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# 2027: Court Dismisses Atiku's Fresh Bid To Bar Tinubu, APC P.2




# 2027: Court Dismisses Atiku's Bid To Present Fresh Exhibit In Suit Seeking To Bar Tinubu, APC

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

JUSTICE Inyang Eden Ekwo of the Federal High Court in Abuja has dismissed the request of the presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), former vice president Atiku Abubakar, to present fresh exhibit in his suit seeking to prohibit President Bola Tinubu from contesting the 2027 presidential election on allegations of forgery of the National Youth Service Corps discharge certificate.

The Judge held that the time allowed by law to make such a presentation of exhibit was within 14 days, being a pre-election suit and in line with Section 285(9) of the 1999 Constitution.

Justice Ekwo agreed with Tinubu and other defendants in the suit that if Atiku is allowed to bring fresh evidence, the character of the initial case would change and would be in breach of the 1999 Constitution.

In a ruling on Friday on the application by Atiku to amend his originating summons in the suit against Tinubu, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the judge held that Atiku attempted to mislead the court in his claim that he would not present fresh issue in the amendment sought.

Justice Ekwo said after carefully perusing the application, the court found that the ADC presidential candidate sought to substitute old evidence for a new one, which if allowed, would over reach Section 285(9) of the Constitution, which says such evidence must have been provided within 14 days.

According to the judge, a fundamental injustice would be done to the defendants if Atiku is permitted to bring fresh evidence through the back door against them.

"This is a time bound suit and the law makes it mandatory for all exhibits to be filed in Court within 14 days of occurrence of the event being challenged. Anything outside the prescribed 14 days is null and void and of no effect.

"I find no merit in this application to bring a fresh exhibit; it is hereby refused for being against the express provision of the law. I hereby make an order dismissing this application and it is hereby dismissed," he said.

Meanwhile, by the consensus of the lawyers, the judge has fixed December 2, 2026, for hearing of the substantive matter.

Atiku had told the court that he needed to make substantial amendments to his case challenging the eligibility of Tinubu to participate in the 2027 presidential election.

Atiku and ADC had in the main suit asked Justice Inyang Ekwo to disqualify President Tinubu and APC from the 2027 presidential election.

They had questioned Tinubu's National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) discharge certificate submitted to INEC by APC.

The plaintiffs, who sued the President, APC and INEC as 1st to 3rd defendants in the originating summons marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1888/2026, alleged that APC submitted the President's forged NYSC discharge certificate to INEC.

They, therefore, prayed the court to compel INEC to remove Tinubu and APC's names from the list of candidates and parties for the presidential poll.

But President Tinubu and APC, in their joint counter affidavit filed on September 9, prayed the court to dismiss the suit in its entirety for being incompetent, arguing that the plaintiffs lacked the legal right to institute the case.

They denied submitting any forged certificate to INEC either for the 2023 or 2027 presidential elections.

The duo, through the APC's Director of Legal Services, Mr. Sanusi Samaila, averred that they did not submit any Form CF001 to INEC for 2023 or 2027 poll as claimed by the plaintiffs.

They stated that the NYSC has never denied issuing the discharge certificate to the 1st defendant at the end of his service year.

They submitted that it is a settled law that the evidence required to prove that a certificate is forged is a disclaimer from the institution that is said to have issued the certificate, citing a previous Supreme Court decision to back their argument.

They urged the court to uphold their preliminary objection and dismiss the suit.

INEC, in its preliminary objection filed on September 7 by its lawyer, Dr Alex Izinyon (SAN), also challenged the competence of the suit on the grounds of statute-bar, want of locus standi, absence of a reasonable cause of action and abuse of court process.

The commission argued that the plaintiffs failed to comply with the mandatory written deposition requirement under Paragraph 7(1) provision of the Federal High Court Pre-Election Practice Directions (Amendment) 2026.

The electoral umpire equally challenged the impropriety of Reliefs 2 and 3 in Atiku and ADC's originating summons, urging the court to dismiss the suit.

Atiku and ADC, however, approached the court with a motion on notice on September 10, seeking an amendment to the suit.



Kebbi State Governor, Nasir Idris (left); National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu; Senator Adamu Aliero; President Bola Ahmed Tinubu; Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas; Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Barau I. Jibrin; Kwara State Governor, Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq; President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, and others during the wedding Fatiha of the daughter of Senator Adamu Aliero, at the National Mosque, Abuja... on Friday. PHOTO: STATE HOUSE.

# Int'l Men's Day: Nigerian Fathers Prioritise Emotional Presence Over Paycheque, Study Reveals

By **Moyosore Salami**

NIGERIAN men increasingly value emotional involvement in raising their children over traditional expectations of financial provision, according to a new study by public strategy and media group, Gatefield.

A study by Gatefield released on Thursday in commemoration of the International Men's Day found emotional connection mentioned nearly twice as often as financial provision, while economic pressures and workplace barriers limit shared caregiving

The report titled, 'The New Breadwinner: Masculinity, Caregiving and Economic Prosperity in Nigeria,' found that emotional connection was mentioned 156 times by respondents, nearly twice the 84 mentions recorded for financial provision.

The study examined changing perceptions of masculinity and fatherhood in Nigeria, highlighting the economic, cultural and workplace factors influencing men's participation in childcare.

It found that traditional expectations that fathers should be primary breadwinners continue to place pressure on men, particularly during periods of economic instability, when inability to provide financially can affect their self-worth and emotional wellbeing.

The study also identified the language used in advocacy campaigns as a factor influencing men's willingness to support shared caregiving.

It found that expressions such as "dismantling the motherhood penalty" and "unpaid care work" generated six times more defensiveness during message testing.

However, framing shared caregiving around household peace and prosperity increased message resonance by more than 70 per cent, suggesting that family-centred messaging was more effective in gaining men's support.

The study further found that workplace policies remain a major barrier to active fatherhood, noting that while public sector employees receive 14 days of paid paternity leave, workers in the informal sector often face financial losses when taking time away from work to care for their children.

It noted that about 80 per cent of Nigerians work in the informal sector, where limited access to paid leave makes it difficult for fathers to balance employment with childcare responsibilities.

The study also highlighted differences in how families manage caregiving, noting that some middle-class, dual-income households rely on hired domestic workers to reduce household responsibilities, an option largely inaccessible to low-income families.

# Delayed Justice Undermines Investment, Economic Growth, Says Elumelu

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

CHAIRMAN of Heirs Holdings, Tony Elumelu, has called for technology-driven judicial reforms and faster dispute resolution to strengthen investor confidence and private sector expansion.

He argued that delays in the administration of justice and weak enforcement of contracts are major obstacles to investment.

Elumelu urged the Federal Government to prioritise judicial reforms as part of efforts to improve the country's business environment, stressing that the ability of businesses to operate under predictable laws, enforce contractual agreements and obtain timely judicial decisions remain fundamental to attracting and retaining investment.

Elumelu said investors were more concerned about the reliability of the legal system than government incentives, adding that uncertainty around contracts and unequal enforcement of regulations could discourage capital formation and push investors to move their resources elsewhere.

Speaking at the Wole Olanipekun and Co. (WOC) Justice Summit in Abuja, themed 'The Rule of Law as a Catalyst for Private Sector Growth and Economic Transformation,' Elumelu said the rule of law, from an entrepreneur's perspective, rests on three fundamental assurances: that contractual agreements would remain binding; that regulations would apply equally to competitors and that government changes would not invalidate existing business agreements.

"Where any of them is in doubt, capital doesn't argue. It leaves," he said.

According to him, predictability in the judicial system is a critical part of the investment climate because businesses need confidence that disputes will be resolved fairly and within reasonable timeframes.

"Capital goes where it's safe and stays where it's respected," he said, adding that before infrastructure, electricity and tax incentives, investors need the assurance of fair, impartial and timely judicial decisions.

He cited his experience in acquiring a struggling bank in 1997 and subsequent investments in power, oil and gas through Transcorp as examples of business decisions that depend not only on economic prospects but also on confidence in the Nigerian legal system.

He warned that the next generation of Nigerian entrepreneurs would struggle to replicate such investments if the country fails to guarantee the protection of economic rights and contractual obligations.

For him, the objective should be to make justice delivery routine rather than exceptional, with efficient court processes that reduce the cost and uncertainty associated with commercial disputes.

Elumelu, who is also the Chairman of Transcorp Group and founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation, spoke from the perspective of an investor with four decades of business experience.

He maintained that an effective justice system is an essential part of the social and economic contract between government and the private sector.

He, therefore, called for the deployment of technology and institutional performance measures to address delays in the judicial process.

"Let us harness your reforming spirit, marry it with technology and the intellect of our legal profession. Let us set KPIs for case management and settlement. We can be effective and efficient," he said.

Elumelu also linked the legal system's effectiveness to the success of the economic reforms introduced by President Bola Tinubu, noting that the administration inherited an economy characterised by fuel subsidy expenditure, multiple exchange rates and weaknesses in the tax system.

He commended the President for removing the petrol subsidy, unifying the foreign exchange market and signing the tax reform laws, describing the decisions as necessary steps to rebuild the economy on a more sustainable foundation.

# Tinubu Backs Igbo Business Consultative Forum

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has backed the establishment of the Igbo Business Consultative Forum (IBCF), a platform designed to protect Igbo business interests, strengthen government engagement and promote peaceful coexistence with host communities across the country.

The initiative, spearheaded by the Minister of State for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite, is expected to provide an organised platform for Igbo entrepreneurs, market associations and business leaders to address challenges affecting their investments and participate more actively in Nigeria's economic development.

The minister said the forum was conceived as a national institution, with structures to be established across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

**Anyaegbu Emerges Chairman**

At a stakeholders' meeting held on November 17 in Lagos, representatives of major Igbo markets, trade associations, businesses and community organisations endorsed the emergence of the founder and chairman of Chisco Group, Chief (Dr.) Chidi Anyaegbu, as its founding chairman.

The development, according to stakeholders, marks an attempt to move engagement between the Igbo business community and government beyond informal consultations to a more organised arrangement for addressing issues affecting businesses.

# How Entrepreneurs, Investors Will Benefit From KLWC 2026 – TREM

By **Suliyat Tella**

ENTREPRENEURS, business executives, professionals, investors and aspiring business leaders will gain a lot of insight on enterprise development, innovation, growth and economic opportunities from this year's Kingdom Life World Conference (KLWC), The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM) has said.

Addressing a press conference on behalf of the Presiding Bishop of TREM, Dr. Mike Okonkwo, the Chairman of the KLWC 2026 Planning Committee, Ugochukwu Ezeagwula, said the conference, which is in its 36th edition, would be held from Sunday, November 22-29 at the Cathedral of His Glory, TREM International Headquarters, Gbagada, Lagos.

According to him, the conference themed, 'Uncommon,' would feature the Big League Summit designed to bring together entrepreneurs, business executives, professionals, investors and aspiring business leaders for insightful conversations on enterprise development, innovation, growth and economic opportunities.

"This year, our conversations will focus particularly on how businesses can scale beyond their immediate markets, expand into larger opportunities and build resilient institutions capable of delivering sustainable value.

"We recognise that many Nigerian entrepreneurs have remarkable ideas, innovative products and significant growth potential. However, building a successful business requires more than a good idea.

# Ekiti Pushes Market-led Industrialisation, Woos Agro-investors

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

THE Ekiti State government has intensified efforts to drive market-led industrialisation through targeted infrastructure development and stronger engagement with private-sector investors.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Economic Affairs and Private Sector Development, Kayode Adaramodu, disclosed this at the end of a three-day familiarisation tour of industrial zones and major agribusiness enterprises across the state.

Adaramodu said the state's economic transformation agenda would focus on moving beyond primary agricultural production to local processing, value addition and integrated supply chains.

He explained that rather than starting industries from scratch, the government was identifying existing viable private-sector enterprises and addressing critical infrastructure and policy gaps that would enable them to expand, create jobs and contribute more significantly to the state's economy.

During the tour, the Special Adviser inspected four major agro-industrial facilities: YSJ Farms and Agro-Allied Ventures; Promise Point Cassava Processing Facility; FMS Farms; and Arog Bio-Allied Agro Services at Ipao-Ekiti.

At YSJ Farms, Adaramodu commended the company's diversified operations, which include soybean oil production, shea butter processing, Ofada rice, gari and in-house plastic packaging. He also praised its outgrower schemes, which provide economic opportunities for women and young people.

# 50 Feared Dead In Bayelsa As Passenger Boat Capsizes

From **Julius Osahon**, Yenagoa

TRAGEDY hit Ukubie Community In Southern Ijaw Local Council of Bayelsa State as a local boat conveying a large number of passengers capsized on Friday.

According to reports, over 50 dead bodies had been evacuated to the morgue while several others were still missing even as rescue operations continued.

The ill-fated vessel was reportedly en route to Ukubie community when the incident occurred between 12 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Reports had it that the boat, which was heavily overloaded with passengers travelling for a burial ceremony, went down in the waterways between Oweikorogha and Angiama communities.

Eyewitness accounts indicated that the tragedy might have been averted if not for the overloading

An eye witness, who said he was part of the rescue operation, said he helped to recover about 30 bodies.

While the actual casualty figure remains unconfirmed, fears mount that the death toll could be substantial given the number of persons on board.

Chairman of the State Maritime Workers Union, Mr. Ipigansi Igoniba, confirmed the incident but stated that information regarding the disaster was still hazy.

"I cannot give the casualty figure right now. We have sent our members to the scene of the accident, and search and rescue efforts for the missing persons are ongoing," Igoniba said.



Gubernatorial candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola (left); Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun; Chairman, Ogun State Council of Oba's and the Alake of Egbaland, Oba Adedotun Gbadebo; and former Governor of the state, Chief Olusegun Osoba, during a meeting with the Egbaland Traditional Council at the Ake Palace, Abeokuta... on Friday.

# Nigerian SMEs Must Scale Into Globally Competitive Businesses – Wale Tinubu

By **David Emokpae**

THE Group Chief Executive of Oando PLC, Wale Tinubu, has called on Nigerian entrepreneurs to prioritise strong business systems, financial discipline, governance and long-term execution as critical foundations for building sustainable and globally competitive enterprises.

He made the call while delivering the keynote address at the recent GROW Nigerian 2026 – the National MSME Conference organised by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) – held at the Ecobank Pan African Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The conference was attended by Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; SMEDAN Director-General, Charles Odii; and Deputy Consul General of Germany, Katharina Ziegler, among other business leaders, policymakers and development partners.

Highlighting the contribution of SMEs to Nigeria's economy, Tinubu noted that they account for 96.9 per cent of businesses, 88 per cent of employment and 46 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

He said the next priority was to strengthen their capacity to grow from small enterprises into medium-sized, large and ultimately global organisations.

"Nigerian giants are not built overnight. They are built through a series of bold decisions, executed with long-term commitment and persistence," he said.

Drawing on Oando's evolution over three decades, Tinubu recounted how the company began with modest family contributions, operating from a converted garage with limited resources before venturing into diesel trading and subsequently expanding into petroleum marketing, gas distribution, and upstream oil and gas.

He attributed this growth to calculated risk-taking, reinvestment and an unwavering commitment to reliability and quality, noting that opportunities must be pursued through deliberate decisions and disciplined execution.

On building businesses capable of attracting investment, Tinubu stressed the importance of proper financial records, documented processes and audited accounts.

He noted that these structures help businesses demonstrate their capacity, establish credibility with financial institutions and prepare for expansion.

# 2027: Afenifere Condemns Escalating Campaign Violence

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

PAN-Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, has called on politicians and political actors across the country to eschew violence, thuggery and inflammatory rhetoric as they campaign for votes towards the forthcoming general election.

The organisation's position was contained in a statement on Friday by its National Publicity Secretary, Jare Ajayi.

According to him, Afenifere is deeply disturbed by mounting reports of electoral campaign-related violence from various parts of the country, noting that no political office or ambition is safe when lawlessness goes unchecked.

Among the recent instances Ajayi cited were the assault on the motorcade of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Friday, November 13, 2026, shortly after he observed Jumu'ah prayers at the Central mosque, Abuja.

"During the incident, assailants hurled stones and dangerous objects at the departing convoy; damaging several vehicles and injuring security operatives," it said.

It also cited the violent ambush on supporters of the Accord Party governorship candidate in Oyo State, Alhaji Oriyomi Hamzat, around the Molete area of Ibadan.

"The unprovoked attack by suspected hoodlums left vehicles vandalised and tragically claimed the life of a 40-year-old supporter, Azeez Tajudeen," Ajayi added.

He also mentioned sundry assaults on convoys and campaign rallies of political players as typified by the one that happened to the convoy of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) vice-presidential candidate, Rabiu Kwankwaso, in Bichi, Kano State; the attack on the convoy of the NDC presidential candidate, Peter Obi, in Calabar; and the disruptions of campaign gatherings particularly of the APC and ADC in Sokoto, Kebbi and Lagos states.

Ajayi referenced the alarm raised by former president Goodluck Jonathan at the 2026 Goodluck Jonathan Foundation Peace Conference in Abuja, where he warned politicians not to be running political parties as though they are rival cult groups. The former president had also cautioned against exploiting youths for political brigandage as it is capable of triggering violent crises.

Ajayi also underscored President Tinubu's firm directive last week Friday, in which he condemned political violence across party lines and insisted that campaigns must remain a contest of ideas rather than being seen as enmity.

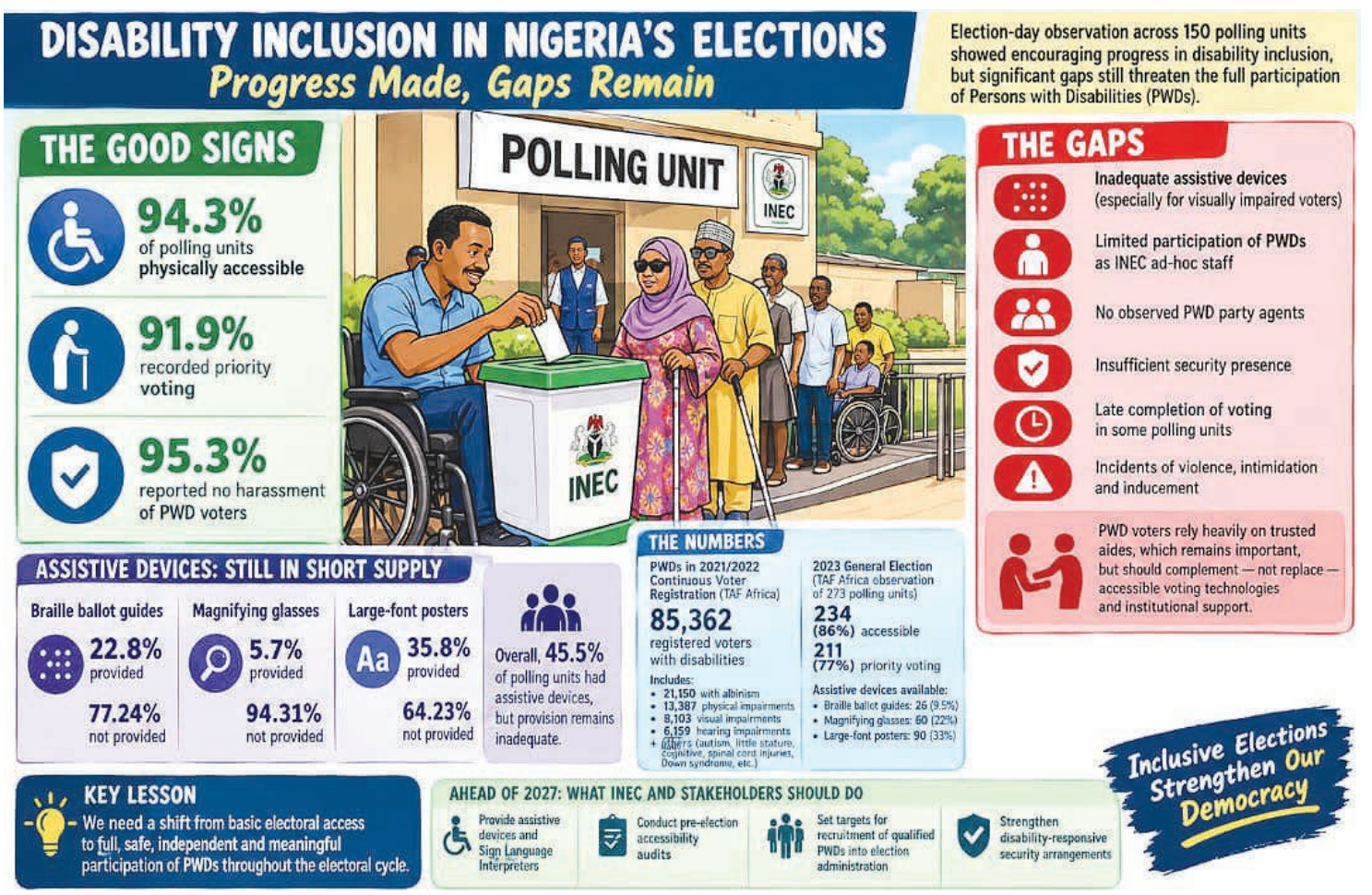
He called on politicians to call their supporters to order and advised youths not to allow themselves to be used.

Special



# 2027 Elections: Accessibility Gaps Threaten To

*Ahead of the 2027 general election, concerns are mounting over how eligible Nigerians living with disabilities can access the polling booths and exercise their voting rights independently, writes* ***GBENGA SALAU.***




FOR some Nigerians, voting on Election Day begins with a journey that has little to do with the ballot itself. It begins with the question of whether they can physically reach the polling unit, enter the voting area, understand the instructions, communicate with election officials and, ultimately, cast their votes privately and independently. For millions of Nigerians living with disabilities, these seemingly ordinary steps can become significant barriers to political participation.

Nigeria has made considerable progress in recognising the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) to participate in elections. The legal framework has evolved; the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has established structures dedicated to disability inclusion, and assistive voting materials have increasingly become part of electoral planning.

However, away from the policies and programmes on paper helping to promote inclusiveness, PWDs are voicing their concerns as the 2027 elections beckon.

For Kemi Odusanya, a visually impaired person, though she did not vote in the last general election, her experience in the 2019 elections was not a bad one.

"I did not vote in the last general election but I voted in 2019. I went to my polling unit and I was attended to, though there was no Braille ballot paper, which could pose a challenge to some other persons," she said.

She, however, stated that PWDs face some negativity while trying to vote during elections. She listed them to include inaccessible polling units, noting that a little person or dwarf could face the challenge of a higher table, while a deaf person could have communication issues because many of the election ad hoc staff cannot communicate with sign language.

"A visually impaired person would need a trusted sighted person because not all sighted people can use Braille. And you can imagine the visually impaired person telling the assistant that he wants to vote for AZ party and the assistant thumbs at AU party.

"For a physically impaired person, standing in a queue for a long time could negatively affect their health," Odusanya said.

While she has some pleasant personal experiences to share, that is not the case with the Executive Director of Sussan's Unique Oasis Foundation (SUOF), Sussan Kelechi Ihuoma. A physically challenged person, Ihuoma also did not vote during the last general election but she voted during the 2019 general election. She, however, said she had a cumbersome experience while voting during the 2019 elections because her polling unit was far from her house.

Ihuoma, who is the Vice Chairman of Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, further said: "As a person with physical disability, getting to the polling unit was stressful aside from the fact that the voting area was not easily accessible. Out of the two elections, I only participated in the first; I could not participate in the second because I did not have the strength to repeat the experience."

She also said that attitudinal barriers that PWDs face during elections are often less talked about. "This is one of the less visible barriers. A PWD may encounter people who assume they cannot understand the voting process; speak to their companion instead of speaking directly to them; treat them as objects of pity; question why they came to vote; assume someone else should vote on their behalf; touch or move their wheelchair without permission. These experiences can make a voter feel that the polling unit is not a place where their citizenship is respected," she said.

On how these barriers discourage PWDs from voting, Ihuoma noted that disenfranchisement does not always look like someone being physically prevented from voting.

"Sometimes it looks like a person deciding not to attempt the journey at all. The thought process can become: 'last time I went there, there was no ramp'; 'I can't stand in that queue for four hours'; 'who will take me there?'; 'what if the polling unit isn't accessible?'; 'what if I get there and they don't have the assistive device?'; 'what if people embarrass me again?'; 'maybe my one vote isn't worth all this stress.' That is how an accessibility barrier becomes a participation barrier."

Ihuoma argued that the conversation should move beyond "can PWDs vote to can every person with a disability get to the polling unit, enter it, understand the process, vote independently or with appropriate support, and leave with their dignity intact?"

The TAF Africa post election report on the recently held Osun State governorship election provides some insight about accessibility for PWDs during elections. TAF Africa in its report stated that election-day observation across 150 polling units showed encouraging progress in disability inclusion, with 94.3 per cent of polling units assessed as physically accessible, priority voting recorded in 91.9 per cent of cases, and 95.3 per cent reporting no harassment of PWD voters.

It added: "The provision of assistive devices was particularly weak. Braille ballot guides were available in only 22.76 per cent of observed polling units, while 77.24 per cent had no Braille ballot guide. Magnifying glasses were available in just 5.69 per cent of locations, leaving 94.31 per cent without them. Large-font graphic posters were provided in 35.77 per cent of polling units, while 64.23 per cent lacked this form of accessible information. These gaps indicate that physical access to polling units does not necessarily guarantee an equally accessible voting experience for persons with visual or other disabilities."

Thus, more than a decade after disability advocates began pushing for more inclusive elections, questions remain about what happens when the policy meets the polling unit. Is a polling unit truly accessible simply because a wheelchair user can enter it? What happens to a blind voter who cannot independently identify where to mark the ballot? What happens to a deaf voter who cannot access verbal instructions? And how many eligible Nigerians with disabilities stay away from the polls because the journey to the ballot box is too difficult, unsafe or uncertain?

These questions have become increasingly important as Nigeria approaches the 2027 general election.

Dr. Adebukola Adebayo, a specialist in disability-inclusive development, governance and public policy, who has spent almost two decades working on electoral inclusion, said the country had come a long way since the early years of the Fourth Republic, but the progress should not be mistaken for full inclusion.

"I have been working on election issues since 1999, and we can see a lot of remarkable improvement," Adebayo said.

He identified three major areas of progress: greater awareness of disability inclusion within INEC, the establishment of a legal framework supporting the participation of persons with disabilities, and the creation of governance structures within INEC to address disability issues.

*A blind voter may require a Braille ballot guide. A voter with low vision may require a magnifying device or larger print. A deaf voter may need accessible information or communication support. A person with mobility impairment may require an accessible route to the polling unit. These materials cannot simply be distributed randomly across the country.*

The Electoral Act 2022 contains specific provisions on the participation of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable voters. Section 54 requires INEC to take reasonable steps to assist persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups to vote. The law provides for voting arrangements and materials that can accommodate different disabilities, including Braille and large embossed print, electronic devices and sign-language interpretation. It also provides for assistance to voters who require help because of disability.

For Adebayo, who is visually impaired, the real test is not whether such provisions exist in the law but whether they enable a voter to participate independently and in secrecy. That represents a significant shift from the way disability inclusion was approached during earlier elections. According to Adebayo, much of the advocacy around the 2015 general election focused on what was known as priority voting.

"Persons with disabilities, older people, pregnant women and other vulnerable voters were encouraged to be allowed to vote ahead of others in the queue," he recalled.

But while priority voting reduced the physical burden of waiting in long queues, it did not necessarily solve the deeper problems confronting voters with disabilities. For instance, a visually impaired voter could be allowed to vote first and still be unable to mark the ballot independently. Without an appropriate assistive device, the voter may have to rely on another person to guide him or her through the process. That raises the issue of ballot secrecy.

Adebayo pointed out that an assistant, even a spouse or close relative, could have a political preference different from that of the voter. He therefore said a person with a disability could technically cast a ballot but not enjoy the same degree of privacy and independence as another voter.

It was this realisation that pushed the conversation beyond priority voting. "Since 2018 when INEC developed its Disability Framework, we have shifted from just Priority Voting to issues around Accessible Polling Units," Adebayo said.

He said the objective became broader: to ensure that persons with disabilities could reach polling units, understand the voting process, access appropriate materials and cast their bal-

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# Disenfranchise Voters With Disabilities

lots independently.

But another problem soon became apparent: data. For INEC to provide appropriate assistive materials, it needs to know where voters who require those materials are located.

For instance, a blind voter may require a Braille ballot guide. A voter with low vision may require a magnifying device or larger print. A deaf voter may need accessible information or communication support. A person with mobility impairment may require an accessible route to the polling unit. These materials cannot simply be distributed randomly across the country.

Adebayo stated that for years, INEC's voter register was not sufficiently disaggregated by disability to enable the commission to determine exactly where such materials were needed.

"The consequence was a logistical problem. INEC could not reasonably produce and deploy large quantities of every type of assistive device to every polling unit. It needed to know the location and type of disability of registered voters so that resources could be targeted," Adebayo added.

This problem remains central to the disability-inclusion debate. Data from the 2021/2022 Continuous Voter Registration exercise analysed by TAF Africa identified 85,362 registered voters with disabilities. They included 21,150 persons with albinism; 13,387 with physical impairments; 8,103 with visual impairments and 6,159 with hearing impairments, alongside voters with autism, little stature, cognitive or learning disabilities, spinal cord injuries, Down syndrome and other disabilities.

The figure is significant, but it does not represent the total number of Nigerians living with disabilities. Citing National Population Commission data, TAF Africa has put the number of Nigerians living with disabilities at 19 million.

The contrast raises a question Nigeria's electoral system has yet to answer conclusively: how many eligible Nigerians with disabilities are actually registered to vote and how many of those registered voters eventually participate?

Founder and CEO of TAF Africa, Dr. Jake Epelle, said election-related research has traditionally focused on whether polling units are accessible rather than on understanding why eligible persons with disabilities fail to participate.

"The focus of election-related discussions has always been on accessibility for persons with disabilities, particularly physical accessibility," Epelle said. "However, we need to widen the scope of that research and invest in understanding why eligible persons with disabilities did not participate in elections."

His argument points to a major gap in Nigeria's electoral statistics. Election authorities can count registered voters and votes cast; but there is no comprehensive national dataset showing how many eligible voters with disabilities failed to vote because of inaccessible polling units, insecurity, lack of assistive materials, transportation difficulties, poor communication or other barriers.

Adebayo said existing disability-focused election reports generally document whether polling units were physically accessible and whether assistive voting devices were deployed, adding that they do not adequately establish how many persons with disabilities were able or unable to vote.

"If you have not even captured my disability status in your voter register, your system cannot know whether I have come to vote or not," he said.

This is one of the most significant blind spots in measuring electoral inclusion. The 2023 general election provides a useful illustration of the problem. TAF Africa observed 273 polling units during the election and found 234 or approximately 86 per cent accessible. Priority voting was observed in 211 polling units, approximately 77 per cent.

At first glance, those numbers suggest substantial progress but the picture changes when specific assistive materials are examined. Braille ballot guides were available in only 26 of the 273 polling units observed, approximately 9.5 per cent. Magnifying glasses were available in 60 polling units, about 22 per cent, while large-font posters were available in 90, approximately 33 per cent.



The figures show why the term "accessible" requires careful interpretation. A polling unit may have a relatively accessible physical entrance while still failing to meet the needs of a blind voter. It may have a ramp but lack accessible information. It may allow priority voting but provide no assistive device to enable an eligible voter to mark the ballot independently.

Epelle said Nigeria should therefore move away from treating accessibility as simply a question of whether a wheelchair can enter a building.

"I would not say that polling units are absolutely accessible. There has been some remarkable improvement, but we are still struggling with achieving accessibility," he noted.

He described accessibility as a combination of physical, informational and procedural requirements, saying a voter must be able to arrive at the polling unit, enter the premises, understand the process, communicate with election officials, cast a secret ballot independently and leave with dignity.

Therefore, physical accessibility must go beyond providing a road to a polling unit. In some locations, voters encounter open gutters, uneven ground, steps or narrow pathways. In other cases, a small plank may be placed across an open gutter as an improvised crossing.

For an able-bodied voter, such an arrangement may already be uncomfortable or risky. For a wheelchair user or person with mobility impairment, it can make voting practically impossible. The problem is complicated by the fact that INEC does not own many of the buildings used as polling locations. Polling units may be situated in schools, public buildings and other facilities that were not designed to meet modern accessibility standards. But this does not mean that nothing can be done.

Epelle argued that accessible pathways should be provided where possible. "Where a polling location remains inaccessible, arrangements could be made to bring the voting process to an accessible point where the voter can participate without compromising the integrity of the election," he said.

Adebayo, meanwhile, believed that the first step should be a systematic accessibility audit. To him, INEC already has detailed information on the location of polling units.

"Ahead of the 2023 general election, the commission reported that it had geographically located all 176,846 polling units and captured their coordinates as part of its mapping and geographic information system.

"That information could be used to conduct a nationwide accessibility assessment. Every polling unit could be assessed to determine whether it has an accessible entrance, whether voters can reach it safely, whether the voting area can accommodate wheelchair users, whether information is accessible to blind and deaf voters, and whether the required assistive devices can be deployed," he said.

Adebayo also believed such an exercise should take place before the 2027 elections, stressing that the role of election officials must also be examined.

He, however, said INEC has included disability-inclusion issues in training materials for ad-hoc election officials, disclosing that he participated in some of the training programmes.

But can training alone cannot solve an infrastructure problem? "If you train someone and the materials that will support that person are not there, or where the polling unit is sited is not physically accessible, there is almost very little the polling officers can do.

"A presiding officer cannot simply relocate a polling unit because the location is difficult for a voter with a disability. Polling units are already designated and mapped. This makes planning before Election Day crucial.

"If INEC knows in advance that a particular polling unit is inaccessible, it can identify an alternative arrangement or make modifications before voters arrive. The same principle applies to assistive devices."

Adebayo proposed that the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) should strengthen the issuance of disability certificates, while INEC should use the Continuous Voter Registration process to verify and capture voters' disability status. More importantly, he said INEC should capture the type of disability and the specific assistance required, which would give the commission a much clearer picture of its logistical responsibilities.

"If a polling unit has blind voters, it would know how many Braille guides may be required. If it has voters with low vision, it could determine the need for magnifying devices or large-print materials. If deaf voters are registered there, appropriate communication arrangements could be made," Adebayo said.

He stated that the approach would also make the deployment of electoral resources more efficient.

But will better data address another major factor keeping voters with disabilities away from polling units: insecurity.

For Epelle, persons with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to electoral violence because some may have difficulty escaping dangerous situations or accessing alternative transportation.

"When there is violence, a person with a disability or a visually impaired person will not want to risk his or her life," Adebayo said. Epelle advocated discussions with security agencies around what he calls inclusive security: security planning that recognises the different vulnerabilities of voters.

Movement restrictions on Election Day can create another unintended barrier. Epelle said a person with a disability may depend on a family member, caregiver or driver to reach a polling unit.

"If movement is restricted, that support system may be disrupted," he argued. "Restriction itself is a barrier."

He said there is also the less visible barrier of information, noting that voter education is important for every citizen, but accessible voter education is particularly important for PWDs.

"Electoral information needs to reach voters in formats they can use. A deaf voter may require sign-language interpretation or accessible written information. A blind voter may need information in an accessible digital or audio format. People with visual impairments may require larger print, while voters with cognitive or learning disabilities may benefit from clear and simplified information.

"Poor communication can therefore prevent participation even when a polling unit is physically accessible."

Epelle acknowledged that INEC has begun opening its communication channels to greater public engagement. He cited a recent opportunity to engage directly with an INEC official on air as an example of a changing approach to communication. But greater openness must be matched with accessible communication.

Epelle also argued that political parties, security agencies, civil society organisations and the media all influence whether voters with disabilities can participate.




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

# Diary





Vice President, Student Development, Babcock University (BU), Prof. Motolani Williams (left); Vice President, Advancement and Development, Dr. Olaniyi Arije; Vice President, Financial Administration/ Bursar, Prof. Folorunsho Akande; President/ Vice Chancellor, Prof. Afolarin Olutunde Ojewole; Senior Vice President/ Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academics Administration, Prof. Jonathan Nwosu; Chief of Staff to the President/ Vice Chancellor, Dr. Joshua Suleiman; University Registrar, Dr. Patience Chioma; University Librarian, Dr. Itunu Bamidele; Deputy Provost, College of Post Graduate Studies, BU, Prof Emmanuel Ajike, and others, during the 28th Undergraduate and 17th Postgraduate matriculation ceremony of Babcock University at the University's Amphitheater in Ogun State ...on Friday.




The Celebrator, Wole Olanipekun (SAN) (second left); his wife, Omolara Olanipekun; Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji (right)and Senate leader representing Ekiti Central Senatorial District, Opeyemi Bamidele during Olanipekun's 75th birthday celebration in Abuja ...on Thursday.




Vice President, Pipeline Professionals Association of Nigeria ( PLAN), Adeche Omotosho-Oboro(left); Partner, PLAN, Mrs. Jumoke Oyedun; Member, Board of Trustee PLAN/ Chief Executive Officer,QuickFill Energies, Yusuf Usman; President, PLAN, Ngozi Adeleke; anaging Director /Chief Executive Officer, NGIC, Audu Ibrahim, representing the Group Chief Executive Officer, NNPCL , Bayo Ojulari and Chairman, Nigeria International Pipeline Technology and Security Conference (NIPITECS) Planning Committe, Dr. Felicia Agubata during the opening ceremony of the NIPITECS 2026 Conference held in Abuja. PHOTO LUCY LADIDI ATEKO




Brand Manager, Caplux, Oluseun Mudashiru(left); Head of Inbound Logistics and Procurement, Chemical & Allied Products Plc (CAP PLC), Ademuyiwa Afolabi, and Brand Executive, Jesulayomi Awogbami, at the 4th African Brands Innovators Summit Awards 2026, where CAP PLC was recognised as Africa's Most Admired Quality Decorative Paints & Coatings Manufacturer of the Year.

# Metronotes



## ANA President Urges Govt To Address Insecurity

By **Sunday Aikulola**

PRESIDENT Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Usman Oladipo Akanbi has urged the federal government to redouble its efforts to improve security across the nation.

Speaking at its 45th international convention held in Abuja recently, he said: "We must state, as writers who travel by road to meet readers, that the insecurity and the deplorable shape of our hinterland roads remain a major concern. Coming to Abuja from many parts of Nigeria through the hinterland roads is a hellish experience. Tales of kidnapping, armed robbery and collapsed bridges abound.'

With the theme, "Literature, security and the place of Nigeria in the World', he added, 'while the idea of the coastal road and the borderline roads may sound good and visionary, the ordinary Nigerian feels that the hinterland roads —the roads that connect farms to markets, villages to towns, and our state chapters to the centre.' "I call on all politicians and political actors to exercise utmost restraint. We must ensure that the 2027 elections are conducted in an environment devoid of rancour and bitterness, " he said.

## Every Nigerian Child Deserves An Opportunity To Learn — Prof Adeniyi

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE Chairman, Board of Trustees of the Professor Peter Olufemi Adeniyi Foundation (PPOAF), Emeritus Professor Peter Olufemi Adeniyi, has stated that every child deserves an opportunity to learn, develop their potential and pursue their aspirations, regardless of the circumstances of their birth.

He spoke during the Education Support Programme Presentation Day of the foundation held at the joint premises of Ijaiye Ojokoro Senior High School and Ijaiye Ojokoro Senior College, Lagos.

The programme is an initiative of the foundation aimed at supporting indigent students in public secondary schools by presenting essential educational materials and transport assistance to them to ease the financial burden of schooling.

At the event, 10 students of Ijaiye Housing Estate Senior Grammar School, Ijaiye Ojokoro Senior College and Ijaiye Ojokoro High School received textbooks, school uniforms, school bags, notebooks, stationery and transport allowance of N50,000 each for the entire session that would be disbursed in three tranches.

## Foundation Pledges Mentorship, Skills Development For Scholarship Beneficiaries

By **Isaac Taiwo**

THE Sohcahtoa Foundation has reiterated its commitment to supporting the educational and personal development of young Nigerians, pledging mentorship, practical skills acquisition and leadership development for scholarship beneficiaries beyond financial assistance.

The Foundation disclosed this at its scholarship award ceremony, where its Co-founder, Solape Fayemi, said the organisation was established to bridge the educational opportunity gap confronting talented Nigerian youths from financially disadvantaged backgrounds.

Fayemi, who described the ceremony as a celebration of potential and opportunity, said the Foundation's intervention went beyond helping students secure access to education, stressing the need to equip them with the guidance and skills required to thrive after graduation.

## HBM Nigeria, Foundation Empower Women, Provide Industrial Sewing Machines, Starter Kits

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

A LEADING provider of innovative building solutions and manufacturer of cement, HBM Nigeria Plc., in partnership with Awesome Empowerment Foundation (AEF), has empowered participants from its fashion designing training programme, reinforcing its commitment to skills development, entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods.

The graduation ceremony, held recently, marked the completion of a three-month full-time practical training programme that equipped the participants with basic fashion design and tailoring skills through weekly six-hour classes.

Participants received starter kits, including industrial sewing machines, to support their businesses and to apply their newly acquired skills, as part of the efforts to promote self-reliance and economic empowerment.

## 2026 Transport Safety Week: Unilever Nigeria Rewards Transporters, Drivers

By **Sunday Aikulola**

UNILEVER Nigeria, a leading manufacturing and consumer goods company, has recognised and rewarded its transporters and drivers for their commitment to road safety and operational excellence at its seventh yearly Transport Safety Week held in Agbara, Ogun State.

The event brought together the company's logistics partners, transporters and drivers to reinforce safety standards, celebrate outstanding performance and promote continuous improvement in the transportation and distribution of its products across the country.

Five drivers from its logistics partners, Silverbase and Haul247, were recognised for their long partnership with the company. The recipients include Jimoh Jelili of Silverbase, who was recognised for 34 years of service; Amuzat Ayegbajeje of Silverbase and Akingboye Ademola of Haul247, each with 24 years of service; Isiaka Ajao of Silverbase, with 21 years; and Akinloye Waheed of Silverbase, with 20 years of service.

In the transporter category, Stevic International Resources was awarded Best Transporter operating from the East DC, S&Y Manager was awarded the Best Transporter operating from the North DC.

## 2027: US-based Doctor Prioritises Child Healthcare, Education, Agriculture In Anambra

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

A UNITED STATES-BASED medical practitioner and 2027 House of Representatives hopeful for Orumba Federal Constituency, of Anambra State, Dr. Odiraa Nwakwor, has identified child healthcare, education and agricultural development as key priorities of his legislative agenda, pledging to leverage his professional experience and international connections to drive development in the constituency.

Speaking during a fundraising ceremony in Lagos, Nwakwor said his decision to venture into politics was driven by a desire to improve the living standards and healthcare delivery for his constituents and Nigerians in general.

The aspirant, who is the flag bearer of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), said he had spent more than 35 years in the medical profession, argued that Nigeria's healthcare policy placed too much emphasis on primary prevention while giving insufficient attention to secondary and tertiary healthcare,.

He said his experience as a paediatric intensivist and associate Professor of Paediatrics had exposed him to the urgent need for better-equipped facilities to manage children requiring intensive medical care.

# Years Of Darkness: Badagry West Communities Lament As Lagos Electrification Project Stalls

By **Gbenga Salau**

FOR many communities in Badagry West Local Council Development Area (LCDA), electricity has become a distant memory after an estimated seven to nine years without regular power supply. Yet, when an electrification project reportedly approved by the Lagos State government commenced, they were excited. Their joy was further consolidated when the project started with transformers arriving communities, damaged poles replaced.


Sanwo-Olu

With that, many believed their long wait was finally over. That optimism, however, appears to have been short-lived, as the project has been abandoned according to some residents.

The project, which was officially flagged off at Gbaji by the Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Dr Kadril Hamzat in March 2026 following the intervention of Bonu Solomon, lawmaker representing Badagry Constituency I in the Lagos State House of Assembly, it was learnt reportedly progressed steadily, with some communities already undergoing wiring, transformer repairs and electricity testing. But residents alleged that the pace of work slowed considerably and eventually stopped after the APC primary election earlier this year.

A concerned resident, Michael Sewanu stated that the entire Badagry West communities in Apa and Kweme Kingdoms are affected. He argued that the Executive Chairman should take responsibility to parley with the Eko Power for the resuscitation of the electricity.

According to him, 60 per cent of the budget set aside for the appointment and payment of salaries to 300 aides categorized as special advisers and senior special assistants can go a long way to assist the electricity company in bringing back hope to the people. "The House of Assembly has facilitated the project, it is the duty of the Council Chairman to judiciously take it up from their with huge allocation of resources that comes to his office."

Another resident who pleaded anonymity said: "There is a bitter truth that the people of Badagry West LCDA must confront. A community cannot develop in darkness while those entrusted with its development remain silent about the projects meant to bring light.

"The electrification project in Badagry West LCDA was not merely an idea or a political promise made during a campaign. It was a project that reportedly commenced, giving residents hope that their communities would finally experience improved electricity supply and a better standard of living.

"For a moment, there was hope. People believed that the long years of darkness were finally coming to an end. The commencement of the project created expectations among residents who had endured prolonged electricity challenges. Unfortunately, the project was later halted for reasons that remain unknown to the public.

"And that is where the real concern begins. Why Was The Project Stopped? Who ordered the suspension? Was there a funding challenge? Was there an administrative disagreement? Was the contractor unable to continue? Was there a technical problem, or was there another reason that the people have not been told? These are legitimate questions that deserve clear and honest answers.

"If the project received official approval from the Lagos State Government and work had already commenced, what happened between the approval and the sudden halt? Why has there been no satisfactory public explanation about its current status?"

Also speaking, a concerned son of the community, Sonayon Hunjo, disclosed that the project was driven vigorously by a member of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Solomon Bonu, but when he lost the APC primaries I feared for that project too. "But that is not me saying he abandoned the project. I have no details."

He, however, said that Badagry West LCDA gas has suffered infrastructural neglect for years; not just during the Babajide Sanwo-Olu administration. "The Gbaji-Apa-Owode road, which is a federal trunk road, is in a terrible situation. Electricity has always been a problem. Fuel supply to the area is even worse. The only thing that shows the government's active presence in that area is the road blocks at nearly every kilometre or less."

## Omotoso Congratulates Lagos Traffic Radio On Outstanding Performance Award

By **Gbenga Salau**

LAGOS State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr. Gbenga Omotoso, has congratulated the management and staff of Lagos Traffic Radio 96.1 FM on receiving the state government's 2026 State Productivity Order of Merit Award, in recognition of the station's outstanding institutional performance, excellence, and contribution to productivity and service delivery.

Omotoso described the award as a reward for hard work, dedication and integrity, noting that the station's specialised role in providing timely traffic information and helping Lagos residents navigate the state's roads had distinguished it among the numerous radio stations operating in Lagos.

The commissioner spoke during the presentation of the award to him by the station's management, led by its General Manager, Mr. Tayo Akanle, urging the workforce to sustain its commitment to excellence through innovation, creativity and improved service delivery.

He challenged the management and staff to aspire to make Lagos Traffic Radio one of the best traffic radio stations in Africa and a leading station globally.

Omotoso also acknowledged the support of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, noting that the state government's commitment to excellence had created an enabling environment where dedication and hard work were recognised and rewarded.

Earlier, the General Manager, Akanle, who disclosed that the award was the first of its kind received by the station in its 14-year history, described the recognition as a testament to the station's commitment, consistency and dedication to public service broadcasting.

Akanle expressed appreciation to Sanwo-Olu for his support and encouragement, while also acknowledging the Commissioner for Information and Strategy for his leadership, guidance and continued support.

He dedicated the award to God, the station's staff and its listeners, whose feedback and suggestions, he said, had continued to contribute to improving the station's services.

The recognition follows an earlier Merit Award received by Lagos Traffic Radio at the Nigeria Broadcasters Merit Awards.

Also, the Deputy Director, News & Current Affairs, Lagos Traffic Radio, Mrs. Adeola Akindele was also recognised as Outstanding Officer, Senior Category, for commendable and dedicated service to the state.

## Ikeja Local Council Commences Reconstruction Of Fagbohun Street, Promises More Roads

By **Gbenga Salau**

IKEJA Local Council on Thursday flagged off the reconstruction of Fagbohun Street in Alausa area of the council with a promise to complete the road in three months.

Speaking during the brief groundbreaking ceremony, the Council Chairman, Comrade Akeem Olalekan Dauda, stated that the commencement of the reconstruction of the road marks another important milestone in the collective journey towards building a better, more functional and prosperous Ikeja.

"Today is not just about breaking the ground for the reconstruction of Fagbohun Street. It is about fulfilling a promise, responding to the needs of our people and demonstrating that governance must translate into tangible improvements in the everyday lives of the citizens.

"For too long, residents and road users have had to contend with the challenges associated with the condition of this road. We listened to your concerns, took note of your expectations and made a commitment to address the situation. Today, we are taking a decisive step towards fulfilling that commitment."

The chairman said his administration is guided by the conviction that development must be felt at the grassroots. He added that roads are more than physical infrastructure; they are critical to economic activities, mobility, safety, access to businesses and the overall quality of life of our people.

"This is why infrastructure renewal remains a major priority of our administration under the I.K.E.J.A Agenda, particularly the pillar of Infrastructure and Urban Renewal."


The chairman while flagging off the road reconstruction

## Ministry Celebrates Yoruba Heritage At Maiden Gele Festival

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE gele, a traditional Yoruba headtie, has remained an important part of women's dressing at weddings, cultural celebrations and other special occasions. Beyond its role as a fashion accessory, it represents cultural identity, creativity and craftsmanship, with its elaborate folds and different styles reflecting the skill of the women who tie them.

This cultural expression took centre stage in Lagos on Sunday as the state government hosted the maiden Lagos Gele Festival at Eko Amore Garden, Lagos, bringing together government officials, entertainers, cultural enthusiasts and members of the Chinese community to celebrate the traditional headtie.

The festival, organised through the Office of the Special Adviser to the Governor on Tourism, Arts and Culture, Idris Aregbe, featured displays of different gele styles, a runway presentation and performances celebrating Yoruba culture.

Models took to the runway wearing gele in different colours, fabrics and designs, showcasing the creativity and versatility of the traditional headtie. The displays highlighted the different ways the gele can be styled, from elaborate designs to contemporary interpretations.

The event also featured masquerades, adding a traditional dimension to the celebration, while members of the Chinese community in Lagos joined in the festivities, displaying gele tied in different styles.

# Politics

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# From Kaduna To Kebbi: Tinubu's Four-state Roadmap To Mobilise Northern Support

*As the All Progressives Congress (APC)' rallies attract influential political leaders and large crowds across the North, Tinubu's second-term ambition faces a crucial test of whether campaign promises will be sufficient to secure the support of a northern electorate increasingly concerned about economic hardship, insecurity, unemployment and the cost of living,* ***ADAMU ABUH*** *reports.*

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu's campaign for a second term in 2027 is placing the North at the centre of his political calculations, with his recent rallies in Kaduna, Jigawa, Plateau and Kebbi states offering an insight into the opportunities and challenges confronting his re-election bid.

From Kaduna, where he defended his economic reforms and promised prosperity, to Dutse, where he unveiled an agricultural development agenda and pledged support for smallholder farmers; Jos, where he promised to rebuild communities devastated by violence and Kebbi, where he approved an inland dry port and promised further infrastructure interventions, the President has tailored his campaign messages to address some of the pressing concerns across the region.

The rallies also provided an opportunity for the APC to showcase its political organisation, mobilise influential northern politicians and demonstrate that Tinubu retains the backing of important sections of the region's political establishment.

The participation of Vice President Kashim Shettima, governors, senators, members of the National Assembly, former governors and other party leaders was particularly significant.

However, beyond the impressive gatherings and endorsements, the central question is whether the President's promises and his administration's record will be sufficient to secure the support of a northern electorate increasingly concerned about economic hardship, insecurity, unemployment and the cost of living.

The four campaign appearances suggest that the APC recognises that the North cannot be approached as a politically homogeneous constituency. While infrastructure and economic development featured prominently across the rallies, Tinubu's messages reflected the peculiar concerns of each location.

Tinubu's October 24 campaign flag-off in Kaduna was particularly important because it marked the formal commencement of his presidential re-election campaign.

The rally attracted a large crowd of supporters and an impressive gathering of political heavyweights, including Shettima, APC National Chairman, Nentawe Yilwatda; Director-General of the Presidential Campaign Council, Abdulaziz Yari; Senate President Godswill Akpabio, governors and other party leaders.

The participation of 32 governors, according to the Presidency, was intended to demonstrate the ruling party's organisational strength and determination to secure another mandate for the President.

Unlike his subsequent appearances in the other states, Tinubu's central message in Kaduna was largely a defence of his economic policies and an attempt to counter opposition criticism of the hardship experienced by Nigerians.

Responding to complaints about hunger and poverty, the President blamed previous administrations and opposition politicians for the country's economic difficulties, insisting that his government was working to eradicate the problems. He defended the removal of the petrol subsidy, arguing that the policy had ended corruption, falsification of invoices and fuel smuggling associated with the previous subsidy regime.

His promise was that a second term would bring prosperity, continuity and progress. The message reflected the administration's determination to persuade Nigerians to look beyond the immediate difficulties associated with its reforms and consider their anticipated long-term benefits.

The removal of the petrol subsidy and foreign exchange reforms have improved government revenues and some macroeconomic indicators, but they have also contributed to increased transportation costs, food prices and pressure on household incomes. For northern households dependent on farming, trading and informal employment, the consequences are particularly significant. The President's economic argument will therefore be tested against the daily experiences of citizens who want to know whether the reforms have made food more affordable, created jobs and improved their purchasing power.

Kaduna also provided an opportunity for the administration to showcase its infrastructure investments. Tinubu inaugurated the 81-kilometre section of the Abuja-Kaduna highway during the campaign flag-off, while Shettima highlighted Federal Government interventions in education, vocational training and railway development.

He cited the establishment of the Federal University of Applied Sciences, the transition of the Federal University of Education, Zaria, and vocational training institutions in Rigachikun, Soba and Samaru. He also highlighted the Kaduna-Kano railway, the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano gas pipeline and other major infrastructure projects across the North-West.

These projects were presented as evidence that the administration was addressing the region's development needs.

The Kaduna rally also had a political dimension. Shettima reminded northern voters of Tinubu's previous support for northern presidential aspirants, including Atiku Abubakar in 2007, Nuhu Ribadu in 2011 and Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 and 2019. His argument was that the North should reciprocate the political support Tinubu had extended to its leaders over the years.

Nevertheless, the political loyalty argument may not be sufficient to override economic concerns among voters.

A different dimension emerged at the November 10 campaign rally in Dutse, Jigawa State, where Tinubu placed agriculture, food security, electricity, employment and human capital development at the centre of his re-election appeal.

Unlike Kaduna, where he concentrated on defending his economic reforms, the Jigawa appearance provided an opportunity to demonstrate how the administration intended to translate those reforms into increased agricultural production and improved household welfare.

Tinubu presented the APC manifesto, titled 'From Reforms to Prosperity,' and promised interest-free loans for smallholder farmers, mechanised farming service centres across the six geopolitical zones and improved irrigation facilities.

He argued that Nigeria had sufficient arable land and human resources to feed itself, insisting that increased agricultural production would help bring down food prices.

The agricultural proposals were particularly relevant to Jigawa, where farming remains a major source of livelihood. The President also promised reliable electricity, functional education, job creation and a more effective security architecture. He ruled out any return of petrol subsidy, arguing that resources saved from its removal were necessary to finance roads, agriculture, education and other development programmes.

The significance of the Jigawa visit, however, extended beyond campaign promises. Tinubu inaugurated 400 tractors and 60 combine harvesters, alongside projects executed by the Governor Umar Namadi administration. The agricultural equipment included 300 tractors provided by the state government and 100 supported through Federal Government intervention.

He also commissioned the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Multi-Purpose Skills Acquisition Centre, the Renewed Hope Technical Services Centre and a three-kilometre dualised road in Dutse. These interventions were presented as investments in agricultural productivity, vocational skills and infrastructure.

Namadi used the occasion to highlight the Greater Dutse Water Supply Project, which he said was more than 60 per cent complete. The project was particularly significant because Tinubu had promised to address Dutse's water shortage during the 2023 campaign.

Namadi also cited the Kano-Katsina-Maradi railway, Federal Government interventions in agriculture and education, and the establishment of federal educational institutions in the state. He appealed for the acceleration of the water project and Federal Government intervention in ecological challenges affecting Dutse and Hadejia.

The Jigawa rally therefore offered Tinubu an opportunity to connect his national economic agenda with practical interventions in a predominantly agrarian state. The inauguration of agricultural machinery was especially important in projecting the administration's commitment to mechanisation.

However, the provision of tractors and harvesters alone cannot transform agricultural productivity without affordable inputs, irrigation, accessible financing, storage facilities, rural roads and reliable markets.

Similarly, the proposed interest-free loans and mechanised farming centres will have to move beyond campaign announcements to become accessible interventions that reach smallholder farmers.

The political dimension was equally important. Namadi declared Jigawa's readiness to deliver victory for the APC across elective offices, while Shettima urged residents to support the President and the governor. Shettima also invoked Tinubu's historical political alliances with northern leaders, urging the region to reciprocate his support.

The presence of Deputy Senate President, Barau Jibrin; Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas; Yari, APC governors and other influential politicians reinforced the party's mobilisation efforts. Yet, the extent to which these endorsements translate into votes remain to be seen..

If Kaduna was largely about defending economic reforms and showcasing infrastructure, and Jigawa about agricultural productivity and food security, Tinubu's November 14 visit to Jos placed security, reconciliation and reconstruction at the centre of his campaign.

The APC North-Central rally at Zaria Road Stadium attracted the President, Shettima, Akpabio, Abbas, Yilwatda, Yari and several serving and former governors.

The presence of influential Plateau political figures, including former governors Joshua Dariye and Simon Lalong, alongside Governor Caleb Mutfwang, was significant in projecting political cooperation behind the President.

However, the most consequential aspect of Tinubu's message was his acknowledgement of the security and humanitarian challenges confronting Plateau. He promised Federal Government assistance to rebuild communities affected by violence and facilitate the return of displaced residents to their ancestral homes.

The President also announced that surveillance cameras promised for the state had arrived in Nigeria and would soon be installed. He disclosed that 1,000 forest guards recruited by the Federal Government were undergoing training and would be deployed upon completion to support security agencies in monitoring forests and vulnerable communities.

These commitments addressed longstanding concerns in Plateau, where communal violence and attacks have disrupted livelihoods, displaced residents and affected economic activities.

Tinubu also announced plans to convert Plateau's airport into a cargo facility to facilitate the export of agricultural produce, particularly vegetables and potatoes. The proposal is significant because Plateau has considerable agricultural potential.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



Tinubu

# I Will Make Representation In Lagos Central Measurable, Accountable – Ojumu

*Dr. Desmond Oludare Ojumu is the senatorial candidate of the Allied Peoples Movement (APM) for Lagos Central in the 2027 elections. In this interview with* ***SEYE OLUMIDE****, he speaks on his plans to tackle traffic gridlock along the Apapa corridor, address flooding and housing challenges in the district, among other issues.*

**What is your connection with the people of Lagos Central that makes you think they should vote for you?**

My responsibility, if elected, will be to represent the people of this district, understand their challenges and ensure that their concerns receive adequate attention at the National Assembly.

THIS is where I live. I have been here for years. I have a business here. I know Saheed, the local mechanic in Ikota. Njideka, my secretary, comes from Surulere. I share the agony of residents affected by state-led demolitions in Eti-Osa. I understand that we could do better on the Apapa corridor, where traffic congestion continues to affect businesses, workers and ordinary commuters. The flood vulnerability assessment and mapping is also clear to me. The pain points across the five local governments are the same in different shapes and shades.

These are not abstract political issues. They affect people's livelihoods, businesses, homes and ability to plan their future. Whether it is a trader struggling with the cost of transportation, a young graduate searching for employment, a family facing the threat of flooding or a resident whose property is affected by demolition, these experiences reflect the difficulties of living in Lagos Central.

These pain points were evident and more pronounced in the last elections. Check out the numbers. About 1.3 million people were registered to vote here in the last general election, but only 261,568 were accredited. That means approximately one in five participated, while four in five stayed at home.

I do not read that simply as apathy, but as genuine protest. I see people who have heard many promises over the years without seeing corresponding improvements in their circumstances. They have become increasingly sceptical of politicians who make commitments during campaigns but rarely return to account for their performance.

They deserve a candidate who signs promises with numbers and dates, then publishes how he is doing. Representation should not be based on occasional appearances, political speeches or assurances that cannot be verified. Constituents should have the opportunity to examine what their representative promised, what he has done and where he has fallen short.

As for connection, no honest candidate can claim to know every street or every individual in the district. What I can offer is a connection that people can test. We are building volunteers, 20 in each of the 62 wards. We are holding town hall meetings in each local government, building an organic movement of people with a new mindset.

Our approach is not simply to tell people what they want to hear, but to explain what works for everyone and what can realistically be achieved through effective representation. We want constituents to understand that the responsibility of a senator is different from that of a governor or local government chairman, even though all three levels of government have responsibilities that affect their lives. We already have their buy-in.

Once I am sworn in, there will be an office in each of the five local governments, and cases brought to them will be acknowledged within 48 hours. This is important because representation must be accessible. People should not have to struggle to locate their senator or travel long distances before their complaints can receive attention.

These offices will provide a channel for receiving complaints, documenting community concerns and following up on issues requiring intervention by relevant government agencies. Not every problem can be resolved immediately, particularly where other institutions are involved, but constituents deserve to know that their concerns have been received and are being addressed.

A connection that has to be believed is weaker than one that can be checked. I am asking to be checked.

**What is your legislative agenda and how does it translate into benefits for constituents?**

I am signing genuine and SMART commitments. Each has a number and a date, counted from the day I am sworn in. I believe that legislative representation should produce measurable benefits rather than remain at the level of speeches, motions and political promises.

The first issue is the cost of living. Food inflation was 19.57 per cent in August 2026, while the minimum wage was set at N70,000 in July 2024. These figures underline the economic difficulties facing households, particularly low-income earners who spend a significant proportion of their earnings on food, transportation and accommodation.

I will move a motion on prices and seek greater legislative attention to the factors responsible for rising living costs. The issue goes beyond food prices alone. It includes the cost of transportation, distribution and the general economic conditions affecting household purchasing power. I will also ensure that every wage vote I cast is published within seven days. Constituents should know my position on legislation affecting workers' welfare and the reasons behind it.

On unemployment, the Senate oversees federal agencies that administer job, skills development and loan programmes. I intend to use this oversight responsibility to ensure that young people in Lagos Central are not excluded from opportunities provided by these agencies. I commit to having young people in this district linked to those programmes within four years.

I will also establish a Youth Council of 25 members, with five representatives from each local government meeting every quarter. The council will provide a platform for young people to communicate their concerns, identify opportunities and assess the effectiveness of interventions intended to improve their economic prospects.

The objective is to make young people active participants in the process rather than treating them merely as recipients of occasional assistance. Their concerns about employment, access to finance, skills acquisition and business development must inform the interventions we pursue.



Ojumu

> *Our approach is not simply to tell people what they want to hear, but to explain what works for everyone and what can realistically be achieved through effective representation.*

Housing is another major concern. Residents across parts of Lagos Central face rising rents, insecurity of tenure, demolitions and flooding. For many families, these challenges are interconnected because the loss of a home or damage to property can destroy years of savings and plunge households into economic difficulties.

I will organise a housing rights clinic every quarter, with each case logged publicly. This will provide an avenue for residents to seek guidance and appropriate assistance on housing-related complaints. Within 90 days, I will also establish a public register of federal flood works. Residents should be able to identify projects approved for their communities, the agencies responsible and the progress being made. Transparency is necessary to ensure that public interventions address the actual vulnerabilities of affected communities.

On traffic, the ports are federal business. The Apapa corridor remains a major economic route, but congestion has continued to impose significant costs on businesses, transport operators and commuters. I will hold four oversight sessions a year and publish the figures, including how long trucks wait. The intention is to ensure that relevant federal agencies are made to account for their responsibilities and that discussions about congestion translate into measurable improvements.

Insecurity also requires deliberate legislative attention. Although the Senate does not deploy security officers, its powers include oversight and budgetary responsibilities. I will therefore drive a digitised and harmonised data system that can help trace, curtail and contain crimes. Effective security requires reliable information, coordination among agencies and the capacity to identify threats before they escalate.

Working with other lawmakers and relevant stakeholders, I shall ensure that the security budget is appropriately utilised, the intelligence architecture is re-jigged and proactive policing is encouraged. It is not enough to approve huge sums for security without demanding accountability for how the money is spent and what results are achieved.

You will see all of this on a public scorecard. I want constituents to be able to assess my commitments, the timelines attached to them and the progress made. Where there are delays or obstacles, I will explain them.

I would rather be measured by people-oriented legislation numbers than praised for empty speeches. The essence of representation is to make public institutions work better for the people and ensure that their concerns are not forgotten after elections.

**What sets you apart from the candidates of the dominant parties, and what structures will you use?**

I respect the larger parties and the people in them, and I will not call them weak. They have their political structures and established support bases. However, I believe Lagos Central voters also look at the individual seeking their mandate and the quality of what that person is offering.

In 2023, this district's Senate result and its presidential result differed by tens of thousands of votes. That demonstrates that voters can make different choices depending on the candidates and the issues before them. It also reinforces my belief that personal credibility, the quality of representation and the ability to connect with constituents matter in an election.

What sets us apart is one habit: every promise carries a number, a date and a place to check it. We want to make accountability the central issue of this campaign. Voters should not have to depend on political advertisements or campaign rhetoric to determine whether a candidate is serious.

# NELFUND Has Given 1.67m Nigerian Students Hope –Ashafa

*Senator Gbenga Ashafa represented Lagos East Senatorial District in the Senate from 2011 to 2019 before serving as Managing Director of the Federal Housing Authority (FHA). In this interview with* ***SEYE OLUMIDE,*** *he highlights the impact of President Bola Tinubu's student loan scheme under the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), defends the administration's economic reforms and explains why the President deserves re-election in 2027. Excerpts:*

**As a two-term senator and prominent member of the Lagos APC, what factors accounted for President Bola Tinubu's defeat by Peter Obi in Lagos in the 2023 presidential election despite his longstanding political influence in the state?**

IN my assessment, one of our major strategic errors was complacency. Many party members assumed Lagos was secure for the APC and failed to appreciate that political support only counts when people come out to vote. Some believed victory was assured without recognising their individual responsibility to deliver it.

We learnt that lesson before the governorship election that same year. The party reorganised, mobilised its grassroots and impressed on stakeholders that nobody could afford to remain on the sidelines. Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu subsequently secured 762,134 votes against the Labour Party's 312,329.

The enduring lesson is that we must never take the electorate for granted or mistake popularity for votes already cast.

**What concrete steps is the APC taking to prevent a repeat of the 2023 experience? There are concerns that many young people, particularly in the Southwest, feel disconnected from the party. How is it addressing this?**

The major difference is that there is no room for complacency this time. Our emphasis is on grassroots mobilisation, door-to-door engagement, voter education and an effective Get-Out-The-Vote strategy.

We also recognise that young Nigerians cannot be engaged through political slogans alone. They want answers on jobs, technology, housing, education, transport, entrepreneurship, security and the cost of living.

Programmes such as NELFUND, the three million Technical Talent initiative and the Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation provide opportunities to engage young people on practical issues. We must explain who qualifies, how to access these programmes and how they can improve people's lives.

Our candidates at all levels must also campaign on their records and programmes. Ultimately, the task is to convert political support into actual participation.

**Many Nigerians are struggling with economic hardship and rising living costs, yet some say they see no convincing alternative to the APC. Does this necessarily translate into support for the ruling party or could it lead to voter apathy? What is your message to disappointed Nigerians?**

We must not assume that dissatisfaction with the alternatives automatically translates into support for the government. Economic hardship can equally lead to voter apathy. That is why the government must listen and communicate honestly.

The reforms of the past few years have been challenging. Families have faced high food prices, businesses have struggled with operating costs, and Nigerians have had to make difficult adjustments.

However, we must remember why the reforms became necessary. Nigeria was burdened by an unsustainable fuel subsidy regime, distortions in the foreign exchange market, weak revenues and structural economic weaknesses. President Tinubu chose to confront these problems rather than postpone them.

We are beginning to see measurable improvements. Real GDP grew by 4.43 per cent in the second quarter of 2026, while external reserves and inflation figures have also shown encouraging movements.

The reforms include fuel subsidy removal, foreign exchange restructuring, tax reforms, banking recapitalisation, domestic refining and efforts to improve the investment climate.

The administration has also raised the minimum wage to N70,000, introduced student loans, activated consumer credit initiatives and promoted CNG-powered transportation.

The critical task now is to translate macroeconomic gains into improvements at household level. Nigerians must see the benefits in affordable food, better-paying jobs, improved electricity, accessible credit, reliable infrastructure and rising real incomes.

**There are growing concerns about the relationship between economic influence, demographic changes and political power in Lagos. Some believe the indigenous political and cultural identity of the Southwest could face increasing pressure. How should the region balance its identity with the constitutional rights of other Nigerians?**

Lagos is home to millions of Nigerians from every part of the country, and I believe it will remain so. Its opportunities and cosmopolitan character are precisely what attract people to the state.

Every Nigerian has constitutional rights to live, work, own property and pursue legitimate aspirations anywhere in the federation. However, inclusiveness should not require a people to abandon their history, culture or identity. Indigenous Lagos communities have centuries of history, traditional institutions and cultural practices that deserve preservation.

The balance is neither exclusion nor historical erasure. Lagos can remain welcoming to everyone while proudly preserving its indigenous Yoruba heritage. These ideals have coexisted for generations.

**How do you interpret the recurring description of Lagos as a 'no man's land'? Does it reflect the state's cosmopolitan character or diminish the historical identity of its indigenous population?**

There is simply no such place as a 'no man's land'. Every land has a history, a people and a heritage.

The Awori are recognised among the earliest known settlers of much of what constitutes modern Lagos. There are also long-standing Egun communities in the Badagry axis and indigenous Ijebu communities in Epe, Ibeju-Lekki and Ikorodu, alongside the historical influences of Benin, the Saro and Brazilian returnees.

> *Programmes such as NELFUND, the three million Technical Talent initiative and the Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation provide opportunities to engage young people on practical issues. We must explain who qualifies, how to access these programmes and how they can improve people's lives.*

Lagos is historically and geographically part of the Southwest, with a distinct Yoruba indigenous heritage. Acknowledging this does not diminish the enormous contributions of Nigerians from other parts of the country and people from across the world.

What I reject is the suggestion that the accommodating spirit of Lagosians should be used to erase the state's history. Cosmopolitanism does not mean the absence of heritage. Both can comfortably coexist.

**If you were asked to convince a sceptical Nigerian that President Tinubu's administration deserves another four years, what specific achievements would you present? Beyond policy announcements and government figures, what tangible improvements can ordinary Nigerians identify in their daily lives?**

I would begin with programmes that directly affect people's lives.

In education, NELFUND has established a student-financing system to help eligible students meet tuition and upkeep costs. Its November 2026 disclosures put cumulative disbursements at N375.28 billion, covering approximately 1.675 million beneficiaries. For struggling families, this can make a significant difference. These are loans, and their eligibility and repayment conditions must be clearly understood.

For workers, the minimum wage has increased from N30,000 to N70,000, while the statutory review period has been reduced from five years to three. Although this does not resolve the cost-of-living crisis, it represents a concrete intervention.

The Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation is another initiative. Access to responsibly priced credit can help working Nigerians acquire essential assets without paying the entire cost upfront.

For young people, the three million Technical Talent programme offers opportunities to develop digital and technical skills. Its success should ultimately be measured by how many participants secure employment, contracts or opportunities to establish businesses.

On transportation, the Presidential CNG Initiative has supported vehicle conversions and the development of refuelling infrastructure. The Presidency reported more than 120,000 converted vehicles, over 400 certified conversion centres and more than 90 refuelling stations in its September 2026 update. The challenge is to extend affordable and reliable transportation across the country.

Healthcare is another area receiving attention. Three of the six planned cancer treatment centres had been commissioned in Katsina, Benin and Enugu as of November 2026. Access, staffing and affordability will determine the ultimate impact of these investments.

The four tax reform laws signed in June 2025 also seek to simplify the tax system, improve administration and protect lower-income earners through exemptions. Their success will depend on effective implementation and fair treatment of taxpayers.

There are also encouraging macroeconomic indicators. Real GDP grew by 4.43 per cent in the second quarter of 2026, while external reserves reached $55.24 billion in October. Inflation has also moderated, although this does not mean that prices have returned to previous levels.

Infrastructure investment remains significant, including the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, Sokoto-Badagry corridor, Bodo-Bonny Road and Bridges, and major road projects in the Southeast, including sections of the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway and the Enugu-Onitsha dual carriageway.

The welfare of the Armed Forces has also received attention, with presidential approval for salary increases of between 30 and 80 per cent, depending on rank, effective from September 2026.

Institutionally, the administration pursued the Supreme Court case on local government financial autonomy. State policing has also advanced through the reported approval of the constitutional alteration by all 36 State Houses of Assembly.

These are important interventions, but I would not suggest that every problem has been solved. The most important test is converting economic stability and government programmes into household prosperity, better services and improved living standards.

**One criticism of the Tinubu administration is that some people around the President have failed to translate his vision into tangible results, while the political elite appear insulated from ordinary Nigerians' economic difficulties. Does the President have the right people around him, and should he consider a major reassessment of his team?**

Every administration must constantly assess its performance. Government cannot be static, and public appointments should never become entitlements.

The President has assembled people with different backgrounds and experience in government, politics, business and the professions. However, some areas of government will inevitably perform better than others.

My position is that there must be a strong culture of performance management. Ministers and heads of agencies must understand that public appointments are responsibilities to deliver measurable results.



Ashafa

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By **Festus Ahon**




Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori (left), and his Deputy, Monday Onyeme, acknowledging cheers from supporters during the APC campaign rally at the Arcade, Asaba, headquarters of Oshimili South Local Council, recently. PHOTO: BRIPIN ENARUSAI

# Oborevwori's Governance Scorecard: Awards, Investments, Projects Shape Delta's Devt Drive

RECOGNITION in public office is often measured by the number of awards received, but its real significance lies in the responsibilities that come with such honours and, more importantly, the impact of governance on the lives of the people.

For Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, the recent recognition by The Sun Newspapers as Governor of the Year 2026 provides another opportunity to reflect on his administration's development agenda, its investment ambitions and the projects being executed across the state.

Receiving the award at the 24th Sun Awards ceremony held at Eko Hotels and Suites, Lagos, on Friday, November 13, 2026, Oborevwori, who was represented by his Deputy, Monday Onyeme, said the recognition would inspire him to raise the standard of governance and sustain his commitment to service delivery.

He described the award as encouragement to do more, insisting that every achievement should serve as a stepping stone to greater accomplishments.

"Every win encourages us to sharpen up and do even better. Every step one has climbed and every achievement recorded requires that one continues to strive, improve and move ahead of the rest," he said.

The award organisers attributed the recognition to his administration's people-centred leadership, inclusive development initiatives and investments in infrastructure and human capital development.

However, beyond the glamour of award ceremonies, the more important test of any administration remains its ability to translate policy promises into tangible improvements in the lives of citizens. That is where Oborevwori's development agenda, anchored on the MORE mantra of Meaningful Development, Opportunities for All, Realistic Reforms and Enhanced Peace and Security, comes into focus.

One area receiving considerable attention is infrastructure development. From urban roads to rural communities, the administration has continued to approve and execute projects intended to improve connectivity, ease transportation and support economic activities.

At its recent State Executive Council meeting held at the Government House Annex, Warri, the government approved a series of road construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation projects across the three senatorial districts.

The projects cover communities in Oshimili North and South, Udu, Ethiope West, Ndokwa West, Isoko North, Warri North, Sapele, Aniocha South and Ika North East, among others.

In Asaba, several roads in Bonsac, Zappa and other neighbourhoods were approved for construction or reconstruction. Similar interventions were approved in Ibusa, Okpanam, Agbor, Owa and other communities.

The government also approved a reduction in the completion period for two major road projects. The reconstruction of PTI-Eku Road, from Chainage 3+600 to Ugolo Junction, was reduced from 12 months to seven months, while the second phase of the Warri Internal Ring Road, from NPA Gate to Effurun Flyover Expressway, was adjusted from 12 months to eight months. These adjustments reflect the administration's stated determination to accelerate project delivery.

Education is another sector featuring prominently in the administration's development plans. The State Executive Council approved N10 billion for constructing and furnishing classrooms in 92 public primary and secondary schools across Delta State. The intervention is expected to address infrastructure deficiencies in the affected schools, while the approval for more than 4,500 units of school furniture is intended to improve the learning environment for pupils and students.

For communities where children still contend with inadequate classrooms and insufficient desks, the importance of such interventions goes beyond government announcements. Proper learning facilities are essential to creating an environment where teachers can teach effectively and students can concentrate on their studies.

The government's emphasis on education also reflects a broader understanding that infrastructure development must go hand in hand with investment in people.

Beyond roads and classrooms, the administration is seeking to position Delta as a destination for domestic and international investment. At the sixth African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network (AfSNET) Investment Conference 2026 in Calabar, Cross River State, Oborevwori presented the state's investment opportunities to prospective investors, highlighting its natural resources, strategic location and industrial potential.

Represented by the Chairman of the Delta State Investment Development Agency (DIDA), Ologorun Lucky Oghene-Omoru, the governor disclosed that the state had identified bankable projects in agriculture, energy, manufacturing and maritime development.

A major attraction is the $100 million Viability Gap Funding committed by the state government as initial support to de-risk investments and encourage private-sector participation. The funding commitment was announced at the Delta State Economic and Investment Summit in August 2026 and is intended to address financing gaps that could discourage prospective investors from undertaking major projects.

The government is also promoting two economic free zones located in Kwale and Koko, with opportunities for gas-based industries, manufacturing and other commercial activities.

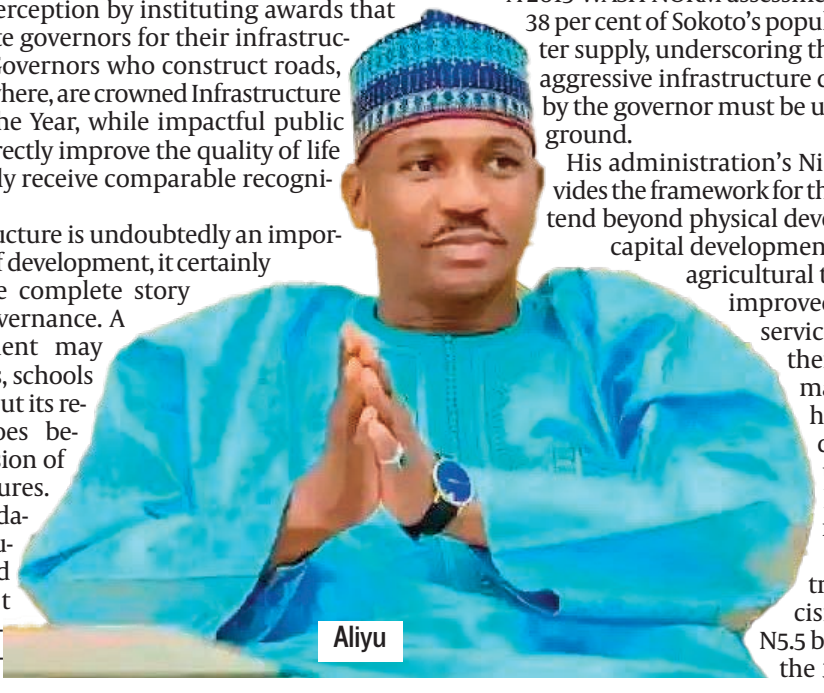
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# Governor Aliyu's Philosophy On Good Governance

By **Emmanuel Ado**

*Good governance is not just about infrastructure; it is also about innovative, people-centred policies that will help improve the lives of our people." – Governor Ahmed Aliyu*

IN Nigeria, good governance is often measured by the number of roads constructed, schools built or renovated, hospitals, roads and other physical infrastructure provided by the various governments. There is no doubt that most states have enormous infrastructure deficits requiring trillions of naira in investment to address. However, infrastructure delivery, important as it is, should not be the sole measure of good governance. Indeed, newspapers have unwittingly reinforced this perception by instituting awards that largely celebrate governors for their infrastructure projects. Governors who construct roads, that lead to nowhere, are crowned Infrastructure Governors of the Year, while impactful public policies that directly improve the quality of life of citizens rarely receive comparable recognition.



Aliyu

While infrastructure is undoubtedly an important indicator of development, it certainly doesn't tell the complete story about good governance. A state government may construct roads, schools and hospitals, but its responsibility goes beyond the provision of physical structures. It must fundamentally formulate and implement sound, innovative and people-centred policies that will strengthen service delivery, expand opportunities and improve the overall quality of life of the people. A government that delivers impressive infrastructure but neglects the foundations of sustainable development has only fulfilled part of its responsibility.

This distinction is important because Governor Ahmed Aliyu's administration inherited substantial infrastructure deficits especially because of the neglect by the previous administration. The challenges were not confined to roads; they extended to access to potable water and housing. Many communities had terrible roads, which made access to markets, travels and accessing healthcare facilities a nightmare. They also lacked access to safe and reliable water supply, and an acute shortage of decent and affordable housing.

A 2019 WASH-NORM assessment indicated that only about 38 per cent of Sokoto's population had access to basic water supply, underscoring the scale of the challenge. The aggressive infrastructure development in Sokoto State by the governor must be understood against this background.

His administration's Nine-Point Smart Agenda provides the framework for this approach. Its objectives extend beyond physical development to include human capital development, economic empowerment, agricultural transformation, security and improved access to essential social services. The important question, therefore, is not merely how many projects the government has executed, but whether its decisions are addressing the underlying problems that have constrained development in Sokoto State.

One recent example illustrates this distinction. The decision to commit a whopping N5.5 billion to the rehabilitation of the 33kV electricity line serving Binji, Tangaza, Gudu and Silame is more than an infrastructure intervention. These four local councils have endured approximately 10 years without public electricity supply. The consequences of such prolonged darkness extend far beyond the inconvenience of households going without power. It adversely affected small scale businesses which couldn't afford to operate using diesel; healthcare facilities also faced operational difficulties.

Restoring electricity to these communities is, therefore, more than an infrastructure project; it is an economic and social policy intervention that serves broader economic purposes. It is an investment in productivity, economic opportunities and improved living conditions. The real significance of the intervention by Governor Aliyu must be measured not simply by the restoration of electricity, but by the businesses that it has made possible, the economic activities that it stimulates and the improvements in the quality of life that reliable power supply ensures.

The same thinking undoubtedly informed the Governor Aliyu administration's decision to carry out a comprehensive rehabilitation of the Government Technical College, Binji, at N988.9 million. This is essentially a human capital development policy, recognising that sustainable economic growth requires a skilled, productive and employable workforce. At a time when unemployment, underemployment and changing labour market demands make practical competencies increasingly important, restoring the college's capacity to deliver quality technical and vocational training is an investment in the future of young people. Beyond rehabilitating the school, the government is seeking to equip them with the skills needed for employment, entrepreneurship and participation in the productive economy.

It is an investment in people that would ultimately translate into the state's economic development.

Indeed, during the 13th Sheikh Usmanu Danfodio Week, Deputy Governor Idris Mohammed Gobir made a strong case for greater investment in vocational and skills acquisition institutions.

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# Editorial

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# Nigerian Laws In Local Languages

THE National Assembly's plan to translate the country's statutes into the major Nigerian languages, especially Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa can go some way in fostering Inclusion In governance. But to succeed, the policy should be backed with greater measures by the legislative arm to give dividends of democracy to Nigerians. For Instance, more Nigerians need to be given educational opportunities, aimed at reducing the level of out-of-school children. Besides, citizens are more likely to read and understand laws, whether in their native language or otherwise, when and if their personal economy is reasonable. At the moment, government has a lot to do to alleviate the economic hardship most Nigerians are going through daily The National Assembly also plans to digitise legislative records, a move that will undoubtedly enrich statutory record

However, merely translating the laws into local languages is, stricto sensu, neither a silver bullet that is capable of shooting down the litany of ailments that afflict the citizenry nor a condition that precedes civic obedience.

If anything, civil obedience in Nigeria, as in any functional democracy, should be anchored on the perceived legitimacy of the state, equitable enforcement of the rule of law, as well as manifest socio-economic dividends of governance. Civil obedience is not achieved by simply making legislation more accessible to the populace.

According to the National Assembly (NASS), the move represents part of a fresh drive to make legislation more accessible to citizens and preserve the country's democratic memory.

The Executive Secretary of the National Assembly Library Trust Fund, Henry Nwawuba, who disclosed this plan in Abuja, during the opening of the 2026 National Assembly Library Week, with the theme, "Parliamentary Memory: Connecting Records, Legislation and the People," informed that the institution was investing in electronic repositories and its e-Library, while developing a National Assembly Library mobile application to make parliamentary information readily available to lawmakers, aides, staff, researchers and citizens.

Senator Osita Ngwu, who represented Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, urged lawmakers to make greater use of the library, particularly in an era of misinformation, disinformation and artificial intelligence.

For the avoidance of doubt, a law-abiding public cannot be created simply by breaking down complex statutory texts into native dialects; hence, to treat linguistic access as the solution to civic responsibility is a misdiagnosis of the root cause of public disillusionment, as well as mistaking a symptom of administrative distance for the cure to structural failure.

Potentially, the proposed policy of translating federal statutes into local languages can help in, among other things, demystifying statutory frameworks, facilitating democratisation of legal literacy, and denying rogue law enforcement officers, the opportunity to exploit public ignorance through arbitrary extortion and arrests.

By bringing national laws and statutes closer to the citizenry, especially rural dwellers, grassroots operators including artisans, traders, and the unschooled, these classes of people are armed with informed rights awareness, which enables citizens to demand institutional accountability.

Translating national statutes into local languages with a view to bridging the divide between formal legal frameworks and everyday public understanding is not a novel development on the African continent and even across the world. Before now, some other countries found it worthy of a task to demystify legal jargon in their statutes to empower citizens to know their rights, understand their obligations, and engage meaningfully with state institutions.

Indeed, some multilingual democracies have institutionalised the translation of statutory laws into major regional or indigenous languages, observing significant civic benefits:

In South Africa, statutes and key government policies are translated across the country's 11 official languages, which Section 6 of the 1996 South African Constitution recognises. Consequently, access to statutory laws in native tongues has broken down criminal codes and civil procedures, especially in rural townships, thereby massively curtailing legal exploitation and widening citizens' understanding of constitutional protections against rights violations.

Under India's Authoritative Texts (Central Laws) Act, federal statutes passed in English are translated into Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, Bengali and the rest of all the 22 official languages that are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the country's Constitution.

The Swedes enjoy similar benefits as all federal legislations are enacted simultaneously in three official languages (German, French, and Italian), with Romansh holding status as a national language for official interactions.

Back home, among the key issues that are confronting Nigerians,, inability to read the law in their mother tongue is not one of them; rather, it is the failure of those elected to enact and uphold these laws, to operate with visible detachment from the public's suffering.

Glaringly, the 10th National Assembly has not been a good example of an institution that prioritises the wellbeing of the citizenry, as members are perceived to consistently prioritise their comfort over public prosperity. Ranging from high-end, imported luxury SUVs to bloated committee allocations, the national lawmakers bask in expensive lifestyle that is in stark contrast with that of millions of citizens struggling to afford basic sustenance.

It is this ostentatious disposition that has pushed public confidence in the National Assembly to an all-time low, creating an environment where lawmakers operate with near-total impunity, taking undue advantage of the legendary resilience and docility of the average Nigerian, and in the process mistake public endurance for political endorsement.

Just as the patience of a citizenry pushed to the economic brink is not infinite, the government cannot indefinitely substitute symbolic reforms like language translation for genuine fiscal discipline, economic relief and nationalism.

As the National Assembly continues to abdicate its constitutional duty of executive oversight, while effectively allowing the executive to indulge in excessive borrowings and free spending,, it should be noted that tokenism in the mould of statutory translation is not sufficient to assuage Nigerians for the lawmakers' shortcomings.

Hence, until the National Assembly demonstrates true legislative courage, by slashing its mindboggling allowances, advocate and push for good governance, translating statutes into local languages will remain a superficial gesture, leaving the core demands of their institution unattended to, and failing to strengthen democratic governance.

## LETTER

### Ministry Of Education Textbook Ranking And Curriculum Conundrum

SIR: There is a growing disquiet in Nigeria's book publishing industry with the newly introduced textbook ranking policy by the Federal Ministry of Education. While the desire for quality is desirable, the manner in which the ministry hurriedly implemented the ranking policy, alongside a new curricula, has left many stakeholders wondering if something else other than quality of books is not at play.

At a time millions of Nigerian children are out of school, it seems the ministry of education is more concerned with revenue collection for government with a policy that will increase the cost of books. With the dire economic situation in the country, stakeholders had expected that the ministry would provide some form of subsidy or palliatives to publishers to help reduce the cost of printing books as incentive for more school enrolment.

Instead, the Federal Ministry of Education under the supervision of Mr. Tunji Alausa as Minister, introduced a new school textbook ranking policy that is threatening to force over 300 publishing firms out of business. These are registered members of the Nigerian Publishers Association (NPA), alongside hundreds of other non-members, smaller publishers and authors; who depend on publishing for survival. In Mr. Alausa's book ranking policy, any book ranked lower than 10 cannot be considered for recommendation for schools. Assuming 10 publishers have their books ranked, what happens to over 400 publishers and their authors, who have provided quality books for Nigeria's educational system over the years? Did Mr. Alausa consider the job loses his policy will cause with the closure of these publishing houses across Nigeria? Also, what happens to the authors who earn royalties from book sales from these publishers?

In spite of the fact that education is on the concurrent list of the Nigerian Constitution, the minister has communicated to even the private schools approved by the States to use only books that emanate from the Federal Ministry of Education's opaque ranking policy. This means that Mr. Alausa's policy is in clear violation of a federal law. Why a minister would choose a path without engaging in consultation with industry stakeholders, who are at odds how the new book ranking was carried out, and believe that the process lacked transparency. How many books per subject were actually ranked and approved? A cursory enquiry among bookstores in major cities across the country indicates that the ranked books are nowhere to be found even as a new school session has since begun. Is the policy designed to create artificial scarcity of books as has never been seen before in Nigeria? What exactly is Mr. Alausa's goal in this hurriedly packaged textbook ranking policy?

As a result of the education ministry's new policy, a large section of publishers are shut out of the usual assessment of books for a new curriculum that was introduced last year, scheduled for implementation this school year. NERDC gave publishers just three months to commission books ready for the new curricula. By the time publishers were ready with their books, NERDC shut its doors and refused to allow more books to be assessed. Books by only 10 publishers were eventually ranked that accounts for a mere fraction out of almost 400 publishers in Nigeria.

Stakeholders have also confirmed that the new curriculum for books was not released on time to give publishers enough time. While a new curriculum was released in September 2025, the curriculum for Mathematics for Primary 5, which ought to start in 2026, has not been released in October 2026. Meanwhile, it is common knowledge that good books take time to be written and published, a feat that cannot be accomplished within three months, if quality is the goal. Clearly, the current executives at NERDC have done a shoddy job of the new curricula, as the body failed to carry stakeholders along but acted outside the norm that had guided a smooth process that the industry had worked seamlessly with over the years.

"While Minister Alausa is busy talking about recommending quality books to children, the haphazard manner the new curriculum is being released speaks of chaos instead. What can be qualitative about books when a curriculum is released in September and books are expected to be published by November for assessment? Even up till now, the second part of the newly curriculum released by NERDC still does not have some subjects. Meanwhile, books for these subjects are expected to be assessed in November that has almost gone half-way."

• *Godwin Okondo wrote from Lagos.*

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# Opinion

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# 2027 And The Electoral Fortunes Of Nigeria

By **Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa**

**Introduction**

THE 2027 general elections represent another significant moment in Nigeria's constitutional and democratic development. Beyond the contest for political offices, the elections will test the strength of Nigeria's electoral institutions, the commitment of political parties to internal democracy, the independence of the judiciary, the credibility of the electoral process and, ultimately, the willingness of citizens to defend democratic values. The enactment of the Electoral Act 2026, which repealed and replaced the Electoral Act 2022, has introduced a new statutory framework for the conduct of elections in Nigeria. The legislation addresses political party membership registers, nomination of candidates, electronic transmission of results, collation procedures, election offences and the determination of election petitions. However, the existence of an electoral law does not automatically guarantee credible elections. The effectiveness of the law depends on its implementation, institutional independence, compliance by political actors, judicial interpretation and the vigilance of the electorate. In this piece, we will examine the Electoral Act 2026 against the background of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), relevant decisions of the Supreme Court and other courts, and the practical lessons that Nigerians can derive from electoral jurisprudence. It argues that Nigeria's electoral fortunes in 2027 will be shaped not merely by who wins political office, but also by whether the electoral process respects the rule of law, protects the people's mandate and strengthens democratic accountability.

**2027 And The Destiny Of Nigerian Democracy**

Democracy is more than the periodic organisation of elections. It is a system of government founded on the sovereignty of the people, constitutional limitations on governmental power, political participation, accountability and the rule of law. Section 14(2)(a) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) declares that sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria, from whom government derives all its powers and authority. This constitutional provision establishes a fundamental democratic principle: political authority is not the personal property of the President, Governor, legislator or political party. It is a public trust derived from the people. The 2027 general elections must therefore be understood within this constitutional philosophy. The Electoral Act 2026 was signed into law on 18 February 2026 and commenced on the same date. It repealed the Electoral Act 2022 and established the statutory framework applicable to the forthcoming elections. The Act was published in the Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, Volume 113, No. 40, on 2 March 2026. The importance of this legislation cannot be overstated. It determines how political parties nominate candidates, how voters are accredited, how votes are counted, how results are transmitted, how electoral offences are prosecuted and how disputed elections are judicially determined. The central question is therefore:

Will the 2027 elections become an opportunity for strengthening constitutional democracy, or will the country repeat the legal, institutional and administrative difficulties that have characterised previous electoral cycles? The answer will depend on the faithful application of the law.

**The Constitutional Foundation Of The 2027 Elections**

The Electoral Act 2026 cannot be interpreted in isolation. It derives its authority from the Nigerian Constitution and must operate consistently with constitutional provisions. Some of the most important constitutional provisions include:

2.1 Section 14: Sovereignty of the people

Section 14(2)(a) provides that sovereignty belongs to the people. This means that elected officials are representatives of the electorate and not owners of governmental authority. A political office is therefore a public trust, not a personal inheritance.

2.2 Section 40: Freedom of association

Section 40 guarantees the right to assemble freely and associate with other persons, including the right to form or belong to political parties. This provision protects political participation and the right of citizens to organise themselves for political purposes.

2.3 Section 221: Political parties and election sponsorship

Section 221 provides that only a political party may canvass for votes for a candidate at an election or contribute to the funds of a political party or candidate, subject to the constitutional framework. This provision makes political parties central institutions in Nigeria's electoral democracy.

2.4 Section 225: Political party finances

Section 225 provides constitutional controls over political party finances and empowers INEC to monitor and examine party financial activities in accordance with the Constitution.

2.5 Section 285: Election petitions and constitutional time limits

Section 285 establishes the framework for election tribunals and regulates the time within which election petitions and appeals must be determined.

**Among other things:**

Election petitions must be filed within 21 days after the declaration of results.

Election tribunals must deliver judgment within 180 days from the date of filing.

Appeals from election tribunal decisions must be determined within 60 days from delivery of judgment.

These time limits are constitutionally significant. They prevent election disputes from remaining unresolved indefinitely. In ordinary life, authority should always be exercised within the limits of the law. A person who occupies a position of leadership does not thereby become superior to the rules governing that position. The same principle applies to a community chairman, company director, church administrator, association president or public officeholder. Leadership confers responsibility, not unlimited power.

**The Electoral Act 2026: A New Legal Framework For 2027**

The Electoral Act 2026 contains 156 sections and several schedules. It regulates the activities of INEC, political parties, voters, candidates, election officials and election tribunals. Some of its most significant provisions deserve detailed examination.

3.1 Electronic transmission of election results: Section 60

One of the most consequential aspects of the Electoral Act 2026 concerns electronic transmission of election results. Section 60(3) provides for the electronic transmission of polling-unit results to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV), after the prescribed Form EC8A has been signed and stamped by the presiding officer and/or countersigned by candidates or polling agents where available. However, the subsection contains an important proviso. Where electronic transmission fails as a result of communication failure and transmission becomes impossible, the Form EC8A signed and stamped by the presiding officer and countersigned by candidates or polling agents where available remains the primary source for collation and declaration of results. This provision establishes a statutory framework for electronic transmission while retaining a manual documentary fallback in specified circumstances.

**Legal implications**

Three important consequences arise. First, electronic transmission is no longer merely a matter of administrative preference. It has express statutory recognition. Second, the law recognises that technological infrastructure may sometimes fail. The proviso provides a mechanism for dealing with such failure. Third, the circumstances in which communication failure is claimed may become important issues in future election litigation. The existence of the exception makes proper documentation, transparency and verification essential. The legal question is not simply whether a result appears on IReV. It is whether the result was lawfully recorded, transmitted or, where the statutory exception applies, properly supported by the prescribed polling-unit documentation. This provision teaches an important lesson about accountability. In business, government and personal administration, digital records improve transparency, but reliable original documentation remains important. A company that maintains electronic financial records should also preserve authentic supporting documents. A person who makes a payment electronically should retain the receipt. A public institution should maintain verifiable records of its transactions. The lesson is that transparency requires both accessibility and verifiability.

**Accreditation and voting procedures**

Sections 47 and 50 of the Act are relevant to voter accreditation and the conduct of voting. The statutory framework requires electoral procedures to be followed in the accreditation of voters and the conduct of the poll. Section 50 provides for voting by open secret ballot. The underlying democratic principle is that the process of voting must be transparent in administration while the voter's actual choice remains confidential. This distinction is essential. The public must be able to scrutinise the conduct of an election without being entitled to dictate or expose an individual's voting preference. Transparency does not mean the destruction of privacy. In family, professional and public administration, people should be accountable for their responsibilities while retaining legitimate personal rights.

**Political party membership registers: Section 77**

Section 77 introduces an important framework for political party membership records. Under section 77(2), political parties are required to maintain digital membership registers containing specified personal information, including: Names of members; Sex and date of birth; Address and geographical particulars; State, Local Government and ward; Polling unit; National Identification Number; and Photograph. Section 77(4) requires parties to make their membership registers available to INEC not later than 21 days before the relevant primaries, congresses or conventions. Section 77(5) provides that only members whose names appear in the register are eligible to vote and be voted for in party primaries, congresses and conventions.

**Why is this important?**

Political parties are the foundations upon which candidates emerge for public elections. Where membership records are inaccurate, manipulated or unavailable, disputes may arise over who is entitled to participate in party primaries. The statutory requirement is intended to provide a verifiable membership structure. Nevertheless, the collection and use of personal information must also be handled responsibly and consistently with applicable privacy protections. An organisation that maintains membership records should ensure that those records are accurate and accessible to authorised persons. In a cooperative society, church association, professional body or trade organisation, membership records determine who is entitled to participate in elections and decision-making. A properly maintained register reduces disputes. The lesson is simple: good governance begins with accurate records

• *Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa is a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN).*

# Olanipekun At 75: The Man, His Mission, And Milestone

By **Sunday Saanu**

OF course, there as an avalanche of philosophical valuations, flourishing words and plethora of excellent expressions capturing the descriptions of his awesome being, which he so majestically exemplifies. Some observers describe him as a treasured heirloom to humanity, others call him a living legal legend, while not a few call him a phenomenal philanthropist and jurisprudential pacesetter. However, he is known as Oluwole Oladapo Olanipekun. He was born on 18 November, 1951 at Ikere Ekiti. He is 75 this week.

Chief Olanipekun, one of the best and the brightest lawyers Nigeria has ever produced holds the distinction of defending the highest number of Nigerian Presidents in the court of law, having defended Presidents Umaru Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan, Muhammad Buhari and the incumbent, President Bola Tinubu. One should not even attempt to list the state governors he has used his legal knowledge and prowess to rescue from political oppression, cheating and intimidation. Perhaps it is a veiled confirmation of this assertion, that President Tinubu will be unveiling a book entitled "Wole Olanipekun Through the Cases" in Abuja on Thursday, 19 November, 2026 to mark the platinum anniversary of this legal icon.

Chief Olanipekun's superlative fame, based on his accomplishments, has no doubts, assumed a meteoric level attributed to the sages in the crucible history of mankind. Here is a man whose impacts have been felt not only in jurisprudence, but also in education, leadership, philanthropy and other aspects of life. He remains one of the men of means respected without reservations. Interestingly, his philanthropy is not limited to grand gestures, it extends to the everyday acts of kindness that often go unnoticed. He was recently at Federal University Oye Ekiti where he was invited as a guest lecturer, having being a professor of practice at the institution. Shortly after the lecture, he gave all the 500 level students in attendance Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira for coming for the lecture and a promise to pay their tuition fees at the Law School.

Miraculously, this is the kind of gesture he displays wherever he goes. He was in the University of Ibadan (UI) between 2009 and 2013, as Chairman of Council, he did more than enough for the university. He built a 350-sitting capacity lecture hall as a crescendo of his contributions to the university. He moved to Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, he built the Vice Chancellor's lodge. He was also at Babcock University, he donated a lecture theatre. He is today the Chairman of Council, University of Lagos, only God knows what he is planning to do for his alma mater. This is in addition of being the Chancellor of Bamidele Olumiluwa University of Education, Science and Technology (BOUETI) Ikere Ekiti, where he has built and donated a Senate Building, among other interventions.

This great man, who carries greatness lightly with his amazing humility occupies a conspicuous space in the pantheon of patriots imbued by compassion and courage. Little wonder some people describe him as a personification of patriotism. His discursive acumen and legal sagacity, as well as his well of his linguistic refinement are simply amazing. His erudition is such that no lawyer can belittle. This is because Chief Olanipekun belongs to the bracket of the best and the brightest in the legal firmament. Obviously, he is nationally respected and internationally revered.

This man, with a larger-than-life image, demonstrates, with distinction though, a deep commitment to national development and his Ikere-Ekiti country home in particular . He has built people, created opportunities, inspired excellence, and demonstrated what purposeful leadership truly means. He is a man who raises other men, thus, becoming a mentor to many, standing tall as a symbol of success built on altruism, dedication, courage, and unwavering commitment to excellence. His passion for giving back, uplifting communities, assisting the needy reflects a rare depth of his character and compassion.

Indeed, amid stupendous existential struggles and nihilism, it is greatly gratifying to encounter the like of Chief Olanipekun who always bends over backwards to lift the downtrodden. Perhaps this is where I count myself lucky to have known him. I am grateful to him for knitting me into his family, playing a crucial role in my life. Before I completed my doctoral programme in the University of Ibadan, Chief would not allow me to rest. He would call and say, "Sunday, I know you are busy, but find time to complete your Ph.D studies. To show his commitment to this charge, twice, he gave me scholarships to complete the programme among other numerous financial interventions.

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# Business Of Remembering In Kelani Abass's *Becoming Immortal*

By **Gregory Austin Nwakunor**

THERE is something almost archaeological in Kelani Abass's approach to the family archive. In his current exhibition, he appears uninterested in leaving the contents of the archive undisturbed. He removes photographs from their settings and handwritten documents. He excavates private fragments of memory and knowledge. Abass brings to the foreground information that has been buried in family documents and photographs and gives it a new life. In the process, he compels the viewer to interrogate what it means to inherit a past.

What it means to inherit a past is interrogated in Abass's solo show, *Becoming Immortal,* at Tiwani Contemporary, Lagos. The show is billed for December 15, 2026 to February 20, 2027. This show is the second outing of Tiwani Contemporary Lagos having closed its doors in May 2026 as part of a wider restructuring that also included the closure of its London outpost in Mayfair where it had been for 15 years.

One of the artist's imposing six-panel compositions, the title of which is the name of the exhibition, examines the role of women, memory and lineage in contemporary Nigerian art using three figures: a seated profile of a young woman; an empty, ornate chair; and a central matron (a deceased aunt of the artist) in teal, both seated, with the latter bearing a warm and knowing smile, against a backdrop of muted, archival photos that maintain a haunting presence in the background like echoes.

The artist makes up for empty space, which could have been filled with a large crowd, through the use of tactile representations of women, bearing the weight of history of family and community, that inform and support the presence of women in the work. It is a work that testifies to the dignity and respect of women.

One of the exhibition's strongest statements is *Translucent History*. This features a display of 11 small paintings with associated materials and documents. A centerpiece of the exhibit is a scroll with handwritten Yoruba text with the heading, 'For Running' (spelt 'For Runing' in the document). This family document is referenced in the paintings.

With the scroll is a copy of a painting from the series, 'Farmers' Ritual'. 'For Running' has a strong element of ancient manuscript. Like a hidden cache of important documents, it also has the element of a secret or private archive. This describes traditional wisdom or knowledge about herbs and other rural or folk remedies and practices, and potential allusions to social customs, practices and rituals.

Other random documents and ephemera are part of the installation. These documents are certainly archival materials, but they won't easily conform to the typical classifications and orderly arrangements of most archival materials. They are randomly arranged, and it seems there is no immediate way of establishing a hierarchy or a structure. It could be that the artist deliberately arranged them randomly to allude to the fact that traditional and inherited knowledge may not always be systematic and in an ordered fashion, but may be in random fragments which may only make sense with the passing of time.

The canvas pieces appear all the more colourful and intimate when placed against this background. Fragments of a family document written in Yoruba by Abass's father, mother and grandfather are woven into the canvas pieces. The document has suffered irreparable loss over the years. There are clues that remain, however.

Abass is preoccupied with documentation in the pictorial representation he gives in the collages. It seems he combines multiple sources in his pictorial representation. This may be to allude to photography or printed documents. The artist's family ran a letterpress printing business and Abass may have been sensitised to layers, impression and other processes involved in the creation of images. It is quite possible that this background explains Abass's interest in shifts and the combination of the three mediums.

This also accounts for the reconstruction and documentation nature of his paintings. His interest in reconstruction gives the photographic image a renewed significance and interpretation and goes beyond the frame of its original documentary role.

The family photographs found in *Translucent History* can also be found in *Space in Between* (2022-2025), *Becoming Immortal* (2025), *Awake* (2023) and elsewhere. They may not always be easy to identify. In some of the paintings they barely appear, if at all, like faint watermarks, underneath the painted surfaces. Their role should not be undermined by their subtle presence. These photographs constitute the essential building blocks of the artist's narratives.

The photographs in more recent works by Abass document family members in Abeokuta and other Yoruba settlements. Abass moves beyond the traditional function of the family album to document family occurrences and record ancestors. He takes relatives out of the contexts that they are documented in, and places them with relatives who are not related to them, in reality, in the same photograph. Abass, in the process, constructs new scenes and situations that invite the audience to contemplate different ways of seeing relationships, especially kinship, and other linkages people in society have to one another in the various levels and dimensions of their existence.

This he successfully does in the large-scale, multi-panel paintings. The various panels serve as freestanding compositions. The audience has the liberty to make connections between them. Often, members of the same family, or of different generations or social backgrounds, may occupy the same pictorial space.



A viewer contemplating the painting, *Becoming Immortal*

Since the individuals in the photographs are actual persons, the audience is free to imagine and construct relationships that may not exist between them, which demonstrates the creative nature of the photography as opposed to painting.

Brilliant colours represent the shapes and structures of the 1980s and 1990s in new and exciting ways. The different sitters against painted backdrops almost give the photos a movie-like quality. The subject repetition creates a meditative effect. The people in the pictures seem to belong to a larger gathering, spanning many years, that has been edited and aligned to a long, continuous wall to illustrate history.

Abass is interested in life after death, thus his depiction of time is cyclical. In his opinion, the past, present and future do not flow one after the other. The future begins where the past left off. His interest in time and death is best represented in his photography. His photographs extend beyond taking photos of the dead. His photographs illustrate how one life touches another, and how one life can continue to live on through another, giving others the assurance that they will never completely lose their loved ones. This is the reason Abass holds a personal handwritten document by his grandfather in high regard. He believes that in the future, even writing will fade away, and like oral tradition, memory will also be lost. Out of all things that can illustrate or assist humankind to relive the past, Abass prefers the written word. The fragility of Abass' family document shows that even if one documents his family history, that documentation too will not be exempt from the passing of time.

The exhibition includes an artist's book in a limited edition of 150 copies. Each volume has the same content, but is numbered, and has a handcrafted cover. The book was designed by Jennifer Bajorek in collaboration with Mariama Attah and Robin Riskin, with writings by Emmanuel Iduma. The handcrafted cover of each book introduces another aspect of the exhibition's consideration of reproduction. What role does the cover play in the identity of the book? Especially in this digital age, where reproducing an image or a text is as easy as the click of a button, a handcrafted object takes on special meaning.

Abass has shown at the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art), New York; the Tate Modern, London; C/O Berlin and elsewhere. His work is in collections of MoMA, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Princeton University Art Museum, Kadist Art Foundation and Fondation H, Antananarivo, Madagascar.

Ultimately, *Becoming Immortal* explores the past and what endures beyond the test of time. It considers the claim of the past on the present and future.

# At *Realms: Beyond Imagination,* Artists Confront Social Issues With Technology

From **Ajuluchukwu Brown,** Abuja

RECENTLY, artists at the 2026 Festival of Creativity and Technology organised by the Creative Art and Visual Imagery Centre (CAVIC) in Abuja used interactive installations and digital expression to confront social issues, including menstrual stigma and mental health.

This year's festival focused on mental and menstrual health, using creative expression and technology to encourage conversations around subjects frequently neglected or misunderstood.

The festival's wider programme also included a five-day capacity-building workshop that brought together artists and technology practitioners to explore new ways of creating and communicating.

Supported by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, the workshop was facilitated by resource persons, Marta Verde, from Spain and David Ugochukwu Ogbuehi, a tech resource from the UK, with three groups subsequently developing projects for exhibition.

Convener and founder of CAVIC, Philip Agbese Jnr, said the initiative was intended to demonstrate that art and technology could work together to address issues beyond the traditional boundaries of galleries and exhibition spaces.

He said bringing people from different professional backgrounds together could expand the possibilities of creative expression and give artists new tools to communicate their ideas.

Cultural Attaché of the Spanish Embassy, Eva Barta Martin, said the workshop had provided Nigerian creatives with an opportunity to learn, experiment and exchange ideas.

She described the collaboration as a platform for growth, adding that the interaction between technology and creativity could encourage dialogue and togetherness.

One of the 2026 festival's partners, GEANCO Foundation, said its involvement was informed by the alignment between the festival's themes and its interventions for vulnerable girls.

Representing the foundation, Okike Offia, said the organisation worked with girls from insurgency-affected communities and internally displaced persons' camps, providing support that extends beyond education to their overall wellbeing.

Offia explained that artistic platforms could help people express themselves, encounter different cultures and acquire knowledge.

He urged government to create opportunities for organisations such as CAVIC to reach wider audiences.

Also partnering with the festival, Pad Up Africa used the occasion to draw attention to menstrual health education and access to affordable menstrual products.

Its founder, Ashley Lori, said the need to break the silence around menstruation informed her interest in the exhibition.

She recalled that many girls, upon experiencing their first menstruation, were often told to keep the experience private rather than being properly educated about their bodies.

"The first word you hear from your parent would be, 'Don't allow any boy touch you.' But that's not supposed to be it," she said.

According to Lori, such responses can reinforce stigma and discourage girls from speaking openly about their bodies, abuse and other troubling experiences.

She also raised concerns about the affordability of sanitary products, advocating greater access to reusable alternatives, including reusable pads and menstrual cups.

Lori disclosed that Pad Up Africa had worked with a technical group under the Ministry of Women Affairs on a menstrual health policy initiative that she said was progressing towards implementation.

She said the interventions were important to ensuring that menstruation did not become an obstacle to girls' education.

For Lori, menstrual health education must begin early and move beyond warnings and secrecy.

"Girls should understand what is happening to their bodies. They should be able to talk about it without feeling ashamed," she said.

Attendee Vivian Amos said she was impressed by the interactive nature of the installations, describing the combination of technology and visual art as both engaging and thought-provoking.

Another attendee, Jude Adama, commended CAVIC for encouraging artists to improve their craft and embrace technological developments rather than remain restricted to conventional methods.

At the centre of the exhibition was *The Red Room*, an installation by a team of young creatives ,Sofia Turaki, Ahmeed Balogun and visual artist, Vyvvan Basil, which explored menstrual dignity and challenges the culture of silence surrounding menstruation.

The work asked how stories about menstrual experiences could be transformed from private realities into subjects people can see, hear and engage with.

Basil said technology offered artists an opportunity to communicate such experiences beyond conventional visual art.

"When people get to see and hear things, they feel it more than just looking at a still picture. So I feel technology has a huge role in passing this information properly," she said.

# Broadcast Content Across Borders

By Shaibu Husseini

## ENIFF Ends In Enugu

THE 2026 edition of the Eastern Nigeria International Film Festival (ENIFF) closed yesterday in Enugu, capital of Enugu State, South East Nigeria. This edition held under the theme: 'Stories that Build the Future' and speakers after speakers at the festival, which opened on November 18 and is supported by European Union and the telecommunication giant, MTN, emphasised the need for filmmakers to look beyond the immediate business of making films and consider the deeper responsibility of storytelling in shaping society. Delegates at the festival reiterated that Stories do not merely tell us where we have been or describe where we are, but they help determine where people or societies can go. Festival keynote speaker and Executive Director of the National Film and video Censors Board (NFVCB), Dr. Shaibu Husseini, admonished filmmakers to tell stories that preserve memory. He argued that a society that loses its stories risks losing important parts of its identity. "We must document our histories, experiences and cultural expressions for generations yet unborn. We must tell stories that encourage critical thinking. Our films should challenge stereotypes, interrogate social problems and stimulate meaningful conversations about governance, citizenship, justice, inclusion and development." Husseini also submitted that filmmakers and content artiste must tell stories that inspire possibility. "Our narratives should make room for innovation, enterprise, courage, resilience and the achievements of ordinary people. We must build a sustainable creative economy where stories must travel, reach audiences and generate value. This requires stronger distribution networks, effective intellectual property protection, investment, skills development and viable business models," he said, adding that festivals such as the ENIFF play platforms for discovery, networking, exchange and recognition. "Their value should extend beyond the days of the festival through lasting partnerships and opportunities for emerging talent." Speaking earlier, founder of ENIFF, Obianujuakwu Akukwe and co-founder Chris Odili, noted separately that ENIFF has from inception in 2020 provided a platform to discover new frontiers in film production, celebrate creative prowess, empower storytellers, encourage the young and upcoming, offer networking opportunities by connecting filmmakers across the globe. More information on the festival can be sourced at https://eniff.org/

## A Day Exta For Berlinale In 2027

THE 2027 edition of the Berlin International Film Festival otherwise called Berlinale, will begin on a Wednesday (February 10, 2027) for the first time, one day earlier than usual. The awards ceremony will take place on the second Friday, 19 February 2027 while the EFM will have a full official market day on Wednesday, 10 February, with its opening reception the evening before. The changed start date gives the Berlinale audience an extra day of screenings (20 and 21 February 2027). Founded in 1951 during the Cold War, the festival was originally conceived as a "showcase of the free world" in a divided Berlin. Over the decades, it has evolved into one of the most politically engaged film festivals globally, reflecting the city's complex history and its role as a crossroads of cultures. Today, the Berlinale champions artistic freedom and cultural exchange, offering a platform where filmmakers from around the world can explore social issues through their work. Reputed as one of the most prestigious film festivals in the world. Each year, the festival attracts thousands of filmmakers, industry professionals and cinephiles from all corners of the globe. The Berlinale offers an exciting programme that celebrates cinema through artistic exploration, cultural dialogue and star-studded glamour. The main event of the festival is the Section, where the year's most anticipated films compete for the prestigious Golden and Silver Bear awards. Information on the films selected for 2027 and the festival programme can be sourced at www.berlinale.de

## Entries Still Open For Warri International Film Festival

ENTRIES are still open for the 2026 edition of the Warri International Film Festival otherwise called WARRIFF. This edition, the second edition will hold from Tuesday, December 8 to Saturday, December 12, 2026 in Warri, Delta State, South-South, Nigeria. Founder of the festival veteran filmmaker Alex Eyengho announced that the festival welcomes entries from across the world. The theme for the 2026 edition is 'Making The Film and Making The Money' and according to him, the festival will feature screening, master classes, panels and networking sessions. Eyengho also announced that as part of the 2026 festival, some prominent Nigerians will be decorated with Lifetime Achievement Award. Those Eyengho named as recipients include the Ologbotsere of Warri Kingdom, Chief Ayiri Emami, Ambassador Lancelot Imaseun, Veteran filmmaker Don Pedro Obaseki and veteran movie marketer, producer and distributor Chief Gab Onyi Okoye otherwise known as Igwe Gabosky. Eyengho noted that the selection cuts across film production, distribution, acting, comedy, corporate support, and cultural leadership — reflecting the broad ecosystem that WARRIFF was established to celebrate. The festival, which has grown to become one of the most respected film fiestas in West Africa, will hold at the Movela Hotels, Airport Road, by Kosini Junction, Warri, Delta State, from Tuesday, December 8 to Saturday, December 12, 2026. The Lifetime Achievement Awards will be presented during the closing ceremony on Friday, December 11, 2026.


Tricia Turtle


Alex Enyegho


Obianujuakwu Akukwe

# In *Like Butterflies*, Abeeb Sodiq Explores Classism, Love, Freedom

By Sunday Aikulola

A GIRL runs through a forest, pursued by five men who intend to sell her. She is a princess of a town in Oyo Empire, and her capture marks the beginning of a journey in which her identity will be stripped away and her life reduced to a commodity.

Taken to a place the novel calls 'Parcel Land', she desperately adopts a new name, Sisi, realising she faces certain death if her true identity leaks. She is now condemned to her new life as a 'parcel', a term the novel uses for captives.

In *Like Butterflies*, the debut novel by Nigerian author Abeeb Lekan Sodiq, this transformation raises a central question. What happens when a society's hierarchies and classism determine who deserves to be treated as a human or not?

The U.S. Ambassador Pamela E. Bridgewater (ret.) in her review of the novel describes it as "a fast-paced journey through the brutal realities of the 19th-century Oyo Empire slave era."

The 'butterflies' in the title and cover are a metaphor for the characters' transformation from systemic oppression to the beauty of freedom; showing the enduring human determination to become free like butterflies.

Iya Temilola, one of the enslaved women in the novel, explains their new reality to abducted Sisi: "I cannot say much about it other than this is Parcel Land, and we are parcels, mere merchandise."

These descriptions were used intentionally by their captors because once people are classified as property, their suffering becomes easier to disregard. The question is no longer what they are experiencing as human beings, but what can be done with them as goods.

Sisi's resistance begins with her refusal to surrender to the circumstances of her capture. She observes, adapts and forms connections with those around her, including a chief maid who recently lost her sister to the local slave system.

Her relationship with Folayan, the son of her owner, introduces a challenge to the order of the estate she was sold to. Folayan comes to regards Sisi as a person despite the class difference that defines her.

This prompts a brief confrontation with his mother where he insists that "They're humans too, mother", but his mother replies angrily, "How dare you? They are animals. You are either a freeborn or an animal?"

Folayan's 'forbidden' affection for Sisi creates a difficult class problem for the two lovers. He belongs to the family that owns her, while she lives under their absolute authority. Their relationship crosses a boundary that the estate's social order maintains with brute force.

But affection alone cannot dismantle that order; as Sisi's resolve develops, she convinces Folayan to back her rebellion against




his own parents.

Surprisingly, despite what was at stake as heir to his family wealth, he assured Sisi, telling her, "If my mother were to kill you, she would have to kill me too."

This confidence drives Sisi, and without restraint, she makes her first public condemnation of their treatment, to the shock of every 'parcel'. Her statement is both daring and revolutionary in every sense of the word, in a time when imagining that alone can take her head. Yet this young girl braver than most, says it aloud: "This is why the change must begin with us. We need to hold those over us accountable instead. Freedom!"

Ambassador Bridgewater calls this "the human spirit's determination to be free," in her review.

However, one of the novel's most unsettling observations is that oppression can reproduce itself through the oppressed if the circumstance becomes beneficial to them or becomes a power play.

Literary reviewer and former Secretary of the Association of Nigerian Authors, Abuja Chapter, Ms Salamatu Sule, captures this in her review, 'The Hierarchy of Men in Abeeb Lekan Sodiq's *Like Butterflies*,' arguing that: "When the oppressed finally take power, do they transform the system, or simply change who sits at the top of it? The answer is not necessarily comfortable. Collective liberation may dethrone an oppressor, but without a transformation of the values and structures that produce domination, another Adunni may simply take the throne."

Adunni is the novel's betrayer whose treachery got a 'parcel' brutally whipped, and took Sisi to the verge of death. Despite being a 'parcel' herself, she sacrificed their collective rebellion for her power-hungry ambition. In a secluded soliloquy, she said to herself:

"Come to think of it, being a parcel may be terrible, but being the parcel in charge is not. It means power over other parcels. Why should such a person want freedom?"

Her reasoning exposes a distinction between escaping oppression and rejecting the principles that sustain it. A person may resent being at the bottom of a hierarchy without questioning the hierarchy itself.

The desired transformation may be a change of position rather than a change in the conditions that make oppression possible. This means the difficulty lies not only in defeating those who hold power, but also in resisting the temptation to preserve the old order under new leadership.

The novel also addresses the historical and moral complexities of the role some local rulers, merchants and other intermediaries played in the enslavement and sale of other Africans. This was condemned through the words of characters who confront this reality, especially the chief maid. She stood with pain in her voice and said to a crowd of 'parcels':

"We sell ourselves to the white people... We sell ourselves to ourselves, and still whip ourselves like animals. . . this is wrong."

Ms Sule also comments on this in her review. "Here, Sodiq moves beyond a simple condemnation of the colonial slave trade. He turns the gaze inward, asking the reader to confront the uncomfortable reality that oppression can also be reproduced by those who have themselves experienced it."

However, this does not erase the responsibility of the European powers that organised and profited from the transatlantic slave trade. Rather, the novel raises a separate but related question about the classism within which exploitation could operate, and why paying attention to it will prevent it from recurring.

The demand for reparatory justice and the examination of local power structures need not cancel each other out. The question that remains is whether a society can truly become free while continuing to measure human worth through hierarchies, power or classism.

The novel has been endorsed by the Lagos State Council for Arts and Culture (LSCAC), and was selected as the official text for the 2026 HRM Alayeluwa Oba (King) Adewale M. Abdul's Book Reading & Playlet Competition, involving 14 schools in Epe, Lagos.

The Lagos State government through the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, has included the novel in its 2026 - 2029 approved booklist for Senior Secondary Schools.

Sodiq is a Nigerian author and the Managing Editor of TheAfricanDream.net with extensive background in journalism. His debut novel, Like Butterflies, was published in 2026, with his second novel already in process.

# LITF Brings Global Theatre To Lagos, Attracts Over 20,000 Attendees

By **Gregory Austin Nwakunor**

THE growing appetite for live theatre and the potential of cultural platforms to stimulate creative enterprise, encourage international collaboration and strengthen Nigeria's global cultural presence

was demonstrated at the third edition of Lagos International Theatre Festival (LITF), which held between November 9 to 15, 2026.

The impressive turnout, diversity of productions and international participation were an endorsement of the potential of cultural platforms to stimulate creative enterprise, encourage international collaboration and strengthen Nigeria's global cultural presence.

The Lagos International Theatre Festival is a yearly celebration of theatre, storytelling and artistic expression, bringing together local and international productions, performers and creative professionals.

Through performances, cultural engagements and industry collaborations, LITF promotes artistic excellence, encourages cultural exchange and supports the growth of the performing arts industry, with a vision to position Lagos as a leading theatre destination in Africa.

The festival, which attracted over 20,000 theatre goers, featured over 25 productions, international performances from Kenya, Brazil, Norway and Canada, high-profile diplomatic engagements and a spectacular Opening Night Gala, offered audiences diverse theatrical experiences while creating opportunities for cultural exchange and collaboration among Nigerian and international artists. Food, beverage and lifestyle brands also contributed to the festival atmosphere, extending the experience beyond the stage. Thus, reinforcing LITF's growing position as an important platform for showcasing Nigerian creativity and connecting global theatre communities.

The festival opened on November 9 with *Theatre Meets Food* at Kaly Restaurant, featuring celebrated chef Hilda Baci in a unique fusion of culinary artistry and live performance. The week also featured diplomatic and cultural engagements hosted by the United States Consul General in Lagos and the British Embassy, alongside a networking reception organised by the British Council for festival directors and participating production companies. These engagements highlighted the importance of international partnerships and cultural diplomacy in advancing Nigeria's creative industry.

A major highlight was the Opening Night Gala, held on November 13 at Shell Hall, MUSON Centre, which welcomed over 1,000 guests, including the Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu; the Chargé d'Affaires of the US Mission in Nigeria; the US Consul General; the British Deputy High Commissioner; the Consul General of Brazil; the Consul General of South Africa, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea; alongside other members of the diplomatic corps, heads of institutions, government representatives, international delegates and leading figures in the creative industry.

The festival's main performance programme took place from November 14 to 15 across MUSON Centre, Ouida and KAP Hub, featuring over 25 productions spanning established and emerging Nigerian creatives, school and children's performances, and international works.

Speaking on the success of the festival, Founder and Creative Producer, Bolanle Austen-Peters, said: "Our ambition has always been to create more than a theatre festival. We want to build a platform that places Lagos firmly on the global cultural map, gives African stories the international visibility they deserve and creates meaningful opportunities for our artists. Welcoming over 20,000 attendees, presenting more than 25 productions and bringing international performers from four countries to Lagos is a powerful affirmation of this vision. Theatre is not just entertainment; it is an instrument of cultural identity, economic opportunity and global influence. The Stage Is Everywhere, and Africa must claim its rightful place on that stage."

The major highlight of the show was the awards ceremony, which saw the Lagos Governor, Sanwo-Olu, honoured in recognition of his support for the arts, while renowned theatre practitioner Ben Tomoloju received a Lifetime Achievement and Legacy Award for his enduring contributions to the development of the arts in Nigeria..

Reflecting on the achievement, Vanessa Jev, Festival Director, said: "This year's festival demonstrated what is possible when artistic vision, strong partnerships and collective commitment come together. We are proud to have created a platform where Nigerian and international artists could share their work, connect with new audiences and build lasting relationships. This success provides a stronger foundation for expanding the festival's reach and creating greater opportunities for the creative community."

The successful conclusion of LITF 2026 marks another important milestone in the festival's ambition to position Lagos as a leading destination for theatre and performing arts in Africa. With growing audience engagement, international participation and institutional partnerships, LITF remains committed to showcasing exceptional talent, promoting cultural exchange and building a sustainable global platform for African storytelling.



A scene from the play





Members of the diplomatic corps, international guests, Board members of Terra Kulture Group and theatre enthusiasts at the opening ceremony of the Lagos International Theatre Festival 3.0 at the MUSON Centre in Lagos... on Friday.

# Nsofor Explores Identity, Ancestry In *Eje Ayó* Homecoming Exhibition

By **Tobi Awodipe**

BETWEEN November 3 and 9, 2026, the National Museum, Onikan, Lagos was agog with activities, as the facility hosted Tony Nsofor's latest show, *Eje Ayó – The Homecoming Exhibition*, a retrospective that brought together works created across Nigeria, Cote d'ivoire and the United States between 2019 and 2026.

It traces the evolution of Nsofor's artistic practice through years of travel, relocation and personal encounters, revealing how different environments have influenced his interpretation of the human experience.

The collection features works preserved at his Lagos home, paintings produced during his stay abroad and recent works created after his return to Nigeria in October 2025. The exhibition moves from earth-toned, crowded compositions to multi-coloured fields, fragmented human figures and paintings in which colour becomes an expression of emotion.

Describing the exhibition as both a homecoming and a retrospective, Nsofor likens himself to a traveller returning with a bag of experiences and souvenirs collected along the way. He said the exhibition offers an opportunity to open that bag before friends, collectors and the Nigerian art community, sharing what he gathered from New York, Abidjan and other places that shaped his journey.

For the artist, the return is not merely geographical but an opportunity to reconsider his identity, reconnect with familiar surroundings and reflect on how travel has changed his understanding of home.

Nsofor said identity encompasses who a person is to others, who they aspire to become and the memory of who they were expected to be. Encounters, relationships and other people's perceptions, he explained, become part of the fabric through which individuals understand themselves.

This fluid understanding informs his paintings, in which figures emerge, fragment and dissolve into abstract forms, allowing viewers to interpret the works through their own experiences and subconscious associations.

One of the works, *Imagining Self in the Dreaming of My Ancestors*, considers what his ancestors might have imagined for a descendant who would travel across continents and encounter societies beyond their own experience.

Reflecting on how international travel has changed within a few generations, Nsofor examines the distance between ancestral expectations and contemporary possibilities, asking how those who came before him might have viewed the person he has become.

His experiences in the the US also prompted a deeper engagement with African history, particularly slavery, ancestry and the continuing consequences of the transatlantic slave trade.

Among the works addressing these concerns is 12,000 ships from Africa, through which he reflects on the transportation of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic and the gaps between historical events and their surviving physical evidence.

Another painting, *They Came by Water, Looking for the Promised Land,* explores the contradiction between the promise of a better life and the suffering endured by Africans forcibly transported across the ocean.

Nsofor also recalled accounts associated with Igbo Landing in present-day Georgia, where enslaved people are remembered for choosing death rather than bondage. These histories, he said, prompted questions about ancestry, identity and the meaning of belonging in a country that offered him opportunities while confronting him with Africa's traumatic past.



Nsofor in his studio

# National Troupe Deepens SIWES Programme, Encourages Creativity, Excellence In Performing Arts

By **Florence Utor**

IT was evident that The National Troupe of Nigeria (NTN) did a good job of grooming and training the students who were attached to the institution for their Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) send-forth, which held recently. The evidence was glaring in the performances that were displayed.

The second edition of the programme, which had 120 students from 11 universities across the country, showed the artistic training and skills they acquired during their three to six months industrial training programme in drama and dance at the Artiste Rehearsal Hall National Theatre complex Iganmu, Lagos were worth it.

The audience were glued to their seats as they enjoyed the display of talent, creativity after six months of intensive grooming.

Artistic Director/Chief Executive Officer, Hajja Kaltume Bulama Gana, who was unavoidably absent sent a goodwill message to the students via a video call. She said, "The National Troupe is delighted to have been part of your journey, keep it up and stay focus with your studies. We are glad to have had you for three to Six months, experiencing the culture of dance, music and Nigerian theatre. We hope you don't forget what you have learnt, take the lessons home with you and take your career seriously in the performing arts."

She added, "We look forward to hearing and seeing the report of what all of you have done, congratulations."

Theatre arts lecturer and dance scholar from the Department of Theatre Arts at the Lagos State University, who frequently collaborates with the NTN, Dr Yeside Dosumu-Lawal, commended the organisation for staying true to its call, to encourage creativity and excellence in the performing arts and to discover, nurture emerging talents.

"What you started in 2025 has been expanded to accommodate more students from many universities across the country, it is laudable and it is part of nation building,"she said.

# At **6th PAO Conference**, Stakeholders Discuss Content Balancing, Innovation In Digital Era

By **Gregory Austin Nwakunor**

THE National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) has reiterated its commitment to a more responsive regulatory framework, stronger intellectual property protection and increased investment in digital innovation to position Nigeria's film industry for greater global competitiveness and sustainable economic growth.

This was outcome of sixth Peace Anyiam-Osigwe Nigerian Digital Content Regulatory Conference (PAO-NDCRC), which held on November 18 and 19, 2026, at the MUSON Centre, Lagos.

Themed, *Film and Content Production in the Digital Era: Balancing Regulation and Innovation,* the high networth event brought together film regulators, producers, distributors, streaming platforms, technology experts, investors and the media.

The conference was an opportunity for stakeholders to tackle issues confronting Nigeria's growing audiovisual industry.

In his welcome address, the Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer of NFVCB, Dr Shaibu Husseini, noted that the rapid expansion of streaming platforms, social media, artificial intelligence and other digital technologies had fundamentally changed production, distribution and consumption of audiovisual content, requiring regulators and industry practitioners to rethink traditional approaches. "Effective regulation requires more than enforcement. We have therefore deepened engagement with filmmakers, producers, distributors, exhibitors, guilds, associations, streaming operators, academics and other stakeholders. Through dialogue, consultation and education, we seek to make the NFVCB not only a regulator, but also a partner in building a structured, responsible and sustainable screen economy," he said.

Reaffirming the Board's commitment to modernising its regulatory processes, strengthening inter-agency collaboration, improving public enlightenment and promoting a sustainable screen economy, he stressed that regulation and innovation must work together to create an enabling environment for creativity, investment and responsible content distribution.

Husseini also highlighted ongoing efforts to reposition the Board from the traditional perception of censorship towards a more classification-focused regulatory system that empowers audiences to make informed viewing choices while protecting creative freedom.

NFVCB boss underscored the importance of protecting intellectual property, addressing digital piracy and developing appropriate safeguards around the use of artificial intelligence, particularly in matters relating to authorship, consent, ownership and the rights of creative professionals.

The Minister of Arts, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy, Hannatu Musa Musawa, represented by Special Adviser to the President on Arts and Culture in the Office of the Minister of Culture, Moriam Ajaga, stressed the importance of sustained government engagement and stakeholder collaboration in advancing Nigeria's creative economy and strengthening the country's film and audiovisual industry.

"Our commitment also extends to protecting the intellectual property of our creative professionals. Through our IP protection initiatives and ongoing policy reforms, we are working to ensure that Nigerian filmmakers retain greater control over their intellectual assets and receive the economic value their creativity deserves," she said.



Shaibu Husseini and Steve Ayorinde at the event

The minister added, "through the National Film and Video Censors Board, we are advancing a more modern and responsive regulatory framework for film and digital content. The implementation of the upgraded Magpie Classification Module represents an important step towards improving the efficiency of film, music video and dramatised skit classification."

She said, "our objective is not to stifle creativity but to establish standards that encourage responsible content production while respecting artistic expression and protecting vulnerable audiences."

While delivering his keynote, renowned actor and filmmaker, Mr Richard Mofe-Damijo (RMD), challenged the industry and regulatory institutions to develop policies and structures that allow creativity to thrive without compromising responsibility.

He maintained that "the future of the creative industry would not be determined solely by its capacity to produce compelling content, but also by the environment created for creativity to flourish."

He said: "We are living through one of the most consequential transformations in the history of storytelling. For generations, the business of film and television was relatively structured. There were established production companies, broadcasting institutions, cinema houses, distribution channels and regulatory frameworks. The journey from an idea to an audience was reasonably predictable. Today, that journey has been fundamentally disrupted.

"A filmmaker can shoot a film on a mobile device, edit it on a laptop, distribute it through a digital platform and reach an audience of millions without ever entering a cinema or negotiating with a traditional broadcaster.

"The barriers to entry have fallen dramatically. This is exciting. It is empowering. It is also challenging. Because when the means of production become accessible to almost everyone, the responsibility of understanding what we produce, how we distribute it and the consequences of that distribution becomes even more important. And this is where regulation enters the conversation."

According to him, regulation must provide clarity, inspire confidence and encourage innovation rather than create unnecessary restrictions for practitioners.

# **Okonoko** Pushes Monetisation Of Nigerian Content In US

By **Daniel Anazia**

UFUOMA Okonoko, known in Nollywood circles as Angel Ufuoma, has announced plans to revolutionise the export of Nigerian content to the huge western market, especially in United States via Blaze Channel, a US-based digital monetisation and streaming platform.

Targeting N10bn yearly in revenues, the arrangement is aimed at financially empowering Nigerian creators across genres like Film/Nollywood, Afrobeat music, Fashion, Culinary Arts, Publishing, Visual Arts and Crafts, Pharmaceuticals and Tourism, as well as boosting foreign exchange earnings for the country.

According to Ufuoma, who is the Chief Operating Officer of Atlantic World Digital Communications, the plans will become fully operational with the partnership between Blaze and Creative Economy Development Fund, CEDF.

"Nollywood filmmakers produce great films, but they find it very difficult to monetise them. We created Blaze Channel as a Digital Monetisation platform in the USA, not only to stream and monetise the movies, but more importantly to monetise



Okonoko

Nigerian Creative Industry products. The strategy utilises the huge power of Nollywood films and Afrobeat music to attract international eyeballs and earlobes to the digital monetisation platform where Creative Industry products such as Fashion, Culinary Arts, AI, Publishing, Pharmaceutical products and Arts and Crafts are displayed for sale to the international market thus creating huge tourism potentials and FDI for Nigeria."

Chairman/CEO of A

tlantic World Digital Communications, Tony Abulu, a prolific Nigerian-American filmmaker, expressed confidence in Okonoko's skills in realising the set goals and plans to introduce her innovation to American filmmakers and businesses through the various American Chambers of Commerce.

"I have confidence that Ufuoma will lead Nigerian Creative Industry to massive monetisation opportunities in the USA where Nigerians already repatriate over $10m annually in diaspora remittances back to Nigeria," he said.

Okonoko has featured in over 40 Nollywood films including *Spellbound* with Daniel K. Daniel, Enyinna Nwigwe and Mercy Aigbe, *Superstar* with Tekno Miles, AY, Nyanya and Jide Kosoko and her latest masterpiece, *Ämerican Japa*, starring Toyin Abraham, Odunlade Adekola, Kanayo O. Kanayo and veteran actress, Tina Amuziam.

# Lord's London Brings Glitz, Glamour To Trace Live With *BNXN*

By **Eniola Daniel**

FROM Zlatan to Spyro, Patoranking and now BNXN, Lord's London Dry Gin has brought another memorable entertainment experiences to Nigerians.

Its latest outing at *TRACE Live*, which held recently at Terra Kulture, Victoria Island, Lagos, brought that commitment to life once again, with afrobeats sensation BNXN delivering an evening of music, excitement and unforgettable moments.

From the opening moments, the atmosphere was charged with excitement as fans sang along, danced and connected with the music. From *Back Outside* and *Bae Bae* to *Still in Charge,* BNXN treated fans to a run of familiar hits that had the audience singing along, dancing and asking for more. It was an evening that celebrated not just the artiste, but also the energy and shared joy that make live performances special.

One of the night's standout moments came when some excited fans made their way onto the stage to perform BNXN's *Eja Meja*. Their confident delivery caught the artiste's attention, earning his admiration and a cash reward.

Beyond the stage, the brand brought its own expression of style and sophistication to the evening through a specially curated experience booth.




Designed as a lively meeting point, the space came alive with drinks, exciting giveaways and interactive games, giving guests more ways to engage with the brand and enjoy the occasion.

More than a sponsorship presence, the brand created opportunities for genuine interaction and connection.

# TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

## A Fountain Of Life Commotion

WHEN there is an issue in regular people's homes, they call on God to intervene. But who do we call upon to intervene when there is a serious problem in a supposed house of God?

And to be specific here, who will resolve the leadership dispute involving Pastor Jimmy Odukoya at The Fountain of Life Church in Lagos after a group claiming to be its Board of Trustees announced his immediate removal as Senior Pastor on November 17, 2026. Both Odukoya and the church have rejected the removal as invalid?

These are the key Issues in the dispute:

• Contested 2021 Succession Video: Trustees cited a December 2021 video recording of the late founder, Pastor Taiwo Odukoya (who died in August 2023), alleging it named a different successor and assigned Jimmy only as an administrative assistant and youth church head. The board claimed Jimmy filmed the video but withheld it when succession plans were initially discussed in 2023.

• Remarriage Controversy: The trustees also objected to Odukoya's recent remarriage to Pastor Mo Odukoya (introduced to the congregation on November 1, 2026, after a blessing in the United States), calling it inconsistent with church teachings and leadership standards following his earlier marriage to Oluwakemi Banjoko.

Odukoya has pushed back and dismissed the move, stating he remains Senior Pastor, while a church statement disputed the validity of the removal and urged the public to separate those pronouncements from the church's constitutionally authorised position.

H. ere is T4T's submissions: Why did Jimmy's father, owner of the church not hand over the church to him at his demise as is the practice of all church owners especially in?

T4T saw a video where the late Daddy In The Lord openly declared someone else a Senior Pastor, while his tattooed son was handed the 'Youth Pastor'.

Now, in the era of AI, T4T cannot independently verify the authenticity of the video but that is what among many other things the 'elders' of the church are banking their 'we nor go gree' stand on.

Was the decision of the father not to hand over the church empire to the junior Odukoya hinged on his rastafarian kind of ways and his loud tattoos? We may not know that now as Baba is no longer around to tell us.

But the 'remarriage' part the church elders raised, that one nor be issue na. At least T4T knows of a prominent Daddy G.O who has married thrice and God never vex for am na. He is still busy'performing miracles' and 'healing' people upandan on TV with his crusades filled to capacity, so, what did bros Jimmy do that is supposed to be a big deal here?

www.guardian.ng **NewsExtra**

# At 40, The Criterion Targets Youth Digital Literacy, Sustains Grassroots Humanitarian Drive

By Shakirah Adunola

AS The Criterion (Association of Muslim Women in Business and the Professions) marks four decades of existence, the faith-based organisation is expanding its traditional humanitarian and educational interventions to prepare young Nigerians for an increasingly digital and Artificial Intelligence-driven future.

Founded 40 years ago to unite Muslim women across diverse professional and entrepreneurial spheres, the association has spent the last four decades translating Islamic ethical principles into tangible community development.

Speaking during activities to mark the milestone anniversary, leaders of the association reaffirmed their commitment to tackling pressing social vulnerabilities, ranging from educational deficits to youth substance abuse.

Over the years, the group's footprint has been most visible in underserved communities where basic social infrastructure remains scarce. Highlighting some of the organisation's landmark interventions, representatives noted that The Criterion constructed and handed over a block of six classrooms in an unserved community that previously had no school facility, opening doors to formal education for local children.



Hajia Musleemah Abdulrahman (left); International Amirah, Hajia Shakirat Omolara Shekoni; Abuja District Amirah, Hajia Risqat Balure; Hajia Nimattallah Abdul (aka- Hasibunallah); and Abuja District Naibathul,Hajia Fatimah Baba Ahmed at the event.

In the healthcare sector, the association has prioritised maternal and community health by donating critical medical equipment to public facilities, including the Mother and Child Hospital in Lekki, Lagos and a public hospital in Karshi, Abuja.

Speaking on the significance of the milestone, the International Amirah of The Criterion, Shakirat Omolara Shekoni, noted that the 40-year journey reflects the enduring power of collective purpose among Muslim women professionals.

"Reaching 40 years is both a moment of gratitude and a renewed call to service. From the very beginning, our vision has been to ensure that our professional attainments and Islamic values translate directly into upliftment for the vulnerable, whether by putting a roof over pupils who had no classrooms or equipping hospitals that care for mothers and children," Shekoni stated.

While physical infrastructure and medical outreach remain central to its mission, The Criterion is pivoting toward addressing modern behavioural and technological threats confronting adolescents and young adults. Through structured mentorship clinics, the association regularly engages young people on resisting negative peer pressure and combating drug abuse.

More recently, the Abuja branch of the Organisation, ncorporated digital literacy into its youth curriculum to counter the adverse effects of unregulated internet exposure and emerging technologies.

Explaining the urgency of this digital shift, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) , Amirah of The Criterion, Hajia Adeola Balure, stressed that young Muslims must be guided to harness technology constructively rather than fall prey to its pitfalls.

# ShortStory

## 'Almighty Father, Truly, I Have Sinned!' (1)

By Segun Durowaiye (08055356855)

TAKE it or leave it, Karim Dolapo was a nice-looking young man, any day and anytime, small wonder why all the ladies just wanted a taste of his 'sugar stick'. And of course, he was very rich! He was an importer of electronic products like computers and music gadgets. His warehouse was in Idumota and he lived in Itafaji, also located on Lagos Island.

Tall, handsome and easy-going; he had all the charming qualities ladies want in a man. No lady could turn down his love offer or advances. He smelt of money! But honestly, his only weak point was his insatiable lust and thirst for the Daughters' of Eve. They all flocked around him in that vicinity. He was often always confused as to which one to pick among the bevy of ladies surrounding him on daily basis. At this very moment, he was 28 and his parents had always admonished him to pick just one as wife among the retinue of ladies visiting him on daily basis. But sincerely, he always turned deaf ears to their warnings and admonitions. He studied Business Administration at a private university and after graduation at 21 he ventured into the trading business and luckily for him it boomed like he had never expected. However, instead of him to be gentle and focused on his business and how he would settle down with a responsible fiancée, he became the 'King Of All Casanovas' on Lagos Island.

Various kind of ladies, in different sizes, shapes and colours hovered around him, trying to seduce him and reap where they had not sowed. He became the 'best and sexiest lover man in town.' As we all know, ladies would always flock around where money is in abundance, like ants would always surround the spot where sugar is located. That particular week, within five days, Karim's love bait caught about seven delectable and beautiful ladies in a row. And he slept with all of them, one after the other, in one of the best brothels on the Island! Can you beat that?!! His manhood was always restless and insatiable all the time.

He felt so happy, joyful and fulfilled to perform that "enormous feat" and he gloated over this 'achievement' thinking he had won a million Dollar lottery added to his trading business!

He even spoke about it gallantly to his close friends and business associates.

"I showed those babes what stuff I am made of!" he boasted happily among his friends that Saturday evening at his beautifully-furnished living room on the Island. He continued to brag over his sexual adventures that eventful weekend. Then came the following Monday, when he was supposed to resume for business at his warehouse. He noticed that his manhood had swollen so big, and he had terribly black substances around it. And he found it very, very painful to pee normally. "What's happening to me?!!" he screamed out of excruciating pains. He couldn't even sit down normally. Instantly, he took the key to his Lexus Jeep and drove himself to Valiant Mind Hospital, based in Ikoyi. His painful condition was growing at an alarming rate.

He was crying like a baby as he hurriedly got down from his Jeep and rushed into the hospital, with the last strength in his body! He was breathing profusely as he took off his trousers and showed the doctor his debilitating condition. "You have contracted Chronic Fatallophobic Syphilis Meningitis!" the Medical Doctor said after a thorough check and analysis of Karim's health condition. He was referred to the emergency facility of the hospital instantly and he paid a whopping N500, 000 as advanced medical bill for the commencement of treatment immediately.

The pains was so much all his body that he burst into tears and wondered if he would survive this terrible ailment he got through his lecherous, promiscuous and wayward lifestyle."Doctor, doctor yeeeeh," he screamed, "I hope I won't die suddenly here sir?" he asked for the umpteenth time. He was in painful tears as the nurses continued to administer drips and injection to his body…

To be concluded.

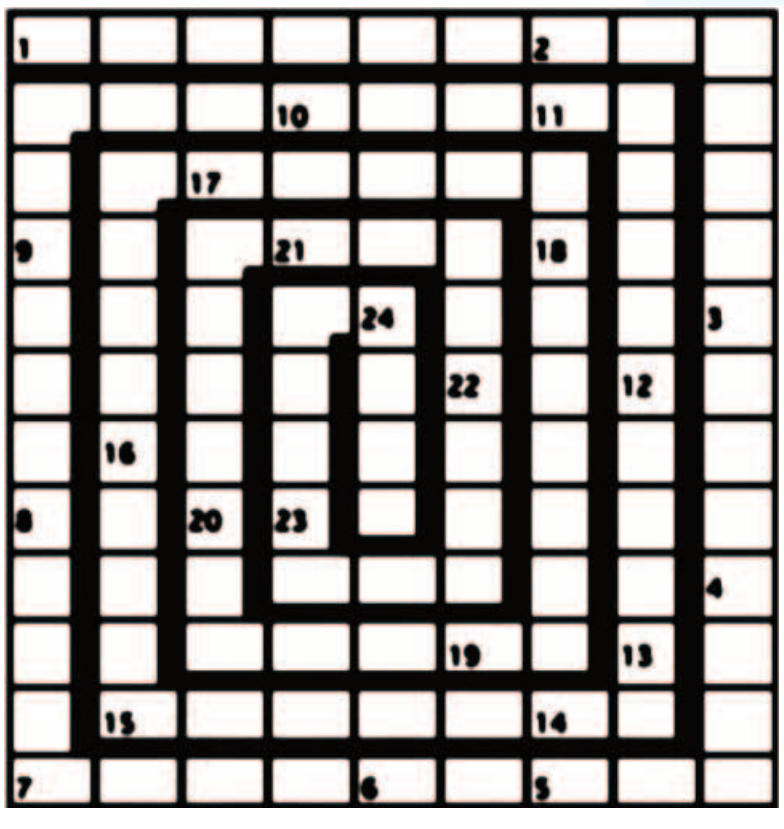
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# Overlapping Word Game

with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
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## Solution

1 Konduga
2 Anambra
3 Atiku
4 Ukulele
5 Least
6 Astana
7 Nagana
8 Native
9 Verify
10 Yerima
11 Imagine
12 Nebula
13 Last
14 Staddle
15 Leather
16 Erasure
17 Reality
18 Tyrannical
19 Calabar
20 Arabian
21 Anaemic
22 Microbe
23 Escape
24 Peak



## Overlapping Word Game

1 Lagos State Governor, (5, 3).
2 Suitcases and bags, (7).
3 Hire somebody, (6).
4 Semi-solid protein, (7).
5 Unit of length, (4).
6 Porcelain, (5).
7 Country in south-eastern Europe, (7).
8 Capital city of Niger, (6).
9 Hair at edge of eyelid, (7).
10 Long-handled scoop, (6).
11 Fabric with soft lustrous pile, (6).
12 Hypnotic state, (6).
13 Island of the Philippines, (4).
14 Stiff fabric, (7).
15 Filling material for teeth, (7).
16 Yellow pigment, (7).
17 Measurement of Earth's surface, (7).
18 Type of maple tree, (8).
19 Farthest out, (7).
20 Fiery mass of rock from space, (6).
21 Lottery with objects as prizes, (6).
22 Homosexual woman, (7).
23 LGA in Borno state, (5).
24 Shaft on which wheel turns, (4).

## Word Search

**Musical Instruments-1**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Tuba | Flute | Basson |
| Viola | Guitar | Xylophone |
| Violin | Cymbals | Recorder |
| Piano | Piccolo | Pipe Organ |
| Harp | Pan-Pipes | French Horn |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| F | R | E | N | C | H | R | O | C | E | R |
| L | E | S | R | P | I | A | N | O | N | N |
| U | C | L | A | B | U | T | N | R | O | A |
| P | O | A | T | P | P | E | O | E | H | G |
| R | A | B | I | I | C | H | S | D | P | R |
| A | L | M | U | C | H | A | S | R | O | O |
| H | O | Y | G | C | O | B | A | O | L | E |
| T | I | C | N | O | L | U | B | C | Y | P |
| U | V | E | F | L | U | T | E | E | X | I |
| L | R | V | I | O | L | I | N | R | E | P |
| F | E | S | E | P | I | P | N | A | P | C |

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

## Birthdays

**ADESINA,** Kola PhD, award-winning international journalist, academic and Head, Department of Mass Communication, Crescent University, Abeokuta, Ogun State is 67.

Born on November 16, 1959, he studied Mass Communication at the University of Lagos; London South Bank University (LSBU); and Canterbury Christ Church University, where he studied Citizenship/Media Studies.

He worked in diverse areas, in different capacities, which include Assistant Examiner, Oxford & Cambridge RSA Examinations Board (OCR), UK; Media Relations Expert (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation),Vienna, Austria; News Editor, West Africa Magazine, London; Managing Editor, African Concern Magazine, London; Teacher of Media Studies, Citizenship Studies, English Language.

He is currently Head, Department of Mass Communication, Crescent University, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Dr. Adesina has been honoured with several awards, which include Award of Excellence by *African Age International* magazine; he also received the award amongst eight others selected from academics and professionals, who have distinguished themselves in their areas of practice in West Africa. (2014).

He won the best written Features Category of the 1998 UK Multi-Cultural Media Award,



Adesina

moderated by Kingston University, UK.

His research interests include Media and Citizenship; Communication and Culture; Sociology of Mass Communication, Print Media Production, Language and Communication

He has led the department of Mass Communication to a score of 90 per cent or above in the last three consecutive



Ribadu

NUC accreditation exercises.

Early this year, Dr Adesina introduced a learning framework that restores humanities to the widely adopted Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and STEAM curriculum, naming it MASHET.

**RIBADU,** Mallam Nuhu, pioneer Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and current National Security Adviser to President Bola Tinubu is 66.

Born on November 21, 1960, Ribadu studied Law at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Kaduna State from 1980 until 1983, with a Bachelor of Law degree and was called to Bar in 1984 after a year at the Nigerian Law School. He also earned a Master of Laws degree from the same university. He is a TED Fellow and a Senior Fellow in St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, UK.

He was appointed chairman of the EFCC in 2003 by former President Olusegun Obasanjo and reappointed in 2007, as well as promoting him to the position of Assistant Inspector General of Police.

In April 2009, he became a visiting fellow at the Centre for Global Development. He lived in exile until 2010 when he returned to Nigeria and declared his intention to run for President of Nigeria under the platform of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN).

On Friday, January 14, 2011, Nuhu Ribadu was adopted as the presidential candidate of the ACN.

In August 2014, he defected to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with the intention to run for the Governorship seat of Adamawa State.

Ribadu was appointed by President Bola Tinubu as National Security Adviser on June 19, 2023.

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

## Events



Former Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief, *The Guardian,* Martins Oloja（left） *CNN* award winner/Queen of Apomu Kingdom, Osun state， Olori Janet Mba Afolabi and Senior Vice Chairman/ Editor-in-Chief， *Leadership* Media Group, Azubuike Ishiekwene, all awardees at the Fourth Edition of Yearly Milestone Recognition of Media Icons in Nigeria, held in Abuja ...recently




Regional Coordinator South-West Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) Benedict Itegbe (left); Country Manager, West Africa, Mastercard Kari Tukur; Director General, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) Charles Odii; Executive Vice President, Growth Segments, Mastercard Tara Nathan; Assistant General Manager and Head of the Lagos Regional Office, Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM) Daniella Jarikre – Ikazoboh and Director-General, Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) Zahrah Mustapha Audu, at the SMEDAN MSME Growth Forum in Lagos recently.



The Celebrant, Prof. Taiwo Osipitan (SAN); his wife, Cecilia and officiating priests during Osipitan's 70th birthday thanksgiving service held at All Souls Anglican Church, Lekki, Lagos.



The celebrant, Dr. (Mrs.) Olusola Agboighale (third right); her husband, Dr. Eromonsele Agboighale; their kids and others during her 45th birthday celebration at the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Praise Tabernacle, Ebun Street, Lawanson, Surulere, Lagos.




Registrar, Ronik Polytechnic, Mr. Joseph Afolabi (left); Chairman, Governing Council, Dr. Adebola Olubanjo; Honoree Fellow , Ronik Polytechnic, Mrs Mogbonjubola Ejirinde, representating Mrs Monica Oghenerobor; Rector, Dr Abiodun Olafenwa; and member, Governing Council, Ayotunde Adedoyin, a lawyer, during the third Ronik Poly Convocation held at Ejigbo campus, Lagos...on Thursday



Guest Speaker, Pastor Akingbade Akinmuyiwa (left); Executive Director, Sohcashtoa Foundation, Mrs Solape Fayemi; one of awardees, Salihu Fatimoh Temitope and Alhaja Salihu during Sohcaktoa Foundation scholarship award presentation ceremony in Lagos.

## Newly-elected MUSWEN Officers Pledge Reform In Education, Welfare, Others

By **Shakirah Adunola**

ALHAJI Rafiu Adisa Ebiti has been elected President of the Muslim Ummah of South-West Nigeria (MUSWEN). Ebiti succeeds Alhaji Rasaki Oladejo, whose six-year tenure ended at the organisation's 11th General Assembly held in Ibadan, Oyo State. The leadership transition was announced by Oladejo, who also chairs MUSWEN's Shurah Committee.

In the restructured executive council, Alhaji Thabit Wale Sonaike emerged as Deputy President I, taking over the role previously occupied by Ebiti, while a former chief executive of Trade Bank of Nigeria, Alhaji Jamiu Ekungba, was named Deputy President II.

In his acceptance speech, Ebiti described leadership of the Ummah as an amanah (sacred trust) rather than a platform for personal gain, pledging an administration anchored on consultation, accountability, transparency and inclusiveness.

Outlining his policy priorities, the new MUSWEN President emphasised a dual focus on Islamic scholarship and modern professional excellence, noting that there is no conflict between sound religious knowledge and contemporary fields such as science, medicine, engineering, artificial intelligence and robotics.

"Poverty must never block a talented child," Ebiti declared, announcing plans to deepen partnerships with Islamic universities, including Crescent, Fountain, Al-Hikmah and Summit to expand scholarships, teacher training, and digital literacy, particularly for indigent students, girls and persons with disabilities.

On economic empowerment and social welfare, Ebiti vowed to professionalise the MUSWEN Endowment Fund into a permanent institutional asset and overhaul the administration of Zakat and Waqf to move recipients from dependency to sustainable livelihoods.



Muslim Ummah of South-West Nigeria (MUSWEN) Deputy President I, Alhaji Thabit Wale Sonaike (left); Chairman of MUSWEN's Board of Trustees, Dr. Wale Babalakin (SAN); former MUSWEN President, Alhaji Rasaki Oladejo; Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar; President, MUSWEN, Alhaji Rafiu Adisa Ebiti and MUSWEN Deputy President II, Alhaji Jamiu Ekungba, during MUSWEN 11th General Assembly held in Ibadan, Oyo State.

## Prof. Ndubuisi To Receive Leadership Award At Global Investment Summit In Lagos

LAGOS is set to host the Eighth Global Business Leadership Forum on November 28 at NECA House, Ikeja Business District, Lagos. The first Professor of Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability in Africa. Prof. Okeke Gerald Ndubuisi, will receive the Global Leadership Award of the Asian African Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the event.

Ndubuisi will also deliver a keynote paper with theme: "Understanding Climate Change and Impacts on Human and Entrepreneurs."

A statement signed by the Vice President, Africa Region of the University of Entrepreneurship and Technology, State of Delaware, USA, Dr. Leye Babalola, said the President of YSJ Group, Dr. Chief Oluwayemisi Bukola Joluwe would be awarded Honorary Doctorate Degree in Entrepreneurship, while Dr. Alhaji Amao Jamiu Akanbi would receive Honorary Doctorate Degree in Auditing and Assurance.



Prof. Ndubuisi

## Eno Inyang, 83, For Burial Dec. 5

FUNERAL rites for Madam Eno Samuel Inyang who died recently at the age of 83, begin on Friday, December 4, 2026, with a service of songs at her residence at 9.00p.m.

She will be buried on Saturday, December 5, after a funeral service to be conducted by the Church of Christ, No.1, Ukpom Abak, Akwa Ibom State at 9a.m. A thanksgiving service holds on Sunday, December 6, at the same church at 9.00a.m.



Inyang

Guardian Fashion

● STYLE ● ELEGANCE ● LIFESTYLE

By **Maria Diamond**

# *A Street Called Cray:* Exploring Individuality Through Contemporary Tailoring, Classic Principles

*'I began to see the collection like a street, with each look representing its own house, distinct in character and personality while still belonging to the same design universe'*

STYLE should make room for individuality rather than prescribing one way to dress for an occasion. This is the concept behind 'A Street Called Cray' collection, exploring how different people can interpret tailoring, classic suiting principles and contemporary style in ways that remain distinctly their own.

Designing attire and styling is not about dressing everyone the same way. It is about giving each person a way to dress like themselves.

With this in mind, *A Street Called Cray* represents a deliberate step beyond being known primarily for individual celebrity moments or a particular category of occasion dressing.

The 15-look collection built around a new campaign thought: "Made for You" is designed as a reflection of individuality and how different personalities can coexist within the same space.

For Oladipupo Olamide Samuel, the Founder and Creative Director of 'Samuel Cray', this latest collection explores individuality through contemporary tailoring and classic tailoring principles. "I began to see the collection like a street, with each look representing its own house, distinct in character and personality while still belonging to the same design universe."

The collection moves across white wedding looks, contemporary formalwear for grooms, high-street bespoke suits and structured, architectural silhouettes across both menswear and womenswear. Box-cut construction, modern proportions and sharper experimentation sit alongside the craftsmanship and classic tailoring discipline on which Samuel Cray was built.

This balance between evolution and classic tailoring is intentional. Samuel Cray is not abandoning the principles that have defined tailoring; it is expanding what those principles can look like for the new generation.

*A Street Called Cray*, marks a new chapter in the brand's evolving design language. Founded in 2018 with its roots in classic menswear, Samuel Cray has grown through a distinctly personal approach to tailoring. Bespoke craftsmanship, attention to fit and an understanding of the individual wearing each piece have remained central to the brand as its repertoire has expanded across traditional attire, contemporary suits, wedding looks, occasion wear, and womenswear.

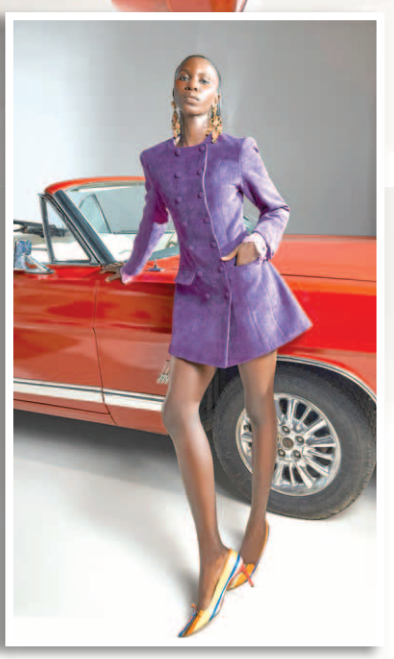
From Classic Menswear to a Modern Fashion House Samuel Cray's journey began with classic menswear. In February 2021, the brand opened its first flagship store in Yaba before relocating its flagship atelier to Osapa London, Lekki, in 2023.

**'Made for You' Campaign**

"Made for You" reflects Samuel Cray's belief that modern luxury should give the wearer room to be recognisably themselves. It also reflects a broader view of African luxury, one rooted in craftsmanship, personal attention, cultural intelligence, and distinctive design rather than dependence on international labels.

The proposition behind *A Street Called Cray* begins with individual expression. A wedding may call for classic formality for one client and something unconventional for another. A suit may be understated or architectural. A woman may want strong, structured tailoring; a man may want the same. What connects those choices is not the occasion alone, but the person making them.



# Growing Burden Of Diabetes In Nigeria, Treatment Access Gap

## ...Lifestyle, Genetics, Environmental Factors Contribute To Condition

By **Maria Diamond**

**DIABETES** may begin as a medical diagnosis, living with it is a daily reality for millions of people. In Nigeria, diabetes is an increasingly important public health concern, with millions of people living with the condition, many of whom may not even know they have it.

The Diabetes Association of Nigeria (DAN) has cited estimates ranging from 8.2 million to 11.04 million people living with diabetes, including both diagnosed and undiagnosed cases.

For an average Nigerian diabetes means "sugar," and maybe there is some level of accuracy there, but we need to establish that, attributing it to just taking too much sugar will be under presenting the entirety of what this chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. This causes sugar and nutrients to build up in the blood and that build up is what we can safely say characterise as diabetes.

Think of insulin as a key that unlocks the body's cells, allowing sugar from the food we eat to enter the various body cells and provide energy. Diabetes occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin (the key) or cannot use it effectively.

Diabetes has two major types, Type 1 diabetes' and 'Type 2 diabetes. Now, they may share a name, but they develop differently and affect the body in different ways.

**Type 1 Diabetes Reflects Genetic Predisposition**

Type 1 diabetes is characterised by deficient insulin production and requires daily administration of insulin. Experts say it is an autoimmune condition where the body's immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys the insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas.

Although the exact reason this autoimmune reaction occurs is not fully understood, genetic predisposition (basically, family history) and certain environmental factors are believed to contribute to its development. The destruction of these insulin-producing cells means the body produces little or no insulin, and daily insulin administration is necessary for survival.

Type 1 diabetes can develop at any age, although it is commonly diagnosed in children and young adults and accounts for 5 to 10% of all diabetes cases. Importantly, it cannot be prevented, and is not caused by eating too much sugar, poor lifestyle choices or a lack of physical activity. People living with Type 1 diabetes require lifelong insulin therapy, regular blood glucose monitoring and ongoing medical care to manage the condition.

**Type 2 Diabetes Reflects Lifestyle Choices**

On the flip side of the coin is Type 2 diabetes and unlike its counterpart, it is very common and accounts for about 90 to 95% of diabetes cases and it's usually caused by lifestyle choices. It is a metabolic condition primarily driven by insulin resistance, where the body's cells stop responding properly to insulin.

Here, the body might produce insulin, in abundance even, but because the body's cells develop a resistance, they gradually become less responsive to insulin, making it harder for nutrients, like glucose (sugar) to move from the bloodstream into the cells. If you remember the lock and key analogy stated earlier, then remember it like this, the locks gradually become less responsive to the key (insulin), because it's either blocked and the key cannot pass through or it's rusty.

According to Kingsley Aguoru, a pharmaceutical expert in local manufacturing of diagnostic solutions and the Managing Director, Colexa Biosensor, a Nigerian medical diagnostics manufacturer with a focus on blood glucose monitoring solutions, for type-2 diabetes, factors such as excess body weight (obesity), physical inactivity, genetic susceptibility, certain dietary patterns, age and some others can contribute to its development and increase risks.

A systematic review and meta-analysis published in Cardiovascular Diabetology estimated a pooled Type 2 diabetes prevalence of 7.0% in Nigeria, translating to approximately 8.02 million adults.

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF), in its 2025 Diabetes Atlas, estimated that approximately 2.99 million Nigerian adults aged 20–79 were living with diabetes in 2024. However, it is also estimated that 78.7% of these cases were undiagnosed. There are considerable variations and clear contradictions in the estimated figures of people dealing with diabetes in Nigeria.

At the continental level, the IDF estimates that 24.6 million adults in Africa were living with diabetes in 2024, with approximately 73% unaware of their condition. Nigeria accounts for a significant share of this burden and is among the countries with the highest estimated number of people living with diabetes in sub-Saharan Africa, in fact, the country ranks #1 in Africa for the absolute number of adults living with diabetes placing it ahead of countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania.

**Factors Influencing Diabetes:**

It is also important to understand as we've established that the likelihood of developing diabetes is influenced by several factors, including genetics, family history, body weight, physical activity, lifestyle, dietary patterns and underlying health conditions. These factors do not operate independently, and their effects can vary from one individual to another.




**. URBAN LIFESTYLE**

One particularly important factor to consider in Nigeria is urbanisation. Consider the difference in everyday routines. Many urban residents spend extended hours sitting at desks, working in offices or commuting through traffic. Convenience also increasingly influences food choices, with greater dependence on processed foods, fast food and sugar-sweetened beverages.

Combined with reduced physical activity, these lifestyle patterns can contribute to weight gain, insulin resistance and an increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

**Access To Healthcare**

Aguoru stated that beyond the lifestyle factors, however, there is another dimension to consider: access to healthcare. A person's risk of developing diabetes is one thing, but their ability to identify, diagnose and manage the condition is another.

"This becomes particularly important in communities where routine health screening may be limited or where the cost of healthcare makes regular check-ups difficult.

"For some people, diabetes is only discovered when symptoms become severe or complications have already developed. This is partly because early symptoms, such as frequent urination, excessive thirst, unexplained weight changes and persistent fatigue, may be overlooked or mistaken for other health conditions."

For someone living with diabetes, the cost of care is not a one-time expense. It is a continuous financial commitment. Beyond consultations and medication, blood glucose monitoring requires a compatible meter, test strips and other consumables.

In a study conducted by Development Governance International Consult (DGI Consult) with support from Gatefield, to assess the implications of inflation on access to antidiabetic drugs across the country, it compared the average household income with the annual cost of diabetes management, and the study revealed that only people earning above N2.5 million per year can afford consistent treatment without falling into debt.

Aguoru noted that one of the key components of diabetes care is blood glucose monitoring which is the practice of measuring the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood. "Blood glucose monitoring (BGM) is an important part of diabetes management. It helps people track how their blood sugar levels change in response to food, physical activity, medication and other factors affecting their health.

"A blood glucose meter makes this possible by measuring the amount of glucose in a small blood sample, usually obtained through a finger prick and applied to a compatible test strip. The result gives an indication of the person's blood glucose level at that time. When done regularly, as recommended by a healthcare professional, these readings can help individuals identify patterns, recognise unusually high or low blood sugar levels and make more informed decisions about their care."

**Affordability, Supply**

In Nigeria, the dependence on imported medical products also raises questions about affordability, supply and the ability to maintain consistent access. For a person who needs to test regularly, the cost of replacing test strips can be just as important as the initial cost of purchasing a meter.

In recent times, local healthcare manufacturing has become very relevant. Developing the capacity to manufacture essential medical devices within Nigeria presents an opportunity to strengthen domestic supply chains and contribute to the availability of products needed for long-term health management.

**How can Nigeria move beyond importing essential healthcare products to developing and producing more of them locally?**

While local production alone cannot resolve the challenges of affordability and access, building domestic manufacturing capacity is an important step towards a healthcare system that is better equipped to meet its own needs.

This is the standpoint of Aguoru who also revealed that one company contributing to this space is Colexa Biosensor. "Through its OnPoint blood glucose monitoring system. Colexa provides a locally manufactured option for people who need to monitor their blood glucose levels."

Beyond individual companies and products, Aguoru stated that the drive for the growth of local production also aligns with Nigeria's healthcare industrialisation agenda. Through the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and initiatives such as the Presidential Initiative for Unlocking the Healthcare Value Chain (PVAC).

"The Federal Government is pursuing greater domestic production of essential healthcare products, including medicines, diagnostics and medical devices. The initiative seeks to attract investment, strengthen local manufacturing capacity and build more resilient healthcare supply chains."

Diabetes is among the top range non-communicable diseases (NCD) affecting the highly productive segments of the Nigerian populace and addressing its growing burden in the country would require a united effort that goes beyond awareness. Nigeria has taken some giant steps towards the prevention and control of diabetes in Nigeria, but the desired destination in the provision of a working system to reduce the growth has not yet been reached.

This calls for stronger healthcare systems, improved access to screening and diagnosis, affordable treatment and the availability of reliable monitoring solutions.

Thus, the emergence of companies such as Colexa Biosensor in the blood glucose monitoring space is part of this developing landscape. However, the true measure of progress will not simply be how much we can manufacture locally, but how effectively that capacity translates into accessible, quality and affordable healthcare solutions for Nigerians.

As Nigeria joined the world to observe World Diabetes Day on November 14, 2026 under the theme "Early Action on Diabetes", the conversation must therefore extend beyond understanding diabetes to examining how we can build a healthcare system better equipped to prevent, diagnose and manage it.

> *'As Nigeria joined the world to observe World Diabetes Day on November 14, 2026 under the theme "Early Action on Diabetes", the conversation must therefore extend beyond understanding diabetes to examining how we can build a healthcare system better equipped to prevent, diagnose and manage it.'*

# AWAF Launches Health Insurance Scheme For Aku People

By **Moyosore Salami**

THE Aku Welfare Association Federated (AWAF), an umbrella organisation of Aku indigenes in the diaspora, has launched a National Health Insurance Scheme to improve healthcare access and reduce medical expenses for residents of Aku in Igbo-Etiti Local Council of Enugu State.

The launch, held at the Aku Civic Centre, Onuigba, Obarazu, marks a significant milestone in AWAF's commitment to community welfare and forms part of activities preceding its 40th anniversary celebration on December 27, 2026.

The event attracted representatives of AWAF branches, the Aku General Assembly (AGA), political leaders, healthcare providers, Health Maintenance Organisations (HMOs), community leaders and beneficiaries.

Speaking at the occasion, AWAF National President, Chief Uche L. Ocho, Esq., described the initiative as a historic transition from occasional medical assistance to a structured, sustainable and subsidised healthcare protection system.

He lamented the financial burden of out-of-pocket healthcare expenses on Aku families, emphasising that the scheme was driven by the guiding principle: "NoAku Man Or Woman Will Be Left Behind."

Ocho disclosed that AWAF had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with NEM Health Maintenance Organisation to provide subsidised healthcare coverage, including primary healthcare, secondary referrals, maternal health and emergency services.

He called on all hamlets to mobilise residents for mass enrolment, stressing that widespread participation would guarantee the programme's sustainability.

He also highlighted other achievements of his administration, including the provision of a borehole for Ugwuegede community and the successful hosting of the December 2025 Aku Cultural Festival.

In his presentation, Chairman of the AWAF National Health Insurance Committee, Dr. ChijiokeOke, explained that the committee had conducted a needs assessment and consulted relevant regulatory agencies and private HMOs before establishing the scheme.

He outlined its benefit package, enrolment process and fund management structure, commending AWAF leadership, NEM Health Insurance and Attah Memorial Hospital for their collaboration.

Similarly, AGA Chairman, Engr. Mathew Enyi, applauded AWAF for recognising healthcare as a fundamental pillar of community development. He pledged the Assembly's support in sensitising residents across Aku's three major quarters and urged political leaders to support the initiative irrespective of political affiliations.

Representing NEM Health Maintenance Organisation, Mrs. Susan Okeke explained that beneficiaries would undergo biometric registration and receive temporary hospital cards pending the issuance of permanent cards. Covered services include consultations, laboratory investigations, essential medicines, antenatal care, childbirth, childcare and minor surgical procedures.

Mr. Amuche Charles Attah Jr., representing Attah Memorial Hospital, assured beneficiaries of quality, non-discriminatory and round-the-clock healthcare services in line with the agreed package.

# Queen's Palm @3: Empowering Youths For Infinite Futures

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

THE Queen's Palm Support Initiative, a Non-government organisation, has celebrated its third anniversary in Lagos with a call to action for young people to embrace personal development, financial literacy, leadership skills, and responsible decision-making.

The event, themed: "Infinite Future," brought together youths, mentors, and industry professionals to chart a course for the next generation of Nigerian leaders.

Speaking at the event, the Founder of the initiative, Sabrina Osma, who expressed profound gratitude to God for the opportunity to empower young people through mentorship, training, conferences, and school outreaches over the past three years, explained that the initiative, which was established in Abuja in 2023, focuses on developing essential soft skills such as emotional intelligence, communication, leadership, poise, and etiquette.

She emphasised that investing in young people is crucial to national development, stressing the adage: "If you train a child, you have trained a nation."

Addressing the students and young professionals present, Osma urged them not to limit themselves to mere academic pursuits but to also build meaningful relationships and learn how to relate effectively with people.

# Sustainability Project Supports Nearly 20,000 Students Across 20 Schools

By **Suliyat Tella**

A SUSTAINABILITY education project has reached an estimated 19,673 students across 20 schools in Lagos, Ogun State and Ibadan, using games and practical activities to introduce young people to global development challenges.

The 2026 edition of the SDG Hero Project recorded about 1,043 students participating actively in workshops and related activities, according to its organisers.

Launched in Nigeria by Boke Technology Co. Ltd., a digital entertainment company, the initiative uses an educational board game to teach students about the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and encourage them to explore ways to contribute to sustainable development.

The project is implemented in partnership with Bracken Media Solutions and Adapted Nest, a non-governmental organisation, which support programme delivery and engagement with participating schools.

During this year's implementation, students took part in interactive gameplay, facilitated workshops and practical sessions, including liquid soap making and tie-dye. The activities combined sustainability education with creativity and hands-on learning.

organisers said the project engaged 50 volunteers and deployed 150 SDG Hero game boxes across the participating schools. Some students reportedly asked the team to return after taking part in the activities.

The initiative also received an endorsement from the Ministry of Education, according to the organisers.



# Academy Inducts 11 New Fellows, Special Recognition For Four Others

By **Gbenga Salau**

THE Nigeria Academy of Pharmacy has inducted 11 pharmacists as new fellows in Lagos at its investiture ceremonythemed, "Pharmacy for National Health Security: Advancing Innovation, Medicine Sovereignty and Sustainable Healthcare." Also, four other distinguished Nigerians were also given special recognition for their contribution to the field of pharmacy.

The Academy presented Lifetime Achievement Award to founder, Emzor Pharmaceuticals, Dr Stella Okoli; honorary fellowships on DrObiora Anthony Chukwuka and Alhaji Auwalu Abdullahi Rano as well as Distinguished Service Award to Professor Fola Tayo.

The newly inducted fellows are: Dr Shakirat Adeshiyan Adeosun, Dr Solomon Aigbavboa, Pharm. Ignatius Kenechukwu Anukwu, Dr Josephine Ihanene Ehimen, Pharm. Bankole Aminu Ezebuilo, Rasheed Oladele Faworaja, Gladys Okafor, Pharm. Prof. Henry Akpobor Okeri, Professor Ogbonna Okorie, Prof. Ibrahim Adekunle Oreagba and Pharm. Dr Titilayo Abidemi Onedo.

The President, Nigerian Academy of Pharmacy, Prof. Lere Baale, implored new fellows to use their expertise to transform the pharmaceutical sector and contribute to national development.

"Let your fellowship become a platform for collaboration, for mentorship, innovation and service. Do not merely wear this honour of fellowship. Let that honour define your actions," he said.

# *The Experience* 21 Holds December 4

By **Gbenga Salau**

ON Friday, December 4, 2026, the Lagos skyline will once again echo with worship as hundreds of thousands of voices unite in praise for the 21st edition of *The Experience*. This year, the gathering expands beyond Tafawa Balewa Square (TBS) to include Onikan Stadium as an overflow venue, creating more room for worshippers to share in this extraordinary night.

Convened by Pastor Paul Adefarasin, The Metropolitan of House On The Rock, this extraordinary night of music and prayer runs from 6pm till dawn. Admission is free, and millions worldwide can join live online.

year's theme draws inspiration from convener's profound teaching, The Mountain of the Lord's House, an exposition of Isaiah 2:2, a call for the Church to rise beyond just gathering for services to building enduring institutions that shape nations, influence economies and impact generations.

The night is not ultimately about a platform, or a sound system, or even a line-up, as extraordinary as this line-up is. The night is about a foundation: people from every tribe, and tongue, denomination and nation, standing together upon the foundation that never fails: Jesus, The Rock.

The line-up brings together some of the biggest voices in gospel music from Nigeria, Africa, and around the world including: Onos Ariyo, Moses Bliss, Tolu Odukoya, Bidemi Olaoba, Mercy Chinwo, Kaestrings, Nathaniel Bassey, Dunsin Oyekan, Sunmisola Agbebi, Mr. M & Revelation, Blessing Lopez, Emma OMG, Tim Godfrey, Eno Michael, IB Quake, Sonnie Badu, Joe Mettle, Oncemore Six, Israel Houghton, Travis Greene and the Lagos Metropolitan Gospel Choir.



Adefarasin

*The Experience* continues to grow in global reach and impact, bringing new voices, new generations and nations together in worship.

Beyond the music, its influence extends into the Lagos economy, supporting hospitality, tourism and local businesses, while amplifying Nigerian gospel music and culture on the global stage.

# Lagos Intensifies Child Protection Campaign As Ajumobi Unveils 'Flora's Flower'

By **Tobi Awodipe**

A NEW book,Flora's Flower, by journalist and child-rights advocate, Funmi Ajumobi has been launched.

The presentation, held in Lagos, brought together government representatives, media executives, legal practitioners and child-protection advocates to examine the roles of families, communities and institutions in safeguarding children.

Reviewing the nine-chapter work of fiction, Executive Secretary, Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA), Titilayo Vivour-Adeniyi, described the book as a useful resource for parents, schools, faith-based organisations, the media and government agencies.

She said its central message is that abuse thrives where children cannot speak out and adults refuse to listen, stressing that disclosures must be taken seriously, regardless of the identity or social standing of the person accused.

She highlighted the importance of trusted adults in helping children report abuse and commended the book's treatment of children's rights, legal processes and access to medical and psychosocial services.

A panel discussion on 'Beyond Justice: Strengthening Support Systems for Child Abuse Survivors' examined the need to complement criminal prosecution with counselling, medical care, legal assistance and educational support.

Panel participants included Ronke Oyelakin of the Child Protection Network; Itoro Eze-Anaba of the Mirabel Centre, represented by Sanya; Antonia Ojenagbon of the Tonia Bruised But Not Broken Foundation; Oluwatobi Akerele of Vcare Development Initiative.

# 'Wealth Is Built On Quality Decision'

*__Solape Fayemi__ is a business executive, board leader and social impact advocate whose work sits at the intersection of corporate governance, investment, real estate and human capital development.Her work is anchored in a clear conviction: lasting impact is not built on moments, but on systems that endure.Across business, governance and social impact, she is focused on building institutions, developing people and creating structures capable of delivering value beyond their founders and across generations.Solape serves as Board Chair of Sohcahtoa Holdings Limited, a diversified financial and investment group. In this role, she leads the Board in its oversight of governance, strategy, risk and the Group's long-term institutional development.Her relationship with Sohcahtoa extends beyond the boardroom. Having previously served in executive leadership within the organisation, she brings to the Chair a deep understanding of its entrepreneurial foundations, operating environment and long-term ambitions. Her focus today is on strengthening the governance structures, leadership disciplines and strategic oversight required to support the Group's evolution into an enduring African institution. She is also Chief Executive Officer of Saina Properties, where she is building a real estate advisory enterprise focused on helping individuals, families and investors make informed property decisions, protect capital and build long-term wealth through real assets.Solape is the Founder and Executive Director of Sohcahtoa Foundation, a nonprofit organisation committed to expanding access to education, opportunity and structured development for underserved young people.Through the Foundation, she leads initiatives spanning educational scholarships, skills development, character formation and community support. Her approach to social impact goes beyond charity: she views investment in human capital as an essential part of Africa's long-term development. Together, these three dimensions of her work (institutional governance, enterprise and investment, and human capital development) reflect a broader philosophy: sustainable progress requires both strong structures and prepared people. In this interview with __MARIA DIAMOND__, she speaks about property investment and how real estate can play an important role in wealth creation.*

**As an expert in investment and wealth creation, what fascinates you the most in this space?**

I AM fascinated by what it takes to build something of value on the right foundation. This is one of the many reasons I ventured into real estate. Real estate can play an important role in wealth creation; however, wealth is built due to the quality of one's decision. This is why it is advisable for people to do due diligence before making any kind of real estate investment commitment. I have been investing in real estate for a long time even before Saina Properties was founded. I love real estate as an asset class because it's one of the ways to build long term wealth. And I have always been interested in what it takes to invest in real estate, how to acquire properties right. When I decided that I would go into real estate, I didn't just go into it because I know that the industry is saturated. I want to know exactly what is the problem in this industry and how can we solve it? I started going to school to understand, to learn more about the real estate industry in Nigeria and also in other parts of the world.

**What makes real estate unique amongst other asset classes?**

I particularly find real estate very interesting. I understand investing. I have invested in other asset classes and then I decided that real estate offers more opportunities to build long term wealth. I had always personally invested in real estate even before I ventured into the industry. Each time I was looking at my portfolio, I'm looking at real estate, I'm exploring markets. I'm asking questions across markets, trying to see what are the returns that are possible with realestate. And when I do that, all this information brought me to a point to say that real estate is where I want to be.

**Property investment continues to pose a huge challenge that sometimes affects the lives of investors who have entrusted their life savings for this cause, as an expert, what would you say is the missing factor?**

Real estate can play an important role in wealth creation but risk must be considered as carefully as the potential rewards.There are no mincing words, more often than not, property investment can sometimes be unnecessarily difficult. However, having explored the market I discovered that the way we approach realestate may have been one of the reasons many people got bummed in the process. Many times, we just see the good marketing, we invest in it, we buy and then that's it without actuallyfinding out exactly what we are buying.

We don't have clarity; we don't know exactly what we are buying. This is why the industry needs to be approached differently. People need to know what they are buying. Because in not understanding what you are buying is one of the reasons someone wouldinvest in a property, buy the property and after some time discover that the person who sold the property to them did not actually have the legal right to sell the property to them – they are not legallyrecognised in the government records to sell that property yet a lot of people have invested the same property.

Real estate is a very big financial decision. It is not N1,000 Naira, it is not N50,000, it's in millions. And just parting away with such amounts of money and discovering along the line that something happened to the money. Nobody enjoys such information. That is why we decided that we need to do things better. We need to start approaching real estate in a different way. Before people part with their money, they need to know exactly what they are buying, who owns the property.

Does this person have the right to sell this property to me? Then what are the risks involved? Is this location where I want? And what is my goal? Is it capital acquisition? Is it rentalincome? Is it my first home? Is it an investment? There are so many questions to answer when it comes to buying a property. It's not just about buying land and it ends there. You must do due diligence to understand if the person selling to you has actually fully acquired that land. The reason why a lot of people have delay with allocation also is sometimes the person selling has not fully acquired the land. Maybe they have an arrangement with the land owners and they start collecting money, selling the land to people and along the line, something goes wrong and so they now get stuck with allocation and a whole lot of issues like that. So those are some of the things that people should understand. Before you part with your money, there are certain questions you need to ask for clarity. This is why at Saina Properties; we advise people to buy with clarity and confidence.

*I believe in the power of vision, not in the power of your genetics or sex, male or female. This is what makes the actual difference, not gender.*

*Real estate can play an important role in wealth creation but risk must be considered as carefully as the potential rewards.'*

**Although the common issues in real estate span globally, there are challenging peculiarities in Nigeria that you can't find anywhere else – why is it so?**

Transparency. If everyone can have access to information about every property. For instance, you walk into a real estate agent or broker's office to purchase a property and then you ask them, this property, who is the real owner? And then you get the actual information. Everybody knows what to do. If you're buying a property in the US, for instance, you can get that information online. You don't even need to walkin-to anybody's office. You just go online, who is the actual owner of this house and number. Then you see the owner,you see the history. This house was first bought in 1982, sold to this person in 1995. All the information, everything comes out. But here in Nigeria, the information is still kind of hidden andpeople can hide behind what people don't know and what people can't see to actually take advantage of them.



Solape Fayemi

**As a woman who operates in a male dominated sector like real estate, how do you navigate seamlessly?**

It is truly male-dominated, but I believe in the power of vision, not in the power of your genetics or sex, male or female. I believe in the power of vision. What is your vision? What is driving you and what do you want to achieve? I believe that is what makes the actual difference, not my gender. Understanding what I'm trying to build, the people that I serve and what I hope for them to achieve with whatever they purchase, that is what drives me.

**Where do you see your brand in the next 5-10 years?**

I have built trust over time. I have built consistency in delivering on what we say we will do. With Saina Properties, I am building a company that anybody can trust, whether in Nigeria or outside of Nigeria.

**Over the years, we have seen a number of real estate companies go under for diverse reasons, what are you doing differently for sustainability?**

A steadfast system that doesn't crash. Our clientele is embedded in our systems. Once you start a relationship with us, we are not just out to sell you a property, we want to build a relationship with you such that in the next 5-10 years, if you need to buy real estate or you want to invest in real estate again, Saina Properties comes as your first point. This is because after selling to you, our relationship with you doesn't end there. We follow-up with our clients to ensure that the properties we sell actually stand the test of time.

This way we will be able to build trust. One of the things that separates us is our approach. We are not just out to sell, we want to empower people, we want to advise people to know exactly what they are buying before they purchase. We also want to offer excellent customer service. While being a customer to other real estate companies, you find that after money has exchanged hands, you startpursuing them for updates, you start calling them for this one and that one.But with us, we want to ensure that our clients are not calling us, chasing us for updates they should readily have. We want to be able to provide all the information that they need to thrive intheir investment journey.



Vice-Chancellor-designate, UNIJOS, Professor Patricia Manko Lar



UNIJOS Governing Council and Pro-Chancellor, Senator Grace Folashade Bent



Registrar UNIJOS, Dr Rejoice James Songden



UNIJOS Librarian, Professor Victoria Ladi Lawal



UNIJOS First female Bursar, Victoria Mangut Mankilik

# Five Distinct Women Breaks Standard Academic Patriarchal Genes

## ... UNIJOS Set For Complete Female Administration

By **Maria Diamond, Moyosore Salami** and **Suliyat Tella**

IN the traditional Nigeria university system, the mantle of highest decision-making offices had always been a patriarchal birthright until recently when women started changing the narrative to become Vice Chancellors (VC) in a number of federal and state universities. Even then, the he-for-she dynamics takes the credit.

While there is absolutely nothing wrong with a he-for-she dynamic, as it is always an honour for women to be fully supported by men in their chosen career, there is still the quiet yearn for a she-for-she dynamics where women gravitate towards supporting fellow women to attain leadership positions.

This element is what the new leadership of the University of Jos (UNIJOS), Plateau State is bringing into the cabinet with the appointment of a first female VC, Professor Patricia Manko Lar who will be working alongside four other women occupying the university's principal leadership positions.

On November 12, 2026, Lar was announced as the institution's 11th substantive VC and the first woman to hold the position since it became an independent university in October 1975.

When she assumes office on December 1, 2026 as UNIJOS Vice-Chancellor, four other women will head the offices of Pro-Chancellor, Registrar, Bursar and University Librarian. These are the top five leadership positions in the Nigeria university system.

This one appointment which has also sprouted four other top university positions for four women, isn't only set out to change the composition of the university's leadership but Nigeria's educational system where boys and girls, men and women are 'equally' enabled to attain desired height of success that goes above the sky without gender barrier or restriction.

The other four women are Senator Grace Folashade Bent as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council; Dr Rejoice Songden, Registrar; Mrs Victoria Mangut Mankilik, Bursar and Professor Victoria Ladi Lawal, University Librarian.

Their journeys into these offices have taken different paths. Some spent years rising through the university's administrative and academic ranks, while others, built careers in public service and professional practice before taking up leadership responsibilities at UNIJOS. Their appointments have brought together experience in governance, administration, finance, librarianship and medical research at the highest level of the institution.

**Professor Lar takes UNIJOS Mantle From Professor Tanko Ishaya**

For Professor Lar who will be succeeding Professor Tanko Ishaya, whose tenure ends on November 30, 2026, the appointment is a return to the university where she has spent almost four decades building her academic career. She joined UNIJOS in 1987 as a graduate assistant and rose through the ranks to become a professor of Medical Microbiology in 2015. Her years at the institution have included teaching, research and administrative responsibilities.

She obtained her first degree in Microbiology from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1986, a master's degree in Medical Microbiology in 1989 and a PhD in Medical Parasitology from the University of Lagos in 1998. In 2005, she undertook postdoctoral research training at the Institute of Human Virology, University of Maryland, Baltimore, under the NIH-Fogarty Fellowship Programme.

Her research focuses on infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and antimicrobial resistance. At UNIJOS, she served as Head of the Department of Microbiology, Director of Linkages and Collaborations, and Chairperson of the Jos-Carnegie Partnership Projects. She also served as Acting Vice-Chancellor of Yakubu Gowon University, Abuja, formerly the University of Abuja from February 10, 2025 to August 11, 2025.

Lar's emergence as Vice-Chancellor UNIJOS followed a selection process involving eight professors. Seven of the aspirants attended a stakeholders' interactive session, where they presented their visions and responded to questions on governance, funding, staff and student welfare, research and institutional development.

The 15th Governing Council eventually selected Lar, with its chairman, Bent, announcing the decision on November 12.

**Senator Grace Folashade Bent – Pro-Chancellor**

Bent's announcement of the appointment reflected her own place in the changing leadership structure. She became the first woman to serve as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the UNIJOS Governing Council when she was appointed to lead the 15th Council. The position places her at the head of the body responsible for the university's policy direction and oversight, including decisions on major appointments.

Her career has taken her through broadcasting, student activism, politics and public administration. She was a student union activist at the University of Calabar and later worked as a broadcaster with the Nigerian Television Authority in Kaduna. Between 2007 and 2011, she represented Adamawa South in the sixth National Assembly.

Bent holds a bachelor's degree in English and Literary Studies, a master's degree in Political Science and International Relations, and a PhD in Public Administration from Indiana State University in the United States. Her experience in the legislature and public service preceded her appointment to the council, where she now oversees a governing body with responsibility for the university's broad policy and administrative direction.

Under her chairmanship, the 15th Governing Council appointed Lawal as University Librarian, Mankilik as Bursar and Lar as Vice-Chancellor. The appointment of Songden, however, came earlier, under the preceding council.

**Dr Rejoice Songden – Registrar**

Songden became the first woman Registrar in June 2022, when the 14th Governing Council approved her appointment after considering the report of its Selection Board. Her five-year tenure began on June 24 of that year.

She had spent 17 years working at UNIJOS before taking up the position. She joined the university in 2005 as an Administrative Officer II and served in different units, including the Senior Staff Establishment Division. By 2020, she had risen to the position of Deputy Registrar.

Before returning to UNIJOS as Registrar, Songden served as Registrar of Karl Kumm University, Vom, Plateau State, after taking a leave of absence from her former institution. She is also an alumna of UNIJOS, where she obtained a bachelor's degree in English in 2002, a master's degree in 2012 and a PhD in 2018. She also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Education.

The Registrar's office is central to the university's administration. It handles important administrative processes and provides support for decisions taken by the university's governing bodies.

Songden's appointment followed a career spent learning the workings of the institution, first as an administrative officer and later as a senior university administrator.

**Professor Victoria Ladi Lawal – University Librarian**

Also appointed to one of the university's principal offices is Professor Victoria Ladi Lawal, who became the sixth University Librarian in February 2025. The 15th Governing Council announced her appointment on February 7, with her five-year tenure taking effect on February 14.

Lawal's career at UNIJOS began in 1995, when she joined the university library. She worked there until 2016, heading different sections, including Technical and Support Services, before moving into academic work as a lecturer in the Library and Information Science Unit of the Faculty of Education.

Her academic qualifications include a Bachelor's degree in Library Science from the University of Maiduguri and a Master's degree in Law and Diplomacy from UNIJOS. She later obtained a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and a PhD in Information Studies from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She also served as a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa.

The university described Lawal as its first female professor of Library and Information Science and the first in Plateau State. That distinction should be separated from the claim that she was the first woman to serve as University Librarian: Mrs Audrey Bernice Ojoade had previously acted in the position. Lawal's appointment is as the sixth substantive University Librarian.

**Victoria Mangut Mankilik – Bursar**

Another appointment followed in February 2026, when Victoria Mangut Mankilik became the first woman to head the university's Bursary as substantive Bursar.

The 15th Governing Council announced her appointment on February 10. She succeeded Philip Fada Umbugala, whose tenure ended on February 14, 2026.

Mankilik was already familiar with the department before her appointment. She had served as a Senior Deputy Bursar and headed the Salaries and Wages Division. Her experience in the Bursary had taken her through the financial processes that support the university's daily operations.

The Bursar is responsible for the university's financial administration, including the management of accounts and financial records. The office also deals with budgets, staff payments and other financial procedures.

**Unfolding Leadership History**

The ten substantive vice-chancellors who served in UNIJOS before Professor Lar were all men.

The first female Vice-Chancellor and the five-all-women top administration has unfolded against a history in which men dominated the university's highest offices.

UNIJOS began in November 1971 as a campus of the University of Ibadan, with Professor E.A. Ayandele as its first Acting Principal. It became an independent university in October 1975, when Professor Gilbert Onuaguluchi was appointed its first substantive Vice-Chancellor.

In the course of these ten years, these five women taking over the wheels of leadership together in UNIJOS have worked hard through the ranks at different capacities and senior positions to reach this destination that officially commences in December 1, 2026.

Reaching these positions for the five women involved different professional experiences and years of work.

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

WeekendBeat www.guardian.ng

# With *Euphoria, Omo Ologo,* Zinoleesky Drives Turning Point For Street Pop

By **Daniel Anazia**

FOR the past decade, Nigerian street-pop has operated on an unwritten, relentless rule: release fast, capture the immediate pulse of the streets, and move on before the next sound wave hits.

Birthed in the bustling neighbourhoods of Lagos Mainland and nurtured by grassroots DJs, street-hop thrived on immediacy — raw, unfiltered, and built for the next Friday night. Yet, as the genre increasingly commands mainstream radio rotation, digital streaming dominance, and international chart entries, its leading voices face a new creative test: longevity.

This is the exact terrain Oniyide Azeez, professionally known as Zinoleesky, steps onto with the announcement of his forthcoming Extended Play (EP) titled *Euphoria*, and the release of its assertive lead single, *Omo Ologo* on Friday, November 13.

Rather than merely feeding an impatient digital algorithm, the Billboard-charting vocalist appears to be orchestrating a calculated artistic reset — one that signals a broader maturation for contemporary Nigerian street-pop.

In Yoruba parlance, the word *Omo Ologo* translates to "a child of glory"— a phrase steeped in street spirituality, predestination, and unshakeable self-belief. Over the years, the expression has served as an informal anthem for young Nigerians navigating economic headwinds and personal adversity with quiet confidence.

By anchoring his new era on this title, Zinoleesky taps directly into a shared cultural lexicon while making an unmistakable personal statement. Sonically, *Omo Ologo* balances the percussive, log-drum-inflected cadence that defined his early breakthrough with a more measured, mid-tempo poise. His signature vocal delivery — melodic, slightly melancholic, yet resolute — carries an air of defiance.

**From Mainland Anthem To Global Metric**

Zinoleesky's music career trajectory mirrors the broader ascent of street-pop from hyper-local sensation to global export. Like several young artistes who have benefited from the democratisation of music discovery through social media, his journey from recording freestyle videos in Agege, Lagos, to becoming one of the recognisable voices in Nigeria's contemporary street-pop movement has been marked by ambition, resilience and an evolving musical identity.

His talent brought him into the orbit of established music personalities, including Davido, Kizz Daniel and Naira Marley. However, it was his association with Marlian Music in 2019 that provided a more structured platform for his emergence.

Having previously earned spots on Billboard charts — a milestone that demonstrated the international appetite for indigenous, Yoruba-inflected melodies — he belongs to a generation of acts who proved that grassroots Nigerian music does not need to dilute its cultural identity to cross borders.

With the release of *Omo Ologo*, a defiant lead single and the announcement of his forthcoming extended play (EP), *Euphoria*, the singer appears poised to enter another significant chapter of his career.

More than a fresh addition to his growing catalogue, the song serves as the opening statement for a new body of work and arrives at a particularly important moment for an artiste seeking to consolidate his position in an increasingly competitive Nigerian music industry.

For the *Who Knows* (featuring Lil Frosh), *Money* (featuring Zlatan), *Popo*, and *Hustler* singer, whose rise has been closely associated with the evolution of street pop, the timing for the *Omo Ologo* release is significant, particularly as he is gradually moving beyond the identity of a promising young singer whose popularity was strengthened by the Marlian Music movement, which he got signed to in January 2020.

His departure from the label and the establishment of his independent imprint, Zinodict Music, has introduced a new dimension to his career: creative and business independence. Consequently, *Omo Ologo* and *Euphoria* represent an opportunity to demonstrate how much that transition has influenced his artistic direction.

Produced by Babybeats and 7teentrill, *Omo Ologo* introduces listeners to a familiar but increasingly mature side of Zinoleesky. Built around his characteristic melodic delivery and contemporary street-pop sensibilities, the record explores ambition, perseverance, personal struggles and the determination to rise above difficult circumstances.



Zinolessky

> *Perhaps the most compelling aspect of his new chapter is the emergence of Zinodict Music as the platform through which he is releasing his latest material. Following his departure from Marlian Music in 2026, the singer began operating under his own imprint, opening a new phase in his professional journey. Zino's earlier association with Marlian Music was instrumental in bringing him to mainstream attention. However, establishing an independent platform introduces opportunities to exercise greater control over his music, creative decisions and long-term professional direction.*

The title, which loosely translates to a child of glory, carries an unmistakable message of self-belief. It speaks to the possibility of achieving greatness despite setbacks and the importance of remaining focused when circumstances appear unfavourable.

Zinoleesky described the record as a personal expression of resilience, dedicating it to people who have continued pursuing their ambitions despite seemingly endless obstacles. "This song is from the heart, it's for anyone who ever felt like the obstacles were never ending but had faith and kept pushing," he said.

Despite references to material achievements, luxury and public recognition feature in its narrative, the song also touches on personal struggles, emotional burdens and the need for spiritual guidance. Its emotional foundation gives the single a more reflective dimension than a straightforward celebration of success.

This contrast is important to understanding Zinoleesky's musical appeal. His records have often occupied the intersection of street-inspired storytelling, romantic expression, youthful aspirations and melodic Afropop.

Rather than relying exclusively on the familiar bravado associated with street music, he has developed a delivery that allows vulnerability and confidence to coexist. Across the lyrics, Zino as the singer is also called by close circuit associates, reveals himself as still "standing on ten toes", jumping obstacles "like parkour" and getting back up after every fall, while refusing to be distracted by critics, pressure or people waiting for him to lose control.

His ability to combine street-pop rhythms with emotionally engaging melodies became particularly evident in records such as *Kilofeshe*, *Gone Far*, *Ma Pariwo* and *Personal*. These songs helped establish his reputation as a singer capable of moving between energetic street records and more reflective, melodic compositions.

Zino's 2022 EP, *Grit & Lust*, further demonstrated his willingness to explore different dimensions of his sound, while collaborations with artistes such as Omah Lay and Ayra Starr expanded his musical reach. However, the release of his debut studio album, *Gen Z* in 2025 represented another important milestone.

The project strengthened his position commercially, topping the Official Nigerian Albums Chart and entering the Billboard World Albums Top 10, according to reports on the album's performance.

**Turning Point For The Genre**

What makes the single and the yet-to-be-released EP a turning point for street-pop extends beyond one artiste's discography. For years, critics and industry gatekeepers viewed street-hop as a transitional stepping stone — a raw energy source that acts eventually abandoned in favour of polished, mainstream Afropop once they achieved commercial success.

Zinoleesky's approach challenges that binary. Instead of stripping away the street sensibility that built his core fanbase, *Omo Ologo* refines it. The track preserves the rhythm, street wisdom, and emotional vulnerability indigenous to the subgenre, while elevating the production quality and structural discipline to meet international pop standards.

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of his new chapter is the emergence of Zinodict Music as the platform through which he is releasing his latest material. Following his departure from Marlian Music in 2026, the singer began operating under his own imprint, opening a new phase in his professional journey.

Zino's earlier association with Marlian Music was instrumental in bringing him to mainstream attention. However, establishing an independent platform introduces opportunities to exercise greater control over his music, creative decisions and long-term professional direction.

His single *Nostalgia* released earlier in the year, provided an early indication of this transition, while subsequent releases, including *Dantata*, continued to keep his name in circulation. *Omo Ologo* now extends that process, placing the burgeoning own music at the centre of a new campaign.

While the full tracklist and official release date for *Euphoria* remain closely guarded, *Omo Ologo* has already sparked vigorous conversation across music circles and social media timelines in Lagos and beyond.

If the album delivers on the promise of its lead single, it will offer a blueprint for how street-pop artistes can evolve without losing their soul — proving that the sound of the Lagos streets can deliver both immediate cultural impact and enduring artistic weight.



Zinolessky

# Nishka Brings Global Pop Flavour To Lagos



By Daniel Anazia

LAGOS is set to welcome an Australian pop voice into its creative space as Melbourne-based singer, Nishka; prepares for her first Nigerian performance at Escape, an art exhibition scheduled for November 28.

The event will bring music and contemporary visual art together, offering the singer an opportunity to introduce her sound to a new audience while adding an international dimension to the exhibition.

Organised by visual artist Fortune Ileleji and Grammy-winning musician Tejiri Sonics, Escape will feature the works of both creatives, with Nishka appearing as a special musical guest. The collaboration reflects the growing intersections between music and visual art, as creative events increasingly provide platforms for different disciplines to share audiences and ideas.

For Nishka, the Lagos appearance marks another step in a musical journey shaped by a mix of cultural and sonic influences. Raised in Melbourne in a family of Macedonian heritage, she grew up listening to soul, funk, hip-hop and house music, alongside traditional sounds connected to her family background.

Her interest in music began at the age of 10, when she started singing while also learning martial arts. She pursued both interests for several years, including competing in martial arts tournaments, before deciding at 15 to concentrate on music.

The Melbourne-based artiste sound draws on soulful vocals, contemporary pop production and rhythm-led arrangements. Her songwriting explores love, desire, vulnerability and self-discovery, moving between intimate storytelling and more energetic expressions. Her debut single, On My Mind, provides an introduction to that approach.

# T Bass Celebrates Faith, Gratitude In New Single, *Victory*

By Eniola Daniel

UK-BASED bassist, musician and music producer, Lisa Ezekiel Temitope, professionally known as Awesome T Bass, has released a new single, *Victory*, an energetic celebration of God's faithfulness, blessings and the triumphs of everyday life.

Released on October 21, 2026, the self-produced single was inspired by the artiste's personal journey, life challenges and enduring belief that there is always a reason to be grateful, regardless of life's circumstances.

According to Awesome T Bass, the melody came to him while returning home after a rewarding church rehearsal. He subsequently developed it into an uplifting composition designed to get listeners singing and dancing while reminding them to celebrate their victories, big or small.

Originally conceived as social media content, the song features a pronounced bass line.



Following encouraging responses and requests from listeners for a downloadable version and an extended arrangement, he released it on digital music platforms in two versions.

Awesome T Bass who is from Ondo State, describes his sound as a blend of African rhythms inspired by his cultural roots, contemporary musical expression and gospel influences.

His musical journey began at his parents' church, where he learnt to play the drums, piano and acoustic guitar before specialising in the bass guitar. He later ventured into singing and music production.

As a bassist, band director, sound engineer and producer, he brings an instrumentalist's sensitivity to his music, paying particular attention to melody, rhythm and groove. He believes music can communicate emotions beyond words and wants listeners to connect with both its sound and message.

His growing inclination towards gospel music reflects a deepening relationship with God and a desire to use his talent to communicate hope, gratitude, love and positivity, while remaining open to collaborations across different genres.

*Victory* follows earlier releases, including Bukata, a prayer song released in February, and The Repertoire, a seven-track album released in September. He also recently compiled 17 Afrobeat instrumental covers into an album, titled, *Sounds From The Journey*.

As an independent artiste, Awesome T Bass hopes to expand his audience, build a lasting music catalogue and create opportunities for collaborations and live performances.

"I'm a musician on a journey to use my gift to tell stories, inspire lives and glorify God, one sound at a time," he said.

# Mr. Gabby In Champions Future Of Afro-Highlife

By Olubunmi Adebumiti

FOLLOWING the release of his highly anticipated debut highlife album on Thursday, November 12, Afro-Highlife artiste, Gabriel Uaangue, popularly known as Mr. Gabby, has appealed to the Federal Government to institute policies that will foster the growth and development of highlife music in Nigeria.

While making the appeal, he highlighted the genre's cultural influence and economic potential, describing afro-highlife as a distinctive sound that has helped project Black culture across Europe, Asia and the Americas.

Mr. Gabby urged government officials and policymakers to give the genre deliberate support, arguing that investment in highlife could strengthen Nigeria's cultural exports and contribute to economic development.

Addressing his personal choice of music, the artiste attributed his dedication to the genre to a deep-rooted love for Edo culture, continued research into African music, and a desire to promote Nigerian heritage to international audiences.

With the release, Mr. Gabby aims not only to entertain but also reignite national appreciation for a genre that remains central to Nigeria's musical identity. Beyond the album, his appeal raises a familiar question about the country's creative industry: how can Nigeria better support its indigenous sounds, preserve their cultural value, and help them compete in the global music market?



# Odumodublvck Makes Acting Debut In *The Rise Of The Machine*

By Tobi Awodipe

THE award-winning rapper, Odumodublvck, is showcasing his artistic depth with a stellar performance in his acting debut in a short film directed by ace cinematographer TG Omori, famous for shooting some of Africa's most iconic music videos.

The cipher alongside Omori, on Saturday, November 7, were special guests at the closing ceremony and award gala of the 15th Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF), where they screened their short film, titled, *The Rise of the Machine*. Odumodublvck in the film made his acting debut in a role that would unleash another dimension to his talent and creativity.

Speaking of the short film in a recent interview on TVC, the rapper described it as an addendum to his recently acclaimed projects, 'The Machine is Coming' and 'The Industry Machine," he said.

On making his acting debut, the rapper shared that he has enjoyed acting from a young age and always wanted to showcase that talent. "Since I was in primary and secondary school, I was in the drama club. And with movies, I can show a lot more than listening to my music might show."



The short film is a precursor to the release of his upcoming project of the same name, which will complete his Machine Trilogy. The first installment, 'The Machine Is Coming' enjoyed huge commercial success with the hits *Legolas* and *Pity This Boy* featuring Victony.

The album was nominated for the 'Best Rap Album' and 'Album of the Year' at the 18th Headies. The follow-up, 'The Industry Machine,' also spawned chart-topping records with the hit single *Industry Machine* and the hip-hop anthem *If You Like Gym*, which earned the nod for 'Best Rap Single' at the 16th Headies.

Shot in Lagos, 'The Rise of the Machine' marks a major chapter in the career of Omori, who will be making his movie directorial debut and Odumodublvck, who serves as co-producer and executive producer.

The short film is scheduled for release before the end of the year, ahead of Odumodublvck's new project, which will complete his Machine Trilogy while also kicking off his career as an actor and filmmaker.

# *Behold The King:* A Christmas Worship Experience Holds Dec 12

By Eniola Daniel

GOSPEL recording artiste and worship leader, Toluwani Odukoya, has disclosed that *Behold the King: A Christmas Worship Experience*, a special live worship gathering scheduled for Saturday, December 12, will be held at the The Wole Soyinka Center for Culture and Creative Arts, in Lagos.

Presented as the second edition of The Worship Project, the free event will bring worshippers together for an evening of music, praise and adoration, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and the enduring significance of Christmas.

For audiences who have connected with Toluwani Odukoya's music and worship sessions online, the event offers an opportunity to experience those moments in person, joining thousands of voices in a shared expression of faith.

At the heart of *Behold the King* is an invitation to look beyond the festivities of the Christmas season and reflect on the One at its centre. Through music and collective worship, the gathering will celebrate the majesty of Christ and create space for reflection, thanksgiving and spiritual connection.

The announcement follows the debut of The Worship Project in May 2026, when the worship leader hosted *Raising an Altar of Thanksgiving* at the MUSON Centre in Lagos. Conceived as a live worship recording and a collective expression of gratitude, the inaugural gathering marked an important milestone in her journey as a recording artist and worship leader.

With Behold the King, Toluwani Odukoya continues that journey, this time bringing a distinctly Christmas-centred expression of worship to one of Lagos' landmark cultural venues.

# Christmas Travel 3: It's Already Looking Like Christmas In Vienna Austria

By **Maria Diamond**

VIENNA is the capital and largest city of Austria, located in the northeast of the country along the Danube River. It is the cultural, economic, and political centre of the country, the fifth-largest city by population in the European Union, and the most populous of the cities on the river Danube.

So, when you think of what Christmas looks like in a city like Vienna, think of a big festivity that feels like a fairytale except that Vienna brings it to reality.

**Atmospheric views of the city**

Vienna is most attractive during the festive season as the city transforms in mid-November through late December (and into early January for select markets) with over 20 official Advent markets, grand light displays, and traditional cafe culture.

From mid-November until Christmas, Vienna's most beautiful squares are transformed into magical Christmas markets. During this winter season, Vienna offers a unique and festive atmosphere, with the city glowing with world-famous Christmas markets, steaming mugs of mulled wine, and ice-skating rinks set beneath twinkling lights.

With its Baroque palaces and manicured gardens, Vienna is all elegance and charm. The city features a huge opera scene with three houses including the Vienna State Opera and a deep connection to classical music.

**Explore the streets of Vienna's historic center**

One of the most enchanting ways to experience the historic center of Vienna in winter is to see its landmarks under the glow of Christmas lights. Whether you head out for an evening walk on your own or take a guided tour, you can experience quintessential Vienna sights like the imposing Gothic architecture of St. Stephen's Cathedral and the grand Hofburg Palace.

The cobblestone streets of the Innere Stadt (inner city) feel even more magical when lit up at night. Stop by Graben and Kartner Strasse to stroll the streets lit by chandeliers.

**Ice Skate and Ride the Ferris wheel**

Where is the fun in taking an international Christmas trip to a place like Vienna in winter without skating especially for lovers and families with kids? You may want to find your way to Wiener Eistraum and just skate.

The Wiener Eistraum also known as Ice Dream is an outdoor skating rink set up in front of Vienna's city hall. With fairy lights twinkling on the ice and music playing, skating here is a magical activity for all ages. The rink also includes a dedicated children's area.







**Ferris Wheel** – You should also consider taking a snowy stroll through the Prater amusement park, where you can ride the Ferris wheel and feel like royalty. Visit on a weekend to take a ride on the 65-foot-tall Ferris wheel and get a panoramic view of the city.

**Festive Events in Vienna**

Attend a classical holiday concert at the Musikverein, or enjoy the winter light installations at Schonbrunn Palace.

**Festive Food and Drink**

Christmas season at Vienna comes with special food and drinks: Gluhwein (mulled wine), Weihnachtspunsch (hot punch), roasted chestnuts, bratwurst, raclette, Langos (fried dough), Kaiserschmarrn (shredded pancake), and Sachertorte.

You can also stop over at a traditional Viennese cafe and sip a cup of coffee. There's no better time to experience Vienna's famed coffeehouse culture than in winter. Escape the chill with a Viennese specialty melange coffee or rich hot chocolate.

Coffeehouses are not hard to find in Vienna, but some notable historic spots are Cafe Central and Cafe Frauenhuber, the oldest coffeehouse in the city.

**Visit Christmas Market**

Visiting a Christmas market tops the list of things to do in Vienna in December. The central Rathausplatz hosts a Christmas pop-up market set against the backdrop of Vienna's grand neo-Gothic city hall.

The market offers handmade gifts, festive decorations, and traditional treats, such as roasted chestnuts and warm gingerbread. Take in the sparkling lights and festive atmosphere of the market as you savour a steaming mug of Gluhwein (mulled wine) or Weihnachtspunsch, a warm Christmas punch crafted with tea, spices, sugar, and spirits like rum or brandy.

**Advent concerts in Vienna**

Christmas in Vienna usually features traditional advent concerts. The city is a classical music haven, and winter is the perfect time to experience concerts and operas at venues throughout the city.

When it is cold outside, find warmth and wonder at a classical concert at the Wiener Musikverein Concert Hall.

This is one of the most prestigious concert venues in the world and has been the home of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra since its opening in 1870.

# Flyzone Tourism, Black Boy Afrika, Partner To Host *Amala And Palmwine Festival* 2026

By **Maria Diamond**

CURATED to promote the rich heritage and cultural identity of South West Nigeria alongside its tourism potential, the second edition of the Amala and Palmwine Festival is set to hold on December 13, 2026 at The Stable, Surulere Lagos.

Amala and Palmwine Festival is designed to provide a platform where culture meets tourism, gastronomy complements destination marketing, and indigenous heritage is transformed into an engaging experience capable of attracting visitors.

The oncoming second edition of the festival in Lagos organised by Black Boy Afrika in partnership with Flyzone Tourism goes beyond celebrating the popular Amala and Palmwine delicacies to telling a broader African story through the promotion of local cuisine, fashion, indigenous traditions, the hospitality of the people and the tourism destinations that make South West Nigeria an attractive destination for visitors.

The festival, themed 'The Extravaganza' will showcase indigenous cuisine, fashion, music, culture and tourism attractions of South West Nigeria.

Babatunde Afolabi, Founder of Black Boy Afrika, who expressed excitement about the festival's vision and Flyzone Tourism renewed partnership noted that the second edition would raise the bar in promoting Nigeria's cultural heritage and tourism potential.

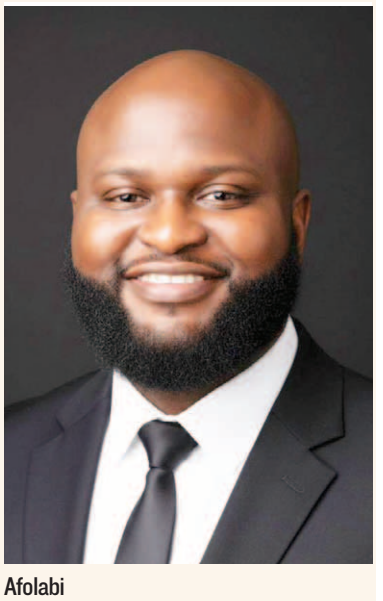
Afolabi also noted that the continued partnership with Flyzone Tourism, one of Nigeria's leading travel agencies, is a significant boost to the festival's objective of connecting cultural experiences with travel, tourism and destination discovery.

He emphasised that tourism goes beyond travelling from one destination to another, explaining that it also involves experiencing the people, tasting their food, understanding their traditions, celebrating their creativity and discovering the unique stories that define destinations. "This December, Lagos is not just hosting a festival; we are bringing the treasures of South West Nigeria to life," Afolabi noted.

Also supporting this year's edition is Loving Lagos, a cultural preservation, tourism and hospitality initiative whose involvement reinforces the collective commitment to preserving and promoting the cultural identity of Lagos and the wider South West region.

Other partners supporting the festival include Bountip Technologies, CAPA, Omega Horeca and several other brands.

> *'Tourism goes beyond travelling from one destination to another, it also involves experiencing the people, tasting their food, understanding their traditions, celebrating their creativity and discovering the unique stories that define destinations.'*



Afolabi

# Ofada Rice Festival Targets Lagos Food Economy, Small Business Growth

By **Gloria Nwafor**

THE growing economic potential of indigenous food businesses, cultural tourism and Nigeria's agricultural value chain will take centre stage as Lagos State hosts the eighth edition of Ofada Rice Day Festival.

The festival, scheduled to hold at Muri Okunola Park, Victoria Island, is expected to bring together farmers, food vendors, entrepreneurs, culinary experts and other stakeholders to showcase the commercial and cultural value of indigenous Nigerian cuisine.

The event, organised by Ofadaboy in partnership with 78 Microfinance Bank (78 MFB), comes amid increasing attention on the need to strengthen local food enterprises, create market opportunities for small businesses and harness Nigeria's indigenous food heritage for economic development.

Speaking ahead of the event, the Convener, Tobi Fletcher, popularly known as Ofadaboy, said the initiative was designed to position Ofada rice beyond its traditional identity as a local delicacy and establish it as a symbol of Nigerian culture, enterprise and national identity.

He said the eighth edition, themed "Da Ti E Mo," would build on efforts to promote indigenous cuisine while creating opportunities for businesses operating within the food value chain.

"Ofada Rice Day is more than a food festival; it is a movement built around celebrating who we are, what we eat and the cultural stories behind our indigenous cuisine.

"Over the years, we have continued to create a platform that brings people together through food, culture, entertainment and enterprise. With the eighth edition, we are taking that vision further and creating even greater opportunities to showcase the richness of our local food ecosystem," Fletcher said.

Beyond the cultural celebration, the festival is expected to provide a marketplace for food vendors, small businesses and entrepreneurs to display their products, connect with consumers and explore potential business partnerships.

The involvement of 78 MFB as a headline sponsor also highlights the role of financial institutions in supporting initiatives that promote entrepreneurship and economic activities within local communities.

For Lagos, which serves as a major commercial and hospitality hub, platforms promoting indigenous food products could provide opportunities for local food businesses to expand their markets while strengthening the state's cultural tourism offerings.

Participants are expected to experience indigenous delicacies, cultural displays, music, entertainment and other activities celebrating Nigeria's culinary heritage.

The eighth edition of the festival will be held on Sunday, December 6, 2026, at Muri Okunola Park, Victoria Island, Lagos.

www.guardian.ng

IbruCentre

# From The Rector

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

## Healing For The Wounded: How God Heals Wounds Of Human Relationships (2)

By Stephen Wolemonwu

THAT is why the wound is spiritual because it will make you to doubt God, doubt church, doubt prayer itself. You say, "If a person I prayed with can do this to me, who can I trust again?"

What Do You Do With This Wound?

David did not pretend. He did three things we must learn:

• **He told God, not everybody.**

Psalm 55:16-17,"As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud." Do not take your brother's betrayal to WhatsApp, to the whole church, to gossip. Take it to God first. If you tell everybody, you will reopen the wound every time you tell it. Tell God until the pain reduces.

• **He cast the burden, not the person.**

Psalm 55:22, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." David did not say, "Lord kill him." He said, "Lord, carry this for me, I cannot carry it." Forgiveness does not mean you bring the betrayer back into your inner circle. It means you stop carrying him in your heart. You can love a brother from a distance. You can forgive Ahithophel and still not take sweet counsel with him again. Wisdom is: forgive, but rebuild boundaries.

• **He kept walking to the house of God.**

This is the hardest. The betrayer walked with you to church. Now you want to stop going to church because you will see him. David did not stop, but kept walking.

Do not let a brother's betrayal stop your walk with God. The House of God is bigger than one betrayer. The God who saw Judas kiss Jesus also saw Jesus rise again.

The Comfort

Hear this: If you have been wounded by a brother, you are in good company like David and Jesus. And the same Jesus who was betrayed by a kiss is the One who says in Psalm 147:3, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

The brother who wounded you knew your secrets, but God knows your wound. And He will heal it. You will take sweet counsel again, not necessarily with the same person, but God will raise a new Luke for you, a new faithful friend who will walk with you to the house of God in company, and will not betray you.

Pray with me: Lord, You know the wound of sweet counsel turned sour. I was betrayed not by an enemy, but by my brother. Heal me. Teach me to cast this burden on You, to forgive without becoming bitter, and to keep walking to Your house. Send me a faithful friend again. Amen.

• **The Wound of Rejection and Words - "They Despised Me"**

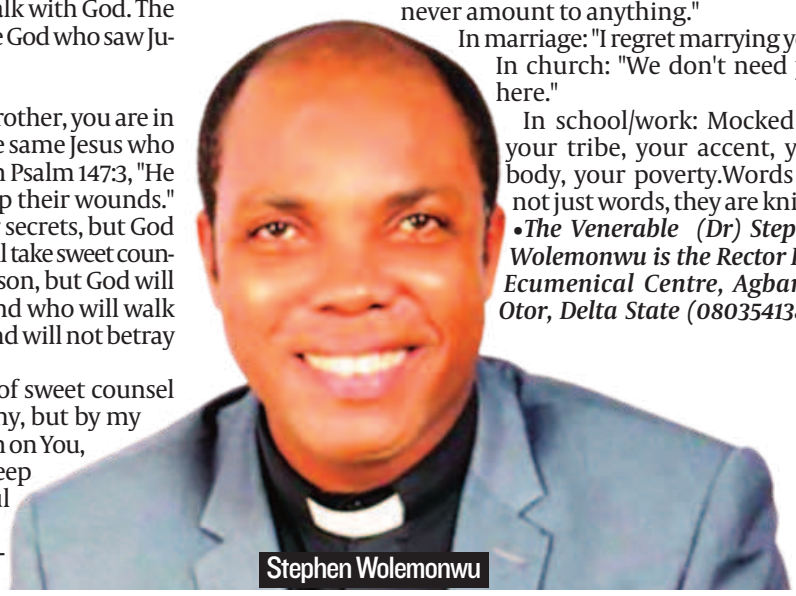
Proverbs 18:21, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

In family: A child constantly told, "You are useless, you will never amount to anything."

In marriage: "I regret marrying you."

In church: "We don't need you here."

In school/work: Mocked for your tribe, your accent, your body, your poverty.Words are not just words, they are knives.



Stephen Wolemonwu

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

## Coming Out Of A Shameful Past

By Charles Ighele

THERE is a novel titled: "The Scarlet Letter," by Nathaniel Halton. It is about a lady named Mrs. Hester Prynne, who was caught in the act of adultery. It was a shameful thing to be done in that highly moralistic village. As a punishment, on every dress that she had and would ever have, a big letter "A" was printed on them. The letter "A" means Adultery. It was done so that everybody would learn a lesson. But she decided to come out of a very shameful past, and single-handedly raised the only child she had, as a single mother.

She started taking part in community development activities, left her adulterous life and was doing good to all that came her way in the community even with the letter "A" stigma on every dress she wore.

Ten years later, children who grew up in that village who knew the woman and her good works started asking their parents whether the letter "A" on her dress stood for "Angel."

Mrs. Prynne started to make a brand new history for herself. There is no person who has passed or will pass through planet earth that will not be ashamed of something he/she did or that something shameful might not have happened to.

But you can come out like Mrs. Hester Prynne did.



Ighele

David brought shame upon himself when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. He lamented over it in Psalms 51 because he had a sense of shame. But having a sense of shame is different from living a life of shame. He handled shame through prayer and praise.

In Psalms 25:1-3 David prayed, "Unto thee oh Lord do I lift up my soul. Oh my God, I trust in thee let me not be ashamed… Let none that wait on thee be ashamed…" David came out.

You might have been jailed, jilted, divorced and disengaged from work, among others. Many people who have passed through the classroom of divorce end up almost permanently in the classroom of shame.

You must not remain there. Meet a man of God and tell him the truth that led to the divorce. He or she will counsel you on what to do.

Jesus Christ also passed through the classroom of shame. "…despising the SHAME…" Hebrews 12:2.

Have you done something that brings you back to that classroom of shame as a young person, man or woman, keep taking your mind off that rear view mirror each time that shameful thought comes to your mind. Look instead at the windscreen of your car of life and drive on.

A man of God, A. W. Tozer said, "you cannot prevent a bird from flying over your head but you can prevent it from building a nest on your head." That is how you may not be able to completely forget about the thought of that shameful past. But you can each time prevent that shameful thought of the past not to build a nest on your mind and disturb or distort your destiny journey.

Learn to love yourself. Learn to enjoy life despite a shameful past. Love you!

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

## Ndukuba, Odedeji, Others Laud Retired Justice Ogunade's Contributions To Anglican Communion

By Chris Irekamba

PRIMATE of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev'd-Henry Ndukuba and Diocesan Bishop of Lagos West, The Rt Rev'd James Odedeji have lauded the contributions of retired Justice Babasola Opeoluwa Ogunade, who celebrated his 90th birthday on November 16, 2026.

The Primate said retired Justice Ogunade's contributions to the Anglican Communion extended far beyond the Diocese of Lagos West.

Head of the church, spoke during the special thanksgiving serviceand the launch of his autobiography,themed: "God's Hand in My Life," in honour of the nonagenarian jurist and church leader.

Held at Christ Anglican Church, Elere, Agege, Lagos where eminent Bishops of the Anglican Communion, clergy, church officials, family members and well-wishersgathered to honour the celebrant.

Delivering his sermon, Ndukuba, who was represented by the Bishop of Ibadan North Diocese and Archbishop of the Ibadan Province of the Church of Nigeria, The Most Rev'd Williams Aladekugbe, recalled the celebrant's decade-long service as head of the House of Laity of the Church of Nigeria between 2010 and 2020, describing him as a shining light within the church and a worthy role model for younger generations.




Mr Oderinde Okeowo (left); Pro-Chancellor, Ajayi Crowther University Oyo, Dr Olutoyin Okeowo; wife of the Bishop, Dr Kemi Odedeji; Bishop, Rt Rev'd James Odedeji; Dean of the Cathedral, The Ven Arire Kolawole; celebrant, retired Justice Babasola Ogunade (fifth right); his son, Tokunbo and host Vicar, The Ven Omotunde Owoyele at the Book Launch/90th birthday celebration of retired Justice Ogunade... last Monday

The Diocesan Bishop of Lagos West, The RtRev'd James Odedeji, while speaking at the event, described retired Justice Ogunade, as a man of exceptional integrity, diligence and honesty.

The Bishop commended the celebrant's meticulous approach to service and unwavering commitment to truth and righteousness.

A major highlight of the celebration was the unveiling of retired Justice Ogunade's autobiography.

Speaking at the launch, renowned chemical engineering scholar, Professor Ogunye, described the celebrant as a community leader and tireless advocate for truth and justice.

He particularly applauded Justice Ogunade's efforts in providing free legal advice.

# Preach The Word In Season, Out Of Season

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



***Text: 2 Timothy 4:2,*** *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (KJV)*

THE world today is filled with many voices. Men are preaching human wisdom, worldly philosophies, motivational speeches, traditions of men, and doctrines that satisfy the flesh. Yet in the midst of all these noises, God is still searching for men and women who will faithfully preach His Word without compromise. The greatest need of this generation is not entertainment, politics, wealth, or fame; the greatest need is the undiluted Word of God. Souls are dying daily. Multitudes are marching toward eternity unprepared. Sin is increasing, righteousness is mocked, and many believers are becoming cold and careless. In such a dangerous hour, the command of God remains unchanged: "Preach the word."

Paul gave this solemn charge to Timothy as a dying apostle speaking to a young minister. He knew persecution would arise, false teachers would increase, and many would turn away from sound doctrine. Yet he did not tell Timothy to adjust the message to please people, or to soften the truth to gain popularity. Instead, he commanded him to preach the Word in season and out of season.

To preach in season means to preach when it is convenient, when people are willing to hear, when doors are open, and when the atmosphere is favourable. To preach out of season means to continue preaching even when it is inconvenient, when people reject the message, when persecution comes, and when society opposes the truth. God is looking for servants who will remain faithful whether people applaud them or reject them.

The gospel is not meant for selected occasions alone. The Word of God must be preached at all times because eternity is at stake. Jesus Himself gave this commission before He ascended into heaven.

**Mark 16:15,** "*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,*" (KJV). This command was not given only to pastors, evangelists, or bishops. Every child of God has been called to be a witness for Christ. If you are truly saved, God expects you to tell others about salvation. Christianity that is silent about Christ is a powerless Christianity. A believer who refuses to preach the gospel is disobeying the heartbeat of heaven.

Many believers today are ashamed to preach openly because they fear rejection, criticism, or persecution. But the apostles never allowed fear to silence them. They preached in prisons, marketplaces, villages, cities, and before kings. They preached despite threats, beatings, and suffering.

**Acts 5:42,** *"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."* (KJV)

The early church understood that souls are precious. They knew heaven is real and hell is real. Therefore, they could not remain silent. Sadly, many believers today can discuss business, fashion, sports, and worldly matters freely, yet they become silent when it comes to Christ. This ought not to be so.

The world may reject the message, but the truth must still be preached. Noah preached righteousness in a corrupt generation, though people mocked him. Jeremiah preached while being rejected and persecuted. Ezekiel preached to rebellious people. John the Baptist preached against sin and lost his life for the truth. Jesus preached despite opposition from religious leaders. The apostles preached despite imprisonment. True servants of God preach regardless of the season.

One reason many avoid preaching the truth today is because people no longer want sound doctrine. Paul warned Timothy about this dangerous time.

**2 Timothy 4:3-4,** *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* (KJV)

We are living in those days now. Many people no longer want messages that convict them of sin. They prefer sermons that make them comfortable in rebellion. They want preaching without holiness, Christianity without repentance, salvation without surrender, and heaven without obedience. But a true preacher of God cannot dilute the truth to please men.

The gospel is a message of repentance. Jesus preached repentance. John the Baptist preached repentance. Peter preached repentance. Paul preached repentance. Without repentance there can be no true salvation.

Luke 13:3, "I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (KJV)

God's Word is powerful enough to convict, transform, and save souls. The duty of the preacher is not to invent a message but to faithfully declare what God has spoken. The Word of God carries divine authority.

**Hebrews 4:12,** *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (KJV)

No motivational speech can replace the power of God's Word. Human wisdom cannot break the chains of sin. Only the gospel can transform a sinner into a child of God. That is why Satan fights the preaching of the gospel so fiercely. The devil knows that whenever the true Word of God is preached, captives can be set free.

Believers must, therefore, preach with boldness and compassion. Some preach harshly without love, while others speak softly without truth. But biblical preaching contains both truth and compassion. Paul told Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." There are times to correct, times to warn, and times to encourage. Yet everything must be done patiently and according to sound doctrine.

The preacher must also live what he preaches. A life that contradicts the gospel weakens the message. God desires vessels that are clean and holy.

**Matthew 5:16,** *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* (KJV)

Your life may be the first Bible people will ever read. If your conduct is sinful and careless, your preaching will lose power. But when your life reflects Christ, your message will carry greater authority.

There are many opportunities around us to preach the Word. Some think preaching only happens behind the pulpit. No. You can preach in your home, school, workplace, neighbourhood, market, or through personal conversations. You can preach through your character, your speech, and your daily lifestyle. Every day presents an opportunity to point someone to Christ.

We must also understand the urgency of the hour. Time is running out. The coming of the Lord is nearer than ever before. Soon the trumpet shall sound, and every opportunity to preach will end forever.

**John 9:4,** *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."* (KJV)

Many souls around us are waiting for someone to tell them about Jesus. Some are trapped in addiction, immorality, fear, depression, false religion, and hopelessness. God may have positioned you near them for a reason. If believers r**emain silent, how will sinners hear the gospel?**

*Romans 10:14, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"* (KJV)

The responsibility placed upon the church is enormous. We cannot afford spiritual laziness. The harvest is ripe, but many labourers are asleep. Some believers are too occupied with worldly pursuits to care about dying souls. But one day, every believer shall stand before God to give account of his stewardship.

Imagine arriving in heaven and discovering that many people around you perished without hearing the gospel from your lips, though God gave you opportunities to speak. What a painful regret that would be. We must wake up from spiritual slumber and become active witnesses for Christ.

The reward for faithful preaching is glorious. God never forgets the labour done for His kingdom. Those who turn many to righteousness shall shine eternally.

If you are a child of God, this message is a call to rise and preach the Word boldly. Preach when people listen and when they refuse. Preach when it is comfortable and when it is difficult. Preach in your family, community, church, and everywhere God opens a door. The world is passing away, but the Word of God shall stand forever.

And if you are not yet saved, the greatest sermon you can preach begins with surrendering your own life to Christ. You cannot lead others to a Saviour you have not truly known. Jesus died for your sins, shed His blood on the cross, and rose again to give you eternal life. Come to Him today in genuine repentance and faith.

**Romans 10:13,** *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* (KJV)

May God raise believers who will not compromise, who will not be silent, and who will faithfully preach the Word in season and out of season until Christ returns. ***Amen.***

## Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

# Healed Of Multiple Afflictions, After Pastor's Prayer

MY name is Sister ChinelloChukwu, and l worship at one of the branches in Abuja.

Sometime last month, l was down, so l went to the hospital, where l ran series of tests and at the end, l was told that my Blood Pleasure (B.P) was high, and that I had ulcer, together with typhoid and malaria.

They treated me,and I wasrelieved a bit, but not totally healed because I could not still go for my business.

In the night I could not sleep because of the Blood Pleasure (B.P)coupled with the fact that my entire body was paining me.

In this Kaduna crusade 2026, titled: "Wonderful Move Of God As Of Old"our General Overseer mentioned all my cases and prayed against them, and by the grace of God all the afflictions disappeared. Praise the Lord!

God of Chosen is so great, may His name be glorified in Jesus' name. . .amen.



Congregants listening to the General Overseer of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries Worldwide, Pastor Lazarus Muoka ministering during the Kaduna crusade 2026, titled: **"Wonderful Move Of God As Of Old"** held at the Murtala Square, Kaduna State from October 3 - 4, 2026

# Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor W. F. Kumuyi



# Life That Pleases God (2)

FAITH in the promises of God produces a loving relationship with the Lord. The Old Testament worthies demonstrated the love in fullness that pleased God. Enoch walked with God for three hundred years and "*had this testimony, that he pleased God.*" Like him, the Lord can "*circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,*" to maintain steadfast and consistent walk with Him.

Love also made Abraham an intimate friend of God. When He tested his love and obedience to sacrifice his only child, "Abraham ...rose up, and went." He never looked back or rethought his decision. When God demands something we cherish, we should be ready to surrender it as proof of our faith and love for Him.

The fullness of love earned Moses a special place in God's heart because he "*refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.*" He chose this because he esteemed "*the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*"

Seeing and focusing on the invisible God by faith enabled Moses to forsake Egypt, "not fearing the wrath of [Pharaoh]." Like him, our faith should make us give up something we cherish for the glory of the Lord and help us make decisions for Christ without fear. We must realise that activity, earnestness, zeal, sacrifice, religious deeds or mechanical acts, without the faith that produces total love, cannot please the Lord.

The worthies of old laboured for the flock of God. They fought for His glory, led the flock, taught, counselled, exhorted and fed them with the word of God. They also contended with adversaries, "*subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, [and] stopped the mouths of lions.*" They laboured by faith to preserve the nation of Israel – God's elect and flock. They "*subdued*" the enemy and the powers that would have hindered them from doing God's will and preserving His people. Likewise, God has called us today to do His bidding and subdue whatever stands between the great commission and us. We must also subdue the land for Christ and turn the heart of people to God. Believers in Christ are the fulfilment of the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream "that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold..."

Christ is the Rock of ages who lives in the believer; and greater is He that lives in us. Therefore, through His Church, He will subdue the earth. If we believe, God will use us to purify, empower, preserve, protect, project, prosper, perfect and prepare His Church to please Him in all things. We can conquer the enemies of the gospel in our contemporary time by faith.

• ***Further Reading (KJV): Hebrews 11:6; Galatians 1:10;1 Thessalonians 2:4; Romans 8:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:15; Isaiah 2:6;Judges 14:3; Hebrews 11:5,6; Matthew 3:17; 17:5;John 8:29;Philippians 2:5; Hebrews 11:5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 30:6; Hebrews 11:14-16;Genesis 24:6-8; 22:1-3,15-18; Hebrews 11:24; Exodus 32:10-14; Hebrews 11:25; Psalm 119:30; Hebrews 11:26; 13:12,13; 1 Peter 4:14; Hebrews 11:27; 13:5,6; Psalm 56:4,11; Hebrews 11:30,32-34; Joshua 18:1; Judges 11:33,35; 1 Samuel 7:13; 2 Samuel 22:40,45; Daniel 2:40,44,45; Hebrews 11:40.***

# Stop Talking And Listen (12)

*God also speaks to us through the gentle impress of the Spirit (cont)*

# Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus Prof. Mercy Olumide



WHEN checked by the Spirit from going in one direction, they would go in another, trusting in the Holy Spirit to either approve or disapprove of their traveling plans.

1:12 We do not know the details of this revelation. Paul is referring to something other than his experience on the road to Damascus. His point is that his words are more than his own speculations or ideas.

**What is 'Revelation?'**

The word "*revelation*" means an uncovering, a removal of the veil, a disclosure of what was previously unknown.

Greek apokalupsis, to unveil or uncover. It implies the lifting up of a curtain so all can see alike what is uncovered. When used of a revelation it always denotes that which has had the covering taken off and the mystery removed, so that all can see alike what is revealed *(Rev 1:1; Rom 2:5; 16:25; 1Cor 14:6,26; 2Cor 12:1,7; Gal 1:12; 2:2; Eph 1:17; 3:3).* When used of a person it means his visible appearance and manifestation to others (Lk 2:13; Rom 8:19; 1Pet 1:7). Revelations are always by '*Spirit*" and not by flesh and blood (Mat 16:17)

**How does the Holy Spirit work in believers?**

*"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."* (Rom 8:14)

> *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* (Rom 8:14) *led by the Spirit of God.*

"*led by the Spirit of God.*" The Holy Spirit lives within the child of God in order to lead him or her to think, speak and act according to God's Word. (1) He leads primarily by promptings that (a) are inward urgings to do God's will and to put to death the misdeeds of the body (v.13, Phil 2:13; Tit 2:11-12); (b) are always in harmony with Scripture (1Cor 2:12-13; cf. 2Pet 1:20-21); (c) are intended to give direction in life (Luke 4:1; Acts 10:19-20; 16:6-7); (d) are opposed to sinful desires (Gal 5:17-18; 1 Pet 2:11); (e) are concerned with the guilt of sin, Christ's standard of righteousness and God's judgment against evil (John 16:8-11); (f) exhort believers to persevere in faith and warn them concerning falling away from personal faith in Christ (v.13; Heb 3:7-14); (g) become weaker the longer believers resist obeying the Spirit's prompting (1:28; Eph 4:17-19, 30-31; 1Thes 5:19); (h) result in spiritual death when rejected (vv. 6, 13); (i) result in spiritual life and peace when obeyed (vv.6,10-11,13; Gal 5:22-23)

(2) The Spirit's prompting comes by (a) reading God's Word (John 14:26; 15:7,26; 16:13; 2 Tim 3:16-17); (b) praying and fasting (v.26; Acts 13:2-3); (c) listening to godly preaching and teaching (2Tim 4:1-2; Heb 13:7,17); (d) earnestly desiring and valuing the manifestations of the Spirit (see 1Cor 12:7-10; 14:6); and (e) heeding the counsel of Christian parents and trustworthy spiritual leaders (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20). See God's Methods of Communication, above.

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# RESTORATION HOUR

Text: Proverbs 3:5-6

# The Future Is Now (2)

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

***Key Verse: Jeremiah 29:11,*** *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." (NLT)*

GOD has a clear plan for each of us He created. God has already willed greatness, excellence, and impact for your life. Look closely at Jeremiah 29:11, God does not say, *"I will figure out a plan later."* He says, *"I know the plans I have for you."* The plan is already finished in the spirit. We treat the future like a distant shoreline that we are waiting to drift toward. But the truth of the Kingdom is radically different: The future is not a destination you are merely waiting for; the future is an invitation you must step into today. When we say, *"The Future is Now,"* we are declaring that God's promises are not on hold. His purpose for your life doesn't start tomorrow. It starts the moment you decide to align your current steps with His eternal word.

To understand why the future is now, we have to understand when these words were spoken in Jeremiah 29:11. God did not give this word to a people who were lounging in comfort or enjoying immediate success. He gave this word through the Prophet Jeremiah to the Israelites who were exiled in Babylon. They were captive, discouraged, and stuck in a foreign, hostile land. Many prophets were telling them, "Don't worry, this will be over in a few days! God will rescue us tomorrow!" But God spoke through Jeremiah and said something entirely different. He told them to build houses, plant gardens, marry, and pray for the peace of the very city that held them captive (Jeremiah 29:5-7). He told them they would be there for 70 years. Right in the middle of their waiting, right in the middle of their hardship, God drops verse 11: "For I know the plans I have for you..." What is God saying to them? He is saying: Your current location does not dictate your ultimate destination. You don't have to wait for Babylon to fall before you start living out My purpose. You don't have to wait for your circumstances to change to experience My hope. God's future for them was happening right inside their present situation.

If you want to realise the future God has for you, you have to visualise it and act on it today. But a vision without a mission is just a daydream. You must dream the dream of your future now. You cannot feature in a future that you have never first pictured in your mind. If you cannot see it, you cannot possess it. Your thoughts shape your reality. What you eventually become is directly connected to your consistent thought patterns, deep-seated desires, and daily aspirations. You have to sanctify your imaginations and purge it of negative thoughts. Reject negative thoughts. Instead, cultivate sanctified thoughts, tap into creative ideas, and receive godly visions for your career, ministry, and family. Reject small thinking. God's plans for you are massive, but your mind must expand to accommodate them. Do not procrastinate your preparation. Step into your identity as a child of the Most High God, stretch your vision, and start acting like the person God has called you to be. The future is happening in the choices you make today.



Amadi

• ***Today's Nugget: God's Plans for you are massive. Prayer: I declare my glorious future shall not be cut off. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com. Rev. (Dr) Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeri***a.

# RCCG To Commission Enoch/Folu Adeboye Dialysis Centre At UBTH Nov 24

By Isaac Taiwo

THE Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), through its His Love Foundation, the Christian Social Responsibility arm of the Church has concluded arrangements to commission the Enoch and Folu Adeboye Dialysis Centre at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH)on November 24, 2026.

The milestone, which isanother significant investment in Nigeria's healthcare infrastructurewill be commissioned by the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

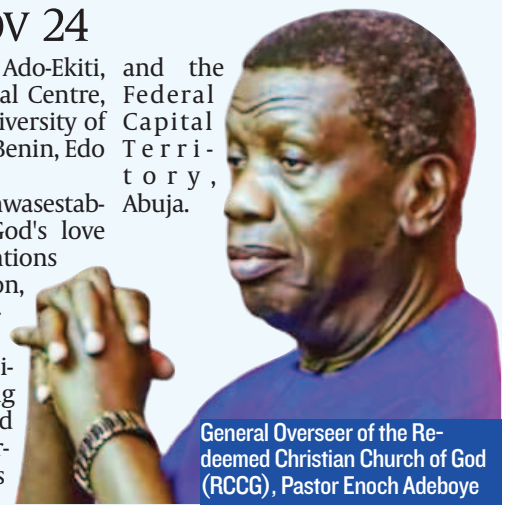
The facility is designed to provide vital dialysis care, strengthen UBTH's capacity and support patients living with kidney disease and requiring regular dialysis treatment.

The dialysis centresestablished by the Foundation are located across the country.

They include Healing Stripes Hospital, Victoria Island, Lagos; Wuse District Hospital, FCT Abuja;Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Teaching Hospital, Bauchi, Bauchi State; Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital, Sagamu, Ogun State;Redeemer's Health Centre, Mowe, Ogun State and University of Medical Sciences Teaching Hospital Complex, Ondo, Ondo State.

The rest include Redeemer's Health Centre, Ibadan, Oyo State; The Comprehensive Medical Centre, Awkuzu, Anambra State; Umaru Shehu Ultra-modern Hospital, Maiduguri, Borno State; University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu, Enugu State; Wesley Guild Hospital, Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex, Ilesa, Osun State and Immanuel General Hospital, Eket, Akwa Ibom State; Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State; Federal Medical Centre, Asaba, Delta State; andUniversity of Benin Teaching Hospital, Benin, Edo State.

The CSR arm of the churchwasestablished to demonstrate God's love through practical interventions across healthcare, education, social welfare, environmental architecture, prison impact and rehabilitation, positively impacting individuals, families and communities with interventions across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.



General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adeboye

# **Beyond The Journey:** Inside GIG Mobility's Strategy For Operational Excellence, Customer Centered Experience

**In the mobility industry, customer experience is shaped by much more than the journey itself. From punctual departures and fleet safety to digital innovation, service recovery and customer engagement, delivering a dependable travel experience requires operational discipline at every touchpoint. In this interview with GBENGA SALAU, GIG Mobility Chief Operations Officer, Jude Odum underscores innovative service delivery systems powered by technology, responding to customer feedback and building a connected mobility ecosystem anchored on service, comfort and safety as GIG Mobility's unique selling points.**

**When a customer books a journey with GIG Mobility, what does delivering a dependable experience actually require behind the scenes?**

CUSTOMER experience in GIGM is rooted in our philosophy of service, which is underpinned by Service, Comfort, and Safety. Our journeys are mostly decided before the customer reaches the terminal. It starts with pre-operations planning, scheduling that matches vehicles and drivers to routes, and pre-trip inspections. To answer your question of which part of our customer experience process is more critical to delivering a consistent experience in GIGM, I'd say it's the mindset. Our psychology of service is deeply woven into every fibre of our processes such that the way we research, design, develop and implement solutions is governed by the convenience, comfort and safety of our guests.

**Departure punctuality is an important part of the customer experience. What systems, processes, and operational disciplines are required to improve departure reliability across a network of routes and terminals?**

Punctuality is a reasonable expectation from our guests, and it is built through discipline at every stage rather than one big fix. It needs accurate schedules, vehicles and drivers in place on time, and a boarding process that starts early enough to leave on time. That is why check-in begins 30 minutes before departure, and why our Arrive Early campaign reminds customers that a departure time is not an arrival time. Punctuality is a shared effort between the passenger and us. That calls for clear departure procedures, defined responsibilities, and timely communication between the teams involved.

It also means looking beyond individual delays to identify recurring patterns. If a particular process regularly contributes to late departures, the response should involve examining and improving that process rather than treating every incident as an isolated event. We recognise that customers organise their plans around the times we communicate. Our responsibility is therefore to keep strengthening the discipline behind those commitments and to communicate honestly when circumstances affect them. Punctuality is not simply an operational target; it is part of the trust customers place in us.

**Safety and vehicle reliability are fundamental to intercity transportation. How does GIG Mobility approach fleet readiness, vehicle inspections, preventive maintenance, and managing unexpected breakdowns?**

We do not compromise on safety. For us, reliability begins with ensuring that vehicles are mechanically fit for service by ensuring that pre-trip inspections and preventive maintenance are automated. Our system lock down vehicles not serviced on their due date and make them unavailable for use. This ensures that only buses that are roadworthy are used for operations. Also, our buses are fitted with telematics devices that monitor the speed and route of our buses, ensuring that Captains comply with our speed policy. Our intelligence control unit receive alert when a bus veers off route or exceed speed limit for a sustained period beyond what is approved. At the same time, we recognise that unexpected incidents can occur, even with the right precautions in place. What matters then is how quickly and appropriately we respond. This is where our Rapid Response Unit (RRU) plays an important role.

As a specialised operational division, it supports fleet safety, manages in-transit incidents and coordinates real-time service recovery when disruptions occur. Communication is equally important. During an incident, guests need timely, clear information about what is happening and the assistance available to them. Our Customer Care Centre plays a key role in keeping guests informed and providing a channel through which their concerns can be addressed as the situation unfolds. Ultimately, safety and reliability depend on more than the condition of a vehicle. They also require coordinated operations, clear responsibilities, and a structured response when things do not go as planned. For us, safety is not simply a promise; it is a responsibility that must be reflected in how we operate every day.

**Customer experience extends beyond the vehicle itself. What is GIG Mobility doing to improve the experience at its terminals and across customer facing touchpoints?**

A guest's experience of GIG Mobility begins long before they board a vehicle. It starts with booking and the information they receive, continues through their arrival at the terminal and boarding, and extends to how we respond when they need assistance. Every touchpoint shapes their perception of the service we provide. Delivering a consistently good experience requires our terminal teams, customer service personnel and operations team to work as one. Terminal teams are closest to the guest and the realities of the boarding process. Customer service provides an important channel for questions, feedback and concerns, while operations coordinates the activities that keep journeys running. These functions must remain connected, sharing relevant information and responding together when an issue arises.

For example, if guests are experiencing confusion around boarding or a change to a departure, the response should go beyond addressing individual complaints. The terminal team needs to communicate clearly on the ground, customer service must have accurate information to share, and operations must coordinate the response. When these teams work in sync, guests receive clearer guidance, issues can be addressed more effectively, and avoidable frustration is reduced. Ultimately, an excellent customer experience depends on how well all these elements come together. The guest experiences one GIG Mobility, so our teams must work together to deliver one consistent standard of service.

*When a service is disrupted, the operational problem is only part of the challenge. Customers also need to understand what has happened, how it affects their plans, and what options are available to them. Effective communication begins with accurate information. The teams responding to a disruption need to establish what is known and provide updates as the situation develops. Where a departure is delayed, rescheduled, or cancelled, guests are given clear information about the change and the appropriate next steps.*

**Customers increasingly expect timely information when their plans change. How does GIG Mobility communicate delays, rescheduling, cancellations, or other disruptions?**

When a service is disrupted, the operational problem is only part of the challenge. Customers also need to understand what has happened, how it affects their plans, and what options are available to them. Effective communication begins with accurate information. The teams responding to a disruption need to establish what is known and provide updates as the situation develops. Where a departure is delayed, rescheduled, or cancelled, guests are given clear information about the change and the appropriate next steps. Customer recovery also requires more than an apology. It means explaining the available support and ensuring that the customer knows how to access it.

The appropriate response will depend on the circumstances and the company's applicable policies. From an operational perspective, every disruption presents an opportunity to examine what happened and whether the response could be improved. Were the right teams informed? Was the customer updated in good time? Could the problem have been anticipated? These questions help us move from resolving individual incidents to strengthening the systems that shape the experience.



**Digital platforms are changing how customers interact with mobility providers. How does the GIGM App support the operational and customer experience objectives of the business?**

Technology is most useful when it solves a real problem for the customer. In mobility, that includes making it easier to find a trip, complete a booking and payment, and access the information needed to travel. The GIGM App represents an important part of our digital journey. It was introduced in 2016, helping move the booking experience beyond the manual processes on which much of the market had depended. That innovation reflects a broader objective: reducing avoidable friction between deciding to travel and completing the journey.

Digital booking can make the transaction more convenient, while the information generated through customer interactions may also help us identify recurring difficulties. The important question is what we do with that information. If customers repeatedly encounter difficulty at a particular stage, we try to understand the cause and determine what can be improved. Digital tools should not operate separately from the people delivering the service. They should help connect the booking experience to the operational decisions that shape what happens next.

**Customer feedback can reveal gaps that internal operational reports may not always capture. How does GIG Mobility use complaints, reviews, customer service interactions, and feedback to identify recurring problems and drive improvement?**

Customer feedback gives us a view of the service that internal reports alone may not provide. Our operational data can tell us what happened, but a customer's account can help us understand how that experience felt and where the process fell short of expectations. Our customer feedback systems spans contact centre, email, social media, app surveys, and app stores. The value lies in identifying patterns. An individual complaint may point to a specific incident, while similar concerns raised by different customers may indicate a recurring problem with a process, a communication gap, or a particular touchpoint. Looking at feedback alongside operational information helps us distinguish between isolated incidents and issues that require a broader response.

The next step is action. Feedback should be assessed, directed to the team responsible, and used to determine whether a change is necessary. Where an improvement is made, it is also important to review whether it has addressed the original problem. I would not measure our responsiveness simply by how many complaints we receive or close. The more important question is whether we are learning from them and reducing the likelihood of the same problems recurring. Listening to customers becomes meaningful when it leads to better decisions and a more dependable experience.

**As GIG Mobility expands into premium vehicle mobility through hireX and curated travel experiences through PASS, how does the company ensure that the wider ecosystem remains consistent with its expectations around trust and customer experience?**

A bus journey, a premium vehicle booking, and a curated trip are different services with different operating models, and I would not pretend otherwise. What can carry across is a short list of operating principles. Be clear with the customer about what they are buying. Be honest when something changes. Take responsibility when something goes wrong, and fix the cause. Those principles apply whether the customer is boarding at a terminal, hiring a premium vehicle through hireX or planning a trip through PASS. My job is to make sure those standards travel with the brand, while recognising that each business needs its own processes and people who understand it. Guests who find hireX or PASS through the GIGM App will reasonably expect the same level of care they associate with GIGM. We have to earn that each time.

**What does operational excellence look like for GIG Mobility over the next few years, and how should customers expect to experience the difference?**

Operational excellence is what drives our customer-centricity. We are constantly seeking innovative ways to create world-class travel solutions for our customers. In the coming years, we will leverage technologies like AI, EV, and other smart solutions to ensure that the customer experience is more predictable and reliable, customer needs are better understood through data, cycle times are shortened, processes are more optimised, resolution time is shorter, and quality of service is significantly improved.

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Issue

# 'Why Enabling Environment For Wealth Creation, Economic Security Is Desirable'

*Founder, GMD/CEO of ARCO Plc,* ***Engineer Alfred Okoigun,*** *was recently at the National Institute for Security Studies (NISS) where he delivered a lecture, updating his views on the need to create opportunities for young, vibrant men and women in the country, by putting in place an enabling environment for building wealth in the polity, backed by economic security.* ***NDUKA NWOSU*** *captures the details, including a track record of his contributions to the growth of corporate Nigeria, especially in the oil and gas sector.*

DR. Alfred Okoigun, an engineer and GMD/CEO of ARCO Plc is distinguished as a scholar, a teacher, and a patriot whose love for the nation is expressed on how, when, and where he invests his time and wealth. As a scholar, Okoigun's admission into the prestigious Government College Warri was significant in announcing his quest for knowledge, combined with service to the nation.

The whole idea of ending up as a pioneer student at the Petroleum Training Institute (PTI) Warri was driven by love for the fatherland, which was to be counted for the pioneer students as nation builders in the emerging oil and gas driven economy. But even at that, his exposure very early in the day within the ecosystem of the oil and gas business, whether in Warri or Italy, and France, told him there was need to dig deeper if we must as a people, make the best use of what our natural resources and knowledge acquired through skilled education, could offer.

Okoigun carried a one man crusade to stop wasting the flared natural gas in the oil producing Niger Delta region. That was when his organisation now ARCO Plc, hosted the country's first international conference on gas re-injection, which deliberation was concretised in Lagos a few years later at a seminar chaired by the erudite economist Pius Okigbo. The communique went to Dodan Barracks and was part of the backbone in the establishment of the Nigeria LNG Limited (NLNG).

The scholar in Okoigun is best appreciated through his educational foundation, which has mostly benefited hundreds of students in the oil and gas discipline and other related programmes. His commitment to institutional growth manifests itself in his huge contributions to the physical and intellectual sustenance of the PTI and GCU. Beyond these two, he has been active in promoting the standard of higher education in the country, leading to recognitions and awards, something he is not easily taken to.

Despite his shyness and tendency to stay away from these numerous awards coming to add value to his already festooned cap of achievements, three institutions stand out for mention – the University of Lagos, the Federal University of Technology Warri, and the Nigerian Academy of Engineers from where he had an investiture of fellowship. The University of Lagos, through its Engineering Society, designated or tagged Okoigun a Role Model in recognition of his philanthropy and scholarship awards to deserving students of the institution and the development and progress of the university.

Again, because Okoigun would rather be the one recognising talents and giving awards, he deserves to be applauded once in a while. As a scholar, Okoigun keeps updating himself to keep abreast with modern trends taught in some of the world's famous business schools. Contrary to Google report and as reported in some newspapers (not The Guardian.ng), Okoigun was neither at the Lagos Business School, the IESE in Barcelona nor at the Harvard Business School. Instead, he attended the top-tier independent business school, the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), in Switzerland. However, he has had the opportunity to espouse the principles that have brought ARCO thus far, from a limited liability company to a Plc and as one of the leading indigenous oil and gas companies in the country at the Lagos Business School (LBS) and many other places, on invitation.

With this type of background, is it any wonder Okoigun, over the years, has become an advocate of knowledge power over resource power urging policy makers whether in government or corporate Nigeria to lay emphasis on knowledge over resources, the same way he led the change advocacy in gas flaring to gas re-injection in 1982 and the early 1990s.

Part of Okoigun's tradition is to pay tribute to scholars who work through research and development. He launched the Nigerian Excellence in Science and Technology (NEST), which was initiated in recognition of outstanding Nigerian scientists who have excelled in their fields of endeavour locally and globally.

Chairman and founder of Geometric Power Limited Aba, two-time minister and Professor of Robotics, Barth Nnaji and computer guru Philip Emeagwali, as well as Dr. Henrietta Ukwu who was recently listed in the prestigious Marguis Who's Who, what Okoigun described as "a testament to decades of intellectual rigour, ethical leadership and professional excellence in a very demanding and consequential field," were among the over 10 awardees honoured at the Dorchester Hotel London in 2001.

While Okoigun keeps tab with the ARCO Alumni, they in turn carry and wear his excellence mantra like a pair of a workman's overall anywhere they go. DrAdedoyinAdeleke, co-chair of the United Nations Independent Group of Scientists and Executive Director Green Growth Africa, fits into this bill. An ARCO Alumnus, Adeleke had this to say about his former boss and mentor: "From a modest beginning, you built not just a company but an institution. Through courage, perseverance, discipline, and an unwavering belief in possibilities, you have shaped ARCO into a resilient enterprise that has stood strong for 46 years.

> *Contrary to Google report and as reported in some newspapers (not The Guardian.ng), Okoigun was neither at the Lagos Business School, the IESE in Barcelona nor at the Harvard Business School. Instead, he attended the top-tier independent business school, the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), in Switzerland.*

"Today, your vision sustains more than a thousand families. As one of Nigeria's earliest indigenous oil and gas servicing companies, and among the few that survived and scaled, ARCO stands as a testament to your foresight and national impact." Adeleke is just one among scores of the alumni that passed through the trajectory for which ARCO is known-a stickler for professionalism.

There is Mrs. FunkeAmobi who is an executive director at IBTC Bank and Vincent Ozoude managing director and chief executive of the Transafam Power, those the founder is proud to call ARCO's ambassadors wearing the company's badge of honour and distinction, a placement of premium on talent, which it hones through training and exposure of its staff in highly recognised institutions, corporations and work stations in different parts of the world.

In the 1990s, ARCO Plc took a team of journalists and civil service executives for a fact finding mission on why the Asian Tiger countries were galloping from the category of Third World countries to that of the Middle Income Countries (MICs) on the cusp of industrialisation. Okoigun was also in the team of industrialists, bank CEOs, et al, who President Ibrahim Babangida delegated to the same Asian Tiger countries under the leadership of Chief MKO Abiola and Finance Minister, Chief S P Okongwu on a fact finding mission on what lessons that could be learnt from their success story as well as what economic collaborations that could be forged with those countries. Their reception back home and brief at Dodan Barracks signalled a new era of economic awareness for the country.

On a personal and corporate level, Okoigun has sustained this culture of Presidential briefing using the ARCO Plc platform and its progression for each incumbent Nigerian President with the exception of one or two, to date. Okoigun, in recent times, has been partnering with the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), in recognising and rewarding exceptional diaspora and local talents. He has sponsored a football and tennis foundation, which discovered local talents for export. Only recently in his regular lecture series, he had an update when the commandant of the National Institute for Security Studies (NISS), JO Odama, invited him to deliver a lecture to the students with emphasis on entrepreneurship and national development through the creation of wealth, economic opportunities and the strengthening of economic security. His opening and basic argument was that entrepreneurship and national development may seem to be poles apart in terms of context. One, he said, focuses on investment and wealth creation while the other is all about the protection of life and property, institutions, and national interests. "However, I believe they are deeply connected," Okoigun surmised.

The details flowed with revealing and convincing sub-heads: "A nation can't achieve lasting security without economic strength, and it can't achieve economic strength without building its own productive capabilities. This is the central message I would like to share with you today." he added.

"Drawing from my personal experiences and (with) more than four decades of building businesses in Nigeria, I would like to share with you today how entrepreneurship can help our country develop indigenous capabilities," he added. The details: Entrepreneurship Lessons From Building ARCO: Entrepreneurship is often understood as starting a business. In reality, starting is only the beginning. Entrepreneurship involves identifying opportunities, solving problems, taking calculated risks, and creating value(s). Sustaining an enterprise requires persistence, adaptability, discipline, and the determination to build a lasting competence.

My journey with ARCO has taught me three important lessons: It has involved investing in people, equipment, partnerships, and professional standards. It has also taught me that local participation is not the same as local capability. A company may win a contract without acquiring the expertise needed to execute similar work independently. Our objective must be to ensure that participation results in lasting competence.

Second, adaptability is essential. Markets change, technology advances, and customer expectations evolve. Yesterday's achievements do not guarantee tomorrow's relevance. Entrepreneurs must continually assess emerging needs and develop the capabilities required to remain competitive.

Third, we must build institutions, not businesses that depend entirely on their founders. A company may begin with the vision and determination of one individual, but its long-term survival depends on professional management, governance, accountability, succession planning, and strong systems. Our ambition should be to build enterprises that preserve knowledge, sustain employment, and continue contributing to the economy across generations. The objective must be to transfer not own capability. Many of us have travelled abroad and observed how people live in other parts of the world. Such experiences can inspire us to think differently about what is possible in Nigeria.

Challenges and Opportunities: Turning Nigeria's challenges into opportunities means that we must not ignore the considerable challenges that remain because these challenges also present opportunities. Consider education, healthcare, housing, transportation, water supply, and electricity as examples. In many communities, access to these essential services remains inadequate. Each gap represents a problem that needs solving. Each problem presents an opportunity for entrepreneurs who can develop practical, affordable, and sustainable solutions. The important question is not simply why these problems exist. It is this: What can we do to solve them? We must also recognise that solutions developed elsewhere cannot always be transferred directly to Nigeria. We should learn from successful economies but adapt useful ideas to our own peculiar circumstances, resources, and needs. Nigeria has enormous potential in agriculture, manufacturing, energy, technology, and infrastructure. Our task is to convert our resources into products, our knowledge into services, and our opportunities into sustainable enterprises.

The Dangote experience: The experience of AlikoDangote illustrates how entrepreneurship can move beyond trading into large-scale industrial production.



Okoigun



UBA Foundation Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Bola Atta (left); winner of the UBA National Essay Competition, Khaira Ojima Bala (middle) and UBA Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Oliver Alawuba (right), at the grand finale of the UBA National Essay Competition held at UBA House, Marina, Lagos

# UBA Foundation… Nurturing Young Minds, Investing In The Next Generation Of African Thinkers

By **Suliyat Tella**

WHEN the UBA Foundation established its National Essay Competition in 2011, the initiative was part of its efforts to promote education and create opportunities for young Nigerians. Sixteen editions later, what began as a national competition has expanded to six other African countries, bringing its current reach to seven countries.

Over the years, the competition has offered secondary school students an opportunity to develop their writing skills, engage with national issues and compete for scholarships towards their university education.

The Foundation now hopes to extend the initiative to all 20 African countries where UBA operates.

The 2026 edition attracted nearly 15,000 entries from senior secondary school students across Nigeria. It produced 20 finalists, up from 12 in the previous edition, while the number of scholarship recipients increased from three to five.

The assessment process, however, also drew attention to challenges in students' writing, including essays with characteristics associated with artificial intelligence-generated content, recycled submissions and limited analysis.

These findings were highlighted in a report by the competition's judges.

**What The Judges Found In The Essays**

The judges' report detailed the strengths and weaknesses identified during the assessment.

The four assessors were Prof. Asabe Kabir Usman of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto; Prof. Ini Uko of the University of Uyo; Prof. Samuel Onuigbo of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; and Prof. Emmanuel Babatunde Omobowale of the University of Ibadan. All four are professors of English.

Entries were assessed over two weeks using a standardised marking guide. Content carried the highest weighting at 30 per cent, followed by expression at 20 per cent.

Organisation and mechanical accuracy, including vocabulary, each accounted for 15 per cent. Depth of analysis and relevance to Nigeria made up 10 per cent, while adherence to guidelines, including the title and word count, accounted for the remaining 10 per cent.

The report said the top 100 essays were outstanding, but many of the remaining entries displayed weaknesses. The judges estimated that between 35 and 40 per cent of the scripts had characteristics they associated with generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and Gemini.

They pointed out polished but generic language, repetitive transitions, a lack of personal voice and recommendations that did not appear grounded in local realities.

Some essays, for example, proposed solutions such as vertical farming in urban skyscrapers or blockchain systems for food traceability without explaining how such proposals would work in the Nigerian context.

The report also identified identical introductory paragraphs, definitions reproduced from online sources and conclusions that appeared in multiple submissions. Some entries included titles from earlier editions, while others had no title or used one that did not correspond with the assigned topic.

The judges said about five per cent of the scripts had incorrect titles, including titles linked to previous competition topics.

There were also cases of duplicate submissions. Some essays were entered under names with minor variations or under different school names. In one instance, handwriting checks suggested that the same essay had been submitted more than once under different names from the same school.

Other submissions were far shorter than expected. Some contained only 120 to 180 words.

The judges also encountered entries written in the format of debate speeches, beginning with greetings to a chairman, judges, timekeeper and fellow speakers rather than presenting an essay.

The judges recommended clearer guidelines, school briefings for English teachers, plagiarism screening and measures to prevent multiple entries. They also suggested that the entry portal should reject submissions below the minimum word count.

**A Second Stage Built Around Independent Writing**

The final stage of the competition was held under supervised conditions at UBA House, Marina, Lagos. The 20 finalists wrote their essays without access to phones, textbooks or the internet.

Before the final assessment, the students attended a one-day writing boot camp with the judges. The sessions covered essay structure, critical argumentation, originality, the use of Nigerian examples, writing ethics and the importance of following instructions.

According to the judges' report, the final-stage essays were more authentic and showed greater insight. The assessors described some of the submissions as moving and noted that the boot camp had helped students improve their structure, argument and attention to originality.

**The Issues Shaping The Essay Topics**

FOOD security remains a major challenge in Nigeria, with millions of households struggling to afford sufficient and nutritious food. Rising food prices, declining purchasing power and disruptions to agricultural activities have made access to food increasingly difficult for many Nigerians. The scale of Nigeria's food security challenge is reflected in projections by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), which estimated that 34.7 million Nigerians could face acute food insecurity during the June to August 2026 lean season

It was against this backdrop that food security became the subject of the first-stage essay in the 16th edition of the UBA Foundation National Essay Competition. Participants were asked to write on the topic: 'No nation can develop without food security. How can Nigeria deal with this problem?'

The second topic focused on child marriage and the factors contributing to its prevalence in Nigeria, and poverty remains one of the issues associated with the practice.

The 20 finalists were subsequently asked to examine the issue in the final-stage essay, titled: 'Examine how poverty and other social vices contribute to the prevalence of child marriage in Nigeria.'

UBA Foundation Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Bola Atta, said the essay topic changes yearly to encourage students to think critically about important issues and develop their own ideas rather than rely on artificial intelligence.

# Soft Drink Giant Boosts Nigeria's Socio-economic Growth With $1b

By **Omotoyosi Erinle**

ON Monday, November 23, 2021, former vice president of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, at the 70th anniversary gala of the Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC), commended the company's decision to invest $1 billion in the economy.

According to him, "your ongoing investment in the country, which I am told will be in the order of $1 billion in the next five years, testifies to your faith in the possibilities of Nigeria."

Osinbajo further stated that in the 70 years that the company has operated, it has demonstrated commitment to the Nigerian people with repeated investments, in the building of production facilities across the country, in creating thousands of jobs and in its "active support of every aspect of our national life, from health to education, from women and youth empowerment to sports. All done with conscious respect for the environment."

Continuing, Osinbajo said: "I think it is fair to say that the commitment has been met with the enthusiastic patronage of generations of Nigerians; families who have been supported by the stable careers of staff who have grown with the company through the years."

Five years later, a new Socio-Economic Impact Assessment findings show that the industrial giant is operating not merely as a beverage manufacturer, but as a brand wired for socio-economic growth.

Conducted in 2024 by Steward Redqueen, a global consultancy that has done similar studies for the

Coca-Cola System in more than 60 markets, the assessment found that the System in Nigeria, made up of The Coca-Cola Company and its bottling partner, the Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC), contributed about $1 billion in value added to the Nigerian economy in 2024. This value represents the combined contribution of salaries, taxes and profits that support national economic growth and add to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The report underscores the importance of local sourcing to this economic contribution. Of that $1 billion spending, $601 million went to Nigerian suppliers for goods and services in 2024, representing 14 per cent of the System's total procurement across Africa.

From packaging manufacturers and ingredient suppliers to logistics operators and retailers, thousands of Nigerian businesses are connected to the System's value chain. This reinforces business growth and supports local industries.

According to the report, the Coca-Cola System supported more than 160,200 jobs nationwide. The study puts direct employment at 2,989 people. But its more striking figure lies outside the System's payroll: an additional 157,200 jobs were supported indirectly through suppliers, distributors, transporters and retail outlets. Put differently, for every person on the system's payroll, 53 other jobs were sustained elsewhere in the economy.

This multiplier effect is acutely visible on the streets. From corner-store retailers and open-air market vendors to transport workers navigating interstate highways and hospitality staff in local bars and restaurants, livelihoods are inextricably tied to this commercial ecosystem.

Numbers alone do not capture the full scope of corporate citizenship. As conversations around environmental sustainability and community resilience take centre stage in Nigeria, the system has increasingly channelled investments into social impact. Its landmark interventions include the Packaging Collection Hub in Apapa, Lagos. The facility has the capacity to process up to 13,000 metric tonnes of PET plastic bottles yearly, helping to improve recycling infrastructure, reduce plastic waste and support the growth of a circular economy. The project is also expected to support 1,000 informal waste collectors and feed food-grade recycled PET production through third-party partners. The hub aims to serve as a comprehensive solution for plastic waste management. It seeks to facilitate PET collection, process materials into clean PET bales and enable PET production through third-party partnerships, helping contribute to cleaner communities and driving collective action to help reduce packaging waste.

Water stewardship is another area receiving attention. Through partnerships involving The Coca-Cola Foundation and other organisations, water and sanitation projects are already making a difference in communities in Borno State. Nigeria is also part of the Africa Water Stewardship Initiative, a nearly $25 million investment planned through 2030 across 20 African markets, announced by the Africa Operating Unit of The Coca-Cola System, with Coca-Cola Beverages Africa and other bottlers.

In a period marked by foreign exchange volatility and rising operating costs for manufacturers, the assessment suggests that the Coca-Cola System remains a significant contributor to economic activity and community development across Nigeria. This is further boosted by the System's recent announcement to invest up to $1 billion in Nigeria over the next five years, subject to the availability of a predictable and enabling business environment. Demonstrating its dedication to social impact, the Foundation has also committed $1.25 million towards improving access to safe water and enhancing water management systems in Lagos and Abuja, helping to build more resilient Nigerian communities for the future.

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SpotLight

# How NGE Is Reconnecting Young Nigerians With Journalism Ethics

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

As journalism grapples with the growing threats of misinformation, disinformation, digital disruption and falsehoods, the Nigerian Guild of Editors is taking the conversation beyond newsrooms, placing a new publication in the hands of institutions preparing the next generation of journalists.

With journalism at a crossroads, the rapid transformation of the media landscape, driven by digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI), presents both unprecedented opportunities and significant challenges. While these innovations have revolutionised information gathering and dissemination, they have also created new threats that challenge the credibility of news, the integrity of the profession and public trust in the media.

From the proliferation of fake news to the sophisticated manipulation of information through AI-generated content, journalists face an increasingly complex environment in which distinguishing facts from falsehoods has become a critical professional responsibility.

It is against this backdrop that the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) has taken a significant step towards strengthening the future of journalism in the country. The Guild recently donated copies of its recently unveiled publication, Truth, Trust, and the Future of Journalism in Nigeria, to six universities and other institutions involved in training aspiring journalists namely: University of Lagos (UNILAG), University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), Lagos State University (LASU), Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH), Yaba College of Technology (YABATECH) and the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ).

The intervention, which is aimed at strengthening professional standards and safeguarding the future of the profession, comes at a time when journalism in Nigeria is facing mounting challenges including shrinking newsrooms, declining advertising revenues, political and commercial pressures and the growing influence of digital platforms on how information is produced and consumed.

These challenges, as examined in the publication go beyond the question of whether journalists are committed to professional ethics. They touch on the institutional, economic and technological conditions necessary for journalism to fulfil its responsibility as a credible source of information and a watchdog in a democratic society.

Edited by Prof. Chinyere Stella Okunna, Tony U. Onyima, Iyobosa Uwugiaren, Angela U. Agoawike and Kabir Alabi Garba, the publication brings together the perspectives of scholars, experienced journalists, editors and media practitioners to examine the challenges confronting the profession and the measures required to sustain its relevance in a rapidly changing information environment.

Its contributors include LanreIdowu, Akpandem James, Sule Yau Sule, Hamza Idris, Sylvester Odion Akhaine, Elueme Emeka Izeze, Marcel Mbamalu, Adaobi Olivia Okeke, Dapo Olorunyomi, Lanre Arogundade, Azu Ishiekwene and the five editors.

Structured into three sections and 14 chapters, the book examines issues ranging from professional ethics, investigative reporting and editorial independence to misinformation, journalists' safety, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, journalism education and the economic sustainability of media organisations. It also considers the responsibilities of the press ahead of the 2027 general elections and the need to preserve its watchdog role in Nigeria's democracy.

In her foreword, the Director of the Institute of Continuing Education at the University of Lagos and former Head of the Department of Mass Communication at the institution, Prof. Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika, described the publication as an important intervention in the debate over the future of journalism, highlighting the need to confront the disruption of traditional media structures, the spread of misinformation and the weakening economic foundations of independent journalism.

She also underscored the importance of the Nigerian Guild of Editors in the conversation, given its position as an association of media leaders responsible for editorial gatekeeping and newsroom leadership across print, broadcast and digital platforms.

Speaking on the book, especially during the presentation of copies at the various institutions, the Vice President (West), Nigerian Guild of Editors, Kabir Alabi Garba, said the publication is part of a broader initiative aimed at bridging the gap between what is taught in journalism and Mass Communication classrooms and the realities of professional practice in newsrooms across the country.

Garba, who doubles as the Weekend Editor of *The Guardian,* explained that the publication was conceived to bridge the gap in industry - academia collaboration.

Describing the NGE as an umbrella body for media gatekeepers, editors and professionals across the print, broadcast and online media in Nigeria, he said the publication brings together contributions from scholars in academia and experienced professionals in the newsroom, offering perspectives on the evolving demands, responsibilities and challenges of journalism in the country.

He explained that one of the major priorities of the NGE President, Eze Anaba since assuming office three years ago had been to promote sustained conversations between the academic community and the media industry.

He noted that the need for such engagement became more pressing when the Guild identified a considerable disconnect between journalism education and the practical experiences of journalists working in media organisations.

"One of his priorities is to see how we can continue the conversation around the town and gown," he stated.

Garba further disclosed that the observation of the gap between classroom instruction and professional journalism practice informed the decision to establish a committee to oversee research and publication which eventually led to the latest publication.

"When we noticed a very big gap between what is obtainable in the newsroom and what is being taught in the classroom, the Guild President empowered a committee headed by Professor Chinyere Stella Okunna, Nigeria's first female Professor of Mass Communication and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Paul University Awka, who coordinates the team that produced this book," he said.

He described the book as a product of contributions from individuals with different experiences and expertise in journalism and communication studies, adding that its content reflects the importance of connecting theoretical knowledge with the realities of the profession.

He explained that the Guild intends to make the book available to as many Mass Communication departments in Nigerian tertiary institutions as possible to promote wider access to its ideas and contributions.

"Part of our aim is to make it available to at least many of the departments offering Mass Communication in Nigeria," he stated.

At the University of Ilorin, the Head of Department, Prof. Rasaq Adisa, who received the publication, described the donation of the copies of the book as timely because the department was preparing for accreditation in which the book will play crucial role in the process of accreditation.

According to him, "One of the key requirements is the number of books we have, their relevance, and how recent they are. For the Nigerian Guild of Editors to have given us copies of a 2026 publication is a great asset — for our department, for the library, and for the university as a whole. The gift is highly appreciated."

He advised the students of Mass Communication at the department to make good use of the book, noting that it is particularly valuable because it contains chapters contributed by people who have lived the profession.

"It captures practical experiences that cannot be found in pure theory," he stated.

At the University of Lagos, the Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Prof. Oloruntola Sunday, said that the publication will play critical role in moulding the next generation of excellent journalists.

He described the publication as a form of collaboration between the town and gown, expressing hope that it will bridge the gap identified by the Guild while strengthening journalism education.

He said: "This publication will go a long way in helping our students, especially in the area of ethics, and I promise that we are going to make very good use of it."

Speaking, while receiving copies of the book at the Lagos State University (LASU), the Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Prof. Jide Jimoh, said the publication, with its wealth of knowledge and the expertise of its contributors, would serve as a valuable resource for students and academics in their quest for knowledge.

He described the book, which brings together contributions from professionals and academics, as an important addition to knowledge advancement, noting that the faculty places great emphasis on strengthening town-and-gown relationships.

Jimoh further stated that lecturers in the faculty remained committed to continuous learning and professional development, particularly in acquiring practical industry skills to enrich their teaching. He explained that this would help equip students with the relevant knowledge and competencies needed to remain competitive in the rapidly evolving media job market.

In her remarks, the Head of the Department of Mass Communication at Yaba College of Technology (YABATECH), Dr. Olorunyomi Omolara, commended the leadership of the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) for identifying the knowledge gap among students preparing to enter the media industry and initiating efforts to address it.

She noted that the initiative would help students gain a better understanding of industry expectations and the professional demands of journalism before venturing into the field.

She also praised the NGE for providing students with a platform to learn from industry professionals, adding that the initiative demonstrated the Guild's commitment to nurturing a new generation of journalists equipped to uphold truth, build public trust and meet the demands of the profession.

"If you are hiding in the college, there is no way you can hide when you get into the industry. Our work is teamwork, and students must understand that they need to practise individually, even when they are involved in group assignments," she stated.



Dr. Olabisi Deji-Folutile (left); Dean, Faculty of Media and Communication Studies, University of Lagos, Prof. Oloruntola Sunday; and Dr. Kabir Alabi Garba.



HoD, Mass Communication, Yaba College of Technology, Dr. Olorunyomi Omolara (right) and Dr. Kabir Alabi Garba.



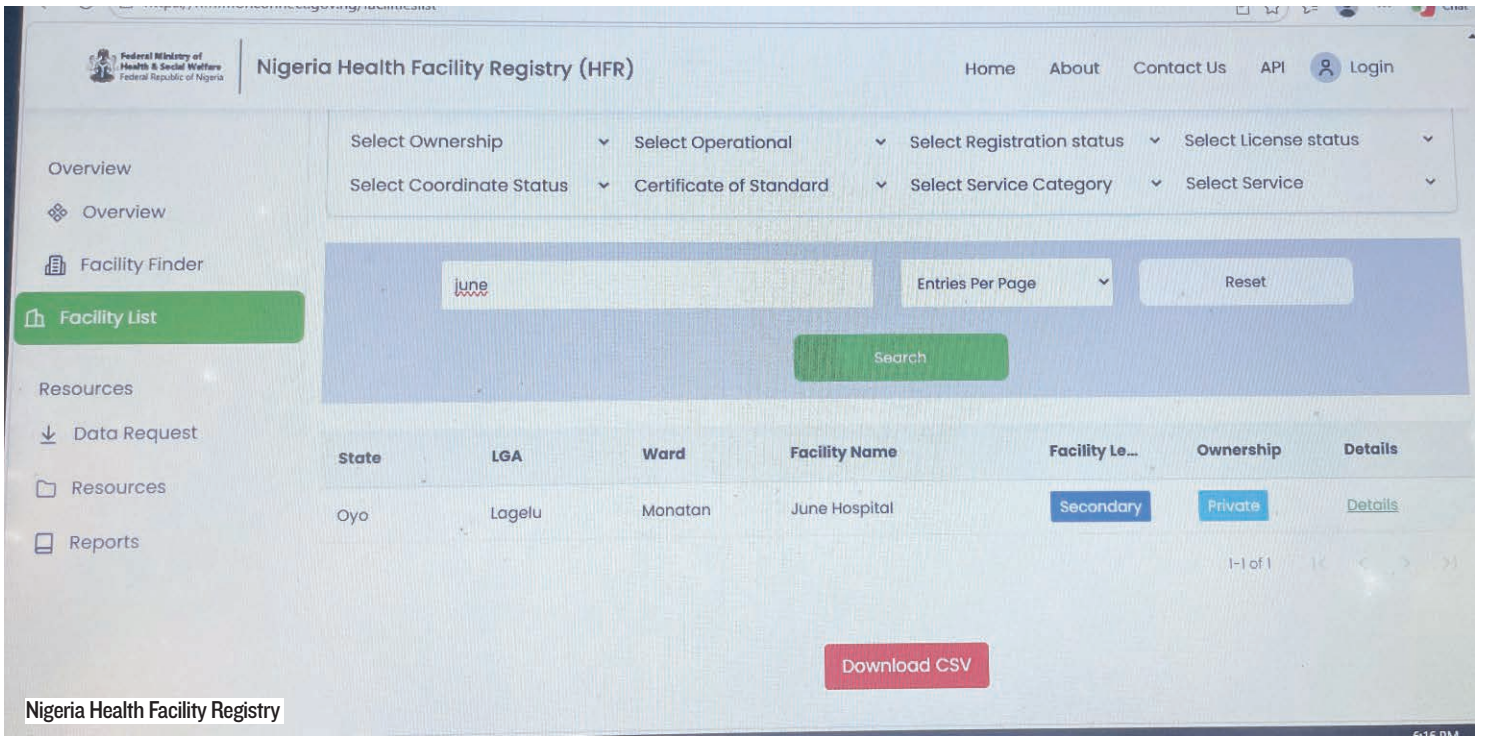
Steve Ayorinde (left); Onuoha Ukeh; Provost, Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ), Gbenga Adefaye; NGE President, Eze Anaba; Kabir Alabi Garba; and Iyobosa Uwugiaren.

Spotlight

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# Laxity In Health Regulation

*Weak monitoring and enforcement of standards in private health facilities, including inadequate verification of practitioners' qualifications and supervision of clinics allowed to reopen after anti-quackery operations, are exposing patients to the dangers of medical malpractice. Despite government crackdowns on unregulated facilities,* ***MOYOSORE SALAMI*** *examines inspection procedures, medical supervision and post-reopening monitoring.*



Nigeria Health Facility Registry

ABIODUN Rachel, an 82-year-old retired teacher, was accustomed to sitting outside her home in Gbekuba, Apata, Ibadan,enjoying the fresh air and exchanging greetings with neighbours. But on Saturday, September 12, something different happened.

As she sat outside, her daughter, Lola Abiodun, noticed that her mother's usually loud voice had become unusually faint.

Rachel had answered a telephone call from her son, who also noticed the change and asked why she sounded weak. When Lola asked what was wrong, her mother said she did not know.

Moments later, Rachel could no longer stand. Lola hurriedly closed her shop and, with the help of relatives, supported her mother into the compound. Unsure what had happened, they contacted Olawale Osho Olusola, proprietor of Iped Amazing Grace Medical Clinic, where Rachel had previously received treatment for keloids.

"He said he was not around, but that he would get to the hospital in 30 minutes and that we should bring her," Lola recalled.

Although Rachel managed to walk from her room to the car, her condition had deteriorated by the time they arrived. She could no longer use her left hand and leg properly.

Osho arrived as the family helped her out of the car and asked whether they wanted her admitted. They agreed, and he said tests would be conducted, including checks for malaria, typhoid and blood sugar.

It was Rachel's first hospital admission. Before then, her visits to Iped had been for keloid treatment. According to Lola, her mother had declined surgery because of her age.

The family expected the admission to establish what had happened to her. Instead, the days that followed raised questions about the treatment she received and the decision to keep her at the facility.

Whenever they asked about Rachel's medication or sought explanations about her condition, Lola alleged, the matron responded rudely and told them that only the doctor could answer their questions.

Osho was also not consistently available at the facility. Lola recalled that he had told the family he would not arrive early on Sunday because he was a pastor and owned a church. He eventually arrived later in the day.

On Saturday night, Osho had instructed Lola to prepare pap for Rachel, with honey or milk if she wanted. Lola said her mother drank pap that night and again on Sunday. Earlier, Rachel had eaten amala and vomited.

On Sunday, she complained of hunger, prompting Lola to ask the matron whether she could eat. The matron consulted Osho and later returned with his approval. Lola said her mother ate a substantial quantity of porridge before falling asleep.

The family initially did not realise Rachel had lost consciousness. Lola recalled that when Osho arrived and repeatedly called her mother's name without getting a response, relatives began screaming. Water was brought and oxygen administered before Rachel regained consciousness.

According to Lola, Osho told them they should thank God because Rachel had nearly gone into a coma.

By Monday morning, Rachel could still speak, although her voice was weak. She asked Lola to bring her Bible and glasses from home, later reading from the Bible and speaking with relatives. She also complained about noise from a neighbouring church, where an anniversary celebration had reportedly kept her awake the previous day.

Lola said Osho subsequently told the family that he had treated Rachel for malaria and typhoid and that she could return home to recuperate. He also recommended physiotherapy for her weakened limbs and offered to help them find a therapist.

But the family was unconvinced she was well enough to leave. Lola said her mother had become markedly weaker, could barely raise her arms or legs, and had deteriorating speech.

Although one of her sons repeatedly urged the family to take Rachel elsewhere, Lola said Osho maintained that he could treat her because she was a customer.

The family eventually requested a referral to a specialist hospital in Bodija, Ibadan. Osho wrote the referral letter, and relatives struggled to move Rachel into the car because, according to Lola, her body had become stiff and weak. She sat beside her mother during the journey, holding her head.

At the specialist hospital, doctors asked about Rachel's condition and the treatment she had received. Lola said they also asked whether her mother had eaten solid food and vomited. When she answered yes, a doctor raised the possibility that food might have entered her lungs, a condition the family understood to be aspiration.

She recalled that the specialist also questioned the earlier treatment for malaria and typhoid and discussed the need for antibiotics. Lola could not remember the precise medical terminology or the full explanation.

Rachel was subsequently referred to the intensive care unit at Frontida Clinic in Ibadan, where she died on September 19, 2026.

Femi Abiodun, one of Rachel's sons, said he was not living with his mother and had to visit after hearing about her illness. He recalled being told that tests would be conducted and the results made available the following morning.

According to him, Osho later said Rachel had malaria and typhoid, as well as signs of a stroke because her movement, particularly in one leg, had deteriorated.

Femi said the family struggled to obtain information about the medication being administered but initially accepted the clinic's explanations, believing its staff knew what they were doing.

He said their concern increased when Osho suggested that Rachel return home to recuperate and receive physiotherapy, as they believed she was still too weak to leave.

The family eventually requested a referral. Femi said they received a referral letter and hospital card from Iped but did not obtain complete medical records or prescriptions detailing the treatment administered.

**Medical Records Reveal Stroke, Suspected Aspiration Complications**

MEDICAL records obtained by *The Guardian* showed that Rachel was admitted to BODMED Clinic and Neurological Centre on September 14, 2026, at 3.09pm, following sudden weakness on the left side of her body, headache and vomiting.

A clinical summary described her as a known hypertensive patient and documented features of aspiration pneumonia complicated by severe sepsis. It also recorded features of acute kidney injury.

Consultant neurologist at BODMED, Dr Olabode Olajide, said Rachel's symptoms had started two days before she was brought to the facility. The family also said she had been taken to another private hospital, where they were told her blood pressure was elevated. Olajide said he did not have complete details of the treatment administered there.

On examination, Rachel was drowsy but responded to verbal greetings and commands. Her eyes were deviated towards the right, and she had limb weakness, particularly on the left side. She was also breathing rapidly, with abnormal sounds detected in her chest.

The medical team assessed her as having a right hemispheric stroke, with hypertension identified as a risk factor. They also suspected aspiration pneumonia because of the chest findings.

A cranial CT scan conducted on September 14 at Total Healthcare Diagnostics identified a region of hypodensity in the left cerebellar hemisphere, suggestive of a subacute infarct, and a lacunar infarct in the right head of the caudate. The report also documented calcifications in parts of the brain but found no evidence of haemorrhage or a mass lesion.

Olajide said the scan showed evidence of old and new strokes, while blood investigations indicated an infection suspected to have originated from the chest.

He explained that stroke can affect a patient's ability to swallow, causing food or liquid to enter the respiratory tract instead of the stomach and potentially leading to aspiration pneumonia.

"What had happened is that probably the patient was not swallowing well. And then the patient aspirated. Maybe the patient was fed, probably because of the stroke and all that, she had difficulty in swallowing. And that can make the food go to the wrong place. And that will cause infection," he said.

The clinical summary also recorded that Rachel continued to have low oxygen saturation despite receiving high-dose oxygen, with readings between 81 and 90 per cent.

According to Olajide, the team commenced stroke care, including oxygen, antiplatelet medication, antibiotics and intravenous fluids. However, when she did not improve as expected, BODMED referred her to the intensive care unit at Frontida Clinic for further management.

Olajide said aspiration pneumonia could become fatal, particularly when it complicates an existing stroke.


Dr Victoria Udofia

*Iped Amazing Grace Clinic was among six health facilities sealed by the Oyo State government in February 2024 during an enforcement exercise against regulatory violations. However, the circumstances surrounding its return to operation raise questions about the checks carried out by the state before allowing previously sealed facilities to resume work.*

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# Leaves Patients Exposed

"Aspiration can kill the patient very soon. The stroke is there. And then complications of stroke can be difficult to swallow. That can cause aspiration. That can lead to death," he said.

A death certificate issued by Frontida Clinic recorded that Rachel died at 3.50pm on September 19, 2026. It listed aspiration pneumonitis complicated by severe sepsis on a background of chronic hypertension as the primary cause of death, with cardiopulmonary arrest as the secondary cause.

A consultant neurologist, Dr Temitope Farombi, warned that Nigeria's fragmented healthcare system, weak regulatory enforcement and widespread quackery were putting patients at risk.

She said poor coordination among healthcare facilities compromised continuity of care, noting that critical patient information was often not properly transferred as people moved from one level of healthcare to another.

Farombi said the resulting gaps made it difficult to ensure coordinated treatment from the point of first contact through specialist care.

She also identified weak enforcement of healthcare regulations as a major factor allowing unprofessional practices to persist. According to her, the problem was not necessarily the absence of regulations but the failure to consistently monitor compliance and impose appropriate sanctions.

Stroke is a significant public health concern in Nigeria. World Health Organisation estimates for 2023 put the country's stroke mortality rate at 40 deaths per 100,000 people, with estimated rates of 41.7 among women and 38.5 among men. The WHO cautions that the figures are modelled estimates because Nigeria's death-registration data are incomplete or unsuitable for some mortality analyses.

A consultant neurologist, Dr Temitope Farombi, warned that Nigeria's fragmented healthcare system, weak regulatory enforcement and widespread quackery were putting patients at risk.

Farombi said the challenges confronting the country's healthcare system goes beyond inadequate facilities and personnel, stressing that poor coordination among healthcare facilities has compromised the continuity and effectiveness of treatment.

She noted that critical information about patients was often not properly transferred as they moved from one level of care to another.

According to her, the situation had created gaps in the healthcare chain, making it difficult to ensure that patients received coordinated treatment from the point of first contact through specialist care. She maintained that stronger coordination between different levels of healthcare was essential to preventing patients from falling through the cracks of the system.

Farombi further identified weak enforcement of healthcare regulations as a major factor allowing unprofessional practices to persist. She said the problem was not necessarily the absence of regulations but the failure to consistently monitor compliance and impose appropriate sanctions where necessary.

Stroke is a significant public health concern in Nigeria. The World Health Organisation's 2023 estimates put the country's stroke mortality rate at 40 deaths per 100,000 people. The estimated rate was 41.7 per 100,000 among women and 38.5 among men. The WHO cautions that these figures are modelled estimates because Nigeria's death-registration data are incomplete or unsuitable for some mortality analyses.



Iped facility

**How Did Iped Return After Being Sealed?**

IPED Amazing Grace Clinic was among six health facilities sealed by the Oyo State government in February 2024 during an enforcement exercise against regulatory violations.

However, the circumstances surrounding its return to operation raise questions about the checks carried out by the state before allowing previously sealed facilities to resume work.

Olawale Osho, who identified himself as a community health officer and owner of the facility, said Iped was not closed for medical quackery but because it had not been registered with the Ministry of Health. He said the facility was subsequently registered and allowed to reopen.

A licence obtained from Osho and issued by the Oyo State Ministry of Health on March 3, 2026, provides documentary evidence of the registration. Bearing registration number MHC/OY 142, the document names Osho as the person authorised to establish or manage Iped Amazing Grace Clinic at Araromi, Ibadan. It cites the Private Ordinance, 1948, and the Oyo State Registration of Private Hospitals and Other Health Institution Edict, 1988, as its legal basis.

The licence was valid until December 31, 2026. Osho said it was issued after the facility's closure and would require annual renewal. However, a search of the Nigeria Health Facility Registry (NHFR), the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare's national database of health facilities, returned no records for Iped Amazing Grace Medical Centre in Oyo State. The search, conducted on November 17, 2026, displayed the message, "There are no records to display."

The finding raises questions about whether the facility's state registration has been reflected in the national database. Its absence from the search results does not, however, establish that it was unlicensed, particularly given the state-issued licence obtained by The Guardian.

In response to questions about Rachel's admission, Osho confirmed that she was brought to his clinic on September 12. He said he noticed she had suffered a stroke but that the facility also discovered malaria and typhoid, which were treated.

He maintained that Rachel responded well to treatment and was discharged. He said he intended to recommend a physiotherapist to help with her stroke-related condition and reiterated that she had previously received treatment at the clinic for keloids.

On his professional qualification, Osho said he was not a medical doctor but a community health officer. He identified Dr Adeoye Omoniyi as the medical doctor who registered the clinic. However, Osho said the doctor did not routinely visit the facility and that he managed its daily operations.

**Ministry Explains Conditions For Reopening Sealed Facilities**

THE Oyo State Ministry of Health said facilities sealed for regulatory violations could resume operations after correcting the offences for which they were penalised and obtaining the ministry's approval.

Documents sighted by *The Guardian* list offences that could attract closure, including non-registration or failure to renew a facility's registration, lack of qualified personnel, handling medical cases beyond a facility's capacity, failure to comply with previous corrective directives, improper waste disposal and poor environmental hygiene.

A schedule, titled, *Invoice for Violation from the ministry's Anti-Quackery Taskforce,* also lists the training or use of auxiliary nurses, removal of government seals and assault of visiting officials among the offences. It includes a reopening fee for sealed facilities.

The ministry's Director of Planning, Research and Statistics, Babalola Damien, said inspections involved checking facility registration and the qualifications and professional licences of personnel. Officials, he said, examined the doctors and other health workers documented as working there to determine whether they possessed the required credentials.

Damien explained that a person did not necessarily have to be a medical doctor to own a health facility. Investors could establish facilities by employing qualified medical personnel, while nurses and community health officers could operate within their professional authorisation and applicable requirements.

"If they see a community health officer, they also can operate based on their standing order. The only thing that they need to do is that they will have a doctor who will be able to see their activities," he said.

Asked specifically about Iped Amazing Grace Medical Clinic in Apata, Damien said he understood that it was initially shut down because it had not been registered. The ministry subsequently returned to complete its registration, after which it was allowed to resume operations. *The Guardian* requested the clinic's inspection and registration records, as well as documents detailing the checks conducted before it was allowed to reopen. However, the ministry did not provide the requested documents.

**Enforcement Is Not The Same As Oversight**

THE state's repeated closure announcements suggest that its anti-quackery taskforce continues to identify facilities operating outside regulatory requirements. Yet public notices of sealed premises reveal little about what happens afterwards.

The case of Obeki Pharmacy in Monatan, Ibadan, illustrates the distinction between a facility's stated purpose and the services it allegedly provides. In November 2024, the pharmacy was reportedly closed after authorities raised concerns that it had admitted patients and carried out surgical procedures beyond the scope of a pharmacy. The allegations were reported during an enforcement operation and should not be treated as a judicial finding.

In another case, police arrested Adeniyi Benjamin, 45, at Life Is Good Hospital in the Olodo area of Ibadan on October 2, 2026, following intelligence reports about his activities. Police alleged that he attended to patients, including people seeking fertility-related care, despite lacking the qualifications and licence required to practise as a medical doctor.

Items reportedly recovered from the facility included a stethoscope, medicines, specimen bottles and weighing scales. Benjamin was described in reports as an auxiliary nurse. Police said he admitted practising since 2022 without the qualifications or training required to work as a doctor. The investigation was ongoing at the time of this report, and the allegations had not been determined by a court.

These cases do not prove that every private facility in Oyo State is unsafe. However, they underline why enforcement must go beyond sealing premises and issuing public warnings.

Regulators need to establish that facilities are registered, their professionals hold valid licences, their services fall within approved scopes and previous breaches have been corrected before operations resume.

For Iped, the ministry's explanation that it returned to register the facility does not answer all the questions raised by its earlier closure. The March 2026 licence identifies Osho as the person authorised to establish or manage the clinic, while the ministry says a facility managed by a non-medical doctor should have a qualified doctor overseeing its activities.

Osho's statement that Dr Adeoye Omoniyi registered the clinic but does not routinely visit makes it important to establish the doctor's formal responsibilities and whether the required supervision was provided.

The ministry did not provide the records needed to establish who was responsible for clinical operations when Rachel was admitted, which professionals were on duty or whether the facility's staffing and services met the conditions for its approval.

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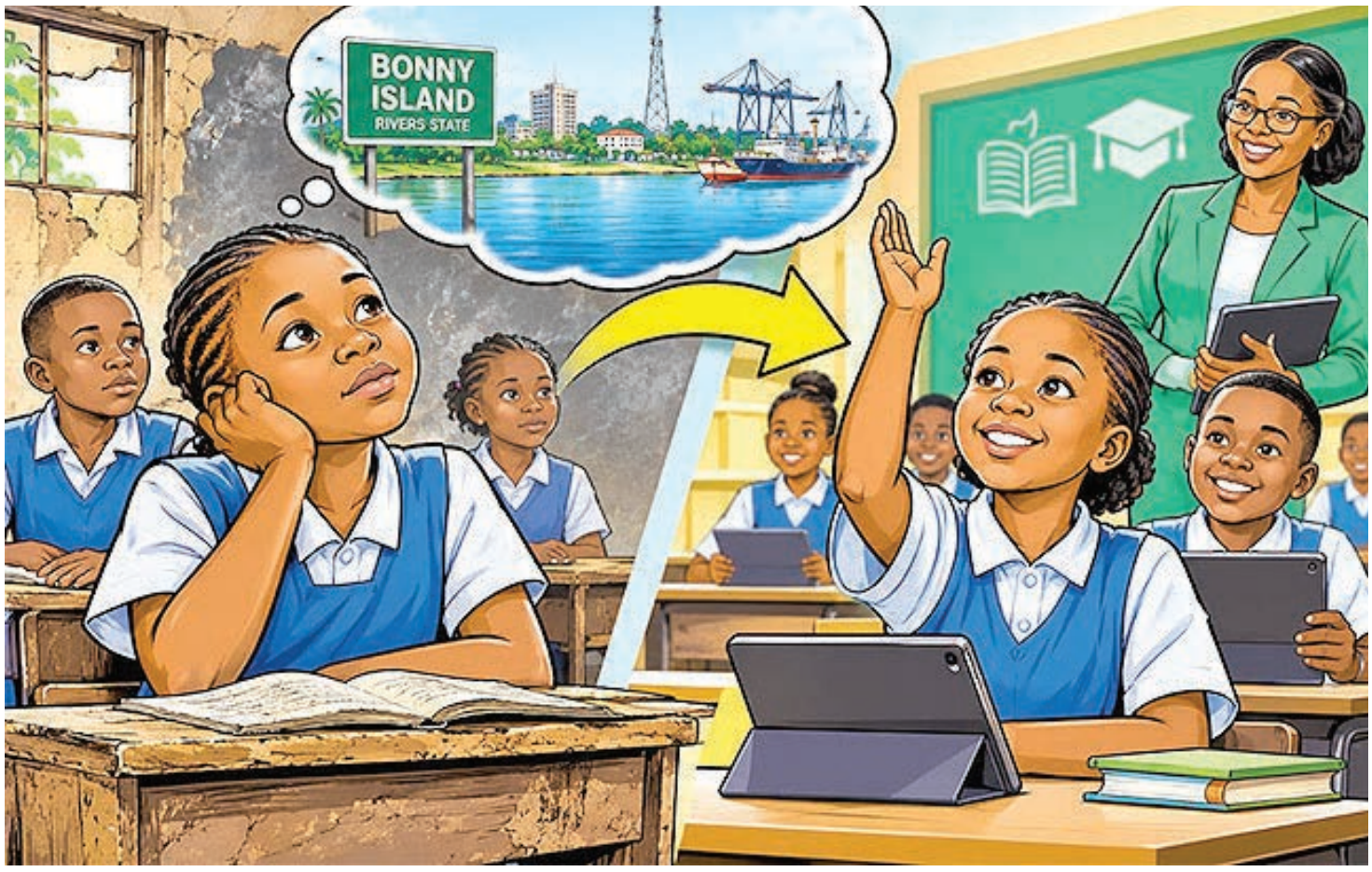
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How Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo moved from employment controversy to education, planning, and the difficult work of giving Bonny a future it could own

By Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo




# The Man Who **Carried The** Future

BEFORE dawn, the phone began to ring.Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo had hardly slept.

The calls came one after another, carrying the same question in different voices. Why had he been sent to Community Relations?

The question sounded incredulous even to him. He was Nigeria LNG Limited's Corporate Communication and Public Affairs Manager, and Community Relations was not where he had expected his career to go.

He had not requested the posting. He had not been briefed about it. Then the management reshuffle appeared on the company intranet.

Three hours later, Dr Babs Omotowa called. Mbanefo asked what offence he had committed. Omotowa gave him a different answer. He said Community Relations mattered deeply to him, and that he believed Mbanefo had the intellect, integrity, relationships, and courage the work required. But more than anything, Omotowa believed Mbanefo would not serve the rich and well-connected while abandoning the poor — that he would help build institutions capable of serving everyone.

Mbanefo asked permission to write down his own understanding of the assignment and the principles that would guide it. Omotowa agreed.

The assignment became more than a posting. It became a test of whether Bonny could move from personal access to public capacity.

Mbanefo entered Community Relations at a moment when Bonny was debating representation in the LNG economy. The community believed that candidates of Bonny origin were being systematically excluded from company employment, and the allegation carried real weight, because employment had become the most visible route into the modern economy.

The plant stood on Bonny land. Workers arrived with specialised skills. Contractors entered with equipment and expertise.

The industrial complex grew. And many Bonny youths remained outside the gates.

To them, a job meant more than wages. It meant a share in the project, recognition of host status, compensation for land and disruption, a place in the future, and proof that the kingdom had not simply surrendered its land to outsiders.

Mbanefo's first move was to seek a measurable response: he asked Omotowa to reserve 20 per cent of the ongoing operators' recruitment for Bonny candidates as a floor, and Omotowa agreed.

Then the quota could not be filled. The empty places became a kind of evidence. The community had demanded access. Access had been offered. The qualified candidates were not available in sufficient numbers.

Mbanefo could have stopped there and let the dispute return to accusation. Instead, he asked a harder question: why was Bonny demanding entry into an industrial future without producing enough candidates prepared to enter it?

Mbanefo went to the West African Examinations Council. He purchased 10 years of school-certificate results from schools in Bonny and began to study them. There was no drama in the room where the figures were read — no angry youths, no Chiefs Council, no company gate. Only documents, percentages, subjects, credits, failures, and the quiet accumulation of evidence.

The results were stark. Roughly 70 per cent of the secondary-school results did not contain five credits, and among those who did obtain five, a substantial number had not passed Mathematics and English, the two subjects Nigeria requires for admission into tertiary education.

The figures did not prove that discrimination was absent. They showed that discrimination could not explain the whole of the problem. Even a perfectly fair recruitment process could not fill the quota if the educational system upstream produced too few qualified candidates.

This was the moment Mbanefo moved from allegation to diagnosis. He had gone looking for a locked door and found that Bonny also needed to build the road leading to it.

The discovery was painful because it demanded internal responsibility: the community had to examine its own schools, teachers, families, institutions, and priorities, and to ask why children growing up beside one of Nigeria's most important energy projects were not being prepared to take part in its technical economy.

A school result can hide a life. Behind a failed Mathematics paper may sit a child who studied without electricity. Behind a missing credit may sit a classroom without adequate teachers. Behind a poor English result may sit a family without books or guidance. Behind a weak school may sit a community whose development spending was never connected to educational outcomes at all.

The statistics were not a verdict on Bonny's children. They were a verdict on the systems around them.

A child who fails to obtain five credits is not incapable of learning; the result says only that the child has not yet received enough support to demonstrate the required knowledge under the examination system, and that distinction matters enormously.

Blame the child, and the system stays untouched. Measure the school, and the problem becomes addressable. Accept the evidence, and a community can begin to build better teacher support, better materials, better school leadership, career guidance, focused Mathematics and English programmes, technical and vocational routes, scholarships, mentorship, and industry-linked training. The future of Bonny was not waiting at the gate. It was sitting in a classroom, often without the tools to recognise itself.

Mbanefo presented the findings to the King, the chiefs, the youths, and to different sections of the community in turn. This was a dangerous kind of honesty. It would have been easier to flatter the kingdom, to blame the company entirely, to repeat the language of systematic discrimination, and to demand a larger quota. Instead, he told Bonny that it had to build a talent pipeline.

The message was not that the employment grievance was false. It was that the grievance could not be solved permanently by fighting over vacancies after the company had already begun recruiting. The work had to begin earlier — in primary school, in secondary school, at home, in teacher training, in career guidance, in the relationship between education and employment itself.

His argument to the community was direct: build a robust pipeline rather than keep fighting needless wars; the future of the children should concern everyone. The word "pipeline" was chosen carefully. It described a continuous system through which a child could move from school to skill, from skill to qualification, and from qualification to real employment or enterprise. Bonny had been demanding the final product, employment, without always possessing the machinery that produces it.

Mbanefo set out to build that machinery.

He reached out to the World Bank and to UNICEF, and both sent education experts to support the work — an act that widened the whole meaning of Community Relations. The problem could no longer be managed through NLNG, the palace, and the Chiefs Council alone. It needed development institutions with real experience in education, children, planning, measurement, and public systems. UNICEF brought its institutional focus on children; the World Bank brought experience in education reform, learning outcomes, data, school management, teacher performance, infrastructure, and monitoring.

He also reached out to Moronke "Ronke" Azeez, who had served as Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on the Eko Project, a World Bank-assisted programme that improved learning outcomes and infrastructure across hundreds of public junior and senior secondary schools, reaching more than half a million students through school development grants, teacher support, performance incentives, testing, and management reform.

Its relevance to Bonny was plain. Education could not be improved by building walls alone. It needed baseline data, measurable targets, teacher development, school leadership, student assessment, performance tracking, incentives, community engagement, and the willingness to change a programme when its results were poor.

Azeez shared the experience of a project that treated learning as an outcome to be measured, not school construction as an achievement to be photographed.

Mbanefo also reached out to Professor Akin Mabogunje. Mabogunje's contribution should be described accurately: his major work on Lagos was academic and consultative rather than the drafting of a particular municipal blueprint, and his 1961 doctoral dissertation, Lagos: A Study in Urban Geography, remains a foundational study of the city's spatial, demographic, economic, and social structure. His wider significance for Bonny was methodological — the conviction that a place must be understood before it can be planned.

Bonny was not an empty canvas. It had, as this history has shown, a deep historical memory, a riverine geography, a palace, chieftaincy houses, Finima, industrial enclaves, resettled communities, restless youths, a diaspora scattered across Lagos and other cities, a limited land base, a maritime identity, and a development future that could not be reduced to LNG alone.

A masterplan that ignored these realities would be just another external document imposed on the kingdom. A plan that understood them could become a framework for ownership.

Mbanefo was not looking for a foreign blueprint to lay over Bonny. He was looking for the knowledge that would help Bonny understand itself.

NLNG hired Accenture to develop the 25 year masterplan for Bonny Kingdom — a decision that marked the shift from scattered projects to strategic planning.

The plan had to study population, land, education, health, employment, infrastructure, tourism, industry, enterprise, fisheries, agriculture, environment, investment, governance, financing, and implementation all at once.

The kingdom's future had to be mapped in more than ceremonial language. It had to be measured: how many children were in school, how many completed secondary education, how many passed Mathematics and English, how many could enter tertiary education or be trained for technical employment, how many local businesses could supply the companies, how many houses needed services, how much land could support new development, and what would happen to the community when the gas economy itself eventually changed. A masterplan could not answer every one of these questions on its own. But it could make them visible, and visibility is the beginning of accountability.

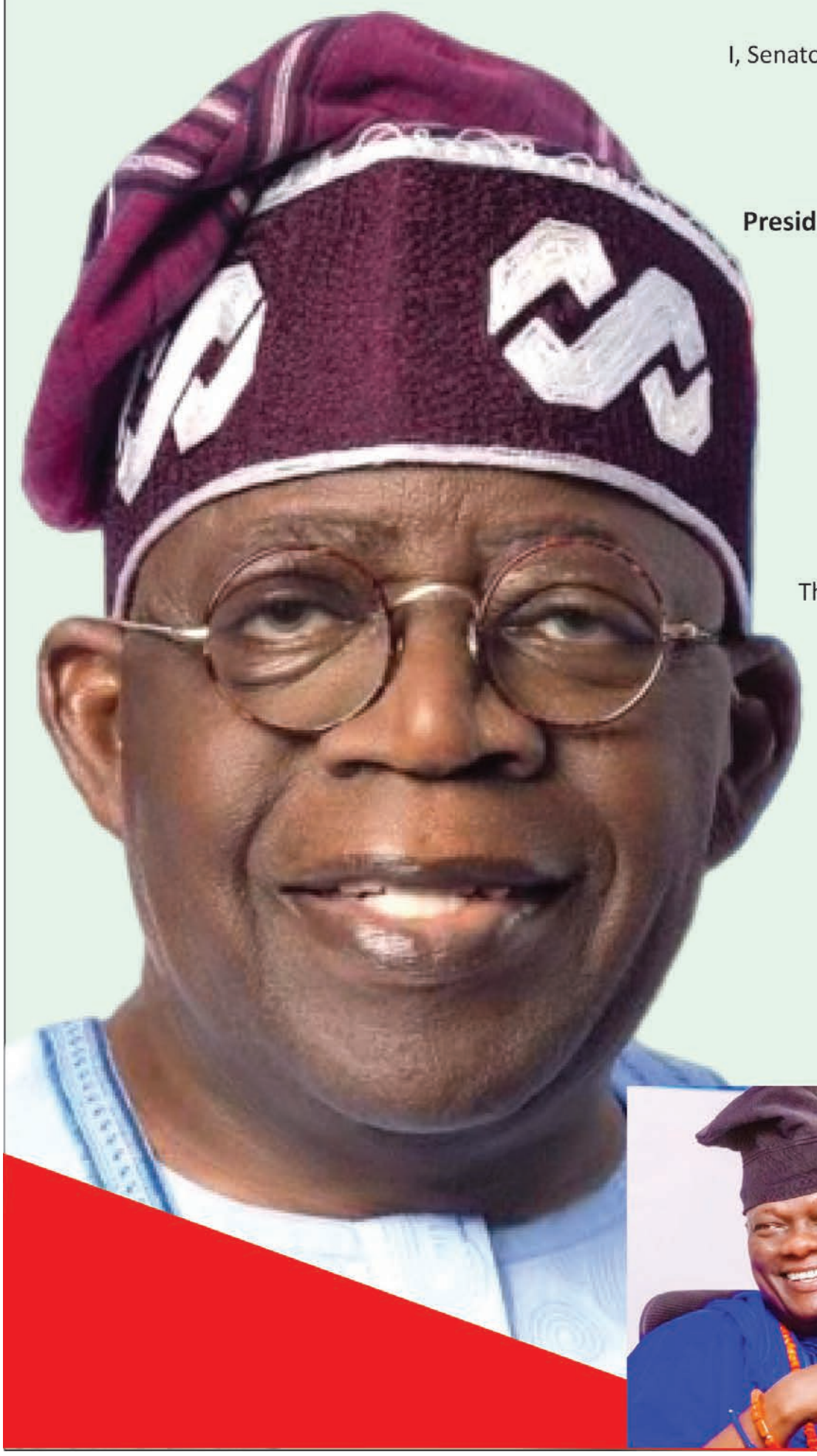
Mbanefo led sensitisation among the different constituencies of Bonny, including the Bonny people living in Lagos. The work required him to move through more than one Bonny at once: Bonny on the island, Bonny in Port Harcourt, Bonny in Lagos — the chiefs, the youths, the professionals, the business people, the elders, the women, the families, the students, the company workers, and the people who had left the island but still claimed it as home. A kingdom's population may be physically scattered while its identity remains entirely concentrated.

The masterplan therefore had to engage the whole of that wider community, and Mbanefo's consultations pressed for answers on what people wanted Bonny to become, what they feared, what had failed before, which projects mattered most, who should own the assets, how the Foundation should be governed, what role the King should play, how Finima should be represented, how the companies could remain partners, and what would make people trust the plan at all.

This was painstaking work. The community was not a blank audience waiting for a vision; it held its own visions, memories, disappointments, and competing expectations, and the task was to gather them into a shared direction.

# WELCOME TO PACESETTER STATE,
# OUR FATHER AND LEADER,MR. PRESIDENT!
## His Excellency,
## President Bola Ahmad Tinubu, GCFR,
## President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces,
## Federal Republic of Nigeria

APC



I, Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin, OFR, together with my family and associates, joyfully welcome and felicitate with

**His Excellency,**
**President Bola Ahmad Tinubu, GCFR,**
**President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces,**
**Federal Republic of Nigeria,**

on the occasion of your official visit and Presidential Campaign in Oyo State, today, 21st November, 2026.

Mr. President, your visionary leadership and steadfast dedication to the growth of our nation through the Renewed Hope Agenda remain a source of pride and inspiration to us all.

This visit means so much to the good people of Oyo State. It shows your genuine affection for our state and your resolve to carry every part of Nigeria along in the journey to greatness.

We are confident that your presence here will further unite our people and energize our collective support for your administration.

We pray for a hitch-free visit and a most memorable stay in the Pacesetter State.

**Oyo State is honoured to host you, Mr. President.**

**Welcome, Our Leader!**



**Signed:**
**Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin, OFR**
**Presidential Campaign Coordinator,**
**Oyo State.**

# Tantita: Nigeria's Quest For $50b Offshore Investments In 2030 Needs Strong Oil Assets Protection

*The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) projects that Nigeria's upstream oil and gas sector will attract between $30 billion and $50 billion in offshore investments between 2026 and 2030. To achieve this target, Nigeria needs to continue protecting its oil assets, especially oil pipelines, where the services of Tantita Security Services Nigeria Ltd (TSSNL) have proven to be vital,* ***ONYEDIKA AGBEDO*** *writes.*

ONE of Nigeria's biggest dreams is to achieve a $1 trillion economy and between $30 billion and $50 billion in offshore investments by 2030. The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) and other stakeholders in the economy are working hard to realise these targets. The NUPRC attributed the improved outlook to reforms introduced under the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), improved licensing transparency and faster project approvals.

Since 2024, the regulator has approved more than $57 billion in Field Development Plans, with several projects already progressing to Final Investment Decisions. The Commission also said preparations for the 2026 Licensing Round are underway as it seeks to attract further investment into Nigeria's upstream sector. The planned projects are expected to support the government's target of increasing crude oil production to two million barrels per day by 2027 and three million barrels per day by 2030.

Gaining the oil sector backing in this journey requires more than policy pronouncements from the NUPRC. It requires investment drive, attractiveness to global energy markets and support of domestic players in the industry.

Effectively harnessing the oil revenue requires that the Niger Delta, a region often described as the goose that lays Nigeria's golden eggs, must also be at peace and oil infrastructure across the region well secured. This is where the Federal Government of Nigeria's appointment of Tantita Security Services Nigeria Ltd (TSSNL) to protect oil assets and ensure peace and stability in the Niger Delta comes to play.

That singular act will contribute positively towards achieving $30 billion and $50 billion in offshore investments between 2026 and 2030, as targeted by NUPRC. The investment will be driven by 22 major offshore projects expected to boost crude oil production, create jobs, expand energy infrastructure and strengthen Nigeria's energy security.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu had appointed TSSNL led by High Chief Government Oweizide Ekpemupolo, alias Tompolo, to protect Nigeria's oil assets in the Niger Delta region. The appointment enabled the TSSNL to support the national economy in getting the full benefits of oil resources through its security operations.

The TSSNL works in collaboration with other security outfits to achieve its goals of securing oil assets and ensuring peace and stability in the Niger Delta region. Its operations had boosted the security of oil pipelines, ensuring the uninterrupted flow of petroleum resources and also that Nigeria migrated from a position of constant loss management to stability, planning, growth and development.

The TSSNL's operations have transformed the oil and gas landscape and allowed Nigeria to expand oil production quota and significantly cut rampant oil theft. Its track record in mitigating risks associated with oil pipelines has positioned it as a reliable partner in preserving Nigeria's economic backbone. The impact of TSSNL's operations was captured in a recent survey, with majority of the respondents attributing the de-escalation of security incidents in the Niger Delta region to the pipeline surveillance operations executed by the company.

Operational Modalities

TSSNL says it integrates advanced technology into all aspects of security operations, providing real-time monitoring, rapid threat detection and seamless communication. Its technology and system integration solutions are designed to enhance security infrastructure, streamline operations and prevent incidents before they occur. It delivers end-to-end solutions that ensure its clients' facilities remain secure while improving efficiency and response times.

To achieve efficiency in its operations, Tantita deploys surveillance technology to protect infrastructure from vandalism, theft and unauthorised access. It offers a range of surveillance systems customised to meet the specific needs of its clients. The company installs high-resolution cameras with night vision and thermal imaging to monitor activities 24/7, ensuring that no event goes unnoticed.

Its surveillance systems allow for remote monitoring through secure networks, giving authorised personnel access to live footage anytime, anywhere. Also, its cameras with motion sensors and AI capabilities can automatically detect unusual activity, triggering alerts for immediate response.

In a report on its website, Tantita said controlling access to critical areas ensures that only authorised personnel have entry, reducing the risk of insider threats or unauthorised access.

"Systems such as fingerprint scanners, facial recognition and retina scanners ensure secure and efficient access management. RFID Smart Card Systems allow for restricted access to key areas and provide a record of entry logs for enhanced accountability," it said.

The company said it also installs turnstile gates and automated barriers to control entry points in high-security facilities, minimising unauthorised movement.

"Early detection of potential threats is crucial for preventing damage and ensuring timely responses. Our integrated alarm systems are designed to detect and notify security teams of intrusions instantly. Our perimeter Intrusion Detection Systems (PIDS) detect breaches along fences or walls, issuing immediate alerts," it said.

It disclosed that glass break and door sensors installed on doors and windows send alerts if forced entry is detected, preventing unauthorised access.

"Our systems integrate with mobile devices to notify security personnel in real time, ensuring swift response to incidents. Seamless communication between security teams ensures coordinated responses to emergencies and real-time decision-making.

"Our advanced radio systems ensure uninterrupted communication across facilities, even in remote locations. We design and equip control rooms with video walls and communication consoles, providing centralised oversight for large-scale operations. Emergency Notification Systems enable quick dissemination of alerts to relevant stakeholders during emergencies, minimising confusion and delays," the firm added.

What Stakeholders Are Saying

In a published report, President General, Niger Delta Progressive Alliance, Nse Victor Udoh, said pipeline protection has enabled national institutions to progress from reactive crisis management to strategic foresight, from temporary containment to durable systems-building, and from uncertainty-driven decisions to calculated national ambition.

"It is important to clarify the role of pipeline surveillance within the wider energy landscape. Energy security encompasses the full value chain, from exploration and production to refining, distribution, pricing policy, and subsidy frameworks. Pipeline surveillance does not manage these domains," he said.

Udoh added: "Its mandate is precise: safeguarding critical infrastructure that transports petroleum resources. Yet, this single function has proven foundational. Without secure transportation channels, production targets falter, refining plans collapse, exports decline, and fiscal projections become unreliable.

"Asset protection, in this context, is not a supporting activity. It is a precondition for economic order. In effect, the pipeline is the hinge on which the entire petroleum value chain turns. When that hinge is weak, every other link in the chain carries strain. When it is secure, the entire system gains coherence."

The immediate impact has been operational. Sustained monitoring and rapid response systems have sharply reduced pipeline breaches and illegal tapping. Receipt rates have climbed towards full recovery, with national output rising to levels not seen in recent memory.

This redirection has restored Nigeria's credibility in international oil markets, allowing Nigeria to reclaim market share lost to Angola and Libya. "Economic stability follows predictability. When crude flows are secure, refineries can plan feedstock intake with assurance. Export commitments can be met without fear of sudden shortfalls. Gas-to-power projects can operate without recurrent shutdown risks.

"Investors can assess Nigeria's petroleum sector with clearer risk profiles. Surveillance therefore does more than stop theft. It reintroduces reliability into national energy planning. And reliability is the bedrock upon which sustainable economic growth is built. With predictable flows, national budgeting becomes more credible, infrastructure planning becomes more precise, and long-term contracts become easier to negotiate. Predictability is the silent currency of modern economies, and pipeline surveillance has begun restoring it," he stated.

Further benefits extend into public finance. Higher accounted-for production translates directly into increased export revenues, improved foreign exchange inflows and strengthened fiscal capacity. National oil company's performance in recent years illustrates this shift towards profitability and efficiency, driven in part by reduced losses and enhanced operational continuity. As revenues stabilise, government budgeting gains credibility.

Development planning becomes less speculative. The national economy gains breathing space to invest in infrastructure, social services and diversification. This breathing space matters. It allows policy makers to think beyond survival and begin shaping structural reforms, industrial expansion and long-term social investment. It also reduces dependence on emergency borrowing and short-term fiscal patchwork.

Stakeholders therefore advocate for continued collaboration with TSSNL, noting that securing oil infrastructure remains at the forefront of efforts to ensure the nation's sustainable development. Traditional rulers and community leaders in the Niger Delta have particularly called for continued support for Tantita following a vote of confidence passed on the firm by the National Assembly of Nigeria.

The leaders said the company's involvement in securing oil and gas pipelines has led to visible improvements in oil-producing communities, particularly in reducing crime and creating jobs for youths.

Speaking on the development, the President-General of the Isoko Development Union, Christopher Akpotu, praised the joint committee of the Senate and House of Representatives for dismissing petitions filed against the firm.

He described the decision as a positive step for the Niger Delta and urged stakeholders to focus on economic gains rather than internal disagreements. "That is the right way to go," he said. "There are many opportunities in the oil and gas sector. We should focus on how to derive more benefits rather than fighting over what has already been allocated."

Akpotu warned that continued disputes among communities could allow outsiders to take over opportunities meant for host communities. "At the end of the day, if we continue fighting, we give room to those who have no stake in our communities to take what rightfully belongs to us," he added.

Similarly, the President-General of the Ughelli Descendants Union, Sam Akpemegi, said the company has improved security since it began operations, noting that both visible and intelligence-based strategies have been deployed.

"They have done very well and improved security since they began operations," he said, adding that the firm's activities now cover a large number of communities.



Oil rig workers (inset) Tompolo

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

## Guinness Open For More: Why Delivering The Prize Matters

By Sulaimon Salau

A CONSUMER promotion is judged not only by the value of its prizes but also by whether participants can trust the process and receive the rewards promised. Guinness Nigeria Plc's Open For More promotion brought this into focus, rewarding 1,075 consumers over ten weeks with cash prizes and a luxury vehicle. Launched on July 18, 2026, the promotion rewarded 1,000 consumers with N100,000 each, while another 75 received N1 million each. Queen Thompson emerged as the grand prize winner, receiving a Toyota Land Cruiser Prado valued at N150 million. The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) provided regulatory oversight of the campaign.

For Thompson, however, believing the good news was not immediate. Having been swindled twice earlier in the year, she initially declined the call informing her that she had won the grand prize, fearing another scam. The notification eventually proved genuine, and the vehicle was presented to her at Guinness Nigeria's headquarters in Ogba, Lagos.

## PwC Africa Announces Michal Kotzé As Incoming Territory Senior Partner

By Felix Kuye

PWC Africa has announced that Michal Kotzé has been elected as the firm's next Africa Territory Senior Partner. He will take office on July 1, 2027, succeeding Dion Shango, who completes his maximum eight-year term on June 30, 2027.

Michal is currently part of the PwC Africa Leadership team as the Africa Clients and Markets Leader, a role he has held since July 2019. He joined PwC in 1997 and has spent close to three decades with the firm, building experience across all our markets and businesses.

Michal's election followed PwC Africa's established governance process for electing a Territory Senior Partner, which requires nomination by fellow partners, an extensive network and African board governance vetting process, and a vote by all partners across the PwC Africa territory.

As Africa Territory Senior Partner, Michal will lead PwC Africa's strategic direction aligned with the PwC Network strategy, with a strong focus on quality, ethical conduct and maintaining the trust of all our stakeholders.

# Nigeria's Cooking Gas Crisis: Supply Bottlenecks Threaten Decade Of Progress

By Sulaimon Salau

NIGERIA already holds the solution to its worsening cooking gas crisis, if adequate attention is given to the metrics and strategies, the Chief Executive Officer of Unigas Global Energy Limited, Anthony Agbo, has said.

Agbo, an economist, a finance expert and LPG advocate, in a chat with The Guardian, said supply bottlenecks and infrastructure deficits have continued to threaten to squander a decade of energy progress, because the nation failed to pay attention to the strategic plans that could enhance product availability and accessibility.

He said with 210.54 trillion cubic feet of proven gas reserves, the largest in Africa, Nigeria is not a gas-poor nation, but a gas-underutilized one.

He added that possessing a 93-year reserve life, the country has every resource needed to keep Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) affordable and accessible, provided it does not waste the opportunity.

"For years, Nigeria has pursued a deliberate policy to make cooking gas affordable and accessible: the Decade of Gas Initiative, the National Gas Expansion Programme (anchored by the Petroleum Industry Act 2021), VAT waivers and import-duty exemptions on LPG and cylinders. It worked, until demand outran supply.

"The results of that policy push were real: LPG consumption grew from about 900,000 metric tonnes a few years before to over 2 million metric tonnes in 2024, according to NALPGAM. NLNG alone supplied a record 500,000 tonnes to the domestic market last year, up from 70,000 tonnes when it started local supply in 2005. Dangote Refinery has added a new pillar, with reported LPG production capacity of 2,500 tonnes per day.

Noting that the gains are under threat, he said, "In September 2026, NMDPRA data showed daily LPG consumption rose to 5.2 kilotonnes per day, 33 per cent above the regulator's benchmark, while total receipts were only 4.7 kilotonnes per day. Stock cover fell to 15.9 days, against a 30-day safety minimum.

"When that gap opens, prices follow. In Abuja this week, retail prices hit N1,800 per kg meaning a 12.5kg refill now costs N22,500. Earlier this year, prices spiked as high as N2,400 per kg in some locations, up – 140 per cent from N1,000 per kg," he stated.

"When cooking gas becomes unaffordable, families do not stop cooking. They revert to firewood, charcoal and kerosene, reversing years of progress on deforestation, carbon emissions, and the respiratory health of rural women who bear the brunt of smoke related illnesses.



Business Unit Director, Plus Acuity, Emmanuel Adediran (left); Managing Director, mediaReach OMD Nigeria, Stephen Onaivi; EVP, Strategy & Innovation, Chain Reactions Africa, Franklin Ozekhome; Editor-in-Chief, The Industry Newspaper, Goddie Ofose; Group Head, Digital Marketing, TGI Group, Kenneth Iruonagbe; Group Executive Director, OMG WeCa, Adeyinka Adebayo and Managing Director/CEO, Brands Optimal Limited, Otis Ojeikhoa at the 2026 Industry Impact Summit in Lagos. PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

## VerveLife Brings Customers Together On Fitness, Wellness Experience

By Sulaimon Salau

INTERSWITCH is deepening its customer engagement and brand ecosystem strategy with VerveLife 9.0, expanding its flagship annual fitness experience into a two-day, four-part programme in Lagos designed to unite customers, fitness professionals, and industry stakeholders around shared wellness goals.

By moving beyond a single-day activation to a multi-touchpoint lifestyle platform, Verve is strengthening brand affinity and fostering a loyal, interconnected community. Rather than limiting engagement to financial transactions, the ninth edition creates high-value spaces for everyday customers and wellness entrepreneurs to connect, learn, and thrive together.

Commenting on the strategic vision behind the ninth edition, Executive Vice President, Group Marketing and Communications at Interswitch Group, Dr. Cherry Eromosele, noted: "With VerveLife 9.0, we are building on the platform's commitment to bringing people together around fitness, wellness, and shared experiences.

"This year's edition reflects that commitment through a two-day programme that brings together fitness professionals, enthusiasts, industry leaders, and entertainment. From the professional development opportunities at the 'Train the Trainer' session to the main fitness experience and the celebration that follows, we are creating different moments that allow our community to connect, learn, move, and have fun," she stated.

The programme kicks off on Friday, November 20, with an exclusive 'Train the Trainer' session tailored for fitness professionals. Led by renowned VerveLife trainers—including Chris Hinshaw, Mayorfit, Kemen, Dolly Phillips, and Benfit—the workshop equips local fitness practitioners with advanced skills while cultivating peer-to-peer networks.

## Union Bank Expands Footprint In Financial Inclusion, Community Development

By Sulaimon Salau

UNION Bank of Nigeria has accelerated its efforts to bring unbanked and underserved Nigerians into the formal financial system, even as it extended banking to rural farmers, provided mentorship and support for small enterprises.

Union Bank, in a document obtained by The Guardian, plans to deepen its cross-sector partnerships in the coming years, sharpening impact measurement to ensure its financial inclusion and enterprise initiatives deliver lasting economic participation.

Backed by over 200 million in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability investments in 2025, the bank said its inclusion drive directly reached more than 10,000 beneficiaries nationwide through 40 partnerships with non-governmental organisations, private-sector operators, and community institutions.

Rather than relying solely on traditional branch banking, Union Bank said its strategy pairs financial access with digital literacy, enterprise readiness, and grassroots social investment to dismantle barriers keeping vulnerable groups out of the formal economy.

"A central pillar of the bank's rural inclusion push is its partnership with agricultural processor WACOT, which extends formal banking services directly to smallholder farmers across rice and sesame value chains," it added.

According to the document, the collaboration connects rural producers, many previously excluded from formal credit and savings channels, with structured banking solutions, driving broader financial participation across agrarian communities.

The document highlights Alpher, Union Bank's dedicated women's banking proposition, as a primary vehicle for gender-focused financial inclusion. Recognising that credit alone cannot sustain emerging enterprises, Alpher blends financial products with business verification, mentorship, and investment-readiness training.

## AirSmat Secures Carbon Removal Deal With VP Capital

By Sulaimon Salau

AIRSMAT Limited, a Nigerian climate technology and agricultural manufacturing company, has announced a landmark commercial agreement with VP Capital, a European investment company, following the successful purchase of biochar carbon removal credits from AirSmat's Nigerian project.

The transaction marks a significant milestone for AirSmat as it advances its ambition to build Africa's climate infrastructure by combining sustainable agriculture, and durable carbon removal.

The purchase represents carbon removal associated with the production of more than 10,000 bags of BROWN, AirSmat's fortified biochar-based fertiliser, intended for farmers across Nigeria.

BROWN is produced by converting agricultural residues into biochar and combining it with essential crop nutrients. The resulting fertiliser is designed to improve soil health, support agricultural productivity and store carbon in the soil for the long term.

AirSmat's business model creates commercial value from both fertiliser sales and carbon removal credits, demonstrating how climate solutions can generate economic opportunities beyond carbon finance alone.

## Aradel's N2.46tr Cash Flow Masks Profit Decline, N1.32tr Earnout Liability

By Moyosore Salami

ARADEL Holdings Plc generated N2.46 trillion in net cash from operating activities in the nine months ended September 30, 2026, moving from a net debt position of N475.1 billion at the end of 2025 to a net cash position of N532.3 billion, following increased production and the consolidation of newly acquired subsidiaries.

According to the company's report, revenue rose to N3.95 trillion, while earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) stood at N2.10 trillion. Average production increased significantly to 144,700 barrels of oil equivalent per day (boepd), compared with 24,000 boepd in the corresponding period of 2025.

The growth followed the consolidation of ND Western and Renaissance, which became subsidiaries after the acquisitions were completed on December 31, 2025. This marked the first reporting period in which both businesses were fully reflected in the group's financial results.

The expanded production base improved EBITDA margin to 53 per cent from 49 per cent a year earlier, while unit field operating costs declined by 28 per cent to US$7.9 per barrel of oil equivalent from US$11.0.

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# Solar Cold Storage: How EWAS Is Creating Jobs For 17,000 Women, Youths

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

MRS JULIET Akin-Allen, a frozen food operator at the Eshidana Market, Okerube in Abaranje area of Lagos, and other traders in that line of business have been crying in silence over the negative impact of epileptic power supply on their trade.

While she had struggled over the years to stay afloat after recurring incidences of spoilage that had almost led her to bankruptcy, Akin-Allen kept hope alive, hoping that one day she'll get a new business that'll make her to finally quit the frozen food business she had engaged-in for 10 years.

"The electricity situation in this area has been very poor in recent time. At times when we discover that the frozen foods are getting to the point of spoilage, we give them out and at times, we sell them at cheaper rates, instead of recording total losses. At times we spend up to N9, 000 daily to fuel generators to ensure that the fishes, chickens are turkey are in good condition. If you spend that kind of money from your profit daily, it amounts to going home empty handed."

Another trader, Mrs Florin Osagie, the owner of Floxy Spice Delight, also had a bitter experience from the epileptic power situation on her business. "At times, when power is restored in the morning, within minutes it will be taken off till night and that's how we have been enduring the unpalatable situation. We depend solely on generating sets buying as much as 10 litres a day, depending on how light is available."

Just like Akin-Allen, Osagie narrated how losses incurred on weekly basis has seriously impacted her business and also made her to lose some of her loyal customers. "There was a woman who bought chicken, on getting home, she returned the goods and demanded a refund, which seems to be a difficult problem in business. There are many cases like that too."

These are two of the numerous sweet-bitter experiences of young women and youths engaging in food, cold-storage and agriculture related businesses in the country. But with the emergence of Energizing Women and Youth in Agri-Food Systems (EWAS) – an initiative designed to integrate technologies into agriculture and empower young women in rural areas, the story of these traders have changed from losses to profits.

Now, Akin-Allen expresses a different experience. She has experienced a great turnaround in her business since she acquired a solar power initiative. The patronage has also increased as customers come from far and near because there's assurance that there'll be fresh frozen foods in her shop.

"For now, I have been able to save the money spent on fuel as my profit, since the solar solution has provided constant power supply and it is cheaper. The repayment plans are also very flexible."

While also giving her testimony, Osagie said: "But since the solar solution was introduced, it's been a wonderful story. We acquired the freezer and solar panel. Our goods, which usually get spoiled before the intervention, are now in good condition, the refrigerators working perfectly and the chickens looking very attractive to the customers.

"We are enjoying good patronage on daily basis, seeing new customers. Before we usually buy small quantity for the fear of irregular electricity, but now I usually stock more than enough."




EWAS is a three-year strategic partnership between the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet and the Mastercard Foundation. Operating across Ethiopia and Nigeria from 2024 through 2027, it integrates clean productive use of energy (PUE) technologies, such as solar irrigation, walk-in cold storage, solar milling and chest freezers, directly into agricultural value chains.

This initiative, aimed at enabling 17,000 jobs, especially for young women in Ethiopia and Nigeria, moves beyond traditional aid by treating renewable energy as a foundational productive asset for industrialisation.

EWAS seeks to improve access to green energy, promote the productive use of energy technologies, and provide training to help young women increase their incomes. By integrating these technologies into agriculture, the programme aims to empower young women in rural areas.

The programme, working with a consortium of partners including Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) in Nigeria, and local businesses, is structured to deliver measurable progress across three high-impact areas – Gender-inclusive job creation.

The initiative is designed to create 17,000 jobs, specifically targeting young women in Nigeria and Ethiopia to help close the persistent gender earnings gap in rural economies; Technological scaling: By integrating solar-powered irrigation and walk-in cold storage, the programme stabilises value chains in poultry, horticulture, and milling; and De-risking finance: Utilising the Productive Use Financing Facility (PUFF), the programme provides results-based subsidies and capacity-building grants to make green technologies affordable for communities, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) such as farmers.

In Lagos, the initiative operates across 16 peri-urban communities, concentrated mainly in Alimosho (Ayobo, Ikotun, Egbeda), as well as Ikorodu and Ojo. So far, 88 of 90 target systems have been deployed, with 85 installed. From this, 68 systems went to women (77%).

Also, 350 of 637 phase jobs created, including 25 master agents, 29 sub-agents, 21 installers (8 women), three female project staff, loaders, and logistics staff. Aside the fact that the initiative focuses on Lagos traders running their businesses on solar power, another success story of the initiative is the fact that it is the female folks that are installing these solar system, thereby breaking into a male-dominated trade.

The Manager of the EWAS programme in Nigeria, Farouk Magaji Bello, said the aim of the programme is to give young women the necessary support that will improve their livelihood, in order to earn more income for improved livelihood.

Bello said the programme, which began in 2024, targets women and youth entrepreneurs and cooperatives across agri-food value chains.

Studies conducted as part of the programme found that a vast majority of women micro-entrepreneurs trade in perishables, meat, fish, and cold drinks, where lack of reliable cold chain power was the primary bottleneck to profitability. The idea is to work with local partners such as SunFi to support these young entrepreneurs to grow and improve their livelihoods.

# 'How Indiscriminate Fertiliser Use Can Undermine Food Security'

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

AGRICULTURAL experts have warned that Nigeria's quest for food security may remain elusive unless farmers abandon indiscriminate fertiliser application and embrace soil testing and crop-specific nutrient management.

The experts, who spoke at the 2026 South-West Nigeria Fertiliser and Soil Health Summit in Ibadan, Oyo State, cautioned that increasing fertiliser consumption without understanding the specific nutrient requirements of farmland could undermine agricultural productivity, reduce farmers' incomes and worsen soil degradation.

They argued that fertiliser management should go beyond distributing inputs to farmers to ensure that the right fertiliser is applied to the right soil, for the right crop and at the appropriate time.

The position formed a major highlight of the communiqué issued at the end of the summit, organised by the Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T), Obafemi Awolowo University, Moor Plantation, Ibadan.

With the theme, "Fertilisers and Food Security in South-West Nigeria: The Journey So Far," the summit brought together more than 150 scientists, farmers, policymakers, fertiliser manufacturers and distributors, agricultural extension professionals and development partners to examine challenges affecting fertiliser utilisation and soil health in the region.

The participants expressed concern that the continued reliance on blanket fertiliser recommendations failed to address variations in soil fertility, acidity, phosphorus fixation, nutrient depletion and other soil-related challenges across different agroecological zones.

According to the communiqué, "The predominance of blanket fertiliser recommendations does not adequately address the variations in soil fertility, soil acidity, phosphorus fixation, nutrient depletion and other soil constraints across different agroecological zones in the region."

The experts maintained that fertiliser recommendations should increasingly be based on soil testing, crop requirements, prevailing agroecological conditions and economically viable nutrient management practices.

They also identified high fertiliser prices, inadequate distribution networks, limited access to credit and inconsistent availability as major constraints preventing smallholder farmers from accessing and effectively utilising the agricultural input.

The summit also warned that declining soil organic matter, nutrient imbalance, erosion and other forms of soil degradation continued to undermine fertiliser-use efficiency and agricultural productivity.

To address the challenges, the participants called on research institutions to strengthen soil fertility mapping and develop crop-soil-and location-specific fertiliser recommendations for major crops cultivated across South-West Nigeria.

They also urged governments and relevant agricultural institutions to provide affordable and accessible soil testing services to enable farmers to understand the condition of their farmland before applying fertilisers.

The experts advocated integrated soil fertility management, involving the combination of mineral fertilisers with organic resources, crop residues, compost, animal manure and biological inputs, as a sustainable approach to improving soil health and agricultural productivity.

They also called for stronger collaboration between fertiliser manufacturers and research institutions to develop formulations capable of addressing specific soil deficiencies, including phosphorus fixation and shortages of secondary and micronutrients.

On climate change, the experts noted that irregular rainfall patterns and increasing incidences of drought required farmers to adopt climate-smart fertiliser management strategies.

They recommended that fertiliser application guidelines should take rainfall variability, planting dates, crop water requirements and appropriate application methods into consideration.

Earlier, the Chairman of the occasion and Vice-Chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Prof. Simeon Bamire, represented by the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Prof. A.O. Ajayi, emphasised the need to shift attention from fertiliser distribution to fertiliser-use efficiency, describing it as a critical pathway to achieving food security.

## 2027: Group Plans Presidential Debates For January 10 In Abuja

By **Gbenga Salau**

THE Political Intelligence Group (PIG) on Friday, said that as Nigeria moves towards the 2027 general election, the nation and its citizens cannot afford to submit to disorderliness, violence and confusion.

The Convener of the group, Lai Omotola, stated this on Friday at a press briefing to announce the PIG planned presidential debate slated for January 10, 2027, at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

Omotola noted that after 66 years of independence as a nation, it should be clear in mind and deed to know the policies that will work and those that will not work.

"We should be able to know the best man for the job and not jump at every banana thrown at us. As Nigerians head for the polls, the forthcoming elections will be the most consequential in the history of the nation.

"Over the years in our election cycle, presidential debates have not been consistent. In 1993, the First Presidential Debate was held between the SDP Presidential Candidate, Chief MKO Abiola and NRC Candidate, Alhaji Bashir Tofa and since then, a total of eight debates have occurred," he said.

## 2027: Obi Charges Citizens To 'Sacrifice One Day For Nigeria' To Be Good Again

From **Chuks Collins**, Awka

IT was a carnival of sorts at the commercial city of Onitsha when the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) national campaign train berthed there on Friday.

The multitude of NDC faithful took over the entire roads in the city in a solidarity march round Onitsha roads – from Awka road down to the popular Main market, Ochanja market area and the Head bridge.

Many who lost strength dropped by the wayside and boarded commercial motorcyclists to return to All Saints Cathedral Hall, the party's Town Hall venue.

His eventual arrival set the arena on fire as everyone was very excited. It took longer than 10 minutes for the frenzy to die down.

In his remarks Obi urged all electorates to "sacrifice one day for Nigeria to be good again."

"Go with your stool, cast your vote. Sit down, wait, monitor and guard your vote. Follow it till it's counted, recorded and announced," Obi advised.

Senator Victor Umeh emphasised that Obi remains the best candidate in this election.

"Nigerians nationwide are clamouring for a Mr. Peter Obi presidency," he said.

He therefore called on the South East not to allow any single vote to be lost.

# Ekiti Governorship: Parties Adopt Final Addresses Before Tribunal

From **Ayodele Afolabi**, Ado-Ekiti

EKITI State Governor, Mr. Biodun Oyebanji and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), on Friday, urged the Election Petitions Tribunal to dismiss the petitions filed by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Action Alliance (AA) against the conduct of the June 20 governorship election.

Oyebanji, who was the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate at the election, and INEC which conducted the poll, maintained that the petitions are incompetent, full of defects and have proven to be gross violations of the provisions of the Electoral Act 2026.

Oyebanji and INEC stated this before the three-member panel led by Justice Abubakar Idris Kutigi during the adoption of final written addresses by parties in the two separate petitions.

Represented by his lead counsel, Dr. Onyechi Ikpeazu (SAN), Oyebanji argued that the petitioners (SDP and AA) have not proved that his return was invalid by reason of non-compliance with the provisions of the Electoral Act 2026.

The governor further contended that the petitioners have failed to place concrete and convincing evidence before the tribunal that his election was valid by reason of corrupt practices as alleged in their petitions.

Ikpeazu, who adopted the written addresses on behalf of his client (Oyebanji) and relied on the contents of the addresses, urged the jury to dismiss the petitions and hold that the governor's election was valid and satisfied the provisions of the Electoral Act 2026 and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended).

In the SDP case, INEC's lead counsel, Mr. Sulaiman Ibrahim (SAN), who also canvassed the dismissal of the petition, identified three major issues for determination in the petition.

Adopting his written addresses on behalf of the electoral umpire, Ibrahim maintained that the evidence of the petitioner's witnesses brought to the tribunal by the SDP from PW 1 to PW 57 were hearsay which has no basis in law, urging the tribunal to discountenance the said evidence.

Adopting INEC's written address in the AA petition, Mrs. Wendy Kuku (SAN), who urged the tribunal to throw out the petition "as far as the law can reach," also urged the panel to do so with substantial cost.

But the SDP counsel, Dr. Nnamdi Chukwudebelu, who adopted the final written address on behalf of his client, urged the tribunal to uphold the petition in the interest of Justice.

Chukwudebelu, who also appeared for AA and adopted its final written address, implored the tribunal to grant the petitioner's prayers.

After all the parties had adopted their written addresses, the Tribunal Chairman, Justice Kutigi, who spoke on behalf of the other two panel members, Justice Aminu Tukur and Justice Maurice Okediya, reserved judgment till a later date to be communicated to the parties in the petition.



Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State, Dr. Peter Akpe (left); Governor Douye Diri; and Chairman, Bayelsa Council of Traditional Rulers, King Bubaraye Dakolo, during the governor's visit to the council's secretariat in Yenagoa.

## Tinubu Confers GCON On NBA Ex-president, Olanipekun

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

**•Akpabio, Oyebanji, Others Eulogise Legal Icon At Book Launch**

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu has conferred Nigeria's second highest national honour of Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON) on renowned legal expert and former President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Chief Wole Olanipekun (SAN) in recognition of his contributions to the legal profession and the administration of justice in the country.

President Tinubu conferred the honour on Olanipekun on Thursday during the unveiling and public presentation of 'Wole Olanipekun Through the Cases,' commemorating the legal icon's 75th birthday, 50 years at the Bar and 35 years as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria at the Hairat Balogun Auditorium, Body of Benchers Complex, Abuja.

Dignitaries at the event included Senate President Godswill Akpabio, Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanii; Ondo State Governor, Lucky Aiyedatiwa; Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila; Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele; President of the Nigerian Bar Association, Mrs. Oyinkansola Badejo-Okunsanya (SAN), eminent jurist, political leaders, traditional rulers, among others.

Addressing the gathering, the President described Olanipekun as a phenomenal Nigerian and a legend of the legal profession, who the country had benefited immensely from his wealth of experience, dedication and valuable contributions to the course of justice.

The President, who expressed pride in celebrating the legal icon, said his relationship with Chief Olanipekun had spanned decades of friendship and loyalty, noting that the senior lawyer had led his legal team for many years.

## Investors Bet On Ogun's Political Stability, Continuity In Governance, Says Abiodun

From **Azeez Olorunlomeru**, Abeokuta

**•Egbaland Backs Power Shift To Yewa — Ishola**

OGUN State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, has attributed the sustained influx of investors into the state to growing confidence in his government's policies, the peaceful political atmosphere and the prospect of continuity under the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Abiodun said the orderly political transition within the ruling party had further strengthened investors' confidence that the stability, economic reforms and development trajectory established by his administration would be sustained beyond 2027.

This came as Egbaland has declared its collective support for the emergence of Yewa as the next political zone to produce the governor of the state, throwing its weight behind the APC governorship candidate, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, popularly known as Yayi, ahead of the 2027 general election.

The governor spoke on Friday when he led the APC governorship candidate, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, to a meeting with members of the Egba Traditional Council at the palace of the Alake and Paramount Ruler of Egbaland, Oba Adedotun Gbadebo, in Ake, Abeokuta.

He noted that Ogun State had continued to attract fresh investments because of its peaceful environment, improved infrastructure and deliberate policies aimed at creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive. According to him, his administration has attracted more than 6,000 companies to the state in the last seven years, constructed over 1,700 kilometres of roads, built about 8,000 houses and recruited more than 8,000 teachers into public primary and secondary schools.

Abiodun maintained that the absence of political violence, thuggery and wanton destruction of lives and property had become a major selling point for Ogun State, assuring investors that their investments were safe and their businesses could operate without unnecessary disruptions.

## Tinubu Appoints Dabiri As National Assembly Service Commissioner

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has appointed former Lagos State Commissioner for Youth and Social Development, Agboola Lukman Dabiri, as Commissioner representing the South-West in the National Assembly Service Commission (NASC).

Dabiri's appointment fills the vacancy created by the resignation of Taiwo Olukemi Oluwa, who stepped down on March 30, 2026, to pursue his political ambition in the 2027 general election.

The President's approval announced on Friday by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, explained that Oluwa is seeking election to represent the Irewole/Isokan Federal Constituency of Osun State in the House of Representatives.

Before his appointment, Dabiri served as Lagos State Commissioner for Youth and Social Development.

He also previously held the position of Mandate Secretary for Economic Planning, Revenue Generation and Public-Private Partnership in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

## VOA Foundation Targets $60,000 For Youth Education

By **Debo Oladimeji**

THE VOA Foundation and Charity has launched a $60,000 fundraising campaign to expand its education and aviation programmes for young people in Nigeria and other African countries.

The foundation announced the target as part of activities marking its fourth anniversary, scheduled for November 29 in Lagos, with the theme, 'From Roots to Wings, Time to Elevate.'

It said the campaign would raise an initial $30,000 by December 31, with another $30,000 expected through sustained monthly donations.

Established in 2022, the foundation said it had reached more than 4,000 students, mostly in public schools, across Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia, Kenya and Namibia.

Its programmes include Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education, tutoring, mentoring, scholarships, aviation and space education, as well as health and medical outreach.

The foundation said it had also supported science education in 10 schools through its programmes.

Its founder, Dr. Olabisi Adekoya, said the organisation was established to help young people gain access to opportunities that could improve their future.

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# CHANGE OF NAME

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**ADDITION OF NAME ;** I, Nkoyo Etim Akaduh now wish to be addressed as Stephanie Nkoyo-Etim Akaduh. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**ADDITION OF NAME ;** I, Sakutu Ogechi now wish to be addressed as Sakutu Ogechi Blessing . All former documents remain v alid. General public take note.

**ADDITION OF NAME:** I, formerly Endurance Dedevwo now wish to be addressed as Endurance Success Dedevwo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**ADDITION OF NAME;** I, Nwachukwu Esther Chiemerie now wish to be addressed as Nwachukwu Anthonia Esther Chiemerie. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**ADDTION OF NAME::** I formerly known as Solomon Stella now wish to be addressed as, Ojo Solomon Stella. My DOB is 20-11-1976 not 20-11-1978. Former documents remain valid. Public note

**ADEYEMO:** I, formerly known as Adeyemo, Rebecca Adediwura now wish to be addressed as Akinlawon, Rebecca Adediwura . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**AGUSTA :** I , formerly known as Abu Ebamuonlen Agusta now wish to be addressed as Abu Augusta Ebamounlen. My DOB is 16-08-1992 not 28-05-1991. Former documents remains valid, note

**AKANANA :** I , formerly known as Akanana Rosa Odiano, now wish to be addressed as Okoeguale Roseline Odiano. My DOB is, 02-03-1953 not 02-02-1953. Former documents remains valid, note

**AKENWA:** I, formerly known as Akenwa Joy Ife now wish to be addressed as Irabor Joy Ife . All former documents remain v alid. General public take note.

**ALEXANDER:** I, formerly known as Alexander Matthew now wish to be known as Ikwumere Chiemeka Matthew . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**ANINKAN:** I formerly known as Miss Funmilayo Taiwo Aninkan now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Jimoh Funmilayo Taiwo. All former documents remain valid. Oak Pensions Limited, General Public note

**ATIBA:** I, formerly known as Atiba Adebola Cecilia now wish to be addressed as Fadipe Adebola Cecelia. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**AYLA:** I, formerly known as Khalipher Ayla Omuwa, now wish to be addressed as Ayla Omuwa Ojei. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**BAAJON :** I, formerly known as Baajon Rikwen now wish to be addressed as Iranum Rikwen. My DOB is 30-04-1988 not 04-04-1988. Former documents remains valid, public take note.

**BLESSING :** I, formerly known as Blessing Aniebietabasi Isaiah now wish to be addressed as John Aniebietabasi Isaiah. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**BLESSING:** I, formerly Blessing Blessing Dedevwo now wish to be addressed as Blessing Ese Dedevwo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**BOZIMO :** I, formerly known as Bozimo Princess Tamarabrakami now wish to be addressed as Elikwu Princess Tamarabrakami .All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**CHIDERA:** I, formerly known as Anthony Chidera now wish to be addressed as Anthony Chiwueze . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CONFERMATION OF NAME ;** I, Abido Cynthia now wish to be addressed as Lagos Ufuoma . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME:** That I, Adebogun Esther Bose is same person known as Adebayo Esther Bose. All former documents remain valid. Geanral public take note

**CORRECT OF NAME :** I, formally known as Ezechukwu Chidiebere Chidi now wish to be addressed as Eze Udu Chidiebere . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME :** My name was wrongly written as Aderibegbe Taiwo Esther instead of Aderibigbe Taiwo Esther. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME.** I , formerly known as Marcus Smith Sokari now wish to address as Marcus Smith, as it is on my NIN. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly captured as Obadago Fegor instead of Obodago Fegor. All former documents remain valid. WAEC, Public take note

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly written as John Endurance, Jeremiah instead of Shaibu Endurance Jeremiah. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME;** I, Olatunji Faith Agbojule now wish to be addressed as Olatunji Agbojule . All former documents remain v alid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME;** I, Tochukwu Emmanuel Obia now wish to be addressed as Tochukwu Nelson Emmanuel . All former documents remain v alid. General public take note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME:** I, Ebere James Obuzor is one and same person as Ebere Nkemka Odoyi. Documents bearing both names remain valid. Public take note.

**DARAMOLA:** I, formerly known as Daramola Damilola Dare now wish to be addressed as Folayinka Daramola Damilola. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

**IDOKO:** I, formerly known as Idoko Christian Owechi, now to be addressed as Idoko Leo Owechi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**ADDITION OF NAME:** I, known as Okoligwe Ignatius now wish to be addressed as Okoligwe Ignatius Ikechukwu. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

**DINNEYA :** I, formerly known as Miss. Dinneya Gift Onyiyechi. now to be known as Mrs. Eria Gift Onyiyechi. All former documents remain valid. . General public take note

**EJIMAFUVWE:** I, formerly known as Ejimafuvwe Edafevwigho now wish to be known as Edafevwigho Diakuayen Jonas . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**EMMANUEL :** I, formally known as Emmanuel Chibuzor Eucharia now wish to be addressed as Ibeanu Omolade Chibuzor Eucharia. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**FAGUNLEKA:** I, formerly known as Toluwanimi Ifeoluwa Fagunleka now wish to be addressed as Toluwanimi Ifeoluwa Okeowo . All former documents remain v alid. General public take note.

**GLORY:** I, formerly known as Smart Glory now wish to be addressed as Smart Patience . All former documents remain valid. Geanral public take note

**GODWIN:** I formerly known as Godwin Matina Usobhaseguaehi now wish to be addressed as Iyoha Matina Usobhaseguaehi. All former documents remains valid .General public take note.

**HEAVEN:** I, formerly known as Khalipher Heaven Mizita, now wish to be addressed as Heaven Mizita Ojei. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**IBEABUCHI:** I, formerly known as Ibeabuchi Helen Ijeoma now wish to be addressed as Anunobi Obiefuna Helen Ijeoma. All former documents remain v alid. General public take note.

**IFEANYICHUKWU:** I, formerly known as Ifeanyichuwku Favour Elekwachi, now wish to be addressed as Ifeanyichukwu Splendour Elekwachi . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**IJEOMA:** I, formerly Mrs. Umeozor Josephine Ijeoma now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Umeozor Josephine. My DOB is 18/06/1974 not 29/06/1976. Former documents valid. NIN, public note.

**ILABANJI:** I, formerly known as Temilade Aderonke Olabanji, now wish to be addressed as Temilade Aderonke Olateju-Ajose. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**IROHA:** I, formerly known as Kalu Innocent Iroha, now wish to be known and addressed as Kalu Innocent Onwuka. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**ISIAKA :** I, formerly known as Ibrahim Danamisa Isiaka Abass now wish to be addressed as Abass Ibrahim. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**KARIMU :** I, formerly known as Karimu Safiyat Amoke now wish to be addressed as fadeke Safiyat Amoke . All former documents remain v alid. General public take note.

**LEMU:** I formerly known as Johathan Ibrahim now wish to be addressed as Jonathan Ibrahim Lemu. All former documents remain valid . General public take note

**MBINA :** I, formerly known as Fordey Anthony Mbina now wish to be addressed as Fordey Daniel Lee . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**MMADUKA :** I, formerly known as Abali Mmaduka Ogayi now wish to be addressed as Idenyi John Ogayi, All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**MOHAMMAD:** I, formerly known as Zainab Abdallah Mohammad now wish to be addressed as Husnah Hamza Abubakar .All former documents remain valid. Nigeria Immigration Service , Public take note

**OGBEMUDIA : :** I, formerly known as Ogbemudia Celestina Esther, now wish to be addressed as Ogemudia Celestina Esther. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

**OGUN:** I, formerly Ogun Precious Oluwadamilare, now wish to be addressed as Ogun-Michael Precious oluwadamilare. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**OJO:** I, formerly known as Ojo Adebimpe Abigail now wish to be addressed as Alabi Adebimpe Abigail . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**OJUKWU:** I Shade Oyeniyi, Hannah Folashade Oyeniyi, Hannah Folashade Opayinka now wish to be addressed as Hannah Folashade Ojukwu . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

**OKECHUKWU ;** I, formerly known as Ijeoma Mercy Ijeoma Mercy Okechukwu now wish to be addressed as Ijeoma Mercy Okechukwu . All former documents remain v alid. General public take note.

**OKOH:** I, formerly known as Okoh Jennifer Ndubuisi now wish to be addressed as Anaedum Jennifer Ifesinachi . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**OKORO:** I, formerly known as Miss. Okoro Deborah Ginikachi now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Henry Deborah Ginikachi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**OLABANJI:** I, formerly known as Temilade Aderonke Olabanji, now wish to be addressed as Temilade Aderonke Olateju-Ajose. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

**OLOWONIYI: :**I, formerly known as Miss Abigail Olowoniyi now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Abigail Owoeye. All former documents remain valid. Public take note .

**OLUMESE :** I , formerly known as Olumese Sunday now wish to be addressed as ILobun Sunday Odion. All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

**OMIYEFA :** I , formerly known as Omiyefa Joel Olayinka now to be addressed as Olagunju Olayinka Joel-Oluwadamilola. All former documents remain valid . Grammar public take note

**ONYEMAEKE:** I, formerly known as Onyemaeke Chidalu Nancy now wish to be addressed as Nnamdi Chidalu Nancy. All former documents remain valid . Grammar public take note

**SIFA-AMODU :** I, formerly Elizabeth Abiola Kanoyinsola Sifa-Amodu now wish to be addressed as Elizabeth Abiola Kanoyinsola Charles Nnah. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**SMART:** I formerly known as Smart Glory now wish to be addressed as Smart Patience .All former documents remain valid .General public take note

**SOBOWALE:** I, formerly known as Oluwatosin Oluremi Sobowale now wish to be addressed as Oluwatosin Oluremi Yesufu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**SOYEGE ;** I, formerly Miss Titilayo Mariam Soyege now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Titilayo Mariam Aboaba. Former documents still remain valid. General public note note.

**THOMPSON:** I, formerly known as Oreoluwa Doubra Thompson now wish to be known as Oreoluwa Doubra Olojede. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

**TONKA;** I, formerly known as Mercy Tonka, now wish to be addressed as Mercy Tanko Ezra. . All former documents remain v alid. General public take note.

**URAMA:** I, formerly known as Urama Ijeoma Cynthia now wish to be addressed as Ene Ijeoma Cynthia . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**UZU:** I, formerly known as Ngozi Uzu , now wish to be addressed as Jane Ngozi London. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

# News Extra

## FG To Test-run Kaduna-Kano Rail Line For Three Months

From **Joke Falaju**, Abuja

THE Federal Government has disclosed plans to test-run the Kaduna-Kano railway for a period of three months.

The aim is to assess the structural integrity of the railway infrastructure and ensure that the system can sustain regular operations before the commencement of commercial services.

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Transportation, Funso Adebiyi, disclosed this during an inspection tour of the Kaduna-Kano railway corridor ahead of the commissioning in December.

He said subject to the approval of President Bola Tinubu, the government was considering running the service free of charge during the test period,

The permanent secretary expressed satisfaction at the pace of work, noting that most of the concerns raised relating to passenger safety, lighting and maintenance during the earlier inspection had been addressed.

He also noted that all the toughened glass previously specified for areas occupied by passengers had been replaced with laminated glass to reduce the risk of injury in the event of breakage.

"The change was necessary because toughened glass could shatter under certain conditions, including exposure to high temperatures or accidents."

## Eze Mourns Ferotex Boss, Describes Him As Mentor, Philanthropist

By **Joseph Onyekwere**

THE Federal Commissioner representing Enugu State at the Federal Character Commission (FCC), Peter Eze, has mourned the death of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ferotex Construction Company Limited, Chief Festus Oshaba Onu, describing him as a mentor and philanthropist.

Eze, in a condolence statement, said Onu's death in a motor accident on Thursday was a major loss to Enugu State and Nigeria.

He said his relationship with the deceased went beyond admiration for his business achievements, noting that he had personally benefited from his mentorship, kindness and generosity.

"Some deaths are difficult to comprehend, and the passing of Chief Festus Oshaba Onu is one of them. He was more than a mentor; he was a man whose kindness, generosity and humanity I experienced firsthand," Eze said.

The commissioner described the late businessman as one of the finest sons of Enugu State, whose philanthropic activities extended beyond his community and touched lives across the country.

He said Onu was committed to improving the welfare of others and making meaningful contributions to society.

## DG Lauds Isolo Club's Projects, Welcomes Osolo As Rotary Member

By **Isaac Taiwo**

THE District Governor of Rotary International District 9111, Bukola Bakare, has commended the Rotary Club of Isolo for its community development projects and welcomed the Osolo of Isolo, Oba Isa Abiodun Olakunle Faronbi Shekoni, into the club.

Bakare gave the commendation during a routine visit to the club, led by its Impact President, Adetutu Kamiyo.

As part of the visit, Bakare and her entourage, including a past District Governor, Asiwaju Michael Olawale Cole, visited the palace of the Osolo of Isolo, where they discussed the club's activities and membership.

Cole highlighted some of the club's projects but expressed concern over the limited participation of Isolo indigenes in its activities. He urged residents to join the organisation and contribute to its community service initiatives.

Responding, the monarch, who had previously maintained a relationship with Rotary, pledged to become a full member and encourage his subjects to join the club.

Bakare subsequently decorated him with a Rotary pin, formalising his membership.

The club's projects include the renovation of eight rooms in the toilet block at Local Government Primary School, Ile-iwe Meta, Isolo, and a tree-planting exercise.

# Sports

## Odegbami Survives Assassination Attempt

FORMER Nigerian international footballer and sports administrator, Chief Segun Odegbami, says he survived what he described as an assassination attempt after three unidentified men broke into his residence in the early hours of Friday.

Odegbami, popularly known as Mathematical, said the incident occurred at about 2:30 a.m., when the assailants allegedly forced their way into his home with intentions to steal and kill.

In a statement recounting the frightening encounter, the former Super Eagles captain said he fought off the attackers with the assistance of his driver and houseboy, forcing them to flee.

"Thank the Creator of the Universe for me. I survived an assassination attempt," Odegbami wrote.

"Three unknown persons came to the house to steal and kill. I fought back with the help of God.

My driver and house boy joined me, and we fought them before they fled."

Describing the encounter as the closest he had ever come to death, the 1980 Africa Cup of Nations winner said the attackers broke down his door in their attempt to reach him.

"It was the closest I have ever been face to face with death. They broke down my door to get to me," he said.

A deep machete wound sustained by former Nigeria international Segun Odegbami during the attack on his residence.

Odegbami disclosed that he subsequently visited a hospital, although he did not provide details of the nature of any injuries sustained during the confrontation.

The incident recalls another frightening encounter involving the former football star nearly a decade ago, when he reportedly escaped an armed robbery attempt while travelling out of Abeokuta, his hometown.

The latest attack raises fresh concerns about the safety of the football icon, whose illustrious playing career made him one of the most recognisable figures in Nigerian football history.

Odegbami was a key member of Nigeria's Green Eagles team that won its first Africa Cup of Nations title in 1980. He also featured prominently in the country's football history through his exploits at the 1980 Olympic Games qualification campaign and subsequent career in sports administration, journalism and advocacy.




Details surrounding Friday's incident, including the identities of the attackers and their motive, were not immediately available.



Obi of Abavo, HRM Uche Irenuwa II presents the March Past trophy to the winner at the 8th GCU Relays in Ughelli, Delta State

## Beauty Theophilus Gets Scholarship At 8th GCU Relays

By Gowon Akpodonor

### School Track Needs A Replacement, Says Organisers

DELTA Secondary School, Warri, stamped its authority at the 8th edition of Government College Ughelli (GCU) Relays, winning the overall male and female titles. The inter-collegiate athletics competition held in Ughelli, Delta State, saw one of the school's athletes, Ifeoma Beauty Theophilus, secure a scholarship through university education, alongside financial and training support to advance her athletics career.

Beauty Theophilus was named Victrix Ludorum, while her schoolmate, Abruthe Ogenevwegba, claimed the Victor Ludorum award, giving Delta Secondary School a clean sweep of the competition's two major individual honours.

The scholarship was announced by Chief Andrew Oru, recipient of The Sun Newspaper's Investor of the Year 2025 award, who pledged to sponsor Beauty Theophilus's education through university level in Nigeria.

His intervention goes beyond academic sponsorship, with a commitment to provide the coaching and training resources needed to nurture her sporting ability.

He also promised financial assistance to Delta Secondary School and the coaches who have played a role in developing her talent.

The school contingent equally benefited from immediate cash rewards following its impressive outing.

In the relay events, Idia College, Benin City, demonstrated its strength in the women's category, winning gold in both the 4x100m and 4x400m races. Novena University Staff School took the men's 4x400m title.

Traditional rulers HRM Uche Irenuwa, the Obi of Abavo, and HRM Albert Akpomudje, SAN, the Owhorode of Olomu Kingdom, joined Chief Oru in presenting awards to the outstanding participants.

However, while the performances provided plenty of reasons for celebration, the state of the competition venue emerged as a major concern, with the athletics tracks now requiring urgent attention.

# Business

## TETFund's Wake-up Call: Why Varsities, Others Must Rethink Funding, Technology, Accountability

NIGERIA'S tertiary education system is confronting a crisis that goes beyond inadequate funding. It is also struggling to spend available resources effectively, attract private investment, protect students and adapt to a digital world.

The warning from the Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono, is more than a call for institutions to embrace technology and public private partnerships. It exposes institutional inertia in a sector under pressure to modernise.

Echono spoke at a two-day strategic engagement with heads of beneficiary institutions, chairmen of governing councils and bursars in Abuja, organised to review intervention programmes, assess project implementation and develop a framework for the 2027 disbursement guidelines.

With inflation and pressure on public finances narrowing the room for government spending, institutions can no longer assume public allocations will meet every need.

Echono's call for tertiary institutions to identify bankable projects and attract private capital reflects an unavoidable reality: dependence on government funding is increasingly unsustainable.

But private investment is not a magic solution. As Echono noted, investors are not charities. They seek returns, clear rules and confidence that agreements will be honoured. Governing councils and management teams must therefore identify viable projects, prepare credible proposals and provide transparent arrangements. They must also ensure that the pursuit of profit does not make essential services unaffordable or expose public assets to unfavourable deals.

TETFund's proposed hostel partnership model illustrates both the opportunity and the challenge. Institutions provide land while private investors finance, build and manage accommodation. With fewer than half of students in many institutions living on campus, the need is clear. Yet, lack of enthusiasm among some beneficiary institutions raises questions about whether university leaders are prepared to move beyond familiar funding channels.

Accommodation is not simply an infrastructure issue; it is directly connected to student welfare and campus security. Students living off campus may travel late at night after using libraries until 11pm or midnight, exposing themselves to different kinds of risk on poorly secured routes. A safe campus requires adequate accommodation, reliable transport, lighting and security plans suited to each institution.

The digital gap presents an equally urgent test of institutional leadership. TETFund has invested in platforms and academic resources, including access to over 400 digital libraries and thousands of electronic books, journals and research materials.

Yet, the TETFund boss laments that adoption remains slow and expects at least 60 per cent of teaching staff to become competent in modern modes of delivery. Providing technology without ensuring its use is an expensive exercise in procurement, not transformation.

Digital learning can expand access beyond lecture halls, support students unable to be on campus and make academic materials available at any time. Hybrid learning could improve continuity. But platforms alone cannot deliver these benefits. Institutions need reliable electricity, affordable internet, suitable devices, technical support and sustained staff training. Without these foundations, digital transformation risks remaining an ambition on paper.

The 60 per cent target should be a starting point, not proof of success. Competence must mean more than logging into a platform. Lecturers need to design engaging online lessons, assess students fairly and use digital resources to improve learning. Institutions should set targets and report the impact on learning and research. TETFund should align its support with these measurable needs.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) adds another layer of complexity. Concerns that students may use AI tools to cheat are legitimate, but rejecting or fearing the technology will leave institutions unprepared as it reshapes research and work. The challenge is to establish rules for disclosure, assessment and responsible use while equipping lecturers to distinguish genuine learning from automated submissions. Universities must teach students to use AI critically and ethically.

The wider problem, however, is governance. Echono's concern about disagreements between governing councils and principal officers over procurement and project implementation points to weaknesses that can frustrate even well-funded interventions. Projects are delayed when responsibilities are blurred; decisions contested or procurement poorly managed.

The call by the Executive Secretary, National Commission for Colleges of Education, Dr. Angela Ajala, for institutions to complete projects and account for every naira, captures the test of public investment – money must produce functioning facilities and better outcomes, not abandoned sites.

Ajala's call for stronger data management is equally important. Reliable information on enrolment, staffing, facilities and academic programmes is essential if resources are to be allocated according to actual needs. Without credible data, funding decisions are at risk of being based on incomplete submissions or outdated assumptions. TETFund and regulatory agencies should make data quality and transparent reporting central to intervention planning.

The challenge facing tertiary institutions is not simply to secure more money but to invest existing resources effectively, build partnerships that protect the public interest, make technology part of everyday teaching and create safer campuses.

TETFund can provide funding, platforms and frameworks, but it cannot substitute for leadership within institutions. The real test will be whether its warnings translate into completed projects, functioning digital classrooms, accountable management and safer campuses.

Otherwise, Nigeria risks spending heavily on the appearance of reform while institutions remain trapped in old ways of working without demonstrable improvements in student outcomes.



Echono

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# Infantino: Warri Stadium Is Significant Investment In Football Development

By Gowon Akpodonor

## • Stakeholders Seek Answer On Abandoned FIFA Goal Project At Ugborodo

FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, on Friday described the re-modelled Warri City Stadium as a significant investment in football development.

Infantino, who inspected the stadium alongside the Secretary General of FIFA, Mattias Grafström, said that complex would help nurture talents and create opportunities for young players.

In 2009, Warri Stadium was denied the opportunity of hosting the World Youth Championships, which was held across some selected cities in Nigeria. Then, the visiting FIFA delegation, led by its former vice president, Jack Warner, refused to approve Warri Stadium for the World Cup on the ground that the complex hurriedly built then by a Delta Sports Commission official did not meet requirement.

Other governments could not also fix the problem of Warri Stadium until Governor Sheriff Oborevwori came into power.

Determined to leave a lasting legacy, Oborevwori embarked on total re-construction of Warri Stadium and some other facilities within the complex. The job is yet to be completed.

Earlier this week, news broke out that FIFA President and his team were coming to commission Warri Stadium, an ambush, which was later fouled by the government.

The news of the visit by Infantino and his team to commission Warri stadium came as a big surprise to Governor Oborevwori. He was said to have dispatched the Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Charles Aniagwu to the complex on Tuesday evening.



FIFA President Gianni Infantino and Delta State Governor Sheriff Oborevwori at Warri Stadium on Friday

After his inspection of Warri stadium, Aniagwu said the complex is not ready for commissioning as reported by some media outfits, but noted that work on the rehabilitation and upgrade of the facility was near. An official of Delta Sports Commission also said no top official of the commission was aware of FIFA president's visit to the Stadium.

Soon after *The Guardian* reported the story, the man behind the 'ambush attempt to commission' a complex that is yet to the completed quickly made a u-turn and changed his plan to 'mere inspection' by the visiting FIFA President.

Infantino and his team arrived at Osubi Airport, and was received Governor Oborevwori for the inspection (not commissioning) of Warri Stadium. The visiting FIFA President, on Friday, commended Governor Sheriff Oborevwori, for investing in the re-modelling of Warri City Stadium.

Infantino also praised Nigeria's rich football heritage, particularly Delta State's contribution to the global game, and expressed confidence in its potential to shape the future of football.

Governor Oborevwori, in his remarks, described the visit as an endorsement of his administration's commitment to sports development.

Earlier, Infantino inaugurated some other sports facilities in Warri.

Meanwhile, some stakeholders asked repeatedly on Friday on what has happened to the abandoned FIFA Goal Project at Ugborodo?

# Toriola: Flamingos Achievement Will Inspire New Generation Of Young Nigerians

By Gowon Akpodonor

CHIEF Executive Officer of MTN Nigeria, Karl Toriola, has said the achievement by Nigeria's U17 women's team, the Flamingos, at the recently concluded FIFA U17 World Cup will inspire a new generation of young Nigerians, particularly girls, to pursue their ambitions with confidence and determination.

Toriola, who spoke at a reception organised for the players and their officials at MTN headquarters in Ikoyi, Lagos, where the telecommunication giant rewarded the World Champion with N150 million. He praised the girls for their resilience that defined their journey to the title.

"What makes this victory truly remarkable is not just that you became world champions, but how you achieved it. After a difficult start to the tournament, you showed courage, determination and belief, demonstrating the qualities that define champions," Toriola said. "Somewhere in Nigeria today, a young girl has watched your journey and believes that she too, can achieve extraordinary things and excel at the highest level. That is part of the legacy you have created through this remarkable achievement."



Chief Coach of Flamingos, Busari Hakeem Ishola (left), Team Captain Chidi Harmony, Chief Executive Officer, MTN Nigeria Dr. Karl Toriola, Director General, National Sports Commission Bukola Olopade, and Acting General Secretary, Nigeria Football Federation, Dr. Emmanuel Ikpeme, at a reception hosted by MTN Nigeria in honour of the Flamingos following their historic FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup victory at the MTN Plaza, Falomo, Ikoyi, Lagos on Monday, November 16, 2026

Reaffirming MTN's commitment to football development, Toriola noted that the company has supported Nigerian football for nearly 25 years and remains proud of its role as the Official Telecoms Partner of the Nigeria Football Federation.

"For nearly 25 years, MTN has invested in Nigerian football because we recognise its power to unite people, inspire communities and create opportunities. We are proud to celebrate this historic achievement and remain committed to supporting the growth of the game and the development of the next generation of talent."

The event brought together the players, technical crew, officials of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), representatives of the National Sports Commission, MTN executives and members of the media.

# Coronation Backs Zone E World Polo Championship Qualifiers Hosting

By Christian Okpara

CORONATION Group supported the hosting of the Federation of International Polo (FIP) Zone E World Polo Championship Qualifiers in Abuja, marking a historic moment for Nigerian polo as the country welcomed the international competition for the first time in its 120-year polo history.

Hosted by the Nigerian Polo Association (NPA) at the Guards Polo Club in Abuja from November 9 to 16, the four-nation tournament featured teams from Nigeria, India, Iran and Pakistan.

Pakistan completed an unbeaten campaign, recording three victories against Iran (10–6), India (7–4) and Nigeria (9–5) to qualify for the championship, scheduled to hold from February 4 to 14, 2027, in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

The FIP's decision to award Nigeria the hosting rights recognised the Nigerian Polo Association's efforts to develop the sport and strengthen the country's standing in international polo.

The tournament brought together players, officials, business leaders, diplomats and polo enthusiasts from the participating countries. The presence of the Emir of Katsina, Dr Abdulmumini Kabir Usman, further reflected the sport's longstanding cultural significance in Nigeria.

Speaking on the Group's sponsorship, its Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Ngozi Akinyele, said: "Sport has a unique ability to bring people, institutions and nations together. Beyond the competition itself, it creates platforms for developing talent, building relationships and opening doors to new opportunities."

## This Weekend's Football Matches

**Saturday Premier League**

Man City Vs Fulham 12:30
Aston Villa Vs Sunderland 15:00
Bournemouth Vs Nott' Forest 15:00
Chelsea Vs Leeds United 15:00
Coventry Vs Crystal Palace 15:00
Tottenham Vs Ipswich 15:00
Newcastle Vs Arsenal 17:30

**Spanish La Liga**

Alavés Vs Deportivo 13:00
Rayo Vallecano Vs Valencia 15:15
Sevilla Vs Real Betis 17:30
Real Madrid Vs Celta Vigo 20:00

**Nigerian Premier League**

Ikorodu City Vs Kano Pillars 15:00
Sporting Lagos Vs Kwara United 18:00

# Sodje Urges NSC, NFF To Safeguard Flamingos' Future

From Monday Osayande, Asaba

## • To Avoid Another Lost Generation

FORMER Super Eagles defender, Sam Sodje, has called on the National Sports Commission (NSC) and the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to urgently put in place a comprehensive development and monitoring framework for members of the victorious Flamingos squad following their triumph at the just-concluded FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup.

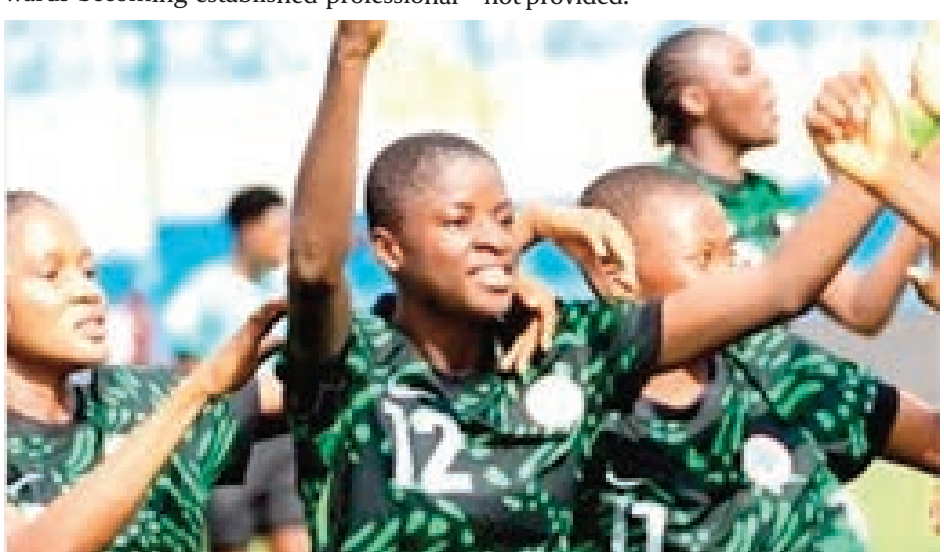
Sodje warned that Nigeria risks wasting the historic achievement if the young players are abandoned after their global success without a clearly defined pathway into professional football.

Speaking with journalists, the former Leeds United and Charlton Athletic defender described the Flamingos' achievement as incredible but stressed that the real responsibility of football administrators begins after the celebration.

"Incredible achievement, and now is the time to make sure the transition into professional football is guided and monitored. If not, what seems to be a great achievement in a couple of years will be of no benefit to Nigerians, but just many memories," he said.

The experienced football administrator, who also owns a football academy in Delta State, noted that the present stage of the players' careers offers an important opportunity to identify, develop and properly guide them towards becoming established professional footballers.

He cautioned that players aged between 16 and 17 are particularly vulnerable to challenges that could derail their football ambitions if adequate institutional support is not provided.



The Flamingos celebrate victory at the FIFA World Cup

According to him, the risks include exploitation by unscrupulous football agents, distractions arising from sudden fame and financial rewards, inadequate exposure to competitive club football, abandonment of education and family pressures to discontinue their football careers.

Sodje particularly drew attention to the personal struggles of Flamingos captain, Harmony Chidi, whose determination to pursue football reportedly faced opposition from her mother following the early death of her father.

Chidi had disclosed that her mother initially wanted her to abandon football and get married, but the intervention and encouragement of her grandmother and foster father helped sustain her ambition.

For Sodje, such experiences underline the need for deliberate policies that protect young female footballers from social and economic pressures capable of truncating promising careers.

He argued that winning the World Cup should not be treated as the ultimate destination for the players but as the beginning of a carefully managed journey towards international football excellence.

He also called for sustained investment in their education, improved access to quality club football and the maintenance of the squad's competitive relationship through the next FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup cycle.

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November 21–22, 2026



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# INSIDE STUFF WITH MARTINS OLOJA



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# 2027: Tinubu And Writings On The Wall

## 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin - 'The Biblical Image That Won't Go Away'

IN Daniel Chapter 5, King Belshazzar was feasting in his palace, drinking from gold vessels looted from the Temple, praising gods of gold and silver, while his kingdom was collapsing outside. Then a hand appeared and wrote on the wall: *MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN*. Daniel interpreted it: **You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Your kingdom is divided and given away**. That is the image that haunts the 2027 campaign of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Not because anyone is claiming divine prophecy. But because from Kaduna through Abuja to Port Harcourt and Calabar, the walls of his campaign are writing their own message. And the question is: Are his strategists reading it right? Or are they reading endorsements in Abuja conference halls and mistaking them for votes in the streets? The President has deployed massive resources to the campaign fields. Billboards everywhere. Jingle everywhere. Endorsement after endorsement. Governors endorsing. Senators endorsing. Traditional rulers endorsing. Ministers endorsing. Birthday big boys endorsing. But on the ground, people are saying: We don't want you. That is the writing on the wall.

**Kaduna –The Flag-off That Flagged Off Rejection'**

On October 24, 2026, the APC chose Kaduna for its presidential campaign flag-off. Kaduna is strategic. It is the political capital of the North West, the most populous zone. It is the place where you prove you still have the North.

President Tinubu arrived at Ranchers Bees Stadium, also known as Kaduna Township Stadium, to launch his 2027 re-election bid. According to *Daily Trust*, as reported widely, when Tinubu mounted the podium and shouted "Nigeria!" - a section of the crowd responded: "Ba Ma Yi!" - Hausa for "We don't want you" / "We won't support you". When he shouted "Kaduna!" - the same response. He had to invoke Governor Uba Sani's name - "Sai Uba Sani" - before he could continue his speech. Some attendees who spoke to *Daily Trust* said their actions were motivated by concerns over insecurity and the effects of the government's economic policies. President Tinubu acknowledged hardship and hunger in his speech. But he blamed the opposition for it. That is the first misreading of the wall: When people tell you they are hungry, you don't tell them the opposition made them hungry. You tell them what you did with the three-year budgets you implemented.

Kaduna was not just a rally. It was a referendum in miniature. His strategists told Nigerians: "It was a huge success. The crowd was massive." The wall said: "Ba Ma Yi." Which one will they believe?

**'Abuja –The Mosque That Turned To Protest'**

If Kaduna was embarrassing, Abuja was symbolic. On Friday, November 13, 2026, President Tinubu went to observe Juma'at prayers at the Shehu Shagari Central Mosque in Area 1, Garki, Abuja. This is significant because in 2023, when he campaigned on a Muslim-Muslim ticket, he was warmly received in mosques across the North. The Muslim-Muslim ticket was presented as a masterstroke. Muslims were told: "This is your turn. This is our ticket." Three years later, the same constituency was saying something else. Videos also showed youths outside the Area 1 axis tearing down APC campaign posters and banners while chanting against the administration. Eyewitnesses attributed the anger partly to excessive security restrictions. But the deeper anger was not



Tinubu

about security. It was about the Muslim-Muslim ticket itself. The ticket promised: "Muslims will benefit." What did ordinary Muslims in Abuja get? The same hunger, the same 'Band A tariff', the same insecurity, the same out-of-pocket health care as everyone else. The ticket delivered power to elites, not bread to the masses.

It was also in Jalingo, Taraba State, on October 30, 2026, that worshippers reportedly walked out of the mosque when the Chief Imam Sheikh Ibrahim Jalo Jalingo called on them to back Tinubu's re-election. In Madina Quarters in Bauchi, an Imam identified as Dahiru Abubakar was reportedly removed by the mosque committee for using his sermons to campaign for Tinubu. These are not opposition rallies. These are mosques. The most sacred spaces. When prayer turns to protest, the writing is not only on the wall - it is on the prayer mat. The presidency, of course, disputed the narrative.

**'Port Harcourt and Calabar –The South is not safe either'**

The strategists might say: "The North is difficult, but the South-South is ours. Wike is there." But Port Harcourt has its own writing on the wall. In Rivers State, the APC campaign has been dogged by the Wike-Fubara war. The state that should be a fortress is a battlefield. The President's own minister, Wike, has turned Rivers into a permanent crisis zone. People in Port Harcourt are not asking about 2027. They are asking: "Who is governor? Who controls the Assembly? Who controls the local governments?" When you go to campaign in a state where your own party is in two factions, where your minister is fighting your governor, the crowd does not hear "Renewed Hope." They hear "Renewed Confusion."

In Calabar, Cross River State, the writing was even more violent. The other day, according to reports, the convoy of Peter Obi, presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress, was attacked by miscreants around Watt Market Roundabout after a courtesy visit to the Obong of Calabar. Windscreens were smashed. Supporters panicked. That attack was rightly condemned. But it also showed that Calabar, which should be a peaceful APC state under Governor Bassey Otu, is now a place where campaign convoys get attacked. If opposition convoys are attacked in Calabar, what does that say about the security the ruling party promised? The South-South writing is: "You promised us peace, you gave us factional war."

**"Heaven won't fall"** – The correct context and why some commentators are right. Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, SAN, said: "Heaven won't fall if Atiku isn't on the ballot." On November 5, 2026, Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court, Abuja, in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/1819/2025 - Nafiu Bala Gombe vs ADC - nullified the David Mark-led leadership of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), under which Atiku Abubakar emerged as the party's presidential candidate for January 16, 2027. The ADC has appealed. But INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, told Chatham House in London on November 13: If Atiku fails to overturn the judgment, "I'm obligated to obey every court order, especially if it's from the Supreme Court" and Atiku will not be on the ballot. It was in that charged atmosphere that Keyamo said: "Heavens WILL NOT FALL IF A CERTAIN ATIKU ABUBAKAR IS NOT ON THE BALLOT IN 2027." Heaven did not fall when the same court sacked all our candidates in Zamfara a few years ago. Not just candidates who had won elections. The governor, the deputy governor, all members of the House of Assembly, all the senators and all members of the House of Representatives. I'm talking from top to bottom.

They were all sacked." He added the Bayelsa precedent: On February 13, 2020, when the Supreme Court nullified the victory of APC governorship candidate David Lyon a day to his swearing-in, APC took it on the chin. His legal point was precise: The ADC as a party would remain on the ballot, but Atiku might not be its candidate, because the process that produced his nomination was conducted by a leadership the courts had refused to recognise. In other words, Keyamo was dismissing the opposition's threat that heaven would fall. But here is why his dismissal is itself a misreading of the writings on the wall - and why two recent commentators are more prophetic than the Minister.

**Commentator 1: "Heaven doesn't fall in one day."** Keyamo is technically right: On November 6, 2026, heaven did not fall. On November 13, heaven did not fall. Markets opened. Banks opened. Flights flew from Lagos to Abuja. But heaven does not fall in one day. It recedes. It leaks. It cracks. In Zamfara in 2019, heaven did not fall on the day the Supreme Court sacked all APC candidates. But what happened after? Zamfara became the epicentre of banditry in Nigeria. A state whose democratic legitimacy was decided by court, not by ballot, lost the moral authority to govern. People stopped believing in elections. They started believing in guns.

**Commentator 2: "Heaven may not fall but the skies can recede."** This is even more poetic, and even more accurate. The skies receding means: The space for democracy shrinks. Not with a bang, but with a slow closing. Heaven may not fall. But the skies can recede until there is no sky left - until Nigeria becomes a democracy in name, a one-party state in practice, where elections are held but outcomes are decided in courtrooms in Abuja before votes are cast in Kaduna. Keyamo is using a legal truth to hide a political danger.

Legally, INEC must obey court orders. But politically, when you remove the most experienced opposition candidate - a former VP contesting for the seventh time, the anchor of ADC coalition about 60 days to election, through a lower court judgment in a case filed by a party member, not by INEC, not by APC, you create a perception that cannot be erased by legal correctness: The perception that the ruling party is using courts to clear the ballot. And perception is the writing on the wall.

**What should they be doing instead?** If Tinubu's strategists were reading the writings on the wall right, they would do five things:

**1. Campaign on record, not on attacks.** Tell Nigerians: "Here is what we borrowed, here is what we spent, here is what we built, here is the audit." Apologise where they failed. Apologise for electricity failure. Apologise for food inflation. Apologise for insecurity. Nigerians forgive a leader who apologises. They don't forgive a leader who blames opposition for hunger he created by removing subsidy without palliatives.

**2. Fix existing roads, not promise new superhighways.** Go to Abuja-Lokoja road and fix it. Go to East-West Road and fix it. Nigerians will believe a repaired road more than a billboard of a coastal road.

**3. Stop the dismissive messaging.** Stop "Heaven won't fall." Stop N10 million for wards. That is not mobilisation. That is vote-buying and judicial triumphalism. It insults voters and scares democrats.

**4. Stop attacking opposition and start listening.** When youths chant "Ba Ma Yi" in Kaduna, don't call them opposition thugs. Ask: "Why are they angry?" When worshippers walk out in Jalingo, don't call them sponsored. Ask: "What did we promise them in 2023 that we didn't deliver?"

**5. Show, don't tell, on electricity.** If you cannot give 20 hours light before election, don't promise 24 hours after election. Give people 12 hours for one month and they will believe you.

Conclusion: *MENE, MENE, TEKEL…* The writings on the wall are not mystical. They are practical. The strategists are reading endorsements. The people are writing rejection. The biblical king ignored Daniel and lost his kingdom that night. Tinubu's strategists should not ignore Daniel. Hope Tinubu is reading 'The Writings On The Wall'! Because if he is not, 2027 will read it for him. And the interpretation will be the same as Babylon: You have been weighed on the scales of electricity, food, security, education, health – and found wanting. Tinubu's strategists think that because heaven didn't fall on November 5, it won't fall on January 16, 2027. They are wrong. "Heaven doesn't fall in one day". It falls when a nation stops believing that its courts are neutral, its elections are free, and its ballot can change its leaders." And heaven may not fall, but the skies can recede. 2027-2031 is still a bridge too far - unless he crosses it by apologising, accounting, and actually delivering, not by buying wards and dismissing the opposition.

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