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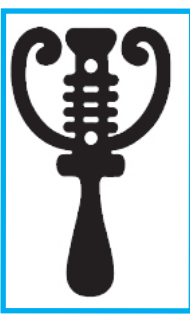
‘Electoral Justice Will Ultimately Drive Peaceful Elections In Nigeria’



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How Leadership, Innovation, Trust Can Make Nigerian Universities Resilient





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WEEKEND

Vol. 43, No. 18,186 ■■

August 22 - 23, 2026

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria N500

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WHY POLITICIANS SHOULD EMBRACE ISSUE-BASED CAMPAIGN

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His Royal Highness, Elegushi of the Ikate-Elegushi Kingdom, Oba Saheed Elegushi (left); His Imperial Majesty, the Olowo of Owo, Oba (Dr.) Ajibade Gbadegesin Ogunoye III; His Majesty Ogiame Atuwatse III, the Olu of Warri; Her Majesty Olori Atuwatse III (Behind) and His Imperial Majesty, the Alafin of Oyo, Oba Abimbola Akeem Owoade, at the 5th coronation anniversary of Olu in Warri, Delta State... on Friday.

Food Security:

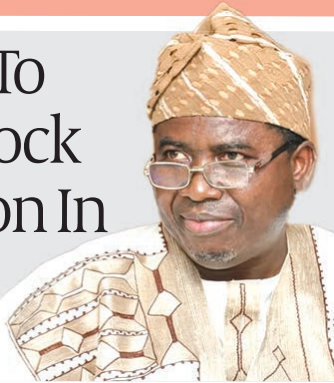
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Food Security: Afenifere Seeks 'Robust Military Action' To Curb Banditry In S'West, Boost Farming

From Rotimi Agboluaje (Ibadan), Oluwale Ige (Osogbo) and Adewale Momoh (Akure)

PAN-Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, has warned that insecurity in the South-West is a serious threat to food security in the region and across the country.

This was even as four personnel of the Ondo State Security Network Agency, otherwise known as Amotekun Corps, have been confirmed dead following an ambush attack by bandits in Ago-Oyinbo farm settlement of Akure North Local Council Area of the state.

Afenifere's warning was contained in a statement made available to journalists in Ibadan on Friday by the National Publicity Secretary of the organisation, Jare Ajayi.

The group lamented the incessant attacks on and kidnapping of farmers and other innocent citizens in the region, citing the killing of a female farmer in Ondo State, the abduction of a 33-year-old poultry farmer, Mr. Ooreoluwa Osunuga, in Ikenne, Ogun State; killings of four farmers in Okeogun area of Oyo State and the abduction of Debo Farounbi in Ora, Osun State, among others.

"Abductors of the latter, Farounbi, who was kidnapped on June 9, 2026, have refused to release him despite the payment of N30 million according to sources. They are even asking for more money and motorcycles," Ajayi said, adding that there were several such incidents in various parts of Yorubaland and elsewhere in Nigeria that were unreported.

According to him, in June this year, the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) disclosed that persistent abductions of farmers, farm workers and agribusiness investors in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo states had discouraged investment, reduced agricultural productivity and endangered the livelihoods of thousands of farming families.

"Many farmers now abandon their farms due to fear of abduction, ransom demands and violent attacks," the group said.

An earlier report by *The Guardian* indicated that banditry and herders' attacks had reduced agricultural-related activities in some parts of Yorubaland by about 40 per cent.

Afenifere spokesman revealed that during recent visits to Okeogun area and northern parts of Oyo and Ondo states respectively, some people lamented that they had abandoned their farms for three major reasons.

"One is fear of being kidnapped, second is the serious fall in prices that farmers could sell their proceeds as middlemen/middle-women (known as 'Onibaranda') are standing between them and direct purchasers while the third reason is grazing on farmlands by unscrupulous

• Bandits Kill Four Amotekun Operatives In Ondo Farm Settlement

• Yoruba Monarchs Hold Meeting With Igboho Over Attacks

herders that have not stopped despite several lamentations, warnings and steps taken," Ajayi said.

Ajayi quoted Mallam Shitu Kabir, President, Cowpea & Beans Farmers Association of Nigeria and Vice President of Federation of Agricultural Commodities Association, as stating that production of the commodities had dropped by almost 70 per cent in the North.

He added that research reports by local and international bodies such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Bank had indicated how regional insecurity had deeply altered agricultural practices.

Ajayi asserted that reports from various parts of the country painted a bleak picture for agricultural practices and raised the risk of hunger in the coming months if insecurity was not quickly put in check.

He said this was why Afenifere lauded President Bola Tinubu on his latest directive that a comprehensive National Threat Assessment and a rolling five-year Strategic Defence Operations Plan be formulated within 90 days to strengthen coordination across Nigeria's defence, intelligence and security capabilities. The body also commended the authorities and

security agencies for the recent rescue of abducted students and teachers in Oyo and Borno states and urged them to deploy the same sagacity to rescue those still in captivity and prevent a recurrence.

Among the multi-layered measures suggested by Afenifere for resolving banditry in Nigeria were robust military action, tighter border control, strong community policing, a stoppage to incentives driving kidnapping and greater co-operation among communities, security agencies and people in authority to identify those abetting banditry.

Other steps included economic reforms to enhance purchasing power, reduction in the high cost of items and services, greater attention to "ungoverned spaces" and stringent sanctions against those caught in acts of banditry.

While calling on authorities at every level to buckle up, Afenifere specifically called on governors in the six states in the South-West to establish state police, strengthen Amotekun by increasing its personnel, provide modern communication tools, operational vehicles and surveillance drones, enforce anti-open grazing laws and form specialised ranger units to clear and patrol thick forest reserves being used by criminals as hideouts.

The organisation also urged the governors to integrate local hunters and vigilante groups into information-sharing networks and encourage modern ranching.

The Amotekun operatives were ambushed when moving from their base within the axis. According to sources, the assailants engaged the security personnel in a fierce exchange of gunfire that lasted several minutes before the attackers fled into the bush.

While confirming the attack, the Public Relations Officer of the corps, John Adenekan said that "reinforcements were immediately deployed to the area following the incident, with joint security forces conducting intensive search operations to track the perpetrators."

He added: "The Corps has also intensified patrols and intelligence-gathering activities within the affected communities to prevent further attacks."

"They demonstrated exceptional courage and commitment to the protection of the people of Ondo State."

Meanwhile Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa has expressed sadness over the loss of the security personnel, describing them as heroes who paid the ultimate price in service to the state.

The governor, alongside the Corps Commander and management, extended heartfelt condolences to the families, colleagues and loved ones of the fallen officers.

The Corps has appealed to members of the public to remain calm and vigilant while urging residents to provide security agencies with credible information that may assist in identifying and apprehending the perpetrators.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng



Ogun State Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Chief Yemi Sanusi (left); former People's Democratic Party (PDP) member in Ijebu-Ode, Asiwaju Oladapo Odumosu; Ladi Owodunni; Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun; and another former member of the PDP, Sanni Olalekan during the official acceptance of former PDP and African Democratic Congress (ADC) members from the Ogun East Senatorial District into APC, held at the Ojude-Oba pavilion in Ijebu-Ode...on Friday.

2027: INEC To Conduct Mock Accreditation In November

From Sodiq Omolayo, Abuja

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) will conduct a nationwide mock accreditation exercise in November 2026 as part of measures to test its readiness for the 2027 general election.

The Chairman of the commission, Prof. Joash Ojo Amupitan, disclosed this on Friday in Abuja when he received the Chargé d'Affaires of the Canadian High Commission to Nigeria, David Sproule, and other officials of the commission on a courtesy visit to the INEC headquarters.

According to him, the mock accreditation would subject the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and other electoral equipment to a rigorous field test ahead of the general election.

He said the exercise was designed to identify and address possible operational challenges before the elections, stressing that the commission was determined to build on the lessons learnt from recent off-cycle elections.

"We will be conducting a mock accreditation in November 2026 to assess our readiness for the general election.

We will be subjecting our electoral equipment, the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), to a rigorous field test to fortify the sanctity of the ballot during the election," Amupitan said.

The INEC chairman said the commission would welcome Canada's partnership in ensuring the success of the exercise, particularly in the areas of technology, electoral integrity and capacity development.

He said the commission had treated recent off-cycle elections as crucial grounds for testing and improving its operational frameworks ahead of the 2027 general election.

Amupitan cited the August 15 Osun State governorship election as a major benchmark, noting that 3,556 of the state's 3,763 polling units, representing 94.5 per cent, opened for accreditation and voting by 8:30 a.m.

He also highlighted the performance of BVAS in the election, the uploading of results on the INEC Result Viewing (IREV) portal and the commission's crisis-management measures as areas where lessons had been learnt.

He said the commission would seek to consolidate these gains in preparation for the 2027 elections.

Amupitan disclosed that INEC had established a dedicated Artificial Intelligence (AI) Unit to respond to emerging technological challenges in election administration.

He said the unit would explore the use of AI in areas including data management and voter registration, while also helping the commission confront emerging threats such as deep fakes and AI-generated disinformation.

The chairman disclosed that INEC would participate in the Global Conference on Responsible AI and Elections scheduled to take place in Ottawa, Canada, from September 9 to 11.

He appealed to the Canadian authorities to facilitate the processing of entry visas for members of the INEC delegation attending the conference.

Amupitan said INEC would deploy about 1.4 million ad-hoc personnel across more than 176,000 polling units for the 2027 general election.

In a related development, the INEC

chairman sought stronger collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) to deepen youth and women's participation and strengthen democratic culture ahead of the 2027 general election.

Amupitan made the call on Friday in Abuja when he received the Country Representative of KAS in Nigeria, Moritz Sprenker, who paid a courtesy visit to the commission.

Amupitan said the engagement came at a critical period as INEC intensified preparations for the 2027 elections, with the commission seeking to strengthen institutional capacity and improve the participation of under-represented groups in the electoral process.

He acknowledged KAS's longstanding contributions to democratic development and capacity building in Nigeria and across Africa.

Amupitan said the commission remained committed to improving electoral administration through collaboration with stakeholders, stressing that election management was a multi-stakeholder responsibility.

He said INEC's priorities ahead of 2027 included strengthening civic and voter education, improving electoral technology, promoting greater participation by youths, women and grassroots communities, and expanding access for persons with disabilities.

Earlier, Sprenker said his visit was his first official courtesy engagement with INEC since assuming office as KAS Country Representative in Nigeria.

He said KAS works with think tanks, young people, political leaders, civil society organisations, the media and inter-religious partners to strengthen democratic institutions.

Sprenker said the foundation had maintained a longstanding relationship with INEC and expressed readiness to explore further areas of cooperation.

He specifically recalled the three-day capacity-building workshop held in Lagos in March, saying KAS was pleased with the outcome and interested in identifying additional areas where both organisations could collaborate.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

2027: National Rainbow Coalition For Tinubu Underway, Wike Reveals

From Azimazi Momoh Jimoh, Abuja

MINISTER of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has hinted at the emergence of a broader national political coalition to support President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's re-election bid in 2027.

He disclosed that Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, belongs to the emerging alliance.

Wike spoke on Friday in Abuja while inspecting ongoing projects in the FCT, disclosing that Adeleke's recent meeting with President Tinubu was part of efforts to strengthen what he described as a "National Rainbow Coalition" of politicians across party lines in support of the President.

According to him, the development was not about conventional opposition politics, insisting that the political landscape had been significantly altered by the crisis rocking the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

"When you say opposition, I have told you, I don't know what you call opposition. I say there is no opposition

Anglican Diocese Mourns Anthony Adeosun, Extols Virtues

By Felix Kuye

THE Anglican Diocese on The Coast in Ondo State on Friday commiserated with former Minister of Finance, Mrs. Kemi Adeosun, over the death of her husband, Anthony Adeosun, extolling the virtues of the deceased and his family.

The Bishop, The Rt. Rev'd Olaoluwa Oluseyi Pirisola, who spoke with *The Guardian*, described the late Adeosun as a successful businessman, devoted Christian and a philanthropist who, jointly with his wife, cheerfully made generous donations for the growth of the work of God in the diocese.

According to him, the family also made interventions that have improved children's education in some rural communities in the area.

It was learnt that the late Anthony and Kemi were the pillars behind the building of the St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Aiyede; renovation of some dilapidated classrooms of the primary school and the building of St. Phillip's Anglican Church, Okebi, as well as the vicarage, all in the diocese.

"Mr. Adeosun was a humble, compassionate and dedicated Christian. The news of his death shook us but we take solace in the fact that he knew God and served him very well while he was alive. He was also good to people around him. They supported the work of God. Our prayer is for God to reward him with peaceful and eternal rest, and to protect our sister Kemi, her children and other family members that he left behind," the Bishop said.

The Vicar of the St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Aiyede, Venerable Abel Taiye Olabanji and the Archdeacon in charge of the St. Philip's Anglican Church in Okebi, Venerable Idowu Eniagbojule, said special prayer sessions had been held for the Adeosun family in their respective church.

Says Adeleke Belongs To Coalition

now," Wike said.

He argued that although Adeleke contested the recent Osun governorship election on the platform of the Accord Party, he remained a member of the PDP and was now part of the political realignment backing Tinubu.

"Adeleke is a member of the PDP, but because of the internal wrangling, and for him to be able to secure a ticket to

run for a second term, he has to find a platform.

"And that platform happens to be a good party, but he is a member of the Peoples Democratic Party," he said.

Wike explained that his meeting with Adeleke followed the governor's engagement with Tinubu and was aimed at reviewing and strengthening the emerging coalition.

"What happened last night is

a meeting to review the Rainbow Coalition. And he is supporting Mr. President. It is a different party. I am supporting Mr. President. I am in a different party. "So, it is a Rainbow Coalition," he said.

The FCT minister predicted that the political alliance would expand in the coming weeks, urging Nigerians to watch out for further realignments ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

"In the next few weeks, watch

what is going to happen. You will see the Rainbow Coalition in this country supporting Mr. President," Wike said.

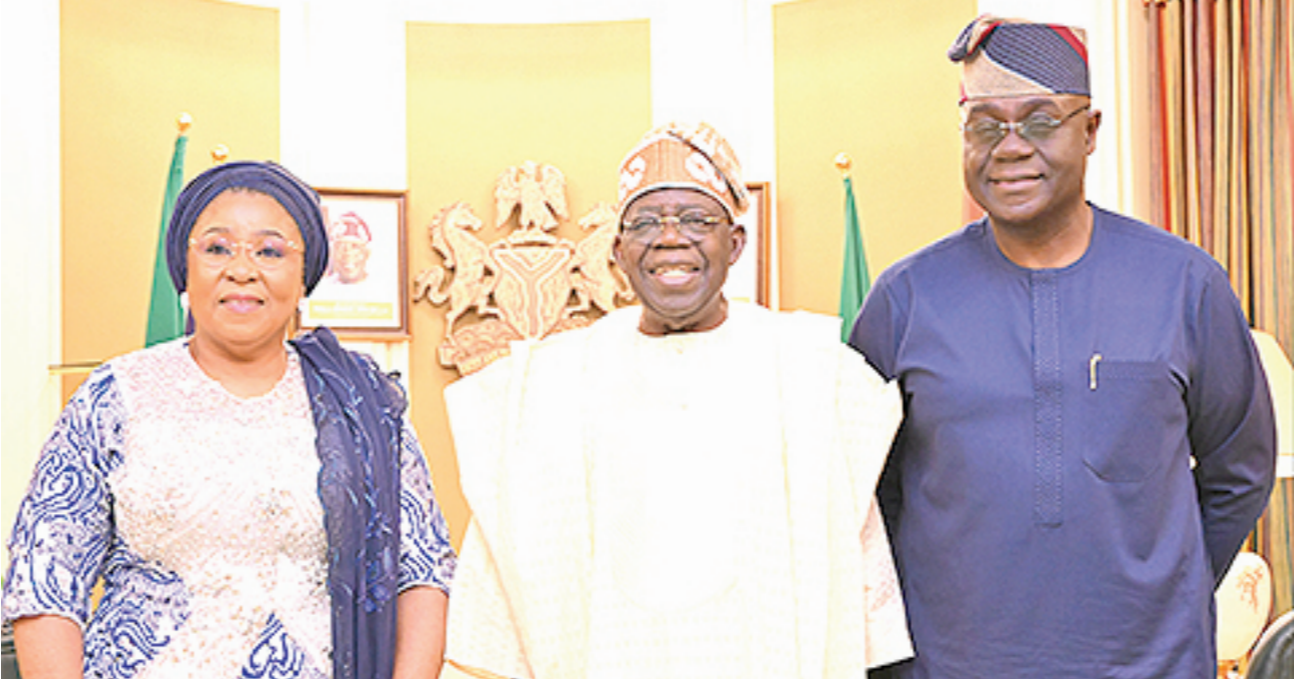
He also dismissed claims by elements of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) that the party and its allies contributed significantly to Adeleke's victory in the Osun governorship election.

"All those ADC people who are talking about, 'Oh, they helped Adeleke to win,' have seen that they just wanted to

harvest what they never planted," he said.

Wike maintained that Adeleke was now firmly within the coalition supporting Tinubu, declaring: "Adeleke belongs to us. And we all belong to Mr. President."

The minister further dismissed concerns about how former vice president Atiku Abubakar and former Anambra State governor, Peter Obi, would react to the emerging political realignment.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (middle) in audience with the outgoing Head of Service, Mrs Didi Esther Walson Jack (left) and the incoming Head of Service, Mr Abel Olumuyiwa Enitan at Presidential Villa, Abuja... on Friday. PHOTO: STATE HOUSE

Ogoni Leaders Fault Resumption Of Oil Exploration Amid Dialogue Process

By Debo Olodimeji

OGONI leaders have expressed concerns over the resumption of oil exploration activities in some parts of Ogoniland while the dialogue process is still ongoing.

Addressing a press conference in Port Harcourt, the President of KAGOTE, Chief Lesi Maol, said that the Ogoni Dialogue Committee (ODC) was inaugurated by the Federal Government in January 2025 with the mandate to engage the Ogoni people in good faith towards achieving a lasting resolution of the issues surrounding the resumption of oil production in Ogoniland, while rebuilding trust and strengthening re-

lations between the Ogoni people and government.

Maol stated that because they support the initiative and desire its success, they want the government to take note of the conduct of a few individuals "whose actions, in our view, require urgent clarification and intervention to preserve the credibility of the dialogue process."

He added: "There is growing apprehension among sections of the Ogoni population that certain oil-related activities may have commenced in parts of Ogoniland while consultations between the Federal Government and Ogoni stakeholders remain ongoing.

"The absence of clear information from the leadership

of the ODC on this matter has created uncertainty within our communities. In my capacity as President of KAGOTE, I have received several representations and expressions of concern from Ogoni communities. Unfortunately, the absence of authoritative information has made it difficult to provide the necessary clarification.

"We, therefore, respectfully request that the position regarding the status of oil activities in Ogoniland be clearly communicated to the people in order to prevent misinformation, speculation and unnecessary tension.

"We understand that, as part of confidence-building measures, employment opportunities were extended to Ogo-

Energy Security Must Become Africa's Next Industrial Strategy, Says Lawal

By Moyosore Salami

AFRICAN nations must completely shift their economic focus from merely extracting raw materials to building an energy-led industrial framework if the continent is to overcome chronic power deficits and unlock sustainable development.

This was the submission of Juwon Lawal, a prominent energy executive and business strategist, during an industry briefing.

According to Lawal, energy availability can no longer be handled as an isolated utility issue, but must serve as the literal foundation for all macroeconomic planning across the continent.

Despite boasting some of the world's most massive reserves of crude oil, natural

gas, strategic green transition minerals and arable agricultural land, Lawal noted that many African economies remain trapped in cycles of low productivity. The structural gap between resource ownership and domestic utility continues to stall growth.

"The question is no longer whether Africa has resources," Lawal noted. "The real question is whether those resources can be transformed into sustainable economic value."

He stressed that the current framework leaves key industrial sectors exposed, adding that "no economy has achieved sustained industrial growth without reliable and affordable energy."

Lawal pointed out that manufacturing, mining, transportation, agriculture, logistics and digital infrastruc-

ture remain entirely dependent on a consistent energy supply.

As African governments face intense international pressure to meet global climate agreements, the energy expert warned against adopting copycat transition pathways that do not match local realities.

He emphasised that for much of the continent, the most urgent priority is expanding basic electricity access for millions of households and small businesses.

Lawal advised the continent to craft its own distinct energy transition blueprint.

"The transition requires a balanced approach that supports environmental progress while maintaining economic growth," he explained.

To bridge this gap, he called

for responsible utilisation of natural gas to power heavy industrial manufacturing and cleaner transport systems, noting that strategic investments in compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) networks could immediately improve energy availability for underserved commercial hubs.

Lawal affirmed that the transition strategy also requires an aggressive upgrade of midstream and downstream logistics, including ports, pipelines and storage terminals. These links, he noted, are vital to unlocking the full trade potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). However, he stated that policy frameworks alone will not spur intra-African trade without massive physical investment.

Families Dispute Leadway Assurance's Claim To 22-Hectare Lekki Land

By David Emokpae

TWO prominent families of Origanrigan II, Lekki LCDA, Ibeju/Lekki, and Leadway Assurance Company Limited are in a legal tussle over ownership of a 22-hectare parcel of land in the Lekki area of Lagos State.

The dispute, currently before the Lagos State High Court sitting in Epe, involves the Kazeem and Adeoye families, who claim to be the original customary owners of the land, and Leadway Assurance, which asserts a competing claim.

The two land-owning families described Leadway Assurance Company Limited's ownership acts over the 22-hectare land as unlawful trespass.

The families seek declarations affirming their customary ownership and statutory rights over the approximately 22,314 hectares of land known as Origanrigan II, an order of ownership in their favour, and perpetual injunctions restraining Leadway Assurance and its agents from claiming or interfering with their land.

Royal Anchor Estate Officials Discharged As Magistrate Court Dismisses Criminal Case

By Suliyat Tella

FOUR officials and workers associated with Royal Anchor Estate have been discharged after a Senior Magistrate Court in Karu dismissed a criminal case brought against them by Abolarinwa Olatunbosun.

The matter, CR/124/24, came to an end after the court upheld the defence's objection to a further adjournment, with the prosecution having been unable to proceed after the complainant's absence from consecutive proceedings.

The defendants were identified as Henry Ortese, Attahiru Musa, Tanko Yakubu Pani and Abraham Osezuah.

Defence counsel, Joe Abah, had urged the court to dismiss the case, arguing that the complainant had not demonstrated the level of commitment required to sustain the prosecution.

Counsel holding brief for Olatunbosun's substantive lawyer, D.D. Aaka, had sought another adjournment. She told the court that the case was due for further cross-examination of the first prosecution witness, but that Aaka was engaged in another matter at Court 44 in Kuje.

Special

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Why 2027 General Election Campaigns Should Be

By Gbenga Salau

DURING the 2023 general election, Olusola Adebayo was excited when he heard that one of the governorship candidates will be coming to Ikotun to campaign. On the day, he saw a high level movement of people with same attire moving towards the local council secretariat as early as 8 a.m. Around 10 a.m., he decided to visit the campaign ground and was taken aback when he saw that the people gathered there were just dancing to music being dished out by a deejay amid the intermittent announcement of the arrival of party leaders and dignitaries.

According to him, those who were not dancing and singing were discussing and gossiping. He said that it was around 1 p.m. that they were told the governorship candidate had promised he was still coming.

Adebayo disclosed that around some minutes to 2 p.m., the candidate and his team arrived and the tempo of euphoria in the venue doubled. He added that the candidate did not say much about identified challenges peculiar to the Ikotun corridor and how he planned to solve them but spoke for less than three minutes and that was the end of the rally.

Adebayo stated that there were other candidates for the House of Assembly, House of Representatives and Senate seats, who never spoke about their agenda for the people.

"I cannot not even remember if they were introduced as contestants or their names were just announced when they arrived at the venue," he added.

Adebayo stated that most rallies are attended by hired crowd and party faithful. He added that it is usually very odd to see just an average citizen at the venue wanting to attend the rallies as part of the process for him to make informed decisions on election day.

"Those who are not party members are usually those who came to do petty business. The atmosphere is usually politically partisan and that makes it unfriendly for non-party people to show up," he stated.

As the country begins the countdown to the 2027 polls, personal attacks, petty talks and propaganda are gradually taking the lead, without deliberate efforts to question the candidates. Party supporters and members are all over the social media abusing each other, sometimes threatening fellow citizens as witnessed in the just concluded Osun election. This is usually the case during elections in Nigeria. Yet, every election should offer a community or a nation an opportunity to hold a conversation with itself. It is a moment to ask difficult questions, weigh competing ideas and decide which path promises a better future.

Unfortunately, Nigerians have too often allowed that conversation to be drowned by the noise of insults, political vendetta, ethnic sentiments and manufactured controversies. As preparations for the 2027 elections gather pace, the country cannot afford another campaign defined by personalities rather than policies. The debate should shift from who can ridicule an opponent to who can revive the economy, secure communities, strengthen institutions and improve the quality of life for ordinary citizens. The greatest gift politicians can offer Nigerians is not clever slogans or viral attacks, but practical ideas capable of transforming the nation. To achieve this, campaigns must be issues-based.

Speaking on why Nigeria needs issues-based campaigns, a Professor of Political Science at the University of Ibadan, Emmanuel Olugbade Ojo, noted that one of the major canons of democracy is about choices and an electorate cannot make a good choice if campaigns are not issues-based.

His words: "Unfortunately, in third world countries, there are no quality campaigns aside from deceit. Don't forget, I was in government for five years. I was the Special Adviser on Political Matters to the late governor Ajimobi in Oyo State, and in the second term I was his Chief of



Staff; so I am talking from practical experience.

"When campaigns begin, politicians will be busy with road shows and jamboree across streets rather than campaigning to the electorate, saying what they would do for the electorate when they get into government. But our politicians are deceitful; they play on the ignorance and intelligence of the electorate. They are promising nothing, so when they get into government and they are doing nothing, how would you blame them?"

"Ordinarily, they are supposed to have sent out people to collect data on what is the need of a particular local council, so that when they go to campaign or get into government, they meet that need. Unfortunately, our government will be building schools in a community where they need hospitals; they will be building hospitals in a community where they need potable water; in a community where they need to grade roads, they will be building maternity centres that are not needed.

"There are villages with less than 100 residents; you will see a lot of new classrooms unoccupied because that village doesn't need the number of classrooms built there. That means the government is doing the wrong thing. At the federal level, if you are campaigning in Akwa Ibom, what can your government do that they will appreciate; if you are campaigning in Oyo State, what can your government do that the residents of Oyo State can appreciate? But rather than that, they are doing the wrong thing.

"How do you explain a government that has budgeted for mosques and churches? Was it part of their campaign that government will be building churches and mosques? Is it the responsibility of government? So, our politicians don't know anything about campaigns; they just go out with a popular musician to draw a crowd. The crowd will be dancing from morning till evening; the politicians will come to the campaign stage and wave at the people, sing choruses, use abusive language on the opposition and engage in a campaign of calumny.

"Let me give you a practical example. In Oyo State, when I was in government, the late President Buhari came to campaign for his second term in Ibadan. I took a sheet of paper. I wrote what he should promise the South West. I gave it to my governor to give Buhari and he gave it to him. They were just shouting, 'sai baba, sai baba, you don win,' and he said thank you for coming to everybody and he left. Has he campaigned?"

"So, you will see other candidates come to the campaign ground with trailers and trucks throwing biscuits at people, throwing N200, N500 at people, throwing rice, garri and kulikuli at people. Is that campaigning?"

"That is why vote-buying is now rampant. People will get to the polling unit and just vote for the person who gives them cash right there, whether that person will do anything meaningful when they get to government or not.

"You will also discover that before the presiden-

tial election, the media will organise media chat for candidates. Some candidates will not come to face the media to tell the society what they would do when they get there so that people can hold them accountable."

Similarly, the Executive Director, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), Auwal Musa Rafsanjani, stated that there is an urgent need for political parties, candidates, citizens and other democratic stakeholders to shift the conversation away from frivolities, personality attacks, ethnic and religious sentiments, and other distractions to the real issues affecting Nigerians.

"Elections should not merely be contests for political power; they should be opportunities for citizens to interrogate competing visions, policies and programmes for the future of the country. At CISLAC, we believe Nigerians deserve an electioneering process that places national interest, accountability and development at the centre of political discourse," he said.

He stated that issues-based campaign matters because elections are ultimately about deciding who should be entrusted with public power and resources. Citizens therefore need sufficient information to assess the competence, character, policies and priorities of those seeking their votes.

"Nigeria is confronted by significant challenges— economic hardship, unemployment, insecurity, poverty, weak public institutions, poor infrastructure, deficits in education and healthcare, and declining public trust. These are too serious to be overshadowed by name-calling, propaganda, personality cults, ethnic mobilisation or attacks on opponents.

"An issues-based campaign gives citizens the opportunity to ask candidates fundamental questions: What is your plan? How will you finance it? What are your priorities? What measurable outcomes should Nigerians expect? What will you do differently from previous administrations? How will you ensure trans-

Nigeria is confronted by significant challenges— economic hardship, unemployment, insecurity, poverty, weak public institutions, poor infrastructure, deficits in education and healthcare, and declining public trust. These are too serious to be overshadowed by name-calling, propaganda, personality cults, ethnic mobilisation or attacks on opponents.

Feature

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Competition Of Ideas, Not Personal Attacks

parency and accountability? It also strengthens democracy because it enables voters to make informed choices based on policies and performance rather than sentiments, inducements or misinformation.

"Most importantly, an issues-based campaign can help move Nigeria from politics of personalities to politics of ideas, policies and public interest. The quality of political debate ultimately influences the quality of governance we get after elections," Rafsanjani said.

Also commenting, Country Director, ActionAid Nigeria, Dr. Andrew Mamedu, stated that an issues-based campaign is not optional for Nigeria but a democratic necessity. He insisted that Nigeria cannot afford another election dominated by ethnicity, religion, personality contests and attacks on opponents while the real struggles of citizens are pushed aside.

"The World Bank projects that 62 per cent of Nigerians, about 141 million people, will be living in poverty in 2026. Nigeria's public debt stood at N159.35 trillion as of March 2026. Across the country, families are struggling with food prices, unemployment and declining access to essential services, while insecurity continues to displace communities and prevent farmers from accessing their land. These are not abstract statistics. They represent people skipping meals, children leaving school and families unable to afford healthcare.

"An issues-based campaign compels candidates to move beyond slogans and explain what they will do, how they will fund it, when citizens should expect results and how progress will be measured. Elections must be a contest of ideas and solutions. That is how citizens make informed choices and obtain clear commitments against which elected leaders can be held accountable," Mamedu said.

Now that campaign has officially kicked-off, many politicians and their political parties can hold rallies in different locations across the country. It is expected that they would seize the opportunity to showcase their ideas on major issues that are confronting the average citizen.

Nigeria's electricity challenge is still evident in 2026. The country is only able to deliver about 4,000 megawatts of electricity to more than 200 million people. Also, the World Bank, in its April 2026 Nigeria Development Update, noted that Nigeria's under-five mortality rate was around 110 deaths per 1,000 live births, meaning about 40 per cent of children were stunted, and more than half of the children were failing to meet developmental milestones before school age.

Similarly, the World Bank assessment estimated that more Nigerians fell below the national poverty line in 2025, putting the estimated national poverty rate at approximately 63 per cent. The bank also noted that food inflation disproportionately affects poor households because they can spend as much as 70 per cent of their income on food.

Furthermore, Afrobarometer's Nigeria survey, conducted in 2024 and reported in 2025, found that 79 per cent of Nigerians experienced moderate or high levels of lived poverty; while 82 per cent reported shortages of food and medical care, 74 per cent reported shortages of water and 79 per cent reported shortages of cooking fuel.

The World Bank estimates that approximately 3.5 million Nigerians enter the labour force every year. This means Nigeria cannot solve its employment challenge through occasional government recruitment exercises or temporary empowerment programmes. It requires a continuously expanding productive economy. These figures provide perhaps the clearest reason the 2027 campaign must be issues-based.

On how to ensure that issues-based campaigns remain central to the 2027 polls, Rafsanjani said that it requires deliberate action from all stakeholders.

"The 2027 election must be more than a competition for votes; it should be a competition of ideas and visions for Nigeria. First, political parties and candidates must set the tone. They

should commit publicly to issues-based campaigns and discourage their spokespersons, supporters and campaign structures from spreading inflammatory rhetoric, misinformation and personal attacks.

"Second, political parties should participate in structured public debates and policy engagements where candidates are required to respond to the same set of questions. Nigerians should be able to compare candidates based on their positions on the economy, security, education, healthcare, corruption, electoral reform and other national priorities.

"Third, civil society organisations should develop citizen-centred campaign scorecards and policy trackers that monitor what candidates are saying, identify contradictions and assess the feasibility of their promises. This will make it more difficult for politicians to escape scrutiny by changing the subject to personal attacks.

"Fourth, the media should give greater prominence to policy, manifesto and performance analysis rather than allowing sensational comments, political insults and social-media controversies to dominate election coverage. Where politicians make claims, journalists should fact-check them and provide citizens with the relevant context.

"Fifth, citizens themselves have a responsibility. Voters should demand answers from candidates and reject attempts to distract them from issues that affect their lives. Political parties and candidates will continue to exploit whatever attracts public attention. Citizens must therefore make policy and performance the currency of political engagement," he said.

For Rafsanjani, religious leaders have enormous influence in Nigerian communities and should use that influence responsibly by encouraging peaceful participation, rejecting hate speech and political violence, and reminding their congregations that political choices should not be reduced to religious or ethnic identity.

"They should encourage citizens to evaluate candidates based on competence, integrity, policies and their commitment to the common good," he added.

He emphasised that there should also be sustained fact-checking and rapid response to misinformation and disinformation, particularly on social media.

"Political actors should not be allowed to deliberately create controversy simply to avoid answering difficult questions," Rafsanjani stated.

For Ojo, when the country's democracy begins to grow, the electorate will understand how to vote, what to vote for and what is the priority of the society.

"But for now, politicians have made people super poor, extremely poor. So, people are concerned with surviving - how to eat three square meals in a day. The truth is that our democracy is still young and the level of education is still low. If you want to do this issues-based campaign, how many of them have access to television? Where is the electricity for them to watch it? If you are a print journalist, professors cannot buy newspapers everyday; I buy two on a weekly basis. "So, even if you are talking based on issues, how do you communicate with the electorate? How will they know when they cannot

buy newspapers to read? So, there are so many limitations; the level of literacy is very low, poverty is rampant and hypocrisy is much in this country."

Ojo also noted that some Nigerians do not see their civil obligation as essential. "In fact, if movement is not restricted, people will not care to vote. Look at the last presidential election. In a country of over 200 million human beings, Mr. President got there with eight million plus votes. From the number of registered voters to the number of actual voters you will see that it has made nonsense of our democracy.

The position of Ojo is supported by data because out of the 93,469,008 registered voters for the 2023 general election, only about 27 per cent turned out for the presidential election.

Ojo insisted that the level of participation is still very low, arguing that issues-based campaigns are essential but involve a lot of things.

"How do you reach the electorate? That is why politicians pump a lot of money into elections because they know they have not communicat-

ed unlike in the Second Republic.

"I can recall that most Nigerians knew the cardinal programmes of Awolowo's UPN - free education, free healthcare and housing for all. Today, what are the cardinal programmes of our political parties? When you go to social media, they bamboozle the youth and tell lies. That is why there are no opposition parties. Issues-based campaigns are essential for our democracy to develop," Ojo said.

To Mamedu, it would require deliberate and sustained action. "Civil society organisations, professional bodies and citizens should develop a common citizens' agenda and use it to assess every party and candidate. Debates and town halls must require candidates to answer direct questions: what exactly will you do? How much will it cost? Where will the money come from? When will it be delivered? How will Nigerians measure success?

"The media must exercise editorial discipline by consistently returning discussions to policies, records and measurable commitments. Personal attacks and inflammatory remarks should not receive more prominence than serious policy proposals simply because they attract attention. Claims made by candidates must be fact-checked promptly, while misinformation and hate speech should be challenged before they take root.

"Citizens also have power. When voters reject vote-buying, stop rewarding insults and demand credible answers, political behaviour will begin to change. Every campaign promise should be documented and tracked beyond election day. An issues-based campaign becomes sustainable when candidates understand that Nigerians will remember their promises and demand an account of their performance," he said.

On the issues that should top the debates and campaign as the country goes into the general election, Mamedu stated that the campaign agenda must begin with the issues keeping Nigerians awake at night: food, income, safety, essential services and the future of their children.

"First is poverty, inequality and decent employment. Candidates must present credible plans to create dignified jobs, support small businesses, strengthen social protection and ensure that economic growth improves people's lives. Nigerians cannot eat GDP figures; economic progress must be measured by whether families can afford food, housing, healthcare and education.

"Second is food security. Candidates must explain how they will support smallholder farmers, especially women farmers, address insecurity in farming communities, strengthen local food systems, reduce post-harvest losses and respond to the growing effects of climate change.

"Third is security and access to justice. Nigerians deserve practical, properly funded and rights-respecting plans for preventing kidnappings, violent attacks and other forms of insecurity. These plans must address both immediate threats and their underlying causes.

"Fourth is investment in education, healthcare, water and other essential public services. Every candidate should state what proportion of public resources will be committed to these services and how improvements will reach underserved communities.

"Fifth is public finance and accountability. By the third quarter of 2025, only 17.7 per cent of that year's capital budget had been released. Candidates must explain how they will improve budget implementation, manage Nigeria's debt responsibly, reduce waste and ensure that every naira spent delivers measurable public value."

Mamedu added that electoral integrity, gender equality and inclusive governance must be central while candidates must commit to respecting INEC's independence, the rule of law and the rights of women, young people and persons with disabilities to participate meaningfully in political leadership.

Candidates must present credible plans to create dignified jobs, support small businesses, strengthen social protection and ensure that economic growth improves people's lives. Nigerians cannot eat GDP figures; economic progress must be measured by whether families can afford food, housing, healthcare and education.





Lagos State Deputy Governor, Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat (middle); Chairman of Council, Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM) (Chartered), Commodore Abimbola Ayuba (rtd) (left) and the Registrar/Chief Executive, NIM, Dr. Taiwo Ganiyat Olusesi, when Hamzat received an award as a Fellow at the 65th Anniversary Dinner and Awards Night in Lagos... on Thursday

PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU



Director-General/ Chief Executive Officer, Rivers State Tourism Development Agency/panellist, Yibo Koko(left); CoFounder/CEO, Narrative Landscape Press Ltd/panellist, Anwuli Ojogwu; Managing Director/CEO, SmartCity Resorts Plc/representative of Sir Demola Aladekomo, Executive Chairman of SmartCity Resorts/Chairman of the occasion, Gabriel Ukachukwu; former Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Lagos State/panel moderator, Steve Ayorinde; Publisher of QEDNG/convenor of QEDNG Creative Powerhouse Summit, Olumide Iyanda; CEO/Chief Creative Officer, X3M Ideas/panellist, Steve Babaeko; and iDICE National Coordinator/Keynote Speaker, Ife Adebayo, during the QEDNG Creative Powerhouse Summit 2.0 held in Lagos.



Bayelsa State Governor Senator Douye Diri (middle); Finance Commissioner and representative of the Director-General, National Pension Commission, Dr Charles Emukowhate (second right) and other members of his delegation during a courtesy visit to Government House, Yenagoa...on Thursday



Guest Speaker / Head, Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos (UNILAG), Prof. Ibitayo Popoola(left); Head, Brand and Marketing Communications, Wema Bank Plc, Mabel Adeteye; Chairman, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, Lagos Chapter, Samuel Ayetutu; representative of Lagos State Governor and Special Adviser on Public Relations, Documentation and Repository to the Governor, Olusegun Fafore; Public Relations Manager, TotalEnergies Nigeria, Irene Jerry-Iyoha; Conference Convener and Lead Consultant, Addefort Limited, Olabamiji Adeleye, and former Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Information and Strategy, Olusina Thorpe, during the 13th Lagos Public Relations Stakeholders' Conference in Lagos.

Metronotes

Oyebanji Begins Yearly Vacation August 24



Oyebanji

EKITI State Governor, Mr Biodun Oyebanji, will commence a two-week yearly leave on Monday, August 24, 2026. The two-week leave, according to a statement signed by Special Adviser (Media) to the Governor, Special Adviser (Media) to the Governor, Olayinka Oyebode, “is part of the Governor’s statutory annual leave entitlement. While on leave, Oyebanji will, however, continue to attend to crucial matters relating to governance and administration of the State. He will resume office on Monday, September 7, 2026. This is the second time Governor Oyebanji will be proceeding on leave since assuming office on October 16, 2022.

Atoyebi Urges Tinubu To Decentralise MDAs, Create Feedback Channel

By Kehinde Olatunji
THE Convener of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Ideological Group, Bamidele Atoyebi, has urged President Bola Tinubu to enforce structured delegation of authority across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and establish a direct

channel for Nigerians to communicate their concerns and ideas to the Presidency. Atoyebi said the measures were necessary to address what he described as excessive centralisation of decision-making, prolonged absence of some political appointees

without proper handover and the growing inaccessibility of senior government officials. He made the call in a statement, noting that the President’s efforts to decentralise governance could be undermined if ministers, managing directors and other

heads of government institutions continued to concentrate operational authority in their hands. “Governance in a nation as dynamic and complex as Nigeria requires vision, efficiency, and structural agility,” he said.

By Kehinde Olatunji

A NEW generation of financially-skilled graduates is emerging from Ekiti State University (EKSU), Ado-Ekiti, as the pioneer cohort of the institution’s Professional Diploma Programme in Securities Trading and

EKSU Pioneer Financial Markets Students Set For Graduation
Financial Markets prepares to graduate before the end of 2026. The eight-month programme, known as the EKSU Financial Markets Training Programme (E-FMTP), is designed to equip students

with practical knowledge and skills required to operate in the financial and capital markets. The programme was approved by the university’s Senate on February 25, 2026, marking a significant step in EKSU’s efforts to integrate

practical financial market education into its academic curriculum. Prof. Oke Michael Ojo of the Department of Finance confirmed that the pioneer students would complete the programme this year.

Rotary Club Donates Delivery Kits To Expectant Mothers In Lagos Hospital

By Debo Oladimeji
THE Rotary Club of FESTAC Town has donated delivery kits to 60 expectant mothers at Amuwo Odofin

Maternal and Child Centre FESTAC Town, Lagos. The club said the programme was meant to mark its Maternal and Child Care month.

Speaking during the programme, the President of Rotary Club of FESTAC Town, Echefu McAnthony, said it was the club’s first project for the

Rotary year. He explained that the beneficiaries were drawn from those whose Expected Delivery Dates (EDD) were close.

Diri Hosts INC Unity Reception Sept. 1

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, will on September 1, 2026, host Ijaw leaders as part of the effort to consolidate the reconciliation process in the Ijaw National Congress (INC). A statement signed by the

Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Daniel Alabrah, said: “The event tagged “Mega Unity Reception” is scheduled for the Ijaw House in Yenagoa and will also be attended by the major INC stakeholders.

On May 26, the Bayelsa governor, who is known as Governor-General of the Ijaw Nation, constituted a reconciliation committee chaired by Dr. Matthew Seiyefa, a former Director-General of the

Department of State Services Others on the panel were a former Rivers State Deputy Governor, Sir Gabriel Toby, a former Minister of Police Affairs, Alaowe Brodrick Bozimo, former INC president, Chief Joshua Fumudoh and more.

Africa Must Shift From Raw Material Exports To Energy-Led Industrialisation — Lawal

By Kehinde Olatunji
AFRICAN countries must shift their economic focus from the export of raw materials to building an energy-led industrial framework to address persistent power

deficits and achieve sustainable economic development, energy executive and business strategist, Juwon Lawal, has said. Lawal said energy availability should no longer be treated as an isolated utility

concern but as the foundation of macroeconomic planning across the continent. Speaking during an industry briefing, he noted that despite Africa’s abundant reserves of crude oil, natural gas, critical

minerals and arable land, many economies on the continent remained trapped in low-productivity cycles because of the disconnect between resource ownership and domestic utilisation.

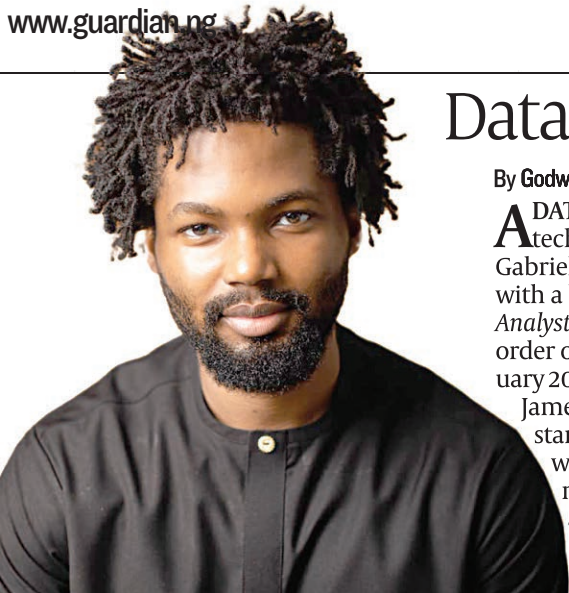
Street Project Foundation Opens Nominations For The Wole Oguntokun Legacy Award 2026

STREET Project Foundation (SPF) has officially opened the 2026 call for nominations for The Wole Oguntokun Legacy Award, which celebrates young Nigerians using theatre, storytelling and the arts to inspire change, preserve culture and champion social justice.

Nominations close on August 22, 2026, and the award will be presented at *Do What U Love Festival 7.0*, taking place in Lagos on 11 September 2026. At The Zone, Gbagada - Oworonshoki Road, Lagos.

The award is open to Nigerian residents aged 18 to 35 working across four categories: theatre practitioners, storytellers, arts and creative advocates, and performing artists. Members of the public may nominate a deserving creative, or apply directly, at <https://dwulfestival.com/wola> or by scanning the nomination QR code on Street Project Foundation’s official channels.

Founder, Street Project Foundation, Rita Ezenwa-Okoro stated “The award carries the name and legacy of Wole Oguntokun, the Nigerian playwright, director and lawyer fondly known as “Lasapi,” who died in March 2024.



Data Analyst, James, Makes Waves With New Book On AI

By Godwin Dunia

A DATA analyst and founder of multiple tech companies based in Lagos, Mr. Gabriel James, has enriched the techworld with a book on AI, titled *The AI Powered Data Analyst*. The book is now available for pre-order on Amazon ahead of its proposed January 2027 launch.

James, the founder of Datafrik.co, said he started in data analytics in 2022 and have worked for three U.S.-based digital technology companies - Udacity, Educative and Lighthall - that has enabled him enrol over 300 learners, create global software platform among others.

"I also founded Carbud (cARBUD.xyz), an AI-powered car super app for Nigerian drivers covering vehicle document renewals, mechanic booking, a parts and accessories market place and roadside assistance. "Since 2022, I have also ran BlackPythonLovers, a free telegram community teaching Nigerians Python programming entirely as a volunteer. I recently spoke on the panel at TDI tech summit in Lagos."

Speaking on the book and AI innovation, James said the book covers how working data analysts can practically integrate AI tools into their workflows, adding that it was written from the perspective of someone building

and teaching data skills on the African continent.

He stated that African technologists can build and operate at a global level without relocating, noting that it says a lot about where the continent tech talent is heading.

"All my clients, students and platform has been built or served from Nigeria. I have not left Lagos to build any of these," he noted.

Former Lagos Commissioner, Lawanson Bags PhD In Business Administration

By Balikis Ademuyiwa

FORMER Lagos State Commissioner for Transportation, Ladi Lawanson, has been awarded a Doctorate Degree in Business Administration with specialisation in International Business.

Lawanson, whose full name is Akinwale Oladipo Lawanson, received the doctorate on Wednesday, at a ceremony held at the Buba Marwa Auditorium, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos. Speaking after receiving the degree, Lawanson said pursuing a doctorate had been a lifelong ambition, adding that the academic journey had equipped him with research and analytical skills that could improve decision making in public service.

He said obtaining a doctorate had strengthened his ability to define problems, gather and analyse data, and develop scientifically driven solutions. According to him, "having a doctorate means you have research methodology skills to analyse data," adding that such skills were important for making data driven decisions.

Lawanson said his doctoral research, titled "The Effects of Cargo Distribution Modes and Traffic Congestion on Port Efficiency at the Lekki Deep Sea Port," was influenced by his experience as transport commissioner.

He recalled the congestion and gridlock experienced at the Apapa Port during his tenure, saying the experience reinforced his interest in understanding the causes of transportation challenges and developing appropriate solutions. He said the research had equipped him with skills that could be applied in different environments and strengthened his capacity to make informed decisions.

Speaking on leadership and public service, Lawanson urged young Nigerians to take responsibility for the development of the country. "What drove me to government, and which I encourage all young people to do, is to take ownership of your country," he said.

He encouraged young people to build their capacity so they could contribute meaningful solutions to challenges facing the country. Lawanson added that combining academic knowledge with experience in governance could provide an effective platform for developing solutions and making a positive impact in society.

By Gbenga Salau

WOMEN in Successful Careers (WISCAR) has graduated 71 women from its flagship WIN-with-WISCAR Mentoring Programme, reaffirming its commitment to developing competent, values-driven female leaders equipped to drive meaningful change across organisations, communities, and the nation.

The graduation ceremony celebrated the successful completion of the 20 early career women in WIN1 and 51 mid-career women in WIN2 mentoring programmes, from diverse

WISCAR Graduates 71 Women Through Flagship Programme

sectors including banking and financial services, healthcare, law, technology, oil and gas, aviation, professional and business support services, education, culture and nonprofit development.

The event brought together WISCAR Advisory Board members, mentors, alumni, partners, corporate leaders, and family members to celebrate not only the graduates' achievements but also WISCAR's enduring mission of advancing women's leadership as a catalyst for nation building.

In her address as Founder and Chairperson, Mrs. Amina Oyagbola described the ceremony as a celebration of women who had intentionally chosen growth, leadership, and excellence.

She urged the graduating mentees to dream boldly, lead with purpose, and use their knowledge, influence, and networks to create lasting impact.

Delivering a goodwill message, Mrs. Funke Amobi, Executive Director, Operations, Stanbic IBTC, GPA Board Chair, and WISCAR Advisory Board Member, congratulated the graduating mentees on reaching an impor-

tant milestone in their leadership journey. She encouraged them to embrace lifelong learning, remain resilient in the face of challenges.

The ceremony also featured the surprise presentation and announcement of the Amina Oyagbola Education Initiative, through which the graduating WIN 2 cohort recognised and rewarded a deserving secondary school student for outstanding academic performance.

In recognition of the invaluable role mentors play in developing future women leaders, the ceremony included a special Mentor Recognition Ceremony, presented by Amina Oyagbola, WISCAR Advisory Board Member, Mrs Boma Alabi, OON, SAN, and WISCAR Executive Secretary, Ekemini Akpakpan, celebrating their unwavering commitment to investing their time, knowledge, and experience in nurturing the graduating mentees.

The graduation ceremony was attended by several distinguished mentors whose continued commitment has been instrumental to the success of the WIN-with-WISCAR Mentoring Programme.

Most Rev'd John Emerges New Primate of First African Church Mission

By Suliyat Tella

HIS Grace, The Most Rev'd Ogbonnaya Christian John, PhD, has emerged the Primate-elect of the First African Church Mission at its just concluded 135th annual general conference.

John will take over from Primate S. Matilukuro, who will successfully end his primatical tenure and disengage from the ministry of TFIACM on September 30th 2026.

In a statement by the Conference communique members, John was elected the new primate by the church College of Bishops. It further said that Elder Arch. Ayorinde Ajala was elected unopposed as the Deputy Lay President by the Conference in Session.

"The Conference received with joy and appreciation to Almighty God that the Primate Palace was completed and dedicated to the glory of God on August 4, 2026. And for the first time in the history of our mission, the Primate will officially take residence at the Primate Palace.

"To our dear country, Nigeria, the church through the annual conference pledge continued to pray for our leaders to pilot the affairs of our country with the fear of God while urging every parent to devote adequate time for the upbringing of their children in order to have a better country tomorrow.



AASP Takes Community Service Projects To Ogun, Lagos

By Isaac Taiwo

THE annual community service initiative of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, executed through the All-Africa Service Project (AASP), was held recently in Simawa, Ogun State. The initiative was established to bring members and friends together to improve and beautify communities across Africa.

The project which began in 2006 had by 2009 become a significant Africa-wide service effort, with members in more than 30 countries participating in charity works such as road repairs, drainage clearing, environmental cleanup, painting, tree planting, blood donation to hospitals, pothole filling, desilting gutters, weeding and cleaning public facilities among others. This year, members of the church in large numbers simultaneously participate in the project.

Members of Ojodu Stake were at Simawa, Ogun State where they carried out activities such as clearing, cleaning, painting of capstone around Simawa roundabout. They also painted walls and ceilings of two rooms of Simawa Healthcentre as well as part of the walls of Simawa High School, Simawa Sagamu Local Council.

Speaking at Simawa, Stake President, Lagos Nigeria, Osadiaye Osamuyi-men said the project brings together every year, members of the church to render community service. He noted that the church, aside from the All Africa project initiative carried out every August, also from time to time carry out other activities at all levels.

Also speaking at Simawa, First Counsellor in Mowe Ward Bishopric, Ojodu Stake, Bro. Chibueze Ohaegbuem said the project is in line with what the church believes in.

Academy Urges Nigeria To Prepare For Next Ebola Outbreak

By Suliyat Tella

THE Nigeria Academy of Pharmacy has urged Nigeria to strengthen its preparedness for Ebola and other emerging infectious diseases before the next outbreak, warning that the country must not wait for a suspected case before activating its response systems.

The call was during an Emergency Epidemic Preparedness Webinar organised by the Academy and moderated by its Director of Programmes, Dr Lolu Ojo.

The webinar, themed "Building a Prepared, Coordinated and Resilient

Healthcare Workforce," brought together experts from medicine, pharmacy, nursing, medical laboratory science, physiotherapy and other health professions.

The President of the Academy, Prof Lere Baale, said epidemic preparedness must be treated as a collective responsibility of the entire health system. "An outbreak does not recognise professional boundaries. Neither should preparedness."

He stressed that preparedness should begin before the first suspected case, with continuous training in surveillance, case recognition, infection prevention and control, referral pathways and emergency protocols.

Also, the Chairman of the Academy's Ebola Task Group, Prof Fola Tayo, called for continuous testing and improvement of Nigeria's outbreak response systems. "Preparedness must be continuous. It must be tested, evaluated and improved regularly. People change, practices evolve and technology advances," Tayo said.

He challenged health institutions to ask whether front-line workers knew exactly what to do when confronted with a suspected Ebola case.

Politics

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'Electoral Justice Will Ultimately Drive Peaceful Elections In Nigeria'

By Onyedika Agbede

The 2027 presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Prince Adewole Adebayo, spoke with journalists after signing the Peace Accord ahead of the 2027 general election. He pointed out that genuine peace in Nigeria's electoral process can only be achieved when there is justice, transparency and strict adherence to the law. Adebayo also called for greater independence for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the neutrality of the security agencies during elections.

You signed the peace accord recently. What exactly did you commit to?

BASICALLY, what I committed to is what the law says: elections must be based on issues. We have always campaigned on issues. We do not attack personalities and we do not campaign against identities. We do not use identity to campaign. There is no issue of religion, ethnicity and all of that. We totally avoid hate speech and we don't use bad language. We don't use fake news. We don't use false propaganda. We try as much as possible to comply with the Electoral Act in terms of how to conduct rallies.

We totally avoid violence. We don't use thugs. We don't pay thugs. We don't buy votes and we don't sell votes. We don't do money politics. We respect the office that we are running for, and we conduct ourselves as if we have already taken the oath of office for that position. That is what I signed today, and that is what I am committed to. I signed not only with my hand; I signed with my heart and I intend to live up to it.

I also commend the Peace Committee for taking this matter seriously, even though some people in the political space, especially those in government, take it as a joke and are not serious about it. However, the Peace Committee is taking it seriously. The chairman and members of the committee have shown Nigerians that it is possible to pursue a national objective without being in government and to do so consistently over the years in search of peace.

The reason we have not managed to have peace so far is that peace is impossible without justice. Electoral justice will bring peace automatically in a system where every player in the electoral process follows the law; where the government of the day does not put its thumb on the scale; where INEC is truly independent and follows the mandate given to it to conduct free, fair and credible elections; and where voters vote according to their conscience and consciousness. Whether they vote for the right person or not, let them vote freely, without inducement and without harassment. Let the result be the mathematical and arithmetical exactitude of what the voters actually voted for. That will automatically bring peace.

You don't even need a Peace Committee searching for peace that is not missing, because the tool for getting peace is justice. When you do electoral justice, peace will come automatically.

So, you are saying that there is no peace without justice. Are you saying that you do not trust the electoral system under which you are asking people to vote?

What I am saying is that the electoral system needs a lot of improvement. When I become president, I will not short-circuit INEC as chairman. I will not control its money.

That's not your forte. The law says that if you become president, you determine that...

I will change the law because laws are made by people. Those laws do not write themselves. In fact, when President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua came into office, one of the things he agreed with us on was to set up a panel to try to change that system. So, depending on the circumstances at that time, we will work to make INEC independent.

Let law enforcement agencies—the police, DSS, civil defence and all branches of the military—be totally agnostic to politics. Let them not influence politics. Let them not take political instructions. Let their presence during elections not even be a subject for discussion. Let elections be free, fair and civilised. With that, I can guarantee you that, as presi-

dent, the Peace Committee will be idle during my time, because the person who has the greatest possibility of establishing peace in the land is the president of the country or the governor of a state.

If you look at recent elections, peace accords were signed. Yet, if you look at some of those rogue governors who left their states and were seen making trouble here and there, including the Minister of the FCT, who said, "If I was there, APC would not have lost," those are the kinds of things that threaten peace. Is it a crime for you to go and support your party member? Don't you go around supporting candidates running for election under your platform?

There are two things we need to consider. One, when you go to campaign, you don't go as a lawless wanderer. You go peacefully like any other person. You make speeches that are consistent with the peace and good governance of the place, and you do not come and display massive state power. You go in a civilised way. If you have friends in a state, you use your friendship and goodwill. You go and campaign and say, "vote for my party," but not through this organised invasion that they organise. It is not proper. Those are the things which, if you do them, will make a difference.

I want us to understand that in signing the Peace Accord, we are not doing the country a favour. We are committing ourselves to what we ordinarily should do. When I read through it, I didn't see anything that I wasn't already doing. I think it is the Bible that says it is only the sick that need the physician, and the people who needed the physician did not come today. President Tinubu refused to come. Maybe he doesn't want to be committed to it.

He sent a representative, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF).

Oh, please! This is an insult to the process. The SGF is not involved in the election. You have your vice president, who could have come. I don't see any reason President Tinubu, who works and lives in Abuja, and who has the influence to determine when the event would be held, and who gave an indication that he would come, failed to attend. I think President Tinubu has been missing in action for some time. I don't know if you, as reporters, have noticed. I don't know if he is a ghost worker or whatever he is, because a president cannot be so invisible like that.

But we see him at meetings receiving guests in the Presidential Villa...

Oh, okay. Today?

We understand that he has had a closed-door meeting with the Senate President...

Closing his door is not doing our work. I'm talking about the President showing up in places where presidents are supposed to show up.

What about Atiku? You are talking only about Tinubu. Atiku and the ADC were also absent...

You know, Atiku is a person seeking the presidency, not the President. The President has a duty to the country.

I have a duty to the country, but my duty is less than that of the President. When I become president, you will see my behaviour.

You are one of those who signed the Peace Accord today. The peace-signing ceremony is an indication of the commitment of those participating in the 2027 general election to peaceful conduct ahead of the elections.

Campaigns will resume tomorrow. What do you see ahead of this election? INEC says it is committed, unbiased, does not belong to any political party and will conduct free, fair and credible elections. Do you believe INEC?

I say Amen. It's a prayer and it is something we need to make happen. It is not that INEC can make it happen on its own. It is a desire that I can never go against. But there are steps we need to take.

I don't even know whether INEC has received all the

money it needs to conduct the election, because President Tinubu and his government have managed to put INEC in a position where it cannot plan properly. They are holding its money. They are holding it to ransom. I think INEC doesn't belong to the President. It doesn't belong to any candidate. It doesn't belong to any party. That is the law of the land.

It is left for Nigerians to make sure that this election is one we take advantage of and that we do all we can to participate. There are over 100 million voters. We should try to get at least 85 to 90 million people to come out and vote according to their conscience, without selling their votes. That is important.

As for the campaign, you will see that the SDP has brought its manifesto, focused on poverty and insecurity, and we will launch it very soon in Abuja. We are already going around the country, exchanging ideas with people, talking to sector leaders and talking to all shades of opinion in the country to develop everything contained in Chapter Two of our Constitution—the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. We want to see a country where no one is hungry, no one is homeless, no one is without medical care, no one who wants to work is without employment and every child is guaranteed the maximum education necessary to develop his or her talent. Those are the things the SDP will sell.

We want to move Nigeria away from the poverty that has afflicted the country for decades, so that no Nigerian will say that poverty is their destiny for life under our government. That is what we are focused on.

But it is important that this election be conducted in an atmosphere that is free, fair, credible and peaceful. President Tinubu's failure to show up today is sending the signal that he is not committed to peace. He is sending the wrong signal to law enforcement agencies and to people who work for the government—that the President does not appear to be committed enough. He needs to correct that by making a clear statement, explaining why he was absent and making sure that he commits himself publicly to peace.

What if he was held up by issues of state?

There is no issue of state greater than the President showing that democracy is important.

Even with national security?

There is no greater national security than the continuity of the state. The state has to assist, and a free, fair and credible election is important for establishing civil government.

What moral event of today can be considered equal to issues of national security?

It is the most important issue in the country because of the continuity of democracy. It is this process that made him president—the process of election. Four years ago, he was around, and now... President Buhari was not even contesting. The most committed president so far since the process began has been President Goodluck Jonathan.

It is good for you as a leader to signal that we are a civilised society and that we believe in the peace process.

If we look at eminent Nigerians such as John Onaiyekan and other people who are in that Peace Committee – Prof. Ameze Gubadia, Gen. Martin Luther Agwai and others – these are eminent people in their respective careers who could have been president if they had run for election.

So, it is important for the President to be serious and send that signal down because, as the leader of the country, if you say peace doesn't matter, then you can be absent.

From what I understand, everything was done to accommodate the President, including the timing and date, and he gave his word that he was going to be there.

It is something personal because he is the one elected; he is the one who will make the commitment. I have a feeling that, in addition to President Tinubu's tardy way of behaving recently, where he doesn't show up and just locks himself up somewhere, he has contempt for the peace process. He doesn't want to sit down and commit himself to being peaceful.

Legally speaking, he is not bound by it. It is a moral issue, not a legal issue...

He is bound by it because he has a constitutional mandate to be a moral leader. When he took that oath of office on May 29, 2023, he swore to respect the Constitution of Nigeria. The Constitution of Nigeria says we should have free, fair and credible elections. The Electoral Act also has provisions which the President and his people violated in Osun. Do you know what it means for

a country to be clapping and saying that we had a governorship election when there were 41 people or more in the mortuary? How do you do that? What kind of country allows a system where people lose their lives and limbs, where people are lynched in the afternoon? A president who has seen that should use this opportunity to come forward and even make a comment, saying, "My government will investigate what happened in Osun. It will not happen again." President Tinubu has proven that it is a moral failure, and a moral failure is not what the country needs to be.

Adebayo

Barau Jibrin: An Emerging Political Phenomenon

By Baba Dantiye

POLITICS is often defined by moments, but enduring political leadership is built over time. While elections may elevate individuals to public office, only a few succeed in transforming electoral victories into sustained political relevance and national influence. In Nigeria's highly competitive political environment, where fortunes can rise and fall with remarkable speed, those who remain consistently relevant usually possess a combination of experience, strategic judgment, resilience and the ability to build enduring relationships. Senator Barau I. Jibrin is increasingly demonstrating many of these attributes.

His emergence as the Deputy President of the Senate represents far more than personal political advancement. It symbolises the steady ascent of a politician who has invested years in public service, legislative engagement and party organisation. More significantly, it has elevated him from being a prominent political figure in Kano State and the North-West to becoming one of the influential voices in contemporary Nigerian politics.

Today, discussions about Northern political leadership are no longer confined to a handful of familiar names. A new generation of leaders is gradually assuming greater national prominence through legislative experience, administrative competence and the ability to navigate Nigeria's complex political environment. Barau belongs to this emerging group. His political journey reflects patience rather than haste, institution-building rather than personal spectacle, and steady progression rather than dramatic political leaps.

What distinguishes Barau is not merely the office he occupies but the consistency of his political growth. Unlike politicians whose influence depends largely on executive appointments, his career has been shaped principally within the legislature, an institution that demands negotiation, consensus-building and an appreciation of democratic processes. These are qualities that often receive less public attention than executive authority, yet they remain essential in a constitutional democracy.

His rise has also coincided with a period when Nigerians increasingly expect political leaders to combine representation with tangible development outcomes. Citizens now assess public officials not simply by speeches or political alliances but by their capacity to attract opportunities, promote education, support infrastructure, empower young people and contribute meaningfully to national policy. In this regard, Barau has sought to project a leadership style that combines legislative responsibility with constituency engagement.

Political prominence, however, is never accidental. It is usually the product of sustained effort, strategic alliances, institutional experience and the confidence of both political associates and constituents. Barau's journey illustrates how persistence, combined with an understanding of party politics and governance, can gradually translate into wider national relevance.

His election as Deputy President of the Senate further expanded his political horizon. The office is one of the most important within Nigeria's constitutional framework, requiring not only legislative competence but also the ability to manage competing interests, foster cooperation across party lines and contribute to national stability. Occupying such a position places its holder under greater public scrutiny while simultaneously creating opportunities to influence national discourse and legislative priorities.

Northern Nigeria has historically produced many distinguished political leaders whose contributions have shaped the country's development. As one generation gradually gives way to another, attention naturally shifts towards individuals who possess the experience, credibility and national outlook required to provide effective leadership. Barau's increasing visibility suggests that he has become one of those figures whose political trajectory deserves close observation.

This is not to suggest that political influence should be measured solely by high office. Rather, influence is determined by the ability to inspire confidence, build consensus, respond to public expectations and remain relevant across changing political circumstances. By these measures, Barau has emerged as a politician whose voice carries increasing weight both within the National Assembly and beyond.

His story reflects a broader transformation in Nigerian politics, where legislative experience and institutional knowledge are becoming increasingly important factors in national leadership. The legislature is no longer viewed merely as a supporting institution to the executive arm of government; it has become a central arena where national priorities are debated, policies are shaped and democratic accountability is strengthened.

Barau's journey therefore provides an opportunity to examine the qualities that increasingly define political leadership in Nigeria. His legislative experience, organisational ability and expanding national role offer insights into the changing nature of political influence and the expectations placed on leaders in a complex democracy.

His rise has not been built on sudden political visibility alone. Rather, it represents the accumulation of experience, relationships and responsibilities over time—the very foundations upon which enduring political relevance is often established.

Every enduring political career has a defining characteristic. For some leaders, it is charismatic mobilisation; for others, executive accomplishment or ideological conviction. In the case of Senator Barau, one of the defining features of his journey has been consistency. His rise has not been marked by dramatic political upheavals or temporary moments of popularity. Rather, it has been the product of years of en-

gagement in public affairs, electoral politics and legislative responsibility.

Like many successful politicians, Barau's understanding of governance was shaped long before he attained national prominence. His involvement in public life exposed him to the realities of policy development, political organisation and the expectations of citizens. These experiences helped to cultivate a pragmatic approach to leadership—one that places emphasis on consultation, strategy and results.

His entry into the National Assembly provided a broader platform to demonstrate these qualities. Legislative politics differs fundamentally from executive administration. It requires persuasion rather than command, negotiation rather than unilateral decision-making, and the ability to reconcile competing interests in pursuit of the national interest. It is within this environment that Barau steadily developed experience and recognition as a legislator capable of operating effectively within Nigeria's democratic institutions.

Over the years, his role in the Senate has reflected an understanding of the legislature's constitutional responsibilities in law-making, representation and oversight. Beyond participation in debates and legislative processes, modern lawmakers are expected to serve as bridges between government institutions and the communities they represent. This balance between national responsibility and constituency engagement has become an important feature of contemporary democratic leadership.

Another factor behind Barau's political growth has been his ability to remain relevant through changing political circumstances. Nigerian politics is characterised by competition, shifting alliances and evolving public expectations. Many politicians experience brief periods of prominence before dis-

Political prominence, however, is never accidental. It is usually the product of sustained effort, strategic alliances, institutional experience and the confidence of both political associates and constituents

appearing from national attention. Sustaining relevance requires adaptability, credibility and the ability to maintain relationships across different political environments. His continued rise suggests an ability to navigate these complexities.

Equally significant is the confidence placed in him by political colleagues and stakeholders. Politics in a democracy as diverse as Nigeria's is ultimately built on trust and cooperation. Leaders who attain positions of greater responsibility are often those who have demonstrated reliability, organisational capacity and the ability to work with others. His emergence as Deputy President of the Senate reflects not only personal ambition but also recognition of his experience and leadership qualities.

His political style has generally reflected measured engagement rather than unnecessary confrontation. In an era where political attention is often attracted by controversy and dramatic exchanges, the value of quiet institutional work can sometimes be overlooked. Yet many important political achievements are realised through dialogue, negotiation and sustained commitment. These qualities remain vital in strengthening democratic institutions.

His roots in Kano State have also shaped his political outlook. Kano occupies a unique place in Nigeria's political history. As one of the country's most populous and influential states, it has produced national figures who have contributed significantly to politics, business, education and public administration. Success in such a competitive environment requires resilience, strategic understanding and close connection with grassroots realities.

The ability to move from state-level relevance to national prominence is one of the greatest tests of political leadership. Barau's journey demonstrates that it is possible to achieve national prominence through consistent engagement and a focus on public service.

leadership. Barau's journey demonstrates this transition. While his political foundation remains strongly connected to Kano and the North-West, his present responsibilities require a broader national perspective and engagement with issues affecting the entire federation.

His emergence also comes at a time when Nigeria requires leaders who understand that public service is not merely about occupying positions but about using those positions to create value. The challenges facing the country—from economic pressures and insecurity to unemployment and the need for human capital development—demand leaders with experience, patience and the ability to build consensus.

The significance of Barau's current position therefore extends beyond personal achievement. It represents the continuing evolution of legislative leadership in Nigeria and the growing importance of individuals who can combine political experience with institutional responsibility.

Barau's emergence as Deputy President of the Senate marked a defining chapter in his political career. While he had already established himself as an experienced legislator, the office elevated him into the highest circle of Nigeria's political leadership. It brought with it not only constitutional responsibilities but also the expectation of providing direction and stability within an institution central to the country's democratic development.

The position of Deputy President of the Senate is one of the most significant legislative offices in Nigeria. Beyond presiding over Senate proceedings in the absence of the Senate President, it requires political maturity, institutional understanding and the capacity to manage diverse interests among lawmakers representing different regions, parties and perspectives. In a country as complex as Nigeria, such responsibilities demand diplomacy, patience and a strong commitment to democratic values.

Effective legislative leadership is rarely defined by public visibility alone. Much of its success depends on the ability to encourage dialogue, manage disagreements and build consensus. The strength of a legislature is measured not only by the laws it passes but also by the quality of debate, the effectiveness of oversight and the confidence citizens have in the democratic process. These responsibilities require leaders who understand both the political and institutional dimensions of governance.

Barau's elevation to this position reflects the importance of experience and credibility in legislative politics. Positions of such responsibility are generally entrusted to individuals who have demonstrated competence, commitment and the ability to work with colleagues. His emergence therefore represents not simply a personal political achievement but also recognition of his contribution to the legislative process.

His current office has inevitably expanded his national profile. Although his political roots remain firmly established in Kano State and Northern Nigeria, the responsibilities of Deputy President of the Senate require engagement with national issues affecting every part of the federation. This wider responsibility places him in a position to contribute to discussions on economic development, security, institutional reforms and policies aimed at improving the welfare of Nigerians.

At the same time, maintaining connection with the people who provided the foundation for political success remains essential. One of the greatest challenges for national leaders is balancing wider responsibilities with the expectations of their immediate constituencies. Successful leaders understand that national service and local representation are not competing obligations but complementary aspects of democratic leadership.

For Northern Nigeria, Barau's rise carries particular significance. The region has produced many prominent leaders who have contributed to national development. As political generations evolve, attention naturally turns to those capable of combining regional understanding with a national outlook. His emergence as one of the highest-ranking elected officials from the region places him among those expected to contribute ideas and leadership towards addressing Nigeria's challenges.



How Infrastructure Gains Boost Tinubu’s Victory Chance In North-Central

From Joel Oladele, Abuja

VISIBLE investments in road infrastructure, healthcare and education in some North-Central states are shaping a new political narrative in a region where President Bola Ahmed Tinubu won the 2023 Presidential election by a relatively slim margin. The President had secured 1,760,993 votes, representing 41.3 per cent of the votes cast across the North-Central in the 2023 presidential election but the margin was not wide enough to make the region an electoral stronghold.

Three years later, visible infrastructure and the increased capacity of state governments to undertake development projects in Kogi, Benue and Nasarawa States could strengthen Tinubu’s acceptance ahead of the 2027 elections.

A nationwide media tour of government projects organised by the Renewed Hope Ambassadors (RHA) in collaboration with the Presidential Media Team has so far taken journalists through the three states in the geo-political zone and the feedback is broadly similar.

Beyond the political statements of government officials, residents and community

leaders spoke of roads linking farming communities, bridges ending dangerous river crossings, hospitals expanding specialist services, flyovers easing congestion and skills acquisition centres creating opportunities for women and youths.

In Nasarawa State, Governor Abdullahi Sule said the state’s monthly allocation had risen from N4.5 billion before the removal of the fuel subsidy to about N16 billion currently, attributing the state’s increased capacity for execution of projects to the administration’s reforms.

“Executing all the projects without borrowing from the bank is because of the Federal Government’s support. So, you must give the President credit for that,” Sule said.

Among the projects inspected in the state were the N44 billion Mararaba flyover designed to address chronic congestion on the Abuja-Keffi corridor, the Keffi flyover, Akwanga road and underpass projects. There is also the Kilema-Tudun Amba bridge and stormwater channel in Lafia.

The Mararaba project, expected to be completed in December this year, will reduce travel time between Abuja and Keffi from over two hours to less than 40 minutes.

In Benue State, the ongoing Buruku Bridge

across the Katsina-Ala River is expected to enhance movement for communities that have relied on boats to cross the river for decades.

Also, the 854-metre dual carriage bridge is expected to link communities in Benue with Taraba State and provide a strategic corridor connecting the North-Central with the North-East.

Benue State Deputy Governor, Samuel Ode, described the project as a “golden gift” to the people, recalling the deaths and boat accidents that have occurred on the river over the years.

According to him, the bridge will equally serve agricultural communities, particularly the Sankera axis – a major yam-producing belt – by making it easier for farmers to move their produce to markets.

Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, said such projects provide a practical response to critics of the Federal Government’s borrowing spree.

“Government has been accused of borrowing money, but we can see where the money is going into – to develop infrastructure, link communities and to ensure free flow of commerce,” Onanuga said.

Benue’s development strides extend beyond roads. About N20 billion has reportedly been invested in the Benue State University Teaching Hospital in the last three years, expanding specialist services, diagnostic facilities and manpower. A cancer centre is under construction, while the hospital’s In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) centre provides assisted reproductive treatment at a subsidised cost.

The Chief Medical Director, Dr. Terungwa S. Hwande, said the hospital is attracting patients from different states of the federation including Nasarawa, Taraba, Kogi, Enugu and the FCT, Abuja.

The state is also seeking to translate its agricultural advantage into industrial activity through the rehabilitation of Taraku Mills and the development of the Food Basket Brewery and other processing ventures for job creation and value addition from agricultural production.

In Kogi State, the ongoing Iyale-Ogane-Enugu Road in Dekina Local Council reflects government’s efforts to connect rural communities with markets.

Residents of Otutulu and neighbouring farming settlements expressed gratitude to President Tinubu and Governor Ahmed Usman Ododo for the long-awaited road.

Amodu Joseph Silvas said the project has restored confidence in the communities that had endured years of unfulfilled promises.

“This road has been the prayer of our forefathers. Unfortunately, many of them are not alive to witness what we are seeing today. It is a thing of joy for our people because government remembered us.

“We are grateful to President Tinubu for supporting the governor. We also appreciate Governor Ododo for using the resources available to him to remember communities like ours,” Silvas said.

The road is expected to improve transportation of farm produce from the hinterland where poor transportation had led to post-harvest losses and discouraged agricultural activity.

In Benue State, the deputy governor pledged to deliver one million votes for Tinubu in 2027. According to him, the state hopes to achieve this by ensuring that it fulfils its 2023 campaign promises.

The media tour, launched recently to enable journalists inspect federal and state projects under the Renewed Hope Agenda, has provided opportunities to examine the link between federal reforms, increased state revenues and projects being delivered across the states.



Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity, Temitope Ajayi (left); Governor Hyacinth Alia of Benue State; Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga; Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Special Duties, Tunde Rahman and Senior Special Assistant to the President on Digital Engagement, Strategy and New Media, O’tega Ogra; during a recent Presidential Media Tour of Projects in Benue and Nasarawa States.

2027: Unmasking The Defects Saraki, Kwara PDP’s ‘Feel Good’ Analysis

By Suleiman Ibrahim

MUCH of what we read these days on Kwara politics are mostly ‘feel good’ analyses, authored out of insufficient considerations of all variables, misunderstanding or to paint a picture that amounts to shadow-chasing. Many of them simply do not add up.

Many of the writers had in fact written before May 2026 that Kwara APC tickets had been decided in a particular way and that the governor was already castrated. If I were Senator Salihu Mustapha, for instance, I would be asking for a refund from these shallow writers who made him to overrate himself and self-sabotage.

As far as Kwara politics is concerned this hour, the political map remains heavily tilted in favour of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq. Except for Senator Mustapha who is himself a beneficiary of the governor’s political support in 2023 and Amb. Yahya Seriki whose mining business has enjoyed state patronage, eight in 10 of the people who are up in arms against the governor now did not support him in 2023. Yet he led the APC to a resounding victory.

Here was the lineup of the opposition in 2023 in the South: Bashir Omolaja Bolarinwa (BOB), Senator Suleiman Mankanjuola Ajadi, Gbenga Power, Saheed Popoola and a few others. In the North, Adamu Manko, Kolo, Hon. Bio, Makama Lafiagi and many others took up arms. In Central, Oloriegbe

and his boys did not campaign for the governor. Moshood Mustapha was half PDP, half APC as he openly worked for Atiku in 2023. Senator Gbemisola Saraki was also in the opposition against the governor. Yet the governor and APC won massively with the support of mostly party loyalists and the masses of the state.

Ask yourself a question: how many of the battle-tested gladiators in Saraki’s camp in 2023 are still with him today? Do the counting in the North, South, and Central. In the South, his backbones were former governor Abdulfatai Ahmed, Gbenga Mankanjuola, Sir Bisi Fakayode and the late Rafiu Ibrahim Adebayo. The four are no longer with him, including Senator Rafiu who is now late. Who were his soldiers in the North? Prof. Gana, Ahman Patigi, Zakari Mohammed, Bio Ibrahim, and a few others who have since left for other political parties, except for Ahman Patigi who is now late. It is worse in Central where several of the field commanders have since left: Bolaji Abdullahi, Bibire Ajape, Razaq Lawal, Musa Yeketi, Amuda Kannike, among several others.

So emaciated is the Saraki dynasty that more than 70 per cent of its electoral tickets are held by inconsequential placeholders who have self-confessed to holding the ticket pending when more suitable candidates will be attracted. In other words, Saraki’s political platform is at the mercy of potential defectors, including APC’s G15.

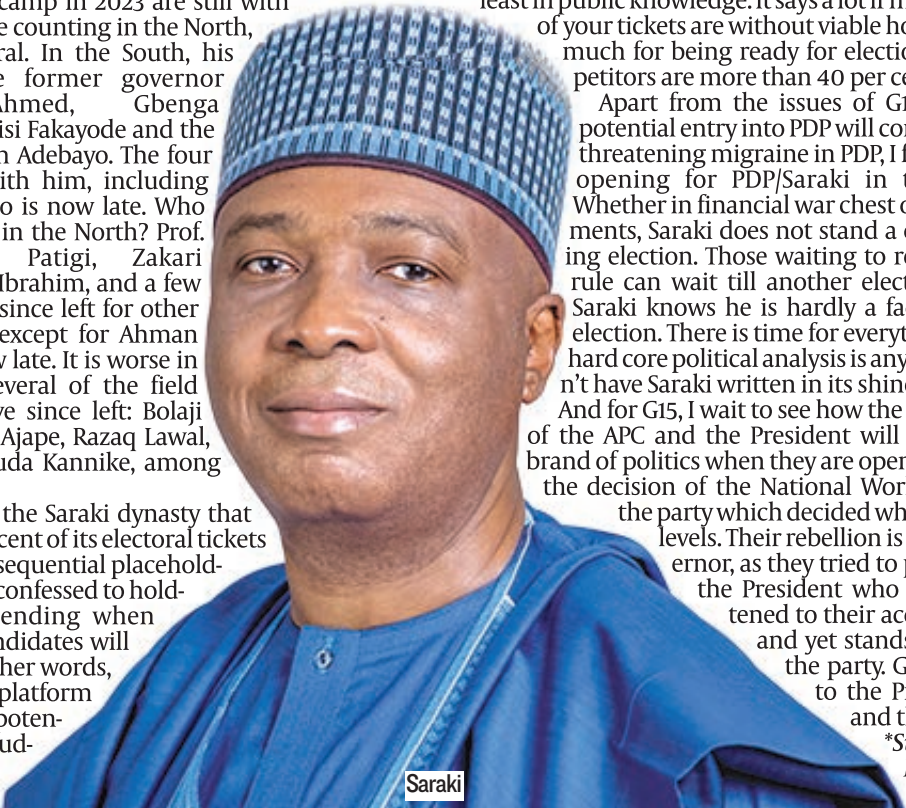
I have laughed

myself to stupor over one analysis of how PDP seeks to distribute its tickets. A careful analysis of the tickets, if true, shows how naive some people could be. It is not my business to point out the errors. But is it really an error or the PDP/Saraki simply doesn’t have anything more viable? If the analysis is correct, more than 70 per cent of its ticket holders will be persons who were not PDP members as of today, at least in public knowledge. It says a lot if more than two-thirds of your tickets are without viable holders as of today. So much for being ready for election when your competitors are more than 40 per cent ahead of you.

Apart from the issues of G15 members whose potential entry into PDP will come with its own life-threatening migraine in PDP, I fail to see any bright opening for PDP/Saraki in the coming polls. Whether in financial war chest or record of achievements, Saraki does not stand a chance in this coming election. Those waiting to restore his ‘dynastic’ rule can wait till another election cycle. I’m sure Saraki knows he is hardly a factor in the coming election. There is time for everything. Today’s sun, if hard core political analysis is anything to go by, doesn’t have Saraki written in its shine.

And for G15, I wait to see how the national leadership of the APC and the President will receive their bitter brand of politics when they are openly rebelling against the decision of the National Working Committee of the party which decided who flies its ticket at all levels. Their rebellion is not against the governor, as they tried to portray; it is against the President who I’m certain has listened to their accounts of the issues and yet stands by the decision of the party. G15’s pledge of votes to the President is a deceit and the Villa knows it.

**Suleiman wrote from Ilorin.*



Saraki

A CROWN FOR A PURPOSE-DRIVEN LEADER

It is with great joy and deep respect that I congratulate His Royal Majesty, Dr. Benson Chinedu Madubuko, OFR, on his coronation as Igwe Chinechendo I of the ancient Adaziani Kingdom.

This is a moment that honours not only a well-deserved crown, but a lifetime of service, integrity and generosity that has touched countless lives across Anambra State and beyond. Your journey from a respected entrepreneur and philanthropist to a revered traditional ruler is a testament to what purpose-driven leadership can achieve.

Today, I celebrate this historic milestone with you and your family. May your reign be guided by wisdom, marked by unity, and blessed with the peace and prosperity that your people so richly deserve.

Long live Igwe Chinechendo I of Adaziani Kingdom.

Olasunkanmi Owoyemi

Managing Director,
Sunbeth Global Concepts Limited



Editorial

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Catholic Bishops And Presidency: History Unravelling

THE controversy generated by the July 28 meeting between the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) and President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, has raised an important question about the place of moral voices in a democratic society.

What should have remained a constructive engagement between the nation's highest political authority and one of its most respected religious institutions unfortunately degenerated into needless controversy following the Presidency's reaction to comments made after the meeting by His Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan.

Cardinal Onaiyekan disclosed during an interview that the bishops had informed the President that Nigeria was "bleeding" under the weight of hunger, economic hardship and insecurity. He also reiterated the Church's insistence that future elections in Nigeria must be free, fair, credible and transparent.

The Presidency's response, through one of the President's advisers, sought to portray the Cardinal's remarks as unfair and merely his personal political opinion. That response has understandably attracted widespread criticism from political leaders, civil society organisations and many Nigerians who believe the bishops were simply performing their moral responsibility.

The Catholic bishops did not visit the President as politicians or opposition figures. They went to the State House as pastors burdened by the suffering of many Nigerians who are members of their congregation. Their message reflected what countless citizens experience every day in food inflation, persistent insecurity, unemployment, declining purchasing power and growing uncertainty about the future. Such

observations deserve thoughtful engagement rather than political interpretation.

In every healthy democracy, religious leaders, like labour unions, professional associations, traditional rulers, civil society organisations and the media, have the constitutional right to express opinions on issues affecting the public. Democracies flourish when governments are willing to listen to dissenting voices, especially when those voices are motivated by concern for the common good rather than partisan interest.

The Catholic Church's interventions in public affairs are rooted in a long-established tradition of social teaching which insists that the Church has a moral obligation to defend human dignity, justice and the welfare of society. This obligation follows the example of Jesus Christ, whose ministry embraced not only the spiritual needs of humanity but also the physical and social conditions of the people. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, comforted the afflicted and stood with the poor and the marginalised. Concern for human suffering, therefore, lies at the very heart of Christian witness.

That explains why the CBCN has consistently spoken on national issues irrespective of the party or administration in power. During General Sani Abacha's military regime, the bishops condemned repression, arbitrary detention and the denial of democratic freedoms. Cardinal Anthony Olubunmi Okogie was among the country's most fearless critics of Abacha's authoritarianism.

During the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Catholic bishops criticised corruption, persistent poverty, electoral irregularities and opposed constitutional amendments designed to prolong presidential tenure. Under President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, they welcomed his acknowledgement that the 2007 elections were flawed while urging com-

prehensive electoral reforms.

The bishops similarly challenged President Goodluck Jonathan's administration over insecurity, corruption and the Boko Haram insurgency, particularly after the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls. Under President Muhammadu Buhari, they repeatedly warned that terrorism, banditry, kidnappings, economic hardship and national disunity threatened Nigeria's stability.

Their interventions have continued under the Tinubu administration. They have expressed concern over inflation, worsening living conditions, insecurity and the hardship confronting ordinary Nigerians. During their recent meeting with the President, they urged government to place the welfare of citizens at the centre of public policy while reaffirming their commitment to credible elections as the foundation of democratic legitimacy.

This consistency demonstrates that the bishops' interventions are neither selective nor partisan. They have commended governments when commendation was deserved and criticised policies whenever justice, accountability or the common good required it. Their record has been remarkably consistent across military governments and democratic administrations alike.

Nor is this prophetic role unique to Nigeria. Across the world, Catholic Bishops have often emerged as courageous defenders of justice and human dignity. Archbishop Óscar Arnulfo Romero of El Salvador became the voice of the poor against military repression and ultimately paid with his life. Brazil's Dom Hélder Câmara courageously challenged military dictatorship while defending the rights of the poor. Cardinal Jaime Sin played a pivotal role in the peaceful People Power movement that restored democracy in the Philippines. Bishop Samuel Ruiz García spent decades defending indigenous communities in Mexico, while Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya consistently challenged electoral fraud and authoritarianism in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their examples illustrate the Church's enduring commitment to justice and human dignity beyond national boundaries.

Cardinal Onaiyekan himself belongs to this distinguished tradition. Throughout his public ministry, he has consistently spoken against corruption, electoral malpractice, insecurity and poor governance under administrations led by different political parties. His interventions have reflected moral conviction rather than partisan preference.

Against this background, personal attacks on the Cardinal are unfortunate and unnecessary. Nigeria's political leaders should remember that constructive criticism is not an act of hostility. Governments are strengthened—not weakened—when they are willing to listen to uncomfortable truths. Indeed, one of the greatest tests of democratic leadership is the capacity to distinguish criticism from antagonism.

History also offers a useful lesson. During Pope John Paul II's 1998 visit to Nigeria, he spoke candidly on democracy, justice and human rights in the presence of General Sani Abacha. His forthright message was received as the counsel of a moral leader rather than as partisan political interference. Following in the legacy of his predecessors in the papacy, Pope Leo XIV has been advocating for a new world order—one founded not on military might, economic domination or geopolitical rivalry, but on peace, justice, human dignity, solidarity and respect for the sovereignty of nations.

This moral mission of the Catholic Church should guide public reactions to the meeting between Nigeria's Catholic bishops and President Tinubu. While the Presidency may disagree with the Bishops' position on the state of affairs, it would do well to focus less on the messenger and more on the message. The concerns expressed by the bishops are neither imaginary nor isolated. They are realities or perception that cannot be wished away through political rebuttals.

The measure of democratic maturity is not the absence of criticism but the willingness of those in authority to listen. President Tinubu's administration should regard the bishops' intervention as an opportunity for reflection rather than a challenge to its legitimacy.

Nigeria stands to gain when government and moral institutions engage each other with mutual respect in the shared pursuit of justice, peace and the common good.

LETTER

Jabi Lake: A Significant Economic, Tourist & Cultural Asset

EVERY city has places that embody its essence, places that become synonymous with its name and culture, places that shape how people experience it. For Abuja, Jabi Lake has long been one of them. Over the years, it has evolved into one of the capital's best-known recreational spaces, attracting families, residents, businesses, and visitors alike. Yet despite its popularity, much of its long-term economic, tourism, and cultural potential remains untapped.

Look closely at what has already happened there. Families arrive on Saturday mornings before the sun gets high. Vendors set up along the edges, selling keepsakes to people who have come to experience the city and want to reminisce about memories made long after life has resumed its usual pace. Children run the way children usually do—freely, without worries. None of this was designed by anyone. It happened because the lake gradually morphed into a sanctuary from life's frazzling pace, and people, once they discover a haven rarely need a second invitation.

This is not unique to Abuja. Water has drawn people first and planners second for as long as cities have existed; settlements formed at the water's edge long before anyone called it urban design. Jabi Lake is simply the latest chapter in a pattern as old as civilisation itself. What is unique is the opportu-

nity now in front of Nigeria: to take a natural asset that already draws people in, and build around it deliberately, so that its value multiplies rather than erodes. This is the rationale behind the transformation of Jabi Lake under Akida Hills' ongoing waterfront destination development project.

Akida Hills, the Nigerian mixed-use real estate and destination development company, is transforming a 3.36-hectare section of the broader 14-hectare waterfront district into a phased leisure and tourism destination designed to unlock the lake's long-term potential. It is a vision worth examining through the three lenses that matter most to Nigerians today: economic opportunity, tourism potential, and cultural significance.

An economic opportunity beyond the waterfront

It is tempting to speak of the ongoing Jabi Lake development purely in aesthetic terms, but the economic case is where the real argument lies. A destination of this scale creates a chain of activity that reaches far beyond the waterfront itself.

During construction, the project draws on engineers, project managers, logistics providers, and skilled trades people, many of them Nigerian professionals working on a scale of ambition rarely available at home. Once operational, the destination

sustains an entirely different ecosystem, a circuit of four sectors that have the immense potential to boost Nigeria's revenue and those of its denizens significantly: the hospitality sector, the tourism sector, the creative sector and the informal sector. For context, the restaurant industry in Nigeria—a fragment of the hospitality sector—was reported to generate \$24 billion in annual revenue in 2023 alone. In the same year, domestic tourism generated \$15.2 billion. UN Tourism recorded a 21% growth in the Nigeria's international tourism in 2022, with international tourist spending in the same year reported to be \$3.1 billion.

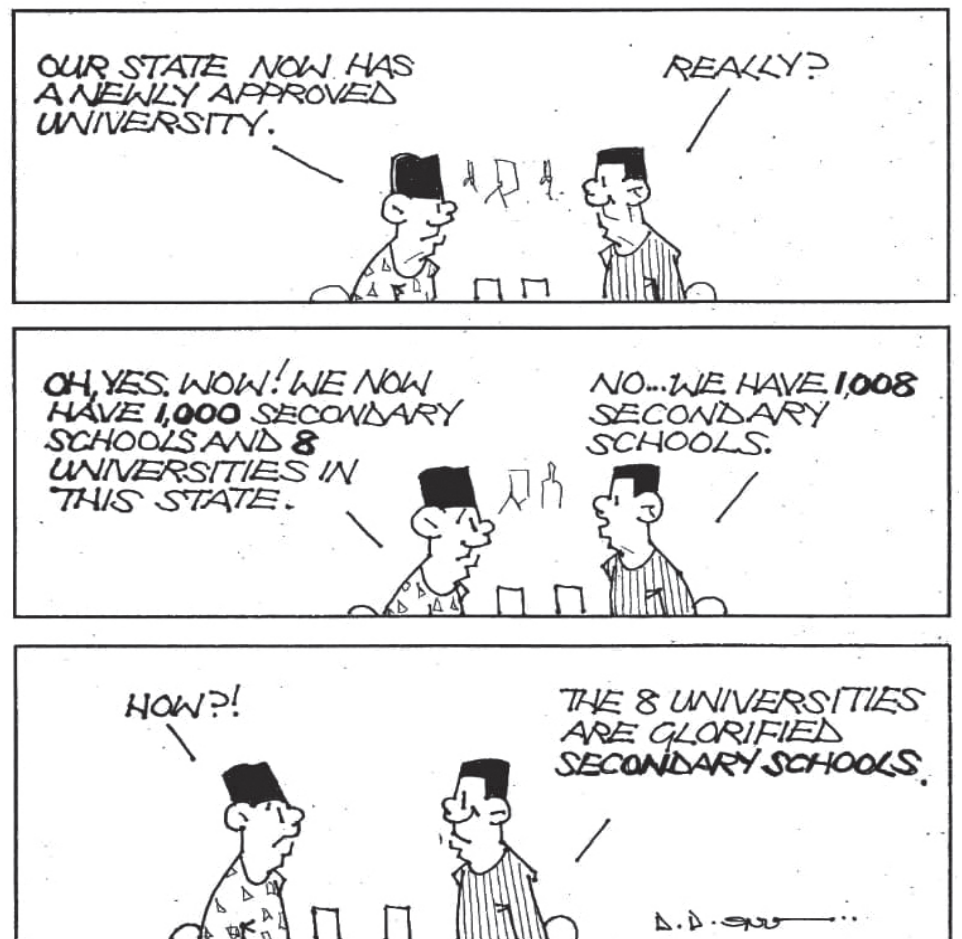
Now imagine the strength of all four sectors combined. This is the strength of destination-led development. It generates recurring economic activity, year after year, for as long as people keep coming back.

Unlocking Abuja's tourism potential

Nigeria's tourism potential is often discussed and rarely converted into infrastructure. The country has the culture, climate, and landscapes, but tourists do not travel for potential. They travel for experiences that are built, marketed, and maintained.

• *Olawale Johnson, a Real Estate advisor, wrote from Lagos.*

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Opinion

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Osun Election: A Strategic Setback Or A Political Defeat?

By Sola Adeola

THE political arguments surrounding the outcome are far from over. Senator Ademola Adeleke has emerged victorious, and naturally, his supporters are celebrating. For others, however, the result has become an opportunity to declare the collapse of the APC and predict the political future of Nigeria ahead of 2027.

But, perhaps we need to pause.

Beyond the celebrations, accusations and political noise, there is a need for sober reflection. Elections are not won or lost in isolation, and a single electoral outcome should not be stretched beyond what the facts can reasonably support.

The Osun result is undoubtedly significant, but the bigger question is what it actually represents. Is it evidence of a weakening APC, a rejection of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, or simply a setback in one state?

This is why the Osun outcome deserves more than The dust is gradually settling on the Osun election, celebration or lamentation. It deserves analysis, context and a proper understanding of the difference between a strategic setback and a political defeat.

For those who have repeatedly described President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as desperate for power or determined to control every election, I would ask a simple question. If President Tinubu were truly as desperate as some claim, and if he genuinely possessed the kind of unlimited federal political machinery attributed to him, would Osun State have been won by the opposition?

I doubt it.

The Osun outcome should remind us that Nigerian democracy is considerably more complex than the narratives we sometimes construct on social media. Electoral outcomes are influenced by several factors, including local political structures, candidates, alliances, voter preferences, grassroots mobilisation, party organisation and the performance and popularity of individual candidates.

Not every electoral outcome can be attributed to federal interference. Equally, not every victory should automatically be interpreted as evidence of a hidden political agenda.

The APC may have suffered an electoral setback in Osun. That is undeniable. But describing one state election as evidence of the collapse of the APC, or as a definitive rejection of President Tinubu ahead of 2027, is a much bigger claim.

Politics is about strategy, positioning and timing.

A party can lose an election and still learn valuable lessons from it. It can reassess its strategy, strengthen its structures, identify weaknesses and prepare differently for the next contest. Political history is filled with examples of parties and politicians who suffered electoral defeats only to return stronger. A particularly striking example can be found outside Nigeria. Donald Trump lost the 2020 United States presidential election after his first term in office. Yet four years later, he returned to win the 2024 presidential election and became

only the second president in American history to serve two nonconsecutive terms.

The point is not that Osun is the same as the United States. It clearly is not. The political systems, electoral structures and circumstances are entirely different.

The lesson is much simpler. Today's electoral setback does not necessarily determine tomorrow's political outcome.

Trump's political comeback demonstrates how dramatically political fortunes can change between elections. A politician or political party that suffers a setback can reassess its strategy, reconnect with voters, strengthen its structures and return with a different political proposition.

That is why those celebrating the Osun result as though it has already determined the fate of the APC in 2027 may be celebrating too early.

Likewise, those within the APC who are tempted to dismiss the result simply because it is uncomfortable may also be missing the lesson.

Every election is a message.

The wise political actor listens to the message, studies the numbers, understands the voters and adjusts accordingly.

Therefore, the question should not simply be who won Osun. We already know the answer.

The more important questions are why did the APC lose, what lessons will it draw from the outcome, what factors produced Adeleke's victory, how will the various political actors respond and what does the result actually tell us about the political landscape ahead of 2027?

Those are the questions serious political analysts should be asking.

Interestingly, some people are already celebrating the Osun result as though it has settled the political future of Nigeria. That is premature.

The enthusiasm surrounding the result should nevertheless be tempered with political realism. An opposition victory in one state does not automatically translate into a national political realignment.

Some have presented the result as confirmation that the political structure supporting President Tinubu has collapsed. Others are celebrating as though the 2027 presidential election has already been conducted. Political enthusiasm is understandable, but political analysis requires restraint.

Osun is important, but Nigeria is a federation of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, with different political realities, interests, personalities and voting patterns.

What happens in Osun cannot automatically be extrapolated to Lagos, Ondo, Oyo, Kano, Rivers, Kaduna, Anambra, Enugu, Delta or any other state.

Every state has its own political dynamics.

Nigeria has several registered political parties, but participation in an election does not necessarily translate into meaningful electoral influence.

Looking at the Osun contest, the major political battle was essentially between the two dominant political forces. Other parties participated and contributed to the democratic process, but their overall impact on the final outcome was comparatively limited.

This raises an important question. Are some political parties genuinely building structures capable of competing nationally, or are they primarily occupying political space and generating noise without developing the grassroots machinery required to win elections?

Politics is not won by social media popularity alone.

It is won through organisation.

It is won through mobilisation.

It is won through candidates who can connect with voters.

It is won through political structures that operate beyond the internet.

And perhaps most importantly, it is won by understanding the aspirations and frustrations of ordinary voters.

President Tinubu can and should be criticised where criticism is justified.

No elected leader is above scrutiny.

The same principle applies to every political leader, including President Tinubu, Peter Obi, Atiku Abubakar and other prominent figures. No political leader should be beyond criticism, and no political supporter should be expected to surrender critical thinking because of political loyalty.

Democracy requires room for disagreement.

If President Tinubu has failed in an area, Nigerians should say so. If his administration has achieved something worthy of recognition, that should also be acknowledged.

Likewise, if Peter Obi, Atiku Abubakar or any other political leader makes a political miscalculation, supporters should be mature enough to examine it objectively.

Political loyalty should not become intellectual captivity.

We cannot build a healthy democracy by creating political personalities who are beyond criticism.

Those who have followed President Tinubu's political journey know that he is not a newcomer to political battles.

From his years as a political strategist and governor to his role in the evolution of political alliances and the emergence of the APC, Tinubu has demonstrated an ability to understand political structures, build alliances and survive difficult political moments.

That does not make him infallible.

It simply means that it would be a mistake to underestimate his political instincts. His administration should be judged on its record, its achievements, its failures, its policies, its consequences for Nigerians and the realities within which it is operating.

The same standard should apply to his opponents.

Facts should matter more than political hatred.

Being objective also means acknowledging the winner.

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China As Industrial Powerhouse Of The Globe: Takes For Nigeria

By Joseph Onyekwere

THERE is an old saying that seeing is believing. Before my recent visit to the People's Republic of China for the first time, I had read countless reports about the country's phenomenal rise from a largely agrarian society into the world's manufacturing giant. But nothing prepared me for what I witnessed firsthand. The journey was not merely a tour of cities and industries; it was an immersion into a nation that has transformed innovation into a culture, technology into a way of life, and development into a national obsession.

From the moment our media delegation landed at Beijing's ultra-modern airport, one fact became obvious: China is no longer simply manufacturing goods for the world; it is manufacturing the future. Automated systems seamlessly handled immigration procedures, while efficiency, orderliness, and precision defined every part of the arrival process. It was an early indication of a country that has mastered the art of combining technology with everyday living.

Our first major destination was the Great Wall of China. Standing atop one of humanity's greatest engineering achievements, I reflected on the extraordinary vision of a civilisation that, centuries ago, constructed thousands of kilometres of defensive walls across rugged mountains. Climbing to the 9th fortress was physically demanding, but it also served as a reminder that great nations are built on determination, sacrifice, and long-term thinking.

The journey then took us to Shenzhen – a city whose story perhaps best captures China's transformation. Once a modest fishing village, Shenzhen has evolved into one of the world's leading innovation hubs through deliberate planning, visionary leadership, and consistent policy implementation. Today, it stands as a modern metropolis where skyscrapers blend harmoniously with parks, efficient transport systems, and clean streets. The city demonstrates that rapid urbanisation need not come at the expense of environmental sustainability.

Nowhere was China's technological ambition more evident than at the headquarters of BYD – “Build Your Dream.” What began in 1995 as a battery manufacturer has become one of the world's leading producers of electric vehicles and renewable energy technologies.

The company showcases electric vehicles powered by revolutionary Blade Batteries renowned for safety, durability, and remarkable performance. Engineers demonstrated how the batteries withstand extreme impact without exploding and continue operating efficiently even under freezing temperatures. More astonishing was the company's latest charging technology capable of delivering hundreds of kilometres of driving range within minutes.

The story of BYD is more than a corporate success. It reflects China's unwavering commitment to research, development, and technological independence. Rather than depending on

imported technologies, Chinese companies are investing heavily in innovation and intellectual property, enabling them to compete globally in high-value industries.

Equally remarkable was our visit to DJI, the global leader in drone technology. What started in a small Shenzhen office has grown into a multinational enterprise whose products are transforming filmmaking, agriculture, emergency response, environmental conservation, energy infrastructure, and scientific research across the globe.

The philosophy driving DJI is simple yet profound: transform sophisticated technology into tools that ordinary people can use creatively. It is this combination of research, imagination, and practical application that continues to propel Chinese technology onto the world stage.

Beyond technology, China's engineering ingenuity was spectacularly displayed during a boat tour across Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Macau. The famous Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau transport corridor represents engineering at its finest. Parts of the crossing disappear beneath the sea, allowing uninterrupted passage for some of the world's busiest shipping lanes while ensuring aircraft can safely access nearby Hong Kong International Airport.

Rather than allowing geographical limitations to dictate development, China simply engineered solutions around them. It is a philosophy that has become the hallmark of Chinese infrastructure development.

Another unforgettable experience was visiting

Shenzhen Television Station. The sophisticated broadcasting facilities, virtual studios, and digital production technologies illustrated how seriously China invests in modern communication infrastructure. The media sector itself reflects the country's broader technological advancement.

The visit to Guangzhou in Guangdong Province further reinforced China's development story. Ancient cultural heritage coexists beautifully with futuristic skylines, demonstrating that modernisation does not require abandoning history or cultural identity. Chinese civilisation proudly preserves its traditions while embracing innovation.

Officials at the Guangdong Provincial Foreign Affairs Office provided remarkable statistics illustrating the province's economic transformation. Guangdong remains China's foremost economic powerhouse, maintaining the country's highest foreign trade volume for decades while establishing trade relations with over 210 countries and regions.

Its economy, valued at over 14 trillion yuan, rivals that of many developed nations. Equally significant is Guangdong's emphasis on public welfare through investments in schools, hospitals, parks, housing, and transportation; enduring economic prosperity translates into improved living standards.

• Onyekwere, a lawyer, is the Deputy Editor, Features, Law and Foreign Affairs at The Guardian.

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Residents Decry Abandonment Of Ijora Road Reconstruction

By **Gbenga Salau**

FOR many residents of Ijora, Badia and Ajegunle, it was great excitement when they heard the Federal Government has awarded the reconstruction of the Costain-Ijora-Marine Beach Road, but it later became a thing of worry for many as no contractor moved to site.

Finally in late 2025, the contractor finally moved to site despite he had been paid since august 2024. His movement was alleged to be a product of some advocacies after some persons got wind that the contractor has been paid.

However, months after moving to site, a considerable section of the road has been reconstructed, some sections have not been reconstructed. From Marine Beach area inwards the Ijora-Badia Roadabout, especially 7up corridor, sections of it have not been reconstructed, leaving the road with varied sizes of potholes and stone filled road.

Also, two portions of a section of that same road, the area before the National Theatre Bridge, inward Costain Bus Stop were not reconstructed. They were filled with varied sizes of stones and one of the portions is already dotted with assorted

potholes.

Commenting on the state of the road, especially the non-completion of the Ijora-badia axis, a concerned citizen on facebook, Olatunji Subair, said: “The one done is of a poor quality road. It is already failing in front of First Bank and they failed to construct a drainage on the side.” He wondered who the person that got the contract and the same supervisor in the ministry who approved the job, alleging that the contractor could be a quack for doing a poor job.

Also, commenting, Bukola Ojo stated that it is ironical that the contractor came to site months after he got paid and only to do a shoddy job. “Or, how do we call this when the job that was given was not only completed, it was done haphazardly. If you about to climb the National Theatre bridge, meters to the mouth of the bridge was not done. At late night, louts often loiter around that area, sometimes to beg for money in the day but to rob motorists in the night. This is because that bad portion forces every motorists to slow down completely and move at snail speed.”

Ojo, therefore, pleaded with the Federal Government, especially the Federal Ministry of Works to urgently get the contractor to return to site to complete the work it started along that corridor.



Ijora 7up section of the road



National Theatre Bridge section of the road

Property Practitioners Lament Bottlenecks With Land Registration, Implore LASG To Offer Explanation

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

STAKEHOLDERS in the property sector has raised the alarm over the excruciating pains they go through in getting land titles documented with Lagos State government. They claimed, this is despite the state government said it has digitized the process.

A concerned practitioner said: “For the past three years, the Lagos State government’s online portal for land title registration has reportedly remained dysfunctional, making it extremely difficult for property owners, developers, and investors to successfully register their titles.

“The repeated excuse that the portal is not functioning has resulted in a serious backlog, with little or no progress on new title registrations. This situation is creating unnecessary difficulties for developers and investors who need properly registered titles to proceed with transactions, secure financ-

ing, develop their properties, and conduct business with confidence.

“The question is: why has this issue been allowed to continue for so long? Why is the Governor not addressing this situation? Why is the Registrar of Titles silent? Why has the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands not provided a clear solution or timeline for resolving the problem?”

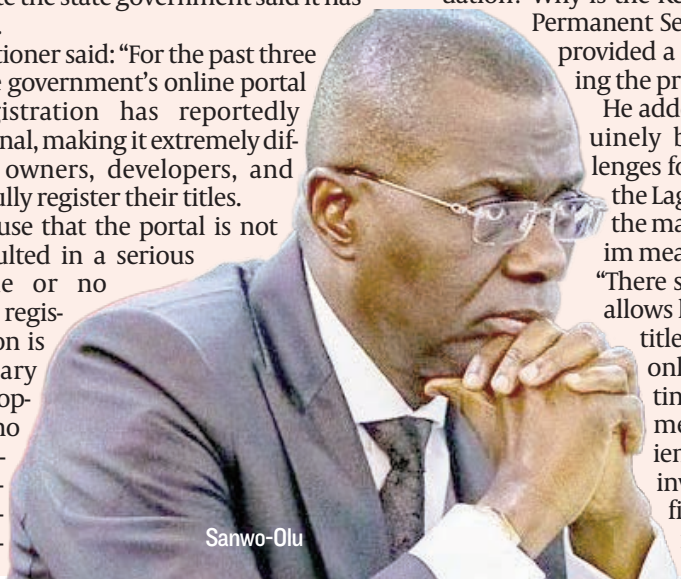
He added that if the online system has genuinely been experiencing technical challenges for such an extended period, why has the Lagos State Government not reverted to the manual registration process as an interim measure?

“There should be a practical alternative that allows legitimate property transactions and title registrations to continue while the online platform is being fixed. The continued inability to register titles is not merely an administrative inconvenience. It has serious implications for investors, developers, property owners, financial institutions, and the wider real estate sector.

“It is therefore important for the Lagos State Government to provide transparency on the situation and explain: What exactly is responsible for the prolonged failure of the online registration portal?, What steps are being taken to resolve the problem?, When will the portal become fully functional?, Why has an alternative manual registration process not been provided?, What measures are being put in place to clear the backlog of pending registrations?”

He maintained that the Lagos real estate sector cannot operate efficiently when title registration is effectively stalled for years. “We need answers, accountability, and an immediate solution. If the online system is not working, then the Government should provide a functional alternative. Developers and investors should not continue to bear the consequences of an administrative or technological failure that is beyond their control.”

The issues raised by the practitioners were taken to the Land Bureau for comment and clarification. As a result, the Public Relations Officer of the agency, Mr. Adeola Dayo Harry was contacted. He provided the details of the practitioners’ concerns. He claimed he was on leave and so, he was told to provide the person who could comment on the issues, he promised to get back, but he has not as at press time.



Sanwo-Olu

Upholding Standardisation In Patient Screening Is Our Watchword – HEFAMAA

By **Gbenga Salau**

THE Health Facilities Monitoring and Accreditation Agency (HEFAMAA) has emphasised the need for strict adherence to established protocols and effective communication in the screening and management of patients within the health sector.

The Executive Secretary of HEFAMAA, Dr. Victoria Egunjobi, stated this when she received members of the Nigerian Optometric Association (NOA), Lagos Chapter, who paid a courtesy visit to the agency to introduce the newly inaugurated Executive Committee and discuss issues of mutual interest.

In her welcome remarks, Egunjobi stressed that strict compliance with standard protocols during patient screening, coupled with effective communication between healthcare providers and patients, would significantly reduce avoidable challenges and misunderstandings in healthcare deliv-

ery.

She said: “There is a need for us, as practitioners in the health sector, to adhere strictly to protocols in screening. This is what we emphasise as an Agency. It will go a long way in ensuring that things are properly done at every stage before treatment is administered to a patient. There is also a need for issues to be well communicated between healthcare providers and patients, as well as among members of professional associations.”

The Executive Secretary further reiterated HEFAMAA’s commitment to promoting quality healthcare delivery through regulatory oversight, standardisation and collaboration with relevant professional bodies.

In her remarks, the newly inaugurated Chairperson of the Nigerian Optometric Association, Lagos Chapter, Dr. Ghenorhe Ehimen, appreciated the excellent working relationship between the Agency and the immediate past

Executive Committee of the Association. She pledged to build on the existing relationship and sustain the legacy of collaboration.

Ehimen also solicited the continued inclusion of representatives of the Association in HEFAMAA monitoring teams. She appealed to the Agency to support the Association’s efforts to curb quackery and indiscriminate vision screening across the State.

Responding to the requests, Egunjobi assured the NOA delegation that the Agency would look into the issues raised with a view to finding appropriate and mutually beneficial solutions.

She reaffirmed HEFAMAA’s commitment to strengthening collaboration with professional associations and other stakeholders in the health sector towards ensuring the delivery of safe, standardised and quality healthcare services to residents of Lagos State.

Lineage Of The Masters Celebrates Artistic Heritage At Grillo Museum

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

FIVE years after the passing of Professor Yusuf Adebayo Grillo and in commemoration of what would have been his 92nd birthday, the Yusuf Grillo Museum is set to host *Lineage Of Masters II: Continuity and Contemporary Expression*.

The show, which holds from October 24 to December 16, 2026, stands as both a tribute and a critical reflection on the enduring influence of one of Africa's most distinguished modern artists, educators, and cultural visionaries.

Grillo died on August 23, 2021.

He belonged to a pioneering generation of Nigerian artists who sought to establish a modern visual language capable of expressing African realities within contemporary contexts. Their contributions created foundations upon which subsequent generations continue to build.

For Mrs. Morayo Grillo Anthonio, the daughter of the late artist, on behalf of GRILLOArt Limited, organisers of the show, said it was conceived as an "international commemorative exhibition" marking the fifth anniversary of the transition of Grillo and celebrating his 92nd posthumous birthday.

She said the show is honoured to have representatives of three generations of Nigerian artists: "the pioneering generation of the 1960, to which my father belonged, the remarkable generation of the 1970s, represented by artists such as Kolade Oshinowo and Dele Jegede and the vibrant generation of the 1980s to the present, represented by artists such as Abiodun Olaku, Duke Asidere, Kunle Adeyemi and Kehinde Sanwo." Anthonio is more excited to have Kolade Oshinowo, Dele Jegede, Jerome Elaiho and the indefatigable Bruce Onobrakpeya showing their work, and is very hopeful that the platform "will become more than a commemorative gathering."

According to Adeyemi, "this exhibition seeks to create a meaningful dialogue between historical legacy and contemporary practice. Rather than positioning Yusuf Grillo solely as a historical figure, it presents him as an active presence within ongoing artistic discourse. His influence is examined not as a fixed narrative but as an evolving source of inspiration capable of generating new meanings and possibilities."

He said the exhibition also aims to foster intellectual exchange among artists, scholars, collectors, institutions, students, and audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds. "Through this exchange, participants will gain deeper insight into the ways artistic legacies continue to shape contemporary cultural production," he remarked.

An opinion also corroborated by Kehinde Sanwo, one of the curators. Sanwo said the exhibition explores "the enduring impact of his artistic, educational, and cultural contributions within contemporary visual art practice."

It is founded on the understanding that artistic influence extends beyond direct imitation. Legacy manifests through ideas, values, teaching methodologies, aesthetic principles, cultural com-

mitments, and intellectual traditions that continue to inspire artists across generations and geographical boundaries.

Grillo occupies a unique position in the history of Nigerian and African art. Emerging during a pivotal period in Nigeria's cultural development, he became one of the defining figures of modern Nigerian artistic practice.

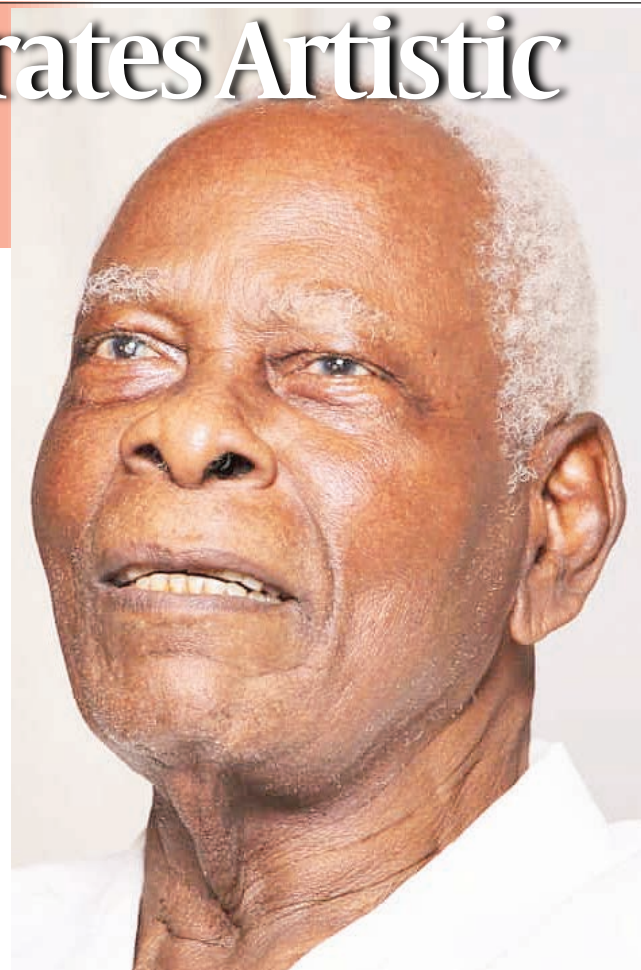
"Through his distinctive visual language, characterized by elegant compositions, architectural sensibilities, stylised figuration, and his celebrated use of luminous indigo-blue tonalities, Grillo established an artistic identity that was simultaneously modern, Trad-African, and deeply rooted in cultural consciousness," said Adeyemi: "Yet Grillo's significance extends far beyond aesthetics. As an educator, administrator, mentor, and former Head of Department, Director of the School of Art, Design and Printing at the Yaba College of Technology, he influenced generations of artists who continue to shape contemporary artistic discourse within Nigeria and across the global African diaspora. His commitment to excellence, intellectual rigor, cultural authenticity, and artistic innovation helped define the trajectory of contemporary Nigerian art for decades."

"This commemorative exhibition seeks to explore not only Grillo's artistic achievements but also the living legacy of his ideas. It asks a fundamental question: How does the influence of a great artist continue to resonate long after his physical departure? The participating contemporary artists have been selected because their practices reflect varying degrees of engagement with Grillo's legacy; while his professional colleague shared his philosophy and mindset. Some of today's contemporary artists were directly taught, mentored, or inspired by him. Others have encountered his influence through institutional histories, artistic traditions, cultural narratives, or the broader evolution of contemporary African art. Together, their works reveal how artistic legacies transcend generations, geographies, mediums, and ideologies."

Rather than presenting homage alone, this exhibition encourages dialogue between the past and present. It invites artists to respond critically, creatively, and imaginatively to the ideas, values, and visual philosophies associated with Yusuf Grillo through painting, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, photography, mixed media, installation, digital art, and interdisciplinary practices. The exhibition demonstrates how legacy functions as a living process of transmission, reinterpretation, and renewal.

The exhibition therefore becomes a site of memory, reflection, and creative continuity. It celebrates the remarkable contributions of Yusuf Grillo while simultaneously acknowledging the new artistic directions that emerged from his influence.

It is aimed that the exhibition will contribute to broader conversations concerning: The preservation of African artistic heritage. The documentation of influential cultural figures. The relationship between art history and contemporary practice. Cross-generational artistic dialogue. International cultural exchange.



Grillo.

PHOTO BY Benjamin Oladapo

The role of mentorship in creative development.

At a time when the contributions of African artists are receiving increasing global recognition, this exhibition provides an important opportunity to celebrate one of Nigeria's most influential cultural pioneers while simultaneously highlighting the artists whose practices continue to reflect, reinterpret, and expand the possibilities he helped to create.

Adeyemi said *Lineage Of Masters II: Continuity, and Contemporary Expression* is more than a commemorative exhibition. It is a platform for reflection, dialogue, and creative engagement. It recognizes that artistic legacies are not static monuments but living forces that continue to inspire innovation, challenge assumptions, and shape cultural futures.

"By bringing together distinguished artists from Nigeria and around the world, the exhibition celebrates the enduring relevance of Yusuf Grillo's vision and affirms the transformative power of art to connect generations, cultures, and ideas across time."

Sanwo noted that the inspiration for the show focuses on the ways artists absorb, reinterpret, and transform influences encountered throughout their creative journeys. Rather than viewing influence as replication, such that the "exhibition recognises inspiration as a dynamic process through which artists engage with existing ideas while developing unique voices of their own."

Tosin Adeyemi Deepens *Ebo* Narrative With Acting Finesse

By Samuel Osaze

THE strength of *Ebo* (The Offering) lies in its masterful treatment of the collage of themes that it centres. On stage, it depicts the dynamics of the female psyche, internal conflicts, perceptions and the way individuals assign different meanings to actions, gestures, and behavioral patterns.

As a contemporary play, *Ebo* further interrogates the complexities of friendship and questions the role of envy in stirring animosity, grappling with the thin line that demarcates friends from foes.

In an enchanting one-act play held on July 10 and 12, in Lagos, Tosin Adeyemi played the role of Simi Adeyinka-Cole, exuding class and depth. It was her first time doing a one-act play.

The enthralled audience was very much handy in the call and response aspects when the actor needed them. This is what makes *Ebo* an absorbing experience.

Written and directed by Bimbo Olorunmola and produced by B-Rated Productions, it was a triplicate show held on Friday by 5:00pm and twice on Sunday 5:00pm and 7:00pm, at the American Guest Quarters (GQ) on Oyinkan Abayomi Drive, Ikoyi, Lagos.

Ebo (The Offering) portrays a litany of internal



Tosin Adeyemi

conflicts of a woman named Simi Adeyinka-Cole. In her prime, Simi pours out her mind through a compelling monologue and phone calls. Using the call and response technique, she invites the audience to participate in the ensuing ruminations.

No doubts, watching *Ebo* prompts the question: "when a friend's achievement stirs deep intro-

spection or envy in you and perhaps, motivates you to take decisions on certain things, is this what is called witchcraft?"

Simi's loyalty with Kemi, her childhood friend of 23 years, comes under scrutiny when she finds out that, on the eve of Kemi's wedding, she has been assigned Table 11. This is the major conflict the play revolves around.

Simi, subsequently, delves into immersive contemplation, questioning what might be responsible for being pushed to the fringes. Why is she given the back seat at a supposedly best friend's wedding where she should ordinarily be one of the key players? It's through this self-analysis that the loyalty of Simi is tested and her mixed feelings towards her friend Kemi are brought to the front burners.

The layers of human nature, as reflected through the lens of a chronic spinster, are carefully peeled off. Depth, class, intensity and delicateness of friendship, are what make *Ebo* (The offering) relatable to the audience.

Simi talks emotionally about three types of Nigerian men.

Reflecting deeply on her past relationships, she recalls cherished moments and expresses desire for true and committed love. Thus, Simi becomes the subject of her pastor's Sunday ser-

mons. However, when she is assigned Table 11 at the wedding, by her friends—Kemi and aunty Ngozi, who know she needs a man to spice up her chequered life, Simi's interpretation of the gesture is unexpected. Suffering from the pain of losing a beloved friend to another person, Simi, nevertheless, decides to be at the wedding but insists: "The question is not whether I am going to the wedding but which version of me goes through that door."

Nollywood actor, Bimbo Manuel, was part of the audience. The film veteran conceded that the play was well-executed and brilliantly performed. "I liked that it was very organic and the use of other media (the music and phone messages) made that more real," he said.

"This is one of the boldest exploration of the psychology of the modern urban Nigerian young woman, her struggles, identity and the inner battles of conforming pitched against feminism," he observed.

Award-winning actress, producer and host, Amanda Oruh, said she learnt a lot while watching Tosin Adeyemi on stage. Oruh added that she was particularly fascinated by how the actor was able to transition seamlessly in telling the sto-

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Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by Shaibu Hussein

Kaduna International Film Festival Starts August 25

THE 9th Kaduna International Film Festival (KADIFF 2026) holds from August 25 to 29, 2026, in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Centred around the theme “Cultural Renaissance,” the five-day event features daily film screenings, masterclasses, panel discussions, and cultural activities, with Fedmas Studios’ *Nini* serving as the official opening film. Festival Director Israel Kashim Audu disclosed that the main venue of the festival is the Kaduna State University (KASU), Kaduna, Nigeria while film screenings will hold at Greyhobb, 31 Gwari Avenue, Barnawa, Kaduna, Nigeria.

A cultural night has been scheduled for Friday, August 28, 2026. Focused topics for the panel sessions include preserving indigenous languages through cinema and exploring the ethical use of artificial intelligence in African storytelling while the workshop and interactive sessions will feature digital broadcast training by S24 Television and an innovation interactive dialogue hosted alongside official partner MTN Nigeria. An award night will end the festival on August 29. Guest and honourees expected at the festival include Executive Director/CEO of the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), Dr. Shaibu Hussein; Managing Director, Nigerian Film Corporation, Ali Nuhu; Senator Shehu Sani and veteran actor Rabi’u Rikadawa. Preparations leading to the actualisation of the 2026 edition started with the official unveiling of the nominations which according to the KADIFF festival director is made up of films that celebrate outstanding achievements in African and international

cinem. More information on the festival can be sourced at www.kadunainternationalfilmfestival.com

MIPCOM Cannes To Host BBC, BBC Studio Leaders

MIPCOM, the world’s largest and most influential market and gateway to the international media and entertainment content business, have announced an exclusive headline conversation featuring three of the BBC and BBC Studios’ most influential creative leaders. The session, “From Idea to Global IP: Building Brands That Last” will bring together BBC’s Chief Content Officer, Kate Phillips, BBC Studios CEO and Chief Creative Officer Global Content, Zai Bennett, and BBC Studios CEO Brands & Licensing, Shelley Macintyre, for a deep dive into how exceptional storytelling evolves into globally recognised entertainment brands. Through the lens of globally recognised franchises including *Bluey*, *Doctor Who*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and *BBC Earth*, the conversation will examine the complete lifecycle of hit IP, from original development and international expansion

to licensing, brand extensions and cultivating passionate fan communities. The session will also explore

how broadcasters, producers and distributors can identify emerging opportunities and empower the storytellers shaping the future of entertainment.

The session will hold on Tuesday October 13 from 12:00-12:30 in the Grand Auditorium. Lucy Smith, Director of MIPCOM Cannes and MIPJUNIOR, said: “The ability to create enduring global brands has become one of the defining challenges and opportunities for every part of our industry. Few organizations have achieved this more consistently than the BBC, whose portfolio spans some of the world’s most recognized and beloved entertainment franchises. Bringing together Kate, Zai and Shelley offers MIPCOM audiences a unique opportunity to hear directly from the leaders shaping how world-class IP is created, expanded and sustained.” The session forms part of MIPCOM Cannes’ expanded conference programme, which convenes the industry’s leading executives, creators and innovators to explore the trends, partnerships and ideas shaping the future of global entertainment. MIPCOM Cannes, scheduled to hold

between October 12 to 15 is the world’s largest and most impactful market and gateway to the international media and content business, bringing

together studios, broadcasters, streaming platforms, distributors, creators, brands, and AI and technology companies from over 100 countries across an increasingly interconnected media landscape. It is where deals are made, partnerships take shape, and new content reaches global audiences.

Canon Firms Up Cinema EOS

CANON has announced a new free firmware update for the EOS C80 and EOS C400, delivering image quality, workflow and compatibility enhancements for professional filmmakers. Headlined by the introduction of Cinema Exposure Mode, the update reflects Canon’s ongoing commitment to evolving Cinema EOS products based on professional user feedback, helping customers get even more from their existing equipment. The latest firmware update introduces Cinema Exposure Mode, designed to improve highlight performance when shooting above base ISO levels (up to 2-stops), as well as providing a more streamlined camera menu specifically for log shooting.

This gives filmmakers greater flexibility in challenging shooting conditions while helping maximise image quality throughout post-production workflows. The EOS C400 also benefits from a range of workflow and usability enhancements, including Auto Exposure Ramping Compensation for smoother operation in broadcast and live production environments with supported Cine Servo lenses, alongside additional refinements that streamline day-to-day camera operation. Further expanding the Cinema EOS ecosystem, the update adds enhanced compatibility with the all-new and optically groundbreaking CN30x40 Cine Servo lens, strengthening integration across Canon’s professional imaging portfolio and providing greater flexibility for production teams. By adding meaningful new capabilities at no additional cost, Canon says it has continued to demonstrate its commitment to supporting professional creators long after purchase, ensuring the Cinema EOS platform continues to evolve in line with the needs of filmmakers



Kate Phillips BBC’s Chief Content Officer

Israel Kashim Audu

Senator Shehu Sanni expected at KADIFF

Pay TV Content: The Scary Logic Behind Moreplex’s Narrative

By Akinbobola Odelusi

BY September 22, when the Federal High Court in Port Harcourt resumes proceedings in the case involving Moreplex, the dispute will have acquired another layer of significance. Moreplex is facing criminal proceedings following allegations that it intercepted and retransmitted MultiChoice signals without authorisation. The matter arose from a 2024 petition by MultiChoice to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and led to Moreplex’s arraignment in June 2026. The allegations have not been proved and Moreplex remains entitled to the presumption of innocence.

But the case did not begin in a courtroom over alleged signal interception. It started much earlier, with a commercial disagreement over access to television channels. That distinction is important because the framing of Moreplex’s argument is like a six footer pistol-whipping a dwarf. In this version, MultiChoice is the six footer, while Moreplex is the dwarf simply asking for a chance to compete.

MultiChoice is a dominant player and there is nothing illegal about that. There is also nothing inherently wrong with wanting to take it on. The

country would benefit from stronger Nigerian-owned businesses investing in broadcasting, creating employment, developing local programming and giving viewers alternatives.

But there is another question that cannot be wished away in the name of competition. Where does the content come from and who actually owns the rights to it? That question takes the dispute back to 2020, when Metro Digital Limited approached MultiChoice seeking access to 54 channels. The company based its request on the Sixth Edition of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Code, including the controversial provisions requiring sublicensing.

MultiChoice refused. Its argument was not that Metro Digital was unworthy of competing, but that it did not own the rights necessary to grant the requested licences to Metro Digital. Granting them, it said, could expose it to claims from the actual rights owners and could ultimately jeopardise the channels themselves. Metro Digital challenged that position in court. In June 2021, the Federal High Court in Port Harcourt found that Metro Digital had not established that MultiChoice possessed the rights it was being asked

to sublicense. Metro Digital appealed. The regulatory foundation on which these demands rested was also tottering.

The NBC had amended its Sixth Edition Code in 2020 to introduce compulsory sublicensing. The amendment was challenged and in May 2022, the Federal High Court held that the Commission had exceeded its authority, nullified the amendment and restrained the NBC from enforcing it.

MultiChoice subsequently instituted its own action against the NBC. In January 2024, the Federal High Court again struck down the amendment and restrained the Commission from enforcing it.

There was yet another twist. In July 2022, the Court of Appeal directed the NBC to commence a process for resolving the Metro Digital dispute under the same Code. MultiChoice challenged that decision at the Supreme Court, where the matter remains pending.

This history is important because it shows that the argument was never as simple as “MultiChoice refuses to share its channels with Nigerian competitors.” There was a prior and unresolved question about whether MultiChoice could legally

provide what it was being asked to provide in the first place. Moreplex entered this already complicated terrain in January 2021, when it sought sublicensing for 10 channels from MultiChoice. Like Metro Digital, it relied on the disputed NBC Code and like Metro Digital, it was told that MultiChoice did not possess the relevant rights.

The issue resurfaced in March 2023, when Moreplex again sought sublicensing, this time citing the Court of Appeal judgment and an NBC directive. MultiChoice maintained its refusal, pointing to the nullification of the amended Code and its lack of ownership of the relevant rights. Moreplex then went to court against MultiChoice, the NBC and the Minister of Information. It sought an order compelling MultiChoice to provide the channels and claimed ₦500 million in damages. The court, in March 2024, held that MultiChoice was required to sublicense the requested channels under the Code and awarded Moreplex ₦200,000 in damages. MultiChoice appealed, meaning the matter was not thereby brought to a final conclusion.

But even if Moreplex ultimately succeeds in its argument over sublicensing, that does not answer the entirely

separate question of signal interception. This is where the current criminal proceedings become significant. During the earlier litigation, MultiChoice told the court that the channels Moreplex wanted were available through competitive bidding with their respective owners. In other words, there was another route to obtaining the content. This entails approaching the actual owners and negotiate for the rights.

That may be a more expensive or difficult route. It may even be one Moreplex believes should not be necessary. But commercial inconvenience is not the same thing as a licence to use somebody else’s property. The Metro Digital case again provides a useful backdrop. In 2024, MultiChoice petitioned the National Copyright Commission over what it described as unauthorised rebroadcasting by Metro Digital. It also went to the EFCC over alleged unlawful interception and retransmission of its signals. Criminal proceedings were subsequently brought against Metro Digital under the Cybercrimes Act.

MultiChoice later made a similar complaint against Moreplex. The EFCC subsequently instituted criminal

proceedings against the company, producing the case now before the Federal High Court in Port Harcourt. None of this means that Moreplex is guilty. It does, however, mean that the debate should not be conducted as though the only issue at stake is whether Nigeria’s smaller pay-TV operators should be allowed to compete with MultiChoice. They should. The more difficult question is the method by which that competition is pursued.

There is a reason broadcasters spend extraordinary amounts of money acquiring premium programming. Sports rights cost money. Movies cost money. Technology costs money. Transmission infrastructure costs money. Local productions require producers, writers, actors, technicians and other professionals to be paid. Somebody must carry those costs before a viewer ever sits down in front of a television. If another platform can simply take the finished signal and sell it to its own subscribers without paying for the underlying rights, the investment model becomes difficult to sustain.

Consider premium football. A broadcaster spends heavily to acquire the rights and then builds a subscription business around them.

How IP Protection Can Unlock Investment, Create Business Opportunities In Music Industry

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

RECENTLY, the U.S. Consulate General in Lagos convened more than 120 intellectual property (IP) policymakers, lawyers, music executives, artists, producers, distributors, and other creative industry stakeholders for a three-day workshop exploring how stronger IP protection can unlock investment, expand revenues, and create new commercial opportunities for American businesses and Nigeria's rapidly growing music industry.

At the event, which was part of the U.S. Mission's celebration of 250 years of independence, it brought decades of experience in building a music industry that has turned the country's creative industry into a global economic force.

Titled, 'IP for Growth in Africa: Lagos Music Industry Workshop,' it provided an opportunity to highlight America's excellence and experience in the creative sector while learning from the talent and innovation coming out of Nigeria.

The U.S. Consul General Brandon Hudspeth underscored the growing commercial partnership between the American and Nigerian music industries, noting that U.S. record labels including Universal Music Group, EMPIRE, Sony, and Warner Music Group, as well as platforms such as YouTube, Meta and Apple Music have helped Nigerian artists reach global audiences generate revenue, attract investment and create jobs across the creative value chain.

"The United States sees Nigeria's music industry not only as a powerful cultural force, but as a significant trade and investment oppor-



tunity. As Afrobeats reaches more listeners around the world, we will continue to see more American music companies work with more Nigerian artists, labels, publishers, platforms, and other creative businesses," Hudspeth said.

He emphasised that strong IP protection and enforcement are essential to creating the certainty that U.S. music companies need to enter partnerships, finance projects, develop new markets, and invest for the long term.

Hudspeth added, "for Nigeria, strong IP protection gives U.S. investors greater confidence,

gives creators greater control over their work, and creates the conditions for businesses on both sides of the Atlantic to invest, partner, and grow."

The event was organised in partnership with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO); the U.S. Mission in Geneva; and the Nigerian alumni of the American Music Mentorship Programme (AMMP), a U.S. government exchange programme implemented in partnership with the Recording Academy, the organisation behind the GRAMMY Awards.

The 10 Nigerian alumni of the AMMP

exchange programme brought their U.S. and Nigerian music industry experience, insights, and professional networks to the discussions, while panelists highlighted partnerships, such as Universal Music Group-Mavin and EMPIRE-YBNL as models of U.S.-Nigeria commercial collaboration that have helped propel Nigerian Afrobeats to global audiences, expanding market access, while creating new revenue streams that benefit both countries.

Speakers and panelists at the event, including Director General, National Council for Arts and Culture, Obi Asika; Director General, Nigeria Copyright Commission, Dr. John Asein; Director, World Intellectual Property Organisation Nigeria Country Office, Dr. Tobi Moody; Lagos State Commissioner for Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade and Investment, Mrs. Folashade Ambrose-Medebem; and representatives of leading American music companies operating in Nigeria, examined the legal and commercial foundations of a sustainable music industry. They discussed topics covering copyright ownership, royalty systems, IP enforcement, licensing, contracts, music monetization, streaming, publishing, and international market access.

The U.S. government is committed to supporting bilateral and multilateral initiatives such as this workshop to bring together the music industry professionals who innovate, create, and build, as well as policymakers and industry leaders to discuss building a sustainable music business that enjoys strong IP protections.

NEMCEA 2026: EMCOAN Seeks Sustainable Future For Content Creators

By Ruth Ononye

THE Electronic Media Content Owners Association of Nigeria (EMCOAN) has called for greater investment and institutional support for content creators, saying the growth of Nigeria's creator economy must translate into sustainable income and long-term opportunities for practitioners.

The association made the call at the media briefing to announce activities planned for Nigerian Electronic Media Content Exhibition and Awards (NEMCEA)2026. The fifth in the series since the programme started, it is themed, 'The Creator's Economy Elevate Your Craft, Secure Your Future.'

The event, organised by EMCOAN, brought together media organizations, broadcasters, content producers, regulators, sponsors and other stakeholders in the creative industry.

Speaking at the event, the President of EMCOAN, Adeniji Omirin, said technological developments, including artificial intelligence, streaming platforms, social media

and digital broadcasting, had significantly transformed the way content was created, distributed and consumed. He said the expansion of the digital space had created new opportunities for creators but stressed the need to move beyond the pursuit of visibility and viral content to building sustainable businesses. According to him, creators must be equipped with the knowledge, resources and structures required to protect their intellectual property, monetize their work and secure their future in an

increasingly competitive industry.

The association also highlighted insurance and risk management as critical areas requiring greater attention, noting that content producers and media practitioners faced risks involving equipment, intellectual property, liability and business interruption.

The issue of Digital Switch Over (DSO), audience measurement and the future of Free TV also featured prominently at the briefing.

Representatives of the

National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) highlighted the opportunities available through Free TV, noting that viewers could access about 100 channels without subscription through the appropriate decoder.

The commission also encouraged Nigerian content creators to explore opportunities to have their productions featured on the platform, describing it as another avenue for African content to reach wider audiences.

MCSN Warns Public, Music Users On Licence Payment

By Ruth Ononye

THE Musical Copyright Society of Nigeria Ltd/Gte (MCSN) has warned the general public and all those who exploit music in their businesses to be very careful not to pay imposters for licence for the use of music. The warning, the Society said, is necessary now because there is evidence that a certain organisation and individuals are taking advantage of unsuspecting users of music in the name of granting them licence, which they have no authority or approval to do so.

MCSN stated that this organisation's licence to operate as a Collective Management Organisation (CMO) expired in 2018 when its licence was suspended and eventually expired "by effluxion of time."

Aside from the expiration of the licence, the Federal High Court on March 25, 2020, in a judgment by Justice Saidu, ordered the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) to strike off the name of the organisation from the companies register in Nigeria.

The Court of Appeal, on July 6, 2026, in a unanimous decision, affirmed the ruling of the Federal High Court and stated clearly that the organisation had no licence in the first place before coming to court to seek injunction. "Only an existing and valid licence could be revoked and that there was no basis for granting an injunction restraining the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) from revoking a licence that no longer existed."

MCSN, therefore, warned the public not to pay any money to the defunct Society as doing so will amount to sheer waste of resources as MCSN being the only approved Society to licence musical works for exploitation will come after any hotel, lounge, event centre, cinema, discotheque, bar, radio and television stations, telcos, digital and online platforms and any other entity that exploit music for its business without a licence from it (MCSN).



Prof. Dayo Duyile (left), Oghenemairo Adegeye, Prince Ebenezer Adeniyen, Rt. Rev. Prof Sunday Obeka, Olori Comfort Olayinka Kiladejo, Hon. Mrs. Yinka Akinfolarin, Dr. Hakeem Oladipo Oyeneyin, Mrs. Jadesola, Prince Olufemi Adegeye, Tolu Akinbohun, Prof. Mrs Nireti Duyilemi at the official unveiling of Realitylife Magazine Studio Ondo City

UNITED Nigeria Airlines has pledged N20 million to sponsor the yearly Chinua Achebe Prize for Fiction, administered by the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) for the next 10 years. The deal was disclosed by the executive chairman of the airline, Professor Obiora Okonkwo, following a discussion with the ANA president, Dr. Usman Akanbi.

Under the arrangement, the airline will provide N2 million every year for the next 10 years to ANA, bringing the total sponsorship to N20 million, a commitment the association says would guarantee the continuation of

United Nigeria Lifts Achebe Prize

the prize regardless of the change in the state government.

The yearly award which was initiated by the Anambra State government in 2021 in conjunction with the ANA leadership, has faced financial constraints in the last three years following the failure of the state government to continue its sponsorship.

Though the Governor Willie Obiano administration began the sponsorship with one million naira, the Governor Chukwuma Soludo administration that succeeded it in 2022

continued the sponsorship and agreed to ANA's request to double it in consideration of inflation and administrative costs like payments to judges. However, after two years, the organisers say the state government appears to have lost interest in continuing with the sponsorship despite several letters reminding it of its promise.

Announcing the airline's decision to step in, Dr. Akanbi quoted Prof Okonkwo as saying: "Prof Achebe is too precious in our consciousness for the award to continue to suffer the

current epileptic funding."

Speaking on why the airline made the decision to take over the sponsorship, Prof. Okonkwo said that Achebe's legacy demands this level of commitment.

"Very few men and women of letters and culture in recent history", he stated, "have brought as much attention and honour to the black race and the African world as the great Achebe through his writings, lectures, speeches, intellectual activism, ethical conduct, and intermittent interventions

in political affairs which has made him an authentic conscience of the Nigerian people.

Reacting to the sponsorship, the ANA president, who is a senior academic at the University of Ilorin in Kwara State said: "We are immensely grateful to Prof. Okonkwo and his airline for their patriotic intervention."

Chinua Achebe was born in Eastern Nigeria in 1930. He went to the local public schools and was among the first students to graduate from the University of Ibadan.

Goldberg Unveils Iconic Talking Drum Above Cocoa House

By Daniel Anazia

FOR generations, Cocoa House has been one of the defining features of the Ibadan skyline, standing as a reminder of the ambition and enterprise that shaped the city and the wider Western Region.

On Friday, August 7, premium, award-winning pale lager, Goldberg, unveiled a monumental talking drum installation above the iconic 26-storey building, bringing one of Yoruba culture's most recognisable symbols to one of Nigeria's most historic structures.

The unveiling brought together two important parts of the region's story. The talking drum has long played a role in Yoruba communication, celebration and storytelling, while Cocoa House, completed in 1965, remains a landmark of indigenous enterprise.

The decision to bring the two together speaks to a shared history of identity, ambition and cultural expression. The talking drum was not simply an instrument for entertainment. Skilled drummers used changes in pitch and rhythm to convey praise, proverbs, announcements and messages, allowing stories and information to travel across communities.



Speaking on the significance of the installation, Abduallahman Yinusa, Group Managing Director/CEO, Odu'a Investment, described the drum as a new chapter in the story of a building that has represented the region's ambition for more than six decades.

He said, "For over six decades, Cocoa House has been the most visible testament to the vision of our founding fathers – the progressive leaders of the Southwest who dared to build an indigenous economic empire. This build-

ing has weathered many storms, witnessed history and remained the enduring face of our collective ambition."

"We have not merely added a structure to the roof; we have crowned Cocoa House with a talking drum of our civilisation as a Yoruba people. The talking drum does not merely make sound. It speaks. It speaks proverbs, conveys emotions, announces the presence of royalty and reminds us of our togetherness as a community."

DOTTi The Deity Unveils Sophomore Album, *Cocoa Hue*

By Daniel Anazia

SINGER, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, DOTTi The Deity, is set to release his highly anticipated sophomore album, *Cocoa Hue*, on August 28. A deeply personal and expansive body of work, *Cocoa Hue* is an expression of the different flavours born from DOTTi's eclectic influences and experiences.

Across its 12 tracks, the album moves fluidly through sounds, moods and stories, drawing from the rich intersection of African musical traditions, contemporary Nigerian music, soul, jazz, gospel, pop and Yoruba cultural influences.

It brings together an exceptional cast of collaborators, including legendary Fuji musician Adewale Ayuba, songwriter Shorae Moore, multi-instrumentalist and Afrobeat exponent Mádé Kuti, and rapper, lyricist and Big Brother Naija winner Laycon.

Behind the sound is an equally distinguished production team. The album is primarily produced by SiBU, with additional production by acclaimed producer Duktör Sett and guest/producer and songwriter Cobhams Asuquo. Together, they help create a sonic landscape that allows DOTTi's versatility, musicianship and storytelling to take centre stage.

More than simply a collection of songs, *Cocoa Hue* is designed as an immersive journey. The album's title speaks to its central idea – just as cocoa can be transformed into different flavours, textures and experiences, DOTTi's music draws from the many colours of his artistic identity and the experiences that have shaped him.

In the months leading to its release, DOTTi The Deity has taken *Cocoa Hue* beyond traditional listening sessions through the Cocoa Circuit, a pre-release experience that brought the album into homes and communities.



DOTTi

Lami Ends Six-year Hiatus, Returns With Soul-stirring Single, *Broken Crayon*

By Daniel Anazia

AFTER a deliberate six-year hiatus from the active recording scene, singer-songwriter and actress, Lami Phillips, is officially stepping back into the spotlight. The celebrated vocal powerhouse and music therapist is making a highly anticipated return to music with the release of her new single, *Broken Crayons*, signaling the beginning of a fresh chapter in a career defined by authenticity, soul and artistic depth.

Phillips, who is also United Nations (UN) envoy and Oxfam Ambassador for Women and Youths, said the new song and the documentary were inspired by observation. "I have always been fascinated by people; how we think, how we make decisions, the things we normalise, the identities we construct and the stories we tell ourselves. *Broken Crayons* is really an invitation to stop, to look again and to ask better questions," she disclosed.

Known for her distinctively rich vocal texture and emotionally driven songwriting, Phillips' return is not merely a comeback to the charts; it is a creative rebirth for an artiste who has spent her career using music as a vehicle for healing, empowerment, and social commentary.

According to Phillips, the song looks at a world that is becoming increasingly noisy, where influence is often mistaken for wisdom, and popularity for truth and imitation for originality.



Phillips

Tems Redefines Global Footprint With *Children Of Blood And Bone* Soundtrack

By Daniel Anazia

GRAMMY-winning singer-songwriter, Tems, continues to redefine her global footprint, stepping into a historic new role as the Executive Music Producer and Curator for the official soundtrack of Paramount Pictures' highly anticipated fantasy epic, *Children of Blood and Bone*.

The project marks another landmark achievement for the Afrobeats star, whose influence continues to grow across music, film and popular culture.

Beyond overseeing the project's musical direction, Tems contributed three brand-new original songs to the soundtrack, further cementing her influence on one of the year's most anticipated film releases.

Already recognised as one of Africa's most successful music exports, the *For Broken Ears* and *If Orange Was a Place* hitmaker is now playing a central role in shaping the musical identity of one of Hollywood's biggest adaptations of an African-inspired story.

Explaining why Tems was chosen to lead the soundtrack during the film's high-profile trailer launch event at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York City, Director Gina Prince-Bythewood praised her creative vision and the quality of the final project.

"I wanted Tems to curate the soundtrack. I wanted her to executive produce it. She's actually the first woman to executive produce a soundtrack at this level, which is incredible. She put together an epic soundtrack. There are absolutely no skips... The soundtrack is so amazing, and I'm so proud of Tems, who had never done this before and created something truly extraordinary," she said.

Based on Tomi Adeyemi's bestselling, critically acclaimed fantasy novel, *Children of Blood and Bone* follows a young hero's fight for purpose, magic, and justice in the mythical kingdom of Orisha.

To build an authentic sonic landscape, Tems has assembled an elite roster of contemporary African talent. Grammy-winning artiste Burna Boy joins the project as the Executive Music Consultant, lending his structural expertise to the production.

The star-studded tracklist also features contributions from heavyweights such as Ayra Starr, Fireboy DML, and BNXN.



Tems

Campus Drop Takes Over UNILAG

By Eniola Daniel

FOR two days, the University of Lagos (UNILAG) became something more than a campus – a space where music discovery, product education, and youth culture collided, giving more than 2,000 students a front-row seat to the future of music, on and beyond Spotify.

Spotify Campus Drop turned familiar student spaces into immersive experiences re-

flecting how young Nigerians actually engage with music every day. The event opened at the Femi Gbajabiamila Female Hostel with *No Data No Wahala*, showing students that great listening doesn't stop when mobile data runs out.

Inside the 'Offline Oasis', interactive games, product demos, and podcast stations let students discover how playlists, albums, and podcasts stay accessible without an internet connection. For many, it was less about learning a feature and more about realising Spotify could fit their everyday routine – lectures, commutes, late-night study sessions, hostel downtime.

While day one explored how students listen, day two focused on who they could be listening to next. Fresh Finds on Campus shifted focus from product to possibility. Hosted at Madhouse by Tikera before moving to the University's Sports Centre for the evening showcase, it brought aspiring artistes, student creators, and future music executives together to learn about the industry beyond the stage.



20 Campuses ALive With Music, Culture, Energy Of BiGi x Fearless Soundcity

By Daniel Anazia

NIGERIA'S tertiary institutions are once again transforming into epicenters of youth culture, as the highly anticipated 'Soundcity on Tour 2026,' powered by Rite Foods Limited's BiGi and Fearless Energy Drink brands, has returned on an unprecedented scale, rolling out across 20 campuses nationwide, blending live music and talent discovery.

The campus tour is designed to bring together music, lifestyle, games and live entertainment, creating a platform where students can unwind, connect and experience some of the energy that defines contemporary Nigerian youth culture.

Now in its fourth year, the music/talent discovery activation has doubled in scale since its 2023 debut, when it covered just 10 institutions. The expansion, organisers say, reflects growing demand for experiences that place students at the centre rather than on the sidelines of brand engagement.

Speaking on the initiative during a media parley in Lagos on Wednesday, August 12, Head of Marketing at Rite Foods Limited, Toyin Nnodi, said: "Young Nigerians are shaping the future of culture every day. Through BiGi and Fearless, we want to support that creativity by providing platforms where talents can be discovered, celebrated and encouraged."

According to her, today's consumers want brands that understand them and create experiences they can be part of. Hence, the partnership between BiGi, Fearless, and Soundcity reflects Rite Foods' commitment to supporting young Nigerians by creating platforms where creativity, talent, and self-expression can thrive.

While each partnering brand brings a distinct element to the experience, BiGi and Fearless connect with young consumers through lifestyle and entertainment. Soundcity provides a strong music and pop-culture platform capable of amplifying the excitement beyond the campuses.

By Maria Diamond

“THE focus has always been simple: build artists, build businesses, create opportunities and leave people better than I met them. I believe that work speaks for itself. Lives have changed, families have been supported, artists have grown, music has travelled further, people have found jobs, and dreams that once looked impossible have become real. That is the work I am proud of,” founder/CEO Dapper Group, Damilola ‘Dapper’ Akinwunmi, stated while recounting his career journey as a music producer during a recent interview on how the relationship between music producers and artists is formed and why they sometimes fallout.

Akinwunmi said: “These relationships do not begin casually, and they did not begin in bad faith. Every artist sends his/her contract in advance, enough time is created to read it and take advice on it before anything is signed, and the terms are negotiated rather than presented. From the very first meeting, Seyi Vibe was accompanied by his own legal counsel. NSNV was distributed through Dapper Digital, we entered into an agreement, and we paid him to make music as an investment, with a clear understanding between both parties. We also worked on the project itself. We provided A&R on NSNV and we secured a feature for it. That is not distribution. That is a label doing label work.”

He continued: “In the case of Shallipopi, there were multiple witnesses present before signing, and every benefit and sign-on bonus under that agreement was paid immediately on execution. In the case of T.I Blaze, we also went through a documented process, with the records and the accounts examined at the time. Nobody was rushed, nobody was uninformed, and nobody was exploited. These relationships began because we believed in the music, the talent and what could come from working together.”

Speaking on the public notion and conception that the artists did not know what they were signing at the beginning of the contract, Akinwunmi said: “I do not accept that, and the record does not support it. A man who has the document days in advance, who negotiates its terms, who improves them, who takes the benefits under it on

Highs, Lows Of Artists, Record Labels Agreement Policies In Nigeria Music Industry – Damilola ‘Dapper’ Akinwunmi

the day it is executed, and who then operates under it for years without complaint, knows what he signed. These were not boys handed a pen. They were businessmen making a deal, and they made it. What has changed is not their understanding of the contract but that they no longer like it.”

The Work Behind The Scene Of Making A Career For Artists

Akinwunmi said: “Over the years during these contracts, Dapper will do the work of a label; we handle the administration, the logistics and the day-to-day machinery that keeps a career moving. We help shape records. We provide A&R. We bring in songwriters and put the right rooms together. We secure features. We build the strategy behind the releases, the campaigns and the timing, and we execute it. That work is not visible from the outside, and it is rarely the part anyone talks about, but it is the reason careers move as fast as they do.

“The growth these artists experience are not accidental. It is built, deliberately, by a team. For some of these artists, the first video that ever ran and the first time their music took them outside Nigeria came through this company. I say that as a matter of record, not as a debt anyone owes me.”

The Investments

“Alongside the work put into making of their careers, we invest substantially: recording, production, artwork, marketing, DJs and digital campaigns, multiple music videos shot in Nigeria, South Africa, London, Dubai and the United States, touring, including headline shows in the United Kingdom and the United States, settlement of a prior label agreement, property, rent payments, vehicles and repeated personal cash advances. To put that in perspective, two videos for one artist, shot in America, cost this compa-

ny \$52,000, not N52,000. One of them was an announcement piece that was never officially released, so, it earned nothing and was never meant to. One trip to the United States, for recording camps and video shoots, came to over two hundred thousand dollars once flights, visas, accommodation, ground movement and welfare for everyone travelling were counted. There was no show and no fee attached to it. That was money spent purely on making the work, long before anyone knew whether it would return. Every amount is documented, and every amount sits in the same accounts and state-ments.

How

standing behind those payments is the possibility that the music earns, and if it does not earn, the label carries the loss alone and the artist keeps everything they were given. When it does earn, the label recovers what it advanced from those earnings, exactly as the contract sets out and exactly as the artist agreed.

Advances are recoupable, and that was set out in the agreements and communicated clearly to every artist before they signed. It is not a detail anyone discovered later. That is not exploitation. That is the arrangement, and it is the arrangement that made it possible to spend that money in the first place. If a label cannot recover what it invests, no label will take that risk on an artist who is unknown and unproven. That is who actually loses this argument. I should also be clearer about the figures for better understanding. A catalogue revenue number is not money waiting in an account. Before anything reaches an artist, the platforms take their share, the distributor takes theirs, and the costs the label advances are recouped from what remains. That is the order, it is written into every agreement, and it was explained before signing. The numbers being quoted in the public domain are gross figures from the top of that chain, not net earnings at the bottom of it. The investment exceeded the earnings, the balances remain unrecouped, and what is outstanding is owed to the company, not by it. When you place what was actually earned beside what was actually invested, these accounts do not show a label holding money that belongs to an artist.”

Label Financing Actually Works

“When a label finances a career, that money is not a gift and it is not free money. It is capital put at risk before anyone knows whether a record will work. There is no collateral behind it. Nobody signs over a house. The only thing

On Masters and Ownership, Akinwunmi revealed that when a label funds the making of a record, it holds the recording it paid for. That is not a Dapper invention and it is not peculiar to us. It is how recorded music has been structured here and everywhere else, for one simple reason: a master is not free. Somebody paid for the studio time, the producer, the mixing, the mastering, the artwork, the video and the campaign that made anyone hear the song at all. Ownership follows that money and that risk. None of this was hidden or discovered later. Our position on ownership is written into the agreements, it was there before anyone signed, it was explained, and it was agreed by both sides. It was negotiated, not imposed.”

Social Media Is Not A Court Of Law

Addressing the claims directly, Akinwunmi said: “Social media is not a court of law, and the person who cries the loudest is not automatically the person who is right. A tweet is not evidence. A viral video is not a judgment. Repeated insults are not arguments. If there is a disagreement about money, contracts or accounting, let us put the documents on the table. We have said this several times, and each time we are brought back to the same circle of image and business reputation tarnishing. Ownership sits exactly where the agreements say it sits. Let the lawyers do their work. Let the auditors examine the books. Let the contracts be read. Let the facts be established, and let the truth stand, even when it is not convenient. However, when every disagreement becomes a social media war, everyone loses. The artist loses. The executive loses. The investor loses. The industry loses and the young person watching learns the wrong lesson about what it takes to build a business in entertainment. This is why we are addressing these issues rather than remain silent. There comes a time when silence stops being peaceful. I have spent most of my career choosing work over noise. I have never believed that every disagreement deserves a public response especially since there are documentations.”

T4T... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

‘Incoming Governor’, It Is Dare, Not ‘Dear’

So many Nollywood actors make this embarrassing gaffe of using dear in place of dare. In fact, it has become a culture seen in many Nigerian movies even with some so called ‘prolific’ Directors watching. Some award winning actors are guilty of this too, sadly. So, it was not a surprise to T4T when he was watching a Nedu podcast featuring the ‘incoming Governor’ of Abia State, Nollywood actor, Doris Ogala, and the actor who was recently embroiled in a messy sex scandal with a popular Pentecostal Pastor who she serially accused of ditching her for another woman after he had promised her marriage, repeatedly ‘deared’ the incumbent Governor of Abia, Alex Otti. In response to a questions about her accusations of ill performance against Otti, Ogala repeatedly said: “I ‘dear’ Otti to deny all what I am saying. There is no light in Abia. For three months, I have been in my family house. People are just lying. I ‘dear’ Otti.”

At a point, T4T began praying that she reverses herself and use dare instead, whoosai! It was “I ‘dear’ you...” that T4T heard all through the interview. So, if Ms Ogala wins the election next year and becomes Governor of Abia, it is plenty ‘dearing’ she will be ‘dearing’ her political opponents and critics.

If you thought the Nedu podcast was a slip, then go and watch Mummy Doris’s video where she was also ‘dearing’ Minister Wike Nyesom. She ‘deared’ Wike more than four times in that video. Who will correct our ‘incoming Governor’ that it is “how dare you”, not how “dear” you?

Oga Deputy Governor’s Son, You Have Been Served!

T4T was doing a social media run on Monday when he came across this lengthy, emotional outburst on Facebook by a lady who claimed to be the wife of the son of the Deputy Governor of Ebonyi State. She alleged that the Deputy Governor and her estranged husband are depriv-

ing her from seeing her two children after a messy separation.

“My name is Victoria Okoro, wife of Francis Obila, son of the Deputy Governor of Ebonyi State. Today, August 17th, will make it eight weeks since I was separated from my children. This happened on June 21st. At the time, my second child was barely three months old, while my first child was just a year and six months.”

Okoro said she had tried to resolve the issue with her estranged husband and family privately to no avail. “For the past eight weeks, I have deliberately chosen silence. I have tried to remain calm. I have tried to be respectful of the people involved and their positions. I have tried to resolve this privately and peacefully. I have had conversations, reached out, and made several attempts to find a way for me to have access to my children. But eight weeks is a very long time for a mother to be separated from her children, especially children so young.”

Even though the angry Okoro refused to answer T4T’s answer of what she did that made her husband and his family take custody of her two kids, and kicked her out, she concluded the long piece with an appeal and ultimatum (a mild threat really) before she spills the beans. “I am therefore making this public appeal to my...(sic) Francis Obila, and his mother: I am asking that we find a peaceful and immediate resolution to this situation and that I be allowed access to and custody of my children. I am giving this one more week for us to resolve this privately and peacefully. If nothing changes after that, I will have no choice but to begin sharing, in a series, the events and circumstances that have brought us to this point.”

So, T4T is joining Madam Deputy Governor’s son to let his estranged wife see her kids before she begins to reveal ‘things’ as she threatened, unless he believes his room is neat. And he should not forget that women also have a way

of dirtying up a neat room.

‘Twerk Or Die’, Which One You Prefer?

THE act of making suspected petty thieves to dance (twerk as the mob calls it) and entertain a crowd before he or she is handed over to the police did not start today. If you grew up in the kind of society T4T grew up in, you will agree. It was called ‘Igbonine’ back in the day and it was even more crude, as the suspected thief was stripped naked, with charcoal and white native chalk rubbed all over him or her.

Recently, however, it has become a fad and the people of Edo state were named to have made it popular especially with the videos that came out of that state featuring young and old suspected of a crime being made to dance(twerk their waists) with Afro pop hits blaring from music boxes. Most of them were stripped naked to the boxer shorts or pants.

To T4T, it is a more friendly way to treat a suspected thief from the more barbaric way of hanging motor tyres around their necks and setting them ablaze in broad day light. As crude as this way of treating suspected thieves is, it is far better and entertaining than the mob lynching of the darker days of yore.

And so, T4T saw this funny video on Tuesday. The suspect was in a large pool of water in the middle of the road, and he was surrounded by a fairly large crowd. From the unique Pidgin English some of the people cheering the suspect spoke, T4T could easily conclude that the incident happened in one of the South South states. A popular hit song was playing from a boom box and the suspected thief was really enjoying the whole thing at a point. He was actually performing for the crowd amid loud cheering and applause. It was funny and entertaining and the popular quote by Will Rogers came to T4T’s mind: “Everything is funny as long as it is happening to somebody else.”

Between Summer Coaching, Soft-Life, Children Enjoy Holiday Steeze

By Maria Diamond

WITH the imported 'summer' holiday concept now a fad in Nigeria, the kids are surely having a time of their life following while the long vacation is on.

"Why not?" 13-year old Oyinkansola responded as an affirmation to having all the fun available to her for as long as the holiday lasts.

She said: "My friends and I have this summer holiday figured out for soft-life and our parents are cool with it so long as we are under constant adult supervision. Although we don't have the whole day to ourselves as we have to attend summer coaching, which commences by 9:00am and closes by 1:00pm Monday to Friday, but the first fun is that we don't get to wear the school uniform to class,

so, I go all out to dress up for the day before setting out in the morning wearing my best clothes and looking my best. A look in the mirror and I feel like a real princess every day. Also, most of the coaching sessions are fun activities which make every day beautiful and memorable and I am not missing a chance to enjoy every moment until school resumes."

When asked what she does after the summer class closes each day, Oyinkansola said: "My friends and I get our parents to allow us to hang out at fun places after school. They make the money available to a designated supervisor and we enjoy each day. Sometimes, we go to the swimming pool, sometimes, it's ice cream and pizza spots, and other times the playground. We also visit each other's houses and rotate the routine."



By Shakirah Adunola

HAVING focused on Health and Environmental Sustainability, Education and Empowerment, Works and Security, alongside Agriculture, Tourism and Culture (HEWA) to drive his progress agenda in the last one year, the Executive Chairman of Odi-Olowo/Ojuwoye Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Dr. Oluseyi Jakande, marked his first anniversary in office with the unveiling of a landmark 500 million Mega Empowerment Programme aimed at driving sustainable growth and community development recently.

Addressing community leaders, traditional rulers, political stalwarts and residents at the council secretariat, Jakande reflected on his administration's achievements over the past 365 days, attributing their success to a

HEWA Agenda Drives One-Year Progress As Odi-Olowo/Ojuwoye Chairman Unveils Mega Empowerment

commitment to governance that goes beyond promises to deliver visible impact. He said: "Today, we are not merely celebrating one year in office; we are celebrating one year of action, service and measurable impact."

The centerpiece of the anniversary celebration was the launch of the 500million intervention scheme. Key components of the package include: 250million Interest-Free Loan Scheme; Tagged Ile-Owo, the initiative offers zero-interest loans designed to boost small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and local entrepreneurs.

Also, over 600 residents graduated from a comprehensive three-month skill acquisition programme covering trade areas such as shoemaking, catering, fashion design, electrical and solar installation and advanced ICT courses (including full-stack web development and data analysis). Beneficiaries were presented with equipment and start-up tools.

The empowerment initiatives included the allocation of nine commercial buses to qualified residents, financial grants for small business owners and designated support for 302 Street Assistants.



The Executive Chairman of Odi-Olowo/Ojuwoye Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Dr. Oluseyi Jakande presenting tools to graduates of skill acquisition centre recently...



FTAN Cautions NIHOTOUR On NCIPRG

By Maria Diamond

THE Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria (FTAN), the umbrella body of Nigeria's tourism industry, has cautioned its member associations, stakeholders and the general public over the recent call by the National Institute of Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) for submission of memoranda through its National Committee on Industry Professional Bodies Recognition and Governance (NCIPRG).

According to FTAN, it is concerned that the current memorandum exercise may inadvertently provide stakeholder endorsement and legitimacy to a policy direction, which significant sections of the tourism industry have already called for review.

The Federation, therefore, cautions stakeholders against participating in the exercise in a manner that could be interpreted as acceptance, validation or endorsement of the proposed PRPP framework or any arrangement that seeks to expand NIHOTOUR's regulatory or professional jurisdiction over areas that properly belong within the broader tourism sector.

The Federation, which continues to push for review of the NIHOTOUR Act 2022, particularly, advised stakeholders not to submit memoranda merely to validate, legitimise or endorse a framework whose implications for the structure, autonomy and future governance of Nigeria's tourism industry have not been adequately resolved.

This latest intervention is contained in its statement titled: 'Advisory to the General

Tourism Public on the Call for Memoranda by the National Committee on Industry Professional Bodies Recognition and Governance (NCIPRG)'.

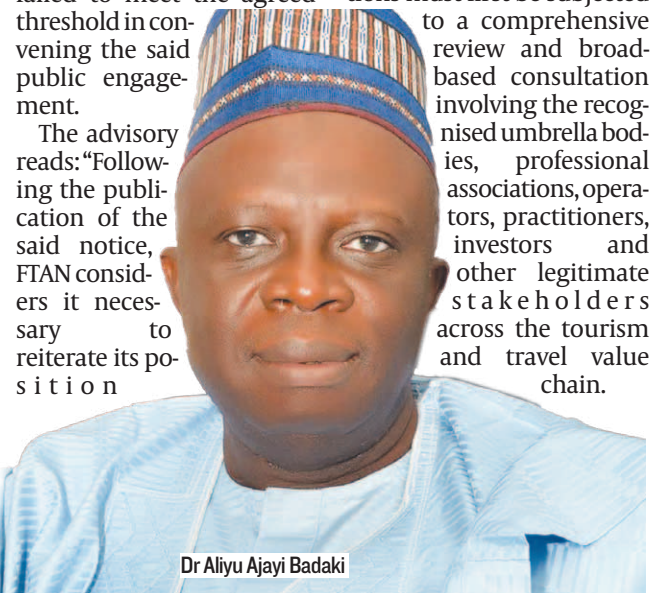
In the circulated advisory signed by FTAN President, Dr. Aliyu Ajayi Badaki, reiterated its position on the NIHOTOUR Act 2022, stating that its implementation portends wider negative implications for the industry, the operators and the country, hence its consistent calls for its review by all the stakeholders, government and its agencies affected by the Act.

Recall that NCIPRG was constituted by NIHOTOUR at the purported July 15, 2026 stakeholders' engagement convened by it in Abuja, which FTAN and its member associations and other relevant stakeholders abstained from the engagement on the directive of FTAN's Council because it said the stakeholders' engagement failed to meet the agreed threshold in convening the said public engagement.

The advisory reads: "Following the publication of the said notice, FTAN considers it necessary to reiterate its position

and issue this further advisory to associations, practitioners, businesses, professional bodies, investors, institutions and other stakeholders in the Nigerian tourism, hospitality and travel industry. The current call for memoranda seeks views on the recognition, governance, certification, professional practice and collaboration of professional bodies within Nigeria's hospitality, tourism and travel industry. While FTAN supports appropriate professional standards, capacity development, ethical practice and effective regulation in the tourism industry, such initiatives must be undertaken through a transparent, inclusive, legally sound and sector-led process, with due regard to the existing institutional and regulatory framework governing tourism in Nigeria."

In the advisory, FTAN's position is that the underlying policy and institutional questions must first be subjected to a comprehensive review and broad-based consultation involving the recognised umbrella bodies, professional associations, operators, practitioners, investors and other legitimate stakeholders across the tourism and travel value chain.



Dr. Aliyu Ajayi Badaki

Sokoto Govt Endorses 2026–2035 Education Strategic Plan

THE Sokoto State Government has formally endorsed and adopted the Sokoto State Education Strategic Plan (SESP) 2026–2035, alongside the State Education Sector Operational Plan (SESOP) 2026–2028 and Local Education Sector Operational Plans (LESOPs) 2026–2028, marking a major step towards improving the quality, accessibility, equity and inclusiveness of education across the state.

The plans were endorsed on Friday, August 14, 2026, by the Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Prof. Ahmed Ladan Ala, during a validation and dissemination workshop held at Pinnacle Guest Inn, Sokoto.

Developed by the Sokoto State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education in collaboration with development partners, including the European Union (EU), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and other stakeholders, the plans provide a long-term strategic direction and a practical framework for improving education delivery across the state.

The LESOPs 2026–2028 cover Gada, Tureta, Gwadabawa, Tangaza, Goronyo, Isa, Sabon Birni, Kebbe and Yabo Local Government Areas.

Speaking at the event, Prof. Ahmed Ladan Ala described the plans as a significant milestone in the state’s efforts to tackle longstanding challenges in the education sector. The commissioner formally

• Sets Out Three-year Operational Roadmap



Ala

endorsed the documents and urged government institutions, education authorities, development partners and other stakeholders to ensure their effective implementation.

He stressed that the success of the plans would ultimately be measured not by the documents themselves, but by tangible improvements in teaching, learning, school access, retention and education outcomes across Sokoto State.

The Officer in Charge of the UNICEF Sokoto Field Office, Isa Ibrahim, said the strategic and operational plans provide an important opportunity to tackle the barriers preventing many children from enrolling in, remaining in and completing school. He identified poverty, insecurity, displacement and inadequate learning opportunities among the factors that continue to undermine educational outcomes, particularly in Sokoto State and northern Nigeria.

According to him, the plans must go beyond policy docu-

ments and translate into practical interventions capable of ensuring that every child has access to quality, safe and inclusive education.

Isa identified prompt implementation, sustainable financing and accountability, and deliberate efforts to ensure that no child is left behind as key requirements for the success of the plans.

He urged the state government to ensure that yearly budgets, work plans and development partner programmes reflect the priorities contained in the education plans. He also called for proper allocation and efficient utilisation of resources, alongside transparent monitoring of funds and programmes.

Isa advocated targeted interventions for children in hard to reach communities, particularly girls, children with disabilities, Almajiri and nomadic learners, and children affected by insecurity, poverty and displacement.

He reaffirmed UNICEF’s commitment to supporting Sokoto State in strengthening its education system.

The Assistant Chief Training and Research Officer of the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), Dr. Opeyemi Oyekan, said the initiative was part of a wider NIEPA UNICEF partnership covering Lagos, Jigawa, Enugu, Sokoto and Adamawa states.

ShortStory

Shadows Of Destiny (1)

By Segun Durowaiye
(08055356855)

A INA sat under a makeshift shop after a heavy rain in Mile 12 Market. She was shivering like a drenched dog in the harsh cold of that Tuesday morning. She folded her arms to her chest, her teeth chattering, and her clothes dripping rainwater continuously.

“God,” she soliloquised, “why did you make me poor? What was my offence on the day of creation that you chose to bathe me with the waters of penury and poverty? Why am I an *Alabaru* while some people live in stupendous wealth? O God! Is this how I am going to continue my heart-rending life?”

Just as Aina pondered over her condition, tears streamed down her face once again. She wiped the tears off with her right hand and tried to suppress the surging emotions in her heart. Her one-year-old baby boy was right there on her back, crying for breast milk. She wondered how she could give her baby breast milk when she herself had not eaten, this could be suicidal. The last meal she took was the little *garri* she soaked yesterday morning. Her tummy ached terribly from hunger. Then, her thoughts took flight to her husband, Dipo, who was a cheap labourer at Apapa Wharf. One thing bothered her about her marital life. “If one is poor he or she is bound to marry a poor person in return and vice versa,” she’d concluded. Had it been her husband was rich, there was no doubt she would be swimming in money and affluence, too.

She had been through these painful thoughts for the past 40 minutes and the rain had subsided when she suddenly heard, “*Alabaru! Alabaru!! Alabaru!!!*” She turned and saw a well-dressed woman, possibly in her late 30s, calling one of her colleagues in the cheap labour profession. Immediately she realised this was an opportunity to make a little money, which could give her breakfast meal. She sprang to her feet and ran towards the gorgeously dressed woman. She wasn’t the only one running towards the chubby-cheeked madam. About six other *Alabarus* surrounded the woman.

“Madam, *na me go carry am for you!*” They all chorused almost at the same time. The woman

had about four bags of flour beside her at that moment.

“You, you, you and you, carry these bags of flour and follow me to my car.” The woman said and turned.

“I will carry one of the bags for you, madam, please,” Aina begged in tears.

“Woman, I can’t let you carry this bag, you have a baby on your back, you don’t look too strong to carry this kind of heavy bag. And moreover, I am a mother myself,” she told Aina.

“But...but...please, madam,” Aina begged, “I can carry it, I swear, my physique notwithstanding.” “No, this is too big for you, I insist,” the woman replied, “but you can help me with that bag containing my foodstuff.”

“Oh, thank you ma! God bless you...” Aina said excitedly as she lifted the bag containing the foodstuff and followed the woman. A couple of minutes later they were at the woman’s car. It was a Cherokee Jeep, and it was chauffeur-driven. The chauffeur got down immediately and opened the boot of the Jeep. “Welcome, ma,” the chauffeur said while adjusting his cap, beaming a toothy smile.

“Thank you, Tunde,” the woman replied. She dipped her elegantly manicured fingers into her beautiful handbag and brought out wads of naira notes. She counted about five N200 notes and gave them to the four *Alabarus* that carried the four bags of flour.

“Thank you very much,” chorused the four men as they left the spot instantly.

“Enhen, you woman,” the lady turned to Aina, “take this N5,000 and feed yourself and your child.”

“Hah!” exclaimed Aina, “Madam, this is too much! Just for doing nothing! Oh, may God bless you more and more! I really don’t know what to say!” “Don’t bother yourself,” the Madam said gently, “I really think you need it and even more...by the way, can you work for me? I mean working in my house as a housemaid?”...

To be continued.

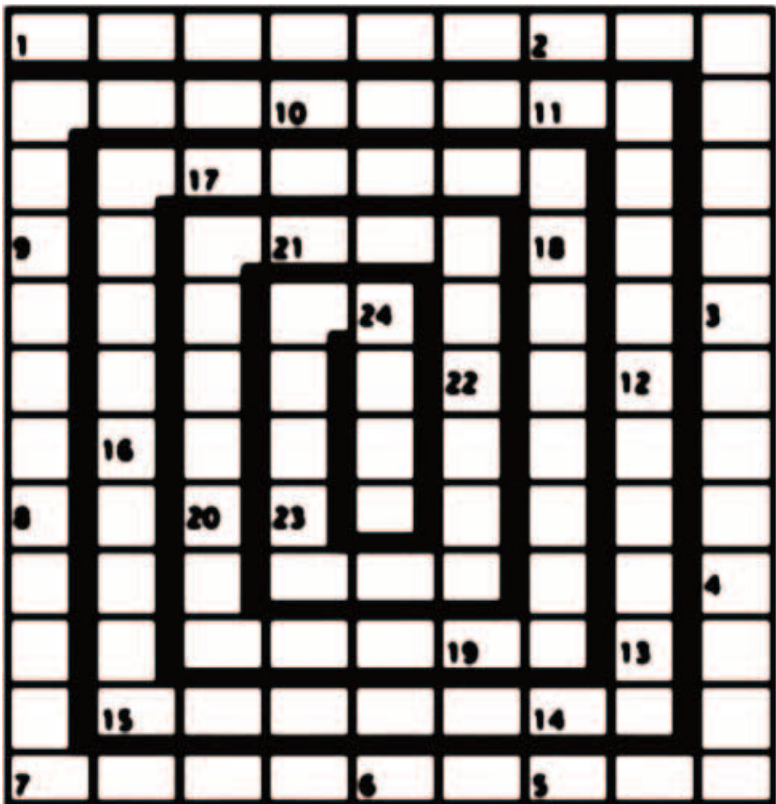
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Overlapping Word Game

Solution

- 1 Ugwuanyi
- 2 Yiddish
- 3 Hustle
- 4 Lexicon
- 5 Once
- 6 Cellar
- 7 Arrive
- 8 Veneer
- 9 Errant
- 10 Tsafe
- 11 Festive
- 12 Vested
- 13 Eden
- 14 English
- 15 Shiver
- 16 Erratic
- 17 Icicle
- 18 Estrange
- 19 Edible
- 20 Educate
- 21 Tender
- 22 Erudite
- 23 Enter
- 24 Rage



Overlapping Word Game

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Local council in Gombe State, (8). | 13 Adam and Eve's garden, (4). |
| 2 River in central Siberian Russia, (7). | 14 Language of the UK, (7). |
| 3 Time when somebody is young, (5). | 15 Tremble, (6). |
| 4 Very unfriendly, (7). | 16 Inconsistent, (7). |
| 5 In case, (4). | 17 Hanging rod of ice, (6). |
| 6 Previously announced, (6). | 18 Cause to stop being friendly, (8). |
| 7 Chief journalist, (6). | 19 Able to be eaten, (6). |
| 8 Shrine of ancient god, (6). | 20 Teach somebody, (7). |
| 9 Somebody who grants lease, (6). | 21 With gentle feeling, (6). |
| 10 Jewish religious leader, (5). | 22 Very knowledgeable through study, (7). |
| 11 Relating to the Bible, (8). | 23 Go in, (5). |
| 12 Having rights to something, (6). | 24 Extreme anger, (4). |

Word Search

Nigerian Capital Cities-1

Edo	Akure	Sokoto
Jos	Minna	Jalingo
Kano	Ibadan	Osogbo
Ikeja	Ilorin	Abeokuta
Lafia	Katsina	Maiduguri
Gusau	Lokoja	

R	T	Y	A	U	I	O	U	I	R	F
L	O	K	O	J	A	T	D	G	S	D
T	Y	I	T	Y	E	O	F	K	A	L
R	U	E	R	J	D	K	N	N	T	A
D	E	F	H	U	O	O	I	A	U	F
N	O	R	A	H	G	S	H	D	K	I
I	S	E	U	B	U	U	O	A	O	A
R	O	R	W	K	S	G	D	B	E	N
O	G	N	I	L	A	J	E	I	B	N
L	B	B	M	J	U	H	G	F	A	I
I	O	F	A	N	I	S	T	A	K	M

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Society

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Birthdays

FAJOUNBO, Bolaji, a consummate media professional, and retired Deputy General Manager (News & Current Affairs), Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation (OGBC), Abeokuta, Ogun State, will be 62 on Tuesday, August 25, 2026.

Born on August 25, 1964, he hails from Ifo Local Council, Ogun State, and attended the prestigious Methodist High School, Arigbajo, Ogun State, where he was the Social Prefect.

After his brilliant performance in the West African School Certificate Examination in 1983, he enrolled for a Bachelors of Art Degree in Theatre Arts at the nation's premier University, University of Ibadan, popularly called UI for a Bachelors of Arts (B.A Hons) in 1991.

After being with Governor Olusegun Osoba as Corre-

spondent of OGBC, Fajounbo was back in UI for Masters in Communication Arts (MCA). At the OGBC, which he joined after a three and half year's stint, he steadily rose through the ranks to the position of the Deputy General Manager in-charge of News and Current Affairs.

In recognition of his commitment and dedication, with less than two years on the job, he was honoured with the award of Editor of the year in 1999.

It was the first time in the history of OGBC that an employee whose appointment has not been confirmed was coming tops in the Corporation.

In May 2000, he was also honoured with the award of Best Performance/Dedication to duty in the News division, where he spent the better part of his professional career.

In December 2006, he bagged the award of the Best



Fajounbo

Performance in News/Current Affairs during the OGBC 30th anniversary.

Similar feat was repeated in June 2012 when he was conferred with the Best Staff member in News/Current Affairs for the month of June, and in April 2014, he clinched the Best Staff member in News/Current Affairs for the month of April.

A mentor to many – Fajounbo's eyes-for-details is ex-



Obalanlege

emplary. He is meticulous, consistently consistent and always going the 'extra miles'. He retired from the employ of the OGBC in July 2024.

OBALANLEGE, His Majesty Oba Professor Adeyemi Abdulkabir Obalanlege Ph.D, the Monarch of the ancient Otta land, Ogun State will be 60 on Thursday, August 28, 2026.

Born on August 28, 1966,

Kabiyesi is a professor of journalism, a liberal-minded intellectual, a cerebral personage in the community of knowledge, a goal-getter, and a peace ambassador who is so committed to a course of joining like minds in uniting not just the Aworis but the Yoruba race at large.

Stepping into his reign, Professor Obalanlege brought with him not only the weight of tradition but also a distinguished background in academia and a fervent dedication to community service.

Oba Adeyemi's academic prowess extended beyond the confines of the classroom, earning him recognition as a world-class scholar. His contributions to the field of Mass Communication, including publications in esteemed academic journals and presentations at conferences across Africa, Europe, and North America, solidified his reputation as a cerebral intellectual.

Even as his academic and professional pursuits flourished, Oba Adeyemi remained deeply rooted in community service.

He is the Chairman of Awori Obas Forum, Ogun State, a humanitarian, a member of Rotary International, and a Paul Harris Fellow.

Kabiyesi has equally remained undaunted and continues to use his stool to galvanise support and increase the attention and presence of the government to facilitate laudable projects for the kingdom of Otta land.

His Majesty is happily married to Olori Oloruntoyin Obalanlege (Nee Gbobiyan), and blessed with two sons, Dr. (Engr.) Adewale Mustapha Obalanlege Ph.D and Engineer Adetobi Hamed Obalanlege.

Compiled by Gbenga Akinfenwa, oluwagbenga.akinfenwa@guardian.ng or gbengaherkin@yahoo.com

Events



Chief of Staff to the Governor, Ekiti State, Oyeniyi Adebayo (left); his mother and celebrant, Mrs Cecilia Adebayo; wife of Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Olayemi Oye-banji and wife of Chief of Staff. Olanireti Adebayo, during Madam Adebayo's 85th birthday thanksgiving Service at St Monica Catholic Church, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.



Conference Supervising Secretary, Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church (CSMC) World Wide, Dr. Abiodun Ogunsakin (left); Conference Supervising Prophet, Dr. Joel Adeniran and Leader in Charge, CSMC, Imole, Ayo Modern Church Circuit, Dr. Tolani Adewale, during the 30th edition of seven-day and night prayer convention in Igode Township, Ogun State.



Former Director of Defence, Information, General Chris Olukolade (rtd.); Account Director, Integrated Indigo Limited, Olutayo Irantola; Public Affairs Executive, Integrated Indigo Limited, Faith Ola-Jones, and Convener, Spokespersons' Awards, Yushau Shuaib, during the presentation of Best Agency of the Year to Integrated Indigo Limited at the sixth edition of National Spokepersons' Awards, organised by Image Merchant Promotion Ltd held in Abuja.



Mr. Okhide Ezigbo, lawyer, receiving the Diaspora Community Impact and Infra-structural Development Award from Nigeria's High Commissioner to Canada, Ambassador Isaac Adewole at just-concluded Nigeria Diaspora Investment Summit held in Toronto, Canada.



Programme Manager, Freedom Fund Nigeria, Mr Ime Samuel-Etukudoh (left); Founder, Street Project Foundation, Mrs Rita Ezenwa-Okoro; Chief Operating Officer, Street Project Foundation, Mrs Eduvielawhe Olutimayin; and Programme Manager, Ceceyara Child Advocacy Centre, Mr Damilola Adenusi, at the digital launch of the Ethical Media Reporting Guidelines made possible through a grant from the Freedom Fund, a gift from the Department of State at Shoregate hotel, Ikeja GRA, Lagos ...on Thursday

Ekanem Udo Marks 90th Birthday August 23

THE 90th birthday celebration of Deaconess Ekanem Monday Udo holds on Sunday, August 23, 2026, at No. 4, Okpon Street, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State at 2.00p.m.



Udo

Saint Peters African Church, Ilawo Holds 60th Anniversary, Awards Presentation

THE 60th Founders' Day Anniversary of Saint Peter's African Church, Ilawo, Abeokuta, Ogun State has been scheduled to hold from Monday, September 14 - 20, 2026.

The programme starts with Revival from Monday, September 14 to Wednesday, September 16. On Thursday, September 17, there will be Health Check-up and Archdeaconry Novelty Football Match.

Visitation to the Church Aged and Orphanage Home with gifts holds on Friday, September 18, while Anniversary Thanksgiving; Awards Presentation; Chieftaincy Installation; N100 million Fund Raising for Investments and Launching of St. Peter's Church Nursery and Primary School Project comes up on Saturday, September 19.

The anniversary will be rounded off on Sunday, September 20, with Praise Sunday of Appreciation to God at the Church's auditorium.

Theological Scientist Set For Public Lecture On "God Does Not Exist" August 26

ATHEOLOGICAL Scientist, Mr. Ademola Akinyeye, is set to organise a one-day public lecture, scheduled for Wednesday, August 26, 2026.

The August lecture has "God Does Not Exist" as its theme. It is billed to hold at (White House), directly opposite Baale of Agiliti Palace in an open space at White House Bus Stop, along Aina/Agiliti Mile-12 Expressway, Mile-12, in Ikosi-Isheri, Kosofe Local Council, Lagos State.

The keynote speaker of the day and host of the event, Mr. Ademola Akinyeye, an Estate Manager and a theological scientist for decades, said "religion controls the populace," adding that religions with its antics shield man from genuine spiritual awakening pecuniary motivation.



Mr. Godwin Umoren and his wife, Dr. (Mrs.) Funmi Umoren during their 17th wedding anniversary celebration in California, United States of America.

From The Rector

Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor Delta State. www.ibrucentre.org

Christian Benevolence: Willing Heart A Wheel To Drive God's Purpose (1)

By Stephen Wolemonwu

"If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: whoever loves God must also love his brother," 1 John 4:20-21.

"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done," Proverbs 19:17.

Introduction

CHRISTIAN benevolence is not merely the act of giving or showing kindness; it is the outflow of a transformed heart that has been aligned with God's will. Scripture consistently presents benevolence as both a divine attribute and a human responsibility. The believer's heart, once renewed by the spirit, becomes the driving wheel through which God's purpose advances in the world.

God As The Source Of Benevolence

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," (John 3:16). Divine benevolence is rooted in love expressed through sacrificial giving. Benevolence is not optional; it is the very nature of God. To be conformed to Christ is to embody His generosity.

Jeremiah, in Lam. 3:22-23, declares: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." Mercy is an act of God's benevolence to humanity and His heartbeat in dealing with hu-

manity.

Mercy is not just God's attribute—it is His nature. And Jesus, in Matthew 5:7, calls us to embody this divine nature: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Which also charges us to be like God in showing kindness and mercy in leadership and service.

The Heart As The Wheel Of Purpose

Proverbs 4:23 reminds us: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." The heart is the engine room of Christian benevolence. When surrendered to God, it becomes the wheel that propels His mission forward. Paul exhorts believers in 2 Corinthians 9:7: "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Benevolence flows from a willing heart, not external pressure. Deuteronomy 24:10-22 shows God's concern for the poor, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. His mercy is expressed in laws that protect the vulnerable.

1 John 3:16 reminds us: "Hereby perceive we the



Stephen Wolemonwu

love of God, because he laid down his life for us." Mercy is ultimately revealed in Christ's sacrifice.

This heart above all things must go through a transformed process. Apostle Paul in Romans

12:2 calls believers to reject conformity to the world and embrace transformation through the renewal of mind.

To Conform: means adopting worldly values such as materialism, pride, and showmanship. To Transform: is a spirit-led inner change, best illustrated by the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly.

When Paul said: "Do not be conformed," it was a compelling call to resist worldly pressures. The Greek word: 'syschematizo,' which was used means "to be fashioned after, squeezed into the same mould." The "this world" which Paul warned not to conform to, is 'Kosmos'; the system of values opposed to God. While "be transformed" is an ongoing process of renewal. The Greek: 'metamorphoo' which refers "to change in form, like a caterpillar to butterfly" is a continuous process.

When people become squeezed into the pressured 'mould' either in ministry or personal life, in leadership or in relationship they choose popularity over piety, showmanship over substance. 2 Tim 3:1-5, 2 Cor 2:17; they become victims of materialism, comparison, ungodly parenting patterns, secret sins. 1 John 2:15-17 reflecting a character of gossip, pride, greed, and anger. Gal 5:19-21.

• Venerable Stephen Wolemonwu is the Rector, Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State (08035413812)

By Charles Ighele

As a marriage and family counsellor for over three decades, I have heard about battery, maltreatment, infidelity, insincerity and lack of trust, among other couples.

Marriage is a beautiful experience depending on the partner with whom you went into it. Marriage in itself is harmless; it is not bad. But it is those (the couples) who go into it that determine if it will be pleasant for them or unpleasant.

Talking about the issue of battery in a marriage, I believe strongly that any man

who beats his wife must have exhibited that tendency. He must have exhibited an uncontrollable or excessively high level of anger either to you or his co-worker or his sibling(s) or even his parents.

Such person must have quarreled or fought with someone over something little and you were trying to mediate and telling him to stop the fight and he refused, those for me are some highlights. Do not be deceived by the looks of the person. Do not be carried away by the person's intelligence.

Before You Say I Do

Before going ahead to marry such a person, don't say "love will change him" or you will pray and Holy Spirit will change him. The change must be conspicuously noticeable before marriage.

Saying "I do" to a man or a woman goes beyond the feelings attached to the words.

Saying "I do" means you have accepted the man or woman with every weakness, strength, frailties, im-

perfections, perfections, among others. However, this is usually not the case when people say "I do." Most people look at beauty, shape, money and other things.

If you marry a woman who keeps malice with almost everyone, including her parents, be rest assured that she would replicate same to your family members including your parents. And nobody will like his/her parents to be insulted or disre-

spected no matter who the person is.

People like that do not have any form of regards for anyone no matter the position or age.

If you marry such a lady without first seeing a marriage counsellor or you both sitting down to iron out that aspect of her life, you will not enjoy the marriage; you will only be enduring it. Marriage was created by God to be enjoyed not endured. Love you!

• Bishop Charles Ighele is the General Superintendent of Holy Spirit Mission, Lagos.



Ighele

Lagos Mainland Diocese Commemorates 20 Years, Unveils Book

By Sunday Aikulola

THE Diocese of Lagos Mainland, Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, recently commemorated its 20th anniversary and launched a new book, titled, 'The Church Is Marching On In Lagos.'

In his speech, the Bishop of Lagos Mainland Diocese, Rt. Revd. Akinpelu Johnson, said: "We have every reason to give thanks to God for what he has done."

Expressing gratitude to God for the achievements recorded so far, he added that the diocese was committed to establishing a music school to train musicians and preserve the tradition of musical excellence associated with the

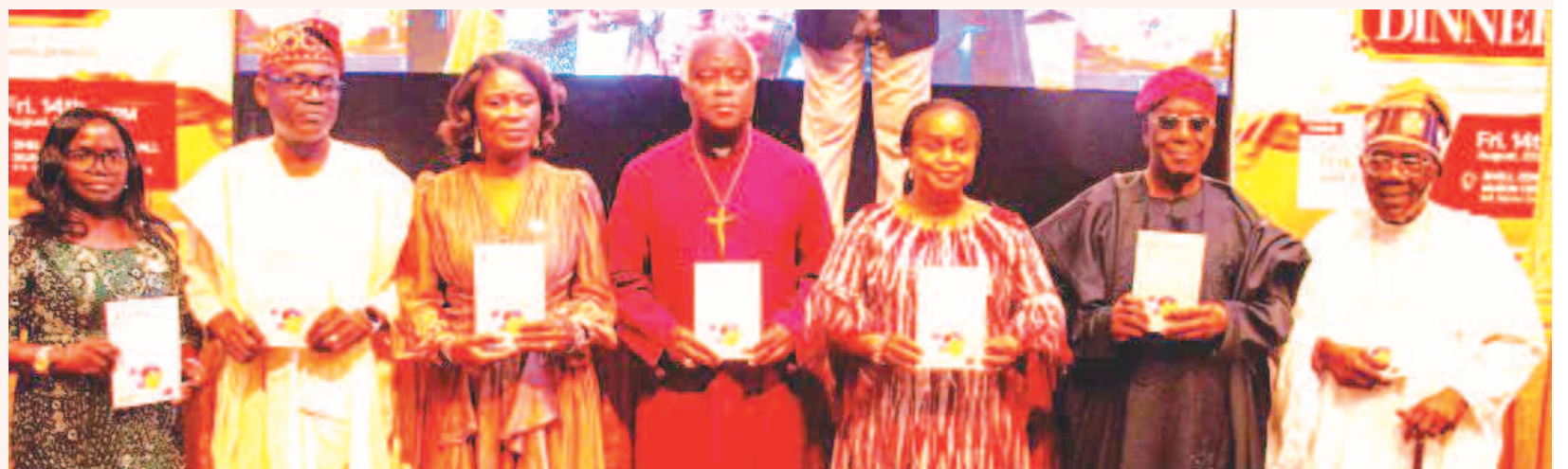
Anglican Communion. He noted: "We have spent so much money on the school building, but it is

yet to get to where we want it to be. Music is very important to us in the Anglican Church. We need to

train our musicians because the quality of worship is influenced by the quality of music we offer.

"It is not just about singing and entertainment. It is about training people, preserving our

heritage and making sure that worship continues to be offered with excellence."



Major General Tilewa Amusu (rtd), (left); Justice Olayinka Fajii; Mrs Abosede Fajii, Diocesan Bishop of Lagos Mainland Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Rt. Rev'd Akinpelu Johnson; Mrs Olabo Johnson; Mr. Kayode Sonaike; and Chief Joseph Oke, during presentation of the book, entitled: "The Church Is Marching On" to commemorate the Diocese of Lagos Mainland Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), 20th anniversary in Lagos... recently

Text: 1Timothy 2:19 (KJV): “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

THE Christian life is not merely about belonging to a religious group or outwardly professing faith; it is about a real and total transformation that comes through Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul reminds us in the opening text that God’s foundation is firm and unshakable. He knows those that truly belong to Him and there is a clear mark upon their lives. They depart from iniquity.

Salvation is not simply a confession of words, but a divine work of transformation that changes the heart, the mind and life. Many people claim the name of Christ, yet their lives remain unchanged. But the gospel of Jesus Christ brings a power that completely transforms a sinner into a new creature.

A Call To Depart From Iniquity

THE second part of our opening text carries a serious command: “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” This statement reveals an important truth: true salvation produces a changed life.

Many people want the blessings of God, but are unwilling to abandon the sins that separate them from Him. Yet the Word of God clearly teaches that sin is the greatest barrier between man and God.

Isaiah 59:2 says: “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

Sin is not something to be taken lightly. It destroys fellowship with God and leads to eternal separation if not forgiven. Romans 3:23 declares: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

No one is exempted. Whether rich or poor, educated or uneducated, religious or irreligious, the truth remains that all have sinned. The natural human condition is one of spiritual corruption. Jeremiah 17:9 says: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and des-

Living Waters

By Pastor Lazarus Muoka

Founder/General Overseer

The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries Worldwide

• For more messages and testimonies visit: www.tlccrm.org 08056889396



God Knows Those That Are His

perately wicked: who can know it?”

Because of this sinful nature, humanity cannot transform itself. Good works, moral efforts and religious activities cannot cleanse the heart. Proverbs 20:9 asks the question: “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” The honest answer is no one.

That is why salvation is necessary. It is the divine intervention of God to rescue mankind from the bondage and penalty of sin.

The Transforming Power Of Christ

The good news of the gospel is that what man cannot do for himself, Jesus Christ has done for him. Romans 5:8 says: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Jesus did not come for the righteous; He came for sinners. His mission was to bring salvation and transformation. Matthew 1:21 declares: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

Notice that the scripture says from their sins, not merely in their sins. Christ does not simply overlook sin; He delivers people from its power.

When a person truly comes to Christ in repentance and faith, a supernatural change occurs. The Bible describes it, as becoming a new creature. **2 Corinthians 5:17** says: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

This transformation affects the whole life. The desires change, the priorities change, and the direction of life changes. The things that once con-

trolled the person begin to lose their power.

A thief begins to hate stealing. A liar begins to love truth. A person bound by sinful habits begins to experience freedom. This is not merely human discipline; it is the transforming power of Christ at work within the soul.

Ezekiel 36:26 speaks prophetically about this inner transformation: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh.”

This is what God does in salvation. He replaces the hardened heart with a heart that desires Him.

Evidence Of True Salvation

Returning again to our opening text, the Bible says: “The Lord knoweth them that are his.”

Many people may claim to know God, but the real question is whether God knows them as His own. Jesus warned about this reality in **Matthew 7:21**:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

Profession without transformation is dangerous. Christianity is not merely about words; it is about a life that reflects the work of God.

Titus 1:16, describes some people this way: “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him.”

True salvation produces visible fruit. When

Christ changes a life, it becomes evident in conduct and character.

Galatians 5:22-23 describes the fruit of the spirit: “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

These qualities begin to appear in the life of a person who has experienced genuine transformation through Christ.

This does not mean the believer becomes perfect overnight, but there is a clear change in direction. Instead of pursuing sin, the believer now seeks to please God.

1 John 3:9 says: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him.” This means that the person no longer lives comfortably in sin because the nature of God now works within him.

The Urgency Of Salvation

The message of salvation is not something to postpone. Life is uncertain, and eternity is real.

Hebrews 9:27 reminds us: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

Every person will one day stand before God. On that day, religious titles, social status, and earthly achievements will not matter. What will matter is whether a person has truly experienced salvation through Jesus Christ.

Jesus, Himself, spoke about the narrow way of salvation. In **Matthew 7:13-14**, He said: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction.”

Many people are travelling the broad road because they refuse the transforming work of Christ. They want religion without repentance, blessings without obedience, and heaven without holiness.

The Gospel Calls For Repentance

Acts 3:19 says: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God. It is a change of heart that results in a change of life.

Romans 10:9 says: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

Salvation is not earned; it is received by faith. Yet the faith that truly saves produces a transformed life.

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

‘God Used Commercial Motorcyclist To Save Me From Armed Robbers/Kidnappers’

Psalms 50:15 says: “And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me.”

MY name is Nwaeje Samuel, I joined The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries in 2003, since then, God of Chosen has been keeping me.

I titled my testimony as “Deliverance,” and it took place on July 6, 2026. After the workers’ meeting on July 4, 2026, which was on Saturday. I decided to visit Odolowu Warehouse to buy some items. After making the purchases, I kept the goods with one of our Chosen sisters there.

I told her that I would pick them on Monday, while going to vigil. On that fateful Monday, as I was about to leave office, I called the sister and told her that I was on my way, getting to Oshodi, I called her again, and told her to arrange the goods accordingly. I called her the last time when I was at Odolowu Warehouse.

As I parked my car, and was about to alight from it, a

young man wearing a T-shirt on a pair of jean trousers and a face-cap greeted me very politely. He asked me about the programme we just concluded, titled: “And The Enemies Submitted.” I was still wearing the apron of that programme then.

Suddenly, in the course of the greeting, the man said I should look at the other side and asked whether the man

standing there was with me. It was at this point that I looked at the right side of my car and saw a young man standing with a gun in his hand pointing at me. While that was happening, another one entered the car and sat at the back seat.

In no time, the one that was sitting at the back, brought out a handkerchief and used it to cover my face and my

mouth, and they took me out of my car into their own and zoomed off. But God of Chosen is so great and does mysterious things. There was this commercial motorcyclist (Okada rider, an Hausa man) who was going to Cele Bus Stop to drop his passenger, but when he saw what the unknown persons did to me, he quickly discharged his passenger and was watching.

As soon as the robbers/kidnappers whisked me off, he followed them with his bike, as he got to Ijesha bus stop, he alerted other bike riders there and they joined him to pursue my assailants. They blared their horns, while their headlights were fully on. This created chaos and drew attention on the expressway. As the robbers were getting to 2nd Rain-

bow, they saw that the attention was increasingly becoming higher, they then told me to alight from their vehicle, while on a high speed.

I told them to reduce the speed of the vehicle to enable alight and they refused, but sensing the dangers that laid ahead of them, the driver had to reduce his speed and pushed me out.



Chosen mothers receiving prayers during the dedication of their children at the Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries, headquarters, in Ijesha, Lagos...recently

Benefits Of Purity Of Heart (2)

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor
W. F. Kumuyi



presence on that day. Only holiness confers such privilege. That is the reason holiness experience is not possessed, but by fervent prayer of faith.

Prayer is essential to possess a pure heart, which is not given accidentally. Rather, it is an experience we must desire and pray for actively. The Psalmist, after examining his heart and recognising his need for purity, pleaded with God to, "purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." This should be the prayer of those who genuinely seek a pure heart.

We should ask God to remove from the heart, every stain of sin

These individuals see God when they pray and when they face challenging and threatening conditions. God shows up for them in times of difficulty, whether in life or ministry, when only He can provide a solution. In addition, Jesus said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away

and the nature of selfishness and disobedience, and rebellion, the attributes of the old sinful man evident in the life of Adam in the garden of Eden. Such prayers must come from a sincere, passionate and desirous heart. As we request the promised cleansing and purging from God, we must not fail to "ask in faith," trusting that nothing is impossible with God. There is need for power to accompany a pure heart. After Christ prayed for His disciples' sanctification, He instructed them to wait in Jerusalem until they received power. This power enabled them to give witness of the gospel of salvation everywhere they went. While peace is for salvation and purity is for sanctification, power is for Holy Ghost baptism. We should not give up one because we have the other.

• **Further reading (King James Version):** Matthew 5:8. Ephesians 2:14,15; Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:7,9. Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 10:14,16,22; 1 Timothy 1:5. Psalm 17:3; Daniel 1:8. Matthew 5:8; 24:35; Psalms 24:3,4; 89:34. Psalm 51:7,10; Ezekiel 36:26,37; James 1:6. 2 Chronicles 16:9; Luke 10:27,19; Acts 1:8. Matthew 5:8. Genesis 26:2-5,12; Jeremiah 1:12. Jeremiah 18:7,8. 2 Peter 1:19; Luke 1:45.

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 6:1: "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain," (KJV).

To "receive grace in vain" means to let it fall flat, rendering it empty, useless, or without effect in your daily life. In 2 Corinthians 6:1, Apostle Paul issues a fierce and loving warning, saying that we should maximise God's grace to the fullest. Imagine someone hands you the keys to a brand-new, top-tier luxury vehicle. It is fully paid for, insured and fuelled up. But instead of driving it, you parked it in your driveway to gather dust, while you continue to trek long distances on foot under the scorching sun. It would mean you received an incredible gift entirely in vain. Tragically, this is exactly how many believers treat the grace of God. We celebrate grace, we sing about it, and we write it on our church walls. Yet, many of us live far below its intended power. We waste it, rather than maximise it.

Grace is an empowerment for service just like Paul wrote in another letter that: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not

Maximising God's Grace (3)

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them, and yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me," (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Grace is a kingdom advantage given to believers to do the work of God. Grace increases, as we put the measure of grace we have received to work. It diminishes when we don't use it for kingdom purposes. Grace empowers us to live the life of Christ and not otherwise. Grace should not be treated as a license to compromise.

For example, someone can say: "I can sin if I want because God will forgive me anyway." That is not maximising grace; that is degrading it. Grace empowers us for holy living. It is a transforming grace that changes sinful nature into the image of Christ.

Grace breaks the power of sin in our lives just as the Bible says in Titus 2:11-12, that the grace of God teaches us to say, "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled and upright lives. If your life looks identical to the world, and your char-

acter never changes, you are receiving the grace in vain. Maximised grace produces a holy life.

If you read the next verse, 2 Corinthians 6:2, it states: "For he says, 'in the time of my favour I heard you...' I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation." Maximising grace means understanding spiritual timing. Grace is seizing the moment to answer the call of salvation. Accept Jesus Christ now as your Lord and Personal Saviour because you don't know what may happen the next minute. Now is the accepted time of salvation. Procrastination is the ultimate killer of grace. The enemy will always tell you: "You can repent tomorrow. You can serve God next year. You can obey when things settle down." But tomorrow is not promised; now is the window of divine favour. When God gives you a prompt, a door of opportunity, or a moment of conviction, act immediately. Do not sit on the conviction of the Holy Spirit. The favour of God is active today, and de-



Amadi

laying your obedience wastes the specific grace tailored for this exact moment.

Stop leaving the gift of God on the driveway. God did not pour out the precious blood of His Son on Calvary just for us to live a weak life, defeated and unchanged lives. He poured out His grace so that you could be an unstoppable force for His kingdom.

• **Today's nugget: Maximised grace produces a holy life. Prayer: Lord help me to maximise the grace of God. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com, Rev. Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.**

2026 GKS Youth Assembly Begins August 22 Across Nigeria, Other Countries

By Chris Irekamba

THE God's Kingdom Society (GKS), the Church of the Living God, begins its 2026 yearly Youth Assembly on Saturday August 22.

The yearly event expected to hold across various zones in Nigeria, Ghana, United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America, as directed by the headquarters of the church in Salem City, Warri, Delta State, would end on August 23, 2026.

Chairman of the GKS Youth Fellowship Central Working Committee, Lagos, and the Acting Secretary, Brother Pureheart Nwosa and Nelson Eleya, in a statement, said the Lagos Zone events would feature sporting activities at the Egbe premises of the church, as well as Bible Quiz at the Apapa service today.

President of the church, Brother Felix Ekundayo Adedokun, speech on the theme: "Better Is The End Of A Thing Than The Beginning



GKS President, Brother Felix Ekundayo Adedokun

Thereof," taken from Ecclesiastes 7:8, would be read during the Special Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, August 23, 2026 at the Apapa Service Hall.

Presentation of prizes to participating teams and individual laurels will also take place at the Thanksgiving Service.

The Benefits Of Adoration (cont)

TRUE believers will hunger and thirst for God and His grace, blessing and supernatural activity in their lives.

1• To stop thirsting for God is to die spiritually; thus we must not allow anything to diminish our intense desire for the things of God. Beware of the cares of this world, the pursuit of earthly things, and the pleasures that choke out hunger and thirst for God and the desire to seek His face in prayer (Mark 4:19).

2• We should pray that our longing for God's presence might be strengthened, our love for the full manifestation of the Holy spirit might be greater, and passion to see fullness of Christ's kingdom and righteousness might be deepened until we cry out to Him day and night in a heartfelt thirst, even as the deer (hart) "panteth after the water brooks" in times of drought (v. 1; see Mat 5:6; 6:33).

"O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, and from the heights of Hermon, from the Hill Mizar," (Ps 42:6).

"My soul is cast down within me." Those who thirst for God and yearn for a greater manifestation of His presence may ex-

Adoration (76)

perience delay. Yet the faithful believer will continue thirsting for and seeking God. The Lord promises to bless those who hunger and thirst after righteousness rather than settle for less than His full blessing (Mat 5:6). Amid God's silence, we must continue to press on to know God and to experience a greater measure of the Holy spirit (cf. Hos 6:1-3; Acts 2:38-39; Eph 4:11-13). We must not despair, but put our hope in God and trust in His steadfast love (vv. 8-11).

(42:1ff) There may come times when, after thirsting for God, weeping for his help, and enduring ridicule, we still do not hear his voice (42:1-3). Such times often lead to depression and discouragement, but the Psalmist discovered a remedy. He remembered God's great blessings (42:4, 5); he realised that although God seemed silent, he was present with him (42:4, 5); he gazed upon God's beautiful creation that proclaims his love (42:6). The Psalmist had felt billows of sorrow, but he realised that he was never adrift from God's steadfast love

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus
Prof. Mercy Olumide



(42:7,8). Finally, he faithfully expected God to act (42:11). When you cannot seem to find God, use this remedy and you will, once again, find reason to praise him.

God Offers Help For Today And Hope For The Future (Ps 27) Unwavering confidence in God is our antidote for fear and loneliness.

"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!" (Ps 27:14).

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By Jelilah Bilal

FORMER University of Ilorin Vice Chancellor and erstwhile JAMB registrar, Professor Is-haq Oloyede, has called for a fundamental rethinking of Nigeria's university system, saying institutions must move beyond surviving repeated disruptions to building systems capable of anticipating risks, adapting to change and delivering lasting public value.

Oloyede made the call on August 18, 2026, while delivering the keynote address at the 37th Annual Conference and General Assembly of the Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (CVCNU) at the University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

Speaking on the theme, "Reimagining Nigerian Universities for Resilience: Leadership, Innovation and Sustainability in a Disruptive Era", Oloyede said fiscal instability, rapid technological change, climate pressures, insecurity, demographic growth, public distrust, industrial disputes and changing labour markets were now overlapping to place unprecedented pressure on higher education institutions. He said the idea of resilience should not be reduced to the ability of universities, staff and students to endure inadequate resources.

According to him, lecturers teaching large classes without proper facilities, students studying without reliable power or internet access, laboratories operating without essential equipment and administrators holding systems together through personal sacrifice should not be celebrated as evidence of institutional strength. He argued that resilience must instead mean the capacity to anticipate threats, withstand disruption, learn from experience and transform when existing arrangements no longer serve society. "Resilience is therefore not stubborn endurance. It is structured adaptation and disciplined renewal," he said.

Oloyede noted that Nigeria had 310 federal, state and private universities at the beginning of 2026, but said the expansion of institutions had created a paradox in which demand remained high for some universities and programmes while many institutions struggled to attract applicants. He cited Federal Ministry of Education figures showing that 199 universities received fewer than 100 applications through the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board in the preceding admission cycle in 2025, while 34 received none. He, thus, argued that these figures pointed to a deeper challenge involving distribution, institutional identity, relevance, public confidence and planning, rather than simply a shortage of access.

Oloyede warned against treating the creation of more universities as the automatic answer to the country's higher education challenges, saying quality should not be sacrificed for quantity. He described the reported moratorium on the creation of new public universities, polytechnics and colleges of education as an opportunity for consolidation, infrastructure renewal, staff development, quality assurance and clearer institutional missions.

Additionally, he mentioned that Nigerian universities were facing five major pressures, including demographic, technological and fiscal pressures, which demanded a more deliberate approach to institutional planning while he warned that disappointment would grow where access remained narrow, academic quality was weak or programmes were disconnected from employment opportunities.

Technology, he said, was also transforming the production, teaching and application of knowledge, with artificial intelligence, automation, digital platforms and data analytics affecting disciplines far beyond computer science. He therefore called for continuous curriculum review, saying programmes in law, medicine, agriculture, engineering, humanities, education, administration and the creative industries must respond to changing professional requirements.

On funding, Oloyede said universities needed more resources but argued that financial sustainability also depended on governance, accountability and public trust. He mentioned that alumni and institutional partners

How Leadership, Innovation, Trust Can Make Nigerian Universities Resilient

were more likely to provide support when universities clearly explained their priorities, published audited accounts and demonstrated results. "Financial sustainability is therefore inseparable from integrity," he said while also stressing that efforts to diversify university revenue must not make higher education inaccessible to students from poor households. Moreover, he advocated an integrated system involving student loans, scholarships, work study arrangements, targeted bursaries and transparent payment plans. Oloyede commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his attention to the Nigeria Education Loan Fund, saying its renewed role could support educational equity and advancement.

On human capacity, he warned that universities could not become resilient while losing experienced scholars, overloading early career academics or neglecting technical staff. He implored Nigerian institutions to provide functional laboratories, research support, fair promotion, manageable workloads, safe campuses and reliable digital access, alongside appropriate remuneration, to attract and retain talent.

He also urged universities to turn brain drain

Consortium of Universities in Kwara State for promoting cooperation among institutions.

He also cautioned universities against relying on inherited routines simply because they had existed for many years. A system that depended on a few individuals to keep essential functions working, he said, remained vulnerable to sudden disruption. Universities needed stronger records systems, succession plans, digital infrastructure and clear institutional procedures so that leadership changes or unexpected shocks would not threaten their core operations.

Oloyede said the country's university system should be viewed as an opportunity rather than merely a burden. More than 300 institutions collectively possessed significant academic expertise, research capacity and human resources. Better coordination could therefore allow universities to contribute more effectively to national priorities while reducing unnecessary duplication and improving the use of resources. He said the success of reform would depend on whether institutions were prepared to confront uncomfortable weaknesses and make difficult decisions. Universities, he added, must be

conscious campuses and inter university collaboration.

He said universities should also maintain strategic plans, risk registers, continuity arrangements and succession frameworks, while tracking student progression, retention, completion and graduate outcomes. He urged institutions to strengthen cybersecurity, data governance, digital accessibility and responsible use of artificial intelligence.

On research, he advocated mission focused programmes addressing national problems and called for promotion systems that recognised quality, mentorship, collaboration and impact rather than publication volume alone. He said the compact should be supported by a simple resilience scorecard that would help institutions identify weaknesses, learn from peers and demonstrate progress without creating another bureaucratic burden.

Beyond universities, Oloyede said the government must provide stable policies, predictable funding, respect for institutional autonomy and appointments based on competence. He urged the National Universities Commission to continue developing risk based and outcome focused quality assurance, while encouraging responsible experimentation without compromising standards. He also called on TETFund and other research funders to support competitive, long term and interdisciplinary research, with national research infrastructure treated as a shared resource.

Industry, he said, must deepen its relationship with universities by supporting curriculum development, internships, research, laboratories, endowed chairs and apprenticeship pathways. Alumni should also remain active members of the academic community through mentoring, continuing education, expertise and financial support.

While he warned that a fragile university system would produce fragile institutions beyond the campus by sending inadequately prepared professionals into hospitals, schools, courts, businesses and public agencies, he, conversely, argued that resilient universities could multiply national capability and help Nigeria address its problems through shared knowledge, facilities, expertise and coordinated research.

In his concluding remarks, Oloyede said leadership would determine whether disruption produced confusion or renewal, while innovation would determine whether universities remained relevant and sustainability would determine whether present gains could endure. He called for a renewed social contract involving government, university councils, management, staff, students, industry, alumni, communities and regulators.

He urged every university represented at the conference to return home with a 90-day agenda identifying its most serious vulnerabilities, transformative priorities, responsible officials, resources and measures of progress.

He said the future image of the Nigerian university would not be created through slogans or public relations, but through repeated choices that made merit, evidence, maintenance, collaboration, learning and service part of institutional culture.

"The challenge before us is formidable, but it is not beyond us," Oloyede said, urging Nigerian universities to see themselves differently, organise more intelligently and judge their success by the public value they create.

Oloyede proposed that the conference establish a Nigerian Universities Resilience Compact, supported by measurable commitments, peer review and annual reporting through the Committee of Vice Chancellors. The proposed compact would focus on institutional integrity, strategic governance, student success, curriculum relevance, digital transformation, research for public value, sustainable finance, human capital, climate conscious campuses and inter university collaboration.

into brain gain by creating structured opportunities for academics in the diaspora to teach, supervise students, lead research projects, share facilities and participate in seminars. Student and staff welfare, he added, should be treated as part of academic quality, with universities providing counselling, referral systems, inclusive facilities and clear procedures for dealing with misconduct.

In furtherance, Oloyede argued that another weakness of the Nigerian university system was the tendency of institutions to imitate one another by pursuing similar programmes, centres and ranking measures. He called for mission differentiation, arguing that universities should develop distinctive strengths according to their mandates, locations, staff capacity, infrastructure and national needs.

In a bid to proffer a solution, he advised that some institutions could focus on research and postgraduate education, while others could specialise in undergraduate teaching, agriculture, health, technology, teacher education, creative industries or regional development. He stressed that differentiation did not mean unequal dignity, but clarity of purpose.

Collaboration, he said, should accompany differentiation.

Universities should share expensive equipment, specialised staff, digital resources and research facilities rather than repeatedly building identical systems. He thus praised the University of Ilorin's leadership of the

willing to concentrate resources where they would have the greatest effect, redesign ineffective processes and publish reliable information about their performance.

Oloyede proposed that the conference establish a Nigerian Universities Resilience Compact, supported by measurable commitments, peer review and annual reporting through the Committee of Vice Chancellors. The proposed compact would focus on institutional integrity, strategic governance, student

success, curriculum relevance, digital transformation, research for public value, sustainable finance, human capital, climate



Concerns As Nwobodo, Ogbuanu Fight Over N235m Landed Property In Enugu

Former governor of old Anambra State, Jim Nwobodo, his wife, Patricia, and businessman Basil Ogbuanu are fighting over a piece of land in Independence Layout, Enugu, leading to the destruction of buildings and properties worth millions of naira to the chagrin of observers, LAWRENCE NJOKU reports.

FORMER governor of the old Anambra State, Jim Nwobodo is a household name. Several years after serving as governor from 1979-1983, the elder statesman who celebrated his 86th birthday recently would have loved to continue to live in his retirement with less worry. But this is not to be. A property he acquired in Enugu about 50 years ago, known as Patson Estate, Independence Layout, is now a source of worry to him and a trial on the reputation he has built over the years, following the legal contention that has arisen over the sale of the land and other allegations against his family.

Nwobodo had allegedly sold part of the land at about N235 million to a Pastor and businessman, Basil Ogbuanu, since 2021, but has been unable to release the title documents to him. The dispute over the sale of the land, the criminal allegations and the attendant demolition of buildings under construction belonging to Ogbuanu are now a subject of litigation as the businessman has sued the former governor for over N5.8 billion for damages. Nwobodo, on the other hand, sued the business man claiming N1.2 billion in general damages.

Trouble had begun over the land on January 16, this year, when Nwobodo's wife, Patricia, allegedly went to the estate to plant trees. She was said to have arrived at the place and noticed ongoing construction by Ogbuanu and allegedly hired bulldozers that levelled the buildings under security protection; a development that has elicited public outcries following the scale of construction that went down the drain.

The Guardian gathered that Nwobodo acquired the vast land for the purpose of setting up his Linkana International Hotels in 1976. However, on winning the governorship seat of Anambra State in 1979, he decided to focus on governance, while entrusting the property and others to his Managers.

He was said to have lost part of the property while serving as governor. However, he fought back and recovered some parts of the land. In the course of time, he had decided to parcellate the land to enable him to sell to ideal members of the public. Ogbuanu was said to have purchased four plots of land from the estate in 2021 and was issued receipts and offer letters by Millennium Construction and Estate Developers Limited, an agent allegedly appointed by Nwobodo to market the property.

In a suit marked E/238/2016, filed by his Counsel, Chukwudi Obieze (SAN), Ogbuanu named plots R/18, R/19, R/20 and R/21 as the ones sold to him, alleging that he made all the payments required of him for the plots, upon which he began the process of formalising the plots in his name.

He stated that before embarking on the construction, he had visited the residence of the former governor with gifts during the 2023 Christmas to inform him of his intention to commence development of the plots of land he purchased from him. He said he received the blessings of Jim and his wife, Patricia, who also promised to make the title documents available to him. He added that having waited to no avail for the documents; he commenced construction after obtaining official approval from both the Enugu Capital Territory Development Authority and Ministry of Lands.

Ogbuanu stated that he was near completion of the buildings, when on January 16, 2026, Nwobodo's wife, Patricia, stormed the estate and allegedly carried out "illegal and malicious destruction" of the buildings; a development he said inflicted financial losses and mental agony on him.

Ogbuanu further claimed that three of his workers on site were arrested, adding that a day after the incident, he was also arrested at the Akanu Ibiam Airport, Enugu, enroute to Lagos following a petition sent to the Independence Layout Police Station by Nwobodo.

He said he never suspected any foul play on the transaction until the visit of Patricia and the demolition of his buildings, adding that it was only after the demolition that he understood that the entire land had been transferred to Moss Island, another company allegedly linked to the Nwobodo as the new managers of the estate. He claimed he had been defrauded and asked for justice. He queried the motive for the delay in issuing him with title documents after payments were made several years back.

But Nwobodo also filed a counter suit. He did not deny receiving money from Ogbuanu for the plots of land he purchased from the estate. He said as of the time he acquired the land, Certificate of Occupancy (CofO) was not in operation. He said he only got a building lease which enabled him to own the property.

Nwobodo claimed that while he was busy with governance, those he entrusted with the management of the land stole from it and left him with a tiny portion. He said he started to recover what was left when he left office as governor. He said after the recovery, the land was transferred to Moss Island, who started parcellating it and gave it the name Paston Estate. He had thereafter appointed some agents to market the plots, with a caveat that no plot should be sold to miscreants.

He disclosed that when Basil through his cousin Amaka Igwe, a lawyer purchased land at the estate, he had told them that the title documents could not be signed at that time for the fact that the title required recertification in order to get CofO. He said that the subdivided plots would be issued with leases as the format and contents of deed of subleases for an estate was different from that of standalone plot; adding that they had arranged for an architectural land layout designs for the estate, which had been submitted for approval at the ministry of lands and Enugu Capital Development Authority. He said he asked them to exercise patience.

Nwobodo added that Ogbuanu later resurfaced and "deceived" them into signing power of attorney relating to the land in the guise that he borrowed the money for the land from a bank and that the bank required him to show evidence of what he did with the money.

Nwobodo added that soon after he signed the documents Ogbuanu disappeared, only to resurface to start erecting structures on the land against their earlier advice for him to wait for the authentication of the land titles.

He alleged that his wife, Patricia had gone to the estate with some experts on January 16 to plant trees and were detained and beaten by workers brought by Ogbuanu for several hours, only to be rescued by police. He alleged that he and his wife later sought medical support following the trauma they passed through in the hands of the workers and thugs working for Ogbuanu.

This development led to the suit filed at an Enugu Magistrate Court by the

Commissioner of Police on behalf of Mrs. Nwobodo against Ogbuanu and three of his workers, alleging conspiracy and unlawful deprivation of her (Mrs Nwobodo's) liberty.

Specifically, the police had charged the men with unlawfully confining and detaining Mrs. Nwobodo against her will for two hours at Patson Estate in Independence Layout, Enugu. Those charged with Ogbuanu were Eze Patrick Muoneke, Arinze Onoja and Sedro Theodore. These charges were brought under Sections 496 (a) and 316 of the Criminal Code, Cap 30, of the revised laws of Enugu state.

The Enugu Magistrate's Court, where the matter was brought had last month struck it out, following the inability of Mrs. Nwobodo to prosecute it. The court had also awarded N1 million against her for her persistent absence since the matter was filed in January this year.

His Worship, D.K Ekoh, who delivered the ruling, had lambasted the conduct of the complainants, saying it was a clear indication of their lack of desire to prosecute the matter.

"A Complainant whose complaint was investigated and to her knowledge is aware of the charge preferred against the Defendants, but decides to stay in her luxury home without prosecuting her complaint, should as well pay damages to the person(s) she wrongfully complained against," the Magistrate stated.

He, therefore, struck out the matter and awarded N1 million cost against Mrs. Nwobodo and ordered that the defendants must not be re-arrested on the strength of the same complaints.

Meanwhile, with the collapse of the suit, Ogbuanu has filed a fresh suit against Mrs. Nwobodo at the Enugu State High Court, seeking N10 billion in exemplary damages over allegations of malicious falsehood and illegal police orchestration.

He claimed that the police proceeded with the charges without conducting a mandatory or thorough investigation into the veracity of the claims by Mrs. Nwobodo.

A writ of summons dated May 4, 2026, urges Mrs. Nwobodo to enter an appearance within 42 days of service. Failure to comply, the court warned, could result in a judgment being delivered in her absence.

Ogbuanu stated that the exemplary damages is intended to compensate for the emotional and reputational damage caused by setting the machinery of the Nigeria Police Force against him based on allegedly false information.

Furthermore, the businessman is seeking an order of perpetual injunction to restrain Mrs. Nwobodo or her agents from further making, "false and malicious allegations" against him to the police or any other enforcement agency. Date of hearing on the matter has not been fixed.

Since the matter came to public glare following the massive destruction carried out in the estate, residents have continued to express worry over land issues in the state. Tongues are wagging on why plots in the estate should be put up for sale when the authorising documents have not been procured and how long it would take for the documents to be perfected and those who acquired land be allowed to develop.

Can the court provide solutions to it or would it be settled at the community level? Was there really intent to defraud, given the length of time payment on the land was made? While Ogbuanu is not prepared to lose the money he invested in the estate, Nwobodo seems not ready to continue in the land deal. The estate, which currently lies in the heart of Enugu, has lain without development since it was acquired. It was learnt that at a time, the administration of Sullivan Chime revoked the property. The administration, however, failed to cause development in the area. The revocation order was, however, cancelled under the immediate past administration of Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi and the property restored to Nwobodo. Obviously, only time will address the several questions begging for answer with regard to the property.



The deepening structural disconnect in the Nigerian economy comes under close scrutiny as OLUDARE RICHARDS explores how a major surge in capital importation and short-term financial inflows mask a lack of vital funding on local factory floors, leaving the nation's productive manufacturing core highly vulnerable to currency fluctuations and ongoing power and logistics problems.

NIGERIA'S economic narrative is currently caught in a striking contradiction: while capital importation and investment often dominate the headline as markers progress, the hum of industrial machinery across the federation is growing increasingly faint.

Experts agree there is a widening gap between the velocity of financial investment and the stagnation of the domestic manufacturing sector. This structural disconnect suggests that while capital is flowing into the country, it is largely bypassing the production lines that form the bedrock of sustainable economic sovereignty, settling into more liquid, service-oriented sectors that offer quicker returns but fewer structural foundations.

This trend has fostered an environment of 'superficial growth' where the economy thrives on paper through banking, telecommunications, and speculative assets, yet remains hollowed out as its productive core. The consequences of this manufacturing deficit are no longer theoretical; they are manifesting as a chronic vulnerability to global supply chain shocks and debilitating dependence on imported essentials.

Without a robust industrial base to act as an internal shock absorber, the Nigerian economy remains at the mercy of foreign exchange volatility. This exposure systematically erodes the purchasing power of the average citizen, feeling an unrelenting cycle of import-dependent inflation. The toll of this imbalance extends far beyond fiscal balance sheets, impacting national security and social stability alike.

Reacting to the widening disconnect between strong investment inflows and weak industrial expansion, the Director-General of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Segun Ajayi-Kadir, warned in June 2026 that the country's manufacturing sector remains under intense financial pressure despite signs of macroeconomic stabilisation.

According to the association, manufacturers are contending with prohibitively expensive borrowing costs, shrinking access to bank credit, volatile foreign exchange conditions and persistently high energy expenses that continue to undermine industrial competitiveness.

MAN disclosed that credit extended to the manufacturing sector fell sharply by about N1.92 trillion, dropping from N8.53 trillion in December 2024 to N6.61 trillion by the end of 2025, even as commercial lending rates climbed above 35 per cent in some cases. The association argued that the decline illustrates the growing reluctance of commercial banks to finance long-term productive investments at a time when industries require affordable capital to expand capacity, modernise equipment and create jobs.

Ajayi-Kadir maintained that while recent monetary adjustments are intended to improve investor confidence, they have not translated into meaningful relief on factory floors where manufacturers continue to shoulder escalating self-generated power costs, expensive imported inputs and limited access to affordable financing. He argued that without deliberate policies directing finance towards productive enterprises, cap-

Why Investment Surge Can't Replace Fading Factories



Fading factory



Manufacturing factory

ital inflows would continue to concentrate in financial assets while the country's industrial base weakens.

"The persistent non-implementation of the N1 trillion Manufacturing Stabilisation Fund remains an issue of promise not kept for the manufacturing sector," Ajayi-Kadir said, warning that sustained constraints in access to affordable finance could suppress manufacturing capacity, discourage fresh investment and ultimately threaten employment across the sector.

Manufacturing has historically served as the primary engine for mass employment and the cultivation of a stable middle class, yet the current investment-heavy model lacks the capacity to absorb the nation's massive semi-skilled labor force. As industrial zones give way to residential estates and shopping malls, the nation risks its ability to add value to its own natural resources.

The data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reveals a stark imbalance, demonstrating that while billions of dollars flow into Nigeria, only a tiny fraction actually enters factory floors. Total capital importation into Nigeria experienced a major surge, climbing 88.5 per cent to reach \$23.21b.

Looking closely at the final quarter of the year, total foreign inflows hit \$6.44b, which represents a significant 26.6 per cent increase compared to the same period the previous year. However, a breakdown of how this money enters the economy exposes the core of the structural disconnect. The vast majority of these inflows are short-term and speculative, rather than long-term industrial commitments.

Foreign portfolio investment, often referred to as 'hot money' because it flows directly into money market instruments, equities and bonds, dominated the landscape at \$5.48b. This accounted for a massive 85.14 per cent of total quarterly inflows.

Meanwhile, the category classified as 'other investments', which is largely composed of commercial bank loans, accounted for \$599.65m or 9.31 per cent. Crucially, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which is an exact form of capital required to build physical factories, assemble machinery, and establish long-term Greenfield projects, sat at the very bottom, bringing in just \$357.80m, a meagre 5.5 per cent of the total capital imported.

When analysing where these billions settle sectorally, the data confirms a profound gap between financial investment and tangible industrial production. The financial services architecture absorbs the lion's share of foreign interests. The banking sector recorded the single high highest inflow, pulling in \$3.85b, which translates into 59.75 per cent of all imported capital.

This was closely followed by the financing sector, which attracted \$1.94b representing 30.5 per cent. Together, these two financial categories cornered nearly 90 per cent of the capital entering the country. In sharp contrast, the production and manufacturing sector secured just \$308.93m, representing a trivial 4.79 per cent of the total capital share. This data provides clear evidence for the report, proving that Nigeria's investment surge is overwhelmingly a financial sector phenomenon where the nation's productive heart receives less than 5 cents of every dollar that

crosses the border.

Evaluating this institutional institutional blockage from a development finance lens on February 12, 2026, senior executives at the Bank of Industry noted that the current commercial banking layout is structurally designed to starve industrial long-term cycles. They observed that the foreign capital absorbed by commercial lenders rarely translates into single-digit, long-term development funds because private banks favour short-term trading arbitrage, import financing, and government treasury bills over ten years gestation manufacturing risk.

Experts argue that while development finance institutions attempt to bridge the gap with targeted interventions, the volume of commercial lending remains deeply skewed away from physical production. Industry financial strategists emphasise that until national monetary policy enforces a mechanism that links foreign capital inflows directly to mandatory real-sector lending quotas, commercial banks will remain a highly profitable sponge, soaking up foreign billions while local factory floors starve of long-term capital.

"The MAN DG's warning over shrinking industrial credit and weakening manufacturing competitiveness aligns closely with concerns raised by organised labour, which views the growing financialisation of the economy as a threat to sustainable employment."

Reviewing the state of industrial employment on March 8, 2026, leaders within the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and industrial unions argued that a reliance on short-term "hot money" portfolio investments creates an illusion of prosperity that completely leaves behind the working class.

Labor executives pointed out that while the financial and banking sectors report staggering profits and attract the bulk of foreign inflows, they are inherently low-employment sectors that cannot absorb the country's massive semi-skilled youth population. When high energy costs and capital starvation force an industrial factory to shut down, the closure sets off a devastating chain reaction that immediately pushes thousands of breadwinners out of the stable wage brackets and into the volatile informal economy.

Union leaders caution that an economy that exchanges physical production lines for passive asset trading is systematically destroying its middle class, converting real productive labor into underemployment, and breeding social unrest across the federation's urban centres.

Offering an economic policy critique on May 17, 2026, the Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), Dr. Muda Yusuf, counselled that the federal government's fiscal measures must move aggressively past nominal financial stability toward protecting real sector productivity.

Reviewing recent trade adjustments and policy updates, Yusuf acknowledged that while targeted tariff revisions and tax exemptions for small and medium industries provide needed liquidity, the structural headwinds facing real production are still immense. High power costs, logistics failures, and severe port inefficiencies continue to suppress real output.

He warned that if capital continues to favor short-term portfolio investments and liquid services over physical manufacturing, the country will struggle to build an inclusive economy. "Our fiscal measures must move aggressively past nominal financial stability toward protecting real sector productivity," Yusuf argued.

"If capital continues to favor short-term portfolio investments and liquid services over physical manufacturing, the country will struggle to build an inclusive economy. The primary challenge is to intentionally channel credit away from speculative commercial activities and guide it through the banking system directly into private industrial projects."

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Oborevori...Building A Safer, Stronger Delta Through Collaboration With Critical Stakeholders

By Festus Ahon

SHERIFF Oborevori, governance is not simply about building roads, executing projects or announcing policies. It is also about creating the conditions in which people can live securely, institutions can function effectively and economic activities can flourish.

That philosophy was on display in Asaba this week as his administration simultaneously deepened its partnership with the security establishment, supported a newly established federal medical university and strengthened its relationship with the media.

Though the three engagements appeared different on the surface, they point to a common thread in the Oborevori administration: the belief that sustainable development depends on collaboration among government, security agencies, educational institutions and the media.

Receiving the newly appointed General Officer Commanding, 6 Division, Nigerian Army, Port Harcourt, Maj. Gen. Everest Okoro, who is also the Land Component Commander, Joint Task Force South-South, Operation Delta Safe, on a courtesy visit to Government House, Asaba, Oborevori made a direct connection between security and economic prosperity.

He told the Army chief that Delta's strategic importance to Nigeria's economy made security in the state a national concern.

"Delta State is very, very key to the economy of Nigeria and we rely on the security agencies to do their work because the peace we are enjoying today is the result of collaboration between the state and the security agencies," the governor said.

The statement captures a reality that is often overlooked in discussions about development in the Niger Delta. A region may possess abundant natural resources and immense investment opportunities, but without peace and security, those advantages can quickly become liabilities.

Delta, with its oil and gas infrastructure, waterways, industrial assets and strategic location, remains central to Nigeria's energy and economic architecture. The protection of these assets therefore extends beyond the immediate interests of the state. It has implications for national revenue, energy security, employment and investor confidence.

Oborevori's message to Maj. Gen. Okoro was consequently both local and national: the preservation of peace in Delta is an investment in Nigeria's economic stability.

"If this region is safe, the economy will go up. If there is unrest in this region, the economy will go down," he said.

It was also significant that the governor did not present security as the exclusive responsibility of the military. Rather, he emphasised collaboration between the state government and security agencies, a model his administration has continued to promote.

The governor recalled that the state government had provided infrastructure and logistics to strengthen the operational capacity of security formations. Among the



Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevori (left), receives a souvenir from the General Officer Commanding, 6 Division, Nigerian Army, Port Harcourt/Land Component Commander, Joint Task Force South-South Operation Delta Safe, Maj.-Gen. Everest Okoro during a courtesy visit to the Governor at Government House, Asaba, recently. PHOTO: SAMUEL JIBUNOR.

interventions, he disclosed, was the construction of one-unit flats at the Amphibious Army Barracks in Agbor, alongside sustained logistical support to the 63 Brigade.

Such interventions may appear modest when compared with the huge financial resources required for major infrastructure projects, but their strategic value can be substantial. Security personnel who operate in difficult environments require functional accommodation, mobility, logistics and institutional support to respond effectively to threats.

For Oborevori, therefore, supporting security agencies is not an alternative to development; it is an essential component of development.

That position aligns with Okoro's own assessment of the situation. The new GOC, who was on a familiarisation tour of formations and units under his command, identified the protection of critical national assets as one of his priorities.

He noted that Delta's oil and gas infrastructure, waterways and other strategic assets made the state important to Nigeria's economic and energy security.

His proposed approach built around credible intelligence, realistic training, disciplined leadership and seamless joint operations suggests a recognition that contemporary security challenges require more than conventional military responses.

The emphasis on intelligence and inter-agency cooperation is

particularly important in a complex environment where criminality, illegal activities and threats to critical infrastructure can assume different forms.

Yet the significance of the governor's engagements during the week extended beyond security.

On Tuesday, the Delta State Government presented a 30-seater Coastal Bus to the Federal University of Medical and Health Sciences, Kwale, in another demonstration of the administration's willingness to support institutions whose activities have implications for the wider development of the state.

Representing the governor at Government House, Deputy Governor Monday Onyeme described the intervention as part of the administration's commitment to supporting the university.

The gesture is important because the institution is expected to contribute to the development of medical manpower at a time when Nigeria continues to grapple with shortages of skilled healthcare professionals. By supporting the university's operational needs, the state government is indirectly investing in human capital. A functional university requires more than lecture halls and academic programmes. Transportation, logistics, staff welfare, equipment and administrative support are all necessary to create an environment in which teaching, research and healthcare training can thrive.

Pan-Yoruba Groups Seek End To Internal Attacks, Okay State Police

By Suliyat Tella

MORE than 100 Pan-Yoruba and self-determination groups have called for an end to attacks and divisions among their organisations, while urging the Federal Government to implement state police to address insecurity across the region.

The groups made the call at a meeting on peace, unity and conflict prevention in Yorubaland held in Lagos on Tuesday.

They said growing insecurity, terrorism, extremism, internal divisions and religious tensions were threatening the peace, heritage and development of Yoruba and Itsekiri communities.

In a communiqué issued at the end of the meeting, the groups resolved to work together to promote peace, prosperity and harmony across Yoruba and Itsekiri territories.

They specifically called for an end to attacks against leaders of various Pan-Yoruba and self-determination organisations, including the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, Gani Adams; Professor Banji Akintoye; Sunday Adeyemo, popularly known as Sunday Igboho; and other leaders.

The groups also agreed that there should be no further attacks against one another through social media or other platforms, warning that individuals or organisations that disregarded the resolution would be

seen as undermining peace and unity in Yorubaland.

They also opposed extremism and called for the preservation of the region's tradition of religious freedom and tolerance.

The delegates urged an end to attacks targeting traditional worshippers, Christians, Muslims and freethinkers, saying religious differences should not be allowed to threaten peaceful coexistence.

Speaking on insecurity, the groups condemned the situation across the region and urged the Federal and state governments to take decisive measures to protect residents.

They specifically called for the speedy implementation of state police, which they described as necessary in addressing security challenges in the region.

The groups also called for stronger cooperation among Yoruba and Itsekiri communities across the South-West, as well as in Kwara, Kogi and Yoruba-speaking parts of Edo State.

They said such cooperation would promote political, economic and cultural integration while helping the communities respond collectively to internal and external security threats.

As part of their response to insecurity, the groups called for community defence by indigenous Yoruba and Itsekiri people.

The meeting also addressed the role of tradi-

tional rulers, urging them to promote unity and protect Yoruba cultural heritage.

The groups appealed to traditional rulers to focus more on improving the social, cultural and economic conditions of their people rather than engaging in rivalries that could undermine the dignity of traditional institutions.

On governance, the delegates expressed support for democracy and opposed moves they considered capable of undermining the will of the people.

They also called for free, fair and credible elections, describing credible elections as essential to sustainable development.

The groups expressed support for the Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN), urging South-West states to support its programmes and achievements.

They further called for greater regional integration involving the South-West, Kogi, Kwara, Edo and Itsekiri communities in the Niger Delta.

Among the proposed regional projects was the development of Lagos-Warri water and rail transportation links to improve economic and cultural integration.

The groups also raised concerns over the power situation in the region, blaming inadequate electricity supply for worsening poverty and slowing economic development.

They criticised electricity distribution companies for what they described as poor service and exploitation of consumers, calling for measures to address the problems affecting electricity supply in Yoruba territories.

On self-determination, the groups reaffirmed their commitment to ethnic self-determination, describing it as a right recognised under the United Nations Charter and arguing that it remained important to the political, economic and cultural aspirations of the Yoruba people.

The meeting resolved to establish a Working Group on Peace Building and Conflict Prevention in Western Nigeria.

The committee, according to the communiqué, will comprise the conveners of the meeting and would be expanded to include other representatives.

It is expected to engage groups involved in disputes in an effort to promote peace, harmony and coexistence among Pan-Yoruba organisations.

The meeting was attended by representatives of groups including Oodua Youth Movement, Agbekoya, Ilana Omo Oodua, Coalition of Oodua Self Determination Groups, Oodua Peoples Congress, Yoruba Self Determination Movement, Afenifere Youth Movement, Yoruba Council Worldwide, Oodua National Congress and several other organisations.

New CBN Policy: Putting The Cart Before The Horse

By Opeyemi Bello

DATA localisation is one of those rare policies that almost everyone agrees with in principle and argues about in practice. On 15 June 2026, the Central Bank of Nigeria issued circular PSS/DIR/PUB/CIR/001/004, signed by Dr Rakiya Yusuf, Director of the Payments System Supervision Department, directing financial institutions to localise payment data. The circular signals a new posture of systemic oversight, under which the largest fintechs would be supervised as critical financial infrastructure rather than as startups. And it mandates data localisation, which has attracted the most attention, because it is by far the most operationally demanding.

It requires that all payment transaction data generated in Nigeria be "stored and managed within Nigeria" by 1 January 2027. Read broadly, as the law firms parsing it have, the requirement extends to transaction databases, settlement and reconciliation records, switching logs, merchant and issuer records, audit trails, and, critically, backups and disaster-recovery systems. The circular supplements rather than replaces the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, leaving covered institutions subject to two compliance regimes at once. It specifies no fixed penalties of its own, only discretionary "supervisory sanctions"; the single quantified monetary penalty in the surrounding framework belongs to the NDPA, at up to 10 million or two per cent of annual gross revenue. Firms are expected to comply by a hard deadline, to a standard the circular never fully defines, under a penalty it never quantifies.

The principle behind the policy deserves broad support. A country's payment data is a strategic national asset. The regulator supervising a trillion-naira payments ecosystem should not have to rely on a foreign court, a foreign cloud provider, or another government's cooperation to access data needed for oversight. Financial sovereignty is not protectionism; it is prudent regulation.

The macroeconomic case is real too. Technext puts Nigerian spending with foreign cloud providers at around \$ 850 million a year, paid in scarce dollars earned in a currency that lost roughly 70% of its value between 2020 and 2024. Keeping that expenditure at home is a legitimate ambition, and naira-denominated hosting is a genuine hedge.

Where the policy falters is not in its objective but in its execution. The CBN has instructed the industry to achieve full localisation by January 2027, roughly six months after issuing the circular, without ensuring the infrastructure, cloud ecosystem, and operational readiness required to make that transition viable. In effect, it has asked the industry to drive on roads that have not yet been built. We do not have to speculate about the consequences. Another central bank tried this eight years ago, and the deadline did not hold.

It would be naive to read the circular in isolation. It is the latest move in a two-year pattern of the CBN tightening its grip on the fintech sector. In November 2023, the Bank introduced stricter KYC requirements widely seen as targeting fintech onboarding. A few months later, it overhauled the rules for international money transfer operators, raising the minimum capital requirement to US\$1 million, imposing a

10 million non-refundable licensing fee, and excluding fintech companies from holding those licences altogether. Then, on 29 April 2024, it ordered five of the country's best-known fintechs; OPay, Moniepoint, Kuda, PalmPay and Paga, to stop onboarding new customers entirely, two days after the EFCC froze 1,146 accounts linked to illicit foreign-exchange dealing.

The issue is not that the CBN should supervise the industry. It should. The concern is that it has repeatedly reached for the bluntest regulatory instrument available: impose a hard deadline first and deal with the operational consequences later. Data localisation reflects that same instinct, only this time it targets the industry's underlying infrastructure rather than its business processes. That makes feasibility not an academic question, but the central one.

The platforms Nigerian fintechs actually run on have no home in Nigeria. AWS, Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud do not operate a full data-centre region in the country. AWS has run a Local Zone in Lagos since January 2023, but a Local Zone is a latency extension of a parent region rather than a stand-alone one, and its parent is Cape Town. Azure's nearest region is Johannesburg, as is Google Cloud's. Equiano lands in Lagos, but a subsea cable delivers connectivity, not compute. For most institutions, then, compliance is not a configuration change. It means migrating live production workloads off the infrastructure on which a decade of Nigerian fintech has been built. That is not simply an ambitious migration programme. It is a race against physical constraints.

Migrate them to what? Nigeria has roughly 50 to 56 megawatts of live commercial data-centre capacity, by the reckoning of trackers including TechCabal and ConnectingAfrica; counting announced and under-construction facilities, the installed figure rises to between 124 and 137 megawatts. Those are two different measures, frequently blurred into one.

South Africa operates about 355 megawatts across more than 50 facilities, which is precisely why AWS, Microsoft, and Google have their African regions there. The ros-



Cardoso

ter shows why the doubt is reasonable. Rack Centre runs a 13.5-megawatt off-grid gas plant in Lagos and added a 12-megawatt hall in March 2025, bringing its entire footprint to a single campus. Open Access Data Centres has committed more than 240 million dollars to reach 24 megawatts by 2027, with only the first 12-megawatt phase near-term. Kasi Cloud's campus is billed at 100 megawatts on full build-out with only its first phase live; Equinix, which bought MainOne for 320 million dollars in 2022, has a 20-megawatt site planned at Alaro City; Airtel's Nxtra arm is building 38 megawatts in Eko Atlantic. Those all mature during or after 2027, at or beyond the deadline, and none has been tested at the scale of a national payments switch. The commercial terms differ too: where the hyperscalers seeded a generation of startups with free tiers and credits, local providers charge commercial rates from the first invoice.

The operators themselves disagree about how ready the country is. The chief executive of Open Access Data Centres has argued publicly that physical capacity is not the constraint and that institutions have no reason to delay. A co-founder of Kasi Cloud, someone with every incentive to talk the sector up, has instead asked whether Nigeria has enough cloud computing and storage platforms to carry a migration of this size, and the chief technology officer of the fintech Rank has located the problem in these facilities' processing capacity rather than their floor space, untested under real load. When the people selling the capacity are the ones raising the caveats, the caveats deserve weight.

The policy also treats data-centre floor space as equivalent to cloud infrastructure. It is not. A building filled with racks does not automatically become a managed cloud platform capable of running high-availability financial workloads at national scale. The real question is whether Nigeria has enough mature cloud platforms, with proven storage, networking, orchestration, and operational resilience, to absorb this migration without compromising reliability. The policy assumes the answer is yes. That assumption has yet to be demonstrated.

Huawei is the notable exception. In December 2024, it launched what it describes as Nigeria's first hyperscale cloud region, offering more than thirty managed cloud services, with another US\$400 million off-grid facility announced for Ogun State. If any provider can satisfy the CBN's localisation ambition today, Huawei is probably the strongest candidate. Yet that exposes an uncomfortable irony. A policy justified in the name of data sovereignty may ultimately shift Nigeria's payment infrastructure away from American cloud providers and towards a Chinese one. The policy does not eliminate dependence on foreign infrastructure. It merely changes which foreign infrastructure Nigeria depends on.

AWS presents the opposite problem. Its Lagos Local Zone genuinely allows certain workloads and data to remain in Nigeria, but it is not a full AWS region. The control plane remains in Cape Town, and several core managed services, including Amazon RDS, are unavailable locally.

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Engineering Excellence: Inside A Refinery Designed For Tomorrow

By Abdulbasit Yusuf

IN every generation, there are projects that redefine what is considered possible. They challenge assumptions about local capacity, demonstrate that world-class execution is achievable within emerging markets, and inspire confidence that the future can be built at home. Nigeria's refining renaissance presents one such opportunity.

The conversation around refining has understandably focused on fuel availability, pricing, import substitution and energy security. Yet beneath these outcomes lies another story deserving equal attention: the engineering philosophy behind building one of the world's largest single-train refineries and what it means to create infrastructure designed not merely for today, but for tomorrow.

This matters because competitiveness in today's global economy is no longer determined solely by natural resources. It increasingly depends on technology, operational excellence, resilience and the ability to anticipate future requirements. The most successful industrial assets are therefore not simply large; they are intelligently designed.

The Dangote Petroleum Refinery is significant not only because of its 650,000-barrel-per-day nameplate capacity, but because of the extraordinary engineering complexity

required to bring such a facility together. In June 2026, the refinery reportedly achieved 700,000 barrels per day during a performance test, exceeding its official nameplate capacity.

Large-scale refining is among the most demanding industrial engineering undertakings. Thousands of interconnected systems must operate with precision. Processing units, control rooms, pipelines, storage facilities, utilities, marine infrastructure and safety systems must function as one integrated ecosystem.

Devakumar Edwin, Vice President, Oil & Gas at Dangote Industries Limited, explained that the refinery was designed and built by Nigerians, with Dangote Industries Limited acting as the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor, incorporating cutting-edge technologies from around the world. "It is a point of pride that a Nigerian company not only designed but also built the world's largest single-train refinery complex," he said, highlighting the Nigerian engineering capability behind the project.

The scale becomes even clearer when one considers the range of disciplines involved. Chemical, mechanical, electrical, civil, structural, instrumentation, environmental and digital systems engineers must work together to ensure that the plant operates safely,

efficiently and reliably.

The refinery's engineering ambition is also evident in its infrastructure. Its offshore crude-receiving system is connected to the facility through subsea pipelines, while its extensive processing and storage systems are designed to support large-scale movement of crude and refined products. Its design incorporates international environmental and product-quality standards, including Euro V specifications.

And there is an even stronger supporting fact. The Nigerian engineering community itself has recognised the facility. The Nigerian Society of Engineers, Nigerian Academy of Engineering, Association of Consulting Engineering in Nigeria and COREN toured the complex, with NSE President Margaret Oguntala describing the facility as "mind-blowing" and saying the project gave her confidence that young Nigerian engineers are ready to take on the world.

The Dangote Refinery therefore matters not only for what it produces, but also for what it demonstrates. It demonstrates that complex industrial infrastructure of global significance can be conceived, financed, constructed and operated in Nigeria. It demonstrates the value of thinking beyond immediate market needs and designing for long-term competitiveness. And it demonstrates the importance of Nigerian engineers, techni-

cians and professionals participating in projects measured against global benchmarks.

There is also a national dimension to this achievement. When Nigerians see complex infrastructure being built and operated to global standards, it changes expectations about what is possible. It can encourage young people to pursue engineering and technical careers, motivate companies to invest in innovation and workforce development, and strengthen confidence in Nigeria's capacity to participate in sophisticated global industries.

Ultimately, the true measure of a refinery is not simply how many barrels it processes. It is how intelligently it is engineered, how safely and reliably it operates, how efficiently it converts resources into value, and how effectively it can adapt to an evolving energy landscape. That is what makes the Dangote Refinery more than a large industrial facility.

Its greatest significance may lie in the engineering confidence it represents: the confidence to build at scale, to compete against global standards and to create infrastructure capable of serving an economy for generations. For Nigeria, that is an important part of the refining story, and perhaps one of the most important stories yet to be fully told.

•Yusuf, an engineer and project consultant, wrote from Lagos

70 Cheers For Soldier Of Peace, Sultan Sa’ad

By Danladi Bako

“Leaders must act in the best interest of the populace, maintain accessibility for the oppressed and loose legitimacy if they fail to establish justice” - Shehu Usman Danfodiyo (1754 - 1817).

PARADOXICALLY the context of soldiering, war-mongering and peace-making look estranged, unconnected and at parallel with each other. When these distinct elements of power, conflict resolution and leadership contestation all aggregate into one personality, when also the components all tether towards the same trajectory of peace building, the locus of thought about power and leadership now rests with Michel Foucault’s dictum that “power is not just held by governments and kings, it flows through every day social interactions.”

When power is vested in a leader and in this case a Sultan, what readily challenges the mind and thought is how would he handle this intoxicant called power and its utilization for the public good. Many a man has fallen by the wayside while navigating the exercise of his power, while many others have self-destruct in the control and execution of their plans and policies because of a lack of preparedness for power and some deficiency in governance adaptability quotient.

Sultan Saad was installed as the 20th Sultan of Sokoto via a letter of appointment in November 2006 at the age of 50, equipped with a member of national institute graduation certificate, incredible knowledge of Nigeria having served in numerous military formations and an innate capacity for making friends very easily with all and sundry. From Sultan Ward primary school Sokoto along with Kabir Tafida and Rilwanu Bello in the 60s to Barewa College, Zaria with Ahmed Mora and others in the 70s, he moved into course 18 of the Nigerian Defense Academy along with Bala Shagari and Gen Dambazau completing the course and decorated as a Second Lieutenant.

His postings took him to Nnewi and Nsukka in the South East, South South, Saki South West, Ilorin in the North Central and Bauchi and Baga in the North East. It was literally evident that providence and fate was preparing him for the role of a national leader and traditional kingship. It was not by accident that he trained and served in one of the most difficult and dangerous sections of the Army - the Armoured Corps. The army irrespective of the corp, they are trained to kill. It’s as simple and as direct as

that. It was not surprising that the ECOMOG interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone became his next assignment in the 90s.

As a Commander of armed forces in those battle fields he had to deploy tact and control effectively at all times. Winston Churchill once said “Leadership is the intelligent use of power”. Growing up as a prince and son of Sultan Abubakar III he knew and understood the dynamics of power and power relations at local, sub-national, national and international levels.

In preparation for becoming a Sultan, fate sent him to National Institute for Policy Studies, Kuru Jos where peace building and national integration are key elements of the course outline. In fact, his dissertation was on conflict and peace resolution. He once said “I have seen the devastating effects of war, and it is my conviction that we must do everything possible as a nation to avoid war. Peace is always the best option.”

It is the aggregation of these life and professional experiences that manifests in his



interpretation of his role as Sultan of the Sokoto Caliphate. As he always reminds his audience, the word “Islam” means peace.

At his presentation in Harvard University Boston, Massachusetts USA in 2010, he lectured the audience about “Islam , peace and democracy in West Africa” pontificating that Islam and democracy can and do co-exist harmoniously in Africa. At the State Department of the American Government, he regaled the army generals with relevant instances stating to corroborate the fact that Islam is a religion of peace.

Two years later at Chatham House in London, Sultan Sa’ad preached peace to the motley crowd of intellectuals and policy makers. He reiterated the peace mantra at his meeting with Prince Charles at Clarence House in 2010. Further visits to Council for Foreign Relations in Washington DC and Wilson Center Washington were followed by lectures at Columbia University Washington and United States Institute for Peace where Ambassador John Carson hosted His Eminence the Sultan.

Similar other peace advocacy trips took the Sultan to Oxford in England last year and as Co-President of the Religion for Peace which is a United Nations body at the Global meeting in Istanbul Turkey, the whole mantra of peace building and advocacy has become a gargantuan responsibility.

At home, the Sultan’s peace building efforts are truly encapsulated in his leadership of the Nigerian Inter-religious Committee (NIREC). Being a very pragmatic and committed advocate of peace , Sultan Sa’ad interacts with and displays huge accommodation for adherents of other faiths and religions. Indeed, a Christian delegation once visited him at the Palace and they requested to pray the Christian way and he obliged them.

Another famous quote from Shehu Usman Danfodiyo comes in handy here. He postulated that “the death of a thousand good men is not as tragic as having an unfit man in a position of national leadership.”

What greater testimonial of Sultan Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar’s liberalism while also stoutly defending the doctrines of Islam and the teachings of the Caliphate founding fathers.

As Sultan Sa’ad clocks 70 on August 24, 2026, his legacies as a quintessential leader are already manifesting to all and sundry. He remains a national treasure we are all proud of.

• **Nasir Danladi Bako, PhD, OON is also Kogunan Sokoto.**

IBB @ 85: When Power Betrayed Friendship

By Banji Alabi

THE tragic and merciless murder in the name of execution of Mamman Vasta, a renowned military intellectual and soldier-poet, no doubt, requires a sober and solemn reflection especially at a moment like this when his erstwhile trusted friend, who without disguise, became the arrow-head of the conspiracy that abruptly snuffed life out of him and, without any remorse, now abashedly celebrates his own life at 85.

I find it irresistible a moral obligation doing a philosophical requiem for a friend betrayed by a “twin brother”, (though non-biological) who was not only a childhood friend but a Best-man during the wedding ceremony that did not produce just survivors but successors as this now offers indelible lesson for generations unborn.

History is full of betrayals, but none cuts deeper than when a man orders the killing of his childhood friend. The execution of Major-General Mamman Jiya Vatsa on December 17, 1986, by the regime of his bosom friend, General

Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, remains Nigeria’s most poignant study of what absolute power does to human friendship.

Vasta and Babangida were not mere colleagues. They were sons of Bida in Niger State, both attended the same Government College, Bida and joined the Army together. They were best men at each other’s weddings, their children called each other uncle. In military terms, they were closer than blood.

In August 1985, Babangida overthrew General Muhammadu Buhari and became Head of State. He appointed Vatsa, his dearest friend, as Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja - one of the most powerful ministries in the country. It was an act of trust. Four months later, that trust was shattered.

The accusation and the weak evidence: In December 1985, Vatsa was arrested and accused of plotting to overthrow Babangida’s government in a coup allegedly planned for December 1985. He was tried secretly by a Special Military Tribunal headed by Major-General Charles Ndiomu. He was allegedly found guilty and sentenced to death.

What has



haunted Nigeria for 40 years is the revelation that came later from the highest quarters. General Domkat Yah Bali, who was at that time the Chief of Defence Staff, the Number Two man in the Armed Forces Ruling Council, and the most senior officer after Babangida, stated unequivocally in later interviews that “all the evidences presented against Vatsa were weak, circumstantial, hearsay-based, and would not have sustained a conviction in any serious court of law.”

Other members of the tribunal have also whispered that the judgment was pre-determined. If Bali’s testimony is true- and there is no reason to doubt a man of Bali’s integrity who had nothing to gain from lying - then Vatsa was not executed because he was guilty. He was executed because he was “suspected”! And that is where condemnation becomes inevitable.

Condemnation where history must judge Babangida: We must condemn General Ibrahim Babangida on three grounds where evidence and morality support such condemnation:

Condemnation for allowing paranoia to override justice. A leader who kills his friend on weak evidence has failed the first test of leadership - justice. Babangida as Head of State had the power of prerogative of mercy. He had the power to commute death sentence to life imprisonment, to detention, to retirement. He chose the most irreversible punishment on the most questionable evidence. That is not firmness; that is ruthlessness.

Condemnation for Destroying Due Process. The Tribunal that tried Vatsa was a military tribunal, not a court of law. Defence lawyers were intimidated, appeal was limited, and

the Head of State was both the accuser and the final judge. When a man is both the offended and the judge, justice is already dead. Babangida created a system where friendship could not be saved even if he wanted to.

Condemnation for Setting a brutal precedence. By executing his own best friend, Babangida sent a chilling message to the Nigerian political class that has endured till today that power has no friends, only victims. From that day, Nigerian politics became a game of absolute betrayal. The murder of Chief Bola Ige, the killing of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola and her husband, Moshood Abiola by the same cabal lend credence to the above legacy Babagida left for Nigeria’s political and power class. If Babangida could kill Vatsa, who is safe? That culture of suspicion and elimination is the direct child of December 17, 1986. Vasta was also a poet. In his poem “The Bird That Sings”, he wrote about freedom. He was a humanist, a writer, a gentleman officer. He did not deserve to die like a common criminal on weak evidence.

From the above, we can philosophically ask the question that what does power do to friendship?

Power destroys equality. Friendship can only exist between equals. The day Babangida became President and Vatsa remained Minister, equality died. One could now kill the other with a signature. Friendship cannot breathe in such unequal air.

• **Banji Alabi, National Chairman, Ondo State Eminent Persons Group and Chairman, Human Rights Committee, Eti-Osa Chapter of the Nigeria Bar Association, dedicated this article to the memory of Major-General Mamman Jiya Vatsa (1940-1986).**

Kaleidoscope

The Road That Would Not Die: How Bonny-Bodo Survived 40 Years Of Betrayal

By Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo

THERE are islands that keep to themselves because geography demands it, and islands that keep to themselves because memory, caution, and power have taught them to. Bonny was both. For decades, it lived in a carefully guarded solitude—a silence not quite peace, not quite fear, but something older and more deliberate than either. It was the silence of a place that seemed to say: let the world come close, but only to the edge of the tide.

A holding of breath by a community that has fought incessant devastating wars, especially with neighbours—Andoni, Okrika, Opobo, courtesy of King Jaja. I lived inside that silence. I served as NLNG's Community Relations Manager through the years when the Bonny-Bodo Road died, revived, died again, and at last rose from the mud, mangrove, and the archives like an oath that history had delayed but could not erase. I watched its ghost hover over the island for years, a road not yet built but already heavy with the burden of destiny. And I watched the man who would finally drag that ghost into flesh—quietly, stubbornly, and almost single-handedly—Dr. Babs Omotowa. This is the story as I lived it. And what I learned directly from the man at its centre.

The Water Remembers Everything

Long before Bonny became an island that said no to a road, it was an island the world could not ignore. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Bonny stood among the busiest slave ports on the West African coast. Captives from the Igbo interior were pushed through its creeks toward European ships waiting offshore. Historians estimate that hundreds of thousands passed through Bonny's waters—a human tide that surged between 1780 and 1810, slowed only when Britain outlawed the trade in 1807, and continued illegally for years after.

When slavery ended, palm oil took its place. The same waterways that had carried human cargo now bore barrels of red gold toward Europe's factories. Bonny became indispensable again. Then came crude oil and Shell. Then natural gas liquids and ExxonMobil. Then liquefied natural gas and Nigeria LNG Limited. For nearly three centuries, Bonny has been one of Nigeria's vital gateways to the world—and for nearly all of that time, the world reached it only by water. The Federal Soldiers sent to secure Bonny crude oil export terminal during the civil war, were moved from an important military facility in Victoria Island, Lagos, today known as the Bonny Camp. The road this story is about would be the first time in Bonny's long history that the island's value would flow through its people, not merely past them.

The Island That Chose To Wait

When NLNG first drew up plans for its great gas liquefaction plant, the drawings included a road—a proper road—linking Bonny to the mainland at Bodo. The community said no. From afar, that may appear short-sighted. It was not.

Bonny's leaders feared that a road would fling the island open to strangers, upset its fragile social balance, and weaken the cultural authority of those who had long controlled access to land and opportunity. Some feared crime. Others feared change. A few feared losing the quiet leverage that isolation had always given them. So, Bonny chose the water. And the water, as always, chose Bonny.

Then the modern world arrived anyway—by sea. At the height of NLNG's construction, more than seventeen thousand workers descended on Bonny Island. Boats carried them daily. Helicopters lowered others onto a strip of land that had neither the roads nor the housing to absorb them. Bonny had asked to keep the world offshore. Instead, the world arrived all at once—and remained offshore all the same, because the island could not capture the wealth passing through it. Workers earned their wages on Bonny soil and spent them in Port Harcourt, in Lagos, anywhere a road or runway could carry them. Bonny had won its isolation. In the same breath, it had lost the prosperity isolation was meant to protect.

Meanwhile, the waters grew dangerous. Pirates multiplied. Boats capsized. Lives were lost. The arithmetic changed. Slowly, reluctantly, the island turned toward the

• Now Popular As Nigeria's Greatest Act Of Corporate Grace

road it had once refused. That first refusal is not folklore. It sits in the minutes of an NLNG shareholders' meeting, recording the refund of money already budgeted for the road. The community did not accept it. So, the money went back. Bonny had chosen to wait. And wait it did.

Thirty Years, One Road, No Progress

The Federal Government was not blind to the injustice. An island producing close to fifteen percent of Nigeria's revenue deserved a road. A contract was awarded. And then nothing happened. For more than thirty years, the contractor collected annual allocations of 1–2 billion, filed variation claims for almost exactly the same amount, and left the road trapped in a permanent state of half-finished stalemate. Federal Ministry of Works records showed that Gitto Costruzioni Generali Nigeria Ltd which received an initial mobilization fee of 10,463,233,981.26, eventually walked away with 43% of the contract sum for 12% work done. Rumours swirled of political ties, donations, influence. What did not swirl was progress. A road is a promise. For thirty years, Nigeria broke that promise.

The Bill That Frightened A Good Man

In 2008, NLNG's Managing Director, Dr. Chima Ibeneche, revived the idea. He assembled a team—Siene Allwell-Brown, Chinasa Ego-Osuala, Kudo Eredia-Eke, Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo, Godson Dienye, Belejiti Ikuru, and others—to determine the true cost.

The number came back: over 100 billion. It was more than the annual budgets of many Nigerian states. It was too heavy, too immense, almost impossible to carry. Ibeneche let the idea recede. Three false starts now: a community that feared the road; a government that funded nothing; a company that had tried twice and failed twice. Into this graveyard of good intentions walked Dr. Babs Omotowa in 2012. "Forty Years Is Unfair." The spark came from a visitor. General Yakubu Gowon visited NLNG late in 2012. In passing, he mentioned that the design for the Bonny-Bodo Road had begun during his tenure—in the 1970s. Omotowa did the arithmetic. Forty years. An island that had carried Nigeria's wealth on its back, still reachable only by water. He decided the waiting would end with him. What followed was not a single heroic gesture, but a campaign—patient, strategic, relentless. He built the case before he ever presented it.

The Moral Case

Bonny's people were dying on the water. Pirates ruled the creeks. NLNG's footprint was growing. The company owed the community more than condolences. A road was not merely concrete and steel. It was an act of

duty—a way to honour the lives that had been risked, and lost, in the shadow of corporate success.

The Business Case

A road would:

- End NLNG's dependence on expensive air and marine logistics.
- Allow staff to live in Port Harcourt and travel to Bonny in about 45 minutes.
- Reduce operational costs.
- De-risk Train 7 construction and future expansion. This was not charity dressed in ceremony. It was strategy in its most humane form.

The Political Case

He costed an alternative route through Andoni. He met Governor Rotimi Amaechi personally. He anticipated objections before they arose. He pre-engaged non-Nigerian directors on the Board. He secured NNPC's support. He prepared answers before questions could be asked. By the time he entered the Boardroom, nothing could surprise him. It took nearly a year. But the Board approved it: NLNG would provide 60 billion—half the cost—if the Federal Government removed the incompetent contractor and awarded the road to a capable one. It was the breakthrough the road had waited forty years for.

The Rooms Where The Road Was Reborn

Omotowa met with Architect Mike Onolememe, then Minister of Works. The Minister understood at once. He terminated Gitto Construction's contract. The project was retendered and Julius Berger through a competitive bid process. For the first time in decades, the road had a pulse. Then the administration changed. A new Minister arrived: Barrister Babatunde Fashola. In his first meeting, he dismissed the road as a lesser priority—behind roads "for moving cattle and rams." He said he was unimpressed by NLNG's 60 billion commitment. Omotowa returned from that meeting visibly stung—not by disagreement, but by ingratitude. He told the Minister plainly: cooperate, or the offer would be withdrawn. It took nearly another year—and the quiet intervention of the Minister's own directors—before the project moved again.

The Clause That Saved The Road

Omotowa offered to advance NLNG's entire 60 billion immediately—even in dollars—so Julius Berger could mobilize without delay. In exchange, NLNG insisted on a clause Gitto had never faced: Any future cost overrun would be borne by the Federal Government, not NLNG. That single clause broke the thirty-year cycle of appropriation and disappearance. It was the road's shield. It was Omotowa's

quiet genius. It was the turning point.

What Was Finally Built

Thirty-nine kilometres of heavy-duty road. Three major bridges. All on a swamp and mangrove terrain that swallowed lesser contractors whole. Variations arose—as they always do—but they now landed on the Federal Government's account, routed through the Road Infrastructure Development and Refurbishment Investment Tax Credit Scheme. The project moved from N120 billion to N280 billion. It became the largest single corporate social responsibility project in Nigeria's history. And it very nearly did not happen at all.

A Road Inside A Larger Dream

The road was only the spine of a larger vision—Bonny-Dubai. Around 1970, Dubai and Bonny had strikingly similar economic foundations: both were dependent on oil. Indeed, Bonny was ahead in some economic indices. It became a primary crude oil hub in 1965 when the Bonny Island Terminal was completed. Oil was discovered in Dubai's Fateh field in 1966 and commercial exports began subsequently. These happened before Dubai accelerated past Bonny and then past Nigeria itself, transforming resource wealth into global ambition, gleaming infrastructure, and a city that seemed to rise from imagination as much as from sand.

Our dream for Bonny was quieter, but no less bold: a 25-year masterplan; 75 billion committed by NLNG and N25 billion committed by Shell; a modern city imagined from coastline and gas. I was tasked with turning parts of that dream into reality:

- Removing Monkey Village, a 25-year-old ghetto defacing NLNG's \$30 billion plant.
- Constructing 70 new buildings for Finima indigenes whose houses were demolished to build NLNG, 46 years prior, but were not replaced. We also paid those whose houses were demolished but not adequately compensated. We wanted to make peace with the past. We planned for a prosperous future with no one left behind.
- We planned restructuring Bonny Utility Company, which provides electricity to the island. - Omotowa gifted the kingdom assets worth billions of dollars, including Bonny vocational School and Bonny Utilities Company.
- We Set up a foundation with UNIDO, Bank of Industry, World Bank, as partners.
- We promoted Bonnyization and creating a talent pipeline for Bonny. We leveraged NLNG scholarship scheme and took youths straight to Oxford and Leeds and Cambridge.
- Engaged Accenture to hand-hold Bonny through its transition from rural community to industrial and commercial heartbeat of Nigeria.

It was a solid foundation

We were not merely building structures. We were restoring what the community had been owed for years. But none of it mattered without the road. The road was the artery. The road was the beginning.

For The Record

I write this because I was there. Because I watched a man do what three governments could not. Because I believe leadership, when it is real, deserves its name in history. The bill that once frightened Ibeneche was almost exactly what Omotowa eventually structured: 60 billion from NLNG, 60 billion from the Federal Government. What one man saw as impossible, another saw as solvable. Every government since Gowon has owed Bonny this crossing. I only ask that the record show clearly where the breakthrough came from. Dr. Omotowa did not ask me to write this. I didn't seek his permission to write it. Because the truth does not ask for permission. So, I write it. In my voice. With my witness. With my conscience. Because Bonny will one day cross that road without remembering how close it came to never existing. And because history should remember the man who refused to let it die. I believe the proper name for that road is Babs Omotowa Highway.

• Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo, CEO Museums and Monuments Academy, lives in Montreal, Canada.



By Silver Nwokoro

AS Nigeria intensifies its quest for economic diversification, particularly through regional and global trade expansion, trade tensions, shifting trade corridors, interrupted supply chains, regulatory fragmentation and infrastructure bottlenecks are impacting how goods and service move across the continent.

There are significant opportunities for trade in Africa driven by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a growing consumer market, expanding regional value chains, and increasing investment in infrastructure and digital connectivity.

AfCFTA offers a market of over 1.4 billion people and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$3.4 trillion.

Connecting the free movement of goods and services and the free movement of persons is essential to harness the benefits of intra-African trade and economic integration. But while many African countries have ratified or signed the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, the AU's free movement protocol (AU-FMP) has not received as much attention.

The Guardian gathered that Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), legal professionals and other informal cross-border traders face harsh crackdowns, high tariffs, and complex customs documentation.

They are also blocked by restrictive work and business permit rules. Lawyers aiming to practice in other African countries are also confronted by lack of mutual recognition agreements. These factors create severe friction for regional integration and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

According to a report by the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), over 65 per cent of SMEs attempting to export goods or services within Africa cite legal and regulatory barriers as their biggest constraint.

The report noted that there are cumbersome documentation processes, which many SMEs lack the capacity to navigate. These include the extensive paperwork required for customs clearance, export licensing, and standards compliance across multiple jurisdictions.

Other challenges include the lack of harmonised professional standards across African countries; restrictions on foreign legal consultancy services in several jurisdictions and delays in ratifying professional mobility protocols under AfCFTA's Protocol on Services.

The Guardian gathered that such other hurdles include that Nigerian-trained lawyers must undergo fresh qualification or accreditation processes before being allowed to offer cross-border services, even within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region and among common law jurisdictions.

Intra-African mobility is central to realising Agenda 2063 — an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens. As ECOWAS has shown, free movement is possible and powerful. Now is the time for the rest of Africa to follow suit.

By embracing mobility, Africa can unlock its full potential, foster unity and build a future where borders connect rather than divide. Achieving this vision will require coordinated effort and commitment, but it is within reach.

According to the United Nations (ECA), full implementation of AfCFTA could increase Africa's GDP by \$141 billion and intra-African trade by \$276 billion, an increase of 45%.

However, trade is not just about goods and services. It is also about people and skilled labour. Labour mobility is the lifeblood of economic integration. The AU-FMP, though still awaiting widespread ratification, is essential to realising AfCFTA's full potential.

The consequences of lawyers not being able to deliver legal services seamlessly across the continent manifest in businesses facing



How Legal, Regulatory Hurdles Stifle \$3.4tr Cross-border Trade, Service Delivery

- NOTN Committed To Boosting Cross-border Trade
- Only 20% Of SMEs Resolve Disputes Efficiently – LCCI Survey
- Experts Call For Standardised Laws Across Africa

slow and expensive dispute resolution processes, as National laws prioritise domestic labour over regional talent mobility, stalling cross-border corporate services.

A study by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) revealed that only 20 per cent of SMEs involved in cross-border disputes successfully enforce contracts within a reasonable timeframe.

In the World Bank's Business Ready (B-READY) 2025 report, Nigeria achieved 63.48 per cent score for the regulatory framework, 24.50 for public services, and 53.80 for operational efficiency within the dispute resolution pillar.

While legal frameworks are established, the report indicates a significant gap between these laws and the available public infrastructure to enforce them.

Even where lawyers can advise clients on trade transactions, enforcement of cross-border agreements remains problematic.

At the moment, the British Nigeria Law Forum (BNLF) wants Nigerian lawyers to renew strategic collaboration between them and Britain to advance cross-border legal practice, harness global opportunities, and address emerging challenges in a fast-evolving legal and commercial landscape.

A Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Chris Ehumadu Okeke, who weighed in on the challenges facing cross-border legal practice in Africa, particularly in light of AfCFTA, which aims to ease movement of goods and services, including legal services, across the continent, said legal reforms would address some of the challenges.

Okeke said structural legal impediments hinder cross-border legal practice, explaining that law, like medicine, remains a localised profession governed strictly by national legislation.

"The idea is a latching on the African Free Trade Zone, and to my mind, you cannot trade without legal practice. But the challenge is that law practice, like medical practice, is localised. Each jurisdiction is autonomous," Okeke explained.

He cited the example of Nigeria's Legal Practitioners Act, which defines who may legally practice within the country's borders. According to Okeke, the definition limits legal practice to individuals called to the Nigerian Bar, thereby excluding international practitioners.

He explained that unless the law is specifically amended, foreigners will not practice in the country.

"Even when Nigeria and Ghana are brothers and both Commonwealth countries, the law has always restricted practice to those locally certified. That's the challenge," he stated.

Okeke emphasised that any change to this status quo would require legislative action across various national parliaments, including Nigeria.

Without such reforms, he argued, the dream of seamless legal services across African borders would remain out of reach.

The SAN also criticised what he sees as an imbalanced arrangement in emerging bilateral frameworks, particularly between Nigeria and Britain.

According to him, UK-trained lawyers are entering the Nigerian legal space without reciprocal provisions for Nigerian lawyers.

"Many of us are becoming very skeptical. Is this a backdoor arrangement to allow UK practitioners into Nigeria without granting the same access to Nigerians in the UK? That's the anxiety," he said.

Executive Director, Cadrell Advocacy Centre, Evans Ufeli, said despite growing momentum for regional economic integration, the continent's fragmented legal systems continue to obstruct progress.

According to him, one of the primary challenges lies in the diverse legal systems that span the continent, including common law, civil law, and customary law traditions.

These differences, he said, make it difficult for legal practitioners to offer services or represent clients across multiple jurisdictions without encountering procedural and regulatory roadblocks.

"Each African country maintains its own regulations around trade, taxation, employment, and investment. The lack of harmonisation of laws creates unpredictability for both lawyers and SMEs involved in cross-border transactions," he said.

"Without targeted legal backing, SMEs often struggle with customs procedures, compliance issues, and access to dispute resolution mechanisms," he added.

To resolve these challenges, Ufeli proposed a multi-pronged approach focused on harmonisation, mutual recognition and legal education.

"Key recommendations include

standardising laws across African nations through the leadership of the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs); creating a continental framework for the mutual recognition of legal qualifications; offering cross-border legal training to empower practitioners to navigate foreign legal environments; enhancing government-SME collaboration to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and legal uncertainty.

"Lawyers need the tools and freedom to operate beyond borders if AfCFTA is to truly benefit the African people," Ufeli declared.

He referred to the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as examples of how regional blocs have effectively facilitated cross-border legal practice through unified directives and cooperative frameworks.

"These models demonstrate that it is possible to retain national sovereignty while ensuring legal alignment that promotes trade, investment, and mobility," he said.

He also urged African countries to leverage technology, such as virtual legal services and online dispute resolution platforms, to support remote cross-border practice.

"In the long run, removing legal and regulatory barriers will not only empower lawyers but also unlock the potential of millions of SMEs that are vital to Africa's economic future," Ufeli stated.

Legal consultant at De Legal Pilots, Aduware Osemwegie, who frowned at the challenges, suggested that harmonised legal frameworks would foster inter-African collaboration and economic integration.

Osemwegie noted that many African countries still require lawyers to obtain local licenses before they can offer legal services within their jurisdictions.

She attributed this to the unique and diverse legal systems across the continent, which make it essential for non-local practitioners to have a deep understanding of a country's specific legal landscape.

"Most African countries have different laws and legal procedures. So, non-locals are licensed before they can practice, as this underscores a deep understanding of the legal system in that country," Osemwegie explained. According to her, mutual recognition of legal qualifications across African nations could greatly enhance trade and regional cooperation.

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Enterprise Life Rallies Technology, Huge Capital To Lead Nigeria's Next Insurance Wave

By Sulaimon Salau

ENTERPRISE Life Assurance Nigeria Limited is moving to cement itself as one of the companies shaping the next phase of Nigeria's insurance industry, backed by a capital base that gives it room to underwrite bigger risks, deepen its digital push and chase growth across a market still largely underinsured.

The company's ambitions were underscored on Tuesday in Abuja, where the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) presented its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Nelson Akerele, with a new Operational License, at a ceremony attended by industry leaders and other stakeholders.

Enterprise Life's paid-up share capital now stands at over N18.7 billion with a Minimum Capital Requirement (MCR) well above the N10 billion (MCR) NAICOM has set for life insurers under the industry's recapitalization framework. The gap gives the company headroom analysts say few of its peers can match.

For Akerele, the stronger balance sheet is less about clearing a regulatory bar and more about what the company can now build. He said the extra capital positions Enterprise Life to write larger risks, expand into new markets and push harder into technology-led insurance products aimed at Nigeria's largely untapped middle class and mass-market segments.

"This milestone reflects our ambition to build one of Nigeria's most trusted and innovative life insurance companies. It demonstrates the confidence of our shareholders, the resilience of our business and our readiness to support the future of insurance in Nigeria," he said. He added that the priority now shifts to translating that financial strength into products and service customers can feel.

"It gives us greater capacity to invest in innovation, strengthen customer experience and deliver even more value to the individuals, families and businesses we serve," Akerele said.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) independently verified the capital raise, which was backed by Enterprise Life's parent company, Enterprise Group Ghana, a signal, the company says, of long-term confidence in the Nigerian market rather than a one-off compliance exercise.

Akerele framed the milestone as a launchpad rather than a finish line, pointing to a strategy built around sustained investment in technology and partnerships well beyond what regulation requires.

Esso To Begin Oil Drilling From 40,000bpd Usan Infill Project

By Sulaimon Salau

OIL drilling activities will soon commence at the Usan Infill Project as the Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria (Offshore East) Limited, operator of the Usan field located in Oil Mining Lease (OML) 138 announced the arrival of the Noble Gerry de Souza oil rig in Nigerian waters.

This marks a major milestone in the execution of the Usan Infill Project, reinforcing the company's commitment to investing in Nigeria's deepwater energy sector.

The arrival of this state-of-the-art ultra-deepwater drillship signals the commencement of a drilling campaign designed to unlock additional value from the Usan Field.

As a short cycle investment, the project is expected to deliver up to 40,000 barrels per day of incremental oil production within 18 months, contributing quickly to Nigeria's energy security and economic development.

The Usan Infill Project is supported by a cumulative US\$1 billion investment by the OML 138 partners and underscores Esso's confidence in Nigeria's improving investment environment.

Chairman and Managing Director of ExxonMobil affiliates in Nigeria, Jagir Baxi, said: "The arrival of the Noble Gerry de Souza marks the

• As Oil Rig Arrives Nigeria

beginning of an exciting new chapter for the Usan Field and reflects our continued focus on delivering short cycle deepwater production growth through disciplined investment, in deploying technologies and through operational excellence."

He said the advanced capabilities of the Noble Gerry de Souza would support the safe

and efficient delivery of the drilling program, helping maximize recovery from existing infrastructure while strengthening the long-term performance of the Usan asset. "This milestone is the result of years of planning, collaboration, and dedication by multidisciplinary teams across Esso and partner organizations in Nigeria.

Their expertise and commitment have been instrumental in transitioning the project from concept to operational readiness," Esso stated in a statement.

As offshore activities commence, Esso said it remains focused on delivering the project safely and responsibly, in close partnership with government stakeholders, regulators, contractors, and coventurers.



Executive Secretary/Chief Executive Officer of Nigeria Ports Economic Regulatory Agency (NPERA), Dr. Akutah Pius (left); and the Chairman of the NPERA Governing Board, Dr. Ibrahim Shema, during a press conference in Lagos.

Shell Pursuing Projects To Help Meet Nigeria's Growing Energy Needs – Aiboni

By Sulaimon Salau

SHELL has said it is vigorously pursuing an extensive portfolio of projects that would help meet Nigeria's growing energy needs.

Speaking at the Shell Leadership and Contractor CEO Conference, the Executive Vice President and Country Chair Nigeria, Elohor Aiboni said: "Shell is delivering an extensive portfolio of projects and operations that would help meet Nigeria's growing energy

needs, create value for our stakeholders, and support national development.

"We are advancing major opportunities, executing complex work, and pursuing ambitious goals. But no matter how significant the opportunity, no matter how important the project, our success will always be measured first by how safely we deliver it. That is why this conference matters."

The Shell boss stressed the need for the contracting companies to sustain safe

operations across its businesses in Nigeria.

Speaking on the conference theme, "Learn, Adapt, Improve, connects strongly with the purpose of the Charter," SNEPCo Managing Director Ronald Adams said: "To learn, we must be honest about what has worked, what has been difficult, and what our people and operations are telling us. To adapt, we must be willing to adjust our approach where the realities of work require us to do better. To improve, we

must make sure that the commitments in the Charter are not only discussed during conferences, but embedded into how we lead, how we engage, how we review performance, and how we support safe execution every day."

Elohor reiterated the place of safety in company operations, adding: "Every person who works for Shell or on behalf of Shell deserves to return home safely to their family, every day, without exception."

Expert Urges Nigerians To Tap Into \$21.14b 'Digital Twin' Market

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Country Sales Director, Process Automation, Sub-Saharan Africa, Schneider Electric, Elijah Daniel, has stated that industrial organisations that prioritise digital twins technology in their operations are likely to realise sustainable returns from their investments.

Digital Twin is a virtual representation of a physical object or system that uses real-time data to accurately reflect its real-world counterpart's behaviour, performance and conditions.

Daniel noted that digital twins technology is designed to solve operational prob-

• Says Digital Twins Technology Key To Sustainable Returns On Investments

lems, adding that its adoption across manufacturing, energy, infrastructure, and process industries in Nigeria would improve asset reliability and optimise production. Daniel, in a statement titled 'Digital Twins Deliver Value Only When Built Around Business Outcomes', said that while digital twins have emerged as one of the industry's most talked about technologies, many projects fail to deliver expected returns because organisations prioritise technology deployment over clearly defined business outcomes.

Quoting a report by

MarketsandMarkets, he said the global digital twin market is projected to grow from approximately US\$21.14 billion in 2025 to more than US\$149.81 billion by 2030, driven by increased adoption across manufacturing, energy, infrastructure, and process industries.

He said: "At their core, digital twins seek to address one of engineering's longest standing challenges: fragmented data across disciplines".

He noted that mechanical, electrical, instrumentation and process engineering teams often work in separate environments, producing

inconsistent datasets, duplicated work and limited visibility that can lead to costly project delays.

"By creating a shared engineering data environment, organisations can generate deliverables from a common source of truth, improving collaboration throughout the asset lifecycle," he added.

Daniel said modern digital engineering platforms combine design information with operational data from control systems, sensors, maintenance records and performance monitoring tools, enabling activities that span engineering design.

AfCFTA Chief, Mene To Headline PMI Global Summit In Cape Town As Africa Focuses On Delivery

By Sulaimon Salau

AFRICA'S trade integration Agenda takes centre stage this September as Mr. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, headlines the PMI Global Summit Series Cape Town from 14-15 September 2026 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC).

Hosted by Project Management Institute (PMI) Sub-Saharan Africa, the Summit will bring together government, development finance, energy, tech and infrastructure leaders under one urgent mandate: Africa Delivers M.O.R.E. Together.

Mene's keynote gives weight to the theme. As the architect of the world's largest free trade area, his work embodies the very idea of African nations delivering together.

"Africa's integration will depend on how well we connect our markets, move goods and people, power our economies and make it easier to do business across borders," the Summit programme notes. "Behind all of this is the ability to deliver — having the right institutions, skills and project capability to turn continental ambition into real progress."

The Cape Town Summit will move from policy to practice with leaders tackling Africa's most critical delivery challenges: Energy: Mteto Nyathi, Chair of Eskom, will lead conversations on delivering reliable energy access to power growth.

Digital Trade: Olugbenga Agboola, Founder & CEO of Flutterwave, will address the financial and digital systems needed to unlock AfCFTA. Infrastructure: Willem Botha, Head of Projects at Zutari, will examine the projects required to build a more connected, borderless continent.

AI & the Future: Ziaad Suleman, CEO for South Africa and Botswana at Cassava Technologies, will lead Building Africa's Own AI Future — a case study on how Africa can move from consuming AI to building it.

They join Karin van Rooyen of PM.Ideas and Sabrina Walter, founder of Women For Change and TIME 100 Most Influential Person of 2026, alongside project leaders driving transformation across the continent.

"Africa is not short of ambition. You can see it in Agenda 2063 and in national development visions across the continent," says George Asamani, Managing Director, PMI Sub-Saharan Africa.

"What matters now is delivery."

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Agbeyewa's Partnership Route To Agricultural Scale

By Sunday Kayode

THE countries getting the most from agriculture have long moved beyond seeing the farm merely as a place where food is grown. Across successful agricultural economies, the land increasingly connects with science, technology, industry and markets, creating value long after harvest. For Nigeria, a country of vast arable land still grappling with food security and low productivity, that lesson has assumed a new urgency.

Nigeria has never been short of agricultural ambition. Governments have launched programmes, opened intervention windows and repeatedly placed food security at the heart of national policy. The more difficult task has been turning those opportunities into productive farms, higher yields, viable businesses and stronger rural economies. That requires government to create the right conditions, while serious private operators bring capital, technology, knowledge and the discipline of execution.

It is within that space that the Agbeyewa Farms story in Ekiti becomes interesting. Rather than viewing government principally as a source of intervention, the company is plugging an expanding commercial operation into public agricultural platforms that can help it scale. By late 2025, Agbeyewa had cultivated more than 3,000 hectares of cassava and was working towards a 5,000-hectare target, with mechanisation, improved varieties and productivity increasingly defining its approach.

The Federal Government took notice. In February 2025, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari, visited Agbeyewa's operations at Ipao-Ekiti. After seeing the scale of activity, he declared that the government had "no option than to collaborate" with Ekiti and Agbeyewa on food production and wealth creation. In time, that remark would amount to more than a passing ministerial endorsement.

By November 2025, the relationship had acquired an institutional framework. The National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) entered into a formal partnership with Agbeyewa. Its Executive Secretary, Cornelius Adebayo, linked the authority's interest partly to what he had encountered during an earlier visit to the company's operations, particularly the scale and efficiency of the farming activities he saw.

The sequence is instructive. Agbeyewa did not arrive at the Federal Government's door with little more than a proposal. An operating agricultural platform was already taking shape. For government, the partnership offered an opportunity to build on demonstrated private capacity. For Agbeyewa, it opened another route through which its production and agronomic ambitions could be extended.

That relationship acquired a physical footprint by May 2026, when 1,200 hectares at NALDA's Oke-Ako Farm Estate in Ekiti were earmarked for cultivation by Agbeyewa as anchor operator. The roles are reasonably clear. Public land development creates room for expansion, while the private operator brings investment, technology, management, agronomic expertise and a route to market.

That division of responsibility speaks to an old problem in Nigerian agriculture. Government has the institutional reach to unlock land and address some structural constraints, but running commercial farms is a different undertaking. Private businesses may execute more efficiently, yet land preparation, infrastructure and the cost of expansion can limit their reach. Partnership provides a bridge when both sides bring something useful to the field.

But expansion, in itself, is hardly enough. The more compelling part of the Agbeyewa proposition is its emphasis on productivity. The company has reported cassava yields of up to

32 tonnes per hectare and starch content of 27.7 per cent. Such figures matter because Nigeria's agricultural future will depend increasingly on how much value comes from each hectare, not simply how many hectares are cultivated.

That thinking is reflected in the varieties grown across the company's Ekiti operations. AYAYA, White Lion, Dixon and TME 419 are cultivated with attention to maturity, yield potential and starch content. The principle is straightforward. Land becomes more economically useful when decisions about what goes into the soil are connected from the outset to productivity, quality and the requirements of the market.

Modern farming is also increasingly a knowledge business. In 2025, Brazilian cassava specialists visited Agbeyewa's operations in Ipao, Gede and Iyemero, exchanging ideas on mechanisation, cultivation techniques and production efficiency. Their visit reflected a wider reality. Land remains fundamental, but science, machinery and technical knowledge increasingly determine what that land can produce and whether the output can compete commercially.

Seen from that perspective, the Federal Government partnership becomes more than a land story. Developing additional hectares without improving what each hectare produces merely expands acreage. The greater opportunity lies in combining land development with better agronomy, mechanisation, technology and dependable markets. That is how public support can contribute to commercially sustainable production rather than another agricultural programme remembered mainly for its launch.

The ambition does not end at the boundaries of Agbeyewa's directly cultivated fields. Its in-grower and out-grower model envisages cooperatives of between 100 and 150 farmers managing production clusters of about 500 hectares. Properly implemented, participating farmers could gain access to improved planting materials, mechanisation, technical support, aggregation and more predictable markets, bringing smaller producers into a better organised production system.

The smallholder connection could prove crucial. Nigeria cannot transform agriculture through large commercial farms alone. Neither can millions of small farmers, working individually with limited machinery, finance and market certainty, easily drive the transformation required. An anchor investor offers a middle ground, allowing commercial knowledge, technology and market access to travel beyond the boundaries of a company's own farms.

Then comes the question every successful agricultural expansion must eventually confront: who buys the additional output? Growing more crops without creating sufficient demand can ultimately hurt the farmer. Agbeyewa's acquisition of Matna Foods Company Limited in January 2026 strengthened its connection with industrial cassava processing, bringing production closer to value addition and creating another destination for agricultural output beyond the traditional raw commodity market.

Once crops begin feeding industry, the economic picture changes. Processing creates demand for engineering, energy, packaging, storage, transportation and distribution. More value can remain within the economy before the final product reaches the market. Seen this way, the journey from farm to factory becomes almost as consequential as the journey from planting to harvest.

There is also a partnership closer to home. A May 2024 agreement with the Ekiti State Government set an ambition of 100,000 hectares through an out-grower programme. Taken alongside the federal engagement and NALDA arrangement, it reveals an expansion strategy built around collaboration across different levels of government, while leaving responsibility for commercial execution largely with private enterprise.

• Kayode, PhD writes from Ado Ekiti



Executive Secretary, National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Cornelius Adebayo (middle), with the management team of Agbeyewa farms, during the tour of the Renewed Hope Mega Farm Estate in Irele-Ekiti, Ekiti State...recently

Firm Extends Agri-research Grants To Final-year Students

By Silver Nwokoro

AS part of its commitment to building sustainable agricultural capacity, a consultancy firm - Farmdev Consult has officially awarded N300, 000 in research support grants to six promising final-year agriculture students from top universities during the Africa Agribusiness Summit 2026.

The official presentation took place at the Africa Agribusiness Summit held at Ibadan, Oyo State. Each of the six selected undergraduate researchers received a N50, 000 cash grant to directly fund field research, data collection, and laboratory analysis for their final-year thesis projects.

The initiative, named the Farmdev Agribusiness Grant, was launched to relieve severe financial pressures on final-year students, while actively driving research that solves real-world farming challenges.

Speaking during the award ceremony, the Managing Director of Farmdev Consult, Mr. Samuel Oluwatobi, emphasised that true agricultural transformation in Africa begins with empowering young scholars who are actively studying the field.

The six beneficiaries were selected based on the practical impact and quality of their proposed research covering critical areas such as climate-smart techniques, low-cost pest control, and efficient irrigation systems. The awardees include

Emiola Deborah Favour; Victor Oluwaseyi Aniobia; and Jegede Senior from the University of Ibadan; Ogunde Precious and Abolade Abdullahi from the Federal College of Forestry, Ibadan; and Nwigwe Onyinye Christiana from the Federal University of Technology, Minna.

Detailing their project goals in their grant proposals, the beneficiaries outlined how the financial backing will transform their academic research into field solutions.

"With this grant, I will secure essential fertilisers and pesticides needed to evaluate cowpea resistance against severe insect infestation," Emiola stated.

Similarly, Ogunde noted: "This funding covers the materials for testing neem and moringa

extracts as natural alternatives to synthetic insecticides on African eggplant."

Highlighting the economic focus of his research, Aniobia explained: "With this grant, I will deploy field extension agents and cover logistics to collect clean, verifiable data on household food consumption among cassava farmers in Akinyele Local Council Area."

Delivering a vote of thanks on behalf of all the beneficiaries, student leader Comrade Jegede Senior expressed deep appreciation to Farmdev Consult and Oluwatobi for recognising their hard work and stepping in at a critical stage of their academic journeys. He noted that the support would significantly ease the burden of research expenses.

Otuaro Urges Niger Delta To Vote Massively For Tinubu

•As 150 PAP Scholarship Beneficiaries Head To UK Varsities

By Balikis Ademuyiwa

THE Administrator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP), Dr. Dennis Brutu Otuaro, has urged people of the Niger Delta to reciprocate the developmental efforts of President Bola Tinubu by voting massively for him in the 2027 elections. Otuaro spoke as the PAP sent a new batch of 150 post-graduate scholarship beneficiaries to various universities in the United Kingdom. The figure brings to 243 the total number of offshore deployments the PAP has made this year under the leadership of Otuaro, with 93 dispatched in January and May.

Guinness Nigeria Partners Federal Palace Hotel To Brand Magic Padel Court

By Suliyat Tella

GUINNESS Nigeria Plc has strengthened its connection with Nigeria's evolving lifestyle and social culture with the launch of the Guinness Lounge at Magic Padel, Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, bringing its iconic stout brand into one of the city's fastest-growing sporting and social scenes. The partnership brings together sport, music, hospitality and social connection, creating a distinctive experience where the energy of padel meets the character of Guinness.

Guests experienced the refreshed Guinness-branded courts before moving into the new Guinness Lounge, a dedicated space for conversation, relaxation and celebration.

Nigerian Student Excels In Robotics At Ghanaian Varsity

By Omowunmi Sanni

FOR Alfred Ikechukwu, Nigerian student from Delta State, the path to a career in technology did not lead to Europe as he once imagined. Instead, it led him to Academic City University in Accra, Ghana, where he is currently pursuing a degree in Robotics Engineering and building technology solutions to address real-world problems. Ikechukwu, who is set to graduate in the Class of 2027, has emerged as one of Nigerian students taking advantage of expanding opportunities in Africa's higher education sector, particularly in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) fields.

His decision to study in Ghana was made during his final year in secondary school. At the time, he was researching options for advanced technology programmes.

Fake Agencies: Tinubu Suspends Three Perm Secs As ICPC Uncovers Fresh Scam

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

THE Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has uncovered another alleged fake government agency in Abuja, barely weeks after exposing the fictitious Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC).

The ICPC Chairman, Dr. Musa Adamu Aliyu, disclosed this on Friday after briefing President Bola Tinubu on the latest findings from the commission's ongoing investigation into fictitious agencies and weaknesses in public sector processes.

Aliyu said the newly uncovered entity, operating as the National Brands Development and Made-in-Nigeria Special Project Office, had allegedly secured office accommodation within the premises of the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (OSGF) without authorisation from the President.

He said the discovery was made during the broader investigation into the PFIPC, which President Tinubu had directed the ICPC to undertake.

According to the ICPC chairman, the purported agency was promoted by Prince George Buchi Nwabueze, who allegedly operated under several variations of his name, including George Nathan Nwabueze, Honourable George Buchi Nwabueze, Prince George Buchi Nwabueze and George Buchi

Nwabueze.

Aliyu said the commission was engaging relevant officials in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation to establish how the purported agency came to operate from government premises and to obtain other vital information required for the investigation.

"I have briefed Mr. President comprehensively on these new developments. ICPC will continue with its investigation," he said.

Following the fresh findings, Aliyu said President Tinubu had directed the immediate arrest of Prince George Buchi Nwabueze, as well as the immediate suspension of three permanent secretaries.

The affected permanent secretaries, according to the ICPC chairman, are M. S. Danjuma, Nadungu Gagare and Richard Pheelangwah.

The commission is expected to establish the roles played by the suspended officials and other individuals in the emer-

gence and operation of the purported agency.

Aliyu said the latest discovery underscored the need for tighter controls and greater scrutiny of government institutions and internal administrative processes.

He commended President Tinubu for ordering a wider policy audit of federal agencies and government processes, describing the initiative as a proactive measure to strengthen the governance system.



The Chargé Affairs of Canada to Nigeria, Mr David Sproule (left) receiving a presentation from the Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Professor Joash Amupitan during the visit by a delegation of the Canadian High Commission to the INEC headquarters in Abuja... on Friday. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

Adebule Empowers Constituents, Disburses N200m Grant To 2,000 Artisans, Others

By Shakirah Adunola

THE Senator representing Lagos West Senatorial District, Dr. Idiat Oluranti Adebule, hosted the second edition of the Lagos West Women's Assembly and Cash Empowerment Programme in Ikeja, recently, where N200 million in direct business grants was disbursed to 2,000 constituents.

Held under the theme 'From Voice to Action: Empowering Women for Impact,' the event gathered political leaders,

community stakeholders, grassroots women entrepreneurs and market leaders to drive economic inclusion and human capital development across the senatorial district's 28 local councils and Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs).

Delivering her address, Adebule emphasised that the event was designed to move beyond rhetoric and provide tangible economic relief to families and small business owners struggling within the

current economic climate.

A major highlight of the cash empowerment was a N100 million direct contribution from Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola (YAYI), representing Ogun West, who redeemed a pledge made during a previous empowerment drive in January 2026. Combined with matching funds, the N200 million packages provided micro and mini seed grants to 2,000 selected traders, artisans and entrepreneurs.

"When each beneficiary

receives this business cash support, our message is clear: we believe in you, we value your contributions and we are committed to supporting your dreams," Adebule stated. "Let this support become seed capital for sustainable micro-businesses that will create jobs and improve family incomes."

Reflecting on her tenure since assuming office in 2023, the former Lagos State deputy governor highlighted her legislative record and infrastructure footprint across Lagos West.

Power Sector Woes: Experts Propose Cassava Effluent-to-energy Solutions

By Moyosore Salami

United States and Nigerian experts have proposed converting cassava wastewater into biogas and other useful resources as a sustainable solution to the environmental challenges associated with cassava processing and Nigeria's energy needs.

According to the experts, cassava effluent, which is often discharged around processing centres without adequate treatment, could contaminate nearby streams and other water bodies, but its biodegradable components

could also be harnessed to produce renewable energy.

An Associate Professor, Department of Environmental Health and Technical Director, Renewable Resources Centre, University of Ibadan, Prof. Taiwo Hammed, who spoke at a U.S.-Nigeria Transdisciplinary Workshop, themed, 'From Cassava Effluent to Energy,' at the University of Ibadan, said cassava wastewater could serve as feedstock for biogas production when properly managed.

Hammed explained that its

effectiveness depends on the type and quantity of feedstock, retention time, temperature and the balance of nutrients required by microorganisms to break down organic matter.

He said cassava wastewater could be combined with materials such as cow dung to introduce the microorganisms needed to facilitate digestion and improve gas production, stressing that excessive water should be avoided to maintain the appropriate concentration for efficient methane production.

According to him, the biogas

generated could be used for lighting and heating, while the residual slurry could be processed into solid and liquid fertiliser, creating additional value from cassava waste and reducing the quantity discharged into the environment.

An environmental sustainability researcher, Dr. Foluke Olatoye, said the initiative was conceived after researchers encountered challenges associated with cassava wastewater during a previous collaborative learning exercise with processors.

Disability-inclusive Expert Laments Non-release Of WAEC Result Of Blind Students

By Gbenga Salau

Fin Disability-Inclusive Development, Governance and Public Policy, Dr. Adebukola Adebayo, has lamented the non-release of the May/June 2026 West African Examination Council (WAEC) Senior School Certificate Examination of blind students nearly two weeks after those of others (sighted) students were released.

Adebayo, a visually impaired, in a statement on Friday, said the blind candidates would not be able to process their admission into some universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and other tertiary institutions of their choice due to the delay in the release of their results.

He added: "For example, any of these blind candidates whose choice is University of Ilorin will miss his/her admission into that university because the University of Ilorin is closing the uploading and verification of WAEC results into its admission portal by 3:00pm, Friday, August 21, 2026.

"The delay or late release of the WAEC results of blind candidates is not new."

Glo@23: Telco Unveils New Products, Services

By Adeyemi Adepetun

As part of activities marking its 23rd anniversary, telecommunications solutions provider, Globacom, has unveiled its new transformative campaign, 'Never Settle For Less,' in Lagos.

The occasion also provided a platform for the company to introduce a suite of life-changing products and services designed to empower Nigerians to aspire to higher standards, pursue excellence and turn their ambitions into reality.

'Never Settle For Less,' the exhortative brand campaign line, is a bold call on Nigerians to seek the best for themselves at all times and never to settle for less in the pursuit of their ambition and goals. The company believes that this is the only way to attain new heights, achieve life goals and excel in an increasingly competitive world with plenty of opportunities ready to be explored.

The company's representative, Uche Ogwuda, said at the media event that "digital services have become the magic tool to transform lives, and anyone who understands that success is aided by the application of transformative telecommunication products and services will understand never to settle for less."

The products Glo showcased at the event to underscore its commitment to driving Nigerians to achieve excellence were Welcome Bonus.



CHANGE OF NAME

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ABEGUNDE : I, formerly Miss Adenike Beatrice Abegunde now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Adenike Beatrice Okupe. All former documents remain valid. Public note

ABIGAEI: I, formerly known as Abigael Oyinade Ajiboye now wish to be addressed as Faridat Oyinade Olatayo due to marriage.. All former documents remain valid. General Public, take note.

ABIOLA: I, formerly known as Fakorede Kamorudeen Abiola now wish to be addressed as Fakorede Kamoru. Alani.. All former documents remained valid. General public, take note.

ABOYEJI : I, formerly known as Aboyebi Oluwakemi Durotola, now wish to be addressed as Kazuga Oluwakemi Durotola. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAMW: I formerly known as Osunde Palmer now wish to be addressed as Osunde Palmer Oriabure. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

ADEFESO: I, formerly Mrs Aderonke Adefeso now wish to be known as Miss Aderonke Haruna-Ishola. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADEYEMI: I, formerly known as Adefolake Temitope Adeyemi now wish to be addressed as Adefolake Adeyemi Kuye. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AFULUKWE: I, formerly known as Afulukwe Celestina Ifeoma now wish to be addressed as Ezechinyere Celestina Ifoma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AKOKO : I, formerly known as Naomi Oghenemaro Akoko now wish to be addressed as Naomi Oghenemaro Imoagene. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AKPOTEBU: I, formerly known as Akpotebu Blessing Okeoghene now wish to be known as Omene Blessing Okeoghene Akpotebu All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AGATHA: I, formerly known as Agatha Onyemaechi Uyakonwu, Agatha 'Echi Uyakonwu, Agatha 'Echi Nmazua, Agatha Nmazua, and Agatha David-Nmazua, now wishes to be known as Osehwe Agatha David. All former documents bearing all listed names remain valid. General public take note.

ARCHIBONG: I, Formerly Miss Okore Nwanna Archibong, now wish to be known as Mrs Okore Nwanna Gracey. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BABALOLA: Formerly known as Babalola Abiola Esther now want to be addressed as Peter Abiola Esther. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BELLO: I, formerly known as Bello Temilayo Ifemide now wish to be addressed as Taiwo Temilayo Elizabeth, DOB is 18/03/2001 not 18/03/1997. All former documents remain valid. Public note

BYERS: I, formerly known as Mercy Ngozi Ezuwe, now wish to be addressed as Mercy Ngozi Byers. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CAMILLE: I, formerly known as Uzumma Camille Uche, now wish to be addressed As Camille Uzumma Uche All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CHENDOM: I, formerly known as Monday Esther Chendom now to be addressed as Monday Chunduny Esther. Former documents remain valid. Stanbic IBTC, public take note

CHIKEREUBA: I, formerly known as Miss Chikereuba Nkechi, now wish to be known as Mrs Nwachukwu Nkechi. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Christian Nnamdi Ihekweke now wish to be addressed as Christian Chinedu Ihekweke. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH: Mr Ezegbulem livinus ikechukwu wishes to state that my date of birth is 27th April 1976 And not 15th of July 1978. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Oguche Mathew Emmanuel now wish to be known as Oguche Emmanuel Mathew. All former documents remain valid. my banks ,TCN, public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as as Toyo Iyanuoluwa Miracle instead of Toyo Miracle Iyanu .. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was written as Andrea Chinda instead of Andrea April Chinda. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured in BVN as Mba Bridget Ifeoma instead of Abuchi Bridget Ifeoma. My DOB is 12/01/1986 not 12/02/1986. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Anyanwu Chinedum Chiagoziem Adaoma instead of Anyanwu Chinedum Chiagoziem. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Aurora Alake Dada instead of Aurora Alake Asi-waju-Dada. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Victory Segun Akinwande instead of Victory Jemine Akinwande now wish to be known and addressed as Victory Jemine Akinwande. Correct DOB 11 of March 1995. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: That my name was wrongly captured as Long Guovvv instead of Guo Long. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

DENNIS : I formerly known as Dennis Aikhu now wish to be addressed as Foss Noah. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

DUROSINMI: I, formerly Miss Durosinmi Adedoyin Rhoda now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Odufuwa Adedoyin Rhoda. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

EBADIN : I formerly known as Ebadin Joy now wish to be addressed as Oribhabor Joy. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EBUNOLUWA : I Formerly Ebunoluwa Antonia Adeniyi now wish to be addressed as Ebunoluwa Antonia Awofolu. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EBURUO : I formerly Miss Eburuo Onyinyechi Lawrita, wish to state that, Lawrita, Lorrita, Lawretta, Lauretta, Lorrita, Lorreta and Loritta captured wrongly in different Certificates belong to same person, now Mrs. Madu Onyinyechi Lawrita. All former documents remain valid. The Registrar Nigeria Nursing and Midwifery Council, general public note.

EDEGBA : I, formerly known as Edegba Elisabeth now wish to be addressed as Ajali Elizabeth. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

EDEGHONGHON : I, formerly known as Edeghonghon Eunice now wish to be addressed as Aigbiremonlen Eunice. My DOB is, 25-03-1981. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EDET: I, formerly Miss Nsiong Paulinus Edet now wish to be addressed Mrs. Nsiong Ekemini John. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EFFIOM: I, formerly Miss Offiong, Asari Effiom now known as Mrs Etowa, Asari Ikaka. Former documents remain valid. General public and concerned authority take note.

EKE: I, formerly known and addressed as Eke Zikeyi Agori, wish to be addressed as Ekei Asuquo Edem. All relevant documents remain valid. General public take note.

EKOROYE : I, formerly known as Ekoroye Najite Anita now wish to be addressed as Onajite Anita Akpojotor.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EKPEDE : I, former Miss Ekpede Blessing Orevaoghene now wish to be addressed as Roland Blessing Orevaoghene.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FASANSI: I, formerly known as Fasansi Tosin Sakirah. now wish to be addressed as Ogunlana Tosin Sakirah. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FUNGOS: I, formerly Miss Fungos Abigail Audu now wish to be known as Mrs Omozusi Abigail Audu All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IGBANE : I formerly known as Miss Igbane Martha Now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Sowho Martha. All former documents remain valid. General public banks and concerned institutions take note.

ISUEKEBHOR : I formerly known as Isuekebhore Rosemary now wish to be addressed as Isaac Rosemary, All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

IYOMO: I, formally known as Iyomo Edekpevw, wish to be known henceforth as Iyomo, Edekpevw Powell. All relevant document remain valid. Public Complaints Commission, general public take note.

JAMES: I, formerly known as Ruby Tokoni James now wish to be known as Ruby Tokoni Okeme-Henry All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

KANU: I, formerly Kanu Ikechukwu Ikenna now wish to be addressed as Atasie Ikechukwu Ikenna. My DOB is 15/6/2000 not 15/6/1992. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

LAWAL: I, formerly Miss Lawal Kadijat AJOKE now wish to be addressed as Mrs Onafuwa Kadijat AJOKE. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

MAMUDU : I formerly known as Miss Mamudu Jennifer Eghonghon now wish to be addressed as, Mrs Eromosele Jennifer Eghonghon. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

MBAH: I, formerly Mbah Prisca Nneka and Chidiebere-Ukpaby Prisca Nneka now as Prisca Chimekachi Chidiebere-Ukpaby. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

MODESTUS: I, formerly, Uche Modestus Nnanna now wish to be addressed as Uche Charles Nnanna. All former documents remained valid. General public, take note.

NCHE: I, Formerly known as Miss Nche Blessing Thelma, now wish to be known as Mrs. David Blessing Thelma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NWAOBODO : I formerly known as Nwaobodo Chika Esther now wish to be addressed Mrs. Udeze Chika Esther All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

OBIAKOR: I, formerly known as Obiakor Salome Chiamaka now wish to be addressed as Ibekwe Salome Chiamaka. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OBILOR: I, formerly known as Miss Obilor Francisca Ozioma now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ikotun Francisca Ozioma.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ODUTOLA : I, formerly known as Odutola Motunrayo Funminow wish to be known as Fakunle Motunrayo Funmi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OJIMMA: I, formerly known as Ojemma Chinenye, now wishes to be addressed as Okike Chinenye. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OJUKWU : I, formerly known as Joan Ezinne Ojukwu. now wish to be addressed as Joan Ezinne Ojukwu-Timighe Leader. former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLORE: I, formerly known as Okikiade Olori Anah now wish to be known as Okikiade Iyabo Hannah. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OMOJOLA: Formerly known and addressed as Omojola Oluwatoyosi Victoria now want to be addressed as Fajoyomi Oluwatoyosi Victoria. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OMOKE : I, formerly known as Cecilia Okike Omoke now wish to be known as Cecilia Okike Okafor. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ONOME : I, formerly known as Richard Onome now wish to be addressed as Richard Onome Ruth, All former documents remains valid. Gneral public take note.

ONOTAFE : I, formerly known as Enajite Anthonia Onotafe (Miss), now wish to be addressed as Enajite Anthonia Onotafe-Egbowon (Mrs). All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ONUORAH : I formerly known as Onuorah Chioma Angel now wish to be addressed as Okoye-chinedu Chioma Angel. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OPAWOLE: I formerly Opawole Oladimeji Yaqeen now wish to be known as Opawole Oladimeji. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OSADEBE: I, formerly known as Osadebe John Animam, now wish to be addressed As Osadebe John Anim, All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OSAMILUYI : I, formerly Miss Osamiluyi Olulola Caroline now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ekundayo Caroline Olulola. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OSUJI: I, formerly Osuji Chioma Grace, now Osuji Chioma Chukwuma. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. General public note.

OTENIYA: Formerly Miss Abegunde Funmilola Julianah now wish to be addressed as Mrs Oteniya Funmilola Julianah. Former documents remain valid. General public, note.

PANICH: I, formerly known as Miss Panich Yana, now wishes to be addressed as Mrs. Ezekwem Yana Panich. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

PHOEBE : I formally known as Kalu Chikodi Phoebe n ow which to be known as Kalu Chikodi Jacob All former documents remain valid. General public note

RAJI: I, formerly Mr Raji Michael Segun now wish to be known and addressed as Mr Olasunkanmi Michael Segun. All former document remain valid general public note.

RECONCILIATION/RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME. My name was written as Ibada Chisom Damian and Ibada Damian Chisom Instead of Ibada Chisom Michael. All former documents remain valid. General public note

SIFIWU : I formerly known as Dirisu Sifiawu now wish to be addressed as Dirisu Sarah. My DOB is 26-07-1980 not 25-06-1980, Former documents remains valid, public note.

TAHCHANG: I, formerly christopher tahchang now known as Lar Nangwang Timkwu. My correct D.O.B is 05/08/1998, not 01/01/1992. Former documents are valid. General public take note.

THOMAS: I, formerly known as Miss Shekinah Naansat Thomas now wish to be known as Mrs Shekinah Naansat Toluhi. All documents remain valid. First Bank and general public note.

TOBY: I, formerly known as Letitia Sharon Diepriye Toby now wish to be known as Letitia Sharon Diepriye Coco-Bassey All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UDO: I, formerly known as Udo Faith Ogechi, now wish to be addressed as Mbah Faith Ogechi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

VERO : I, formerly known as Okhae Vero Egbé now wish to be addressed as Okhae Veronica Egbé. My DOB is 19-05-1960. All former documents remains valid. General public note.

News Extra

U.S. Court Permits FBI To Review Tinubu Drug Case Files In Private

By Balikis Ademuyiwa

WASHINGTON-BASED lobbying firm, Von Batten-Montague-York, L.C., has alleged that a U.S. federal court has taken a new step in the long-running Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) case seeking the release of alleged drug-trafficking records linked to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

In an update posted on X, the

firm claimed that it had been told that Judge Beryl Howell of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia granted the FBI permission to submit the documents to the court privately, for in-camera review.

According to the post, the judge has given the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and President Tinubu until

August 28, 2026, “and no later,” to file their opposition to the release of the records. The firm described the “and no later” language as a sign that the court has reached its limit.

The post reads: “We have now been informed that @uscourts Judge Howell this morning granted the @FBI permission to provide the court with the documents in private...

“This has not yet been published on the court docket as of this evening, and the claim is based solely on the law firm’s X post. Meta AI has not independently verified the August 28 date.”

The case is from the FOIA requests filed by American Aaron Greenspan between 2022 and 2023 seeking records from the FBI, DEA, IRS and other agencies relating to a 1990s

Chicago heroin trafficking investigation.

In April 2025, Judge Howell ruled that the FBI and DEA’s use of a “Glomar response” — neither confirming nor denying the existence of such records — was “neither logical nor plausible” after the agencies had already officially confirmed investigations relating to Tinubu.

Judge Howell asked the agen-

cies to release non-exempt documents, noting that privacy interests were outweighed by public interest. The investigation is linked to a 1993 civil forfeiture in which \$460,000 in funds connected to Tinubu were forfeited to the U.S. government. Tinubu was not criminally charged and has consistently described the matter as a civil settlement.



TENDER NOTICE: GCDT/NGA/02

Design, supply, install, test, commission and place into successful operation a rooftop Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) hybrid power system for NACGRAB in Ibadan, Nigeria

Title of the Contract	Design, supply, install, test, commission and place into successful operation a rooftop Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) hybrid power system for NACGRAB in Ibadan, Nigeria		
Location of the works	National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB), P.M.B. 5382, Moor Plantation Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. NIGERIA		
Name and address of the PEA	The Global Crop Diversity Trust, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 7, 53113 Bonn, Germany		
Submission address	Attention: Olawuyi J. Sangokunle - Head, Procurement National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB), P.M.B. 5382, Moor Plantation Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. NIGERIA (Contact phone number-08063204067)		
Number and title of the project	Project ID BMZ-No. 2018 01141: Capitalisation of the endowment fund of the Global Crop Diversity Trust and strengthening of national seedbanks ('Seeds for Resilience').		
Approximate value	EURO 75,000– EURO 120,000		
Other information	Please note this is a single stage national competitive bidding procedure with qualification for small admeasurement works contracts.		
Type of notice	Tender Notice		
Time schedule	Tender publication date:	15 August 2026	
	Deadline to confirm interest to bid:	Open	
	Site Visit:	24 August 2026	
	Pre-bid Meeting (online):	27 August 2026	
	Deadline to request clarifications:	31 August 2026	
	Circulation of final clarifications:	3 September 2026	
	Deadline for submission of bids:	14 September 2026 01:00 PM local Nigeria Time	
	Tender opening date and time:	14 September 2026 01:00 PM local Nigeria Time	
	Tender opening venue:	NACGRAB Conference Hall, NCRI Complex, Moor Plantation, Apata, Ibadan, Oyo State.	
	Indicative Evaluation:	14 September – 17 September 2026	
	Indicative Issue of Contract:	17 September – 25 September	
		2026	
	Commencement:	Soon after contract signing	
Language and Currency of the bid	English EURO		
Complete tender documents can be obtained from	Documents can be obtained by sending a request, with the subject: “Tender Notice: GCDT/NGA/02 – Request for Bid Documents” to the email address below: Alexander Kambili - Finance and Procurement Officer, Global Crop Diversity Trust, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 7, 53113 Bonn, Germany. Email: alexander.kambili@croptrust.org		
For clarifications/ further information, please contact	Send an email with the subject: “Tender Notice: GCDT/NGA/01 – Request for Clarification” to the email address below: alexander.kambili@croptrust.org		
Confirmation of interest	In all cases, please send an email confirming interest, with the subject: “Tender Notice: GCDT/NGA/02” to: alexander.kambili@croptrust.org to get you added include onto the tender mailing list for clarifications, venue for opening and any other updates.		

Brief description of the project and tender: Seeds for Resilience is a project of the Crop Trust working with partners to upgrade the physical infrastructure of their genebanks. The project is supported by the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW. This contract is for Design, supply, install, test, commission and place into successful operation a rooftop Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) hybrid power system for NACGRAB in Ibadan, Nigeria a period of 3 months.

Please be advised that the Crop Trust is not bound to accept any proposal, nor award a contract or purchase order, nor be responsible for any costs associated with bidder's preparation and submission of a proposal, regardless of the outcome or the manner of conducting the selection process.
Late bids will be rejected.

Allen Onyema - Lifting 'Dream Team', Keshi, Amusan And Ajunwa

IN the midst of all the ongoing brouhaha that has held Nigerian football by the jugular for some weeks, there are some cheering news, some bright stars in the darkness!

I can understand why his passion for sport is irrepressible. He was an all-round athlete in his student days at the Federal Government College, Ughelli, and during his undergraduate days at the University of Ibadan, sprinting and playing football for both institutions. He also played at club level in Ibadan before wisely venturing into the world of business where he has excelled and has become the Chairman of the largest private commercial airline in Nigeria's history, the largest airline in West Africa currently, and, potentially, the largest in the whole of Africa in the next few years at the rate it is growing and expanding.

Beyond those lofty achievements, it is his humanity, his irrepressible spirit and his undiluted passion for sports that amaze me the most and endear him to me.

He once told me I was his hero. Now, the roles are reversed, I am a devoted fan of Dr. Allen Onyema, the CEO of AirPeace airline.

This past week, fresh from extending his usual patriotic hand at evacuating hapless Nigerians from the shameful Xenophobic terror of South Africans, and fresh from losing over 2 Billion Naira to last week's picketing of his airlines by some disgruntled airport staff resulting in cancellation of all flights, he still found the space in his heart to approve the celebration of some Nigerian athletes that were selected by the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, NIIA, for upliftment and induction into the 'NIIA Sports Diplomacy Wall of Fame'.

Such occasional induction requires the fulfillment of criteria set by the institute for athletes (and personalities) that promote the tenets of diplomacy in line with Nigeria's international foreign affairs objectives as a result of their sports activities.



Their names will be inscribed in Gold on the marbled 'NIIA Sports Diplomacy Wall of Fame', an edifying monument and destination for tourists and visitors to the institute's premises in Victoria Island, Lagos.

There shall be a small ceremony to mark the event that will celebrate and honour the legendary athletes when it is finally put together before the end of the year.

Dr. Allen Onyema recommended and got confirmation that 'The Dream Team', Nigeria's victorious Olympics football team of 1996, be inducted alongside other athletes already selected by the institute.

They are: Chioma Ajunwa (first Nigerian individual Olympic Gold medalist; Tobi Amusan (first Nigerian world record holder); and the Late Stephen Okechukwu Keshi (first Nigerian captain and coach to win AFCON), and Nigerian coach to lead a neighbouring country to the World Cup.

The celebrations will take place before the end of the year at an event that marks Allen Onyema's consistent identification with excellence, humanity and philanthropy in support of deserving Nigerian athletes.

President-General Worldwide of Nigerian Football!
I am thinking.

Read the remaining story online www.guardian.ng

800 Young Footballers Seek Breakthrough At ABT Scouting Programme

From **Ernest Nzor, Abuja**

NO fewer than 800 young footballers from 15 academies are seeking a breakthrough at the ongoing ABT Football Academy Scouting Programme in Kwoi, Kaduna State.

The grassroots scouting programme, which began on Monday, is expected to end on Saturday.

Chairman of ABT Football Academy, Alhamdu Bala, expressed satisfaction with the turnout, describing the programme as a major opportunity for young footballers in Southern Kaduna.

Bala said the academy was committed to creating opportunities for talented youngsters, especially those lacking access to established football development structures.

"This is the first time we are

organising such a grassroots scouting programme in Southern Kaduna, and the response has been very encouraging.

"Marcelo's presence has added tremendous value to this programme. We believe some of these young players can attract opportunities beyond Nigeria."

Bala appreciated Argentine International Scout, Marcelo Houseman, for supporting the initiative and travelling to Nigeria to identify emerging football talents.

Houseman, a renowned Argentine football scout, said the scouting exercise had been fruitful, with more than 10 promising talents identified so far.

He said he would discuss the discoveries with National U-17 Coach Manu Garba to ensure the talented players received an opportunity to showcase their abilities at the national level. Houseman said: "The players we have discovered are very good, and some of them are eligible to play for the U-17 and U-20 national teams.

"I will speak with coach Manu Garba about these players because they deserve to be given an opportunity to play for the Golden Eaglets as well as the Flying Eagles," he said. There are so many undiscovered talents across Africa. The continent is blessed with gifted footballers who only need the right opportunities."

Houseman said the exercise demonstrated the abundance of football talent in Nigeria and the importance of creating opportunities for young players to be identified.

He said his passion for grassroots football had taken him to several African countries in search of players capable of excelling at the highest level.

According to him, some of Africa's biggest football stars were identified through similar scouting missions conducted over the years.

"I discovered Odion Ighalo when nobody knew him. I also found Kim Ojo and worked with players such as Obinna Nsofor, Solomon Okoronkwo, and Christian Ebere."

CHANGE OF NAME AND CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH ON INTERNATIONAL PASSPORT.
I was formerly known and addressed as Mrs Ademakinwa Fesola. I want to change my name from Ademakinwa To Osagie. I wish to be known and addressed as Miss Osagie Fesola Rita and my Date Of Birth is 9th September, 1983. All former documents remain valid. The general public take note.

‘Nigerians Should Stop Allowing Threat Of FIFA’s Ban’

By Gowon Akpodonor

UNITED States-based former Super Eagles player, Paul Okoku, says Nigerians should stop allowing threat of FIFA’s ban to shut down legitimate governance and accountability at home.

The freefall of the nation’s national teams at all level forced Nigerians to call on the Ibrahim Gusau-led Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to resign with immediate effect to pave the way for a Normalisation Committee being planned by the National Sports Commission (NSC).

But, as usual, some top officials of the NFF and their cronies are crying blue murder saying that FIFA will ban Nigeria if Gusau is not allowed to re-contest in an election fixed for September 27 in Lafia, Nasarawa State.

Okoku, a sports analyst, told *The Guardian* on Friday that though, FIFA has repeatedly warned Nigeria about interference, statutes and good governance, Nigerians should stop allowing the threat of a ‘FIFA ban’ to shut down legitimate governance and accountability at home.

“National associations, confederation leaders, senior FIFA officials and supporters are questioning transparency and accountability inside FIFA itself, so, Nigerians should stop allowing the threat of a ‘FIFA ban’ to shut down legitimate governance and accountability at home.

“For years, one warning has carried extraordinary weight whenever Nigerian football enters another administrative dispute: ‘FIFA may suspend Nigeria.’ Those words can change the direction of a debate almost immediately.

Questions about an NFF election, government oversight, court action, financial accountability or administrative reform can quickly become arguments about FIFA statutes and the danger of third-party interference.

“Nigeria has legitimate reasons to take FIFA’s rules seriously. It has been suspended before and threatened with suspension when FIFA believed the independence of the Nigeria Football Federation was being violated. That warning is not merely part of Nigeria’s football history. It is already hanging over the September 27, 2026 NFF election.

“As debate intensifies over the electoral process, proposed reforms, court cases and the role of the National Sports Commission, the possibility of a ‘FIFA ban’ is again being invoked whenever stronger oversight or government action is discussed. That is precisely why this moment deserves closer examination.

“If any Nigerian authority unlawfully removes elected football officials or takes direct political control of the NFF, FIFA’s rules on third-party interference remain relevant. Nigeria cannot simply ignore obligations it accepted as a FIFA member. But Nigerians should also reject the idea that every lawful attempt to demand accountability, enforce Nigerian law, examine an electoral process or question the administration of public resources automatically amounts to interference,” he said.

Okoku continued: “And there is now an uncomfortable contradiction that cannot be ignored. At the very moment Nigerians are once again being warned to fear FIFA sanctions, FIFA itself is facing one of the most serious leadership and governance crises of Gianni Infantino’s presidency. Member associations are withdrawing support. Sweden is demanding new leadership. FIFA vice-presidents are questioning Infantino. Three confederations are discussing whether a no-confidence challenge is possible. Supporters are demanding govern-

nance reform. None of that makes FIFA powerless, and none of it cancels FIFA’s statutes. But Nigeria should have enough institutional self-respect to stop behaving as though every domestic disagreement must be carried to Zurich and every mention of FIFA suspension should end the conversation.

“There is something deeply inconsistent about demanding unquestioning deference to an institution whose own members and senior officials are now demanding greater transparency and accountability from its leadership. Before Nigerian football stakeholders rush once again to FIFA with domestic disputes, perhaps we should ask a harder question: Are we using FIFA’s rules to protect football independence – or using the fear of FIFA to protect people and institutions from legitimate accountability?” Okoku queried.

According to him, past threat by FIFA to ban Nigeria should not be rewritten because ‘FIFA itself is now under pressure’.

“But neither should it become a permanent weapon for frightening Nigerians out of legitimate governance discussions.”



FIFA President Gianni Infantino

I Won’t Run Again After Cardiac Arrest, Says Olympian Simpson

OLYMPIC medallist, Jenny Simpson, says a ‘chapter has ended’ and she will not return to running after having a cardiac arrest.

The 39-year-old American, a former 1500m world champion, was pacing a mile group at a pop-up event in North Carolina in June when she collapsed. She required CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator before being transported to UNC Rex Hospital in Raleigh, where she went into cardiac arrest again.

“My heart was severely injured and stunned. My lungs struggled too,” Simpson said in an Instagram post, external on Thursday.

“I was diagnosed with a rare inherited heart condition called arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ARVC).”

ARVC is a genetic condition in which the proteins that normally hold heart muscle cells together do not work properly.

This can cause heart muscle cells to die and be replaced by fatty tissue and scar tissue.

It causes the walls of the heart chambers to become thin and stretched, and the heart cannot pump blood around the body properly.

“My future is an incredible gift. It’s hopeful, and it will continue to have great purpose,” Simpson said.

“But my diagnosis also means it would be dangerous for me to return to running. That chapter has ended. Thankfully, my story hasn’t.”

Simpson won 1500m gold at the 2011 World Championships and bronze at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, and retired from competitive racing at the end of the 2024 season. “I’m profoundly grateful that I got to have the career I did,” added Simpson, who won silver medals in the 1500m at the 2013 and 2017 World Championships.

“I experienced everything - from the trenches of training to standing on the top of the podium while our national anthem filled the stadium.”

Saturday Premier League Fixtures

Hull City Vs Man United 12:30

Everton Vs Crystal Palace 15:00

Ipswich Town Vs Sunderland 15:00

Nott’ Forest Vs Leeds United 15:00

Brentford Vs Tottenham 17:30

Saturday Spanish La Liga

Athletic Club Vs Sevilla 16:00

Valencia Vs Celta Vigo 18:30

Espanyol Vs Real Madrid 20:30

Egbe: ‘There Is Urgent Need To Expand NFF’s Electoral College’

By Gowon Akpodonor

AS the battle to ‘retrieve’ Nigeria football from the hands of the current board ranges on, FIFA trained Facility expert, Ebi Egbe, says there is the need to expand the electoral college of the NFF for a better result.

The Ibrahim Gusau-led NFF has been under fire following the freefall of the various national teams.

Egbe, who is the Chief Executive Officer of Monimichelle Sports Management Company, told *The Guardian* on Friday that there is the need to discontinue with a narrow electoral

system in the NFF. “Are we really saying that the future of Nigerian football should continue to be determined by such a narrow electoral structure



NFF President Ibrahim Gusau

controlled by the NFF hierarchy?,” Egbe queried.

“With a country of over 200 million people, millions of football stakeholders, thousands of clubs, players, coaches, referees, administrators, former internationals and football professionals, it is time to ask whether the present NFF electoral system provides sufficient representation.

“The ongoing court cases and controversies surrounding the present NFF board should not simply be treated as another political battle. They should be an opportunity to address the fundamental problem of representation and governance in Nigerian football,”

he said.

According to Egbe, what Nigerians are asking for is to expand the electoral college and stop interfering in State FA elections.

“There is the need to bring more legitimate stakeholders into the process. Give football professionals, clubs, players, former internationals, coaches and other recognised stakeholders a meaningful voice.

“This is not about targeting any individual. It is about transparency, inclusiveness, credibility and a genuinely representative Nigerian Football Federation. Nigerian football needs a fresh start,” he stated.

Arewa Youth Sports Forum Wants Presidency To Probe N17b Given To NFF

THE Arewa Youth Sports Forum (AYSF) has called on President Bola Tinubu to order a full-scale probe into an alleged 17 billion released to the football house in January 2024 for the payment of al-

lowances and bonuses to national teams.

In a statement signed by the National Coordinator of the Forum, Comrade Yohanna Pam, made available to *The Guardian*, on Friday, the

group expressed deep concern over what it described as the “systemic collapse, financial recklessness, and institutionalised corruption” currently plaguing Nigerian football.

The Forum noted that the 17 billion intervention fund released by the Federal Government in January 2024 was meant to clear outstanding bonuses, camp allowances, and to properly prepare all national teams for international engagements.

However, rather than seeing improved welfare and results, Nigerian football has witnessed its worst run in history, culminating in the Super Falcons’ failure to qualify for the FIFA Women’s World Cup for the first time since 1991, and the senior national team’s struggle across all fronts.

“Instead of accountability, we are now faced with allegations of misappropriation of public funds. Instead of progress, we are faced with international shame as our Super Falcons were forced to drag the NFF to the Court of Arbitration for Sport

(CAS), over unpaid bonuses and entitlements that the Federal Government had already released,” the statement read.

The AYSF further stated that the NFF, under its current leadership, has become synonymous with corruption allegations, lack of transparency, poor planning, and executive arrogance.

According to the Forum, the continuous damage being done to the image of the country in global football can no longer be tolerated.

The group also urged the President to initiate a total restructuring of the NFF architecture to entrench transparency, professionalism, and accountability. It called for the inclusion of credible stakeholders, former players, technical experts, and youth representatives in the management of the game, rather than what it termed “a recycling of political appointees with no regard for football development.”



President Bola Tinubu receive members of the Super Falcons in Abuja after their victorious outing in 2024. The team failed woefully at the last AWCON and also failed to qualify for 2027 World Cup in Brazil



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#2027: Tinubu, Adeleke And Danger Of Assumptions

The Photograph That Fooled Abuja

THE picture went viral within hours. Governor Ademola Adeleke, fresh from collecting his Certificate of Return in Osogbo, standing side-by-side with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in Abuja, both men smiling. Adeleke's signature dance-step energy was on pause. Tinubu's grin was wide. Within 12 hours, APC WhatsApp groups in Abuja and Osogbo were celebrating. "Osun is back in the bag." "The Southwest is now 100% APC." "Adeleke has surrendered." That photograph may go down as one of the most dangerous assumptions in Nigerian politics since 2015. And here is why: reading that handshake as "Osun people have joined APC" is to mistake courtesy for conversion. To read it as "Southwest is secured for 2027" is to mistake survival tactics for surrender.

This column argues one thing: It is dangerous for President Tinubu, APC leaders in Osun and Abuja to assume that Governor Adeleke's public gesture equals automatic support of Osun people, and by extension, the entire Southwest. The reasons are still far-reaching. And the dangers are already lurking in Oyo, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Ogun, Ekiti and even Kwara and Kogi states.

What really happened in Osun State last Saturday, August 15, 2026...

Let's be clear on the facts. On Saturday, Osun people voted against hardship. They voted against hunger. They voted against a party that they felt had abandoned them to food inflation, fuel costs, and a federal government that speaks in statistics while they speak in empty pots. They voted to retain **Ademola Adeleke** and the PDP through King Rashidi Ladoja's **Accord Party**. Adeleke's victory was not a fluke. It was a referendum. And the margin was wide enough to make election petition difficult, but not impossible. So, Adeleke was in Abuja. He collected his certificate. He posed for photographs with the President. He said the right things: "Mr President is my leader. I respect the office." This is Nigerian politics 101. **Rule 1:** You do not fight Abuja when your mandate is still in court. You court Abuja. **Rule 2:** You protect your state's federal allocations, projects, and appointments by staying close to power. **Rule 3:** You give the President his photo-op so that when INEC or the courts look at the file, they see "no crisis." That photograph was deft. It was smart. It was self-preservation.

It was not a defection. It was not an endorsement of APC by 3.4 million Osun people.

Note this symbolism: "In Nigeria, a handshake with the President is insurance, not ideology." To assume otherwise is the first danger.

The danger of assumption #1 - "Adeleke = Osun = SouthWest"

This is the biggest fallacy circulating in APC circles in Abuja right now.

The logic goes: Adeleke is PDP/ACCORD. Adeleke met Tinubu. Therefore ACCORD in Osun is weak. Therefore, Southwest is APC. Politics does not work like mathematics. Fact 1: Adeleke won because he connected with Osun's pain. Market women in Ede, farmers in Ile-Ife, artisans in Ilesha did not vote for Adeleke because of Abuja. They voted because of rice prices and transport fares. Because of school fees. Because of 'Band A' killer tariff. Because of the promise that "Imole" means light, not darkness. Fact 2: Osun people have a history of punishing arrogance.

In 2018, they rejected APC's imposition. In 2022, they rejected it again. In 2026, they rejected it a third time. Osun voters have shown that, "money really doesn't answer all things". You can bring bags of rice, you can bring federal might, but if the people are hungry, they



will vote with their stomachs.

Fact 3: Adeleke's body language is not Adeleke's base. Listen to Davido and his father. The Adeleke political machine in Osun is "people power party". The local chairmen, the councillors, the youth leaders. They are not following Adeleke to APC because he took a picture. They are watching to see if Abuja will release Osun's projects and arrested LG funds and structure. To assume that one photograph dissolves decades of consistency in Osun is to gamble with 2027.

The danger of assumption #2 "Southwest is Tinubu's birthright" This is where it gets more dangerous for APC. The Southwest is Tinubu's political base. No one disputes that. He built it. He funded it. He delivered it in 2023. But 2023 was three years ago. And a lot has happened since then. Let's go state by state:

Oyo State: The Makinde factor: Governor Seyi Makinde is not just popular. He is institutional. He has delivered infrastructure, revived the economy, and built a PDP structure that won him re-election despite federal pressure in 2023. To assume Oyo will "go to APC because Adeleke smiled" is to ignore that Makinde controls a new party structure, the teachers, the artisans, and the Ibadan vote. Oyo people ask: "What has Abuja done for us?" The answer right now is: not enough. What of the classic imposition that humiliated the scion of "Penkelemesi years"?

Lagos State: The humiliated Governor: Lagos is APC's headquarters. But Lagos is also angry. They can't ignore the power of incumbency as Nasarawa State Governor just warned. The governor was humiliated during the last party primaries when the process was taken away from him. Party elders imposed candidates. Council chairmen were handpicked. The grassroots felt sidelined. Even the president's daughter lamented it. Lagos people are also feeling food inflation the most. A bag of rice in Mile 12 is not cheaper because the President is from Lagos. The Oluomo's men aren't smiling in 2026 with the consequential PMS/diesel price and other economic matters arising. To assume that Lagos is automatic is to forget that Lagos voters are the most sophisticated and the most unforgiving in Nigeria. Recall 2023.

Ondo State: The angry structures and humiliated

Governor: Ondo APC is fractured. The governor was also sidelined and humiliated in the party's internal process. Factions exist. The Akeredolu loyalists are still smarting. The people remember that Ondo gave APC votes in 2019 and 2023 and got little back in federal presence. Even Pa Fashoranti's son was recently humiliated by 'Abuja politicians' who don't care about the morning after their arrogance in Abuja.

Ogun State: Again, the imposition spirit: The governorship candidate was imposed. The party is split between old and new structures. Ogun people are industrial, educated, and they vote on issues. Inflation is hitting Abeokuta and Shagamu traders hard. Loyalty to "son of the soil" from Lagos does not pay school fees. The very aggrieved former governors are quite influential. Just like Omisore in Osun. Ekiti and Kwara: Already captured Ekiti is small but vocal. Kwara is "O to go" but also "O ti ri ise?" Have you seen work? The point is simple: No state in the Southwest and satellite states is automatic in 2027. "The Southwest gave Tinubu 2023. But 2027 will be earned, not inherited."

The real issue: **People are hungry.** All politics in Nigeria from now till 2027 will be about one thing: **the cost of living.** Food inflation is at record highs. A bag of beans is N120,000. A loaf of bread is N2,000. Transport fare has tripled. House rent crisis is ticklish. This is not an APC problem alone. It is a governance problem. But the party in power owns the problem. The danger for APC is this: You cannot campaign on photographs when people are campaigning on prices. Osun people just showed you. You can bring federal ministers. You can bring money. You can bring thugs. But when a mother cannot feed four children, she will vote for the man who looks like he understands her pain.

Governor Adeleke, for all his drama, looks like he understands. Perception wins elections. So, APC's assumption that "structure will cover it" is dangerous because structure without stomach infrastructure collapses.

The danger of assumption #3: "More money will do what money cannot do." There is a belief in some APC quarters: "We lost Osun because we didn't spend enough. In 2027 we will spend more." This is the most dangerous assumption of all. Osun 2026 has proven that, "money is necessary but not suffi-

cient". Voters are now wiser: *WhatsApp, X, Facebook, Instagram, Radio* have educated voters. They collect the money and still vote their conscience. **Economic pain is personal:** N10,000 on election day does not erase 12 months of hunger. **Youth voters are different:** 40% of voters in 2027 will be under 35. They don't vote because of "party leaders." They vote because of data, jobs, and dignity. To assume that "more money" will flip Oyo, Lagos, Ondo, and Ogun is to prepare for a shock in 2027.

What APC must do instead - **CONNECT FIRST.** . If the goal is to win the Southwest and Nigeria in 2027, then the work starts now. And it is not with photographs. It is with policy, empathy and delivery. **CONNECT WITH THE PEOPLE, NOT JUST THE GOVERNORS**

The President must go to markets in Ibadan, in Akure, in Abeokuta, in Katsina, in Maiduguri. Not for rallies. For listening. What is the price of garri? What is the price of transport?

FIX WHAT HURTS MOST: FOOD AND TRANSPORT Release grains. Subsidise fertilizer. Fix the rail. Make CNG buses real, not press releases. People will forgive a lot if their pot is full.

RESPECT PARTY STRUCTURES: Stop imposing candidates in Ogun, Ondo, and Lagos. Let primaries' results stand. An angry party structure will sabotage you in 2027.

DELIVER VISIBLE PROJECTS: Not just Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road. Southwest, Northwest, North East, South East, South South people want to see federal presence: equipped universities, hospitals, roads, power.

STOP READING BODY LANGUAGE, READ DATA: Commission real polls. Talk to market women. Talk to Okada riders. The photograph with Adeleke is not data. The price of tomatoes is data.

WHAT ADELEKE'S GESTURE REALLY MEANS: Let's be fair to Governor Adeleke. He is not a fool. He knows that to govern Osun state, he needs Abuja. He needs federal projects. He needs to avoid a repeat of 2018 where the centre fought him. So he played the game. He smiled. He shook hands. He said, "Mr President is my leader." That is politics. Smart politicians in Abuja should understand this. The ones who don't will be shocked in 2027.

If APC continues with assumptions, if they rely on photographs, money, and structure, and ignore hunger, if they allow PDP, SDP, ADC, NDC and other forces mobilise around economic pain, Southwest splits 3-3, the election will be decided in the North. **The Wildcard:** A new coalition forms around economic issues, not party. It sweeps urban Southwest: Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Akure, Ado-Ekiti. APC is reduced to a regional party again. Which scenario happens depends on what APC does between now and 2027.

A letter To APC Leaders in Abuja And Osun Gentlemen, that photograph with Adeleke is good PR. Frame it. But do not frame policy around it. Osun people have spoken. They said: "We are hungry." Southwest people are saying: "We are watching." Do not assume that because one governor smiled, 40 million Southwest people have surrendered. Do not assume that because you have money, you have votes. Osun people just proved you wrong. Do not assume that because this is Tinubu's base, it is automatic. Bases are lost when they are taken for granted. The work is hard. It is in the markets. It is in the farms. It is in the price of food items. Do that work, and 2027 will be yours. Ignore it, and that photograph will be the only thing you have to show in 2027. And here is why: in democracy, assumption is the mother of defeat.

Published by The Guardian Group, Rutam House, Isolo, Lagos Tel: 01-4489600
Abuja Office: Plot 415 Olu Awotesu Street, Off Idris Ibrahim Crescent, Off Obafemi Awolowo Way, Jabi District, Abuja. Tel: 08065290744
Advert Hotlines: 01-4489619, 08023015115 08031930899, advert@guardian.ng; Circulation Hotline: 07038746449
All correspondence to Guardian Newspapers Limited, P.M.B. 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria.
E-mail: Letters@guardian.ng; www.guardian.ng
Editor: KABIR ALABI GARBA
ABC (ISSN NO 0189-5125)

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