000 minimum wage, demands withdrawal of 'insensitive' tax bill**

RICHARD EWEKA WITH AGENCY REPORT

In a significant gesture to commemorate this year's Workers' Day, Governor

Monday Okpebholo of Edo State has announced an upward review of the minimum wage for workers in the state from N70,000 to N75,000.

The governor made the declaration during the May Day celebrations held at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin City.

Addressing a crowd of civil servants and labour leaders, Governor Okpebholo described the

wage increase as a concrete step towards improving the living conditions of workers and reaffirmed his administration's unwavering commitment to their welfare.

"Today, I am proud to announce that our administration has approved a new minimum wage of N75,000 per month for Edo workers," the governor said, drawing applause from attendees.

"It's our way of saying thank you to the workforce for your resilience, hard work, and support as we strive to build a better Edo."

The revised minimum wage places Edo State at the forefront of states actively responding to the economic challenges faced by workers amidst nationwide calls for improved remuneration.

The announcement comes as inflation and cost-of-living pressures continue to mount across the country.

Governor Okpebholo highlighted a series of policy actions undertaken within his first six months in office, including the regularization of over 1,000 casual cleaners into the civil service, the recruitment of 500 teachers, and ongoing efforts to absorb over 3,000 casual teachers.

He also noted the hiring of 450 medical personnel and the regularization of 126 contract staff at the Edo State Specialist Hospital.

In the judicial sector, delayed judicial appointments were resolved, while in the education

sector, outstanding salary arrears owed to staff of the Edo State Polytechnic have been cleared.

The governor further revealed that his administration has approved health insurance coverage for retired civil servants, asserting that "our responsibility to workers doesn't end at retirement."

Speaking at the event, the acting chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) in Edo State, Comrade Bernard Egwekhide, lauded the governor's swift interventions, noting that workers had already begun to feel the positive impact of his administration.

He praised the wage increase and described the current gov-

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MAY DAY CELEBRATION:

Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, acknowledging cheers from workers, during the May Day celebration at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium, Benin City.

CBEX resumes operations despite SEC ban, N1.2tn EFCC probe

Despite the alleged N1.2tn digital trading fraud that reportedly affected over 600,000 Nigerians, the embattled Crypto Bridge Exchange trading platform, accused of these acts, has resumed operations, announcing fresh withdrawal options in a move to restore investor confidence.

Two traders on the CBEX platform confirmed on Wednesday that the digital trading firm has quietly resumed operations, allowing new users to register, trade, and withdraw profits, despite ongoing investigations by regulatory agencies.

According to the sources, an insurance verification process and an external audit of the company's financial records are currently underway to ascertain the actual amount lost in the scheme, which collapsed in April.

They added that existing investors, many of whom have been unable to access their funds for weeks, will be able to take out their funds starting from June 25, 2025, when the audit is expected to be concluded by an insurance firm based in the United Kingdom.

This development comes barely weeks after the Securities

and Exchange Commission declared the platform illegal, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission confirmed an ongoing investigation into the firm's operations.

CBEX, a digital investment platform, offered investors 100 per cent profit after 30 days of purported AI trading. The trading platform started operations in 2024 after receiving registration approval from the Corporate Affairs Commission on September 25, 2024, and the EFCC's Special Control Unit

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Edo govt partners BUA on plant expansion, security boost

● Moves to tackle cable theft, unify tax regime

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

In a move to reinforce industrial growth and investor confidence, the Edo State Government has opened strategic talks with BUA Cement PLC to address security lapses, multiple taxation, and support the expansion of its Okpella plant.

The high-level engagement, led by the Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO), signals Governor Monday Okpebholo's renewed focus on job creation and economic revival through public-private collaboration.

The ESIPO team, led by Managing Director Hon. Amen Odigie, visited BUA's sprawling facility in Okpella, Etsako East LGA,

where they toured the plant and held detailed business discussions with senior management, including Plant Director Engr. Ahmed Idris.

Idris briefed the delegation on the plant's capacity, noting that it currently runs three production lines with a combined output of 9 million metric tons annually. A fourth line is under construction. He added that the Okpella facility is about 20% larger than BUA's operations in Sokoto, making Edo a vital hub for the company's national output.

However, Idris outlined several challenges affecting operations. Chief among them are recurring cable theft and vandalism, which not only disrupt production but have also led to loss of life.

The company also raised concerns about unpredictable and overlapping tax demands from various state ministries and agencies.

Despite these obstacles, BUA Cement reaffirmed its commitment to Edo State and its host communities.

It highlighted significant contributions, including the construction of a 3.7km concrete road, pro-

vision of transformers, boreholes, streetlights, and extensive educational support through scholarships and school renovations.

Notably, 60% of the company's 1,013 direct employees and a large segment of its 5,000–10,000 indirect workforce are drawn from local communities, reinforcing its role as a key employer and development partner.

In response to national eco-

nomie pressures, BUA has also made major investments in power and logistics.

It currently generates 160 megawatts from two on-site power plants and operates a fleet of over 1,200 trucks, ensuring energy and transport independence.

The company defended current cement prices, stating that margins remain low due to high production costs, especially dollar-priced gas from NNPC and naira devaluation impacts.

Hon. Odigie commended BUA's commitment and assured the company of the government's support. He said the visit forms part of a wider investor aftercare strategy to understand business needs and facilitate long-term growth.

"BUA Cement is a pillar of industrial progress in Edo," he said. "Governor Okpebholo remains committed to creating a stable, secure, and investor-friendly environment."

Edo, Dangote Cement strengthen...

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business-friendly environment through improved infrastructure, streamlined regulatory processes, and enhanced security.

In response, the Plant Director of Dangote Cement, Engr. Mohammed Ismael, a veteran with nearly four decades of experience in the industry, expressed appreciation for the state's engagement but highlighted some of the pressing challenges facing the company.

Chief among them was the poor condition of the 7.5-kilometre access road connecting the plant to the main highway, which has severely hampered logistics.

He also drew attention to ongoing security concerns, recalling a past incident in which ten staff members were kidnapped, and called for stronger collaboration with government authorities to address these issues.

Beyond the challenges, the meeting opened up discussions on new opportunities for mutual benefit.

Engr. Ismael pointed to the high stripping ratio of the company's limestone mining operations, which results in the generation of 1.5 tonnes of granite waste for every tonne of limestone extracted.

He proposed attracting investors who could convert this granite waste into usable products such as construction materials, granite tiles, and housing components—an initiative that could create new jobs and generate revenue for the state.

He also appealed for government assistance in identifying new limestone reserves to ensure the long-term sustainability of the plant.

The company used the occasion to reaffirm its commitment to local development through its Community Development Agreement, signed in July last year. Under the agreement, Dangote Cement allocates millions of naira annually for community initiatives, including scholarships for students in secondary and tertiary institutions.

CBEX resumes operations despite...

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Against Money Laundering on January 16, 2025.

No fewer than 600,000 Nigerians reportedly invested in the scheme and lost N1.2tn after it collapsed on April 14, 2025.

Miffed by the development, the EFCC declared eight persons wanted for promoting the program. They include Johnson Oteno, Israel Mbaluka, Joseph Michiro, Serah Michiro, Adewora Olanipekun, Adewora Oluwanisola, Emmanuel Uko, and Seyi Oloyede.

On Monday, Adewora Abiodun, a prominent leader and trader on the platform, voluntarily surrendered himself to the anti-graft agency for interrogation.

Other regulatory agencies, such as the SEC, also condemned the operations of the suspected Ponzi scheme, warning Nigerians to exercise extreme caution and steer clear of investment platforms that offer unrealistic returns under the guise of digital trading.

However, in defiance of regulatory warnings, fresh findings

revealed that more Nigerians are still being lured by promises of quick profits, with new users flocking to the platform in hopes of cashing in on its resumed operations.

One of the sources told one of our correspondents in confidence due to lack of authorisation to speak on the matter, that withdrawal options on the CBEX platform had been reactivated, noting that while new accounts could process withdrawals, funds from older accounts—allegedly wiped—remained inaccessible for now.

The trader noted that the platform is making efforts to clear its name of any allegations of fraud or any association as a Ponzi scheme.

The source said, "People can now withdraw from the CBEX platform. The withdrawal option has been activated. Let me explain the withdrawal. The old account was wiped; you can't take out funds from it yet. On the 14th of this month, the Artificial Intelligence on the platform traded 100 per cent, lost its trade, and wiped people's money out."



2025 MAY DAY CELEBRATION:

L-R: Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo; his deputy, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, with Speaker, Edo State House of Assembly, during the 2025 May Day celebration at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium, Benin City.

PHOTO: MOSES OBOH.

Retract sexual harassment allegation against Akpabio, Agbakoba tells Natasha

Former President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) and Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Olisa Agbakoba, has called on suspended senator representing Kogi Central, Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, to retract her sexual harassment allegation against Senate President Godswill Akpabio, describing it as "clearly false and unsubstantiated."

Agbakoba, who is lead counsel to the Senate President, issued a second formal letter dated April 22, 2025, after an earlier request on April 14 reportedly went unacknowledged by the embattled senator.

The development was disclosed

at a press conference held in Lagos.

According to the senior lawyer, Akpoti-Uduaghan failed to provide clarity on what he termed "significant contradictions" in her allegations, particularly concerning her alleged harassment on December 8, 2023 and her subsequent praise of Akpabio the following day on social media.

"In our first letter, dated 14 April 2025, we requested that you clarify contradictions in your sexual harassment allegation against our client, Senator Godswill Akpabio," Agbakoba stated.

"Of note is the contradiction as to timeline and dates. You have failed to clarify your allegation of

8 December 2023 and your exaltation of Senator Akpabio on Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) on 9 December 2023 — the very next day. Rather than explain, you deleted the social media post, which to us is extremely concerning."

Agbakoba also questioned the timing of Akpoti-Uduaghan's public accusation, noting the over 14-month delay between the alleged incident and her public revelation on February 28, 2025.

"You claim the harassment occurred on 8 December 2023, but your allegation was not made until 28 February 2025 — one year and two months later."

"During this period, you were

seen with Senator Akpabio at several legislative and non-legislative functions, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union session in Geneva on 24 and 25 March 2024, where you took selfies and group photos with him, which were posted warmly on your social media pages," he said.

Presenting screenshots of such posts, Agbakoba said the contradiction undermined the credibility of her claims.

"In light of this and your failure to clarify inconsistencies raised in our first letter, we demand that you retract your sexual harassment allegation against our client," he added.

Okpebholo raises Edo workers' minimum wage...

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ernment as exceeding expectations in just six months.

The event was attended by key political and administrative figures, including the Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa; Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Rt Hon Blessing Agbebaku; and the Head of Service, Anthony Okungbowa, among others.

The wage review is expected to take effect immediately, placing Edo among the few states leading with a progressive pay structure amidst national deliberations on a new federal minimum wage.

Meanwhile, amid nationwide

May Day celebrations, the organised labour has firmly rejected the N70,000 minimum wage, insisting it is grossly inadequate in light of Nigeria's worsening economic conditions.

State chapters of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) described the current wage as meaningless against the backdrop of unrelenting inflation, skyrocketing prices, and harsh fiscal policies.

Labour leaders across the country said that, contrary to President Bola Tinubu's earlier promise to pay a "living wage," the reality for most Nigerian workers had deteriorated sharply under his administration.

They argued that the government's removal of fuel subsidies and the continued devaluation of the naira had plunged workers into deeper economic distress.

The Chairman of the Bayelsa State Trade Union Congress (TUC), Comrade Julius Laye, declared that the recent wage adjustment had been wiped out by taxation, high tariffs, and hyperinflation. "Even N70,000 cannot cover basic healthcare."

While government officials fly abroad for treatment, the Nigerian worker is left to suffer," he said, lamenting that workers were now worse off than ever.

In Ebonyi State, both the NLC and TUC chairmen, Prof. Oguogu Egwu and Comrade Igwe

Chidi, described the cost-of-living crisis as unprecedented, urging a constitutional review of the minimum wage.

Egwu said, "Every Nigerian worker's face tells the story of multi-dimensional poverty," while Chidi added that N70,000 no longer had real purchasing power in the market.

TUC Chairman in Niger State, Ibrahim Gana, echoed the sentiment, stating, "You collect your salary as if you didn't. It vanishes under the weight of inflation, electricity tariffs, and rising transport costs."

He squarely blamed the Tinubu administration for the hard-

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Edo Assembly raises alarm over renewed cult killings

KEN ABU

The Edo State House of Assembly has expressed alarm over a fresh surge in cult-related killings across the state, calling for urgent enforcement of the anti-cultism law to tackle the growing threat.

Raising the matter under public importance during plenary, Hon. Bright Iyamu (APC, Orhionmwon South) decried the rising death toll from an ongoing and violent cult war spreading across Edo commu-

nities.

He cited Section 4 of the Secret Cult and Similar Activities (Prohibition) Law 2025, which clearly bans secret cults and proscribes cult-related activities within the state.

Describing cultism as a destructive social vice claiming the lives of many young people, Hon. Iyamu revealed that a medical doctor was recently killed at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital in a suspected cult-related attack.

“Just last Friday, a man was gunned down in GRA, Benin

City, in yet another cult-related incident. These disturbing cases are no longer isolated. They are occurring with increasing frequency across the state,” he said.

He warned that the rise in cult violence has left residents living in fear and uncertainty, unsure of what tragedy may strike next.

In a motion adopted by the House, Iyamu called on the state government, the police, and all relevant security agencies to implement strict measures to stem the tide of cult

killings and related crimes.

He urged community youths and local vigilante groups to actively assist in identifying and exposing cultists, so that perpetrators can be brought to justice under the provisions of the law.

Iyamu also appealed for collaboration between the government and the media to raise public awareness about the anti-cultism legislation and its implications.

Several lawmakers who contributed to the debate urged the government to fully enforce

the law by ensuring prompt arrests, diligent prosecution, and appropriate punishment of those found guilty.

Speaker Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku ordered that clean copies of the resolution be forwarded to relevant authorities for immediate action.

Meanwhile, the House

passed a bill for the establishment of the Edo State Public-Private Partnership to promote infrastructure and service development.

Also passed was a bill to establish the Edo State School of Nursing, Health Science, and Technology in Uromi under the new 2025 law.

Vigilante member shoots Ogwashi-Uku Poly student, CP vows justice

AJUWA VICTOR

The Delta State Commissioner of Police, CP Olufemi Abaniwonda, has ordered the immediate arrest and investigation of one Ike Peter, a member of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria over the fatal shooting of a student of Ogwashi-Uku Polytechnic.

According to the Police Public Relations Officer, SP Bright Edafe, the suspect allegedly shot and killed 29-year-old Peter Eyorowalebo, a student of Ogwashi-Uku Polytechnic, while he was studying in his room.

The tragic incident occurred on Wednesday, 30th April 2025, at approximately 9:30 a.m. Following a distress call, officers from the Ogwashi-Uku Division swiftly arrived at the scene and found the victim in a pool of blood.

The student was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he was confirmed dead by medical personnel. His remains have been deposited at the mortuary for an autopsy.

The suspect, Ike Peter, was immediately apprehended and has been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department for a thorough probe, on the orders of the Commissioner of Police.

The CP has tasked the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of the SCID with leading the investigation and ensuring justice is served.

While consoling the bereaved family and the entire student community of the Polytechnic, CP Abaniwonda urged calm, assuring them that no effort would be spared in uncovering the truth and delivering justice.



FACILITY TOUR:

The Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO) team led by the Managing Director, Hon. Amen Odigie (middle), with key management team of BUA Cement PLC, Okpella, led by BUA Cement's Plant Director, Engr. Ahmed Idris, in a group photograph, during the facility tour and crucial business meeting recently at Okpella, Edo State.

Oborevwoi mourns passing of Gen. Paul Omu

AJUWA VICTOR

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwoi, has expressed profound sorrow over the death of elder statesman and retired military officer, General Paul Ufuoma Omu, describing his passing as a monumental loss to both Delta State and Nigeria.

In a condolence statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Sir Festus Ahon, the Gov-

ernor paid tribute to the late General Omu, whom he described as a patriotic Nigerian, an honourable military figure, and a revered community leader who served with integrity.

Governor Oborevwoi extended heartfelt condolences to the Omu family, the Ig-bide Kingdom, and the Isoko nation, noting that General Omu's contributions to national unity—especially as Military Governor of the former South-Eastern State and in

other national roles—remain deeply etched in the country's history.

“General Paul Omu was a man of discipline, wisdom, and character. His life and legacy left a lasting impact on generations of Deltans and Nigerians,” the Governor said.

He added, “On behalf of the Government and people of Delta State, I commiserate with his dear wife, Senator Stella Omu, the entire Omu family of Ig-bide Kingdom, and

the Isoko people.”

“While we grieve his passing, we also celebrate a life wholly committed to the service of God, nation, and humanity.”

Governor Oborevwoi encouraged the Omu family, the people of Ig-bide in Isoko South Local Government Area, and all Deltans to find solace in the late General's enduring legacy of service and sacrifice.

He prayed for the peaceful repose of his soul.

Okpebholo raises Edo workers'...

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ship, accusing it of failing to prioritise workers' interests.

In Rivers State, NLC Chairman Alex Agwanwor insisted that the current wage must be immediately reviewed. “Despite salary adjustments, workers are still battling for survival.

Inflation is eroding everything,” he said. His counterpart in Imo State, Comrade Chigamezu Nwigwe, pointed out that workers were struggling with growing bills, despite government assurances of a better deal.

Across several other states, including Oyo, Edo, Lagos, Ogun, Benue, Kwara, and Kwara, labour leaders painted a grim picture, the organized labour complained about job insecurity, the high cost of living, and the collapse of essential services such as healthcare, education, and transportation.

Oyo NLC Chairman, Kayode Martins, noted that Nigerian workers had effectively dropped below the middle class, with their standard of living now worse than their peers in other African countries.

In Lagos, NLC Chairperson Funmi Sessi criticised the lack of action on the part of the government, saying, “Prices keep rising, and nothing is being done to ease the pain.” In Ogun, TUC boss Akeem

Lasisi said the wage increase had made little impact on work-

ers' lives due to persistent economic pressures.

Despite these grievances, Senate President Godswill Akpabio struck a conciliatory tone.

In a statement marking Workers' Day, he pledged that the National Assembly would remain committed to labour-friendly legislation and would work with the Executive to ensure no worker was victimised for demanding their rights.

“We will not shirk our responsibility to work together ... to create opportunities for growth and prosperity,” he stated.

Speaking in Abuja, during the 2025 May Day celebration in Abuja on Thursday, the President, Trade Union Congress (TUC), Mr Festus Osifo, said that the organised labour is against the proposed tax bills by the Federal Government because it imposes heavy burdens on workers' meagre allowances.

Osifo criticised the bills for “disproportionately targeting workers while sparing the wealthy and corporate elites.”

He expressed strong opposition to the bill by the Federal Government, describing it as “anti-worker.”

“The tax proposals were drafted without the involvement of workers. They impose heavy burdens on our meagre allowances—housing, transport, and even medical benefits, yet fail to promote a progressive taxation system that ensures the rich pay their fair share,” he said.

Reps salute workers, pledges support for welfare, dignity

JOY ODOR

The House of Representatives has commended Nigerian workers on the occasion of International Workers' Day, hailing their resilience, sacrifice, and contribution to national development.

Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, described workers as key partners in progress and praised the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) for their critical role in sustaining the country's economy.

In a statement issued in Abuja on Thursday by the House Spokesman, Rep. Akin Rotimi Jr., the 10th National Assembly reiterated its recognition of the invaluable contributions of Nigerian workers across various sectors—ranging from public service and agriculture to technology, education, health, and the informal economy.

Speaker Abbas urged workers to remain committed and patriotic, stressing that the advancement of the nation depends on the collective effort and productivity of its citizens. “The labour of our workers

fuels the machinery of governance, drives national productivity, and anchors social stability—even in the face of daunting economic challenges,” he said.

He also emphasised that Nigerian workers deserve improved welfare and praised labour unions for their constructive engagement with the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on issues affecting workers' welfare.

In his own message, Chairman of the House Committee on Labour, Employment, and Productivity, Rep. Adegboyega Adefarati, paid glowing tribute

to the sacrifices and patriotism of Nigerian workers.

“Today, we celebrate the silent sacrifices, enduring hope, and unwavering resolve of Nigerian workers in the service of our country,” he said.

He urged all citizens to renew their respect for honest labour and shared national responsibility.

“The House of Representatives remains committed to legislating for a Nigeria where every worker earns a decent living, is treated with dignity, and contributes to a prosperous and inclusive future,” he added.

NEWS

Kingship: My reinstatement reaffirms honour of traditional institution —Danesi

LAMAI CASSIUS

The reinstated Aidonogie of South Ibie, Alhaji Kelvin Danesi, has said that

his return to the throne by the Edo State Government has restored the honour of the traditional institution and demonstrated the government's

commitment to peace, equity, justice, and the rule of law.

Alhaji Danesi made this known during a press conference at his palace in South Ibie, Etsako West Local Government Area, following the announcement of his reinstatement as the rightful traditional ruler of the kingdom.

He expressed appreciation to the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for issuing the resolution which clearly affirmed that the throne

of the Aidonogie of South Ibie was never vacant, thereby confirming his reinstatement.

"This act has not only restored the dignity of our traditional institution but has also reaffirmed the government's commitment to peace, equity, justice, and the rule of law," he stated.

The Aidonogie praised the patience, maturity, and steadfast support of the people of South Ibie during what he described as a challenging period.

"I accept this responsibility with gratitude and a solemn pledge to serve all our people with wisdom, fairness, justice, and courage.

"As we celebrate the triumph of truth over falsehood, I reiterate our loyalty and support for the developmental agenda of Governor Monday Okpebholo and his strong commitment to the rule of law," Danesi added.

He also urged residents to ensure that South Ibie does not become a haven for crim-

inal activities, stressing that the kingdom would not tolerate cultism or kidnapping.

"Anyone who allows their property to be used for such criminal purposes must be prepared to face the full weight of the law.

"We therefore call on landlords, parents, community leaders, and the youth to take this warning seriously.

"We must work together to rid our communities of these vices," he declared.

BTC rejects attempt to recast Igbanke origins, warns against historical distortion

The Benin Traditional Council (BTC) has strongly criticised attempts by certain individuals it described as "self-styled elements parading themselves as Igbanke representatives" to alter the historical narrative of the Igbanke people within the context of Benin heritage and their ties to the Oba of Benin.

In a statement endorsed by seven senior Palace Chiefs, the BTC cautioned the Igbanke community against falling prey to what it termed "needless acts of infamy" driven by misinformation and divisive agendas.

The Council dismissed as false and misleading the assertion that the Igbanke people are of Igbo origin, particularly as such claims lack any clear ancestral links to established Igbo communities.

"It is therefore important to set the record straight and unequivocally

affirm that the Igbanke people have ancestral ties to Benin.

"Over time, their language and cultural expressions may have been influenced by their geographical position and interactions with neighbouring ethnic groups, especially the Ika-speaking communities in Delta State," the statement read.

BTC further emphasised that the Igbanke are historically and genealogically part of the Benin kingdom, noting that their forebears have long paid homage to the Oba of Benin, under whose traditional authority their communities fall.

The Council urged the general public and security agencies to be alert to the activities of those promoting what it described as a dangerous falsehood, warning that such claims could incite unnecessary tension and threaten public order.

Kanu's trial: DSS submits Radio Biafra devices in court

The terrorism and treason trial of the leader of the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu, opened on Tuesday before the Federal High Court in Abuja with the prosecution tendering several exhibits, including Radio Biafra equipment.

At the trial, Kanu maintained that he is not a violent person as alleged by the Federal Government.

Instead, he claimed that his fight is solely for the emancipation of the people in the South-East, South-South, and parts of Benue and Kogi states.

Kanu made the statement in a written document submitted to the Department of State Services on October 15, 2015, in Lagos.

The statement was read aloud in open court during the resumed hearing of his terrorism trial.

Kanu is facing seven counts of terrorism brought against him by the Federal Government.

He was first arrested on October 14, 2015, upon his return to Nigeria from the United Kingdom. He was granted bail in 2017 on health grounds after being detained at the Kuje Correctional Centre.

However, Kanu fled to the United Kingdom after his release, only to be re-arrested in Kenya in 2021 and brought back to Nigeria, where he was detained by the DSS.

Initially facing 15 counts of terrorism and treason, eight charges were dropped by the trial court on April 8, 2022, for lack of merit.

In 2022, the Court of Appeal in Abuja ruled in Kanu's favor, vacating the charges and ordering his release.

Drivers petition NASS over corporate abuse by Uber, Bolt, In-drive

The Amalgamated Union of App-Based Transporters of Nigeria has filed a petition with the National Assembly, accusing global ride-hailing platforms Uber, Bolt, and InDrive of systemic corporate violence, worker misclassification, and repeated neglect of drivers' rights and safety.

The petition, dated May 1, 2025, was submitted to the

Chairman of the House Committee on Public Petitions and outlines what the union describes as "precarious working conditions" for thousands of Nigerian app-based drivers.

The association is calling on lawmakers to intervene urgently, citing cases of violent attacks, exploitative policies, and denial of labour rights.

The AUATON National Pres-

ident, Damola Adeniran accused the tech giants of failing to implement adequate safety measures and of exploiting a regulatory gap in Nigeria's labour classification system.

"Several families have been left isolated to mourn their loved ones from incidents occurring on platforms

"Platform drivers have been victims of manslaughter, carjacking, car theft, and other violent crimes.

2025 MAY DAY CELEBRATION:

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti (in the cubicle - left), watch as workers march past, during the 2025 May Day celebration in Umuahia.



Forum urges Edo hoteliers to shun criminal activities

LUCKY EFESE

The Edo State chapter of the Business and Hoteliers' Stakeholders' Forum (BHSF) has cautioned hoteliers and guest house operators against allowing their premises to be used for cult-

ism, kidnapping, or other criminal activities, warning such acts violate state laws.

In a statement signed by Secretary-General Dr Tabusite Osado on behalf of State President Chief Dr Omogiade Edokpolor, the forum urged hospitality businesses to be

proactive in screening guests and to report suspicious activities to security agencies, in order to curb the rising trend of criminal groups using leisure facilities for covert meetings.

The BHSF also commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for his administration's firm

stance on security and for introducing policies aimed at creating a safe and conducive environment for business growth.

They called on stakeholders to operate in line with government regulations to support the broader goal of a crime-free and prosperous Edo State.

PDP threatens legal action against Oborevori, others over defection

The National Working Committee (NWC) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has resolved to initiate legal proceedings against the Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevori, and other key stakeholders who recently defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The party's leadership, after a marathon six-hour closed-door meeting at its national secretariat in Abuja, directed the PDP National Legal Adviser to commence the process of reclaiming what it termed the party's stolen mandate in Delta State.

In a communiqué released following the meeting, the party directed its national legal adviser to initiate a legal process to reclaim its mandate from the Delta State governor and others who defected from the party in the state.

Moving to stabilise its structure in the state, the party leadership appointed Emma Ogidi, its South-South Zonal Chairman, to take charge of affairs in Delta and lead reorganisation efforts.

The Acting National Chairman, Umar Damagum, said, "We have also instructed the national legal adviser to recover our mandate that they have

taken away. The fortune of this party cannot be just left in the hands of our adversaries, so you (the national legal adviser) will take legal action to retrieve those mandates.

"We've just instructed the zonal caretaker committee to oversee the party in Delta, after dissolving all the structures that have already been there since the majority of them have shifted."

Beyond the immediate concerns surrounding defections, the NWC also adopted key recommendations from its governors' forum.

The committee fixed May 28 for the party's next National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting and scheduled the PDP National Convention to hold from August 28 to 30, 2025.

Governor Oborevori, his deputy, Monday Onyeme, and a wide circle of political allies, including commissioners, lo-

cal government chairmen, and the grassroots structure of the PDP in Delta, officially joined the APC on April 23.

They were received by top APC leaders, including Vice President Kashim Shettima, APC National Chairman, Abdullahi Ganduje, Senator Adams Oshiomhole, and the Imo State Governor and Chairman of the Progressive Governors' Forum, Hope Uzodinma.

Also defecting was a former Delta State governor and PDP's 2023 vice-presidential candidate, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa, in what many observers have described as a massive political realignment that dismantled the PDP's decades-long grip on the oil-rich state.

Describing the move as more than mere a defection, the APC hailed it as a "movement," signalling a major political shift ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Friday Sermon

Workers Day: The rights and responsibilities of the employer and the employee

IMAM TAJUDEEN IBN IBRAHIM

All praise is eternally due to Allah Alone. Peace and salutations be upon the Noblest of mankind, Muhammad, the son of Abdullah.

I enjoin you all and myself to be conscious of Allah, The Most High, for the fear of Allah is best of all provisions.

The religion of Islam has not left any area of the relationship with our Creator or the relationship between a servant and other servants without organizing and arranging it, and clarifying what each party has of rights and duties.

One of the most difficult relationships we all go through is the relationship between the employee and the employer, and our religion has arranged it in the best way.

O Brethren, Let us begin this relationship with a unique example of loyalty from employers, so we may emulate it. The Truthful and Trustworthy One - may God's peace and blessings be upon him - mentioned it from those who came before us. It has been mentioned in the most authentic books of Hadith.

IBN 'UMAR NARRATED:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "While three persons were walking, rain began to fall and they had to enter a cave in a mountain. A big rock rolled over and blocked the mouth of the cave. They said to each other, 'Invoke Allah with the best deed you have performed (so Allah might remove the rock)'. Then the third man said, 'O Allah! No doubt You know that once I employed a worker for one Faraq (three Sa's) of millet, and when I wanted to pay him, he refused to take it, so I sowed it and from its yield I bought cows and a shepherd. After a time that man came and demanded his money. I said to him: Go to those cows and the shepherd and take them for they are for you. He asked me whether I was joking with him. I told him that I was not joking with him, and all that belonged to him. O Allah! If You regard that I did it sincerely for Your sake, then please remove the rock.' So, the rock was removed completely from the mouth of the cave." Al-Bukhari.

O Brethren, If the employer in the Hadith above, just kept his worker's money as a trust and gave it back to him in full when he asked for it, he would still be praiseworthy before the people. So what about him, when he invested it and took care of it and returned everything to him?

Yes! The employer had increased the ration until it became herds of camels, cows, sheep, and their slave shepherds. When the worker came to ask for his wages, he said, "Everything you see is part of your wage, from camels, cows, sheep, and slave shepherds." They are all yours.

It was as if the worker was shocked and amazed when he saw the herds of



cattle and their shepherds and compared his meager wage with the large sum of money offered to him by his employer. His amazement increased when the employer did not ask him for a percentage of the growth, which made him say in amazement: "Fear Allah and do not mock me!"

O Brethren, Where are the types of this employer in the reality of our lives today? So they can see the images of injustice towards these weak workers and labourers, and the denial of their rights. Some of them may even delay their workers' salaries for many months, or only give them a fraction of it, and delay the remaining part, so the workers humble themselves before them, and sometimes, their tears may even precede their words, but to no avail. So, where are these people in relation to this righteous man and how he preserved his worker's money and made it grow?

O Brethren, Whoever amongst you can be like the employer mentioned in the above hadith, let him be. And whoever cannot be like him, then he should at least heed the command of the Prophet - peace be upon him - in his saying: "Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries up." Ibn Majah.

And let him beware of being among those whom the Prophet (ﷺ) referred to when he said: "Allah, the Exalted, says: 'I will contend on the Day of Resurrection against three (types of) people: One who makes a covenant in My Name and then breaks it; one who sells a free man as a slave and devours his price; and one who hires a workman and having taken full work from him, does not pay him his wages.'" Al-Bukhari.

Imagine, O Believer, that you are being sued in the Divine Court of Justice, and your opponent is Allah - The Almighty. The text of the lawsuit is that you took your benefit from the worker without compensa-

tion and used him without wages, as if you enslaved him. As for the place of the trial, it is in the court of Divine Justice, and its date is on a day Allah, The Most High described in Suratul Hajj Verse:2 (On the Day you see it every nursing mother will forget that she has nursed, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people as if they were drunk, but they are not drunk, but the punishment of Allah is severe). and in Suratu Taha verses 108-111

(...And voices will be hushed before the Most Merciful, so you will hear nothing but a whisper* On that Day, no intercession will benefit except for one whom the Most Merciful has permitted and whose word He has accepted. He knows what is before them and

what is behind them, but they do not encompass it in knowledge. And faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining. And he who bears injustice will fail.)

And to the employee, Our religion is a religion of justice and fairness. Just as it has demanded the rights of workers from their employers, it has also legislated and reminded them of their duties, stated the consequences of their actions, in the event of their negligence or betrayal. One of the first duties of workers is to be diligent in their work The Prophet (peace be upon him) in a Hadith narrated by Abu Ya'la said: "Allah loves it when one of you does a job, that he does it well." Authenticated by Al-Albani

In the Hadith stated above, we saw

how the employer insisted that what the employee saw was his right, and he (the employee) could not even offer his thanks or prayers to the employer and drove the herds away. However, the employer was satisfied because he was dealing with a Generous Lord who rewards good deeds tenfold to a hundredfold.

Furthermore, among the duties of the employee is honesty, sincerity, cheating, taking bribes or gratification, unnecessary time wastage in carrying out assigned duties all forms of betrayal of trust, and are not characteristics of the believers. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade us from it when he said in a Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira: "Whoever cheats is not one of us." Muslim.

IN ADDITION

The employee must obey his superiors at work as long as it does not involve disobedience to Allah, The Most High, and he must abide by the labour laws set by the state or his employer.

He must also refrain from exploiting his position or influence for personal gain or for the benefit of others close to him. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) warned against this in the Hadith of Buraidah when he said: "Whoever we employ and provide him a salary, and he takes anything after that, it is considered misappropriation." Authenticated by Al-Albani

May Almighty Allah make it for all employees to perform their work in a manner that pleases Him, and that brings them rewards and good outcomes in this world and the hereafter...

Ameen.

The employee must obey his superiors at work as long as it does not involve disobedience to Allah, The Most High, and he must abide by the labour laws set by the state or his employer.

He must also refrain from exploiting his position or influence for personal gain or for the benefit of others close to him. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) warned against this in the Hadith of Buraidah when he said: "Whoever we employ and provide him a salary, and he takes anything after that, it is considered misappropriation." Authenticated by Al-Albani

Imam Tajudeen Ibn Ibrahim
(Grand Chief Imam of Akoko-Edo)

Foreign

News

Seven takeaways from US-Ukraine resources deal

The US and Ukraine have signed a deal that will give Washington access to some of the war-torn country's natural resources.

Months in the making, it sets up an investment fund that Ukraine hopes will cement US assistance as the country struggles to repel Russia three years after the invasion.

The BBC stated it had seen a draft of the deal but not the final text. Based on that and the public statements from

both sides, here are seven key takeaways.

No Ukrainian payback to US
Trump has previously demanded that Ukraine pay back the \$350bn (£264bn) of aid that he claims has been provided by the US during the war - a condition that Zelensky rejected.

But Washington appears to have made a concession. Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said the agreement did not dictate that his country pay back any supposed "debt".

Trump has styled the agreement as a win for his side as well, saying his country will get back "much more in theory" than the billions that were provided to Ukraine by his predecessor Joe Biden.

Tougher tone from US towards Putin

The language used by the US in announcing the deal is notably harsher towards Russia than is usually the case from the Trump administration.

A statement by the US Treas-

ury Department refers to "Russia's full scale invasion" and adds that "no state or person who financed or supplied the Russian war machine will be allowed to benefit from the reconstruction of Ukraine".

This will hearten Kyiv, which has demanded more pressure be placed on Russia in talks between Moscow and Washington discussing a possible ceasefire. Oil and gas included alongside minerals.

Despite the fact that much of

the talk around the deal relates to Ukraine's mineral wealth, the agreement also includes provisions for new oil and gas projects, and related infrastructure.

In all cases, the resources stay in Ukrainian ownership, even though the US will get joint access.

This has been seen as a softening of the Ukrainian position, since it was not in earlier drafts of the deal.

No hindrance to Kyiv's EU ambitions

Ukraine has long aspired to join the European Union and accession talks formally began last June.

There were some concerns in Kyiv that the resources deal could hinder Ukraine's ability to join the EU, if it gave preferential treatment to US investors, as Kyiv and Brussels already have a strategic partnership on raw materials.

But the deal's text says that the US acknowledges Ukraine's intention to join the EU and the need for this agreement not to conflict with that.

It also says that if Ukraine needs to revisit the terms of the deal because of "additional obligations" as part of joining

the EU, then the US agrees to negotiate in good faith.

Additionally, Kyiv says the US will support additional transfers of investment and technology in Ukraine, including from the EU and elsewhere.

Profits to be reinvested in Ukraine for 10 years

Another intriguing element of the deal is that, for the first decade of the reconstruction investment fund, profits will be "fully reinvested in Ukraine's economy".

This is potentially significant if there is no financial benefit for the US for 10 years. Ukraine says it expects that any money that comes into the fund will go towards rebuilding the country and new projects.

After that initial period, profits may be distributed between the partners. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told Fox News that the deal was a signal to the American people that "we have a chance to participate, get some of the funding and the weapons, compensation for those and be partners with the success of the Ukraine people".

A US military commitment back on table...



MEETING:

US president Donald Trump (left) with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Kenyan MP shot dead in 'targeted' attack in Nairobi

A Kenyan member of parliament has been shot dead in the streets of the capital Nairobi by gunmen on a motorcycle in a suspected assassination.

Police said the attackers had been trailing Charles Ong'ondo Were's vehicle before one of them got off the motorbike and shot him at close range.

"The nature of this crime appears to be both targeted and pre-determined," police spokesperson Muchiri Nyaga said in a statement.

The opposition MP had two months ago complained about threats to his life, local media reported.

After the shooting late Wednesday, his driver and bodyguard, both unhurt, managed to rush the injured MP to Nairobi Hospital, where he was

pronounced dead on arrival.

The attack happened along Ngong Road near a busy roundabout often manned by traffic police officers and well secured with security cameras.

Shortly after the shooting, senior police commanders and detectives visited the scene and investigations are underway, police said.

President William Ruto has ordered police to conduct a thorough investigation into the attack, adding that: "Those responsible must be held to account."

Fellow legislators who visited the scene on Wednesday night expressed shock and outrage at the killing and called for swift investigations and justice.

Parliament Speaker Moses Wetang'ula described the MP as a "fearless and distin-

guished" legislator, calling his shooting "devastating".

The motive for his killing is still not clear but the soft-spoken legislator had publicly claimed some "hired goons" were plotting to assassinate him, attributing the plot to local politics.

In February, he expressed concern over growing violence and unrest during public events in the Kasipul constituency in western Kenya which he represented.

"When you hear I have been killed, Kasipul will not be the same again. But I know they won't kill me because I have the Bible in my phone and another one under my pillow," Were said at the time.

On Thursday, homicide detectives visited the scene with Interior Minister Kipchumba Murkomen saying that "inves-

tigations have advanced".

Were was serving his second term in parliament as a member of the Orange Democratic Movement, led by veteran politician Raila Odinga.

In his statement, Odinga condemned the killing, saying the legislator was "mercilessly and in cold blood, gunned down by an assassin".

"We have lost a gallant son of the soil!" Odinga added.

Odinga lost to President Ruto in the 2022 election and rejected the results due to alleged irregularities.

The former prime minister has since struck a political deal with Ruto which saw some opposition members join cabinet in what is referred as the "broad-based government" - which Were supported.

Snake halts Japanese bullet trains after wrapping around power line

One of Japan's busiest bullet train lines came to a halt after a snake tangled itself in a power line, causing a power outage.

Tokaido Shinkansen trains running between Tokyo and Osaka were suspended from around 17:25 local time on Wednesday.

Services resumed at around 19:00 local time, operator Central Japan Railway Company said, according to local media.

Japan is currently in one of its busiest holiday seasons, Golden Week, which consists of four national holidays in seven days, and will see trains, airports and holiday hotspots hit their peak.

Osaka is also hosting the World Expo this year, which will see millions of foreign and domestic visitors flock to the city until it ends in October.

The snake entanglement occurred between Gifu-Hashima and Maibara stations, which suspended Tokyo-bound trains between Shin-Osaka and Nagoya, and the Osaka-bound trains between Shin-Osaka and

Tokyo, according to Japanese news agency Kyodo News.

While authorities worked to get power restored, passengers reportedly gathered around staff at one station while large queues formed at ticket machines.

One frequent shinkansen traveller, who was returning to Tokyo, said it was the first time he had experienced this.

"I use the shinkansen several times a month, but this is the first time I have experienced suspensions due to a power outage," Satoshi Tagawa, 46, told Kyodo News.

But 26-year-old Kazutoshi Tachi, said he was "fed up with the troubles" to services.

"I want them to run on time," he added.

This is not the first time a snake has brought the shinkansen service to a halt.

In April 2024, there was a 17-minute hold-up while authorities removed a 16 inch (40.6cm) snake from the train between Nagoya and Tokyo, according to CBS News, BBC News's US partner.

US urges India and Pakistan to defuse tensions after Kashmir killings

The US has urged India and Pakistan to work together to "de-escalate tensions" after a deadly militant attack in Indian-administered Kashmir last week killed 26 civilians.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio held separate talks with India's foreign minister and Pakistan's prime minister on Wednesday and called on them to "maintain peace and security in South Asia".

India accuses Pakistan of supporting militants behind the 22 April attack at a scenic meadow near the resort town of Pahalgam. Islamabad rejects the allegations.

On Wednesday India also announced the closure of its airspace for all Pakistani aircraft, in the latest of a series of tit-for-tat measures taken by both sides.

The "perpetrators, backers

and planners" of the Pahalgam attack "must be brought to justice", Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar wrote on X after speaking to his US counterpart by telephone, as Rubio expressed his sorrow and reaffirmed Washington's support in India's fight against terrorism.

Meanwhile, the top US diplomat expressed the need to "condemn the terror attack" in

his talks with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He urged Islamabad to co-operate "in investigating this unconscionable attack".

During the call, Sharif rejected "Indian attempts to link Pakistan to the incident", a statement issued by his office read. The Pakistani prime minister also urged the US to "impress upon India to dial down the rhetoric and act re-

sponsibly".

The phone calls come after Pakistan's information minister warned that they had "credible intelligence" suggesting India might launch military action against the country in the next 24-36 hours. Delhi has not publicly commented on these claims.

There has been speculation over whether India will respond with military strikes

against Pakistan, as it did after deadly militant attacks in 2019 and 2016. Islamabad has warned of retaliation in case of military action from India's side.

Amid mounting tensions Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has held back-to-back meetings with senior state and defence officials in Delhi this week.

On Wednesday, India's cabi-

News

Foreign

Tesla denies contacting headhunters to replace Musk

Tesla has denied reports that it has contacted recruitment firms to launch a search for a replacement for Elon Musk as chief executive.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday that the electric car firm's board began looking for a successor to Mr Musk last month.

It said this was because of frustration around Mr Musk's focus on his job in US President Donald Trump's administration and Tesla's sinking share price.

However, in statement on Thursday, Tesla said the report was "absolutely false" while Mr Musk wrote on his social media platform X that the paper was "a discredit to journalism".

Tesla chair Robyn Denholm wrote on X: "There was a media report erroneously claiming that the Tesla Board had contacted recruitment firms to initiate a CEO search at the company."

"This is absolutely false (and this was communicated to the media before the report was published)."

She added: "The CEO of Tesla is Elon Musk and the board is highly confident in his ability to continue executing on the exciting growth plan ahead."

The denial comes after the Wall Street Journal, citing unnamed sources, wrote that Mr Musk was told by the board he needed to spend more time on Tesla and that he needed to say so publicly.

The paper said Mr Musk did not push back against the suggestion.

Last week, Mr Musk said on a conference call about earnings "I'll be allocating far more of my time to Tesla" and pledged to "significantly" cut back his government role.

Writing on X on Thursday, Mr Musk was heavily critical of the Wall Street Journal's reporting.

"It is an EXTREMELY BAD BREACH OF ETHICS that the WSJ would publish a DELIBERATELY FALSE ARTICLE and fail to include an unequivocal denial beforehand by the Tesla board of directors," he said.

He later reposted a comment from an X user that called the paper "trash".

Protests and boycotts

Mr Musk's leadership of Trump's newly created advisory body - the Department for Government Efficiency (Doge) - has attracted a lot of criticism.

Some customers of Tesla say they no longer feel loyal to the brand because of Mr Musk's controversial political views and actions while in charge of Doge.

Some have pledged to boycott the firm while others have staged protests against it because of Mr Musk - in some cases causing criminal damage to dealerships.

Meanwhile, investors and analysts have said Mr Musk's reputation and his juggling of high-level roles is part of the reason why Tesla struggling financially.

In March, Trump - with Mr Musk by his side - told reporters at the White House gardens anyone using violence against Tesla would "go through hell".

He then pledged to buy a red Model-S, one of a number of Teslas lined up on the White House drive that day, to support the electric car firm.

"I wear a lot of hats"

Temporary government employees, such as Mr Musk, are normally limited to working 130 days a year which, if counted from the day of Trump's inauguration, will end in late May.

But it is unclear when Mr Musk, who contributed more than a quarter of a billion dollars to Trump's re-election, will step down completely.

Trump said last month he would keep Mr Musk "as long as I could keep him".

On Wednesday, Mr Musk, who also runs space firm SpaceX, made light of the idea he was doing too many jobs.

In a video posted on X in a White House cabinet meeting, he was wearing two baseball caps.

"They say I wear a lot of hats," Mr Musk said in the video. "That's true. Even my hat has a hat."

Bloomberg reported that Mr Musk also said on Wednesday that Doge should examine the spending of the US central bank, the Federal Reserve, particularly the cost of renovating its headquarters.

Mr Musk has made similar comments before, raising the idea that the Fed should be audited. However, such a move



CEASEFIRE PROTESTS:

Recent polls in Israel indicate widespread public support for a new ceasefire and hostage release deal

DR Congo seeks to remove ex-President Kabila's immunity

The authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo are seeking to lift former President Joseph Kabila's immunity from prosecution after accusing him of backing rebels in the east.

There was a "substantial body of documents, testimony and material facts" linking Kabila to the M23 armed group, Justice Minister Constant Mutamba said on Wednesday.

The M23 currently controls parts of the mineral-rich east of the country after making significant advances earlier this year.

Kabila, 53, has not commented on the accusations but has in the past denied any connection with the insurgents.

He led DR Congo for 18 years, after succeeding his fa-

ther Laurent, who was shot dead in 2001. Joseph Kabila was just 29 at the time.

After stepping down, he was given the title of "senator for life", which gives him legal immunity.

In order to pursue a legal case, DR Congo's military prosecutor has asked the senate to overturn this.

Kabila has been living outside the country, in South Africa, for the past two years. But at the beginning of last month he said he would be returning to help find a solution to the conflict in the east.

A few weeks later, there were reports that the former president had come back and was in Goma, one of the cities captured by the M23.

But these were denied by

his political party, the People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD).

Last month, the authorities banned the PPRD because of its "ambiguous attitude" to the occupation of Congolese territory by the M23.

Justice Minister Mutamba, who last month ordered the seizure of Kabila's assets, said the former president should return to the country and "face justice... and present his defence".

DR Congo and Rwanda, which denies accusations it backs the M23, may be edging towards a peace deal to end the fighting, which has seen hundreds of thousands of civilians forced from their homes in recent months.

The two countries signed

a preliminary agreement in Washington last week and said they would have a draft deal by Friday.

Who is Joseph Kabila?

After being sworn in as president following his father's death, Kabila twice won elections. His second and final elected term in office officially ended in December 2016, but he refused to step down, saying it wasn't possible to organise elections, leading to deadly protests.

He stayed in power for two more years until elections were finally held in 2018.

In January 2019, he handed power to Félix Tshisekedi, the official winner of a disputed election, which many election observers said was rightfully won by Martin Fayulu.

Israeli reservists speak out against Gaza war as pressure on Netanyahu grows

Israel's war in Gaza grinds on, but opposition is growing.

In recent weeks, thousands of Israeli reservists - from all branches of the military - have signed letters demanding that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government stop the fighting and concentrate instead on reaching a deal to bring back the remaining 59 hostages being

held by Hamas.

Eighteen months ago, few Israelis doubted the war's logic: to defeat Hamas and return the hostages.

For many, the January ceasefire and subsequent return of more than 30 hostages raised hopes that the war might soon end.

But after Israel broke the ceasefire and returned to war in mid-March, those hopes were dashed.

"We came to the conclusion that Israel is going to a very bad place," Danny Yatom, a former head of the spy agency Mossad told me.

"We understand that what mainly bothers Netanyahu is his own interests. And in the list of priorities, his interests and the interests of having the government stable are the first ones, and not the hostages."

Many of those signing recent letters are, like Yatom, long time critics of the prime minister. Some were involved in the anti-government protests that preceded the outbreak of war on 7 October 2023 following Hamas's attack on Israel.

But Yatom says that's not why he decided to speak out.

"I signed my name and I am participating in the demonstrations not because of any political reason, but because of a national reason," he said.

"I am highly concerned that my country is going to lose its way."

The first open letter to be published, in early April, was

signed by 1,000 air force reservists and retirees.

"The continuation of the war does not contribute to any of its declared goals," they wrote, "and will lead to the death of the hostages".

The signatories urged Israelis to follow their lead before time ran out on the estimated 24 hostages still thought to be alive in Gaza.

"Every day that passes is further risking their lives. Every moment of hesitation is a crying shame."

In the weeks since, similar letters have appeared from almost every branch of the military, including elite fighting and intelligence units, along with a number of decorated commanders.

More than 12,000 signatures all. After 7 October, hundreds of thousands of Israeli reservists answered the call, eager to serve.

But now, more and more are refusing, with reports suggesting that reserve attendance has dropped to as little as 50-60%.

Russia launches deadly drone attack on Odesa —official

Russian drones have killed at least two people and injured another five in a sustained attack on the Ukrainian city of Odesa, the regional leader has said.

Residential high-rise buildings, a supermarket and school were damaged, Oleh Kiper posted on Telegram. Russia has not yet commented on the attack.

Later on Thursday, a Russia-appointed official said seven people had been killed in a Ukrainian drone attack in an

occupied town in the southern region of Kherson. Vladimir Saldo said a crowded market had been attacked in Oleshky.

However, Ukrainian forces said they had targeted four Russian soldiers and that two had been killed.

Odesa regional head Oleh Kiper said that Russian forces had targeted the city with strike drones, damaging homes and civilian infrastructure.

"Two people died and five others were injured as a result

of the strike. Medics are providing all necessary assistance to the victims," he said.

The city's Mayor Gennady Trukhanov said: "The enemy has launched another massive attack on the city. Residential buildings and civilian infrastructure have been damaged in various areas of Odesa."

Videos and images uploaded to social media, which the BBC has not yet verified, show explosions and damaged buildings.

Odesa, a strategically impor-

tant port city on the Black Sea, has a population of around a million people. It has come under repeated attack since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, the mayor of Kharkiv said a drone had struck a petrol station in the city centre, and explosions were also heard in the city of Sumy.

The latest attacks came as the US signed a deal with Ukraine on the joint exploitation of its energy and mineral resources.

Sports

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing

NWFL: Coach Aduku targets League title, CAF Champions League trophy as Edo Queens leave for super six

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

THE Head Coach of Edo Queens Football Club Moses Adukwu, has stated that his desire and new target for his team is to retain the Nigeria women league title and win the 2025 CAF Championship League.

The ambitious Edo Queens coach made the disclosure while speaking in Benin City at a press parley, saying that he has won the premier league title twice with two different clubs -Bayelsa Queens and Edo Queens and that he is now hungry for the biggest title on

the continent.

He said that he is a coach that likes challenges and wants to break record in wherever he finds himself.

Coach Adukwu expressed his confidence that the team was ready to retain the league title they won last season to enable them realized their ambition of representing the country in the champion League again to fight for the trophy.

The NWFL defending champions conquered West Africa before going into the Women CAF Champions league proper where they finished as 4th best

team in Africa in Casablanca, Morocco last season

He however admitted that he is still not satisfied with his team performance and achievements despite their excellent run of form in the just concluded abridged league, winning the group A.. "It has been a very good season for us but I am not satisfied. However, we will ensure we win the Super Six so that we can realize our ambition of playing in the Champions League.

"We are going to Ikenne, Ogun state for the super six with empty bag but we are coming back with the bag full.



Guard of honour for Edo Queens as they end NWFL group A on a high. The Executive Chairman Edo state Sports commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele, introducing the players to the wife of the Deputy Governor of Edo state Ambassador Osaretin Idahosa who was accompanied by some wives of the state House of Assembly members.

AFCON U20: Nigeria's Flying Eagles clip Tunisians' wings in Group B opener

● **Egypt coach Nabih apologizes after heavy home defeat to Sierra Leone**

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Nigeria U-20 male national football team, the Flying Eagles on Thursday, May 1, 2025 started their campaign at the Africa U-20 Nations Cup finals in Egypt on a sound footing as they triumph over the Young Carthage Eagles of Tunisia.

Auwal Ibrahim scored the only goal of the match in the 38th minute as the first half strike damaged the wings of the Young Carthage Eagles and tamed them. The beautiful goal earned Ibrahim the Man Of The Match award at the June 30 Stadium in Cairo the Egyptian capital.

It was the first game of Group B at the championship and Auwal Ibrahim's strike in the first half was enough to see off the North Africans in the cagey contest in an empty stadium. Morocco takes on Kenya in the second game of the group.

Meanwhile, Egypt U-20 national team's coach Ossama Nabih has apologized for his team's 4-1 defeat to Sierra Leone in the second round of the CAF U-20 Africa Cup of Nations group stage, describing the result as "shocking and disappointing."

The Young Pharaohs entered Wednesday's match on the back of a narrow 1-0 win over

South Africa, while Sierra Leone were coming off a goalless

draw with Zambia.

"It was a shock and a disap-



pointing result, and of course, we are sorry for the defeat," Nabih told reporters after the match.

"We performed well in the first round," he added.

Egypt started the match brightly, pressing high in the early stages, but struggled to keep possession and convert chances, as they allowed Sierra Leone to gradually take control, threatening the hosts repeatedly on the counterattack.

"We tested Sierra Leone's goalkeeper several times with four shots on target," Nabih stated.

Athletics: I'm confident my performance will help me at the polls – Chief Okowa

As the date for the election into the exalted office of the President of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria, (AFN), draws closer, the incumbent president, Chief Tonobok Okowa, says he will be seeking re-election again in order to consolidate on the gains already achieved.

Okowa told journalists in Agbor, Delta State, South-South, Nigeria, that the work, reforms and programs that he and the current AFN board have put in place and are building on, will go a long way in helping him secure a second term.

"What we are doing in the Federation right now is critical to the success we all yearn for in athletics and Nigerian sports in general. We have laid a solid foundation through our 'GET OUR ATHLETES IN SCHOOL' program," Okowa said.

The 'GET OUR ATHLETES IN SCHOOL' program has helped a good number of athletes to secure scholarships and admission into American Colleges and Universities, and they have been combining their academics with sports seamlessly.

Chief Tonobok Okowa, who

is also the President Confederation of African Athletics (CAA), Zone II and a Vice President Confederation of African Athletics (CAA), explained that the Federation in its wisdom also appointed a very efficient and effective Performance Director, Victor Okorie, who resides close to the athletes.

Victor Okorie has been actively involved in monitoring the athletes and preparing the Nigerian team for upcoming events like the World Athletics Relays, the African Championships and other major competitions.

NNL's hammer falls on two clubs for assaults and hooliganism

The Nigeria National League has again wielded the big stick against erring Clubs, with Godswill Akpabio FC of Uyo and Barau FC of Barau FC of Kano severely penalized for assault and intimidation of match officials.

On its part, Uyo-based Godswill Akpabio FC was found guilty of assaulting match officials during their Matchday 15 encounter against Rovers FC of Calabar at the Uyo Township Stadium on 26th April. The match ended 2-2, but right from the end of first half, the home team's match officials and fans started to intimidate match officials, and a player, Austin Ajibawo, was cautioned for physical intimidation of the first assistant referee. Further assaults were committed at the end of the match.

While they have been fined the sum of N3,000,000 which must be paid before their next match, Godswill Akpabio FC must also play their next two home games under strict closed-doors. They will pay the sum of N250,000 as medical bills to the assaulted match officials, and Ajibawo is suspended for two matches. The Akwa Ibom State FA is also given only seven days to identify the names of assailants or show evidence of disciplinary action taken against them.

Strict closed-doors means only 20 security personnel, seven club officials per team, 12 ball boys, 10 host FA officials, match officials, accredited medical personnel, two accredited cameramen per team and 10 representatives of the media can attend the match.



Hon. Olopade celebrates Ogba on birthday, hails him as a Colossus in Athletics



The Director General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Hon. Bukola Olopade, has extended warm birthday wishes to Chief Solomon Ogba, describing him as a towering figure in athletics globally and a treasured asset to the Nigerian sports family.

Chief Ogba, the First Vice

President of the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC), is celebrated not only for his illustrious contributions to sports administration but also for his trailblazing efforts in media as the founder of SportsDay newspaper.

In his birthday message, Hon. Olopade praised Ogba's lifelong dedication to sports develop-

ment in Nigeria and beyond.

"Chief Solomon Ogba is more than a name in Nigerian sports—his name reverberates on the global scene as a colossus. From his days as President of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria to his leadership roles in the NOC and Delta State, including numerous international assignments, he has con-

sistently raised the bar," Hon. Olopade stated.

"Chief Ogba is a well-respected authority whose impact transcends generations. He lives and breathes sports. He is a colossus of athletics in globally, and the nation continues to benefit immensely from his wisdom, leadership, and passion," the D.G added.

Eagles to get Presidential support group to ease 2026 World Cup qualification burden

In a bid to revive Nigeria's hopes of qualifying for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the National Sports Commission (NSC) has announced the formation of a Presidential Support Group, Sports247 reports.

The Presidential Support Group is aimed at supporting the Super Eagles' qualification campaign.

Chairman of the NSC, Shehu Dikko, revealed the initiative during an interview with former Nigerian international Segun Odegbami on Eagle 7 Sports Radio 103.7 FM.

He explained that the intervention comes at a critical time, as Nigeria has managed only three points from a possible twelve in their first four qualifying matches.

"When we assumed office, Nigeria had played four qualifying matches and only earned three points from a possible twelve. It was a complicated situation," Dikko stated.



According to Dikko, the Presidential Support Group is a public-private partnership initiative designed to provide financial and logistical backing to the team.

"The President approved our request. It is the first time this support group is being formally captured in the national budget," he confirmed, adding that the group would be officially unveiled soon.

Dikko also emphasized the collaboration with the Nigeria

Football Federation (NFF) in the appointment of the national team coach. While the NFF signed the coach's contract, the support group has taken on the responsibility of covering his salary until October.

"It's not the commission paying directly, the support group is providing relief so the NFF can focus on other critical needs. We are processing his payment upfront. The idea is to settle him completely, so he can

concentrate on getting the team to the World Cup," he said.

Highlighting the swift actions of the group, Dikko cited the recent example of bonus payments during the Rwanda match. "The bonuses were paid immediately. While the players were still at dinner, before they had even showered, the money was already on the table. That level of organisation shows respect and commitment," he noted.

Dikko concluded by reaffirming the NSC's commitment to supporting the national team's success: "We're not part of the contract. But we're committed to ensuring the coach has all the support he needs. After all, this is about Nigeria. If we can help, we will. And we are doing just that."

The unveiling of the Presidential Support Group is expected to mark a new chapter in Nigeria's campaign as the Super Eagles seek to secure a place at the 2026 World Cup

Wolves devastated after promotion application bid suffer setback

Wolves women's team members have expressed their feelings of disappointment after learning the club did not apply for promotion to the Championship. They described feeling "let down" and "devastated" despite working all season to earn a place in the second tier.

The team missed out on promotion to Nottingham Forest on Sunday. Players believe their efforts were in vain after discovering the club chose not to apply for the Championship, even though they met the crite-

ria to do so.

The decision came despite their strong performance throughout the campaign.

After securing a 6-0 win against Liverpool Feds on the final day, players and staff were told the club would not enter the Championship. They would have gained promotion if other results had gone their way.

In a message on X, midfielder Beth Merrick said, "Imagine fighting all season for a chance at promotion and then finding out our bid was never submitted."



Osimhen is a proven goalscorer —Peter Crouch

Former Liverpool striker Peter Crouch has hailed Nigerian forward Victor Osimhen as a proven goalscorer, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

Crouch made the comments while comparing Osimhen with Ipswich Town striker Liam Delap, explaining why the Nigerian is the more reliable option for Premier League clubs eyeing both players ahead of the new season.

"I think Delap has shown he can compete in the Premier League, but it's only been one

season," Crouch said.

"Osimhen, on the other hand, has been doing it consistently for years. As much as I like Delap and rate him highly, if I had to choose, I'd go with Osimhen — you know exactly what you're getting."

"Osimhen is proven. A top striker can change the dynamics of a game and win matches you never expected to."

Osimhen is currently the top scorer in the Turkish Super Lig, shining in front of goal for Galatasaray.

UCL: Phenomenons like Yamal are born every 50 years, says Inzaghi

Inter Milan coach Simone Inzaghi lavished praise on Barcelona's teenage winger Lamine Yamal after a thrilling 3-3 Champions League semi-final first leg draw on Wednesday.

Yamal, 17, scored a superb solo goal on his 100th Barcelona game as the Catalans came back from two goals down and terrified Inter's defence throughout.

"Yamal is clearly a talent of

the type born every 50 years, talents like this I've never really seen before," said Inzaghi.

"I saw him tonight for the first time and he created problems for us, we doubled up him... and then we lacked players elsewhere on the pitch..."

"(Our performance) is a reason for great pride, and Yamal is a phenomenon of the kind born every 50 years."

Inter kept Yamal quiet for some parts of the second half, which Inzaghi said was the objective after the teenager's first-half display.

"We adjusted something, we had to be better on Yamal, which is not very simple," con-

tinued the coach.

Inzaghi also said he had "some doubts" whether captain Lautaro Martinez, who went off injured at half-time, would be ready for the second leg.

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick also hailed winger Yamal, who rejected comparisons to all-time great Lionel Messi on the eve of the game, but scored a goal the Argentine would have been proud of.

"I'm really happy that this talent that comes every 50 years plays for Barca," said Flick, when Inzaghi's words were put to him.

The German coach said Yamal sparked his team's comeback.



Naija Ratels Gaffer excited to qualify for NWFL Super Six playoffs

Head Coach of Naija Ratels, Samson Keshi has expressed excitement after he led his team to the 2025 Nigeria Women Football League, NWFL, playoffs, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

Naija Ratels secured the final spot in the 2025 NWFL Super Six after a goalless draw against the undefeated Bayelsa Queens at the Bwari city stadium, Abuja in the final Group B fixture of the regular season.

This result sparked celebrations among the Abuja-based side as they secured their place in the NWFL playoffs for the second time since moving to the top-flight league.

Speaking after the draw, Keshi rated his ladies highly after sharing points with the unbeaten Bayelsa Queens to qualify for the Super Six, as he claims the aim is to reach the final of the playoffs.

"I give my girls hundred percent praise because Bayelsa Queens are a very good side. I played them almost 2-3 times now and I know they are one of the best teams in

the country. And for my girls to come out today with a point that surpasses any other team to qualify them for the Super Six from my zone. So I thank my girls, and I give them praise.

"And I know the Super Six is going to be a different ballgame. I promise to reach the finals of the Super Six."

As the regular season wrapped up, all eyes are now on the Super Six showdown in Ikenne, Ogun State, with the top three contenders from the two NWFL groups clashing for the ultimate prize.



Rangers launches digital platform for talent development, performance analysis

Rangers International FC has announced a strategic partnership with Eye Ball, a leading technology platform to focus on talent development and performance analysis, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The collaboration, revealed in a statement released on April 30, 2025, by Rangers CEO Amobi

Ezeaku, aims to digitally transform the club's approach from its youth ranks to the senior team.

Speaking on this transformative partnership, the CEO of Rangers, Amobi Ezeaku, stated, "This collaboration reinforces our belief that the future of football lies at the intersection of talent and technology.

Rangers is proud to be one of the first professional clubs in Nigeria to embrace this level of digital transformation."

He further emphasized the long-term vision, adding, "Together with Eye Ball, we are building a smarter football future — from grassroots to greatness."

President Federation Cup: Women's round of 16 fixtures

Rivers Angels (Rivers) Vs First Mahi Babes (Ebonyi) – Aba – 03/05/25 – 1pm

Remo Ladies (Ogun) Vs Dannaz Ladies (Lagos) – Ibadan – 03/05/25 – 1pm

Delta Queens (Delta) Vs Ibom Angels (Akwa Ibom) – Enugu – 03/05/25 – 1pm

Onimarg (Ondo) Vs Heartland Queens (Imo) – Benin City – 03/05/25 – 10am

Osun Babes (Osun) Vs Edo Queens (Edo) – MJA Lagos – 03/05/25 – 1pm

Mighty Jets Mata (Plateau) Vs Unification FC (Lagos) – Anyigba – 03/05/25 – 1pm

Sunshine Queens (Ondo) Vs Confluence Queens (Kogi) – Benin City – 03/05/25 – 1pm

Nasarawa Amazons (Nasarawa) Vs Bayelsa Queens (Bayelsa) – Awka – 03/05/25 – 1pm

Men's Quarter-Finals
Abakaliki FC (Ebonyi) Vs Nasarawa United (Nasarawa) – Benin City – 03/05/25 – 4pm

Wikki Tourists (Bauchi) Vs Ikorodu City (Lagos) – Bwari Abuja – 03/05/25 – 4pm

Akwa United (Akwa Ibom) Vs Kwara United (Kwara) – Enugu – 03/05/25 – 4pm

Plateau United (Plateau) Vs Rangers Int'l (Enugu) – Area 3 Abuja – 03/05/25 – 4pm



AAU's rusticated medical students: A grim reflection

KELLY ODARO

Circa 1992, my sibling underwent surgery for appendicitis at a hospital in Benin City. Though the operation was pronounced successful and she remained under observation for several days, tragedy struck soon after her discharge.

She was gripped by excruciating pain, prompting an urgent scan that revealed a horrifying discovery: a surgical instrument had been left inside her abdomen during the procedure. It was an unforgivable act of negligence and a stark display of unprofessionalism, likely born out of ineptitude.

The recent announcement by the management of Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma, about the rustication of 34 medical students over examination malpractice reminded me of the harrowing experience my sibling had at the hands of medical practitioners.

These students, some from the prestigious Department of Medicine and Surgery, were expected to be among the future healthcare providers in a society already plagued with inadequate medical personnel owing to brain drain abroad.

That individuals who aim to take on the noble role of saving lives were caught cheating raises a fundamental question about the integrity of our future doctors. If cheating is a shortcut taken at the training level, what guarantees do we have that such shortcuts would not be taken during professional practice?

The field of medicine is one that demands not just technical expertise, but a strong moral compass, ethical grounding, and a sincere commitment to human welfare. When those entrusted with health are compromised, the consequences can be fatal.

Around the world, there are chilling examples of what happens when unethical individuals slip through the medical education system and into practice. These examples serve as a reminder of the immense responsibility that institutions like AAU carry in training and evaluating future healthcare workers.

In Nigeria, stories abound about medical negligence and malpractice that have led to avoidable deaths. Some of these are tied to incompetence, but others result directly from ethical failings — fraudulent diagnoses, careless procedures, and profit-driven decisions.

One widely reported case was that of a woman in Lagos who died following a routine caesarean section performed by a doctor who, as later investigations revealed, had fake medical credentials. The incident rocked the community and highlighted how gaps in vetting and training can have deadly results.

In 2021, a doctor at a government hospital in Benin City was accused of leaving surgical tools inside a patient during an operation. The patient suffered greatly and eventually lost her life. It later came to light that the said doctor had been under disciplinary watch but



was never properly sanctioned.

Globally, the story of Dr. Harold Shipman, a British general practitioner, is one of the most extreme examples of how a medical professional without ethics can cause irreparable damage. Dr. Shipman was found guilty of murdering over 200 of his patients, using his position of trust to administer lethal doses of drugs.

Similarly, in the United States, a neurosurgeon named Dr. Christopher Duntsch, christened 'Dr. Death,' left a trail of maimed and dead patients due to incompetence and arrogance. Despite multiple complaints and lawsuits, systemic loopholes allowed him to continue practising far longer than he should have.

These tragic examples remind us that malpractice and unprofessionalism are not just academic issues; they are life-and-death matters. If students who cheat are not identified and weeded out early, they may become tomorrow's killers in white coats.

The AAU rustication, though painful, should be applauded as a necessary act of cleansing. Institutions must be brave enough to uphold standards, even when it means losing students or damaging their reputations temporarily. However, this incident should not be treated as an isolated case. It should lead to a broader evaluation of the medical education system in Nigeria and other parts of the world.

Cheating in examinations is a symptom of a deeper malaise — an erosion of values. In many institutions today, success is defined by grades, not by integrity or learning. Students are often under pressure to perform at all costs, with little emphasis placed on the sanctity of the process.

The parents and guardians of these rusticated students may be shocked or devastated, but the greater tragedy would have been if the students had gone undetected. An inept and corrupt doctor is a greater danger to society than a corrupt banker, politician, or even a lawyer.

Medical errors are now one of the leading causes of death globally. According to the World Health Organisation

(WHO), unsafe medical practices and medication errors cause more deaths annually than road traffic accidents.

In low-income countries, the lack of adequate supervision, poor training, and overcrowded institutions create fertile ground for such failures. Medical students are often left to their own devices, and in many cases, practical sessions are rushed or poorly executed.

Yet, a significant part of medical professionalism is not taught in textbooks. It must be instilled through example, discipline, and a culture of accountability. Senior medical personnel must model ethical behaviour. Institutions must be strict with policies and unrelenting in enforcement.

It is commendable that AAU took a firm stance. But one must also ask: how were these students admitted? What systems allowed them to reach this point? Are there cracks in the university's admission and assessment processes that need fixing?

A major reason why students dabble into the field of Medicine and Surgery is parental pressure. In many Nigerian homes, Medicine is regarded as the apex of academic achievement, a career path that commands prestige, respect, and financial security.

Parents, driven by societal expectations or personal ambitions, often project their dreams onto their children, insisting that they must study Medicine and Surgery regardless of the children's own interests or aptitudes.

Unfortunately, many of these children, eager to please their parents or afraid of disappointing them, find themselves trapped in a field for which they have little passion or natural inclination.

Their struggles become apparent as they progress, leading to academic frustration, desperation, and, ultimately, actions like cheating during examinations. This raises grave concerns about the calibre of future healthcare providers being produced.

The consequences of forcing students into Medicine are far-reaching and potentially tragic. Beyond per-

sonal unhappiness, these students, if they somehow manage to graduate, become practitioners who lack the genuine compassion, dedication, and competence required of medical professionals. Medicine demands not only intellectual rigour but also emotional resilience and an unwavering commitment to patient welfare. Without a true calling, these essential qualities are often absent.

In a profession where errors can mean the difference between life and death, such shortcomings can lead to devastating consequences for patients, as evidenced by various reported cases in Nigeria and around the world.

Parental pressure also contributes to a distorted perception of success among students. Rather than seeing academic and career success as the fruit of passion, talent, and hard work, it becomes about status and societal validation. This mindset diminishes the nobility of other equally important professions, fostering a culture where careers in the arts, humanities, and social sciences are undervalued.

In environments where children feel coerced, it is no surprise that desperation to meet unrealistic expectations sometimes manifests in unethical behaviours like examination malpractice, further staining the integrity of educational institutions like AAU.

True educational guidance should involve helping children discover and nurture their unique talents and passions. Parents ought to recognise that a fulfilled child in any field is better than a frustrated doctor or an incompetent medical practitioner. Success is best achieved when an individual's skills, interests, and career align harmoniously, leading not only to personal satisfaction but also to societal benefit. The AAU situation should serve as a wake-up call for families, educators, and society at large to re-examine the motivations driving students into professional fields.

There must be a holistic approach to reforming the system. Ethics should be a compulsory part of medical ed-

ucation from the very first year. Students should not only be taught medical ethics as theory but immersed in an environment where those values are practised daily.

Nigeria's Medical and Dental Council also has a role to play. It must regularly audit training institutions, enforce continuous professional development, and maintain strict licensing protocols. The bar must be kept high, and only those who truly qualify should be allowed to wear the doctor's coat.

Patients' lives are literally in the hands of these professionals. From childbirth to cancer treatment, from trauma care to simple prescriptions, each decision made by a doctor can make the difference between life and death.

Public hospitals are often understaffed and overburdened, making it tempting for some doctors to take shortcuts. But these shortcuts can end lives. Imagine a doctor who cheated through pharmacology exams prescribing the wrong dosage of a powerful drug.

Consider the implications of a surgeon who never learned anatomy properly due to exam fraud. Or a paediatrician who does not fully grasp the development of a child's immune system because he bought his grades. The danger is not just hypothetical. It is imminent if the system does not take its role seriously.

The rusticated AAU students have temporarily lost some semesters, but society has potentially saved thousands of lives. That is the sobering reality. This is not a call for vengeance or vindictiveness. Young people make mistakes. However, institutions must balance mercy with justice, especially when public safety is involved.

As the healthcare system in Nigeria continues to evolve, trust in practitioners is paramount. Patients must feel safe in the hands of their doctors. But that trust can only be built on a foundation of rigorous training, accountability, and ethical discipline.

The media, civil society, and educational watchdogs must continue to shine a light on issues like this. Transparency and public engagement are key tools in maintaining standards and avoiding a repeat of such infractions.

Ambrose Alli University has set an example. Other institutions should follow suit. Not just in rustication, but in preventive reforms, regular ethics training, and ensuring that those who walk through their gates come out not just as professionals but as people of character.

In the end, the white coat must represent purity, not pretence. It must be a symbol of compassion, competence, and credibility; not corruption or ineptitude.

Let this incident be a turning point, not just for AAU, but for the entire medical training landscape in Nigeria.

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