



SPOTLIGHT/PAGE 26

Celebrating A Life
Of Service And Vision
As Pastor Folu
Adeboye Clocks 78

INSIDESTUFF/BACK PAGE

FIFA World Cup:
Ten Lessons
Africa Must Learn
From Europe

NEWSFEATURE/PAGE 35

Adegoroye Seeks
Civil Service Reform
Ahead Of HCSF
Appointment



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56 DAYS IN HELL OVER FOR OYO CHILDREN...AND TEACHERS

PAGE 2

• Tinubu, Makinde Hail Their Safe Return • President Vows Justice As Eight Kidnappers Are Nabbed

HURIWA Commends FG, Air Peace On Evacuation Of Nigerians From South Africa

NEWS/PAGE 3

At 92: Soyinka Renews Campaign For 'Reparatory Justice'

PAGES 4-5

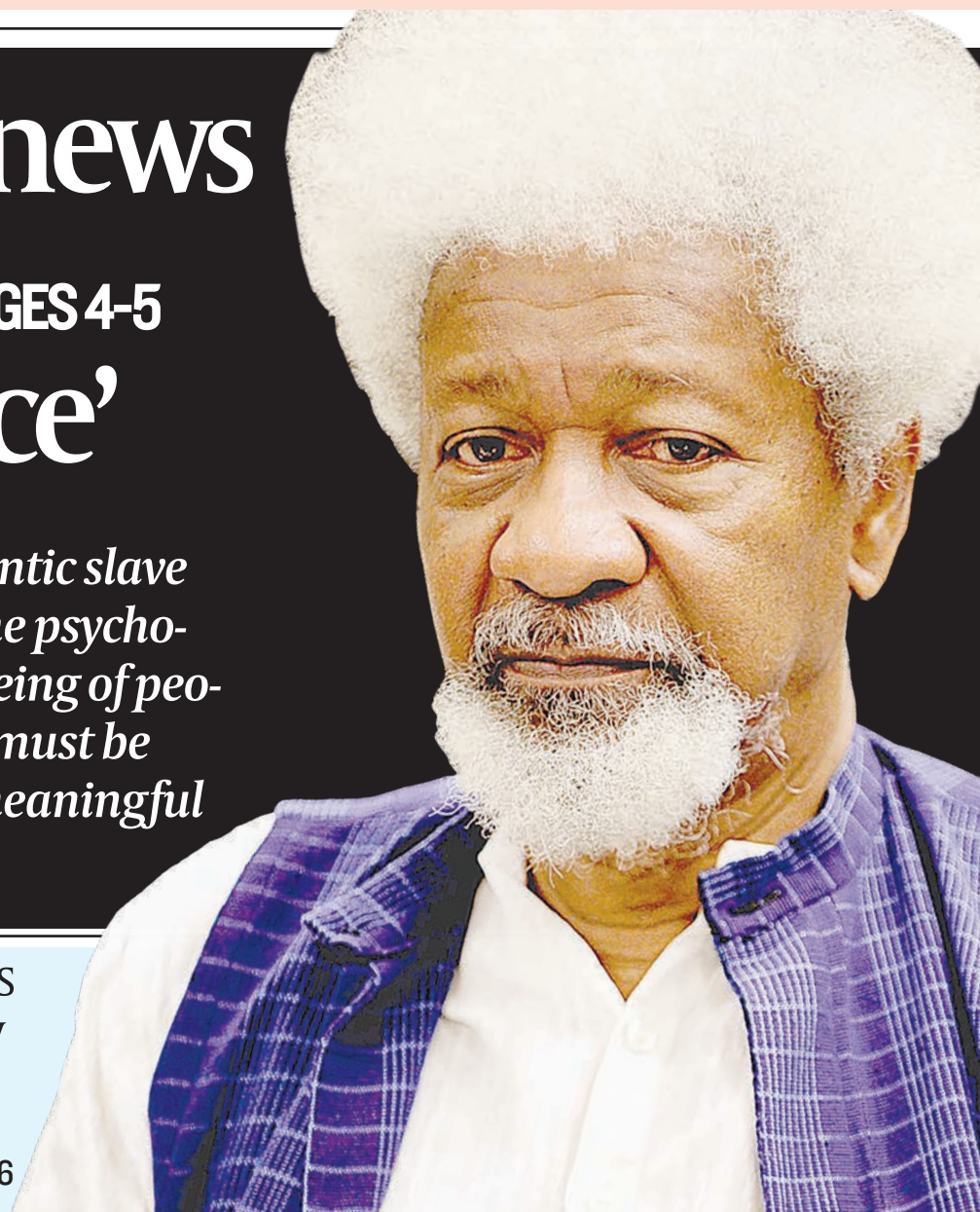
'The legacy of the transatlantic slave trade continues to affect the psychological and cultural well-being of people of African descent and must be addressed as part of any meaningful reparations agenda.'



NNPCL/Seplat Energy JV Signs Landmark 15-Year Gas Supply Deal With UTM FLNG

• Restate Commitment To Unlock Nigeria's Stranded Gas Reserves

NEWS/Page 36



Procurement Reforms Saved Nigeria Over N1.1tr, Says Shettima

Tasks Civil Servants On Ethical Integrity

NEWS/PAGE 2

2027: Tinubu Retains Shettima As Running Mate

APC Predicts Landslide Victory

NEWS/PAGE 3



Court Remands Drug Baron Anochi, Three Mexicans, Others Over N480b Drug Lab

Orders Final Forfeiture Of Properties Linked To Drug Proceeds

NEWS/PAGE 3

News

56 Days In Hell Over For Oyo Children... And Teachers

From **Terhemba Daka** (Abuja) and **Rotimi Agboluaje** (Ibadan)

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has expressed delight over the successful rescue of the pupils and teachers abducted from Oriire Local Council of Oyo State, commending the military, the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) for ending the victims' 56-day captivity.

The President's reaction was contained in a statement issued on Friday by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga.

Tinubu praised the security agencies for what he described as a painstaking, intelligence-led operation that secured the release of the victims without collateral damage, arrested eight of the suspected kidnappers and neutralised several others.

He also expressed sympathy with the victims, their families and the nation over the trauma caused by the abduction, describing the successful operation as a major relief after weeks of anxiety.

"I am profoundly happy that our security forces successfully rescued the abducted pupils

• Tinubu, Makinde Hail Their Safe Return

• President Vows Justice As Eight Kidnappers Are Nabbed

and teachers from Oriire, Ogbomoso in Oyo State today after a military, police and intelligence-driven operation that neutralised some of the terrorists that perpetrated the evil act and led to the arrest of eight of them.

"This successful military operation has ended the siege and standoff of over 50 days and has brought relief to the entire nation and the affected families in particular.

"On behalf of the country, I express my gratitude to the officers and men of our Armed Forces, the intelligence agencies and the police for the safe rescue of the children and their teachers.

"My government will get justice for these children and their teachers and for the family of Mr. Oyedokun, who the terrorists gruesomely murdered.

"I must commend the government of Oyo State for working cooperatively with us in bringing this unfortunate incident to a successful end," the President said.

Tinubu also praised the Oyo State government for its collaboration with the Federal Government throughout the rescue efforts and urged the state to strengthen security around schools to prevent similar attacks.

He directed emergency response agencies to work closely with the Oyo State government to provide the rescued pupils and teachers with immediate medical attention, psychosocial care and other relief support required for their recovery.

Earlier, Onanuga had announced the rescue of the victims in a series of posts on his verified X handle, commending the efforts of the nation's security agencies.

"Finally, all the kidnapped pupils and teachers in Oriire, Oyo have been rescued by our security agencies," Onanuga wrote.

Providing further details, the presidential spokesman disclosed that eight suspected kid-

nappers were arrested during the rescue operation and were in the custody of the Department of State Services (DSS), while several others were killed in the operation.

He also dismissed speculation that the victims were released following negotiations involving the exchange of detained suspects.

"In the course of the rescue operation, eight of the kidnappers were arrested and are now in DSS custody, while some of them were neutralised. There was no quid pro quo in the rescue, as one of the terrorists, the kingpin whose release the kidnappers demanded, is being prosecuted for his atrocities. The security agencies will give a full account soon," Onanuga stated.

The Oyo State government had also announced the release of the victims, describing their freedom as a victory for resilience and principled leadership.

In a statement issued on Friday by the Commissioner for Infor-

mation, Dotun Oyelade, the government expressed gratitude that the victims had regained their freedom after weeks in captivity.

"We are happy to report to our people in Oyo State that our children and teachers at Oriire have been released from captivity," Oyelade said.

He said the successful release marked a significant test of its resolve against criminal elements, stressing that it remained committed to resisting the payment of ransom despite pressure to adopt what it described as a "quick-fix" approach.

Oyelade stated that by refusing to throw money at bandits to secure a temporary solution, Governor Seyi Makinde's administration had demonstrated courage and a long-term commitment to tackling kidnapping and banditry.

He noted that yielding to ransom demands would only encourage criminals and strengthen their operations.

The commissioner added that the administration's approach reflected its determination to confront insecurity through pragmatic and sustainable measures rather than actions that could embolden criminal gangs seeking to destabilise the country.

He reiterated the government's commitment to protecting the lives and property of residents while continuing to work with security agencies to rid Oyo State of kidnapping and other criminal activities.

The victims, 39 pupils and seven teachers, were abducted on May 15, 2026, when armed gunmen attacked three schools in the Ahoro-Esiele and Yawota communities of Oriire Local Council.

The incident took a tragic turn days later when one of the abducted teachers, Mr. Michael Oyedokun, was reportedly beheaded by the kidnappers,

heightening public anxiety and calls for intensified security operations. It triggered nationwide outrage, disrupted academic activities and prompted an indefinite strike by the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) in Oyo State.

Reacting to the development, the All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate in Oyo State, Senator Sharafadeen Alli, commended President Tinubu and the nation's security agencies for the successful rescue of the abducted pupils and teachers.

Alli, in a statement issued on Friday in Ibadan, also praised the arrest of eight suspected kidnappers and the neutralisation of some members of the criminal gang during the rescue operation.

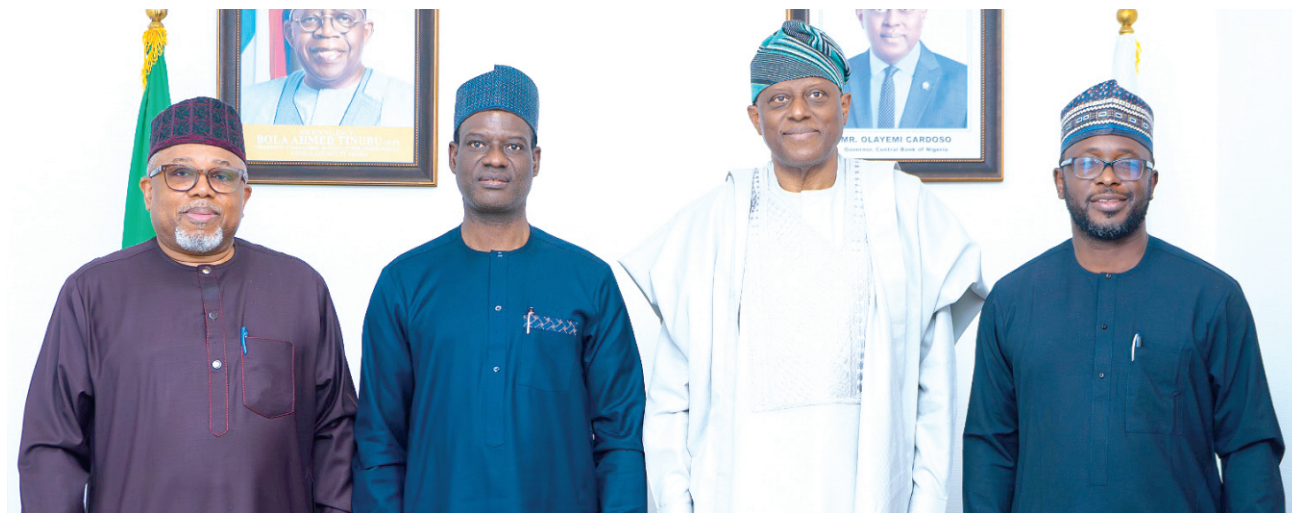
The APC governorship candidate described the operation as a major victory against criminality, applauding the feat as a demonstration of the renewed commitment of the Tinubu administration to safeguarding lives and property across the country.

He said that the successful operation had rekindled hope among Nigerians that the security architecture under the Tinubu administration was becoming more proactive, intelligence-driven and result-oriented.

The lawmaker said the swift response by the security agencies and the eventual rescue of the victims reflected the effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration in combating insecurity.

Alli urged security agencies not to relent until every member of the criminal syndicate responsible for the abduction was apprehended and brought to justice.

He also called for diligent prosecution of the arrested suspects to serve as a deterrent to others engaged in kidnapping and other violent crimes.



Deputy Governor, Economic Policy, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Philip Ikeazor (left); Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Taiwo Oyedele; Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Olayemi Cardoso; and Deputy Governor (Corporate Services) at the CBN, Dr. Muhammad Sani Abdullahi, when the minister paid a working visit to the CBN Head Office, Abuja... on Friday.

Procurement Reforms Saved Nigeria Over N1.1tr, Says Shettima

From **Ayoyinka Jegede, Uyo**

VICE President Kashim Shettima has disclosed that procurement reforms saved the nation over N1.1 trillion.

The vice president made the disclosure on Friday in his keynote address as the special guest of honour at the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF)-Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) Permanent Secretaries Retreat held in Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State.

The retreat with the theme, 'Strengthening Procurement Leadership and Accountability for Effective Budget Execution and National Development,' will end on July 12, 2026.

Shettima, whose speech was delivered by the Chairman, Federal Civil Service Commission, Prof. Tunji Olaopa, who represented him, said that ongoing transformation at the BPP remains one of the most important institutional reforms in the government's national development agenda.

He stated that so far, 23 strategic initiatives and reforms aimed at improving transparency, accountability and fiscal discipline in Nigeria have been introduced, adding that as at the last count, some of the reforms saved the Federal Government over N1.1 trillion in 2025 alone.

He listed some of these reforms as

Tasks Civil Servants On Ethical Integrity

threshold adjustments, which allow contracts below N5 billion for goods/services and N10 billion for works to be managed by ministerial tender boards rather than the Federal Executive Council; local empowerment that is aimed at the implementation of the Nigeria First Policy, which prioritises locally made goods and services that meet international standards; and institutional expansion which is the approval of seven new zonal offices with a view to deepening compliance enforcement across the country.

According to him, public procurement occupies a central place in the nation's life as it accounts for a substantial proportion of public expenditure.

"Every road constructed, every hospital equipped, every school rehabilitated, every agricultural intervention implemented and every digital platform deployed passes through the procurement process. Therefore, the reforms reinforce the Federal Government's commitment to fiscal discipline, transparency and value for money under the Renewed Hope Agenda. Our administration will follow through these reforms religiously and ensure that all MDAs comply," he said.

He noted that the government would

not shy away from applying appropriate sanctions to defaulters, including prosecuting anyone who runs foul of the law. The vice president said procurement is no longer simply an administrative or compliance function.

He added: "It is a strategic instrument for economic growth, a driver of industrial development, a tool for promoting local content, an enabler of infrastructure delivery, a mechanism for ensuring value for money, and above all, it is an instrument of public trust.

"When procurement works well, government delivers. When procurement fails, development suffers. The challenge before us, therefore, is not merely compliance with procurement procedures but strengthening procurement leadership.

"Leadership means ensuring that procurement planning begins early and aligns with approved budgets. Leadership means insisting on professionalism throughout the procurement cycle. Leadership means resisting undue influence, protecting institutional integrity and making decisions solely in the public interest. Leadership means ensuring that contracts are completed on schedule, within cost and according to specification. Leadership means build-

ing institutions that outlive individuals."

Noting what he identified as an irreplaceable responsibility of permanent secretaries, he said that as accounting officers they are the custodians of financial discipline within their ministries and agencies.

"They are responsible not only for ensuring compliance with the Public Procurement Act and extant Financial Regulations but also for creating institutional cultures that reward transparency, professionalism and ethical conduct," he said.

Noting weak procurement planning as one of the greatest obstacles to effective budget implementation, Shettima said that far too often, procurement activities commence long after budgets have been approved, thereby making project designs remain incomplete, needs assessments inadequate and market intelligence insufficient.

"All these delays compress implementation timelines, increase project costs and ultimately reduce the developmental impact of public expenditure," he said.

He stressed that improving budget performance requires procurement to move from being reactive to becoming strategic. "It requires stronger collaboration between finance, planning, pro-

urement and technical departments. It requires greater use of data, technology and evidence in procurement decision-making. It also requires stronger contract management to ensure that government receives full value for every naira spent," he noted.

According to the vice president, technology in procurement offers enormous opportunities such as electronic document management, integrated financial management platforms and data analytics that can significantly improve transparency, reduce processing time, minimise human discretion and strengthen public confidence.

He said that Nigeria must continue to embrace these innovations as part of the government's broader public sector modernisation agenda.

He, however, stated that institutional reforms succeed only when they are driven by values as integrity remains the most valuable asset in public administration.

To him, no amount of technology can substitute for ethical leadership.

"No legal framework can replace personal accountability. No reform programme can succeed without leaders who consistently place national interest above personal interest," the vice president said.

2027: Tinubu Retains Shettima As Running Mate, APC Predicts Landslide Victory

From Adamu Abuh, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Friday formally retained Vice President Kashim Shettima as his running mate for the 2027 presidential election, as the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) expressed confidence of securing a landslide victory at the polls.

The names of President Tinubu and Vice President Shettima were officially submitted to the National Chairman of the APC, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, for onward transmission to the Independent National Electoral

Commission (INEC) in line with electoral requirements.

The submission was made on behalf of the President by his Special Adviser on Political Matters, Alhaji Ibrahim Masari, at a ceremony attended by members of the Progressive Governors' Forum (PGF) led by Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, members of the National Assembly, the Federal Executive Council (FEC), the APC National Working Committee (NWC), state chairmen of the party, governors from Borno, Kebbi, Yobe, Kano and Kaduna states, as well as some of the party's governorship

candidates.

Speaking during the event, APC National Organising Secretary, Sulaiman Muhammad Argungu, said the occasion marked the formal submission of the duly completed nomination forms of the party's presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

He recalled that Tinubu had earlier emerged as the party's presidential flag bearer through what he described as a transparent primary process and urged members to remain united behind the party's leadership while continuing to support the administration and pray for

Nigeria.

Argungu also commended President Tinubu for what he described as the achievements recorded by his administration before formally presenting the names of Tinubu and Shettima to the national chairman for onward processing.

In his remarks, Uzodimma, reaffirmed the governors' unwavering support for President Tinubu and the APC leadership.

"We are delighted that this event is coming after a well-organised and thoroughly supervised primary process. We reiterate our commit-

ment to continue supporting President Tinubu and the party," he said.

Uzodimma described the APC as a party guided by internal democracy and inclusiveness, pledging that governors elected on its platform would work tirelessly to secure victory for the President and other party candidates.

"We will continue to support him in the larger interest of Nigerians and to take the country to greater heights. To the National Working Committee, we reaffirm our support. Together, we are going to deliver victory for President

Tinubu and ensure the party wins all elective positions, including the National and State Assemblies," he added.

APC National Chairman, Yilwatda, said the event reflected the confidence reposed in President Tinubu by millions of party members.

"Today is a reflection of the wishes of over 12 million members of our party who supported the President's candidature. We are proud of the support already in the kitty of President Tinubu and we are convinced that many more Nigerians will vote for him," he said.

HURIWA Commends FG, Air Peace On Evacuation Of Nigerians From South Africa

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has commended the Federal Government and Air Peace for the successful evacuation of Nigerians fleeing the latest wave of xenophobic violence in South Africa.

The association said the prompt rescue operation has undoubtedly saved many innocent lives and reflects the government's responsibility to protect its citizens wherever they may be.

In a statement on Friday signed by its National Coordinator, Emmanuel Nnadozie Onwubiko, HURIWA, particularly applauded Air Peace for its patriotism and swift response in deploying a replacement aircraft after the original evacuation plane suffered a technical fault in Johannesburg.

"The airline's commitment ensured that the operation proceeded without unnecessary delay despite the challenging circumstances," it said.

It noted that while the evacuation is commendable, bringing Nigerians home cannot and must not be the end of the matter.

"The recurring attacks on Nigerians and other African nationals in South Africa have become an intolerable pattern of violence, lawlessness and impunity that demands consequences beyond emergency evacuations.

"For far too long, hardworking Nigerians have built legitimate businesses, invested in properties, paid taxes and contributed to the South African economy, only to become targets of violent mobs who destroy their livelihoods, loot their investments and, in some cases, brutally take their lives. This cycle of violence has persisted for years with little accountability for the perpetrators and inadequate protection for victims," HURIWA added.

It called on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to immediately initiate high-level diplomatic engagements with the South African Government to secure comprehensive compensation for every Nigerian whose business, home, investment or other legally acquired property was destroyed during the attacks.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in audience with Senator Mohammed Aliu Ndume at the Presidential Villa, Abuja... on Friday.

PHOTO: STATE HOUSE

Dentists Warn Against Over Reliance On AI For Dental Treatments

By Moyosore Salami

THE adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven technologies for dental treatments improves patient care and accelerates the progress of treatment, but it must not replace the expert knowledge and experience of dentists.

This was the submission of experts who spoke at the 18th Annual Scientific Conference and Eighth Alumni Guest Lecture of the Faculty of Dental Sciences, College of Medicine, University of Lagos, on Thursday.

Held under the theme, 'Creating the Perfect Smile: Modern Possibilities in Tooth Alignment' and sub-theme, 'The Snow White Complex: How Social Media Distorts the Perception of Natural Tooth Shade,' the conference attracted dentists from across the country, underscoring the faculty's tradition of academic excellence and unwavering commitment to advancing knowledge, clinical practice, research and innovation in the dental sciences.

The keynote speaker, Prof. Idia Ize-Iyamu, who is Chief Medical Director (CMD) of University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) and President, Nigerian Association of Orthodontists, highlighted various AI-driven technologies that have made dental treatment more comfortable and less aggressive while improving patient care.

Her words: "We are talking about modern possibilities in tooth alignment. Instead of going through surgery, we are going through AI-driven technologies."

Experts Seek Stronger Partnerships To Advance Nigeria's Energy Transition Plans

By Suliyat Tella

NIGERIA'S renewable energy experts have called for stronger partnerships, continued innovation and sustained investment to ensure that millions of citizens gain access to reliable, affordable and sustainable energy.

The experts spoke when All On Partnerships for Energy Access hosted its 10th Anniversary Dinner and Fireside Chat in Lagos, convening leaders from government, development finance institutions, the private sector, development organisations, academia and the renewable energy industry to celebrate a decade of catalytic investment while setting the agenda for the future of energy access in Nigeria.

ria.

The evening reflected 10 years of building businesses, strengthening markets and expanding access to clean, reliable and affordable energy through collaboration. More importantly, it looked ahead, bringing together some of the sector's most influential voices to explore how partnerships, innovation and long-term investment can accelerate universal energy access for millions more Nigerians.

Representing Governor Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, the Commissioner for Energy and Mineral Resources, Biodun Ogunleye, congratulated All On on its 10-year journey, describing the organisation as an important contributor to Nigeria's re-

newable energy ecosystem.

Delivering the governor's goodwill message, he commended the organisation for demonstrating that underserved communities are not beyond the reach of sustainable investment and reaffirmed Lagos State's commitment to creating an enabling policy environment that encourages innovation, investment and private sector participation in the electricity market.

Welcoming guests, Chief Executive Officer of All On, Caroline Eboumbou, reflected on the organisation's evolution from an ambitious vision into one of Nigeria's leading impact investors and ecosystem builders. She acknowledged the presence of the founding visionary and

former Board Chairman, Dr. Osagie Okunbor, the Board of Directors, investors, partners, government institutions and communities whose collective efforts have helped shape its first decade.

Reflecting on the organisation's journey, Eboumbou noted that while capital was essential, experience had shown that expanding energy access required far more than financing businesses alone.

"We realised very quickly that we needed to be more than just an investor. Building this market required us to combine catalytic capital with technical assistance, venture support, ecosystem development and strategic partnerships. That is how lasting impact is created," Eboumbou said.

Court Remands Drug Baron Anochili, Three Mexicans, Others Over N480b Drug Lab

By Bertram Nwannekanma and Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

JUSTICE Musa Kakaki of the Federal High Court, Lagos, yesterday remanded a 63-year-old suspected drug baron, Anochili Innocent, three Mexican nationals and six other Nigerians in a correctional facility over alleged involvement in an illicit drug manufacturing operation in an Ogun State forest.

The defendants were arraigned by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) on an 11-count charge bordering on the establishment of a super clandestine laboratory and the production of 2,419.48 kilogrammes of methamphetamine valued at over N480 billion in the international market.

The laboratory was allegedly located in Mowe village, Ijebu East Local Council of Ogun State.

They are Anochili Innocent,

• Orders Final Forfeiture Of Properties Linked To Drug Proceeds

63; Juan Carlos Meza Torrero, 49; Nemecio Martinez Felix, 46; Jesus López Valles, 40, all Mexican nationals except Anochili.

Others are Nwankwo Sunday Christian, 41; Ekwuonwu Uchenna Victor, 38; Igwe Abuchi Remijus, 43; Ifeanyi Chukwu Chibuike Joshua, 23; Omonughwa Kingsley Orike, 45; and Nwobum Emeka, 59.

The defendants were arraigned following their arrest by operatives of the NDLEA during coordinated operations in Ogun and Lagos states between May 16 and 18, 2026.

Those arrested at the clandestine laboratory hidden deep inside the Mowe forest on May 16 included Nwankwo Sunday Christian, Igwe Abuchi Remijus, Ifeanyi Chukwu Chibuike Joshua and Ekwuonwu Uchenna Victor, alongside the three Mexican

methamphetamine experts, Nemecio Martinez Felix, Jesus López Valles and Juan Carlos Meza Torrero.

The alleged mastermind of the cartel, Anochili Innocent, was subsequently arrested at his luxury residence located at No. 8 Tafawa Balewa Street, Golf Estate, Lakowe, Lekki, Lagos.

In a follow-up operation on May 18, 2026, NDLEA operatives stormed another property owned by Anochili at House 70, Close 3, Mayfair Estate, Lakowe, Lekki, where another alleged member of the syndicate, Kingsley Orike Omonughwa, was arrested. Investigators later raided the residence of another suspect, Emeka Nwobum, whose property was allegedly used as the cartel's strategic stash house.

The 11-count charge, filed by the NDLEA prosecution team, accused the defendants of

conspiring between February and May 16, 2026, to establish a clandestine laboratory for the preparation, processing and production of methamphetamine, contrary to Section 14(b) of the NDLEA Act.

Other charges include managing, organising and financing a drug trafficking organisation, contrary to Section 20(1)(g) of the Act; unlawfully transporting precursor chemicals, including toluene, phenyl-2-propanone (P2P), phenylacetic acid, acetone and hydrochloric acid, from Lagos to the Mowe laboratory using a Toyota Tacoma, a Mercedes-Benz with registration number APP 942 YL and a Toyota Highlander with registration number GWA 662 DJ, contrary to Section 20(1)(f); as well as the unlawful production and possession of the 2,419.48kg of methamphetamine, contrary to Sections 11(a) and 19 of the Act, respectively.

Special

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At 92: Soyinka Renews Campaign

• Interrogates Culture Beyond Borders • Still Chooses The Young: A Tradition Of Mentorship Returns To Ijegba, London

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor and Anote Ajelurou

YOUNG members of the African diaspora, alongside students, academics, artists and the wider public will once again have the rare privilege of engaging directly with the Nobel Laureate in another mentorship conversation and interactive question and answer session.

This man, Akinwande Oluwole Babatunde Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel prize winner in literature, for decades, has quietly resisted the temptation of making his birthday the centrepiece of public celebration. Rather than bask in accolades, he has preferred reflection, retreat and, perhaps most importantly, a return to what has defined much of his life's work: engaging minds. Except when he turned 90, when the Federal Government named the National Theatre after him and elaborate ceremony was organised on October 1, 2024. He always avoided loud celebration on his birthday.

Those close to him speak of his eagerness to once again welcome the young participants and continue a dialogue that has endured for nearly two decades.

From Ijegba to London, the message remains the same: culture transcends geography; ideas know no borders; and dialogue remains one of humanity's greatest instruments of progress.

Celebrations span Lagos, Abuja, and London. The events centre around literary exhibitions, a major book launch, and a global cultural exchange.

On July 13, 2026, friends, admirers, scholars, and lovers of literature will gather in Abuja to celebrate the remarkable life and enduring legacy of Professor Wole Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel Laureate in Literature, as he marks his 92nd Birthday.

As part of this celebration, Prof Adesoji Adesugba's new book, *Ideas Do Not Die: Prof. Wole Soyinka and the Philosophy of Moral Rebellion*, will be launched.

This book explores the ideas, convictions, courage, and moral vision that have shaped Professor Soyinka's extraordinary journey as a writer, activist, public intellectual, and defender of human freedom.

Built around extensive conversations with Professor Soyinka and enriched by historical, philosophical, and political reflections, the book examines the themes that have defined his life and work: rebellion against injustice, the defense of truth, the power of memory, the importance of conscience, and the responsibility of leadership.

Historical conversations will unfold — first in the quiet surroundings of the Autonomous Republic of Ijegba (ARI) and days later in London — where one man, whose words have travelled the world, will once again sit among the young, answer their questions, challenge their thinking, and remind them that the future belongs to those prepared to imagine it, question it and build it.

Organisers of the 17th Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange (WSICE @92) have announced that Soyinka has confirmed that he will once again receive young people for his yearly mentorship and interactive question and answer session at his residence, the Autonomous Republic of Ijegba (ARI), Abeokuta, on Wednesday, July 15, 2026.

"For 17 years, this has become one of the most distinctive intellectual traditions in Nigeria. What began as a modest engage-



Prof. Wole Soyinka and oni Of Ife, Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, jájá II

ment has grown into a pilgrimage for students, young writers, scholars, artists, teachers and cultural enthusiasts from across the country. They come not simply to see a global literary icon, but to ask questions that matter. Questions about literature. About Africa. About freedom. About identity. About courage. About leadership. About truth. About the responsibilities that accompany education and privilege," said Alhaji Teju Kareem, co-founder of the culture platform, Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange.

He said the children come "because Professor Soyinka listens before he answers. They come because every conversation is unscripted. They come because every year history quietly unfolds in a courtyard in Ijegba."

According to Kareem, "preparations are now in their final stages. Organisers are coordinating logistics, hospitality, security and media coverage for what promises to be another memorable encounter between one of the world's most celebrated intellectuals and the generation that will inherit the future. Its impact extends well beyond the annual gathering."

More than 10,000 essays have been

received from students over the life of the project. Outstanding entries have been curated into published volumes, each preserving the voices, hopes and imagination of young Africans. Notably, two of these publications carry forewords personally written by Professor Soyinka himself—further testament to his enduring investment in the intellectual development of younger generations.

The programme has equally become a meeting point for writers, academics, diplomats, theatre practitioners, policymakers and cultural leaders who recognise that meaningful nation-building begins with informed and engaged young citizens.

This year's theme, "Culture Beyond Borders," speaks directly to a world increasingly defined by migration, interconnectedness and cultural exchange. It asks how societies can remain rooted in their histories while embracing global citizenship, and how culture can serve as a bridge rather than a barrier.

He noted, the conversation will not end in Abeokuta. Professor Soyinka will participate in the United Kingdom leg of the programme on Saturday, July 18, 2026, at The Africa Centre.

The yearly mentorship remains the emotional heart of the Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange, an initiative that has, over seventeen editions, grown into one of Africa's foremost youth-centred literary and cultural advocacy platforms.

"In an age increasingly shaped by fleeting digital interactions, Professor Soyinka continues to demonstrate the enduring value of face-to-face conversation—of listening deeply, questioning honestly and challenging young minds to think independently. That may well be one of his greatest legacies. Not merely the Nobel Prize. Not merely the plays, essays and novels. Not merely the decades of public advocacy," said Kareem. "But the quiet consistency with which he has continued to make himself available to young people, year after year, generation after generation."

That tradition continues in 2026. "It is of a living tradition. It is of ideas. It is of mentorship. It is of a lifelong commitment to nurturing minds," he mused.

At 92, Professor Soyinka remains as intellectually restless as ever. The national treasure, Soyinka, is everything Nigeria is not: Focused, consistent and inspiring. Nigeria is not. The country Soyinka and his co-travellers in the 50s and 60s idealised has sunk into an abysmal quandary. His generation had deployed both ethical and empirical arguments to buttress the way forward for the nation.

Born July 13, 1934, Soyinka, one of 1930s generation most accomplished writers, was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature for what has been described "as a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashioning the drama of existence."

His 1986 success has gone on to open the floodgates in the continent with four other writers following in his stead: Naguib Mahfouz, Nadine Gordimer, John Maxwell Coetzee and Abdulrazak Gurnah.

Soyinka is perhaps the most versatile of African writers, equally at home in all genres; his dramatic masterpieces, such as *Kongi's Harvest* and *Death and the King's Horseman* have been produced all over the world.

His poetry anthology, *Poems of Black Africa* (1975), remains the most authoritative showcase of the writings of the first generation of postcolonial African poets, from Agostinho Neto to Léopold Senghor to Dennis Brutus — a generation that is fast dwindling.

The playwright, poet, novelist, essayist is among a rare crop of African intellectuals who contribute immensely to the economic and political debate in their countries.

He is unquestionably a man of action and ideas; an embodiment of benevolence, who helps nurture young minds while supporting the less privileged, and intervening in crisis situation to prevent conflict.

He makes the perfect poster figure: imprisoned, exiled, perpetually seeking to reform his country by turning out books critical of the corrupt rulers who, after the euphoria of independence from the colonial Europeans, have continued exactly where they left off, using the same playbook of divide and rule.

Born into a Yoruba family in Abeokuta. In 1954, he attended Government College in Ibadan, and subsequently University College Ibadan and the University of Leeds in England.

After studying in Nigeria and the UK, he worked with the Royal Court Theatre in London. He went on to write plays that were produced in both countries, in theatres and

At 92, Professor Soyinka remains as intellectually restless as ever. The national treasure, Soyinka, is everything Nigeria is not: Focused, consistent and inspiring. Nigeria is not. The country Soyinka and his co-travellers in the 50s and 60s idealised has sunk into an abysmal quandary. His generation had deployed both ethical and empirical arguments to buttress the way forward for the nation.

Feature

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For 'Reparatory Justice'

on radio. He took an active role in Nigeria's political history and its campaign for independence from British colonial rule. In 1965, he seized the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service studio and broadcast a demand for the cancellation of the Western Nigeria Regional Elections.

In 1967, Soyinka was appointed Director, School of Drama, and later, Head of Drama at the University of Ibadan, but he could not assume that position as a result of the Nigerian Civil War, when he was arrested by the Federal Government of General Yakubu Gowon and put in solitary confinement for two years, for volunteering to be a non-government mediating actor.

After his release, he moved to the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, where he was Professor of Comparative Literature (1975 to 1984, when he voluntarily retired). With civilian rule restored to Nigeria in 1999, he was made professor emeritus.

While in the United States, he first taught at Cornell University as Goldwin Smith professor for African Studies and Theatre Arts from 1988 to 1991 and then at Emory University, where in 1996 he was appointed Robert W. Woodruff Professor of the Arts.

Soyinka has been a Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and has served as scholar-in-residence at New York University's Institute of African American Affairs and at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. He has also taught at the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard and Yale, and was also a Distinguished Scholar in Residence at Duke University in 2008.

Soyinka is a strong critic of successive Nigerian (and African at large) governments, especially the country's many military dictators, as well as other political tyrannies, including the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe in works such as *The Open Sore of a Continent: A Personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis*, *A Play of Giants*, *Opera Wonyonsi*, *The Man Died* and others.

Much of his writing has been concerned with "the oppressive boot and the irrelevance of the colour of the foot that wears it."

During the regime of General Sani Abacha (1993-98), Soyinka escaped from Nigeria on a motorcycle via the "NADECO Route." Abacha later proclaimed a death sentence against him "in absentia." With civilian rule restored to Nigeria in 1999, Soyinka returned to his nation.

In December 2017, Soyinka was awarded the Europe Theatre Prize in the "Special Prize" category, awarded to someone who has "contributed to the realization of cultural events that promote understanding and the exchange of knowledge between peoples".

Soyinka is a pragmatic writer and views the new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) era with realism, underscoring the role of new media and their influence on the public and users. For him, new media users should use it to enhance good governance and the continent's development.

"Sometimes I think the inventor of the Internet should be decorated, given the key to the city, put on a white horse, and then... hung from the nearest lamppost," he joked; "it's amazing how technology has been used for libel, ignorance, and the abuse of the notion of freedom. That's why I stopped at email". But "in more atavistic zones," he said, "expressing the hope that the Internet will contribute to the exposure of corruption and violence."

With his interventions as a polemic, he has



President of Ghana, John Mahama (left) in handshake with Prof. Wole Soyinka while former Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyokwu, looks on

given the community of readers and those committed to a life of the mind another somewhat meaty matter to engage in such essays as – *InterInventions: Between Defective Memory and the Public Lie – A Personal Odyssey* in the Republic of Liars, *Isese Festival: An Open Letter to Sulu Gambari*, *A Putrid Presidential Easter Egg* and *Fascism On Course*.

As one of Nigeria's most celebrated playwrights, poets, and political activists, Prof. Soyinka's contributions to the world of literature and his tireless commitment to social justice have made an indelible impact on the global stage.

Though, Ugoji Egbu, in a recent article, titled, *Has the man died?*, feels Wole Soyinka has slowed down in his activism, because he has continue to look away from some of the things happening in the country, at 92, he "remains strong and razor-sharp."

He has picked up slave trade and reparation as pertinent issues that will shape his conversations in years to come.

For Soyinka, the deepest damage of the slave trade was the stripping of identity and humanity. He argues that true reparations must elevate the descendants of the enslaved by addressing the enduring psychological and social scars left by the legacy of enslavement. In his UN address, he detailed why he believes reparations cannot be quantified. "Reparations can't be quantified," he said.

He believes reparations must restore humanity, not just provide compensation. The Nobel laureate called for reparatory justice efforts to move beyond financial compensation and symbolic gestures.

He argued that the deeper challenge is the restoration of humanity, dignity, and identity damaged by slavery.

Speaking at the opening of the Next Steps Conference on Reparatory Justice in Accra on Thursday, June 18, 2026, Prof. Soyinka said the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade continues to affect the psychological and cultural well-being of people of African descent and must be addressed as part of any meaningful reparations agenda.

"As that any means that enable us to

recover the re-humanization collectively, even of memory, not just of the present, but even of memory is essential to the development, collective development of those who've been traumatized as a people by this iniquitous commodity in human beings," he said.

Prof. Soyinka urged governments, institutions, and advocates to pursue a more dynamic approach to reparatory justice, one that extends beyond commemorative events and economic discussions.

"Let us move mentally and practically towards the dynamizing of the commemoratives which exist," he said. "We have to move now beyond just the performances, the discussions, the rhetoric, even the economic

aspects of a retrieval of an egalitarian relationship between them and us."

The Nobel laureate argued that slavery's impact was not limited to economic exploitation but also altered how affected communities perceive themselves and their place in the world.

"We have to recognize the fact that even our mental conditioning is involved and in the diaspora in particular," he said.

Prof. Soyinka described the African diaspora as a critical component of the reparatory justice movement, stressing that efforts to reconnect descendants of enslaved Africans with the continent carry significance beyond sym-

bolism.

Nobel Laureate Prof. Wole Soyinka is spearheading the Heritage Voyage of Discovery, a global initiative aimed at reuniting the African diaspora with their ancestral roots. Supported by the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), the commitment centres around the iconic Door of Return ceremony in Badagry.

According to him, initiatives such as the Door of Return represent opportunities to reclaim values and identities that were distorted or erased by the experience of slavery.

"It is a return to certain values, certain human values, which were distorted or simply totally wiped out of our collective appreciation of a reality of the world we inhabit," he said.

Soyinka champions this spiritual and historical pilgrimage in Badagry, Lagos. It serves as the symbolic inverse of the historical "Point of No Return", aiming to heal the generational wounds of the transatlantic slave trade. The Heritage Return Journey: He promotes this reverse route as a global tool to reunite Africans in Europe and the Americas with their lost heritage.

Prof. Soyinka works closely with NIDCOM and its Chairman/CEO, Abike Dabiri-Erewa, integrating the "Door of Return" into Nigeria's official cultural diplomacy and diaspora engagement agenda.

Soyinka uses high-profile platforms, including the United Nations and UNESCO, to advocate for the reclamation of history and the cultural reintegration of the global African diaspora.

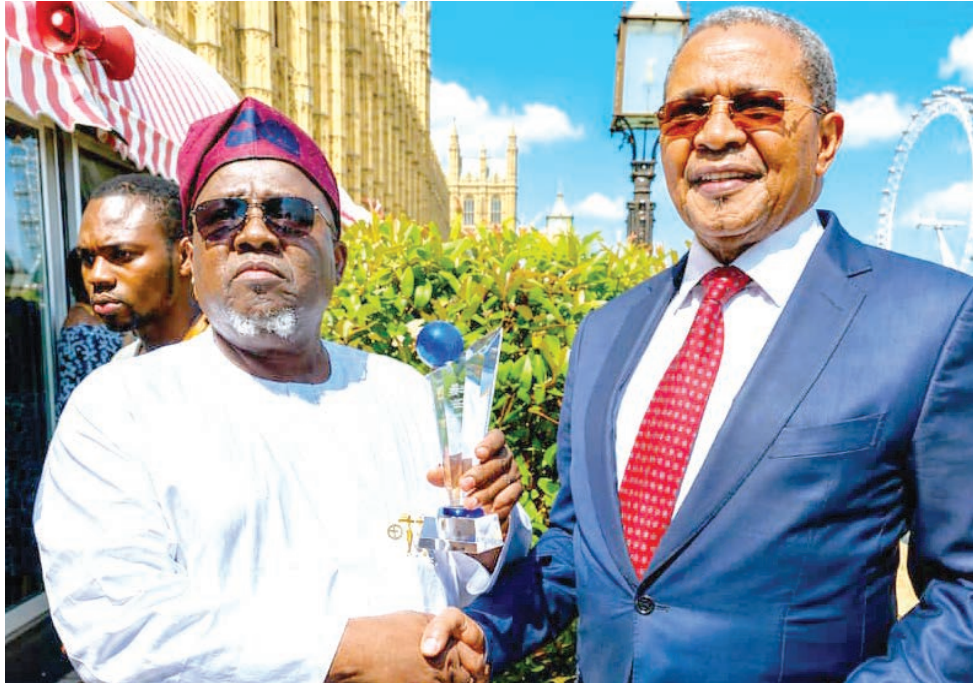
Initiatives such as the Door of Return represent opportunities to reclaim values and identities that were distorted or erased by the experience of slavery. It is a return to certain values, certain human values, which were distorted or simply totally wiped out of our collective appreciation of a reality of the world we inhabit. Specifically, the Door of Return serves as the symbolic inverse of the historical "Point of No Return", aiming to heal the generational wounds of the transatlantic slave trade. The reverse route is being promoted as a global tool to reunite Africans in Europe and the Americas with their lost heritage.



Prof. Wole Soyinka and President of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva



Executive Director, Intermarc Consulting, Nigeria, Toba Otusanya (left); Managing Director, Intermarc Consulting, Nigeria, Dr. Adeyinka Adeyemi and Country Manager, Visa West Africa, Damola Giwa during the Digital PayExpo 2026 in Lagos.



Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania /Chairman of the African Leadership Organisation (ALO) Global Advisory Board, Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete (right) presenting the African Business Leadership Awards to the Special Adviser, Political & Other Matters to President Bola Tinubu, Alhaji Ibrahim Kabiru Masari at the 16th African Business Leadership Awards held in London, United Kingdom ...recently



Director General/Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Nigeria Technical Aid Corps, Dr. Yusuf Buba Yakub (left) and Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to President Tinubu on Media & Special Duties, Mr. Tunde Rahman, when the SSA visited Yakub in Abuja...recently



Kogi State Governor, Usman Ododo (right) and Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) Marshal, Shehu Mohammed (left) after Ododo's investiture as Patron of the FRSC Special Marshals in Kogi State...on Thursday

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Adebayo To Deliver Keynote Address At QEDNG Summit



Adebayo

NATIONAL Coordinator of the Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (iDICE) programme at the Bank of Industry (BoI), Ife Adebayo, will deliver the keynote address at the QEDNG Creative Powerhouse Summit 2.0 on Tuesday, August 11, at Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

The announcement was made by Mighty Media Plus Network Ltd, the parent company of online newspaper QEDNG, on Wednesday. With the theme: "Creativity, Culture and Nigeria's Next Chapter," the summit will examine how stronger partnerships among government, investors and the creative community can unlock opportunities for growth, job creation and sustainable development.

Adebayo has spent over 16 years working across Germany, the United Kingdom and Nigeria, leading programmes that support innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise development.

Group Deplores State Of Abattoirs In Nigeria, Floats Digital Marketplace

ABIS Group has said that the state of abattoirs in Nigeria remains a major concern as many are outdated, poorly maintained, and operate under unhygienic conditions posing a serious challenge to food safety and the livestock industry.

By Sunday Aikulola

TO address poverty and improve Nigerians' quality of life, members of Rotary Club of Omole Golden recently empowered artisans and business owners with grants worth N5 million.

Speaking during presenta-

tions posing a serious challenge to food safety and the livestock industry.

This was disclosed at the official launch of ABIS Digital Market Place in Abuja

designed to modernise Nigeria's protein supply chain – from farm/sea, to the table – using technology to solve the inefficiencies that plague livestock, meat, seafood, and

poultry market in Nigeria.

ABIS Co-founder, Dr. Iliyasu Gashinbaki, explained that the Digital Marketplace is far more than an online marketplace.

Rotary Members Empower Artisans, Business Owners In Lagos

The Impact President (2026-2027), Dr. Omowunmi Bakare said, 'this is our first project and we are visiting the beneficiaries' shops to encourage and show them

how to maximise opportunities of the scheme."

She highlighted some activities for the year as sustaining membership growth, fueling the Rotary Foundation, supporting youths through Rotaract,

Interact clubs; prompt payment of revised yearly dues; cCommitment to District Educational Welfare Endowment Fund (DEWEF); Elevating public image and deeper engagement with Diaspora members.

FG, Leaders Should Intensify Efforts To End Kidnapping – Otusanya

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Federal Government and all political office holders have been urged to intensify efforts towards eradicating the lingering menace of kidnapping in the country.

The Founder/General

• As TCCG Inaugurates Cathedral On August 16

Overseer of the True Covenant Church of God (TCCG), Bishop Olufemi Otusanya, who made the appeal during a press conference to announce the inauguration of the Cathedral, assured that all the victims of

kidnapping across the country, including school children would be rescued soon.

"If God can save the Israelites, all the victims of kidnapping can be rescued. But the Federal Government needs to do more

While speaking on the inauguration slated for August 16, 2026, Otusanya, popularly called Omomajemu said "the occasion marks the manifestation of God's faithfulness, fulfilled promises, and divine presence among His people."

By Kehinde Olatunji

WEMA Bank has announced the seventh edition of its flagship innovation programme, Hackaholics, introducing three competition tracks, seven innovation verticals and

Wema Bank Launches Seventh Hackaholics, Unveils Innovation

millions of naira in grant prizes aimed at supporting young Nigerian innovators and startups.

Launched in 2019, Hackaholics is the bank's youth-focused technology ini-

tiative designed to provide a platform for young Africans with innovative, technology-driven ideas to develop and scale their solutions.

According to the bank, the programme has supported

more than 10,000 startups, engaged over 50,000 participants, developed more than 100 solutions from scratch and awarded grant funding to innovators across its first six editions.

Catholic Knights Honour 115 Champions Of Charity Ahead Of National Convention

NO fewer than 115 members and supporters of the Order of the Knights of St. Mulumba (KSM), Nigeria, have been honoured in Lagos for their commitment to charity and humanitarian service, as the organisation stepped up

preparations for its 47th Annual Supreme Council Convention scheduled for November. The awards were presented last Friday during the KSM Supreme Council Convention 2026 Pre-Convention Dinner held in

Lagos, where Catholic Knights from across Nigeria and the international community gathered to celebrate members' contributions to the Order's charitable mission.

Chairman of the Convention Organising Committee, Sir

Benjamin Omenazu-Agba Ofodile, commended the chairman of the pre-convention dinner, Sir Ralph J. Kariere, for what he described as an event that reflected the unity of members towards a successful national convention.

Chinese Consul General, Yan Yuqing To Visit Grace Schools

GRACE Schools, Gbagada, Lagos is set to host the Chinese Consul, General, Yan Yuqing, on Tuesday, July 15, 2026.

The visit is aimed at strengthening the bond between the School and the Chinese Consulate. Grace Schools have been major promoters of Chinese culture and language in Nigeria. The Schools, both Primary and Secondary, have included Chinese language in their curriculum.

Executive Director, Grace schools, Mrs. Olatokunbo Edun, said the schools have made huge investment in the training of teachers in Chinese Language. She added that the schools have forged a partnership with the Confucius Institute, University of Lagos, to provide adequate training and exposure for the teachers.

Edun also said the visit is the second by a Chinese Consul-General, is poised to appraise the depth of teaching and promoting Chinese Language. The visit would also enable the school to showcase all the concrete efforts undertaken to develop globally recognised students.

Edun asserted further that Chinese cultural displays, poem recitation, Chinese language promotion are part of the major highlights of the visit.

Despite N2.7bn Ecology Fund, Lagos Canals Remain Clogged

By Gbenga Salau

IN the first five months of 2026, January to May to be precise, Lagos State received about N2.7 billion as ecology fund, yet there seems to be no relief for the state in terms of flooding.

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics and the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, while the state government got N1.493 billion, the 20 constitutionally recognised local councils got N1.199 billion between January and May 2026 as ecology fund from the Federal Government.

The Ecological Fund is a special intervention account established by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1981 to address severe environmental emergencies such as soil erosion, flooding, droughts, and oil spills.

A monthly breakdown of what the state government got revealed that in January, N251.46 million was paid to Lagos State government as ecology fund, outside what was paid to the local councils. The amount paid dropped to N230.6 million in February while it jumped to N296 million in March. It further increased to N371 million in April and dropped to N344 million in May, totaling N1.49 million for January to May as ecology fund that Lagos State government received.

Similarly, the sum of what the 20 local councils received monthly revealed that in January, the local councils got N202.9 million, it came down to N180 million in February, but jumped to N238.9 million in March. In April, it got increased to N299.567 million, while in May, it got reduced to N277.67 million. In total, the 20 constitutionally recognized local councils got N1.199 billion.



Monkey Village, Oriade LCDA

lion.

A monthly breakdown of what each local councils got revealed that in January, Agege got N10.207 million, Ajeromi/Ifeledun got N13.120 million, Alimosho received N21.159 million, Amuwo-Odofin received N8.269 million, Apapa was paid N6.95 million, Badagry N7.773 million, Epe got N7.136 million, Eti-Osa received N8.6 million, Ibeju-Lekki got N5.74 million, Ifako-Ijaye received N9.8 million, Ikeja was paid N8.47 million, Ikorodu got N11.65 million, Kosofe was paid N12.6 million, Lagos Island was paid N6.786 million, Lagos Mainland received N8.188 million, Mushin got N12.258 million, Ojo was paid N11.896 million, Oshodi-Isolo received N12.145 million, Somolu was paid N9.393 million while Surulere received N10.745 million.

In February, Agege got N9.36 million, Ajeromi Ifelodun was paid N12.03 million, Alimosho received N19.403 million, Amuwo-Odofin got N7.58 million, Apapa was paid N6.3 million, Badagry got N7.128 million, Epe received N6.544 million, Eti-Osa got N7.895 million, Ibeju-Lekki got N5.272 million, Ifako-Ijaye got N8.989 million, Ikeja N7.77 million, Ikorodu was paid N10.684 million, Kosofe



End of Babs Animashaun Road, Surulere

received N11.56 million, Lagos Island got N6.222, Lagos Mainland N7.509 million, Mushion got N11.24 million, Ojo received N10.907 million, Oshodi-Isolo was paid N11.137 million, Somolu got N8.614 million while Surulere received N9.853 million.

In March, Agege received N12.017 million, Ajeromi/Ifeledun got N15.447 million, Alimosho was paid N24.9 million, Amuwo-Odofin got N9.7 million, Apapa received N8.186 million, Badagry was paid N9.15 million, Epe got N8.4 million, Eti-Osa received N10.136 million, Ibeju-Lekki got N6.768 million, Ifako/Ijaye was paid N11.54 million, Ikeja was N9.977 million, Ikorodu N13.717 million, Kosofe received N14.841 million, Lagos Island got N7.989 million, Lagos Mainland was paid N9.64 million, Mushin received N14.433 million, Ojo was N14.004 million, Oshodi/Isolo got N14.299 million, Somolu received N11.059 million while Surulere was paid N12.65 million.

For the month of April, Agege got N15.068 million, Ajeromi/Ifeledun received N19.368 million, Alimosho was paid N31.235 million, Amuwo-Odofin was N12.208 million, Apapa got N10.264 million, Badagry received

N11.474 million, Epe was paid N10.535 million, Eti-Osa got N12.71 million, Ibeju-Lekki was N8.487 million, Ifako/Ijaye got N14.471 million, Ikeja received N12.509 million, Ikorodu was paid N17.2 million, Kosofe received N18.609 million, Lagos island was paid N10.017 million, Lagos Mainland received N12.088 million, Mushin got N18.096 million, Ojo was paid N17.559 million, Oshodi/Isolo got N17.929 million, Somolu received N13.867 million while Surulere got N15.86 million.

In May 2026, Agege got N13.967 million, Ajeromi Ifelodun received N17.953 million, Alimosho was paid N28.953 million, Amuwo-Odofin got N11.316 million, Apapa received N9.5 million, Badagry was paid N10.636 million, Epe N9.765 million, Eti-Osa got N11.78 million, Ibeju-Lekki received N7.866 million, Ifako-Ijaye was paid N13.413 million, Ikeja N11.595 million, Ikorodu N15.94 million, Kosofe got N17.249 million, Lagos Island received N9.285 million, Lagos Mainland was paid N11.2 million, Mushin got N16.77 million, Ojo received N16.276 million, Oshodi-Isolo was paid N16.619 million, Somolu received N12.85 million, Surulere got N14.7 million.

Ironically, despite this support from the Federal Government for the state government and local councils, a number of the mini canals visited across three local councils of Surulere, Ajeromi-Ifeledun and Amuwo-Odofin revealed clogged canals with water hyacinth, weed, plants and refuse.

And scholars have proved that water hyacinth and weeds negatively affect canals by forming dense, intertwined mats that can slow down water flow by 40 per cent to 95 per cent. They argued that this severe restriction is caused by physical blockages, and increased friction along the canal bed.



Signal Barracks, Mile 2-Suru



Ago-Hausa, Ajegunle



Alafia Bus Stop, Along Lagos-Badagry Expressway

PHOTOS: Gbenga Salau

LASWA, Interferry Advance Seamanship Training Under Ferry Safety Development Programme

By Gbenga Salau

LAGOS State Waterways Authority (LASWA), in partnership with Interferry, has successfully delivered Module Two (Seamanship) of the Ferry Safety Development Programme (FSDP), marking another milestone in Africa's first structured ferry professional development initiative.

The June module focused on Ropes and Knots, Mooring and Anchoring, and Deck Maintenance. Through self-paced learning, virtual mentoring, expert engagement, and practical field exercises, participants strengthened the technical knowledge and practical skills required for safe and efficient ferry operations.

As part of the module, participants attended an "Ask the Expert" virtual session featuring Mr. Jeff Joyce, Interferry Mentor and Vice President, Marine Operations, Northumberland Ferries Limited. He shared practical insights on seamanship, ferry operations, maritime safety, leadership, and international best practices while engaging participants in an interactive knowledge-sharing session.

The practical component was held at Sea School, Apapa, under the leadership of the Programme Coordinator, Engr. Ukeme Sunday, and facilitated by Sea School Coordinator, Dr. Ekundayo and seven experienced maritime instructors.

The 50 participants were divided into three groups, each receiving hands-on training in rope identification, rope handling, knot tying, line management, and the practical application of knots used in ferry operations.

The exercises were supervised by seven seasoned maritime instructors, providing participants with valuable real-world experience that reinforced teamwork, operational competence, and onboard safety.

Speaking on the significance of the programme, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Blue Economy, Mr. Oluwadamilola Emmanuel, noted that the practical sessions complement the programme's virtual mentoring and self-paced learning by exposing participants to real-life operational environments and international best practices.

LASWA sincerely appreciates Lagos Ferry Services Company

Limited (LAGFERRY) and Thesaurus Bay Limited for providing ferries for the practical session, Interferry for sponsoring the programme, Mrs. Shari Corrigan for her exceptional support, Mr. Jeff Joyce for sharing his expertise, Dr. Ekundayo and the management of Sea School, Apapa, for facilitating the practical training, and the Lagos State government for its continued commitment to maritime safety and capacity development.

As Africa's first 18-month Ferry Safety Development Programme, the initiative is designed to strengthen technical competence, operational excellence, leadership, and safety culture while developing the next generation of ferry professionals across the continent.

With 16 months remaining, the programme now advances to Module Three: Ferry Safety in July 2026. Participants will explore emergency preparedness, risk management, and international safety best practices in another engaging module aimed at further strengthening safety culture and operational excellence across Africa's inland waterways.

Politics

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APC Will Sweep Governor Adeleke Out Of Office During August Poll – Tella

• Says Tinubu Is Sowing Seeds Of Development

Alhaji Liad Tella is a former News Editor of The Punch and former Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief of the defunct Monitor newspapers. In this interview with **ROTIMI AGBOLUAJE**, the All Progressives Congress (APC) chieftain said his party would defeat Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun State in the August 15 governorship election, arguing that media popularity will not translate into electoral victory for the governor. He also expressed confidence that President Bola Tinubu will secure a second term in 2027 despite opposition. Tella also spoke on insecurity, the economy and attacks on Nigerians in South Africa.

The 2026 Osun State governorship election is set to be held next month. What is the fate of your party?

THE governorship contest was initially expected to be between the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). However, the crisis within the PDP has changed the dynamics of the race. With Governor Ademola Adeleke now contesting on the Accord Party platform, I believe the election has become less competitive for the APC. I can tell you that we will defeat the Accord party convincingly. Some observers argue that the Accord party appears more popular than the APC. How do you respond?

Such people judge by appearances rather than reality. I have said before that the Adeleke administration lacks structure and focus. In terms of development planning or infrastructure delivery, it is not a well-coordinated government. Take road infrastructure as an example. How many of the projects initiated across the state have been completed? In Ile-Ife, several projects were started simultaneously, yet many remain unfinished. That has created significant challenges for residents.

Aside from road construction, it is difficult to identify major achievements in many sectors. In education, many government-owned primary and secondary schools face shortages of teachers. Some schools with enrolments of more than 500 pupils have fewer than five teachers. There are also secondary schools without enough subject specialists.

The health sector faces similar challenges. Many hospitals lack adequate manpower, with shortages of doctors and nurses. And a good number of projects in hospitals initiated under the administration of former governor Gboyega Oyetola have been abandoned.

Many people say Governor Adeleke remains popular among the people of Osun. How do you reconcile that?

During my years as a News Editor, I regularly conducted opinion polls. My question is: has any media organisation carried out a scientific opinion poll in Osun State to support that assertion? People should rely on verifiable data rather than assumptions or narratives on social media. In 2018, together with Semiu Okanlawon and Mojeed Jamui, I conducted an opinion poll before the governorship election. Based on our findings, I told Asiwaju Bola Tinubu that the election would be extremely close. I projected a margin of about 51 to 49 per cent and stated that the outcome would be decided in court rather than solely at the ballot box. I also advised on what to do. At the time, polling organisations from Germany, Britain and the United States predicted a comfortable victory for Oyetola. Our survey was among the few that projected a very tight contest. That is why I challenge anyone who claims Adeleke is popular to present credible polling data. Let them publish the methodology and statistics showing the governor's level of public sup-

port. Scientific opinion polling, not assumptions, should determine such conclusions. Look at the United States, where opinion polls are conducted regularly to assess public support for President Donald Trump. Campaign crowds should not be mistaken for electoral strength. There is a clear difference between perceived popularity and actual voting behaviour. Excessive media hype can create false impressions and

media hype will not save Governor Adeleke. APC will sweep him out of office during the August poll.

From my assessment, the APC will perform strongly in Iwo. The establishment of the Federal College of Education has contributed to the town's economic and social development, with increased commercial activities and physical expansion. The APC will perform well in Ile-Ife. I expect the contest in Ilesa to be much closer because the Ijesa electorate is difficult. In Osogbo, the APC has a strong chance of winning a majority of the votes. The ADC (African Democratic Congress) may perform well in Ejigbo because its governorship candidate hails from the area. I also expect Ila-Orangun to be highly competitive. The town has benefited from significant federal educational investments over the years, including a military training institution, a university of medical sciences and others. Governor Adeleke will lose the election. He is not fully in control of governance. Members of the Adeleke family exercise significant influence over government decisions. Again, development has been concentrated in Ede, their hometown. My question is: is he governor of Ede alone? Many of the projects in Ede have either been completed or are nearing completion, while projects in many other parts of the state remain unfinished.

But the Ilesa dualisation project has been completed. Is that not a plus for the government?

That project covers only the stretch from the roundabout to the expressway. Road construction alone does not address the broader challenges facing education, healthcare and other sectors. Finally, the electorate will decide.

The state government is also dualising the Ila-Orangun road. Can this influence voting patterns?

The road is only about three kilometres long and it has taken too long to complete.

Let's go national now. In the face of mounting opposition, what is the fate of President Bola Tinubu in the 2027 elections?

Even if the ADC, PDP and other opposition parties were to come together in a coalition, they would not be strong enough to defeat President Bola Tinubu. The Obidient Movement does not have the electoral strength it demonstrated in 2023. I expect Tinubu to improve his performance in the South-East. In my assessment, his administration has taken steps that I regard as advancing aspects of restructuring—an issue that has been discussed since the return to democratic rule. One example is the establishment of regional development commissions. Another is the step towards the introduction of state police. These reforms are gradual and will take time to produce results. Nigeria's challenges developed over many decades and cannot be resolved overnight. If Tinubu secures a second term, many of these initiatives will mature and

Campaign crowds should not be mistaken for electoral strength. There is a clear difference between perceived popularity and actual voting behaviour. Excessive media hype can create false impressions and media hype will not save Governor Adeleke.

become more visible.

Some people argue that introducing state police in a pre-election period could be abused for political purposes. What is your view?

I disagree with that view. Nigeria faces serious security challenges, and the current number of police personnel is inadequate to address them effectively. As a founding member of the Police Community Relations Committee, I had the opportunity to study policing systems in countries such as Morocco, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Those countries have significantly larger security personnel than Nigeria.

I must say that Nigerians have the habit of criticising reforms before they are fully implemented. History also shows that some public officials such as Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, who initiated important projects, were not adequately recognised for their contributions.

Some Nigerians say that the economic reforms of the Bola Tinubu administration have not translated into improved living conditions. Do you subscribe to that?

I acknowledge that many Nigerians are experiencing economic hardship. However, some of the government's policies are beginning to produce results. For example, the increased domestic refining capacity has helped reduce dependence on imported petroleum products.

Global events, including tensions in the Middle East, could have had a greater impact on fuel prices if Nigeria remained heavily reliant on imports. Overall, the economy is gradually improving and industrial activities are expanding in parts of the country. The full benefits of current reforms will become clearer over time. President Tinubu has done excellently. The Industrial Revolution is

gathering momentum.

But many Nigerians continue to complain of hardship and hunger despite the reforms...

(Cuts in) Economic hardship is a reality for many people. However, high living costs are not unique to Nigeria and are relative. It is appropriate to state that those who seek miracles will continue to complain of hunger. Those hawking miracles rather than hard work are the problem of the country. Nigeria belongs to the hardworking people.

Let's talk about security. Kidnappings have become rampant in the South-West. What is the way out?

Nigeria's security situation cannot be viewed in isolation. When Boko Haram emerged, I wrote that the outgoing Borno State government had mishandled the situation when the leader of an independent economic group broke out of the system seeking economic development under Yusuf. The crisis escalated after the group's leader was killed. At the time, I advocated granting members of the group amnesty, similar to the approach adopted for Niger Delta militants. That was an opportunity that was missed and the insurgency subsequently expanded.

Many argue that the Niger Delta agitation was different from the Boko Haram insurgency. How do you respond to this?

Many of the Niger Delta militants had been involved in oil bunkering before they accepted the government's amnesty programme. They were given opportunities for education and training in Europe and later returned to contribute to the country's development.

Religion was not introduced into the Niger Delta crisis in the way it later became associated with Boko Haram. I warned at the time that if the insurgency spread beyond Borno State, it would become much more difficult to contain. Today, it has affected parts of the North-West, North-Central, and the South-West. I also believe many of the conflicts we are witnessing have longstanding ethnic and communal dimensions. Places such as Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi State have experienced religious and communal divisions for many years. Plateau State had recurring communal conflicts long before the Boko Haram insurgency. Benue State has also experienced prolonged violence.

What is the solution?

I believe external interests play a role in aggravating the situation. America is number one; Israel is number two. I also question why the violence is frequently presented in religious terms when many victims are themselves Muslims. Thousands of people have been killed in states such as Borno, regardless of their faith. I believe security challenges should be addressed based on facts rather than assumptions or stereotypes. Also, America's coming to help fight insecurity is the greatest mistake Nigeria has ever committed. We opened our security to our enemy. Allowing foreign troops access to Nigeria's security infrastructure carries significant risks.

Do you consider the United States an adversary of Nigeria?

I have long believed that some foreign governments have not always acted in Nigeria's best interests. I have cited public statements made years ago predicting instability in Nigeria. It's unfortunate that we opened our door to a country that doesn't want Nigeria to emerge as the China of Africa. They are taking our statistics. Despite the country's challenges, I remain confident that Nigeria will remain united and overcome its difficulties.

Politics

Tracking Tinubu's Handling Of The PFIPC Saga

In every pre-election year, it is usually hard to separate truth from fallacy or even the grotesque from the downright odd. The Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC) saga has left President Bola Ahmed Tinubu battling to unravel a sleazy affair that has touched on the core of his administration, **LEO SOBECHI** writes.

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu's decision to direct the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related matters Commission (ICPC) to investigate the alleged flotation of an irregular agency of the Federal Government came as a surprise to many Nigerians.

Before the President acted, many Nigerians had taken up verbal stones, which they hauled in the direction of the Presidency, listing the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC) as another evidence of lack of accountability and rigour by the administration.

However, the inroad made by the sponsors and promoters of the PFIPC within the Federal Government circles made it quite hard for many citizens to believe that it was not a case of botched insider-sleaze tunnel. The allegation by the phoney Director General of the PFIPC, Adeyemi Matthew that he funneled N400 million through a middle-man to the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila, gave the critics the fuel to hold onto their belief that the business blew open due to the DG's refusal to pass on additional N200 million to the CoS.

But the CoS's decision to sue Adeyemi as well as the fact of his earlier petition to the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) brought about a new dimension to the entire saga. The gap between those who believed that the CoS was actually involved in the setting up of the PFIPC and those who gave him a large dose of the benefit of the doubt widened.

The rambunctious Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, told Nigerians in his monthly media chat that having known Gbajabiamila for more than 20 years, it was impossible that the President's Chief of Staff should condescend to such antics. He declared that the creation of PFIPC was the handiwork of political detractors and rivals who wanted to make President Tinubu look bad in the eyes of the people.

Yet, others argued that it was not possible for an outsider to summon the courage to wake up a comatose federal agency, rename and factor it into the

official stream and governance scheme of the current Federal Government.

Ligaments Of Bureaucracy

In a letter dated November 21, 2024, the Permanent Secretary, General Services office within the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Mr. Nnamdi Mbaeri, endorsed a letter through which the PFIPC was allocated an office in the Federal Secretariat.

It was gathered that the letter also mandated the EFCC to grant the PFIPC access to one of the facilities recovered by the anti-graft agency for use as its office. Nothing was said about who scheduled the memorandum that prompted Mbaeri to raise the memo for office accommodation for PFIPC.

Intriguingly, Mbaeri, who should have thrown more light on the sequences of correspondence that culminated in the demand for an operational facility for PFIPC to occupy, retired from the federal civil service in July 2025.

Also, on account of the civil service rule, which dictates that civil servants can only be seen, but not heard, the officer who took over from Mbaeri, Danjuma Mohammed, can only speak to the police in the course of their investigation.

But between October 2025 when the Gbajabiamila petitioned the Inspector General Police (IGP) and the DSS to investigate the PFIPC and November 5 when he formally asked the OSGF to disclaim Adeyemi and the PFIPC, no individual or institution had an inkling that the PFIPC was a cloned agency. That very fact speaks volumes about the gray lines that existed as the bureaucratic ligaments that conferred authenticity to PFIPC. It was based on this that many critics are calling for Gbajabiamila's suspension.

Were there trails that Gbajabiamila saw that none of the other offices, particularly the OSGF, could not and did not see? Did the OSGF, the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Nigeria Police, sleep

on the Chief of Staff's petitions and whistle blowing until the mid-2026, when it became a media blow out?

Although the development struck the Presidency with surprise and disbelief, some Nigerians

thought that President Tinubu was adopting the silent code to douse public angst. But instead of invoking Omerta, the code of silence that governs fraternities and corruption cartels as suggested, the President turned a new chapter by directing the ICPC to probe the various sides and shades of the saga.

Many recalled how the Chief of Staff disclosed barely two months ago how the President would have given him the booth for the political miscalculations of his (Gbajabiamila's) political godson, Desmond Elliot, during the ill-fated attempt to dislodge the Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa.

What that recollection did was to convince Nigerians that contrary to beliefs that President Tinubu would go to any length to shield his beloved political ally and loyal staff, it was possible for the President to fire whoever crosses the red line, particularly those that would give a negative public image to his administration.

As it turned out, by giving the ICPC 30 days to turn in its report, the President wants to toe the path of administrative inquisition to unearth whatever dead bones that were buried in the PFIPC cubicle.

In a statement, the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, explained that the presidential directive "follows the discovery of fictitious PFIPC, which was never established by the Federal Government of Nigeria and (therefore) has no basis in any law, presidential instrument, executive approval or other lawful act of government."

The statement asserted that one Adeniyi Adeyemi Matthew presented himself as the Director-General of the so-called PFIPC and falsely claimed to be a presidential appointee, noting that the issues to be investigated by ICPC include: "The forged appointment letters and other official government documents, the use of a false claim of presidential appointment to seek or obtain official recognition and diplomatic support, including visa facilitation and the opening of multiple bank accounts in the names of purported government agencies using allegedly forged documents."

The ICPC was also charged to go after other collaborators involved as well as "the wider circumstances that may have enabled a fictitious body and a false claim of presidential appointment to acquire an appearance of official

legitimacy."

By requiring that the ICPC should identify any weaknesses in government and institutional procedures that may have been exploited and to recommend immediate measures to prevent the recurrence of similar abuses, the President showed that the saga touched on the core of his administration.

Despite the President's charge to the ICPC, critics remained unrelenting. Senior lawyer, Femi Falana, dismissed the presidential position as a ruse, demanding that the Chief of Staff should be temporarily moved away from his office for a pure investigation by non-appointees of the President.

"Allegations involving public officials should never be settled through media exchanges or official denials alone. They must be subjected to lawful, independent investigation where evidence, not emotion, determines the outcome," Falana asserted.

But the President appears more disposed to upholding the legal maxim that an accused person remains innocent until proven otherwise, hence he did not hesitate to saddle the Chief of Staff with the additional responsibility of chairing the Presidential Committee on the Implementation of State Police.

The President stated that while the Chief of Staff will serve as Committee Chairman, the Attorney General of the Federation, Prince Lateef Fagbemi; the National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu and the IGP, Tunde Disu are among the members.

Tijjani Sarki, a good governance advocate based in Kano State, reacted to the appointment on his Facebook page, where he formulated some five questions for the President to resolve.

Sarki stated that if the Presidency maintains that the PFIPC never legally existed, it should explain how it obtained an approved establishment within the Federal Civil Service.

"Under what legal authority was a recruitment waiver reportedly issued during a government embargo on employment? Which public institutions processed, endorsed or supervised these approvals, and were established procedures followed?"

"If the documents published in the media are inaccurate or fabricated, who created them, and why has no comprehensive forensic investigation been publicly announced? Finally, if the documents are authentic, what measures will the Federal Government take to reassure Nigerians that the integrity of public administration and the budgetary process remains intact?"

Coming in a pre-election year, it is obvious that the mix of political and administrative considerations compound the legal underpinnings of the search for the real clues to the PFIPC monster. As a political strategist, President Tinubu may never allow an independent panel to probe the quagmire because not only will that arm opposition with the arsenal to repudiate his Renewed Hope Agenda, but also distract his electioneering messaging.

With Adeyemi facing an eight-count criminal trial at a Federal High Court, Abuja, the Presidency has got a valid respite that it would naturally tell naysayers that it cannot interfere with judicial process, but allow the law to take its course.



Gbajabiamila

Adeyemi

How Oborevwori Is Entrenching Accountability As Governing Principle In Delta

By Festus Ahon

LEADERSHIP is often judged not by the promises made during campaigns but by the courage to demand results after assuming office. Across Delta State, Governor Sheriff Oborevwori is steadily building a reputation for a governance style anchored on accountability, quality service delivery and direct engagement with the people.

Rather than relying solely on reports from commissioners and contractors, the governor has embraced regular project inspections, prompt intervention in public sector challenges and decisive action where performance falls below expectations. From education and healthcare to workers' welfare and infrastructure, recent events have offered fresh insight into an administration determined to ensure that public funds translate into visible development.

Perhaps nothing illustrates this more than Oborevwori's unscheduled visit to the Technical College, Irri, in Isoko South Local Council.

The project, awarded in 2019, was expected to provide technical and vocational education that would equip young people with practical skills for employment and entrepreneurship. Seven years later, however, the institution remains uncompleted.

What the governor found at the site was far from encouraging. Critical components of the project, including workshops and sections of the roofing, were unfinished. Landscaping had barely commenced, and more disturbing was the absence of both the contractor and workers during the inspection.

Clearly dissatisfied, the governor rejected assurances that the project could be completed within weeks. He described the prolonged delay as unacceptable and immediately ordered that both the contractor and the supervising consultant be summoned to explain why such an important project had remained unfinished for years.

His decision to hold not only the contractor, but also the consultant accountable underscored an important principle of governance: every stakeholder entrusted with public resources must answer for their responsibilities. It also sent a strong message that abandoned or endlessly delayed projects would no longer be tolerated.

The Irri inspection reflected a broader philosophy that has increasingly defined the

Oborevwori's administration: projects must not only be awarded but must also be properly supervised, completed on schedule and meet acceptable standards before they are commissioned.

That philosophy was equally evident during the governor's inspection of the College of Health Technology, Ovrode, and the Ozoro Modern Market in Isoko North Local Council.

Unlike the situation in Irri, the governor expressed satisfaction with the quality of work at both facilities while insisting that a few outstanding finishing touches be completed before inauguration.

The College of Health Technology represents a strategic investment in healthcare education. Recognising its importance, the administration also approved and completed an access road leading to the institution, ensuring that students, lecturers and visitors would enjoy easy access.

The Ozoro Modern Market is another example of infrastructure designed to stimulate economic growth. Equipped with over 220 shops, warehouses, meeting halls, modern sanitation facilities, security posts and water supply, the market promises to transform commercial activities in the area.

Although the contractor lamented that repeated acts of vandalism had increased execution costs, the project remains a significant public investment expected to improve the

livelihoods of traders and residents once fully operational.

During the inspection tour, Oborevwori also reminded the people of Isoko Nation that development thrives where government and citizens work together. Pointing to ongoing investments in roads, healthcare and education across the area, he urged residents to support all candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2027 elections by voting en masse for them in recognition of the administration's developmental efforts.

Beyond physical infrastructure, the governor has also demonstrated that responsive leadership means addressing institutional challenges before they escalate. That approach was evident in his intervention at the Delta State University Teaching Hospital (DELSUTH), Oghara, where industrial unrest had disrupted services at the state's premier tertiary healthcare institution.

Rather than allowing the dispute to linger, the governor convened a meeting with the hospital's management and resolved the issues that triggered the crisis.

The discussions also focused on long-standing infrastructural challenges, particularly the persistent electricity problems that had affected medical services and water supply. The governor directed immediate action to restore stable electricity

through the installation of a dedicated power line and a new transformer while also approving steps towards the comprehensive rehabilitation and modernisation of the hospital.

For management, staff and patients, the intervention represented more than the resolution of a labour dispute. It reaffirmed government's commitment to improving healthcare delivery and creating a more functional medical institution.

The same concern for people was evident in the governor's latest decisions affecting the Delta State public service. At the 2026 Public Service Week Dinner and Awards Night, Oborevwori announced the approval of a 13th-month salary for civil servants, further strengthening his administration's pro-worker credentials.

The announcement came alongside a threefold increase in cash awards for outstanding public servants, completion of the Permanent Secretaries' Quarters, procurement of official vehicles for newly appointed permanent secretaries and renewed commitment to affordable housing for workers.

These measures reinforce the administration's belief that motivated workers remain the engine room of effective governance. By rewarding excellence and improving welfare, government is investing in a more productive and efficient public service capable of delivering quality services to citizens.

Equally significant was the governor's response to complaints from residents of Ofagbe Community over the quality of work on the ongoing Isoko Ring Road project.

Following reports alleging substandard construction, the governor immediately directed the Commissioner for Works, Reuben Izeze, to inspect the project. Despite heavy rainfall, the inspection team visited the site to independently verify the complaints. Officials confirmed that ministry engineers had earlier issued a stop-work order after identifying deficiencies in the execution of the project.

Rather than dismissing the concerns of residents, the administration chose transparency and direct verification. It is an approach that demonstrates respect for public opinion while reinforcing the principle that contractors handling government projects must deliver value for every kobo spent.



Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, acknowledging cheers from civil servants and guests during the dinner and award night marking the grand finale of the 2026 Civil Service Week Celebration in Asaba... recently. PHOTO: BRIPIN

By Banji Alabi

RICHES, wealth and other forms of treasure no matter the quantity, the quality and long-lasting nature, will one day expire or be exhausted. What cannot expire, in exhaustive and treasure for life, is how you impact on the life of others as a sacrifice, not for pecuniary gain and not only for those known or related to you or for who could in turn help you either in the immediate or in the future. Your daily joy and comfort ought to flow from unconditional services, sacrifices and help you render to people in dire and genuine need around you. Legacies and treasures should be measured in terms of how many people you built, empowered, changed their misfortunes to fortunes and those who in their closet will shout "thank God I came across this man or woman today," not the other way round.

How do you respond to someone in genuine need when you are in a position to help? Do you just say God bless you and make him or her go empty-handed or go to bed hungry, forgetting that you are the God he could see at that moment? "Life/survival is tough" has no doubt become the mantra these days. But pause and ask yourself the blunt question, "Am I not better than and truly in a better position than this fellow being and also to help him/her? Why does this word, altruism exist? Does it have any meaning to you? Are altruists created specially and for a particular place? Why can't I be an altruist? Remember, when God or nature gives you either enough or in excess, He simply wants to use you to reach someone else who has been disturbing Him (God) in prayer/praise-worship. The hard truth is that what you are treasuring that you cannot part with some or the whole will finish/end one day. And if it doesn't end or finish while you are alive, death would one day make you part with them one day! It is the people that you build that would survive you after death, not your wealth and not necessarily your biological children. Also, in the hours of need in the future it is your investment in people that will speak for you.

Nobody rises without sponsors. The greatest act of leadership is mentoring. Today, when we see former Vice President Yemi

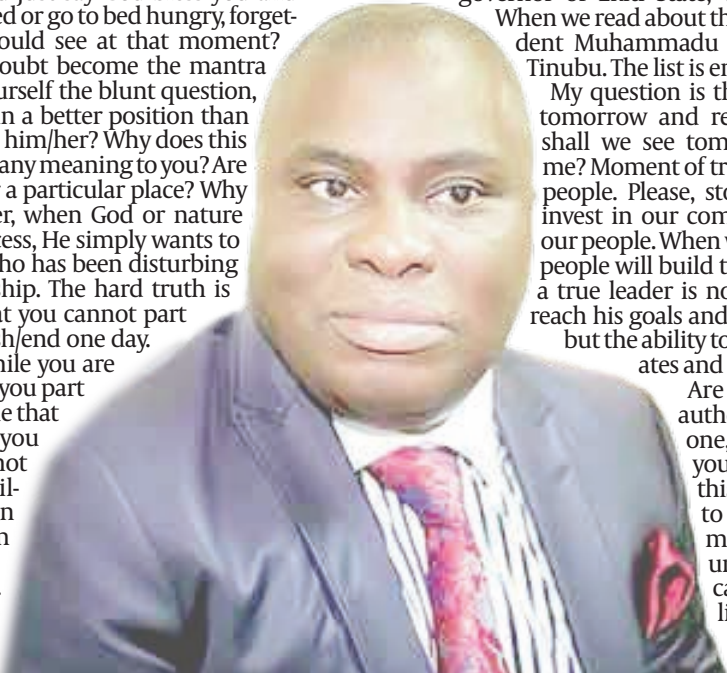
Building People Is Best Standard To Measure Successful Leadership

Osinbajo (SAN), we remember Bola Tinubu not as President but as a man who sowed a seed in the life of Osinbajo as governor many years ago. When we see Sanwo-Olu, Governor of Lagos State, we remember Tinubu. When we see Rauf Aregbesola, former governor of Osun State and former federal minister, we remember Tinubu. When we see Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN), the erudite former governor of Lagos State and former Minister of Works, Power and Housing, we remember Tinubu. When we see Alhaji Lai Mohammed, former Minister of Information, we remember Tinubu. When we see Babatunde Fowler, former Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, we remember Tinubu. When we see Dr. Kayode Fayemi, former governor of Ekiti State, we remember Tinubu.

When we read about the late and former president Muhammadu Buhari, we remember Tinubu. The list is endless.

My question is this: whom shall we see tomorrow and remember you? Whom shall we see tomorrow and remember me? Moment of truth! Let us invest in our people. Please, stop the rat race. Let us invest in our communities. Let us build our people. When we build the people, the people will build the city. The hallmark of a true leader is not merely the ability to reach his goals and live in absolute luxury, but the ability to nurture, groom associates and promote talents.

Are you in a position of authority? Can you help just one, two or three people in your neighbourhood or on this platform to succeed, to secure an appointment, or win a contract? I urge you to do so today. A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle. The greatest act of leadership is mentoring.



My first witness this evening is Late Dr. Myles Munroe. Hear his testimony: "If what you learn, achieve, accumulate or accomplish dies with you, then you are a generational failure."

Mentoring is the manifestation of the highest level of personal maturity, security and self-confidence. Insecure people will never train people; they will instead train thugs for self protection which course cannot last. Mature people create people; your assignment has a shelf life. You will die one day, so train your replacement. Your greatest gift to the world is your mentee. True leaders do not seek followers; followers are attracted to true leaders. The greatest obligation of true leadership is to transfer your deposit to the next generation.

Leadership success is measured by the success of your successor. No matter how great you may have been, if you didn't produce a successor, you have failed. You preserve what you built through mentorship. Legacy is about preserving all that you've built by raising other people. Success without a successor is failure. Leadership that serves only its generation is destined to fail. If your vision dies with you, you have failed. Legacy is about living beyond your grave. Leadership is not a sprint but a relay. The most important part of a relay is passing the baton — not running. The ultimate measure of true leadership is not to maintain followers, but to produce leaders. True leadership measures its success by the diminishing dependency of its followers. The ultimate measure of leadership is the ability to leave. True leadership makes itself increasingly unnecessary. You are a successful leader when your followers can lead others. Your goal as a leader is to destroy the dependency of the people around you. You are a great leader when your people don't need you. Make people greater than you and you will live forever. True leaders do not seek power. True leaders seek to empower. True leaders make themselves increasingly unnecessary. Never confuse your position with your value. The ultimate goal of true leadership is not to maintain followers, but to produce leaders. The first act of a true leader is identifying your replacement — and you begin mentoring them. You become great by producing people greater than yourself. When you produce someone greater than yourself, don't get jealous. Take the credit. When you train your replacement, you are freed to expand your work. When you mentor people, your legacy will make your tombstone unnecessary."

• Alabi Esq, a civil right campaigner and National Chairman, Ondo State Eminent Persons Group, is also the Alternate Chairman, Eti Osa Chapter of the Nigerian Bar Association.



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Editorial

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Migratory Birds And Crisis Of Ecological Neglect

THE alarming revelation by conservationists that more than 40 per cent of migratory bird species worldwide are now in decline should worry governments, environmentalists and citizens alike. Beyond the beauty of birds in flight lies a deeper ecological crisis that signals the deteriorating health of the planet itself.

Migratory birds are among nature's greatest wonders. Every year, millions of birds travel thousands of kilometres across continents and oceans, linking ecosystems, seasons and communities in an extraordinary cycle of survival. Yet, this timeless natural phenomenon is increasingly under threat.

The warning by the Chief Executive Officer of BirdLife International, Martin Harper, is not merely about birds disappearing from the skies. It is about the collapse of ecological systems that sustain agriculture, water resources, biodiversity and ultimately human existence.

Migratory birds are vital indicators of environmental health because they depend on interconnected ecosystems spread across countries and continents. When their numbers decline, it reflects widespread habitat destruction, pollution, climate change and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.

The importance of migratory birds cannot be overstated. They pollinate plants, disperse seeds, regulate pests and insects, recycle nutrients across ecosystems and contribute significantly to food security. Many agricultural systems benefit from birds that naturally control crop-destroying pests, reducing dependence on harmful chemicals. Wetlands and coastal ecosystems frequented by migratory species also provide flood control, water purification and climate resilience for millions of people.

The yearly observance of World Migratory Bird Day, celebrated during May and October to align with migration seasons in both hemispheres, is therefore more than a ceremonial event. It is a reminder that humanity shares a common ecological destiny. The migration routes, known as global flyways, connect breeding grounds, feeding habitats and seasonal refuges across the world. These flyways represent some of the most delicate ecological corridors on Earth.

Among the most significant is the African-Eurasian Flyway, which links Africa with Europe and parts of Asia. Every year, countless birds leave the warmth of Africa and travel northward to breed. However, the survival of these species increasingly depends on whether wetlands remain intact, forests are preserved and coastlines protected from reckless development.

Unfortunately, human activities are rapidly breaking these critical ecological links. Wetlands are being drained for urban expansion, industrial pollution is contaminating water bodies, illegal hunting persists in many regions, while climate change is altering migration patterns and food availability. Coastal degradation, desertification and uncontrolled infrastructural projects continue to destroy habitats essential to migratory birds. The extinction of the Slender-billed Curlew, referenced by conservationists, is a painful reminder of what happens when humanity fails to act in time. Once widespread across parts of Europe and Asia, the species disappeared largely because of habitat destruction and hunting pressure. Its extinction should serve as a global warning that many other migratory species may soon follow unless urgent interventions are implemented.

Africa occupies a strategic position in global bird migration networks. As Dr Paul Matiku of Nature Kenya rightly observed, the continent lies at the centre of some of the world's major flyways. This places enormous responsibility on African governments and institutions to protect wetlands, forests, rivers and coastal ecosystems that support migratory species.

Nigeria, in particular, cannot afford to remain indifferent. The country hosts numerous wetlands and biodiversity hotspots critical to migratory birds, including the Hadejia-Nguru wetlands, the Niger Delta mangroves and coastal lagoons around Lagos. Yet many of these ecosystems face severe threats from oil pollution, sand mining, urban encroachment, deforestation and weak environmental enforcement. The shrinking of wetlands in northern Nigeria due to climate stress and poor water management has already affected biodiversity and local livelihoods. In coastal areas, unchecked dredging and land reclamation projects continue to destroy habitats that birds depend on for feeding and nesting. Environmental policies often exist only on paper, while enforcement agencies remain underfunded and politically constrained.

The irony is that protecting migratory birds also protects people. Conservationists are correct in emphasising that healthy flyways contribute to cleaner water, stronger food systems, flood prevention and climate resilience. The destruction of wetlands, for instance, not only threatens birds but also exposes communities to flooding, erosion and water scarcity. Biodiversity conservation is therefore not a luxury reserved for environmental activists; it is a practical necessity for economic survival and public welfare. There is also an important economic dimension to bird conservation that many governments overlook. Ecotourism centred on bird watching generates billions of dollars globally and supports thousands of jobs. Countries that preserve biodiversity attract researchers, tourists and conservation funding. Africa possesses immense potential in this regard, yet environmental neglect continues to undermine such opportunities.

The forthcoming Global Flyways Summit co-hosted by BirdLife International and Nature Kenya is therefore timely. Bringing together experts from science, policy, finance, business and civil society offers an opportunity to move beyond rhetoric towards measurable action. However, conferences and declarations alone will not save migratory birds unless governments demonstrate political will.

Concrete steps must include stronger enforcement of environmental regulations, restoration of degraded wetlands, protection of coastal ecosystems and integration of biodiversity concerns into national development planning. Urban planning should account for ecological sustainability rather than prioritising short-term commercial gains. Agricultural practices should also encourage habitat conservation while reducing harmful pesticide use that threatens bird populations. Climate action remains equally critical. Rising global temperatures are already disrupting migration cycles, altering breeding seasons and reducing food availability along migratory routes. Nations that continue to treat climate change as a distant concern ignore the growing evidence that biodiversity loss and climate instability are deeply interconnected crises.

Public awareness is another vital component. Schools, media organisations and community groups should intensify environmental education to help citizens understand the value of migratory birds and biodiversity conservation. Indigenous knowledge systems that traditionally protected ecosystems should also be recognised and strengthened.

Ultimately, the decline of migratory birds is warning signal humanity cannot ignore. Nature operates through interconnected systems, and when one part collapses, the consequences spread far beyond wildlife. The disappearance of birds from the skies reflects deeper ecological imbalances that threaten agriculture, economies, health and climate stability.

The world still has an opportunity to reverse these trends, but time is running out. Protecting migratory birds requires collective global responsibility because flyways transcend political borders. No nation can succeed alone if neighbouring countries continue to destroy habitats and weaken conservation efforts. Humanity must decide whether future generations will inherit a world still alive with the seasonal movement of birds across continents, or a silent planet diminished by environmental neglect. The choice should not be difficult.

LETTER

NCC And Telecoms Sector Development In Nigeria

SIR: One sector that has seen a huge difference or transformation in Nigeria's socio-economy since the days of our democracy is the telecommunications sector where we have transitioned from when the elites declared glibly that telephone is not for the poor, when possession of a phone was a status symbol to now that the average Bose, Emeka and Aliyu have active phone lines. In fact there has been a paradigm shift in the mentality of most Nigerians to the effect that the phone is a necessity, an essential life and business tool rather than a luxury.

Let's take a closer look at some of the achievements in the sector which have been primarily facilitated by the regulator, the Nigerian Communications Commission. As of today, official sources put the number of active phone lines in Nigeria at 185 million. For a country whose population is estimated to be in the region of 230 million and coming from less than half a million lines at the start of this revolution a little over 20

years ago, you be the judge whether or not there has been a positive transformation.

On the data side, the records show that Nigerians are using an average of 45,800 terabytes daily based on March 2026 figures. By the way, one terrabyte is 1 million megabytes or 1000 gigabytes. Let that sink in.

It is important to note that this is one sector where the nation is not only recording growth but also development. Using various tools and policies, the Commission continues to ensure improvements both in quantity and quality.

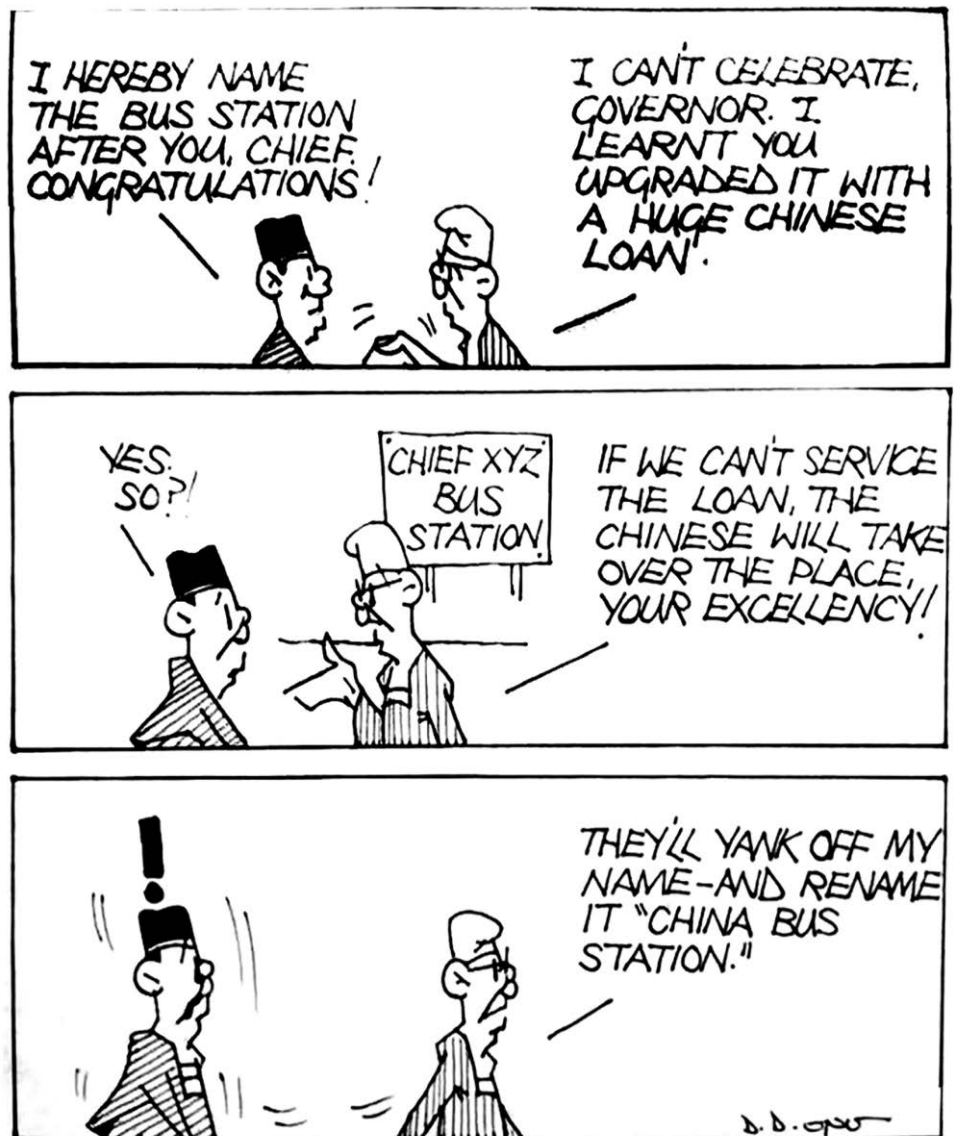
The twin tools of Quality of Service (QoS) and Quality of Experience (QoE) assessments are being actively deployed to monitor performance of providers and satisfaction of consumers and this feedback mechanism the Commission to take appropriate steps to minimise the incidence of poor service.

The Commission has remained steadfast in protecting and empowering consumers. Recently,

upon the insistence of the Commission, millions of consumers across the nation were compensated for poor service by mobile network operators when service quality dropped lower than an acceptable threshold. For many, it was a pleasant surprise, a total break with a systemic weakness that had become the norm, because many Nigerians have come to terms with being serially cheated, oppressed or defrauded with little or no chance of redress or recompense.

NCC also went further in its empowerment of consumers by directing Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and major Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to inform consumers ahead of time about any major network outages and planned service disruptions.

In the event of such outages, they are to provide further information such as the cause of outages, affected locations, estimated time of restoration of service, etc. This and a few other policies show clearly that the Commission does not trifle with consumers.



Opinion

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Civil Service And Leadership Synergy

By Paul Onomuakpokpo

ALTHOUGH human history is replete with epochs that were marred by infighting within leadership, the degradation of the Roman Republic into an empire owing to the mistrust and rivalry between the two towering leaders, Julius Caesar and Pompey, remains a singularly stark reminder of such a catastrophic tension.

The Roman experience is denied the infamous record of being the only dark interlude in leadership by contemporary human history that is streaked with a predilection for a replication of such a rivalry in the affairs of governments and corporations. What we are witnesses to, not infrequently, are not cases of the leaders parleying off their best efforts to serve the public good. They are, rather, cases of those who strive to treacherously establish a government within a government and a corporation within a corporation. This was the case in fledgling post-colonial African states from Nigeria to Ghana and Burkina Faso that were mired in coups and counter-coups. This is still the case in governments and their agencies in some African countries where inter-agency rivalries have left effective service delivery to the citizens not untrammelled.

It is, consequently, imperative to take cognisance of a rarefied existence of inter-agency synergy in government that redounds to a prosecution of an overarching objective to improve the lot of the citizens. Here we hold up the civil service as the poster child of that synergy. The current civil service is led by two eminent bureaucrats who are deploying their best efforts to restore its former glory and place it on a competitive pedestal of excellence with its counterparts from the rest of the world.

While Prof. Tunji Olaopa, a former Federal Permanent Secretary and a Professor of Public Administration is the Chairman of the Federal Civil Service Commission, Mrs Esther Didi Walson-Jack, a former Federal Permanent Secretary and a lawyer, is the Head of Civil Service of the Federation. These two eminent bureaucrats have forged a cooperative relationship to optimise the productivity of the civil service.

Olaopa once underscored the magnitude of the synergy between his office, the FCSC and that of Walson-Jack, the OHCSF as comparable to that of Siamese twins. When Olaopa spoke in this regard, he did not revel in aspirational avowal as his declaration has been demonstrated on several occasions.

Olaopa and Walson-Jack have brought to bear on the collective management of the civil service such a high emotional intelligence quotient that needs to be studied by government agencies that are marooned in avoidable rivalries. These great bureaucrats understand their centrality to the flourishing of the civil service as the institutional memory of government and the non-negotiable avoidance of the obstructive dominance of their egos. Thus, while Olaopa confidently declares that although he has worked with many highly placed people in government, Walson-Jack's collegial spirit is unrivalled, the latter often describes him as her great ally in the reform of the civil service.

Clearly, the signs of the possibility of a smooth working relationship between Olaopa and Walson-Jack emerged early. In an interview with Civil Service News marking the first 100 days of Mrs Esther Didi Walson-Jack, Olaopa said: "Her tenure has been outstanding so far. She has fostered a spirit of collaboration, continuity, and focus. She has seamlessly integrated into ongoing reforms, successfully run the National Council on Establishments, and conducted tenure renewals and other key exercises for permanent secretaries. This demonstrates her preparedness and determina-

tion to make a meaningful impact."

The FCSC and the OHCSF under the leaderships of Olaopa and Walson-Jack have had collaborative efforts in order for them to smoothen their working relationship by resolving all areas of conflict. The highpoint of such efforts was a joint meeting of the two offices where Olaopa commended Walson-Jack's cooperative spirit by saying: "If this measure of cooperation and shared passion is indeed sustained in time and space, I bet it sure will bode well not only for the federal civil service, but for the entire public administration community of practice and service in Nigeria and beyond."

On that occasion, Olaopa said that since the inauguration of his leadership under the auspices of the 10th Federal Civil Service Commission in December 2023, the FCSC and OHCSF had been contemplating the desirability of a consultative forum for an exchange of ideas, and the harmonization of policies and programmes and resolution of any issues of conflict.

According to him, the OHCSF and the FCSC have shared responsibilities as the core central governance agencies for the federal civil service, noting that "It is saying the obvious if I go as far as saying that our two offices are Siamese twins, with shared roles and responsibilities, to implement policies, rules and regulations, to gatekeep and provide leadership for the civil service in Nigeria."

"It bears restating for our collective education and guidance, that while the HCSF, one, provides leadership to the federal civil service, two, facilitates productive working relationship of ministers and permanent secretaries, thus creating an enabling bureaucratic climate for effective and accountable implementation of government policies and programmes, and three, drives reforms and system's improvements service-wide, the FCSC, as a constitutional body acts as the ultimate authority for regulating employment conditions and standards as touching on recruitment, promotion, discipline and appeals in the federal civil service."

"To that extent, and if the essence of the roles and responsibilities of the two offices are put in perspective, it will be clear that the relationship between the two offices, for all practical purposes, is one of both collaboration and separation of powers, for all that may mean in terms of checks and balances for good governance. All, as designed to ensure good corporate governance and gatekeeping of the civil service as a profession and a management system."

On her part, Walson-Jack, said that the retreat was more than just an engagement because she had been engaging with Olaopa for the success of the civil service. She stated that the retreat was to forge a stronger partnership with the two offices to deepen service for the citizens. According to her, the theme of the retreat underscored the need to strengthen the civil service and that the cordial relationship between the two offices showed that success was only possible through collaboration.

She commended Olaopa for initiating transformational changes into the FCSC. She particularly mentioned the Computer-based Test (CBT) system that Olaopa had introduced for the conduct of examinations in the civil service.

This initial joint meeting was succeeded by the inauguration of the joint technical committee headed by Amb. Mustapha Suleiman. Stressing the importance of the retreat, Olaopa noted that it provided an opportunity for an agreement "that a joint technical team be constituted to examine and thrash out the deep issues and technical design elements requiring researched

interrogation and nuancing, so that a well-thought-out baseline report can be generated. The report will then form the basis for future periodic meetings and engagement where, through incremental improvement and sustained interrogation, the strained boundaries in the functional relationship between our two offices will be corrected within a dynamic that will crystallize a seamless working relationship and institutional partnership as we continue to discharge our responsibilities in providing leadership, strengthening competency-based human resource, career management and deepening and consolidating our shared gatekeeping responsibility to our cherished profession of public administration in Nigeria."

According to Olaopa, the FCSC and the OHCSF are organizations that are distinct in establishment and structure, but which are nonetheless two sides of the same coin. Thus, for him, it takes deep knowledge of the working of the civil service and its governance to sufficiently appreciate the level and depth of the functional complementarity of their shared roles as the central management cum personnel agencies and gatekeepers for the profession of public administration and its community of practice and service in Nigeria.

He noted that when the reconstituted FCSC, otherwise called the 10th Commission, assumed office in December 2023, and with the benefit of their experience as career bureaucrats and expert public administration practitioners, what they witnessed was "an unhealthy rivalry, needless boundary protection, and in some cases and sadly, ostensible moves by each party to take over clearly defined powers and functions that should statutorily belong to the other in a subtle contest and unwarranted empire psyche."

However, he noted that that there was a breath of fresh air with the emergence of Walson-Jack as the HCSF as she allowed room for collaboration between the OHCSF and the FCSC towards the correction of the identified anomalies.

Fortunately for the two offices, Olaopa stated, they had jointly signed on to own and align resources in implementing the OHCSF Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan - FCSSIP - (2021-2025) which just ended and are set to be relaunched, and the FCSC Strategic Plan (2026-2030).

On her part, Walson-Jack who described Olaopa as a dependable ally in the development of the civil service said that the inauguration was a milestone in strengthening the service. Noting that the joint committee was a direct outcome of the retreat, she said that it underscored the need for collaboration between her office and the FCSC. Walson-Jack stated that the committee would translate insights into action and that resolutions would not only be documented but be implemented. Consequently, she said that the work of the committee would contribute to building an efficient civil service that would drive development in line with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu.

In the absence of inter-agency rivalry in the management of the civil service, no time, funds and other resources are dissipated by its leaders under the auspices of the FCSC and OHCSF on proving supremacy or attempting to destroy each other. All guardrails of excellence and competitiveness are activated towards the common objective of making the civil service attain all its potential, bloom and serve its workforce and ultimately the government and citizens of the country.

• **Onomuakpokpo, PhD, former Acting Editor, The Guardian, and ex-Group Managing Editor/OPED Editor, The Daily Times, is the Special Assistant on Strategic Communication to the Chairman, Federal Civil Service Commission.**

China's Communist Party At 105 And Lessons For Developing World

By Mukhtar Imam

IN the annals of modern history, few political organisations have transformed a nation as profoundly as the Communist Party of China (CPC). As the Party marks 105 years since its founding in 1921, the occasion offers more than a celebration of longevity; it invites reflection on one of the most remarkable national transformations the world has ever witnessed. From a war-ravaged, impoverished, semi-colonial society to the world's second-largest economy and a leading technological, industrial, and geopolitical power, China's rise under the leadership of the CPC stands as one of the defining stories of the twenty-first century. The scale, speed, and sustainability of China's transformation are without historical precedent. No country in recorded history has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, built world-class infrastructure across a continental-sized nation, emerged as a manufacturing powerhouse, and become a major force in global governance within such a relatively short period. The CPC's 105-year journey is therefore not merely China's story; it is a chapter in world history whose implications continue to shape the international order.

Humble Beginnings and a Grand Vision

When 13 delegates gathered in Shanghai in July 1921 to establish the Communist Party of China, few could have predicted the magnitude of what would follow. China at the time was a fragmented nation suffering from foreign domination, internal strife, economic backwardness, and political instability. The newly founded Party had fewer than sixty members and faced formidable challenges. The decades that followed were marked by struggle, sacrifice, and revolution. The Party survived political persecution, civil war, and foreign invasion, most notably during China's resistance against Japanese aggression. In 1949, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the CPC led the establishment of the People's Republic of China, bringing an end to a century of humiliation and national fragmentation. The creation of the People's Republic laid the foundation for national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and state-building. Yet China remained economically poor and technologically underdeveloped. The greatest chapter of China's transformation was still to come.

Reform and Opening-Up: The Turning Point

The watershed moment arrived in 1978 when China embarked on the policy of Reform and Opening-Up under the leadership of Deng

Xiaoping. Recognizing that economic modernization was essential to national rejuvenation, the CPC introduced market-oriented reforms while maintaining political stability and strategic state guidance. The results were extraordinary. Over the following four decades, China achieved economic growth on a scale never before witnessed. Entire cities emerged from farmland. Special Economic Zones attracted foreign investment. Manufacturing capacity expanded exponentially. China integrated into global trade networks and eventually became the world's factory. Perhaps the most remarkable achievement was poverty alleviation. According to international development institutions, China succeeded in lifting more than 800 million people out of extreme poverty—a contribution accounting for the majority of global poverty reduction during the period. This accomplishment alone would place China's development experience among the greatest achievements in human history. The transformation was visible everywhere: modern highways stretching thousands of kilometers, high-speed rail networks connecting distant provinces, ports handling massive volumes of global trade, and urban centers becoming hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Rise of a Technological Powerhouse

China's rise has not been confined to manufacturing and infrastructure. Under the CPC's long-term development strategy, the country has steadily moved up the value chain, becoming a leader in science, technology, and innovation. Today, China is at the forefront of artificial intelligence, quantum computing, telecommunications, renewable energy, electric vehicles, e-commerce, and digital finance. Chinese companies compete globally in sectors once dominated exclusively by Western firms. The country's space program offers another striking example. From launching its first satellite in 1970 to operating its own space station and conducting ambitious lunar exploration missions, China has demonstrated capabilities that place it among the world's leading space powers. These achievements reflect a governance model that combines strategic planning, substantial investment in research and development, and the mobilization of national resources toward long-term objectives.

• **Prof Imam is with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) Abuja.**

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LIMCAF Expands Access, Opportunity For Artists In Nigeria

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

FOLLOWING a five month submission window, which ran from January 1 to May 31, 2026, the Life in My City Art Foundation's (LIMCAF) Call for Applications recorded an impressive 830 artwork entries, representing a notable increase from 750 entries in the previous edition.

Participation was received from across 18 cities covering all the geopolitical zones in Nigeria, reaffirming LIMCAF's "continued national reach and relevance as one of Nigeria's foremost platforms for emerging visual artists," said the organisers.

"In terms of artistic categories, the highest volume of submissions was recorded in painting, mixed media, sculpture, and drawing, reflecting both the strength and diversity of contemporary artistic practice. A notable highlight of this year's Call was

the increase in female participation, with women accounting for approximately 33.2 per cent of total applicants up from last year's 29.3 per cent marking a positive step towards greater inclusivity within the LIMCAF ecosystem," they stated.

"The 2026 theme, *Open Letter*, invited artists to engage critically with personal and societal narratives, resulting in a wide range of thought provoking and conceptually rich submissions. These outcomes collectively underscore the growing awareness, accessibility, and prestige associated with the LIMCAF platform."

Following the conclusion of the application and screening phases, the LIMCAF 2026 regional exhibitions officially commenced in June and have continued actively into July across various centres nationwide.

These exhibitions present a curated selection of works from participating artists

within their respective regions, offering audiences the opportunity to experience the diversity, depth, and evolving narratives within contemporary Nigerian art.

LIMCAF also said in continuation of festival activities, the LIMCAF Artist Residency Programme officially commenced on July 1, 2026. The 2026 residency features two selected artists: Mr. Nnamdi Udoka (Enugu Region) and Miss Bilkisu Shaibu (Jalingo Region), who will participate in the programme in sequence. Each artist will undertake a six-week residency, allowing for focused studio practice, mentorship, and professional development.

Udoka's residency will focus on studio-based exploration, supported by critical review sessions and structured engagements designed to deepen his artistic practice. He has already arrived and commenced his residency. He was formally received at the LIM-

CAF Headquarters in Enugu by the Art Director, marking the beginning of his six week engagement within the programme.

As the regional exhibitions continue across the country and the residency programme progresses, preparations are steadily underway for the next phases leading to the LIMCAF Grand Finale scheduled for October 31, 2026.

For nearly two decades, LIMCAF has remained at the forefront of discovering and nurturing artistic talent in Nigeria. While the yearly competition remains central to the platform, and its work extends into artist development programmes, community outreach and inclusive creative initiatives.

LIMCAF remains committed to creating opportunities that support artistic growth, encourage innovation, and strengthen the cultural landscape across Nigeria.

Dear Kaffy: Diary Of A Single Woman In London

By David Emokpae

AFTER its successful run in Lagos and South Africa, *Dear Kaffy: Diary Of A Single Woman*, arrives in the United Kingdom for a limited three-day engagement, bringing an authentic, witty, and emotionally compelling Nigerian story to international audiences. The production will be staged at the Shaw Theatre on Euston Road, London, with performances daily at 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm.

Presented by Bolanle Austen-Peters Productions (BAP Productions), the creative powerhouse founded by acclaimed producer and director, Bolanle Austen-Peters, *Dear Kaffy* continues the company's mission of taking world-class African storytelling to global audiences.

A statement from BAP Productions, one of Africa's leading theatre and film production companies, said, "we are delighted to bring *Dear Kaffy* to Lon-

don. This is a story about self-worth, resilience, and finding the courage to define your own path. While Kike's story is rooted in Lagos, her experiences are universal. We look forward to sharing this production with audiences in the UK and celebrating the richness of African storytelling on a global stage."

At the heart of the play is Kikelomo Olota (Kike), a successful 35-year-old woman navigating the complexities of love, family expectations, self-discovery, and societal pressure in contemporary Lagos.

As Kike journeys through a series of relationships, she finds herself caught between the expectations of others and the life she truly desires. Through moments of humour, heartbreak, music, and reflection, *Dear Kaffy* explores universal themes of identity, womanhood, love, and authenticity.

While deeply rooted in Nigerian culture, the story resonates with audiences everywhere, particularly among the African diaspora, offering a powerful reflection on the challenges many women face in balancing personal ambition, cultural expectations, and the pursuit of happiness.

Over the past decade, BAP Productions has transformed Nigeria's theatrical landscape through groundbreaking productions including *Saro the Musical*, *Wakaa! The Musical*, *Fela and the Kalakuta Queens*, *Motherland The Musical*, *Death and the King's Horseman*, and numerous other critically acclaimed stage and screen works. The London presentation of *Dear Kaffy* marks another milestone in the company's growing international footprint and its commitment to showcasing contemporary African narratives on some of the world's most respected stages.



By David Emokpae

IN continuation of efforts to preserve Yoruba cultural heritage, the ancient city of Ile-Ife, Osun State, will be agog on July 23 and 24 for the yearly Ayanagalu Drum Festival.

The event, which will hold at the palace of the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, will attract no fewer than 1000 drummers as well as culture enthusiasts, scholars and traditionalists from the South-West states and other parts of the country.

Ile-Ife Upbeats For Ayanagalu Drum Festival 2026

The festival, which is in its fifth edition, is being organised by the palace in partnership with Ajoyo NG Integrated Services Limited.

Briefing journalists in Lagos on the plans for the event, Olori Aderonke Ademiluyi Ogunwusi said the drum festival is one of the festivals the Ooni of Ife takes pride in showcasing to the

world.

According to her, the drum festival has been going on for hundreds of years, but the incumbent Ooni decided to elevate it to a major cultural fiesta when he ascended the throne.

"We are in a digital era now and we can see things our forefathers couldn't see then. Ayanagalu festival is one of the festivals His Majesty takes pride in showcasing to the world. It's our identity, our culture and heritage; we must not do away with it. We must celebrate our identity and culture with pride. What my husband preaches every time is that we should be proud of our culture," she said.

Similarly, the Executive Director of Ajoyo NG Integrated Services Limited, Sinmisola Olajuwon, said the event will parade many cultural attractions.

"We have signed a 10-year agreement with the House of Oodua. We are going to be executing the Ayanagalu festival in Ile-Ife. It's going to be an exciting festival with many cultural attractions for guests and residents of Osun State," she said.

She stated that university and secondary schools will participate in the festival, noting that culture that is not passed to the next generation will go into extinction.

Omooba Adekunle Adeyemo of the House of Oodua also harped on the significance of the festival, saying Oba Enitan Ogunwusi will use it to empower people.

"Drumming is a career. Individuals can choose drumming as a career. There are people who beat drums for musicians and they are doing well. Drumming is encompassing.

"Drumming can be used to tame insecurity; a drummer can use his or her drum to pass a message in a community, town, village, and Hamlet that there is a danger and nobody should come out," he explained.



Culture custodian, Omoba Module Asabi Eguabu (left); Omooba Adekunle Adeyemo of the House of Oodua; Wife of Ooni of Ife, Olori Aderonke Ogunwusi; Head of Legal, Ajoyo NG Integrated Services Limited, Adeola Omotola and Executive Director, Ajoyo NG Integrated Services Limited, Olajuwon Sinmisola, at the press briefing to herald the 2026 Ayanagalu Drum Festival...recently.

Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by Shaibu Hussein

AuthenticA Series Lab Invites Applications From African Screenwriters

THE AuthenticA Series Lab, a screenwriter's programme from South Africa-based non-profit Realness Institute, is now open for applications for its 5th edition. This six-month programme is delivered in partnership with The StoryBoard Collective, a Swiss non-profit organisation dedicated to holding space for storytellers from underrepresented communities. Series Mania returns as the programme festival partner, where the writers will pitch their projects to industry decision-makers as part of the African Series Pitch in Lille, France, in March 2027. The Canada Media Fund also returns for a third year as a funding partner, supporting the participation of one African Canadian writer in the programme. The programme has supported 15 African writers since its inception, with some writers currently in active co-production conversations with companies across the UK, France, Canada and the US. Now entering its milestone fifth year, the programme welcomes submissions of original series projects in any genre, from writers living in Africa or the African diaspora, provided the story concept is set in Africa. Four writers will be selected for the programme, which is conducted through a mixture of online and in-person sessions, holds from September 2026 to April 2027. Selected writers will be mentored by Selina Ukwuoma, Story Consultant and Director of Writing Programmes, and Mehret Mandefro, Creative Producer and Managing Director of the Realness Institute. Ukwuoma says, "the lab offers writers a rare opportunity to take creative risks. It gives them the confidence to trust their most audacious ideas and shape them into series with real craft, rigour and clarity." Mandefro adds, "giving writers the time and space to bring their boldest ideas at a time when the industry is so unstable is the best way we know how to meet this moment." Experienced industry experts are invited to engage with the cohort as guest speakers, sharing their insights and professional journeys through case studies, offering a range of industry perspectives and practical guidance. Past guest speakers have included Anthony Q. Farrell (Writer/Director/Producer, Canfro Productions), Layla Swart (Producer/Co-Founder, Yellowbone Entertainment), Aoife Lennon-Ritchie (Managing Director of

Torchwood Literary & Scouting), Sameer Gardezi (Founder, Break the Room Media) and Pauline Fischer (Founder & CEO, PMF Media Group, Inc.). This fifth year the programme opens with in-person sessions in Ethiopia, a first, and then moving through online sessions, which culminates in a two-month residency in Geneva, Switzerland, before the cohort pitches at Series Mania in Lille, France. Each participant will thereafter deliver a pitch deck and a pilot script. The rights to the material developed through the programme will remain with each writer. "This programme reflects what we believe in: backing bold storytelling from voices the industry hasn't made enough room for," says Laure de Peretti de la Rocca, Director of The StoryBoard Collective. The call for applications is open from Monday, July 6, 2026, closing on Saturday, August 1, 2026. For more information on eligibility and how to apply, visit <https://realnessinstitute.com/2026/07/04/authentic-african-series-lab-call-is-open/> or email submissions@realness.institute

Application Open For Berlinale Talent 2027

BERLINALE Talents, a programme of the Berlin International Film Festival has announced call for applications for the

2027 edition. Berlinale Talents is the festival's hub for exchange, ideation, collaboration and discovery. Each year, 200 exceptional emerging filmmakers are invited from around the globe to gather in Berlin as part of the Berlinale's talent development programme. The programme has enabled emerging filmmakers to join a worldwide constellation of artists, thinkers, and makers connected through cinema across crafts, cultures, and continents. Held as part of the Berlinale, the 2027 edition will hold between February 12 and February 17, 2027. Applications are expected till August 19, 2026 with a final submission deadline fixed for September 2, 2026. Full details at www.berlinale-talents.de

Preparation Hots Up For Makurdi International Film Festival

THE second edition of the Makurdi International Film Festival will hold between July 27 and 31 in Makurdi, the Benue State capital. Organised by Gafiligadoki Communication in collaboration with Kaduna International Film Festival & One Benue, the festival is packaged by G-Films Academy and it was set up with the mission of moving Nigerian filmmaking from inspiration to execution by equipping creators with practical skills, connecting them to industry

opportunities, and building a united creative community. The festival according to its founder Nyam Terkimbi Terry, also aims at positioning the festival as a catalyst for the next generation of Nigerian filmmakers empowering them to shoot smart, pitch right, and go global. The focus for 2026 as the founder revealed include empowering creators by training "300+ young filmmakers in no-budget production, AI tools for filmmaking, investor pitching, and global distribution as well as to bridge industry gaps by connecting emerging talent directly with investors, distributors, and mentors through workshops, panels, and a live pitch room." Terkimbi also stated that the festival has rewarded excellence by awarding filmmakers who are advancing Nigerian cinema through innovation, impact, and bold storytelling. "What we have done with MACA is to create a five-day hub where filmmakers, culture custodians, and audiences collaborate across divides to foster unity and peace," he disclosed. The theme for this edition is 'Filmmaking As A Tool For Change' and it will feature hands-on workshops, panel discussions, short film competition and a MACA film market. Details of the festival can be sourced at www.macaofilmfestival.com



By Oyindamola Shoola

AGENERATION ago, parents worried about children sitting too close to the television. Today, the screen follows the child from the breakfast table to the back seat of the car and, too often, into bed. Ofcom's latest research found that 88 per cent of British children aged three to seven go online, while 85 per cent of children between six months and two years spend at least some time looking at screens. That makes the subject of Tokesi Akinola's *What If Your Cup?* especially timely. Illustrated by

Naomi Anidi, the book approaches children's screen habits through an ordinary household object with a distinctly modern problem: a cup stays awake all night playing on a gadget and is then too tired to perform its job the following morning.

It is a playful idea, but one rooted in a genuine concern. Ofcom found that 37 per cent of children aged eight to seventeen believe they spend too much time on screens. More than half of parents in the same survey felt that their child's screen time was excessive, and nearly a third admitted finding it difficult to control. The issue has moved beyond private arguments over bedtime. In June 2026, the UK Government announced plans to prevent social-media platforms from providing services to children under sixteen,

with the restrictions expected to begin in spring 2027.

What If Your Cup? speaks to the habits beneath that larger political debate. It is not principally about dangerous content, strangers or social-media algorithms. Its concern is simpler and more immediate: what happens when a device begins to consume the time needed for sleep, play and everyday responsibilities? The tired cup gives young children a concrete way to understand that trade-off. After spending the night scrolling, beeping and tapping, it yawns when the child wants a drink, wobbles about and eventually retreats to its rack for a nap. Rather than explaining tiredness through an adult lecture, the story lets children watch a familiar object become comically useless after a sleepless night.

Naomi Anidi's illustrations carry much of the humour. The cup is given expressive eyes, thin little limbs and enough mischief to feel like a character rather than a teaching prop. The opening scene, in which its face is lit by a screen in a dark kitchen, will be instantly recognisable to many families. Later images of the cup running away and

spilling its water keep the lesson light.

The book is also sensible enough not to present technology as wholly bad. Its introduction asks adults to encourage children to enjoy technology "in balance, as a tool, not a master". That distinction matters. Ofcom's research also found that most parents see real benefits in children going online, including support for education, creativity and communication. The problem is not the existence of screens. It is allowing them to crowd out everything else.

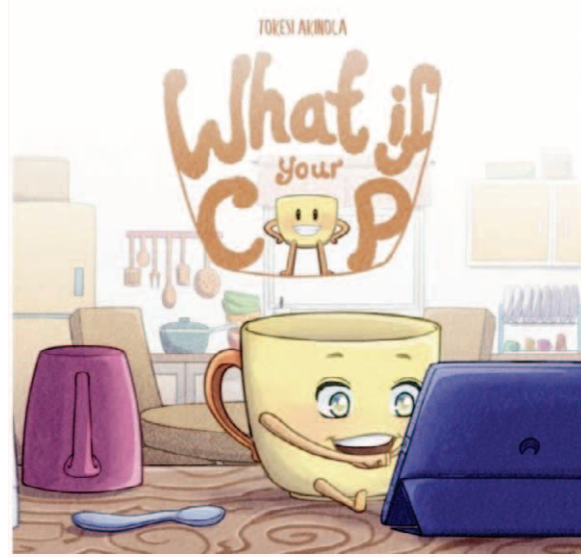
This balanced message is reinforced by the closing illustrations, which show children experimenting with science, painting, dancing and running. These activities are not presented as punishments for putting down a device. They are reminders that childhood should include making, moving, imagining and discovering. The drawing and discussion pages also invite children to think about why rest matters and what they can do away from a screen.

The connection between screen habits and sleep is particularly appropriate for the book's likely audience. The World Health

Organization recommends that children aged three to four should have between ten and thirteen hours of good-quality sleep and no more than one hour of sedentary screen time each day. *What If Your Cup?* translates that rather dry guidance into a picture a child can remember: even a cup becomes hopeless when it refuses to sleep. The rhyming text makes the story easy to read aloud, although a few lines are more functional than musical. The book is strongest when it trusts its central image and allows the tired cup's behaviour to deliver the message. Its later emphasis on children having a special purpose broadens the theme, but it also encourages readers to consider what they might enjoy or become when they look beyond a screen.

Overall, *What If Your Cup?* is a cheerful and relevant picture book for young children, particularly those between four and seven. It enters a serious debate without burdening its readers with adult anxiety. Instead, it uses humour, rhyme and a rebellious piece of crockery to make a modest but valuable point: technology can be useful and entertaining, but it should not steal the sleep, play and curiosity from childhood.

Oyindamola Shoola is an award-winning Nigerian-American writer.



By Chief Eric Opah

I NEED to confess something before I start: I love a good infrastructure dream as much as the next Nigerian. Show me a governor cutting a ribbon, and I will cheer and clap along with everybody else, no shame. But somewhere between the clapping and the commissioning, somebody has to ask the boring, unglamorous question that nobody wants to ask at the podium: how much will this thing actually cost, and where exactly is the money coming from? And will this be beneficial to the people within the immediate environment in anyway?

There is something inherently seductive about grand infrastructure. Bridges go over rivers before the first vehicle crosses them. Airports rise from empty fields in anticipation of passengers yet to arrive. Railways promise commerce long before freight begins to move. Seaports, perhaps more than any other public investment, evoke the image of prosperity itself. To the public, they represent progress. To politicians, they symbolize legacy. To investors, however, they pose a far less romantic question: will they generate sustainable economic returns? That distinction matters.

Around the world, the most successful ports were not conceived as monuments to political ambition. They emerged as responses to commercial necessity. They were built because industries required them, exporters depended upon them, and global shipping networks could no longer function efficiently without them. In maritime economics, ports are not engines that create trade. They are platforms that facilitate trade already being generated by productive economies. Put differently, ports do not create prosperity. Prosperity creates ports.

It is against this backdrop that Abia State's proposed deep-sea port at Azumini deserves careful examination. The discussion has understandably generated excitement. Any project that promises jobs, investment and international connectivity should command public attention. Yet public enthusiasm should never substitute for economic analysis. Infrastructure of this scale is among the most expensive, technically demanding and financially consequential investments any government can undertake. The proper question, therefore, is not whether Abia can build a seaport. The question is whether the economic fundamentals justify building one now.

My perspective is shaped not by politics but by a lifetime in international shipping and logistics. The maritime industry has a habit of stripping away optimism and

Abia, Governor Otti And The Seaport Question: Ambition Or Economic Miscalculation?

replacing it with numbers. Ships do not call at ports because governments desire them to. Shipping lines deploy vessels where cargo exists. Investors finance terminals where projected throughput justifies capital. Banks lend billions only after scrutinising demand forecasts, cash-flow projections and long-term commercial viability. The sea, unlike politics, has little patience for aspiration unsupported by economics.

This is why every serious port project begins with one question above all others: where will the cargo come from?

That question is remarkably absent from much of the public conversation surrounding the Abia Seaport.

Ports generate revenue through the movement of cargo, not through their physical existence. Every container handled, every tonne of bulk cargo discharged, and every vessel that berths contributes to the commercial viability of the facility. Remove sufficient cargo from the equation, and even the most technologically advanced port becomes an expensive fixed asset that struggles to recoup its investment.

The history of global maritime development repeatedly illustrates this.

The Port of Rotterdam did not become Europe's largest port because the Netherlands simply decided to build bigger docks. Rotterdam became indispensable

because it serves one of the world's richest industrial hinterlands. Its logistics network extends deep into Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland through an integrated system of inland waterways, rail freight corridors and motorways. Manufacturer's hundreds of kilometres from the North Sea regard Rotterdam as their mar-

itime gateway because infrastructure, customs systems and industrial production evolved together. The port is successful because it sits at the centre of an economic ecosystem far larger than itself.

Singapore tells a similar story, although through geography rather than hinterland. Located astride the Strait of Malacca, one of the busiest maritime corridors on earth, Singapore leveraged an extraordinary natural advantage through decades of disciplined investment in efficiency, digitization and trade facilitation. More than eighty thousand vessels transit nearby waters each year. The port did not manufacture that traffic. Geography provided the opportunity; policy maximised it.

Closer to home, Morocco's Tanger Med offers perhaps the most instructive example in Africa. Frequently celebrated as one of the continent's greatest infrastructure successes, the port's rise was not driven by dredging alone. It formed part of a broader industrial strategy that integrated automotive manufacturing, free trade zones, modern rail infrastructure, customs reform and global shipping alliances. Renault and Stellantis established major production facilities nearby because logistics costs became globally competitive. Cargo followed factories. The port expanded because industry expanded.

The lesson is consistent across continents. Successful ports rarely precede economic transformation. More often, they consolidate and accelerate it.

This principle brings us back to Abia.

Since late 2025, Abia State has been in serious discussions with China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) over a proposed deep-sea port at Azumini-Obeaku, and the process has now reached the feasibility-study stage. As someone who has spent his career in international shipping and logistics, I want to lay out, plainly and technically, why this project is a poor use of Abia's limited resources: it sits on a difficult and expensive engineering site, its financing has not been credibly worked out, and it competes for funds that would do far more good spent elsewhere.

The journey so far, a year of meetings, not metres

The confirmed timeline tells its own story. In November 2025, Governor Otti received China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) at Government House to "explore partnership" in dredging, rail, and seaport development talk, at that stage, of possibility.

On 5 May 2026, at a meeting in Nvosi, the governor announced his approval for an "immediate feasibility study" into the Azumini-Obeaku Seaport and Inland Waterways Corridor, pushing CHEC to compress its own proposed six-to-seven-month timeline. By June 2026, a CHEC technical team was on the ground at Obeaku carrying out hydrographic surveys — bathymetric readings, water-depth checks, the early paperwork of engineering, not the machinery of construction. That is the sum of it, seven months on: Abia has a survey team wading through the Imo River, not a port. And nowhere in any of these announcements has the state told Abians what this feasibility study itself is costing the public purse. Taxpayers are being asked to trust the process without being

told its price.

Geography does not negotiate

Every successful seaport begins with one advantage that governments cannot legislate into existence: naturally deep, navigable water. Abia does not have it. The proposed site at Azumini is reported to sit somewhere between 19 and 23 nautical miles from the high sea, and the government's own briefings acknowledge that roughly 19.5 kilometres of dredging would be required simply to create a channel. Dredging on that scale, sustained indefinitely against silting, is one of the most expensive and technically demanding components of port construction anywhere in the world. It is not a detail to be resolved after the ribbon-cutting; it is the central engineering problem, and it alone can consume a large share of any realistic budget before a single ship berths.

The money question has never been answered

Even the state's own leadership has conceded the project cannot begin until "adequate funds are secured." That is the correct instinct, but it also concedes the real issue: nobody has yet said, credibly, where the money is coming from, how much it will actually cost once dredging, breakwaters, road and rail linkages are included, or what Abia's share of the exposure will be if a foreign partner's enthusiasm cools once the feasibility numbers come back. A state that struggles with pension arrears and road maintenance should not be signing up for the kind of long-term financial exposure that deep-water port projects carry elsewhere on this coast.

Where the money should go instead

Every naira committed to a speculative deep-sea port is a naira not spent on the things Abians tell pollsters and town-hall meetings they actually need: functional hospitals, roads that survive one rainy season, timely payment of workers and pensioners, and support for the small manufacturers of Aba who need reliable power and access to existing ports far more than they need a new one twenty kilometres of dredging away. Aba's industrial cluster can be connected to global trade through smarter logistics and rail links to Onne or Calabar long before a new Azumini port could plausibly become operational and at a fraction of the risk. But there is a bigger, structural answer too one that does not depend on a single foreign contractor's feasibility report.

Ambition is not the problem in Abia. Judgment is. And there is a closer, cheaper, more honest route to the growth Abians actually want: real financial autonomy for our local governments. In 2024, it was Abia's own name on the Supreme Court judgment — Attorney General of the Federation v. Attorney General of Abia State that ordered federal allocations to flow directly into the accounts of elected local government councils, not through the state.

That judgment recognised something the seaport dream keeps overlooking: government is closest to the people not at Government House in Nvosi, but at the council office in their own local government area. If Abia fully funded its 17 local councils as the Constitution intends with predictable, undiluted allocations they can plan around every ward would feel the difference within a budget cycle, in ways twenty kilometres of dredging cannot promise for years, if ever. That is the choice before Abia: a speculative port on the horizon, or a functioning government in every local government area, today. I am not against Abia dreaming big. I am against Abia dreaming expensively while its local governments dream on empty pockets.

• **Chief Eric Opah is a businessman in international shipping and Abia State's APC Guber Candidate, 2027**

Alex Otti

Labisi Makes Bold Statement With New EP, Assurance

By Daniel Anazia

FAST-rising gospel minister, Labisi, has released her latest Extended Playlist (EP) titled, *Assurance*, a deeply personal project that leans fully and reflects her journey of faith, resilience and unwavering trust in God.

Released under EeZee Conceptz, the four-track project features *Favour Me*, *Tuale*, *Assurance*, and *Oba Nke* — each built on Labisi's signature blend of Fuji rhythms, Afro-gospel textures and contemporary worship arrangements, a sound she has steadily refined.

Rooted in gratitude, unwavering faith, and the assurance found in Christ, the vibrant collection of songs

celebrates God's faithfulness through a rich blend of indigenous sounds, heartfelt worship, and joyful praise. It reflects both the gospel music minister's musical heritage and her passion for creating songs that resonate across cultures and generations.

What sets *Assurance* apart isn't just its message but its musicality. Labisi fuses indigenous Yoruba influences with modern gospel production, creating songs that feel equally at home in a church service or a Sunday afternoon playlist.

It's an approach that speaks to both her musical upbringing and her ambition to make faith-based music

that travels across cultures and generations, rather than staying confined to a single audience.

The lead single *Tuale* (Live), released on Friday, July 3 ahead of the full project, sets the tone. Recorded live, the track blends passionate vocals with energetic African praise rhythms, built around themes of gratitude and God's faithfulness, the same emotional through line that runs across the full EP.

Speaking about the project, Labisi describes *Assurance* as a testimony of God's faithfulness and a reminder that hope remains alive, even in difficult seasons. "This project is more than music to

me," she said. "It is a reflection of my journey and the countless moments when God

proved Himself faithful. My prayer is that everyone who listens will find comfort, renewed faith and the confidence to keep trusting Him."

Born Esther Olabisi, after emerging as the winner of the Gospel Groove Talent Quest (GGTQ) 2023, she signed with EeZee Conceptz Global and has continued to build a loyal audience through her soul-lifting performances, authentic storytelling, and unmistakably indigenous sound.

Since her emergence in 2023, Labisi has consistently bridged the gap between traditional indigenous gospel and the digital-forward trends of 2026



Labisi

Zaa Nurty Signals New Chapter With Cryptic Teasers

By Daniel Anazia

FOLLOWING the successes recorded by his 2025 debut EP, *With Love*, Zaa Nurty, appears to be ushering in a new phase of his career with a new music.

The fast rising music star has resurfaced with a deliberate air of mystery built from cryptic teasers, intimate behind-the-scenes footage, and a growing wave of online speculation, suggesting that new music may be arriving sooner than expected.

Over the past few weeks, Zaa Nurty has fueled speculation with a series of carefully curated social media posts, cryptic captions and refreshed visuals that hint at a significant artistic evolution.

While he has yet to make an official announcement, the subtle

changes have been enough to ignite conversations across fan communities, with many predicting that a major release is imminent.

The growing anticipation reflects the strong connection he has built with his audience. Every teaser, image and online interaction has been closely examined, with supporters eager to unravel what could be his next creative direction.

Fans have responded with excitement, flooding social media with predictions about a possible single, extended play (EP) or full-length album. Others have expressed hope that the upcoming project will showcase a more mature sound while preserving the distinctive style that first earned him a loyal following.

Known for his ability to seamlessly blend Afrobeats, R&B, and highlife, the Denver-based artiste has spent the last year solidifying his reputation as a versatile performer. His latest project, which featured tracks like *Marseille* and *Currency*, offered an intimate look into his personal journey, documenting his transition from the vibrant streets of Lagos (Oshodi) to the international stage.

Born Harold Ayodeji Aikhomu, since his breakout, the singer-songwriter has maintained a steady output of genre-bending singles and high-quality visuals. His commitment to authenticity—telling stories about his life, his hustle, and his evolution—has cultivated a dedicated following.



Zaa Nurty

NIGMA 2026: Organisers To Spotlight Gospel Excellence, Champion Mental Health Awareness

By Daniel Anazia

THE Academy of Gospel Music in Nigeria (AGMN) has announced that the fifth edition of the Nigeria International Gospel Music Awards (NIGMA) will hold on Sunday, August 9, at the Agip Recital Hall, MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos, with this year's event placing equal emphasis on celebrating gospel music excellence and promoting mental health awareness.

Now in its fifth year, NIGMA has become one of Nigeria's leading platforms for recognising excellence, creativity and impact in gospel music. Organisers said the 2026 edition will go beyond the traditional awards format by launching a nationwide campaign focused on emotional wellbeing, hope and healing, particularly among young Nigerians.

The awards' founder and Chief Responsibility Officer of Golden Heritage Limited, Kingsley Omoefe, frames it deliberately as a celebration rather than a contest. "Gospel music has become one of the most influential forces for inspiration, healing, and positive social change. NIGMA exists to celebrate those

who use their gifts, creativity, and platforms to impact lives and contribute meaningfully to society," he said.

"NIGMA is not a competition but a celebration of excellence, creativity, consistency, and positive impact in gospel music. We believe recognising outstanding contributions inspires future generations and strengthens gospel music as a force for hope, faith and national development," Omoefe added.

He explained that the awards remain committed to honouring individuals and organisations whose work continues to inspire lives while advancing national development. He added that the mental health campaign will be implemented through partnerships with churches, mental health organisations, media platforms and other stakeholders.

According to Peter Armand Boyo, Head of Strategy, this year's ceremony aims to further strengthen the global profile of Nigerian gospel music, honouring the artistes whose dedication continues to inspire audiences worldwide.

Fuji Icon Obesere Returns To Abuja For 'Overthrow: The Legacy Continues' October 18

By Daniel Anazia

FUJI music icon, Abass Akande Obesere, is set to make a highly anticipated return to the Federal Capital Territory Abuja with Obesere Live in Concert themed 'Overthrow: The Legacy Continues', an experience that promises an unforgettable celebration

of culture, music and his enduring legacy in Nigeria's entertainment industry.

Organised by Stealth Mode Ltd and powered by Zillionaire Media Global Services Ltd in partnership with Sidophobia Entertainment, the event is positioned as more than just a musical performance; it's a celebration of indigenous Nigerian heritage and a testament to the enduring influence of Fuji music in the modern entertainment landscape.

Known for his electrifying stage performances and commanding presence, the Agbaakin Abobagunwa of Yoruba Land, is expected to thrill fans with a rich repertoire of classic hits alongside newer favourites that have cemented his status as one of Africa's most influential indigenous music figures.

Scheduled to hold on Sunday, October 18, at the Sol Lounge Resort, Jabi, Abuja, the organisers say attendees can expect a world-class production featuring captivating performances, vibrant stage effects and an atmosphere that reflects the excitement of one of Nigeria's most celebrated indigenous music genres.

Beyond the entertainment, the event, the organisers explained, also highlights the growing demand for live music experiences in Abuja, as promoters continue to attract top-tier artistes to the city with large-scale concerts and cultural showcases.

Speaking ahead of the event, Obesere expressed his excitement about reconnecting with fans in the nation's capital, describing the concert as a celebration of loyalty, culture and the enduring bond he shares with his audience.

recent interview on *Cool FM*, revealed that between 2017 and 2019, he struggled with a throat issue that made him unable to sing or perform and eventually forced him to travel to the United States for surgery. He added that the health challenge left him unable to perform, compelling him to turn down lucrative bookings despite overwhelming demand for his music.

"I lost millions of dollars because I couldn't perform. I was refunding so much money. I think I refunded over a million dollars in shows," the singer said, reflecting on the painful sacrifices he had to make while focusing on his recovery.

Despite the financial losses, Tekno said prioritising his health was the only option, stressing that no amount of money was worth risking his long-term wellbeing or career. For him, being able to rise beyond the challenges offered him a different perspective in life as he learnt to be grateful and appreciative of being able to still make music.

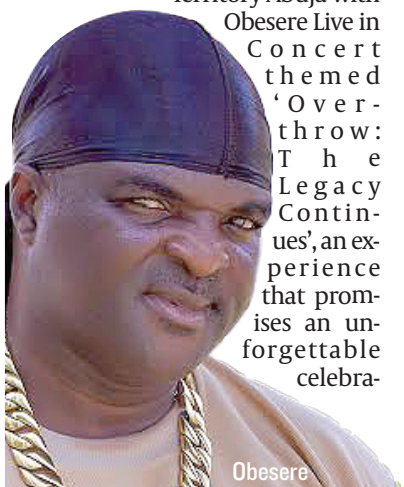
The revelation sheds light on the often unseen realities of the music business, where an artiste's ability to perform is directly tied to earnings. For many musicians, live concerts, tours and private performances account for a substantial portion of their income, making health setbacks particularly costly.

Although the setback temporarily slowed his career, Tekno has since

bounced back, returning to the studio and the stage with renewed energy. He has continued to release successful records, collaborate with leading African artistes and maintain his reputation as one of Afrobeats' most accomplished singer-songwriters and producers.



Tekno



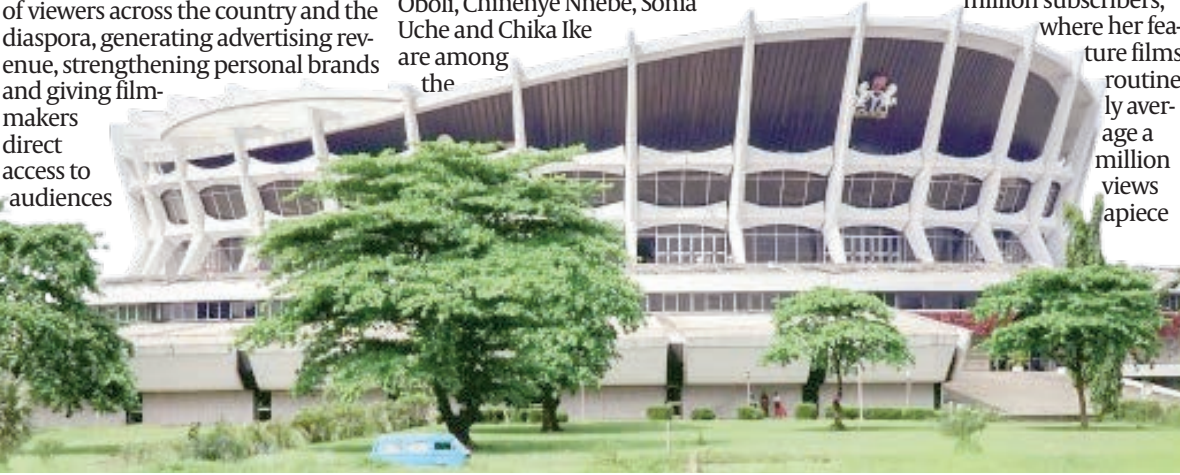
Obesere

Nollywood YouTube Takeover: How Digital Premieres Are Rewriting Nigerian Cinema

By Daniel Anazia

A FEW years ago, YouTube premieres were considered Nollywood’s consolation for films that couldn’t land a cinema release or a streaming deal. That perception has flipped, as the traditional gatekeepers of the industry are increasingly finding themselves sharing the screen with a disruptive digital force.

This year, the free, fast, and fiercely competitive digital platform has solidified its position as Nigerian film industry’s most potent distribution ecosystem, bypassing conventional cinema bottlenecks to deliver high-quality narratives directly to millions of viewers across the country and the diaspora, generating advertising revenue, strengthening personal brands and giving filmmakers direct access to audiences



without relying solely on cinemas or subscription-based streaming platforms.

Nowhere is this shift clearer than among female producers, who are turning personal channels into studios that rival theatrical runs and forcing the industry to rethink what box office even means. Actresses who once chased a spot on cinema release lists are now building their own YouTube channels instead, thus effectively rewriting the rules of the nation’s cinema and reaping the rewards.

Women Leading Digital Charge

Ruth Kadiri, Uche Nancy, Omoni Oboli, Chinenye Nnebe, Sonia Uche and Chika Ike are among the

most consistent creators dominating YouTube’s Nollywood ecosystem, with their channels collectively pulling millions of views a month, proof that audiences will follow quality storytelling wherever it lands.

Actress and filmmaker Angela Eguavoen puts the economics plainly: a filmmaker can turn a solid profit on a mid-budget production by going straight to digital, reaching a global audience cinema simply can’t match.

Ruth Kadiri pioneered the shift. Bypassing traditional distributors and platforms like Netflix and Prime Video, she built RuthKadiri247 into a mini streaming service with roughly 2.85

million subscribers, where her feature films routinely average a million views apiece

across genres.

Destiny Etiko’s *Undercover* echoed that momentum, racking up a million views in just three days. Industry analysts credit the model with giving women full creative autonomy, direct access to global audiences, and financial control over their own work — control the traditional system rarely offered.

A Crowded July

Four major releases this month capture the shift in real time: *Alechemu, I Swear to God, The Return of Omotara Johnson*, and *Who Comes First?* Two went to cinemas first; two went straight to YouTube. All are being judged by the same currency — views, comments and cultural noise.

Director Biodun Stephen’s *Alechemu*, which premiered in cinemas on Friday, July 3, leads the pack with the story of an autistic teenager’s journey from Oyo to Lagos in search of the mother he’s never known. Starring Bimbo Ademoye, Mike Ezuruonye, Femi Adebayo, Niyi Johnson and Blessing Obasi, the movie has drawn praise for its emotional depth and sensitive handling of autism.

Though official box-office figures are yet to be released, industry conversations suggest the film has benefited from positive word-of-mouth recommendation, particularly among audiences, especially early viewers who have applauded its sensitive treatment of autism and family relationships.

Adding to an unusually busy release calendar that underscores the industry’s renewed confidence in both cinema and digital audiences was *I Swear to God*, which premiered on Thursday July 9.

Attention shifted to Friday, July 10, with veteran actress Bukky Wright’s *The Return of Omotara Johnson*, a sequel to one of Yoruba cinema’s most memorable films. Directed by Adeoluwa Owu, the sequel reunites Wright with Richard Mofe-Damijo, Shaffy Bello, Ali Nuhu, Timini Egbuson and Nse Ikpe-Etim.

The official trailer sparked widespread conversations, with many fans celebrating heavy online conversation, with fans celebrating Wright’s comeback, after years away from one of her most iconic characters.

Others praised the noticeably higher production values and cinematic ambition reflected in the preview, while humorous memes inspired by familiar characters quickly circulated across social media.

Wright deployed a strategy more filmmakers are adopting: releasing the original *Omotara Johnson* on YouTube ahead of the sequel, letting younger viewers discover it for the first time while longtime fans reconnected with the story before heading to cinemas, a neat illustration of how nostalgia and digital access now work hand in hand.

Chika Ike’s *Who Comes First?*, which premiered on July 10, rounds out the week. It joined the growing catalogue, reinforcing another important shift. Starring heavyweights like Patience

Ozokwor and Blossom Chukwujekwu, the film demonstrates the power of talent-driven digital marketing.

Early audience reactions highlight an appreciation for the production quality and the star-studded ensemble, proving that movie lovers are willing to commit to long-form storytelling on digital platforms if the talent is right.

Factors Behind The Booming

Unlike the DVD era, producers no longer surrender control over distribution. A single YouTube release reaches Lagos, London, Atlanta, Johannesburg, and Toronto simultaneously, while generating ad revenue, sponsorships, and long-term viewership.

For filmmakers, the economics is becoming increasingly attractive. While Cinema requires distributors’ 40-50 percent revenue splits and limited screens, YouTube only needs a camera, a premiere date and a thumbnail, as producers keep 55 percent of ad revenue plus 100 percent of brand deals. For mid-budget films, that math is hard to beat.

Also, affordable and accessible mobile data (data prices drop) has made millions of Nigerians bypass DVDs and cable altogether, thus streaming films straight on their phones.

“YouTube is the new DStv for working-class Nigerians,” said Sofia Okeimute, a Lagos based media buyer. “Instead of rigid TV schedules, viewers use data plans or mobile TV to watch on their own time. Comments have become real-time reviews, and piracy drops as legal versions are free.”

Audience sentiment has shifted accordingly; social media chatter on X and Instagram has moved from complaints about poor YouTube quality to genuine praise for the cinematic feel of digital releases.

Viewers now subscribe to channels with the loyalty once reserved for TV networks, trusting creators to deliver a steady pipeline of family dramas, romantic comedies, and thrillers.

A Coexisting Future

Industry insider Norbert Ajaegbu believes Nollywood’s future isn’t about YouTube replacing cinema, but coexisting with it. “Cinema still delivers the premium communal experience, particularly for large-scale productions, while YouTube offers unmatched accessibility and longevity,” he said. “The result is a healthier creative ecosystem where both are no longer rivals but complementary platforms serving different audience segments.”

He noted that if the current run of releases is any indication, 2026 may be remembered as the year YouTube stopped being Nollywood’s backup plan, but became one of its main stages.

BBNaija Season 10 Reunion: The Feud Continues

By Daniel Anazia

MONTHS after the curtains closed on the reality TV show, Big Brother Naija Season 10 (10 Over 10), the reunion has proven that reality TV rivalries rarely end when the cameras stop rolling as digital echoes of the show continue to dominate Nigerian entertainment discourse.

For weeks, the reunion, which premiered on June 8, served as a high-stakes arena where former housemates unpacked the alliances, betrayals, and viral controversies that defined the 2025 season.

The show has evolved from a simple recap to a cornerstone of Nigeria’s social media calendar. It continues to dominate conversations across Nigeria’s entertainment landscape, with dramatic confrontations, emotional revelations and unresolved rivalries keeping fans glued to their screens and social media timelines.

Since the episodes began airing, viewers have taken to X, Instagram, TikTok and Facebook to dissect every heated exchange,

revisit old controversies and debate the actions of their favourite housemates.

While some fans applauded contestants who confronted unresolved issues with honesty, others criticised certain housemates for reigniting old feuds or appearing more interested in creating viral moments than finding closure.

Moderated by Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, the show which air weeknights on Africa Magic, has brought the 29 former housemates back to the couch, and true to form, reopened wounds many assumed had healed. Clips from the show have generated millions of views, thus extending the show’s reach far beyond television.

From the disqualification of Faith following his altercation with Sultana to the intricacies of romantic entanglements that famously split fan bases across the continent, the reunion offered a rare behind-the-scenes perspective.

Dede and Kola’s dynamic has proven just as combustible, with Dede pub-

licly accusing him of inconsistent behaviour behind the scenes despite a cooler public persona. Their exchange became one of several moments filled with accountability sessions, emotional apologies, unresolved kitchen disputes, and friendships that appear beyond repair.

Thelma has been at the center of multiple flash-points; first with Big Soso over lingering tension from the house, and then in a tearful clash with Imisi over allegations involving shared images sent after the show ended. A separate face-off with Rooboy saw her firmly reject any romantic future between them, drawing mixed reactions from viewers split over her bluntness.

Season 10 winner, Imisi, who claimed victory with 42.8 percent of the final vote and a prize package worth roughly N150 million, has also faced renewed scrutiny over her gameplay, while runner-up Dede Ashiogwu has been widely praised for handling awkward confrontations with composure.

Notwithstanding the show’s often criticism on the grounds of its chaotic energy, industry analysts point to its effectiveness as a marketing engine. They aver that reunion not only sustains the brand presence of the housemates as they pivot into post-show careers but also serves as a crucial bridge to the upcoming Season 11.

For the savvy entertainment viewer, the episodes cum the show provide more than just drama; they offer a look at the pressures of modern reality television and how participants navigate the transition from housemates to public figures.

By allowing housemates to lay it all bare, the organisers — MultiChoice Nigeria NO Canal+ — successfully maintain audience interest and brand loyalty in an increasingly crowded media landscape. As we look ahead to the next installment of the franchise, the legacy of the Season 10 reunion is clear: it remains the most powerful platform for reality television stars to control their narratives.

TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

Why You Should Not Make Friends With Seun Kuti, VDM It was with total disappointment that T4T followed the online brawl between son of Fela Anikulapo Kuti (that is how he wants to be addressed as that appears to be his only medal), Seun Kuti and social media ‘activist’, Martin Otse aka VDM.

Both of them decided to go for each other’s jugular and there was nothing they did not expose about themselves. Like scorned women, Seun Kuti and VDM told the world what both of them had shared in secret. The world also got to know how the refusal of Seun Kuti to support a certain presidential candidate for next year’s general elections brought the wedge in their relationship as well as what Seun Kuti allegedly said about a popular human rights activist and online news publisher among many others. The back and forth took several days as the warring

parties took turns to tear each other apart. T4T was like, wow...*na men be dis?* Even pepper and tomatoes sellers at Oyingbo market in Lagos will not go that far, but here we have two grown men spreading their dirty linens out to dry before the universe, literally. This is T4T’s submission: if you want to make friends, just be careful not to make friends like Seun Kuti and VDM. Rather, find an akara seller (apologies to our dear First Lady, ‘Iya Alakara’ Remi Tinubu) at Ijesh market to befriend. At least, you won’t be surprised that she exposed your secrets later like those overgrown babies did to each other. One can excuse VDM, he is still an overgrown ‘child’ at 32, but what about a Seun Kuti who is in his 40s?

Never Knew Daddy Showkey Was An ‘Ancestor’...

T4T was watching a podcast show earlier in the week that featured Ajegunle ghetto star, well, former star if you

wish, John Odafe Asiemo, popularly known as Daddy Showkey, where he was recalling his good old days when he was the rave of the moment. That is not the news here. Daddy Showkey revealed to the host that he was planning on organising his 50 years on stage concerts this August. What? 50 years on stage? T4T had to rewind the video to be sure he heard right. Indeed, he heard right, Showkey said he would be celebrating his 50 years on stage from August 8, 2026. Public record shows that Daddy Showkey was born on August 4, 1970, that will make him 56 years in August. And this is someone planning to celebrate his 50 years on stage? Which stage? Did he begin performing on at age six or did bros Showkey count the five years he spent dancing and singing at children’s birthdays part of professional stagecraft? Showkey, be calming down na.

‘How Environments, Thoughtful Designs Influence Human Behaviour’

By Maria Diamond

THOUGHTFULLY designed spaces have the power to create comfort, joy, connection and improve physical and emotional well-being.

When people walk into a room and feel comfortable without necessarily knowing why, that is usually the result of thoughtful design.

Thus, interior and exterior design isn't simply about decorating spaces – it's about improving the way people experience living and the world.

Those were the words of Chioma Tyra Obiadi, an Interior Design Expert and former Miss Nigeria who spoke on the physical and mental effect of thoughtfully designed exterior and interior spaces during an interview recently. She said: “A walk into a hotel, restaurant, or even someone's home and you'd instinctively notice how the space made you feel. Some spaces immediately make you feel comfortable, inspired, and welcomed, while others don't.”

Obiadi who has a Master of Fine Arts in Interior Design from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) United States, revealed that even as a beauty queen she had always been fascinated by design and this is why one of the most meaningful aspects of her reign as the 40th Miss Nigeria was the Green Girl Project, an environmental sustainability initiative that focused on

supporting communities affected by environmental pollution.

She said: “Through the project, I collaborated with corporate partners, including companies within Nigeria's oil and gas sector, to raise support for affected communities.

“Beyond raising awareness, we educated women and children on the environmental and health impacts of pollution while empowering them with knowledge and practical ways to improve their quality of life. Seeing the direct impact of that work remains one of the most fulfilling experiences of my journey.”

The Science behind Designs

Creativity is a scratch on the surface of thoughtful and successful design. According to Obiadi, successful design is supported by psychology, human behaviour, accessibility, sustainability, building codes, ergonomics, and evidence-based research.

Design Functionality

While beautiful interior spaces thick the aesthetics of design, beauty should never come at the expense of functionality – Obiadi remarked. “A successful space should support the people using it. It should make life easier, healthier, more comfortable, and more meaningful. If a space photographs beautifully but doesn't improve someone's experience, then I don't think it has fully

achieved its purpose.”

What A Great Interior Design should be

It is intentional – the space simply works. A great design isn't just about creating beautiful spaces. It's about creating spaces where people can live better, work better, heal better, and connect more deeply with one another.

.The lighting feels right.

.The circulation makes sense.

.The furniture supports how people actually live.

.The materials are appropriate.

Inspiring Design spaces

Hospitality design creates experiences that people remember long after they've left. However, **Residential Designs** are endearing because home is such a personal place.

Research in Designs

According to Obiadi, research is the most important part of the design process. “Every client is different, every project is different, and every space tells its own story. Before making design decisions, I want to understand how people live, work, move, interact, and what challenges they're trying to solve. That information allows me to create spaces that aren't just visually appealing but genuinely improve everyday life.”



Striped Outfits: The Return Of Old Money

By Maria Diamond

BACK in days, spotting a classy wealthy woman was effortless when she turned up in vertical or horizontal striped shirts or tops with a matching skirt, trousers or short. She steals the spotlight with the magical aesthetic effect of striped outfits that speaks the kind of luxury that only the affluent could showcase.

This was the era of women with ‘old money’ until the new money showed up and every outfit became a show of drama that couldn't be sustained – after all every drama comes to an end hereby leading to a reverse clothing concept with a touch of modernity here and there.

Old Money Striped Clothing returns with a bang

Whether in vertical or horizontal design, striped outfits are back in this fashion sphere and both young and old are rocking the timeless pieces in style and class.

Look around you and see how the women of this era flocks every event, gatherings and timelines with striped outfits as though it's a new fashion trend, but be not deceived it is not – it's a fashion evolution from the women with old money.

The Evolution of classic Striped clothing

Fashion designers know better not to rid the old – something about the popular saying that ‘nothing new under the sun’, hence they stay in touch with the old and tweak it at the slightest opportunity or inspiration

just as they have done with the striped clothing for women in this era.

Rather than just stick to striped shirts and tops, two piece striped outfits paired with skirts and trousers, striped long, average and short gowns, stylishly designed blouses and shirts, etc. makes it to clothing stores in diverse attractive colours that suits and fits women of all shapes and colours perfectly.

The Beauty of Striped Outfits

.It highlights your skin tone

.It gives you an effortless elevated chic look

.It radiates luxury

.It is versatile – can be worn as both corporate and casual outfit depending on your overall styling.

NGO Deepens Youth Development With Vocational Training

THE Founder of Path to Possibilities, a UK-registered Charity Organisation, Titilolami Bello, has called for more investment in education and vocational training to equip young Nigerians with practical skills.

Bello made the call during the 10 years anniversary and graduation ceremony of beneficiaries of the organisation's tailoring programme at its resource centre at Ikota, Lekki, Lagos recently.

“We need to diversify education through vocational training and practical skills to engage more out of school children,” she said. “Government at all levels in the country must commit more funds to enhance education and vocational skills development.”

Bello believes that such investment would

reduce the growing number of out-of-school children in the country, noting that the country topped the chart of countries with the highest out-of-school children.

According to her, Path to Possibilities introduced tailoring training in 2025 to equip out-of-school

youths and secondary school graduates with employable skills and improve their economic opportunities.

“We are happy to graduate the first set of students, five in number from the tuition free 12 months training on tailoring,” she said.



One of the trainees receives her certificate from the foundation

Busayo Stylez: Redefining Beauty With Hair Solutions

By David Emokpae

IN today's world, confidence begins with looking and feeling your best.

Busayo Fausat Seriki, the lady behind Busayo Stylez, has become a trusted name for women seeking elegance, style, and confidence.

Renowned for delivering premium hair services, with the brand slogan, “Glow Naturally, Shine Uniquely,” the br is dedicated to helping every woman express her unique beauty through quality hair solutions and professional

styling services.

The business prides itself on offering premium services tailored to individual preferences while maintaining high standards

of quality, professionalism, and customer satisfaction.

According to the lady, “whether you need a glamorous look for a special occasion, a bridal hairstyle that leaves lasting memories, or a complete wig transformation, we remain the ideal destination for exceptional hair care and styling services.”

As the beauty industry continues to evolve, “the brand stands out by consistently delivering excellence and helping women embrace their beauty with confidence,” said Seriki.



‘Government Alone Cannot Solve Nigeria’s Mounting Challenges’— Bishop Otuya

THE Global Convener of Nigerian American Social Entrepreneurs Forum (NASEF), Bishop Priscilla Otuya, has said that: “Government alone cannot solve Nigeria’s mounting challenges of insecurity, unemployment, human trafficking, drug abuse and illegal migration.”

Speaking during the re-launch of the forum in Lagos, she described “enterprise as a key weapon against poverty and social vices in Nigeria and Africa.”

With the theme: “Fighting Poverty and Social Vices by Mobilising Enterprise for Global Good”, Otuya said government alone could not solve Nigeria’s mounting challenges of insecurity, unemployment, human trafficking, drug abuse and illegal migration.

“The time has come for every Nigerian to stop asking only what the government can do for us and begin to ask, “What can we do to help Nigeria?” she told dignitaries, diplomats, entrepreneurs and members of the press. “Nation building is a collective responsibility.”

Forum Repositioned as Global Enterprise Platform (NASEF), which is in collaboration with the KOGA Faith Foundation, Washington D.C., and SESS AFRICA (Social



Otuya

Enterprise Support Services Ltd.), will function as an international platform connecting entrepreneurs, investors, governments, development agencies, corporations and the African diaspora.

According to Otuya, the Forum will focus on business forums, investment summits, incubation programmes, mentorship, skills development and trade missions to create jobs and support women, youths and underserved communities across Nigeria, Africa and beyond.

“Social entrepreneurs are the hope of the nation,” she stated, adding that, “they identify society’s greatest challenges and create sus-

tainable business solutions that generate employment, restore dignity, build communities and transform lives.”*

NASEF also formally dedicated *News Nigeria USA* International as its official international media and strategic communications platform to promote enterprise, investment opportunities, diaspora engagement and social innovation.

Otuya, who is also President and Founder of KOGA Faith Foundation and the first female President of the United Gospel Churches Association of Nigeria, urged governments, the private sector, faith-based groups, financial institutions and Nigerians at home and abroad to join the movement.

New Leaders who were inaugurated are Dr Emeka Henry Obidi (Executive Director); Ms Gloria Izuogwu as Deputy Executive Director and Nene Kalu Mmaju as Director, Young African Female CEOs.

The event ended with prayers for Nigeria, the United States and the African continent.

The Nigerian American Social Entrepreneurs Forum is a global platform mobilizing entrepreneurship, innovation, investment and social enterprise for national transformation and global good.

ShortStory

The Great War Of Love! (1)

By Segun Durowaiye
(08055356855)

“COME here! Ireti,” Mrs. Mamora called her pretty daughter. “How much did Mallam Bature give you this time around?” “N5,000.00,” she replied. “He said I should come back for the remaining N5,000 around 6p.m.”

“Ha! Haa!! Haaa!!! My belly is filled with laughter! I’ll swindle this foolish Mallam of all his money! He wants to marry my lovely and beautiful daughter. I’ll use all the tricks in the book to milk him dry! Ha! Haa!! Haaa!!!” Mrs. Mamora giggled with laughter to the surprise and consternation of her beautiful daughter, Ireti.

For the past two years, it had been the habit of Mrs. Mamora to flatter and trick the Mallam to part with various sums of money as the occasion demanded. Mallam Bature was a successful trader who had a minimart very close to Mrs. Mamora’s house. Mrs. Mamora had the cunning and fraudulent habit of calling Ireti, her young beautiful daughter the ‘wife’ of Mallam Bature.

Everyday, when Ireti came back from school, she would send her to the Mallam and cajole him to part with some money. At times, Mrs. Mamora would follow her daughter to the Mallam’s shop. She was a round-faced and robust woman in her late 40’s.

“Your wife is about sitting for her examination at school,” she would say, “won’t you give her some money to take care of her educational and personal needs?”

“I’ll do anything for my wife,” Mallam Bature replied with smiles. “Take this N6,000. I hope this would make you happy.”

“Thank you very much Mallam Bature!” Mrs. Mamora would reply, “Won’t you say thank you to your husband, Ireti?”

“Oh, thank you so much Mallam Bature!” Ireti said, wondering why her mum was using her as bait to swindle the diligent and hardworking trader. Ireti was a 17-year-old girl, the only daughter of Mrs. Mamora. She was a very beautiful and innocent young girl. Her dad, Mr. Mamora was a retired civil servant. Mrs. Mamora was a caterer by profession. Ireti was now in her final class in the secondary school. She was a charming, pretty girl, and very witty. Her mum kept using

her to get extra money from Mallam Bature, contrary to her natural disposition and character. Being a young girl still under the supervision and tutelage of her parents, she would obey her mum and do her wish, but deep in her heart, she hated her mother’s ungodly moves because she knew her mum was reaping where she didn’t sow.

Mrs. Mamora was a society woman. She was, indeed, a Lagos socialite. All the money she could scrounge or filch out of the hardworking trader was used on frivolities and life’s vanities. She could buy expensive clothing materials worth several thousands of Naira. There was hardly any weekend she wouldn’t attend a party. Her love for parties was really passionate and crazy.

In her wardrobe were different brands of sophisticated clothing materials; ranging from the lace, the guinea brocade, damask, satin, just name it. She also had expensive jewellery like gold, silver and so on. She could buy a shoe worth N100,000 for a particular occasion. Her insatiable thirst for the good things of life made Mrs. Mamora trade her lovely daughter for money from the soft-spoken Mallam Bature. The Mallam was in his mid-30’s.

Whenever Mrs. Mamora celebrated her birthdays, she would flatter the tall and lanky Mallam to part with reasonable amount of money. She even made it a habit to grab some monies from Mallam Bature while feigning sickness.

“Go to your husband, tell him that his in-law is sick and at the hospital. Tell him to send me some money,” she would order Ireti.

“But mum, you’re hale and hearty, why do you have to bother Mallam Bature for nothing?” Ireti asked.

“Don’t ask your mum stupid questions, Ireti. Go and meet him and make sure he gives you worthwhile amount before leaving his shop,” Mrs. Mamora ordered.

“What’s the matter, Ireti?” Mallam Bature asked. “Is your mum okay?”

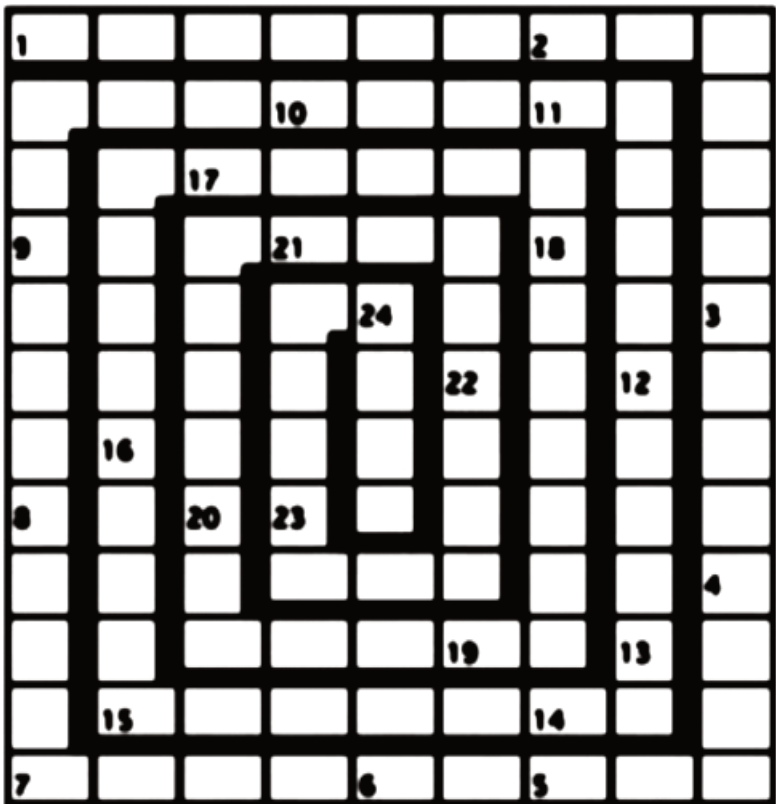
To be continued.
Interested sponsor/sponsors for this SHORT STORY column should please contact: 08023015115 or 08055356855.

Overlapping Word Game

with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
olulana3@yahoo.com

Solution

- 1 Obanliku
- 2 Kumquat
- 3 Toddle
- 4 Lettuce
- 5 Cede
- 6 Defile
- 7 Lemon
- 8 Njabal
- 9 Albasu
- 10 Udenu
- 11 Number
- 12 Recite
- 13 Test
- 14 Sterile
- 15 Lexus
- 16 Sapele
- 17 Engage
- 18 Educated
- 19 Disable
- 20 Legible
- 21 Letter
- 22 Erudite
- 23 Exile
- 24 Eket



Overlapping Word Game

- 1 Borno State capital, (9).

2 Expel urine, (7).

3 Local council in Akwa Ibom State, (6).

4 One that is different, (7).

5 Make mistake, (3).

6 Live somewhere, (6).

7 Lead somebody to choose, (6).

8 Cease something, (6).

9 Suffering from starvation, (7).

10 Able to be eaten, (6).

11 Spoiling fault, (7).

12 Holy place of worship, (6).
- 13 Orderly in appearance, (4).

14 Unbeliever in God, (7).

15 Whitish bony object in mouth, (5).

16 Need for liquid, (6).

17 Shake slightly but uncontrollably, (7).

18 Diplomats on mission, (8).

19 Take care of young thing, (7).

20 Remove impurities, (6).

21 Go in, (5).

22 Something left over, (7).

23 Machine for powering equipment, (6).

24 Immediately following, (4).

Word Search

Famous Cities in Africa

Tunis	Tunis	Tunis
Lome	Lome	Lome
Cairo	Cairo	Cairo
Dakar	Dakar	Dakar
Accra	Accra	Accra
Bangui	Bangui	Bangui

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

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Society

www.guardian.ng

Birthdays

ARURE, Elder John Owhigho, a Sickle Cell warrior and retired NEPA staff is 70.

Born into the family of the late Pa Stephen Onowhoeze Arure on June 27, 1956, he started his education at St. Luke's Primary School, now Atanaru Primary School, Uro-Irri, Delta State, in 1967. That same year, he moved to Lagos and attended Ansar-Ud-Deen Primary School, Arapagi-Oloko, Ibeju-Lekki, from 1967 to 1972.

He was admitted to Lofi Ogunmade College, Ejirin-Epe in 1973. Following a government directive and financial considerations, he returned home to complete his secondary education at Uro Grammar School, Uro-Irri,

from 1974 to 1977.

In 1978, he joined the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), later Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), and retired meritoriously on October 1, 1996.

After his retirement, in 2004, he founded and registered John Julie Marvelous Schools, a Nursery and Primary School, with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

In 2018, he established the Igba-otu New Dawn Multipurpose Cooperative Society, registered by the Lagos State Government, to empower members through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises. That same year, he also founded an NGO focused on Sickle Cell advocacy. The organisation educates youths on genotype awareness and prevention, working to elimi-



Arure

nate Sickle Cell challenges from our nation.

Described as a man of vision and compassion, Elder John has turned personal pain into collective praise by lifting others.

BAMIDELE, Michael Opeyemi, lawyer, human right activist, politician and



Bamidele

Majority Leader of the Senate will be 63 on July 29, 2026.

He was born on July 29, 1963 in Ilawe, Ekiti State. The 1986 University of Ife Philosophy and Religious Studies graduate also attended the University of Benin, Edo State, where he bagged the Bachelor of Law, in 1990 and crowned it with a Masters degree in Law in Intel-

lectual Property at the University of New Hampshire, USA in 1996, having been called to the Nigerian Bar in 1992.

He is the Principal Attorney and Head of Chambers of the Law Firm of Opeyemi Bamidele & Associates, with offices in Abuja and Lagos.

In June 1992, he contested in the primary elections to the House of Representatives, representing Oshodi/Isolo Federal Constituency in Lagos State under the platform of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), but lost.

He served as Special Assistant on Legal Matters to President Bola Tinubu till November 1993 as the Governor of Lagos State. In July 2000, he was appointed Senior Special Assistant on Political and Intergovernmental Relations to the Lagos State Governor.

He was later appointed Commissioner for Lagos State Ministry of Youth, Sports and Social Development during Tinubu's administration as Governor.

He was appointed in June 2016 to serve the 8th National Assembly in a professional capacity as a Consultant to the House of Representatives' Special Committee on the Review of the Nigerian Constitution,

He contested for the Senatorial seat to represent Ekiti Central Senatorial District in 2011, he won and was re-elected in 2015, 2019 and 2023 elections.

On July 4, 2023, he was elected the Majority Leader of the Upper Legislative House.

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

Events



Editor, *LEADERSHIP Saturday* and *LEADERSHIP Sunday*, Mr Olusola Fabiyi, his wife, Funke, during the Call to the Bar of their son, Temidayo, in Abuja ...on Tuesday.



Celebrant's family members: Amina Maiyaki (left); Fatima Maiyaki; Navy Commander Usman Y. Maiyaki (rt); Celebrant, Princess Omonike Maiyaki; Mariam and Hadiza Maiyaki during Princess Maiyaki's 60th birthday thanksgiving/retirement from the Nigeria Revenue Service at the Airforce Officers Mess, Victoria Island, Lagos



Dean, College of Law, Caleb University, Dr Gbenga Asaju (left); Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research Innovation Strategy and Administration, Prof. Adesola Ajayi; Vice Chancellor, Caleb University, Prof. Olalekan Asikhia; Deputy Registrar, Operations, Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria (ICSAN) Akudazie Ndughu; Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academics, Caleb University, Prof. Sunday Adewale; Director, Centre for Global Engagement, Non-Government and Industry Partnerships, Caleb University, Dr. Sophia Abiri-Franklin; Director, Special Programme, Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Lagos, Dr. Jide Johnson, during a press conference on the Journalism Outlook Conference and HR Space 2026, held at Caleb University, City Campus, off CMD Road, Magodo Lagos.



Rotary Int'l District 9111 Chairman, Public Image, Olalekan Otun (left); District 9111 Governor 2025-2026, Prince Henry Akinyele and District Governor 2026-2027, Bukola Bakare during the presentation of Public Image Excellence Award to Akinyele at Rotary Centre, Lagos.



National Treasurer, Chief Tobi Oduyale (left); Deputy President /Chairman of the Finance & General Purpose Committee, Mr. Ehi Braimah; National President/ Chairman of the Board of Director, Alhaji Sheriff Balogun; Chairperson, Membership Committee, Dr. Mary Ade-Fosudo, and Legal Adviser, Chuba Mbanefo, during the 65th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Nigerian-American Chamber of Commerce in Lagos ...recently.



Assistant Secretary, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Lagos State Council, Olayide Awosanya (left); Chairman, Media Games Committee, Ayo Ojedokun; Secretary, NUJ, Tunde Olalere; Council Manager, Olusegun Akinyemi; Executive Chairman, Amuwo Odofin Local Council, Prince Lanre Sanusi; Chairman, NUJ Lagos State Council, Adeleye Ajayi; Vice Chairman, NUJ Lagos Council, Philip Nwosu and member, Media Games Committee, Anulika Menaya during the decoration of Sanusi, as an NUJ Lagos Media Games Ambassador.



Customer Experience Consultant, HumanManager Ltd, Renee Julius-Polyn (left); Senior Lecturer, Department of Employment Relations and Human Resource Management, University of Lagos (UNILAG), Dr Ekwoada Onyinyechi; Senior Lecturer, same department, Dr Mariam Gbajumo-Sheriff; Lead, Brands and Marketing, HumanManager Ltd, Jerry Adeyeri, and Senior Lecturer, Dr Dayo Badejo during the HumanManager NextGen HR Initiative 2026, at the University of Lagos. PHOTO: MARVELLOUS OBASA

Sparkle Foundation Equips Over 1,000 Teachers With Practical Skills In Ogun State

By Opeyemi Babalola

NO fewer than 1,000 teachers were equipped with practical skills during the Sparkle Foundation and Alpha Global Teachers' Training Conference held across Ogun State. The group also called for greater investment in education in Nigeria, adding that it is a renewed purpose to transform learning outcomes in the state.

The conference, with the theme: "Teaching with Purpose: Equipping Educators and Raising Change Makers," reaffirmed the critical role teachers play in shaping future leaders and driving sustainable national development.

Delivering her speech, Ogun Deputy Governor of Ogun State, Mrs. Noimot Salako-Oyedele, commended the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

of Sparkle Foundation, Mrs. Olasimbo Ojuroye, and the CEO Alpha Global, Mrs. Caroline Popoola for their unwavering commitment to improving education and creating a platform that celebrates, encourages and equips teachers, particularly those serving children from less-privileged communities.

"I commend the CEO of Sparkle Foundation, Mrs. Olasimbo Ojuroye, for her passion for education and for creating this platform to celebrate, encourage and equip teachers, especially those working with children from less-privileged backgrounds," the deputy governor said. Salako-Oyedele encouraged teachers to continue viewing their profession as both a calling and a service to humanity, noting that every

leader, entrepreneur, professional and change maker once sat before a teacher.

Executive Chairman, Ogun State Universal Basic Education Board, Evangelist Joshua Olalekan Ifede/ Executive Director Bet9ja Foundation, Mrs. Ada Cuomo emphasised on teachers' empowerment as one of the most strategic in-

vestments any society could make.

Vice Principal, Green Springs School, Ikoyi, Mrs Omobola Odutayo, a facilitator, challenged educators to move beyond traditional teaching methods by creating classrooms that inspire creativity, critical thinking and lifelong learning.



Education Secretary, Shagamu LGEA, Apostle Okubote, Education Secretary Ikenne (LGEA), Odumusi Samuel, (left); Executive Director, Mrs Ada Cuomo; Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Alpha Global, Mrs. Caroline Popoola; Trustee, Sparkle Foundation, Mrs. Olabisi Omole; Vice Principal, Greensprings School, Mrs Omobola Odutayo; CEO, Sparkle Foundation, Mrs. Olasimbo Ojuroye; Founder, Friend of the Deaf Foundation, Mrs. Funmi Ogunro; Mrs Oyinlola Bukky Akande; Mr Tope Adenuga and NUT Vice Chairman, Ogun State Chapter, Mr. Femi Okulalu at the event



Deputy Executive Director of Nigerian American Social Entrepreneurs Forum (NASEF), Ms Gloria Opene - Izuogwu (left); Director, Forum Presidents and CEOs, Nene Kalu Mmaju; Global Convener of NASEF, Bishop Priscilla Otuya and Executive Director, Ambassador Henry Emeka Obidi at the re-launch of NASEF in Lagos ...recently.

From The Rector

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

Odedeji Urges Newly Installed Dean, Canons To Remain Focused, Undistracted

By Chris Irekamba

THE Bishop of Diocese of Lagos West Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Rt. Rev'd James Odedeji, has described the newly installed Dean of the Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral Church (AVMCC), Ikeja, Lagos, The Venerable Emmanuel Ariire Kolawole, as honest, dogged and respectful man, urging him to remain focused and undistracted.

The Bishop revealed this, last Sunday, at the inauguration, institution and induction of Venerable Kolawole as the seventh Dean of the Cathedral.

Held at AVMCC, Ikeja, the event witnessed the institution of other canons, including Rev'd Canons Tope Fashogbon; Innocent Okonkwo; Lekan Daramola; Samson Ogabi; Michael Fagbemi; Richard Oke and Ibikunle Opeyemi.

Speaking on the theme: "God Demands Total Obedience," Odedeji reminisced on his long-time relationship with the new Dean and his exemplary conduct, adding that the new Dean once became frustrated and wanted to resign from full-time ministry, the cleric said, but he counseled him and after that, he tore his resignation letter.

According to the Bishop, the

new Dean broke down in tears and later when he (Odedeji) became the Bishop, he made Venerable Kolawole acting Archdeacon of Egbe Archdeaconry and he transformed his parish.

"I did not know I was going to be a Bishop then. Less than a year later, I was elected Bishop and I appointed him acting Archdeacon of Egbe Archdea-

conry and God used him mightily to transform that place," Odedeji said.

The cleric said Venerable Kolawole's tremendous impact in ministry led to his present position, adding that he was subsequently posted to Archdeacon Ogunbiyi Memorial Anglican Church against all odds where, he said the new Dean remarkably

transformed the parish as well. Encouraging the congregants on the need to obey God in all things, Odedeji stressed that God demands total obedience from His servants, adding that these days people, including Christians, want to serve God on their own terms.

The truth, according to him, "is that for a follower of Christ, obedience is not an option. It is a

proof of a genuine relationship with God. It means allowing God's will to swallow our own will."

The Bishop, who argued that obedience cannot be forced, noted that it is not always easy to obey God because of the pressure of the flesh.

"We find it difficult to obey God because what He asks us to do sometimes may not align with

common sense. With God, one plus one may not be two. The Bible, however, makes us to understand that if we are willing and obedient, we will eat the good of the land," he said:

Odedeji noted that many find it difficult to obey God due fear of public opinion and persecution, citing the example of Pontius Pilate, who, despite finding no fault in Jesus, gave Him up to be crucified to please the crowd.

He, however, assured Christians that obedience to God is the ultimate pathway to greatness, especially when they obey God fully. He added that their place in His kingdom is guaranteed as well as fruitfulness in God's vineyard.

He identified various types of obedience, highlighting "uncommon obedience," which he noted Abraham demonstrated when God instructed him regarding his only child, Isaac.

Odedeji, who observed that many Nigerians are overly "title-centric," cautioned that, "What should matter more to you is the testimony of a changed life and the desire to make more impact in God's vineyard, not the title. As humans, we are rarely satisfied with titles; the quest is always there to acquire one after the other."



Wife of the Dean, Mrs Aderonke Kolawole (left); Bishop, Diocese of Lagos West, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Rt Rev'd (Dr) James Odedeji; and seventh Dean of the Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral, The Venerable Emmanuel Ariire Kolawole, during the Installation, Institution and Induction of the Dean, at AVMCC, GRA, Ikeja, Lagos... last Sunday.

Be A Fan And Not An Opponent

By Charles Ighele

ONE thing that every woman should understand and know as a fact is that every man wants to marry and live the rest of his life with a fan, a supporter and someone who cheers him up. Someone who will encourage him and help lift his spirit up when he's down. No man likes to marry and live the rest of his life with an opponent, an enemy, an antagonist, a villain, a discourager, an unrepentant critic, and opposition.

The advanced dictionary of English define a fan as "a person who admires somebody or something or enjoys watching or listening to somebody/something very much. While an opponent is defined as "a person who is against something and tries to change or stop it" while the second definition of an opponent is "a person that you are playing or fighting against in a game, competition or argument."

When as a wife you are constantly locked in argument with your husband then, you are portraying yourself as an opponent. When he makes a business mistake

and you keep taunting him because of that you are exhibiting the traits of an opponent. When you abuse him and don't give him the necessary regard that is expected of you, you are posing yourself as an enemy. You may want to ask "what if his actions or inactions will land the whole family in hot waters?" That is the more reason why you should not argue with him or insult him. Look for an appropriate time when he is very happy and maybe you have his head on your laps, you can then bring up the

matter for discussion. Or maybe after you have treated him to a nice amorous session, you can also bring up the matter and give your points as a suggestion and not as a final decision. You can also see your pastor for wise and godly counsel. You can also pray about the matter. The Bible says that the hearts of a king is in his hands.

As a fan (wife) when your husband's decision has brought problems to the home, you pat him on his back, encourage him and speak words of love to him. Let him know that you are both in the mess together. Make him know you will be with him throughout the trial period. Constantly remind him that you will both get out of that problem by God's grace. When you do this, you are fanning his ego and making him feel that he can conquer the world. What a FAN you are. Remember, every man needs a fan at home and not an opponent. Ask yourself now, am I a FAN or an OPPONENT? Love you!

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



Ighele

Pray For Us, South African Cleric Tells Muoka

By Chris Irekamba

ANIGERIAN-BASED cleric in South Africa and founder of Rock of Victory Ministries International, Johannesburg, South Africa, Reverend Francis Anosike, has appealed to the General Overseer of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries, Pastor Lazarus Muoka to pray for God's intervention in the ongoing crisis in South Africa.

Anosike, who has a flourishing ministry in South Africa made the appeal during an interview with journalists at the just-concluded biennial programme, titled: "...And The Enemies Submitted," organised by The Lord's Chosen



Reverend Francis Anosike, Senior Pastor and founder of Rock of Victory Ministries International, Johannesburg, South Africa

Charismatic Revival Ministries at its headquarters in Ijesha, Lagos. He said the situation in South Africa needed prayers and God's interven-

tion, hence he called on his spiritual father, and mentor, Pastor Lazarus Muoka to pray for them regarding the crisis in South Africa, where some Nigerians have been killed.

Anosike, whose ministry in South Africa spanned over two decades, exonerated the government of South Africa from what is happening but hinged the blame on political parties.

"I don't know what the Nigerian government wants to do about the situation. To me, we need to pray for that beautiful nation so that God will arrest every situation and that is why I'm calling on Daddy Lazarus Muoka to pray for us.



Wife, Director of Home Mission, Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, Pastor Mary Obialor (left); wife of FGC National Secretary, Rev. Sarah Alawode; former National President Foursquare Women International, Nigeria, Elder Gbemisola Ajayi; wife of the General Overseer, Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, Dr. Olabisi Aboyeji; National President, FWI, Elder Margaret Udoh; and Axis Coordinator Sango Otta, Rev. Yetunde Sodipo, at the grand finale of the weeklong yearly June Rally programme of the Foursquare Women International, Nigeria held at Ajebo, Ogun State.

Text: Philippians 2:5-8 (KJV): "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

THE greatest need of every believer in this generation is not merely to bear the name "Christian," but to truly live like Christ. Our world is filled with darkness, moral confusion, hatred, selfish ambition, pride and ungodliness. The pressure to conform to the world's standards has never been greater. Yet, amid this crooked and perverse generation, God is calling His people to be different. He is looking for men and women whose lives reflect the character, love, holiness, humility and obedience of Jesus Christ.

Christianity is more than attending church services, singing hymns or knowing Bible verses. It is the life of Christ being revealed in us every day. The true Christian is one whose thoughts, words, attitudes and actions resemble those of the Lord Jesus. People should be able to see Christ through our conduct.

Jesus Himself declared in John 13:15 (KJV): "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Christ did not simply come to save us from sin; He also came to show us how to live. His earthly life remains the perfect model for every believer.

Living a Christ-like lifestyle begins with genuine salvation. No one can imitate Christ by human effort alone. A sinful heart cannot produce a holy life. There must first be a transformation within. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV): "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." When Christ enters a person's life, He changes the heart, renews the mind and gives the power to live differently.

Many people desire the blessings of Christ without surrendering to His Lordship. They want heaven without holiness, forgiveness without repentance, and eternal life without obedience. But Jesus calls every disciple to deny self and follow Him. Luke 9:23 (KJV) says: "If any man will come after me, let him

Living A Christ-like Lifestyle In This World

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



deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Following Christ requires daily commitment. It is a deliberate decision to reject sin and embrace righteousness regardless of the cost.

A Christ-like lifestyle is marked by humility. Though Jesus is the Son of God, He humbled Himself and served others. He washed the feet of His disciples and associated with the poor, the rejected and the brokenhearted. Pride separates people from God, but humility draws us closer to Him. Every believer must learn to put others before self, seeking not personal glory, but the honour of God.

A Christ-like life is also a life of holiness. The Lord Jesus was without sin. Though He lived among sinners, He never participated in their sinful practices. Today, believers are surrounded by temptation through the media, the Internet, ungodly entertainment, corrupt friendships and worldly desires. Yet God still commands His people to live holy lives. 1 Peter 1:15-16 (KJV) says: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." Holiness is not old-fashioned; it is God's standard for every generation.

A Christ-like believer is filled with love. Jesus loved those who loved Him and those who hated Him. He prayed for those who crucified Him. His love was unconditional, sacrificial and forgiving. In a world filled with revenge, bitterness and division, believers are called to demonstrate genuine love. John 13:35 (KJV) declares: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Love is the unmistakable evidence of true discipleship.

Another mark of Christ's life was obedience. Jesus obeyed His Father completely, even when obedience led Him to the cross. He said in John 6:38 (KJV): "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Likewise, believers are called to obey God's Word whether it is convenient or difficult. Partial obe-

Forgiveness sets the heart free and reflects the mercy that God has shown us. Those who have received God's forgiveness should freely forgive others.

dience is still disobedience. The true Christ-like believer delights in doing God's will.

Living like Christ also requires forgiveness. Many people carry resentment, anger, and unforgiveness for years, but Christ teaches us a better way. As He hung upon the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Forgiveness sets the heart free and reflects the mercy that God has shown us. Those who have received God's forgiveness should freely forgive others.

Further, Christ lived a life of prayer. Before making important decisions, before performing miracles, and during times of great trial, Jesus prayed. His communion with the Father gave Him strength, wisdom and direction. A believer who neglects prayer cannot consistently live a Christ-like life. Prayer keeps us dependent upon God and enables us to overcome temptation.

Christ also lived for the salvation of souls. Everywhere He went, He sought to save the lost. He preached the kingdom of God, healed the brokenhearted and invited sinners to repentance. Every believer should possess this same burden for souls. Our lives should point people to Christ not only by our words, but also by our example. The world may refuse to read the Bible, but it is constantly reading the lives of Christians.

The Apostle Paul understood this truth when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:1 (KJV): "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." His confidence rested not in personal perfection, but in his sincere pursuit of Christ. Every Christian should strive to become an example worthy of imitation.

The present world will continue to oppose godly living. Those who choose righteousness may face ridicule, rejection or persecution. Jesus warned His followers in John 15:19 (KJV): "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world... therefore the world hateth you." Nevertheless, believers must remain faithful. Our citizenship is in heaven, and our goal is to please God rather than men.

The Holy Spirit is our helper in this journey. We cannot overcome the flesh by our own strength. As we yield ourselves daily to the Spirit of God, He produces His fruit within us—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. These qualities reveal the presence of Christ in our lives and distinguish us from the world around us.

Dear friend, examine your life today. Does your character resemble Christ? Do your words glorify Him? Are your relationships marked by love, forgiveness, humility and holiness? If someone observed your daily conduct, would they see Jesus in you? Christianity is not merely about outward appearance, but inward transformation. God desires a heart that is fully surrendered to Him.

If you have drifted away from the Lord, today is the day to return. If you have never truly given your life to Jesus Christ, do not delay. He died on the cross for your sins, rose again for your justification, and offers eternal life to all who repent and believe in Him. Acts 3:19 (KJV) says: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." His grace is sufficient to forgive every sin and to transform every life.

Let us determine, by the grace of God, to live as Christ lived. Let our homes reflect His love, our workplaces reflect His integrity, our speech reflect His truth, and our conduct reflect His holiness. The world desperately needs believers whose lives proclaim the gospel even before their lips speak it.

May it be said of us that we walked in the footsteps of our Saviour, shining as lights in a dark world until the day He comes again. May Christ be seen in us, honoured through us, and glorified by our lives. Amen!

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

Curses Resulting From Evil Dedication Vanished, Favour Follows After Prayer

MY name is Birildowu. I come from Auchi, but serves in Akure, Ondo State, as a pastor and police officer too. I joined The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries in 2014. My father died early, after his death, my mother carried us to a shrine and dedicated us there. Eventually, I joined the Nigeria Police in 2000, but since I joined police, there was nothing to show for it. There is no favour and no promotion. In fact, I was working like elephant, but eating like an ant; all because of the dedication to that shrine. I remember that, that shrine has a stream and there was this snake that was in that stream, every time I would be praying, I would see that snake crawling on my leg. I have visited several men of God, including Alfas to see

whether my problem would be solved all to no avail.

In 2004, I engaged in a three-day dry fasting and prayer, thinking that after that my problem would be solved, but all the effort was in futility. The night after my dry fasting, they gave me broom in my dream to be eating. In fact, I passed through hell. Time would not allow me to say all I passed through. But to God be the glory, I was watching cable one day and I saw the Lord's Chosen, oh! God of Chosen is so great.

I was invited here in 2014, that fateful day, G.O. preached on: 'Beware of the snares of sinners,' after the preaching, he began to pray and said, "you young man looking at me now, that python in your village, I curse it to die now in Jesus name..." After service, I went

home and in the night when I slept, I had a dream and I saw that snake burnt to ashes.

Immediately this snake died, I bought land, how the money came, I did not know. The same month I bought that land, my friend overseas, dashed me a car. Brethren, after the prayer of our G.O., all the curses in my life were broken. Today, I have built Chosen branch in my village. Today, favour has been my other name. Ooh, God of Chosen is wonder-working God. No power can withstand Him. May His name be glorified in Jesus' name.

I pray for our G.O. that he will fulfill his ministry most excellently well and at the end, heaven at last with all the Chosen members worldwide in Jesus' name... Amen!



Brother Romanus Njike (right) with Sister Nkechi Romanus Njike testifying and thanking God for blessing them with a baby girl after 17 years of childlessness at The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries, headquarters, in Ijesha, Lagos.

Be A Tool In God's Hand (2)

SOMETIMES, we encounter people who served God enthusiastically in many areas, but who have now grown cold feet towards God's work or have simply become misguided in the manner they approach their heavenly assignment. These may be individuals who delighted in bringing souls to Christ, blessing the church with their various talents, skills and abilities. When they abandon their duty post and run in the wrong direction, they become hirelings, serving only their personal interests.

They dishonour God's call on their lives by doing things that bring the church of Christ into disrepute. They are like the 'prodigal' Jonah, who, when sent on an errand by God, chose to run in the opposite direction. We must recognise and recover these runaway hirelings, for there is work for everyone to do in God's kingdom.

When hirelings flee from their duties, they expose the sheep under their care to the wolf; "and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep." Hirelings lack the stamina, courage and conviction to confront wolves. They cannot sacrifice or endure to achieve unity and spiritual development of God's people. Instead of confronting evil, they prioritise ease and personal gain, and forget that there are sinners to reach in their communities. Some of these hirelings, though workers and leaders in the church, are not able to influence anyone to repent,

but are busy causing sinners to remain in wickedness and "strengthen also the hands of evildoers."

Despite these, we must not abandon those who have strayed. We must be ready to correct, rebuke and encourage them to return to their duty posts. That way, "they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking." Although Jonah was a runaway prophet, God recovered and re-commissioned him. Like Jonah, believers who have deserted the Master's work may require chastisement and discipline, as these will ultimately, lead to their restoration.

Believers are selected, set apart and sanctified to reap the ready, ripened harvest by reaching out to those who continue to live independently of Christ, those who think that God is not concerned with their depraved and indulgent lifestyle, or those who are consumed by the pursuit of all the world has on offer now, with the hope that they would come to God at a more convenient time.

The harvest field is ripe and ready, and awaits our positive response. The spiritual state of the lost should spur us to compassion. Besides, we are instructed to, "pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Alongside preaching repentance, our duty is also to cast out devils and heal the sick, just as Christ commissioned the 12 disciples to do.

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor
W. F. Kumuyi



Instead of prioritising financial gain over lost souls, we should seek to save the lost, and occupy in Christ's commission until He returns. We must also seize the opportunity now to preach salvation to the lost and not allow any challenge to hinder us from performing our divine task. We should be serious with this assignment, so that, the Lord will not have controversy with us on the judgment day, when the regretful cry of unsaved souls would stand to condemn us before God.

• *Further reading (King James Version):* 2 Timothy 2:19-26; 2 Corinthians 6:16,17; 7:1; Hebrews 12:1,2,10,14; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Colossians 1:21-23,28,29; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 2 Timothy 2:20; John 10:12,13; Isaiah 56:10,11; Ezekiel 34:1,2,4; Jeremiah 23:13,14,4; Jonah 1:1-3; 2:7-10; 3:1-3; Acts 9:26-28; James 5:19,20; 2 Timothy 2:19-21; Matthew 9:36-38; 10:6-8; Luke 10:1,2; Mark 6:12,13; Jeremiah 5:24; 8:20-22; 12:5; 50:6; Luke 19:10,13; John 4:34-38.

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

Key Verse: Galatians 4:19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," (KJV).

PAUL'S plea in Galatians 4:19 is the cry of a heartbroken, loving pastor: "My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!" Paul spent his life sharing the gospel. He loved these believers deeply. Now, he watches them drift away from God's grace and fall into legalism. He does not yell at them. Instead, he goes to his knees in spiritual labour. He prays and pleads for them. His ultimate desire is not just that they attend church, but that they truly become like Jesus. The Christian life is meant to be a journey of growth. When the Apostle Paul planted the church in the region of Galatia, the believers started strong. They

That Christ Be Formed In You (5)

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: Galatians 4:8-20

trusted in Jesus, experienced the freedom of grace, and felt the joy of the Holy Spirit. But after Paul left, false teachers came in. They told the Galatians they needed to follow old rules and man-made laws to be truly saved. The believers began to believe these lies, stepping out of grace and right back into the chains of religion. When Paul heard the news, he was confused and deeply sad. He loved them like a parent loves a child.

In Galatians 4:19, Paul uses the heavy, agonising imagery of a mother giving birth to describe his emotional and spiritual pain. He is labouring in prayer all over again. His goal is clear: he wants Christ to be formed in them.

Salvation is just the beginning of the Christian journey, but it does not end there. When we



Amadi

are born again, we become new creation, but being a new creation does not mean we are instantly mature. Just like a physical baby must learn to walk, talk and grow, a new Christian must also grow up. Salvation is the start of a beautiful journey, not the finish line. Many Christians mistake

only believe that going to church or reading a Bible here and there is enough. But God wants to change our hearts. He wants the love, patience, and character of Jesus to shine through our everyday lives. Paul uses the Greek word "morphomai" when he talks about Christ being "formed" in us. This word means to develop into a specific shape or distinct form. It is like clay being moulded on a potter's wheel until it takes the shape the potter wants. The goal is to form us to look less like the world and more like Jesus every single day.

When Christ is truly formed in a believer, they act, talk and think like Him. Their inner faith matches their outer actions. Why did Paul have to go through the pain of spiritual childbirth a second time? This is because the Galatians had stopped looking at Jesus and started looking at a list of legal rules. Legalism—the belief that

we can make ourselves holy by following man-made rules; it is dangerous. Paul calls this a "deformed" spiritual state. He wants to pull them away from dead religious works and back to a living relationship with Jesus. Paul's anguish shows us the deep, loving heart of a true spiritual leader. He did not give up on the Galatians when they made mistakes. Instead, he laboured in prayer for them. Discipleship and spiritual growth are never passive. They require deep, agonising

and loving personal investment. True Pastors and mentors long for the people to reflect the nature of God. They stand by them, correct them in love and pray that Christ will be fully developed in their lives.

• *Today's nugget: Reflect the nature of Christ. Prayer: Lord help me walk in Your ways. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com, Rev. Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.*

Oyo Pupils, Teachers Abduction: Babcock University Schools Hold Special Fasting, Prayer For Their Safe Release

By Chris Irekamba

The Principal of Babcock University Schools, Ogba, Lagos, recently organised a special fasting and prayer programme for the safe release of pupils and teachers abducted by bandits in Yawota community in Oriire local council, Oyo State.

Speaking during the event, Principal, Elder Adeniran Adebayo, said that God's intervention is a major weapon and highly needed for the safe and speedy release of the children and their teachers.

Citing Psalm 46:1 and Psalms 50:15, Elder Adebayo explained that they have chosen to come before God in faith because they believe He will hear their petitions and bring comfort, protection and deliverance to the people.

"As we pray and fast, let us unite our hearts in faith, compassion and hope. May God grant wisdom to Nigerian armed forces and all those working for the release of these school children and teachers, strengthen their families and bring this situation to a joyful and peaceful end," he said.

The President of Lagos Mainland Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pastor Umezuruike Uchegbue, said: God is a dependable father and there is no problem He cannot solve.

He assured the management, staff and students of

the school that God will answer their prayers concerning the safe release of the abducted school children and teachers in Oriire, Oyo State.

Referring the Principal and his team Psalm 46:1 and Isaiah 41:10, he lamented the evil in the world, adding that God remains faithful with those who are in trouble and as such, he will surely rescue the school children and their teachers.

He also commended the management and staff of Babcock University Schools, Ogba for the special fasting and prayer session for the safe release of the school children and teachers.

The schools' Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Vice Chairman, Prince Oguegbulam Ejiofor, who was also present at the event, said that what happened in Oriire, Oyo State was an eye opener and called on the management of the school to beef up security within and around the school by taking proactive measures such as installing Close Circuit Television (CCTV) in the school premises.

Encouraging the school security personnel to be at their duty post at all times, and also to ensure that they scrutinise those coming into the school premises properly among others. He also prayed to God to intervene and deliver the children and their teachers.

Adoration (70)

The Benefits Of Adoration (cont)

THE ability to live triumphantly above changing circumstances comes from Christ's power flowing in and through you (v.13; see 1 Tim 6:8, note above). This ability does not come naturally, however; it must be learned through dependence on Christ.

4:10-14: Are you content in any circumstances you face? Paul knew how to be content whether he had plenty or whether he was in need. The secret was drawing on Christ's power for strength. Do you have great needs or are you discontented because you don't have what you want? Learn to rely on God's promises and Christ's power to help you be content. If you always want more, ask God to remove that desire and teach you contentment in every circumstance. He will supply all your needs, but in a way that he knows is best for you.

4:12, 13: Paul was content because he could see life from God's point of view. He focused on what he was supposed to do, not what he felt he should have. Paul had his priorities straight, and he was grateful for everything God had given him. Paul had detached himself from the nonessentials, so that, he could concentrate on the eternal. Often the desire for more or better possessions is really a longing to fill an empty place in a person's life. To what are you drawn when you feel empty inside? How can you find true contentment? The answer lies in your perspective, your priorities and your source of power.

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," (Phil 4:19).

We can trust God for always meeting our needs on earth. He

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus
Prof. Mercy Olumide



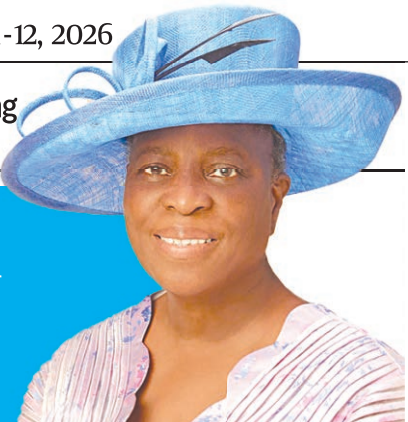
will always supply our needs, even if it is the courage to face death as Paul did. Whatever we need in heaven he will supply. We must remember, however, the difference between our wants and our needs. Most people want to feel good and avoid discomfort or pain. We may not get all that we want. By trusting in Christ, our attitudes and appetites can change from wanting everything to accepting his provision and power to live for him.

"Supply all your need." Paul emphasises the loving care of God, the Father, for His children. He will meet all your needs (material and spiritual) as you present them to Him. He will meet them "in Christ Jesus." Only in union with Christ and in His fellowship can we experience God's provision.

Among the many Scriptural promises that give hope and encouragement to God's people concerning His care and help are: Gen 28:15; 50:20; Ex 33:14; Deut 2:7; 32:7-14; 33:27; Josh 1:9; 1 Sam 7:12; 1 Ki 17:6,16; 2 Chr 20:17; Ps 18:35; 23:121; Is 25:4; 32:2; 40:11; 41:10; 43:1-2; 46:3-4; Joel 2:21-27; Mal 3:10; Mat 6:25,34; 14:20; 23:37; Luke 6:38; 12:7; 22:35; John 10:27-28; 17:11; Rom 8:28,31-39; 2 Tim 1:12; 4:18; 1 Pet 5:7)

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Celebrating A Life Of Service And Vision As Pastor Folu Adeboye Clocks 78



By Michael Omolewa

ON Monday, 13 July 2026, Pastor Folu Adeboye, the wife of Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), marks her 78th birthday. For more than five decades, she has been a beacon of



womanhood, embodying gentleness, kindness, thoughtfulness, and sensitivity, while tirelessly ensuring that no one is left behind.

A Heart of Hospitality

Pastor Folu Adeboye is renowned for her extraordinary gift of hospitality. Her husband fondly calls her a “born giver,” and her children recall her selflessness—even serving guests at the expense of her own family’s comfort. Visitors to Redemption City have experienced this generosity first-hand, welcomed with African attire and nourished with traditional delicacies such as pounded yams. During annual conventions, thousands are fed daily, with more than enough food for everyone.

Her hospitality extends beyond Redemption City. She has opened her home to stranded individuals, with testimonies of miracles follow-

ing such kindness. Even in moments of grief, she has shown compassion, as seen in 2014 when she accompanied her husband to comfort the family of Emeritus Professor J.F. Ade Ajayi, bringing food sufficient for an entire community.

Compassion in Action

Her generosity has inspired the establishment of maternity centres, health centres, and the Redeemer’s Health Village, a facility equipped with modern medical technology to serve those whose faith may need support. Guided by Matthew 25:34-35, she has devoted herself to caring for widows, orphans, the elderly, and vulnerable populations worldwide, living out the words: “For I was hungry, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in.”

Breaking Barriers in Ministry

Pastor Folu Adeboye made history as the first woman ordained as a Pastor in RCCG. Her ordination in 1975 was groundbreaking, and she prayed fervently for more women to be ordained. Today, women serve as missionaries and lead prayer meetings at RCCG’s Holy Ghost services, attended by thousands.

Her vision also inspired the *Feast of Esther*, a ministry that empowers women leaders, widows, and wives of General Overseers through prayer, study, and worship. Inspired by Queen Esther’s courage, the

programme underscores the indispensable role of women in spiritual and societal progress.

Global Influence and Recognition

Her missionary zeal extends through the Friends of Jesus (FOJ) network, broadening her impact worldwide. Despite her trail-blazing role, she prefers to work quietly behind the scenes, avoiding publicity while inspiring women to innovate and support their families. Her contributions have earned recognition locally and internationally, including her appointment as Chancellor of Caleb University.

A Legacy Worth Emulating

Pastor Folu Adeboye is a selfless visionary whose life of service continues to inspire generations. As she celebrates her 78th birthday, we honor her unwavering devotion to God, her compassion for humanity, and her commitment to advancing the role of women in society.

We wish her long life, good health, immeasurable joy, and continued abundance. Her legacy is one of faith, generosity, and leadership. It is a legacy worthy of emulation by women everywhere.

Michael Omolewa is Emeritus Professor at the University of Ibadan and President of the 32nd session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO.



At installation as Chancellor of Caleb University



Celebrating with her Friends of Jesus (FOJ) group



With women Christian leaders



Feast of Esther with women Christian leaders

Oba Lateef Adams’ Decade Of Service And Twists Of Royal Destiny

The relationship began with an audacious declaration in a London shop nearly 45 years ago. “You are my wife,” Lateef Adams told a woman he had just met, convinced, he said that God had revealed she was destined to become his life partner. Decades later, the couple not only built a successful fashion empire together but also found themselves occupying a royal throne neither had planned for. Their story is one of faith, perseverance, business success and an enduring commitment to improving the lives of people in Ikate Surulere. SULIYAT TELLA had a chat with Oba Lateef Adams as he and his Olori mark 10 years on the throne.

LONG before he became the Onikate of Ikate, Surulere, Oba Lateef Adams had already established himself as one of Nigeria’s leading fashion entrepreneurs. As founder and chairman of Latris Fashion, he built a reputation that took him from a modest upbringing in Lagos to the wardrobes of presidents, military rulers and business moguls. Yet, despite the prominence he attained in business, he insists that kingship was never part of his ambitions.

Born at Massey Hospital and raised in Isale Gangan, Lagos Island, Adams describes his childhood as one shaped by discipline rather than privilege. His father, a Nigerian Railway worker, ensured that all his children received an education despite the family’s modest means. Unknown to him at the time, his paternal lineage was royal, while he was only aware that his mother’s family in Sagamu, Ogun State, had royal roots.

The first hint of his royal destiny came while he was still in his 20s. During a visit to his mother’s hometown, she sought spiritual prayers for her son and was told that a crown rested upon his head. The prophecy meant little to him then. “I never knew my father came from a royal family. I simply continued with my life. I believed in hard work and wanted to build a good name for myself.”

That good name eventually came through fashion. Driven by his love for elegant dressing, Adams ventured into clothing design and textile importation after questioning why Nigerians depended heavily on imported fashion products.

“I was always known for dressing well. I kept asking myself why we should continue giving our money to foreigners for things we could produce ourselves.”

The decision proved transformative. Latris Fashion quickly became one of Nigeria’s most respected fashion houses, winning the *Daily Times* Fashion House of the Year Award around 1989/1990.

Over the years, Adams designed clothes for former military president Ibrahim Babangida, former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan, among several prominent Nigerians. The only former president he never dressed, he jokes, was Muhammadu Buhari.

His breakthrough into elite circles, however, came through a simple act of humility.

At a social function many years ago, Adams spotted the late Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale (MKO) Abiola among the guests. Rather than admire him from afar, the young entrepreneur introduced himself respectfully, identified himself as a fashion designer and handed over his business card.

“I recognised him immediately as someone I needed to meet. I approached him humbly, introduced myself and gave him my card. That was how our relationship started.”

That encounter blossomed into a lasting relationship, reinforcing what Adams now describes as his greatest business lesson.

“In business, you must never feel too big for your customers. Humility opens doors.”

His growing clientele also brought him into contact with other influential figures, including President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, relationships he said later became significant in his journey to the throne.

Despite the prophecy of kingship years earlier, Adams remained entirely focused on business until members of his ruling house approached him shortly before his 50th birthday. Initially, he declined.

Although family elders had already endorsed



his candidature, he questioned whether the community even had a proper palace and preferred to remain a Baale rather than embark on what appeared to be a difficult process.

His perspective changed during an encounter with Juju music legend, King Sunny Ade, and Oba Fatai Irawo of Odi Olowo Mushin at a social gathering.

“King Sunny Ade told me that remaining Baale would not take me far but becoming an Oba would place me in a much higher position. That conversation changed everything.”

Even then, the journey was anything but straightforward. Although there was no opposition to his nomination and the process passed through all statutory requirements, including publication without objection, it still took about a decade before he was finally crowned Onikate of Ikate Surulere.

Throughout the lengthy process, Adams said several influential individuals, particularly President Tinubu and former Lagos State Governor Babatunde Raji Fashola, encouraged him to persevere.

Ten years after ascending the throne, Adams believes the greatest measure of his reign lies not in titles but in the transformation of Ikate.

He recalled inheriting a community plagued by insecurity, with notorious area boys making movement difficult for residents.

One of his earliest actions was to petition gov-

ernment authorities, leading to security interventions while also working with members of the Oodua People’s Congress to restore peace. “Today people can move freely. There is peace.”

Infrastructure has also improved considerably during his reign. Roads that were once nearly impassable have been rehabilitated, developments he says have significantly increased property values across the community.

He also revealed that there had been many empowerment programmes executed by him to make the people within his kingdom happy. He was quick to point out that many of the interventions that resulted in the distribution of food items were funded personally.

“I don’t wait for government. I spend my own money because a king must ensure his people benefit from his reign.”

That philosophy is shaping activities marking his 10th coronation anniversary. Rather than distribute food items alone, Adams and his wife are providing industrial sewing machines, grinding machines, salon dryers, deep freezers and financial support for aspiring sachet water entrepreneurs.

“We want to give people tools to earn a living,

not just temporary relief.”

The idea, however, came largely from his wife, Olori Risikat Adams. For her, sustainable empowerment offers greater dignity than one-off donations. “I told my husband that after 10 years, we should give people something that would change their lives permanently,” she said.

To identify beneficiaries, she personally visited businesses and households across Ikate. One encounter left a lasting impression. She met a young tailor who had completed his apprenticeship three years earlier but remained unable to purchase an industrial sewing machine after losing his mother.

“When I told him we would provide one, he burst into tears. That confirmed we were doing the right thing.”

Her commitment to the project reflects the same values that have defined their marriage for over four decades.

Their love story began unexpectedly in London nearly 45 years ago. She had entered a shop on Liverpool Street when she greeted a mutual acquaintance who happened to be with Adams. She barely noticed him.

Later that day, she was surprised to learn that a man had come looking for her. When she opened the door, Adams looked at her and declared with remarkable confidence: “You are my wife.”

“I asked him, ‘Whose wife?’” she recalled with laughter. He explained that the moment he saw her, he believed God had revealed she would become his wife.

Although she initially dismissed the claim, Adams remained persistent. After both returned to Nigeria, he traced her to her residence on Glover Road in Ikoyi, where their courtship truly began.

Nearly 45 years later, she describes their marriage as one built on faith, responsibility and unwavering support.

She said her husband has always been deeply devoted to his family. She remembered discouraging him from driving to the airport in the early hours of the morning to receive their children arriving from London.

“He refused. He said he must personally bring his children home.”

She also credits his strong Islamic faith, describing him as a devout Muslim who prays five times daily and whose compassion extends naturally to others.

When the opportunity for kingship emerged, she never hesitated. “If people wanted him to lead them, it meant they saw something good in him. I supported him completely.”

Despite becoming queen, Olori Adams said little has changed about her personal life. She continues to manage Latris Fabrics, the textile business she and her husband built together more than 40 years ago, maintaining close relationships with loyal customers while still visiting the market herself to select fabrics.

She has also retained the friendships she cherished

King Sunny Ade told me that remaining Baale would not take me far but becoming an Oba would place me in a much higher position. That conversation changed everything.

before entering the palace.

“I don’t believe becoming queen should make someone proud.” Nor has palace life prevented her from caring personally for her husband.

Although the palace employs a chef, she insists on preparing his meals herself. “I’m the one who knows what is good for his health,” she said. “I monitor his medication, remind him to rest and make sure he eats properly.”

His favourite meal, she revealed with a smile, is a simple plate of well-cooked beans.

For Oba Adams, the journey from fashion entrepreneur to traditional ruler has reinforced a philosophy that has remained constant throughout his life: humility, hard work and service to others.

Whether approaching MKO Abiola with a business card decades ago, building one of Nigeria’s foremost fashion brands, accepting a crown he never sought or investing personal resources in community development, he believes the same principle applies.

“When God blesses you, remain humble. That is what opens doors and allows you to touch other people’s lives.”



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America At 250: The Republic That Mistook Itself For An Empire



By Tim Akano

ON July 4, 1776, fifty-six strong men signed their names to a proposition so audacious it still reads like heresy: that government exists by the consent of the governed, not the grace of kings. It was not simply a nation being born. It was a wager — that liberty, codified in law rather than bestowed by bloodline, could outlast every empire that mocked it as naïve. That was an idea, an experiment and a promise. However, the expectations, inspirations and aspirations of 1776 have turned to complications, frustration and exasperation of 2026. The drafters of the American constitution will be turning in their grave today, asking what happened, where and when did rain start beating America from.

For 250 years the wager has been paid out in instalments — sometimes in the coin of Gettysburg and Selma, sometimes in the coin of Hiroshima and Baghdad. Today, on the eve of the 250th anniversary, the house is not certain it will win the next round. This is not decline dressed as drama. It is arithmetic. And arithmetic, unlike patriotism, does not negotiate.

Country, Empire, or Idea?

America has always been three things wearing one flag. As a country, it is a federation of fifty quarrelsome states bound by a document older than the steam engine. As an empire, it maintains military installations in roughly eighty nations, prices the world's oil and its own debt in a currency every central bank must hold, and fields the closest thing history has produced to a global police force. But as an idea, America is stateless. It lives wherever a Nigerian undergraduate memorises the First Amendment for a debate competition, wherever a dissident in Minsk, Manila or Tehran invokes "we the people" against their own government. Rome had legions. America had legions and a story — and it is the story, not the legions, that made the empire different from every one that came before it. The tragedy unfolding in real time is that the legions are still funded while the story is being defunded, quietly, by cynicism at home and hypocrisy abroad.

The Outgoing Class Captain

In 1945 America inherited a planet in ruins and did something no hegemon before it had ever attempted: it rebuilt its enemies rather than enslaving them. The Marshall Plan poured the equivalent of hundreds of billions of today's dollars into a shattered Germany and a humiliated Japan — not out of charity, but out of a cold calculation that prosperous, democratic former enemies were cheaper to manage than occupied, resentful ones. It worked spectacularly. Germans stayed in Germany. Japanese stayed in Japan. Both became pillars of the very order that had just finished defeating them.

Layer onto this the slow strangulation of the Soviet Union — not through a single decisive battle, but through an arms race Moscow could not sustain and a consumer culture it could never out-produce — and you have the full architecture of American primacy by 1991: the dollar, the ballot box, and Coca-Cola, exported as one inseparable package. Democracy, human rights and the rule of law were not just ideals. They were merchandise, and for half a century the whole world was the customer.

But empires are never judged by their brochures; they are judged by their receipts. In Congo, Patrice Lumumba — Africa's most promising post-colonial mind — was deposed and murdered with Washington's fingerprints on the plot, replaced by a kleptocrat the West found easier to manage. In Chile, in Guatemala, in Iran in 1953, sovereignty was treated as negotiable the moment it inconvenienced American commercial or strategic interests. Democracy was the export; democracy was also the first thing sacrificed when a foreign election produced the wrong winner.

And then came the wars that could not be won. Vietnam, sold as a domino that had to be stopped, ended in helicopters lifting off a Saigon rooftop. Iraq, sold as weapons that were never found, unleashed a sectarian wound still bleeding across the region. Afghanistan, the longest war in American history, ended exactly where it began — the Taliban back in the palace, twenty years and two trillion dollars later. Each war was launched

with certainty and buried in retreat. Each was proof that firepower can conquer territory but cannot manufacture legitimacy. Rome did not collapse in a single battle either — it fell by overextending faster than it could ever administer what it had already seized. An empire that can no longer distinguish between a war it should fight and a war it merely can fight is an empire already counting down its own clock.

The Middle East Wager

Nowhere is the American contradiction more theatrical than in the Middle East. Washington chose Israel as a permanent civilisational and strategic commitment while simultaneously courting the Sunni Gulf monarchies with arms deals, security umbrellas and quiet arrangements — a policy of engineered ambiguity that has kept the entire region dependent on American arbitration for seventy years. The Abraham Accords were the high-water mark of that formula: peace purchased through parallel bilateral deals rather than resolved through the harder, slower work of justice for Palestinians. Will America one day abandon Israel for Tehran? That is the wrong question, the question of people still thinking in Cold War binaries. The right question is whether a multipolar world — one less dependent on American security guarantees, more comfortable settling disputes through Beijing or Riyadh or its own regional balance of power — will simply stop asking Washington's permission at all. Ambiguity was a masterstroke when America was the only adult in the room. It becomes a liability the moment other adults arrive.

The Twilight Variables

Now the harder arithmetic — the numbers the elites in Washington quote in private and rarely in public. A world quietly de-dollarising, settling trade in yuan, rupee and dirham, building alternative payment rails that route around Western sanctions entirely. A China that no longer merely assembles the world's phones but increasingly designs the chips inside them, and has stitched close to seventy nations into its Belt and Road Initiative, offering roads, ports and power plants without the moral home-

work Washington always attached to its aid cheques. A Europe that is wealthy but strategically hollow — its factories dependent on Chinese components, its winters until recently dependent on Russian gas, a legacy partner too divided to lead and too proud to simply follow. This is not the coalition that won the Cold War. This is a coalition negotiating the terms of its own irrelevance.

Trumpism, whatever else history decides it was, is the sound of an empire's domestic base insisting it can no longer afford to police a world it built for someone else's benefit. "America First" may be less an aberration in the timeline than a preview of the next fifty years — a retreat into fortress-nationalism dressed as renewal. And inside the country itself, a demographic transition is arriving on schedule: by 2041, the Caucasian population becomes a plurality rather than a majority. Whether this is absorbed as renewal or resisted as loss will shape more of America's next half-century than any foreign policy white paper ever could. A nation unable to resolve who it is at home cannot convincingly sell who it is abroad. Talk of a second civil war is overwrought theatre for cable news. Talk of a second Reconstruction — a slow, contested, sometimes violent renegotiation of the American bargain — is not overwrought at all. It is already underway.

Taiwan looms over all of it as the test case that answers every other question at once. If Beijing takes the island by force and Washington's guarantees prove to be theatre, the story America has sold since 1945 collapses in a single afternoon — and every treaty ally from Warsaw to Seoul to Manila recalculates its assumptions before the smoke clears.

What Rome Did Not Have

Here is precisely where the Rome analogy breaks down, and where hope, cautiously, re-enters the essay. Rome had no rival civilisation offering a competing operating system for the world — it simply exhausted itself from the inside, with no outside alternative pulling loyalty away. America faces something Rome never had to face: a challenger offering a genuinely different model of order, one that trades individual liberty for collective efficiency, and finds no shortage of willing customers among nations exhausted by lectures on human rights that were never followed by real investment.

To remain sole captain — or to accept co-captaincy with grace rather than resentment — America does not need more wars, more coups, or more ambiguity dressed as strategy. It needs to re-earn the story it has been coasting on since 1945: rebuild the middle class that makes democracy credible to its own citizens before exporting it to anyone else's; re-anchor its alliances on mutual interest rather than Cold War nostalgia; and compete for the loyalty of the Global South with capital, technology transfer and respect, not ultimatums, sanctions and sermons.

The Founders' wager, on that humid Philadelphia afternoon in 1776, was that consent could outlast conquest — that an idea, properly tended, could outlive any empire built to defend it. Two hundred and fifty years later, the only question that actually matters is whether America still believes that wager about itself.

The world is watching to see if the Republic remembers the difference between being feared and being believed. Bing loved, is not even on the table.

Here's Wishing USA, a happy birthday anniversary

• **Tim Akano** is Founder and CEO of New Horizons Africa Group and convener of One Africa Initiatives and Founder, Al-majiri-to-Tech Foundation. [a](#)

Interview

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Orthodox, Complementary Medicine Should

Afolabi Samuel Coker is the Medical Director of Wellness Path Clinic and a complementary and alternative medicine practitioner. In this interview with MOYOSORE SALAMI, he speaks about his journey into complementary medicine, the need for orthodox and complementary medicine to work together, cancer care, preventive healthcare, regulation of the sector and the role of faith in healing.

You have spent decades across healthcare, academia and ministry. What inspired your journey into complementary and integrative medicine?

My journey into complementary and integrative medicine started with a personal experience in 2002. My mother, who turned 91 on April 30, 2026, was diagnosed with breast cancer that had progressed to about Stage 3 and was almost getting to Stage 4. At the time, we were told at the hospital that except for surgery, she had only a few months to live.

My daughter later took her to a naturopath in Ilorin, who prepared some herbal concoctions. There were no incantations or anything of that nature. According to our experience, she recovered from the illness. That made me curious about complementary medicine and the role it could play in healthcare.

Although I had always been interested, my work in ministry limited my exposure to the field. But the passion remained. I started visiting a professor at Covenant University who had knowledge of complementary medicine. I learnt from him, took notes and continued my personal research.

Eventually, I was inspired to write my book, *I Choose to Live*, which is based on more than 20 years of my experiences and observations in naturopathic practice. After that, I went for formal training, both online and physically. I obtained my licence from the Lagos State Traditional Medicine Board, joined several professional associations within and outside Nigeria, and also underwent attachments and internships. From there, the practice started gradually, and today, by the grace of God, here we are.

You have a special interest in cancer management. What drew you to this area and what gaps do you see in cancer care in Nigeria?

Cancer has become a major health challenge in Nigeria. We see increasing cases of prostate cancer, cervical cancer, breast cancer, retinoblastoma, especially in children, and many other types of cancer.

My interest in cancer management grew from both personal experiences and the training I later received in complementary medicine. Through my work at Wellness Path Clinic, I have encountered many patients seeking alternative or complementary approaches to treatment after receiving difficult diagnoses.

To the glory of

God and what I have learnt over the years, we have managed a number of cancer cases at Wellness Path Clinic.

I always say doctors provide care, but God heals. To the glory of God, we have not recorded any death among the cancer patients we have managed, and we have had some cases where patients later received clinical reports showing no detectable cancer cells.

One of the biggest challenges in Nigeria is late presentation. Many people don't go for medical check-ups or screening until the disease has reached an advanced stage. By then, treatment becomes more difficult. That is why I believe there should be more awareness about cancer, more emphasis on early detection, and better collaboration between orthodox and complementary medicine. When patients present early and receive the right support, their chances of a better outcome are much higher.

How would you define integrative medicine, and what role should it play within Nigeria's healthcare system?

Integrative medicine is about bringing orthodox medicine and complementary medicine together to work for the benefit of patients. Unfortunately, there is what I would call an unspoken rivalry between practitioners of orthodox medicine and those in complementary and alternative medicine. In my opinion, both are doing well in their different areas, but they should not see themselves as competitors.

In naturopathic medicine, we do not see cancer as a death sentence. Like orthodox medicine, we believe early detection is very important because it gives patients a better chance of recovery. We also encourage people to go for proper diagnosis and medical tests before any treatment.

I belong to the Association of Integrative Medicine Practitioners because I believe both systems should complement each other. Our approach is holistic. We don't just look at one disease or one part of the body; we look at the overall health of the patient.

Treatment may involve nutritional support, herbal capsules, decoctions, tinctures and other complementary therapies. We also pay attention to protecting vital organs such as the liver and kidneys, while treatment is ongoing.

Over the years, we have seen encouraging results in patients who had been told there was little hope. That is why I believe orthodox and complementary medicine should work together.

We are not saying people should abandon orthodox treatment. Rather, we believe complementary medicine has a role to play in

There is what I would describe as an unspoken rivalry between practitioners of orthodox medicine and those in complementary and alternative medicine. In my view, both have important roles to play, and they should not see themselves as competitors.

supporting patients and improving their overall wellbeing. The challenge is that many people still think herbal medicine is about picking leaves from the bush and mixing them together without any standard. That may have been the practice years ago, but things have changed. Today, many herbal products are processed and produced as capsules, tinctures and other preparations, just like conventional medicines. If you see some of them on the shelf, you may not even know they are herbal products. That is why I believe Nigeria's healthcare system should create room for both orthodox and complementary medicine to work together, with proper regulation, professional standards and mutual respect. At the end of the day, the goal should be to give patients the best possible care.

There's growing interest in natural therapies for serious illnesses. How can complementary medicine support patients living with cancer and other life-threatening conditions alongside conventional treatment?

There is what I would describe as an unspoken rivalry between practitioners of orthodox medicine and those in complementary and alternative medicine. In my view, both have important roles to play, and they should not see themselves as competitors.

In naturopathic and complementary medicine, we do not see cancer as a death sentence. Like orthodox medicine, we believe early detection is very important because it gives patients a better chance of recovery. Our role is to complement, not replace, orthodox care. That is why I belong to the Association of Integrative Medicine Practitioners, which promotes collaboration between conventional and complementary medicine.

Our approach is holistic. We do not focus only on the affected organ; we look at the patient's overall health. Treatment may involve nutritional support, herbal capsules, tinctures and decoctions, alongside therapies aimed at supporting the body's natural healing process. We also pay attention to protecting vital organs such as the liver and kidneys while treatment is ongoing.

Over the years, by the grace of God, we have seen encouraging results among patients who had previously been told there was little hope. We are not saying people should abandon orthodox medicine or treatments such as chemotherapy. Rather, we believe complementary medicine can support patients and improve their overall health during treatment.

One challenge is that many people still see herbal medicine the way it was practised many years ago. They assume herbal remedies are simply leaves mixed together without proper measurement. That is no longer the case in many modern naturopathic practices.

Today, many herbal products are processed with modern technology and produced as capsules, tinctures and other dosage forms. If you see some of them on the shelf, you may even think they are conventional medicines.

Many conventional medicines are derived from plants, which shows the value of natural products. The important thing is that complementary medicine should be practised by trained and licensed practitioners, with proper regulation and patient safety as the priority.

Wellness Path Clinic places strong emphasis on prevention. Why do you think preventive healthcare remains under-utilised in Nigeria despite the rising burden of chronic disease?

Preventive medicine is very important. As we always say, prevention is better than cure, and it is always cheaper to prevent illness than to treat it.

One of the major challenges in Nigeria is poor health education. Many people are influenced by religious beliefs, cultural



Coker

Interview

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Work Together, Not Compete – Coker

practices and misconceptions about traditional and complementary medicine. For instance, some people have been told that acupuncture is demonic, which I don't agree with. I believe that comes from a lack of knowledge and exposure to modern complementary medicine.

If you look at countries like China and India, traditional medicine has gone very far. Chinese medicine and Ayurveda are well established, while in Germany, integrative medicine allows orthodox and complementary medicine to work together, even in some hospitals.

Another challenge is that Nigerians generally do not take preventive healthcare seriously. In many developed countries, before you can even get life insurance, you undergo a comprehensive medical examination. With your consent, the medical report is sent to the insurance company so they can properly assess your health status. In Nigeria, once you pay for the policy, that is often all that matters. We don't place enough emphasis on preventive health checks.

Many people are afraid of going for routine medical tests because they don't want to discover that something is wrong. They would rather wait until they break down before seeking medical attention.

Take prostate enlargement and prostate cancer, for example. Men from about the age of 40 should check their prostate regularly, but many don't. The same applies to women. Regular breast examinations and cervical screening can help detect disease early, but many people wait until symptoms become serious.

The same thing happens with hypertension and other heart-related conditions. People talk about sudden death, but many of these cases could be prevented through regular medical check-ups and proper health management. The economic situation also contributes to the problem. With poverty and the rising cost of living, many people focus on meeting their daily needs. As long as they can still work, they assume they are healthy without paying attention to what may be happening inside their bodies.

That is why I believe we need more health education. People need to understand the importance of routine medical check-ups, healthy eating, healthy living and early detection. Prevention should become part of our lifestyle rather than something we think about only after illness develops.

Many patients turn to alternative remedies after a difficult diagnosis. What advice do you give people considering complementary therapies for cancer, and how do you make sure that advice isn't mistaken for a substitute for oncology care?

The World Health Organisation has documented that a large percentage of the world's population uses traditional, complementary and alternative medicine. That shows there is growing interest in these approaches. Nevertheless, we are not in competition with orthodox medicine. We complement it.

My advice to every patient is to first go for proper medical tests. Take cancer, for example. We encourage patients to carry out the necessary investigations, including conventional tests such as the carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA) test where necessary, so that we know the nature and extent of the condition. In our practice, we also use NLS as part of our assessment because it gives us a clearer picture of the body's condition. But we don't tell people to ignore conventional diagnosis. Proper investigation comes first before any treatment. Just as you won't treat a patient without checking the person's blood pressure, you shouldn't recommend herbs without first knowing the person's health condition. Some herbs may not be suitable for people with low blood pressure, while others may not be suitable for people with hypertension. That is why people should avoid self-medication, even when it comes to herbal remedies.

The media also has a major role to play in educating the public because many people simply don't know these things. The more people understand complementary medicine, the better informed they will be when making decisions about their health.

Another challenge is the perception that complementary medicine is not properly regulated or practised professionally. Yet many practitioners today have formal training, belong to recognised professional associations and are licensed to practise.

If you look at countries like Ghana, they have made greater progress in developing complementary and traditional medicine. I believe Nigeria can also move in that direction through better regulation, greater awareness and more collaboration between orthodox and complementary medicine.

At Wellness Path Clinic, we combine herbal medicine, acupuncture, acupressure and other complementary therapies as part of our approach. Our goal is to support the patient's overall health while working alongside orthodox medicine, not against it.

As a practitioner recognised by Lagos State and affiliated with several professional bodies, how important is regulation in building credibility and ensuring patient safety in the alternative medicine sector?

Regulation is very important because every profession has genuine practitioners as well as quacks. It is not peculiar to complementary medicine. You have quack engineers, fake lawyers and unqualified people in many professions. That is why regulation is necessary.

I must commend the Lagos State Government because it has put a regulatory system in place. If you practise as a traditional, naturopathic or complementary medicine practitioner in Lagos without being licensed by the Lagos State Traditional Medicine Board and you are caught, you risk a fine of up to N1 million or imprisonment. That has helped to improve standards in the profession.

As practitioners, we are required to register every year. Apart from registering personally, we also register our facilities annually. If you fail to do that, there are sanctions. Those measures are there to ensure that practitioners operate within the law and maintain professional standards.

Training is also very important. You cannot practise medicine without continuous learning. I have undergone training in different institutions, both online and physically, and I am currently pursuing a doctorate in complementary and alternative medicine. In this profession, you must continue to study because knowledge keeps evolving.

I am also a member of several professional bodies, including the Association of Integrative Medicine Practitioners, the Nigerian Council of Physicians of Natural Medicine and the Nigerian Association of Traditional Medicine Practitioners. I am also recognised by the Federal Ministry of Health as a traditional medicine practitioner.

Patient safety must always come first. You cannot afford to be careless with people's lives. That is why proper training, regulation and continuous education are essential. They help to separate qualified practitioners from quacks and also give the public more confidence in the profession.

You also serve as a ministry leader. How do faith and spirituality intersect with your understanding of healing and recovery?

I have been in ministry for many years. I was ordained as a pastor on November 23, 1991, after serving as a deacon for about two years. Today, I serve as the General Overseer of a ministry with a prophetic outreach and a strong emphasis on faith.

For me, faith and healing go together. When you study the Bible carefully, you will find many references to the use of herbs. From Genesis to Revelation, there are several passages that speak about natural remedies. I believe God has provided everything we need in nature for our wellbeing.

The same applies to Islam. The Hadith also contains teachings on medicine and the use of herbs. Islamic medicine has developed over the years, just as Chinese medicine has. Across different traditions, there is recognition that nature has a role to play in health and healing.

One of the challenges we have in Africa is the effect of colonialism. Many of us were made to believe that everything foreign is better, while anything African or traditional is demonic. I used to think that way myself, but my studies and experience have changed my perspective.

I believe many herbs and plants have medicinal value. The important thing is that they should be properly studied, standardised and used responsibly. We shouldn't dismiss them simply because they are natural.

Take acupuncture, for example. We have seen it used to support people living with conditions such as arthritis, hypertension and infertility. It is one of the therapies we use as part of a holistic approach to patient care.

Ultimately, I believe healing comes from God. Healthcare practitioners provide care, but God is the one who heals. My faith influences the way I approach my work, but I also believe that knowledge, research, proper training and responsible practice are essential in caring for patients.

Looking ahead, what's your vision for the future of integrative and naturopathic medicine in Nigeria, particularly in cancer care and chronic disease management?

I look forward to a time, and I don't think it is too far away, when complementary and traditional medicine will no longer be seen as an alternative but will be properly integrated into Nigeria's healthcare system.

I would like to see a situation where orthodox medicine and complementary medicine work side by side. For example, in a general hospital, you can have orthodox medicine in one unit and complementary medicine in another, with both working together and referring patients where necessary. There should be no unhealthy rivalry or sentiment. At the end of the day, what matters is saving lives.

The government has a major role to play. It should create the right policies and provide the necessary support for complementary medicine to grow under proper regulation. That will make these services more accessible and ensure that qualified practitioners are recognised.



Coker

We don't place enough emphasis on preventive health checks. Many people are afraid of going for routine medical tests because they don't want to discover that something is wrong. They would rather wait until they break down before seeking medical attention.

From Muhammad Gazali Garba, Sokoto

THE Minister of Defence, General Christopher Gwabin Musa (rtd) on Wednesday, July 8, 2026, commissioned 62 operational vehicles, 320 motorcycles and other high-tech security equipment valued at ₦27.6 billion, procured by the Sokoto State government to strengthen the fight against insecurity and consolidate peace across the state.

The security assets include operational vehicles, Buffalo Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs), bullet-resistant vehicles, motorcycles, bulletproof helmets and vests, night-vision devices, thermal imaging equipment, security kits and other advanced tools designed to enhance intelligence gathering, improve operational mobility and strengthen the capacity of security agencies to combat banditry, terrorism, kidnapping and other violent crimes. Speaking at the commissioning ceremony held at Giginya Memorial Stadium, Sokoto, Governor Ahmed Aliyu said the state's proximity to Zamfara and Katsina states, as well as the Republic of Niger, has exposed parts of Sokoto, particularly communities in the eastern corridor, to persistent security threats.

He said this informed his administration's decision to accord the security sector top priority immediately after assuming office by providing all necessary support to security agencies to effectively tackle banditry and other criminal activities.

Governor Aliyu recalled that upon assuming office, his administration procured and distributed more than 200 patrol vehicles and over 250 motorcycles to security agencies across the state.

He added that the government also restored and increased monthly allowances for security personnel serving in frontline communities and established the Sokoto State Community Guard Corps, which has been equipped with 40 Hilux operational vehicles and 700 motorcycles.

He further stated that his administration constructed military barracks in Illela and a Mobile Police Barrack in Tangaza Local Council, operationalised the Nigerian Air Force Base in Sokoto, enhanced the communication and surveillance capabilities of the Department of State Services (DSS), and provided housing units for security personnel as part of efforts to improve wel-



Sokoto Reinforces Fight Against Insecurity As Minister Commissions Vehicles, Equipment Worth ₦27.6b

fare and operational efficiency.

The governor also disclosed that the state government supplied operational vehicles to the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigerian Air Force; donated motorcycles to the DSS, procured Buffalo Armoured Personnel Carriers and BMW R1250 GS Adventure motorcycles, and facilitated the establishment of additional Forward Operating Bases in Kagara, Sabon Birni and Isa local councils to strengthen rapid response to security threats.

According to Aliyu, the latest intervention includes additional Buffalo APCs, upgraded armoured vehicles, motorcycles, thousands of security kits, bulletproof helmets and vests, night-vision devices, thermal imaging equipment and other modern security gadgets, which will be strategically deployed to identified flashpoints across the state.

He also announced the donation of operational vehicles and motorcycles to the Federal Ministry of Works to support security along the Sokoto-Badagry Super Highway project initiated by

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

The governor disclosed that the first batch of Forest Guards recruited under the Federal Government initiative had successfully completed training and had been deployed across the state, while expressing optimism that the second phase of recruitment would further strengthen surveillance in forests and rural communities.

Aliyu expressed appreciation to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his unwavering support to Sokoto State and commended the Minister of Defence for honouring the state's invitation despite his demanding national assignment.

He also thanked the National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, and the Director-General of the DSS for supporting Sokoto State's participation in the Forest Guard initiative, urging residents to continue supporting security agencies with timely and credible intelligence, as security remains a collective responsibility.

Commissioning the security equipment, Musa described the investment as a demonstration of strategic lead-

ership and responsible governance, saying it reflects Aliyu's commitment to protecting the lives and property of the people of Sokoto State.

The minister, who expressed pride in being a son of Sokoto State, recalled his childhood memories in the state and commended the governor for consistently supporting security agencies through the provision of operational vehicles, logistics and other critical resources.

"This is not the first time the governor has provided operational vehicles and logistics to security agencies. He has consistently supported our security institutions, and we remain grateful for his unwavering commitment," the minister said.

Musa noted that the newly commissioned assets would significantly improve the mobility, operational effectiveness and protection of security personnel engaged in combating banditry, terrorism, kidnapping and other violent crimes.

He reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment under the President's Renewed Hope Agenda to

strengthening the Armed Forces and other security agencies through improved welfare, enhanced intelligence capabilities, modern technology and stronger inter-agency collaboration. The minister stressed that security is a shared responsibility and urged citizens to continue providing credible information to security agencies.

He charged officers entrusted with the newly commissioned equipment to maintain the assets properly and deploy them professionally in accordance with the law and established rules of engagement.

In a goodwill message delivered on behalf of the NSA commended the Sokoto State government for its sustained investment in strengthening security through the provision of operational vehicles, Buffalo APCs, Hilux vehicles, motorcycles and other logistics, as well as the recruitment, sponsorship and training of about 2,000 Community Guards to complement conventional security agencies.

He disclosed that the Office of the National Security Adviser had facilitated the training of 1,000 Forest Guards for Sokoto State and ensured the prompt processing of the End-User Certificates required for the procurement of the newly commissioned security equipment.

He reaffirmed President Tinubu's commitment to improving security nationwide and assured the governor of his continued support in advancing national security and safeguarding the lives and property of Nigerians.

He also congratulated the minister on the honour of having a major road named after him in Sokoto State, describing the recognition as a fitting tribute to his exemplary leadership, patriotism and distinguished service to Nigeria.

He called on governments at all levels, security agencies, traditional rulers, community leaders and citizens to sustain their collaboration to build a peaceful, secure and prosperous Sokoto State and Nigeria.

The Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, represented by the Waziri of Sokoto, Prof. Sambo Wali Junaidu, commended the efforts of the Sokoto State government in the fight against banditry and other criminal activities.

Earlier, the secretary to the State Government, Muhammad Bello Sifawa, reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to tackle banditry and other criminal activities through sustained investment in operational logistics and support for security agencies.

The ceremony climaxed with the road named after the Minister of Defence in recognition of his outstanding contributions to national security and unwavering commitment to safeguarding lives and property of Nigerians.

The Hidden Curriculum: Lessons Beyond The Lecture Hall

By Aisha Lawal

IT'S 100 level, first day of school, only minutes before the lecture starts. You sit in class, nervous, unsure of what university would bring. The room feels alive, filled with laughter, occasional flipping of pages and phone notifications chiming in every now and then. You look around and observe, trying to understand what's going on, wondering how everyone seems to have it all figured out.

The lecturer comes in and lessons begin, but one question remains on your mind: how on earth does everyone have it all together?

It's a feeling that many students know but hardly admit. The sense of already being behind when your life hasn't even fully began, trying to understand where you fit in and what directions you need to take in order to move forward. As time goes on, one thing is clear: university isn't just a place for formal education.

University promises knowledge, degrees and career paths. But somewhere between the lectures and group projects, students start to learn something else entirely, something that isn't necessarily taught, almost like an unspoken rule. From navigating friendships to mastering the art of confidence, university teaches lessons that no students mention. This is the hidden curriculum; the lessons no lecturer teaches and yet somehow becomes the most important lesson we carry into life outside campus.

The Illusion Of Having It All Together

One of the first lessons that students encounter is the illusion of having it all planned out; it is also the quick-

est lesson to learn. There is an unspoken pressure in university to appear like you know what you are doing even when most of the time that is not the case. From faking confidence, social life and performance, there is this expectation that you should know what you are doing; it's like a standard that is unintentionally set but regardless students try to live up to it.

Though it doesn't look that way, there are many students that are uncertain. "Yeah I believe there are people who are not certain; they just act like they are; because where are you even flying to," Aisha a 100 level students says. "I feel like they try to fit into different aesthetics all at once."

Many students are navigating the same reality, the same doubts, the same questions. The only difference is that some have learned how to hide these things; the art of pretending in a nutshell.

Confidence isn't just about being sure of what you are doing. While that is one thing, sometimes it is the ability to keep moving forward despite not having all the answers.

Networking Without Knowing

From most university success stories, a common denominator is networking. Networking is always mentioned as an important factor. Yet, for many students the idea feels foreign. The truth is networking is inevitable; it has most likely happened and you don't even know it.

Networking happens in group discussions, in shared annoyance over assignments, in casual greetings that

turn into conversations. The person who sat beside you during exam could be a future colleague. The person who you met during registration could play an important role in your life.

What students struggle with isn't networking itself but connections – how to engage freely and how to build relationships that go beyond casual interactions. These are not lessons that are taught in slides and even if they are it wouldn't change anything if not implemented. These are the things that are learnt through experiences and would only progress with time.

Lessons You Can't Study For

There are certain things that no course outline prepares you for. For example, no lecturer will teach you how to recover from the embarrassment of giving a wrong answer in class, especially when you mustered the courage to say it. No exam or test gives you the ability to read a room, manage conflict in a group project or speak confidently even when you are unsure of yourself. And yet, these are the moments that shape the way you go about things in life.

"I feel like there are things you just have to learn through experiences because it's one thing to be told but to actually go through it is another thing entirely," says Anonymous.

This is where social intelligence comes in, not in theory, but through these experiences. Students learn when to speak, when to listen, how to adapt to new people and how to represent themselves in a way they want to be identified as.

NNPC Slashes Operational Costs By \$3.4b In One Year

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited said it has slashed operational costs by \$3.4 billion between April 2025 to April 2026.

The Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, Bayo Ojulari, who disclose this in his presentation at the Nigeria Oil and Gas Energy Week in Abuja, said the cost reduction was possible through contract restructuring and optimisation.

Reviewing the company's performance from April 2025 to April 2026, Ojulari unveiled a sweeping turnaround in production metrics, cost efficiencies, and infrastructure availability under the strategic theme of enabling Nigeria's energy future.

According to him, the company's interventions have translated into tangible

gains across both liquid and gas portfolios, as crude oil and condensate production climbed to 1.659 million barrels per day in 2026, up from 1.64 million barrels per day in 2025. This represents a steady six percent year-on-year increase, translating to a total of 569.7 million barrels.

He said this positive trajectory positions the company to target 1.92 million barrels per day by 2027 and ultimately 2.91 million barrels per day by 2030.

Concurrently, gas production witnessed an 8.1 percent year-on-year surge, hitting 2,576 billion standard cubic feet.

Noting that focus on fiscal responsibility and structural reforms has significantly boosted returns to the national treasury, he said the federation's revenue share from the oil sector surged by 21.8 percent, delivering a massive N9.5 trillion to the government within the period.

Rite Foods Wins National Sustainability Achievement Award

By Sulaimon Salau

RITE Foods Limited, a leading player in Nigeria's food and beverage industry, has been honoured with the National Sustainability Achievements Awards 2026 in recognition of its outstanding commitment to sustainable manufacturing, product innovation, environmental stewardship, and responsible corporate leadership.

The company received the recognition following recommendations by the Awards Technical Committee, which selected Rite Foods in the categories of Best Food Processing Carbonated Drink Formulation and Clean Energy Company of the Year 2026. The National Sustainability Achievement Awards, organised by ESG Impact Consulting Limited celebrates organisations that demonstrate meas-

urable commitment to sustainability by successfully balancing business growth with environmental responsibility and social impact. According to the organisers, recipients are evaluated based on key performance indicators such as impact, environmental stewardship, and contributions towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For Rite Foods, the award reflects years of strategic investment in world-class manufacturing, advanced technology, energy-efficient operations, product quality, and environmentally responsible business practices. Sustainability remains central to the company's operations, shaping every stage of its value chain from production and resource to innovation and stakeholder engagement.

'Reliable Electricity Is Vital For Africa's Growth'

By Opeyemi Babalola

TO meet West Africa's growing demand for intelligent power distribution, Schneider Electric has emphasised the need for reliable electricity systems capable of delivering enhanced performance, operational continuity, and digital capabilities.

The global energy technology company noted that such efforts are critical to supporting the region's expansion across key sectors, including oil and gas, data centres, commercial real estate, and transportation.

Speaking on the development, Channel Sales Director, Schneider Electric West Africa, Nurudeen Oyedeki, emphasised that reliable and intelligent power distribution is essential to support economic growth and infrastructure

development.

He argued that these sectors need high reliability and operational continuity-engineered for zero downtime tolerance with rapid restart capabilities, ensuring uninterrupted power distribution in critical applications.

This is as the firm announced the unveiling of its next-generation BlokSeT low-voltage (LV) switchboard, designed to deliver high performance, enhanced safety, and real-time visibility.

Commenting on the innovation, Oyedeki stated that the innovation, which he described having locally relevant solutions that support infrastructure growth, reduces downtime, optimises maintenance, and operates more efficiently in even the most demanding environments.

Customs Deepens Border Security Ties With NAQS, Reaffirms Commitment To Protecting Nigeria's Economy

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has reaffirmed its leadership role in safeguarding Nigeria's borders, announcing plans to deepen collaboration with the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS) on intelligence sharing, trade facilitation and national security.

The Comptroller-General of Customs, Adewale Adeniyi, disclosed the plans during a visit by NAQS Comptroller-General, Nigeria Agricultural

Quarantine Service, Vincent Isegbe, to the Customs headquarters in Maitama, Abuja.

Adeniyi said the Service was moving to harmonise inspection procedures across the country's ports and border stations, a step he described as critical to promoting consistency, transparency and efficiency in cargo clearance nationwide.

He also revealed plans to establish a new Customs laboratory, with NAQS expected to provide technical support, and announced that

Customs training facilities would be opened up to NAQS officers as part of a broader capacity-building push.

"We must expose our officers to the broader concept of national security. Border management goes beyond revenue collection," Adeniyi said, stressing that Customs sees itself as the anchor institution coordinating Nigeria's multi-agency border protection efforts.

The visit doubled as an opportunity for Isegbe to congratulate Adeniyi on the

extension of his tenure as Chairperson of the World Customs Organisation Council, which he described as recognition of Adeniyi's dedication and leadership.

Isegbe praised what he called an excellent working relationship with Customs, and outlined areas for closer partnership, including integrating NAQS into Customs' B'Odogwu platform, joint enforcement operations, and coordinated efforts to detect fake certification and fraudulent documentation.



Managing Director, NIPCO Plc, Suresh Kumar (left); Chairman, Bestman Anekwe; Company Secretary Chief Paul Chukwuma Obi, SAN; and Group Executive Director, Alhaji Abdulkadir Amunu, during the company's 22nd Annual General Meeting in Abuja.

Expert Unveils Framework To Boost Management Of Ageing Oil Assets

By Sulaimon Salau

AN oil and gas expert and Deputy Group Managing Director of Divcon Engineering Limited, Dr. Robert Oloyede, has unveiled a six-dimensional framework to strengthen physical asset management in Nigeria's upstream oil and gas sector, urging operators to prioritise human capital, knowledge transfer and security to maximise ageing oil assets.

Oloyede presented the research paper, "Enhancing Physical Asset Management in Nigeria's Upstream Oil & Gas Sector: A Six-Dimensional

Framework for Indigenous and Multinational Operators," at the ongoing Technical Seminar of the 25th anniversary of the NOG Energy Week Conference and Exhibition in Abuja.

The NOG Energy Week Technical Seminar, a Continuing Professional Development-certified programme, brought together technical and engineering professionals to discuss emerging technologies, research findings and industry best practices in the oil, gas and energy sectors.

Speaking during the presen-

tation, Oloyede said indigenous oil companies had continued to demonstrate resilience and innovation despite inheriting ageing assets from multinational operators.

He said: "Nigeria's indigenous operators demonstrate remarkable necessity-driven innovation despite inheriting 40 to 60-year-old infrastructure, capability gaps and operating complexity. The greatest asset is not physical—it is human. Tacit knowledge of veteran engineers and organisational resilience constitute more valuable

resources than equipment itself."

According to him, the Six-Dimensional Physical Asset Management Practices Enhancement Framework offers a practical roadmap for sustainable asset management in Nigeria's upstream petroleum industry.

He noted that while multinational oil companies provide valuable operational benchmarks, their practices cannot be adopted wholesale because indigenous firms operate under significantly different financial, infrastructural and security realities.

Dangote Cement Targets 20% Emissions Cut, 80MTPA Capacity By 2030

By Sulaimon Salau

DANGOTE Cement Plc has unveiled plans to further reduce net carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions intensity by 20 per cent, and increase installed production capacity to 80 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) by 2030.

The company reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable industrialisation, while outlining sustainability strategies that align with the broader Dangote Industries Limited (DIL) Vision 2030.

Presenting the company's 2025 Sustainability scorecard at its 17th Annual General Meeting in Lagos, Chairman of Dangote Cement Plc, Emmanuel Ikazoboh, high-

lighted how sustainability has evolved in the company from a compliance requirement into a core business strategy that supports growth, resilience and long-term value creation across Africa.

In line with its agenda to reduce net carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions intensity by 20 per cent, while accelerating the transition to cleaner transportation, he said: "By 2027, all fleet trucks operating in Nigeria, except at the Gboko plant, will run on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), with electric trucks scheduled for introduction in 2026"

The cement giant also announced plans to strength-

en its position as Africa's leading cement exporter through expanded port infrastructure at Apapa, Onne and Lekki, while pursuing capacity expansion programmes that will increase installed production capacity to 80 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) by 2030, including new footprints in Botswana and Zimbabwe.

These initiatives, according to him, support Dangote Group's Vision 2030 ambition of building a globally competitive industrial powerhouse rooted in sustainability and innovation.

"On its People-centred growth sustainability drive, Dangote Cement reported significant progress in

human capital development and social impact, creating 625 direct green jobs across its operations while increasing social investment spending by 56 per cent.

"Graduate trainee recruitment also rose by 74 per cent, underscoring the company's commitment to nurturing the next generation of African industrial talent.

"Supporting this commitment, the company invested N2.1 billion in employee training and development, reinforcing its ambition to become the employer of choice across its operating countries by fostering a high-performance and inclusive workplace culture, the company stated in its reports.

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Bridging Hatcheries' Gap In Poultry Enterprise

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

ONE of the major challenges faced by poultry farmers in the country is access to hatcheries, as they struggle daily to get hold of healthy day-old chicks—the starter stock that is the foundation of any poultry enterprise.

This is due to the fact that most of the hatcheries are concentrated in the Southwest region, far from farmers in other regions, especially in the north and east, who are forced to travel up to 10 hours to find chicks to buy. Such distances raise costs and stress and weaken the birds, with many chicks dying on the journey.

This “last-mile” problem, according to industry players, is one of the most critical bottlenecks in the country’s poultry system—and one that mostly affects the poorest farmers, many of whom are women. Such farmers also have to contend with high chicken feed costs, fluctuating market prices, and deadly outbreaks of poultry diseases. Together, these obstacles are preventing the rural poultry farmers from building viable businesses.

However, this will soon be a thing of the past, as a new research project known as the (uncatchy) “Sustainable Decentralised Dual-purpose Chick and Input Supply Delivery System”, or DDCDS, is set to close these gaps, by bringing the country’s chick production closer to its rural farmers.

This project, piloted by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), was supported by SAAF Catalytic Fund, a funding

mechanism within CGIAR’s Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods (SAAF) science programme that supports promising innovations, partnerships, and scaling opportunities in livestock and aquatic food systems. The fund is intended to help research teams and partners move innovative ideas from pilot stage toward broader adoption and impact.

The simple shift from centralised to decentralised chick production, the research shows, has true transformative potential. By shortening the distance between hatchery and farm, transport time and costs drop dramatically and chicks arrive on farms alive and healthy.

Through this research, it was learnt that instead of farmers having to rely on a few large hatcheries far from their communities, a network of community-level hatcheries could be located in the country’s underserved rural regions.

Crucially, these hatcheries would act as local “service hubs”, not only supplying the farmers with day-old chicks but also connecting them to affordable feed, veterinary services, poultry training, and financial credit.

Another key feature is the project’s focus on “dual-purpose” chickens—hardy native breeds improved by geneticists and developed to produce both meat and eggs. While consumer and farmer demand for these breeds is rising across Nigeria, supply has not kept pace. Linking community hatcheries with local farmers producing fertile eggs fixes that.

And the benefits of such a model extend beyond individual farmers. Decentralising hatcheries by necessity creates new business



opportunities, especially for women and young people, with new jobs opening for hatchery operators and technicians, for feed suppliers and transporters, for vets and market sellers.

In order to co-develop and refine the DDCDS model, ILRI recently convened an Innovation Package and Scaling Readiness (IPSR) workshop with key stakeholders in Ibadan, Oyo State. This is essential because it

takes a whole system—research, finance, logistics, local enterprise—to deliver healthy chicks to rural farmers.

The workshop brought together hatchery operators and breeders, feed producers and vets, chick transporters and poultry geneticists, government agencies and policymakers, microfinance institutions and agricultural extension services, and business advisors and non-governmental organisations.

Aliyu Flags-off Free Fertiliser Distribution, Warns Against Diversion

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Sokoto State Governor, Ahmed Aliyu has flagged off the distribution of free fertiliser and other farm inputs to farmers across the 23 Local Councils in the state, warning that anyone found diverting the commodity will face the full wrath of the law.

The Governor revealed that the state government has procured 157,800 bags of assorted fertilisers, equivalent to 263 truckloads of NPK and Urea fertilisers, worth N7,706,800,000 for distribution to farmers across the councils.

According to him, each of the councils will receive six truckloads of fertiliser for free distribution to genuine farmers.

“When we came on board, we distributed fertilisers free of charge to our farmers on three occasions. However, we later discovered that the targeted farmers were not fully benefiting from the gesture

due to the activities of middlemen. That informed our decision to sell the commodity at a subsidised rate last year.

“We have now introduced measures to curb the activities of the unpatriotic individuals who denied genuine farmers access to the free fertilisers. If we succeed in eliminating these sharp practices, the fertiliser distribution programme will continue to be free for our farmers,” the Governor added.

Governor Aliyu further disclosed that the state government has also procured 12,800 bags of improved seeds, including Millet Super SOSAT, Hybrid Maize, Beans, Cowpea, Sorghum, and FARO 44 Rice, as well as herbicides and insecticides for distribution to farmers across the state.

As part of efforts to achieve full agricultural mechanisation, the Governor said the administration has procured 250 units of MF-375 Massey

Ferguson tractors at the cost of N22,125,938,207.50, with 75 per cent of the contract sum already paid to the contractor.

“I’m happy to inform you that the contractor has already delivered 90 per cent of the tractors. In addition to the 250 Massey Ferguson tractors procured by the state government, the Federal Government has offered us the opportunity to acquire another 100 Belarus tractors through the Bank of Agriculture, with the state paying only 60 per cent of the cost of each tractor and its implements,” he added.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Committee for the Supervision of Fertiliser and Other Essential Commodities Distribution, Alhaji Chuso Abdullahi Dattijo, said the 2026 wet season fertiliser distribution programme reflects the practical commitment of the present administration to ensuring that genuine farmers have timely access to quality fertiliser, through a transparent, accountable, and well-coordinated distribution system.

“It is a programme designed not only to distribute fertiliser but also to strengthen livelihoods, boost agricultural output, reduce the cost of food production, and improve the economic well-being of every household in Sokoto State,” he said.



Governor Aliyu (2nd right), presenting a bag of fertiliser during the flag off ceremony



PUBLIC NOTICE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC DISPLAY EXERCISE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR THE PROPOSED MAHIN FIELD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN PPL 272, ONDO STATE BY AKATA ENERGY LIMITED

In accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act CAP E12 LFN 2004, which makes it mandatory for proponents of all new major developmental activities to carry out EIA for their proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces a twenty-one (21) working days public display information and comments on the draft EIA report submitted by Akata Energy Limited.

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project entails the drilling of additional four (4) wells namely Mahin, 03, 04, 05 and 06 to develop oil reserves in hydrocarbon bearing sands A3, B1, B2 and B3 in the shallow water Mahin field in PPL 272, construction and installation of oil and gas production and processing facilities such as the well head jacket platform and a 5-km oil and gas evacuation pipelines to the Mina Field. The Mahin field is located in the near offshore shallow waters within the established prolific and proven hydrocarbon basin covering 17.9km² in PPL 272 in Ilaje Local Government Area, Ondo State.

THE DISPLAY CENTERS ARE: -

- Ileja Local Government Area Headquarters, Igbokoda, Ondo State.
- Ondo State Ministry of Environment Ondo, State Secretariat, Akure.
- Federal Ministry of Environment, Ondo State Field Office, Akure.
- Federal Ministry of Environment, Environmental Assessment Department, (Environment House), Independence Way South, Central Business District, Abuja - F.C.T. and
- www.ead.gov.ng

DURATION OF DISPLAY:

DATE: 12th July - 10th August, 2026
TIME: 8:00am - 4:00pm Daily

ALL COMMENTS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE HON. MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT HEADQUARTERS, MABUSHI, ABUJA - FCT AND VIA info@ead.gov.ng ON OR BEFORE 17TH AUGUST 2026.

SIGNED:
PERMANENT SECRETARY
For: Honourable Minister

By Moyosore Salami

A FORMER Director-General of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR), Dr. Goke Adegoroye, has urged President Bola Tinubu to use the impending appointment of a new Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (HCSF) to begin a reset of the federal bureaucracy, warning that the decline in leadership effectiveness at the top of the civil service has weakened the federal bureaucracy.

Adegoroye, a retired Permanent Secretary of the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) and National Publicity Secretary of the Council of Retired Federal Permanent Secretaries (CORFEPS), made the call yesterday in an open letter to the President ahead of the retirement of the incumbent HCSF, Dame Didi Esther Walson-Jack, who is due to leave office on August 27, 2026, on attaining the mandatory retirement age of 60.

He said the appointment of the next Head of the Civil Service presents Tinubu with an opportunity to reverse what he described as the steady decline in quality of leadership within the federal bureaucracy, arguing that the effectiveness of the civil service depends largely on the quality of those appointed to lead it.

Adegoroye argued that while Section 171(3) of the Constitution gives the President the discretion to appoint any serving permanent secretary as Head of the Civil Service, the exercise of that power should be guided by the need to strengthen the bureaucracy rather than satisfy narrow interests.

According to him, the constitutional provision merely establishes eligibility, while the responsibility for choosing a candidate with the competence, administrative experience and leadership capacity required to lead the federal civil service rests squarely with the President.

Adegoroye also linked the trending Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC) saga, involving one Adeniyi Adeyemi Mathew, to what he described as the erosion of leadership and coordination within the bureaucracy. He stated that the controversy exposed serious lapses in the operations of key government institutions.

Drawing from his experience as Director (Special Duties) in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation during the Olusegun Obasanjo administration, he said such anomalies would ordinarily have been flagged and referred to the President for investigation through internal administrative processes.

He argued that the episode exposed weaknesses in coordination at the centre of government, warning that overlapping responsibilities and the growing reliance on officials outside the traditional civil service structure had weakened institutional accountability.

According to him, it was difficult to understand how no desk officer in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (OSGF), the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF) or the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation detected what he described as the apparent irregularities until the Nigeria Investment Promotion Council (NIPC) raised the alarm.

“I still believe that down the line, there should be a minute trail of objections to this case which would have been spotted by officers, as an apparent scam. That these two offices are now principal actors in this national embarrassment, with their conflicting letters, is symptomatic of the absence of coordination in that office, unless they were so instructed by their principal, in which case their acquiescence is a reflection of both their poor quality and personal integrity as permanent secretaries and the unsuitability of their deployment to those offices,” he argued.

The retired permanent secretary said the impending retirement of

Adegoroye Seeks Civil Service Reform Ahead Of HCSF Appointment

- Says Adeniyi Saga Exposes Failure At Centre Of Government
- Recommends Career Administrator To Head Bureaucracy
- Canvases Audience Of CORFEPS Leadership With President

Walson-Jack had revived concerns within the civil service over who succeeds her, noting that although the Constitution permits the President to appoint any serving permanent secretary as HCSF, successive administrations had increasingly elevated officers from professional cadres ahead of career administrators.

He maintained that the trend had steadily weakened the administrative leadership of the civil service, arguing that the office of the HCSF requires extensive experience in administration and human resources management.

He further argued that sustained civil service reform requires political backing from the Presidency, recalling that major reforms introduced during the Olusegun Obasanjo and Umaru Musa Yar'Adua administrations were driven by strong political commitment.

He noted that the momentum for reform had diminished in subsequent years, leaving institutions such as the Bureau of Public Service Reforms with reduced influence over the direction of the federal bureaucracy.

To illustrate the shift, Adegoroye cited a 2014 Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) promotion exercise in which 169 officers competed for 23 vacancies in the administrative cadre, while only 25 candidates contested 28 vacancies in the procurement cadre, a development he said accelerated the rise of professional cadres into the top hierarchy of the civil service.

He said the imbalance had triggered repeated disputes within the civil service, recalling that groups of administrative officers had challenged the promotion process in court after they were overtaken by colleagues from newer professional cadres.

He also cited the case of 97 deputy directors whose grievances eventually reached the National Industrial Court after what he described as years of delayed promotion, arguing that such developments had steadily eroded confidence in the system and weakened the traditional administrative cadre.

He added that as of April 2026, the Federal Civil Service had 17 medical doctors, including a dental surgeon and a

I still believe that down the line, there should be a minute trail of objections to this case which would have been spotted by officers, as an apparent scam. That these two offices are now principal actors in this national embarrassment, with their conflicting letters, is symptomatic of the absence of coordination in that office, unless they were so instructed by their principal, in which case their acquiescence is a reflection of both their poor quality and personal integrity as permanent secretaries and the unsuitability of their deployment to those offices.

optometrist, and three veterinary doctors serving as permanent secretaries among more than 40 cadres operating across the service.

The development, he said, had resulted in officers being deployed to positions outside their areas of competence, citing the deployment of accountants to Political Affairs and medical doctors to Establishment and Pension.

He emphasised that the mismatch in deployments has affected morale across the service, with experienced directorate officers increasingly finding themselves reporting to permanent secretaries whose professional backgrounds did not adequately prepare them for broad administrative responsibilities.

He argued that this had contributed to declining confidence in decision-making within ministries and undermined institutional effectiveness.

“The current trend smacks of a conspiracy of the professionals against the generalists in administration, human resources management and

even planning, who are now branded as ‘those who cannot pass’ in the so-called written examinations to become permanent secretaries.

“The HCSF is, ipso facto, the chief human resources manager of the federation. The position requires extensive experience in administration and human resources management. The appointment of accountants, medical doctors and other professionals with no such cognate experience falls short of this requirement and should be discontinued,” he advised.

While stressing that his intervention was not an attack on any professional group, Adegoroye said every cadre deserved the opportunity for its best officers to attain the rank of permanent secretary.

However, he maintained that the office of the Head of the Civil Service occupies a unique position as the government’s chief human resources authority and should be reserved for officers with extensive administrative experience, institutional memory and a deep understanding of public service rules.

Adegoroye also cited findings from his assessment of leadership effectiveness among the 11 Heads of the Civil Service who served between 1999 and 2024, saying the study showed a steady decline in leadership quality, with the last three office holders recording the lowest ratings.

According to him, all three were appointed from professional cadres rather than the administrative cadre, a development he said coincided with the decline in leadership effectiveness across the federal civil service.

He urged Tinubu to make competence, institutional memory, knowledge of public service rules, human resources management capacity, integrity and the courage to resist political interference the determining factors in appointing the next HCSF.

According to Adegoroye, the next Head of the Civil Service should possess a thorough understanding of the mandate of the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, demonstrate mastery of the Public Service Rules and Financial Regulations, possess the capacity to drive meaningful reforms, and have the courage to resist undue political interference in the discharge of official responsibilities.

Adegoroye also urged the President to make his position on civil service reforms clear, arguing that uncertainty over the direction of reform had contributed to declining morale within the bureaucracy.

Quoting public administration scholar Ladipo Adamolekun, he maintained that “a president gets the civil service he deserves,” stressing that the responsibility for rebuilding confidence in the public service ultimately rests with the country’s leadership.

“The way to start is to strive to let competence and professionalism; capacity and institutional memory; and character and integrity take the centre stage in the execution of the presidential powers that the Nigerian Constitution has vested in you to make federal appointments. Please, let the appointment of the next HCSF that you are about to make signal a new beginning for the Nigerian bureaucracy,” he said.

Adegoroye also renewed his appeal for the President to grant the leadership of the Council of Retired Federal Permanent Secretaries (CORFEPS) an audience, saying repeated efforts by the body to meet with Tinubu over the past three years had been unsuccessful.

“I am unable to rationalise how, more than three years now into your administration, the executive of CORFEPS... have not been able to secure an appointment to meet directly with you,” he said.



Fubara Presents N1.85tr 2026 Budget, Earmarks N1.4tr For Capital Projects

From **Obinna Nwaoku**, Port Harcourt

RIVERS State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, on Friday presented a proposed N1.854 trillion budget for the 2026 fiscal year to the Rivers State House of Assembly, with the lion's share of the spending plan dedicated to capital projects aimed at infrastructure development, education, healthcare and economic growth.

Tagged 'Budget of Resilience for Growth and Development,' the appropriation bill projects a total expenditure of N1,854,248,734,475.76, comprising N413.1 billion for recurrent expenditure and N1.405 trillion for capital expenditure.

The budget presentation came two weeks after the House approved the state's 2026-2028 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), which serves as the fiscal blueprint for the next three years.

Breaking down the proposed spending, Fubara allocated N625.85 billion to the economic sector, representing the largest share of the capital budget, while the social sector received N435.41 billion. The administration sector was allocated N278.75 billion, while law and justice got N65.26 billion.

Lagos Signs Concession Agreement To Automate Vehicle Administration Services

By **Gbenga Salau**

LAGOS State government has signed a landmark concession agreement for the Business Process Automation (BPA) of the Motor Vehicle Administration Agency (MVAA), a strategic initiative aimed at transforming vehicle administration services and improving access to government services through online one-stop application that allows customers to access their services in the comfort of their homes seamlessly.

The agreement, signed at the Black Diamond Hotel, Ozumba Mbadiwe, Victoria Island, Lagos, marks a major milestone in the State Government's commitment to leveraging technology to deliver efficient, transparent and citizen-focused services.

The agreement was signed by the Commissioner for Transportation, Mr. Oluwaseun Osiyemi; the Permanent Secretary, Motor Vehicle Administration Agency, Mr. Abdul-Rasheed Muri-Okunola; the Special Adviser, Office of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), Mrs. Bukola Odoe; and representatives of the concessionaire, Anchor Advisory Partners.



Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun (right), presenting the All Progressives Congress gubernatorial candidate in the state, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola to Ijebu Traditional Council at the palace of the Awujale of Ijebuland... on Friday.

Abiodun Raises Funding, Judicial Reform Concerns As State Police Bill Advances

From **Azeez Olorunlomu**, Abeokuta

OGUN State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, has called for far-reaching judicial, fiscal and institutional reforms to ensure the success of the proposed State Police system, saying the initiative must go beyond creating new security structures to addressing the legal and financial frameworks that will sustain them.

Speaking at the Thisday/Arise TV Town Hall Meeting on the State Police Bill, Abiodun described President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as a committed federalist whose support for the devolution of policing powers reflected his long-standing belief in true federalism.

The governor said history would be kind to President Tinubu for demonstrating the

political will to decentralise policing, noting that respected elder statesman, Chief Olusegun Osoba and Anambra State Governor, Chukwuma Soludo, had both attested to the President's federalist credentials.

Abiodun, however, stressed that the ongoing legislative process must answer fundamental questions about why the existing Nigeria Police Force has struggled to deliver optimal results and how both the federal and state police systems can complement each other effectively.

He argued that a more efficient state police system would inevitably lead to more arrests and prosecutions, making it imperative to strengthen the judiciary to guarantee speedy trials and justice.

According to him, lawmakers should consider whether the country needs additional judicial reforms, including the establishment of State Courts of Appeal to handle disputes such as land matters without unnecessarily burdening the appellate courts.

The governor also urged policymakers to tackle the root causes of insecurity, particularly the recurring farmers-herders conflicts that have contributed to food insecurity in several parts of the country. He said resolving such underlying issues would reduce the burden on law enforcement agencies while promoting peace and agricultural productivity.

On funding, Abiodun warned that disparities in states' revenue-generating capacities could undermine the effec-

tiveness of state police if not properly addressed.

Using Ogun State as an example, he noted that despite being Nigeria's industrial hub and one of the country's fastest-growing economies, the state receives relatively low allocations from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC). He said an equitable funding framework combining internally generated revenue and federal allocations would be necessary to ensure that every state possesses the financial capacity to establish and sustain an effective police service.

Abiodun also advocated the establishment of independent Police Complaints Commissions at both the federal and state levels to prevent abuse of power and enhance accountability.

2027: NDC Crisis Deepens As Over 80 Enugu Aspirants Weigh Legal Options

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

THE nomination crisis in the Enugu State chapter of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) for 2027 elective offices may have deepened as over 80 aspirants of the party have declared readiness to approach the courts over alleged gross violations of the Electoral Act 2026 and massive extortion against them by the party.

Some of the violations include alleged inability of the party to

conduct primaries for the aspirants after they were made to pay heavily and the alleged ongoing imposition of candidates in the state.

The aspirants stated that they have exhausted every internal organ of the party to seek peaceful and just resolution to issues in the state, but have been met with silence and defiance, stressing that they would now explore legal options to challenge the illegality in the state NDC. In a communiqué they issued

at the end of their meeting in Enugu on Thursday, they stated that they remain committed to the ideal of a New Nigeria, but would not stand by and watch the foundation of that future to be destroyed by impunity in Enugu State.

Some of those who signed the communiqué include Dr. SKC Ogbonna, Joseph Udedi, Eze Izuchukwu Alex, Felix Chijindu Uzodinma, Obiora Obasi, Agu Cyprian Ifeanyi, Ude Kingsley Amobi and Martin Ibeabuchi Ene.

Others are Jude Chinyeaka Ozoukeje, Tobenna Okolo, Okafor Benjamin Chinedu, Aniagboso Solomon, Chibuike Lawrence, El-Aja Ogbonnaya and Obiajulu Uja, among others.

The communiqué added: "We have stated times without number that no direct primaries were conducted anywhere in Enugu State. Furthermore, there has been absolutely no attempt to engage in consensus building.

Asaba Aircraft Incident: Faulty Tower Recorder Limits Probe – NSIB Report

By **Olusegun Koiki**

THE investigation into the serious incident involving a Bombardier Challenger 601-3A aircraft operated by VMO Aero Limited has been constrained by the unserviceability of the Asaba Airport tower voice recording system, the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) has said.

The bureau's preliminary report released on Friday said the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) confirmed that the tower voice recording system was

not functioning during the period of the June 10, 2026, incident on the roadway in Asaba, Delta State.

Searches of the report on the website of NSIB by The Guardian indicated that because of the failure of the recording system, available Air Traffic Control (ATC) communications had to be reconstructed from operational records, limiting access to recorded communications that could have provided valuable information for the ongoing investigation.

The incident involved aircraft

with the registration number: N989BC, which was conducting an Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) flight from Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, to Asaba Airport, Delta State.

The aircraft, during its approach into Asaba, according to the report, landed on a paved roadway under construction near the airport instead of the designated Runway 11.

The report read in part: "Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) reported that the Asaba Tower

voice recording system was unserviceable during the period of the occurrence.

"Consequently, the available communications record had to be reconstructed from operational records, thereby limiting the availability of recorded communications relevant to the investigation."

The preliminary report, however, established that the occurrence was survivable, with all seven persons on board, including four crew members and three passengers escaping without injuries.

TETFund Expands 2026 National Research Fair To Drive Commercialisation Of Innovations

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

AS part of efforts to fast-track the commercialisation of research outcomes and deepen collaboration among researchers, industry players and investors, the Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Dr. Sonny Echono, has announced plans to expand participation in the 2026 National Research Fair and Exhibition.

Speaking on Friday in Abuja while inaugurating this year's National Research Fair/Exhibition Committee, Echono said the decision to expand the committee followed the success of the maiden edition held in November 2024, which showcased innovations from tertiary institutions and facilitated stronger linkages between researchers and industry players.

"Considering the large number of exhibitors that participated in the fair and the number of spin-offs that were mainstreamed into the Nigerian market, we are hopeful that it was also a stimulus for job creation," Echono said.

NNPCL/Seplat Energy JV Signs Landmark 15-Year Gas Supply Deal With UTM FLNG

• **Restate Commitment To Unlock Nigeria's Stranded Gas Reserves**

By **Oludare Richards**

NIGERIA has taken a major step towards commercialising its vast natural gas resources following the signing of a 15-year Wet Gas Sale and Purchase Agreement (WGSPA) between the NNPC Ltd/Seplat Energy Producing Nigeria Unlimited (SEPNU) Joint Venture and UTM FLNG Ltd.

Under the agreement, the Joint Venture will supply 200 million standard cubic feet of gas per day (mmscf/d) to the UTM Floating LNG (FLNG) project, providing the long-term feedgas certainty required to support financing and position the project for a Final Investment Decision (FID) in the fourth quarter of 2026.

A statement by the Chief Corporate Communications Officer, NNPCL, Andy Odeh, on Friday, explained that the agreement, signed at the NNPC Towers in Abuja on Tuesday marks a significant milestone for Nigeria's gas sector and reinforces the country's ambition to unlock stranded gas reserves, expand LNG exports, deepen industrialisation, and accelerate implementation of the Federal Government's "Decade of Gas" initiative.



CHANGE OF NAME

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria GuardianNigeria Guardian Nigeria - C00264288

ABEKE: I, formerly Miss Triumphant Oghenekparobo Abeke now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Triumphant Oghenekparobo Abeke Egbroko. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

ADEMOYEGUN: I, formerly known as Miss Ademoyegun Olaide Adeola now wish to be addressed as Oladejo Mutiyat Olaide. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

AFOLABI: I, formerly known as Yetunde Mary Afolabi, now wish to be addressed as Yetunde Mary Adeyemo. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

AFUSAT: I, formerly known as Oropo Olasimibo Afusat Anike now wish to be known as Oropo Olasimibo Anike. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

AGBOOLA: I, formerly known as Agboola Taofeekat Omotoke now wish to be known as Abdullahi Fatimo Omotoke. All former documents remain valid. Passport office, public note.

AKHILNOMEN: I, formerly known as Miss Akhilnomen Deborah Ehinomen now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Oziegbe Deborah Ehinome. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

AKHIMIMEN: I, formerly known as Akhimimen Osezele now wish to be addressed as Akhimien Joshua Osezele. My DOB is 17-03-1998 not 17-03-1996. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

ALAGA: I, formerly known as Alaga Olajumoke Muinat now wish to be addressed as Ayotoye Olajumoke Muinat. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AWOGBORO: I, formerly known as Esan Egun Omolara Awogboro now wish to be addressed as Esan Egunoluwa Omolara. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AWOGBORO: I, formerly known as Mrs. Temilade Aiyebamiete Awogboro now wish to be addressed as Ms. Temilade Marcella Olatunde. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AWOYEMI: I, formerly known as Awoyemi Ronke now wish to be addressed as Adelakun Adekemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BABATUNDE: I, formerly known as Babatunde Olatundun Damilola, now wish to be addressed as Ayenuyo Olatundun Damilola. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHIKEZIE: I, formerly known as Melvina Chikodi Chikezie now wish to be known as Melvina Chikodi Otur. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHUKWU: I, formerly known as Nchedo Martina Chukwu now wish to be addressed as Nchedo Martina Iyiegbu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: That Edenogie Blessing Oladimeji and Edenogie Blessing Oladimeji Omorem and Oga Blessing is same person now addressed as Edenogie Blessing. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: That, Otoibhi Seed and Otoibi Seed and Eromonsele Seed is one and same person now addressed as Eromonsele Seed Agiakugbe. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly spelt as Bukola Esther Adedina, instead of Bukola Esther Adeshina in my BVN. My surname is Adeshina and not Adedina. Banks, public, take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: That in my BVN details, my name was erroneously captured as Stephen Atanda instead of Opeyemi Oluwaseun Ganiyu that all former documents remain valid public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Ibeneme Nwanyiugo Catherine instead of Ibeneme Nwanyiugbo Catherine. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

DAHUNSI: I, Formerly known as Dahunsi Motunrayo Esther now wish to be addressed as Adekunle Motunrayo Esther. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

DOGARI: I, formerly known as Dogari Deborah Doris now wishes to be known as Ayemere Deborah Doris. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

EBOZELE: I, formerly known as Ebozele Christopher Mariaehigwina now wish to be addressed as, Akhidenor Christopher Mariaehigwina. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EBUN: I, formerly known as Esan Egun Omolara now wish to be addressed as Esan Egunoluwa Omolara. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EDGAL: I, formerly known as Oluwatemiola Onakorame Edgal now wish to be known as Oluwatemiola Onakorame Ilo. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

EKEKWE: I, formerly known as Ekekwe Chisom Ruth Progress now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ahamefula chisom Ruth. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FASASI: I, formerly known as Fasasi Afusat Temitope now wish to be addressed as Jagboro Temitope Afusa. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

FASHORO: I, formerly known as Bisola Funmilayo Fashoro now wish to be addressed as Bisola funmilayo Babalola. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

FOLAKE: I, formerly known as Olaoye Christiana Folake now wish to be known as Olaoye Christiana Oreoluwa. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FOLARIN: I, formerly known as Azeezat Oluwakemi Folarin now wish to be addressed as Azeezat Oluwakemi Oguntoyinbo. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

FOWOWE: I, formerly known as Oyinlade Ngozi Fowowe now wish to be addressed as Oyinlade Ngozi Margaret Lydia Adewuyi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FRANCIS: I, formerly known as Miss Francis Fumilayo Tina now wish to be addressed as, Mrs Ajenifuja Fumilayo Tina. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

GODWIN: I, formerly known as Aniebiet Godwin Sunday now wish to be known as Ibanga Aniebiet Sunday. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

HASSAN: I, formerly known as Hassan Aisat now wish to be addressed as Abdullahi Adijetu. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

HASSAN: I, formerly known as Hassan Mohammad Mohammad now wish to be addressed as Hassan Mohammad Thani Mohammad. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

IDEWELE: I, formerly known as Miss. Idewe Ruth Afekelu, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Okoh Ruth Afekelu. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

IGBO: I, formerly known as Miss. Igbo Joy Chinemerem, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Uzoma Joy Chinemerem. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

INEGBEDION: I, formerly known as Inegbedion Clem Emua, now wish to be addressed as Emua Clem Inegbedion. My DOB is 27-02-1983 not 26-02-1989. Former documents remain valid, public note.

JOHN: I, formerly known as John Monday now wish to be addressed as Zoro Monday. My DOB is 18-09-1988. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

KAZEEM: I, formerly known as Miss kazeem Omotola Oluwatosin now wish to be addressed as Mrs. John Omotola Oluwatosin. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

MAVRVELOUS: I formerly known as Momoh Mavrvellous Osemudiamen now wish to be addressed as Momoh Marvellous Osemudiamen. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NJOKU: I, formerly known as Declan Njoku Njoku now wish to be known and addressed as Declan Ikechukwu Njoku. All former documents remain valid. GTBank and general public note.

NWAKUDU: I, formerly known as Nwakudu Stella Ugochi now wish to be addressed as Itheme Stella Ugochi. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

NWOKE: I, formerly known as Happiness Chimuan Nwoke, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Happiness Chimuan Ajoku. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OBABI: I, formerly known as Balogun Obabi Tope now wish to be addressed as Balogun Obabolorunkosi Tope. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ODIA: I, formerly known as Odia Jennifer Osemenyemen now wish to be known as Afukwa Jennifer Osemenyemen. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OGAGA: I, formerly known as Miss Oboyemu-Voke, Ogaga Joy now wish to be known as Mrs. Richard, Ogaga Joy. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

OGBUEHI: I, formerly Prince Sir Udo Anonaba Ogbuehi now wish to be known as Udo Anonaba Ogbuehi. Former documents remain valid. Banks, public take note.

OGUNSANWO: I, formerly known as Ogunsanwo Olutayo Ikechukwu, now wish to be known as Olaniyi Oluwatayo Ikechukwu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLATUNJI: I, formerly known as Olatunji Olakunbi Mercy now wish to be addressed as Oladapo Olakunbi Mercy. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

OLOWONISEBI: I, formerly known as Olowonisebi Olayinka Selimot now wish to be addressed as Okubote Olayinka Selimot. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

ONYEACHONAM: I, formerly known as Onyeachonam Ngozika Obianuju, now wish to be known as Ogudo Ngozika Obianuju. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ORAGUI: I, formerly Miss Oragui Chinyeaka Hope, now Mrs. Azubugwu Chinyeaka Hope. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. General Public, take note.

OSHOLALE: I, formerly known as Osholale Bose Blessing now wish to be addressed as Obalowose Blessing Omotayo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OTORI: I, formerly known as Fatima Precious Otori now wish to be addressed as Fatima Precious Olutosin. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

PERESS: I, formerly known as Samson Peress Patrick now wish to be addressed as Seje Patrick Samson. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

SHONUBI: I, formerly known as Miss. Shonubi Omotayo Olamide now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Bolu Omotayo Olamide. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

STEPHEN: I, formerly known as Stephen Rhoda Okiemute now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Fredrick Rhoda Okiemute. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UCHE: I, formerly known as Uche Euphemia Akunugu, now wish to be addressed as Uchechukwu Euphemia Akunugu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UDOH: I, formerly known as Udoh Elizabeth now wish to be addressed as Udoh Ekaette. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

UDOJI: I, formerly known as Chisom Maria Assumpta Udoji now wish to be addressed as Chisom Maria Assumpta Obi. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

UGWU: I, formerly known as Ugwu Calister Ukamaka now wish to be addressed as Eze Calister Ukamaka. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

News Extra

Abiodun Presents Adeola To Ijebu Royal Fathers, Says Equity, Competence Guided His Choice

• Seeks Royal Support For APC Ticket Ahead Of 2027 Governorship Election

From Azeez Olorunlomu, Abeokuta

Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, on Friday formally presented the All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, and his running mate, Mrs. Kudirat Abiodun Adegunwa-Balogun, to the Ijebu Traditional Council, seeking the support and blessings of the royal fathers ahead of the 2027 governorship election. The presentation, held at the Awujale's Palace in Ijebu-Ode, marked another major political

consultation by the governor following the emergence of Senator Adeola as the APC standard-bearer. Addressing the traditional rulers, Governor Abiodun said his choice of Senator Adeola as his preferred successor was informed by the twin principles of equity and competence, stressing that the Ogun West Senatorial District deserves the opportunity to produce the state's governor for the first time since Ogun was created 50 years ago. He said his search was not for a third term by proxy, but for a capable leader who would consolidate on the achievements of his administration and sustain the state's developmental momentum.

Ogun, IFAD Collaborate On Farmland Development For Youths, Women

By Chris Irekamba

Ogun State government in collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), has officially handed over 279 hectares of developed farmland to landless youths and women under the Sustainable Land Development for Landless Youths and Women Initiative of the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ-IFAD) Programme. The gesture is aimed at transforming the agricultural sector to significantly contribute to economic growth, job creation and food security. It covers three participating local councils - Odogbolu, Obafemi Owode, and Yewa

North.

The programme would provide beneficiaries with access to developed, productive and climate-resilient farmland to boost agricultural production, improved livelihoods and strengthen rural economic development.

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Security, Bolu Owotomo, while speaking during the symbolic handover of developed farmland at Ibido-Ogbo in Odogbolu Local Council, stated that the event marked the official handover of the land allocation exercise under the SAPZ-IFAD Programme for landless youths and women across the participating local councils.

ActionAid, Inspired Youth Network Engage Stakeholders On Local Council Accountability

By Isaac Taiwo

ACTIONAID in partnership with Inspired Youth Network, through the Strategic Partnership Agreement II Project, convened a one-day Local Government Fiscal Forum to engage local councils on tax expenditure priorities, accountability, service delivery in Lagos State and to create spaces for citizens and young people.

The event that took place in Lagos, brought together youth leaders, community representatives, civil society actors and government stakeholders.

Delivering his welcome address, Executive Director, Inspired Youth Network, Ayomikun Olugbode, said he was honoured by the partici-

pants and expressed gratitude for their commitment to strengthening citizens' participation, accountability and inclusive governance at the grassroots. "Today's forum is founded on a simple principle that the people who are most affected by government decisions should have a voice in shaping those decisions. Local councils are the closest state of government to the people. "They are responsible for delivering essential services, supporting community development and responding to the needs and aspirations of citizens. However, effective local governance can only be achieved when there is meaningful engagement between local authorities and communities themselves."

Sports

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Despite Defeat To France, Morocco Get \$57.5million From 2026 World Cup

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE Atlas Lions of Morocco could not advance to the semifinal in the ongoing 2026 FIFA World Cup, but the country's participation generated a massive financial and strategic return on investment, harvesting \$57.5 million in guaranteed prize money from FIFA.

Morocco became the first African country to reach the semifinal at Qatar 2022 World Cup, where they lost to France. On Thursday night, Morocco also fell to France losing 0-2 in

Boston, United States of America.

Despite the defeat, Morocco made huge amount of money from the World Cup.

Beyond direct cash earnings, the Atlas Lions' deep tournament run bolstered the nation's global reputation, tourism, and ongoing preparations for hosting the 2030 World Cup, which they co-hosting with two other European nations.

The financial returns for Morocco's national team run include both performance based prizes and standard FIFA distributions:

For their preparation and participation in the World Cup, Morocco earned \$12.5 million guaranteed. These include (\$2.5 million in tournament preparation funding and \$10 million for qualification).

For the country's performance at the World Cup, Morocco has a payout totalling

\$45 million. These include advancing through the knockout rounds \$11 million for Round of 32, \$15 million for Round of 16, and \$19 million (Quarterfinals).

Following their historic performance in 2022, where the Atlas Lions lost to France in the semifinal, and their consecutive deep runs in the 2026 World Cup, Morocco have cemented their place as a premier global football destination, attracting lucrative sponsorships and international attention.

The international success has run parallel to massive state-level development programs. Recent successful hosting of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations yielded over €1.5 billion in direct economic returns, acting as a catalyst for €2.3 billion in long-term structural investments (such as stadiums, 5G rollouts, and transport) that put Morocco well ahead of schedule for co-hosting the 2030 World Cup.

Gumel Preaches Physical Fitness As NOC Celebrates Olympic Day

NIGERIA Olympic Committee (NOC) President, Habu Ahmed Gumel, has charged Nigerians to see physical fitness as a way of life.

Gumel gave the charge at the weekend during the Olympic Day Celebration held at the National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos.

The NOC held the Olympic Day Celebration in collaboration with the Sports For All Commission.

Represented by the Chairman, Sports

For All Commission, Dr. Abdul Ibrahim, Gumel reminded Nigerians of the importance of healthy living, saying that bodily exercise is a catalyst for healthy living, hence people should always engage themselves in physical exercises always.

At the Olympic Day celebration, participants were engaged in aerobics, jogging

and other side attractions like Tug-of-War, WBC Muatai Kickboxing, Roller Skating, Karate and Dancing.

Reports from across the states indicate that there was a massive turn out of participants in this year's programme when compared with that of 2025. Certificates were distributed to all the participants at the end of the exercise.



Players of Morocco weep after crashing out of the World Cup on Thursday

Business

TETFund Tasks Scientists On Homegrown Lassa Fever Vaccine To Tackle Disease

THE recent call on Nigerian scientists by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to develop vaccine against Lassa fever has resonated the critical need for scientific discoveries to produce practical solutions to national problems.

For decades, Nigeria has recorded seasonal outbreak of the disease. While universities have continued to research on it, no indigenous vaccine has emerged despite the country's position as the global epicentre of the viral infection.

It was against this backdrop that the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Dr. Sonny Echono, challenged researchers to redirect attention towards vaccines development, describing immunisation as the most effective weapon against infectious diseases.

He made the call during the presentation of findings from a N250 million TETFund funded Mega Research Project on Lassa fever conducted by the Federal University of Health Sciences, Otukpo (FUHSO), Benue State.

Beyond unveiling fresh scientific evidence on the disease, the event highlighted a growing shift in Nigeria's research funding philosophy, from financing studies for academic advancement to supporting innovations to address national challenges.

The intervention also reflects TETFund's increasing emphasis on impact driven research. Over the years, the Fund has invested billions of naira in research grants across tertiary institutions. However, concerns have persisted over the limited translation of research findings into commercial products, public policies or technologies that directly benefit society. By challenging scientists to pursue a vaccine, Echono signalled that government expects publicly funded research to produce measurable national outcomes.

He further asked about the quickest path to developing a vaccine, how Nigeria can reduce the burden of Lassa fever and what additional supports are expected of TETFund to make vac-

cine development a reality.

The challenge is particularly significant because Nigeria bears one of the heaviest global burdens of Lassa fever. According to the Principal Investigator, Prof. Joseph Okopi, between 5,000 and 10,000 Nigerians die from the disease yearly, making it one of the country's deadliest endemic viral infections.

However, TETFund sponsored study has provided valuable scientific insights. Described as the largest multi state population surveillance study on Lassa fever ever conducted in the country, it examined antibody prevalence, rodent reservoirs, transmission patterns and environmental risk factors.

Result showed that Benue State has the highest prevalence of Lassa fever antibodies among the five states surveyed. The research also identified poor housing conditions, rodent infestation, contaminated food, leaking roofs and poorly fitted doors as major drivers of infection.

Contrary to widespread belief, the study found no evidence that merely eating rodents predicts Lassa fever infection. Rather, environmental conditions that encourage frequent human contact with infected rodents appear to pose a greater risk.

The clinical component of the research equally offers important lessons for the health sector. Of the 392 suspected Lassa fever cases investigated in Benue and Kogi States, only 43 were confirmed through polymerase chain reaction testing. The study further established that bleeding and seizure were the strongest predictors of death among infected patients.

Beyond the scientific discoveries, the project demonstrated the growing research capacity within universities. According to FUHSO Vice Chancellor, Prof.

Francis A. Uba, the grant enabled the institution to upgrade laboratory facilities, strengthen research infrastructure, train scientists and establish collaborations.

The university is currently seeking designation as a National Centre of Excellence in Infectious Diseases Research, a proposal that may gain traction if government decides to build on the momentum generated by the project.

However, vaccine development remains one of the most demanding areas of biomedical science. Moving from laboratory findings to a licensed vaccine requires years of additional research, pre-clinical studies, multiple phases of clinical trials, regulatory approvals, manufacturing capacity and sustained financial investment.

This reality suggests that TETFund alone cannot shoulder the responsibility but needs to collaborate with universities, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, the Federal Ministry of Health, pharmaceutical companies, international research institutions and development partners.

Recognising this, Echono disclosed that the Fund intends to present the research findings to relevant government agencies and that if successfully validated, the findings could also strengthen

the case for establishing a dedicated vaccine development centre in the country.

The significance of this approach extends beyond Lassa fever. Considering that Nigeria has continued to grapple with several infectious diseases, including cholera, Yellow fever, meningitis and other viral haemorrhagic fevers, building local vaccine research and production capacity will reduce dependence on imported vaccines, improve national health security and better position the country to respond more rapidly to future disease outbreaks.

For TETFund, the Lassa fever project may also serve as a benchmark for evaluating the impact of future research grants. Increasingly, research funders around the world are demanding demonstrable outcomes, patents, products, policy influence and commercialisation rather than academic publications alone. Nigeria appears to be moving in the same direction.

No doubt, TETFund is repositioning Nigerian universities as centres of innovation, where research is measured not only by publications and conference presentations, but also by its ability to solve national problems. Thus, if the current momentum is sustained through consistent funding, strong partnerships and supportive government policies, researchers may become key drivers of medical breakthroughs.



Echono

TheGuardianSports

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Okoku: 'Why Teams Collapse Despite Having 2-0 Lead At World Cup'

By Gowon Akpodonor

UNITED States-based former Super Eagles and Flying Eagles player, Paul Okoku, has explained why some teams suffered defeats despite having an advantage of a 2-0 lead at FIFA World Cup.

At the 2022 FIFA World Cup final in Qatar, Argentina led 2-0 against France before Kylian Mbappe inspired the French team to fight back to make it 2-2, although Argentina eventually prevailed on penalties.

In the ongoing 2026 World Cup, Senegal established a 2-0 advantage over Belgium, only to lose 3-2 in their Round of 32 fixture.

And during the week, seven-time African Champions, Egypt, raced into a 2-0 lead against Argentina, yet the Lionel Messi-led Argentine recovered to win 3-2.

The defeat of Senegal and Egypt prompted many football fans to ask: "Is a 2-0 lead really more dangerous to defend than a 1-0 lead?"

Okoku, a football analyst, told The Guardian that the defeat of Senegal and Egypt are some of the 'Real Lesson' from the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

He said: "Talent gives you the lead, while game management gives you the best chance to keep it. At first glance, recent matches appear to support that idea. Is a 2-0 lead really more dangerous than a 1-0 lead? We have seen remarkable comebacks at World Cup.

"But my answer is no. From both my experience as a former footballer and now as a football analyst, defending a 1-0 lead is generally more difficult than defending a 2-0 lead.

The reason is simple. A 2-0 lead gives you a margin for recovery. If your opponent scores, the score becomes 2-1. You still have the advantage. The opposition must score again to draw level.

"A 1-0 lead offers almost no margin for error. One mistake makes it 1-1. Another mistake turns victory into defeat. From a purely football perspective, a 2-0 lead is statistically safer.

"So why do we continue to see teams surrender two-goal leads? The answer is not the scoreline, but game management.

The score doesn't change the match, but momentum does," he said.

According to Okoku, football is played in phases. "Every goal creates a new phase. Whether you are leading 1-0 or 2-0, once your opponent scores, the emotional and tactical landscape changes immediately.

"The trailing team suddenly believes and confidence returns. The supporters become louder and every tackle carries greater conviction

just as every attack becomes more purposeful.

"Meanwhile, the team that had been comfortably ahead often begins to hesitate. Simple passes become rushed and clearances become hurried. Players begin watching the clock instead of controlling the match, and confidence slowly gives way to anxiety."

Okoku continues: "As a former footballer, I can tell you that momentum is perhaps the most difficult opponent you will ever face.

You cannot see it. You cannot tackle it and you cannot mark it. But every player on the pitch can feel it. The best teams recognise momentum early and know how to wrestle it back before it decides the match."

Okoku further stated that ball possession is defensive football saying: "Modern football has completely changed. When I was growing up, very few coaches talked about ball possession the way they do today. The emphasis was on attacking, dribbling, individual brilliance, physical courage, and entertaining football.

"Today's game is different. Possession is no longer simply an attacking statistic, but it has become one of football's most effective defensive tools.

"Sometimes, the best way to protect a lead is not by defending deeper—but by keeping the ball. Every completed pass frustrates the chasing team. Every minute of possession reduces the opponent's opportunities. Possession slows the opponent's momentum, and it allows

your players to recover physically.

"Most importantly, it allows your team—not your opponent—to dictate the rhythm of the match. That is intelligent football."

Okoku, the Vice Captain of 1983 set of Flying Eagles said that game management belongs to the entire team. "Game management is often misunderstood. Many people think it applies only to the players, but it doesn't. It applies equally to the coaching staff.

"A coach manages the game through: The timing of substitutions, selecting the right player to introduce, adjusting tactical shape, recognising fatigue before it becomes costly, knowing when to press, knowing when to defend, and helping players remain emotionally disciplined under pressure.

"Every substitution sends a tactical message. Introduce the wrong player, make the substitution too early, wait too long, or fail to recognise fatigue.

"Any one of those decisions can change the rhythm—and ultimately the result—of a match.

"As a former footballer, I understand that players execute the plan. And as an analyst, I also recognise that coaches influence outcomes through every decision made from the technical area.

"Ultimately, game management is a shared responsibility.

Players must make intelligent decisions on the field, while coaches must make equally intelligent decisions from the bench."

Okoku, a CAF silver medalist, also spoke on Africa's next football frontier saying: "One important point is often overlooked.



Mohammed Salah sad after Egypt squandered a 2-0 lead to lose 3-2 to Argentina

Egbe: 'Stunning Facade In Stadium Does Not Earn CAF Approval'

By Gowon Akpodonor

FIFA Stadium facilities expert and Chief Executive officer of Monimichelle Sports Company, Ebi Egbe, says having a stunning facade does not earn CAF stadium approval.

Egbe, who has constructed several stadium pitches across Nigeria, including the Yakubu Gowon stadium in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, told The Guardian, on Friday, that it is great to have a beautiful stadium facade that enhances a football venue's appearance and creates a strong first impression.

He stated however, that a stunning facade does not earn CAF stadium approval.

"The playing pitch remains the most critical element," he said. "Without a high quality pitch that meets CAF standards, a stadium cannot be approved for elite continental football," Egbe said.

According to him, investment in the pitch should always be a top priority.

"A world class playing surface directly influences player safety, match quality, broadcast standards, and ultimately, stadium approval. As it stands, the only pitches in Nigeria with current FIFA/CAF approval status for elite football are the natural grass pitch at Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, and the hybrid synthetic pitch at Remo Stars Stadium, constructed by Monimichelle Sports using its innovative Dynamic Natural Infill System approved by FIFA for FIFA Quality and FIFA Quality Pro football pitches. The Remo Stars pitch currently holds a valid FIFA Quality certification from January 13, 2026 to January 12, 2029, reaffirming its compliance with international standards for elite football."

Egbe also said that discharge drainage plays a pivotal role in football pitch construction saying: "That is why, at Monimichelle Sports, we place great emphasis on designing and installing high-performance drainage systems that efficiently remove excess water from the playing surface.

"A properly engineered discharge drainage system prevents waterlogging, protects the pitch structure, promotes healthy turf growth and supports moisture level control on hybrid synthetic pitches, ensures matches can be played safely and consistently even after heavy rainfall."

Aquatics Federation Boss Fatodu Tips Swimmers For Greatness At Commonwealth Games

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE President of Nigeria Aquatics Federation (NAqF), Lekan Fatodu, is optimistic that Team Nigeria will harvest medals in swimming in the fast approaching 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

Fatodu, who is the Director General of Lagos Sports Commission, charged the swimmers to be worthy ambassadors of the nation and the federation at the Games.

The quartet of Abduljabar Adama, Clinton Opute, Collins Ebanga and Dorcas Oka are currently in the final phase of preparations at a training camp in Aberdeen, Scotland, ahead of the Games, scheduled for July 23 to August 2. Fatodu said the athletes have earned the privilege of representing Nigeria through hard work and dedication, urging them to compete with courage, discipline and determination while flying the country's flag high on the international stage.

"You are carrying the hopes and aspirations of millions of Nigerians. Beyond competing for medals, you are ambassadors of the Nigeria Aquatics Federation and our great nation. Let your conduct, commitment and performances reflect the true Nigerian spirit," he said.

The NAqF President expressed confidence in the team's readiness, noting that the training camp in Aberdeen has provided the ideal environment to sharpen their skills ahead of the multi-sport event.

"We have confidence in your abilities and believe you have what it takes to win laurels for Nigeria. Stay focused, trust in your preparation and give your very best every time you step into the pool. The federation and the entire country are behind you.

Olympian Oshomah Meets Edo Council Boss, Set To Relocate Weightlifting Academy To Agenebode

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE future of weightlifting in Edo State looks brighter following a declaration by the Acting Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council, Sunny Ekpeta Ekpeta, that his administration would give the sport the support needed to take the state to a greater height.

In the early 2000, Edo was one of the leading states controlling the game of weightlifting in the country. Team Edo topped the medals table during the 2002 edition of the National Sports Festival, which the state hosted with a majority of the medals coming from weightlifting. Since then, Edo State has not been able to reclaim the top spot.

To save the situation, former Nigeria weightlifting coach, Olympian Emmanuel Oshomah established the Oshobugie Weightlifting Academy in Auch, Edo State, on September 1, 2022, to train and nurture young weightlifters for Edo State and

Nigeria in general.

Now, Oshomah is set to move the weightlifting Academy to a permanent site in Agenebode.

He paid a courtesy call on the local Govt Ag. Chairman, Ekpeta, in his office at Agenebode during the week, where they discussed on how to lay a solid foundation for Weightlifting Academy and also use it to better the lives of the people in both the local government council, Edo State and Nigeria in general.

According to Oshomah, relocating Oshobugie Weightlifting Academy to its Permanent site in Agenebode will fasten the development of the game, and also bring it closer to the youth in Etsako East.

He said: "During my courtesy visit to the chairman, our discussion was based on my request for recognition and financial assistance to enable the Academy stabilise and make Agenebode a training camp for both local and International Weightlifters," Oshomah told The Guardian.

"Apart from being a great sports



Olympian Emmanuel Oshomah with the Acting Chairman of Etsako East Local Council, Sunny Ekpeta Ekpeta

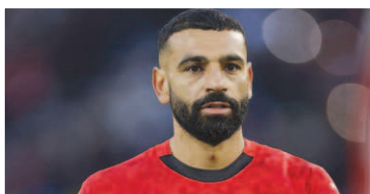
lover, Hon. Ekpeta has demonstrated his love in empowering the youths, and I believe that helping Oshobugie Weightlifting Academy to stabilise will go a long way in laying a solid foundation for the younger ones."

In his active days as a weightlifter, Emmanuel Oshomah represented Nigeria at Los Angeles '84 Olympics Games.

He won two gold and a silver medal at the All African Games in Nairobi Kenya 1987. He retired as an African and Commonwealth record

holder in Weightlifting.

In coaching, Oshomah led Nigerian lifters to Commonwealth Championship in Malaysia in 2013, where the nation won a total of nine gold, two silver and three bronze medals. The team also won the overall trophy in female category. Oshomah is the only indigenous coach that assisted former Bulgarian tactician, Mr Ivan Ganey to the All African games in South Africa 1999, came first winning 28 gold medals, as well as Algiers 2007 All African Games, (17 gold, 12 silver, nine bronze medals.



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FIFA World Cup: Ten Lessons Africa Must Learn From Europe

THIS is a policy brief for CAF and 54-member associations on what African football managers must learn from the organisational power that will continue to make "Africa's sons" World Cup and Europe's Champions League winners for Europe. It is a time to deconstruct 'the teams' that couldn't qualify but may win the world cup even on July 19, 2026 when the global game will be lost and won.

Watch the 2026 World Cup and you will see it. France's front line: Kylian Mbappé - father Cameroonian, mother Algerian; Ousmane Dembélé - Malian and Mauritanian roots; Michael Olise - Nigerian roots; Eduardo Camavinga - Congolese roots in Angola. **England:** Bukayo Saka - Nigerian; Eberechi Eze - Nigerian; Noni Madueke - Nigerian/Congolese.; **Austria:** David Alaba - Nigerian/Filipino. Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Austria, Switzerland, etc, same story.

Now check the African qualifiers for 2026: Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria, Angola, Mauritania... all absent. The best African teams - "White Africa": Morocco quarterfinalists, Algeria and Tunisia in groups - played well, but went home early. Isn't that intriguing?

The uncomfortable question: How did the countries that failed to qualify produce the players who are likely to lift the trophy for someone else? The answer is not about "talent". Africa has talent. The answer is about operating environments. It is about academies, data, sports science, legal departments, diaspora policy, and 20-year planning.

This mysecond commentary on the 2026 FIFA World Cup is not another bout of lamentation. It is about another blueprint on what African football authorities must copy, starting today.

The diagnosis: **Why "Black Europe" Outperformed "Africa"**

Environment beats genetics: Mbappé did not become Mbappé in Yaoundé. He became Mbappé in Clairefontaine, the French national academy, with 12 pitches, cryotherapy, video analysis, and a psychologist. **Saka** did not become Saka in Lagos. He became Saka at Arsenal's Hale End, where every U9 player has GPS data and a nutrition plan. **Olise** did not become Olise in Abuja. He became Olise at Reading and Crystal Palace, with loan pathways, sports scientists, and agents regulated by the FA.

Talent is universal. Systems are not. Europe and South America built systems. Africa built vibes.

The three operating gaps

a. The development gap: France: 14 regional INSEP-style centres + Clairefontaine. 3,000 licensed academies. Every player tracked from U12 on the FFF database.

England: Category 1 Academies must spend £5m/year, employ 25 staff, and pass audits.

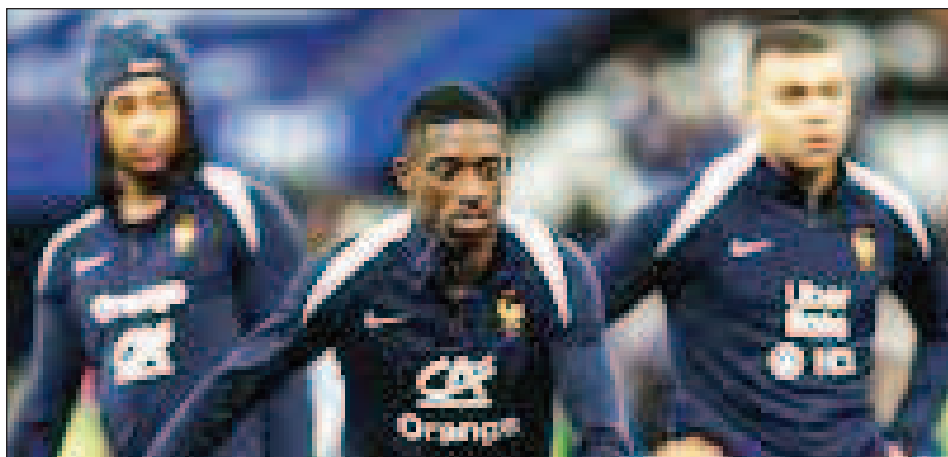
Nigeria: Less than 15 academies meet CAF "Elite" standard. Most "academies" are agents with jerseys. No central player database. No insurance.

b. The administrative gap: France Football Federation (FFF) has 120 full-time staff in technical department. FA England has 40 performance analysts.

Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has 3 technical directors and constant board crises. Many FAs in Africa cannot pay referees on time.

c. The diaspora and retention gap: France, England, Germany: they have "Diaspora Units". They call dual-nationals at 15. They send coaches to visit parents in Bamako, Dakar, Lagos, etc. Most African FAs meet a dual-national for the first time at 24, when he has three (3) England caps. Then we tweet "Come home".

Morocco proved the exception, not the rule: Morocco reached quarterfinals in FIFA WC 2026, semi-final in FIFA WC 2022 because it copied Europe and here is how: **Mohammed VI Academy** in Rabat - €60m, dormitories, school, data laboratory and diaspora policy: "If you have Moroccan blood, we will



find you at 14". Government + Royal backing + 10-year plan. That is why Morocco beat "Black Africa" because Morocco stopped acting like Africa and started acting like Europe. It is curious that a lot of sports commentators and analysts have been profiling and deriding them.

The lessons: 10 things African football authorities must copy from Europe and even South America:

Lesson 1: Build national academy networks, not one academy: Europe model: France has Clairefontaine + 13 regional poles. Germany has 366 DFB academies linked to Bundesliga clubs.

Africa challenge: We celebrate one "Aspire Academy" or "Right to Dream" and call it progress. It is a celebration of mediocrity.

Action point: Every FA must create 4 regional Elite Centres by 2030. Funded 50% by FA, 30% by Government, 20% by sponsors. Minimum standards: 2 pitches, school, dormitory, medical, data analyst. CAF should withhold AFCON prize money from FAs without a certified academy.

Lesson 2: Data is the new scout: **England** knows Saka's sprint speed at 14. **France** knows Camavinga's pass completion under pressure. Whereas most African FAs still select by "who the coach saw at a tournament".

Action point: Mandate a Central Player Passport System. Every registered U12-U20 player gets an ID with medical, match data, video clips. Partner with StatsPerform or local tech firms. This is how you find the next Olise in Enugu before Crystal Palace does.

Lesson 3: Professionalise the backroom: France's World Cup staff: 42 people. Nutritionist, sleep coach, mental coach, 8 video analysts.

Nigeria's staff: 1 coach, 2 assistants, 1 doctor.

Action point: CAF licensing must require FAs to employ: Technical Director, Performance Analyst, Sports Scientist, Player Welfare Officer. Fund it through 10% of FIFA Forward money ring-fenced.

Lesson 4: Win the diaspora war at 14, not 24: France called Mbappé's parents when he was 11. England visited Saka's home when he was 13. In Nigeria, we call players when they are starring in Premier League.

Action point: Create "Diaspora Technical Attachés" in London, Paris, Berlin, Milan. Their job: identify U14-U16 players of African descent, build relationships with parents, invite to camps. Offer dual-pathway: play for Europe until 21, then switch. Brazil does this with Japanese-

Brazilians. We must do it.

Lesson 5: Club-FA partnership like South America: In Brazil and Argentina, clubs must produce and sell to survive. So they invest in 8-year-olds.

In Africa, clubs die because there is no TV money, no youth compensation.

Action point: Enforce FIFA Solidarity Mechanism. If Osimhen is sold for €100m, 5% must go to his first three (3) academies. Use that money to fund grassroots. Besides, give tax breaks to African clubs that run Category 1 academies.

Lesson 6: Stop the coaching tourism: European teams have 10-year technical plans. Spain had the same DNA from 2008-2024.

African teams change coaches every 11 months. We hire a Serbian, fire him, hire a local, fire him.

Action point: 4-year contracts for technical directors, not head coaches. The TD sets playing style from U17 to senior team. Coach executes it. Sack coach, keep DNA.

Lesson 7: Make the domestic league a factory, not a cemetery: Europe's power comes from strong leagues that feed national teams.

African leagues: no VAR, no data, players unpaid for four (4) months.

Action point: CAF should create "African Super League 2" - 16 clubs with minimum standards: salary escrow, stadium, academy. Prize money only paid if audits pass. This forces professionalism.

Lesson 8: Legal and agent regulation: Dembélé's first agent was regulated by FFF. Madueke's agent is FA-licensed. Many African players are trafficked by "agents" at 15.

Action point: Every FA must license agents and run a Player Protection Unit. Partner with FIFPRO. Blacklist agencies that take minors abroad without school.

Lesson 9: Government must fund infrastructure, not salaries: Europe: Government builds stadiums and schools. FA runs football. **Africa:** Government pays coach salary, then delays it 6 months amidst poor infrastructure.

Action point: New model: Government builds 1 FIFA-standard stadium per geopolitical zone + school hostels. FA runs technical programme. Private sector sponsors kits and data.

Lesson 10: Measure what matters: France Football Federation (FFF) key performance indicators (KPI): "Number of players in Top 5 leagues at 21". FA England KPI: "Minutes played by U21 in Premier League".

Most African FAs KPI: "Did we qualify?"

Action point: Publish annual "African Talent Development Report". Metrics: # players exported, # minutes in top leagues, # academies certified, # coaches licensed. Name and shame FAs that don't improve.

Case Studies: What we can copy tomorrow...

France - Clairefontaine Model: Central academy + regional hubs + school. Cost: €10m/year. Output: 1998 and 2018 World Cup winners.

Copy point: Nigeria can build 6 in 6 zones. Ghana 4. Senegal 3. Fund with AFCON TV rights + NNPC Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

England - Elite Player Performance Plan: Clubs get £200m/year to run academies. They are audited.

Copy point: South Africa, Egypt, Morocco already have this. Extend to 10 countries in Africa.

Brazil - Export and reinvest: Sell player 30% reinvested in grassroots.

Copy point: Mandate that 20% of any transfer fee involving an African player must be paid to his development clubs.

Morocco - Diaspora + Infrastructure: Royal academy + scouts in Europe.

Copy point: Algeria and Tunisia already have large diaspora. Create "Maghreb Diaspora Desk". Do same for West Africa in Paris and London.

The hard truths African FAs must accept:

1. **You will lose some players:** Mbappé chose France. That's fine. But you should have called him at 13 and offered a real pathway.

2. **Talent is not enough:** We have 10x more raw talent than Belgium. Belgium has three (3) players in Ballon d'Or top 20 because of systems.

3. **Corruption kills development:** Money for academies ends in estates in most African countries. Until we audit, Europe will keep harvesting our boys.

4. **Fans must accept 8 years of pain:** Germany rebuilt after 2000 and won in 2014. We want AFCON next year and World Cup now. That is bad management of priorities.

A 10-Year "Africa 2036" Roadmap:

Years 1-2: Emergency Fix:

- Audit all academies. Close 70% that are fake.

- Launch Player Passport.

- Hire Diaspora Attachés in 5 cities.

Years 3-5: Build:

- 20 Regional Elite Centres open.

- Domestic leagues get salary escrow.

- Every FA has Technical Director on 4-year contract.

Years 6-10: Compete

- Target: 100 African players starting in Top 5 leagues.

- Target: 2 African teams in World Cup quarterfinals 2030.

- Target: Win U17 World Cup.

Here is the conclusion of the whole matter: **THE MBAPPÉS ARE OURS. THE SYSTEMS ARE NOT!**

The Mbappés, Dembélés, Olises, Sakas, Ezes are not accidents. They are products. Yes, they are products of planning, of budgets, of databases, of lawyers, of schoolteachers who let them miss class for training because the system guarantees a future. The inconvenient truth is that Africa did not lose those players. Africa never built the machine to keep them. Morocco showed us it is possible. Now the other 53 must choose:

Do we keep blaming FIFA, colonialism and even referees? Or do we build Clairefontaines in Kano, Kumasi, Dakar, and Kinshasa?

The current 2026 World Cup will likely be won by a team whose best players have African blood. Let that be the last time we will be watching our children lift someone else's trophy. Here is the real deal, sorry goal, in 2030, 2034, 2036 - the trophy should come home. Let it not be because we prayed harder. But because we planned better. This is how to avoid reading from the book of lamentation any time we participate in World Cup festival of the "beautiful game" called football!

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