



\$100,000 gift to each Falcon, waste of scarce national funds

—VATLAD

By Emma Amaize

THE Vanguard for Transparent Leadership and Democracy, VATLAD, has slammed President Bola Tinubu for supposedly wasting scarce national funds with his \$100,000 (about N153 million) cash gift to each of the 24 Super Falcon players who won the 10th Women's Africa Cup of Nations, WAFCON, title in Morocco on Saturday.

National President of the VATLAD, Emmanuel Igbin, in a statement, yesterday, said: "We strongly disagree with the amount given as a cash gift because it is disproportionate and an unjustified waste of scarce national funds."

"The cash gift is not commensurate with the value of the trophy won and the value of the WAFCON competition."

"It is even more displeasing for the presidency, through a presidential spokesman, Mr. Bayo Onanuga, to justify its decision by making a comparison with the cash reward of the amount given to winners of the highly immoral and disgusting quasi-porn TV show called Big Brother Nigeria (BBN)."

"Is the presidency encouraging and promoting immorality among our youths through such a quasi-porn TV show by citing it in this instance?"

"VATLAD advises that in future rewards to sportsmen and women, particularly footballers, the total cash gift to all players and officials of the winning team should be a maximum of the cash value of the trophy won."

Vitel Wireless completes integration with MTN as roaming partner

VITEL Wireless, Nigeria's Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO), has announced the completion of its network integration with MTN Nigeria.

According to Vitel Wireless Chief Operating Officer (COO), Chudi Nwabueze, this marks the beginning of a new chapter in providing innovative and affordable telecommunications services to Nigerian consumers.

He said: "The seamless integration with MTN Nigeria's extensive network infrastructure enables Vitel Wireless to deliver high-quality voice, data, and value-added services across the country. This partnership underscores Vitel Wireless's commitment to expanding connectivity options and enhancing user experiences in Nigeria's rapidly growing telecommunications market. With this achievement, Vitel Wireless is ready to launch its mobile network services across all 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT)."

"The partnership allows Vitel Wireless to introduce competitive plans, flexible packages, and tailored solutions to meet diverse customer needs. Following the NCC's licensing of 46 MVNOs, Vitel Wireless continues to lead the way in establishing a dynamic MVNO sector in Nigeria—Africa's largest market and most populous nation."

The company has already achieved several historic firsts: the first MVNO issued a numbering plan and national and international routing codes, the first to launch a location awareness network in Africa, the first to archive interconnectivity with Airtel, Glo, and 9Mobile.



GALA NIGHT: Seated (3rd from left) front row: Mrs. Abieyuwa Eweka, Provost, College of Nursing Sciences, UBTH; Ms. Philomena Kerobo, President of SONUBTHAI International; and Ms. Mercy Ekpoudom, representing National Association of Nigerian Nurses in North America (NANNNA) at the Biennial Fundraising Convention and Gala Night in Atlanta, USA.

By-elections: Edo PDP demands removal of REC

By Ozioruva Aliu

BENIN CITY — AHEAD of the August 16, senatorial and House of Representatives by-elections in Edo State, the state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, has called for the removal of the Resident Electoral Commission, REC, Dr. Anugbum Onuaha, accusing him of alleged "ignoble role" in the 2024 governorship election in the state.

A statement by the state chairman of the party, Mr. Tony Aziegbemi said the party was prepared for the election with the emergence of its candidates, adding that the Edo Central and Ovia federal constituencies where the elections would hold are strongholds

of the party.

He said some electoral officers in some local government areas during the governorship election should not be allowed to participate in the by-elections.

Aziegbemi said: "This process (primary election), which was credible, fair, open and transparent and adjudged by majority of PDP members produced Prince Joe Okojie as the party's candidate for the Edo Central senatorial district bye-election and Johnny Aikpitanyi emerged as candidate of the PDP for the National Assembly election for Ovia Federal Constituency."

"Having completed this pre-election process, our party in Edo State

is highly prepared for the polls and are confident that we will emerge victorious."

"The areas in the contest are traditional strongholds of the PDP and with the quality and credential of our candidates and the support of the people, including our party supporters and members, we are sure of victory at the polls."

"We, however, want to express displeasure about some electoral officers whom we are aware, from their antecedent, have been compromised. We unequivocally demand the immediate redeployment of the Resident Electoral Commissioner, REC, Dr. Onuaha, due to his ignoble role in the last governorship election."

"His actions during the last gubernatorial poll undermined the credibility and integrity of the electoral

process, and we cannot allow such a tainted official to oversee the forthcoming bye-elections in Edo State."

"The Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, and its Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu must, as a matter of urgency, meet this demand and boost voters' confidence and assure the credibility of the process."

"We also demand that the Electoral Officers, EOs, during the 2024 gubernatorial, who were in Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, Egor, Etsako West, Etsako East and Akoko Edo steer clear of the by-elections. Their involvement in the irregularities that marred the last governorship election makes their participation unacceptable."

Bayelsa govt nullifies suspension of Ikebiri monarch

By Samuel Oyadongha

YENAGOA—Bayelsa State government has declared the purported suspension of the paramount ruler of Ikebiri community in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of the state, His Royal Highness Francis Odudu, earlier announced by some concerned members of the community as illegal, null and void.

The Deputy Governor, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, made the disclosure at a meeting with some stakeholders and the two feuding parties in the community in Government House, Yenagosa.

Ewhrudjakpo, in a statement by his media aide, Doubara Atasi, clarified that the Bayelsa State Chieftaincy Law does not empower any individual or group of people to suspend or dethrone any government-recognised traditional ruler.

According to him, only the governor possesses the legitimate authority to remove a traditional ruler following the fulfillment of the requirements as prescribed in the state chieftaincy law.

His words: "We have heard from all of you, and as I said earlier, our intention is not political. But I want to make it very clear that our Bayelsa Chieftaincy Law does not empower anybody or group of people to remove any paramount ruler that has been recognised and gazetted by government."

"The only thing you can do if you are so concerned is to petition the paramount ruler to the governor, who will set up a panel to investigate the allegations, hear from the chief and if he is found guilty, then the governor will remove the staff from him."

"So, to that extent, the suspension that you people have carried out or pronounced is null and void."

You don't have the right to suspend him. However, you have a case against him and so, we must hear you and the chief."

"Meanwhile, nobody should go and make any procession. Nobody should also make any radio an-

nouncement, not even any community radio announcement. Any person that does that will be confronting the government and you know what it means to confront government."

Meanwhile, the state government

SONUBTHAI organises fundraising in Atlanta to support UBTH nursing education

THE Alumni of the School of Nursing University of Benin Teaching Hospital International (SONUBTHAI) recently held a fundraising gala night in Atlanta, USA, to support nursing education of their alma mater in Nigeria.

The successful event took place on Saturday, July 19, 2025 at Atlanta, United States of America with the theme "The Future of the Nursing Profession at UBTH & UBTH College of Nursing Moving Forward"

The event united nurses, dignitaries, supporters, and alumni

worldwide to support nursing education at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) College of Nursing Sciences in Edo State, Nigeria.

The event also drew representatives from the National Association of Nigerian Nurses in North America (NANNNA), underscoring the nursing community's collective commitment to advancing nursing education in Nigeria.

In her welcome address, Philomena Kerobo, President of SONUBTHAI International, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead the organization. "It's a great

honor and privilege to welcome you to our Biennial Fundraiser Convention and Gala Night. I'm deeply humbled by this role, and I thank you for entrusting me with the opportunity to serve."

Ms Mercy Ekpoudom, the president of the National Association of Nigerian Nurses in North America (NANNNA), expressed admiration for SONUBTHAI's impactful efforts in uplifting nursing standards, supporting students, and strengthening infrastructure at their alma mater, now known as the College of Nursing Sciences, UBTH.

IANA donates furniture to primary schools in Isoko Nation

By Akpokona Omafuaire

UGHELLI—AS way of giving back to society, Isoko Association of North America, IANA, has donated desks and chairs to Eto Primary School, Ivori-Imi and Okpe-Isoko Grammar School, Okpe-Isoko in Isoko Nation.

Presenting the furnitures to the schools, Dr. Evelyn Aluta, who represented the President General of IANA, Queen Akpotu-Olomusaid the association was showing love to the society.

"The association is not here, it is based in North America, but the members of that association are your own people and the President General is Akpotu-Olomusaid. Because of their love for education, they are making the presentations."

"Even when they have travelled thousands of kilometres away, they still remember home by providing these items to schools in Isoko nation."

"If you educate your child, you educate a nation and in a situation where the children are in school, and there are no comfortable desks to write, it will make learning difficult for them. Therefore, this gesture of IANA is worthy of emulation."

Also speaking, Bashorun Ogieh, who represented IANA and supervised the presentation, noted that the gesture would boost education in Isoko.

He said: "The Isoko people in North Americans that have decided to come up with this gesture that has made us to be here today, they've done wonderfully well, because a lot of people who have traveled out of the country, all they just think is about themselves, they do not remember home."

"But from all their toils and labour, they still remember that they left home, that there are people at home, and there's a need to build for the development of the Isoko people."

How choice of Idahosa as my deputy gave us victory

—Okpebholo

By Ozioruva Aliu

BENIN CITY — Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State, has said his victory in the 2024 governorship election could largely be attributed to his choice of Dennis Idahosa as his deputy.

Okpebholo, who described his deputy governor as his brother, said: "I won because I made the right choice in him."

The governor spoke while receiving a number of defectors from the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, at Okada, the administrative headquarters of Ovia North-East Local Government Area of the state.

The governor in a statement by the Chief Press Secretary to Idahosa, Friday Aghedo, reiterated that he had enjoyed a cordial working relationship with his deputy and assured that they would continue in the same stead for the good of the people.

"We are working well together. I wouldn't have won the election if I had chosen another person as deputy."

"Why are we working for Edo people? We are working for Edo because we are confirmed sons of the soil. We are not foreigners. We were not borrowed from somewhere else."

Addressing the coming August 16 by-election Okpebholo told the crowd, "I will be coming back here for a campaign to let our people know that the choice for Ovia Federal Constituency is the right choice for the people."

CSOs task Lagos LG chairmen on human, infrastructure devt

By Olayinka Ajayi

CVIL society organisations, CSOs, have urged the newly sworn-in council chairman in Lagos State, to embark on programmes that would lead to both human and infrastructural development in their respective councils.

They spoke at the presentation of 'Exemplary Leadership Award', to the immediate past chairman of Somolu Local Government Area of the state, AbdulAhmed Salawu, a.k.a. Dullar.

The CSOs are Committee for People's Mandate, CPM, Human Rights Monitoring Agenda, HURMA and Ideal Society Advocacy Group.

Executive Director of CPM, Mr Nelson Ekunjimi, said: "We're here to present an award to the outgoing chairman because of our roles to hold people in public accountable, and if we've seen a public officer that discharged his responsibilities creditably well, it beholds on us to commend him or her and if he or she does contrary, we are also going to criticize such office holder."

"We commend the outgoing chairman for his impactful eight years of his administration in office to the people of somolu."

Executive Director, HURMA, Isiak Buna, on his part said: "We are here to commend the chairman, who has governed the council excellently."

"The outgoing chairman is the 'best chairman in the country today, because of his impactful governance.'"