



POLITICS/PAGE 8

INEC And The Road To 2027: The Goal, The Gains And Landmines

SPOTLIGHT/PAGE 35

Fiscal Discipline And Public Trust: Re-engineering Government Spending For Real Impact



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HOW DEMAND FOR RECERTIFICATION WORSENS SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS

PAGES 4 & 5



2027: No Region Can Deliver Presidency Alone, Yari Tells Opposition

Says Tinubu's Nationwide Spread Gives APC Strategic Advantage NEWS/ PAGE 3

Osinbajo, Amangbo, Martins, Others Laud Okogie's Contributions To Nation-building

NEWS/Page 44

Tinubu, Sultan, Zulum To Attend MUSWEN General Assembly In November

NEWS/Page 44

Customs Uncovers N3.67b Cannabis Shipment At Tin Can Port, Hands Over To NDLEA

NEWS/ PAGE 3

Chinese Embassy Explains One-China Principle

NEWS/Page 44

When Will Nigerian Leaders Build Worthy Stadiums?

InsideSTUFF – Back Page

Tears Of Joy As 20 Rescued NYSC Candidates Reunite With Families

NEWS/ PAGE 2

Flight Data, Cockpit Voice Recorders Key To Unraveling ATR-42's Final Moments – NAF

Says Aircraft Wreckage Speaks To Investigators

NEWS/Page 2

Tears Of Joy As 20 Rescued NYSC Candidates Reunite With Families

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

TEARS of joy flowed in Ibadan on Thursday as 20 prospective members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), who were abducted in Imo State, reunited with their families after spending seven days in captivity.

The victims, who were rescued in Owerri on Wednesday, were travelling from Oyo State to their respective orientation camps in Abia State when they were kidnapped along the Owerri-Onitsha Road at Umunoha, Imo State.

The 20 were among 30 prospective corps members travelling together when the incident occurred, while the remaining 10 reportedly escaped through the bush.

The rescued victims were reunited with their parents on Thursday after more than three hours of engagement

with officials of the Department of State Services (DSS).

Some of the parents could not hold back their emotions as they embraced their children, expressing gratitude to God and security operatives for their release.

One of the rescued victims, who requested anonymity, broke down in tears on seeing the parents and described the experience as horrible.

"It was a horrible experience," the victim said.

A mother of one of the rescued candidates, Mrs. Faith Felicia Abiala, said she was devastated throughout the period her child was held captive and could hardly eat.

She thanked God for the safe return of the victims and commended the DSS teams from Oyo and Imo states for their efforts in securing their release.

Abiala urged the Federal Government to strengthen security along roads frequently used by prospective corps members travelling to their states of deployment.

She also suggested that the government consider air transportation arrangements for corps members travelling to orientation camps, particularly where road journeys pose serious security risks.

Another parent, Alhaja Alimot Akande, said the release of the victims had brought relief to their families, who had endured days of anxiety and uncertainty.

She said the families could now sleep peacefully following the return of their children.

The parents disclosed that the kidnappers initially demanded a ransom of N50 million for each victim,

amounting to N1 billion, before reportedly reducing the demand to N5 million per person or N100 million in total.

They also claimed that ransom was eventually paid in dollars before the victims were released.

However, the Imo State Commissioner of Police, Audu Bosso, said the kidnappers yielded to pressure from security operatives, adding that he was unaware of any ransom payment.

The parents had visited the private residence of the Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Rashidi Ladoja, on Saturday, October 3, to seek his intervention in securing the release of the victims.

They were accompanied by the Oyo State Commissioner of Police, Olugbenga Abimbola, and the Aseyin of Iseyin, Oba Sefiu Adeyeri.

Olubadan, through his media aide, Adeola Oloko, had disclosed that the Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, confirmed the

release of the abducted prospective corps members during a telephone conversation at about 5pm on Wednesday.

Flight Data, Cockpit Voice Recorders Key To Unraveling ATR-42's Final Moments – NAF

• Says Aircraft Wreckage Speaks To Investigators

From **Adewale Momoh**, Akure

THE Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has commenced an intensive operation to recover the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder from its ATR-42 aircraft that crashed into a swamp in Igbokoda, headquarters of the Ilaje Local Council of Ondo State, killing all 25 people on board.

According to the NAF, investigators are determined to unravel the circumstances behind the crash, which has been described as one of the country's deadliest military aviation disasters in recent years.

The aircraft, which was conducting a routine mission from Benin City, Edo State, to Lagos, went down on Monday near the Nigerian Navy's Forward Operating Base in Igbokoda, claiming the lives of 20 passengers and five crew members, with the wreckage submerged in the swampy terrain, thereby complicating recovery efforts.

Speaking at the crash site on Friday, the NAF Superintendent of Standards and Evaluation, Air Vice

Marshal Ebimobo Ebiowe, confirmed that investigators were searching for the flight data recorder, commonly known as the "black box," and the cockpit voice recorder.

According to him, the components are critical to the ongoing investigation that could provide vital clues about the aircraft's final moments before the tragedy.

"We hope to be able to find critical components of the aircraft that will speak to the investigators because the aircraft wreckage actually speaks to the investigators.

"One of them is what the ordinary man calls the black box. We call it the flight data recorder, and another component close to it, the cockpit voice recorder," Ebiowe stated.

Aviation experts have emphasised that recovering and analysing the devices could provide essential evidence for reconstructing the aircraft's final moments, though their findings would need to be assessed alongside other evidence gathered from the wreckage and crash site.



Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Sunday Aneke (middle); Head of the Investigation and Recovery Team, AVM Ebimobo Ebiowe (left); Chief of Operations, AVM Precious Amadi (2nd left); and other Senior Officers during the visit of NAF officers to Igbokoda, Ondo State to assess the ongoing search, recovery and investigative efforts following the accident involving NAF ATR 42 aircraft, NAF 931... on Thursday. PHOTO: NAF

2027: APC Urges INEC To Enforce Supreme Court Ruling On Party Registers

From **Adamu Abuh**, Abuja

THE All Progressives Congress (APC) has urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enforce a Supreme Court judgment on political parties' membership registers, warning that parties that fail to comply with statutory requirements could be barred from fielding candidates in the 2027 general election.

The ruling party also tackled former vice president Atiku Abubakar, former Rivers State governor, Rotimi Amaechi, and other opposition leaders over their criticism of President Bola Tinubu's economic reforms, accusing them of hypocrisy and challenging them to account for their records in government.

The APC made its position on the Supreme Court judgment known in a letter dated October 9, 2026, addressed to the INEC chairman, while its criticism of opposition leaders followed remarks by its National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, and National Secretary, Senator Surajudeen Ajibola Basiru, in Abuja.

The party also defended the administration's infrastruc-

• **Tackles Atiku, Amaechi Over Criticism Of Tinubu's Reforms** • **Rules Out Return Of Petrol Subsidy**

ture investments in Northern Nigeria, insisting that its policies were designed to promote national unity, strengthen the economy and improve citizens' welfare.

In the letter to INEC, Yilwatda and Basiru urged the commission to implement the judgment delivered on September 24, 2026, in the case of INEC v. Zenith Labour Party, Suit No. SC/CV/495/2026.

The APC argued that the judgment affirmed the validity of Section 77 of the Electoral Act 2026, which prescribes requirements for submitting membership registers and determining eligibility to participate in party primaries, congresses and conventions.

According to the party, the Supreme Court set aside a Court of Appeal order that had nullified Section 77(5) to (7), Section 84(2) of the Electoral Act 2026 and Activity Serial Number Two of INEC's revised timetable and schedule of activities for the 2027 general election.

Section 77(4) of the Electoral Act 2026 requires political parties to submit their membership registers to INEC not

later than 21 days before their primaries, congresses or conventions. The APC said Section 77(5) restricts participation in those internal elections to members whose names appear in the submitted register, while Section 77(6) prohibits the use of alternative registers for the purpose.

Citing page 24 of the judgment, the party said the Supreme Court explained that a political party that failed to submit its digital membership register within the prescribed period could be precluded from fielding candidates in the general election.

It also referred to pages 25 and 26 of the judgment, where the court reportedly emphasised that the provision was intended to promote internal party democracy through fair, transparent and verifiable primaries, congresses and conventions.

The APC further cited Section 228(a) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, which empowers the National Assembly to enact laws prescribing guidelines and rules to ensure internal democracy within political

parties.

It also relied on the Supreme Court's reference to *Ardo v. Nyako* (2014) 10 NWLR (Pt. 1416) 591 at 620, which addressed the National Assembly's constitutional authority to regulate procedures for party primaries, congresses and conventions.

According to the APC, although political parties retain the power to nominate candidates for elections, the process must comply with procedures prescribed by law and cannot be left to the discretion of party officials.

The party also cited page 34 of the judgment, where the Supreme Court reportedly observed that INEC had given political parties sufficient time to submit their digital membership registers.

Invoking Section 287(1) of the Constitution, which provides for the enforcement of Supreme Court decisions throughout the federation, the APC argued that INEC was directly bound by the judgment because it participated in the litigation as the appellant.

It consequently asked the

commission to verify whether political parties had submitted their digital membership registers within the statutory deadline and apply the consequences prescribed by Section 77(7) where non-compliance was established.

The party also urged INEC to recognise only members whose names appeared in duly submitted registers and prevent the use of alternative registers during party primaries, congresses and conventions.

The APC maintained that compliance was a statutory obligation rather than a matter of discretion, warning that failure to enforce the law could undermine internal party democracy, electoral transparency and the rule of law.

Meanwhile, Basiru and Yilwatda spoke in Abuja while receiving opposition politicians, including 12 House of Representatives and state House of Assembly candidates from the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), who defected to the ruling party.

The defectors, drawn from Sokoto, Kaduna, Jigawa, Kano

and Plateau states, were led by Princess Asmau Aliyu. Prof. Murtala Yusuf represented the ADC group, while Mohammed Rabi represented the NDC contingent from Kaduna State.

Basiru, flanked by Yilwatda and other members of the party's National Working Committee (NWC), questioned whether opposition leaders were genuinely concerned about Nigeria's economic challenges or merely seeking to regain political power.

"Is it just about delivering for the Nigerian people or pursuing inordinate ambition?" he asked.

Taking a swipe at Amaechi over his reported criticism of the proposed seaport project in Ogun State, Basiru questioned why an infrastructure initiative expected to stimulate economic activity should be opposed on the grounds of alleged personal interests attributed to Tinubu.

"I heard a Rotimi Amaechi saying that we should not have done a seaport in Ogun State because we are only doing a seaport in Ogun State because the President wants to make money from it," he said.

FG Seeks Legislative Backing For National Research And Innovation Devt Fund, Council

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

THE Federal Government has sent a bill to the National Assembly seeking legislative backing for the establishment of the National Research and Innovation Development Fund and Council, Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Dr. Kingsley Tochukwu Udeh (SAN), has revealed.

Udeh said the Federal Executive Council had already approved the establishment of the Fund and Council, with the bill now before the National Assembly to provide statutory backing for the initiative.

The minister, who disclosed this during an interview, said the proposed framework is aimed at creating sustainable funding for

research and development, particularly research with commercial potential.

He said the proposed legislation would provide for a dedicated and consolidated source of funding for research and development, with emphasis on projects capable of being commercialised.

Udeh also disclosed that the government was working to encourage private-sector investment in research and development, noting that the private sector would have to play a major role in funding innovation.

He said the tax law also contains provisions that allow companies and institutions to devote part of their taxable income or revenue to research and development.

Ogun Sustains Palliative Support For Public Servants, Allocates N987m In Nine Months

From **Azeez Olorunlomu**, Abeokuta

THE Ogun State government has allocated N987.185 million for palliative support for public servants between April and December 2026, including N327.31 million earmarked for the fourth quarter.

Disclosing this in a statement on Friday, the Head of Service, Alhaji Olanrewaju Iskeel Saka, said the sustained intervention reflected the administration's commitment to workers' welfare and efforts to cushion the effects of prevailing economic challenges.

The latest allocation of N327,310,000 covers October to December 2026, following N330,630,000 allocated for April to June and N329,245,000 for July to September, bringing the total provision for the three

quarters to N987,185,000.

The continuation of the programme underscores the government's determination to sustain support for public servants amid economic pressures, particularly the rising cost of transportation and other essential expenses.

The intervention also highlights the administration's recognition of the importance of workers' welfare to productivity, effective public service delivery and the implementation of its development agenda.

By extending the palliative support through December, the administration of Governor Dapo Abiodun is maintaining a welfare measure designed to ease the financial burden on workers while ensuring that the public service continues to deliver essential services to residents across the state.

Lagos Assembly Sets Up Eight-man Panel To Track, Recover State Assets

By **Shakirah Adunola**

THE Lagos State House of Assembly has inaugurated an eight-member Ad Hoc Committee mandated to identify, document and recover all documented and undocumented properties belonging to the Lagos State government.

Chaired by Obafemi Saheed, the panel has already begun interfacing with key Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to audit government property and ensure public resources are fully accounted for.

Other Assembly members serving on the panel include Jubreel Abdulkareem, Olayinka Kazeem, Samuel Apata, Sobur Oluwa and Bonu Solomon.

Speaking at the committee's sitting on Friday, Saheed emphasised that the initiative aligns with the legislature's

mandate to maintain strict oversight, monitor the deployment of public funds and ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayers' money.

"The exercise will enable the committee to establish the assets owned by the state, assess their current status and determine whether they are being effectively utilised for the benefit of Lagos residents," Saheed stated.

The lawmaker issued a strong directive to outstanding MDAs to turn in all requested documentation without delay and adhere strictly to their scheduled appearances.

He warned that the committee would not tolerate non-compliance or disrespect from any official.

"The committee has the power to subpoena anyone and can seek House approval to issue a warrant of arrest for recalcitrant persons," he warned.

2027: No Region Can Deliver Presidency Alone, Yari Tells Opposition

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

THE Director-General of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council for the 2027 general election, Senator Abdulaziz Yari, has argued that no political party can win the presidency by relying on dominance in only one region, insisting that electoral support across the North and South will be critical to the outcome of the next presidential election.

Yari, a former Zamfara State governor representing Zamfara West in the Senate, made the submission while dismissing suggestions that the emerging political alignment involving former vice

Says Tinubu's Nationwide Spread Gives APC Strategic Advantage

president Atiku Abubakar and former governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi, could threaten President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid.

Speaking on Friday after a closed-door meeting with Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, Yari described concerns about the opposition figures' political engagement as misplaced, arguing that Nigeria's electoral arithmetic requires candidates to build support across the country.

"If you have 80 per cent control of the South but have nothing in the North, you cannot make it. If you have 80 per cent control of the North

but no state in the South, you cannot make it," he said.

Yari questioned the opposition's capacity to establish a comparable political foothold across both regions, asking whether the African Democratic Congress (ADC) could claim control of any state in the South and whether Obi, whom he described as a former colleague, could claim a state in the North.

The senator maintained that a candidate's strength in one geopolitical region could not compensate for a lack of support in another, arguing that the ability to build a nationwide political

coalition would be decisive in the presidential contest.

To buttress his argument, Yari cited the electoral fortunes of former president Muhammadu Buhari, noting that Buhari had enjoyed substantial support in the North but struggled to secure the Presidency in previous contests before his eventual victory in 2015.

He contrasted Buhari's earlier electoral difficulties with what he described as Tinubu's broader political reach, expressing confidence that the incumbent had support in more than 10 states in each of the northern and southern regions.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (right) in audience with the Director General of Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), Senator Abdul Aziz Yari (middle) and Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbejebiamila at the Presidential Villa Abuja... on Friday. PHOTO: STATE HOUSE.

Customs Uncovers N3.67b Cannabis Shipment At Tin Can Port, Hands Over To NDLEA

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

THE Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has handed over cannabis-infused products and other illicit drug-related substances worth about N3.67 billion to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for further investigation and necessary action.

The substances, seized from two 40-foot containers at the Tin Can Island Port, weighed a combined 1,201.83 kilograms. They comprised 890 packs of Delta-8 cannabis-infused cookies

and gummies weighing 598.08 kilograms, and 1,207 packages of Cannabis Indica weighing 603.75 kilograms.

Speaking during a press briefing at the port on Friday, the Customs Area Controller of the Tin Can Island Port Command, Joseph Anani, said the first seizure was made on September 2, 2026, following a 100 per cent joint physical examination by officers of the Customs Service and the NDLEA.

He said the cannabis-infused cookies and gummies were

found in a 40-foot container with the number MSDU655132/0. A used 2008 Mercedes-Benz and a 2012 Nissan Infiniti were also found in the container, bringing the estimated value of the consignment to N53 million.

Anani said the second container, numbered SKU625643/6, was intercepted on September 16. Examination revealed 1,207 packages of Cannabis Indica, alongside two used Toyota Sienna vehicles, two used Toyota Corolla vehicles and used engine spare parts.

He put the estimated street

value of the second consignment at N3.62 billion, bringing the combined value of the seized substances to about N3.67 billion.

According to him, the seizures resulted from intelligence-led enforcement and collaboration between the Customs Service and the NDLEA.

Anani said the concealment of illicit substances among vehicles and automobile spare parts showed how smugglers were exploiting containerised cargo to move prohibited items into the country.

55-year-old Motorist Survives Train Collision In Lagos

By **Eniola Daniel**

A 55-year-old motorist escaped unhurt after his Honda car collided with a train at the PWD railway line, inward Agege, Lagos State, on Friday, October 9, 2026.

The motorist was driving a Honda car with registration number; EKY 902 JT, when the collision occurred.

The operatives of Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) and

security personnel responded to the railroad collision at the PWD Railway Line, rescuing the driver and facilitating the removal of the damaged vehicle from the railway track.

Although the collision left the Honda car extensively damaged and virtually written off, no injury or casualty was reported at the scene.

In an inter-agency synergy, LASTMA operatives, working in concert with security personnel, facilitated the immediate removal of the mangled vehicle from the railway track, allowing the train to continue its journey towards Agege.

However, traffic movement around the PWD axis remained severely affected, with congestion disrupting the smooth flow of vehicles along the corridor.

LASTMA subsequently handed over the wrecked vehicle to security personnel for further investigation into the cause of the collision.

The General Manager of LASTMA, Olalekan Bakare-Oki, commended the prompt, coordinated and professionally executed response of the Authority's operatives and the security personnel involved in the emergency operation.

He acknowledged their exemplary vigilance, responsiveness and collaborative disposition in managing the aftermath of an incident with considerable potential for catastrophic consequences.

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Special

Crossing The Certification Hurdles Amid

By Moyosore Salami

OCTOBER 5, World Teachers' Day is held yearly to celebrate all teachers around the globe. It commemorates the anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO recommendation concerning the status of teachers, which sets benchmarks regarding the rights and responsibilities of teachers, and standards for their initial preparation and further education, recruitment, employment, and teaching and learning conditions. It is not only a day to celebrate how teachers are transforming education but also to reflect on the support they need to fully deploy their talent and vocation, and to rethink the way ahead for the profession globally.

World Teachers' Day has been celebrated since 1994.

Sixty years after the 1966 ILO/UNESCO recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, new challenges have emerged for the profession, from digital technologies and climate change to inclusion, migration and displacement.

These pressures affect several dimensions of the status of teachers: their symbolic status, when teaching is not sufficiently recognised or valued; their professional status, shaped by limited autonomy, support or voice in policy-making; and their material status, compromised by salaries, workloads and working environments that do not allow teachers to fully exercise their role.

Under the theme "Standing with teachers: 60 years of protecting the profession, advancing its status and shaping our futures," the 2026 edition centres on reviewing the current challenges related to teacher status and the strategies to address them, calling on society and policy-makers to protect, promote and elevate that status.

Across public and private schools in Nigeria, teachers are under pressure to comply with a new certification requirement introduced by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), as the government moves to fully professionalise the teaching profession.

Under the directive, all teachers are expected to register with the council and obtain professional certification. While schools are expected to achieve substantial compliance by 2026, full implementation is scheduled for 2027. Schools that fail to comply risk being barred from participating in national examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), the National Examinations Council (NECO), the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) and other external examination bodies.

The policy is aimed at placing teaching on the same professional footing as law, medicine and engineering by making certification compulsory for those who wish to remain in the classroom. However, as the implementation deadline draws closer, concerns are mounting over the financial burden on teachers, the capacity of the registration process and the implications for a sector already struggling with shortages of qualified personnel.

Checks by *The Guardian* show that though Nigeria has an estimated four million teachers, only about 1.61 million had been certified by TRCN as of June 2026, according to data on the council's registration portal.

The figure is lower than the 2.4 million certified teachers previously announced by the council, raising fresh questions about the pace of compliance as schools and teachers race to meet the deadline.

A Profession Without A Complete Register

Data obtained from the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) show that Lagos has the highest number of registered teachers in the country, with about 125,000, representing nearly eight per cent of the national total. It is followed by Oyo, Delta, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Kwara, Kaduna, Kano and



An AI-generated image of a teacher teaching students in a classroom

Anambra states.

The pattern changes, however, when attention shifts to teachers currently seeking certification. Borno has the highest number of candidates registered for the Professional Qualifying Examination (PQE), ahead of Lagos, Rivers, Niger and the FCT. The figures reflect the state's continued efforts to rebuild its education sector after years of insurgency.

An analysis of the data also shows that women account for 59.2 per cent of teachers already certified by TRCN and 65.3 per cent of those currently preparing to sit the PQE. The figures come despite concerns by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) over low female enrolment in some Colleges of Education, particularly in parts of northern Nigeria.

While women constitute the larger share of certified teachers nationwide, the commission says some teacher-training institutions are finding it difficult to attract female students into education programmes.

The data further show a growing gap in the qualification profile of those entering the profession. While many teachers already on the TRCN register were certified under lower qualification categories, a larger proportion of those currently seeking certification are bachelor degree holders, suggesting that newer entrants are joining the profession with higher academic qualifications even as enrolment into Colleges of Education continues to decline.

The certification drive is also unfolding against the backdrop of an existing shortage of teachers.

Education agencies estimated that Nigeria requires about 278,000 additional teachers in the basic education sector, leaving the government with the twin challenge of improving professional standards while addressing shortages in classrooms across the country.

The situation is not limited to Nigeria. Across several education systems worldwide, countries are struggling to recruit and retain teachers even as certification requirements become more stringent.

A 2024 study by UNESCO and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimate that the world would require about 44 million additional primary and secondary school teachers by 2030 to achieve global education targets.

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for the largest share of the shortage, requiring about 15 million teachers. The study also found that teacher attrition almost doubled between 2015 and 2022, largely due to poor remuneration and unfavourable working conditions.

The Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), Angela Ajala, recently disclosed that Nigeria faces a shortage of nearly 200,000 teachers in basic education.

Speaking at the Second Annual National Conference of the Committee of Provosts of Colleges of Education in Abuja, she said the problem starts long before teachers enter the classroom.

Ajala noted that 18 states did not recruit a single teacher over a five-year period, while some Colleges of Education recorded no first-

year enrolment. She added that enrolment into teacher education continues to decline, with female students accounting for less than one-quarter of enrolment in some northern institutions.

The development comes as TRCN insists on full compliance with its certification policy, while NCCE warned that fewer people are enrolling in teacher-training institutions, raising concerns over the future supply of teachers in the country.

Certification Drive Meets Implementation Challenge

While the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) continues to tighten certification requirements, figures from the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) point to a teaching profession already struggling with recruitment.

The Registrar of TRCN, Dr Ronke Soyombo maintained that teaching should be regulated like medicine and law, where

professional licensing remains compulsory regardless of manpower shortage.

Yet, concerns persist over the pace of implementation.

With enrolment into teacher education declining and recruitment slowing in many states, some stakeholders stated that the profes-

Certification should go with better welfare, mentoring and continuous professional development in order to foster the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Teaching should not become the profession people enter only when other doors close. It should become one of the professions our brightest minds aspire to join because of its impact, dignity, and national value.



Education Minister,
Dr. Tunji Alausa

Feature

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Shortage Of Teachers, Other Challenges

sion requires stronger investment in welfare, recruitment and working conditions alongside certification.

The differing positions of TRCN and NCCE have also drawn attention. While TRCN is focused on enforcing certification, NCCE continues to warn that fewer people are entering teacher training institutions, raising concerns about the future supply of teachers.

Established under Decree No. 31 of 1993, now the TRCN Act CAP T3 of 2004, the council is responsible for registering qualified teachers, setting professional standards, enforcing a code of conduct and issuing practising licences. Candidates are required to pass the Professional Qualifying Examination (PQE), a computer-based test, with a minimum score of 50 per cent before certification is granted.

Fees vary according to qualification. NCE holders pay about N5,000 for the examination, while PhD holders pay up to N8,000, in addition to certification and annual licensing fees. The council also introduced a digital registration portal to simplify processing and enable candidates to complete registration online.

The Federal Government has continued to push enforcement. Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, directed TRCN to remove unqualified teachers from classrooms, while Soyombo said the government was targeting 75 per cent compliance by 2026 and full compliance by 2027.

Funding, however, remains a challenge. Since federal funding to professional bodies was suspended in 2024, TRCN has faced financial constraints affecting training programmes and enforcement activities.

For many teachers, the concern is less about certification itself than the process of obtaining it. They also reported challenges with the council's registration portal.

Speaking to journalists in Abuja in March 2026, Soyombo said TRCN experienced a week-long disruption in December 2025 following problems with its former service provider, adding that the platform had operated smoothly since a new developer took over in January.

In a later statement, however, she attributed the disruption to heavy traffic following the nationwide rollout, system upgrades and users adjusting to the digital platform, without referring to any change of developer.

Soyombo also acknowledged the challenges faced by teachers in rural communities with poor internet connectivity and limited digital literacy. She said the council had expanded registration support through state offices and help desks in tertiary institutions, while plans were underway to introduce a mobile application to improve access.

Teachers Count Cost Of Certification

The certification process is not the same for every teacher. While graduates of education-related courses can register directly for the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) examination, graduates from other disciplines are required to obtain a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) before sitting the Professional Qualifying Examination (PQE). For many teachers, that additional requirement has become the biggest hurdle.

A teacher in Ogun State, Adewale (not real name) said graduates from non-education disciplines are required to obtain a PGDE before proceeding to TRCN certification, making the process longer and more expensive.

"The honest truth is that I find it odd when you have spent

years in school and then you have to go back again to study just to be recognised as a teacher.

"For those of us whose courses are not in education, we have to do PGDE first, which takes about a year, then proceed to TRCN. The process is long and expensive.

"The issue is not that the certificate is useless. It is actually very good and widely accepted, even abroad. But the challenge is the process and cost. When you are earning little, sometimes as low as N35,000, how do you fund it without support?"

He said the burden is heavier for teachers in private schools, many of whom pay for the entire process from their salaries.

Adewale suggested a model similar to that used by WAEC or JAMB, where schools register teachers for structured training, workshops and examinations.

"That way, it becomes easier and more inclusive instead of placing the burden entirely on individuals."

He warned that strict enforcement could widen the gap between public and private school teachers, as public school teachers are more likely to receive institutional support.

He also stressed that teaching is often treated as a fallback profession and that introducing stricter certification requirements without improving welfare, infrastructure and career prospects could discourage more people from entering the profession.

A certified teacher, Ebubechukwu Udensi, described her registration process as relatively smooth. She completed it while studying at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

According to her, a faculty officer coordinated the registration process. She created a profile on the TRCN portal, paid through Remita and was assigned to a computer-based test centre for the examination.

Although the process was organised, she experienced slow portal response during peak periods and delays in document verification.

Preparing for the examination, she said, was the most demanding aspect of the exercise because it came shortly after her final-year defence, leaving her with little time to study.

She also found time management difficult during the examination because of the number of questions and the time allotted, adding that practising with past questions proved helpful.

Udensi noted that the certification process has helped to improve professional standards by introducing minimum requirements for those entering the classroom.

"Before its enforcement, teaching was largely open to individuals without formal training. Certification has now created a professional benchmark, even though implementation still faces challenges."

Certification on its own does not automatically produce effective classroom teachers. Many schools already invest heavily in retraining newly recruited teachers because certification alone does not always translate to classroom readiness. Some young educators struggle with lesson delivery, communication, classroom management, pedagogical depth, and professional writing.

She stated that she initially resisted writing the examination while still in school but later changed her mind after encouragement from a lecturer who had studied in the United Kingdom, where teacher certification is widely recognised.

Imoh Abasi Ufot also noted that certification has strengthened his professional identity and improved his employment prospects, particularly in international schools in Port Harcourt.

According to him, the certificate has become an important requirement in many schools and has helped to distinguish teachers as recognised professionals.

"It has also improved how teachers are perceived. Parents tend to have more confidence in teachers and schools that employ certified educators."

Ufot, however, said certification alone does not determine classroom effectiveness.

According to him, both certified and uncertified teachers can perform well, depending on their ability, commitment, mentorship and professional development.

He added that certification should be regarded as a professional benchmark rather than a mere box-ticking exercise.

Teachers Weigh Local Certification Against Global Opportunities

For teachers seeking opportunities abroad, however, TRCN certification has its limitations.

Ufot said qualifications such as Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) benefit wider recognition in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe than TRCN certification.

The observation comes as Nigeria continues to lose trained teachers through migration, with more than 2,600 reportedly relocating to the United Kingdom and Canada between 2022 and 2024.

He advised teachers planning careers in Europe, America and parts of the EMEA region to pursue internationally recognised qualifications such as QTS, noting that TRCN certification is not accepted across some foreign education systems.

Nigeria is not alone in tightening professional regulation. In Ghana, the

National Teaching Council conducts the Ghana Teacher Licensure Examination and has identified thousands of unlicensed teachers during enforcement exercises, directing that many be removed from classrooms.

Kenya adopts an even stricter approach. Under the Teachers Service Commission Act, teaching without reg-

istration is a criminal offence, with offenders liable to fines or up to two years' imprisonment.

Across the three countries, the objective is largely the same to make professional licensing a prerequisite for classroom teaching.

The challenges are equally familiar. Teachers continue to complain about the cost of certification, technical hitches on registration portals and the extra qualifications required of graduates who did not study education.

Certification Alone Cannot Fix The System

Education consultant, David Ayalogu said the current certification drive has yet to produce any significant improvement in the quality of teaching in Nigeria.

While describing the policy as an important step towards professionalising the teaching profession, he argued that certification alone cannot address the deeper challenges confronting the education sector.

According to him, poor welfare, overcrowded classrooms and inadequate infrastructure continue to undermine effective teaching.

"Even certified teachers struggle to perform optimally when they are placed in under-resourced and overcrowded environments," Ayalogu said.

He said TRCN could only do so much on its own, stressing that government must increase investment in education, improve school facilities and ensure that graduates of teacher training institutions are absorbed into the system.

Although he described Nigeria's teacher education curriculum, particularly at the NCE level, as commendable, Ayalogu said it remains largely theoretical, while the emphasis on certification often overshadows practical classroom preparation.

He noted that TRCN has become more active in recent years after a period of relative inactivity and now has an opportunity to address longstanding gaps alongside other education regulators.

While commending the certification process, he said it has become unnecessarily bureaucratic and should be made easier for teachers to access.

According to him, making teaching more attractive requires better remuneration, clearer career progression and stronger protection for teachers, many of whom work under difficult and sometimes unsafe conditions. He added that a dedicated policy on teachers' welfare and safety would help improve the profession's image.

Ayalogu also questioned inconsistencies in TRCN's public communication, particularly the different explanations given for the December 2025 portal disruption and the drop in the council's registration figures from 2.4 million to 1.61 million.

He said regulators asking teachers to comply with a costly and sometimes difficult process must also be transparent and consistent with the information they provide.

The Professional Qualifying Examination (PQE) has equally attracted criticism from some teachers, who argue that it places too much emphasis on theory.

Udensi acknowledged concerns over the cost of certification and the burden it places on teachers, especially those earning poor salaries.

She, however, maintained that certification protects learners from unqualified teachers and helps establish minimum professional standards, much like licensing in medicine, law and engineering.

According to her, the PQE tests lesson planning, classroom ethics, assessment and classroom management but does not adequately reflect realities such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching materials and pupils with diverse learning needs.

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



Education Consultant,
David Ayalogu



The High Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Canada, Professor Isaac Folorunso Adewole (left) presenting his Letter of credence to the Canadian Governor General, Louise Arbour, at Rideau Hall, Ottawa, Canada... recently



Chief Executive Officer (CEO), CCTech Distribution Ltd., Adegbenro Adeniyi-Martins (left); CEO, MEL Education Services, Mrs Fola Adeniyi and Chairman, Waterside Group, Adeniyi Omololu, during the official unveiling of Redwood Restaurant, in Lekki, Lagos.



Secretary, Administration, Association of Issuing Houses of Nigeria (AIHN), Onyebuchim Obiyemi (left); Secretary, Finance, Alhassan Gwarzo; President, Kemi Awodein; Vice President, Gbadebo Adenrele, and Secretary, Publicity, Toni Sanni, during the AIHN yearly general meeting in Lagos.



Aro of Agbowo Ikosi, High Chief Sakiru Kehinde Odufowora (left); wife of the Lead Pastor, Mrs Glory Umoru; Abowa of Agbowo Ikosi, Lagos State, Oba Owolabi Saheed Momson; Lead Pastor, International Miracle Service, Pastor Andrew Umoru, during a press conference on the Agbowo Miracle Crusade held at the Oba's palace in Agbowo, Lagos ...on Friday

Metronotes

Yayi, Adebule, Oladejo, Others To Grace Imodi-Ijebu Chieftaincy Outing

By Shakirah Adunola

SENATOR Solomon Solamilekan Adeola, popularly known as Yayi, Senator Idiat Oluranti Adebule, National Missioner of Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Sheikh AbdurRahman Ahmad; Grand Mufti of the Conference of Islamic Organisations, Sheikh Dhikrullah Shafi'i, and former Chairman of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), Alhaji Zikrullah Olakunle Hassan, are among prominent personalities expected at the Imodi-Ijebu Muslim Community turbaning ceremony on Saturday, October 10, 2026, at the Tititlayo Agbaje Memorial Comprehensive High School, TAMCO, Imodi-Ijebu, Ogun State, at 10am. The event will also feature a N1 billion fundraising drive for education and empowerment. The Ogun State All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate, Senator Yayi, is the Chief Launcher, while Chairman/ Chief Executive Officer of Mabtech Electrical Engineering Services Ltd, Abuja, Alhaji Abdul Waheed Yusuf, is the Co Launcher.

The Chairman of the Day is the Bashorun of Offa Kingdom, Alhaji (Dr) Najeemdeen Usman Yasin, while the Royal Father of the Day is the Olumodi of Imodi, High Chief Musibau Adewale Okusajo.

Digital Infrastructure Will Fix Fragmented Health Data — Oluyade

By Sunday Aikulola

THE Head of Application & Development, Bradford Teaching Hospital, NHS Foundation Trust, United Kingdom, Dotun Oluyade, has argued that digital infra-

structure would fix the nation's fragmented health data.

In a recent chat with The Guardian, he observed "Nigeria's healthcare system faces persistent challenge."

He noticed patient informa-

tion was often fragmented across Federal Medical Centres, state hospitals, private providers, and primary healthcare facilities.

He said records generated at one point of care might not be readily available when a

patient moves elsewhere, noting that the fragmentation could contribute to delayed diagnosis, repeated investigations, incomplete medical histories, and unnecessary out-of-pocket expenditure.

JCI Ikeja Screens Over 2,000 Residents For Diseases, Offers Free Drugs

By Kehinde Olatunji

THE Junior Chamber International (JCI), Ikeja, has provided free health screening and medical services to more than 2,000 resi-

dents as part of its yearly community health intervention.

The exercise, tagged "Commit to Quality Health," held last Saturday and covered screening for blood pressure, blood sugar, malaria,

tuberculosis (TB), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and hepatitis B, alongside dental and oral health checks and distribution of free drugs.

President of JCI Ikeja,

THE NNPC Limited/FIRST E&P Joint Venture has concluded the fourth edition of its medical and health outreach programme in Bayelsa, bringing essential healthcare

services closer to residents across its 11 KEFFESO host communities of Koluama 1, Koluama 2, Ezetu 1, Ezetu 2, Foropa, Fish Town, Ekeni,

Joint Venture Ends Medical Outreach In Bayelsa
Sangana, Opu Okumbiri, Okumbiribeleu, and Oginibiri.

The outreach, which began on September 21, 2026, provid-

ed free medical consultations, laboratory testing, eye and dental screenings, eye surgery, health education and other essential healthcare services.

EY Alumni Week: Experts Urge Responsible Adoption Of Agentic Artificial Intelligence

By Opeyemi Babalola

BUSINESS leaders have stressed the urgent need for organisations to adopt agentic artificial intelligence (AI) with a clear purpose,

strong governance frameworks, and sustained human oversight as technology evolves from assisting people to executing tasks and making decisions within defined parameters.

The call was made during a recent virtual webinar organised by the EY Nigeria Alumni Association as part of EY Global Alumni Week.

The event, with the theme: "Leading with Confidence in the

Age of Agentic AI," examined the implications of autonomous AI systems for operating models, decision-making, customer service, and workforce transformation.

18-Year-Old Girl, Favour Chinecherem, Wins SASEYC 2.0 Aviation Scholarship

By Suliyyat Tella

AN 18-year-old girl, Favour Felix Chinecherem, from Enugu State, has emerged winner of the 2026 Southeast Aviation Summit/Eastwing Youth Competition, earning a scholarship to study Aircraft Maintenance Engineering at Eastwing Aviation Institute.

Chinecherem emerged from a stiff competition involving young people from different states in the Southeast at the SASEYC 2.0 grand finale held recently at Bon Hotel Platinum, Enugu.

The competition, organised by the Eastwing Youth Foundation and Eastwing

Aviation Institute, was held under the theme, 'Advancing Youth Potentials Through Aviation Innovation & Excellence,' with the summit bringing together young people, aviation professionals, educators, business leaders and other stakeholders.

Speaking after the event, the

Convener, Christian Agadibe, described the competition as a strong contest among youths from across the region.

"It was a stiff competition among the Southeast youth from different states, and Favour emerged through her confidence, passion and determination," he said.

Arise 2026: Lagos Set For Women's Convergence

THE 2026 edition of Arise Women Conference will hold from Saturday, October 31 to Sunday, November 1, 2026, at the Oriental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The event comes with a fresh mandate urging women across generations to move beyond conversations about change and focus on creating measurable impact in the society.

With the success of the 2025 edition, the gathering is being positioned as more than another conference, with emphasis on practical transformation, leadership, empowerment, service and social impact. With the theme: "Impact," it is designed to challenge women to reflect on their individual contributions to society and ask a critical question: "What impact am I making?" The organisers described it as "Transformational. Monumental. Unstoppable. Impact," stressing that the objective is to inspire participants to translate ideas and inspiration into tangible results.

At the centre of the movement is Pastor Siju Iluyomade, whose vision has continued to provide a platform for women from diverse professional, social and generational backgrounds to connect around purpose, leadership, compassion and service.

NAFDAC Numbers For Cough Syrup, Balm Found On Two Ghanaian Herbal Bitters Sold In Lagos Buses, Parks

By Gbenga Salau

FOUR years after *The Guardian* raised questions about the manufacturing locations of some Ghanaian herbal products sold in Lagos, fresh findings have revealed that two of the products now bear National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) registration numbers that belong to entirely different products. The two products are Madam F Kayes Bitters and Asheitu Adam's Bitters.

The first, Madam F Kayes Bitters, said it was manufactured in January 2025 and expires in December 2028, with A7-2719L as its NAFDAC number. The product's label and the marketers said it is a blood-purifying tonic with capacity to cure about 15 different ailments. Those listed on the product include hypertension, gonorrhoea, stomach problems, sexual weakness, poor eyesight, worms, diabetes, menopausal problems, piles, fibroid, fever, waist pains, menstrual pains, barrenness, and rheumatism. The label also says it is produced and marketed by Rebek Natural Healthcare.

The company's address was not provided. A similar product, Asheitu Adam's Bitter, is also sold in Nigeria as a "100% herbal" blood purifier.

Asheitu Adam's Bitter label said it originated from Ghana and manufactured by Asheitu Adams Enterprises but carries a Nigerian address: 2 Babatunde Adetoro Street, Off Old Abeokuta Motor Road, by Mobil Station, Agege, Lagos. Also, there were two customer care lines in the new product label: a Nigerian phone line and a Ghanaian phone number.

The product label said it treats such ailments as: asthma, pregnancy disorders, headache, hypertension, gonorrhoea, stomach problems, sexual weakness, poor eyesight, worms, diabetes, menopausal problems, piles, fibroids, fever, waist pains, menstrual pains, barrenness, and rheumatism. The product label said it was manufactured on December 1, 2024, and will expire on November 1, 2027, while its NAFDAC-approved number is A7-1827L.

However, when the NAFDAC numbers on the

two products were inputted on the NAFDAC product verification portal, it revealed that NAFDAC allocated the numbers to different products. For Madam F Kayes Bitter (A7-2719L), the details revealed that the product with that approved number is DB Essential Balm, a relieving ointment also categorised as a herbal and nutraceutical product.

The portal also revealed that the product was imported and manufactured by Arya Aushadhi Pharma Mumbai PVT Limited, an India-based pharmaceutical company. It further disclosed that the licence was approved on April 7, 2022, and expired on April 6, 2024.

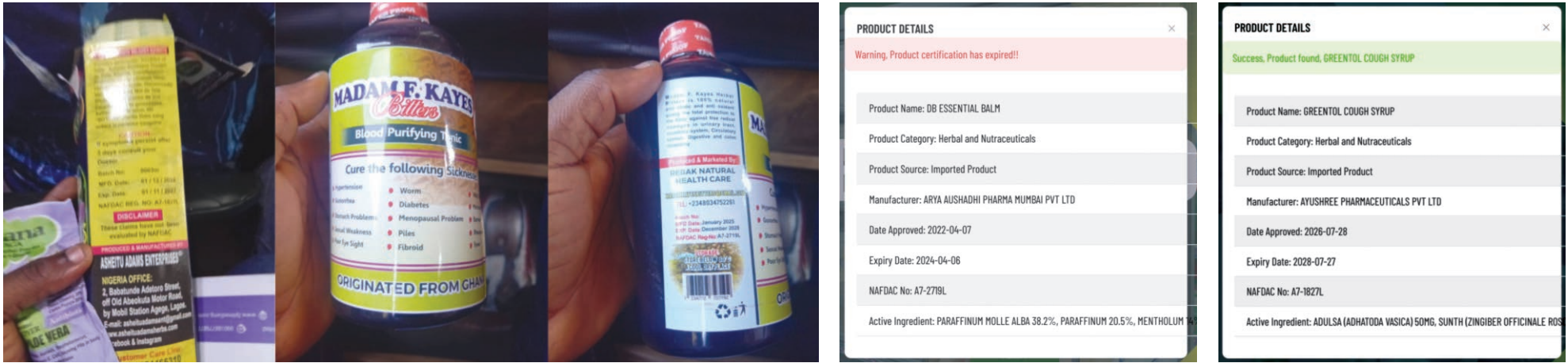
For Asheitu Adams Bitter (A7-1827L), the NAFDAC product verification portal showed that the product with the approved number is Greentol Cough Syrup. It was categorised as a herbal and nutraceutical product that is imported and produced by Ayushree Pharmaceuticals PVT Limited. The portal also disclosed that the product was approved on May 29, 2024, and the licence expired on May 28, 2026.

The Director-General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Professor Mojisola Adeyeye, spoke on the implications of two products sharing a NAFDAC number at a media briefing held in Lagos.

She said that when two products have the same number, the agency usually sanctions those involved.

"A company getting one NAFDAC number and using it multiple times, that is a crime based on our own regulation, but we sanction them heavily," said the agency's Director-General.

"If you go on our website, we have a watchlist. If you cross our path too many times, and you are not repentant, we blacklist you. If there is an issue with a product that we are still investigating or working around, we put you on the watchlist; it is on our website. A company that has one NAFDAC number for more than one product doesn't think of the customer, and the quality, safety, and efficacy are very likely compromised. So we take it very seriously."



Onigbongbo LCDA Chair Tasks Residents To Love Their Eyes

• Optometrists, Council Mark World Sight Day With Free Eye Screening, Over 1000 Glasses

By Gbenga Salau

THE Chairman of Onigbongbo Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Moyosore Adebajo has thanked the Nigerian Optometric Association (NOA) for partnering with his LCDA to bring free eye care to residents and helped him cater for the wellbeing of his constituents.

Speaking during an event to mark the 2026 World Sight Day with a walk and eye screening exercise organised by NOA in partnership with the Onigbongbo LCDA, Adebajo said: "This reinforces the fact that we are committed to caring for members of our community and taking good care of their sight, particularly to commemorate the World Sight Day.

"And it is interesting to know that the Nigerian Optimistic Association, Lagos Chapter, is doing this in partnership with my local council. It could have been any other local council, but because of our interest and our readiness to partner and look after members of our community, that's why we have domiciled this initiative within

my local council development area. What else can I say, than to speak to the fact that we are more than ready and committed to the well-being of members of our community."

The free eye screening exercises were carried out in four locations simultaneously in Ikeja, Festac, Ajah and Alimosho.

Speaking on the initiative, the Chairperson, NOA Lagos Chapter, Dr. Ghenorhe Ehimen, stated that the association marked the 2026 World Sight Day to create awareness and check preventable and avoidable causes of blindness. She added that free eye screening, eye care and eye-glasses would be provided for about 1200 beneficiaries of Lagos.

She further said that the goal is to get more residents to love their eyes through taking good care of their eyes, which is part of giving back to the society by members of the association.

She maintained that Lagosians need to have proper eye examinations once they start noticing a change in their vision, by visiting a clinic and not wish

the problem away.

She added: "Your eye care is important. If you see clearly, then you can work better. If you see clearly, then your future is brighter. If you see clearly, then you can be more productive to the society."

Ehimen thanked the Chairman of Onigbongbo Local Council, Moyosore Adebajo, for partnership with the NOA to cater for 500 beneficiaries that were attended to in Ikeja alone. She disclosed that at least 200 beneficiaries each would be attended to in the other three locations. She was excited that the chairman has not only provided 500 eyeglasses but also pledged to provide support for any beneficiary that needs surgeries.

Before screening the eyes of the beneficiaries at the Ikeja location, centre of one of the exercise, there was a walk from Allen Junction to Onigbongbo LCDA Secretariat on Community Road, Ikeja, creating awareness about the World Sight Day, educating residents and passersby about the importance of loving their eyes through talks and fliers.

Land Title Dispute: Firm Gives Lagos Land Registrar Seven-Day Ultimatum, Threatens N5b Suit

By Gbenga Salau

THE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CFL Group, Mr. Lai Omotola, has issued a seven-day ultimatum to the Lagos State Registrar of Lands to deregister a Governor's Consent linked to a property on Adeola Odeku Street, Victoria Island, threatening to institute a N5 billion lawsuit if the document is not withdrawn.

Omotola alleged that the title documents had discrepancies, accusing individuals allegedly behind the transaction of using the document to lay claim to the property and continue construction despite objections to their ownership claims.

In a public alert titled "Land Title Laundry in Lagos State," he raised concerns about an alleged scheme involving the cloning of land titles, forgery of historical land records and the insertion of questionable documents into the state's land registry system.

According to the com-

plainant, the alleged scheme involves identifying abandoned properties in high-value locations such as Ikoyi and Victoria Island, attributing ownership to deceased individuals, and producing purportedly backdated land certificates before allegedly introducing the documents into official records.

He claimed that, once the documents are reflected in the government's system, those behind the scheme proceed to obtain a Governor's Consent, which they subsequently rely on to assert ownership of the property. Omotola said investigations by his firm into the competing ownership claims revealed discrepancies in the documents allegedly presented by the rival claimant.

The Public Affairs Officer of the Lagos Land Bureau, Harry Dayo Adeola, was contacted and the issues raised by Omotola were put across to him, he promised to get back but has not as at press time.

Politics

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INEC And The Road To 2027: The Goal, The Gains And Landmines

From **Bridget Chiedu Onochie**, Abuja

SINCE Nigeria returned to democratic government in 1999, every general election circle had come with criticisms over various electoral malpractices and allegations of interference, especially by the ruling party. This culminated in loss of zeal and active participation by many people. Their argument being that it is an effort in futility to participate in the election that lacks credibility and fairness.

To rebuild public trust, the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) billed the country over N300 billion to conduct a credible 2023 election through deployment of technological devices.

The assurance ignited greater political interest and gained wider participation, especially by the youth. Unfortunately, the inability of the Commission to deliver a flawless poll returned the country to the state of apathy while some others expressed fears that any attempt to manipulate the system further may trigger violence across the country.

However, less than 100 days to the 2027 elections, the new INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash O. Amupitan (SAN), said every necessary arrangement has been put in place to avoid technological glitch. He reassured the country and the international community of total commitment to neutrality, operational excellence and the sacred integrity of the ballot box.

Speaking on Monday at the World Press Conference and national stakeholders' meeting, Amupitan said the Commission has moved from planning into active contract execution, production, delivery and construction.

The Chairman, who took time to reel out stages of preparedness, said that production has advanced for 57,000 new Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) devices as well as additional voting cubicles and ballot boxes.

Meanwhile, some of the newly acquired BVAS have been delivered while delivery of new operational vehicles is ongoing nationwide.

"Construction of dedicated BVAS storage facilities and Local Government Area offices is progressing alongside nationwide office renovations and the contract for solar power installation across all the Commission's offices has been awarded."

INEC boss also assured that critical ICT applications are being upgraded, core infrastructure implemented and some states currently receiving non-sensitive materials. According to him, printing of ballot papers and result sheets is nearly completed.

Amupitan, who assumed leadership of INEC in October last year, was elated over successful conduct of off-cycle elections, including those of Anambra, Ekiti and Osun states governorship elections. Citing local and international observers' reports, he held that the polls passed the benchmark of electoral integrity and underscored unwavering adherence to operational efficiency and credibility.

However, beyond passing the integrity benchmark, the chairman underscored the need for early deployment of ad-hoc staff and sensitive materials, agile logistics infrastructure and precision-driven and non-negotiable intelligence-led security arrangements.

The INEC boss admitted the arduous task of delivering non-sensitive and sensitive materials to 176,846 polling units across 8,838 registration areas and spanning urban centres, remote riverine communities and other difficult terrains. But

with lessons from recent off-cycle elections, Amupitan said the Commission has finalised an integrated, multi-modal deployment strategy.

"The Commission has renewed and strengthened its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with key transport unions, including the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) and Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN).

"This framework guarantees the early pooling, vetting and mobilisation of over 100,000 vehicles and 4,000 boats to move personnel and materials," he said.

For difficult-to-access terrains, especially in the Niger Delta Region, Lake Chad Basin and high-altitude areas in the North-East and North-West, the Commission said it has secured dedicated speedboats, 4x4 off-road vehicles and local pack transport.

Other strategies include early movement of sensitive and non-sensitive materials ahead of the poll.

"A structured reverse logistics protocol has been established to govern the secure retrieval, auditing and central archiving of BVAS devices, election result sheets (Forms EC8A), and unused ballot materials immediately following final collation," he added.

Yet, technology remains the bedrock of transparent results in an election. To this end, the Commission said BVAS devices have undergone extensive software hardening, battery optimisation and biometric calibration to prevent accreditation bypass and eliminate manual manipulation.

"Building on successful deployments in recent off-cycle elections, our enhanced EC8A system ensures that polling unit result sheets are verified, cryptographically authenticated and uploaded directly from polling units to the public view portal, IReV.

"A nationwide audit of BVAS inventory, with activation testing and GPS tracking verification has just been concluded," Amupitan assured, adding that the Commission has established a dedicated Artificial Intelligence (AI) Division with automated AI auditing tools integrated into results verification process under a five-pillar AI Governance

Visible areas for improvement are thorough cleaning of the register, quality of ad hoc staff training, daily proactive communication in the final 100 days, and clear arrangements for persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons and essential workers.

Framework, operating under mandatory human oversight.

To ensure electoral integrity, Amupitan identified physical security and ethical discipline. Using its Risk Management Tool (ERM) and the Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT), he said the Commission will monitor political activities, track risk incidents and undertake field risk assessments to further fine-tune its security strategy for the 2027 general election.

And for the security of lives and materials, he said a joint security training for Electoral Security Personnel (ESPs) across the country has been organised while anti-graft agencies and undercover surveillance teams would be deployed to track illicit campaign spending and poll-site financial inducements.

While commending the government for timely release of statutory funding to the Commission, the INEC boss called for prompt release of the remaining budget to fund remaining activities.

Although many Nigerians are indecisive about participating in the 2027 polls, about 10.8 million new voters registered during the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise, taking the number of registered voters nationwide to 103 million.

Breaking down the figures, the commission listed the top 10 states by number of registered voters to include Lagos with

7,488,633; Kano, 6,570,276; Kaduna, 4,662,640; Katsina, 3,876,051 and Rivers State with 3,736,434.

Others are Oyo State, 3,588,111; Delta, 3,525,988; Benue, 3,057,225; Ogun, 3,037,981 and Bauchi State, 3,012,547. The data showed Ekiti State with the lowest number of registered voters put at 1,055,708.

In compliance with Section 19(1) of the Electoral Act 2026, the commission pledged to display the Register of Voters for public scrutiny between October 9 and 15, while the distribution of Phase 1 PVCs to all local council centres began last Friday.

The commission had also introduced an online registration portal technology to eliminate distance barriers and Printable PVC technology in line with Section 18(1) of the Electoral Act 2026 to address the problem of long wait times for cards.

"To protect the integrity of party nominations and prevent unlawful exclusion or arbitrary candidate substitution, the Commission implemented an administrative safeguard, which was the pre-uploading of candidate names onto the INEC Candidates Nomination Portal, strictly verified against INEC's primary election monitoring reports and internal party appeal outcomes."

To counter disinformation, the commission said it engaged citizens on public enlightenment to raise awareness on fake and misleading information.

"Generative AI, voice cloning and deepfake videos now make it cheap to fabricate the voices of election officials, doctored result sheets and fake letterheads and to spread them faster than they can be verified.

"The greater danger is not any single falsehood. When deepfakes render lies believable, truth is greeted with scepticism, and cynicism replaces civic engagement.

We are responding on three fronts," Amupitan assured.

Assessing INEC's journey to 2027 elections so far, former National Commissioner of INEC, Prof. Lai Oluode, did not agree any less with Amupitan. Having monitored developments in INEC, he assured that the commission is more than 75 per cent ready for the elections.

"Let me also do an assessment of the state of readiness of the electorate. Following the off-cycle elections and the by-elections that are taking place in different parts of the country, I will say that the electorate are in a state of just blow the whistle and they are there.

"They have a lot of hopes that the elections will go on as planned, and that people's expectations in terms of the integrity and the aftermath of the elections would be met," he said.

On the expectations from the international community, Oluode said they have invested tremendously towards a hitch-free poll and as such, are justified to be positive.

He, however, expressed concerns over financial inducement in elections as well as the audacity with which some stakeholders influence voters.

"When you talk of the integrity of the elections, I think INEC is bothered and it is doing everything to make sure that the record of the 2023 elections is surpassed, and I have no cause to doubt, especially with media engagement.

"It is most likely that we checkmate some media fraudsters, who sit in their rooms and cook up stories.

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



Amupitan

Yari, Lawal Alliance: Appraising Zamfara State's Emerging Godfather Political Dynamics

ON the road to the titanic 2027 general election, Zamfara State is living up to its billing as a potential electoral battleground state, especially with two sons of the state and former governors occupying influential positions in the national scheme of things. Then, there is the incumbent governor, who is not only seeking a second term in office, but also siding with one of his predecessors and shaking off the toga of desperation, LEO SOBECHI reports.

ZAMFARA State is renowned for its rich deposits of solid minerals. But in politics and governance, the state parades huge historic narratives bordering on political drama and electoral upsets.

Incumbent Governor, Dauda Lawal, recently told some journalists that the state is trying to shake off its reputation as the cradle of Sharia system. Yet, no matter how the banker-turned-politician wants to rewrite the state's history with new emphasis on good governance and critical infrastructure, the scars of the state's attempt to perfect Islam along the lines of oppositional political ideology remain.

Not many citizens would easily remember Ahmad Sani Yarima Bakura. But he is not called Tsohon Gwamna (senior governor) for nothing. Zamfara, Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Gombe and Nasarawa were the last states created by the military three years before Nigeria's return to the path of presidential democracy.

So, finding himself as the first democratically elected chief executive, Yerima equated governance with the errand of tin gods. Riding on the prevailing popular piety in the state, and above all, in a bold bid to push back on the dictates of the federal might under the Presidency controlled by the then ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Yerima waved religion, the legendary opium of the people, as his banner of populism.

With the popular acclaim that the Sharia legal system fetched for him, the governor did not just win a second term as governor, he also proceeded to win the Zamfara West seat in the Red Chamber of the National Assembly. As a politician adept at playing to the gallery, barely three years in the Red Chamber, the former governor made headline news for importing a 13 years old bride from Egypt.

In the nearly 20 years after Yerima left the Zamfara State Government House in Gusau, successive occupants did not disappoint in hugging national headlines for a variety of causes or political consequences. Yerima made a quiet political history when he supported his deputy, Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi, to succeed him as governor in 2007.

Shinkafi caused a national political stir when barely after one year in office as governor, he defected to the ruling PDP, thus becoming the first notable politician to cross over from the progressive to conservative political tendency in the mineral-rich North West state.

Shinkafi paid the price for his attempt to break loose from the noose of his political godfather, Yerima. He lost his reelection in 2011 as the state returned to the fold of the progressives. The intriguing thing about Shinkafi's loss was that the defeat of PDP by the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) was wrought by his son-in-law, Abdul'aziz Abubakar Yari.

Yari, who had circulated in various party offices, had to run for the 2011 governorship from the House of Representatives. By that time, he was representing the people of Anka/Talata Mafara Federal Constituency as a first term lawmaker. Yari went from the governorship mandate to become the chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), taking over from Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi.

While serving as NGF chairman, Yari disclosed that the period between 2015 and 2019 was a curious time to be governor, especially given that most state chief executives were finding it hard to defray overhead costs of governance, including payment of workers' salaries. If the Zamfara State governor was bemoaning the socio-economic challenges in the country, compounded by the burgeoning insecurity in the North West, his attempt to play godfather while returning to the National Assembly hit

the rocks.

Yari had penciled Muktar Shehu Idris as his preferred candidate for the APC governorship ticket. But the outgoing governor's attempt to muscle the APC governorship primary led to a split of the party structure, thus pitting the governor's camp against the other faction led by Senator Kabiru Marafa. The parallel straw poll threw up two candidates namely, Idris and Marafa.

But acting on Yari's influence and judicial somersaults, the party's national leadership grudgingly accepted Idris as its gubernatorial flagbearer for the 2019 poll. At the end of balloting, Idris led APC to achieve a 14/14 victory across the local councils with a gross ballot of 534, 541 against the 189, 452 votes returned by the first runner-up, Bello Matawalle, of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

However, while Idris, who served as Commissioner for Finance in the Yari administration, was attending the APC retreat for its elected representatives and governors, the Supreme Court struck, sacking all the candidates of the party in Zamfara State. The court ruled that the APC primary elections in the state were conducted in total breach of extant laws and the laid down regulations.

Receiving that shocking and surprising blow, which was foretold any way, Yari and his acolytes retreated once again from public service as power rolled back into the hands of the same PDP that the progressives had defeated eight years before. To the Marafa group, the Supreme Court judgment was a vindication for their campaign against godfathering, impunity and imposition.

Marafa had been a thorn in the political flesh of Yari. During plenary, the senator had stunned Nigerians when he disclosed that certain politicians in the state were arming bandits and engaging in surreptitious expropriation of the state's rich mineral deposits.

Incumbency Gaffe, Godfathers' Gamble

It was against the background of the shifting grounds of political alliances in the state that, in the lead-up to the 2023 general election, Matawalle, who became governor by procedural default, was lured back into the APC. Believing that the best way to appropriate the legendary federal might during the 2023 poll was to align with the ruling APC, Matawalle walked into a clever ambush laid by the political godfathers in the state. As things turned out, by the time the 2023 election was won and lost, it became apparent that the entire scheme of uniting the political forces under the APC structure was to pave the way for Yari's eventual return to the National Assembly, and national politics as well.

However, extending his political magnanimity towards the former governor, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu appointed Matawalle into the federal cabinet as Minister of State for Defence. On his part, Yari, who ran unsuccessfully for the position of President of Senate as Northern consensus candidate, earned the position of Chairman, Senate Panel on Water Resources, as a consolation prize.

Ever

The appointment of Yari as the Chairman of President Tinubu's Presidential Campaign Council has further elevated Yari. With that development, many believe that healing the rift in the party may no longer be feasible, just as some party faithful claim that as the APC leader in the state, the onus is on Governor Lawal to harmonise the interests of the stakeholders.

since the 2023 general election held, both Yari and Matawalle have remained at daggers-drawn politically. For instance, Yari's supporters do not lose any opportunity to tell whoever cares to listen how the Minister of State, Defence, orchestrated investigation of their principal for alleged corruption, particularly cases of the purported diversion of N37 billion accruing from Federal Government's reimbursement for projects undertaken by the Zamfara State government, as well as the alleged funneling of N350 million into the bank accounts of an estate developer in Abuja.

In the exchange of beef, Matawalle blames Yari for the loss of his second term election, even as allegations of poor performance against the two juggernauts continue to make the rounds among the citizens of the state.

Enter Dauda Lawal

In what emerged as a curious replay of history, incumbent Governor Dauda Lawal, early this year, precisely on March 10, 2026, officially returned to the APC. Recall that Lawal had after losing the APC governorship ticket in 2018 to Yari's preferred candidate, Idris, was prevailed upon by youths, who were peeved by Matawalle's exit, to contest the 2023 governorship on the platform of PDP.

After sensing that the incumbent governor was planning a return to APC, the minister had launched media attacks on Lawal, accusing him of converting the Zamfara State Government House into a market place. Matawalle also alleged that Lawal abandoned some legacy projects in the state to embark on white elephant projects.

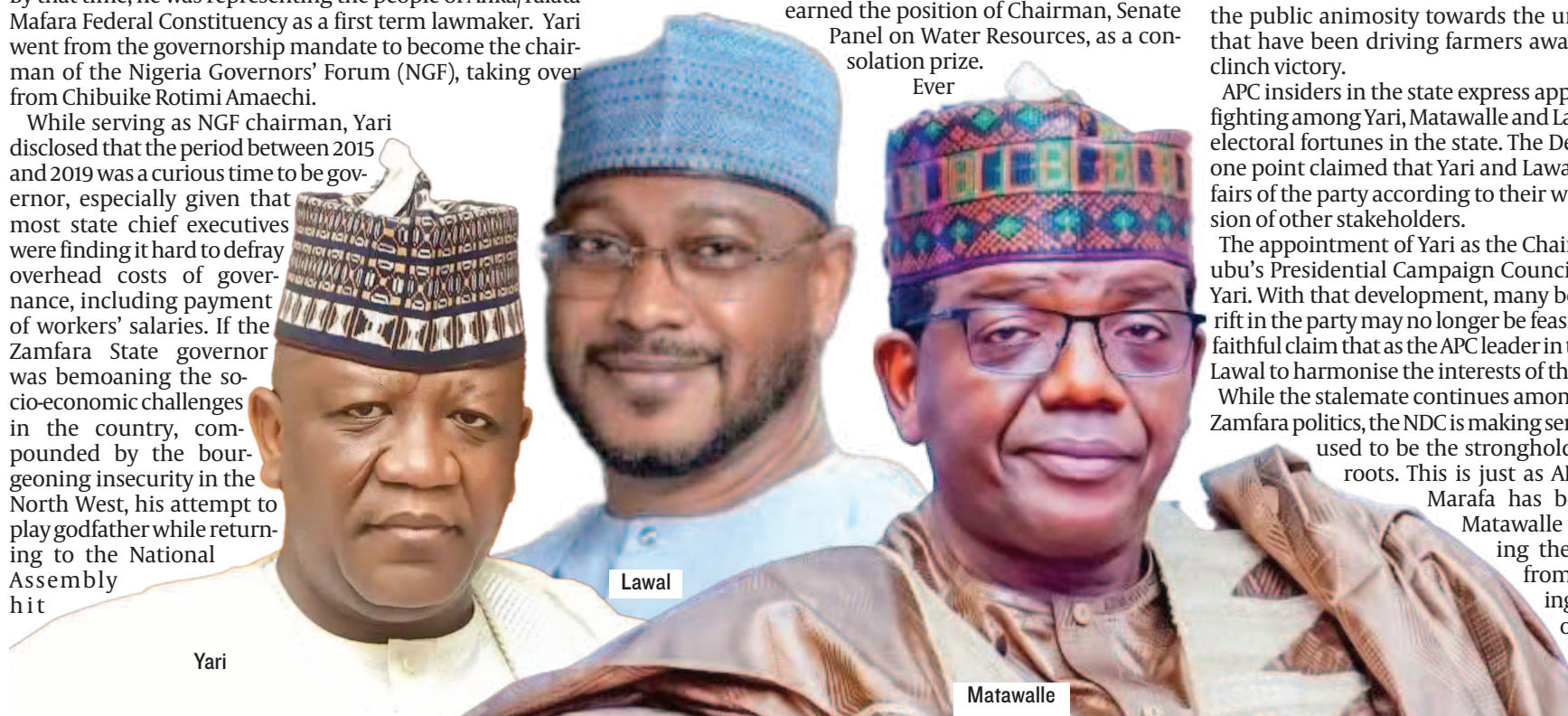
Nonetheless, Lawal's membership of the ruling party has accentuated the internal wrangling and supremacy battles within the state chapter of APC. The incumbent governor has adopted Yari as the political godfather of the state much to the chagrin of Matawalle. And to complete the dimensional political warfare going on in the state, Marafa, who coordinated President Tinubu's campaigns in 2023, has migrated to the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC). The senator counts on the schism between Yari and Matawalle as well as the public animosity towards the unremitting insecurity that have been driving farmers away from their farms to clinch victory.

APC insiders in the state express apprehension that the infighting among Yari, Matawalle and Lawal could injure APC's electoral fortunes in the state. The Defence Minister had at one point claimed that Yari and Lawal were running the affairs of the party according to their whims and to the exclusion of other stakeholders.

The appointment of Yari as the Chairman of President Tinubu's Presidential Campaign Council has further elevated Yari. With that development, many believe that healing the rift in the party may no longer be feasible, just as some party faithful claim that as the APC leader in the state, the onus is on Lawal to harmonise the interests of the stakeholders.

While the stalemate continues among the prime movers of Zamfara politics, the NDC is making serious inroads into what used to be the strongholds of APC at the grassroots. This is just as APC faithful claim that Marafa has been reaching out to Matawalle with a view to retrieving the control of the state from the ruling party during the governorship and other state elections.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



Politics

Founding National Chairman of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Chief Chekwas Okorie, bared his mind to LAWRENCE NJOKU on several issues including the country's independence, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's absence at the recently held United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the 2027 general election, electoral reforms among others. Excerpts:

Some Nigerians were not happy that President Bola Tinubu was missing from the recently held United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Do you think they were right in doing so?

I THINK they were right. It is really very sad that the President has been missing in action in practically all the UNGA meetings that have taken place since he became president. There is a record that he attended once. But this is the fourth one that he did not attend. This is his fourth year in office. So, if he attended once, it means others were not attending.

The Tinubu we all know would seize every opportunity to shine in a public outing like UNGA; but to avoid going there leaves much to be desired and lends credence to certain allegations trailing his activities before he became president. It is unfortunate. If he had attended, it would have been an opportunity for several side meetings with leaders of countries, institutions and business conglomerates that would have loved to have meetings with the Nigerian leader. I find it very scandalous and unacceptable. It is not a good thing for us. It gives a wrong impression about us.

Immunity is guaranteed to delegations of government to attend the UNGA in New York. Even Iran that is in direct combat with America led a delegation to UNGA and they were there to present their situation to the world leaders. So, even if the President has committed anything that is unpardonable, the UNGA provides him the security and immunity to go and present Nigeria's matters there and come back safely. If he had attended, it would have impacted positively on Nigeria. There are many conglomerates, business organisations, heads of states and nations who would have seized the opportunity to ask a few questions about Nigeria. Those side meetings are very critical in attracting investment to Nigeria or in marketing Nigeria positively by the President himself. Knowing the way countries run, any country that wants to get into a serious business relationship with Nigeria will not be talking to the Vice President, knowing that the Vice President is only but a spare tire.

INEC raised concerns recently about the AI threat to 2027 elections? What is your view on the issue?

This should not worry a body like the INEC if they are serious about doing their job. Perhaps, they are giving us advance notice that the results could be manipulated and they would say they had earlier warned about it. The public has always believed that INEC would not be independent and would not conduct free and fair elections next year. Otherwise, what the parties such as the ADC and NDC said they would do including pro-democracy groups like Yiaga Africa among others, is to set up the technology to transmit their own polling unit results to the IReV and INEC is

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Ethnic And Religious Sentiments May Characterise 2027 Elections – Okorie

pected to do the same so that when what nearly happened at Osun State happens anywhere, INEC cannot give excuse that there was a glitch. If there are four different bodies doing the same thing in polling units, then we will have a level of credibility. So, INEC may have realised that with this development, they may not have that freedom to announce anything and that is why they are raising the alarm.

The Osun election has proved to anyone in Nigeria that the people can assist the INEC to do its job properly because when transmission of results was halted for hours, the people raised alarm and the pressure was so much that INEC had to resume transmission. When transmission resumed, there was nothing more they could do to manipulate the election and over 30 governors that invaded the state sneaked out of Osun in the midnight, knowing that the game was up. If they couldn't achieve what they wanted to do in one state, is it in 2027 when all the governors will be in their various states without any external assistance that they would be able to overwhelm the wishes of the people?

So, this fear is what I suspect could have made INEC to start giving this type of early warning to Nigerians. I believe that Nigerians are ready for INEC and it would be in their interest to do the proper thing to safeguard their image and reputation or do the wrong thing and face the wrath of an angry nation. This country is already restive because of the manner our leaders have taken us for a ride. The country is sitting on a keg of gunpowder and any person who will do anything to arouse the anger of the average Nigerians will be held responsible for what follows.

What I am saying is that this INEC has given Nigerians cause to worry and they have not done anything to reassure Nigerians that they are ready. But Nigerians will not allow them to take them for a ride; that is what I know. The ball is in their court. We are dealing with people who are exceedingly angry. A hungry man is an angry man and an angry man is an irrational man. So, when they get angry based on this type of provocation, they might react negatively. Our prayer is that Nigeria should survive 2027, but I don't see a situation where somebody will want to be desperate for power even when the country is burning.

Sixty-six years after Independence, what can you make of the journey so far?

It is a chequered journey. The only thing I can say is that we have witnessed about 26 years of uninterrupted democracy. But we have not made any reasonable progress in terms of development, infrastructure and in managing our diversity. We have deviated so badly. There is nothing to be proud of. We have expected successive governments to improve on these factors that I have mentioned; instead they have allowed those indices of development to continue to deteriorate. The governments don't even care. For instance, the All Progressives Congress (APC) government has been there since they took over from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) but things have gotten worse. We have not done well at all. All the countries that we were better than have overtaken us. Everything about us is on the low side as a result of poor leadership and corruption.

Are you saying that the reforms and all the policies we have had including the present ones have not paid off?

Our reforms have not helped the country and this is the challenge of the present government. The challenge of the government in power is to tell us what they have done with the mandate they got in nearly four years at the moment that will make an average

Nigerian vote for them. I have not seen them tell us what they have done with the four years. The opposition parties are mentioning everyday what they would do differently and deriving from

what the government in power is doing badly. They come up with policies that they are prepared not to implement. The most difficult thing for any politician to do at the moment is to defend the APC government. We are citizens and we know what is going on; but the election will be an opportunity to ask them to continue or be booted out.

Let me add that this country is so divided along the lines of ethnicity and religion. I have been saying this since last year, that irrespective of the manifesto that the candidates in the 2027 elections would be throwing around, the 2027 elections would likely be characterised by ethnic and religious sentiments and that has already begun. It is already dominating the campaigns and conversations, both in the social media, churches and mosques.

What could be responsible for this level of division?

It is as a result of poor management of our diversity. It is the failure to see Nigeria as a single entity; a situation where anyone that comes to power will face either his people or his religion. Buhari came in and believed that it was a Fulani government and the present government has continued on the same trajectory. A religious leader in Kaduna said recently that the country belongs to the Muslim and that anybody that does not agree with Muslim-Muslim ticket should leave Nigeria and nobody cared to call him to order. Some are insisting that someone should be president based on where he comes from; another group is saying this candidate cannot be president because he is from a part of the country. Since the campaign started, where have you seen rallies? Some governors have announced humongous charges to prevent people from putting campaign billboards in their states and this is to discourage people from promoting their candidates. Nobody is calling them to order.

For those who were not born during my own time, Chief Awolowo used helicopters to spread his posters all through the country. The billboard strategy is dead on arrival. But this is what the state governments have chosen to do as if that is what will determine Nigeria's attitude to the elections. Things have deteriorated.

Talking about the politics of ethnicity and religion, there seems to be a contrast in Igboland, where certain politicians are opposing the presidential candidate of the NDC, Peter Obi. What do you have to say about this?

Those people are simply scared of the possibility of Obi winning the presidency in the Southeast as he did in 2023. In 2023, Tinubu scored 5.3 per cent votes. Atiku had 1.3 per cent of the votes. Kwakwanso had 0.4 per cent votes. Go and check this at the INEC record. So, these people know that if they don't go after Obi, they may not be able to retain the offices they are holding at the moment.

The one that surprises me is the man at Awka – Governor Soludo. As the founder of APGA, I get worried that it is an APGA governor that is leading this campaign of calumny against another product of APGA. Obi is a product of APGA. I find him a very vindictive character. You know he has not forgiven Obi and Victor Umeh for his disqualification in 2003 to run for the governorship ticket of the APGA. Umeh's leadership at a time disqualified Soludo from running for the APGA ticket. Soludo told me at a time that if he was allowed to contest the primary and the result was written against him, it would have been more tolerable than to disqualify him as if he had committed some kind of criminal offence. He was so bitter about it. He told me that even his international friends were calling him to ask him what he had committed to earn disqualification, coming as a former governor of the Central Bank and a former governorship candidate of the ruling PDP and then a small party disqualified him from running. So, that animosity is still there and he believes that if Obi was there as governor when this happened to him, that Obi must have approved the disgrace. This is what he is fighting in addition to whatever he thinks Tinubu can do for him.

But I want to use this opportunity to warn him that he should be mindful of the 2027 elections.

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But we have not made any reasonable progress in terms of development, infrastructure and in managing our diversity. We have deviated so badly. There is nothing to be proud of. We have expected successive governments to improve on these factors that I have mentioned; instead they have allowed those indices of development to continue to deteriorate.

Chekwas

Nigeria At 66: Why Oborevwo's Call For Unity, Perseverance Resonates

By Festus Ahon

THE 66th Independence anniversary in Delta State unfolded as more than a ceremonial commemoration. Across the state, the celebration brought together familiar themes of nationhood, unity, sacrifice, security, infrastructure and service, alongside the increasingly visible political mobilisation ahead of the 2027 elections.

For Governor Sheriff Oborevwo, the anniversary offered an opportunity to reflect on Nigeria's difficult but enduring journey while placing the responsibility for its future on citizens and leaders alike.

At the Cenotaph in Asaba, where the governor reviewed the ceremonial march-pass by the police and other paramilitary organisations, his message was unmistakable: Nigeria's diversity should be a source of strength, not division.

Sixty-six years after the raising of the Green-White-Green flag, he argued, the country had survived war, economic difficulties, political transitions and periods of uncertainty. Yet, he said, the "Nigerian spirit" had endured. That resilience, in his telling, imposes a responsibility on citizens to put the national interest above narrow considerations.

In Delta, the Independence Day message was not confined to speeches. Barely had the anniversary celebrations begun when Oborevwo intervened in a problem that illustrated the practical meaning of governance. Following the collapse of a section of the East-West Road at Agbarho in Ughelli North Local Council, the governor directed Julius Berger Nigeria Plc to commence remedial works.

The federal highway is not owned by the state government, but its failure had immediate consequences on Deltans, businesses and travellers. By October 2, reports indicated that Julius Berger had mobilised to the site and had made one lane motorable.

For Oborevwo, the intervention fitted into a broader argument: development is ultimately measured not by political rhetoric but by how government responds to problems confronting ordinary people.

At the Independence thanksgiving service in Asaba, the governor returned to the theme of responsibility, telling Nigerians that nation-building requires sacrifice.

His message to public officials was particularly pointed. Political office and civil service positions, he said, are held in trust for the people and should be exercised in the interest of the common good.

That emphasis on public service also gave religious colour to the anniversary. The governor called for continued prayers for the nation, while the Presiding Pastor of Living Faith Church, Ibusa Road, Asaba, Pastor Samuel Johns, urged citizens to combine faith with civic responsibility, patriotism and meaningful contribution to their communities.

The church service therefore reinforced the same question raised at the Cenotaph: what does citizenship demand beyond celebration?

Security was another prominent part of Delta's Independence narrative.



Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwo (second right), addressing journalists shortly after inspecting ongoing rehabilitation works on the collapsed section of the East-West Road at Agbarho last Saturday. With him are the Technical Assistant to the Governor, Bob Nagbodia (left); Executive Director, NEXIM Bank, Stella Okotete (second left); Regional Manager, Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Fredrick Wieser (third left); and the Chairman, Ughelli North Local Council, Olorogun Jaro Egbo (left). PHOTO: SAMUEL JIBUNOR

Receiving the newly deployed Commissioner of Police, CP Samuel Erle, at Government House, Asaba, Oborevwo declared that there would be no room for crime and criminality in the state. He urged security agencies to intensify intelligence gathering and surveillance, particularly across communities, highways and waterways.

His administration's security strategy, he said, would continue to involve collaboration among the police, other security agencies, traditional rulers, youth leaders and community-based vigilante groups.

The timing was significant. With the political calendar moving towards 2027, the governor also warned against the use of firearms and political violence, insisting that criminality should not be shielded by political connections.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has fixed January 16, 2027, for the presidential and National Assembly elections and February 6 for governorship and State House of Assembly elections. That approaching contest was impossible to ignore during the Independence celebrations.

In Warri and Effurun, thousands of youths participated in a five-kilometre "Run and Rave" event that combined exercise, entertainment and political expression. Participants displayed materials supporting Tinubu and Oborevwo, while organisers described the gathering as both a celebration of Nigeria and a platform for youth civic engagement. The event demonstrated how quickly national celebrations can intersect with electoral politics.

Similar mobilisation was evident in engagements involving the Arewa community in Aniocha South and a newly formed support group for widows in Delta State. Members of the Arewa

community pledged support for APC candidates in 2027, while organisers of the widows' group said beneficiaries of the state's widows' welfare programme had chosen to mobilise support for Tinubu, Oborevwo and other APC candidates.

Those declarations are political positions expressed by the groups and their organisers, rather than evidence of a statewide consensus. What they reveal, however, is the extent to which social interventions and political mobilisation are becoming intertwined as the next election approaches.

The engagement with traditional rulers followed the same trajectory. Delta Coordinator of the Renewed Hope Ambassadors appealed to traditional rulers to support the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Agenda and the Oborevwo administration.

The celebrations were patriotic, religious, developmental and political at the same time. They provided space for the governor to speak about unity and sacrifice, for security agencies to reaffirm their responsibilities, for youths to demonstrate political enthusiasm, and for traditional rulers and community groups to articulate their expectations.

Oborevwo's MORE Agenda—Meaningful Development, Opportunities for All, Realistic Reforms, and Enhanced Peace and Security—was repeatedly presented as the state's contribution to national development. The Oborevwo administration is determined to build more roads, schools, hospitals, other infrastructures, safety of communities, employment opportunities for young people. The governor is also committed to the wellbeing of citizens in riverine and upland communities.

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Akim Yusuf: The Omoluabi In Oyo Governorship Race

He has run banks in Banjul, fixed budgets in Ibadan and lost an election he insists taught him more than any victory could. Now, at 57, Akim Adebola Yusuf believes his time—and Oyo State's—has come.

On a humid morning in Oluyole, the conversation around Yusuf does not begin with politics. It begins with a word: *Omoluabi*. In Yoruba thought, it is the highest compliment one can pay a man—a person of honour, learning, restraint and substance. It is also, his supporters insist, the most accurate description of the man who wants to be the next governor of Oyo State.

Whether the voters agree will be decided in 2027. But few candidates in the emerging field arrive with a résumé quite like his.

From Government College To Kuru

Yusuf's story is the classic Ibadan arc of merit and ascent. He passed through Government College, Ibadan, finishing in 1984—one of the storied institutions of the old Western Region—before earning a degree in Political Science from the University of Ilorin in 1988. He never stopped studying: a Master's in Industrial and Labour Relations (Ibadan, 1997), an MBA (Ibadan, 2002), professional certification from the Chartered Institute of Bankers, and, in 2014, admission to the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, where he completed Senior Executive Course 36 and earned the coveted mni—the quiet letters worn by Nige-

ria's strategic elite.

"Some people prepare for power. He prepared for service," one associate says. The record bears it out.

A Banker Without Borders

Before he ever asked for a vote, Yusuf was asked to run a bank abroad. From 2009 to 2013, he served as Managing Director/CEO of Skye Bank (Gambia) Limited, leading a full banking operation in foreign territory. In 2019, the system tapped him again as Transition Managing Consultant for Skye Bank (Sierra Leone) Limited. Since 2016, he has served as an Asset Management Partner at AMCON—the corporation charged with resolving the nation's most troubled financial assets.

It is the kind of career that rarely produces politicians and the kind, his backers argue, that should produce more of them.

"He is not a dabbler in finance. He is an institution-builder."

The Insider Who Chose The Arena

Critically, Yusuf is no stranger to government itself. Between 2005 and 2007, he sat at the nerve centre of Oyo's administration as Special Adviser on Due Process, Policy and Budget Implementation to Governor Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja—the man responsible for watching how budgets live or die in execution.

In 2017, he took that discipline to the federal level as Special Adviser

(Digital Transformation) to the Honourable Minister for Communication. Long before that, in 2003, he founded The Fortune Group, a good-governance think-tank—evidence, supporters say, of convictions held before ambitions formed.

Honours have followed the work: Justice of the Peace (Oyo State, 2007); Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (2014); the mni (2014); and an Honorary Doctorate of Science in Public Administration from IBLT University, Lomé, Togo (2023).

Scar Tissue And Staying Power

Then there is 2023—the election he did not win. Flying the flag of the Action Democratic Party, Yusuf finished 5th of 16 candidates in the Oyo governorship race. Some saw a defeat. His camp saw a proof of concept: an outsider on a minor platform outpolling eleven rivals.

Now, as the governorship candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress for 2027, he returns to the arena battle-tested—older in the ways that matter, still young in the ways that count.

The Proposition

At 57, the Oluyole-born technocrat-politician offers Oyo State a rare synthesis: banking and budgeting, state and federal service, West Africa and home. Suave yet substantive, accomplished yet accessible, he is pitching himself as the bridge-builder for a state hungry for governance that is both competent and character-driven.

Whether *Omoluabi* translates into votes is the question of the season. But in a field too often defined by noise, Akim Adebola Yusuf is betting that substance still counts for something. The campaign begins in earnest.



Akim Yusuf

Editorial

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Beyond The Controversy Over ‘Vandalism’ Of FESTAC-Alakija Bridge

THE alleged vandalism of the FESTAC-Alakija Bridge along the Lagos-Badagry Expressway compels a fresh call for seriousness and synergy, not controversy, in the protection, maintenance and management of public infrastructure in the country.

What has been learnt about the claim of vandals stripping iron rods, steel reinforcements and other materials from the bridge, which caused a controversy among the contractor, the government and built-environment professionals, indicates that facts must be established before apportioning blame. The government and other stakeholders should work together.

Based on some images in a recent viral video, the Lagos State government arrested 27 persons in connection with the alleged vandalism of the newly constructed bridge. Angry Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu warned that vandalism of public infrastructure is a criminal act and it would not be allowed to thrive in Lagos. He assured residents that the structural integrity of the bridge remains intact and that remedial works would be undertaken. However, there was a twist in the narrative when a fact-finding team from the Building and Civil Engineering Professionals Group under the Building Collapse Prevention Guild (BCPG), Amuwo Odofin Cell, questioned the claims that the bridge was vandalised in the manner portrayed in the viral video.

The three-member team, led by the Cell Coordinator, Chubike Okafor, went on an inspection tour of the bridge and investigated the allegation. Its findings raise questions that the Federal Ministry of Works, Lagos State government and the contractor, China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), should clarify to the public.

According to the professionals, in the areas shown in the viral video, including the pile

columns supporting the bridge deck and the partially excavated earth fill around the section descending towards the 7th Avenue in FESTAC Town, there is no evidence that the concrete cover of the pile columns has been removed. Rather, the team found that some pile columns had rough and irregular surfaces, requiring proper finishing to improve their appearance and further protect the concrete cover. Workers of CCECC were reportedly carrying out finishing works on the columns when the team first visited.

The professionals also found that excavation behind a reinforced concrete retaining wall had been undertaken by the contractor during maintenance work on the drainage outlets. Afterwards, squatters allegedly excavated additional earth and used it to fill the waterlogged portions of the area to create space for makeshift structures. By the second visit for inspection, significant progress had reportedly been made on the finishing works. The contractor disclosed plans to provide additional concrete protection around the pile columns, while the exposed sections beneath the lower bridge deck were also being prepared for protective works.

These findings do not mean that vandalism and illegal activities have not occurred around the FESTAC-Alakija Bridge to warrant the move by the state government. Indeed when The Guardian visited the area beneath the bridge, it was a disturbing picture of environmental degradation, illegal refuse dumping, open burning of wastes, makeshift structures and insecurity. The critical point, however, is that government must distinguish between actual structural vandalism, construction defects, unfinished works, maintenance activities and damage caused by illegal occupation of infrastructure corridors.

This distinction matters because public con-

fidence depends on transparency. If vandals actually removed critical structural materials, the public deserves to know precisely what was taken, the extent of the damage and the remedial measures being implemented. If some concerns arose from unfinished construction, poor finishing or excavation undertaken during maintenance, the authorities should equally say so clearly. The controversy has also exposed a familiar weakness in Nigeria’s management of public infrastructure. There is poor coordination among government agencies and other stakeholders.

The Federal Government, through the Ministry of Works, has a responsibility for maintenance of major federal roads and bridges. Lagos State has responsibilities for environmental sanitation, security enforcement, physical planning and the management of public spaces within its territory. The contractor has obligations concerning the quality, completion and maintenance of the project. When a major bridge becomes a subject of public alarm, these institutions should not act or speak in isolation. Nigerians need a coordinated technical explanation.

The Federal Ministry of Works should provide a clear engineering assessment of the bridge. The CCECC should clarify the status of the project, including completed works, outstanding finishing, and whether any materials were actually stolen. The Lagos State government should explain its plans for securing and managing the environment around the bridge. Protection of the environment beneath the bridge remains crucial irrespective of whether or not the structural columns were vandalised. A bridge cannot be considered adequately protected when its underside has become a refuge for illegal settlers, including scavengers and refuse collectors who regularly burn wastes to extract metals.

The situation is observed across the country, especially in the cities. Spaces beneath bridges are often abandoned after construction only to be occupied by illegal settlers who turn such places into markets, refuse sites and hideouts for criminal elements. Drainage channels become blocked, refuse accumulate, fires are lit indiscriminately and legitimate members of the public become afraid to enter.

There is need to address this poor infrastructure management. Other countries that

have faced similar widespread theft of public properties, including cables, railway components and metals have realised that arresting people found near public infrastructure is not enough. The entire economic chain that makes vandalism profitable must be dismantled. Part of the lesson for Nigeria is that every stolen public property eventually enters a market. There is the person who removes the material, there is the transporter, the middleman, the scrap dealer and, eventually, the recycler or industrial user. Until government follows this entire chain to stop the criminal act, arrests of scavengers only will have limited impact.

Nigeria needs a comprehensive national framework for protecting critical infrastructure. Legitimate scavenging and recycling should be recognised as economic activities, but the industry must be properly regulated. Scrap dealers should be registered and licensed, while major transactions should be documented and traceable. Anyone purchasing suspected public infrastructure materials should face severe sanctions. Vulnerable bridges, railway lines, electricity installations and other strategic assets should be monitored with technology. CCTV cameras, lighting, drones and regular engineering inspections should become standard features of infrastructure protection.

But technology alone will not solve the problem. The spaces beneath bridges must be actively managed. Clearing squatters and illegal structures should be followed by permanent monitoring by legitimate authorities. Otherwise, the same people will return after enforcement officers leave. Lagos State should consider a special strategy for managing bridge and other infrastructure corridor. The programme should involve relevant state ministries and agencies, including the Kick Against Indiscipline (KAI), Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), and local governments. When necessary, the police and other relevant federal agencies should also be involved.

The controversy surrounding the FESTAC-Alakija Bridge should be resolved openly. If vandalism occurred, those responsible must be arrested, prosecuted and adequately punished if found guilty. Also, the criminal network behind them should be exposed. If the viral images partly reflected unfinished works or poor finishing, the necessary thing should be done.

LETTER

The Living Archive Of Asaba Reflects Agbaike

SIR: In the high-stakes, fast-moving arena of statecraft, political actors are like transient shadows. Governors arrive with fanfare, execute their mandates, and eventually step down into the pages of history. The spin doctors, speechwriters, and media aides who populate the corridors of power usually pack their bags with the changing of the guard.

As the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus famously observed, “Change is the only constant in life.” Yet, to stand firm, indispensable, and revered across decades—spanning both military and democratic regimes—defies this transient law. It borders on the mythic. As Mr. Johnson Agbaike officially bows out of the Delta State Civil Service after 35 years of unblemished and meritorious service, we are not just witnessing a routine retirement. We are witnessing the curtain closing on a golden era of public administration. Rightfully christened by his peers as “The Last Man Standing” and formally lauded by the Delta State Bureau for Pensions as a “living archive,” Agbaike’s exit marks the departure of an institutional titan who held the keys to the collective memory of the Delta State Government House. He proved the truth of the classic English proverb: “An unblemished character is the first essential in public life.”

To truly understand the weight of Agbaike’s legacy, one must trace his journey back to the twilight era of the defunct Bendel

State.

When Delta State was carved out in 1991, Agbaike was among the pioneering crop of public servants who laid the very bricks upon which the new state’s administrative structure was built. He watched the capital city of Asaba transform from a dusty, quiet riverine town into a bustling hub of political and economic power.

As a veteran journalist, senior citizen, and media consultant, I have watched the media landscape evolve from the days of manual typewriters and physical press releases to the instantaneous, high-pressure world of real-time digital reporting. Throughout these turbulent shifts, Agbaike remained the calm centre of the storm, embodying the timeless wisdom that “smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.”

Serving as a Deputy Director of Information and the resident Public Relations Officer (PRO) at the Government House, Asaba, he navigated the complex, often volatile terrain of government communications under four distinct democratic administrations—from the transformative tenures of Chief James Ibori, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan, and Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, culminating beautifully in the administration of His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori.

The role of a Government House PRO is arguably one of

the most thankless jobs in the civil service. It is a grueling, tightrope walk. On one hand, you owe absolute loyalty to the chief executive and the ruling administration. On the other hand, you face an aggressive, relentless Fourth Estate—a Press Corps hungry for transparency, fast answers, and occasionally, political blood. It is an environment where a single misspoken word can trigger a state-wide crisis. Yet, for over three decades, Agbaike did not just survive this crucible; he mastered it.

He treated the media not as an adversary to be managed, but as an indispensable partner in state-building. He understood that public relations is not about empty propaganda, but about building and maintaining trust.

When the Press Corps was restless, Agbaike was the bridge. When tensions ran high between the state executive and media houses, he was the shock absorber. He was always “as discreet as a diplomat and as honest as a mirror.” He fiercely protected the image of the governors he served, but he did so without ever compromising the ethics of the pen profession, matching the profound words of Dag Hammarskjöld: “The diplomat’s first duty is to be useful, not to be heard.”

• *Comrade Austine Ihonor is a veteran journalist, senior citizen, and media consultant based in Delta State.*

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Opinion

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Death In Custody: Minna NSCDC Cell And The 37 Young Miners

By Sunday Onyemaechi Eze

IN mid-September, what began as a routine raid by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) against illegal mining in Minna, the capital of Niger State, turned into one of Nigeria's most painful tragedies. On September 15 and 16, 2026, NSCDC operatives carried out what the Corps described as a "burst operation" around Lt. Gen. Mohammed Inuwa Wushishi Housing Estate and the Lukoto areas. Some children were apprehended and taken into custody. Then, in the early hours of September 17, officers found many of the detainees dead. The then state commandant, Suberu Siyaka Aniviye, issued a statement saying that "scores of the detained suspects were found dead, following a suspected outbreak of disease." But he did not name the disease or give a definite death toll.

Initial reports put the number of the dead at 33. Later, residents, officials and rights groups raised the figure at 37. Governor Umaru Bago confirmed that many of the dead were children between 14 and 18 years old—children who should have been sitting in classrooms but were instead working in mining pits. Witnesses and grieving families spoke of even younger children.

Rabi Usman lost two sons, Ibrahim Musa, 13, and Abubakar Musa, 11. Some local accounts even mentioned a child as young as seven. Reports from the International Human Rights Commission also revealed that the victims were poor children from the neighbourhood and people displaced from insecure parts of Shiroro Local Government Area who were simply trying to eke out a living.

Illegal gold mining is common in Niger State. Poverty, the displacement of communities by kidnapping and banditry, and the eventual collapse of other means of livelihood have forced many boys and young men into illegal mining.

Arresting miners in Minna is not new. But dying in a government cell after spending only a night or two in custody is troubling. That is what makes this tragedy so painful.

What really happened inside the cell? There are three different accounts of what led to the deaths. The first is the official account: a suspected disease outbreak. The Corps said the actual cause would be established through medical examination and warned the public against jumping to conclusions. The second account comes from people who were inside the cell and from families who visited their loved ones the night before the incident. They spoke of overcrowding, unbearable heat and a lack of air.

Detainees were reportedly crammed into a small room with poor ventilation. First, they struggled for space. Then they struggled for breath. They cried. They banged on the door. They called for help. According to the accounts, their cries were ignored. Some collapsed. By morning, many were dead. A few of those who survived were later taken to hospi-

tal.

The third account involves allegations that some detainees were beaten and that a substance was sprayed inside the cell shortly before people began to slump. Those allegations have not been independently proven. But one thing is not in dispute: dozens of children were held in conditions that no detention facility should impose on human beings.

And, tragically, they died while in the custody of the state.

A survivor, Dauda Shehu from Allawa in Shiroro, spoke about the incident from his hospital bed. He said they were not tortured in the sense of systematic beating. What he described instead was unbearable heat and overcrowding. He spoke of gasping for air and screaming for help while officers watched. "They wanted us to die without poisoning or shooting us," he said. He also questioned the official figures. If only 33 or 37 people died, he asked, where were the others among the 65 people who had been locked inside with him?

That question deserves an answer. So does the heartbreaking account of Mallam Abdullahi, a father who said he took dinner to his son on Wednesday night and found him alive and well. By Thursday morning, he was told that his son was dead. Parents said they had even completed steps towards securing the release of their children on bail, only to be refused or allegedly asked for large sums of money. These are not the words of distant activists. They are the words of parents and relatives who saw, spoke to and ate with their loved ones the night before they died.

The incident was not, as some would want Nigerians to believe, simply another mysterious epidemic in Minna. It was a case of avoidable deaths involving children in the hands of the state.

Many of the boys were breadwinners despite their tender ages. One father, battling illness, reportedly depended on his two sons to buy his medicine. Think about that for a moment. Children who should have been worrying about school, examinations, football, friendships and the ordinary concerns of childhood were instead struggling to provide medicine for an ill father.

Then they were arrested. And some never came home. For a city already struggling with insecurity and poverty, the cell became a powerful symbol: the state can take a child from a mining pit and return him in a body bag. Expectedly, anger spilled into the streets. Hundreds protested. Some public buildings were attacked. Police used live rounds, according to international reports. The state imposed a curfew. Shops, markets, schools and banks closed. The streets became empty. Trust in an internal NSCDC investigation was almost dead.

Parents demanded independent autopsies, the release of the bodies, compensation and prosecution. "They should tell us what truly killed our children," one relative cried. That cry should not be ignored.

This case raises deeper concerns, not only about the NSCDC but about the way Nigerian security agencies treat citizens they arrest or take into custody.

The state owes every person in detention a duty of care. A suspect is still a human being. Someone arrested for illegal mining is still a human being. Therefore, overcrowding, extreme heat and ignored cries for help, if established, would raise serious concerns about cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Where death results from a failure to treat people as human beings, the consequences cannot simply be brushed aside.

Illegal mining is an offence. But it is not a licence to warehouse dozens of people overnight without proper medical screening, adequate ventilation, water, or a clear plan for release or charge. Allegations of financial demands for bail and delayed access by families would compound the harm if established. There is also a familiar pattern in many custodial deaths in Nigeria: official opacity, explanations that come before the facts are fully known, internal investigations, delays and public anger that grows faster than official answers.

The Minna tragedy must not become another example of that pattern.

As usual, government action came quickly on paper. Governor Bago confirmed 37 deaths and announced the suspension of Commandant Aniviye.

The Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, suspended the commandant and twenty other officers. The NSCDC Commandant-General, Prof. Ahmed Abubakar Audi, ordered a high-powered investigation and cautioned against naming a disease before laboratory work had established the cause. President Bola Tinubu directed that the circumstances surrounding the arrests, detention, medical attention and deaths be examined. The police also opened a parallel inquiry. The bodies were eventually released to the families.

But these actions are only the minimum expected from a government confronted with the deaths of 37 people in its custody. Government should publish independent autopsy and forensic results, not merely an internal summary.

If individuals are found to have been responsible for neglect, assault or unlawful confinement that contributed to the deaths, they should face the law. Simply moving officers from one position to another cannot be enough where evidence establishes criminal responsibility. The families must also receive prompt and adequate compensation. They should not have to beg for what the state owes them after failing to keep their children alive. There must also be clear limits on cell occupancy. Detention facilities must have proper ventilation, water and medical checks. Cameras should be installed in holding areas.

• Eze is a lecturer, Department of Mass Communication and Head, Internationalisation and Partnership, Coal City University Enugu.

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Tares Oburumu, From A Deprived Childhood To Poetic Limelight

By Chiedu Uche Okoye

POETRY, a genre of literature, is an old art whose origin dates to centuries of years ago. And it was William Wordsworth, who defined poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, which are recollected in tranquillity. But in Nigeria, it is perceived as a labour of love. In spite of Nigerians' unflattering perception of poetry, Nigerian poets, who are holding aloft the poetic heritage and legacies left behind by Chris Okigbo, Wole Soyinka, Gabriel Okara, and John Pepper Clark, are churning out poetic works.

Thankfully, Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) had instituted a literary competition, our own equivalence of the Nobel prize for literature, which rotates among these genres of literature, namely children's literature, poetry, drama, and prose. This year's edition of the NLNG literary competition is for poetry. And 223 entries were received for the competition.

Interestingly, Tares Oburumu, a poet, who has written himself into global reckoning, is on the shortlist for the coveted 2026 NLNG literary prize. The other contenders for the poetic prize are James Ngwu Eze and Ogaga Ifowodo, both of whom had held exalted political posts in the past. Any of them could win the prize. But Oburumu is hopeful that he will win the literary poetic prize.

Oburumu has worked his fingers to the bone to achieve literary stardom. Over the years, he has honed his poetic skills and experimented with many poetic techniques to create his own poet-

ic style and voice. His tortuous journey to literary greatness was marked by a mixture of failures and successes. While some of his poetic works were rejected by publishers and journals, others were accepted by them. Not deterred by obstacles he encountered in his writing journey, he soldiered on.

Later, good fortune smiled on him, and he won the Sillerman First Book For African Poetry in 2022. His winning that literary prize announced him to the world and boosted his enthusiasm for writing poetry. That literary prize, which he won, secured a place for him in the pantheon of Nigeria's literary greats. Before then, he had won the GAP poetry prize (Defunct) in 2014. From the foregoing, it can be seen that his emergence on the shortlist of 2026 NLNG literary prize is not a fluke. But Oburumu had overcome a difficult childhood to emerge as a literary star. He recounted that nursery school education eluded him; and that he attended a primary school where he sat on bare ground to listen to their teachers' educational teachings. He further said that their primary school's teachers taught them only four subjects, namely English language, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Christian Religious Studies.

"At the time I was of age to attend school, there were no nursery schools or phase in my place of birth. So I started from primary school. I would say that it was an empty school because it was in a remote place and the people care less of education.

"I recalled that we had no school library, no books, and only about four teachers taking up the arduous task meant for eight or more teachers.

"And we were taught just four subjects: English language, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Christian Religious Studies. We sat on the mud floor until we were in primary four. It was then I wore my first school uniform, which my mother bought with funds she was saving for her fish trade," Oburumu said.

He narrated how his mother made huge sacrifices and worked hard to help him and his siblings achieve their lives' aspirations and goals. His mother who dropped out of school when she got pregnant didn't want him and his siblings to suffer the same sad fate as she suffered. Oburumu was raised in a home where the father was absent. It was a case of deprived childhood.

Not surprisingly, his mother is the afflatus that actuates and drives his poetic enterprise. According to Oburumu, he saw his mother in the lines of poems written by Soyinka, Okigbo, Walcott, and Tristram, which he had read, innumerable times. And the poetic works of Okigbo, Walcott, and Eliot have great influence on him. His appropriation and melding of their poetic styles birthed a medley, which is authentically and uniquely his. Little wonder, Oburumu has become a star poet.

And he is on the shortlist for the 2026 NLNG literary prize. Tares Oburumu's poetic work titled Flora's Love Colony, which is shortlisted

for the 2026 NLNG literary prize is a classic retelling and re-imagining of our chequered colonial past, which encompasses our country's troubles, flaws, assets, and beauty. That book of poetry is a product of research. Oburumu said that the book would have come out better had the original manuscript not been lost.

And Oburumu's poetic work is shortlisted alongside James Ngwu Eze's "Unbind Me Now"; and Ogaga Ifowodo's "Why Does God Need A Gun" for the 2026 NLNG literary prize. But if he wins the literary prize, it will have significances for Nigeria's literati and aficionados. It will be a proof that the circumstances of a man's birth and his geographical abode cannot impede his intellectual pursuits and creative ingenuity. Again, if he wins the prize, his victory will inspire millions of young people, who are inclined to literature, to take their creative writing, seriously. Another significance of the anticipated Oburumu's victory is that the resilience of a man's spirit can take him to a great height in his chosen area of specialization.

The past winners of the yearly NLNG literary competition for the poetry category were Ohaeto Ezenwa and Gabriel Okara, who were joint winners in 2005; Romeo Orangun's Nomad, 2022; Ikeogu Oke's Heresiad, 2017; and Tade Ipadeola's Sahara Testament, 2013. Can Tares Oburumu join the lengthening list of the winners of the most prestigious literary prize in Nigeria? The answer blows in the air now.

• Okoye, a poet, wrote from Uruowulu-Obosi, Anambra State

Felicitation!!!

Congratulations, my dear sister and friend,
Kikelomo Atanda-Owo Abati,
on seven impactful years of

Real Talk

WITH KIKE
SHOW

on television and radio—
and **two decades** of outstanding work
in the media.

You are a consummate professional:
thorough, passionate, and deeply committed
to journalism.

Beyond your remarkable work, your warmth,
integrity, and thoughtful way of engaging
people make you a joy to know and a credit to
the profession.

As you celebrate these milestones, I pray that
even greater heights await you—and that your
work will continue to inspire, elevate
journalism, and make a meaningful
difference in our country.

Here's to many more years
of asking the right questions and
making every conversation count!

Hearty congratulations,
my dear sis.

You deserve every bit
of this celebration.

With love and best wishes,
Maupe Ogun-Yusuf

7
YEARS

Real Talk

WITH KIKE
SHOW

20
YEARS

— IN MEDIA —

Real Talk

WITH KIKE
SHOW

Holloway, Augie, Phillips On Loot, Restitution And African Heritage

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

THE Director General of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), Olugbile Holloway and Director General of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation (CBAAC), Aisha Adamu Augie, have described proposals by the British Museum to loan the Benin Bronzes back to Nigeria as unacceptable, insisting that Nigeria should not be expected to borrow artefacts that were looted from the country.

The government functionaries spoke during a session, titled, 'Loot, Restitution and African Heritage' at the 2026 Quramo Festival, held at Eko Hotels and Suites, Lagos. The session was moderated by Ore Ogunbiyi, African Correspondent for *The Economist*. The award-winning journalist and author of *Loot-Britain and the Benin Bronzes*, Barnaby Phillips was part of the conversation.

Phillips, who spent 27 years reporting for the BBC and Al Jazeera, said his interest in the Benin Bronzes and Britain's colonial legacy in Nigeria began during his first visit to Benin City in 1999. Benin Bronzes have been the subjects of intense conflict. While Nigerians, especially Benin descendants clamour for the return of their cultural heritage, curators of Western museums believe sending them back to Africa will be a total stripping them out of their heritage.

It is hardly surprising that as many as 160 museums and institutions around the world hold artefacts looted from Benin Empire in their collections.

As at when the former Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, announced the launch of a campaign for return and restitution of Nigeria's looted artefacts in 2019, there had been long queues of protests and demands, which snaked out of the country.

The campaign further emboldened agitators such that in less than two years, there had been a gale of restitution of looted artefacts.

In November 2022, the newly launched Digital Benin, a German-curated and financed online database, listed 5,246 Bronzes in 131 institutions around the world, including 27 British ones.

Recall that after decades of campaign, Germany led the biggest détente in restitution history by signing off over 1,130 artefacts. This decision, no doubt, is considered as the most significant by a member state Benin Dialogue Group (BDG) at this parlous juncture of moral struggle.

In 2022, the German government announced the transfer of ownership of some. In fact, Germany's decision reduced BDG's influence and wiped off its decade-and-a-half long hankering to become a lender of last resort for the artefacts.

Phillips explained that the events of 1897 occurred at the height of the European "Scramble for Africa", when Britain and other European powers were increasingly seeking territorial and commercial influence on the continent.

Phillips said the British soldiers who entered the palace were not art historians or anthropologists but nevertheless discovered the extensive collection of objects now commonly referred to as the Benin Bronzes, including bronze plaques, scul-



tures and ivory tusks: A recurring caveat in the narrative. "These are trophies of war that were taken back in 1897 to Britain," he said, adding that many of the objects subsequently found their way into institutions such as the British Museum.

Augie said the loss went beyond the physical removal of artefacts, arguing that the objects represented a repository of history, language, culture and storytelling. "Imagine having all your books stolen and you have no way to access them," she said.

She noted that the bronzes, sculptures and ivory objects contained stories and historical meanings, meaning that their removal also deprived generations of Nigerians and Africans of access to aspects of their own heritage.

"For us at the centre, we tend to see a lot of conversations happening, depending on which country it's coming from. You have people looking at the financial aspect of it, and others are looking at education and history," Augie said.

The CBAAC boss said the restitution debate must therefore go beyond the question of physical ownership to address the loss of languages, history and traditional storytelling, adding that the ongoing conversations should eventually translate into policies that provide clearer frameworks for restitution.

The question of whether Nigeria has the capacity to properly house returned artefacts also featured prominently during the discussion.

Holloway challenged the assumption that the Western concept of a museum should determine how African societies preserve their heritage. "The concept of a museum itself is foreign, so you don't get to take everything a white man does and force it on a black man," he said.

On the question of who should own the returned Benin artefacts, Holloway said the issue had been complicated by the fact that modern Nigeria did not exist as a political entity in 1897. He noted that the Oba of Benin was the sovereign authority with whom the British had entered into a treaty.

He explained, however, that the NCMM had entered into a management agreement with the Oba of Benin because the monarch does not have the museum professionals and institutional apparatus required to manage the artefacts.

"All the museums that are returning the bronzes, the agreement we signed, it has the National Commission for Museums and Monuments and an agreement with the Oba of Benin," he said.

A government Notice No. 25 in the Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette No. 57, Volume 110, which is dated March 28,

2023 titled: 'Notice of Presidential Declaration – on the Recognition of Ownership, and an order vesting custody and Management of Repatriated looted Benin Artefacts in the Oba of Benin Kingdom'

The document instructed that the repatriated artefacts should be kept within the palace, other locations within Benin City, or other places that the Oba and the government consider safe. It further ordered that the "Oba shall be responsible for the management of all places where the repatriated artefacts are domiciled or located."

He argued that African societies had their own systems of preserving cultural memory long before the modern museum emerged, citing shrines and festivals as examples. "We have to imagine what a museum means in the African context," he said. Holloway pointed to the National Museum's renovated gallery and its new exhibition, "Echoes of the Past", as evidence that Nigeria possesses the capacity to care for returned artefacts. Augie similarly argued that the definition of a museum should not be limited to a building where objects are physically stored.

She recalled visiting a museum where many culturally significant objects were kept away in storage and were only made accessible to her through the intervention of a curator.

"We tend to project that we do a lot of rituals in Africa. We do have the spaces to store these artefacts," she said.

According to her, the more important question is whether museums are being used to preserve the stories and connections between African people and their cultural objects.

She also pointed to the emergence of digital museums as a potential way of reconnecting Africans with heritage that remains physically outside the continent. "How do we use these items that are ours, even if they are not with us, to reconnect that power back to say who we were?" she asked.

Holloway, however, said Nigeria should reject the idea of borrowing its own heritage. "We are constantly in communication with the British Museum, and in one of our meetings, I clearly told them that insinuating you want to loan us our artefacts, I find it quite insulting, so let's not entertain the thought," he said. "I'd rather you keep them till the end of time, than for you to loan something that was looted."

He also distinguished between the physical return of an artefact and the transfer of legal ownership, arguing that restitution could begin with a transfer of ownership even where the physical object remained temporarily outside Nigeria. "The loans should be us agreeing to loan you, not loaning us what you looted," he said.

Augie disclosed that the CBAAC itself had experienced the consequences of the continued absence of the Benin artefacts. She said the centre was inspired by an ivory mask from Benin that is currently held by the British, but when CBAAC sought to borrow the original for its activities, it was denied permission and had to create a replica instead.

Augie said the issue demonstrated why African countries needed to strengthen their collective policy advocacy. She rejected the idea that existing laws in Britain should be treated as permanently immutable, noting that laws could be changed through political will and sustained public pressure.

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

FROM October 10, Onitsha, the commercial capital of Anambra State, will be agog with festivities, as the town observes the yealy *Ofala* Festival of His Majesty, Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe, CFR, mni, Obi of Onitsha. The Steering Committee announced the official programme of events for the 25th *Ofala* on October 5, 2026.

This year's event, themed *Igba Mbo, Iga N'Iru* – Strive, and Advance: From Resilience to Progress, marks a significant milestone in the evolution of *Ofala* from a sacred rite of renewal for the Obi into a platform for collective progress of *Ndi Onicha*.

The committee had earlier unveiled the official logo and theme for the 2026 edition. The logo is a royal, cultural, and premium visual statement developed to reflect the strength of an institution that has endured over 500 years, yet remains relevant, progressive, and unifying.

"*Igba mbo, iga n'iru* is both a charge and a celebration," said Chief (Dr.) Okechukwu Mike Areh, Onya Ozoma of Onitsha, Chairman *Ofala* Steering Committee.

"For 500 years, our forebears strove to build, protect, and sustain the Onitsha Kingdom. Today, we are called to advance that legacy through culture, enterprise, youth development, and unity. This *Ofala*, we honour the past by building the future," said Areh.

"The logo was conceptualised to show that *Ofala* is not only a celebration of tradition. It is a living system of identity, leadership, order, resilience, and advancement. It holds the

Onitsha Agog For Ofala Festival

people together while reminding them that heritage is not static; it is a foundation for movement.

"The swords represent royal authority, protection, and continuity. The beads speak to identity, honour, and cultural belonging. The central plate carries the message with the dignity of a royal proclamation.

"The line-up of Agbogidi, red-chiefs, and attendants captures the sacred moment of readiness before the monarch appears before his people. The white sculptural relief gives a refined heritage feel, while the purple accents reinforce royalty and the *Ofala* brand identity," he said.

"Every element was intentionally placed to connect the throne, the people, the culture, and the future," the Committee noted. "*Ofala* 2026 is heritage in motion. Rooted in royalty. Built on resilience. Moving toward progress."

Areh said the 2026 theme builds on last year's *Njiko na Ntachi* – Unity and Resilience. "For over 500 years, *Ndi Onicha* have shown *igba mbo* – resilience. Through every challenge we endured, adapted, and rose again. In 2026, we move forward to *iga n'iru* – deliberate progress. This is our charge: strive in your craft, advance your community. Let personal effort build our Kingdom," he said.

The events of 2026 began on Wednesday, October 7, with the yearly seclusion of the Obi of Onitsha – the most sacred and private moment in the *Ofala* ceremonial cycle. For the

following native week days: Oye, Afor, Nkwo, and Eke, the monarch is incommunicado as he negotiates the fortunes of the kingdom with the ancestors. A feast of atonement for brave men, particularly Ndichie and big game hunters on Saturday. It signals the final countdown to *Ofala* and is the formal announcement of public festivities.

The Obi's ceremonial emergence from spiritual seclusion after successfully negotiating the fortunes of the kingdom is Sunday. This sacred rite marks the end of the *Umato* period and the Obi's return to his people.

From Monday, October 12 to Thursday, October 15, 2026, there will be a community-focused health initiative offering medical screenings, health education, and wellbeing services.

Also, between Tuesday, October 13 to Sunday, October 18, 2026, an international art exhibition showcasing contemporary and traditional works, Oreze Art Exhibition, holds. Oreze positions Onitsha as a hub for culture, creativity, and dialogue.

A youth carnival is lined up for Wednesday, October 14, 2026. the carnival is a vibrant celebration of music, dance, fashion, and talent by Onitsha youth, drawing from the traditional *Igbo Ilo*.

Iru Ofala is scheduled for Friday, October 16, 2026. this is the highpoint of the *Ofala* Festival. The Obi makes his first public appearance after seclusion, blesses his people, receives homage, and declares the theme: *Igba Mbo, Iga*

n'Iru. Azu *Ofala* is Saturday, October 17, 2026. it is the second day of the grand public celebration, featuring continued homage, cultural performances, masquerades, and community engagement at Ime Obi.

On the festival identity, Chief Areh added: "Our logo reflects this journey: the swords of authority and continuity, the beads of identity and honour, and the royal proclamation at its centre. It is a heritage that is not static, but in motion – rooted in royalty, built on resilience, moving toward progress."



Broadcast Content Across Borders

By Shaibu Husseini

All Set For CANEX Weekend in Lagos

ALL is set for 2026 edition of the Creative Africa Nexus Weekend, otherwise called CANEX WKND 2026. Promoted as Africa's largest gathering of creative and cultural industries, CANEX WKND 2026, which holds between November 5 and 8, 2026, is being hosted by African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), in partnership with the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, and will bring together participants from across Africa, the Caribbean and the wider diaspora including creatives, investors, policymakers, financiers, buyers and industry leaders to connect talent with finance, markets, partnerships and commercial opportunities. The four-day event will be held at the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts, National Theatre Complex, Iganmu, Lagos, and will provide a platform to support the development, commercialization and expansion of Africa's creative and cultural industries, with a focus on improving access to finance, markets, skills, partnerships and investment opportunities. To be held under the theme, *One People, United in Culture, Creating for the World: From FESTAC '77 to CANEX'27*, the programme will feature activities across film, music, fashion, literature, visual arts, gastronomy and sport, combining business and investment discussions with showcases, exhibitions, masterclasses and networking opportunities. Key programme components will include the CANEX Finance Summit and Deal Room, CANEX Shorts Film Competition, Jollof Wars Competition, CANEX Music Factory Songwriting Camp, Junior Chefs Competition, Fashion Show and Awards Night, CANEX Mega Concert and Legends Football Match. The Lagos edition will serve as a test run for the fifth edition of the biennial Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2027), which Nigeria will host in November 2027. IATF2027 is expected to provide a broader continental marketplace for African businesses, including creative enterprises, to expand commercial

partnerships and access new markets. Registrations are open - <https://apo.opa.co/4xQ44Wm>

Pitcher Showcases 2026 Winners, Introduces New Categories For 2027

THE 2026 Pitcher showcase and award presentations which held on September 30 brought together award winners, special guests, facilitators of the Future Pitcher Student Academy and Young Pitcher Academy, and jurors of the Future Pitcher and Young Pitcher Competitions for a special in-person celebration of excellence. The event served as a gathering of the Pitcher Festival to spotlight top winners of the 2026 Pitcher Awards and formally present awards to recipients of the prestigious Pitcher Special Awards, while also recognising outstanding achievers from the Young Pitcher Competition and the Future Pitcher Competition. Among the distinguished guests were Chief Marketing Officer, Alternative Bank and Second Vice President of ADVAN, Maurice Igugu, and Brenda Nwagwu, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of QVT and



Hannatu Musawa is expected to be at CANEX

President of MIPAN. Both industry leaders joined the award presentations, with Maurice Igugu presenting awards to winners from the Pitcher academies and competitions. Opening the event, Dr. Nnamdi Ndu, Chairman of the Pitcher Festival, reflected on the importance of talent development as the foundation of the Pitcher community. He described the Future Pitcher Student Academy (FPSA) and the Young Pitcher Academy (YPA) as the programmes that sit "at the very heart of the Pitcher Festival," emphasising their role in developing talent and building the future of the creative, marketing, advertising, and communications industries across the region. Also at the event, Dr. Ndu announced that beginning 2027, the former Channel Category will be replaced by two specialised categories: Media Strategy and Data Category, which celebrates the strategic thinking, audience intelligence, data analysis, and cross-channel planning that drive media effectiveness and the Media Execution Category, which honours outstanding deployment of media channels,



Dr. Nnamdi Ndu

placement excellence, contextual relevance, and executional craft. 2027 will also welcome AI innovation to the Pitcher awards as Dr. Ndu disclosed. Beginning in 2027, AI-focused sub-categories will be introduced within the Care, Craft, Culture, Digital, Entertainment, Heritage, and Media Strategy & Data categories. These new additions will celebrate work where artificial intelligence has played a meaningful role in enhancing creativity, storytelling, audience engagement, strategic planning, production, or problem-solving. The 2027 Pitcher Awards will open for entries on November 1, 2026. More information can be sourced www.PitcherFestival.com

TIFFCOM Unveils Full Line-Up

THE Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) has unveiled its full lineup at Spiral Hall in Tokyo, announcing the films in its five competitive sections along with many other highlights of its 39th edition, in a spirited ceremony spotlighting TIFF's commitment to the past, present and future of cinema. Guided by this year's theme, *Connecting—Cinema Connects Us to the World Beyond*, TIFF will create opportunities for filmmakers and film lovers to connect in a diversity of ways. The 10-day festival, running from October 26 through November 4, will feature over 200 films and extensive related events in the Hibiya-Yurakucho-Marunouchi-Ginza area of Tokyo. As in prior years, TIFF's opening Red Carpet is scheduled to take place on Hibiya-Nakadori Avenue. TIFFCOM, the affiliated marketplace for film and audiovisual content, will be held concurrently for three days, from October 28 to 30. The 39th TIFF will open with the Asian premiere of Takahisa Zeze's much-anticipated *Sukiyaki*, the untold story behind the historic song that topped the Billboard charts and remains one of the world's best-selling tunes; and close with the Korean zombie thriller *Colony*, directed by Yeon Sang-ho of *Train to Busan* (2016). The festival's Centerpiece will be Yamazaki Takashi's *Godzilla Minus Zero*, the epic sequel from the Oscar-winning Visual Effects team behind *Godzilla Minus One*. Full programme can be sourced at tiffcom.jp/en/

NIDO CHICAGOLAND CELEBRATES NIGERIA AT 66

Connecting for Growth, Building for the Future. One Nigeria. One Community. One Future.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS — October 3, 2026 — The Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO) USA – Chicagoland Chapter marked Nigeria's 66th Independence Anniversary with a memorable evening celebrating Nigerian culture, unity, leadership and the achievements of Nigerians in the diaspora. Held on Saturday, October 3, the celebration brought together community leaders, professionals, families, distinguished guests, former NIDO leaders and friends of Nigeria for an evening dedicated to honoring Nigeria's heritage while looking toward a stronger and more united future. The celebration was held under the theme "Connecting for Growth, Building for the Future," with the powerful tagline "One Nigeria. One Community. One Future." The theme reflected NIDO Chicagoland's commitment to creating meaningful connections, developing partnerships, empowering young Nigerians and strengthening the community in the United States and Nigeria. NIDO Chicagoland President Georgina Ayiwe Franklin emphasized the importance of unity, collaboration and youth engagement in building a stronger Nigerian community. She highlighted the responsibility of Nigerians in the diaspora to use their skills, relationships and resources to create opportunities and contribute positively to both Nigeria and their adopted communities. NIDO Chicagoland's mission aligns with its broader objective of providing a unified platform through which Nigerians in the diaspora can harness their talents, expertise and resources for economic and social development. The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Washington, D.C., was represented by Hon. Chukudi Nwachukwu Igboeli, Head of Technology, Health and Education, and Hon. Mrs. Farida Muntari Kaita, Information and Culture. The representatives attended on behalf of His Excellency Ambassador Kayode Are, who was unable to attend the celebration personally. Their presence was warmly received by NIDO Chicagoland leadership and members of the Nigerian

community and was viewed as an important demonstration of the Embassy's continued engagement with Nigerians living in the United States. In remarks reflecting on the significance of the occasion, NIDO Chicagoland expressed appreciation to Ambassador Are for designating his representatives to participate in the celebration. NIDO Chicagoland also expressed its desire to strengthen its relationship with the Nigerian Embassy and to work collaboratively on initiatives promoting unity, community engagement, economic opportunities, youth development and the well-being of Nigerians in Chicagoland and across the United States. One of the major highlights of the evening was the inauguration of the NIDO Chicagoland Board of Trustees. The new Board of Trustees includes:

- * Mr. Sam Aiwuyo
- * Chief Ovie Mukoro
- * Dr. Sandra Dafiaghon
- * Dr. George Nwogu
- * Pastor Doyin Owobamirin

The trustees include former presidents and distinguished leaders of NIDO Chicagoland who have contributed significantly to the growth and development of the organization. The inauguration was conducted by Hon. Chukudi Nwachukwu Igboeli, who represented Ambassador Kayode Are at the event. NIDO Chicagoland looks toward the future with renewed determination to connect Nigerians, strengthen the community and build bridges between the diaspora and Nigeria.

New Chapter, New Decade For ART X Lagos

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

WEST Africa's leading international fairs, ART X Lagos, returns to Federal Palace, Lagos for its 11th edition, from November 5 to 8, 2026, with the opening of a new chapter following 10X, its landmark 10th anniversary fair. Founded by Tokini Peterside-Schwebig in 2016, over the years, the fair has grown into a global destination for contemporary culture from Africa and its diaspora, drawing artists and galleries from over 70 countries and participants from 170 nations worldwide. ART X Lagos now enters its second decade with the theme — "A New Chapter, A New Decade", turning to the artists, architects, educators and thinkers who shaped modernism in Nigeria for inspiration. The 2026 programme explores this question through acts of bridging: between past and present, tradition and contemporary practice, local knowledge and international exchange, established voices and those still emerging into view. Peterside-Schwebig, Founder and Director of ART X Lagos, said: "As ART X Lagos begins its second decade, we are thinking deeply about what it means to move forward while remaining connected to the histories, knowledge and cultural traditions that have shaped us. The generation that shaped modernism in Nigeria showed us that looking to our past does not mean standing still. They drew from what they inherited and transformed it into new forms of expression that spoke powerfully to their present. "A New Chapter, A New Decade asks what that same spirit can mean for us today. This year, we honour the mastery of artists and cultural practitioners who turn inheritance into new forms of expression, while creating bridges between generations, disciplines and geographies. More than an art fair, we want ART X Lagos to be a space where we can recover

Portrait of Ladi Kwali at a pottery demonstration in England, 1970s. PHOTO: W. A. Ismay, © York Museums Trust

what has shaped us, encounter a more confident sense of self and place, and from there, imagine new possibilities for what comes next." This year's event brings together a tightly curated selection of 15 exhibitors across its main and spotlight sections, presenting established and emerging artistic voices from Africa and its diaspora. The main section will feature Affinity Art Gallery (Nigeria), Afriart Gallery (Uganda), Alexis Galleries (Nigeria), AMG Projects (Nigeria), Gallery 1957 (Ghana), kô (Nigeria), Kokopelli Gallery (Nigeria), Nike Art Gallery (Nigeria), O'DA Art (Nigeria), SMO Contemporary Art (Nigeria), TAFETA (United Kingdom), Yenwa (Nigeria). The spotlight section, which platforms emerging galleries through focused presentations, returns with Adegbola Gallery, Nomadic Art Gallery and Windsor Gallery, all based in Nigeria. Sponsored by Zenith Bank, this year, ART X ICON turns its focus to pioneering Nigerian potter Ladi Dosei Kwali (1925-1984) with Ladi Kwali: Beyond the Vessel, conceived and developed by curator Dr Jareh Das. Bringing together ceramics and archival materials from the National Museum in Lagos, alongside works from private lenders, the exhibition considers Kwali beyond the familiar narratives through which she has often been understood. Alongside Kwali's ceramics, Beyond the Vessel will feature works by women potters who worked alongside and after her, including Kande Ushafa and Asibi Ido, as well as traditional pottery by Gbani, Nupe and Bida potters. The exhibition examines what Kwali inherited, what she transformed and what subsequent generations have carried forward, while raising broader questions about craft and art, gender and access.

By Sunday Aikulola

THERE is a quiet, heroic drama behind the physical existence of *The Adventures of a Roving Journalist*. Phil Aragbada left the Sketch Newspaper in Ibadan in 1988, where he had risen to Group Insight Editor and earned a seat on the Editorial Board. By the time he retired and turned back to his old trade, he faced every writer's worst nightmare: the private scrapbooks holding his cuttings from the 1970s onward had been destroyed by circumstances beyond human control.

In an era before digital back-ups and cloud servers, a decade of eyewitness reporting on post-independence Nigeria threatened to dissolve into the air. What followed was a remarkable act of historical rescue.

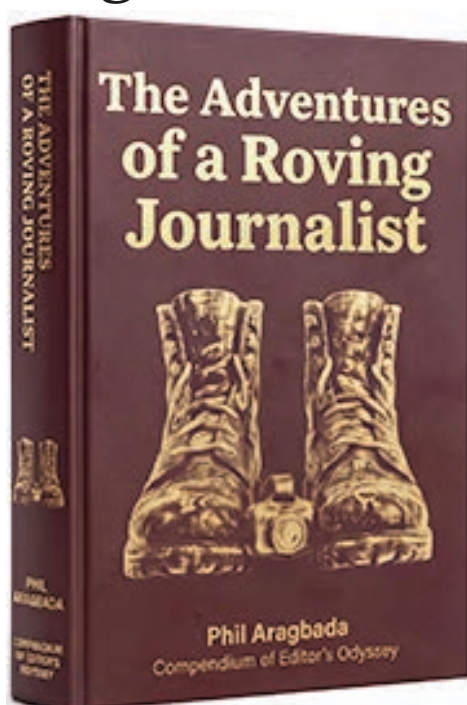
Urged on by his family, newsroom veterans, and friends in academia, Aragbada turned to the National Archives of Nigeria at the University of Ibadan. There, alongside senior archivist, Niya J. Adegoke, and his staff, he sifted page by page through thousands of fragile, un-digitised newspapers in search of over 400 original articles. While his introduction speaks of 94 recovered pieces, this first volume gathers 51 of them, with a second volume promised.

Strengthened by editorial input from his former Sketch colleague, Pastor Bola Bolawole, later editor of The Punch, and featuring a cover designed by the author's lawyer son, Tomiwa, the resulting collection is far more than a personal memoir. It stands as an indispensable primary record of Nigerian socio-political life.

Divided into four thematic parts, the collection captures the raw energy, structural paradoxes, and tragic turns of a nation in transition. The opening section, Travels and Discoveries, is field journalism at its most adventurous.

In March 1987, the Sunday Sketch published Aragbada's account of the Mambilla Plateau in Gongola State (now Taraba and Adamawa states). By his own account the first daily newspaper journalist to make the journey, he documented a temperate domain perched more than 1,833 metres above sea level—home to over half a million cattle, a federally backed tea estate, and the Donga River with an estimated 534 megawatts of hydroelectric potential.

In Adventures Of A Roving Journalist, Aragbada Reflects On Media Career



Yet Aragbada was never a mere tourist documenting picturesque landscapes. He focused on the plateau's severe isolation: 'Kona Gomina' (Governor's Corner), a sheer drop less than 10 feet from the road, and '9 Mile Hill', where his driver ordered male passengers out to walk two kilometres on foot so the vehicle could climb.

He recorded the bitter economics of an abundant region cut off from national markets: kerosene that cost 50 kobo elsewhere sold for five to ten naira during the rains, while a single photocopy that cost 20 kobo in Ibadan commanded eight naira on the mountain. The exposé caused a national stir, forced government authorities to pay attention to the region's infrastructure deficit, and contributed to his 1994 Nigerian Union of Journalists (Oyo State) Award of Excellence.

That eye for structural paradox runs throughout his travelogues. In Badagry, he confronts the dark memory of the

transatlantic slave trade: a 50-metre iron neck chain long enough to hold 100 captives on the march toward the "Point of No Return" on Gberefu Island.

A short walk away stands the historic two-storey mission house of 1845 where, by local tradition, Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther worked on translating the Bible into Yoruba. In Lagos, his study of Victoria Island and Maroko contrasts the manicured lawns of the financial elite with a settlement of half a million working-class residents less than a hundred metres away, living without piped water or electricity, who took to wooden canoes whenever seasonal rains submerged their homes.

Aragbada's investigative work is most potent when confronting state violence and institutional abuse. In October 1982, he travelled nearly 1,000 kilometres from Ibadan to Benue State to investigate the death of Gwaza Ahura, a 20-year-old student at Government College, Makurdi.

Ahura had been sentenced to nine months in prison without the option of a fine for "stealing" a goat—though his family said he was observing Igba, a Tiv custom that allows a son to take a hen or goat from his mother's people during festive periods. Six weeks into his sentence, Ahura was dead in Gboko Prison.

Medical reports cited head injuries; relatives who saw his body described deep whip wounds and a ruptured kidney, and blamed prison warders, two of whom were questioned by police. Aragbada's interview with Ahura's mother—who was turned away at the prison gate two days before her son died and told to "write an application" just to see him—is among the most moving passages in the book, demonstrating the vital role of investigative press oversight during periods of institutional fragility.

In Part Two, *Society and Politics*, the register shifts to political economy. The section opens with "Nigerian Elites and the Tragedy of Leadership," an essay dated 2014 that reads as the veteran's retrospec-

tive verdict on the decades he covered day by day. He argues that military rule from 1966 onward dismantled self-sustaining regional economies built on cocoa, groundnuts, and palm oil, replacing them with dependent states that must go cap-in-hand every month for federal oil allocations. Around it sit his original 1980s dispatches covering state creation, public utility privatization, electoral management under FEDECO, and the 1985 expulsion of undocumented regional migrants.

The third and fourth sections offer a rich mosaic of public affairs, culture, and portraiture. Aragbada reports on the earth tremors that shook South-Western Nigeria on July 28, 1984, the Johnson Wax factory fire, aggressive infant-formula marketing, and the untapped bitumen reserves of Ondo State. His profiles span spiritual, military, and academic figures—from Celestial Church founder Samuel Bilewu Joseph Oshoffa and Pentecostal pioneer Benson Idahosa to neurologist Professor Oluwakayode Osuntokun.

The volume closes with 'Erin Wo' ('The Mighty Falls'), the Sketch's tribute to Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Co-authored with colleague Muiyiwa Apari in under eight hours to beat rival newspapers to the story, it captures the competitive newsroom culture the book celebrates.

The volume is not without limitations. As an archival collection, it is episodic rather than a continuous narrative, and a few pieces carry no original publication dates. The 2014 essay sits among 1980s dispatches without a clear editorial signal to mark the decades-long jump in time. Furthermore, modern readers will miss retrospective footnotes connecting historical dispatches to modern developments, such as Maroko's eventual demolition in 1990 or modern updates on the Mambilla hydroelectric project.

Yet what endures is the reporting itself. Aragbada writes lucid, energetic prose anchored in figures, names, and places. Filed by a journalist willing to trek up mountain roads or sit with a grieving mother in a rural village, this volume is an indispensable record for scholars of West African history, media analysts, and general readers alike.

Osundare...And The Search For Truth

Book: Truth is Trouble

Author: Niyi Osundare

Publisher: Bookcraft Africa, 2026,

Pages 549

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

WHEN Pontius Pilate asked Jesus Christ is what is the truth, he did not know that humanity was going to spend time in search of the truth. Philosophers, religious and authors have spent time searching for this concept, which philosophers have reduced to Correspondence Theory: A statement is true if it matches or corresponds directly to an independent, objective reality; Coherence Theory: A statement or belief is true if it fits logically and consistently with a broader system of other belief and Pragmatic theory, which states that a statement is true if it has practical utility, works effectively, and stands up to active inquiry.

In *Truth is Trouble*, Osundare says truth is conformity to reality, fact, or actuality. It describes statements, beliefs, or propositions that accurately reflect the way things actually are. Just like Biodun Jeyifo reduces truth to

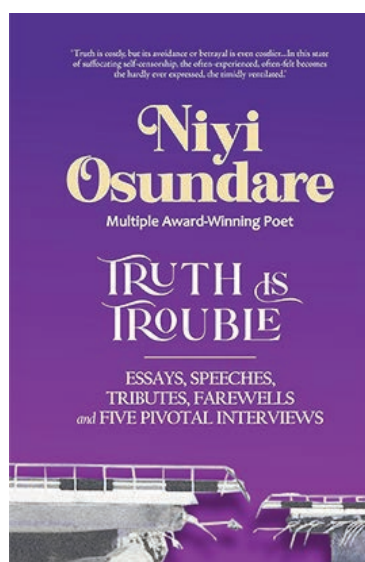
drama in his seminal work, *Truthful Lie*, Osundare interrogates the space to find the truth.

In the book, he explores the concept of truth as constituting a threat and menace to those whose ideas of the world are negative – racists, bigots, political charlatans, economic saboteurs, those, generally, who want to keep the world away from progress because it hurts them.

To him, the true word is often bitter to swallow, it's desirable. Without Truth, the world can't exist for one second. Fearsome and troublesome as it is, it's the pillar on which the house of the universe rests!

Amid the contestation for truth, the author interrogates books for the answer, which he finds in the post colonial literature. The book views truth as being trouble for those who speak it.

The book is divided into five parts, Part One, entitled 'Troublesome Truth' dwells on the author's concerns about contemporary Africa and the world, relationship between African literature and body politic and global setting. It interrogates, among others, the notion of "When in Rome, act like a



Roman," which has recurrently featured in Osundare's recent public engagements.

Section Two, entitled 'Troublesome Muses', profiles prominent poets, writers and others whose trade in words has earned them public envy and oftentimes, malice for their truthfulness and social impact.

Listed in this hall of fame are the late Yoruba classic novelist, D. O. Fagunwa, romance writer, Amos Tutuola; literary icons – Prof. Chinua Achebe; Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka; Aloune Diop, Mariame Ba, the Senegalese novelist and first winner of the Noma

Award; and Anthonio Jacinto, the Angolan poet who was the first poet to win the Noma Award.

'Troublesome Terrains' – that is title of Part Three of the book and is devoted to Osundare's concerns for the physical environment as it relates to human beings placed in it, climate change and the ecology of knowledge.

Here, Osundare pays homage to the 'book' and offered a spectacular view of 'Mountains', raising appreciation of the issue beyond mere physicality to the realm of empathy in another lecture he gave at the University of Toulouse, France, where, years earlier, he had been conferred with an honorary doctorate of the University. Osundare calls Part Four "an unusual section" in a book of this type, consisting, as it were, of tributes to culture icons and artists. On the other hand, he remarked that it could not entirely be dismissed as an unusual entry because of its importance and the opportunity it afforded him to kill two birds with one stone – "speak critically and analytically about the works and their authors at the same time."

In light of this, he pays tributes to some of the literary and intellectual icons before him. The roll call includes Prof Achebe; Eldered Durosini Jones (first Editor of 'African Literature Today'; renowned literary critic, Profs Abiola Irele; Isidore Okpeho; Kofi

Awonoor; Buchi Emecheta; Gabriel Okara; Garcia Marquez; Aduni Olorisa (Susan Wenger); and the historian Dr. Gabriel Akinola.

The conclusion composed of what Osundare described as five major interviews he had granted journals/media, which he now adapted into prose.

In one of the interviews, published by *The Guardian* in 2013; 'Who begat African Literature?', he condemns the idea of who is the father of *African Literature*.

In 'Truth is Trouble', Osundare historicises, analyses, intellectualises and also commonises the subject. The work examines Truth as a cultural, philosophical, and epistemological phenomenon.

A searing, intellectually rich collection of essays, speeches, tributes, and interviews, the renowned Nigerian professor, Niyi Osundare, however, asks: what happens to the song when its singer and its audience are fung to opposite, unequal sides of of a large, decoupling ocean.

As a messenger of truth, he deploys biting sarcasm and satire and weaponises justice as the tool to censure perceived social ills, corruption and injustice. breadth and depth of reference, the recurrence of favourite themes like historical amnesia, and the author's tributes to literary and intellectual icons who have passed, bringing a different outlook on those individuals.

Fans To Determine If Bovi Is *Guilty As Charged*

By Eniola Daniel

FOLLOWING massive, sold-out runs everywhere from London’s Indigo at The O2 to stages across Canada, and success of the Benin City, Edo State show, award-winning comedian, actor, and writer, Bovi Ugboma, known professionally as Bovi, will tomorrow stand before Lagos comedy lovers to answer the one question everyone has been asking: guilty or not guilty?

Titled, *Bovi: Guilty As Charged*, and scheduled to hold at the Eko Convention Centre of Eko Hotel & Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos, the show is the grand finale of his 2026 world tour. The master storyteller will use the event to bring homes his critically acclaimed one-man show, delivering a career-defining verdict.

Bovi’s successful international run, which began in the United Kingdom at Easter, where he sold out Indigo at The O2, subsequently took him to tour across Canada,

performing in six cities, including Toronto, Calgary and Edmonton. The three-hour show will only have one guest appearance, who is an A-list comedian and young comics as opening acts.

Speaking with *The Guardian* ahead of the show, Bovi said he has never taken his audience for granted and that they can be sure that he will put in his best performance. “People pay for tickets and I need to give them value for their money. Over the years, I have evolved where I can evolve,” he said

On his experience performing in and outside Nigeria, the comedian added that while there is no much difference in term of audience as people are in love with his comedy, and have history with his comic deliveries, more fans are coming on board,

He stated that structurally, the difference is that he does not need to lift a finger except to carry himself on stage abroad, as most of the venues are plug and play, but that is missing in Nigeria.



BNXXN Joins Asake’s In God We Trust Tour

AFROBEATS star, BNXXN, is set to join Asake on select dates of his “In God We Trust Tour,” adding another major Nigerian name to the highly anticipated run of shows.

BNXXN will appear as a supporting act when Mr Money and Lungu hit-maker takes over the O2 Arena in London on October 15, before joining him again at the Accor Arena in Paris on October 24.

The announcement brings together two of the leading voices in contemporary Afrobeats, with both artists building strong international followings through their music and live performances.

For BNXXN, the appearances offer another opportunity to perform before major European audiences. The singer has established himself as one of Nigeria’s prominent music exports, with a catalogue that includes fan favourites and collaborations with some of the biggest names in African music.

Meanwhile, Asake continues to strengthen his reputation as a major live performer with the “In God We Trust Tour.” The London

and Paris dates will see him perform at two of Europe’s prominent indoor arenas as he brings his music to fans across the continent.

BNXXN’s addition as a supporting act is expected to add even more Nigerian flavour to both concerts, with fans getting the opportunity to see the two Afrobeats stars on the same stage.

Felabration 2026: Fela’s Rebel Spirit Keeps The Beat, The Fashion, The Fight In One Room

By Daniel Anazia

AS Lagos prepares for Felabration 2026, the yearly celebration of Afrobeat pioneer, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the spotlight returns to a legacy that extends beyond music into fashion, political consciousness, and cultural identity.

Scheduled for October 12 to 18 at the New Africa Shrine, the festival will bring together performances and creative activities that reaffirm Fela’s place in Nigeria’s cultural history while inviting a new generation to engage with his ideas.

Conceived by Yeni Anikulapo-Kuti, Fela’s daughter in 1998, Felabration has grown into a week-long cultural event attracting music lovers and visitors from Nigeria and abroad. Its

programme reaches beyond the stage, incorporating art, dance, school debates and fashion.

The Dress Fela fashion show, scheduled for Saturday, sets the tone ahead of the main festival, showing how the musician’s distinctive style continues to influence contemporary expression.

Fela’s legacy remains particularly visible in fashion. His bold prints, loose-fitting trousers, beads and unapologetic stage presence helped create an image inseparable from his music and political convictions. Today, designers and fans continue to reinterpret elements of that look, turning a personal style into a wider statement about African identity, self-expression and cultural confidence.



ChoreoCinema To Change Narratives, Opens New Frontier For Dance, Experimental Film

By Sunday Aikulola

FOR the first time, ChoreoCinema World is launching what its organisers described as the country’s first dedicated dance film festival, opening a new platform for artists working at the intersection of movement, choreography and film.

Filmmaker and cultural advocate Femi Adebajo said ChoreoCinema World is developed as more than a festival, with plans for screenings, commissions, collaborations and conversations around dance and experimental film. Adebajo, who is also the Chief Executive Officer and Convener, ChoreoCinema noted, “Dance has always had a relationship with space,

the body, rhythm and movement. Film gives us another dimension to explore those things. We want artists to ask what happens when choreography, camera, sound, editing and the body become part of one artistic language.”

To him, “we are not interested in creating a festival that exists for three days and disappears. There are artists whose ideas do not fit neatly into traditional categories of dance, theatre or film. We want ChoreoCinema World to be a place where those ideas can find expression and where artists have the freedom to imagine differently.”

On his part, the festival’s director,

Faith Okoh, noted, “we want to create a space where the moving body can be recognized not simply as a spectacle or support for another narrative, but as the starting point for an authored work of an art on screen.”

Beyond the inaugural festival, ChoreoCinema World plans to develop programmes that create opportunities for artists working across dance, choreography and experimental film.

The ChoreoCinema World Dance Film Festival will hold from October 23 to 25, 2026, at White Space Creative Art Foundation, Ikoyi, Lagos.

TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

Before Something Unpleasant Happens To Akpi...

THE last edition of the periodic celebrity boxing tagged ‘Chaos In The Ring’, held on Nigeria’s Independence Day. The main bout was the male fight between rap artiste Speed Darlington aka Akpi and social media personality, Carter Efe while reality TV star Phyna and Nollywood star, Nkechi Blessing, dug it out in the female category. T4T will not dwell much on the female fight as it turned out to be a huge disappointment after Nkechi Blessing fell down like a bag of ‘fufu’ in the first round and that was the end of the fight. The fight between Efe and Akpi was anti climatic. One does not know what to call what Akpi was doing in the ring but it was everything but boxing. Mrs T4T, after watching the first round online, hissed and went to the kitchen muttering under her breath that she would have done better than Akpi. T4T will try to describe what Akpi did that night. His two gloves covered hands were held in a defensive position in front of his face almost throughout the fight. And the funny part was, he remained crouched with his butt sticking out like one who was hiding from something or someone. In that ridiculous position, he was moving round the ring as he collected the beating of his life from Efe. At a point, his back was turned to Efe with his gloves still covering his face and Efe gave him a very ferocious blow that made him to spin in shock and pain.

The female referee is an amateur. She should have stopped the fight after Akpi, on many occasions had his back turned in fear. That is the rule, but she allowed Akpi to get the beating of his life.

A not too pleasant social media user said Akpi did not

come to fight, that he came to collect the loser’s money, so, he just did what he could to stay afloat till the end of the fight to get his check. T4T agrees.

Last Thursday would make the second time he is losing in a celebrity boxing contest. He was seriously beaten by controversial singer, Zazzu, some time ago.

This is T4T’s advice to Akpi. Before something unpleasant happens to him, now is the time to stop submitting himself to serious beatings because he desperately needs the money as his music career is not what one can call a productive one, at the moment. And by the way, anybody who loves Akpi should tell him to go for a CT scan. He took a lot of blows to the head and for an amateur, that is not a good thing.

Let’s wish Akpi a ‘soonest recover’.

Julius Agwu Drops Bombshell!

WHEN T4T read the news in a national daily (not *The Guardian*), an Urhobo proverb immediately came to his head: “Instead of a man’s penis to ‘die’ (impotence), let all the teeth in his mouth break off.”

So, it was with a heavy heart that T4T read the revelation by once upon a time heavyweight comedian, Julius Agwu, that his manhood stopped working since 2015 after he had surgery for a brain tumour abroad.

Why on earth would Agwu reveal that publicly? To gain what, really? Another Urhobo Proverb tells us that a wizard never gets drunk and confesses to witchcraft.

Anyway, thank God Julius ‘De Genius’ Agwu have had all his kids before the unfortunate incident.

To God be the glory.

Delta Police Should Not Stop There

T4T follows the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of Delta State, SP Bright Edafe on his social media accounts. Last week, he revealed a case that shocked even T4T who thought he had seen it all. A video of three young boys below 16 years old and a 16-year old girl recently went viral in Ughelli, Delta State last week. The small boys were mocking the girl on why she came to the hotel to see them when she was on her monthly menstrual circle. They stripped her naked, had sex with her and still went ahead to release the video online.

The Delta Police Command arrested the main culprit and Edafe Bright paraded him at Police headquarters, Asaba. The boy admitted to the crime of rape and he revealed he was also into Internet fraud popularly called ‘Yahoo’ in Nigeria. This is a 16-year old child o!

Now, T4T is wondering why the owner and or manager of the hotel was not arrested alongside the teenager. A hotel staff who gave a room to three teenagers who were not accompanied by an adult, simply because they could afford it, should be arrested to explain why. In a sane society, any young looking person who wants to buy alcohol or cigarettes is asked for an ID to show he is of age to indulge. Little kids like that should have been asked to produce an NIN to ascertain their ages and asked to leave if they don’t have a valid ID. But because they are ‘Yahoo Boys’ with money to spend, the hotel management gave some toy kids a room!

An arrest and prosecution of the hotel manager or receptionist would serve as a deterrent to other hotel operators across the country that give rooms to teenagers. Over to you Bright Edafe.

Lions Club ‘Back-To-School’ Initiative Targets Three Schools In Lagos

Stories by Opeyemi Babalola

AS part of the commitments of Eko Royal Lions Club aimed at supporting education and giving back to the community, the Back-to-School Outreach Programme successfully held last week. Pupils of three public schools in Lagos: Agunbiade Primary School, Shomolu, Fadeyi Nursery and Primary School were beneficiaries.

Various Back-to-School items such as notebooks, writing pads, mathematical sets, pens, pencils, rulers, erasers, sharpeners, water bottles and snack plates were given out to the excited pupils who expressed their appreciation by dancing and singing.

According to the Club’s Communication and Marketing



Pupils of Fadeyi Nursery School, Lagos

Chairperson, Sanni Balikis, the programme was aimed at supporting pupils, particularly those from less-privileged backgrounds, by providing them with essential educational materials needed for the new academic session.

The gesture was well received by the schools’ pupils and teachers. The pupils expressed their appreciation while the school authorities com-

mended the initiative and support towards improving the pupils’ educational experiences.

The Back-to-School initiative provided an opportunity to support pupils in the three public schools and encouraged them to begin the new academic session with the necessary learning materials and renewed enthusiasm for their studies, Lion Balikis said.

SheRises Initiative Takes Drug Abuse Campaign To Secondary School Students

THE SheRises Women Empowerment Initiative has launched a campaign against drug abuse among secondary school students, aimed at pro-

moting a drug-free society and encouraging young people to focus on pursuing their dreams.

The campaign, held at Sango



Some of the beneficiaries of the SheRises Women Empowerment Initiative during a campaign against drug abuse in Sango High School, Ota, Ogun State.

High School, Ota, marked the organisation’s first major initiative focused on tackling drug abuse among students as part of its broader mission to support vulnerable women and children.

Speaking at the event, the guest lecturer, Imam Saheed Adekunle, stressed the need to educate young people, particularly secondary school students, about the dangers of drug misuse and abuse.

He noted that some young people misuse drugs without consulting physicians or following prescriptions, warning that such practices could have serious consequences...”

ShortStory

Mystery Of The Black He-Goat (4)

By Segun Durowaiye
(08055356855)

Continued from GUARDIAN WEEKEND, October 3-4, 2026

BOSE was confused and didn’t understand how her husband got to know Adeosun’s office. She was speechless and dumbfounded.

“How did he trace you?!” she asked for the umpteenth time. “I don’t know,” he said, “I think I told you someone is after my life. I knew what happened to me recently was not ordinary. Oh, but I love you, Bose. . .honestly, I do.” Undeterred and unwary of any calamity, Adeosun made love with Bose as he had never done before; for hours they were together in Bose’s place and had a marathon love experience. Bose’s husband had travelled to his home town and Bose took the opportunity to invite Adeosun into her matrimonial home. After the long lovemaking session, Adeosun was very happy. Bose too, was really happy when Adeosun opened his briefcase and gave her a sophisticated gold wristwatch and a bundle of N500 notes, which equals N50,000. Bose instantly gave him a long, deep and fervent kiss.

About 15 minutes later, Adeosun decided to take his leave. Bose saw him off to his car. Immediately Adeosun opened his car; what he saw filled him with horror and terror! He was aghast with fear! Once again, he saw the dead, black he-goat on the rear seat of his car. The black he-goat had a red piece of cloth with three cowries tied round its neck.

“God!” he exclaimed, “Not again!” Adeosun started sweating and felt like vomiting. He banged the door of his car and wailed: “Help! Help!! Help!!! It’s the dead, black he-goat again! Somebody help me!”

Bose heard his screams and came running to him. About 10 people rushed towards him to see what was wrong.

“What’s the matter?” Bose asked.

“I saw the dead, black he-goat in my car again!” Adeosun managed to say, trembling and sweating.

“Where is the dead black goat?!” Bose asked.

“That’s it over there, inside my car. . .can’t you see it?” he stammered. “I can’t see anything!” Bose said with surprise and confusion written on her face.

“Can’t the rest of you see it?” Adeosun asked the confused crowd, Bose inclusive.

“I can’t see anything, Ade, don’t worry yourself, this is a figment of your imagination. You need plenty of rest. Go home and sleep,” she advised.

Adeosun was still sweating profusely, shaken and trembling all over. He managed to enter his car and inserted the ignition key. He drove out of the area in complete fear. As he was driving, he was all the while turning to stare at the back seat to see if the dead, black he-goat was still there. His body temperature had increased tremendously. He was feeling very hot in spite of the cool, breezy atmosphere. Adeosun had driven for about 30 minutes and had almost reached home when he collapsed on the steering and gave up the ghost. Alas, he died foaming in the mouth and gasping for breath on the steering wheel. Till this day, it has become a case of criminal study for homicide detectives who could not unravel the mystery behind the death of the young socialite called Adeosun. This should be a lesson for unrepentant casanovas and gigolos who have an insatiable thirst and lust over everything in skirt. Life is very delicate and we should be very careful the way we handle it.

Concluded.

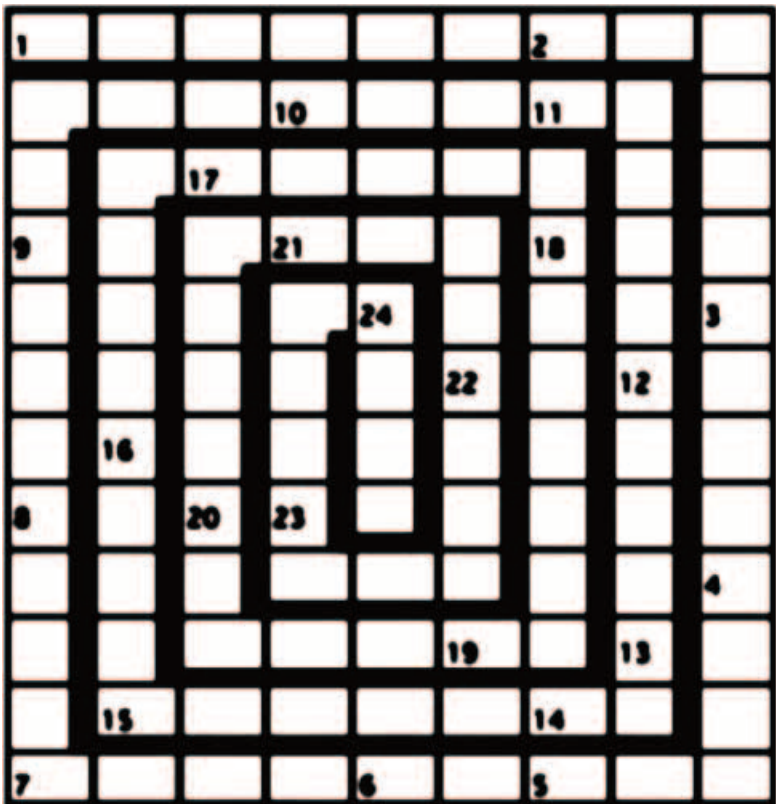
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with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
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Overlapping Word Game

Solution

- 1 Irepodun
- 2 Underage
- 3 German
- 4 Anthem
- 5 Mean
- 6 Anger
- 7 Rijau
- 8 United
- 9 Edible
- 10 Easy
- 11 Yerima
- 12 Afijio
- 13 Iowa
- 14 Waggle
- 15 Ensure
- 16 Release
- 17 Severe
- 18 Extricate
- 19 Textile
- 20 Legend
- 21 Divide
- 22 Deserve
- 23 Ebony
- 24 Year



Overlapping Word Game

- 1 Local council in Oyo State, (9).
- 2 'Relatives' in Yoruba land, (7).
- 3 Citizen of India, (6).
- 4 Ex Chancellor of Germany, (6).
- 5 Shaft on which wheel turns, (4).
- 6 Plant with edible seeds, (6).
- 7 A state of bad health, (7).
- 8 Short non-fiction prose piece, (5).
- 9 Zamfara State Ex Governor, (6).
- 10 Local council in Lagos State, (5).
- 11 Somebody from Germany, (6).
- 12 Characteristic of local inhabitants, (6).
- 13 Change direction suddenly, (4).
- 14 Behaving badly, (6).
- 15 Brief and unfriendly, (5).
- 16 Give in marriage, (7).
- 17 Isolate somebody, (7).
- 18 Fragile, (8).
- 19 Broaden in scope, (7).
- 20 Rock-filled basket as fortification, (6).
- 21 Plant with stinging leaves, (6).
- 22 Free time, (7).
- 23 Make something certain, (6).
- 24 Physically existing, (4).

Word Search

Sporting Activities

Polo	Hockey	Baseball
Judo	Cricket	Fencing
Rugby	Soccer	Handball
Tennis	Boxing	Athletics
Karate	Acrobat	Canoeing

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

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Society

www.guardian.ng

Birthday

SODIPO, Adenike, Deputy Director, Public Affairs, Lagos State Ministry of Agriculture and Food Systems, will be 60 on Tuesday, October 13, 2026. Born on October 13, 1966, into the distinguished family of the Late Prince Olukayode Adeite and Chief (Mrs.) Rachel Modupeola Adeite, Sodipo has consistently exemplified academic rigor, professional distinction, and an unfaltering dedication to public service.

She attended Surulere Baptist School, Methodist Girls High School, Yaba, and Federal Government Girls College, Bida, which paved the way for higher academic pursuits. She earned her OND and HND in Mass Communication from Moshood Abiola Polytechnic in 1990, later advancing her expertise with two

Master's Degrees from Lagos State University—in International Relations and Strategic Studies, and Communication Studies.

Before joining the public service, Adenike honed her strategic communication skills in the private sector with notable organisations, including The Punch Nigeria Limited, Forum Advertising Limited, and Broyon Advertising Agency. Bringing this vast private-sector expertise to the Lagos State Government, she served with distinction across numerous ministries, departments, and agencies—including the Lagos State Council for Arts & Culture, General Hospital Gbagada, Drain Ducks, the Ministry of Education, the Lagos State Examinations Board, and the Information Production Department of the Ministry of Information and Strategy.



Sodipo

She served in the capacity of a Public Affairs Officer in the state Public Service across Ministries, Agencies, Boards and Local Government structures. Her experience covers developing and implementing communication strategies, promoting organisational visibility

through new and traditional media, design professional media/communication at the management level, facilitating strong media linkages and troubleshooting.

A member of the Lagos State Education Quality Team (EQT) and the Communication Task Team, under the Education Sector Support Programme (ESSPIN) DFID/Nigeria, the EQT organised a Statewide Teachers Assessment, Monitoring Learning Achievement, established a school improvement team and support their functioning. While the communication task team developed a State education slogan as well as developed and implemented various communication strategies to support other ESSPIN outputs.

She was also in the Ministry of Information and Strategy Team during the celebration

of Lagos State at 50 where documentaries were done showing the different cultures of the state, interviews of important personalities who gave us the history of Lagos in the yesteryears.

Currently Deputy Director, Public Affairs in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Systems, Adenike has exhibited extraordinary leadership, strategic vision, and uncommon dedication over the past three years. Her creative publicity campaigns and strategic communication frameworks were instrumental in the high-profile rollout of transformative state initiatives, notably the Ounjie Eko food discount market system and the Lagos Fresh Food Hub. Her efforts directly amplified the reach of these social intervention programs, earning widespread public acclaim and generating im-

mensely positive engagement for the Lagos State Government.

Beyond her exemplary career as a civil servant, Adenike's profound commitment to humanity shines through her extensive community service. Since joining the Inner Wheel Club of Gbagada in 1999, she has demonstrated exceptional leadership across multiple capacities, culminating in her election as the 41st District Chairman of Inner Wheel District 911 for the 2024-2025 service year.

She is happily married to Pharmacist Kolawale Sodipo—a Past District Governor of Rotary International District 9112 and blessed with children and grandchildren. *Compiled by Gbenga Akinfenwa, oluwagbenga.akinfenwa@guardian.ng or gbengaherkin@yahoo.com*

Events



Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Hot Construction Ltd, Tijani Olalekan (left); CEO, Megastar Media Communications/Executive Producer, Megastar Man of the Decade Award, Dr. Adeniyi Ifetayo and a nominee, Group Managing Director, GodMade Home Limited (GMH Luxury), Mr. Ayoolanrewaju Kuyebi after business breakfast on the forthcoming Megastar Man of the Decade Award in Abuja.



President, Rotary Club of Lagos PalmGrove Estate, District 9111, Prasan Kumar Jena (left); Managing Director of Jajo Hospital, Dr Vincent Palathingal, and Vice Chairman BDC, Abhaya Yadav, during blood donation organised by Rotary Club of PalmGrove Estate in partnership with Lagos State Blood Transfusion Committee, Tamil Association of Nigeria, Telugu Association of Nigeria, Non-Resident Nepali Association, Phonex Steel Mills Ltd, Star Pipe Product Ltd, Indian High Commissioner to Nigeria, and Maharashtra.



Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborewori (middle); his wife/Founder of You Matter Charity Foundation, Deaconess Tobore Oborewori (second right); Elder Johnson Ogunleye (second left) and members of the Youth Ministry leadership, shortly after the Oboreworis received Awards of Recognition and customised "Support Sheriff" T-shirts presented on behalf of the Youth Ministry of Living Faith Church (Winners' Chapel), Osubi Branch, in recognition of their contributions to the advancement of the Christian faith and the development of society... on Sunday.



Executive Director, Investment Services, Leadway PFA, Yemisi Rotimi (left); Managing Director/CEO, Olusakin Labeodan; Executive Director, Retail & Partnerships, Kikelomo Fischer; Chief Project Officer, Leadway Group, Toyosi Olatunji, and Head, Corporate Services, Leadway Group, Niyi Abiola; at the official launch of the 2026 Leadway Cares Week, held at the Leadway Corporate Office, Surulere, Lagos.



Managing Partner of Carthena Advisory, Wale Ogundare (left); Chairman and President of Governing Council, Institute of Channel Distribution and Direct Sales (ICDDS), Oladapo Siwoku Santos; Chairman, Board of Trustees, Kunle Sebanjo and National Sales Manager, Culinary Category at Olam/Caraway Africa, Rohan Metha, at the launch of the institute in Lagos. PHOTO: FELIX KUYE



The celebrant, Mrs. Amarachi Caleb Ime and her husband, Mr. Caleb Ime, during her birthday celebration in Surulere, Lagos...recently

Ori Oke Iyanu (Mountain Of Miracles) Holds Story To Glory On October 23

ALL is set for a three-day power-packed prophetic and special programme of Ori Oke Iyanu (Mountain of Miracles/Ilara Epe Town) billed to begin on Wednesday, October 21, 2026 to October 23, 2026, between 9am and 11pm.

The programme, christened "From Story to Glory," holds at Bishop Femi Lucas Road, Mountain of Miracles, Ilara Epe, Lagos.

Global/Guest ministers expected to minister include Prophet Sam Ojo Authority.

Others are prophet Femi Oni, Prophet Ayo Ezekiel, Dr Osuolale, Bishop (Dr.) Faith Shonibare, while Evangelist Lekan Remilekun Amos, Evangelist Elijah Akin-tunde, Evangelist Dare Melody, Mama Sax, Aramada Twins, Boye Best among others would minister in Songs/worship.



The Celebrant, Mrs Christianah Bolanle Owolabi (middle); Elyon Brown (left), Mrs Bisi Brown; Mrs Remi Owolabi; Jotham Brown; Mr Olabode Owolabi; Pastor Oladokun; Pastor (Mrs) Ranti Oladokun; Miss Zoe Brown; Miss Queen Owolabi; Miss Oyebola Owolabi; Pastor Tosin Ayenibiowo; Mrs Mercy Ayenibiowo; Miss Nifemi Oladokun; Mr Tope Meyuigbe and Mrs Raifu, at the 80th birthday celebration of Mrs Bolanle Owolabi in Ibadan, Oyo State...recently.



Marketing Manager, Peak Milk, Omolara Banjoko (left); Internet Personality / Actor, Enioluwa Adeoluwa and Brand Manager, Peak Milk, Boluwatife Ayano at the Peak Milk Back to School Experiential Event held at the National Theatre, Iganmu, Lagos.

Guardian Fashion

● STYLE

● ELEGANCE

● LIFESTYLE

By Maria Diamond

GONE are the days when women wear face caps to hide their unkempt. In today's fashion world, a face cap highlights a woman's features, compliments her style, compact her hair-style and calves her facial structure into perfection.

For the ladies who steeze in the girly chic showcases on all levels, the Face Cap styling comes in handy making her that girl on the spotlight of elegance.

So, beyond using a face cap to block UV rays, that girl who's got it all in style and steeze knows how to look radiant with the final touch of a face cap.

Chic Girl In Face Cap

Being a chic girl doesn't just come from an ordinary or common look; it comes from a fashion sense that keeps you in tune with your girly self even when you're a full grown woman.

This is what Face Cap does – framing a woman's face and overall appearance, while popping her eyes in a girly brightness.

Choosing a Face Cap

No woman should go for just anything displayed as face cap without the intentionality of styling which includes the following:

. **Fabric** – For breathable and comfortable sit on the hair, cottons are the best face cap fabrics for women. So when choosing a face cap, go for the ones made with full cotton fabrics.

. **Structure** – Be deliberate about choosing brim curved face caps that suit the shape of your face and puts your facial expression at ease. Also, ensure to go for adjustable face caps.

. **Colour** – Always go for top matching or contrasting face cap colour; for instance, red on red top or black on white top

. **Logo** – Never go for a loud face cap logo. Keep the word marks subtle or just do a clean monogram.

Face Cap Outfits

Constant fashion evolution has upgraded wearing of face caps for casual dressing into all access outfit compliments. From Casual to corporate and high society, if properly matched, a face cap gives an intentional stylish woman access to every room.

Face Cap and Your Hair

Fashion has evolved from the era when women used face caps to cover rough hair so don't be the woman who uses face caps to hide unkempt hair.

She Is That Girl In Face Cap

Be the woman who uses a face cap to highlight and manage her hair style





Impact Of Fermented Foods On Your Diet, Health

By Suliyat Tella

FROM the *ogi* (pap) in your breakfast bowl to the *iru* (locust bean) in your favourite soup, fermentation has been part of Nigerian food culture for generations. But beyond the familiar taste and aroma, what makes these foods worth keeping on the menu?

For many Nigerians who know the benefit of fermented food, breakfast is incomplete without a bowl of *ogi*. Some prefer it with *akara*, others with *moi moi*, while some enjoy it with a generous sprinkling of sugar and slides of bread.

Elsewhere, *iru* does its job in a pot of *egusi* or *ewedu* soup, adding the distinct flavour that makes the meal feel complete.

Then there is *fufu*, *lafun*, *nono* and *kunu-zaki*, all of which have found a place in the country's food culture through one process or another: fermentation.

Although many people consume these foods regularly without giving much thought to how they are made. Fermentation is one of the oldest ways of transforming food. Long before conversations about gut health and nutrition became popular, communities were already using the process to preserve food, improve its taste and make certain ingredients more suitable for consumption.

Today, those same foods are attracting attention. From traditional Nigerian foods to yoghurt, kefir and kimchi, fermented foods have become part of conversations about healthy eating. But what exactly happens to food when it ferments, and how does the process affect what eventually ends up on our plates?

According to Wasiu Awoyale, an Associate Professor in the Department of Food Science and Technology at Kwara State University, fermentation occurs when microorganisms act on food materials, producing substances such as organic acids, alcohol and other compounds.

In simpler terms, tiny living organisms, including certain bacteria and yeasts, break down components of food and change its taste, texture, aroma and, in some cases, nutritional composition.

"Fermented foods are foods that have been subjected to different levels of microbial activities, leading to the production of alcohol, organic acids and water," he explained.

Awoyale, who is also a Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Engineering at Njala University in Sierra Leone, noted that fermentation could take place through

different methods. Some foods are fermented in water, while others undergo the process in a relatively solid state.

One thing many fermented foods have in common is their distinctive taste. "Generally, fermented foods often have a sour taste because of the organic acids produced during fermentation," he said.

That familiar tang in *ogi* or the sharpness of certain fermented dairy products is, in part, a result of the chemical changes that occur during the process.

But fermentation is not simply about giving food a different taste. It can also change the way the food behaves, from how it is digested to how some of its nutrients become available to the body.

More than a change in taste

THINK about the difference between fresh milk and yoghurt. Both begin with the same basic ingredient, but fermentation gives yoghurt a different texture, flavour and nutritional profile. The same principle applies to many traditional Nigerian foods.

Awoyale explained that fermentation could alter the nutritional composition of food, depending on the raw material and how the process was carried out.

"Microorganisms feed on the food materials during fermentation and produce metabolites that can influence the nutritional composition of the finished product," he said.

During the process, microorganisms may break down complex carbohydrates into simpler sugars and other compounds. These changes can affect the food's flavour, aroma, texture and digestibility.

However, Awoyale cautioned against assuming that every fermented food is automatically more nutritious than its unfermented counterpart.

"Different raw materials have different nutritional compositions, and fermented foods retain some of the characteristics of those raw materials," he explained.

This is why yoghurt and cheese, which are made from milk, have a different nutritional profile from tofu, which is produced from soybeans.

The starting ingredient matters

A FOOD made from a protein-rich raw material will naturally have a different nutritional composition from one made primarily from starch, regardless of whether fermentation is involved.

This distinction is particularly important when discussing popular Nigerian staples. While foods such as *ogi* and *lafun* can be part of a balanced diet, they should not be treated as substitutes for protein-rich foods simply because they have undergone fermentation.

Ogi, for example, is commonly made from maize, millet or sorghum. These cereals can contribute energy to the diet, but a meal built around *ogi* may need additional foods, such as eggs, *akara*, *moi moi* or other protein sources, to make it more varied.

The benefit of fermentation, therefore, lies in the changes it brings to a particular food, not in the assumption that it makes every food nutritionally superior.

When fermentation meets digestion

ONE of the reasons fermented foods have attracted attention is their potential effect on digestion.

Have you ever noticed that a glass of milk leaves you feeling uncomfortable, but yoghurt sits more easily in your stomach?

For some people, the difference has to do with lactose, the natural sugar found in milk.

People with lactose intolerance have difficulty digesting lactose because their bodies do not produce enough of the enzyme needed to break it down. This can result in bloating, stomach discomfort and other digestive symptoms after consuming dairy products.

According to Awoyale, fermentation can make certain dairy products easier for some people to tolerate.

"During yoghurt production, the microorganisms involved in fermentation break down some of the lactose in the milk, making it easier for some people to digest," he explained.

This is one reason yoghurt may be better tolerated than regular milk by some individuals with lactose intolerance. However, it is not a universal solution. Some people may still experience symptoms, depending on their level of lactose intolerance and the type of yoghurt they consume.

The process of breaking down food components also occurs in the fermentation of certain plant-based foods.

Awoyale explained that beans contain carbohydrates such as raffinose and stachyose, which the human digestive system cannot completely break down. When these compounds reach the large intestine, gut microorganisms ferment them, producing gases that can cause flatulence.

This illustrates the role microorganisms play in digestion. Some compounds cannot be fully processed by human digestive enzymes and require the activity of microorganisms in the gut.

Fermentation can begin some of this work before food is consumed, although the extent of the benefit depends on the food, the microorganisms involved and the method used to process it.

Understanding the Probiotic conversation

IF you have been paying attention to conversations about gut health, chances are you have come across the word probiotics.

It appears on yoghurt labels, in discussions about digestive health and sometimes in advertisements for supplements. But what exactly does it mean?

Awoyale described probiotics as live microorganisms that provide health benefits when consumed in adequate amounts. Some of these microorganisms are bacteria, while others are yeasts.

The important distinction, however, is that not every fermented food is a probiotic food.

Fermentation involves microorganisms, but the organisms present in a fermented food may not necessarily provide a demonstrated health benefit. A product may also lose its live cultures during heating, processing or storage.

This means that eating a food simply because it is fermented does not automatically guarantee improved gut health.

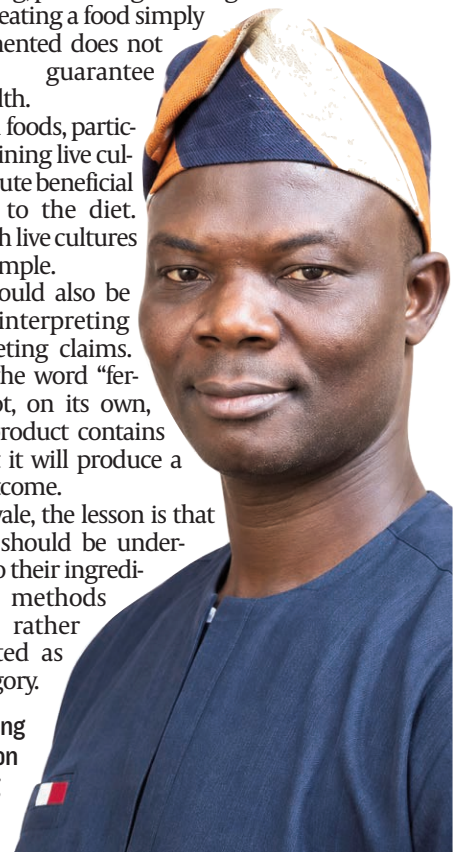
Some fermented foods, particularly those containing live cultures, may contribute beneficial microorganisms to the diet. Yoghurt made with live cultures is one familiar example.

Consumers should also be cautious when interpreting labels and marketing claims. The presence of the word "fermented" does not, on its own, establish that a product contains probiotics or that it will produce a specific health outcome.

According to Awoyale, the lesson is that fermented foods should be understood according to their ingredients, processing methods and properties, rather than being treated as one uniform category.

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

Awoyale



Massive Turnout As Seyi Vibe Headlines Island Block Party

By Suliyat Tella

A MASSIVE crowd gathered at Sol Beach, Elegushi, Lagos, as Balogun Afolabi Oluwaloseyi, popularly known as Seyi Vibe, headlined the Island edition of Mainland Block Party.

The concert, themed Seyi Vibe GTA, drew music lovers who turned up to watch the singer perform songs from across his catalogue, including tracks from his recently released album, Swaggu.

Seyi Vibe took the audience through different phases of his music, performing some of his popular songs while fans sang along. His set also featured songs from Swaggu, with the crowd responding to the new material as enthusiastically as his older hits.

The concert was also marked by performances from a mix of established and emerging artistes. Peruzzi, Shoday, Terry Apala, Kidd Carder, Boy Muller and Muyeze were among the artistes who performed at the event, alongside several underground acts.

Hype men Tobyshang, Mia and



Kayode helped keep the crowd engaged between performances, while DJs Titanium and 4kerty were among those who handled the decks during the event.

The turnout at Sol Beach reflected Seyi Vibe's growing pull among Nigerian music fans. The concert

provided a platform for the singer to perform his music in front of a large live audience while also bringing together different acts from the contemporary Nigerian music scene.

The performance comes at a time when Seyi Vibe's latest album,

Swaggu, is gaining international attention. The album debuted at No. 6 on the Billboard World Albums Chart, giving the singer his highest-charting project on the global chart. It also opened at No. 1 on Spotify's Global Top Albums Debut Chart and debuted at No. 35 on the Worldwide Apple Music Albums Chart.

Mainland Block Party had previously hosted Seyi Vibe on May 1, making the October 1 concert another collaboration between the singer and the event platform within the year. The return came as the organisers continued their programme of bringing established Nigerian artistes to live audiences across Lagos.

The organisers have also announced Mission 24K, their annual New Year's Day concert scheduled for January 1 in Ikeja. While the location has been confirmed, the headlining artiste for the event is yet to be announced, leaving music lovers anticipating who will take the stage as Mainland Block Party begins another year of concerts.

'Tour Of Lagos Waterways' Opens Leisurely Journey Through City's Hidden Gems

By Gbenga Salau

THE SAURUS Bay, in partnership with Lagos State Waterways Authority (LASWA) as part of efforts aimed at boosting Lagos blue economy recently held a Tour of Lagos Waterways to make participants appreciate the resources and facilities along the corridor of the state waters.

The Tour of Lagos Waterways 2026, which is the fifth edition, was an immersive celebration of Lagos beyond its roads, taking participants onto the city's waterways to experience its culture, marine tourism, heritage and waterfront investment opportunities.

More than a boat tour, this year's edition brought together business leaders, investors, real estate professionals, tourism stakeholders, marine-sector players, government representatives, professionals and adventure seekers for a unique day of exploration, networking and discovery.

From the Bics Garden to the natural and cultural attractions of Ito-Omu, and onward to Caribbean Lake City Estate, participants experienced Lagos as they have never seen it before and ended the trip in style at Bics Garden with a music loaded convivial setting.

The General Manager, Lagos State Waterways Authority, LASWA and Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on Blue Economy, Oluwadamilola Emanuel, said that the state government through LASWA supported the initiative because it is a good opportunity to help attract more people to appreciate Lagos waters which would boost investment in the sector.

He added that the initiative has been impressive reason LASWA has continued to support the organisers.

New Institute Emerges To Boost Channel Management, Direct Sales

By Felix Kuye

PROFESSIONALS from across the private sector converged on Ikeja, Lagos recently to witness the birth of a new body, the Institute of Channel Distribution and Direct Sales (ICDDS) meant to provide structured programmes, platforms, and standards that will boost efforts of individuals and organization at achieving remarkable success in modern sales and distribution environments.

At the event held at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCDI), the speakers, including a seasoned commercial expert, Dr. Ajiborode Abiodun; the founder and Managing Partner of Carthena Advisory, Wale Ogundare; and the National Sales Manager for the Culinary Category at Olam/Caraway Africa, Rohan Metha, dwelt extensively on how fundamental is the role of distribution and direct sales professionals, without which marketing, which is considered a crucial wing of businesses, cannot effectively function or deliver corporate expectations.

They explained why channel management should be regarded as a fundamental national infrastructure, particularly because of the transactional nature of the responsibilities of the experts, stressing the need for a special professional body that will make significant input in driving business growth, creating market access, and strengthening the commercial ecosystem.

Besides, the speakers recommended what should be the focus, what should be standardised, and what should determine some crucial decisions that members of the institute would be taking in the course of their transactions to achieve success.

A part of the recommendations encompasses ensuring that the right product is made available at the right outlet, at the right time, and at the right price; consumers should be able to find product quickly; retailer should be able to access the product; it is easy for people to buy; and that relevant information should be constantly provided.

In his speech, the President and Chairman of the Governing Council of the ICDDS, Mr. Oladapo Siwoku Santos, said the institute was established in recognition of the critical role that commerce, distribution networks, direct sales professionals, and market access systems play in economic development, wealth creation, entrepreneurship, and nation building. 'As the industry continues to evolve in an increasingly interconnected and digital world, the need for a professional body dedicated to setting standards, developing competences and promoting best practices had never been greater,' Siwoku told the guests.

He stressed the commitment of the ICDDS to becoming the foremost institution driving professional excellence in channel distribution, direct sales, integrated commerce, trade development, and market expansion in Nigeria and beyond.

Siwoku and other members of the management team, including the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Kunle Sebanjo, and the Registrar-General, Chijoke Ezikpe, said the

activities of the institute spread across Africa. They sought the support of other stakeholders for the professional body to be able to build world-class standards, foster ethical leadership, promote professional excellence and create a legacy that will positively influence generations of practitioners and businesses across the country and the continent.

The high point of the ceremony moderated by the Executive Director of Commercial Operations for Stafford Irish Spirit Brands, Motunrayo Raheem, was the induction of new members into the institute.

Brazilian Consul Proposes Yoruba Music Collaboration At Funmi Bucknor's Concert

By Suliyat Tella

A PROPOSAL to bring Afro-Brazilian Yoruba music to Lagos next year stole the spotlight at lyric soprano Funmi Bucknor's 2026 Global Melodies concert recently, as Brazil's Consul General in Lagos, Ronaldo Vieira, invited the Nigerian singer to collaborate with Brazilian musicians and researchers.

A statement by Israel Scroll Media said the concert held in Lagos, featured operatic classics by Richard Strauss, Giacomo Puccini and Charles Gounod alongside indigenous Nigerian music, while Bucknor also announced plans to stage a play next year with the long-term goal of turning it into an

African opera.

"This is Global Melodies, but I didn't hear Brazil on the programme. So perhaps next year, we should travel to Brazil," Vieira said.

Vieira explained that enslaved Africans in Brazil preserved Yoruba language and culture through religion and music, adding that researchers had recently uncovered songs written in both Yoruba and Portuguese in a church basement in Brazil. "I think one of the few countries outside Nigeria that speaks Yoruba is Brazil. We have songs in Yoruba in Brazil, and I didn't see these songs," he said.

He proposed a formal collaboration. "I'd like to make a proposal. Why don't we collaborate with Brazilian musicians and researchers? Then next year we can bring some of this beautiful Afro-Brazilian music to Lagos and share it with everyone."

Speaking after the performance, Bucknor described herself simply: "I'm a lyric soprano. I'm a creative. I love to sing, I love to paint and I love to write stories."

She said this year's concert, titled, "Global Melodies," began with her debut concert in 2012 after years of preparation. "Having gone through several trainings and having been a member of different choirs, I thought it was time for me to do my own concert."



Rotary Club Of Apakun Gets New President

By Debo Oladimeji

THE President of Rotary Club of Apakun, Lagos, Rotarian Eke Chinedum Obioha, has promised that the Rotary year 2026/2027 will be a year of rendering service and impacting lives.

Speaking during his investiture as the club's 39th president, he said the flagship project is going to be

on maternal and child health.

"The second priority project is upscaling vocational training programme in collaboration with Rotary Club of Mumbai Coastline, India, District 3141," he said.

He, however, stated that beyond the two projects, the club would touch other areas of focus of Rotary

like basic education and literacy, water and sanitation, disease prevention and treatment and environment.

The District Governor, Rotary International District 9111, Rotarian Bukola Olabisi Bakare, said that Rotarians are people serving people in the community.

"We want to increase our membership by 50 per cent. Of course, in my district, we want to charter 20 new clubs. The second priority is on the foundation. We intend to raise about a million dollars for the Rotary Foundation."

"The third is our public image. You know Rotary has been doing a lot of good things but we often keep quiet about it. People don't get to know about it. Now is the time to tell our story."

The Chairman Installation Ceremony, Planning Committee, Rotarian Olagoke Lawal, said the gathering holds deep significance for them.



Interview

‘Every Woman Needs A Drive To Pursue Excellence’

Rosemary Awoh is a multidimensional entrepreneur, a Do it yourself (DIY) mobile television presenter and a global event planner who has grown footprint across the globe. In this interview with MARIA DIAMOND she speaks about the pros and cons of the event planning industry and what drives her to succeed in her career.

What motivates you to aim for excellence in your field as a woman?

EVERY woman should be driven by something that enables her aim for excellence. I am driven by storytelling. I curate each event with intentionality to reflect the client’s personality, vision, and emotional journey. So rather than replicating trends, I focus on crafting distinct experiences where every detail, from spatial design to guest interaction is thoughtfully considered.

How would you describe a professional event planner?

First things first, a professional event planner comes up with the creative design and direction for the event. Every event must have a theme that tells a story. An event planner creates the design in terms of decor and ambience. Nothing must look similar to anything that has been done before. An event planner takes charge of literally 95 per cent of the event. This is what we present as a brand. We ensure our vendors know this. We make sure we’re the ones sourcing for the editorial team, photography, videography, food etc. We leave ‘aso ebi’ and souvenirs to the client as these are personal things. For every other thing, itinerary, MC, total ambience of the day, managing guest experience must be prioritised.

From experience, would you say the event planning industry is remunerative?

Well yes, but not every event planning yields so much gain. Corporate events tend to pay more as opposed to weddings, especially Nigerian weddings. Because Nigerian weddings are quite expensive one doesn’t really gain much but with destination weddings, you get good rewards for your work. More importantly, I feel like to be an event planner, it has to be a passion – genuine passion because the industry is now quite expensive.

What is your take on last minute crisis management in event planning?

One thing I do, after briefing on an event, is to always assess the risks that could potentially happen in that event. It’s also something my team has learnt from me. I tell them before you panic, think of five worst case scenarios to salvage the situation. For instance, we’ve had situations where it just starts raining suddenly. What do you do? We’ve had situations where my clients get scammed by international vendors. We’ve had situations where the power goes out. We’ve had a situation in a destination wedding where the bride’s wedding dress didn’t come and we just had to salvage all that. We just try as much as possible to keep our clients calm, not panic and just think of a solution.

Tell us about the diverse events you curate and which one tops the list?

Weddings top the list for me because my brand started with just that. However, we diversified into regular events such as birthdays for young and old, corporate events etc. We do all of that. One of our very first events within the first year we started our event company was with the Dangote refinery launch. So, we do have a solid corporate clientele. However, destination weddings are our core as a brand.

For a Nigeria-based brand, why destination weddings?

The Nigerian market is extremely expensive. People talk about it as a joke, but being in it, I see how expensive the Nigerian wedding can really be. We work with people’s budgets and when clients tell you their budget, the first thing that comes to mind is finding options that work with this budget. More often than not, destination weddings come way cheaper. We get to give about five different options of countries that will give better value at a way lesser amount. So, we discovered that there is a huge difference between the cost for a Nigerian wedding and destination wedding, so clients opt for destination wedding because it’s way cheaper and flexible.

How do you sell destination Nigeria to the global wedding stages?

We try as much as possible to have some sort of bond where we understand our clients, things they like, their hobbies and we try to create something that reflects their indigenous personality on the day of the wedding. So, we just don’t really do typical weddings, every event has to tell a story from the decor, the plating to food and drink.

How do you navigate destinations across the globe?

Truth be told, it doesn’t come easy. We go through a demanding planning process starting from research to have a clear grasp of the economic differences of countries. What destination – Manchester, London, Egypt, Morocco etc. will cost. So,

when a client reaches out to us for a destination event and they give us the budget, we already know the country that matches each person’s concept and budget.

Take us through the creation of your event planning brand and what it represents in the industry?

My career as an event planner started out as a favour to a friend. I was only trying to save a situation where the original professional planner disappointed them. It turned out very successful and I decided to try my hand at it. Within the first eight months that we started, we successfully did two destination weddings that turned out great and we forged ahead from there. So I created Madame Dubois as an event planning production brand which operates at the intersection of creativity and precision, consistently delivering events that are polished, intentional, and deeply engaging. We are very big on experience. We represent value. One thing that we’ve noticed in the industry is how anything can be called luxury. So we try as much as possible for our clients to see value in every single event. It matters to us that there is value in every aspect of what you see on the day beyond just having physical decor and having nicely plated food on the plates.

What makes your brand stand out from other event planners?

The brand’s strength lies in its ability to transform ideas into well executed experiences that resonate long after the event ends. We ensure not to do the typical. We get creative and replicate everything about the life and personality of our clients in the creation of their event. We thrive on experience, storytelling and overall creative ambience. The experiences we bring together for every event we curate and our creative approach is topnotch – we’re fantastic storytellers. We believe that every celebration should be experienced, not just attended. Your experience begins from the moment you see the venue, before you get into the space, the entertainment on the day which is what drives and keeps people engaged.

How would you describe your career as an event planner?

Simply put: Interesting and fulfilling. After all the work is done and the event sets out, on that day, when you see everything coming together, it’s the most rewarding experience especially when they give you feedback afterwards. It’s like they get to see that you really put your back into it. Creative work is interesting, the ability to be very expressive with our designs especially when we have to align with clients in terms of creativity in a Madame Dubois standard.

Which is your trump card – Destination vs Nigeria wedding?

It is the destination wedding. This is because destination weddings have proven to have more structure. There is a huge gap between Nigerian vendors and destination wedding vendors. In Nigeria you’re having to manage too many expectations in terms of vendors arriving late, excuses of traffic, and most especially another huge problem is that event centres in Nigeria lack organisation. They only care about making their money. But for destination, they pretty much care about what you’re trying to bring to life. So, if you see your brief is big and rich, they make sure there is space for you to properly come and settle. Same thing with destination vendors as well – you do not have to chase anybody to do anything. Everybody knows what to do. They make event planning extremely easy. But here in Nigeria we have to do vendor meetings, you have to keep on following up. There are very few Nigerian vendors that I would say know what to do. Those are the people that we constantly use. From photography, videography, food etc. The Nigerian working cul-

ture is not very encouraging. Their vendors don’t have permanent staff. They only have contract staff. Even the contract staff doesn’t care about the business, all they care about is to get paid on that day. So, they lack training on how to manage guests or guest experience. All they care about is that they are wearing their uniform; they are doing whatever they have been told, get paid and go home. Whereas for a destination event, they are showing their license, they are showing their health and safety policy, they know how to manage the hazard. They don’t need to call you and panic when something goes wrong. They are trained and they know what is expected of them.



‘Before you panic, think of five worst case scenarios to salvage the situation.’

By Maria Diamond

It sets in unannounced like a thief in the night overwhelming her with mixed feeling from sadness to rage, then there is severe anxiety about the baby, suddenly switching to crying, frustration, low self-esteem, insecurity, guilt, amongst others. With perinatal depression, everything is wrong with the woman experiencing it.

Perinatal depression is a mood disorder that happens to one in seven new expectant women during pregnancy and within the first year after birth – a chronic combination of both prenatal and postpartum depression.

According to National Institute of Health (NIH), the common causes and risk factors include:

• **Biological Triggers** – Rapid drops in hormones like estrogen and progesterone after birth.

• **Personal History** – Past personal or family history of depression or anxiety.

• **Stressors** – Financial worries, lack of social support from family or partners and stressful life events.

Clearly, the journey from conception to childbirth goes beyond the trimester stages and delivery, some women experience mental health and emotional disorder that affects their womanhood and motherhood.

In a research gate systematic review on perinatal depression published in June 2026, perinatal mental health disorders significantly affect maternal and child well-being, particularly in low-and middle-income countries like Nigeria, where prevalence rates are high.

The systematic review conducted according to PRISMA guidelines where data were synthesised, and a meta-analysis was performed, the results of a community-based interventions, including psychoeducation, peer support groups, and the involvement of community health workers, were most effective in reducing perinatal depression and anxiety symptoms. Psychological interventions reduced the risk of perinatal depression by 30%.

The review shows that merely surviving pregnancy and childbirth is no longer an adequate standard for maternal care. A more holistic approach is needed, one that includes mental, emotional, and psychological well-being. Perinatal mental health, which spans from pregnancy through the first year postpartum, is essential for the overall health of mothers and their children. Poor maternal mental health negatively impacts maternal behaviours, interferes with child development, and can destabilise family dynamics. Women experiencing mental health challenges during the perinatal period may face difficulties in forming healthy attachments with their infants, which can have long-term consequences on the child's emotional and cognitive development.

Thus, as exciting as the conception and birth of a baby can be to a mother, it can be emotionally draining, tasking, and stressful leading to a depressed mood which affects a woman's quality of life, social functioning and economic productivity.

Speaking on Perinatal Depression, Women health expert, Dr



'Sociocultural Stigma On Mental Health Prevents Women From Treating Perinatal Depression'

Aduke Oluwaloni, states that perinatal depression remains one of the most common but obscure complications of childbirth that has been avoided as a subject for discussion based on sociocultural factors in Nigeria. Needless to say that there is poor knowledge of perinatal depression.

Nigeria is challenged with Perinatal Mental health Prevalence

THE research gate systematic review also shows that Nigeria faces significant challenges related to perinatal mental health. Rates of prenatal depression are estimated at 22.7%, and postpartum depression at 20.8% (Sidebottom et al., 2023). These high prevalence rates are exacerbated by sociocultural stigma, poverty, gender inequality, and under-resourced healthcare systems (Livingston et al., 2025).

Additionally, many Nigerian women do not have access to quality mental health care. Only one in five individuals with a mental health condition in Nigeria receives any form of treatment, and less than 3% of the national health budget is dedicated to mental health services. Most services are located in outdated institutions, and over

75% of mental health expenses are paid out-of-pocket, creating further barriers for low-income women.

Oluwaloni stressed that perinatal depression due to its chronic risk can progress into illness that may lead to death. "Perinatal depression is easily missed by medical practitioners and family members."

The NIH research on perinatal depression revealed that it has a significant impact on the mother and long-term consequences on the cognitive and emotional development of most children whose mothers are affected. NIH also states that the estimated rate of perinatal depression in Nigeria ranges from 10 per cent to 30 per cent in a broad population and primary care survey.

Noting that underdiagnosis is a major challenge as less than 15-20 per cent cases are typically detected or treated in standard primary care settings due to limited mental health infrastructure.

Also, another challenge is the sociocultural stigma surrounding mental health and motherhood prevents many women from openly seeking help.

Explaining how perinatal depression can be cured Oluwaloni said: "Through the use of cognitive behavioural therapy and interpersonal therapy, regular exercises, adequate sleep, taking balanced diet and willingness to be better

by communication with experts. This process is called non-pharmacological. There is also pharmacological process which is the use of Serotonin-Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs), Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs) Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) and others"

For Sandra Jordan, when she got pregnant, she suddenly started feeling uncomfortable in her own skin. "Nothing felt good anymore. There was tearing up due to a burden in my heart that I couldn't put how I felt into words. My husband had just travelled abroad when I found out I was pregnant. I guess the feeling of going through the phase alone terrified me. I lost myself to sadness, every aspect of my life suffered including my job. I didn't know why I felt terrible on a daily basis and I wanted to be better but I didn't know how to. Something in my head kept telling me there was no way out of my loneliness. To make matters worse I couldn't reach my husband for months until I gave birth. After birth, I thought I would get better but no, I felt worse and I lost it."

"One day, my colleague who has been monitoring my mood in the office walked up to me and said I was going through depression. At first it upset me to hear her say that. She apologised and told me she would take me to a doctor the next day. I agreed, we went together and I was diagnosed with perinatal depression. I felt weird. I couldn't tell anyone. I was ashamed to be diagnosed with a mental problem. I worked through my sessions, took my medication and prayed. One day I just started to feel better than I did before – it got better with each passing day."

On her part, Ibufara (surname) withheld said that her condition started when she was seven month pregnant. "For a whole day I didn't feel my baby. That terrified me. Suddenly I started having anxiety and short breaths. I thought my baby had died inside me. I felt I had done something to harm her. I cried my eyes out. My husband came back and tried to convince me that nothing was wrong but failed. The next morning when I didn't let him sleep in peace with my crying, he drove me to the hospital. A scan was conducted and the doctor said my baby was fine. She started kicking gently but that didn't even make me feel better."

"For the rest of the pregnancy I was constantly paranoid, cried for no reason and felt like something was wrong with my baby all the time."

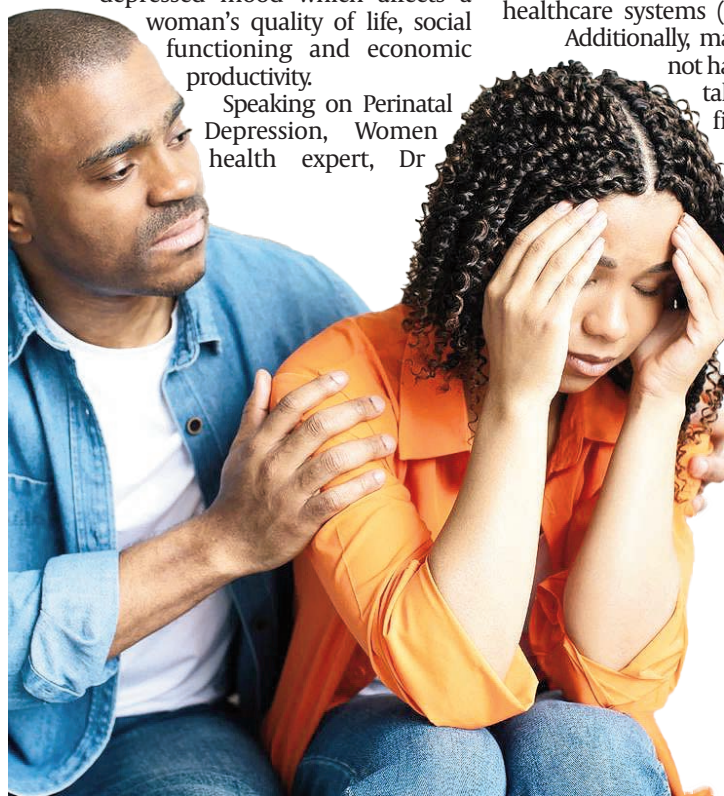
"When I eventually gave birth to a healthy baby girl, I thought that feeling would go away but it didn't. It got worse. I was sad about everything. My emotion was so dampened that I couldn't properly care for my baby. My husband was confused until he was advised to take me to a doctor. When we got to the doctor, he explained my mood and behaviour to him and how it's been affecting my ability to take proper care of our baby and even relationship."

"Hearing my husband narrate the situation to the Doctor made me cry in pain. I have been hurting his feelings without knowing. He has been confused and worried about me. The Doctor asked him to step out and started asking me a number of questions. I cried all the way and he called my husband back in and told him that I would have to undergo treatment for perinatal depression. I felt terrible and from there on, I did everything humanly possible to get better and I did. Why wouldn't I my marriage was at stake from my husband's narrative of how he saw the situation. My baby was also suffering as I was disconnected from her. So I had to do everything and anything to get better," Ibufara recount.

Speaking on the healing process of perinatal depression, Oluwaloni states that healing is a gradual singular act for individuals, some days get really switched up and others get by on a mild level until it no longer feels so bad any more.

"However, it is imperative for our healthcare systems to start staging campaigns across the country on perinatal depression. This will aid social support for women both in the pre-and-postnatal periods and routine screening of women should be encouraged for early detection and immediate intervention of perinatal depression, Oluwaloni noted"

She continued: "A lot of women during postnatal visits to the clinic conceal their emotions from their healthcare practitioners. They perceive their condition as normal rather than understand it as a mental disorder."



'My husband had just travelled abroad when I found out I was pregnant. I guess the feeling of going through the phase alone terrified me. I lost myself to sadness, every aspect of my life suffered including my job.'

'For a whole day I didn't feel my baby. That terrified me. Suddenly I started having anxiety and short breaths. I thought my baby had died inside me. I felt I had done something to harm her. I cried my eyes out.'

Shodey: Music Is Not Something You Just Wake Up One Day To Start Singing

From his breakout project, Caution, to viral hits, Purr and Hey Jago, Afrobeats singer, songwriter, and one of Nigeria's fastest-rising singers currently signed to Canny Consults and 5K Records, a subsidiary of Sony Music UK, Shodade Solomon Segun, popularly known as Shodey, is proving he is more than a TikTok moment. The singer sits down to talk about authenticity over hype, God's timing, and why he wants fans craving his music before it drops. He also reflects on his early struggles, the pressure that comes with viral success, and why consistency matters more than chasing trends.



You have been around for a while now. When did you start music professionally?

I DON'T know; I feel like you start professionally when you first have a viral song or something that is popping. So I started officially in 2022, when I had my first viral song that was *Caution*.

So you believe that when you start is when you have your first song?

Yeah; you might have started 15 years ago, and people don't know you. So, for a big artiste, people start counting from when they have the momentum. Like, yeah, I'm five years in the game, but I'm three years; that's just my own belief, and it's interesting. I started way back before that time, but I feel like officially I started in 2022.

Unlike other professions or industries, where you go to school for a considerable amount of time to get a degree and then continue to train to become a seasoned professional, music is not like that. There's no formal education in that sense. You can spend 10 years, and then after 10 years you have your first song. All those 10 years don't really count. Do you subscribe to this?

Yeah, it doesn't really count. That's why I said people actually start counting from when you, like, have your first hit song or whatever; people start counting from there. People like Wizkid and Davido will tell you they are 13 years in the game; they are celebrating from the first hit song that introduced them to the world. So I feel your viral hit is when people start counting.

Could this be why someone like Asake will say I just blew?

If people want to count Asake now, they might say he's four years in the game and I guess he has been singing for a long. But officially when people start knowing you or when people start knowing your songs and all is when they start counting. **So, before yours happened, how did you feel?**

I don't know, but there's this confidence in me that I would blow. I knew that one day one thing would pick up. I started as a content creator a few years back. I was doing content, and I knew I would go into music, but at that time I did not have the resources. I do tell people it's either you have the money, or you have a platform to hit the limelight instantly with your first project. So at that time I didn't have money, and I didn't have a platform.

I do tell people music is not something you just wake up one day and say 'I want to start singing.' There are a lot of people that can sing, and they are not blowing up because they don't

have the right resources at that moment. Maybe you don't have the money, or you don't have the connection. Some people have the resources; they have a platform already, and they can easily channel people to go listen to their song. A very big example is Nas Boi. People knew him through content creation. So, he has, like, a fan base already. So when he brought the music part, people could easily accept it and listen to the song.

Imagine somebody who does not have any followers or does not have anything that I said. I had a conversation with Nas Boi, and he said he actually started music first. That was how I knew he was an artiste. So I feel like you just need that spark to activate or unlock. So if you start making music and you feel like the music is not working, you can venture into another thing, and if you prosper from that thing, you can easily change it to music because, starting music, I do tell people I don't think I can start music as an upcoming act; There are a lot of things that upcoming artistes do face that is just overwhelming.

Can you give an example of that?

From days of you paying to show. . . Imagine me paying to perform in your event. These are a couple of things that I feel like starting from zero is very hectic. Paying people to perform, paying people to do stuff that if you're an established artiste, you're not supposed to do.

For you, was it music first before you picked up content creation or the other way round?

I knew all these things, but I was not willing to. . .

How did you know them? Did you experience any of them?

I have one brother in the hood; he's an artiste. He has been singing for a long time, and during that time I used to follow him to events, and I saw how they used to treat him. I told myself that if I start music, *I no go let them treat me like as dem dey treat him*.

Is it that they didn't treat him like a human being?

No, it's not that they didn't treat him like a human being. It's just a normal thing in life that if they don't know you, they don't know you, and if they know you, they know you. I don't know if you get my point. Yes, everybody might not know you, but there are certain people in the crowd that kind of know you. Those can easily make others who don't know you. . . like, just let's fill in among you. But you're going to a place where nobody knows you or kind of knows your song, and you are just trying to impress them. It's crazy if you do not really have a good song or you are not really talented. That one might be very bad. You can know how to sing, and nobody knows your

song. But when you sing, you do all these your heart leaves you; you do everything, and people applaud you because you are really talented. Now you are not talented, and you don't have a viral song or a popping song, and you are going in front of like a thousand people, and you are singing; why won't they throw you something? So most times I used to follow him, and I saw a couple of these things, and I feel like I don't think I want to start like this. Then I started making content.

What attracted you to content and why was it more accessible to you?

I'm multi-talented. I used to be where a little bird told me you do actually.

You were a stand-up comedian. How good were you?

Yes I was; I did a lot of stuff. I'm very funny. I was good. In fact, I was about hitting the limelight. Then I just knew that this is not what I want.

Why didn't you want it?

I don't want to be a comedian. I don't want people to see me and all they see is they laugh. I don't want to be joke man.

Don't get me wrong. With all due respect, comedy is a very lucrative work. I have been there before, there's a lot of money in it but it's not that I don't want people to see me in that light.

So why were you doing it then?

I needed something to keep running my life.

Was it for the money?

Everything I do in this life is for the money. I needed something to keep running my life. So, I need to do what I can easily access. And that was why I started content creation as a comedian.

I go to night vigils, praise nights to go and crack jokes. They will give us N1,000 and thank you for coming. And that time

I was very funny. I'm from Agege; so in the whole Agege I was one of the funniest comedians. So every Friday I'm always booked for one praise night.

So you're like the praise night champion?

I get booked at every opportunity; I crack all those Christian jokes that work in churches. Sometime, some of our church members will have a wedding; they will call me to come do MC. I was just doing a couple of stuffs because I just needed to sustain and, you know, make money. So, I was doing that to just gather money and buy a phone because I wanted to go into content creation.

So you didn't have a good phone at the time?

I did not have a good phone at that time. There are a couple of my friends who had iPhones, iPhone had just come out at that time. If you are doing skits or you are doing content creation at that time, if you are not using an iPhone and you are using Android, there's a way Android used to lag behind when you are editing with it. The video won't come out nice, and from onset, I kind of understand the algorithm about you making a quality video. A quality video can easily fly, unlike just making a random video and expecting it to fly. Sometimes it works well, but most times you need to have quality for it to go viral. Sometimes I'll go to their place and borrow their phone, and because at one point I feel like I'm not comfortable with it again, I need to get my own phone. Then I started hustling; I started doing comedy. I'd do the live performance at night; in the afternoon, I used to help them. There's one job; it's called Indomie job; you carry Indomie. They will put us, like 10 guys, inside a truck. They split us up in one street; we would now be convincing people. The Indomie might not be sweet, but you will convince people to buy the stuff.

Did you eat it first?

No, I never tasted it because it's not a popular brand. So when I get to people, I tell them mommy, this thing is very nice; it's delicious. Something I have never tasted in my life. One particular day, they took us to Agbado Ijaiye; there's no street in that area that my leg did not touch that day. I walked, and they used to give us a daily target that we needed to sell four cartons. I walked, I cracked jokes, I did many things, yet people did not buy a carton.

Let's talk about your song *Kolorado*. What was the song all about?

I wrote that song when I was down and I just dropped it as a single. I was just pouring out my heart on how I feel about life, people, everything. I was supposed to drop it in the project, but I dropped it as a single. The song did not blow up, I'm glad because the song will touch people that I want it to touch.

From your breakout project, *Caution*, to viral hits *Purr* and *Hey Jago*, it has been a crazy 12 months. When did it first hit you that this was no longer just you recording in your room, but a real movement?

I was in the traffic one evening and a danfo was blasting *Purr*, loud, and everybody was singing word for word. Then a kid on the street saw me and shouted, "Caution Boy!" That moment hit me, and I knew it was no longer just me in my room recording. People were living with the music, connecting to it emotionally. That's when I knew this is bigger than a viral moment — it's a movement, and I have to be consistent.

I do tell people music is not something you just wake up one day and say 'I want to start singing.' There are a lot of people that can sing, and they are not blowing up because they don't have the right resources at that moment. Maybe you don't have the money, or you don't have the connection.

Some people have the resources; they have a platform already, and they can easily channel people to go listen to their song. A very big example is Nas Boi. People knew him through content creation. So, he has, like, a fan base already. So when he brought the music part, people could easily accept it and listen to the song.

BBNAIJA S11: Unpredictable, Unfiltered, Unforgettable As Temi Nkem Wears The Crown

By Daniel Anazia

AFTER 71 days, 10 live evictions, two disqualifications and one historic immunity twist, 21-year-old, United Kingdom-based Temi Nkem was crowned winner of Big Brother Naija Season 11 with the tagline, *Show Ya Sef*, beating 23 other participants to take home the N160 million grand prize – N100m cash and a brand new SUV.

She was announced winner by the show host, Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, at exactly 9:47pm on Sunday night during live show that was broadcast on Africa Magic channels on DStv and GOTv.

As confetti fell, Temi Nkem dropped to her knees with these words: “Mummy! I did it! Show Ya Sef don show!”

In the finale, the creative and self-styled “wahala but with strategy” defeated right other finalists - Aikou, Barry, Bluethopia, Flora, Oyin, Ricky, Sheba, and Tram - to walk away with the grand prize. She now joins the elite list of female BBNaija winners, and the first to

win without ever holding the HoH title.

Temi entered on July 26 as one of the quietest faces among the 24 housemates. That quiet didn't last 48 hours. She clashed with the house over food sharing in Week 1. Week 3, she cried over a wager loss. By Week 5, she was the house's most quoted housemate – “Big Brother Please” became her catchphrase after her constant diary room rants.

It was that unpredictability that earned her three awards at the Day 66 Show Ya Sef Awards – What Just Happened, Unpredictable, and Big Brother Please. But beneath the drama was game.

The UK-born lady survived four nominations, never won Head of House, but won two Arena Games and the crucial Friday Task that saved her from bottom-three in Week 9. She was blunt and brutally honest in diary sessions. This made the viewers to love her.

In a season defined by twists – Gambits, Immunity-For-All, two disqualifications – Temi Nkem repre-

sented raw authenticity. Ebuka, during her final interview, asked: “Why

should you win?” She replied: “Because I showed myself. No packaging. I vex, I laugh, I cry, I apologise. That

na real life.” The Gen Z viewers connected with her emotional transparency and body-positivity talk in the

house. From week-one isolation to final-week confidante to Aikou and Ricky, she showed the biggest emotional growth. Never holding power made her less of a target. While the housemates underestimated her, the viewers didn't.

In the final 24 hours, the nine finalists were stripped of tasks. No HoH, no veto, just reflection. Answering Biggie's final question to the house: “Who showed themselves?” All nine pointed at different people; five pointed at Temi Nkem.

When Ebuka announced the final two – Temi Nkem and Barry – the house went silent. Barry, the final Head of House and Ultimate Veto holder, was the clear favourite. But Nigeria voted differently.

According to MultiChoice, over 70 million votes were recorded in the final week, with Temi Nkem securing the highest percentage – a landslide in the South-South and South-West regions and a strong showing online where her clips dominated TikTok and X all season.

The grand finale had performances from Teni the Entertainer and Oshamo who set the stage for the most chaotic finale in years.



MADE Kuti, Afrobeat multi-instrumentalist and grandson of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, is set to showcase another dimension of his musical artistry when he performs a classical music piece at the 2026 MUSON Festival of the Arts in Lagos.

Made will take the stage on November 3, by 10:30am, at the highly anticipated “Collabo: Music Meets Technology” event where he will put his dexterity in classical and contemporary music on display.

An initiative conceptualised and first curated by Sade Doherty in 2023, ‘Collabo’ is part of MUSON's efforts to foster conversations around the intersection of music and emerging technologies.

The event will feature Director-General of the Nigerian National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), Obi Asika, as keynote speaker.

The 2026 MUSON Festival is billed to run from October 23 to November 8, 2026, with fascinating line-up of events comprising ten major concerts and a symposium. It will feature a medley of classical music, jazz, operatic performances, theatre, exhibitions, and youths programmes.

One of the highpoints of the festival, ‘Collabo’ is slated for November 3, 2026, at the Shell-Zenith Hall, MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos. The event begins with a prelude; a podcast series, from 10:30am. The main event of the day, a symposium, kicks off by 11:00am.

The 2026 episode of the MUSON Festival is particularly significant as it brings together four major milestones: 43 years of MUSON Centre, 37 years of the MUSON Basic School of Music, 30 years of the MUSON Festival and 20 years of the MUSON School of Music Diploma Programme sponsored by the MTN Foundation.

A free event, ‘Callobo’ will be held under the overarching 2026 MUSON Festival theme: ‘Music Sustained’ aimed at helping to upscale the skillset of music producers, musicians, artist managers, educators and various stakeholders in the music production chain in order to meet contemporary, global standard in music production, in a world that is in constant flux.

According to Chairperson, 2026



MUSON Festival Planning Committee, Sade Doherty, the first three editions explored artificial intelligence, creativity emerging from machines, and the ways AI is redefining music within the contemporary ecosystem.

“Automation in every sphere of life is progressing at breakneck speed, and music is no exception,” Doherty said, noting that the 2026 edition will turn its spotlight to automation, AI and collaboration—three forces increasingly reshaping how music is created, performed and experienced.

She explained that this year's symposium would explore how musical creativity, artistry and human ingenuity can interact with increasingly sophisticated technologies, while also examining the possibilities and tensions that emerge from such encounters.

A major feature of the programme will be a keynote address by Obi Asika, who will share perspectives on building Nigeria's domestic music economy and the role of innovation in strengthening the country's cre-

ative industries.

The event will also feature a masterclass titled “AI in 2026: From Adoption to Collaboration,” designed to move beyond theoretical discussions of artificial intelligence to practical applications for musicians and other creative practitioners.

Deputy-Director, MUSON School of Music, Korede Omopeloye, said the masterclass would demonstrate how practical, non-generative AI tools could help musicians address operational challenges that often take time away from their core artistic activities.

Omopeloye disclosed that the session would explore tools and applications including real-time stem isolation, instant chord extraction, smart metronomes and precision tempo control, showing how technology could streamline rehearsal processes and reduce administrative bottlenecks while retaining human artistic control.

With Eyes On Global Audience, Uyamix Boosts Online Catalogue

WITH a clear purpose to spread the gospel through music and inspire young people, Uyo Okon, popularly known as Uyamix, is growing as a global talent whose work communicates faith, encouragement and hope to audiences across different communities and cultures.

Now with five songs to his credit: ‘Love Story,’ ‘God's Names,’ ‘God Is Great,’ ‘Gospel Exists’ and ‘Birthplace,’ Uyamix's releases form an emerging catalogue centred on faith and gospel expression. His music has been distributed through major digital streaming platforms, with the artiste currently working towards restoring active availability of his online catalogue.

A London-based Nigerian gospel artiste, songwriter and producer, Uyamix's musical expression is rooted in praise, worship and contemporary gospel. A multi-instrumentalist who plays drums and keyboard, Uyamix brings together musician-ship, song-writing and production to create music centred on

faith, encouragement and purpose.

Uyamix, who is the son of Prof. Okon Uya, a distinguished Professor of History in Nigeria and in America; Nigeria's ambassador extra-ordinary and plenipotentiary to Argentina, Peru, Chile and Uruguay; a member of the Political Bureau; and Member, Panel of Eminent Persons of the African Peer Review Mechanism, began developing his musical journey in 2016. His growth has been shaped by practical experience in church music, fellowships, live performance and collaboration. He has played with the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Four Square Gospel Church and Dunamis International Gospel Church, as well as school and university fellowships. He currently serves musically with AWCC Ambassadors Word Global.

Uyamix explores the breadth of contemporary gospel, moving between praise and worship while keeping the gospel message central. His creative identity extends beyond performance: as a songwriter and producer, he is involved in shaping music from its initial idea through to its recorded expression.

His live experience includes church performances and concerts in Nigeria, as well as performances in the United Kingdom. Based in London, Uyamix is continuing to develop his artistic voice and build a wider audience while drawing on the musical and spiritual foundations established through years of church service.



Uyamix

By Maria Diamond

THE United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR) known as UN Refugee Agency tasked with protecting and assisting refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people has signed a three-year partnership with Compagnie Aérienne ASKY, a Pan-African airline based in Lomé, to expand refugees' access to skills development, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in West and Central Africa.

The initiative will give particular attention to women and girls, who often face additional barriers to education, training and decent work.

By connecting refugee skills and enterprises with private-sector demand, the initiative seeks to support self-reliance while helping businesses access talent, goods and services.

UNHCR and ASKY intend the collaboration to provide a practical model for African-led private-sector engagement in refugee inclusion and sustainable development.

Initially covering Senegal, Ghana, Benin, Togo, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, the agreement combines ASKY's aviation expertise and regional network with UNHCR's protection and solutions mandate.

First Phase Initiative

THE first phase will focus on technical and vocational training, scholarships, internships and employment pathways in the aviation sector, with potential expansion into refugee entrepreneurship, supply chain access and agricultural value chains.

As of September 2026, West and Central Africa hosted more than 4million refugees and asylum-seekers, 80 per cent of them women and children, while nearly 751,000 people had identified specific protection needs, including women and children at risk and persons with disabilities.

Remarking on the initiative, UNHCR Regional Director for West and Central Africa, Abdouraouf Gnon Konde said: "When displacement lasts for years, access to skills, markets and decent work is essential to restoring choice and dignity.

"Our ambition is to help half of refugees in

UNHCR, Compagnie Aérienne ASKY Expands Refugees' Access To Skills Development, Employment In West, Central Africa



protracted situations across the region move from long-term aid dependency towards self-reliance and lasting solutions by 2035.

"Partnerships with African businesses such as ASKY can turn that ambition into practical opportunities, especially for women and young people, while strengthening the communities and economies that host them," Konde said.

Through the partnership, ASKY will consider qualified refugees for its existing training pro-

grammes, internships and recruitment processes, subject to available opportunities and standard requirements, and will assess ways for refugee-owned enterprises to access its supply chain.

Drawing on ASKY's regional presence and the potential use of Lomé as a training hub, the initiative will reach refugees living both within and outside traditional assistance settings and connect them with opportunities across labour markets, with particular emphasis on refugee women and girls through aviation-related education, mentorship and professional development, and supplier opportunities for refugee-led artisan enterprises.

On his part, Chief Executive Officer of Compagnie Aérienne ASKY, Esayas W. Hailu said: "As a pan-African airline, we see a direct link between our business and Africa's development. Refugees are part of the communities we serve. Through this partnership, we want to connect their talent and enterprise with opportunities in aviation and encourage

other African companies to integrate refugee inclusion into the way they do business."

Following the signing, UNHCR and ASKY will agree on arrangements for training, scholarships, internships, employment and, where appropriate, humanitarian transport. Initial discussions will consider Lomé as a training hub, expanding livelihoods and employment options in Ghana, linking refugee-owned businesses to markets in Senegal, and facilitating family reunification and voluntary return movements, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire.

The agreement marks UNHCR's first partnership with a regional airline in West and Central Africa and the first initiative of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, leads international action to protect people forced to flee because of conflict and persecution. It provides life-saving assistance, safeguards fundamental rights and works with partners to help displaced and stateless people find solutions and rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.

UNHCR's Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa, based in Dakar, Senegal, coordinates operations across 23 countries, including in the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin and the Gulf of Guinea.

Working with governments, communities and partners, UNHCR provides protection and assistance, strengthens asylum systems and pursues solutions for people affected by conflict, insecurity, climate shocks and socio-economic pressures.

These efforts include regional initiatives such as the Lomé Declaration, which supports safe, dignified and voluntary returns where conditions allow.

ASKY, The Pan-African Airline, is a commercial enterprise centered on sustainability. Its shareholding is held by leading regional financial institutions, including EBID, BOAD, and ECOBANK Group, alongside Ethiopian Airlines and the Government of Togo.

With strategic and technical partnership with Ethiopian Airlines, ASKY serves 30 cities across 28 African countries with a 17-aircraft fleet. The airline is committed to intra-African connectivity, planned intercontinental operation, promotes tourism, and economic growth, with a market-driven approach.

"When displacement lasts for years, access to skills, markets and decent work is essential to restoring choice and dignity. The ambition is to help half of refugees in protracted situations across the region move from long-term aid dependency towards self-reliance and lasting solutions by 2035."

"We want to connect Refugees' talent and enterprise with opportunities in aviation and encourage other African companies to integrate refugee inclusion into the way they do business."

By Maria Diamond

AS part of a broader effort to strengthen travel and tourism links between Ghana and Nigeria, Alisa Hotels, Ghana's leading indigenous hospitality brand, has reaffirmed its commitment to deepening partnerships within the Nigerian travel and corporate markets.

This engagement in the Nigerian travel trade to deepen existing relationships and introduce its evolving hospitality was showcased during the 22nd Akwaaba Travel Market held in Lagos recently.

Over the years, Alisa Hotels has built business relationships in Nigeria with tour operators, travel industry stakeholders and representatives of corporate organisations, including some companies and partners.

Based on this, the hospitality brand on arrival in Nigeria hosted a cocktail reception prior to the Akwaaba Travel Market event to reconnect with existing partners, engage prospective clients and showcase the group's expanding portfolio of accommodation, conferencing, dining and events offerings across Ghana.

Leading the Alisa Hotels delegation was Esperanza Adjei, Group Sales and Marketing Manager, who highlighted the importance of the Nigerian market to the group's growth strategy and the role of strategic partnerships in promoting Ghana as a preferred destination for business, leisure and events.

The engagement comes at a time when Alisa Hotels is strengthening its position as an indigenous Ghanaian hospitality brand with an increasingly diverse range of products designed to meet the needs of both local and international travellers. With premium properties in North Ridge, Accra, and Tema, Alisa Hotels offers luxury accommodation along-

Alisa Hotels Unites Nigeria, Ghana's Hospitality Sector

side conference and banqueting facilities, restaurants and leisure experiences, underpinned by what the group describes as a distinctly Ghanaian approach to hospitality. The North Ridge property has also expanded its events offering with the unveiling of a 1,000-seater pavilion, a state-of-the-art facility designed to accommodate large conferences, exhibitions and major social events. The pavilion complements the hotel's existing conference and banquet facilities. Attached to the pavilion is the Oasis Lounge, a new dining and lifestyle destination offering guests a range of culinary and beverage experiences. The lounge operates from 10am to 10pm on weekdays and extends its opening hours to midnight on weekends.

The group has also continued its expansion in Tema, where Alisa Hotel Tema operates as a 50-room boutique property with modern accommodation, conferencing and banqueting facilities. The hotel recently added a 400-seater pavilion, further strengthening its capacity to host conferences, corporate events and social functions. Beyond its existing portfolio, Alisa Hotels is preparing for the opening of Alisa Heritage, a new collection of luxury residences. The project is expected to introduce 86 superior rooms, luxury apartments, pent houses alongside conferencing facilities, a fully equipped gym, a restaurant and other amenities.



Speaking to the Nigerian market at the cocktail reception, the Alisa Hotels team positioned the group's expanding portfolios which aim towards the development of the industry between both countries.

For Alisa Hotels, the Akwaaba Travel Market represents another platform to engage the Nigerian travel trade, deepen existing relationships and introduce its evolving hospitality products to a market with which it has established longstanding business connections.

Through continued investment in its properties, facilities and service standards, the indigenous hotel group says it remains focused on enhancing guest experiences while contributing to the growth and development of Ghana's tourism industry.

At Alisa Hotels, "Akwaaba" the Ghanaian expression for welcome is presented as more than a greeting; it is an invitation to experience true Ghanaian hospitality.

From The Rector

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

By Stephen Wolemonwu

Texts: Ecclesiastes 2:18-21; Proverbs 13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. Proverbs 13:22 (NKJV)

Introduction

LIFE is more than what we store. Solomon, the richest and wisest man of his time, built houses, planted vineyards, and gathered gold and silver. Yet at the peak of his success, he was troubled—not by poverty or enemies, but by the uncertainty of his heir. He lamented: “I must leave everything I suffered for to someone who did not suffer for it. Will he be wise or foolish?”

This fear is not greed; but concern. It is not about wealth but about legacy. Inheritance is often seen as property or possessions passed down, but Scripture teaches us that true inheritance is deeper. Ecclesiastes warns of the vanity of leaving labour to someone who may misuse it, while Proverbs encourages leaving blessings that extend to grandchildren.

The question, therefore, arises: How do we secure a legacy we won't be there to guard?

• **The Vanity of Earthly Inheritance (Ecclesiastes 2:18-21)**

Solomon laments the futility of labour when its fruits may be wasted.

Wealth without wisdom can become a curse.

Earthly inheritance alone is fragile. It can be

Beyond Inheritance

squandered, stolen, or misused.

Key Point: Material inheritance is temporary and cannot guarantee lasting impact.

• **The Reality of the Fear**
The Bible does not condemn this fear; it records it.

Psalm 39:6 – “In vain they rush about, heaping up wealth without knowing whose it will finally be.”

Psalm 49:10 – “The wise die, the foolish perish, leaving their wealth to others.”

Truth is, you may never control the next chapter. You can build the house, but you cannot decide how your children will live in it. This is why many wealthy people die anxious because they have money for the future, but no peace about the future of their money.

• **The Foolishness of Storing Without Preparing**

Jesus addresses this fear in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21). The man planned for wealth but not for wisdom. He prepared for long life but not for eternity. God called him a fool because he was rich toward himself but not toward God or others.

Money without character is perishable.

Anointing without discipline is abuse.

Wealth without wisdom is waste.

If all you leave is money, you have left the smallest part of you.

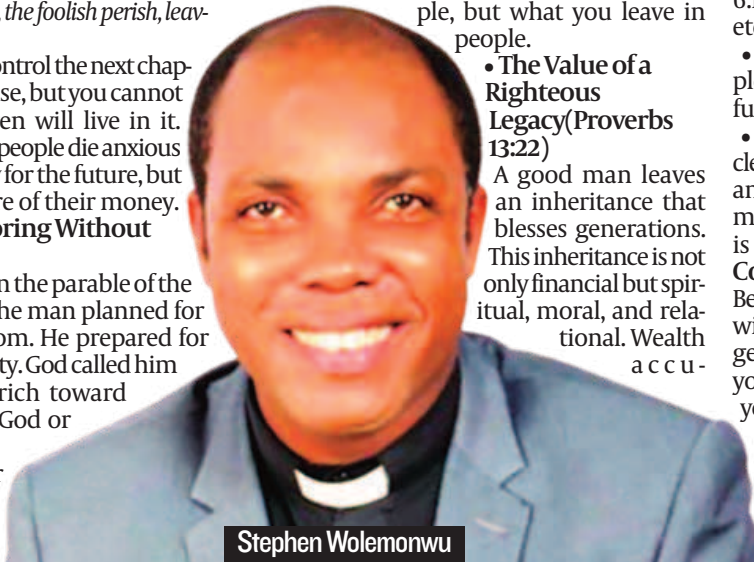
• **The Wisdom for a Legacy That Lasts**
Proverbs 13:22 declares: “A good person leaves an inheritance for his children's children.”

Notice: It is a good person, not just a rich person. Legacy is not only what you leave for people, but what you leave in people.

• **The Value of a Righteous Legacy (Proverbs 13:22)**

A good man leaves an inheritance that blesses generations. This inheritance is not only financial but spiritual, moral, and relational. Wealth

a c c u -



Stephen Wolemonwu

mulated through oppression is fleeting; God ensures justice. True inheritance is more than possessions—it is values, faith, and wisdom.

How Do You Secure a Legacy You Won't Be There to Guard?

• **Transfer Wisdom Before Wealth – Don't just write a will; write your values. Train heirs before handing over inheritance.**

• **Invest in Character, Not Just Wealth – Integrity and stewardship endure longer than riches.**

• **Be Rich Toward God While Alive – 1 Timothy 6:18-19** urges generosity and good deeds as eternal investments.

• **Document Your Vision – Write down principles, family mission, or a “legacy letter” to guide future generations.**

• **Entrust What You Cannot Control to God – Ecclesiastes 2:26** reminds us that God gives wisdom and joy to those who walk with Him. Ultimately, God is the guardian of legacy; our role is stewardship.

Conclusion

Beyond inheritance lies legacy. Wealth fades, but wisdom, faith, and righteousness endure for generations. You cannot live forever to guard your wealth, but you can live today to ensure your wealth carries your values, not just your name.

• **The Ven. (Dr) Stephen Wolemonwu, Rector, The Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor**
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Healing Your Mind When Your Spouse Hurts You

By Charles Ighele

THE problem I want us to look at today is how to heal yourself when hurt, annoyed or disappointed with your spouse.

The only way some people know how to deal with their hurt, annoyance and disappointment is to ask their spouses for an apology or to shout or both. After shouting or screaming or crying, some will tell their spouses, “I demand an apology.” But if demanding an apology is your only way or most important way of healing your wounded mind, it means that you and

your marriage have not matured enough.

There was a time early in our marriage that unless my wife, Carol, held me, rubbed my chest and romanced me, I will not get out of my state of hurt, annoyance or disappointment. I will be bubbling with life again within a few seconds of her holding me.

Whenever she also felt hurt, annoyed or disappointed with me I also have my own way of apologising and within ten seconds, she will start laughing and laughing. She says that I make her laugh a lot.

There were times when there was a stalemate and both of us were either hurt, annoyed or disappointed with each other. It was then I started to mature into what I am suggesting in this article.

My suggestion is this. Instead of you focusing your mind on what hurt you, annoyed you or got you disappointed with your spouse, you should change the channel and tune to another channel of your mind. Tune to what I will call channel “Good Memory Bank.” This channel, this part of your mind is stored and filled with good memories

about your spouse. Unless your spouse is a totally heartless, selfish and bad person like a Jezebel or an Ahab, he or she might have made life sweet and enjoyable for you perhaps for about 70 to 80 per cent in the past. He or she might have given you many warm smiles that melted your heart, nice food or outings/holidays, moments of love-filled love making, sacrificial giving, labour of love, quality care for the children and many others.

In my own case, I found out that whenever I tuned the channel of my spirit and mind from the issue that got me hurt, annoyed or disap-



Ighele

pointed to where Carol gave me great acts of kindness, love, sacrifice, care, hugs, smiles and laughter in the past, my negative feelings about her will stop growing. The negative feelings stopped growing because I stopped nursing them.

Know that whatever you feed or nurse grows and whatever you stop to feed or nurse stops growing. At this point, I begin to force my mind to think and feed on those things that are pure, lovely and good about Carol. At this point, the negative feelings stop growing. Anytime it wants to violently come up to overpower my positive ideas of her, I will tune back again to this love channel that contains good memories, which I grew to nick name channel “Phillipians 4:8.” It says, “Whatsoever things are... lovely... good... think on these things” about your spouse. Love you!

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

By Chris Irekamba

AS Nigeria marks 66 years of independence, Bishop of the Diocese of Ogbomoso and Supervisory Bishop of the Diocese of Ibadan Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Rt. Rev'd Titus Babatunde Olayinka has said that the country must break the cycle of ignorance. He identified ignorance as one of the forces undermining the nation's progress.

The Bishop made the disclosure, last Sunday, while speaking at a Special Thanksgiving Service organised by the Resurrection, University of Ibadan to mark the Chapel's yearly National Day held at the Chapel of the Resurrection, University of Ibadan, Oyo State.

He spoke on the theme: “My People Are Destroyed for Lack of Knowledge,” and taken from Hosea 4:6. Olayinka hinged Nigeria's persistent challenges on the failure to

At 66, Nigeria Must Break The Cycle Of Ignorance, Says Bishop Olayinka



The Rt. Rev'd Titus Babatunde Olayinka

acquire, understand and apply godly knowledge.

According to him, “our persistent challenges cannot be blamed solely on lack of education or resources, but the deeper problem is the failure to apply godly knowledge.”

He attributed the nation's struggles to corruption, insecurity, kidnapping, banditry, unemployment, economic

hardship, ritual killings, poor leadership and the misuse of national resources.

He stated that academic knowledge without wisdom, integrity and responsibility cannot transform a nation, emphasising, therefore, that knowledge of God's word must shape the character and decisions of citizens and leaders, as well as produce righteousness, discipline, honesty, discernment and responsible service.

The Bishop urged the Church to remain a strong centre of biblical teaching and moral formation, while families were encouraged to raise a generation that fears God and understands its responsibility to society.

The Chaplain, Venerable Victor Idowu Oladele, who celebrated the Holy Communion.

GKS Celebrates Christ's Birth Anniversary

By Chris Irekamba

GOD'S Kingdom Society (GKS)-The Church of the Living God has commenced the anniversary of the birth of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ with the theme: “Freedom Day.”

The celebration started last Sunday at various centres in Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, United Kingdom (UK), Canada and United States of America on designated dates, according to a schedule that had been drawn up for the event this year.

The Acting Publicity Secretary of the Church, Brother Emmanuel Oriaku, in a statement, said the yearly Freedom Day celebrations would continue every Sunday in the month of October.

The statement added that

the President of the Church, Brother Felix Ekundayo Adedokun would deliver the main sermons during the Divine Services, entitled: “Are We Disciples Of Christ Indeed?” and “Was Christ Born On Christmas Day?”

The Freedom Day Divine Services, according to the statement, would bring together members and friends of the Church to reflect deeply on the significance of Christ's life, His character and teachings.

The celebration would feature sermons, musical performances and special thanksgiving to God.

GKS, as an international Christian organisation was established in 1934 in Lagos, Nigeria and wholly dedicated to the preaching of the gospel



Brother Felix Ekundayo Adedokun

of Jesus Christ. It has been commemorating the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ every October since the early years of its formation in the 1930s, through the founding instrument of Saint Gideon M. Urhobo of blessed memory.

Text: Revelation 3:14-22, “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

AMONG the seven churches addressed in the book of Revelation, the Church of Laodicea stands as a solemn warning to all believers and churches today. Outwardly prosperous but spiritually poor, they had lost their zeal, their first love, and their fire for God. They had become lukewarm, neither fully for God nor openly against Him.

Lukewarmness is a dangerous spiritual condition. It deceives the heart, quenches the Spirit, and slowly leads to separation from God. It is not open rebellion, yet it is not true devotion. It is a state of self-satisfaction without genuine surrender. It is a form of religion without passion, without power and profession without purity.

Christ's message to Laodicea was not a gentle correction but a stern rebuke: “Because thou art lukewarm, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Let us examine this solemn message carefully and see what lessons it holds for us today.

Understanding Lukewarmness.

To be lukewarm means to be indifferent, complacent, and half-hearted in one's relationship with God. A lukewarm Christian goes through the motions of faith—praying, attending church, reading Scripture—but without fire, without joy, and without deep commitment.

Jesus said: “I know thy works.” He saw beyond the outward activity to the inner condition. The Laodiceans were not spiritually dead like Sardis, nor were they faithful like Philadelphia. They were comfortable, self-contented, and spiritually blind to their true state.

This is a picture of many believers today, they are satisfied with religious routine but lacking spiritual fervor. They have just enough religion to ease their conscience but not enough to transform their lives.

Lukewarmness begins subtly, especially when prayer becomes mechanical, worship becomes routine, holiness becomes optional, and love for souls grows cold. Gradually, zeal fades and comfort takes over. The heart that once burned for God becomes dull and distracted.

The Causes of Lukewarmness

Several factors can lead to this deadly condition. Let us consider a few of them.

The Danger Of Lukewarmness

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



• Self-sufficiency.

“Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. .” (Revelation 3:17).

The Laodiceans prided themselves in wealth, knowledge, and status. Material prosperity had blinded them to their spiritual poverty. They thought they had everything, but heaven saw them as “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” When a person begins to trust in possessions, achievements, or reputation instead of in God, lukewarmness creeps in. Comfort breeds complacency. The heart that depends on wealth no longer depends on grace.

Compromise with the World. Lukewarmness often arises from friendship with the world. James 4:4 warns, “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

When believers begin to adopt the world's values and its love for pleasure, fashion, fame, and success, their spiritual temperature drops. Instead of influencing the world for Christ, they are influenced by the world. They blend in instead of standing out.

Neglect of Spiritual Discipline.

A fire left unattended soon goes out. Likewise, a believer who neglects prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and witnessing will inevitably grow cold. The Holy Spirit's flame burns brightly in a heart that is nourished by the Word and sustained by prayer.

The Deceit of Religious Routine.

A fire left into lukewarmness because they substitute activity for intimacy. They serve God outwardly but neglect communion with Him inwardly. Ministry becomes a duty, not a delight. Religion replaces relationship.

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for this same spirit, because they are outwardly zealous but inwardly barren. God desires heart devotion, not

hollow duty.

The Characteristics of a Lukewarm Christian A lukewarm Christian can be identified by certain marks; and they are:

Inconsistent devotion: They pray only when convenient, worship only when they feel like, and serve only when noticed.

Indifference to sin: They tolerate what God condemns and call compromise “wisdom.”

Lack of hunger for the Word: The Bible no longer excites or convicts them.

Loss of burden for souls: Evangelism feels unnecessary; the lost can perish unnoticed. **Pride in past experiences:** They boast of what they once did for God, not what they're doing now.

Absence of spiritual fire: They are contented with “good enough” Christianity.

Beloved, does this describe your situation? Has your fire for God dimmed? Do you find it easier to talk about God than to talk with God? The Lord is speaking to you as He did to Laodicea.

The Danger of Lukewarmness.

• It Displeases God.

Jesus said, “I would thou wert cold or hot.” (Revelation 3:15)

God would rather have us cold (unconverted) or hot (fervent) than lukewarm. Why? Because the lukewarm person deceives himself and others. The cold sinner knows he needs help, but the lukewarm believer thinks he's fine.

• It Destroys Spiritual Sensitivity.

Lukewarmness numbs the conscience. It dulls conviction and silences the inner voice of the Spirit. What once troubled the believer no longer bothers him. He laughs at sin, excuses compromise, and slowly hardens his heart.

• It Leads to Rejection.

The Lord declared, “I will spue thee out of my mouth,” (Revelation 3:16). That is a frightening statement. It means Christ finds such believers intolerable. The lukewarm are distasteful to God. They claim His name but deny His power. Unless they repent, they will be cast out of His presence.

• It Diminishes Testimony.

A lukewarm church cannot win souls. Its message loses power because its members lack passion. The world sees no difference and mocks the faith we profess. When Christians lose their fire, sinners lose respect for the Gospel.

Christ's Counsel to the Lukewarm.

In mercy, Jesus does not end His message with condemnation but with loving counsel and a gracious invitation.

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” (Revelation 3:18)

• “Buy of Me Gold Tried in the Fire”

This represents genuine faith purified through trials. The lukewarm must return to the cross and seek a living faith tested and refined by obedience and surrender. True riches are not in money but in a heart aflame with God's presence.

• “White Raiment”

This speaks of holiness and righteousness. Lukewarm believers must repent of sin, put away compromise, and be clothed again with purity. Only those dressed in white will walk with Christ in glory.

• “Anoint Thine Eyes with Eyesalve”

Spiritual blindness must be healed by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. We need renewed vision to see ourselves as God sees us. Only the Spirit can open our eyes to our true condition and rekindle our desire for revival.

• “Be Zealous Therefore, and Repent” (v. 19)

The only cure for lukewarmness is repentance and turning back to God with passion and humility. Christ calls us to be zealous again, rekindle the flame, restore the altar, and seek Him with all our heart.

The Promise to the Overcomer.

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame.” (Revelation 3:21). What a glorious promise! To overcome lukewarmness is to regain intimacy with Christ and to share in His victory. The reward for faithfulness is eternal reign with the Lord Himself.

But only those who overcome will sit with Him. The complacent will be shut out. The lukewarm will be rejected. Therefore, let every believer watch, pray, and keep the fire burning.

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

MY name is Brother Kan-neth Amandi

Nwachukwu. I came from Belgium, and I have two testimonies. The first one is how God used me to convert a staunch Muslim brother to The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries.

In a company where I work by the grace of God, I am one of the nine managers. As a team leader I have about 40 people working under me.

Sometime in 2016, a brother, working in my group, came to me one day and asked if he could speak to me. I asked him what the problem was, he told me he and his family are going through disturbing problems. He, then narrated that something was pursuing them. He told me he is from Guinea Republic, married to a woman from Poland, and that he is a Muslim.

I asked him what I could do for him, and he said I should help him get a strong Nigerian doctor. He claimed that Nigeria has many strong native doctors and asked if I

Instantly Healed Of Colon Cancer Through Pastor's Prayer

could connect him to any one that could help him fortify his home, his wife, and children with charms.

I told him, I don't know of any native doctor, and as such cannot help him. So he left. Later, he came to me

about two or three times, and the third time he asked if I could give him the contact of somebody living in Nigeria who could help him contact a native doctor. I told him that if I did so, I would die, and he left. After sometime,

he came back again and asked for help. At this time, I asked him if he was going to accept a stronger power than the one he had, and he obliged. He confessed, and I started preaching to him all that our Daddy G.O. has

thought us.

In 2022, I brought him to our headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria, and he was baptised by immersion. Today, the brother is the men's leader in our branch in Brussels. Praise the Lord, God of Chosen is so great. He works in diverse ways.

In another development, I was in Nigeria in November/December 2013, and my uncle called me from Vienna, Austria, and told me that I was next in line. He asked me who my next of kin was in Vienna and repeated that I was next. I told him it would not happen, as my Daddy G. O. said, “no Chosen member will die a day before his time,” and I stood on it.

At the end of December that year, I went to ease myself, surprisingly, I started passing out blood. I didn't think much about it, so I visited my medical personnel who gave me some prescriptions. He

told me it would take up to eight days to stop. I took the medication for 20 days, to no avail. I was still bleeding. I returned to him, and he advised me to go to the hospital for a check-up.

At the hospital, I was told that my intestine had ruptured and was bleeding heavily. The doctor informed me that it was colon cancer, an aggressive type. I was told to go for surgery and to start chemotherapy immediately.

Then, I was listening to Chosen online prayer and that day our Daddy G.O. prayed and mentioned my case. I claimed it, and after that I returned to the hospital for further checks, I was told that there was no longer cancer in my blood. God of Chosen is so great!

I pray for our Daddy that God Who called him will never fail him. May God grant all of us heaven at last, in Jesus' name. **Chosen is first class!**



Chosen mothers presenting their newly born babies for dedication at the headquarters of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries in Ilesha, Lagos.

CHRIST emphasised that the hypocrites and the godless would be rejected and go into everlasting punishment. These abominable persons will face exclusion from the blessedness of heaven. The "fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable [who are dirty in character, behaviour and thought]... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." The fearful easily compromise their stand during persecution, trial or temptation. Though they know the mind of God and His ways, they are afraid of people's comments and reactions and so, lose their consecration. Such people will be excluded from heaven.

Paul the apostle repeatedly reminded the Galatian believers of the "works of the flesh... that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Like him, believers and preachers of the gospel must not be afraid to clearly define sin and state its consequences to sinners. It will be a terrible thing to go to church regularly and still end up in hell.

The Lord used the example of those abandoned in the burning brimstone outside heaven, to make it clear that the lake of fire is real. The fearful, unbelieving, abominable and all who die in their defilement, "and the devil that deceived them [will be] cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." They will face expulsion for their absence from the Bridegroom's book in heaven.

People whose names are missing from the Book of Life will spend eternity in hell. This is because "there shall in no wise enter into [heaven] anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Moses once failed to

Heaven And Its Holy Inhabitants (2)

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor
W. F. Kumuyi



realise that God works by His laws and not anyone's good intentions. He asked the Lord to either forgive the sins of the Israelites or blot him out of the Book of Life. But the Lord clarified that, "Whosoever hath sinned against [Him]...will [He] blot out of [His] book." Forgiveness does not come on the basis of excuses but genuine repentance and change of heart, life, character and behaviour. Those whose names are "not found written in the book of life [will be] cast into the lake of fire."

If we desire to enter heaven, we must fulfill one key re-

quirement. Righteousness and entire sanctification are indispensable experiences we must possess to get to heaven. Those who do not meditate on the Word of God, ask for grace to overcome temptation or grow spiritually, will not get to heaven. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." But first, such a person must fulfil the divine prerequisite for earnest seekers of heaven.

Those who earnestly seek to enter heaven also must please God, "diligently seek him" and "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." These are people who have made decisive preparation with entire sanctification of heart.

A serious-minded believer must "abstain from all appearance of evil." We must not compromise our stand in holiness despite the mockery and reproach we face from those who do not believe. Rather, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

As believers, we should present ourselves to the Lord, surrender our time and other resources without holiness does not attract God's reward. He is more concerned about the state of our heart and wants us to "submit" ourselves to Him.

• **Further Reading (KJV):** Revelation 21:1-7; Revelation 21:8; 22:15; Revelation 21:8,27; 1 Corinthians 6:9,10; Galatians 5:19-21; Mark 7:21-23; Revelation 21:8; 14:10,11; 19:20. 20:10; Matthew 25:41,46; Revelation 21:27; Exodus 32:31-33; Revelation 13:8. 17:8; 20:15; Revelation 21:3-7; Hebrews 11:6,14,16. 1 Thessalonians 5:22-24; Hebrews 13:12-14; James 4:7; 1 Thessalonians 3:12,13; Romans 12:1-2.

Stop Talking And Listen (6)

The principal way God speaks to us (Cont)

HE has not simply spoken once through His Word, the Bible, but speaks through it still "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (Jn 6:63)

The Holy Spirit reveals truth to us, lives within us, and then enables us to respond to that truth.

Your eyes must turn into ears

There is need to use our ears as well as our eyes

"Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it." (Rev 1:3)

We should not only read Scripture, we should **listen** to it also. In other words, not just reading the word of God but listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit, which speaks to us through that word. It is not enough to read; we must learn to listen.

Read 2Chron 34:14-33, The Book of the Law is found.

What was the effect when God's Word was read out?

It led to 'godly sorrow' (2Cor 7:10) genuine repentance

"Shaphan the scribe told the king, 'Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.' And Shaphan read it before the

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus
Prof. Mercy Olumide



King [Josiah].19 Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes." (2Chro 34:18,19)

It is human nature to treat sin lightly—to make excuses, blame somebody else, or minimise the harm done. Not so with Josiah. He was so appalled at the people's neglect of the law that he tore his clothing to express his grief. True understanding of our sins should lead to "godly sorrow" that "produces repentance leading to salvation" (2Corinthians 7:10). Are you always excusing your sin, blaming others, and pretending that it's not so bad? God does not take sin lightly, and he wants us to respond with true remorse as Josiah did.

"Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testi-

monies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book." (2Chro 34:31)

When Josiah read the book that Hilkiah discovered (34:14), he responded with repentance and humility and promised to follow God's commands as written in the book. The Bible is God's word to us, "living and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12); but we cannot know what God wants us to do if we do not read it. And even reading God's Word is not enough; we must be willing to do what it says. There is not much difference between the book hidden in the temple and the Bible hidden on the bookshelf.

An unread Bible is as useless as a lost one.

• **Email:** ymolumide@gmail.com, **Facebook:** Yetunde Mercy Olumide

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: 2 Corinthians 6: 1-2

Maximising God's Grace (10)

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 6:1, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." (KJV)

THE core of our faith rests entirely on one beautiful word: Grace. It is the unmerited favour of God, a divine rescue mission that we did not earn and could never deserve. Yet, in 2 Corinthians 6:1, the Apostle Paul sounds an urgent, sobering alarm to the church. He says, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." It is entirely possible to sit in the pews, hear the gospel, acknowledge God's goodness, and still receive His grace in vain. In the original Greek, the phrase "in vain" (eiskenen) means to receive something so that it ends up empty, fruitless, or without its intended effect. Imagine a dying man in a desert being handed a cold bottle of water, but instead of drinking it, he just holds it, admires the bottle, and eventually dies of thirst. The gift was real, but it was received in vain. The grace of God is the most powerful force in hu-

man history, yet Scripture reveals a tragic possibility: it can be received in vain. When the Apostle Paul writes to the Church at Corinth, he is not writing to a group of unevangelised pagans. He is writing to baptised, church-attending believers. Yet, he pleads with them, not to allow the ultimate gift of God result in sterility, fruitlessness, or futility.

To receive something "in vain" (eiskenen in the original Greek) means to receive it without it achieving its intended purpose or profit. It means letting a priceless treasure go completely to waste. Imagine a starving man being handed a key to a vault filled with food and riches, only for him to hang the key around his neck as an ornament while he continues to starve. That is what it looks like when a Christian wears the label of grace but refuses to let its power transform their daily existence. Grace is a daily provision: As noted by teachers like Charles Price, grace is not just for past salvation; it is designed for daily survival in present trials. Grace is an empowering force: It is the active, divine enablement of God working within your heart to transform your character, your habits, and your



desires. Grace is more than a fire insurance policy. If your understanding of grace only changes your eternal destination but never changes your current direction, you are flirting with receiving it in vain.

How does this spiritual tragedy of receiving the grace of God in vain happen in the life of a believer? One of the ways it happens is for a person to be religious without experiencing personal transformation. It is entirely possible to sit in a church pew, sing the hymns of grace, and remain completely unchanged. In his classic observations, J.C. Ryle warned against a "profession of faith without practice."

• **Today's Nugget: True Grace Produces fruit for the kingdom. Prayer: I am empowered by grace to live a victorious Christian life. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadi-abelukachi@gmail.com. Rev. Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.**

By Omiko Awa

THE Archbishop of Rhema Christian Church and Towers, Dr Taiwo Akinola, has charged Christians to reject limitations, embrace their covenant identity and relentlessly pursue their God-given destinies.

He disclosed this during the Friends and Family Day celebration held at the Champion Peace Cathedral along the Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway, Sango-Ota, Ogun State.

The Presiding Archbishop, in his keynote address stated that continual advancement is part of God's purpose for

Akinola Charges Christians To Reject Limitations, Pursue God-given Destinies

• **Rhema World Convention To Hold From November 1 To 8, 2026**

believers.

The cleric said being unstoppable does not mean that Christians would face no opposition, but that they must refuse to surrender when confronted with challenges.

According to him, believers are expected to keep moving forward, growing in faith and advancing from one level of grace and glory to another.

Identifying covenant identity as one of the foundations for overcoming limitations, Akinola urged believers not

to allow their background, past failures, age, gender or present circumstances to de-



Dr. Taiwo Akinola

termine their future.

He cited 1 John 5:4 and noted that believer's identity in Christ should provide the confidence to confront life's challenges.

Akinola gave examples of biblical personalities like Deborah, Esther and Jephthah, and said their experiences demonstrated how covenant identity could become greater than earthly disadvantages. He called on Christians to see themselves through the lens of God's

purpose rather than through the limitations imposed by their circumstances.

The Rhema leader also emphasised the renewal of the mind, citing Romans 12:2. He explained that transformation begins internally before becoming visible externally, urging Christians to continually meditate on the Word of God.

He said faith grows through hearing God's Word and that fear and doubt could give way to confidence when the mind is aligned with biblical

FOUR months into the Life Beer Nwa Boi Experience, the excitement of selection has given way to the expectations of winning, realities of life on the road, in the marketplace and behind the wheel of a distribution business.

Across Aba, Enugu and Onitsha, the 30 Nwa Bois have hands on the plough, proudly putting their lessons to work, learning how to win customers, manage costs, navigating competition and building relationships, while discovering what it takes to turn an apprenticeship into a foundation for business ownership.

For Ejim Ejike Emmanuel, a participant, undergoing the igba boi, the Life Beer way at the Nkpor Sales Area in Onitsha, the experience has been a decisive step outside his comfort zone.

"The nwa boi experience for me has been a wholesome out-of-the-comfort-zone experience that has pushed me into facing and solving complex sales challenges in the beverages sales market," he said, pointing to price negotiations, product quality, customer expectations and logistics as some of the realities he has had to navigate.

For Ejim, one of his biggest lessons has been understanding that short-term profit cannot come at the expense of trust. "I have learnt that my personal profit margins don't have to be the prominent focus, but rather the satisfaction of my bosses and the customers should come first. I have also learnt that integrity and product quality are virtues that yield cumulative gains over time rather than dishonesty for quick unsustainable gains," he stated.

He has also developed what he called "Distributor's Availability Mapping", which helped him in identifying customers who may be underserved because of their distance from distributors. This mapping for him, yielded building relationships by ensuring such customers can access products when they need them.

For Aneke Charles Arinze, a participant in

Nwa Boi Participants Reflect On Pride, Optimism, Growth Through Experience

Enugu, the experience has sown in him the lessons of responsibility and taking ownership of the business process. From approaching and convincing customers to tracking daily activities, expenses and profit, he said the programme has taken him beyond theoretical learning.

"The Life Nwaboi Experience taught me how to approach, engage, and convince potential customers. It also taught me to track and document my daily business activities, expenses, and profit," Aneke said.

He described the experience as an extension of the Igbo apprenticeship tradition, giving him practical trade skills, cost management knowledge and what he calls "trade secrets". The journey has not been without pressure. Rising fuel costs, transportation challenges, weather conditions and other operational realities have tested the participants, but Aneke believes those difficulties have made him more resourceful and resilient.

"The Life Beer Nwa Boi Experience is not an empty scheme. It is training for ownership, and a foundation I will draw on for the rest of my business career," he said.

In the same vein, Kamalu Obinna Peter in Aba, Abia State, credited the programme with affording him an opportunity to build a customer base for Life Lager and other Nigerian Breweries brands while learning how to navigate Aba's established distribution market. He said working with existing sub-distributors and sales representatives as partners has helped him build relationships and grow despite the intricacies of a competitive market.

"As a former classroom teacher, this project has pushed me beyond my comfort zone and helped me grow from a reserved individual into a more social and resourceful apprentice, with the goal of becoming the next beer merchant," he said.

From the supervisors' perspective, that transformation is already becoming visible. Chibuike Junior Azarah, a supervisor in Enugu, said the experience has also tested his own leadership skills, having moved from managing small teams to overseeing ten participants.

"Having previously managed small teams of two to three individuals, this project marked a significant step up, placing me at the helm of a ten-person team," he said.

He added that the experience has strengthened his communication and leadership skills while allowing him to contribute to the growth of the Nwa Boi business.

For Life Beer, these experiences reflect the broader purpose of the initiative: taking an enduring element of Igbo apprenticeship and giving young people an opportunity to experience its principles in a modern commercial environment.

According to Senior Brand

Manager, Life Beer, Chima Dim, the strong response to the initiative made the selection process highly competitive, with 30 participants eventually selected across Aba, Enugu and Onitsha.

"What gives more joy and fulfilment is realising that the finalists would be going home with much more than the prizes on offer, because knowledge gained and business acumen acquired from the programme would have long term benefits," Dim said.

With the final stretch now underway, the participants are not simply working towards the 10 million regional prize and distributorship opportunity. They are putting their new skills, relationships and business instincts to the ultimate test, one customer, one sale and one lesson at a time.



TETFund Digital Centres Will Bridge Digital Divide, Transform Research, Says Obilana

THE proposed expansion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Digital Experience Centres across beneficiary institutions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) will mark a significant shift in the manner Nigerian tertiary institutions confront persistent digital-access challenges.

For Professor Aderemi Obilana, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Prakis Educational Services, the intervention goes beyond the provision of computers and internet connectivity; it addresses some of the structural barriers that have limited students, researchers and academics in the digital age.

Obilana, who is also a visiting Professor to the University Institute of Applied and Human Sciences, Republic of Chad, and an independent contractor at the University of South Africa, described the initiative as a "game-changing intervention for higher education" and commended the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono, for the initiative.

His assessment is particularly significant because the higher education system is increasingly dependent on digital resources for teaching, research, publishing and professional development. Yet, access to these resources remains uneven, with many students and academics contending with expensive data, unreliable electricity and inadequate access to modern computing facilities.

It is against this background that ICT Digital Experience Centres, being rolled out by TETFund across tertiary institutions in partnership with the Renewed Hope Initiative

of the First Lady, Senator Remi Tinubu, assumes wider importance.

The Centres have moved beyond the initial pilot phase, with centres already commissioned in Ekiti, Cross River, Anambra and Kwara states, to provide students and academics with access to modern computers, high-speed internet, reliable electricity and other digital resources.

The original pilot programme covered six institutions across the six geopolitical zones – Ekiti State University, University of Cross River State, Federal Polytechnic, Oke, Anambra State; Kaduna State University, Kwara State University and Taraba State University. Meanwhile, centres in Ekiti, Cross River and Kwara states have been commissioned, and the remaining pilot centres in Kaduna and Taraba states are at various stages of rollout.

The expansion has currently extended to 15 additional states – Adamawa, Bayelsa, Borno, Delta, Edo, Enugu, Imo, Katsina, Nasarawa, Niger, Ondo, Osun, Rivers, Yobe and Zamfara. TETFund has indicated that the long-term objective is to extend the ICT Digital Experience Centres to over 270 beneficiary tertiary institutions nationwide, potentially creating a broad digital infrastructure network for teaching, research, skills development and academic collaboration.

According to Obilana, the centres have the potential to address digital divide between students who can afford personal computers, expensive data subscriptions and reliable electricity and those who cannot. His argument is that providing free hardware, round-the-clock internet access and dependable power at institutions will remove several financial barriers that currently prevent many students from fully participating in digital learning.

One of the benefits is the democratisation of digital access. Obilana believes that with access to computers and high-speed internet, students from less privileged backgrounds would be able to carry out assignments, participate in online courses, undertake professional certifications and access international academic resources. This could also change the character of learning beyond the conventional classroom as students will no longer depend solely on lecture notes or available textbooks on campuses.

For postgraduate students and researchers, Obilana sees an even more profound benefit. He pointed to the growing dependence of contemporary research on computational tools, electronic journals, research databases and reference-management plat-

forms. He is optimistic that access to resources such as Scopus, Web of Science and Jornal Storage (JSTOR), an online library, is critical to literature reviews, data gathering and academic publishing.

Also, uninterrupted internet and electricity supply will reduce some of the challenges confronting researchers.

This has implications for research output as academic publishing increasingly requires researchers to navigate global databases, analyse large volumes of information, use specialised software and collaborate virtually with scholars in other countries.

Obilana also highlighted the employability dimension of the intervention. In his assessment, the centres should not be viewed merely as places for students to browse the internet or type assignments.

He said that modern workstations can expose students to software development, data analysis, graphic design, coding and geographical information systems. Such exposure, he argued, could strengthen graduates' competitiveness in an economy where employers increasingly demand technology-related competencies while the skills could open pathways to remote employment and global opportunities for graduates.

While applauding the intervention, Obilana cautioned that infrastructure alone will not guarantee success. The sustainability of the centres, he said, will depend largely on how institutions manage them after installation.

"Maintenance and security are among the immediate concerns. Computers require regular repairs, software updates and replacement of faulty components. Institutions must also protect the facilities from vandalism, theft and misuse if the investment is to deliver its intended benefits over many years.

"Power and bandwidth management are equally crucial. A centre may have hundreds of computers and high-speed internet but if connectivity slows dramatically during peak periods or power supply becomes unstable, the facilities could quickly lose their usefulness," he said.

Obilana, therefore, stressed the need for reliable power solutions, including hybrid or solar systems and sufficient bandwidth to cope with demand.

He also called for digital literacy programmes to accompany the infrastructure. Students and lecturers need to understand how to exploit the centres for advanced academic work rather than simply using them for basic browsing.

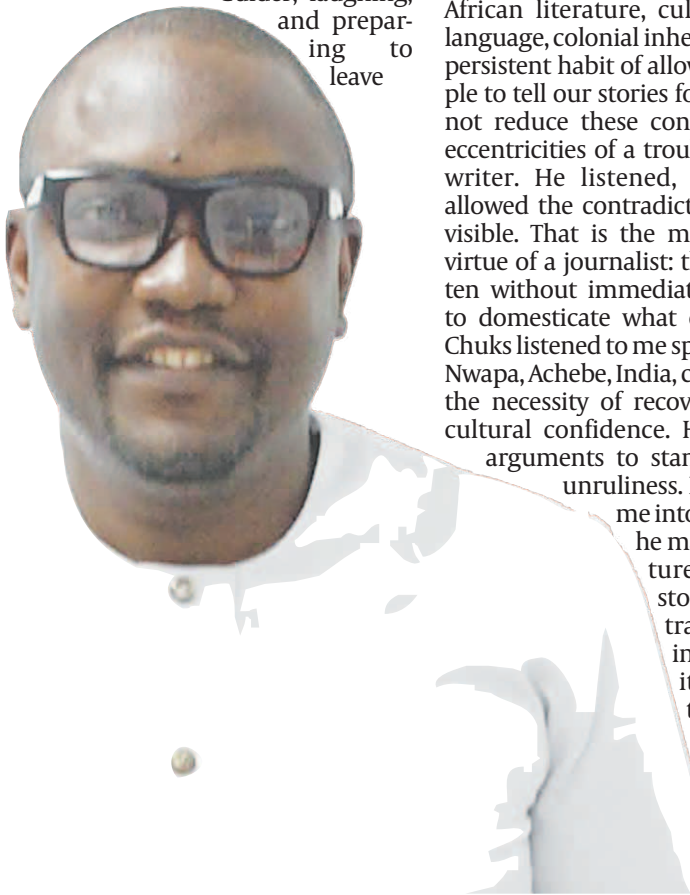
For him, the opportunity is clear. The challenge is ensuring that the infrastructure remains functional, accessible and relevant long after the centres are commissioned.



The Man Who Saw Beyond The Headline: Remembering Chuks Nwanne

By Onyeka Nwelue

There are journalists who report people, and there are journalists who, almost imperceptibly, leave a part of themselves inside the lives they report. Chuks Nwanne belonged to the latter fraternity. His death has therefore produced in me a peculiar kind of silence; the silence that follows the departure of someone who did not merely write about you, but once looked closely enough to recognise something in you that you had not yet learnt to name. In 2017, Chuks came to see me at Bogobiri House in Ikoyi. I was surrounded by friends, drinking Gulder, laughing, and preparing to leave



Nigeria for Ohio. He had come ostensibly to interview me, but what he produced was more than an interview. He made a portrait. He saw the contradictions, the provocations, the ambitions, the vanity, the scholarship, the restlessness, and the absurdities that had begun to constitute my public life. He called me a “literary rebel on a mission to colonise America.” I remember that phrase because Chuks understood something fundamental about me: I have always been suspicious of the comfortable consensus. He understood, too, that beneath my provocations was an appetite for intellectual independence. I was preoccupied with African literature, cultural memory, language, colonial inheritance, and the persistent habit of allowing other people to tell our stories for us. Chuks did not reduce these convictions to the eccentricities of a troublesome young writer. He listened, observed, and allowed the contradictions to remain visible. That is the most underrated virtue of a journalist: the ability to listen without immediately attempting to domesticate what one has heard. Chuks listened to me speak about Flora Nwapa, Achebe, India, colonialism, and the necessity of recovering our own cultural confidence. He allowed my arguments to stand in their full unruliness. He did not turn me into a saint, nor did he make me a caricature. He understood that a portrait worth reading must contain its contradictions. He also understood that writers are sometimes difficult people. I was young,

obstinate, overdressed in my own mythology, convinced that the world needed to hear me and insufficiently concerned about whether the world agreed. Chuks could have written a conventional profile. Instead, he gave me something closer to an x-ray. Years later, I realized how generous that was. Journalism is often treated as an ephemeral profession. Newspapers are read today and forgotten tomorrow, but a journalist writes something that becomes an archive, not merely of the subject, but of an era. Chuks’ piece became such an archive for me. Reading it again now, after his death, I encounter not only the younger man I was, but the younger journalist Chuks was: observant, curious, irreverent and sufficiently courageous to allow an unconventional subject to remain unconventional. He knew that people were larger than the labels attached to them. This is why his death saddens me so profoundly. I wish I could speak to him again. I wish I could sit with him somewhere and argue with him about Africa, literature, journalism, Nigeria, language, and all the subjects on which neither of us was ever entirely willing to surrender ground. I wish I could tell him that the article he wrote about me survived beyond the Sunday newspaper in which it appeared. It became a document of a particular moment in my life, but also a testament to his generosity as a journalist. Chuks Nwanne has now entered the territory about which writers write, but journalists rarely wish to become subjects: memory. And memory is an unreliable but magnificent country. There, Chuks will remain for me as the man who came to Bogobiri House, sat across from me, listened carefully, and decided that my contradictions were worth recording. He was right. Farewell, Chuks. May the record of your work outlive the brevity of your days.

‘Chuks Nwanne’s Transition Is Devastating’

By Ayeni Adekunle

On Saturday, October 3, 2026, we lost a very dear friend. Mr. Chuks Nwanne, Art and Culture journalist and general manager, northern operations at The Guardian Nigeria, passed on, sadly, following an illness. I was still a music journalist when I first met Chuks. We were all hungry, passionate reporters travelling the country, collaborating and engaging in all sorts of shenanigans. It took some time before we became acquainted, and eventually, friends. But once we did, it was easily obvious that Chuks was one hell of a loyal and committed friend. When he’s in your corner, he really was in your corner. No games. No drama. No bullshit. Rare, in an industry and age where everything’s pretty much fair weather. Chuks supported

everything I did personally, championed our companies and projects, and provided insight and counsel where and when it mattered. He had this calm, patient, sagely demeanour that made you never want to not have him in your corner. The world has changed so much over the last decade. We’re now in an age of clout where everyone has a voice; where rage and rabble appear to rank over reputation and substance. An age where all the barriers have been broken and access decentralized. But long before now, when it mattered, I’m proud to say that Chuks Nwanne was one of the guys who used his position in the newsroom and at The Guardian to champion truth, give voice and influence to undercovered talents, support the arts, culture and

creative industries and platform projects and people who truly deserved it - without any commercial considerations. My company and I are beneficiaries. When I spoke with his wife and some of our colleagues and mutual friends over the weekend, I wanted to be sure that they recognized how loved and respected Chuks was; how much he meant to everyone who knew him; and how devastating this loss is for everyone. He was a husband and father who loved his wife and kids greatly; a son-of-the-soil who loved his hometown Ogbunni deeply, a media leader who served The Guardian passionately and honourably; and a fully tribalized Nigerian patriot. He did his family, his organization, and his country, Nigeria, proud. It’s a big loss.

I have no fear or respect for death; or indeed anything whatsoever that takes what it cannot give; reaps where it does not sow- plucking where it hasn’t planted. And I know, because I’ve been taught to put death in perspective, that when we mourn those who have gone ahead of us, we are in a way mourning our own pending passage. For really, who knows who’s next? I pray that God Almighty will grant Chuks Nwanne a peaceful rest. I pray that God will comfort and support the family he’s left behind. I pray that God will teach those of us still on this side to use whatever time we have left here to truly add value, make good impact and always remember that it’s all a lottery and tomorrow is not granted to anyone. Adekunle is CEO, BHM Holdings

Remembering Ganny Akanmu Adekunle (1945-2026)

By Adeshina Okuneye

My dear Ganny! How does one say goodbye to a friend who has been part of his life for more than 35 years? How does one adequately describe a friendship that began professionally but grew into a bond of brotherhood, trust, confidence and genuine affection? I met you more than three and a half decades ago, and from that time, you became much more than a professional colleague. You became my bosom friend, confidant, adviser and brother.

For over 35 years, we shared ideas, discussed life and engineering, exchanged intimate thoughts and supported one another through different seasons of life. We worked together on several professional engagements, including World Bank projects in Osun State, as well as projects in Akure and other places.

Though, we were sometimes separated by distance, our friendship never suffered from it. You remained Ganny. Always available. Always willing to listen. Always willing to help. And always ready to share your knowledge. You were an outstanding Materials and Geophysics Engineer, a professional who did not merely acquire knowledge but generously transferred it to others. You trained and mentored excellent engineers within your family and beyond, leaving behind a professional legacy that will continue to speak for you.

But, my dear friend, your greatest engineering achievement was not in the projects you executed. It was in the lives you helped to build. You were a man with a heart that was extraordinarily large. I have often said that you were the kind of man who could give one of his eyes to save someone who needed it. That was not an exaggeration of your character. That was simply Ganny.

Even when your own pension was modest, you never forgot those who were less fortunate. Whenever your pension came, you would still take a portion of it and distribute it to widows in your community. You did not wait until you became wealthy before helping people. You gave from what you had. That is a lesson I will never forget. You were also deeply connected to your roots in Ede, Osun State, where you were a respected member and head of the Ashawo family. You carried your family and community responsibilities with dignity, and you remained a man people could look up to.

Your greatest legacy, however, will undoubtedly continue through your children and those you mentored. Baba Adeola, You did not merely raise children. You built people. You nurtured excellence. You encouraged education. You trained engineers. You supported professionals. And you gave your family a foundation upon which they can

continue to build. I will also never forget what you did for me when I was launching my youth football club. At a time when I was investing my energy and resources into giving young people an opportunity through football, you gave me your full support and encouragement. That club eventually went on to win the Shell Cup competition for Osun State in Nigeria.

You may not have lifted that trophy yourself, but I will always remember that you were among those who believed in the dream and encouraged me when it was still only a dream. That is the kind of friend you were. You believed in people. You believed in their dreams. And whenever you could, you helped them move forward. Then came the day you told me that you were battling for your life.

My dear Ganny, I cannot forget that moment. We did everything we could. We explored every possible avenue. We hoped. We prayed. We believed that somehow, you would overcome the battle. Because people like you, in our minds, were not supposed to leave us so easily. But eventually, we had to confront the truth that there are battles that belong entirely to Almighty God. God gives, and God takes. You celebrated your 80th birthday last year, and today, I choose to celebrate the remarkable life you have lived. And I will remember you as the friend who stood beside me for more than three and a half decades.

Thank you, Ganny. Thank you for the friendship. Thank you for the counsel. Thank you for the professional companionship. Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for supporting my dreams. And thank you for showing us that even when a man has little, he can still give much. May Almighty God forgive your shortcomings, accept your good deeds, grant you Al-Jannah Firdaus, and give your beloved family—Mopelola Iya Adeola, Adeola, Adeshina, Adediran, Adepeju, Adegoke and all your loved ones—the strength to bear this irreparable loss. Adieu, my dear friend. Adieu, my brother. Adieu, Engr. Ganny Akanmu Adekunle. You came. You served. You gave. You inspired. You loved. And you left a legacy. You will never be forgotten. Rest peacefully, my dear Ganny, until we meet again.



Spotlight

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's October 1, 2026, Independence Day broadcast had so many takeaways. It vividly captured the state of the economy and macroeconomic fundamentals in 2023 when he assumed office and the turnaround seen today. The President also acknowledged that oil theft has drastically declined leading to over four per cent growth in the economy this year, while inflation has fallen substantially from its peak. For many stakeholders, the continued protection of oil pipelines through the operations of Tantita Security Services Nigeria Ltd (TSSNL) helped achieve a decline in oil theft across the Niger Delta region that paved the way for the relatively stable economy of the country, ONYEDIKA AGBEDO writes.

WHEN President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumed office in 2023, Nigeria's economy faced formidable headwinds. Inflation peaked at almost 35 per cent, external reserves were strained, investor confidence was shaken, and nearly every macroeconomic indicator was in red. Another critical issue was the rising cases of oil theft.

President Tinubu, in his Independence Day broadcast, explained that it took leadership rooted in courage to reverse these ugly trends and today, the economy and key indicators are turning the corner.

The President's speech highlighted the difficult economic reforms he undertook and his present scorecard. It further pointed to the priority areas that will define the next phase of his administration.

Part of the speech read: "Our journey has not always been easy. In truth, it has generally been too hard for too many. We have known moments of great hope and periods of profound disappointment. We have endured war, military rule, economic crises, insecurity and political upheaval. Yet through it all, Nigeria, with the indomitable spirit of its people, has endured."

Highlighting his achievements, he said: "Our economy has grown by over four per cent this year. Both oil and non-oil sectors have contributed to the renewed period of stable growth. Oil theft is down. Inflation has fallen substantially from its peak.

"Our foreign reserves have been rebuilt, our foreign exchange market has stabilised, and in 2025 this country recorded its highest revenue from non-oil exports in its history, exceeding \$6 billion. This is real money being made by real Nigerian businesses."

He further set a priority for the country: "Our priority is to bring down the cost of living. We will achieve this by lowering the cost of producing and moving the things Nigerians consume."

The President also listed where support should come from. "That is why, working with our states and local governments, we will continue to strengthen primary healthcare, basic education and the essential public services poorer Nigerians depend on most. Since 2023, we have paid salaries and pensions on time and in full. We have reformed the national pension programme to benefit retirees and the vulnerable," he said.

Achieving and sustaining these feats requires sustained check against oil theft with the aid of technology and qualified personnel. The drastic 79 per cent drop in oil theft has been linked to the superlative works done by the Tantita Security Services Nigeria Ltd (TSSNL) in collaboration with the security agencies in the Niger Delta region.

The Federal Government appointed Tantita Security Services Nigeria Ltd (TSSNL), led by High Chief, Dr. Government Owezide Ekpemupolo, alias Tompolo, to protect oil

Independence Speech: Between Oil Theft Decline, Economic Stability And Tantita's Surveillance Contract

assets and ensure peace and stability in the Niger Delta region.

The appointment was to enable TSSNL, through its security operations, support the national economy in getting the full benefits of oil resources. 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 ensured the security of oil pipelines, which consequently ensured uninterrupted flow of petroleum resources and Nigeria's migration from a position of constant loss management to stability, planning, growth and development.

The operations of the firm 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.

Tompolo founded TSSNL out of the belief that the best people to secure the creeks are those who already know them. These include fishermen, boat operators and former militants who understand the terrain better than an outside contractor.

Tantita's personnel monitor export pipelines, trace illegal connections, identify crude-theft points, and report suspected illegal refining activity to security agencies for enforcement.

Tantita employs about 136,000 people directly in pipeline-related work, with indirect employment extending to more than 300,000. It has also tried a less conventional approach to the theft problem. In partnership with the Stakeholders Development Network and Ecosus Pro Nigeria Limited, it launched the Tantita Sustainable Rice Farming Initiative, aimed at moving communities once involved in illegal oil activity into large-scale rice farming.

As stakeholders advocate for continued collaboration with TSSNL, the imperative of securing oil infrastructure remains at the forefront of efforts to ensure the nation's sustainable development.

In the development process, certain assets contribute to the advancement of any society and its people. These assets ensure economic or monetary benefits for the people. These assets could be regarded as operating assets, non-operating assets or leased assets, among others. **Tantita's 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 time.

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 activi-

ty, 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.

There are also glass break and door sensors installed on doors and windows that 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," it stated.

Investments In The Oil/Gas Sector

WITH improved security of oil facilities, Nigeria's push to revive investment in its deepwater oil fields gained fresh momentum as the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited and its partners signed agreements expected to move the proposed Bonga Southwest/Aparo project, estimated to attract up to \$21 billion in investment, closer to a Final Investment Decision.

The project, located in Oil Mining Lease 118, is expected to become one of Nigeria's biggest

new deepwater developments, with a projected peak production of about 175,000 barrels of oil per day and 140 million standard cubic feet of gas per day.

The NNPC and

the OML 118 Contractor Parties - Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited, Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria (Deepwater) Limited and Nigerian Agip Exploration Limited - executed an Addendum to the OML 118 Production Sharing Contract and an Addendum to the Dispute Settlement Agreement.

Also, President Bola Tinubu approved the Deep Offshore Oil and Gas Projects Incentives (Tax Remission) Order, 2026, designed to improve the competitiveness of Nigeria's deepwater fiscal regime and unlock fresh investments.

The execution showed how the policy reforms were beginning to translate into concrete project development. The agreements provided evidence that the Federal Government's reforms and security measures were beginning to create a pathway for major investments that had remained uncertain.

The Chief Executive Officer, Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), Dr. Muda Yusuf, acknowledged that following the reforms in the oil and gas sector, particularly the NNPC and the totality of the oil and gas ecosystem, there has been a significant positive impact on oil production, which has significantly impacted Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings.

"The oil production surge has contributed to the improvement in external reserves. It has impacted the capacity of the CBN to stabilise the naira, and it has contributed generally to macroeconomic stability. So, the improvement in oil outputs, the improvement in security in the oil producing area has also been a major development that we need to recognise as part of the key achievements of the administration," he said.

Yusuf disclosed that beyond the rise in oil production, there have been some very remarkable efforts by the government to attract some major investment into the oil and gas sector.

According to him, even the deregulation of the downstream has also contributed to the success of the Dangote Refinery, "because if we don't have the right deregulation environment, such a major refinery may also have to struggle."

"The refinery has opened the way for other refineries, and investors, to come on board in the oil and gas space. So, quite a lot has happened within the oil and gas space, both in the upstream, the midstream and the downstream," he stated.

Chairman of the House Committee on Host Communities, Dekor Dumnamene Robinson, had said the contributions of Tantita and its leadership to national security deserve appreciation.

Also, in one of the strongest endorsements yet of the firm's operations, lawmakers under the Joint Committee of the House of Representatives on Host Communities and Public Petitions and other stakeholders commended Tantita for what they described as effective and patriotic service in safe-

guarding Nigeria's critical oil infrastructure.

President Tinubu's acknowledgement of the turnaround in the oil and gas sector and subsequently in the economy serves as a spur for the firm to do more.



By Usman Ibrahim

THE question is not simply how much government spends. Every Nigerian understands that government needs money. Police officers need salaries. Hospitals need equipment. Schools need teachers. Roads need construction and maintenance. Security operations require funding. Social protection costs money. The harder question is whether the money available to government is being converted into sufficient public value. This question has become increasingly important because Nigeria's fiscal room remains constrained. The International Monetary Fund estimated that interest payments absorbed about 53 per cent of Federal Government revenue in 2025, while the consolidated government deficit was estimated at 4.4 per cent of GDP. For 2026, IMF projections put the consolidated fiscal deficit at about 4.7 per cent of GDP. These numbers do not mean that government should simply stop spending. They mean that every naira has become more consequential. Fiscal discipline is therefore not an accounting obsession. It is a development issue.

When Debt Crowds Out Development

Borrowing can be economically sensible when it finances productive investment capable of generating future returns. Borrowing to build a productive railway, transmission infrastructure, irrigation system or industrial corridor can create economic capacity that outlives the debt. Borrowing to sustain inefficient recurrent expenditure is different. Nigeria must become more rigorous about this distinction. When debt-service obligations consume a large share of public revenue, fewer resources remain available for education, healthcare, infrastructure and productive investment. The opportunity cost is paid by citizens through weaker services and slower development. The answer is not necessarily to reject borrowing. It is to improve the quality of expenditure and the transparency of borrowing. The country's fiscal authorities already publish budget documents and implementation reports. The Budget Office of the Federation maintains a public repository of appropriation documents and budget implementation information. The next step is to make

Fiscal Discipline And Public Trust: Re-engineering Government Spending For Real Impact

Adebayo's Open-Books Proposal

such information more useful to ordinary citizens. A budget should not merely answer how much government plans to spend. It should make it possible to ask what citizens received in return.

From Budget Inputs To Public Outcomes

Nigeria's budget culture has traditionally placed considerable emphasis on allocations. But allocation is not achievement. A ministry may receive billions of naira for a programme. That does not automatically mean that schools improved, hospitals became functional or roads were completed.

Government should therefore shift more aggressively from input-based accountability to out-

come-based accountability. For every major programme, citizens should be able to know: What was promised? How much was budgeted? How much was released? What was actually spent? What was delivered? Who benefited? What changed? These questions should apply not only to major federal ministries but also to state and local institutions. The principle is simple: public money should generate public evidence.

Transparency Is An Economic Policy

It is tempting to regard transparency as an issue for auditors, journalists and civil-society organisations. It is much more than that. Transparent public finance can improve economic efficiency because it reduces uncertainty, strengthens investor confidence and makes it harder for resources to disappear between appropriation and implementation. It can also improve citizen trust. A citizen who can see what was budgeted for a local road, what contractor received the contract, how much was paid and whether the road was completed is in a stronger position than a citizen who is told only that government is "working." This is particularly important at the local level, where citizens often experience government most directly.

Adebayo's Open-Books Proposal

Prince Adewole Adebayo's current policy blueprint proposes that Nigeria's 774 local governments publish quarterly information on revenues and expenditures—including statutory allocations, internally generated revenue, grants, contracts and major capital spending—through a publicly accessible digital platform. It also proposes digital tools through which citizens can monitor projects, submit complaints and access government performance information. This is one of the more concrete institutional ideas in his pro-

gramme because it addresses the information gap between government and citizens. The principle is not revolutionary. Around the world, governments have increasingly used digital platforms to make budget and procurement information more accessible. Its importance in Nigeria lies in the scale of the accountability challenge. However, publication alone is not enough. If local governments publish incomprehensible spreadsheets that citizens cannot interpret, transparency becomes a ritual rather than accountability. If citizens report irregularities but no institution investigates them, digital complaints become another dead end. Open government must therefore be linked to enforcement.

Discipline Must Apply to Everyone

Fiscal reform also requires a political culture capable of accepting limits. Government cannot promise everything to everyone. There will always be competing demands for roads, salaries, subsidies, security, education, healthcare and social programmes. A credible fiscal system must establish priorities and explain them. This means resisting politically convenient expenditure that has little developmental value. It also means strengthening revenue collection without placing unreasonable burdens on productive businesses and households.

The IMF has argued that faster gains in revenue mobilisation could create additional fiscal space for growth-enhancing priority spending. At the same time, it has stressed the importance of prioritising vulnerable households and maintaining credible macroeconomic policies. That balance matters. Fiscal discipline should not become an excuse for abandoning social protection. Nor should social spending become an excuse for refusing to confront waste. The objective is a government that spends carefully because citizens' needs are too important to permit waste.

**Ibrahim sent this piece from Abuja.*

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](#)

N3.5b Ogun LG Severance: When Leadership Meets Compassion

By Kayode Akinmade

FOR many of the former political office-holders who gathered at the Oba's Complex, Oke-Mosan, Abeokuta, the cheques handed to them were worth much more than the figures written on them. They represented something that money alone cannot adequately measure: relief after years of waiting, recognition after service and, perhaps most importantly, the restoration of hope.

The Ogun State government's payment of N3.503 billion in outstanding severance allowances to former political office-holders across the state's 20 local councils and Local Council Development Areas is therefore more than another government expenditure. It is a revealing moment in the character of governance and the meaning of leadership.

The beneficiaries, comprising former chairmen, vice-chairmen, secretaries to local councils, supervisors, special advisers and councillors who served between 2016 and 2024, had waited for years for their legitimate entitlements. The liabilities covered 526 beneficiaries from the 2016-2019 tenure and 516 from the 2020-2024 tenure. For some of them, the passage of time had steadily eroded the expectation that the money would ever come. Then came the intervention.

Rather than allowing the obligation to disappear into the maze of inherited liabilities, the administration of Governor Dapo Abiodun subjected the claims to verification and reconciliation and proceeded to settle the verified obligations. That decision is where the story moves beyond the numbers. Government is often discussed in terms of roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, investment figures and budgetary allocations. Those things matter. But there is another, less visible dimension of governance: what government does for people whose immediate needs do not necessarily make headlines.

The former local government office-holders fall into that category. They served their communities, left office and waited for what was due to them. For years, their claims remained unresolved. By the time the cheques arrived, some had moved from expectation to resignation. The words of Emiola Ghazal, former Chairman of Ijebu Ode Local Council, captured the emotion of the moment.

"This is unprecedented in Ogun State. We never believed a government could take responsibility for entitlements owed by its predecessor despite what the predecessor put the governor through. The governor is truly a promise keeper," Ghazal said.

Another beneficiary, Okunade Adebayo, alongside Abosede Balogun, commended the government for demonstrating that

the contributions of former political office-holders to grassroots development had not been forgotten. They also praised the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs for what they described as a seamless, transparent and orderly process.

Ghazal went further, describing Governor Abiodun as "a leader with the milk of human kindness." That phrase may sound simple, but it goes to the heart of what happened at Oke-Mosan. Leadership is not only about making difficult decisions when the spotlight is on. It is also about making responsible decisions when the beneficiaries may no longer possess the political influence they once had. In this instance, the administration had an opportunity to allow an inherited liability to remain an inherited problem. Instead, it chose to resolve the verified claims. That is the practical meaning of responsible governance.

The payment also fits into a broader picture of an administration that has sought to combine social responsibility with long-term economic transformation. Abiodun's years in office have been marked by programmes and policies aimed at expanding Ogun's economic base, improving infrastructure, attracting investment, strengthening agriculture and industrial production, creating opportunities for young people and positioning the state as a major destination for domestic and international capital.

The significance of that economic agenda goes beyond individual projects. A state cannot sustainably meet its obligations to its people without expanding the productive capacity of its economy. The logic is straightforward: care for the people today, while building an economy capable of supporting generations tomorrow. That is why the severance payment should not be viewed in isolation from the administration's wider development strategy. The same government that is pursuing investment, industrialisation, infrastructure and economic expansion is also confronting inherited obligations to people who served at the grassroots. One addresses the future; the other honours the past. Both are important dimensions of responsible leadership.

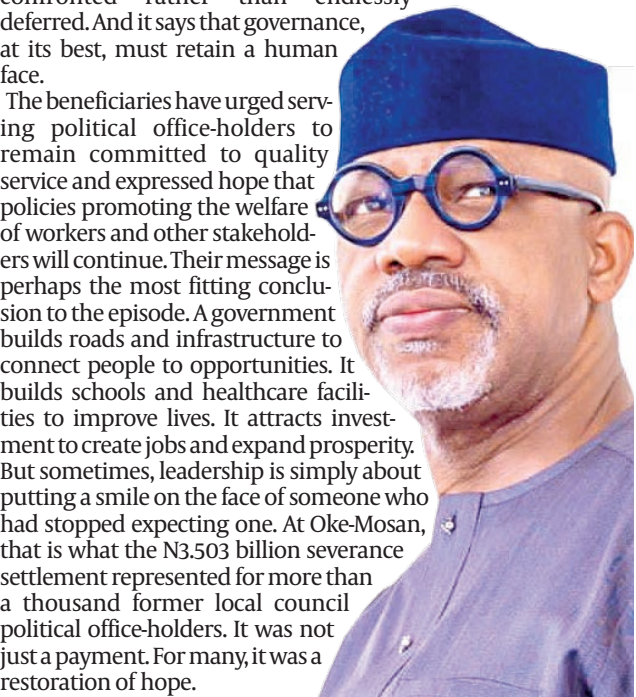
There is also an institutional lesson in the episode. Public administration should not operate on the principle that every change of government wipes the slate clean. Legitimate obligations do not cease to exist because the administration that incurred them has left office. Where such obligations are verified, government has a responsibility to deal with them within the law and available resources. That principle was at the centre of the administration's decision to undertake the verification and reconciliation exercise involving the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, the State Audit Department and the Local

Government Service Commission. The process mattered because compassion in government must be accompanied by accountability. It is not enough to say that people deserve to be paid; the claims must be established, verified and properly documented. The Ogun exercise sought to combine the two.

For the beneficiaries, however, the accounting procedures were secondary to the outcome. They received their money. For some, it will settle debts. For others, it will support families, businesses or long-delayed personal commitments. For many, perhaps the greatest value is simply the knowledge that after years of uncertainty, government eventually honoured what they believed they were legitimately owed. That is why the emotional response to the payment has been so strong.

The N3.5 billion is significant, but the deeper significance lies in what the payment communicates about the relationship between government and citizens who have served it. It says that service should have value. It says that legitimate obligations should not be forgotten. It says that inherited problems can be confronted rather than endlessly deferred. And it says that governance, at its best, must retain a human face.

The beneficiaries have urged serving political office-holders to remain committed to quality service and expressed hope that policies promoting the welfare of workers and other stakeholders will continue. Their message is perhaps the most fitting conclusion to the episode. A government builds roads and infrastructure to connect people to opportunities. It builds schools and healthcare facilities to improve lives. It attracts investment to create jobs and expand prosperity. But sometimes, leadership is simply about putting a smile on the face of someone who had stopped expecting one. At Oke-Mosan, that is what the N3.503 billion severance settlement represented for more than a thousand former local council political office-holders. It was not just a payment. For many, it was a restoration of hope.



CELEBRATING VISIONARY LEADERSHIP



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extraordinary possibilities!

Spotlight

Less than 100 days to the 2027 elections, Ekundayo Ajayi-Femi is making his case for a seat in the House of Representatives for Kosofe Federal Constituency. A civil engineer, real estate developer and entrepreneur, Ajayi-Femi is entering elective politics with a message centred on practical representation, accountability and development. His campaign priorities include infrastructure and sustainable community development, youth empowerment and economic opportunities, and education and human capital development. In this interview with **ONYEDIKA AGBEDO**, he speaks about his decision to move from the private sector into politics, what he believes effective representation should look like, the issues he considers most urgent in Kosofe, and the kind of leadership he hopes to offer.

You have spent most of your career in engineering, real estate and entrepreneurship. Why make the move into politics now?

FOR me, it comes from a growing conviction that the experience and skills I have built over the years can be put to wider use. Engineering teaches you to think about problems in practical terms. You have to understand what is wrong, work within real constraints, plan properly and follow through. Entrepreneurship also teaches you responsibility because decisions have consequences for people, projects and businesses.

Over time, I began to think more seriously about how those experiences could translate into public service. I have seen what happens when development is properly planned and what happens when it is not. At this stage of my life, I believe I can contribute beyond the private sector.

That is really what is driving this decision. I want to bring a practical and development-focused mindset into representation and ensure that the concerns of people in Kosofe are properly articulated and pursued. **This is your first bid for elective office. Why should voters trust someone without previous experience in government?**

I understand that question, and I think voters are right to ask it. Public office requires experience, but leadership experience does not begin only when someone enters government. I have spent my professional life managing projects, working with people, taking responsibility for decisions and operating in environments where you are expected to deliver.

What matters to me is whether the skills you bring are relevant to the responsibility you are seeking. I am also not approaching public service with the assumption that I know everything. Leadership requires the humility to listen, work with people who understand the issues and build partnerships where necessary. I believe there is value in bringing fresh professional experience into public service, especially when it is accompanied by discipline, integrity and openness.

Why Kosofe? What is it about the constituency that has convinced you that this is where you should seek public office?

Kosofe is a constituency with enormous human and economic potential. You have young people who are ambitious, businesses working hard to grow, families trying to build stable lives and communities that are continuing to expand. At the same time, there are real pressures around infrastructure, employment, education and access to opportunity.

Those realities are important to me because they are closely connected to the areas where I have spent much of my professional life. What I want is to bring that experience into service, while working closely with residents, community leaders, businesses and other stakeholders. I do not believe anyone can represent a constituency effectively from a distance. You have to listen consistently, understand what people are experiencing and keep those concerns at the centre of the work.

You have said representation in Kosofe needs to become more accessible and accountable. What exactly do you think is missing today?

Representation Should Be Measured By Outcomes, Not Visibility — Ajayi-Femi

I think people should have a much clearer relationship with the person who represents them. Representation should involve regular engagement. Constituents should know what issues their representative is pursuing, what progress has been made, what challenges exist and where their intervention is required.

For me, accountability also means being honest about what the office can and cannot do. It is easy to make promises. The harder task is to explain the process, follow issues through and report back to the people. I want representation to be judged by practical outcomes and responsiveness rather than how visible a politician is or how often people hear speeches. That relationship between representative and constituent should be active throughout the term, not only when another election is approaching.

Infrastructure is one of the central themes of your campaign. What do you believe a federal lawmaker can realistically do about roads, drainage and public infrastructure in Kosofe?

The first thing is to be realistic about the role of a legislator. A member of the House of Representatives does not become the executive authority responsible for every road or drainage project in the constituency.

However, representation gives you an important platform for advocacy, legislation, oversight, budget engagement and collaboration with the relevant levels of government and agencies. That is where I believe the work has to be serious.

You need to understand which interventions fall under federal responsibility, where state or local government involvement is required, and how to build the partnerships needed to move issues forward.

My engineering background gives me a particular interest in planning, execution and maintenance. Infrastructure should respond to actual community needs, and there should be stronger attention to quality and sustainability rather than simply announcing projects.

Youth unemployment is a major problem across Nigeria, but you have also identified women empowerment, education and health as important priorities. How would these translate into a practical agenda for Kosofe?

I see these issues as connected because they all affect the quality of life and opportunities available to people.

For young people and women, my focus is on skills, entrepreneurship, employment pathways and stronger access to economic opportunities. On education, we need to strengthen the link between learning and the realities of the economy, so people leave school with practical skills and the

ability to create value.

Health is equally important. As a federal legislator, I would advocate for stronger interventions, support relevant budgetary and legislative efforts, and work with the appropriate agencies and levels of government to improve access to quality healthcare. The role of representation is to keep these issues on the agenda, build the right partnerships and use the available legislative and oversight tools to move them forward.

Education is another priority you have identified. What do you think needs to change in the way we currently prepare young people for the future?

We need to strengthen the connection between education, skills and the economy. Education remains fundamental, but young people should leave school with more than certificates. They need the ability to solve problems, communicate, use technology, think critically and create value. That means giving greater attention to vocational and technical education, digital skills, entrepreneurship and partnerships between schools, businesses and professional organisations.

Government cannot achieve everything alone. There is a lot the private sector and educational institutions can contribute when

the right partnerships exist. My interest is in ensuring that education opens doors rather than leaving young people qualified on paper but disconnected from opportunity.

Nigerian politics is often criticised for being driven by promises that are forgotten once elections are over. How would

you want people to hold you accountable if you are elected?

By what I say I will do and what I actually pursue. I believe credibility starts with being careful about the commitments you make. One of the reasons I have been deliberate about my professional record is that I do not want figures or achievements attributed to me unless they can be verified. I want the same standard to apply in politics.

If elected, people should be able to see what issues I have raised, what interventions I have pursued, what progress has been made and where there have been challenges. There should be regular communication with constituents, and that communication should include difficult conversations when necessary. Accountability becomes meaningful when people have enough information to judge your performance for themselves. **You describe yourself as young, solutions-driven and progress-oriented. How do you ensure those ideas do not become another set of campaign slogans?**

By attaching them to actual behaviour. Being solutions-driven means you do the work required to understand a problem before proposing an answer. Being people-focused means you listen even when what people are saying is uncomfortable. Being progress-oriented means you should be able to point to movement and outcomes over time.

Those principles have to show up in how the campaign behaves and, eventually, in how the office is run.

I also think people are increasingly sophisticated about political messaging. You cannot sustain credibility on slogans alone. The substance has to catch up with the language very quickly.

Finally, if you had to tell the people of Kosofe what you want your candidacy to represent, what would you say?

I want it to represent possibility, competence and service. I want young people to see that there is room for professionals and people from different backgrounds to step forward and contribute to public life. I want residents to feel that representation can be accessible and that their concerns deserve to be taken seriously. And I want people to know that my approach will always be grounded in facts, practical thinking and respect for the people I am seeking to serve.

There is a great deal of potential in Kosofe. My ambition is to contribute to unlocking more of it through purposeful, accountable and people-centred representation. That is the commitment I am bringing to this race.

I think people should have a much clearer relationship with the person who represents them. Representation should involve regular engagement. Constituents should know what issues their representative is pursuing, what progress has been made, what challenges exist and where their intervention is required.



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Truth, Trust... Sustaining The Integrity

Truth, Trust, and the Future of Journalism in Nigeria; Chinyere Stella Okunna, Tony U. Onyima, Iyobosa Uwugiaren, Angela U. Agoawike and Kabir Alabi Garba (eds); Premium Times Books and the Nigerian Guild of Editors; Lagos; 2026

Review

By Olayinka Oyegbile

WHAT is Truth? What is Trust? If you have the truth, you are trusted. If you are trusted, it means you have the truth. The two are mutually exclusive. You can't have one without the other. Journalism is a profession; some say it is a vocation. Whichever one you call it, journalism cannot do without the two - Truth and Trust; they are like the Siamese twins. They are inseparable. A newspaper is called *Daily Trust*, another, *The Guardian*, takes its motto from the immortal word of Uthman Dan Fodio which says, "Conscience is an open wound, only the Truth can heal it."!

It is therefore not a surprise that the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) is presenting to the world a book titled *Truth, Trust, and the Future of Journalism*. Let me state the obvious: journalism without these two ingredients: Truth and Trust, has no future. Most of us here today are old enough to remember a magazine called *Akapa's World*. It was published in the late eighties and early nineties when the world of magazine publishing was the rave. What killed it? Lack of Truth and Trust!

You will remember that it came out with an edition, which claimed a certain Nigerian girl resident was a girlfriend to Michael Jackson! The same Michael Jackson, the greatest Pop Music sensation of all times with a Nigerian as girlfriend? It was the biggest news of the time. The magazine was an immediate sell out. If my memory serves me right, it went into several reprints because readers demanded for more copies. *Akapa's World* outsold all news magazines of the time in Nigeria. I am sure most editors of news magazines of that time would have wondered why they missed such a "World Exclusive".

As my people would say, "Ti iro balo ni ogun odun, ojokan ni ototo yio fi ba", which roughly translates as, "If lies travels for twenty years, it takes a day for truth to overtake it." The eighties was not a time of Internet, so news travels not by a click of a button. Newspapers published in the United Kingdom arrives in Nigeria two or three days after, not to talk of those published in the Americas and other far parts of the world. A few months later, perhaps after the magazine had circulated in the United States of America and other parts of the world, the truth caught up with it. Michael Jackson had no girlfriend going by the name the magazine published nor a Nigerian girlfriend!!!

What killed *Akapa's World*? Lack of Truth and Trust!!! Simple. It is against this backdrop that I intend to dissect this book. The NGE has assembled field experienced editors to consider these two great ingredients and the future of journalism. Of recent, there have been fears that [journalism is dying](#), not only in Nigeria but across the world. Technology has advanced journalism, some argue, and it has at the same time served as its death knell.

In 14 chapters, each of the writers deals with the issues approaching them from different perspectives under the three sections it is broken into. The three sections are: Section one deals with: Truth: The Foundation of Credible Journalism with four essays. Section two is on: Trust: Rebuilding Trust in the Media, with five essays, while the third is on: The Future: Reinventing Journalism for an Evolving Media Ecosystem which is made of five essays.

The first article, "The Enduring Principles of Journalism" by Lanre Idowu, deals with the cardinal rules of journalism which have not changed and would never change despite the changing atmosphere in which the profession operates.

According to him, "Good journalism is knowledgeable, credible, trustworthy, and sustainable... Bad journalism by contrast, conflates fact and fiction, privileges convenience over rigour, and often succumbs to vested interests" (P3-4). He lists out these enduring principles and the challenges they face, not leaving out how to surmount them.

Akpandem James in his titled "Journalism in the Age of Misinformation, Disinformation and Deepfakes" tackles the hydra-headed monsters of disinformation and disinformation



as earlier narrated in the *Akapa's World* magazine story. He declares that we are on the threshold of when "the news environment has become toxic, and consumers are constipated." (p19). He posits that the unregulated environment in which journalism operates has led to a situation where, "non-journalists now compete with, and even rival, trained journalists in content creation and distribution, often disseminating toxic material that undermines organized society and erodes public trust in the media." (p21).

What does he think is the way out? According to James, digital technology which he sees as the profession's Achilles' heel has advanced the practice and to mitigate "the negative fallout of the digital media and sanitizing the communication landscape require an inclusive stakeholder-led approach. Strengthening the professional capabilities of journalists is not merely technical but foundational to maintaining an informed citizenry." (p36).

In chapter three, Kabir Alabi Garba focuses on: "Investigative Journalism in Challenging Environments." Whether in a democracy or autocracy, investigative journalism is the torchlight to development and societal growth. However, since the return of democracy in 1999, opinions have remained divided over whether this genre of journalism thrived more under the military than in a democracy. The

answer is blowing in the winds.

In tackling this, Garba observes that to sustain investigative journalism, there must be legal reforms, sustainable models of funding, regional collaboration and cross-border networks among others. In conclusion he avers that, investigative journalism helps to build public trust and that "it is not a luxury of democratic maturity; it is a precondition for it." (p66).

In the closing the first section in Chapter four, Sule Yau Sule's "No Spin Zone: Why Journalism Must Resist Public Relations' Influence," is a chapter every journalist MUST read and study with a fine toothcomb. It dissects the issue in a very matured and distinctive manner. I recommend its reading because many journalists are today more of public relations practitioners than journalists!

This is not meant as an insult. Public Relations is not Journalism and vice versa.

Sule declares, "journalism exists to provide accurate, verified and balanced information that enables citizens to make informed decisions; it promotes transparency, and holds individuals and institutions accountable." (p72). That is journalism.

So, what is Public Relations? He writes, "Public Relations, by contrast, is primarily concerned with managing communication on behalf of organizations to protect their reputation, foster mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders and influence public perception." (p72). Any surprise why the media is shrinking? We have allowed the two to intersect and the thin line that separates them have become too blurred and unnoticed even by journalists and PR people are riding on this. However, our discerning readers and viewers can see those lines which we pretend not to see.

How then do we stem the tide? Sule, while believing that public relations is an important source of information, observes that the only way to rescue the media is, "By investing in investigative journalism, strengthening ethical standards, promoting sustainable media structures and maintaining a commitment to public interest reporting." (p105).

Section two opens with Iyobosa Uwagiaren's "Rebuilding Trust in Nigeria's News Media". In my opening statement I said, "If you have the truth, you are trusted. If you are trusted, it means you have the truth." According to him, "The challenge facing journalism is not a complete collapse of trust

This book deals extensively with the responsibilities of journalists and how to meet up with the changes in their profession. It is not a book to be placed quietly on a library shelf but rather a working manual for survival, a manifesto for democratic resilience and indispensable guide for anyone who cares about the future of truth.

Of Journalism Practice

but its fragmentation. While many Nigerians continue to express confidence in journalism in the abstract, they increasingly question the credibility of specific news organisations, narratives and actors.” (p111).

After listing the impediments to building trusts and factors contributing to its decline in the media, Uwagiaren concludes, “Trust is not merely a professional asset but a foundational condition for informed citizenship, public deliberation, and democratic accountability. Without it, journalism’s capacity to perform its democratic functions is significantly weakened.” (p137).

Tony Onyima in his, “Press Freedom and Safety of Journalists in Nigeria”, touches on how lack of safety nets impedes freedom of the press. Citing the arrests of Agba Jalingo in Cross River, and Steven Kefas in Southern Kaduna and the killing of the Saudi Arabian journalist Kamal Khassoggi in Turkey, he concludes that, “Where journalists are unsafe, democracy is diminished, where they are protected, citizens are well-informed and democratic governance strengthened.” It is difficult to fault this.

Hamza Idris’ “Digital Journalism: Multimedia Skills, Cybersecurity and Audience-Centred Reporting” in chapter seven deals with how digital technologies have reshaped and transformed how news is produced and consumed. He avers that the emergence of internet, social media, mobile technologies etc. have changed the dynamics of news, thus making it more “audience-centred”. Making copious example of the *Daily Trust*, Nigeria’s unarguably the most converged newsroom in the country, he concludes, “The contemporary journalist is no longer simply a writer or broadcaster but a multimedia communicator capable of producing content across diverse digital platforms.” (p174).

In chapter eight, Sylvester Odion Akhaine in his “Media, INEC, Voters and Path to Credible Elections” traced the role of the media in ensuring transparent and credible elections through voter education and focusing on the electoral body to ensure nonpartisanship. As the country moves toward another election next year, he states that “INEC has its constitutional role clearly defined – to manage elections in a credible manner” (P221), while “Voters require continuing education to enhance their capacity for informed choice in ways that undermine the tendency to succumb to financial inducement by unscrupulous politicians. Both the media and INEC can accelerate their activities in this regard. If these critical stakeholders play their roles, it is hoped that the Nigerian democratic train would be steered on the right course.” (p222). So much optimism as we march into 2027.

In closing section two, chapter nine by the duo of Eluem Emeka Izeze and Marcel Mbamalu, while dissecting “Journalism and Good Governance: Media as Public Watchdog”, approach this must talked about role of the media with the finesse of professionals who know their onions. Listing obstacles to the effectiveness of the media in playing the role of a watchdog, they aver that, “In Nigeria, studies of media and governance show that the press served the public interest most when it operated from an adversarial position.” (p228).

This is the naked truth. Since 1999 when the country returned to democracy, attempts to hold politicians accountable by a section of the media have been viewed in some quarters as “threats to democracy” and this has indirectly led to, “A sustained drop in public confidence in mainstream news organisations, particularly in contexts where digital platforms have disrupted traditional journalism models.” (p223). How does the media get out of this bind? Izeze and Mbamalu believe, “Journalism remains essential to good governance. . . . The future of good governance is inseparable from that of journalism. Without a credible and trusted media system, accountability weakens, and governance outcomes deteriorate.” (p246).

The last segment of the book, under the broad theme of “The Future: Reinventing Journalism for an Evolving Media Ecosystem”, has five chapters. The first under this section (Chapter ten) by Chinyere Stella Okunna and Adaobi Olivia Okeke is titled: “Journalism Education and Journalistic Skills for the Future.”

The writers take a comprehensive look at the training of 21st Century media personnel in line with world standards and current realities. While lauding the unbundling of the courses under what used to be known as mass communication into eight courses, the writers say, “Contemporary journal-

ists are expected to produce contents across multiple formats, including text, video, podcasts, infographics, social media posts and interactive reports.” (p267).

Chapter eleven by Angela Agoawike with the title “The Future of News: Reinventing Journalism for Public Good”, vividly reminds me of Mr. Muyiwa Adetiba’s TNT (Today’s News Today). In the 1990s, Mr Adetiba’s TNT was an early morning/mid-afternoon newspaper that prided itself as giving you ‘today’s news today.’ According to it, you don’t have to wait till the next morning to read about what happened on that day. It was perhaps Nigeria’s precursor of news on the go that later became the internet!

In examining how to make journalism to be relevant despite “the rush by smartphone wielding members of the public to share news without first verifying its accuracy, journalism’s agenda setting and gatekeeping roles have been largely diminished.” (p281).

However, she is optimistic that this trend could be salvaged. Her prescription? “Journalism may be struggling, but not because it has become irrelevant. . . Journalism must navigate the challenges posed by digital disruption to serve the public interest again. Therein lies the future of news.” (p295).

The major concern of the writers are issues of trust, truth and digital transformations and how these three have combined to change the way news is consumed and produced. Dapo Olorunyomi in “Digital Transformation and African Newsroom” takes a kaleidoscopic view of the changes that have occurred across the newsroom on the continent and how this has affected their operations. While agreeing that platforms such as Google, Facebook, X, TikTok, YouTube and others influence news, he declares that, “The newsroom is therefore no longer merely a factory for producing news but a hub for curating, interpreting, and validating knowledge generated across digital networks. . . The newsroom of the future will therefore be more than a publisher. It will be part laboratory, archive, part civic institution, and part knowledge ecosystem.” (p309, 326). All these would be achieved only if the media maintained continuous trust, truth and credibility.

Lanre Arogundade’s “Diversity and Inclusion in the Newsroom” discusses how the media could help attain diversity in a multicultural, multinational and multilingual society like Nigeria. He believes the media is capable of doing this because “newsrooms can aggregate a range of experiences, perspectives, languages, to represent society properly and strengthen democratic deliberation more accurately.” (349).

The closing chapter by Azu Ishiekwe, “Economic Sustainability of the News Media: A Personal Story”, should interest a lot of us here today. How do we make news production self-sustaining and not dependent on ‘subsidy’ (Nigeria’s most abused word, if you know what I mean).

After taking a look at how newspapers have survived in the past based on advertisements, copy sales and other business models, he concludes that digital disruption has since made these obsolete and unsustainable. Looking at other options such as innovation, diversification, billing big tech companies as recently approved in Australia, co-created contents as well as philanthropy and grants, he concludes that journalism can be strong, “if only it is financially viable.”

The writer of *Writing for the Media and Monetising It*, while assessing efforts and success of *The Guardian* in the United Kingdom in building a paywall for readers of its contents failed to tell us how efforts by The Punch Newspapers to do the same was frustrated by other leading newspapers who never thought it necessary. Perhaps, if they had followed suit, we may have been telling a different story today rather than allow our contents to be feasted upon freely by readers and tech companies who reap from our sweat!!!

The missing link

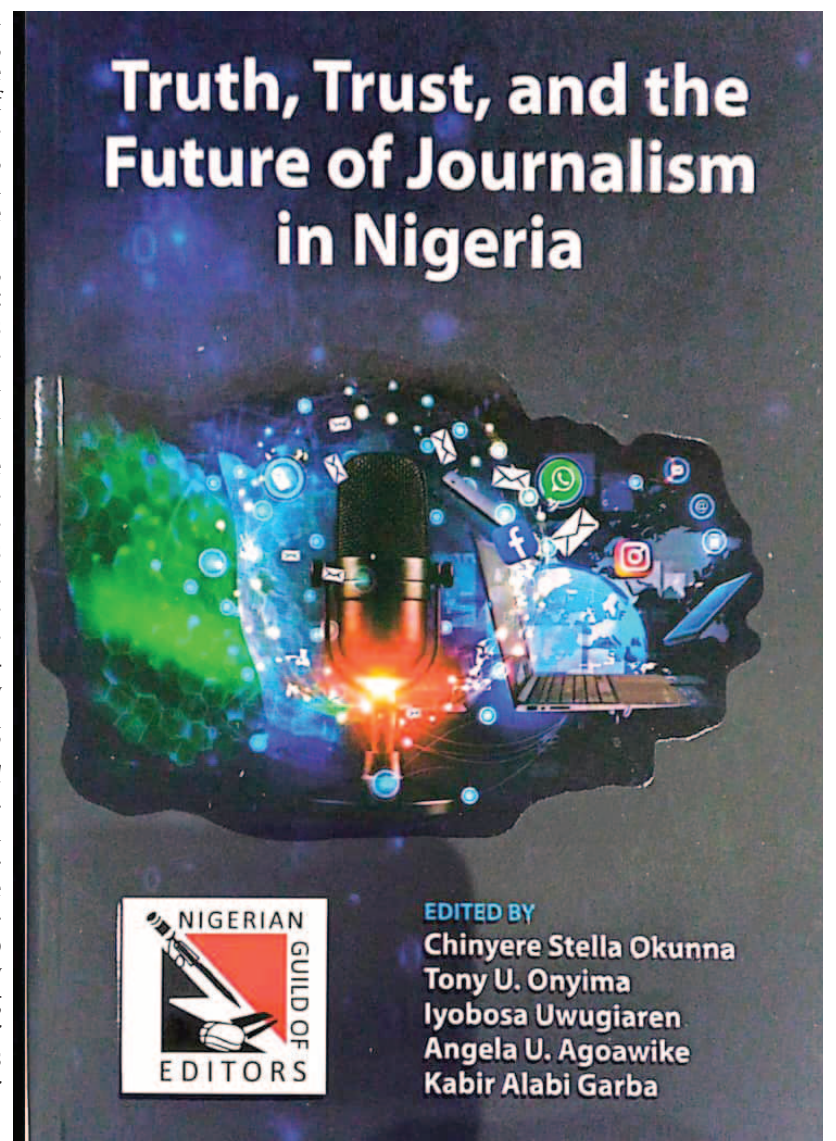
Consequently, this book deals extensively with the responsibilities of journalists and how to meet up with the changes in their profession. Fine lines of thoughts! However, with all the technological and digital advancements that have been made; how do we ensure we turn these into revenue yielding ventures to benefit the producers of the news and contents? This is an area we must focus our attention on. How far has the Guild’s appeal to the federal government to help make data companies pay for using our contents? Australia has done it, what are we waiting for? Journalism should no longer be treated as a social service or charity. Journalists have families and societal obligations to fulfill.

Finally, I want to salute the leadership of the Nigerian Guild of Editors for this landmark publication. The Guild should continue with such initiatives and not allow itself to be turned into a social club. This effort reminds me of the tenure of Lanre Arogundade as Chairman of the Lagos Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists in terms of publications. The Guild has really brought the ‘Gown to the Town, and the Town to the Gown’, with the surfeit of experienced editors who came together to share their thoughts and demonstrate that they are not only good at editing or identifying news and features, but they are capable of enriching our curriculum with on-the-field notes written with academic candour and sagacity.

I will like to toe the line of Prof. Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika, who in her Foreword wrote that, “This is not a book to be placed quietly on a library shelf but rather a working manual for survival, a manifesto for democratic resilience and indispensable guide for anyone who cares about the future of truth.” (pxxviii). It should be made available to all institutions across the country where media studies are taught.

Prof Chinyere Stella Okunna deserves all accolades for distilling the thoughts of editors into what I strongly believe is a sterling academic addition to the growing literature of media texts written by our own people from our perspectives and experience.

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2027: What Ogun Voters Expect From Yayi And Adebutu

By Mikail Mumuni

As political activities intensify in Ogun State ahead of the 2027 general election, one question deserves the attention of every governorship candidate seeking the people's mandate: what exactly do Ogun voters expect from the next governor?

The answer is neither complicated nor mysterious. The people want purposeful leadership, economic opportunities, improved infrastructure, affordable education and healthcare, security of lives and property, and a government that listens and delivers measurable results. Above all, they want a governor who understands that political power is a responsibility entrusted by the electorate, not a trophy to be celebrated after a successful campaign.

These expectations should form the foundation of every serious gubernatorial bid. Unfortunately, there are already indications that the contest could be distracted by personality clashes, political rivalries and the temptation to make another candidate the central issue of one's campaign. This is where the contrasting approaches associated with Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, popularly known as Yayi, and the Peoples Democratic Party's Ladi Adebutu become worthy of examination.

While Yayi remains focused on presenting his vision and demonstrating why he is qualified to lead Ogun State, Adebutu appears increasingly preoccupied with explaining why Yayi should not become governor. Rather than concentrating on articulating his own readiness to govern, his political messaging risks being reduced to opposition to a rival. What should such a fixation be called—strategic opposition, political anxiety or a failure to establish a compelling alternative vision? Whatever name one chooses, the fundamental question remains: how does a candidate convince voters that he deserves their mandate by spending more time discussing his opponent than explaining what he intends to do for the people?

Ogun State occupies a strategic position in Nigeria's economic landscape. Its proximity to Lagos, industrial clusters, agricultural resources, educational institutions and growing commercial centres give it enormous

potential for expansion. Potential alone, however, does not translate into prosperity. It requires deliberate planning, effective administration, infrastructure development, and leadership capable of converting opportunities into tangible benefits for residents. For the trader in Abeokuta, the farmer in Ijebu, the manufacturer in Agbara, the artisan in Ilaro and the young graduate searching for employment, the identity of the next governor matters principally because of what that person can deliver. They want roads that make movement easier, not political promises that disappear after elections. They want reliable electricity, improved water supply, a business-friendly environment and policies that enable small and medium-sized enterprises to survive and grow. They also want a government that recognises the importance of rural communities. Development should not be concentrated in a few urban centres while residents of smaller towns and villages struggle with inadequate roads, limited healthcare facilities and insufficient economic opportunities.

Consequently, gubernatorial candidates must explain how their proposed policies will address these challenges. General assurances of development are no longer enough. Voters deserve to understand the priorities, timelines, funding arrangements and implementation strategies behind every major promise.

Infrastructure remains central to Ogun State's development prospects. The next governor will inherit the responsibility of sustaining ongoing projects, identifying deficits and ensuring that public expenditure produces lasting value. Roads, bridges, drainage systems and transportation networks must be planned with the state's expanding population and industrial activities in mind. Ogun's position as a gateway between Lagos and other parts of Nigeria presents opportunities that require strategic exploitation. Industrial estates, manufacturing companies, logistics operators and commercial enterprises need efficient transportation networks and a pre-

dictable operating environment. The emerging opportunities associated with the Gateway Deep Sea Port and the proposed Blue Marine Economic Zone further reinforce the importance of long-term planning. If properly developed, such investments could stimulate trade, attract industries and create employment.

But voters will reasonably ask what these developments mean for them. How will local businesses benefit? What opportunities will be available to Ogun indigenes? How will the state prepare its young people for jobs in emerging industries? What measures will prevent surrounding communities from being excluded from the benefits of economic expansion?

These are the questions candidates should answer instead of allowing political disagreements to dominate public conversation. Youth unemployment and underemployment remain significant concerns. Ogun State cannot achieve its full economic potential without deliberately investing in the capabilities of its young population. The next governor must present a credible employment strategy that connects education, vocational training, entrepreneurship and industrial development.

Candidates should explain how their administrations would work with manufacturers, technology companies, agricultural enterprises and other private-sector employers to expand opportunities for young people. Government-backed skills programmes must be

designed around actual labour-market demands rather than political publicity. Entrepreneurship initiatives should provide more than ceremonial presentations of cheques; they should offer access to finance, business development support, mentorship and markets.

Education also deserves sustained attention. Ogun State has a strong tradition of educational achievement, but preserving that reputation requires investment in school facilities, teacher development, modern learning resources and technical education. Parents want schools where children can learn effectively. Teachers want an environment that enables them to perform their duties. Young people want an educational system that prepares them for meaningful employment and responsible citizenship. A candidate who cannot explain how to strengthen these foundations has not adequately addressed one of the electorate's most important concerns.

Beyond infrastructure and employment, voters expect accessible healthcare and a secure environment in which families and businesses can thrive. The next administration must demonstrate how it intends to improve primary healthcare, strengthen referral systems, equip public hospitals and ensure that residents can access essential medical services without unbearable financial pressure.

Security is equally fundamental. Farmers must be able to work their land without fear. Traders need to conduct business safely. Communities must have confidence that security agencies can respond effectively to threats.

Candidates should therefore articulate practical strategies for community policing cooperation, intelligence gathering, conflict prevention and the protection of vulnerable communities.

Mumuni, MNGE, is a member of the Media and Publicity Committee of the Ogun State APC Campaign Council.



Audi Abubakar's Steadfast Leadership And Transformation Of NSCDC

By Oladapo Sofowora

In the intricate landscape of Nigeria's internal security architecture, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has undergone a profound redefinition of its institutional identity in recent years but that transformation was put to its most severe test in September 2026, when the death of 37 suspected illegal miners in custody in Minna thrust both the Corps and its helmsman, Commandant-General Ahmed Abubakar Audi, into the glare of national scrutiny. Yet, in the midst of grief and legitimate demands for accountability, Audi's response, transparent and principled nature illustrates precisely why he merits commendation rather than condemnation for the pivotal role he has played in the quest for justice.

Between 15 and 16 September 2026, operatives of the NSCDC Niger State Command conducted operations against illegal mining activities in the M.I. Wushishi and Lukoto areas of Minna, resulting in the arrest of dozens of suspects. In the early hours of 17 September, 37 of those detained were discovered dead in custody. The Command initially attributed the deaths to a suspected disease outbreak, but the Corps' national headquarters moved swiftly to clarify that the actual cause of death had not been established and would be determined only through medical and laboratory confirmation. That measured posture, resisting the temptation to offer convenient explanations, prevented premature conclusions that could have compounded an already grave situation. The anguish of bereaved families was palpable and wholly understandable and how Audi responded to them revealed the character of

the NSCDC leadership.

Confronted with this crisis, Audi did not retreat into evasion or defensiveness. He acted with a clarity that has too often been absent in Nigeria's security establishment. First, he constituted a high-level investigative panel. He directed the establishment of a team led by the Deputy Commandant-General in charge of Intelligence and Investigation, with a mandate encompassing every material question; the circumstances of the arrests, the duration and conditions of detention and the medical care or absence thereof afforded to those held. That a security institution would subject itself



Audi Abubakar

to such internal scrutiny is, in the Nigerian context, far from commonplace.

Second, he suspended the officers implicated. The Niger State Commandant, Suberu Siyaka Aniviye, was suspended with immediate effect pending the outcome of investigations. The Federal Ministry of Interior endorsed the measure, describing the incident as regrettable and pledging a comprehensive inquiry, which is set to unravel the true picture of the situation. This refusal to shield one's own, the instinct that so often corrodes public trust, was a conspicuous departure from institutional habit.

Third, he embraced inter-agency cooperation. The Corps worked in concert with health authorities and sister security agencies to ensure that appropriate medical and public health measures were instituted and that the welfare of those still in custody was treated as paramount. The bodies of the deceased were transferred to the Minna General Hospital for medical examination to ascertain the true cause of death.

In his public statement, Audi mourned with the families of the deceased and pledged that "the incident will be thoroughly investigated and dealt with appropriately, in accordance with established facts." This is the language of a leader anchored in evidence rather than expediency and in the annals of Nigerian security governance, such restraint deserves to be acknowledged.

To appreciate the logic of Audi's response in Minna, one must consider the broader trajectory of his stewardship of the NSCDC. Upon assuming office in 2021, he inherited a Corps that was underfunded, poorly equipped and

demoralised due to some internal issues that needed re-jigging. In the public imagination, the NSCDC was little more than a peripheral agency only visible during electioneering period, directing traffic at fuel stations, but seldom regarded as a serious instrument of internal security. Audi, as a trained scholar with a repertoire of knowledge in security, envisaged something altogether more consequential and his reform agenda has been both systematic and deliberately hinged on professionalism.

He established specialised operational units among them the Mining Enforcement Corps, the Special Intelligence Squad, the Female Special Squad and the Strike Force. The creation of the Mining Enforcement Unit was itself a response to the plunder of Nigeria's mineral wealth and the strategic logic that animated the Minna operation flows directly from that mandate. That the operation ended in tragedy is a matter of profound regret; that illegal mining warranted decisive enforcement is indeed not in doubt.

His infusion of technological gadgets in the corps operation laid a solid foundation for a more coordinated security effort.

Audi, with the help of the Federal Government, equipped state commands with tactical aerial surveillance drones, night-vision devices, GPS trackers and body-worn cameras, translating the rhetoric of intelligence-led operations into operational reality. This shift from brute force to informed precision reflects a sophisticated understanding of modern security best practice. Under his leadership, protection of economic assets became a paramount mandate.

By Adeyemi Adepetun

WHEN the UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (UK PACT) programme entered its second phase in Nigeria in March 2026, it marked a decisive pivot from policy design to delivery. The stakes could not be higher: Nigeria, Africa’s largest economy and most populous nation, is racing to meet its ambitious Energy Transition Plan (ETP) while grappling with entrenched challenges in its power sector. UK PACT’s Phase 2 strategy is designed to move beyond isolated interventions, aiming instead for systemic change at scale, where policy, finance, and implementation converge to deliver tangible outcomes.

For emphasis, the UK PACT is a UK-funded technical assistance programme supporting Nigeria’s energy transition and climate goals. Phase 2 shifts from policy design to delivery, focusing on making renewable energy projects investment-ready and scalable.

From Policy to Delivery: A New Mandate
PHASE 1 of UK PACT in Nigeria focused heavily on policy frameworks and institutional capacity. While this laid important groundwork, the lesson was clear: technical assistance must be tied to real delivery pathways. Phase 2, is therefore prioritising support for Nigeria’s energy transition and green growth with a sharper focus on downstream delivery and investment readiness.

Speaking with *The Guardian*, Senior UK PACT Officer, British High Commission, Nigeria, Folakemi Aletan, observed that the programme is enabling a more competitive and investment-ready renewable energy market by demonstrating how decentralised renewable energy (DRE) systems and other clean technologies can integrate into existing power systems.

Aletan said it is also developing viable financial models to mobilise capital for clean energy development. Special attention is being paid to underserved areas, with community-based approaches designed to ensure inclusivity and sustainability.

Creating bankable outcomes
ONE of the most pressing questions for any technical assistance programme is how to ensure outputs translate into real-world impact. UK PACT is tackling this head-on by embedding early engagement with financiers, operators, and off-takers.

Aletan said the goal is to align technical work with market realities, ensuring that outputs are not just academic reports but practical tools, templates, guidelines, and investment-ready documentation.

A striking example comes from UK PACT-funded support to Nigeria’s Rural Electrification Agency (REA). She said working with the UKNIAF team, the programme helped operationalise previously stalled renewable energy assets under the Korea Energy Project. By developing sustainable commercial models for operations and maintenance, and frameworks for engaging private operators,

UK PACT Phase 2: Unlocking Nigeria’s Path To Scalable Green Growth

mini-grid sites in Rubochi (900kW) and Ikwa (100kW) are now fully operational.

“The Rubochi mini-grid alone serves approximately 4,000 households, making it one of the largest community-based solar mini-grids in the Federal Capital Territory. This is the kind of concrete, bankable outcome UK PACT aims to replicate across Nigeria,” she stated.

Role of Green Finance and Investment Facility

BEYOND technical assistance, financing remained the critical bottleneck for renewable energy projects. Recognising this, Phase 2 has funded the design of the Green Finance and Investment Facility (GFIF) designed by Barton Heyman Limited working with the Rural Electrification Agency (REA). Designed as a catalytic platform, GFIF bridges the gap between project development and access to finance. It combines results-based financing, senior concessional debt, co-lending, and equity co-investment into a single coordinated instrument specifically for Nigeria’s distributed renewable energy sector.

Through GFIF, UK PACT is helping partners strengthen project pipelines and develop investment-ready opportunities that can attract both public and private capital. The Senior UK PACT Officer, British High Commission, said the facility is also supporting access to international climate finance mechanisms, including multilateral climate funds and development finance institutions, by ensuring projects meet global investment standards.

According to her, by structuring opportunities for blended finance, combining concessional funding with private investment, UK PACT is improving risk-return profiles and making projects more attractive to investors. The ultimate aim is to create a strong pipeline of bankable projects that will continue to attract climate and clean energy investments long after UK PACT’s direct involvement ends.

Aligning with Nigeria’s Energy Transition Plan

ALIGNMENT with Nigeria’s Energy Transition Plan (ETP), alongside other key policies such as the Climate Change Act and NDC 3.0, is central to UK PACT’s approach. All projects are assessed against the UK’s International

Climate Finance Transformational Change criteria, mitigation potential, and contributions to Gender, Equality, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI). This ensures that interventions are not only technically sound but also socially inclusive and strategically aligned.

On this, Aletan submitted that the programme is informed by demand, working in close partnership with key government stakeholders including the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), the office of the Minister of State for Health, the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Federal Ministry of Power, REA, and the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission.

She noted that this country-led approach ensures relevance, ownership, and long-term impact, while also advancing UK international climate objectives such as mobilising green finance and building strong international partnerships.

Navigating Nigeria’s Complex Power Sector
NIGERIA’s electricity market presents both opportunity and challenge. The country has abundant underutilised hydro resources and growing demand for reliable power, yet implementation of small hydropower (SHP) and community energy solutions is frequently stalled by fragmentation across technical, commercial, regulatory, and institutional interfaces. Many SHP projects fail not because of weak technology, but because the commercial and governance architecture around them is underdeveloped.

On this, the UK PACT’s approach is to treat hydropower not just as an engineering project but as a market solution. At a recent UK PACT-supported Commercial Pathway workshop on the Ikere Gorge hydropower project, a breakthrough was achieved by aligning early with the regulator (NERC), the distribution company (IBEDC), and the project developer (Quaint Energy).

Aletan said this shifted the focus from whether the project could generate power to how to structure a commercially viable and bankable model that works for all parties.

Explaining, she said by creating this early “governance bridge,” projects like Ikere Gorge—dormant for over four decades, can move forward with greater clarity, reduced risk, and stronger investor confidence.

This model provides a replicable pathway for unlocking small hydropower and community energy projects across Nigeria, particularly in underserved areas where reliable and affordable power is most needed.

Strengthening Nigeria’s Global Climate Voice
BEYOND domestic energy projects, UK PACT is also strengthening Nigeria’s international negotiating capacity. By

enhancing technical, analytical, and institutional capabilities, the programme is enabling Nigeria to more confidently advocate for and secure finance and partnerships in global climate negotiations. This includes delivering an economy-wide Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system required to implement a carbon budget and operationalise a carbon market framework. Such systemic interventions position Nigeria not just as a recipient of climate finance but as a credible leader in low-carbon development.

Unlocking Dormant Dams: AP3’s Small Hydropower Programme

A MAJOR strand of Phase 2 delivery is the UK PACT Nigeria Small Hydropower Programme, led by AP3 Advisory Services.

Speaking with *The Guardian*, Director, UK PACT Nigeria Small Hydropower Programme, AP3 Advisory Services, Dr Gori Olusina Daniel, said rather than financing or building plants directly, AP3 prepares dormant public dams for investment through feasibility studies, dam safety audits, environmental and social assessments, and commercial structuring.

Daniel informed that in its first year, AP3 advanced three pilot sites—Ghari Dam (Kano), NESCO Cascade (Plateau), and Ikere Gorge (Oyo)—from concept to investment-grade preparation, representing about 60 MW of hydropower capacity, rising to 140 MW with planned solar hybridisation.

He said at Ghari Dam, studies recommend a 1.6 MW hydropower unit with 2 MW solar, linked to an industrial anchor load. He added that at NESCO Cascade, feasibility supports rehabilitating up to 28 MW with a 10 MW solar hybrid, while Ikere Gorge targets a 100 MW hydro-solar hybrid.

According to him, by reconciling five datasets into a single national hydropower inventory, AP3 identified 79 preparation sites and 61 near-term build sites totaling about 62 MW, scalable to over 200 MW.

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www.guardian.ng



Peter Vowles, British High Commissioner to Nigeria

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A WATER USE LICENSE FOR ITS MANUFACTURING PLANT PURSUANT TO SECTION 10 OF THE WATER RESOURCES ACT, CAP W2, LAWS OF THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA, 2004

SC JOHNSON AND SON NIGERIA LIMITED

Whose office is situated at;
13/14, Abimbola Street Isolo Industrial Estate, Isolo Lagos State.

Hereby gives notice that it has made an application to the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation through the Nigerian Integrated water Resources Management Commission, whose office is situated at: Plot 502 (Nafisah Plaza), by Abogo Langema Street, Off Constitution Avenue, Central Business District, P.M.B, 7020, Area 1 Post Office, Garki, Abuja.

For water use license to support its manufacturing activities located at 13/14, Abimbola Street Isolo Industrial Estate, Isolo Lagos State pursuant to section 10 of the water resources act, cap w2, laws of the federation of Nigeria, 2004, for the use of water from underground boreholes.

Notice is hereby given that any person who has objections to the grant of this Water Use License should submit written comments, clearly stating the basis for such objections, within twenty-one (21) days of this publication to:

**The Executive Director
Nigerian Integrated Water Resources Management Commission**
Plot 502 (Nafisah Plaza), by Abogo Langema Street, Off Constitution Avenue, Central Business District, P.M.B, 7020, Area 1 Post Office, Garki, Abuja.

Signed
By the Executive Director,
For: Honourable Minister,
Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation.

Afreximbank Welcomes Launch Of Africa Credit Rating Agency

By Sulaimon Salau

AFRICAN Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has lauded the launch of Africa Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA), describing it as an important milestone in strengthening Africa's financial architecture and expanding the continent's capacity to generate credible, independent analysis of African credit risk.

Accountability to Afreximbank, credit ratings play an important role in determining access to capital, influencing investor perceptions and shaping the cost at which governments, institutions and businesses can finance development.

"It is therefore essential that assessments of African credit risk are independent, rigorous and evidence-based, while reflecting a complete understanding of the structures, institutions and economic realities being assessed," it stated.

It added: "The establishment of AfCRA adds an important African-led source of credit opinion to the market. Its value will not be measured by whether it produces more favourable ratings."

Codix Group Expands CRS Commitment With New, Upgraded Facilities

By Sulaimon Salau

CODIX Group through its charity arm, Codix Charity Foundation has commissioned a range of new and upgraded educational facilities at Isanbi Comprehensive Secondary School, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, reinforcing its commitment to educational excellence, student welfare and youth development.

The intervention includes two new classroom blocks, donation of 10 desktop computers, new tables and chairs, eight new toilet facilities for students and teachers, and the refurbishment of the office of the Principal of the Junior School. The project is designed to provide a more conducive learning environment for students while equipping teachers with improved facilities to support effective teaching and learning.

Speaking at the commissioning, Ogun State Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Prof. Abayomi Arigbabu, described the intervention as an example of the positive impact that collaboration between government and the private sector can have on education.

"This landmark gesture beautifully exemplifies how deeply old students cherish their alma mater and remain an integral, devoted part of its growth and success for generations."

FG Pledges Reforms, Calls For More Investment In Power Sector

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Minister of Power, Joseph Olasunkanmi Tegbe, has said the Federal Government would continue to pursue sector reforms, partnerships and investments aimed at improving electricity supply, while committing to clear responsibilities, measurable service outcomes and transparent communication.

Speaking at the 2026 Association of Energy Correspondents of Nigeria (NAEC), Energy Conference in Lagos, themed: "Access to Assets: Empowering Players and Driving Growth", Tegbe, represented at the conference by the Director, Information and Press, Clement Ezeorah, urged investors considering asset acquisition or expansion to look beyond returns from individual facilities and consider the wider economic value that reliable electricity could create.

"Reliable power enables the manufacturing, logistics and services that expand the economy around your investment," he said.

He said the opportunity in Nigeria's power sector extended beyond constructing additional generation capacity, stressing that existing plants could deliver more electricity if their underlying constraints were addressed.

"The first is recovering dependable output from existing generation assets."

• Citizens Rely On Expensive Self-generating Electricity –Amadi

Plant rehabilitation, efficient operations and maintenance, reliable gas deliveries and adequate evacuation can convert investment already made into dependable electricity supply," he said.

He said proposed interventions should first identify the actual constraint affecting a power plant before additional capacity is introduced.

"Every proposed intervention should be tested against the binding constraint, whether plant condition, transmission limitations, gas supply, collections or payment," he said.

According to him, adding

generation capacity where the real constraint lies elsewhere could tie up capital without improving electricity supply to customers.

"Adding capacity where the constraint lies elsewhere will tie up capital without improving the customer experience," he said.

The minister also identified industrial estates, agro-processing centres and commercial clusters as opportunities for investors to aggregate electricity demand, secure credible offtake and develop dedicated generation and supply arrangements within the regulatory framework.

On distribution, the minister called for investment in feeder rehabilitation, substation transformers, metering and digital revenue systems, saying these could improve electricity delivery and payment while helping operators distinguish technical losses from collection failures.

In his address, the Chairman of NAEC, Ugo Amadi, stated that over 90 million Nigerians still lack reliable electricity, forcing households and industries to rely on expensive self-generation to meet their daily energy needs.



Minister of Livestock Development, Idi Mukhtar Maiha (left), engaging the Nigeria Country Head of Olam Agribusiness, Anil Nair, during the minister's visit to the agribusiness head office in Lagos.

'Our Commitment To Nigeria's \$1tr Economy Target Is Solid'

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Comptroller-General of Customs (CGC), Adewale Adeniyi, has pledged the full support of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) to the realisation of Nigeria's ambition to build a \$1 trillion economy, urging institutions to translate national aspirations into concrete, measurable results.

Adeniyi while speaking at the New Nigeria Festival in Abuja, said the economic tar-

get was achievable if the plans and strategies developed to achieve it were properly implemented.

The CGC said the Customs had moved beyond ideas and discussions to taking practical steps in support of the national economic ambition, citing the Service's ongoing Modernisation Reforms, including the deployment of B'Odogwu, the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme and the Advance Ruling mechanism, as initia-

tives designed to facilitate legitimate trade, improve predictability in the trading environment and ultimately strengthen revenue generation.

"Execution is nothing if it is not concrete. We have to move from ideas to action and ensure that whatever we plan translates into results. That is how we can begin to see the kind of transformation we are talking about," he said.

Adeniyi stressed that the

responsibility for achieving the \$1 trillion economy could not rest solely on government agencies, noting that the target required the collective commitment of institutions, businesses and citizens.

He said the Customs Service, by virtue of its responsibilities in revenue collection, trade facilitation and border management, remained strategically positioned to contribute to the country's economic transformation.

Stanbic IBTC Charts Path To Nigeria's Sustainable Financing Options

By Sulaimon Salau

STANBIC IBTC Holdings, a Standard Bank Group member, has held its third Sustainable Finance Summit to advance Nigeria's sustainable financing options.

Themed "Financing a Just Transition: Mobilising Capital for People, Policy and Prosperity," the event aimed to drive the nation's sustainability dialogue toward practical action.

Chief Executive of Stanbic IBTC Holdings, Chuma Nwokocha, stated that the platform was established to unite key leaders capable of shaping the nation's sustainable finance

ecosystem and turning conversations into concrete outcomes.

He noted that sustainable finance has moved from the margins to the mainstream, supported by stronger collaboration, broader participation, and greater market awareness.

"For us at Stanbic IBTC, the conversation about sustainability is no longer about the future. Sustainability is here, it is real, and it requires action now. It is about how we allocate capital today; how we shape policy; how we bring others along on the journey; and how we build institutions capable of

delivering prosperity for every Nigerian and for future generations."

In addition to the summit's focus on action-driven initiatives, the Standard Bank Sustainability Academy was officially launched as a significant step towards fostering a culture of sustainability in Nigeria.

This initiative, according to the company, aims to provide free, high-quality educational resources to individuals enthusiastic about sustainable practices and finance.

By engaging a diverse audience, the Academy seeks to

empower individuals, promoting awareness and practical skills essential for driving Nigeria's sustainable development efforts forward.

Professor of Economic and Business Intelligence, Lagos Business School, Bongo Adi, said Nigeria had reached a critical point where economic growth and climate action are no longer competing priorities.

"At the centre of this transition are people and their livelihoods. Sustainable finance can catalyse private capital, create green jobs, strengthen local economies, and foster shared prosperity."

Firm Brings The Love As Nigerians Celebrate World Indomie Day

By Sulaimon Salau

NIGERIA came alive on October 6 as Indomie, Nigeria's leading instant noodles brand, celebrated World Indomie Day with a city-wide activation in Lagos and other part of the country that brought moments of joy, connection, and appreciation directly to consumers.

Taking the celebration beyond traditional event venues, Indomie transformed everyday spaces into hubs of excitement, reaching consumers at BRT stations, markets, and major junctions across Lagos. From the early hours of the day, the teams engaged with commuters, traders, workers, and residents, creating memorable experiences through product sampling, branded merchandise giveaways, music, and interactive moments.

At selected BRT stations, Indomie's mobile kitchens served freshly prepared noodles to commuters, offering consumers an opportunity to enjoy their favorite meal in a fun and unexpected setting. The activation generated excitement across the city as people chanted the iconic "I Love My Indomie" jingle, danced to music, received branded gifts, and shared in the festive atmosphere.

GLOVO Restates Commitment To Boost Nigeria's Digital Commerce

By Eno Bassey

AFIRM, Glovo, a leading multi-category technology company, has reaffirmed its confidence in Nigeria, promising to continually support customers, partners, and riders, as well as drive local economy.

Since commencing operations in Nigeria in 2021, the company has invested more than N54 billion in the market. The platform has facilitated the delivery of more than 40 million items to customers. At the same time, the economic value generated for businesses operating on it more than doubled in the last year alone, reflecting the growing role of digital platforms in Nigeria's commerce ecosystem.

Notably, Nigeria remains Glovo's fastest-growing market globally in 2026, across 21 countries, and consistently ranks as having the best operational timing among on-demand ordering apps in the country.

To empower local partners, Glovo has delivered more than 50 in-person training sessions within the framework of our Glovo Academy program for hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses, driving clear post-training performance improvements.

Fostering Close-up In Wildlife Health Blind Spot

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE wildlife health surveillance is no longer a luxury. Indeed, it is a global conservation and health security imperative that deserves better attention. This is important to create an essential infrastructure for conserving wildlife, maintaining healthy ecosystems, and supporting food security, livelihoods, and preparedness for emerging threats.

This is due to the fact that most countries still lack reliable systems to detect disease in wildlife, leaving the world dangerously vulnerable to the next conservation crisis—or the next disease threat that spreads across wildlife, livestock, and people.

In response to this, the Wildlife Health Intelligence Network (WHIN) has now published three papers, which provide a diagnosis of the challenge, a blueprint to help close this global blind spot before the next threat unfolds, and the tools to get there.

These papers point to a clear opportunity: by joining WHIN, groups can more effectively and cost efficiently build wildlife health surveillance systems together. Through WHIN, shared tools – HAWK, a data service for managing wildlife health surveillance data, training, data standards, and practical experience can help efforts move faster, avoid costly duplication, and strengthen preparedness before the next crisis emerges.

WHIN is an open, global community of practice uniting experts, organisations, and governments to build wildlife health surveillance systems that are locally led and aligned with international standards. WHIN was created because most countries still lack the consistent, long-term systems needed to understand and respond to health threats affecting wild animals and ecosystems. These systems are essential for conserving wildlife populations and ecological integrity while providing an early warning system for threats before they spread to livestock, people, local economies, or global supply chains.

Published in separate journals, the three new papers deliver a coordinated global blueprint for building wildlife health surveillance systems from the local to international level.

Collectively, the papers answer three practical questions - Why does wildlife health surveillance matter? How can countries build effective systems? And What tools can they use to get started?

The first paper makes the case that wildlife health surveillance is not simply a conservation issue—it underpins progress on many of the world's biggest environmental, health, and development goals. It explains why they matter, drawing a direct line between wildlife health and a majority of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, including Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Clean Water and Sanitation, Climate Action, and Life on Land and Below Water.

The paper recalls examples of outbreaks that have devastated both wildlife and livestock economies alike. For instance, peste des petits ruminants, caused an estimated 80 per cent decline in the endangered Mongolian saiga antelope and 90 per cent mortality in unvaccinated sheep and goats.

On the economic side, every \$1m injected into the economy by nature-based tourism to see Rwanda's mountain gorillas creates roughly 1,328 jobs. Experts claimed that failures to detect wildlife disease early can thus carry enormous ecological and economic costs.

The second paper shifted from diagnosis to solutions, laying out a roadmap to overcome the barriers to implementing and growing locally sustainable and appropriate surveillance for wildlife health.

The Co-chair of the IUCN SSC Wildlife Health Specialist Group, Tiggy Grillo, said: "The goal is to connect local and national actors with the expertise and resources critical to build effective harmonised systems faster, while using international coordination to strengthen and guide local action, such as those developed via WHIN, as well as IUCN. For example, the WOA/WHO General Guidelines for Surveillance of Diseases, Pathogens, and Toxic Agents in Free-ranging Wildlife."

To meet the challenge, WHIN concludes



that it will require progress on six mutually reinforcing fronts. These include, shifting mindsets away from viewing wildlife as an economic liability and toward collaborative models of cooperation, building the political will and aligned funding, strengthening the evidence base through research on cost-effectiveness and prioritisation, developing open-source and interoperable technologies, and enhancing local capacity through training that empowers in-country experts.

The sixth element is a global community of practice, anchored by WHIN, which connects intergovernmental bodies, national programs, Indigenous communities, and field practitioners to share expertise and avoid reinventing solutions.

Rather than prescribing a top-down mandate, WHIN's theory of change calls for collaboration from every direction to scale up solutions that already work—such as WildHealthNet in Southeast Asia and the WOA/WHO South-East Asia Wildlife Health Network – rather than asking every country to start from scratch. As WHIN puts it, sustainable implementation "exceeds the capacity of any single institution."

On the third paper, the authors embrace a Needs Assessment Tool, piloted in Thailand and Rwanda, that gives countries a practical instrument to evaluate an emerging or well-established WHS programme. It helps coun-

tries identify the strongest parts of their wildlife health surveillance systems—and where the biggest gaps remain.

The tool covers topics ranging from diagnostic laboratories to communication and governance, helping pinpoint where investment will make the greatest difference. Built around detection, identification, analysis, management, communication, and applied research, the tool assesses each area by urgency and impact so that resources can be effectively targeted. It provides a concrete example of tools that can be shared across a community of practice to support similar needs.

Collectively, these findings make the case for collective action: WHIN gives partners a way to pool resources and expertise through shared training, common data standards, and hard-won field experience. With this, no single country or organisation has to build wildlife health surveillance capacity alone, and the world is better prepared before the next crisis hits.

WHIN appeals to governments, international organisations, funders, and local communities to treat wildlife health surveillance as core infrastructure rather than an afterthought, noting that investing in wildlife health today is an investment in a safer, healthier, and more sustainable future.

Nigeria @ 66: Ogun Entrepreneur Tasks Youths On Agriculture, Discipline In Business

By Moyosore Salami

YOUTHS have been urged to develop passion for agriculture and other business enterprises, as their small beginning would transform to global presence if they do not relent in their efforts.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive of Ayoludanth Nigeria Enterprises Limited, Chief Ayoola Osunleye, gave the charge while hosting over 300 youths to mark the year 2026 Independence anniversary at his Supermart in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

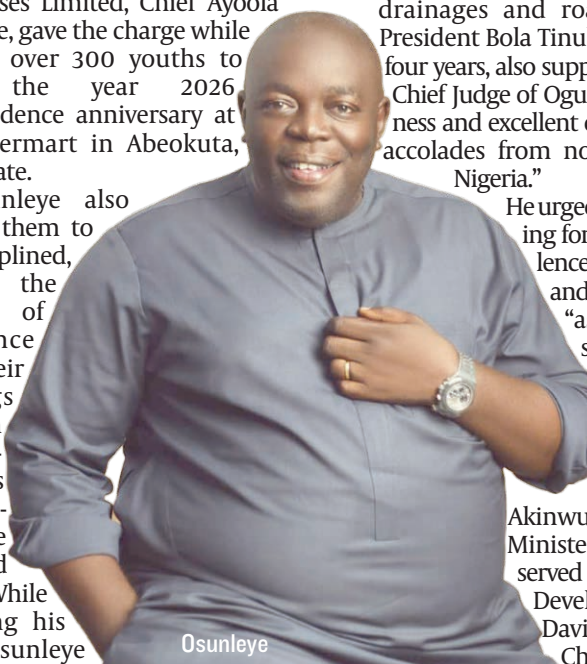
Osunleye also advised them to be disciplined, imbibe the spirit of excellence in their dealings with customers and people around them. While narrating his story, Osunleye

confirmed that he has been an entrepreneur since his secondary school days, focusing on livestock such as rearing of chickens, producing and selling meat pie.

He said: "I focused my vision on entrepreneur, agriculture, and the opening of supermarkets in which I have one in Abeokuta. I also became a building contractor working with Federal, State and Local Councils to construct houses, drainages and roads. I supplied rams to President Bola Tinubu at Bourdillion, Lagos, for four years, also supplying turkeys to the present Chief Judge of Ogun State. My agriculture business and excellent construction works received accolades from notable personalities across Nigeria."

He urged the youths not to stop moving forward during trials or turbulence, urging them to start small and not be in a hurry to make it, "as local beginnings would surely expose them to the global stage someday."

Osunleye further urged the youths to have a good mentor that would shape their journey, noting that Mr. Akinwunmi Adesina, the former Minister of Agriculture who also served as the President of African Development Bank and Pastor David Oyedepo of Winners' Chapel are his mentors.



Osunleye

FAO, Borno Validate Climate-smart Agriculture To Boost Livelihoods

From Njadvra Musa, Maiduguri

THE Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, in partnership with the Borno State Government and other key stakeholders, has validated a climate-smart agriculture strategies to strengthen farmers' resilience and livelihoods in the state from 2026-2030.

The high-level validation meeting, which attracted government officials, development partners, academia and other stakeholders, is part of efforts to update earlier climate-smart agriculture frameworks in response to changing environmental, humanitarian and socio-economic conditions of the people in Borno State.

Speaking at the validation meeting in Maiduguri, the state capital, FAO's Natural Resource and Energy Safety Specialist, Yakaka Maina, said: "The exercise was the second series of activities that began in July to identi-

fy and validate priority areas for climate-smart agriculture."

Yakaka said the strategy would provide a framework for strengthening climate resilience in the state, particularly among communities affected by displacement, climate change and changing livelihoods of thousands of farmers.

The Specialist added that the UN agency had earlier supported the development of climate-smart agricultural documents covering 2020 to 2023, noting that significant changes had occurred since then, including the increased climate shocks, displacement, return of communities and the closure of more than 20 internally displaced persons' camps.

She explained that the new strategy seeks to address the needs of host communities, internally displaced persons and returnees, while linking identified agricultural priorities to durable solutions.

Tinubu, Sultan, Zulum, Expected As MUSWEN General Assembly Meeting Holds November

By Suliyat Tella
PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar and Southwest states governors are among dignitaries expected at the 11th General Assembly of the Muslim Ummah of South West Nigeria (MUSWEN) holding on November 15 at the University of Ibadan Central Mosque. The Chairman of the General Assembly 2026 Central Planning Committee, Alhaji Abdul Rahman Olawale Abdul Ghaniy, said in a statement issued in Ibadan on Friday that the Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Zulum, is expected to deliver the annual lecture. The annual General Assembly of MUSWEN is attended by leaders of Muslim organisations across the Southwest geopolitical zones.

Apart from the annual lecture, delegates are also expected to ratify the change of leadership of the organisation, as the incumbent president vacates office after leading MUSWEN over the last six years. Alhaji Rasaki Oladejo became

Bayelsa Govt Imposes Curfew On Biseni Community

From Julius Osahon, Yenagoa
FOLLOWING the breakdown of law and order in Biseni community in Yenagoa Local Council, Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State has placed the community under a 24-hour curfew.

The directive is with immediate effect.

Diri gave the order on Friday after receiving briefings from security commanders on the state of security in the community, where some unscrupulous elements had barricaded roads into and within the town making bonfires.

The governor also directed security operatives to ensure that law and order, peace and security was restored in the community.

He advised responsible members of the community to remain law-abiding.

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Chinese Embassy has explained its One-China Principle, urging the Nigerian media to distinguish between reporting on Taiwan and descriptions that suggest the island is a sovereign country separate from China.

Speaking at a meeting with media executives in Lagos, Mr. Xu Fan, Director of Bilateral Relations and Commerce at the Chinese Consulate General in Lagos, said China's position on Taiwan is rooted in historical records, international agreements and the diplomatic framework established after the Second World War.

Osinbajo, Amangbo, Martins, Others Laud Okogie's Contributions To Nation-building

By Chris Irekamba

THE enduring legacy of a man, who not only spoke truth to authorities in power, but also fought successive governments, resonated at the Anthony Cardinal Okogie Foundation (ACOF) 2026 Yearly Lecture.

The guest speaker, former Vice President Yemi Osinbajo described the celebrant as one of the country's revered advocates of social justice, rule of law and good governance.

Themed, 'Rule of Law in Nigeria: The Challenges of Leadership Compliance,' the lecture was organised by the Lagos Archdiocese Catholic Men Organisation of Nigeria (IACMON) at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Hall in Victoria Island, Lagos.

Osinbajo recalled how

Okogie, as the Archbishop of Lagos, took the Lagos State government to court over the return of missionary schools to their owners.

According to the guest speaker, the 1999 Constitution was brand new and largely untested and the military had just handed over power to the democratic elected civilian government.

He noted that the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of Okogie based on the important premise that the right to own and operate private schools was protected by the fundamental rights of freedom of expression guaranteed by Chapter 4 of the Constitution and the fact that freedom of expression included ownership of mediums for receiving and impacting ideas. The court held that

a school is also a medium for receiving and impacting ideas.

"So, Olubunmi Okogie and the Lagos State government became one of the earliest cases establishing the fundamental rights of citizens of Nigeria in the new democratic dispensation after 30 years of military rule," Osinbajo said.

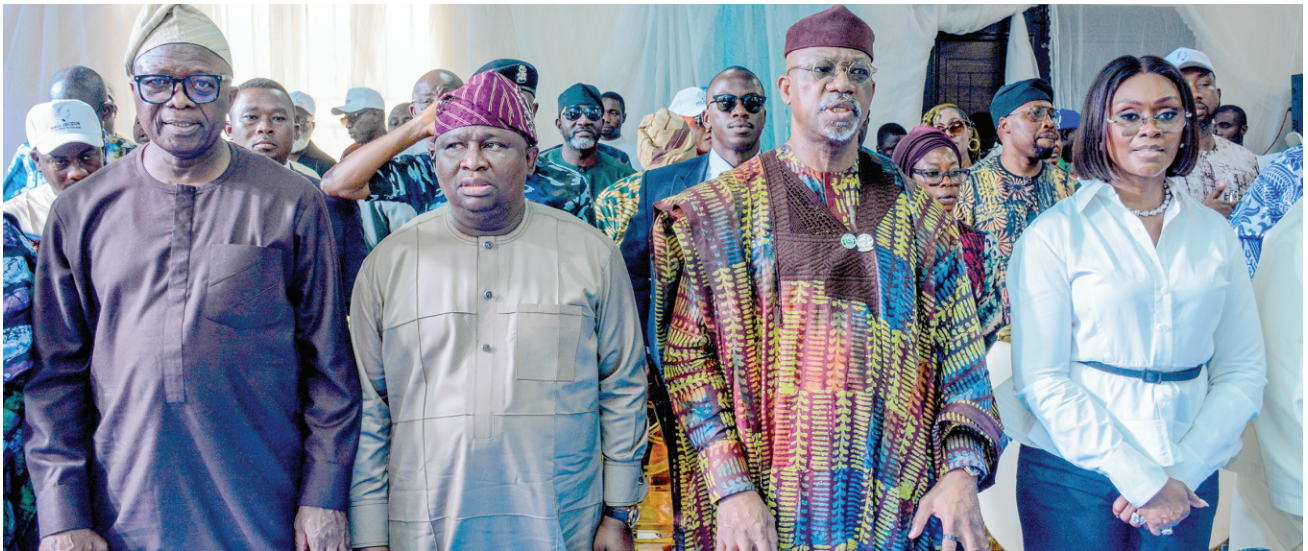
He added that Okogie, while pursuing his course, developed a sustained unmistakable public voice on constitutionalism, education, good governance, human dignity and above all, the protection of ordinary citizens.

Osinbajo also recounted the role Okogie played when he was the President of Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

He said the celebrant's public interventions were marked by consistent and fearless resistance to oppression, injustice and abuse of power regardless of who held office.

At the heart of that advocacy, according to Osinbajo, was a remarkably simple proposition that government exists for people, political authority is not an end in itself but a trust and those who exercise it must be accountable to the welfare and dignity of rights of people over whom they govern.

"Cardinal Okogie spoke that truth to power with admirable forthrightness. Indeed, I greatly enjoyed his famous giants at successive governments until in November 2015 when he turned his attention to our own government," Osinbajo said.



Ogun State Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Prof. Abayomi Arigbabu (left); Governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola; Ogun State Governor Dapo Abiodun and his wife, Mrs. Bamidele Abiodun during the fourth edition of the Gbemiga Abiodun Memorial Education Support Programme held in Iperu... on Friday.

Queen's College Begins Road To Centenary As School Marks 99th Founders Day

By Gbenga Salau

QUEEN'S College, Lagos, one of Nigeria's foremost girls' secondary schools, will on Saturday, October 10, 2026, mark its 99th Founders Day, kicking off a year-long build-up to its centenary in October 2027.

The event will be low-key and held within the school, but it will open preparations for the landmark anniversary.

Established in 1927, the school has produced generations of

women who have excelled in medicine, law, education, business, public service, science, technology and the arts.

The newly elected Chairperson of the Queens College Parent Teacher Association (QCPTA), Mrs. Banke Apata, said the day should be seen as the start of a collective mobilisation.

"Next year, Queen's College will be 100 years old. That is a remarkable achievement, but it is also a responsibility. We

must celebrate where the school has come from while thinking seriously about where we want it to go in the next 100 years," she said.

Apata congratulated Queen's College on the celebrations, describing the 99th Founders Day as an important milestone on the journey to the institution's centenary.

Apata said the centenary should be more than a ceremony. She called on old students, parents, teachers, gov-

ernment, corporate organisations, philanthropists and well-wishers to help shape the school's next chapter, adding that contributions should go beyond money to include expertise, networks and goodwill. She also stressed the need to document the contributions of generations of students, teachers and administrators.

"Every Queen has a story, and every Queen is part of the story of this great institution."

Chinese Embassy Explains One-China Principle

He cited United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 of 1971 and Nigeria's diplomatic recognition of the Peoples Republic of China, while maintaining that the One-China Principle remained the political foundation of diplomatic relations between Beijing and Abuja.

Fan noted that Nigeria reaffirmed its commitment to the principle during President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's state visit to China in September 2024. He clarified that China did not object to Nigerian media reporting on Taiwan but was

concerned about terminology that could be interpreted as recognising the island as a sovereign state.

The explanation prompted a robust exchange with Nigerian media executives, who stressed the importance of editorial independence and the need to preserve journalists' freedom to report issues in the public interest.

The discussion, which also examined Nigeria-China relations, trade, investment and media cooperation, underscored the importance of dialogue between Chinese diplo-

matic institutions and Nigerian media organisations.

The session was convened by Peter Ogbonna Eze, representative of Buffalo and Bay Media, and featured Ambassador Anderson Madubike, a former Nigerian High Commissioner to Australia, former Consul General in Shanghai, China, and former Chargé d'Affaires to South Africa.

Earlier, Eze described Nigeria-China relations as a partnership that had expanded beyond traditional diplomat-

ic engagement to encompass infrastructure, trade, education, technology, agriculture, investment and people-to-people exchanges.

He urged media organisations to report the relationship with accuracy, balance and context, stressing that informed public discourse was essential to maximising the benefits of bilateral cooperation.

"The media does not merely report events. It shapes how societies understand countries, people, policies and opportunities," Eze said.

Sokoto Govt To Boost Onion Production, Storage

From Tunde Omolehin, Sokoto

THE Sokoto State government has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting onion production across the state.

This was disclosed by the Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr. Bashir Muhammad Achida, at a sensitisation workshop on the establishment of onion farming clusters held at Kara Onion Market, Sokoto.

The workshop was organised by the National Onion Producers, Processors and Marketers Association of Nigeria (NOPPMAN) in collaboration with the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC).

Achida said the government was determined to ensure the construction of large onion storage facilities, establishment of seed modification centres, provision of modern farming implements.

Engineers Move To Promote Professional Excellence, Stronger Partnerships

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

THE Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE) has renewed commitment to promotion of professional excellence and rebuilding stronger relationships with government, industry and other stakeholders.

State Chairman of the organisation in Enugu State, Loveday Osondu, stated this when he led executive members of the branch to a courtesy call on the Commissioner of Works and Infrastructure, Ben Osy Okoh.

Osondu disclosed that the desire of his administration was to reposition the branch as a vibrant and respected professional body that provides value through technical knowledge, professional standards, capacity development and constructive engagement.

Channels TV's Uzono, Monique D Vibe To Co-host Megastar Awards 2026

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE third edition the Megastar Man of the Decade Awards 2026 is set to rise another notch as renowned Channels Television On-Air Personality (OAP), Geoffrey Uzono, and popular media personality, Monica Aigbe, better known as Monique D Vibe, have been unveiled as co-hosts of the prestigious ceremony.

Uzono and Monique D Vibe, both reputed personalities in Nigeria's media and entertainment industry, are expected to bring their distinctive on-air chemistry, energy and sophistication to the awards ceremony, scheduled for October 16 at Wells Carlton Hotel and



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ABOIRALOR :I, formerly known as Miss. Aboiralor Precious now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Braimah Godwin Precious. All former documents remain valid, general public take note.

ACHI :I, formerly known as Okwara, Ngozi Obasi now wish to be addressed as Achi, Ngozi Ikenna. Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Abia State. Kindly take note.

ADDITION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Gbemisola Oshodi now wish to be addressed as Gbemisola Oshodi Garuba.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I , formerly known as Abdulsalam Abdulrahman now wish to be addressed as Abdulsalam Abdulrahman Omeiza, All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I formerly know as Adedeji Adewumi which to be known as Adedeji Adewumi Ebenezer . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Ughughe Blessing now wish to be addressed as Ughughe Blessing Osebahiem. Aall former documents remains valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Areghan Benson now wish to be addressed as Areghan Benson Ehimare. All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Aromire Basheer now wish to be knowgn as Aromire Basheer Yusuff. All documents remain valid. Banks and every other institutions take note.

ADDITION OF NAME:: I, formerly known as Taiwo Pelumi Emmanuel, now wish to be addressed as Omolayole-Taiwo Pelumi Emmanuel. All former documents remain valid. General public take notice.

ADEBAYO: I, formerly known as Idowu Latifat now wish to be addressed as Adebayo Hannah Titilayo . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ADEDEJI : I, formerly know as Adedeji Adewumi now wish to be addressed as Adedeji Adewumi Ebenezer . General public take note

ADELEKE: I, formerly known as Edokpayi Enoghayin Sophia now wish to be addressed as Adeleke Jeremiah Sophia . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

AGBABIAKA: I, formerly Aghabiaka Oluwatoyin Esther, now wish to rearrange my name to Agbabiaka Esther Oluwatoyin. Former documents remain valid. General public, PENCOM, and authorities take note.

AGBETOR : I , formerly known as Agbetor Vincent now wish to be addressed as Agbator Vincent.. My DOB is 24-08-1972 not 12-11-1972, All former documents remains valid, public note

AGBOOLA : I, formerly known as Anina Anuoluwapo Agboola now wish to be known as Anina Anuoluwapo Adelabi. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

AGBOOLA : I, formerly known as Oluwamuyiwa Oluwaseyi Agboola now wish to be known as Oladipupo Adelabi. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

AKANDE: I, formerly known as Olajubutu Damilola Olorunwa now wish to be addressed as Akande Oluwadamilola Olorunwa all former documents remain valid . General public take note

AKINMOYEDE: I formerly known as Miss Akinmoyede Zainab Adewunmi now wish to be addressed as Miss Adeeso, Zainab Adewunmi . All former documents remain valid. General public note

AKINTAYO: I, formerly known as Akintunde Adedeji, Akintayo now wish to be addressed as Abdulkabeer Kint, Akintayo . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ANIEDOBE : I formerly known as Ifeyinwa Ada Aniedobe now wish to be addressed as Ifeyinwa Juliana Aniedobe. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AZETA : I , formerly known as Humphrey Azeta now wish to be addressed as Azeta Humphrey. All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

BLACKSHIRE: I formerly known as Christian Oluyomi Blackshire now to be addressed as Christian Oluyomi Obasanjo-Blackshire. All former documents remain valid. General public note

BLACKSHIRE: I formerly known as Michael Tobilola Blackshire now to be addressed as Michael Tobilola Obasanjo-Blackshire. All former documents remain valid. General public note

CHIAMAKA: I, formerly known as Chiamaka Ifeoma Lawal, now wish to be addressed as Chiamaka Ifeoma Okeke. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHINATO.: I, formerly known as Jonathan Ugochukwu Chinato. now wish to be addressed as Jonathan - Mgbemena Ugochukwu Chinatu, All Former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

CHUKWUKA: I, formerly known as Chukwuka Nnanna Okeke, now wish to be addressed as Chuka Nnanna Okeke. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHUKWUMA: I, formerly known as David Chukwuma Umunna, now wish to be addressed as Chukwuma David Umunna. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: My Name was wrongly written as Ojo Adebowole Olamilekan on my BVN instead of Ojo Adewole. All former documents remain valid, public note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: That Ahaneku Anthony Uchendu is the same person as Anthony Davis Uchendu on NIN, BVN, International Passport, etc. All documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH: I, Nnadi Kyrian Ekene states that my date of birth was wrongly written as 17/12/1986, instead of 17/12/1983. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Eleawu Victor now wish to be addressed as Adeko Victor . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly Ugbede Ojo Monday and Ugbedeoso Monday Sani now wish to be addressed as Ugbedeoyo Monday Sani. All former documents remain valid Public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME AND DOB: My name is Bassey Nathaniel Bassey and my middle name is Bassey not Aniekan . My DOB is 3/07/1999 not 3/07/2001 BVN. General Public take notice.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written on my school Testimonial as Ikpea Patience instead of Patience Ikpeaisimeme Jacob. Former documents remain valid public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly quoted as Adekanbi Foluke Angel instead of Adekanbi Foluke Abigail. All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly quoted as Macaulay Olusegun in my BVN/Bank Details should be Elum-Macaulay Olusegun Ejiye Animashaun. Public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: That, Eromosele .G. Onosolelase and Eromosele Onosolelase is same person, now wish to be addressed as Eromosele Godspower Onosolelase, Former documents remains valid, General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My correct name is Nzurumike Chidinma Norah not Nzurumike Chidinma Martha. My DOB is 14/07/1993 not 06/10/1991 .Former documents remain valid. Public note.

EBHOHIMEN: I, formerly known as Ebhohimen Blessing now wish to be addressed as Ajimenlen Blessing. All former documents remain valid. Geanral public take note

EBUN: I, formerly known as Ebinoluwa Daniel Oluwasegun now wish to be addressed as Ebun daniel oluwadamilare . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

EHIJIELE: I, formerly known as Ehijiele Peace Osedebame now wish to be addressed as Ehijele Peace Osedebame. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

ENEBELI: I, formerly known as Akpe Augustina Nkechinyenum now wish to be addressed as Enebeli Augustina Nkechinyenum . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ENEH : I, formally known and addressed as Eneh Francisca A., Ene Franka Adaora, Eneh Adaora Oluanyi C., Eneh Adaora Oluanyi, Eneh Francisca Adaora, Eneh Adaora Oluanyichukwu Ahamba, Eneh Adaora O, Eneh Adaora Oluanyi-Chukwu, now wish to be known and addressed as Ahamba, Adaora Oluanyichukwu Franca. General public take note.

FOLARIN: I, formerly known as Adesoyin Odunayo Aderonke Now wish to be addressed as Folarin Odunayo Aderonke . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

GODDAY : I formerly known as Brimah Godday now wish to be addressed as Braimah Godwin. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

HASSAN: I, formerly known as Regina Iyaji Odey now wish to be addressed as Regina Iyaji Hassan . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

HELEN: I, formerly Miss. Ezenwobi Nkiru Helen now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ezenwobi-Aninta, Nkiru Helen . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

IDIAKE : I formerly known as Idiake Maggie now wish to be addressed as Idiake Margaret, my DOB is 04-08-1950 not 01-01-1900. Former documents remains valid, public note

IJEOMA : I, formerly known as Miss. Ijeoma Matilda now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ugochukwu Ijeoma Matilda. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

KAYODE: I, formerly known as Kayode Blessing now wish to be addressed as Kayode Blessing Josephine . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

KESHI: I, formerly known as Keshi Ogechukwu Rebecca now wish to be addressed as Keshi Ogechi Rebecca . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

LEONARD: I, formerly known as Adamu Leonard Oniovosa now wish to be addressed as Adamu-Governor Oniovosa Leonard. All former documents remain valid. Public note

MMASINACHI: I, formerly known as Dalia Mmasinachi Umunna, now wish to be addressed as Mmasinachi Dalia Umunna. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NJOKU : I, formerly Njoku Nobert Onyewuchi wish to be known as Mr. Chukwuemeka Onyewuchi Patrick . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

NNAEMEKA: I, formerly known as Daniel Nnaemeka Umunna, now wish to be addressed as Nnaemeka Daniel Umunna. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ODELEYE: I, formerly known as Ibifunke Modupeoluwa Odukoya now wish to be addressed as Ibifunke Modupeoluwa Odeleye . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

OGBUJI: I, formerly Miss Ogbuji Francisca Ifeoma, now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ezeonwujito Francisca Ifeoma. Former documents remain valid public take note

OJIEGO: I, formerly Miss Ojiego Jessica Ekenemchukwu, now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ojiego-Ekwunife Jessica Ekenemchukwu. Former documents remain valid. General public, and authorities take note.

OKAFOR: I, formerly known as Chomzy charity mbonu now wish to be addressed as Chioma charity Okafor . All former documents remain valid general public take.

OKEKE: I, formerly known as Miss Okeke Jacinta Chinyere, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Onuoha Jacinta Chinyere. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OKOH: I, formerly known as Okoh Augustina Nkechiem now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Divramredje Augustina Nkechi, All Former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

OKONKWO: I, formerly known as Chinenye Virginia Ahunanya now wish to be addressed as Chinenye Virginia Okonkwo . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

OLAMIDE: Formerly addressed as Hammed Halimat Olamide, now wish to be addressed as Hammed Alimat Sadiat. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

OLOSUNDE: I, formerly known as Miss Olosunde Adesuwa now wish to be known as Mrs. Omoragbon Adesuwa. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

OLUWADEMILADE: I, formerly Ayo Moses Oluwademilade, now wish to be addressed as Anifowose Moses. Former documents remain valid. General public, and authorities take note.

ONOH: I, formerly known as Amechi Chinwendu Hope now wish to be addressed as Onoh Chinwendu Hope . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ONYEJEGBU: I, formerly known as Chisom Philia Ibeh now wish to be addressed as Chisom Philia Onyejebu . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

OSEREMEN ; I, formerly known as Oseremen Odion Blessing now wish to be addressed as Oseremen Odion. My DOB is 15-09-1999 not 15-08-1998. Former documents remains valid . Public note.

PREVIOUSLY: I, formerly known as Previously Felicia Bot-Timothy now wish to be known as Felicia Vou Bot-Timothy. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

REARRANGEMENT OF NAME,: My name was wrongly written as Orlu Chivuikem victor instead of my correct name Orlu victor Chivuikem. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

RE-ARRANGEMENT/CONFIRMATION OF NAMES: My name was arranged as Nnadi Ekene Kyrian (NIN), instead of Nnadi Kyrian Ekene (BVN). All documents bearing these names remain valid. Public note.

REGINA: I, formerly known as Oham Regina Chioma now wish to be known as Oham Chioma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

THOMAS: I, formerly known as Anwan Gladys now wish to be addressed as Thomas Gladys . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

TONIA : I, formerly known as stanley tonia eno now wish to be addressed as Stanley Anthonia Eno. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UGBABE: I, formerly known as Akinsoto Rebecca Iyanuoluwa now wish to be addressed as Ugbabe Rebecca Olamide . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

News Extra

Tegbe Holds Inaugural Power Sector Anti-vandalism Meeting With Key Security, Govt Agencies

A spart of continuing efforts to guarantee stable and reliable electricity supply for households, businesses and industry, the Minister of Power, Joseph Tegbe, has convened a ministerial committee on the prevention of vandalism of power infrastructure. The committee brings together security and power sector

stakeholders and is tasked with ending attacks on assets across the electricity value chain.

The committee was constituted in response to attacks on generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure, which disrupt supply to consumers, increase repair costs and erode the investment on which the sector depends. Its

mandate also includes defining the contribution each institution will make towards a lasting solution.

The inaugural meeting was attended by the Special Adviser to the President on Homeland Security, Major General Adeyinka A. Famadewa, directors from the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA).

Hamzat, Adesina, Others To Lead Nation-building Talk At Real Talk With Kike At Seven

By Suliyat Tella

LAGOS State Deputy Governor Land All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate for the 2027 election, Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, will lead discussions on Nigeria's future at the seventh anniversary of Real Talk With Kike on Saturday.

The event, scheduled for October 10 at Eko Hotels and

Suites, Lagos, will also celebrate broadcaster Kikelomo Atanda-Owo Abati's more than 20 years in the media industry.

The programme, themed 'The Future of Nigeria: Where Leadership, Innovation, Culture and Media Converge to Shape Nation Building,' will bring together speakers from government, business, the creative industry and the media to

discuss issues shaping the country's development.

Hamzat and the Group Managing Director of Mandilas Group Limited, Mr. Vlassis Liakouris, will deliver keynote addresses.

The Group Managing Director of Sahara Group, Mr. Kola Adesina, and the founder of Rise Network, Dr. Toyosi Akerele-Ogunsiji, will also speak at the event.

Sports

If You Can't Get To The Stars, Land On The Moon

A FRIEND brought a young boy and his parents to meet with me earlier this week at the Eagle7 Bamboo Garden in Wasimi.

Such a meeting has become a regular feature in my routine as proprietor of a sports secondary school with the mission to empower young boys and girls with the combination of sports and academics.

The problem is usually that the children want the sport without the educational part, whilst their parents prefer the security of education with or without sports.

With the obstinacy of some of the children that completely refuse to go to school, parents look for a compromise option. Many of them come to me.

Twenty years of an experiment that has produced over 90 per cent success rate cannot be discountenanced. Parents, through

word-of-mouth testimonies, have become the biggest marketers of my specialist institution - SOCA.

So, earlier this week, I met with Hope and his parents. He will turn 17 years of age in January 2027. He is freshly out of secondary school. He scored good grades in his WAEC exams (all Bs and Cs), and is primed for a solid career that will take him through the rest of his life.

His parents are well to do. They have grand plans for their brilliant son. In fact, their plan is that with the good grades in his JAMB exams, he will soon become a student of Babcock University in Ogun State. Hope had visited the university with them and had done some research about the institution that threatens to turn their dream into a nightmare.

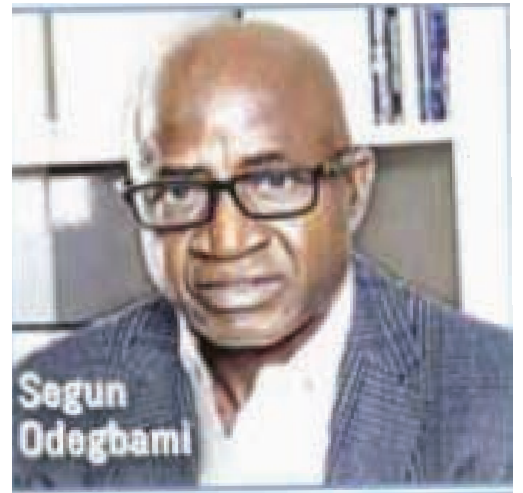
The university does not offer him what is

his greatest passion and ambition. He has now told his parents, finally, that he would rather not go to school than abandon his ambition to be a professional footballer in Europe!

I am not surprised at all about Hope's defiance. He wants to become a professional football player, period. Except that is on the cards for him, he tells his parents, he is not interested in doing anything or going anywhere.

The parents are completely flabbergasted. They do not know what to do, or where to go to get advice on how to deal with this very serious and disturbing situation.

They are not alone in this dilemma. Their story is replicated in many homes all over the country. Many parents are confronted with a similar situation -



Young boys (and girls these days) dreaming of a life as professional footballers in Europe (or anywhere for that matter), living like Kings and Princes along the fast lane of life, rich, famous, and sometimes powerful!

Liverpool, Man City Clash As English Premier League Returns

THE Premier League resumes this weekend after the international break, with Liverpool hosting unbeaten Man City in the standout fixture, as Arsenal, Chelsea and Man United also face key tests.

Arsenal host Leeds United today looking to respond after a 3-0 defeat to Brighton ended their perfect start. Leeds arrive after a goalless draw with Crystal Palace. The match, alongside all Premier League matches, will air live on SS Premier League (DStv Ch. 203, GOtv Ch. 65).

Chelsea welcome Bournemouth also today, with both sides in need of a win. Chelsea have lost two of their last three matches, while Bournemouth are still searching for their first league victory.

Manchester United will host Tottenham in a meeting between two sides looking for a change in fortunes. United have five points

from five matches after a 1-1 draw with Fulham, while Spurs sit at the bottom of the table following a 3-2 defeat to Aston Villa despite their significant summer spending.

Tomorrow, Liverpool face Man City, with the hope of maintaining their unbeaten run. Liverpool remain unbeaten, but have won just two of their five matches, while City have a perfect record and sit atop of the table.

The match also comes as City deal with the fallout from the recent verdict on the Premier League's 115 charges against the club.

Earlier tomorrow, Crystal Palace will host Nottingham Forest, with Palace coming off a goalless draw against Leeds and Forest looking to respond after a 1-0 defeat to Coventry City.

NSC Recognises RENISA As Umbrella Body For Retired Athletes



Director General, National Sports Commission (NSC), Bukola Olopade (left); President, Commonwealth Sports, Dr Donald Rukare and President Nigeria Olympic Committee, Ahmed Gumel, at the NOC/Olympic Solidarity Seminar on Good Governance for Presidents of National Sports Federation in Nigeria held in Abuja.

From Ernest Nzor, Abuja

THE National Sports Commission (NSC), yesterday, officially approved and recognised the Association of Retired Nigerian Sportsmen and Women (RENISA) as the umbrella body responsible for coordinating the affairs and interests of retired Nigerian athletes.

RENISA, established in 2019, seeks to promote the welfare, unity, physical well-being and continued engagement of retired Nigerian sportsmen and women who have served the country with distinction at national and international levels.

The approval was conveyed in a letter dated October 8, 2026, with reference number NSC/FEAD/COA/2025/CON/II and titled "Approval and Recognition of the Association of Retired Nigerian Sportsmen and Women."

The letter, signed by Kabir Yusuf on behalf of the NSC Director-General, Bukola Olopade, and addressed to the association's president, said that RENISA had been officially approved and recognised by the commission.

The association also aims to use sports as a tool for healthy living, social inclusion and mentorship, while preserving Nigeria's rich sporting heritage.

'Pan African School Games Is Building Africa's Next Generation Of Scholar-Athletes'

By Eniola Daniel

AFRICA'S quest for educated athletes has received a big boost from the Pan African School Games, which aims to build the all-round sportsman.

The success of the maiden edition of the games has fueled growing interest among schools and student-athletes that are eager to be part of what is fast becoming one of Africa's most promising school sports platforms.

As preparations gather pace for the second edition, scheduled to hold at James Hope College, Lekki, from October 16 to 18, 2026, the brains behind the initiative, Dr Seun Akinbohun, Dr Busola Tejumola and Aderoju Ope-Ajayi, insist that the Games are about far more than competition and medals.

For the trio, the ultimate goal is to create opportunities that extend beyond the playing field by providing

pathways for talented young athletes to develop both academically and athletically.

One of the most notable developments ahead of the second edition is the competition's new identity. Formerly known as the Africa School Games, the tournament has been rebranded as the Pan African School Games, a move the organisers say better reflects

their long-term vision.

"The change reflects the ambition and direction of the competition," they explained.

"From the outset, our vision has been bigger than a Lagos or Nigerian school sports event. We want to build a platform that brings young people together across Africa through sport, education and cultural exchange."



Swimmers vying for honours at the maiden edition of the Pan African School Games last year.

INDORAMA

Obituary
ANNOUNCEMENT

With a deep sense of loss, but in humble submission to the will of Almighty God, the Management and Staff of OIS Indorama Port Limited announce the passing of our dear Staff, Colleague, and Friend, LATE MR. EMEKA AMADI who passed away on Friday, September 4, 2026, in Port Harcourt, at the age of 36 years, after a brief illness.

Until his passing, the deceased served in the Mechanical Department of the Company for three years.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Mrs. Abigail Christian Chukwuemeka, his children — Wisdom Kelechukwu, Prosper Tochukwu, and God'sgrace Ugochukwu — as well as other family members and relatives too numerous to mention.

According to the family, his burial will take place on Saturday, October 17, 2026, at his hometown in Ivo, Ishiagu Village, Ama-Onye Amadi Compound, Ebonyi State.

We mourn his passing and pray that Almighty God will grant his family, colleagues, and loved ones the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss.

May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

Signed:
MANAGEMENT
OIS Indorama Port Limited



Late
CHUKWUEMEKA
JOACHIM
AMADI

www.guardian.ng

‘Eagles Deliberately Didn’t Want To Qualify For 2026 World Cup’

RUSSIA-BASED striker, German Onugkha, has accused Super Eagles stars of deliberately throwing away the ticket to play at the 2026 World Cup hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, reports allnigeriasoccer.com.

Born in the Russian capital, Moscow, to a Russian mother and a Nigerian father, the Rodina Moscow forward is open to representing the Super Eagles, and rejected a call-up to the Russia squad for a pair of friendlies against Thailand and Vietnam in September 2024.

Nigeria missed out on the expanded 48-team FIFA World Cup after suffering a 4-3 penalty shootout defeat to the Democratic Republic of Congo in the African playoff final.

Had the Super Eagles beaten the Leopards, the three-time African champions would have advanced to the inter-confederation playoffs, where they could have faced Jamaica for a place at the tournament.

Onugkha argued that Nigeria had more than enough quality to qualify for the 2026 World Cup and suggested that a lack of motivation among the players was a major factor behind the setback.

When asked whether he supports the Nigerian national team, Onugkha told Match TV: “Yes, it was disappointing that they didn’t qualify for the World Cup. But people don’t want to play there. You look at their roster—with players like that, it’s impossible not to quali-

fy for the World Cup.

“They have a roster worth half a billion dollars, and they didn’t qualify. My opinion is that they didn’t want to go. They’d rather spend six weeks on vacation than go to a tournament.”

Prior to his summer switch to Rodina Moscow, Onugkha represented relegated Turkish Süper Lig outfit Kayserispor, where he faced Super Eagles striker Victor Osimhen last

season.

The 30-year-old recalled watching Osimhen in action for Galatasaray against his side, highlighting the forward’s impressive performance as evidence of his ability.

“I think they already have a lot of money. It won’t do Osimhen any good. It’s immediately obvious you don’t understand the Nigerian mentality (laughs).



DR Congo eliminated Nigeria from the 2026 World Cup qualifying series.

“There’s just no motivation, that’s all. I remember Osimhen playing against us for Galatasaray.

“He’d scored two goals by the 20th minute; he was a beast! And then I look at the World Cup qualifiers—it’s clear he doesn’t want to play.”

CAF Begins Discussions On Change Of AFCON Calendar

THE Africa Cup of Nations could continue to be held every two years, with discussions under way to reverse its proposed switch to a four-year cycle, reports BBC.

Speaking yesterday at a Confederation of African Football (Caf) strategy conference in Cape Verde, president Patrice Motsepe said: “We’ve discussed it over the last few days.

“We are looking at everything, including having the Afcon coming back every two years. We are very clear, the matter is being reviewed.”

The tournament has taken place every two years since 1968, bar a one-year gap between the 2012 and 2013 editions.

However, in December 2025 CAF announced it would shift to being staged every four years after the 2027 Afcon in East Africa and a 2028 edition.

That planned alteration to the schedule had received widespread criticism across the continent.

National associations had raised concerns about the visibility of their teams, the commercial implications and where Africa’s biggest competition would sit in the international football calendar. an after the opening few fix-

NLO Orders Clubs To Cease Participation In Unauthorised Private Leagues

THE Nationwide League One (NLO) Secretariat has directed all clubs under its jurisdiction to immediately cease participation in, organisation of, sponsorship of, or association with unauthorised private leagues and competitions.

The directive was contained in a formal notice issued by the NLO Secretariat, following concerns that some clubs may be engaging in competitions operating outside the official framework approved by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and the NLO.

According to the Secretariat, participation in such competitions is unauthorised and constitutes a violation of the statutes and regulations governing football administration in Nigeria.

The NLO consequently ordered all affected clubs to “cease and desist forthwith” from any involvement in private leagues or competitions that have not received prior written approval from the NFF and the NLO. The directive takes immediate effect, with the Secretariat warning that clubs that fail to comply could face disciplinary action.

Possible sanctions listed by the NLO include suspension, expulsion from the league, forfeiture of results and referral to the NFF Disciplinary Committee.

The NLO also referred to the controversy surrounding the proposed European Super League in April 2021 as an international precedent for the consequences of operating football competitions outside established structures.

At the time, a group of leading European clubs announced plans to establish a breakaway competition, prompting strong opposition from FIFA, UEFA, national football associations, governments and supporters.

The NLO noted that warnings were issued over potential sanctions against clubs and players involved in the proposed competition, including exclusion from international competitions and possible consequences within domestic football structures.

The proposed European Super League subsequently suffered a major collapse after the majority of the founding clubs withdrew from the project within days of its announcement. Drawing from the episode, the NLO stressed that football competitions must operate within the recognised structures of FIFA and its member associations and that unauthorised parallel competitions could undermine the integrity and hierarchy of the sport.

Fury-Joshua Tickets Priced Up To £13,000 Sell Out In One Hour

TICKETS for Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua’s fight at Cardiff’s Principality Stadium have sold out in just one hour. Fury and Joshua will meet on a bill that begins on December 11 but they are not expected to fight until the early hours of December 12.

The highest-priced tickets were available at £13,128, including booking fees, with the lowest at £88.50.

The all-British heavyweight contest, which will be broadcast globally on Netflix, was announced in September and around 80,000 tickets went on sale at noon yesterday.

Just minutes after the tickets went on sale more than 500,000 people were waiting in the online queue.

Tickets quickly began emerging on resale websites, with ring-

side VIP seats being advertised for £73,645, while upper tier seats were available for £425.

Ringwalks are expected to start around 01:00 GMT on Saturday December 12, following a short live music performance, and the stadium will remain open until 03:30.



Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury will meet in Cardiff, Wales on December 12.

The event is being promoted as a collaboration between Saudi boxing powerbroker Turki Alalshikh’s The Ring and UFC chief Dana White.

Organisers are yet to confirm any of the undercard fights. Joshua, 36, and Fury, 38 - both former two-time world champions - signed contracts for the bout earlier this year, but the date and venue had yet to be confirmed.

London’s Wembley Stadium and New York’s Madison Square Garden were the frontrunners to stage the fight, but both presented issues before Cardiff emerged as an alternative.

The Principality Stadium has hosted late-night boxing before, including Joe Calzaghe’s fight with Mikkel Kessler in November 2007, which began at 01:00 GMT.

Ricky Hatton’s victory over Kostya Tszyu at Manchester’s MEN Arena

in 2005 began at about 02:00 local time, allowing US broadcaster Showtime to show the fight on Saturday evening.

Just 11 days ago, there was uncertainty over whether the fight would even take place due to a dispute over the role of UFC chief White in the promotion of the event.

Broadcaster Netflix said Alalshikh’s The Ring and White would collaborate to promote the event, but Joshua’s promoter Eddie Hearn said his fighter’s contract prevented White from having a promotional role.

The British rivals finally met at a news conference on September 30 to begin the build-up to one of the most anticipated fights in British history.

Fury and Joshua are reported to be sharing a purse worth close to \$200m (£151m).

Psychologist Urges Ibadan Fans To Be Patient With Shooting Stars’ Technical Crew

By Olanrewaju Agiria

PSYCHOLOGIST Kehinde Adeyemi has appealed to supporters of Shooting Stars Sports Club (SSC) to be patient with the team’s technical crew, urging fans to resist personal attacks on members of the coaching staff, particularly the club’s Director of Football, Tobi Adepoyu and Coach Salisu Yusuf.

Adeyemi said the Oluyole Warriors’ early-season struggles are not unusual in football and warned against drawing conclusions about the team or blaming individuals after just seven matches of the league season.

According to him, the failure to secure home victories so far should not be enough reason to cast aspersions on members of the technical setup, stressing that there is still ample time for the team to turn its fortunes around.

Adeyemi, an English FA-trained football psychologist, defended Adepoyu against criticism while explaining the responsibilities of a Director of Football in the modern game.

He noted that the position is primarily advisory and administrative

in relation to the technical department, including ensuring that the right personnel are recruited to manage the team.

“The Director of Football does not sit on the bench with the coaches, hence he should not be targeted,” Adeyemi said.

He acknowledged the emotional attachment supporters have to the club and admitted that he, too, feels the disappointment

when the team fails to win.

“Football is very emotional. Even today, I won’t be able to sleep. But what we are asking for is understanding that things are going to be right soon,” he said.

“The team just played seven games in this season and it remains 31. To qualify for continental football is not really about who wins at the early stage, but the team that finishes better at

the end of the league.

“I can understand the fans’ feelings because I also want us to be winning matches, and don’t forget that all the players and technical crew will also collect bonuses for winning, but it is football. We need to understand its dynamics, which entails ups and downs.” Adeyemi further identified chance conversion as one of the team’s major concerns, rather than a lack of organisation or creativity.

He pointed out that Shooting Stars have created several scoring opportunities in their matches but have struggled to convert them.

“They played and created many chances during the games. The problem is converting the chances. If they played and were not coordinated and could not create a single chance, it would have been another case,” he added.

The football psychologist also expressed confidence in the ability of Shooting Stars manager, Coach Salisu Yusuf, describing him as an experienced tactician with an impressive coaching pedigree spanning more than two decades.



SSC Coach, Salisu Yusuf



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When Will Nigerian Leaders Build Worthy Stadiums?

'Football-crazy people with only one FIFA-approved stadium'.

THERE is a question that should embarrass Nigerian leaders and elite who claim to have developed Lagos and used same profile to capture power in Abuja, the capital of the federation. That question is: When will the powers that be in Abuja and Lagos revive Lagos and Abuja Stadiums in public interest? This is not a rhetorical question. It is a national shame. A recent survey report shows that of the more than 21 stadiums in Nigeria, only one is fit for FIFA purposes. Only one - the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo.

The most populous black nation on earth, with 240 million football-crazy people, cannot bid to host any football festival. Not AFCON, not U-20 World Cup, not even WAFU. Reason: we have no stadium. Meanwhile Morocco, with 38 million people, is now hosting FIFA office and facility in Africa. Morocco will co-host 2030 World Cup. They have 6 FIFA-standard stadiums. South Africa, with 60 million, hosted World Cup in 2010, has good premiership, good stadiums, SuperSport, and a league that pays. Nigeria - the Giant - is a giant in the sun without a pitch to play. This is a reproach. And it is time to call out the governing power that claims it developed Lagos. Once upon a time, there was a political signpost all over Lagos, "Sorry, it is a federal road". Today, the Lagos power has been in office in Lagos and Abuja since 2015, sorry 2023.

'The Shame of Surulere - National Stadium that Died since 1999.'

Since 1999 when democracy was activated, not one ruling party - PDP or APC - has been able to revive the National Stadium in Surulere, Lagos. The National Stadium Surulere is not just a stadium. It is a monument. It was opened in 1972 by General Yakubu Gowon for the All-Africa Games of 1973. It hosted FESTAC 77. It hosted the Green Eagles vs Algeria in 1980 when we won our first Nations Cup. It hosted 1999 U-20 World Cup. It hosted Chief MKO Abiola's Abiola Babes, Stationery Stores vs Enugu Rangers classics. It is where 'Mathematical Segun Odegbami' flew. Where Jay Jay Okocha danced. Where Rashidi Yekini scored. Today, what is Surulere National Stadium? A graveyard. The main bowl pitch is a bush where cows graze. The tartan tracks are torn and have become market for suya sellers. The floodlights don't work. The swimming pool is a pond. The indoor sports hall roof has collapsed. Squatters live inside. Many sports ministers have come and gone: Ishaya Mark Aku, Bala Ka'oje, Sani Ndanusa, Bolaji Abdullahi, Solomon Dalung, Sunday Dare. None has been able to revive it. The last attempt by Sunday Dare to concession it to private sector ended in photo ops. The stadium is still dead. How can a country that boasts of largest economy in Africa not maintain a national monument? If Surulere National Stadium were in Morocco, King Mohammed VI would have made it world-class in 12 months. If it were in South Africa, it would be SuperSport's headquarters. But in Nigeria, we abandon it and build new roads to it. But man shall not live by roads alone'.

'The Lagos braggadocio: Centre of Excellence with no Stadium'.

What of the so-called 'centre of excellence', Lagos - always boasting of largest economy after the federal government? Lagos says it has IGR of N1.2 trillion, bigger than 30 states combined. Lagos says it is a megacity. Lagos says it developed and used that development to capture power in Abuja in 2015 and 2023. Yet the almighty Lagos cannot afford to revive two stadiums one of which sits opposite the National Stadium. Lagos has **Teslim Balogun Stadium** opposite National Stadium Surulere, and **Onikan Stadium** - now **Mobolaji Johnson Arena** on Lagos Island.



Sanwo-Olu

Teslim Balogun Stadium - begun in 1984 by Governor Gbolahan Mudashiru, completed by Governor Bola Tinubu in 2007 - was supposed to be Lagos State's answer to National Stadium. Today, its artificial turf is fake, torn, and dangerous. Players get injured. No VAR. No good dressing room. The floodlights are epileptic.

Onikan Stadium - renovated in 2019 and renamed - is beautiful on TV but small (10,000 capacity), with limited facilities, no big parking, no good access road for 10,000 fans. It is incredible that Lagos - that builds Eko Atlantic, that builds Blue Line, that is building Lekki Deep Sea Port - cannot build one 60,000-capacity world-class stadium that can host Champions League final.

Look at this paradox: Lagos has over 20 million football fans. Lagos has 5 million youths who play football daily on streets, under bridges, in slums. Lagos has richest men in Nigeria who desire to own football clubs in Europe - Aliko Dangote tried to buy Arsenal. **Kunle Soname** owns Remo Stars with a small stadium in Ikene, Ogun State. Yet Lagos cannot give those youths one world-class pitch. The English Premier League makes \$7 billion yearly. La Liga makes \$4 billion. Football is business. Football is diplomacy. Football is entertainment. Lagos that says it is 'Centre of Excellence' should know that one good stadium creates 5,000 jobs: groundsmen, security, hawkers, hotels, broadcasters, transporters.

But Lagos powers prefer to buy SUVs. They prefer to rehabilitate roads every year. Roads are good, but man shall not live by roads alone. A city without entertainment infrastructure is a labour camp. When will Lagos State authorities swallow its pride and vanity and call Qatar - that hosted World Cup in 2022 with whopping \$220 billion - to come over to Lagos and help? Qatar is looking for African partners. Why can't Lagos call Qatar to build Lagos Arena on PPP?

'The Abuja shame - MKO Abiola Stadium that isn't Abiola-worthy.'

What of the only stadium named after MKO Abiola - the Chief himself - in the nation's capital, Abuja? The MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, built in 2003 for All Africa Games at the cost of \$360 million, was once the pride of Africa. 60,491 capacity, velodrome, swimming pool, hostel. Today, it is a shadow. The pitch is patchy, bumpy, not watered. The floodlights



Wike

fail during matches. Super Eagles vs Sierra Leone had to be moved because floodlights failed. The dressing rooms smell. The velodrome is abandoned. Cows graze outside. The only time it looks good is when government paints it for one match and after match, it dies again. When will there be political will to hand it over to Julius Berger to rebuild and maintain again as they have been maintaining the only acceptable one in faraway Uyo?

Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Uyo is the only FIFA-approved stadium in Nigeria today. The reason is: Akwa Ibom gave maintenance to Julius Berger. They signed 10-year maintenance contract. Berger waters pitch daily, maintains floodlights, maintains seats. If Uyo - with less IGR than Lagos, Rivers, Delta - can do it, why can't Abuja?

When will Mr. Project in Abuja - Minister Nyesom Wike, who is building roads everywhere - free some plots of land to develop modern stadiums in the capital of the federation? FCT has land. FCT has money. But Wike builds roads only. Roads are good, but what of youths who need stadiums to play? Abuja is the capital of 240 million. It should have at least two (2) world-class stadiums - one 60,000, one 30,000 - with training pitches. It has none that is truly world-class. This is another reproach.

'Liberty Stadium Ibadan - The first in Africa abandoned'

What of the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan - the first stadium in Africa?

Built in 1960 by Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Western Region government. 35,000 capacity. First stadium in Africa to have floodlights. First stadium to host international match in Africa. It is history. It is heritage. Why can't President Tinubu who is from South West - or Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo deploy funds to preserve that as a world-class stadium? Liberty Stadium is now called Obafemi Awolowo Stadium. Its pitch is bad. Its stands are cracked. Its scoreboard doesn't work. The only thing working is the gate that collects money from social events. If Liberty Stadium were in Egypt - Egypt preserves Cairo International Stadium built in 1960 as heritage. If it were in Morocco, they would make it a FIFA museum. But in Nigeria, we abandon firsts. We abandon history. We abandon monuments. Oyo State has money. Oyo State built 76km Circular Road. Why can't Oyo build

one world-class stadium? Football is identity. Shooting Stars of Ibadan (3SC) - one of oldest clubs in Africa - plays too in that poor stadium. No wonder they struggle.

'Why Nigeria can't play host - The economics of shame'

Why can't Nigeria bid to host AFCON again? We co-hosted 2000 with Ghana. Since then, we have not hosted because we have no stadiums. AFCON 2023 was in Ivory Coast - 6 stadiums. AFCON 2025 was in Morocco - nine (9) stadiums. AFCON 2027 will be in East Africa - Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda - building six (6) new stadiums. Nigeria with 240 million cannot bid because of one reason: Only one stadium passes FIFA inspection.

FIFA inspection checks: Pitch quality (natural grass, drainage, watering), floodlights (minimum 1,200 lux for HD broadcast), dressing rooms (minimum 4, with ice baths), VAR room, media tribune with internet, medical room, doping room, security control room, parking, access roads, evacuation plan, etc. Of 21+ stadiums in Nigeria - including those in Kano, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Kaduna, Bauchi, Jos - only Uyo passes. Why? Because we build stadiums as political projects, not as business. We commission with fanfare, no maintenance contract. After two years, pitch dies.

Morocco builds stadiums as business: They have SONARGES - a state company that builds and maintains all stadiums, with budget for maintenance. South Africa has Stadium Management SA. Nigeria has no Stadium Management Company. Each state governor builds his own stadium, abandons it when he leaves. Next governor builds new one elsewhere. Waste. This is why our national and local league teams perform poorly on national and global stages. How can Enyimba win CAF Champions League again when they play on bad pitch in Aba? How can Super Eagles play tiki-taka on bumpy pitch? Our national team just this week without Lookman and Osimhen drew with Russia on a good turf in Moscow. On good turf, we can play. On bad turf, we cannot. That is the spirit!

Football is global diplomatic weapon. When Morocco reached World Cup semi-final in 2022, its diplomatic power rose. When South Africa hosted World Cup in 2010, its tourism brand equity rose 300%. Football is business platform. A good stadium brings SuperSport, brings DSTV money, brings sponsorship. Nigeria has none. So our league is poor. Players run to Sudan, to Tanzania, to Vietnam for \$500 monthl y.

'The solution - Six stadiums in six zones, plus emergency on existing.'

How do we remove this reproach? Declare emergency on stadiums. President Tinubu should declare national emergency on sports infrastructure. Not just roads, not just fuel, not just education.

Stadiums. Create Presidential Task Force on Stadium Revival - with Dangote, Soname, Adebute, Julius Berger, Qatar, private sector. Give them 24 months to revamp six stadiums.

'Lagos and Abuja must lead.'

Lagos State authorities, specifically, must call Qatar. Qatar wants African allies after World Cup. Lagos wants to be global city. Partnership makes sense: Qatar builds 60,000 Lagos City Stadium in Surulere complex, with mall, hotel, and maintains for 30 years, takes 70% revenue.

FCT Minister Wike - Mr. Project - must free some plots of land in Abuja to develop modern stadiums. Abuja has land in Karsana, in Kuje, in Idu. Build Abuja Sports City with two stadiums, 10 training pitches, indoor arena. Man shall not live by roads alone. A capital city needs entertainment city. When will our leaders remove this reproach?

To be continued...

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