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World Food Day:

RISING POVERTY, FOOD INSECURITY PUSH MORE NIGERIANS TO THE BRINK



Ekiti State Governor, Mr Biodun Oyeibanji (left); Vice President, Senator Kashim Shettima; and Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum/Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq during the swearing-in of Governor Oyeibanji for a second term of office at Ekiti Parapo Pavilion, Ado-Ekiti....on Friday.

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News

Residents Allege Negligence As Gas Pipeline Inferno Injures 20, Razes 50 Houses In Rivers

By Ann Godwin (Port Harcourt) and Walliat Musa (Lagos)

At least 20 persons were injured while more than 50 houses were razed following a gas pipeline explosion in Aleto community, Eleme Local Council of Rivers State on Thursday evening, with some residents blaming authorities involved in checking oil spill for the incident.

The explosion, which occurred around 5p.m. along Old Bori Road, reportedly involved a ruptured pipeline belonging to the Nigeria Gas Company (NGC).

There were, however, conflicting accounts of the cause of the incident. While some residents claimed it was caused by suspected interference by pipeline vandals, others attributed the explosion to a gas leak from the ruptured pipeline.

A resident, Emmanuel Obe, said the explosion was caused by vandals. But another resident, Michael Udoh, said the pipeline had been leaking for about three weeks before the explosion.

"The pipeline has caused injuries and damaged property. This pipeline has been leaking for about three weeks before the explosion today," he said.

Several victims were reportedly rushed to hospitals, while stalls, a mechanic workshop and vehicles parked within the vicinity were affected by the inferno.

Udoh added that most of those affected were passers-by and business owners operating in the area.

Confirming the incident, the Leader of the Eleme Legislative Council, Daniel Chuma, said he had earlier written to the company about the leakage and petitioned relevant authorities for urgent intervention.

Chuma, who visited the

• NALPGAM Seeks Stricter Safety Compliance In LPG Operations

scene, said the council had also petitioned the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) and the Rivers State Ministry of Environment, with a copy sent to the police.

"There was a leakage on another section of the Nigeria Gas Company. We wrote to them and we made a petition to NOSDRA and Rivers State Ministry of Environment and copied the police for urgent intervention.

"We asked for a joint investigation. We don't know what they did before they left. Today, we were called to an explosion at the same pipeline of the Nigeria Gas Company that has destroyed over 50 houses, cars and many casualties. People have been rushed to the hospital," Chuma said.

Meanwhile, the Youths and Environmental Advocacy Centre (YEAC-Nigeria) has reacted to the incident, saying several victims had been hospitalised.

In a statement, the Executive Director of YEAC-Nigeria, Dr. Fyneyface Dumnamene, called on the Rivers State government, the Federal Ministry of Environment and NOSDRA to intervene urgently and provide assistance to affected residents.

"We are using this medium to call on the relevant authorities, the Rivers State government, Ministry of Environment, NOSDRA, the Federal Government and all the bodies involved in checking oil spill and gas explosion to come to the aid of Aleto people. This is a serious incident," he said.

Dumnamene said the fire was still raging as of the time of the statement, with surrounding buildings affected

and some residents reportedly hospitalised.

He, however, said the organisation had not independently confirmed any fatalities.

According to him, volunteers who visited the scene to verify the incident confirmed the presence of officials of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps.

"The cause of the incident is yet to be independently verified," he said.

Dumnamene urged NOSDRA to identify the operator of the affected facility and conduct a Joint Investigation Visit to the site.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Association of Liquefied

Petroleum Gas Marketers (NALPGAM) has called on operators in the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sector to strengthen safety measures, regulatory compliance and digital monitoring to reduce operational losses and support industry growth.

The association made the call at its 2026 webinar themed, 'Downstream LPG Operational Excellence and Compliance,' which brought together industry operators, regulators and other stakeholders to discuss safety risks, market volatility, operational losses and regulatory requirements.



Nigeria-China Monetary Policy Collaboration: Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Olayemi Cardoso (left), and Governor of the People's Bank of China (PBOC), Dr. Pan Gongsheng, during a strategic meeting between the two institutions on Thursday, October 15, 2026, on the sidelines of the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG) in Bangkok, Thailand.

NSIB Deploys Investigators As Aircraft Loses Door Mid-air, Makes Emergency Landing

• United Nigeria Airlines To Raise N20b Through Commercial Paper

By Olusegun Koiki

An aircraft operated by Triton Aviation made an emergency landing at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport (NAIA), Abuja, on Thursday after losing a door shortly after take-off, with the missing part later reportedly found by farmers on a nearby farmland.

Meanwhile, United Nigeria Airlines (UNA) is seeking to raise N20 billion through a commercial paper issuance, representing the first tranche under its N100 billion commercial paper programme, as it seeks to strengthen its financial position and expand its domestic, regional and international operations.

The CL60 aircraft, with registration number T7-SEI and flight identification DWCO52, was travelling from Abuja to the Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA), Lagos, when the incident occurred at about 4:20 p.m. local time.

An incident report obtained by *The Guardian* indicated that the aircraft took off from Runway 22 at 4:17 p.m. UTC and was about three nautical miles from the airport, climbing through 3,000 feet, when the crew declared an emergency by transmitting "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday."

According to the report, the crew informed air traffic control that a door had opened in flight, prompting the approach radar controller to direct the aircraft back to Abuja for an emergency landing.

Following the distress call, the airport's fire watch room and medical team were alerted and placed on standby. Fire and emergency personnel were also directed to designated positions at A4 and

A5 in preparation for the aircraft's return.

The report stated that at about 4:29 p.m. UTC, while communicating with the Abuja control tower, the crew asked whether air traffic controllers could confirm if the door was open.

"The duty air traffic controller attempted to observe the aircraft with binoculars but could not establish the door's condition because of the aircraft's position. The crew was subsequently informed that the controller could not visually confirm the situation.

"The aircraft landed safely on Runway 22 at approximately 4:34 p.m. UTC, about 14 minutes after the Mayday call. After landing, the duty controller observed that the aircraft's door was missing from the fuselage.

"The aircraft was subsequently taxied to the international apron extension and parked with the assistance of a marshaller," the report said.

Meanwhile, a video seen by *The Guardian* showed farmers displaying what they said was the missing aircraft door, which they reportedly found on their farmland in Abuja.

In the video, a man whose identity could not be independently established said the farmers found the object while returning from their farm.

"This is what we found as we were returning from our farm. It fell from a plane, but we don't know much about its identity. As I am sending it to you, sir, just check it," he said.

As at the time of filing this report, the number of passengers on board the aircraft could not be ascertained, while Triton Aviation could not be reached for comments.

World Food Day: FG Reports 4.39% Agricultural Growth In Q2 2026

From Terhemba Daka and Joke Falaju (Abuja)

The Federal Government has said Nigeria's agricultural sector recorded 4.39 per cent growth in the second quarter of 2026, with crop production expanding by 3.66 per cent, as it pledged to intensify efforts to improve food production, reduce post-harvest losses and strengthen agricultural value chains.

This was even as the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) called for greater investment in agricultural innovation, support for farmers and sustainable food production to ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all Nigerians.

The calls were made to commemorate World Food Day 2026, observed on October 16 with the theme, 'Innovate

• Oluremi Tinubu Urges Innovation, Support For Farmers

Today. Nourish Tomorrow.'

The Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Sabi Abdullahi, who disclosed the growth figures in a statement marking the celebration, said the performance indicated that government reforms and investments in the sector were beginning to yield results.

The statement followed a walk led by the Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Dr. Marcus Ogunbiyi, involving development partners, farmers' associations and other stakeholders from the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) to Millennium Park in Abuja to commemorate the day.

Abdullahi assured Nigerians of the Federal Government's commitment to food security through interventions aimed

at increasing production, reducing post-harvest losses, strengthening agricultural value chains and improving farmers' profitability.

According to him, the government's strategy covers the entire agricultural value chain, including research, inputs, storage, processing, financing, marketing and consumption, in collaboration with state governments, farmers' organisations, development partners, research institutions, financial institutions and the private sector.

He disclosed that Nigeria's annual domestic wheat production had risen to approximately 420,000 metric tonnes from a previous baseline of 120,000 metric tonnes, representing a 3.5-fold increase.

On mechanisation, the minister said the government had

commenced the Renewed Hope Agricultural Mechanisation Programme with the commissioning of 2,000 tractors and implements to improve farming efficiency, reduce labour requirements and attract young people to agriculture.

He added that the government was addressing high food prices through expanded dry-season farming, investments in Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones, and the development of storage and cold-chain facilities.

According to him, the interventions were designed to reduce post-harvest losses from 40 per cent to below 20 per cent.

He said the measures were being complemented by the orderly release of food from the Strategic Food Reserve

and the implementation of a Guaranteed Minimum Price to support farmers and improve food availability.

The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to building a productive, resilient and competitive agricultural sector capable of feeding the country and contributing substantially to economic growth.

However, the First Lady called for greater investment in agricultural innovation, support for farmers and the adoption of sustainable food production practices to strengthen Nigeria's food security and ensure access to safe and nutritious meals for families.

In her message to mark the occasion, Tinubu said innovation must go hand in hand with the preservation of traditional agricultural knowledge to build resilient food systems capable of meeting the coun-

try's present and future food needs.

She said achieving food security requires collective efforts to support farmers, reduce food waste and promote sustainable agricultural practices that protect the environment while improving food production and distribution.

She stressed the importance of embracing new ideas and technologies without neglecting indigenous knowledge and traditional practices that had sustained communities and contributed to food production over generations.

Tinubu also urged Nigerians to recognise the role farmers play in national development, noting that stronger food systems require sustained support for agricultural production and measures to ensure that nutritious food remains accessible to households.

Tinubu Woos Investors With \$78.5b 'Bankable' Projects

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has urged local and international investors to explore Nigeria's \$78.5 billion pipeline of 65 bankable projects, as the Federal Government intensifies efforts to attract private capital, expand businesses and create jobs.

The President also welcomed the World Bank Group's initiative to mobilise up to \$5.79 billion in private financing for Nigeria, particularly to support business expansion and investment in agriculture and digital infrastructure.

Tinubu, in a post on his X handle, @officialABAT, on Friday, said the initiatives aligned with his administration's economic reforms aimed at establishing a stronger foundation for investment and expanding opportunities for Nigerians to earn better livelihoods.

He called on investors to examine the available projects and engage directly with their sponsors through the Projects Nigeria platform, assuring them of the government's readiness to address obstacles and facilitate the implementation of viable investments.

• Welcomes World Bank's Plan To Mobilise \$5.79b In Private Financing

The President disclosed that Nigeria had assembled a pipeline of 65 bankable projects seeking a combined \$78.5 billion in investment, describing the initiative as a further step towards mobilising private capital to support economic development.

However, the President's statement did not specify the sectors covered by all 65 projects, although he identified agriculture and digital infrastructure as areas targeted

by the World Bank Group's planned private financing. Tinubu said the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyelede, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Olayemi Cardoso, presented the investment opportunities at the Nigeria Investors Forum, held on the sidelines of the 2026 International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok.

"I welcome the World Bank Group's work to mobilise up to \$5.79 billion in private financing for Nigeria. This partnership supports our efforts to help businesses expand and attract investment into agriculture and digital infrastructure," the President said.

He urged Nigerian and foreign investors to take advantage of the opportunities outlined on the Projects Nigeria platform, stressing

that the government would work with project sponsors to resolve challenges that could delay or prevent implementation.

"Our administration will work with you to resolve obstacles and move viable investments into execution, creating jobs and expanding opportunities for our people," Tinubu said.

The President maintained that the economic reforms undertaken by his administration were intended to create a more solid foundation

for investment and enable more Nigerians to improve their livelihoods.

The initiative reflects the Federal Government's drive to mobilise private-sector financing for development, reduce barriers to investment and encourage the execution of commercially viable projects.

Investors can access details of the project pipeline through the Federal Ministry of Finance's website at finance.gov.ng/project-snigeria.



Registrar, Crescent University, Barr. Zakariyya Ajibola (left); Keynote Speaker/Justice of The Supreme Court of Nigeria, Justice Habeeb Adewale Abiru; Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council, Alh. Rafiu Adisa Ebiti, FCA; Proprietor/Chairman, Board of Trustee (BOT), Prince Muhammed Ma'ruf Adesegun Ajibola; and Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ibrahim Gbajabiamila, during the 18th Convocation Award of First, Master's and Doctorate Degrees, Diplomas, Certificate, Prizes and Conferment of Honorary Degrees, Class of 2026 Crescent University Abeokuta, Ogun State... on Friday.

NRC Denies Ticket Racketeering Allegations On Abuja-Kaduna Train Service

By Benjamin Alade

THE Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has denied allegations that it deliberately creates artificial scarcity of tickets on the Abuja-Kaduna Train Service (AKTS) to enable agents to resell them at exorbitant prices.

The corporation described the allegations, contained in a viral social media video by Instagram blogger, Faizah Raji, who operates under the handle @wearegst, as misleading, insisting that it does not directly handle ticket sales on the train corridor.

In a statement issued by the NRC management, the corporation said Raji had alleged that railway tickets were being withheld from the official e-ticketing platform and sold through unofficial agents at prices reportedly twice the approved rates.

The NRC, however, said the blogger acknowledged that the corporation had warned passengers against purchasing tickets outside its approved portal.

According to the management, passengers who patronise unofficial ticket agents against its warnings do so at their own risk, adding that the corporation should not be held responsible for losses arising from such transactions.

The NRC explained that ticketing services on its standard-gauge rail corridors are managed by private concessionaires under a public-private partnership arrangement.

Foundation, Deloitte Commit N3.5m To Young Sustainability Innovators

By Moyosore Salami and Emmanuel Nathaniel

THE Foundation for a Better Environment (FABE) International Foundation, in partnership with Deloitte Nigeria, has committed N3.5 million in seed funding to support young sustainability innovators developing solutions to environmental challenges.

The funding was announced during the 2026 EcoLeaders Accelerator Programme (ELAP) Closeout, Impact Showcase and Green Innovation Pitch in Ikeja, Lagos.

Speaking at the event, the founder and chief executive officer of FABE International Foundation, Temitope Okunnu, said the programme was designed to equip young people

with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to translate environmental concerns into practical solutions.

She said 10 finalists presented sustainability projects addressing environmental and community challenges, with the top three set to receive seed grants to implement their ideas.

Under the funding arrangement, the first-place winner will receive N2 million, the second-place winner N1 million, while the third-place winner will receive N500,000.

Okunnu said the programme was designed to bridge the gap between sustainability training and practical action by providing participants with the resources to implement

their ideas. She added that the initiative was intended to demonstrate that young innovators could develop solutions to environmental problems with the right knowledge, mentorship, partnerships and financial support.

Okunnu said the participants had undergone intensive training through the FABE Institute of Sustainability, covering climate action, circular economy, environmental, social and governance issues, green entrepreneurship, project management, leadership and sustainable development.

She urged the finalists to focus on the impact their ideas could make, rather than the

financial rewards attached to the competition. The Nigerian sustainability consultant for Deloitte West Africa, Olajumoke Agbetanmije, said the partnership reflected the firm's commitment to promoting climate action and developing leaders capable of advancing a green economy.

She said investing in young people was essential to building sustainable solutions for Nigeria and other African countries.

Agbetanmije said Deloitte's sustainability efforts focused on creating meaningful impact through climate initiatives, community engagement and practical environmental action.

Improved Revenues Creating Opportunities For Landmark Developments Across States - Udeh

From Lawrence Njoku (Enugu) and Johnson Eyangho (Abuja)

THE Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Dr. Kingsley Tochukwu Udeh, has said the reforms embarked upon by the Federal Government are creating opportunities for states and local councils to undertake landmark development projects through improved revenue.

This came as the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has urged Nigerians to support President Bola Tinubu's economic reforms, describing them as necessary steps towards economic stability and long-term prosperity.

Udeh, who spoke with *The Guardian* in Enugu, said the country's economic performance had improved since the introduction of the reforms, despite the hardship

• Idris Drums Support For Tinubu's Reforms

still confronting many Nigerians.

He said economic growth had risen from about two per cent in 2023 to approximately four per cent currently, adding that the removal of fuel subsidy and the financial autonomy granted to local councils were among the measures expected to improve governance and development.

According to him, increased revenue available to state and local councils would enable them to execute landmark projects and improve residents' living conditions.

The minister cited developments in Enugu State, particularly in infrastructure and transportation, as well as its emergence as a conference destination, as examples of

the opportunities available when governments deploy resources towards development.

He acknowledged that inflation and economic hardship remained concerns but maintained that the country was moving in the right direction.

Udeh urged Nigerians to support the Tinubu administration, arguing that a second term would provide an opportunity to consolidate the reforms and deliver further development.

On calls for the South-West to retain the Presidency in 2027, despite the South-East not producing a president since the return to democratic rule in 1999, Udeh said candidates would present their arguments to Nigerians, who

would ultimately decide through the electoral process. Speaking in Abuja on Friday when he received the Director-General of Friends of Tinubu Reforms (FTR), Agbor Ebipade, who visited to introduce the organisation and seek collaboration with the ministry in communicating government policies to Nigerians, Idris said the removal of fuel subsidy and the unification of the foreign exchange market were difficult but necessary decisions intended to stabilise the economy and address long-standing structural challenges.

He noted that state governments had previously struggled to pay workers' salaries, arguing that the reforms were aimed at improving public finances and creating room for governments to meet their obligations.

APEN Moves To Build Nigeria-centric AI Model

By Iyabo Lawal

THE Association of Private Educators in Nigeria (APEN) is charting a new technological path for private education with a plan to develop its own contextualised Artificial Intelligence (AI) model that will reflect Nigeria's culture, curriculum and classroom realities.

The association said the move became necessary because most existing AI tools in use in schools are trained on foreign datasets that often produce content irrelevant to Nigerian learners.

The disclosure was made at a media briefing held at Greensprings School, Anthony, Lagos, ahead of APEN's 16th yearly conference scheduled for November 2 and 3, at The Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Themed, 'Human First: Leading with Purpose in the Age of AI', the two-day summit will bring together school proprietors, administrators, educators, parents and international knowledge partners drawn from 14 states and parts of East Africa to interrogate generative technology and establish enforceable benchmarks for human-centred adoption in the classroom.

Speaking at the briefing, the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Mrs. Bolanle Adewole, stressed that while artificial intelligence offers transformative efficiency, foreign datasets often deliver pedagogical content that is disconnected from local educational realities.

She warned that heavy reliance on foreign-trained public models leaves Nigerian institutions vulnerable to cultural displacement, making a domestic technological roadmap imperative.

"AI has not come to kill education; on the contrary, it has come to enhance and support it by promoting innovation, sustainability and efficiency."

"However, it cannot be an AI free-for-all. What is significant for our schools is developing AI that is not merely drawn from external web caches, but models into which we can input our own context. As an association, APEN is looking to build its own contextualised AI engine in the near future so that our tools reflect local realities rather than giving outputs only relevant to Europe or other parts of the world," she said.

Special

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World Food Day: Rising Poverty, Food Insecurity

By Gbenga Akinfenwa and Joke Falaju

CURRENTLY saddled with the task of meeting United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of reducing poverty in all its forms and dimensions by at least half in 2030, the latest Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) few days ago revealed that the country is nowhere near the projection of reducing multidimensional poverty, as both the proportion of people affected and their total number are rising at an alarming rate.

The findings come amid continued concern over the rising cost of living and the pressure on household welfare in the country. Only in April 2026, the World Bank reported that Nigeria's poverty rate had increased from 56 per cent in 2023 to 63 per cent in 2025, leaving about 140 million people in poverty.

The bank attributed the trend partly to household incomes failing to keep pace with rising living costs and weak growth in agriculture, a sector that provides livelihoods for many poor Nigerians.

Currently, millions of Nigerians are grappling with food insecurity to the rising poverty, hunger and declining public confidence, with many households being pushed to the brink and on the verge of eating from the wastes bins.

Hence, on the occasion of this year's food day commemoration, with the theme, "Innovate Today, Nourish Tomorrow," rather than optimism on food and other agro-based commodities price drop, the revelation from stakeholders indicate a situation of hopelessness.

They told *The Guardian* that while climate change is having its toll on farmers, with excess rain and longer periods of drought becoming order of the day, the cost of inputs and others has reduced the number of practicing farmers, as those left in the profession can barely afford it, hence, the low yields from their efforts.

Celebrated yearly on October 16 across the globe, the day provides an important opportunity for the global community to renew its commitment to the fight against hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity.

The day also commemorates the founding of FAO of the United Nations in 1945, reflecting the enduring global effort to build food systems that can adequately nourish present and future generations.

Beyond the commemoration, the day serves as a rallying point for governments, development partners, farmers, private-sector actors, researchers, innovators and communities to work together towards sustainable food systems and a future where everyone has access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and affordable food.

According to the world body, ending hunger is within reach. The world already produces enough food to nourish everyone, yet 645 million people still face hunger, and 2.69 billion cannot afford a healthy diet.

In Nigeria, stakeholders and industry players believe that ending hunger in the country is within reach, especially owing to the large expanse of arable land across the geo-political zones, the population and temperate weather condition, however, conflict, economic instability and climate shocks put pressure on agrifood systems, therefore, the challenge is how to ensure access to reliable, affordable and nutritious food for the citizens across the country.

For Nigeria to feed its growing population, innovation is no longer an option but a necessity. This shows the urgent need to continuously explore new and smarter ways of increasing agricultural productivity, reducing post-harvest losses, improving processing and storage, strengthening food distribution networks, expanding market access, creating decent employment opportunities to tackle the menace of food insecurity.

This year's theme, 'Innovate Today, Nourish Tomorrow', is a call for renewed commitment to innovation, technology, research and sustain-



- Improved Seeds Adoption Still At 9%
- Transfer Of Country's Agriculture Sovereignty Is A Big Factor
- Low Communication, Inadequate Storytelling Bane Of Innovation Uptake
- Nigeria Must Embrace Biocircular Economy To Rebuild Its Wealth

able practices across the agricultural value chain.

The Federal Government policies appear to be only on paper. For successive administrations, it's being a case of motion without movement, as none of the launched initiatives seemed to be working.

For instance, the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP) 2022-2027 was launched to address the changing dynamics in the agricultural sector owing to climate change.

The five-year policy seeks to improve agricultural productivity through research, mechanisation, extension services, irrigation, digital agriculture and climate-smart farming.

Unfortunately, four years down the lane, the uptake of technology by Nigerian farmers remains at its lowest ebb, particularly, in mechanisation, irrigation, improved seeds and digital farming tools.

According to the 2024 statistics from FAO, less than one per cent of farming households owned tractors. Another report by the organisa-

tion in 2025 showed that 70 per cent of farmers still depend on crude implements.

Reports have it that only three states have tractors for farming. Unfortunately, where these tractors and other equipment are available, the cost of hiring them is far beyond the reach of these farmers.

Investigations showed that the average rental rate of a tractor, which was around N80, 000 per day in 2023, covering about 10 hours of work, increased to N205, 000 per day in 2025. This increase hinged on several factors - rising fuel costs, inflation, higher maintenance expenses, and the increasing cost of spare parts.

Even, the farmers who have the funds to acquire the tractors are being frustrated by government policies, especially the exorbitant tariff placed on imports. For instance, one of the stakeholders, Nnaemeka Obiaraeri, said he cleared a tractor he bought for N33m, with a whopping sum of N15m.

On the issue of improved seedling, a review of the Nigerian seed system by some agricultural scientists put the

adoption of improved seeds by rural farmers at nine per cent, while about 42 per cent of farmers still use inorganic fertilisers.

Some of the challenges attributed to this problem include inconsistent seed quality, limited regulatory oversight, and inadequate awareness among farmers. These gaps have hindered the effective adoption of quality seeds, including biofortified varieties that can combat malnutrition.

The adverse effect of climate change is another big issue. While it appears Nigerian farmers are embracing climate-resilient crop varieties, the adoption is very slow. The recent climate-related disruptions in some

parts of the country laid credence to this, as crops were destroyed either by flooding or drought. While

Small farmers are steadily getting pushed out by big firms and they are more profit oriented and cannot be bothered with food availability. To change things in the sector, we need to farm with the consciousness of climate change. We need to adapt to round-the-year farming and also invest in processing. We need a system that does not place farmers' investment and food availability at the mercy of a currently dynamic climate.



A farmer with a bunch of carrot

Feature

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Push More Nigerians To The Brink

drought-resistant maize, high-yield cassava and improved rice varieties are gaining tractions among farmers in serious countries, the Federal Government is still paying lip service to this.

Though the advent of agro-tech innovations like Thrive Agric and Farmcrowdy, among others, is on the rise in the country, to revolutionise the agricultural landscape, helping rural farmers gain access to funding, market and technical expertise, providing them with real-time weather updates, and agricultural best practices, it's still like a drop in the ocean because their interventions and penetrations is still in the surface compared to large number of farmers in the country.

Experts claim that while the advancement in mechanisation and technology are encouraging, challenges such as poor infrastructure, inadequate storage facilities, access to arable land and post-harvest losses have been serious challenges drawing back the level of progress.

The administration of Muhammadu Buhari made a renewed focus aimed towards repositioning the sector through initiatives like the Anchor Borrowers Programmes (ABP). It was a laudable initiative that provided opportunities for small-scale farmers to get soft loans to improve their farming techniques and expand their businesses, but the scheme was squandered as most of the funds got into the hands of 'political farmers', while several millions of naira remained unpaid till date.

The Founder of Menitos Farm Depot, Lagos, Toluwalope Daramola, said though the lingering food crisis is mostly put down to insecurity and climate change, the efforts to transfer the country's agriculture sovereignty cannot be ignored, as it has also been a factor to the issue of food crisis.

"Small farmers are steadily getting pushed out by big firms and they are more profit oriented and cannot be bothered with food availability. To change things in the sector, we need to farm with the consciousness of climate change. We need to adapt to round-the-year farming and also invest in processing. We need a system that does not place farmers' investment and food availability at the mercy of a currently dynamic climate," she said.

The Strategic Communications Lead of Keselash Agricom, Feyikemi Adurogbangba, attributed the low uptake of innovations by Nigerian farmers to poor communication and inadequate storytelling about agricultural innovations.

She said, "we believe communication should be treated as critical infrastructure for scaling and sustaining innovation in the food system."

"Beyond creating visibility, impact-driven and human-centred storytelling can document what works, share lessons from implementation, build trust, connect stakeholders and foster the partnerships and collaborations needed to replicate successful solutions in other communities and contexts.

"When we tell the stories of farmers, innovators, researchers, businesses and institutions, we do more than showcase achievements. We help others understand what is possible, learn from experience and identify opportunities to invest, collaborate and build on existing progress."

She emphasised that agricultural innovation could help boost food production and reduce food loss, but maintained that its long-term impact depended on the ability to share knowledge, strengthen connections and ensure that proven solutions reached more people.

Adurogbangba added, "if we want to innovate today for a sustainable tomorrow, we must not only invest in developing solutions; we must also invest in communicating them effectively."

The Managing Director of Arzikin Noma Africa, Adeoluwa Michael Adesola, emphasised the need to develop a 10-year sustainable agricultural development roadmap to get the sector out of this debacle.

He said the roadmap should be developed by the government, development finance institutions and the private sector, in collaboration



Rice farmers harvesting

with young people and women, to promote climate-smart agriculture by leveraging technology and irrigation for year-round farming, rather than relying on a single cycle of rain-fed planting.

On his part, the Managing Director of Green Sahara Farms, Suleiman Dikwa, stressed the need for Nigeria to embrace a biocircular economy to rebuild its wealth.

According to him, if Nigeria must escape the chronic cycle of boom-and-bust petro-dependency, it must stop looking beneath the ground for its salvation and start looking across its surface.

He stated that true economic sovereignty lay in an aggressive national shift towards two interlocking engines: the biocircular economy and the carbon opportunity approach.

"This is not a romantic environmental crusade. It is a hard-nosed industrial strategy," he said. "Consider the stark paradox of our current system. Across Nigeria's agrarian belts, millions of metric tonnes of agricultural residues—rice husks in Kebbi, cassava peelings across Ogun and Oyo, and palm oil effluent throughout Edo—are routinely discarded or set ablaze. In burning them, we do not merely pollute our skies; we incinerate capital. In a circular bioeconomy, these residues cease to be waste. They become feedstock."

He said, "decentralised biomass refining could instantly transform agricultural waste into clean industrial heat, biofertilisers and green construction materials. By converting farm waste into biochar—a charcoal-like substance that sequesters carbon for centuries while reviving our degraded, nutrient-depleted topsoils—we can restore our domestic food basket in the

Middle Belt.

"In doing so, we also generate durable, high-integrity carbon removal credits that institutional global buyers will purchase at a premium."

Dikwa added that Nigeria must simultaneously confront its crippling energy deficit through circular innovation.

"Instead of burning scarce foreign exchange on imported petroleum fuels and diesel for backup generators, we have the raw biological fuel to produce domestic bio-compressed natural gas (Bio-CNG). Commercial anaerobic digesters utilising abattoir waste and agricultural runoff can power local trucking fleets, run farm-processing equipment and electrify agro-industrial clusters entirely off-grid."

Speaking on the untapped economic potential of Nigeria's natural geography and its carbon opportunities, he said, "Too often, Nigerian debates frame climate action as a restrictive compliance cost imposed by industrialised nations. This perspective fundamentally misreads the moment. Decarbonisation is the fastest-growing asset class on Earth. Nigeria happens to possess one of Africa's largest natural carbon vaults: the mangrove ecosystems of the Niger Delta and the coastal wetlands of the Atlantic seaboard."

"Mangroves capture carbon at rates four to 10 times faster than terrestrial tropical forests. Where oil spills and illegal refining have scarred coastal communities, high-integrity 'blue carbon' restoration projects can deliver direct economic injections. Under credible international frameworks, restoring these wetlands can generate tradable carbon assets worth hundreds of millions of dollars, while rebuilding artisanal

fisheries and creating coastal storm defences against sea-level rise."

"In the north, integrating cash-yielding indigenous species like shea and gum arabic into our Great Green Wall shelterbelts can transform desertification barriers into commercial agro-forestry hubs that also export certified carbon credits."

Dikwa stated that three deliberate steps were essential if Nigeria was to seize this opportunity. Firstly, he called for legal clarity on carbon property rights. He said the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC) must finalise enforceable rules specifying who owns the carbon in the country's soil, trees and wetlands, while ensuring transparent national registries and equitable revenue-sharing models for host communities. According to him, ambiguity breeds exploitation and discourages long-term investment.

Secondly, he called for smart industrial financing, urging sovereign wealth mechanisms and domestic development banks to structure blended-finance facilities to reduce risks for private-sector investments in waste-to-energy digesters and circular refining plants.

Thirdly, he advocated local market creation, saying circularity required domestic demand. He said mandating minimum thresholds for recycled materials in corporate packaging and prioritising locally produced biofertilisers in government agricultural schemes would establish reliable domestic supply chains.

HOWEVER, experts, especially nutritionists have sounded a note of caution on the importance of food safety, in the country's search for various innovations to boost food security.

The warning is coming on the heel of reports on farmers' usage of harmful chemicals – herbicides, pesticides and others, to increase yields and maximise profits, often without sufficient regard to the health of Nigerians.

According to the WHO, pesticides are classified as extremely hazardous (Class Ia), highly hazardous (Class Ib), moderately hazardous (Class II), slightly hazardous (Class III) and unlikely to be hazardous under short-term use (Class U).

Research reveals that for some extremely hazardous pesticides, just 5ml taken into the mouth is sufficient to kill an adult. It has been well documented that small-scale farmers in developing countries use large amounts of pesticides belonging to classes Ia, Ib, and II due to these being cheaper than the less hazardous, newer ones.

Experts say with this, newer safer formulations tend to be more expensive because they are protected by foreign patents, and local firms are not permitted to formulate them without paying heavy charges which eventually drive up market prices.

Until recent years, the prevalence of cancer, kidney-related ailments, reproductive organ malfunctioning and other life-threatening diseases were not so endemic among Nigerians, especially youths, who have become easy prey to these diseases.

One area that has been of great concern and major contributory factor to this problem, which little or no attention is paid to, is the issue of crop protection, particularly, abuse of agro-chemicals on plants.

Investigations revealed that some these agro-chemicals that have been restricted and banned in industrialised countries have found their way into many third world countries, including Nigeria, where the farmers churn out 'poisoned' crops to unsuspecting consumers.

A crop protectionist from the Institute for Agriculture Research (IAR), Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Kaduna State, Prof. Rabi Adamu, who confirmed that pesticides are often toxic to humans, said nine highly-persistent pesticides – aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex, toxaphene, and hexachlorobenzene have been officially banned from use in agriculture.





Acting Head of Corporate Communications & Branding, Egbin Power, Adebayo Dawodu (left); Community Liaison Officer (CLO), Ijede, Muftau Agbabiaka; Brand, Event & PCSR Manager, Egbin Power, Stella Olugbemi; scholarship beneficiary/Top Scholar in Host Community category, Royalty Olanikanmi; Chief Executive Officer, Egbin Power, Mokhtar Bounour; Odofin of Ijede Kingdom, High Chief Babatunde Ogunmuyiwa and CLO, Ijede Community, Olumide Musediq, during the Scholarship Award presentation to beneficiaries at Egbin Power, Ikorodu, Lagos.



Beneficiary, Idowu Feranmi (left); former Chairman Orile-Agege Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Sunday Johnson Babatunde; Prince Tajudeen Abiodun and Chairman Orile-Agege LCDA, Akinola Abiodun Idowu and Special Adviser to Governor on Political, Legislative and Civic Engagement, Dr. Tajudeen Afolab during the launch of an electric vehicle (EV) and electric motorcycle initiative in Lagos.



Ambassador of Morocco to the United States, Youssef Amrani (left) and Nigeria's Ambassador to the United States, Lateef Kayode Are, during Nigeria's 66 Independence Day celebration in Washington DC on October 1.



Head of Operations, Inter Metro Transport Solutions Limited, Muhammed Atta(left); Chief Operating Officer, Ecovia Limited, Oluwaseyi Akinwunmi; Founder, Hospital Emergency Response Foundation, Udanga Jarigbe; and Country Director, inDrive Nigeria, Oladimeji Timothy, at the inDrive Safety Summit 3.0 held in Abuja.

Metronotes

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Orile-Agege Unveils Electric Vehicle Scheme
• Sponsors Youths On China Technical Training
By Shakirah Adunola

In a decisive shift toward urban transport decarbonisation and grassroots capacity building, the Orile-Agege Local Council Development Area (LCDA) has formally launched an electric vehicle (EV) and electric motorcycle initiative aimed at buffering residents against rising energy costs while curbing municipal emissions.

The initiative, unveiled during a ceremony at the Council Secretariat on Wednesday, combines clean mobility deployment with an intensive technical transfer scheme, under which selected local youths will undergo advanced assembly and diagnostics training in China.

Addressing a gathering of state government representatives, traditional rulers, transport union executives and trade associations, the Executive Chairman of Orile-Agege LCDA, Akinola Abiodun Idowu, framed the transition to electric mobility as both an economic imperative and a public health necessity.

Idowu observed that conventional commuting expenses currently consume a disproportionate share of daily earnings for artisans, commercial motorcycle operators and small-scale traders across the metropolis.

Chemical Engineers Urge Govt To Privatisise State Refineries

By Sunday Aikulola
The Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineers (NSChE) Bayo Olarewaju-Alo, has advocated transparent, competitive and time-bound privatisation process for the nation's state-owned refineries. He said timely, credible reform would strengthen investors confidence in the nation's commitment to commercially disciplined energy-sector reform.

Speaking on the topic, 'Nigeria's moribund refineries need new governance,' he said if the refineries are commercialised, the assets could support domestic supply resilience, petrochemical growth, engineering employment and regional trade.

He advised the government to retain responsibility for policy, regulation, security, competition and public-interest safeguards, not day-to-day refinery operations.

Midea Launches Festive Promotion With Chery Tiggo 2 Pro As Grand Prize

By Kehinde Olatunji
MIDEA has launched a nationwide consumer promotion offering shoppers who purchase its home appliances worth, at least, N100,000 an opportunity to win prizes, including a Chery Tiggo 2 Pro car.

The promotion, tagged WIN 9/A WIN, will run from October 10 to December 31, 2026, with participating dealers expected to distribute scratch vouchers to eligible customers at the point of purchase.

Under the arrangement, customers who buy qualifying Midea products worth N100,000 or more will receive vouchers to reveal their rewards, subject to the campaign's terms and conditions.

Rivers Police Remove DPO Over Renovation Of Station By Suspected Cultists

From Godfrey Gabriel, Port Harcourt
THE Rivers State Police Command has queried and relieved the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of Abuloma Division and the officer overseeing the Abuloma Police Outpost following allegations that suspected cultists renovated the facility.

The Command's response followed a viral video circulating on social media showing suspected cultists visiting the newly refurbished station on Thursday, October 15, 2026, allegedly to celebrate the project's completion.

A statement by the Rivers Police Public Relations Officer, CP Olugbenga A. Adepoju, and others, ordered the immediate removal of both officers pending the outcome of the inquiry.

Digitised Census Key To Security, Economic Prosperity—Clergyman

By Ogueji for Emmanuel
NIGERIA needs a fully digitised national census and the harmonisation of data across government platforms if it is to build a stronger security architecture, upgrade public facilities and create a genuinely data-driven economy.

Dr Desmond Oludare Ojumu made the call last Sunday, arguing that accurate, integrated information is the foundation for better national planning and lasting economic prosperity. Ojumu spoke shortly after his installation as Leader in Charge of the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church (Sanctuary of Salvation) during the congregation's 41st Harvest Anniversary and installation service in Lagos.



Ojumu

Sokoto: Govt Urges Citizens To Make Impactful Inputs At 2027 Budget Town Hall Meetings



Achida

SOKOTO State Government has urged citizens to make impactful inputs as preparations for the 2027 budget begin.

Flagging off the Southern Zonal Town Hall Meeting in Bodinga, the Commissioner for Budget and Economic Development, Dr. Bashir Muhammad Achida, said the town hall is part of Governor Ahmed Aliyu's commitment to inclusive and open governance.

Achida disclosed that last year's consultations produced results, with most citizens' demands captured in the 2026 budget already executed or nearing completion.

He announced that to deepen participation, next year's consultations will be extended to all Local Government Areas.

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Elite Pro Summit Holds In Lagos Oct. 17

By Opeyemi Babalola
AFTER making its mark in London, the Elite Pro Summit is coming home to Lagos. It will bring together ambitious women in the corporate sector for a day-long conversation on how to build careers that do not merely rise, but endure.

Organised by Visible Strengths Co., the inaugural Lagos edition of the summit will hold on Saturday, October 17, 2026, at The Hub, Lekki, Lagos, from 9am to 6pm.

The summit, designed for women in the early stages of their corporate careers, will focus on the theme "Built to Last"—a theme that challenges the conventional approach to career advancement by asking women to look beyond promotion, visibility and professional performance to the often-overlooked foundations required to sustain long-term success.

The event will be led by Mary Mosope Adeyemi, a Nigerian-born, ICF-accredited career coach who spent 16 years in investment banking with Goldman Sachs, Bank of America and Deutsche Bank before founding Visible Strengths Co. Her professional experience across international financial institutions and career development gives the summit a distinctive blend of corporate experience, leadership insight and practical career strategy.

Abiodun's Industrial Revolution: Ogun Lines Up \$17b Investment

By Kayode Akinmade

A \$7bn-plus deep seaport deal, a proposed \$10bn LNG project, more than 1,600 kilometres of roads and a cargo airport underscore Ogun State's ambition to become a leading investment and industrial hub.

OGUN State is positioning itself for a new phase of industrial expansion, with a potential investment pipeline exceeding \$17 billion anchored by a proposed deep seaport and special economic zone backed by global logistics giant DP World, alongside renewed efforts to revive the long-delayed OgunLNG project with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC).

The initiatives reflect Governor Dapo Abiodun's determination to transform the state's geographical advantages, established industrial base and expanding infrastructure into a powerful magnet for local and international investment.

Since assuming office on May 29, 2019, Abiodun has pursued an economic strategy built around infrastructure development, private-sector partnerships and an enabling business environment. His objective is to move Ogun beyond the advantages of its proximity to Lagos and establish it as a major destination for manufacturing, maritime trade, logistics, energy and industrial production.

The emerging investment pipeline could mark a defining moment in that ambition. A deep seaport, an expansive special economic zone and a major liquefied natural gas project offer the prospect of opening new economic frontiers, attracting businesses, stimulating industrial activity and creating thousands of jobs.

The more than \$17 billion, however, represents the potential value of proposed investment initiatives, not funds already deployed. The projects remain at different stages of development, and their ultimate contribution to the economy will depend on implementation. Nevertheless, their scale, viewed alongside the administration's investments in roads, aviation and other infrastructure, underscores Ogun's growing industrial ambitions.

Infrastructure as the foundation of growth

At the heart of Abiodun's economic agenda is the recognition that sustainable industrialisation requires more than investor-friendly policies. It demands roads that connect factories to markets, efficient transportation systems, reliable logistics and an environment in which businesses can operate and expand.

Since 2019, the administration has constructed and rehabilitated more than 1,600 kilometres of roads across Ogun State, improving connectivity among communities, commercial centres, agricultural areas and industrial clusters. The road programme has extended across the state's 20 local government areas, reflecting the administration's emphasis on infrastructure as an instrument of economic development.

For manufacturers and distributors, efficient road networks can reduce transportation costs, improve access to raw materials and markets, and strengthen supply chains. For farmers and agricultural processors, better roads facilitate the movement of produce and improve access to commercial outlets. Ogun's location next to Lagos, Nigeria's commercial and industrial hub, provides a considerable advantage.

The administration has sought to complement that proximity with infrastructure capable of supporting a wider range of economic activities and attracting businesses looking to establish or expand operations. Rail connectivity through the Lagos-Ibadan standard-gauge railway adds to the state's transportation options, while road projects, including the rehabilitation of the Sagamu-Ijebu-Ode-Ore Road, are intended to improve access to markets and strengthen economic links, particularly in Ogun East. The Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway could further enhance regional connectivity upon completion.

Another major component of the administration's infrastructure programme is the Gateway Agro-Cargo International Airport at Iperu-Remo, developed during Abiodun's first term and subsequently commissioned for operations. The airport is intended to support cargo transportation, agricultural exports and logistics, creating opportunities for businesses that require efficient air connectivity. Its strategic importance lies in its potential to complement road and rail infrastructure and strengthen Ogun's participation in domestic and international trade.

In June 2025, Abiodun outlined his ambition to make Ogun the most connected subnational entity in Nigeria through an integrated network of road, rail, air and water transportation. The strategy recognises that infrastructure is not an end in itself. Its value lies in its ability to support productive activities, attract private capital, facilitate commerce and improve the competitiveness of businesses. This infrastructure-led approach provides the foundation for Ogun's pursuit of major maritime and energy investments.

DP World Deal puts Ogun's coastline in the global spotlight. A major milestone in Ogun's investment drive came on

September 24, 2026, when the state government signed memorandum of understanding with DP World MEA FZE in Paris, France, for the proposed development of the Gateway Deep Sea Port and the Ogun State Blue Marine Special Economic Zone. President Bola Tinubu witnessed the signing.

The proposed development involves an initial investment of more than \$7 billion, placing Ogun's Atlantic coastline at the centre of an ambitious plan to expand Nigeria's maritime, logistics and industrial capacity. For a state whose economic profile has traditionally been associated with manufacturing, commerce and its proximity to Lagos, the proposed deep seaport represents an opportunity to establish a stronger presence in international maritime trade.

The accompanying Blue Marine Special Economic Zone is expected to cover more than 10,000 hectares, providing space for industrial facilities, logistics operations and businesses seeking to benefit from proximity to port infrastructure. The project is projected to generate more than 50,000 direct jobs, although actual employment will depend on the scale and pace of development and the number of businesses that establish operations within the zone.

The significance of the proposed investment extends beyond the construction and operation of a port. Deep seaports can serve as catalysts for wider economic activity by attracting shipping services, freight operators, warehousing businesses, manufacturers, exporters and distribution companies. Supported by efficient transport links and a competitive business environment, they can help create industrial ecosystems around port facilities. The proposed special economic zone could reinforce these benefits by attracting businesses involved in manufacturing, processing, assembly, storage and international distribution.

For Ogun, the combination offers the prospect of linking maritime trade directly with industrial production, enabling businesses to move raw materials and finished products more efficiently while accessing domestic and international markets. The state government has indicated that construction is expected to commence in November 2026, following groundbreaking, with substantial completion projected within approximately two and a half years. The timeline remains subject to implementation arrangements and progress on the project.

If delivered as envisaged, the development could transform the economic significance of Ogun's coastline, attract new industries and strengthen the state's position in Nigeria's maritime and logistics value chain. It would also represent a significant step in Abiodun's efforts to attract international investors by combining Ogun's location, land resources, industrial base and infrastructure plans into a compelling proposition for global businesses.

OgunLNG revival adds a \$10bn energy dimension

While the proposed deep seaport and special economic zone have placed maritime development in the spotlight, renewed engagement over OgunLNG has introduced an equally significant energy dimension to the state's industrial ambitions. During discussions with NNPC representatives at Iperu, in Ikenne Local Council, Abiodun disclosed a proposed initial investment of \$10 billion by the national oil company in the long-delayed liquefied natural gas project associated with the Olokola coastal corridor. The renewed engagement has revived attention on a project whose development has been delayed for years, raising fresh prospects for investment in gas infrastructure and related industrial activities.

NNPC was represented at the meeting by its Chief Financial Officer, Adedapo Segun, on behalf of the Group Chief Executive Officer, Bayo Ojulari. Discussions surrounding the initiative have highlighted the need for approximately 1,728 hectares of land and about 2.5 kilometres of Atlantic coastline. The Ogun State Government has indicated its willing-

ness to cooperate on land facilitation and relevant incentives to advance the project.

OgunLNG remains a proposed investment under active discussions. Its eventual development will depend on further agreements and the successful completion of the necessary implementation processes. Even so, the renewed engagement is significant because energy infrastructure is central to the competitiveness of modern industrial economies. Manufacturing, processing and other energy-intensive industries require dependable energy supplies to operate efficiently and remain competitive. Investment in gas infrastructure can also create opportunities in processing, engineering, construction, maintenance, transportation and related services.

If realised, OgunLNG could complement the proposed deep seaport and special economic zone, strengthening the economic case for industrial development along the coast. The potential relationship between the projects is important. Maritime infrastructure can facilitate the movement of goods, a special economic zone can accommodate industrial and logistics businesses, while energy investment can support the requirements of an expanding productive economy. Together, they offer the prospect of a more diversified industrial base, with economic activities extending beyond the state's existing manufacturing clusters.

Building a coastal industrial corridor

The proposed Gateway Deep Sea Port, Blue Marine Special Economic Zone and OgunLNG project are distinct initiatives, but their potential benefits could reinforce one another. The deep seaport could improve access to international shipping routes. The special economic zone could attract businesses requiring port access and large-scale industrial facilities. The LNG project could support energy-related investment and create opportunities for industries that depend on reliable gas supplies. If successfully implemented, the combined effect could extend well beyond the projects' immediate locations. Transport operators, construction companies, engineering firms, equipment suppliers, professional service providers and small businesses could benefit from the economic activities generated by the developments. Local manufacturers could find new opportunities to expand production, while agricultural processors and exporters could benefit from improved logistics and access to markets.

The proposed coastal investments could complement Ogun's established industrial base, which includes manufacturing, consumer goods, construction materials and food processing. Improved access to maritime facilities, logistics services and energy infrastructure could make the state more attractive to investors seeking to establish new operations or expand existing businesses.

This is the broader objective of Abiodun's investment strategy: to leverage infrastructure, strategic partnerships and Ogun's natural advantages to attract capital, expand productive capacity and create employment. Rather than relying solely on its proximity to Lagos, the administration is seeking to strengthen Ogun's appeal through its infrastructure, industrial opportunities and long-term economic potential. The success of that strategy will depend on whether the proposed developments translate into functioning commercial facilities and productive industrial activity.

From investor interest to tangible economic benefits

The prospect of more than \$17 billion in investment is significant, but the ultimate test of Ogun's industrial ambition will be the economic value the projects deliver. The figure combines the proposed initial investment of more than \$7 billion associated with the DP World development and the proposed \$10 billion NNPC investment in OgunLNG. It should not be interpreted as money already invested or as evidence that the full value of the projects has been secured and deployed.

• Kayode Akinmade is Special Adviser on Information and Strategy to the Ogun State Governor.



Executive Vice President, Gas, Power and New Energy, Nigeria National Petroleum Company Ltd, Mr. Olalekan Ogunleye (left); Group Chief Finance Officer, Mr. Dapo Segun; Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun; and Chief Relations Officer, Mrs Morenike Adewunmi during the visit of Nigeria National Petroleum Company Ltd team to the Governor in Iperu, Ogun State.

Politics

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Ahead of the 2027 general election, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) will on Saturday, October 24, kick-start President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's re-election campaign in Kaduna, a historic political centre in Northern Nigeria and the home state of the President's estranged ally, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai. In this report, LEO SOBECHI and ADAMU ABUH examine the significance of the choice of Kaduna as the starting point for the APC's journey to its fourth presidential showdown.



2027: APC Takes Tinubu's 'Victory' Dance To El-Rufai's Political Catacomb

LOOKING back at the 2023 presidential poll that propelled President Bola Ahmed Tinubu into office, it could be safely said that it was in the city of Kaduna that the key to his Presidency was molded. Four years ago, the decision to build collegiate support among the 19 northern governors for Tinubu's election was taken in this city of crocodiles.

In October 2022, Tinubu, as the presidential candidate of All Progressives Congress (APC), attended the Kaduna Economic and Investment Summit. And knowing the role the then outgoing governor, Mallam Nasir Ahmed El-Rufai, played in his emergence as APC standard bearer, especially in the battle to ensure power shift to the South after President Muhammadu Buhari's eight years in office, Tinubu demanded El-Rufai's commitment to the presidential campaign.

Recall that towards the tail end of his tenure, El-Rufai hinted at a possible retirement from public service, alluding to his desire to pursue further academic studies in North Africa, precisely in Cairo, the Egyptian capital. So, recognising how easily the outgoing governor mobilises his colleagues and voters in the ballot-rich North West geopolitical zone, Tinubu urged him to forgo the plan for further studies for APC's electoral triumph at the 2023 polls.

After delivering his goodwill message, Tinubu moved a motion, while still at the lectern. He stated: "I am not leaving this stage unless my brother Nasir promises that he would continue to serve the country."

Moved by that public suasion, El-Rufai rose from his seat and sauntered to the podium and agreed to volunteer himself for further participation in public service to the applause of the dignitaries in attendance. At least, the point was made that El-Rufai was a man of superlative political consequence in the North.

However, four years down the line, power seems to have changed hands. Out of office, the powerful governor seems to have lost the central position in President Tinubu's calculations for his second term. Worse, the distance between the President and his former ally widened immediately the President failed to push through his promise of retaining El-Rufai in the loop of his political and governance schemes.

Surrounded by powerful insiders, including George Akume, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation; Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, the National Security Adviser and the Minister of Budget and National Planning, Senator Atiku Bagudu, the former Kaduna State governor was systematically isolated from the inner caucus of the Tinubu Presidency.

To these new inner men, El-Rufai was not an asset, but a green snake in a green grass that could in the long run become a viper against the President's political progression. But stopping the former governor, who was said to have been penciled to occupy the Ministry of Power in President Tinubu's emergent cabinet, from passing through the security clearance desk at the Department of State Security (DSS) came as an admixture of political insolence and strategic caution.

Having deferred his academic aspiration in Cairo, El-Rufai, as a restless politician that he is, found it expedient to lead the movement against President Tinubu's retention of the Presidency for a second term. Devoid of the restraint expected of

a political office holder, the former governor played with words that poked at the political flesh of President Tinubu and the governance record of APC, from which he excised his membership.

Some of El-Rufai's colleagues told *The Guardian* that what defines the former governor's politics is not the pomp of his presence, but the acerbic nature of his tongue. "You may not be moved by what Mallam weighs, but by what he says, when, where and how he says them," a former governor stated.

When therefore El-Rufai started appearing in various national television programmes to pander words like, "I do not see President Tinubu's pathway to victory," "Tinubu would end up as a one-term President," "I have done the mathematics, Tinubu cannot win," most watchers of Nigeria's high stakes politics knew that the former strong man of Kaduna State politics would talk himself into trouble.

Those who held that opinion did not waste time or words to posit that Tinubu is not former president Goodluck Jonathan. And their prediction came true last February, when El-Rufai was apprehended and detained for claiming to have used technical gadgets to eavesdrop on the conversations of the NSA, whom he fell out of favour with, after Ribadu was appointed as the President's security eye and ear.

Insiders conversant with El-Rufai's travails claimed that the former governor would most likely remain behind gilded windows until the 2027 presidential election is won and lost. Although presidential insiders claim that a free El-Rufai would create irritations for the APC and President Tinubu, others believe that the ambivalent posture of some northern governors towards the President's second term is as a result of the restraints against their former colleague.

Soldier Go, Soldier Come

THE choice of Kaduna by the ruling APC to kick-start President Tinubu's 2027 re-election campaign on October 24, has mixed signals. The move

But, on the flipside, the APC and President Tinubu's handlers must have discovered that tricky political situation of the state, especially given that El-Rufai's allies have emptied into the African Democratic Congress (ADC), which has former vice President Atiku Abubakar as its standard bearer.

is a poignant testimonial that power has changed hands and that contrary to his boasts, El-Rufai does not own the state.

The choice of Kaduna, a historic political centre in Northern Nigeria and the home state of the President's estranged ally, places the North-West at the heart of the APC's re-election strategy. It also sets the stage for a political test of whether the party can translate its control of government structures and the support of influential northern leaders into votes in a region where economic hardship and insecurity remain major concerns.

But, on the flipside, the APC and President Tinubu's handlers must have discovered that tricky political situation of the state, especially given that El-Rufai's allies have emptied into the African Democratic Congress (ADC), which has former vice president Atiku Abubakar as its standard bearer.

To compound the challenge, Isah Ashiru Kudan, a former acolyte of Senator Ahmed Makarfi, has picked the ADC gubernatorial ticket and harvested about 60 per cent of Makarfi's PDP structure into ADC.

For Tinubu, therefore, the rally will be more than a ceremonial commencement of campaign activities. It will offer an opportunity to demonstrate that the APC retains its political machinery in Kaduna despite El-Rufai's estrangement from the Presidency and his emergence as a prominent critic of the administration.

The campaign flag-off comes as the APC intensifies efforts to consolidate its support across the North, where the outcome of the 2027 presidential election could be shaped by competing arguments over power rotation, economic reforms, federal investments and the political future of the region.

The APC's Kaduna chapter has expressed confidence that the state will deliver two million votes for Tinubu, with Governor Uba Sani expected to lead mobilisation efforts across its 23 local councils and 255 wards.

The party's state publicity secretary, Mohammed Sani Haruna, described Kaduna as an appropriate venue because of its historical significance as the former capital of Northern Nigeria and its ethnic and religious diversity.

He said the state would mobilise hundreds of thousands of supporters for the rally, which the party hopes will demonstrate its readiness to secure Tinubu's second term and strengthen its electoral prospects across the country.

Haruna also portrayed the choice of Kaduna as a demonstration of Tinubu's commitment to northern political aspirations, recalling the President's past alliances with northern leaders, including the late General Shehu Musa Yar'Ad-

ua and former vice president Atiku Abubakar.

The APC is seeking to turn that political history into an argument for reciprocal support from northern voters, maintaining that Tinubu's previous backing of northern presidential ambitions should count in his favour in 2027.

However, the party's ambitious two-million-vote target raises questions about how it intends to overcome the electoral challenges it encountered in the state in 2023. Despite controlling both the federal and Kaduna State governments at the time, the APC lost the state to Atiku, then the presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Opposition parties also secured all three senatorial seats, exposing the limitations of the party's political control in translating into electoral victories.

The previous result remains a significant reference point as the APC prepares for the forthcoming rally. Its leaders have attributed the setback partly to public dissatisfaction with the governing style of the administration led by El-Rufai, including controversies over demolitions, dismissals and the management of the state's ethnic and religious differences.

The party argues that the Sani administration has pursued a more inclusive approach, creating conditions for the APC to expand its support beyond its traditional constituencies.

The October 24 gathering will therefore provide a platform for the governor and other party leaders to demonstrate how far they have succeeded in rebuilding the APC's electoral coalition, particularly in Southern Kaduna and other areas where opposition parties previously performed strongly.

Kaduna's political and religious diversity makes the exercise especially significant. A rally that attracts support across the state's different communities would allow the APC to present its mobilisation efforts as evidence of a broader political coalition, although the size of the crowd alone would not establish the level of support the party can expect at the ballot box.

The rally will also place the relationship between Tinubu and El-Rufai under renewed scrutiny. By taking the re-election drive to El-Rufai's home state, the APC leadership will have an opportunity to demonstrate that its political organisation and the influence of incumbent officeholders can sustain its campaign independently of the former governor.

Yet, the extent of El-Rufai's continuing influence in Kaduna remains an important question. His political profile could shape debate around the rally, but it does not automatically establish how his supporters will vote or whether his estrangement from Tinubu will translate into electoral gains for the opposition.

The former governor's disagreements with the Presidency, alongside investigations and allegations relating to his time in office, have further complicated the relationship.

The allegations and proceedings must, however, be assessed on their individual merits, while claims of political persecution have been contested.

For the APC, the immediate task is to ensure that the rally demonstrates organisational unity and that the party's campaign message resonates beyond political endorsements. Its preparations have included the establishment of a dedicated media centre in Kaduna to coordinate information about the event and communicate the party's position to the public. The state chapter has also pledged to provide a peaceful environment for the President, party leaders and supporters expected to attend.

The campaign is scheduled to move from Kaduna to Port Harcourt in Rivers State and Maiduguri in Borno State, according to the timetable announced by the Director-General of the Presidential Campaign Council, Abdulaziz Yari.

The sequence suggests that the APC intends to use Kaduna to establish momentum for a nationwide campaign, combining mobilisation in its northern strongholds with engagements in other regions.

Yet, the political significance of the Kaduna rally extends beyond the Tinubu-El-Rufai disagreement. It will unfold against a debate over whether the Presidency should remain in the South for another four years or return to the North after Tinubu's first term. Tinubu succeeded former Presi-

dent Muhammadu Buhari, who spent eight years in office from 2015 to 2023. Supporters of the current President argue that he should be allowed to complete two terms, while opponents contend that the administration's record should determine whether it deserves another mandate.

For the APC, the two-term argument is likely to feature alongside claims that Tinubu's reforms and federal investments are laying the foundation for long-term economic growth. The party will also seek to persuade northern voters that the administration has not neglected their region.

Opposition figures, however, are seeking to make economic hardship a central issue in the 2027 contest.

Atiku, now associated with the ADC, has criticised the consequences of the administration's economic policies, particularly petrol subsidy removal and the resulting pressure on household incomes.

The opposition's argument is that higher food prices, transportation costs, electricity bills and other essential expenses have made life more difficult for many Nigerians, while the benefits of increased government revenues and economic reforms have yet to translate into sufficient relief for ordinary citizens.

By focusing on the cost of living, Atiku and other opposition figures are seeking to challenge the APC's claim that its policies are producing the conditions for sustainable growth and shared prosperity.



The Director-General of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council, Senator Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar

El-Rufai

The argument could resonate in the North, where concerns about unemployment, poverty and insecurity add to the pressures facing households. It also provides the opposition with an opportunity to reach voters who supported Tinubu in 2023 but are now concerned about the pace of economic recovery and the immediate consequences of government policies.

The APC's response will depend partly on its ability to explain the purpose of its reforms while demonstrating how federal programmes and investments are improving living conditions.

Against this backdrop, the Arewa for Asiwaju (A4A) movement, led by former Kano State governor, Ibrahim Shekarau, and former Plateau State governor, Simon Lalong, is seeking to strengthen Tinubu's support across the 19 northern states and the Federal Capital Territory.

At a meeting with the APC National Working Committee, chaired by the National Chairman, Nentawe Yilwatda, Shekarau said the initiative was established to complement the party's mobilisation structures, address voter apathy and improve turnout in areas where the APC expects strong support.

He said the movement had studied previous election results, identified weaknesses in the party's performance and established directorates and state-level structures to coordinate mobilisation down to local council and ward levels. He stressed that A4A would work with existing party officials and presidential campaign coordinators rather than operate as a parallel organisation.

The movement has also compiled information on federal projects and programmes across the North, which it intends to publicise to counter claims that Tinubu's administration has neglected the region.

Lalong described A4A as a reserve of experienced political leaders who could help address weaknesses in the party's structures. Yilwatda, meanwhile, cited road construction and the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano gas pipeline as examples of federal investments in the North, urging the group to make the administration's record more visible.

The initiative reflects the APC's determination to combine established political networks with grassroots mobilisation. Its effectiveness, however, will ultimately be measured by voter participation and electoral support rather than the number of political endorsements it secures.

The Kaduna rally will also give the APC an opportunity to present its infrastructure and development record as evidence that the North has ben-

efited from the administration's policies.

Yilwatda had cited road projects linking different parts of the region, including the Kano-Maiduguri corridor and the Sokoto-Kebbi-Kwara route. He also highlighted the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano gas pipeline, which the government expects to support industrial development, power generation and domestic gas consumption.

The APC chairman argued that northern leaders should use federal programmes, including student loans, to improve educational access and strengthen the region's development prospects.

He also urged the party to look beyond the presidential election by seeking victories in the National Assembly, governorships and state legislatures. Such victories, he argued, would give the President greater legislative and political support to implement his programmes.

These arguments are expected to form part of the campaign's defence of Tinubu's record. But infrastructure announcements and ongoing projects will compete with voters' immediate concerns about food prices, transport costs, jobs, security and access to essential services.

The opposition, meanwhile, will face questions about the credibility and practical details of its proposed alternatives. Criticism of subsidy removal and rising living costs may attract public attention, but opposition parties will also need to explain how they would address the country's fiscal constraints, protect vulnerable households and improve economic conditions.

The contest will therefore involve competing claims about the direction of the economy and the distribution of the costs and benefits of reform.

For Tinubu, Kaduna offers a platform to unite party leaders, project confidence in the North-West and counter the perception that the fallout with El-Rufai has weakened his political standing in the region. For Governor Sani, the rally presents an opportunity to demonstrate that his administration can deliver the support the APC expects from the state.

The party's two-million-vote target will provide a clear benchmark against which its mobilisation claims can be judged, even though the ultimate result will depend on the wider campaign, voter turnout and the performance of rival parties.

Ultimately, the October 24 rally will be more than the formal launch of Tinubu's re-election campaign; it will test the APC's ability to convert political influence into voter support, demonstrate the reach of its state structures and defend its record against opposition criticism.

Implementation Of Existing Laws Key To Nigeria's To Prosperity – Ighosotu

Dr. Johnmark Ighosotu is the Senior Pastor of Free Indeed Church International (God's Delight Gospel Assembly), Udu-Warri, Delta State, Nigeria. In this interview with OBIRE ONAKEMU, the dynamic preacher speaks on the state of the nation, pointing out how the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) can conduct a free and fair election in 2027.

How do you see to the state of the nation?
NO doubt, the nation is in God's hands. Every nation has leaders; we believe God that one day He will give us a leader who can take us to where and what we are yearning for. The nation is in God's hands.

Do you think the National Assembly is doing enough to trigger the growth of the nation?

Nigeria's democracy is still growing. Gradually, we shall grow to become like the U.S. one day. As they say, Rome was not build in a day. So, it will take us time; it's just a matter of time. So, they may not be perfect; they may

not have given what we expect; but they are doing their best.

How can the country work towards becoming a prosperous, just and equitable country?

It is not far-fetched; it is just to implement the laws. Laws make the difference. If we operate a system where the law works, undoubtedly, we can become a prosperous, just and equitable society. Outside the law, nothing works. Even in God's own way, there are laws. In James 2:10, the Bible says even if you keep the whole laws but stumble in one, you have failed in all. Once the institutions of law put in place are well furnished, like the EFCC, the police, NDLEA, Navy, the Army and others, we don't have problems. But we are still growing.

What is your take on rising insecurity in the country?

Insecurity problem is almost everywhere in the world. We have it in Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Russia and even in the U.S. The one of Nigeria is not all that different but God will help Nigeria. For now, Nigerians are happy that the children of Oriire community in Oyo State who were held long in captivity had been released. And we give thanks to President Bola Tinubu, the Governor of Oyo State, Seyi Makinde, and all stakeholders – the Police, the Army, the Air Force, the vigilantes and others – for the sacrifices they are

making to secure the lives of Nigerians.

Do you subscribe to the view that this nation is under siege?

No! I will not say it is under siege. Nigeria is not even in a siege not to talk of under siege. What makes a nation to be under siege is by few elements of power of darkness. So, Nigeria not under siege but there are some challenges. When you say a country is under siege, the people cannot even come out to buy food, amenities and give themselves what they want.

Nigeria is not really under siege but there are challenges. And the country is working to address those challenges. Gradually we shall get out of it. Nigerians should never lose hope. Once hope is lost, all is lost. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

Are you convinced that Nigeria's political leaders are genuinely committed to rescuing the nation from its woes and improving the lives of ordinary citizens?

Our political leaders are still very far from it. The ones that are making little impact on the lives of the citizens of this nation are few in number. And they can be felt in areas of small scale business, which is relatively few. One of the things that will make huge impact in the lives of Nigerians is having 24 hours electricity where everybody will fend for themselves.

What is your advice to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Judiciary as the 2027 general election is fast approaching?

One thing is that the INEC and the judiciary are actually striving to do their best. But you have something called inter-

est and everybody wants their person to win and that is what is actually going on. But the truth is that the winning process is not always easy. And INEC will always do its best. What we need from INEC is that no power should tell them what to do. They should just be independent and that is all.

What message do you have for Nigerians in the face of current challenges?

Well, I will say that Nigeria is in God's hands and God is in Nigeria. We had seen a prophecy that Nigeria is going to break and God has proved them wrong. Nigeria is in God's hands. We all need to join hands together to pray for our leaders and also for Nigeria. Things would be better when we all join

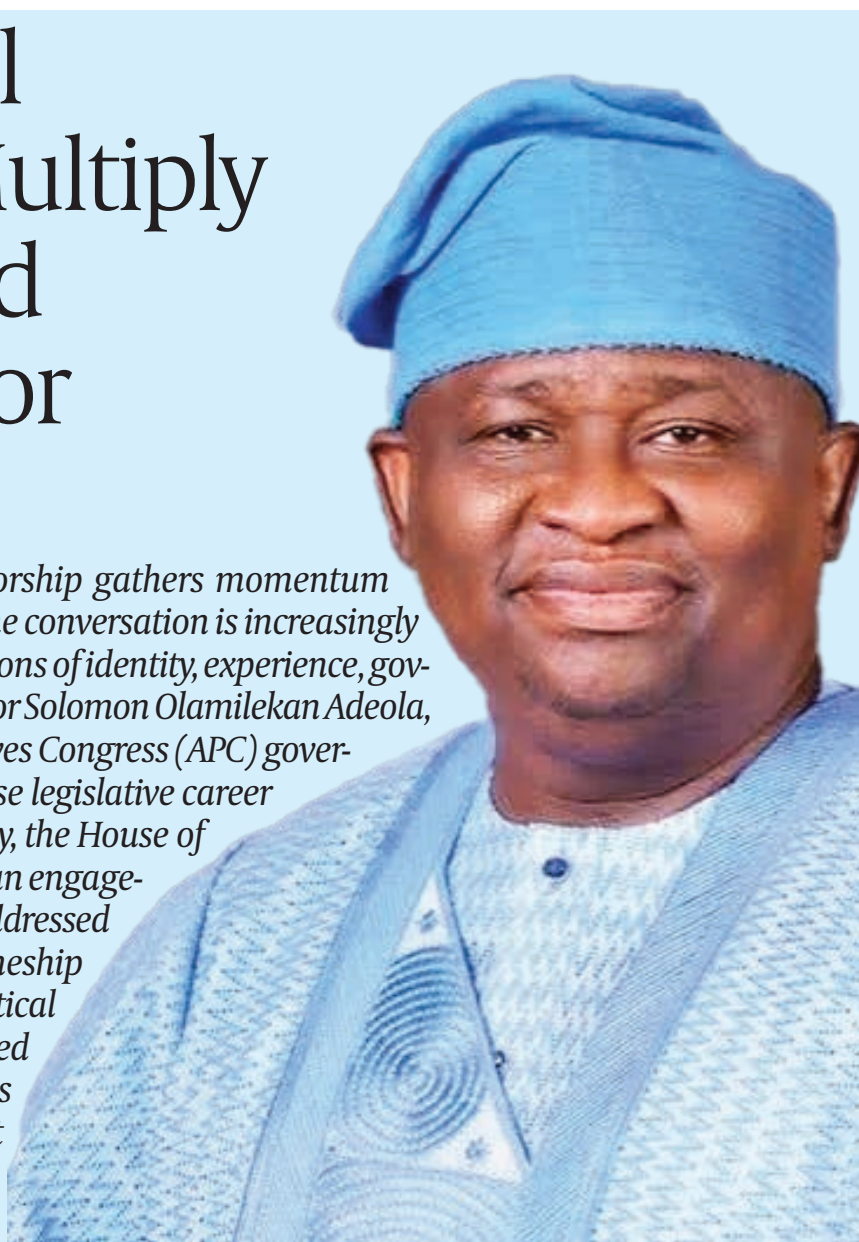
hands to pray for our nation.



Ighosotu

‘If Elected, I Will Consolidate, Multiply Gains Recorded Under Governor Abiodun’

As the race for the Ogun State governorship gathers momentum ahead of the February 6, 2027 election, the conversation is increasingly shifting from political ambition to questions of identity, experience, governance and the future of the state. Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, popularly called Yayi, is the All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate and a politician whose legislative career spans the Lagos State House of Assembly, the House of Representatives and the Senate. He had an engagement with the media recently where he addressed the controversy surrounding his indigeneship and change of name, reflected on his political journey from Lagos to Ogun, and outlined his vision for the Gateway State under his proposed ITESIWAJU development agenda. SEYE OLUMIDE and GBENGA SALAU were there.



Journey into politics

MY sojourn into politics has not been an easy road, but at least, I managed to find my level. It dates back to the June 12, 1993 struggle. Along the line, I lost my immediate younger brother to the June 12 riot, which got me discouraged. But God has a way of directing one's path. In 2002, I found my way back into politics and contested to be elected a member representing Alimosho Constituency in the Lagos State House of Assembly. I won and was in the House of Assembly for eight years.

As a result of my performance, I was encouraged to go to the Federal House of Representatives to represent Alimosho Federal Constituency, where I served for four years. Within the four years, I was able to convince my constituents and, by extension, the leadership of the state and the current President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, my father, my leader and my mentor, that I was ripe enough to represent the Lagos West Senatorial District in the Senate. By God's grace and with the support of my constituents, I represented Lagos West for eight years.

Before then, I knew that I was not from Lagos; I am from Ogun State. That was evident in all my documents and forms that I filled. So, I attempted to return home for the first time, but it met some resistance. So, I returned to Lagos since things were working for me in Lagos, and it was easy to return and contest the Senate seat there, which I did successfully. For the second time, I attempted to return home to contest for the governorship of Ogun State. That was also met with some resistance, and I returned again to the Senate from Lagos West. I am giving you this history so that you will understand how I eventually found myself in Ogun State.

Identity issue

I CAN'T be running for an exalted office and I will not be confronted with some challenges. People who are doing this know they are doing it to discredit and destroy my person. But I have no fears. People can investigate me and my stories. Where my father was buried is 30 minutes away from here (Ikeja), go and investigate. It is in Alimosho,

number 3, Ogunsola Street, Alagutan Bus Stop, and that's where he was buried.

My mother was buried at Vaults and Gardens, Ikoyi. My grandmother, the mother of my mother, was buried at Ikeja, the burial ground is there. My great-grandfather was buried at Ishaga. So, how can I be running to be governor, and I'll be having such a big skeleton in my cupboard, and I'll be comfortable?

Before coming into politics, I also served at *The Guardian*, and I resigned to pursue other things. And somebody said, "He did change his name." after leaving *The Guardian*. Yes, I did change of name, and I did it in *The Guardian* Newspaper. I advertised it in *The Guardian*. They don't understand, because they have nothing to fight with.

So, they have to say something to discredit me, because I am the candidate to beat. They cannot match me. I do not want to join issues with them. They have nothing to offer. They know Yayi is from Ogun State. What they can do is to destroy Yayi, and those who are from Ogun State have responded, "Let him come from Afghanistan". We will vote for him.

His continuity philosophy for Ogun

MAKE bold to say that, under the administration of Governor Dapo Abiodun, Ogun State has done exceedingly well. I can testify to that. Of course, people will ask: if the government has done well, why are there complaints about certain things? I understand that. No government can completely address all the

challenges confronting a state within a limited period in office. Governance is about the seen and the unseen. The seen are the physical structures we see; the roads, hospitals, rail transport and other infrastructure. The unseen are the policies, economic foundations and other things that, when put together and properly implemented, eventually give birth to the visible development.

Under Governor Abiodun, we have been able to establish a strong economic foundation. For example, we have the proposed \$7 billion deep seaport project in Ogun State, with groundbreaking expected in November. If that project becomes fully operational in the next few years, you can imagine the multiplier effect it will have on the state's economy.

There is also the dry port at Kajola and the proposed rail connection from Apapa to Kajola. The biggest dairy farm in Nigeria is also coming up in my local government area, starting with about 5,000 cattle and eventually increasing to a minimum of 15,000 cattle to produce dairy products from Ogun State. A major furniture manufacturing company is also coming up. As we speak, Ogun State is the most industrialised state in Nigeria.

When Governor Abiodun came on board, our internally generated revenue was less than N100 billion annually. Today, we are talking about around N300 billion a year. There has also been oil exploration activity. We may, in the near future, be referred to as an oil-pro-

ducing state. All these things are part of the foundation that has been laid. My responsibility, if elected, will be to consolidate on these gains and ensure that the multiplier effects are properly harnessed for the benefit of the people.

A breakdown of his agenda, ITESIWAJU

ITESIWAJU is the framework for my development agenda for the state. The "I" stands for Infrastructure. The "T" stands for Tourism and Culture. The "E" stands for Education and Environment. The "S" stands for Security and Law Enforcement. The second "I" stands for Inclusive Growth and Well-being. The "W" stands for Women and Youth Development. The "A" stands for Agriculture. The "J" stands for Job Creation and Industrialisation. The "U" stands for Urban Physical Planning and Environment. All these nine pillars are critical to Ogun State. None of them can be treated in isolation.

When you talk about tourism and culture, for instance, you cannot compare Ogun with Lagos because we are more of a rural setting and our culture is well appreciated. There are many activities and festivals that take place in Ogun every year.

The question is: Are we deriving the maximum economic benefit from them for the state and its people? That is an area we want to focus on. We want to turn our cultural and tourism assets into economic opportunities.

Infrastructure includes roads, rail, housing and transportation. On transport connectivity, we want to deal first and foremost with interstate connectivity, and subsequently intrastate connectivity. I want a situation where I can conveniently stay in a corner of my house in Ilaro, get to the bus terminal and take a vehicle straight to Abeokuta. From Abeokuta, I should be able to take another vehicle to Sagamu, from Sagamu to Ijebu and then back to other parts of the state. When you look at the geographical location of Ogun State, you will understand the challenge. Lagos is different. In Lagos, you can move from one part of the state to another within a relatively short period.

In Ogun, you can spend two hours travelling to the next town. You can travel for one hour and 40 minutes to get to certain parts of the state. If you are coming from Ilaro, you can spend several hours getting to another part of Ogun. That is how dispersed Ogun State is geographically. So, we need to have an effective transport system that connects all these areas within the shortest possible time. The road network is one area in which a lot of people residing in Ogun are challenged.

I don't want to embark on any road project that will not lead us anywhere. Yes, there are roads that need to be fixed along the way, but we want to focus on roads that will unlock economic opportunities. For instance, from Ijoko in Ota, we can put in a road that will lead straight to the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, with three bridges and about one kilometre of road. You can imagine what that means to us as a state. Not only will we open up that corridor, but economic activities will spring up around it. You will not believe the impact that a single intervention of that nature can have. There are many other examples like that.

The border communities are another area of interest. Presently, Lagos has an upper hand in many of the border areas. When you look at the Ojodu axis and some of the surrounding areas, you will see that there is a lot of development on the Lagos side. But on our own side of the divide, we are not competing effectively. If I intend to increase the value of the state and work on the economy of the state, I must work on the border towns. That is why I refer to urban development, physical planning and the environment. I can create a new Magodo in those border towns that belong to Ogun. The land is there. What is required is the development. It is possible. I intend to give attention to the border communities and ensure that Ogun gives Lagos a run for its money in terms of development. You can imagine travelling from the Lagos side towards Ogun. Once you approach the border and get to certain points, the standard of infrastructure changes. That has to change, and it has to change immediately.

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As Senator Wasiu Sanni Eshinlokun seeks re-election in 2027, the APC's entrenched political structure faces a test from public discontent over economic hardship and opposition candidates seeking to turn their popularity into votes. SEYE OLUMIDE reports.

THE battle for Lagos Central Senatorial District in 2027 will be shaped by three critical factors: the strength of the All Progressives Congress (APC), the performance and popularity of incumbent Senator Wasiu Sanni Eshinlokun, and the ability of opposition candidates to offer voters a credible alternative.

On paper, the APC enters the race with a considerable advantage. Its longstanding grassroots network, political influence across Lagos and established mobilisation machinery give Eshinlokun a head start over challengers from the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Allied Peoples Movement (APM) and other parties.

But party structure may not be enough to guarantee victory. With the 2027 general election approaching, the economic hardship associated with President Bola Tinubu's administration could influence voters' decisions, including in Lagos, where rising living costs, pressure on small businesses, transport expenses and declining purchasing power have become important concerns.

The central question is whether dissatisfaction with the Federal Government will translate into votes against the APC at the senatorial level, or whether the party's organisation and Eshinlokun's political standing will help him retain the seat.

Eshinlokun won the seat in 2023 with 131,828 votes, defeating the PDP candidate, Wale Gomez, who polled 69,320. The margin demonstrated the APC's electoral strength in the district, but the next contest will take place under different political and economic circumstances.

The incumbent also has an established political profile, having served as chairman of Lagos Island Local Government, a member of the Lagos State House of Assembly and its Deputy Speaker before entering the Senate. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Marine Transport, he occupies a position relevant to Lagos Central's commercial interests.

His constituency interventions, including a scholarship programme for 300 tertiary students and the facilitation of an X-ray machine for General Hospital, Lagos, provide some evidence of activity. However, the electoral question

Lagos Central: Can APC Retain Seat Amid Hardship, Fierce Competition?

whether constituents consider these interventions sufficient and whether they have seen tangible improvements in the quality of representation.

In a district where residents and businesses contend with flooding, traffic congestion, environmental degradation, housing pressure and the high cost of living, the expectations of voters extend beyond empowerment programmes.

Economic hardship and the APC factor

TINUBU'S economic policies could become a significant factor in the contest. Although the Senate election is distinct from the presidential race, both will be held on the same day, making it difficult for the APC candidate to escape the broader assessment of the ruling party's performance.

For traders, artisans, transport operators and small-business owners across Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland, Apapa, Surulere and Eti-Osa, the cost of doing business and sustaining household incomes could weigh heavily on voting decisions.

The removal of the petrol subsidy, exchange-rate pressures and rising prices have imposed considerable costs on households and businesses, even as the Federal Government argues that its reforms are necessary to stabilise the economy and improve public finances.

The question is whether voters will accept that argument or punish the ruling party for the immediate difficulties they experience.

Eshinlokun could face a double test: defending his own record while dealing with public perceptions of the APC-led government. His challenge will be to demonstrate what he has achieved independently of the administration's national performance and how his legislative position has helped address problems affecting his constituents.

However, economic hardship does not automatically translate into electoral defeat. The APC retains a formidable political network in Lagos, and voters may distinguish between their assessment of the president and their opinion of a senator. Personal relationships, constituency services, party loyalty and the strength of ward-level mobilisation could all work in Eshinlokun's favour.

The outcome may therefore depend on whether the opposition can organise discontent into a coordinated electoral challenge rather than merely rely on public dissatisfaction.

Opposition candidates and the question of credibility

THE opposition has candidates on the ballot, but the critical issue is whether any of them can build sufficient recognition, political alliances and grassroots support to

challenge the incumbent.

ADC candidate Abayomi Idowu Omotayo has the advantage of having contested the seat in 2023. That experience could provide a starting point for rebuilding his campaign and improving his visibility. But previous participation alone will not guarantee a stronger showing.

The NDC and PDP candidates, Johnson Lawrence Adeniyi Oladipupo and Dakova-Vaughan Kolawole David respectively, will also need to demonstrate that their parties can mobilise voters across the district. Their prospects will depend on their individual profiles, campaign resources, ward structures and capacity to persuade voters that they offer something different from the incumbent.

The multiplicity of opposition candidates presents an additional challenge. If voters dissatisfied with the APC divide their support among several parties, Eshinlokun could benefit even without securing an overwhelming majority of the votes cast. Conversely, a challenger who establishes a distinctive profile and attracts support across party lines could make the contest more competitive.

The opposition's task is therefore not simply to criticise the APC. It must present a credible alternative, identify the district's most urgent problems and explain how its candidate would use the Senate to address them.

Ojumu seeks space in the contest

AMONG the challengers, APM candidate Dr Desmond Oludare Ojumu has an opportunity to distinguish himself by focusing on policy, accountability and the practical concerns of residents and businesses.

APM has promoted the wider *Àtunto Èkó* 1.0, or Reset Lagos, agenda associated with its Lagos governorship candidate, Prince Laja Adeoye. The programme emphasises employment, affordable housing, education, healthcare, infrastructure, support for small businesses and environmental sustainability.

These themes resonate with many of the problems confronting Lagos Central. However, a state-level programme cannot, by itself, serve as evidence of Ojumu's personal legislative agenda. He would need to translate the broad proposals into specific commitments relevant to the senatorial district.

For Apapa, a priority could be sustained legislative oversight of port access, traffic management and the federal agencies responsible for maritime operations. For Lagos Island and Lagos Mainland, the concerns

include the survival of small businesses, youth unemployment, skills development and the state of public infrastructure. Flooding, drainage, housing and environmental management also require attention across parts of the district. While many local infrastructure responsibilities rest with the state and local governments, a senator can use budget scrutiny, committee oversight, motions, legislation and

engagement with federal agencies to pursue solutions within federal jurisdiction.

Ojumu's challenge is to explain which of these issues he would prioritise, what legislative or oversight measures he would pursue and how constituents would assess his performance.

He must also demonstrate that APM can provide the political structure necessary to convert his message into votes. A compelling agenda may attract attention, but electoral success will depend on whether the candidate can build recognition, sustain a campaign and establish a reliable presence at ward level.

For Ojumu, therefore, the contest offers an opportunity to make a case for issue-based representation in a political environment where established party loyalties remain powerful. Whether he can turn that opportunity into a significant electoral showing will depend on his personal appeal and the organisational capacity behind his candidacy.

What should matter to Lagos Central voters?

BEYOND party affiliations, the election provides an opportunity for voters to examine the quality of representation they want for the next four years.

Apapa's port congestion and its consequences for businesses and residents remain important concerns. Flooding, blocked drainage channels, waste management, road safety and pressure on public infrastructure also affect the quality of life in several communities.

Economic conditions are equally important. Traders and small-business owners need a more supportive operating environment, while young people face questions of employment, skills and opportunity. Access to healthcare, education, affordable housing and security will also shape expectations of elected representatives.

These problems require different levels of government to work together. The senator's responsibility is not to promise that every road will be repaired or every drainage channel cleared, but to use the office effectively to influence federal policy, scrutinise spending, pursue relevant interventions and hold responsible agencies accountable.

For Eshinlokun, the test is whether his first term has delivered sufficient results to justify another mandate. For the opposition, it is whether its candidates can offer practical proposals and convince voters that they possess both the commitment and the capacity to pursue them.

The contest will also test the relationship between political structure and candidate popularity. The APC's organisation gives Eshinlokun a substantial advantage, but the strength of that advantage will depend on voter turnout, the cohesion of the party's support base and the degree of dissatisfaction with the government.

The opposition, meanwhile, must overcome its fragmented field and demonstrate that public discontent can be translated into an organised electoral force.

At this stage, Eshinlokun and the APC appear better positioned because of their established political machinery and the incumbent's electoral advantage in 2023. That, however, is an assessment of the starting position, not a prediction of the final result. The strength of the challengers, the campaign they mount and the mood of voters closer to election day could alter the calculation.

Ultimately, Lagos Central's 2027 senatorial election will be a contest between the advantages of incumbency and party organisation, on one hand, and the electorate's assessment of performance, economic conditions and alternative candidates, on the other. The APC may have the stronger structure, but whether that is enough to secure another victory will be decided by the voters.



Ojumu

Eshinlokun

Kolawole David

Editorial

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No More Life Should Be Lost To Diphtheria Outbreak

ALL relevant stakeholders in the health sector in the country should ensure that no more life is lost to the outbreak of Diphtheria by doing the needful to contain the scourge. Nigerians can't continue to be victims of avoidable death. They deserve to survive even emergency health situation like their counterparts in other parts of the world. And this is possible if priority is actually given to citizens welfare as dictated by the nation's constitution.

For the challenge at hand, a way to go is to consciously and urgently improve vaccination coverage, particularly among unvaccinated and incompletely vaccinated children, and to provide the infrastructure for treatment of those entangled.

Diphtheria, a highly contagious bacterial infection caused by the bacterium *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*, primarily affects the nose, throat, respiratory tract, and skin. The bacterium releases a powerful toxin that destroys human respiratory cells, after which dead tissue accumulates and forms a signature thick grey membrane over the throat and air passages.

The disease is easily and swiftly spread through air droplets (coughing, sneezing) or direct contact with secretions or personal items of an infected person. Symptoms typically develop between two and five days after exposure, and they include the presence of a tough, greyish pseudomembrane coating the tonsils, throat, or nose that makes breathing and swallowing difficult. It also includes a marked swelling of the neck glands and soft tissue due to inflammation, in addition to sore throat, low-grade fever, hoarseness, barking cough, and progressive fatigue. It was learnt that if the toxin finds its way into the blood-

stream, it can cause heart muscle inflammation (myocarditis), nerve paralysis, or kidney failure, leading to fatalities. It is, therefore, a dangerous health condition.

Only recently, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (NCDC) revealed that over 10,000 confirmed cases of diphtheria have been recorded in the country this year. The outbreak of the disease, which is more manifest across northern states, including Kano, Yobe, Katsina, and Bauchi, is driven largely by historical gaps in routine immunisation.

The Director General of NCDC, Dr Jide Idris, while giving an update on the disease, emphasised that diphtheria is vaccine-preventable, adding that bringing transmission under control requires improved vaccination coverage and reaching every eligible child who has missed a vaccine dose. According to him, reactive vaccination is ongoing in affected areas, and essential treatment and laboratory commodities are being provided. Idris urged state and local councils to identify communities with low vaccination coverage and ensure that children who missed routine doses are reached and fully vaccinated.

He said the NCDC would continue to coordinate the public health response with state governments and partners, providing technical support where it is most needed. "Surveillance and laboratory capacity are being strengthened, healthcare workers are being supported on case management and infection prevention and control, and affected communities are being engaged with the information they need to protect themselves and seek care early," he said. But grandmothers, like the Jos, Plateau State-based Fatimatu Abdullahi who recently lost two of her grandchildren to the

deadly disease within one week, are saying the government must not speak poetry at this time, but move at great speed to contain the menace.

Abdullahi, who lives on Bauchi Road, lamented that the death of 14-year-old Umar Muktar and 17-year-old Hauwa Shafi'u remained unforgettable. The family did not initially know what was wrong with them. "All of them were living with me before they died. Umar was the first to develop the illness. Within three to four days, he gave up, and we did not know what was wrong because he was not taken to a specialised hospital. "Two days after he died, Hauwa also developed an illness with the same symptoms. She was later taken to Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH), where she was moved to the isolation centre and confirmed to have diphtheria. "But by then, it was too late to save her. That was when we realised that Umar might also have died from the same disease because they had experienced the same symptoms and condition," the grandmother said.

There should be more serious concern about the growing number of deaths, particularly in the North. The public health issue should not be treated with kid gloves. Though the disease is not a new one, but the rate of infestation and growing number of deaths this time should compel the government and other stakeholders to spread awareness, with a view to bringing it under control. The need for greater awareness creation is further amplified by the recent death of 11 people in Chanchaga and Katcha local councils of Niger State, which brought to 17 the total number of lives lost so far to the disease since January. A new and worrisome dimension to the problem of unvaccinated and incompletely vaccinated victims swelling the ranks of sufferers is that many parents are refusing to vaccinate their children. The Executive Director, Niger State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Dr Junaidu Inuwa, who raised the alarm blamed the spread of the disease on the refusal by parents and guardians to vaccinate their children and wards.

We urge states to emulate the Katsina government that is intensifying measures to contain the disease, with more than 150,000 people already vaccinated within the first five days of its emergency vaccination campaign.

It is heartwarming that the combined emergency vaccination is accompanied by active

case detection, treatment, contact tracing, isolation facilities, infection prevention, and community mobilisation. All of these became necessary following the increase in suspected cases of diphtheria across 29 local councils, with Funtua recording the highest burden, followed by Kankia, Bakori, Katsina, Mashi, and Daura. We state that while vaccination remains the primary method of preventing diphtheria, booster doses are critical for older children and adults to maintain protective immunity. Also, the suspected cases of the disease require rapid administration of Diphtheria Antitoxin (DAT), which neutralises circulating toxins, along with targeted antibiotics.

The recent activation of an emergency multi-agency task force by the Federal Government to contain the diphtheria outbreak affecting children in parts of Katsina and Kano states, and the deployment of 500,000 doses of diphtheria vaccines to the two states to support intensified immunisation of unvaccinated children are commendable, but the intervention is simply not enough. There is need to practically do more to strengthen disease surveillance and close immunisation gaps, especially in the communities. Stronger effort should be made to equip hospitals in affected states with the right personnel and appropriate medication to attend to patients who are already down with the disease. Battling this scourge is beyond just setting up a task force comprising the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in collaboration with the NCDC, NPHCDA, affected state governments, WHO and UNICEF to coordinate outbreak investigations, vaccination, and treatment efforts.

States that are not yet affected but are at risk in the North must do well to take all precautionary steps in case they are eventually affected. It is only by doing so that fatalities associated with the disease can be significantly contained.

While it is important to isolate infected individuals to prevent spread, it is also consequential that family members and caregivers, among others, are made to take preventive antibiotics and booster shots regardless of vaccination status. Community members must also avoid overcrowded environments and gatherings, especially during active local outbreak. They should enforce hand hygiene and promptly report unusual sore throat cases accompanied by neck swelling to local health authorities.

Also crucial is awareness creation about the disease for people to be vigilant.

LETTER

Discrimination Against Minority Faith And Belief Groups In Nigeria

SIR: Nigeria must end official discrimination against minority faith and belief groups. The entrenched exclusion of citizens who are neither Christians nor Muslims is evident at the airports. Existing statistics say that Nigeria is predominantly Christian and Muslim, with millions of the population professing, believing, or praying the Christian or Islamic way. But it is well known that many of those counted and identified as Christians and Muslims in Nigeria do not profess these faiths. Millions of individuals are designated as Christians or Muslims because of where they were born or where they live. Millions people regarded as Christians or Muslims do not believe or profess these faiths. Many Nigerians pay lip service to these religions. Many Christian and Muslim Nigerians cannot identify otherwise because they fear they would be persecuted, prosecuted, jailed, or murdered if they come out as non believers. The Nigerian state is constitutionally secular and prohibits a state religion at federal and state levels. Nigeria's secularity is only on paper, not in practice, because Nigeria is a de facto Chrislamic state. In fact Christianity and Islam are state religions.

In addition, the constitution recognizes citizens' right to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), including the right to change religion or profess no religion. However, this right is not protected.

Blasphemy and apostasy laws exist and are enforced in various states. FoRB is largely misunderstood, abused, or used to favour or further Christianity and Islam. The government privileges these two main religions. It uses state funds to sponsor and subsidize their activities including pilgrimages.

As shown at airports and in other aspects of national life, the Nigerian government is biased towards Christianity and Islam, and officially discriminates against minority faith and belief groups. Nigerian government compels citizens to profess Islam or Christianity and to pray in the Christian or Islamic way. Otherwise, how does one explain the situation at the airports where the government provides prayer rooms for only Muslims and Christians? Why are there no prayer, meditation, or reflection facilities for Nigerians who are neither Christians nor Muslims? Millions of Nigerians do not pray the Christian or Islamic way. There are Nigerians who are traditionalists, or atheists and humanists who pray or reflect in other ways.

Millions of Nigerians profess faiths and beliefs other than Christianity and Islam. Why is there no provision for them at airports? Why are there no religious or philosophical facilities at airports where these people can pray or reflect in ways consistent with their faiths or beliefs? How

can the Nigerian government justify that it treats equally Nigerians of all faiths and none?

Nigerian government can make these prayer rooms inclusive. They could call them meditation rooms as it is the case at some airports overseas. This option allows people of various faiths and beliefs to pray or reflect together. Again, this could help maximize space; after all, airports are transit points. The government could consider including a third room, an 'Other Room' for persons of other faiths and none.

Nigeria has faced intense criticism for violating the FoRB of its citizens, and the government has always denied it, reiterating its commitment to protecting the freedom of religion or belief. But this situation at the airport belies the commitment.

Airports should showcase Nigeria's best in respecting freedom of religion or belief. Because people from other parts of the world, including those who are neither Christians nor Muslims, use the airports and should be able to use 'prayer' facilities at these places despite their faith or belief.

So the government must rise to its constitutional duty and obligation to its citizens. It should demonstrate its commitment to protecting the FoRB of all Nigerians at airports and beyond.

• *Leo Igwe, a Nigerian Humanist, sent in this piece from Murtala Muhammad Airport in Lagos.*



Opinion

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2027 Presidency: When Political Ambition Tests The National Compact

By Abiodun Oluwadare

NIGERIA is approaching another defining moment in its democratic journey. As political actors position themselves for the 2027 presidential election, a fundamental question confronts the country: can a federation as diverse and historically sensitive as Nigeria sustain political stability when the pursuit of individual ambition threatens the informal understandings that have helped to manage its competing regional interests?

This question goes beyond the personalities seeking the presidency. It touches the very logic of Nigeria's political accommodation: the recognition that, in a country marked by deep regional, ethnic and religious diversity, the exercise of political power must be accompanied by a credible sense of inclusion. The Constitution does not prescribe compulsory North-South rotation, but the convention has acquired considerable political significance since the return to democratic government in 1999. It represents an effort to manage competing expectations and reduce the fear that any major section of the federation might be permanently excluded from the highest office.

Rotation is neither a perfect solution to Nigeria's political challenges nor a guarantee of good governance. It cannot replace competence, integrity or accountability. It nevertheless reflects an important political reality: in a deeply plural society, stability depends not only on who wins power but also on whether the process through which power changes hands is perceived as fair and inclusive.

It is against this background that the renewed presidential ambition of former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar deserves serious reflection. The question is not whether Atiku possesses the constitutional right to contest. He does, subject to the applicable legal requirements. The more consequential question is whether the exercise of that right, in the prevailing political circumstances, reflects the restraint and strategic judgment that Nigeria's fragile political compact demands.

A democracy must protect the right to compete. A responsible political class must also recognise that not every constitutionally permissible course of action is necessarily the wisest one for national cohesion. Where political conventions have evolved to accommodate competing interests, disregarding them may carry consequences far beyond the immediate electoral contest. Nigeria must therefore consider not merely who can win the presidency in 2027, but what the struggle to win it might cost the country.

The understanding behind rotation

Nigeria's Fourth Republic offers a useful context for this debate. Olusegun Obasanjo, from the South, served as president from 1999 to 2007. He was succeeded by Umaru Musa

Yar'Adua from the North, whose death in 2010 brought his southern vice-president, Goodluck Jonathan, to the presidency. Jonathan subsequently won the 2011 election and served until 2015. Muhammadu Buhari, a northerner, then governed for eight years before handing over to Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a southerner, in May 2023.

These transitions were not governed by a constitutional requirement of regional rotation. They were shaped by electoral competition, party arrangements and, at critical moments, recognition of the need for political accommodation. Over time, the North-South understanding became an influential convention in the management of presidential succession.

Its underlying rationale was straightforward: neither the North nor the South should develop the impression that the presidency is the permanent entitlement of one region. Both should have a reasonable opportunity to participate in national leadership within a common constitutional order. Rotation consequently became more than an electoral formula; it was a political instrument for reducing mutual suspicion and reassuring communities that their place in the Nigerian project was secure.

The convention has not always been applied consistently. Jonathan's succession to Yar'Adua and subsequent election, for example, altered the anticipated sequence of regional turns. Nevertheless, the broader principle has remained politically influential because it addresses a problem that constitutional eligibility alone cannot resolve: the need for confidence that no major section of the country will be permanently excluded from the highest office.

The transition from Buhari to Tinubu in 2023 reinforced the expectation that the South would have its opportunity after eight years of northern leadership. Many Nigerians consequently believe that the South should ordinarily be allowed to complete an eight-year presidential cycle before power returns to the North.

The question is whether this expectation will continue to command respect or become expendable whenever a powerful political actor sees an opportunity to pursue the presidency.

A political understanding cannot endure if it is observed only when convenient. Its credibility depends on the willingness of political actors to respect it even when doing so may not serve their immediate interests. When established understandings are abandoned whenever they become inconvenient, every succession risks becoming an unrestricted contest in which immediate advantage takes precedence over the consequences for the wider political community.

This is the deeper concern surrounding the 2027 presidential

contest. It is not that a northerner would necessarily govern badly, or that a southerner would automatically govern well. Geography guarantees neither competence nor integrity. The concern is that disregarding the rotation convention at this stage could weaken confidence in the arrangements that have helped to manage Nigeria's political diversity.

Atiku Abubakar and the limits of ambition

Atiku Abubakar is an experienced politician whose national profile and determination to lead Nigeria are well established. His supporters are entitled to believe that he possesses the experience and capacity to govern. He is also entitled, under the Constitution and subject to its requirements, to seek the presidency.

Yet constitutional eligibility and political wisdom are different questions.

The right to seek power does not remove the responsibility to consider the wider implications of doing so. In a plural society, statesmanship sometimes requires a political leader to look beyond the immediate prospects of personal success and consider whether his ambition might undermine an understanding that has helped preserve national stability.

The controversy surrounding Atiku's renewed ambition is therefore not simply a dispute over who should contest in 2027. It concerns the relationship between individual political rights and collective expectations in a federation where regional sensitivities remain consequential.

In September 2026, former Senator Shehu Sani argued publicly that an Atiku victory in 2027 would undermine the rotational presidency convention and could generate resentment in the South. Sani acknowledged Atiku's constitutional right to contest while maintaining that the South should be allowed to complete its expected eight-year cycle. His intervention demonstrates that support for rotation is not exclusively a southern position; it also finds expression among northern political voices.

The question for Atiku is whether his ambition sufficiently accounts for this political reality. After eight years of Buhari's presidency, should a northern aspirant seek to return the presidency to the North after only four years of southern leadership, or should the established convention be respected to preserve confidence in the wider political arrangement?

Advocates of unrestricted competition have a legitimate counterargument. They can insist that elections should be decided by voters rather than informal agreements, and that zoning may constrain merit, narrow voter choice and encourage parties to prioritise regional calculations over competence. These objections deserve serious consideration.

• Abiodun Oluwadare is a Professor of Political Science, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna

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By Alade Rotimi-John

THE Federal Government's peremptory or arrogantly impatient reaction to recent renewed calls for an introspective interrogation of the fuel subsidy regime has thrillingly spawned its own industry of sorts, including parodies, stunts, content creation, rebuttals, and even a threatened television documentary.

The plot of these artistic modes revolves around the President Tinubu declaration at his inauguration on 29th of May, 2023. Tinubu himself has recounted how he was uncontrollably siezed on that occasion by a strange spirit to declare his "Subsidy is gone" diatribe.

Because the victims of the declaration have been the ordinary people of Nigeria, they have lived through the period since the pronouncement with baffling clues and a catalogue of symbolism that has befuddled a seemingly innocuous policy statement.

The President's "Subsidy is gone" monologue even though has led to a quest to expose an old conspiracy and to the discovery of a shocking or benumbing looting spree of the common patrimony, has compounded the nation's socio-economic problems.

Almost before Tinubu could step down from the dais where he made his eureka declaration, the price of petrol and of other petroleum products quadrupled. Staple food items including traded Nigerian articles immediately went out of the reach of the people.

Many intriguing characters parading as pantomimes on the side of the government were themselves scandalised. They sought scientific explanation for the president's undue radicalism. They divined that solution for ameliorating the situation was underway, just to give the policy a soft landing.

Conspiracies opened new avenues even as new questions were being unrelentingly posed. The people, on their own, have moped in bewilderment for a quest for answers even as they have

Truly, We Need To Re-Visit The Fuel Subsidy Colloquium

not profited from the surrounding hullabaloo. They have been left wondering if they could live through the befuddling regime of macro-economic "bulaba" for another set of four years, all things being unequal.

There is understandably therefore, a resurgence of interest in the subsidy removal policy position, if only for the benefit of hindsight. An attitude of active rebellion or of passive indifference has characterised the people's reaction to a general situation of hardship and of hunger, these three and half years.

Many otherwise hopeful people have resorted to anti-social means of providing for themselves and their families. They have become vulnerable to banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, "yahoo-yahoo", advance fee fraud, romance scams, etc. These vices are not mere social coincidences. They are, in the main, a stark evidence of a pervasive social and economic disequilibrium brought about by an abruptly-configured socio-economic relations interplay.

The "Subsidy is gone" catechism can be correctly identified as an incident of the paraphernalia of the neo-liberal ethic of the Tinubu presidency. Whereas subsidies are a hallowed creed of social democracy whereby education, health care, housing, transportation, energy, and an array of social services are objectively subsidised as an incident of pragmatic investment in ultimate all-round prosperity. Neo-liberalism, on the other hand, preaches and legislates the removal of such subsidies. It unabashedly transfers the surplus accruing from the subsidy removal to enrich its cronies and proxies. Neo-liberal socio-political and economic advocacy is predicated on the philosophy of furthering the nests of a few in society, based on visceral or emotional criteria like elitism, religion, ethnicity, cronyism,

privileged connection, etc. It is not a policy for uplifting the majority of the people or for making them participate in the commanding heights of the economy.

Our path for answers to Tinubu's heady insistence on the non-reversal of the policy on the removal of fuel subsidy and of other subsidies which government has touted as the elixir for the much-needed re-engineering of the economy and as the only way open to a reformist government mission has been made easy by a number of well-heeled contributions suggesting that the Tinubu prescription is a devaluation of society's rightful veneration of a populist or democratic setting. It is a derogation from the desideratum for life more abundant for the generality of the people.

The presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Prince Adewole Adebayo, has introduced a uniquely remarkable and socially-conscious dimension to the conveniently-rigged debate. He has not only identified the removal of subsidy on life-sustaining products and programmes as wicked or morally reprehensible, he has hinted that petrol should not cost more than N200 per litre. Adebayo has assured Nigerians that, if elected president, the pump price of petrol will not be above N200 per litre.

The economics of it he has demonstrably put together in his party's published blueprint. The verbiage of his commitment is couched in a language that is intelligible to the household, the marketplace, the farms, and the streets. As he was not brandishing a magic wand, he has detailed how his vision is possible through a combination of an increase in domestic refining capacity, a guaranteed dependable crude supply to functioning refineries, and the removal of iniquitous costs from petroleum products distribution.

Canvassing his own position, Mr Peter Obi of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), pinpointed corruption as the bane of the subsidy regime. Obi argues that the massive corruption surrounding the exercise of subsidy provision is its bugbear. If the corruption that has become its other name is curtailed or eliminated, Obi assures, subsidy removal is sure to exponentially free capital for the effective performance of government's covenant social responsibilities. Subsidy removal by itself is not an economically unsound policy. Adequate arrangements for ameliorating its initial hiccups ought to be made ahead of its announcement or exercise, Obi has posited.

Former Vice-president Atiku Abubakar, who is the presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), has provocatively concluded that the litmus test for determining the correctness of the policy of subsidy removal is the question whether the people are better off today than they were three years ago when the "Subsidy is gone" declaration made.

Atiku has epigrammatically identified two Nigerias respecting the vexed issue of subsidy removal. One Nigeria, he says, is outside the conference rooms, the financial markets, and government spreadsheets.

The other Nigeria is busy spewing out figures, data and statistics that support rent-seeking. She is actively politically supported by compradors.

Atiku has canvassed a "production based subsidy" that "puts Nigerian refineries, Nigerian jobs, and Nigerian consumers first".

• Rotimi-John, a lawyer and commentator on public affairs, is the Secretary-General of Afenifere lawgravitas@gmail.com

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Celebrating The King, The Crown, The Legacy: Happy Birthday, Arole Oduduwa!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Management Team, Heads of Divisions and the entire OJAJA Pan Africa Limited family, I extend our warmest felicitations to Your Majesty on the joyous occasion of your birthday.

Today, we celebrate a visionary monarch whose remarkable leadership continues to inspire hope, foster unity and champion the advancement of our people and the African continent.

Your Majesty's unwavering commitment to cultural preservation, youth empowerment, economic development and African excellence remains a testament to your purposeful reign. As our revered Chairman, your wisdom and vision continue to inspire our collective aspirations towards building a prosperous and sustainable Africa.

On this special occasion, we pray that Almighty God grants Your Majesty continued wisdom, sound health, divine protection and many more glorious years of impactful leadership.

May your reign continue to flourish in peace, prosperity and enduring accomplishments.

Happy Birthday, Your Majesty!

**KABIYESI O! IGBA ODUN,
ODUN KAN NI!**



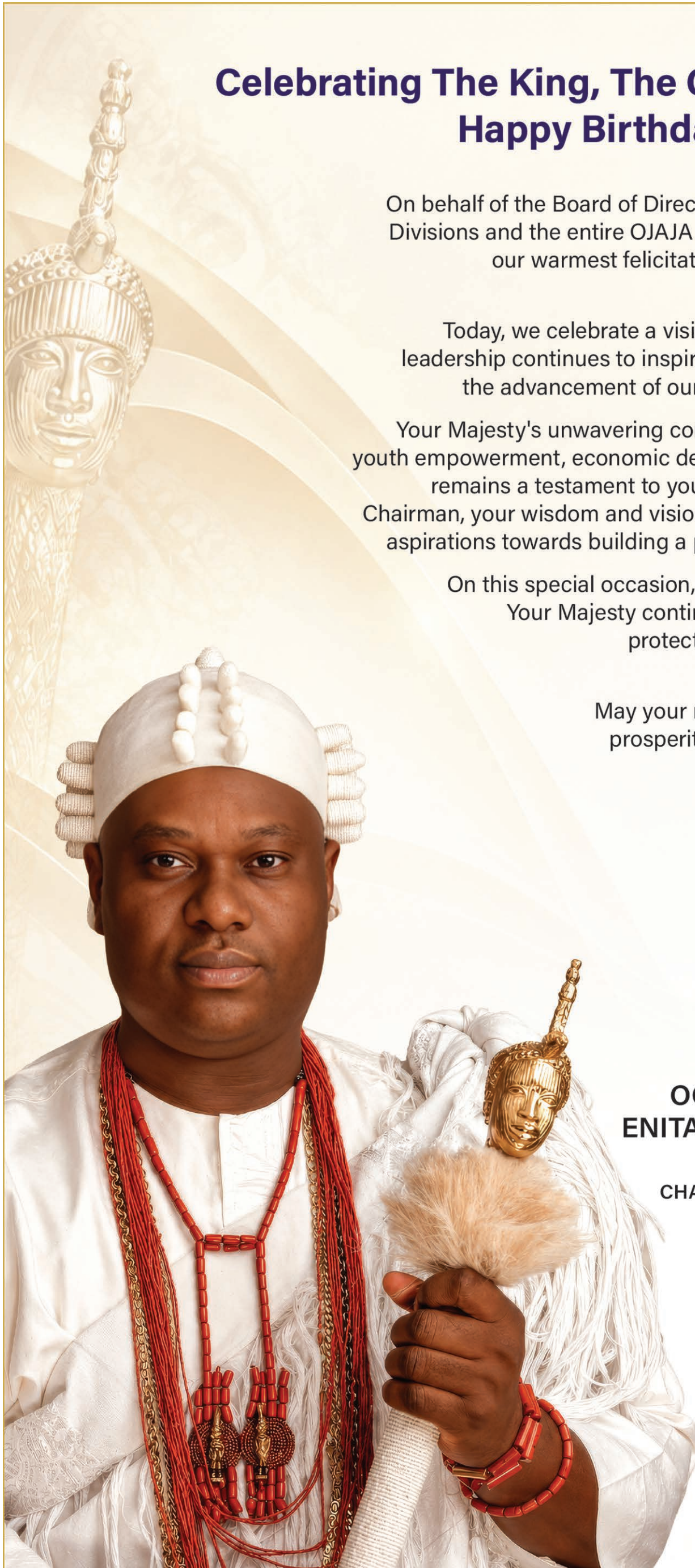
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Mosadoluwa Explores Intersection Of Faith In New Show

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

LOGOS & heART returned for its second show on Saturday, October 10. The event, which held at the main auditorium of the University of Lagos, brought together theatre artists, visual artists, music artists, some of Nigeria's finest Christian creative talents and their likes, for what could be considered thought-provoking conversations and full day of entertainment and expression.

With the theme, *A Foolish Old Story*, the event visited different creative expressions, giving audiences plenty to see, hear, and engage in. It examined the influence of Christian faith on creativity, particularly the limitations artists face on their artistic expression as a result of their religious beliefs. It also sought to encourage a broader understanding of the relationship between faith and art, highlighting the place of spirituality in creative exploration.

The show featured a multi-media drama performance that explored the relationship between faith and creativity, using music and visual elements to communicate the significance of faith in artistic expression. A major highlight was the marketplace showcasing a diverse range of artworks. The displays included sculptures, visual art, acrylic paintings and literary works, providing a platform for artists to express their ideas and perspectives through different creative forms.

The producer, David Mosadoluwa, said the show was created to bridge what many people perceive as a gap between Christianity and creativity. "Being a Christian should not prevent an artist from pursuing excellence, building a career or reaching the highest levels of the creative industry," he said. Logos & heART 2.0 used virtually every form of creative expression from traditional painting and sketching to metalwork, music, drama, performance and emerging technologies such as virtual and augmented reality to communicate the gospel. The idea behind the show goes beyond putting Christian messages into works of art. It is also about demonstrating that creatives can remain committed to their values while navigating an industry that sometimes exposes them to pressures that challenge those values. Mosadoluwa's conviction is partly rooted in his own experience in the entertainment industry. Before establishing Logos & heART, he worked as a production designer and art di-

rector across music videos, television programmes, documentaries, photography and feature films. His professional experience exposed him to different environments and conversations, some of which tested his convictions as a Christian.

He said that the message and life of Jesus became an important source of strength as he encountered such situations. "Christian message may sometimes appear 'foolish' to a world that values retaliation, self-interest and compromise. Yet he believes the same message can provide the strength required to remain grounded while pursuing professional success.

The event challenges the assumption that principles such as kindness, forgiveness, humility and self-control are signs of weakness.

Mosadoluwa argues that creatives can reach the peak of their careers without abandoning their core values. In his view, success should not require people to compromise their faith or engage in habits and practices they believe are contrary to

their convictions. The exhibition therefore seeks to make its argument not only through words but also through examples.

The essence of the event was to change the social narrative that ethical value and success cannot co-exist without a compromise, which the organisers of the event want to change. It also reflected the changing face of creative industry, which now has a strong presence of young people.

Mosadoluwa, said, "This year, we decided to expand the approach by creating a body of work around the theme, including a short story designed to give visitors a clearer understanding of the message. It featured a broad collection of artworks, with over 200 artworks exhibited at the event." For Mosadoluwa, his own professional journey is evidence that faith does not have to restrict creative ambition. His experience working on major film productions, he said, demonstrates that a Christian creative can operate at the highest levels of the industry without sacrificing personal convictions.



Scenes from different event at the show



Arinze, Popoola Unveil Beauty Of Gele At Alexis

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

ALEXIS Galleries presents *Gele*, a dual show that brings together two contemporary masters - Arinze Stanley and Dotun Popoola - whose practices explore a common thread - the *Gele* phenomenon, a culturally relevant contemporary women's headgear, historically popularised since the 1960s in Southern Nigeria. The headgear has since transformed into a fashion statement in the everyday lives of Nigerian women, notably on occasions.

The artists, known for hyperrealism, their naturalistic drawing, paintings, and monumental metal sculpture, present a mix of extraordinary, pristine paintings and sculptures that captivate conscious imagination.

The show examines how a single, familiarised cultural phenomenon like the *Gele* can be rendered and reimagined to reveal extraordinary possibilities.

Through the works of Arinze and Popoola, the *gele* moves beyond adornment and becomes a language through which womanhood is explored.

In Arinze's paintings, the women meet the viewer with a striking sense of presence while in Popoola's monumental sculptures, the female figure is transformed into something commanding and almost regal. Across both practices, the *gele* becomes inseparable from the woman who wears it.

In their curatorial statement, Uche Obasi and Chidera Ogbu, said: "The exhibition brings a joint presentations of *Gele* from the perspective of two contemporary Nigerian masters, Arinze and Popoola, whose works come together around this familiar yet culturally common phenomenon: prominently rooted in Nigerian women's fashion, ceremony, weddings, religious gatherings, identity, and freedom of social expression."

They continued, "For *Gele*, the artists turn to a popular form that is strikingly recognisable within Nigerian society, asking how something so familiar can be re-made to reveal extraordinary possibilities. Beneath the glamour of the *gele*'s popularity and practices lies the inner lives of its wearers - identity, self-presentation, and self-knowledge."

They said: "Arinze's portraits draw us towards the women themselves. Their faces are not secondary to the *gele*; they hold our attention. There is a quietness and intensity in their expressions that suggests an interior world beyond what is immediately visible. The *gele* frames these women, but it does not define them."

One of Arinze's iconic paintings reflects the female gaze. It shows a young woman wearing an intensely dark, reddish traditional Nigerian head tie like a majestic crown - a tiara, the regalia of

an empress - revealing sheer self-knowledge and presence. In Popoola's sculptures, this relationship takes on another dimension. His monumental figures transform the *gele* into an almost architectural form. For Popoola, welding monumental scrap metals has been his preoccupation over the decades. One of his works on display shows a dominant matriarch in

a majestic, glossy red draped *gele* - sculpted into a dramatic, wide fan - that rises and spreads behind her head like a crown. The *gele* is designed with gold filigree patterns, with a long, tasseled-like tail in gold crips cascading down her side arm. Together, the artists demonstrate how the *gele* phenomenon has moved between cultural representation and social presence. It invites us to consider the *gele* not simply as an item of Nigerian fashion, but as part of the ways women construct and express themselves.

Resort Opens Applications For Art Residency In Lagos

A Campagne Tropicana Resort has opened applications for the first edition of its Art Residency, a two-month programme for Nigerian artists and artisans.

The residency runs from February 5 to April 4, 2027 at the resort in Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos, and applications close on November 30, 2026.

The programme will bring practitioners together to make new work, trade ideas and examine how art, culture, place and tourism relate to one another. Res-

idents are encouraged to draw on the resort and its surroundings while following their own creative interests.

The call is open to practitioners in the visual and applied arts, traditional crafts, design and related fields.

Applicants must live in Nigeria, be at least 20 years old when the residency begins, and be able to take part for the full period.

Residents will have time to work on an agreed project and to engage with fellow participants, and the programme will

close with a presentation or sharing of work and ideas. Applicants may propose research, experimentation or the development of new work, and a finished artwork is not required unless agreed as part of an individual project. The residency committee will provide accommodation and meals, travel and local transport support, materials and production support, a stipend, and insurance and healthcare arrangements. Selected applicants will receive the amounts, coverage and practical details in writing before they are asked to accept a place. Applicants with accessibility or other support needs are encouraged to contact the committee so suitable arrangements can be discussed.

Applications will be assessed on the quality of the applicant's practice, the strength and feasibility of the proposal, and its relevance to the residency. Applicants should send a short biography or CV, a portfolio or examples of recent work, a brief proposal for what they wish to explore or develop, their location and contact details, and confirmation that they are available for the full programme dates.

Those selected will receive a detailed programme and a written residency agreement covering support, facilities, participation expectations, and the ownership, display and use of work created during the residency. A place will be confirmed only once these terms have been agreed.

Odigbose: The Play Goes On Stage

By Ruth Ononye

THE gripping story of *Odigbose: The Play* has never been seen before will be on stage this weekend, as the history of the obnoxious slave trade takes centre stage at the Agip Hall, MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos, on Saturday, October 17, 2026 by 7:00pm.

Written by Otunba Wanle Akinboboye, the much-anticipated piece is a recast of the slave trade history. Told from the African perspective, Akinboboye, a renowned investor and promoter of tourism across the world, is, through this historic and dramatic creation, inviting the world to feast on his innate creative ferment beyond the immersive experience that people savour from his promotion of authentic African-theme resorts. *Odigbose* is not just a play. It is a pil-

grimage into the past.

For centuries, the story of the transatlantic slave trade has been told by others. In *Odigbose*, Africa reclaims its voice. Africa tells its own story, in its own rhythm, with its own tears, truth and with its author, director, cast and crew within it hallowed soil.

The production promises a deeply moving, visually arresting and emotionally riveting theatrical experience that will transport audiences into the heart of one of Africa's most painful chapters. Through powerful dramatic performances, haunting chants, soul-stirring music, dance and storytelling, the play will portray the enslavement and captivating and profound inhuman treatment by a set of humanity - Europeans; to another set of humanity - Africans.

Broadcast Content Across Borders

By **Shaibu Husseini**

Entries Open For Realness Institute's Creative Producer Indaba

CALLS for applications are now open for the 6th edition of the Creative Producer Indaba programme, a Realness Institute six-month professional development lab for film producers looking to hone their leadership and entrepreneurial ability and build their creative skills. The sixth edition of the programme begins in November 2026, starting with an online workshop, followed by two in-person workshops in South Africa and Réunion Island. Presented by South Africa-based pan-African non-profit Realness Institute, in partnership with EAVE, the Creative Producer Indaba is supported by FAPA (Fund for Authors and Producers from Africa), the Brazilian foundation Projeto Paradiso, the Swiss Foundation for professional training in cinema and audiovisual media (FOCAL), and the Austrian Film Institute. The Creative Producer Indaba grounds creative development in a professional business framework. Through a series of guest speaker sessions, seminars, one-on-one sessions, and collaborative workshops, the cohort of 10 producers will focus on key areas such as story and creative development, financing and business strategy, festival and market positioning, legal and marketing fundamentals, project and company marketing, network management, and leadership. Workshop one begins on November 24, 2026 (online); Workshop two begins on February 7, 2027 (in-person and online); Workshop three begins on April 3, 2027 (in-person). Realness Institute Managing Director and Emmy Award-nominated producer Mehret Mandefro and European Film Academy Award-winning producer Diana Elbaum serve as mentors and group leaders of the programme. Mehret Mandefro says “Creative Producer Indaba is a leadership and entrepreneurial training program that equips producers with the business skills to become financially sustainable. We help producers figure out their long game so they can stay doing what they love.” The programme is open to producers from Africa, with or without an existing project, as well as producers from outside Africa with an interest in co-producing on the continent. It also welcomes film professionals from other disciplines, including distribution, international sales, funding insti-

tutions, broadcasting and development with a stake in the African marketplace. Applicant producers must have produced at least one feature fiction film, series or documentary, or a minimum of four short films, as lead or co-producer. Executive, associate, and line producer credits do not qualify, and professionals from other disciplines require a minimum of four years’ experience in their field. Through funding provided by the Brazilian foundation Projeto Paradiso, the Swiss Foundation for Professional Training in Cinema and Audiovisual Media (FOCAL), and the Austrian Film Institute, one spot each is covered for an applicant from Brazil, Switzerland, and Austria respectively, with expenses for the selected producer covered by the applicable partner organization. Applications are currently open and will close on Tuesday, 3 November 2026. More information can be sourced at: submissions@realness.institute

Nigerian Filmmakers Win Big At Durban FilmMart 2026

THE premier film industry event in Africa, the Durban FilmMart (DFM) 2026, took place from October 9 to 12 in Durban, under the theme “Shifting Worlds: Turning Towards Ourselves” successfully bringing together 1131

film professionals and filmmakers from 56 countries across the world. “We are delighted to have hosted such a dynamic array of filmmakers and industry leaders in Durban. Delegates entrusted us with their projects and ideas, and had honest, uncompromising conversations about alternative funding pathways, equitable co-production and authentic partnerships. The talent showcased in this year’s programme and film project exemplifies the strength of African cinema; networks expanded, and partnerships forged will extend DFM’s legacy and impact. We extend our gratitude to our partners for their support in celebrating and elevating African storytellers, producers and content creators,” says Magdalene Reddy, Director of the Durban FilmMart Institute (DFMI). “The quality of the projects presented in this year was exceptional, with filmmakers bringing bold, original and well-developed work to the table,” adds Reddy. The event ended on a high with the presentation of 39 awards from 30 partners, valuing over R2 million (over \$120 938,00). Nigeria’s *The Boy Who Spoke Static* by the Agbajowo Collective: Temitope Ogungbamila, Samuel Okechukwu, Mat Cerf (Lead Producer) and Bisola Akinmuyiwa received the National Film and Video Foundation of South Africa (NFVF) Best

Fiction – Grant of R100,000. The Agbajowo collectives also won the Red Sea Film Fund Award – Fiction of 5,000 USD with their *The Boy Who Spoke Static*. The Collective also won the DFMI Talents Durban Award. Another film by a Nigerian born filmmaker-Pulo: *Bloodstream of The Kiri* by Christina Ifubaraboye also won the Sunshine Cinema UCT Impact Development Award. The award comprises a bursary to the University of Cape Town Sunshine Cinema Film Impact Online Course of 2027 to the value of R18 000 and a R7 500 grant towards a first impacts screening of the film. The list of award winners can be sourced: www.realnessinstitute.com.

All Is Set For 2026 Abuja International Film Festival

THE 23rd Abuja International Film Festival (AIFF) holds from October 20 to 24, 2026 at Silverbird Cinemas Abuja. This edition has as theme: “Frames Without Borders: AI, Ethics, and the Future of Filmmaking”. It will examine the impact of artificial intelligence on cinema, authorship, ethics, and human storytelling. This edition will feature usual festival activities like screening, workshops and award ceremony. Details can be sourced at abujafilmmfestival.org.



Fidelis Ducker



Magdalene Reddy

By David Emokpae

TERRA Academy for the Arts (TAFTA) successfully staged another compelling edition of TALP X on Saturday, October 10, 2026, at Terra Kulture, Victoria Island, Lagos, bringing audiences an evening of theatre that moved through themes of trauma, healing, self-discovery, relationships and humour.

The showcase featured three original stage productions, *Ajé*, *Skunk* and *Zaddy's Wallet*, each offering a distinct perspective on human experience while demonstrating the range, creativity and performance growth of TAFTA participants.

Ajé opened the evening with a gripping story centred on 15-year-old Caroline, whose silence following a traumatic experience gradually reveals a painful truth. As her family confronts denial, faith, bullying and societal pressure, the play explored the difficult journey towards healing, justice and reclaiming one’s voice.

From the weight of trauma and the courage to speak, the showcase moved into *Skunk*, a jukebox musical set inside a psychiatric home where a group of women are brought

TALP X Returns With Stories Of Healing, Recovery

together by addiction, grief and loss.

While many wait for someone to rescue them, one woman chooses to begin her healing from within, inspiring the others to do the same. Through music, movement and sisterhood, the production explored self-recovery and the power of choosing oneself.

Shifting the mood from reflection to laughter, *Zaddy's Wallet* closed the showcase with a lively Nigerian comedy filled with money, temptation, friendship and chaos. Featuring a confident baddie, her righteous roommate, a conniving friend and a formidable lawyer wife, the production delivered humour and drama in equal measure, giving audiences a playful ending to an emotionally varied evening.

Together, the three productions reflected the breadth of storytelling TALP X continues to encourage, moving audi-

ences from difficult social conversations to moments of hope, resilience and laughter.

Speaking on the showcase, Bolanle Austen-Peters, Founder of Terra Academy for the Arts (TAFTA), said: “What makes TALPX special is the freedom it gives our participants to explore very different kinds of stories. This edition moved from trauma and healing to recovery, friendship and comedy, showing just how broad storytelling can be. More importantly, we are seeing our participants grow in confidence, emotional depth and their ability to connect meaningfully with an audience.”

Mr JO Umoibom, Academy Lead at TAFTA, highlighted the importance of giving participants practical opportunities to apply their training.

“TALPX takes learning beyond the classroom and places participants in a real performance environment. They have to collaborate, rehearse, solve creative problems and deliver before an audience. Seeing three very different productions come together successfully demonstrates the level of growth, discipline and versatility they are developing through the programme.”

Mr Chinedu Isagbah, Programs Manager at TAFTA Lagos, noted that the variety of stories presented was central to the value of the showcase.

“Theatre allows us to approach serious conversations while still making room for entertainment and joy. *Ajé*, *Skunk* and *Zaddy's Wallet* each connected with audiences differently, and that range is important. We want our participants to understand that powerful storytelling can challenge, heal, entertain and inspire, sometimes all within the same evening.”

Produced by TAFTA in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, TALP X continues to serve as one of the Academy’s key performance platforms, giving participants the opportunity to translate their training into fully realised stage productions and gain practical experience within a professional creative environment.

The October showcase reinforced TAFTA’s commitment to developing the next generation of African storytellers by creating platforms where emerging performers, writers and production teams can test their skills, build confidence and engage directly with audiences.

As the curtains closed, audiences left having experienced three very different stories, but one shared reminder of theatre’s ability to make people feel, reflect, connect and laugh. Through TALPX, TAFTA continues to provide young creatives with the opportunity to find their voices and bring meaningful stories to the stage.



Scene from one of the performances

Navigating Life's Precarious Pathways In Chukwuonye's *Tranquility In Turbulence*

By Anote Ajeloru

THAT life isn't a bed of roses is a truism long been established. However, individuals experience the precarious nature of life in different ways, either due to their environments or how they respond to conditions around them. While some quietly endure the vagaries of life without a whimper, others choose other routes and shout their grief or pain to the world to share and be partakers of their journeys. This is usually with the hope that those who listen are able to learn a thing or two that might help them in their own journeys and avoid where others slipped. Florence Njideka Chukwuonye takes the latter route and decides to share for others to learn and be wise. Her recent collection *Tranquility in Turbulence* epitomises that personal journey that also morphs into the national realm, as persons and nations also embark on journeys that ultimately define and differentiate them. Chukwuonye starts with her personal journey of grief. The woman who meant the world to her suddenly falls ill and the world takes on a dark hue. Death eventually claims her, and she's devastated. How does a daughter mourn a beloved mother? The intensity of her grief is unbearable but she finds anchor in the memory of her goodness as a mother.

This searing poem starts Part I, 'Mother/Memory/Loss' of the collection, where she proclaims: 'Let me eulogise her/ With a voice loud as thunder/ A woman whose life beamed with kindness/ And oozed goodness.' In spite of great grief, she consoles herself with the memory of her undying love, when she says, 'But I wrap my heart/ In the soothing balm of your love/ You were my gem./ You remain my jewel.'

Grief is capable of yoking a painful past to the present, and many are constantly plagued, particularly women who remain mired to a past they seem incapable of finding escape, as the next poem 'Chained to the Past' suggests. But Chukwuonye does not believe that one should remain forever shackled to past chains. This hopeful thread runs throughout the collection. Despair is human, but resilience is superior, she seems to say. She concludes this poem with the hopeful lines, 'But even iron weakens./ Even wounds scar

over./ And beneath the ash/ Something still breathes.' But the piece 'A Dream Dashed' doesn't seem to offer any hopeful end, as the aspiration remains just that: aspiration without fulfillment. From 'She climbed her ladder slowly' in what appears a promising beginning to when 'A ring snapped' to 'Some dreams do not break loudly/ They fall/ And leave you staring/ At the sky/ You almost reached' is the naked disappointment of a once promising adventure that ends badly. But that is life, too.

But it's not all gloom and doom in the first part. It ends with the poem, 'The Best Day of My Life', of the hopeful journey of a lady who bumps on the one man, who is to be her life's partner, and how the heavens align for their hopeful union.

'Scanning the crowd,/ I saw the music of my soul./ He saw me./ He felt me./ He heard me./ Ladden with joy,/ I thanked heaven/ For the rhythm/ And the music in my soul'.

Chukwuonye shifts the poetic muse from the personal to the national and universal in Part II, 'Nation/Turbulence/Society'. She starts with Nigeria's perennial 'Power Failure' problem and ends it with 'Night invaded noon./ Hope flickered./ The city held its breath.' The piece on 'War' is equally telling and digs at global geopolitics and the nastiness of war and how 'War is a foe to peace/ A fiend to man', and in spite of how detestable war is, because of man's folly, 'And yet, it returns/ Again and again.' 'Poverty', 'Corona Virus' and 'Let Peace Reign' also make up this part.

In Part III, 'Woman/Empowerment', Chukwuonye turns to her own gender in searching soul-to-soul, intimate conversation. This section is specially for her gender.

Just two poems, 'Gird Child' and 'Mighty Woman's' make up this section. It tells how much she invests in her gender. To the girl child, Chukwuonye is unsparing of her heart-to-heart moment to plant in the girl child's heart the very seeds of greatness that will equip her for the turbulence life's journey will throw at her, and how resolute she must be, so she could arrive safely at her destination.

So, Chukwuonye sings to the girl child: 'My dear child,/ Blessed at birth,/ Born to rock the world with guts and grit./ Dream and aspire./... Rise like the eagle above the storm,/ Roar like the lion (lioness?) shaking the night./... You are not mere/ You are enough'.

It is in 'Mighty Woman' that Chukwuonye invests her supreme poetic powers, as she finds reason enough to tell women who they truly are, and why they must not be afraid to own their femininity and humanity and never allow themselves to be denied agency. And she says to women, 'You are liberty./ You are freedom/ With your feet on the ground/ And your wings in the wind./... You fan and poke/ The smouldering embers of silenced dreams/ Into a roaring flame.' And Chukwuonye ends the longest piece in the collection thus, 'Mighty woman.../ Go forth in your might/ And do mighty things.'

'Time/Nature/Existence' makes up Part IV, where Chukwuonye sings about things in her natural environment like 'Harmattan', 'Beauty', 'The Hawk's', 'Sunrise', 'The Sun' and ultimately asks the universal question in a poem, 'What Is Life?' And she responds, 'Life is music./ Chords strung with care or chaos./ Dissonance grates./ Harmony soothes.../ What we hold in the pulse of our heart.'

In Part V, 'Mind/Faith/Inner Strength', Chukwuonye turns to faith and the inner power that equips one to navigate life's turbulent journey. In 'The Wonderful Exchange',

she finds anchor in her faith, singing: 'At Calvary/ Christ took my unrighteousness/ And gave me righteousness.' Also in 'What Shall I Ask For?', she makes a list of earthly possessions that eventually count for nothing: 'Beauty, fleeting as the dawn?/ Money, fading like evening shadows?' but affirms that which is constant and life-giving: 'I ask for Jesus,/ The Author of life,/ Who fades not, wanes not, fails not.' And as Christ becomes 'My Delight', Chukwuonye finds pleasure and courage to declare, 'Hold your rituals, your rites,/ I delight in knowing him.../ This knowing nourishes me,/ Enlightens my eyes,/ And reveals the fullness of life.'

Chukwuonye's poetry makes for delightful reading. In the 'Preface', Chukwuonye admits that 'I did not write these poems from a place of ease', as testament to the Williams Wordsworth's age-old definition of poetry 'as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. In this case, powerful feeling of unease "shaped in moments when grief felt close, when the air carried both harmattan dust and uneasy headlines, and when the future of a nation seemed suspended between hope and disappointment. They emerged from private sorrow and public observation - from watching, waiting, enduring." It's perhaps why she "...dedicated (the book) to the quiet moments that saved me. To the days when the noise was loud, the storms were relentless, and yet a small still voice whispered, 'Be still'.

Chukwuonye's *Tranquil Turbulence* is poetry of survival, of resilience and the will power to say no to those forces that threaten to drown the human spirit. And having emerged victorious, she raises her voice to sing and encourage others, particularly her fellow women, to never despair of whatever life throws at them, but to stand tall. Turbulence is a normal human experience that comes at some point in a man's life. But how do you respond to it? That's Chukwuonye's question to anyone hurting or going through some of life's soured moments. Be tranquil. Be still. That's what she offers. It's what serves. This is poetry more than motivational speech. It grounds the human spirit and elevates it to heights that seem possible.

In *Ten Tall Tales*, Ojewale Teaches Importance Of Good Family Values

Book: Ten Tall Tales

Author: Banji Ojewale

Publishers: Straight Gate Publishers Limited, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Number of Pages: 65

Reviewer: Vincent Obia

IN an era when screens dominate the attention of young minds, *Ten Tall Tales* comes as a refreshing and delightful storybook that is sure to revamp the reading culture among children. This 10-chapter collection of 10 engaging stories rooted in African oral tradition, written by Banji Ojewale, evokes a world of wonder, magic, and subterfuge, transporting the reader to a locale seething with life, adventure, and valuable lessons.

The book begins with the story of a girl, an only child, Samari, brought up by her parents to be humble, friendly, and respectful. The chapter, *Samari and the Old Man*, tells of how the girl's excellent home training earns her a reward that turns around the fortunes of the family, teaching the importance of good family values. The second chapter, *Why the Cat*

Lives Among Men, teaches obedience to parents; and chapter three, *The Wicked Pretender*, exposes the folly of deceit, with the story of Ado, a poseur, who only pretends to care about a people he is just out to fleece.

With each chapter dealing with a particular subject, the book seamlessly weaves themes teaching the repercussion of laziness, danger of stubbornness, merits of the saving culture, conjugal faithfulness, destructive nature of subterfuge, and the deceitful colours of greener fields. The messages are both timely and timeless.

The stories are told in simple English, fine flowing prose, and accessible language, combining emotional connection with local, human-centric examples. This makes the book a compelling and delightful read for a broad audience of children, especially Africans, aged 4-10.

One of the distinctive features of *Ten Tall Tales* is its beautiful illustrations. The lively, hand-painted artwork brings the characters to life, creating an engrossing experience for young readers.



The book's print quality is also superb, with font sizes that make reading a delight. Although, a few typos can be spotted on the pages. But they are too minimal to be of any discomfort to the reader.

In trying to revamp the reading culture among children, *Ten Tall Tales* is a shining example of what traditional storybooks should be.

Thus, governments, parents, guardians, get copies of *Ten Tall Tales* for your childreos.

Henderson In Onitsha For Ofala 2026

By Ruth Ononye

ANTHROPOLOGIST and author of the seminal work on Onitsha, *The King in Every Man: Evolutionary Prof Richard (Dick) Henderson*, is in the country after 64 years of leaving as special guest of Agbogidi, Obi of Onitsha, for Ofala 2026 scheduled holding on October 16 and 17. Henderson arrived from Tucson, Arizona. He was accompanied by his son, Michael.

Professor Henderson, who lived among Ndi-Onitsha from 1960 to 62, gave the world the most authoritative account of what it meant to be Onitsha: that kingship, *eze*, *ozo*, *umunna*, *ogbe*, and the spirit of *aniare* not relics, but a living system where every man carries the dignity of a king. His book remains not only foundational in Onitsha — respected in palaces and homes — but is also considered a primer on African anthropology. His continuing archive at amightytree.org, with Helen Henderson, preserves photographs, shrines, *iba*, *okpulukpu*, and oral histories that might otherwise have been lost. n wards. You'll be glad you did. And generations will thank you



Prof Richard Henderson (left) and son, Michael, on arrival in Lagos

for it. Obia, an editor at *THISDAY*, and formerly at *Daily Independent* newspapers, lives in Lagos.



His Excellency
**BIODUN ABAYOMI
OYEBANJI**
Ekiti State Governor

Her Excellency
**MONISADE CHRISTIANAH
AFUYE**
Ekiti State Deputy Governor

Thank You

for Good Governance

IN EKITI STATE

We say a heartfelt THANK YOU to our dear Governor
His Excellency Biodun Abayomi Oyeibanji and his Deputy
Her Excellency Monisade Christianah Afuye
for your visionary leadership, selfless service and unwavering
commitment to the people of Ekiti State.

Your administration has brought progress, hope and
renewed confidence to our dear state.
Congratulations on the inauguration of your second term

*Your leadership continues to make
Ekiti State a better place for all.*

Together, we build a greater Ekiti State.

Signed

Pastor Ademola & Dr. Adeola Adeleye-Fasubaa
for the family

Sokoto: Aliyu Receives Market, Motor Park Fire Committee's Report, Assures 76 Victims Of Support

SOKOTO State Governor, Ahmed Aliyu, has assured the 76 verified victims of the fire outbreaks at Sokoto Central Motor Park and the Old Market of his administration's support to help them recover from their losses and resume their businesses.

The governor gave the assurance while receiving the report of the committee set up by the Sokoto State Government to assess the extent of damage caused by the two separate fire outbreaks.

A statement signed by the Director-General, Media and Publicity Government House, Sokoto, Abubakar Bawa, quoted the governor saying that the government would soon provide assistance to the verified victims to help them ease the hardship caused by the incidents.

Aliyu clarified that the support should not be regarded as compensation but as assistance to alleviate the difficulties faced by the affected traders.

The governor also commended the affected traders and others whose livelihoods depend on the two affected places of the markets for their patience and understanding since the incidents occurred.

"As a government, we are deeply concerned about the way the two fire outbreaks have affected commercial activities and trade in our dear state.

"I want to assure you that we



Aliyu (left) receiving the report from the Committee Chairman, Muhammad

will soon provide assistance to enable you to resume your businesses," he said.

Aliyu commended the committee for what he described as a thorough and commendable exercise, assuring its members that the government would carefully study the recommendations contained in the report. He further reassured the business community in the state of his administration's commitment to supporting commercial activities and creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive in the overall interest of the state.

Earlier, the Chairman of the committee, Gandhi Umar Muhammad, disclosed that the committee received claims from 94 persons who alleged that they had been affected by the fire outbreaks.

However, he said that following a thorough verification exercise, only 76 claimants were

confirmed to be genuine victims of the incidents.

According to him, the committee conducted a comprehensive assessment of the damage caused by the two fire outbreaks in line with its terms of reference.

"We visited the two sites and interacted with the victims, witnesses and other stakeholders. We also conducted far-reaching investigations before submitting this report," he said.

Gandhi explained that the report covered the immediate and remote causes of the fire outbreaks, the losses incurred by the affected traders and recommendations on measures to prevent similar incidents in the future.

He commended the traders in the two affected places for their support and cooperation, noting that their assistance facilitated the committee's assignment.

The Waiting Game (1)

By Segun Durowaiye
(08055356855)

YETUNDE and Bolu were two promising lovers who had so much passion and desire for each other. Yetunde was very beautiful, charming and friendly. She was 5ft. tall, lovely and exuded confidence in her gait. She was a rare bred, courteous and well-mannered. She was around 19 when she fell in love with Bolu who was 22 then.

Bolu, tall, dark-skinned and handsome, was a young man whose cherubic qualities and disposition could melt a heart of steel. Girls swooned at his feet at the snap of his fingers, begging for love. Yetunde was definitely crazy for the ebullient young man. However, Bolu too was in love with the beautiful Yetunde, and they had made a vow never to disappoint or betray each other in this love affair. Their love relationship was a 50/50 thing.

Bolu had been nursing the dream of travelling to the United States (US) to further his education for a long time. The opportunity came when the New York University admitted him and gave him scholarship to further his studies. Bolu was very happy and excited. He was a very brilliant young man, small wonder the New York University gave him scholarship to study Civil Engineering.

It was a breezy afternoon. The weather was cool that month of July. Bolu took a stroll to his sweetheart's home to tell her the good news. Yetunde was delighted and happy to hear the development. The two lovers hugged each other warmly and engaged in a close chat for some few minutes. The joy that enveloped both of them was overwhelming and indescribable.

"I'm leaving for the U.S at the end of this month," Bolu said elatedly.

"So, what's the next thing we should do now, with regards to our relationship?"

Yetunde asked.

"A formal introduction will be better to further solidify our relationship," Bolu suggested.

"But please, darling, don't disappoint me...I beg you in God's name," Yetunde pleaded.

"I can never and will never do that," Bolu replied, "The love we share is something beyond the ordinary, and I cherish every moment with you. You are everything to me and everything is you," he added. A date was fixed for the introduction between the lovebirds. It was a week before the departure of Bolu to the U.S.

On the day of introduction, the two families were in attendance and it was quite elaborate and emotional. Yetunde wept and sobbed heartrendingly and had to be petted by her lover (Bolu), who renewed her confidence and courage.

"I promise, once again Yetunde, I promise not to betray or disappoint you," Bolu said, trying to soothe her mind and make her happy.

On the eve of his departure to the U.S. Bolu reassured his sweetheart that he would come back for her, to marry her, and make her a fulfilled woman. It was an emotionally charged situation. Yetunde looked deep into the eyes of her lover and the tears welled up in her eyes once again, and it streamed down. Bolu mopped her tears off with his handkerchief and embraced her, telling her that there was nothing to worry about, that he had a sincere and honest feeling of love for her. So, that very night, Bolu jetted out to the U.S.A, God's own country...

To be continued.

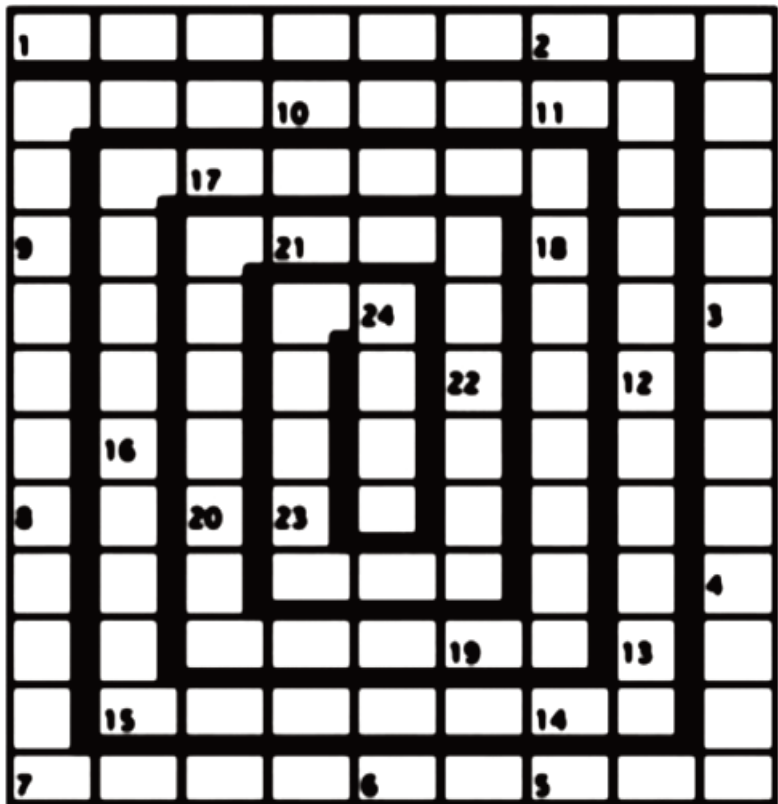
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Overlapping Word Game

Solution

- 1 Itesiwaju
- 2 Ajumobi
- 3 Indian
- 4 Angela
- 5 Axle
- 6 Lentil
- 7 Illness
- 8 Essay
- 9 Yerima
- 10 Agege
- 11 German
- 12 Native
- 13 Veer
- 14 Errant
- 15 Terse
- 16 Espouse
- 17 Seclude
- 18 Delicate
- 19 Enlarge
- 20 Gabion
- 21 Nettle
- 22 Leisure
- 23 Ensure
- 24 Real



Overlapping Word Game

- 1 FIFA Ex President, (7).

2 All matter and energy in space, (8).

3 Legislative body, (6).

4 Somebody who teaches, (7).

5 Make mistake, (3).

6 Formally cancel something, (6).

7 Metal pot, (6).

8 In a smooth even manner, (6).

9 Partially shaved head, (7).

10 Take great pleasure in, (5).

11 Born first, (6).

12 Bank employee, (6).
- 13 Therefore, (4).

14 Enlargement of thyroid gland, (6).

15 Member of northern people, (6).

16 Small piece of food, (6).

17 Hard-shelled sea crustacean, (7).

18 Get rid of something completely, (9).

19 Breed of small dog, (7).

20 The complete removal of, (7).

21 Remove impurities, (6).

22 Required, (7).

23 Kwara state ex Governor, (5).

24 Unable to find way, (4).

Word Search

The Greek Alphabet

Pi	Zeta	Kappa
Xi	Beta	Delta
Nu	Iota	Epsilon
Mu	Theta	Lambda
Eta	Alpha	Gamma
Rho	Sigma	Omicron

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

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Birthdays

ADEBUTU, Sir Keshington Adebukunola Adebutu CON, KJW, FISM will be 91 on October 24, 2026. He was born to the late Alhaji Karimu Folarin Adebutu a.k.a Owo-Iya and late Alhaja Seliat Olasimbo Adebutu of Iperu Remo, Ikenne Local Council Area of Ogun State on October 24, 1935.

Adebutu attended the Wesley Primary School, Iperu Remo, Ogun State and Ijero Baptist School, Apapa Road, Ebute-Metta, Lagos, where he completed his primary education in 1950.

He was admitted into Baptist Academy, Lagos for his secondary education in January 1951, which he completed at the famous Remo Secondary School (RSS) Sagamu Remo, Ogun State in 1955, topping

his class in the School Leaving Certificate Examination.

Because of the feat, he was offered a scholarship to train as a teacher, but he rejected the offer, for him to stay back at home and continue his education as a student.

He attended several leadership and management development courses, seminars and programmes both in Nigeria and abroad.

Adebutu worked with Cable and Wireless Limited, (which later transformed into NITEL), as an operations clerk in 1956. He then joined Claffin Chemicals Ltd as a salesman, and rose to the position of the Regional Sales Manager for Lagos and the old Midwestern State.

He is currently the chairman of Premier Lotto limited and the founder of Keshington Adebukunola Adebutu Foundation (KAAF). He is also



Adebutu

known as Baba Ijebu.

ADEGBOYEGA, Otunba Michael Abayomi, business icon and hotelier is 69 years. He was born on October 17, 1957 in Arigbajo, under the current Ewekoro Local Council, Ogun State, into the family of the late Alfa Sanusi Adegboyega and Madam Felicia Adegboyega.

He attended United District



Adegboyega

Central Primary School, Arigbajo, where he earned his First School Leaving Certificate. After his Primary Education, he relocated to Lagos, where he started his Secondary School education at Nigerian Peco, No 45, Kano Street, Lagos. He later went to the Teachers Training College, Badagry, Lagos.

After the Teachers Training study, he moved to Abule-Oja,

where he started training on Electrical and Electronics. After about two to three years when he graduated, he moved to Sabo, Ebute Metta, where he was trained on R&L and buying and selling in central air conditioners – that was the first place in Lagos and entire Nigeria, where central air conditioners are sold.

From there, he learnt Hotel and Hospitality business. He worked with a Hotel located at Onipanu as a Manager, after that, he moved to Frontier Hotel, Idiroko, Ogun State, very close to the border, also as a Manager.

It was after this he returned to Arigbajo, where he built his Hotel, which he is currently operating. It was not long after his return to Arigbajo, that he was honoured with the post of Baba Loja and later Baba Loja-General of Ewekoro Local Council. After these,

based on his efforts at the Olu of Arigbajo's palace, Arigbajo, he was honoured with the position of Otunba of Arigbajo.

He joined St. John's African Church, Arigbajo, as a member few years and joined the Christ Warriors Society, where he has contributed his quota, which earned him the society's Vice President's position.

Following his activities in the Church, he was bestowed with the post of Otun Balogun Onigbagbo of The African Church, St. John's Cathedral, Arigbajo.

Married to two wives, with four children, Otunba Micheal Abayomi Adegboyega is also the Vice Chairman, Hotelier Association of Ifo, Ogun State.

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

Events



An entrepreneur, Alhaji S. Ola Lawal (left); the Asiwaju Musulumi of Iwo, Alhaji Liad Tella; and former Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, University of Lagos (UNILAG), Prof. Lai Oluode, after Jumua prayer at The Wings Schools Central Mosque in Iwo, Osun State.



Nigeria's Ambassador to the United States, Lateef Kayode Are and his wife, Mrs Ngozi Are, during Nigeria's 66 Independence Day celebration in Washington DC on October 1.



Cross section of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) officials; new students and teachers at the end of Registration and Orientation for the 2026/27 academic session at the Skyward College of Nursing Sciences, Iwo, Osun State.



Business Head, Midea, Mr. Ashok Dimri (left); Managing Director, DP World, Mr. Ajit Nair; Retail Manager, Midea, Mr. Louis and (Chief Financial Officer (CFO), DP World, Mr. Venkatesh Kommineni at the Midea Flagship ceremony held in Lagos...last Friday.



Past Governor and Trustee, Gbolahan Dixon (left); Current Governor, Femi Adeyeye; keynote speaker, Asiwaju Oluwabumi Oluwadare and Past Governor/Trustee, Tope Akande during the bootcamp training for beneficiaries of the Kajola Foundation Entrepreneurship Support Programme powered by Thursday Business Group (TBG) held in Lagos...recently



Rotary Int'l District 9112 Governor, Layi Abidoye (left); Guest Speaker, Chief Brand Strategist Big and Bold Marketing Communications Ltd, Mr 'Jide Adeyemi; and Rotary District 9111 Governor-elect, Dr Samuel Ayetutu during Joint Districts 9111 & 9112 Public Image Seminar held in Lagos.



Winner of The Nigeria Prize for Literature 2026, Ogaga Ifowodo (middle); NLNG's Managing Director /Chief Executive Officer, Adeleye Falade (right) and Chairman of the prize's Advisory Board, Prof. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo at the Nigeria Prize for Creative Arts 2026 Award held in Lagos...recently

MFM Akure Empowers Women, Awards Scholarships To Indigent Pupils

From Ayoyinka Jegede, Uyo

MOUNTAIN of Fire and Miracles Ministries, (MFM), Ondo Mega Region 1, Southwest 4, Adesuper, Akure, has trained 10 women free in fashion designing and given each a brand new sewing machine and certificate to start own businesses.

The empowerment programme underscores the growing role of faith-based organisations in providing community support, promoting skills development and assisting with education as complementary aspects of social outreach.

The training was aimed at equipping members with

• **Beneficiaries Commend Church For Social Interventions, Humanitarian Services**

practical skills for self-reliance and sustainable livelihood.

The church also empowered widows with brand new grinding machines to support their livelihoods.

In addition, it awarded scholarships to 20 indigent pupils of Mountain Top Nursery and Primary School, Akure, in line with vision of General Overseer, Dr. Daniel Kolawole Olukoya, to raise young people through quality education, sound spiritual development and godly values.

The programmes form part of church's broader efforts to

combine spiritual activities with women, men, teenage and youth empowerment, entrepreneurship and productivity.

Mega Regional Overseer,

Ondo Mega Region 1, Pastor Ademola Adeniyi, said "initiative is vision of General Overseer to make people financially independent and promote self-reliance.



A cross section of the beneficiaries at the event



Members of Rotary Club of Ogudu GRA: Franca Nwosu, Mary Okoh, Funmilola Owokoya and Lucy Emem Bruno during the Education and Literacy Day held at Ogudu Senior Secondary School, Ogudu GRA, Lagos...recently.

Guardian Fashion

● STYLE

● ELEGANCE

● LIFESTYLE

David Wej Signature: A Global Evolution In Refined Menswear

By Maria Diamond

MEN'S fashion has taken a tremendous evolution from the regulars to staple statement making intricate apparels. And in Nigeria, David Wej is one of the many designers who have driven this evolution through creativity at its best.

For men of statement making styles, especially Nigerian men, fashion is either luxury or nothing. And for designers like David Wej who know their craft, refined luxury fashion comes with certain factors which include top-notch fabrics, accessories and the craftsmanship behind it.

This is the basis for the unveiling of David Wej Signature, a luxury arm of David Wej brand in collaboration with world-class fabric mills and artisans, starting with Loro Piana, Drago, Carino, Vitale Barneris Canonico (VBC), Thomas Mason and Brown Aaron.

At the unveiling of David Wej Signature in Lagos, the founder, Adedayo David Eweje revealed the logic behind partnering with famous world-class textile brands for the David Wej Signature. For him, it is easier to collaborate with the leading international fabric mills to create world-class collections because of course Nigerians are already familiar with them. So they get the chance to feel the fabrics, choose what they want, and it is customised for them.

For over 18 years and counting, David Wej has grown into a global household name where everything concerning men is being designed and manufactured with topnotch craftsmanship and tailoring.

Looking back based on his journey and experience in the Nigeria fashion industry, David says Nigeria fashion is the biggest in Africa as the creativity of the designers stands tall globally. "The only thing we've not been able to do is to put together that supply chain and commercialise it the way it should be."





Fisherman Soup: The Hidden Culinary Treasure Of Nigeria’s Riverine Communities

By Maria Diamond

FISHERMAN SOUP is no ordinary soup; it is a signature soup, a means to an end. A practical feeding invention by fishermen to survive the exhausting task of fishing in the river and on the sea all day for most of their lives – no wife, no chef and no restaurant on site, just hardworking men who have left their families at home to fish and earn a living. Thus, the fisherman soup is a way of life for survival; one deeply rooted in the history of Nigerian men fishing in the riverine and coastal communities of the Niger Delta region. For these fishermen, it is only natural for

them to invent certain meals that can be prepared within their reach to sustain them while they fish. This is because most of them stay away from their families for days. They erect a hut that shelters them when they are not fishing. They have basic cooking utensils from home and they mostly use firewood to cook this one-pot-soup that comes easy within their reach but delicious. Of course fish and every edible protein in the river/sea would do just fine with a couple ingredients which are usually sourced around or provided by their wives just before they leave home for the fishing field.

How the Fishermen make their soup

- They start with the items from their river source: Fresh Fish, prawns, shrimp, crabs, sea snails, lobsters, shelled periwinkles etc.
- Add Fresh pepper blend with onion in the pot.
- Add red palm oil (minimum quantity)
- Add water and available spices and herbs such as blended crayfish powder, ground uziza seeds, sliced uziza leaves or bitter leaves, and seasoning cubes with salt to taste. Then let it heat up for 30 seconds.
- Add a bit of ‘garri’ (some call it cassava flakes in English.) or boiled and blended cocoyam ofor, achi, or a small amount of pounded yam paste for mild thickening.
- Then let it cook for 10 minutes and put it down. The soup is ready.
- Serve with pounded fufu, pounded yam, or garri/eba.

Evolution of Fisherman Soup

For as long as fishing has been a way of life for the fishermen in the riverine communities of Niger Delta, the fisherman soup remained within their local pots, firewood and consumption until it wasn’t. The fisherman soup that started off as a practical survival means has evolved through time and moved quickly to homes, kitchens and thereafter became an integral part of the menu for every occasion and ceremony, first, within the region and now everywhere in Nigeria.



By Maria Diamond

BLENDING thought leadership, fashion education, and high-fashion luxury runway presentations, Ejiro Amos Tafiri, one of Africa’s premier luxury fashion houses, is set to host a high-impact, three-part event series running across Lagos and Abuja this October and November. Grounded in 16 years of craftsmanship and innovation, Ejiro Amos Tafiri has grown beyond an individual designer into a fashion brand name across the globe whose journey has been about bridging heritage craftsmanship with modern luxury while creating sustainable opportunities for the next generation. Remarking on the multi-city series, Founder and Creative Director, Ejiro Amos Tafiri said: “the events represent both our commitment to industry leadership and our appreciation for the patrons who have supported us across Nigeria and globally.” The conference scheduled for October 24, 2026, at the British Council in Lagos, convened by Ejiro Amos

Ejiro Amos Tafiri Set For Multi-city Series

Tafiri, will serve as a Pan-African platform dedicated to advancing the African fashion ecosystem. It will feature under the thematic preoccupation of ‘Fashioning a Legacy: Leaving a Mark in Time’.

This conference is open to the public, emerging designers, creative industry stakeholders, fashion students, and media. It will feature keynote sessions and panel discussions.

While the exclusive off-schedule show alongside Lagos Fashion Week at a private Lagos venue will be staged on October 25, 2026. The luxury fashion brand will unveil its Spring/Summer 2027 collection (SS27).

Ejiro Amos Tafiri, also known as “Nigeria’s Drape Queen”, will showcase her signature mastery of drapery, fluid tailoring, and indigenous textile artistry before an invited audience of HNIs, celebrities, top-tier clients, fashion editors, and VVIPs at the off-schedule showcase.

The Federal Capital Territory exclusive showcase billed for November 15, 2026, at a private venue in Abuja, is designed to connect directly with the Northern elite, diplomatic community, cabinet members, and high-fashion patrons, celebrating African heritage through high-fashion storytelling.

Ejiro Amos Tafiri is an indigenous Nigerian luxury design, retail, and educational brand renowned for its drapery, intricate detailing, and celebration of African textiles. With features on global platforms such as Vogue, CNN, and Beyonce’s Black Parade, the brand remains a pioneer in contemporary Pan-African luxury fashion. Through the Ejiro Amos Tafiri Foundation, the house actively mentors young creatives and drives capacity building across the continent.

Dapper Entertainment Gets H1 2026 Positive Ranking From Turntable Charts

By Maria Diamond

EIGHT years ago we started with a conviction that Nigerian music, built properly, artist first and for the long term, could compete with anyone. To be recognised at the top of this list is a reflection of that work. Those were the words of Damilola “Dapper” Akinwunmi, Dapper Group Founder and Group CEO, while commenting on the recognition of Dapper Music & Entertainment’ as the number one Nigerian-owned music company for the first half of 2026 by Turntable Charts’ H1 2026 ranking, with a reported market share of

3.82 per cent. According to Akinwunmi, the win belongs to every artist, writer, producer and member of the team who has contributed to it. “We are building for the next eight years, not celebrating the last. As the company looks ahead, Dapper Music & Entertainment remains focused on building an enduring African music and entertainment company, with structures designed to support the continued growth of the wider creative ecosystem,” Akinwunmi stated. The H1 2026 ranking adds another notable milestone to Dapper Music & Entertainment’s journey since its



establishment in 2018 as the company continues to build an integrated music and entertainment business from Nigeria with a global outlook. For Dapper Group, the recognition reflects the people, creativity and collective work that have shaped the company over the past eight years, as well as a marker of the ambition behind its next chapter. This recognition marks a significant milestone for Dapper Music & Entertainment and builds on the company’s consistent market performance over recent years. Founded in 2018, Dapper Music & Entertainment is the record label arm of Dapper Group, a vertically

integrated music and entertainment company headquartered in Lagos. The wider Dapper Group comprises Dapper Music & Entertainment, Dvpper Digital, S94 Publishing, Bangers Only Productions and Dapper Live, bringing together different areas of the music and entertainment ecosystem under one group. Collectively, the group generates more than one billion streams annually. Over the years, Dapper Group has built its operations around a long-term approach to music, combining artist development, music distribution, publishing, production and live entertainment to create an integrated platform for the business of music.

Ayra Starr Makes History As First African Artiste To Headline NFL Halftime Show

By Suliya Tella

NIGERIAN singer, Oyinkansola Aderibigbe, professionally known as Ayra Starr has become the first African artiste to headline a National Football League (NFL) International Games halftime show following her performance in London on Sunday, October 11, 2026. The Afrobeats star performed at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium during the game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Jacksonville Jaguars, delivering a set that featured some of her biggest hits and songs from her latest album, Starrgirl. Her set included Heaven Baby, Rush, Santa and Dangerous, alongside a medley of Hot Body and Ms. Paper. The performance brought her blend of Afrobeats and pop to an international sporting audience. Speaking after the performance, Starr described the experience as amazing and expressed gratitude for the opportunity. “It was amazing. I felt like there was another person on the stage, because

by the time we were done, I was like, ‘Oh my God, we are already done.’ But it was amazing. I am so grateful for this,” she said. The performance marks another milestone in Starr’s growing international career, as Nigerian music continues to gain visibility on major global entertainment platforms. The NFL has previously featured several prominent female performers at its halftime shows, including Diana Ross, Madonna, Beyoncé, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Shakira, Rihanna and Jennifer Lopez. Starr’s appearance, however, marks the first time an African artiste has headlined a halftime show at an NFL International Games event. The NFL is the professional American football league in the United States. Its International Games programme takes regular-season matches beyond the country, with London among the cities that host fixtures.

Echefu Emerges As 45th President Of Rotary Club Of Festac Town

By Suliya Tella

THE District Governor, Rotary International District 9111, Rotarian Bukola Bakare, has installed Rotarian McAnthony Echefu as the 45th President of the Rotary Club of Festac Town. Speaking at the event, which was also used to raise funds to support the club’s humanitarian projects, Echefu said his administration would focus on projects that aligned with Rotary International’s seven areas of focus: peace-building and conflict prevention, disease prevention and treatment, water, sanitation and hygiene, maternal and child health, basic education and literacy, community economic development, and environmental sustainability. According to him, he accepted the office not merely as an honour but as a responsibility to lead, inspire and transform lives. “I am grateful to God Almighty for the privilege to serve. I am grateful to the members of Rotary Club of

Festac Town for the confidence they have reposed in me,” he said. He said the club’s flagship project for the year would be a heart health initiative tagged ‘Know Your Numbers and Save Your Life,’ aimed at promoting regular blood pressure checks, early detection and prompt referral for treatment. He also announced plans for glaucoma screening, cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination programme for 100 young women. Other projects he announced

include the provision of a solar-powered borehole for an underserved community and the distribution of 1,000 French dictionaries to support language learning among pupils. On economic empowerment, Echefu said the club would provide vulnerable members of the community with income-generating equipment, including sewing machines, vulcanising machines, grinding machines, baking ovens and other vocational tools.



Foundation Provides Educational Materials To 200 Students In Lagos

By Opeyemi Babalola

KOLA Olugbodi Foundation has provided educational materials to over 200 students during its maiden back-to-school outreach, held at Majidun in Ikorodu, Lagos. The initiative was organised to support students preparing for a new academic session and to provide practical assistance within the community. Although the original target

was 200 students, attendance exceeded expectations, and the team accommodated the additional children with support from community representatives and volunteers. Olugbodi attended the programme with members of his team. The outreach also created an opportunity to engage directly with the students and encourage them to pursue their education and aspirations. Olugbodi is Managing Director of Background Check International (BCI) in Lagos. Community representatives helped coordinate participants and supported the organisation of the programme. This collaboration enabled the Foundation to respond to the larger turnout and reach more students than initially planned.

AREWA24 Zooms Light On Maternal, Newborn Health

By Moyosore Salami

AREWA24, Nigeria’s leading Hausa-language family entertainment and lifestyle television network, has launched another groundbreaking show, *Uwa Da Da*. The new TV show, dedicated to mothers, babies, and the critical journey from pregnancy through childbirth and early childhood, premieres every Saturday primetime (7pm – 7:30pm) on the AREWA24 television network. The show comes at a time when maternal, newborn, and child survival remains a major public health challenge in Nigeria, particularly in northern communities where health outcomes are lagging. According to the 2023–24

Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), Nigeria recorded an infant mortality rate of 63 deaths per 1,000 live births, while neonatal mortality stood at 41 deaths per 1,000 live births. Earlier NDHS data showed an under-five mortality rate of 187 deaths per 1,000 live births in the Northwest, compared with 62 per 1,000 in the Southwest. Said Aisha Lawal, AREWA24’s Director of Studio Production: “For many women, pregnancy and motherhood can be accompanied by uncertainty, fear and misinformation. *Uwa Da Da* places particular emphasis on supporting first-time mothers by providing clear,

practical, and culturally relevant information to help them understand what to expect before, during, and after childbirth. The show will create a platform where mothers can hear directly from qualified health professionals and other mothers, while learning about important issues including pregnancy nutrition, antenatal care, birth preparedness, breastfeeding, newborn danger signs, immunization and postnatal wellbeing.” *Uwa Da Da* seeks to use the reach and accessibility of television to promote practical information that can help mothers make informed decisions about their health and the health of their babies.

“Every Child Has A Light”: A Picture Book For Ages 0-6

By Gbenga Salau

UK-BASED Nigerian author, Funke Solomon-Adebisi’s picture book, *The Light You Bring*, centres on individuality, self-worth and the everyday qualities that make each child unique. Written for children aged 0–6 and the parents and carers who read with them, *The Light You Bring* is built around the idea that every child carries a unique “light”, reflected in their personality, emotions and experiences. Through familiar moments from childhood, the book considers how children begin to understand themselves and what makes them who they are. The story touches on curiosity, imagination and laughter, as well as the self-doubt that can accompany growing up. Rather than presenting an idealised version of childhood, it makes room for different personalities and feelings that young readers may recognise in themselves. It also acknowledges that children experience

a range of emotions as they grow, including uncertainty and fear. Even during difficult moments, a child’s light does not disappear. The book suggests that reassurance, encouragement and support from trusted adults can help children feel secure and recognise their own worth. The inspiration for the book came following the birth of Solomon-Adebisi’s son, Jared-Roy. Becoming a mother prompted her to reflect on the qualities that make each child distinct and the importance of helping children feel valued for who they are. Solomon-Adebisi hopes the book will reach families and schools in the UK, Nigeria and beyond, encouraging conversations between children and the adults around them about individuality, feelings and self-worth. Its central message is simple: every child has a light of their own, and no two lights are quite the same.



Adebisi

‘Competence Open Doors, But Character, Credibility, Contact Determine How Far You Go’

Bola Matel-Okoh is an attorney, executive coach, entrepreneur and corporate leader with over three decades of professional experience spanning law, corporate governance, business and leadership development. Admitted to both the Nigerian Bar and the New York State Bar, she has practised law in Nigeria and the United States, with experience in Admiralty Law, Immigration Law and insurance class action litigation. She is a Non-Executive Director of Wema Bank Plc and the Founder and CEO of BMO Advisory Services, where she focuses on executive coaching and leadership development, particularly for women. She is also the founder of Women’s Lifestyle Hub and CEO of Havilah Ventures. In this interview with MOYOSORE SALAMI, she shares insights from her career journey, leadership, success, self-doubt and her passion for empowering women to take their place in positions of influence.

You have moved from legal practice in Nigeria and the United States to boardrooms, entrepreneurship, and executive coaching. Looking back, was there ever a master plan, or did you evolve with each opportunity?

THERE was no perfectly mapped-out master plan. What I had was a sense of purpose, ambition, a commitment to excellence, and a willingness to keep evolving. My legal training gave me a strong foundation in critical thinking, discipline and advocacy. Moving between Nigeria and the United States expanded my perspective. Corporate leadership taught me how organisations and people really work, while the boardroom exposed me to governance, strategy and the complexities of decision-making at the highest level. Entrepreneurship and executive coaching grew out of my desire to use everything I had learned to help others, particularly women, navigate leadership with greater clarity, confidence and authenticity. Looking back, the journey appears more connected than it felt while I was living it. Each chapter prepared me for the next, even when I could not see the bigger picture. So, I would say I evolved with each opportunity, but not passively, remaining open, prepared, and willing to step into unfamiliar spaces. I have learned that purpose is not always revealed as a complete blueprint. Sometimes it unfolds as we remain open, prepared, and courageous enough to respond to the opportunities before us.

What defining moments shaped the woman you became?

Beginning my career as a Legal Assistant taught me humility and the importance of learning from the ground up. I did not begin with a title or a corner office; I began by observing, working hard, and proving that I could be trusted with greater responsibility. Qualifying as a lawyer in Nigeria and later being admitted to the New York State Bar were defining achievements because they demanded discipline, resilience, and the courage to adapt to different professional environments. Working across Nigeria and the United States also taught me that competence may open the door, but character, credibility and relationships determine how far you go. Another defining moment was entering executive management and later joining the board of Wema Bank. I had to grow beyond technical competence and develop strategic thinking, executive presence, and the confidence to contribute at the highest level. Every transition stretched my identity. I learned not to define myself by one role, but by the value, integrity and impact I bring wherever I serve.

When did you realise your influence could extend beyond law?

It was a gradual realisation. Law trained me to analyse, advocate and solve problems, but as my career progressed, I became increasingly interested in the people behind the organisations, their aspirations, fears, relationships and capacity to lead. In corporate environments, people often came to me for guid-

ance that had little to do with legal matters. They wanted perspective on leadership, career decisions, confidence and navigating difficult professional situations. I began to recognise that one of my strengths was helping people see possibilities in themselves that they could not yet see. I became an executive coach at 52 and realised law had equipped me with powerful skills, but it didn’t have to define the full extent of my contribution. My influence could extend to helping women find their voices, own their authority, and lead with clarity, confidence, and authenticity.

What have you learned about power and influence?

One of the most important lessons I have learned is that position may give you authority, but it does not automatically give you influence. Influence must be earned through preparation, credibility, sound judgment, and consistency. I also learned that power is most effective when it is exercised with purpose and integrity. It should not be used merely to control people or protect a position, but to advance the organisation, create

‘Women must learn to articulate their value, build strategic relationships, pursue visibility, and occupy space without apology.’

‘My younger version wanted to prove what she could achieve. The woman I am today cares more about who I am becoming, whom I am lifting, and what will remain after I am gone.’

‘We need institutional change and internal transformation. Opening the door is not enough if a woman has been conditioned to believe she should not walk through it.’

opportunities, and give others a voice. Ultimately, power may secure your seat at the table, but the value you bring, the trust you build, and the courage with which you use your voice determine your influence.

What has been the most difficult chapter of your journey?

One of the most difficult chapters of my life

was when my mother passed away in January 2023, just one month before I was scheduled to begin the first cohort of my leadership programme. I was grieving deeply and questioned whether I had the emotional strength to proceed. Yet I also knew that the programme represented something important, an opportunity to equip women with the guidance I wished I had received earlier in my own leadership journey. I eventually launched the programme in March. Moving forward did not mean that I had stopped grieving; it meant I had decided to allow purpose to carry me through the pain. That season taught me that strength is not the absence of vulnerability. Sometimes strength is simply taking the next step while your heart is still healing. It also deepened my understanding of legacy. My mother’s life and the stories of the people she impacted reminded me that true success is not only about what we achieve, but about the lives that are better because we lived.

Why did you create the executive coaching programme?

I saw highly accomplished women who were brilliant, hardworking, and exceptionally competent, but still questioned whether they truly belonged in the rooms they had earned the right to enter. Many had invested heavily in technical competence but had received little preparation for the unwritten realities of senior leadership, power dynamics, visibility, strategic relationships, executive presence, and the confidence to advocate for themselves.

I also saw women carrying enormous responsibilities while trying to meet unrealistic expectations in every area of life. They were succeeding publicly but sometimes struggling privately with self-doubt, exhaustion, and isolation. My own experience made this need very personal. That is why I created my leadership and coaching programmes. I do not want other women to have to figure everything out alone. Competence gets women into the room; confidence, credibility, connection and strategic influence help them thrive there. Many highly successful women enter the coaching room carrying struggles that are almost invisible to the outside world. Behind the impressive title, polished appearance, and record of achievement, they may carry self-doubt, loneliness, and the constant pressure to prove they deserve to be in the room. Some struggle with impostor feelings and live with the fear that one mistake will expose them as inadequate. Others struggle to use their voices in rooms where they are in the minority, despite being exceptionally qualified. Some are exhausted from constantly proving themselves, managing competing responsibilities, and feeling that they cannot afford to show vulnerability. There is also loneliness at the top. As women rise, they may have fewer people with whom they can speak openly and safely. They may be managing difficult boardroom dynamics, questioning their next move, or dealing with the hidden cost of being constantly available to everyone.



Bola Matel-Okoh

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

By Maria Diamond

INCLUDING women in leadership is essential to achieving equality. It is not that women are better than men or that women will necessarily make better leaders, it is simply that women are human and make up half the world's population and have historically been unfairly excluded.

Those were the words of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the globally celebrated Nigerian writer, during her speech on women in leadership position at the Johns Hopkins University SAIS Washington DC Campus in the United States in 2023.

It's been approximately three years since that speech, and looking back it still feels fresh and relevant especially at this time in Nigeria when women and the girl children still have to climb all the way to break glass ceilings in all ramifications of their lives before they are seen, heard and allowed a space in leadership or any front row at all.

The question however is, who installed the glass ceilings of restriction and limitation? Do men climb all the way up to shatter glass ceilings before they take up leadership positions? Are there even glass ceilings for men?

Leadership comes as a birthright for men and this why women like Adichie lend their voices to advocate for women equality – the right to be treated as a fellow human being without gender barriers.

Adichie can be likened to the one woman who goes everywhere in the world doing good for women by correcting and sensitising the notion that a woman should be restricted or limited based on gender.

Thus, when Yale College became one of the destinations, Adichie advised young women never to apologise for existing, or for taking up space in the world, or for having a well-considered opinion.

She said: "I say this particularly to women whom socialisation teaches us to shrink ourselves as though our responsibility is never first to ourselves but always to others and we end up sometimes feeling guilty for wanting the things we want, for wanting to be our own selves first.

"The messages that society sends us can be conflicting, that tension between telling you to value yourself; that you matter. And then the other message that tells you to put other people first and to serve.

"It is possible, it is necessary that you find a balance between the two, but you will have to figure it out yourself. But if I can offer a useful guiding principle, it is this: you do not have to make room in your life for people who wish you harm," she said.

Every Woman Should have Genuine Support System

A woman with no support system may never find a ladder to climb all the way to the glass ceilings of restrictions and limitations. Every woman, actually, every human being needs a genuine friend – a genuine support system.

This is why Adichie spoke about the importance of friendship and connections. She said: "Have friends, many friends or just one

'Teach Girls That They Are Not Mere Objects To Be Liked Or Disliked'

friend. Hold your family close. Family doesn't necessarily mean those to whom you're related by blood or by social institution. Hold your friends close. Stand up for your loved ones. Tell the people you love that you love them – tell them often. Find reasons to laugh. Gravitate towards people with whom you never feel that pressure to perform or to be what you're not."

She also spoke about the necessity to openly compliment people you admire. "One of the tenets I try to live by is never admire quietly. If I admire something about someone, I let them know. We do not always recognise what is beautiful in ourselves, in our spirits until somebody has pointed it out to us. And remember, that people will hardly ever forget small acts of kindness. I remember once during a public event, I was exhausted, I was a little grumpy, actually I was very grumpy and I was surrounded by people none of whom seemed to see my exhaustion. And then my friend sort of looked at me and said she's tired. I almost burst into tears because I felt so wonderfully seen by her.

"Be kind. Paying attention is one of the

most beautiful acts of kindness. The people you will come across in your life will not forget when you're kind and they will not forget when you're unkind."

Self-love as an important factor in a woman's life

The most important thing in the world is love. Girls are often raised to see love as only giving. Women are praised for their love when that love is an act of giving. But to love is to give and to take.

This was Adichie's take on the imposed concept of love on women. She urged women to love by giving and taking.

"Give and be given. If you're only giving and not taking, you'll know. You'll know from that small and true voice inside you that we females are so often socialised to silence. Don't silence that voice. Dare to take.

"I wish that it is easier for people to have self-love especially women. I was loved. I am loved. I had the best parents in the world so I do not need to campaign for your love. I don't need to change myself for you. If you like me I am happy that you like me, if you don't like me I am still me."

Disservice of raising girls to cater to the egos of men

Intentional parenting comes to play when parents understands the necessity to raise their sons and daughters appropriately.

According to Adichie, "we do a great disservice to boys in how we raise them. We stifle the humanity of boys. We define masculinity in a very narrow way. Masculinity becomes this hard, small cage and we put boys inside the cage. We teach boys to be afraid of fear. We teach boys to be afraid of weakness and vulnerability."

She however noted that the society do much greater disservice to girls by raising them to cater to the fragile egos of men.

"We teach girls to shrink themselves – to make themselves smaller. We say to girls: you can have ambition but not too much. You should aim to be successful but don't be too successful otherwise you will threaten the man. If you are the breadwinner in your relationship with a man you have to pretend that you're not especially in public, otherwise you will emasculate him. But what if we question the premise itself?"

Why should woman's success be a threat to man?

What if we decide to simply dispose of that word emasculation? Adichie queried.

She said: "A Nigerian acquaintance once asked me if I was worried that men will be intimidated by me. I was not worried at all – in fact, it had not occurred to me to be worried because a man who will be intimidated by me is exactly the kind of man I would have no interest in."

Pressuring the girl child to measure up to societal expectations

We teach girls to be likable, to be nice, to be false – this is dangerous. Adichie implore parents and guidance never to put pressure on their daughters.

"Many sexual predators have capitalised on this. Many girls remain silent when abused because they want to be nice. Many girls spend too much time trying to be nice to people who do them harm. Many girls think of the feelings of those who are hurting them. This is the catastrophic consequence of likability.

"Young girls receive these societal messages telling them that they have to be likable – that they have to reduce themselves – that they have to in many ways disavow their success or their ambition.

"And so, I find it to be conflicting. How a woman is supposed to show ambition and confidence and strength and at the same time follow the societal rule of likability?

"This is why it is imperative to teach girls that they are not mere objects to be liked or disliked but that they themselves are subjects who can like or dislike. Never, ever accept because you are a woman as a reason for doing or not doing anything.

"Be kind because kindness is a measure of our humanity but do not be nice. Nice means wanting always to be liked. Nice means silencing inconvenient truth. Nice means choosing always to be comfortable. Nice means letting go of courage. Nice means talking about peace but not about justice. Nice will not remake the world and there is so much about our world that needs remaking."

Be sceptical of perfection

The Longing for perfection will hold you back. It doesn't help any cause to start with perfection as yardstick.

Here, Adichie emphasised on the danger of seeking perfection. "Please be sceptical of perfection, because perfection is among other things utterly boring. I am convinced of this because I have learned from literature that there is no such thing as a perfect human being. We do not need to be perfect before we are able to do what is right."

Feminism is not to be wicked

It is impossible to truly talk about attaining gender equality without feminism. Perhaps, this is why Adichie in 2012 TEDxEuston talk said "We should all be feminists" which was later published as an essay in 2014.

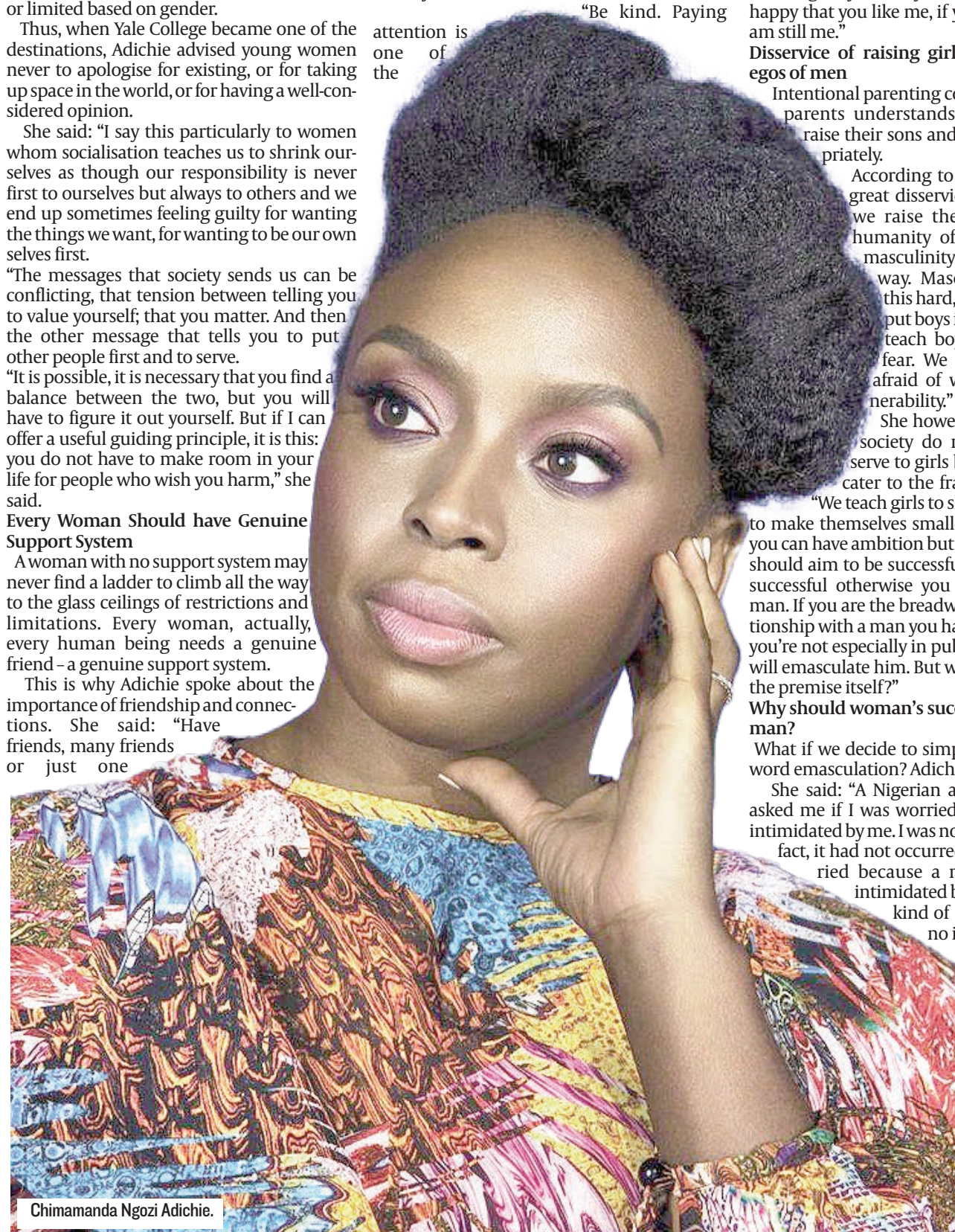
However, to use feminism as a yardstick for wickedness and maliciousness is unacceptable because the concept of 'feminist' in its true sense means being human.

This is why in another presentation, Adichie shuns the act of some Nigerian feminists who uses feminism to justify their wickedness. She said: "Sometimes, some of these young women when you're talking to them they sound really mean and I say this isn't feminism, you're just really nasty. There are people I meet for whom my kindness comes as a surprise because I'm a feminist. And I say yes, actually feminists are kind, we're human."

'I have learned from literature that there is no such thing as a perfect human being. The Longing for perfection will hold you back. It doesn't help any cause to start with perfection as yardstick. We do not need to be perfect before we are able to do what is right.'

'Be kind. Paying attention is one of the most beautiful acts of kindness. The people you will come across in your life will not forget when you're kind and they will not forget when you're unkind.'

'Females are so often socialised to silence. Don't silence that voice. Dare to take. Gravitates towards people with whom you never feel that pressure to perform or to be what you're not'



Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

You have a new album out now. Can you tell us what makes it different from your past projects?

THE album is a very special one to me, especially because I made it in a way that is very spectacular. It is a fan-titled album. For the first time ever, I felt like I wanted to share the process of giving my album a title with the people who matter the most — my fans, and they came through for me. They sent several titles, over 200 options. But the name that kept coming up; the title that kept coming up, was 'It's Yemi Alade'. They wanted a self-titled album, and I went for it. Aside from that, the most spectacular part of everything is the composition of the album. I went with the strategy of "something new, something old, something borrowed." Something old is me going back to my roots, my highlight days, and really pushing that forward. Something borrowed would be me jumping on sounds that I don't necessarily do; sounds outside of Afrobeat or Highlife, like the kind of techno music that you listen to in Ibiza. I explored Kompa, I also infused disco at some point, and I fused that with highlife. And something new would be me almost rapping, because I started off falling in love with music through rap. My journey towards becoming a musician started with me truly falling in love with rap music.

You collaborated with some music industry heavyweights like Don Jazzy on the project. Tell us about that and any other collaboration?

The album features several collaborations from Nigeria, East Africa, and different parts of the world. It's a very rich celebration of African sounds, cultures, and musical collaborations. I had opportunity to work with Don Jazzy, and honestly, that was a dream come true for me. Beyond his incredible artistry, he's someone I deeply respect and see as a mentor, so having him on this album means a lot to me. There's also Ferre Gola, and who doesn't know Ferre Gola? He recently sold out a 60,000-capacity stadium in Paris in July, which is an incredible achievement. I'm really excited about what we created together. I also have two incredible female powerhouses from East Africa, Njarae and Sofiya Nzau, both from Kenya. They've done tremendously well for themselves, and I can't wait for the world to hear what we've created together. There's also Bien from East Africa, who is like a brother to me. He was previously part of the group Sauti Sol, and he has gone on to build an incredible career of his own. Beyond the music, he's such a genuine soul, and I'm really happy we got to collaborate. Then I have Teni and Fave, my ladies. For the first time ever, I actually have more women than men featured on my album, and I think that's pretty spectacular. It's not necessarily about gender. I'm simply a genuine fan of these artistes and their music, and I'm truly happy to have them be part of this project. And, of course, there's Jeriq from the East of Nigeria, because, you know, you have to represent. Ultimately, the focus throughout this album was very simple: good music and good music only. I wanted to work with people I admire, explore different sounds, and bring together artists from different parts of Africa and the world to create something that feels fresh, authentic, and truly special.

What experiences were unique to making this new body of work, and how would you say your sound has evolved over the years?

I think the word that best captures the evolution of my sound, the unique experiences I've encountered, and the journey of creating this album, *It's Yemi Alade*, is audacious. I've been fearless about creating sounds that people may not traditionally associate with me, and about speaking my mind regardless of outside opinions. I'm making music on my own terms, enjoying the process on my own terms, and allowing myself the freedom to explore. More than anything, I hope this music connects with people who are living, evolving, discovering themselves, and embracing their own individuality. Because for me, this album is about freedom, the

Audacious, Global, Unapologetic Sound Of Yemi Alade

*When an artiste reaches the decade-mark in an industry as fast-moving as African pop, the temptation to rest on established formulas is high. Yet, Afropop queen Yemi Eberechi Alade has never been one for comfort zones; she continues to stand as a pillar of unapologetic African authenticity. For over a decade, she has stood not at the edges of pop culture but at its centre, steering its direction. Whether filling arenas in Paris or connecting audiences across languages and borders, she is a living picture of the power, vibrancy, and endurance of the African woman in music. In her landmark self-titled album, *It's Yemi Alade*, the multi-award-winning powerhouse delivers a cross-continental master-class that marries fearless reinvention with deep-rooted authenticity. Named after suggestions from her fans, the 16-track project reflects her willingness to experiment, reconnect with her roots, and explore sounds beyond Afrobeats and Highlife. From working with Don Jazzy, Ferre Gola, Bien, Teni, and Fave to embracing disco, Kompa, and techno influences, the queen of Afrosounds in this interview with **DANIEL ANAZIA** breaks down the drive behind the project, the magic of her cross-continental collaborations, and why true originality will always be the ultimate bestseller.*

freedom to be unapologetically myself.

If you were to describe this album as a course food dish: starter, main dish, dessert - what would it be?

I think I'll give you two starters because I like options. The starters would be *Don't Be Shy*, the song with Njarae, and *General Market*. For the main dishes, it would definitely be *Al*

Beeke, featuring Jazzy, and *Coco Na Yam*, featuring Ferre Gola. Then, for dessert options:

Alhaja and the song with Njarae and Sofiya Nzau, which is the *Earth song*.

The world is listening to Afrobeats now. What advice would you offer to the upcoming generation of musicians about scaling their craft to global standards?

My advice to the new generation of musicians trying to scale their craft and take it to the global level is simple, originality is a best-seller. It's so important for every one

of us to find our own version of originality and run with it. Don't be afraid to sound different; don't be afraid to be yourself.

Find that thing that makes you unique and make it your strength, because ultimately, your originality is your special power. It's what sets you apart, and

that's what the world will remember you for.

Let's go back down memory lane, before the 'Peak Talent Show', which brought you into the limelight and made the whole world know the kind of talent that you embody. Who was Yemi Eberechi Alade?

I was just a young teenager trying to navigate the idea of life, obviously attending school. School was the basis of my living, literally, but I loved music; I lived for music; I loved to dance. I grew up in a very strict household. And so the only way I could feel like I was alive was to soak myself in all the extracurricular activities that were in school. So from dance to acting to all of that, I was that girl that was out there. But my deal with my mom was that I had to make sure that I brought home good grades. So growing up, I was just that girl trying to understand life, who loved music and dance.

Many wonder how you took on music, a career that has transcended genres, cultures, and languages, and taken it to another level. You've taken the stage for great collaborations. Did you find music, or music found you?

I just knew that I wanted to be a mega superstar, and I didn't know how, and I'm thankful that I surrounded myself with the right people who believed in the vision. I feel like Africa chose me before I even chose Africa. And I feel like music also chose me before I chose music because music was my hobby. But I had no plans of really making it a proper career, like the one thing that I would use or do as a source of living. I never really considered that 100 percent. I mean, I pursued music everywhere from the church to the school choir, but I was just having fun. It was a hobby for me, but the inspiration to now make it an actual career dawned on me when I won the talent show, a contest that I participated in. When I became the winner, it just occurred to me that I could actually get more from this hobby than I had actually thought, because it wasn't logical for me.

You have excelled in a space — the entertainment industry — that is considered hard for female folks. How are you able to do it?

Which space is easy for women? There is an unwritten rule that we have to work double the time, double the hours, and put in double the effort to rise above all possible doubts. And these are rules that were not written anywhere. It is just in the atmosphere; it's as if the systems of the world are structured in a way that limits the woman and makes the woman push herself beyond her own boundaries just to prove one point. And I think the secret is that even when, as a woman, you find yourself in a world that seems to be against you, you just have to do it irrespective. And most importantly, don't wait for them to give it to you; earn it; take it; break down the walls. Break down the doors and take what's yours because what's truly yours might be delayed but cannot be denied, you know.

Is it getting easier for women now on the continent?

Easier for who? On this continent, people are just a little more accepting. I feel like people are just a little more accepting and women need to continue coming out in their thousands and millions to continue to push the envelope to continue to take and conquer and occupy space. The more we occupy space and the more we remember that we should also open the door for the woman next to us, we will continue to continue to better ourselves.



By Daniel Anazia

AS the celebratory dust settles on Independence Day weekend, the nation’s entertainment engine is wasting no time pivoting toward its most anticipated cultural export window: *Detty December*. Attention is shifting towards December, when Lagos, Nigeria and by extension, Africa’s entertainment capital is expected to once again become a meeting point for music, tourism, nightlife and global entertainment.

With major concert organisers and international stars preparing for the festive season, anticipation is building around this year’s *Detty December* fest scheduled to run from December 18 to 30 in Lagos, and the opportunities it presents for Nigeria’s creative economy.

Long before the first holiday flight touches down at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, global eyes are locking onto Lagos; producers, international music executives, and diaspora travelers are already tracking a December calendar shaped by unprecedented scale, structural ambition, and world-class curation.

Grammy-winning Afrobeats star, Wizkid,

Detty December: Lagos’ Test As An Entertainment Capital

has been announced as the headliner, he will kick off the 13-day programme of music, culture, and entertainment on December 18. The announcement signals the growing ambition of Nigeria’s festive entertainment calendar.

In previous editions, international performers including Busta Rhymes, Rick Ross, Gunna, Skepta and Shenseea shared the stage with Nigerian and other African stars, illustrating how Lagos can bring different audiences together through music. The question some industry watchers are asking is whether this year’s fest can sustain that international appeal while giving local talent greater visibility.

However, setting a towering precedent for



Wizkid

the season, the organisers are moving away from isolated one-off arena shows, expanding into multi-stage layouts with a dedicated *Detty Festival Stage* for heavyweight headliners, and the *Detty Pulse Stage* acting as a daily heartbeat for nightlife and emerging talent as they seek to broaden the festival’s appeal beyond established headliners.

Building An Evolving Global Tourism Economy Beyond Concert

With Lagos preparing for another year-end influx of music fans and diaspora visitors, the festival is shaping up as both a major entertainment event and a test of the city’s ability

to turn global attention into lasting economic gains.

The frantic early demand for tickets and high-end short-lets highlights a fundamental shift in how Lagos handles its year-end tourism feature. The festival’s importance increasingly extends beyond the excitement surrounding headline acts.

What started years ago as an organic collection of detribalised parties and club nights has matured into a sophisticated, multi-million-dollar institutional season. Last year set the benchmark, as the festival drew more than 40,000 attendees.

Actor Adedimeji Rewards First 10 Winners Of ‘Baba Eta Challenge’ On DusDus

By Daniel Anazia

IT was a moment of celebration in Lagos as Nollywood actor Lateef Adedimeji personally presented prizes to the first 10 winners of the recently concluded “Baba Eta Challenge” on DusDus, a creative talent platform and community for Nigerian youth.

The presentation, held at the DusDus office in Lagos, brought together the winners, representatives of the platform and the award-winning actor, who was visibly delighted to celebrate the participants who stood out in the challenge. Coker Oluwarantimi, who placed first, received a cheque for N1 million, while Ajewole Ayomide and others received N200,000 each.

The challenge built on Adedimeji’s popularity and his much-loved “Baba Eta” persona, giving fans and followers a chance to join a fun digital campaign while competing for prizes. For the winners, meeting the actor in person added another layer of excitement to an already engaging experience.

Rather than have the prizes distributed on his behalf, the actor chose to hand them over himself, turning the presentation into an intimate celebration of creativity, participation and the growing bond between entertainers and their digital audiences.

His collaboration with DusDus also reflects how entertainment personalities and digital platforms are working more closely together, with challenges, audience participation and creator-led campaigns becoming powerful engagement tools. The event underscored the importance of recognising audience participation, too: for the winners, what began as a social media challenge ended in a face-to-face meeting with one of Nollywood’s most popular faces.

DusDus is an entertainment and creators’ contest app that lets young Nigerian content creators create, share and win rewards for their video posts across a variety of engaging challenges. It is free to download on the Google Play Store and Apple App Store.



Ben Dancer Surpasses Seven-Day Non-Stop Dance Quests, Awaits GWR Validation, Recognition

By Daniel Anazia

AWARD-winning Nigerian contemporary dancer and choreographer, Benjamin Daniel Gabriel, professionally known as Ben Dancer, has recorded more than 176 hours of dance marathon, surpassing the 168-hour time target he set as he seeks to set a new Guinness World Records (GWR) mark for the longest dance marathon by an individual.

The ambitious seven-day endurance challenge saw the 33-year-old founder of Bendancer Academy International dance continuously for more than 176 hours from Monday, September 21 to Sunday 27 at Freedom Park, Lagos. He ended the challenge at about noon on Tuesday, September 29, after continuing for more than nine hours beyond the seven-day mark he reached at about 3am.

His team said the timer recorded seven days, eight hours, 32 minutes and 59 seconds at the end of the challenge. However, Guinness World Records is yet to recognise Daniel as the new record holder. The organisation confirmed that his application was active and said evidence from the attempt would be reviewed before the record could be officially confirmed.

“Benjamin’s application is active and we now eagerly await submission of his evidence,



which will then go through our official review and verification process before any record can be confirmed,” a Guinness World Records spokesperson told the BBC.

With over 18 years of professional dancing experience, the dancer incorporated various Nigerian dance styles and musical genres into his performance. Afrobeats featured prominently, alongside fuji, jazz and zouk.

During the quest, he was allowed five minutes of rest for every continuous hour of activity, while medical personnel were also present. He maintained hydration and ate lightly throughout the performance. Ahead of the attempt, he underwent fitness training and adjusted his diet to prepare for the physical demands of the marathon.

Shortly after completing the physically demanding challenge, Ben Dancer was taken to a hospital for a medical check-up.

Temi Nkem Thinks Investment, Education, Fun, As Aikou Pledges Support For Northern Children

By Eniola Daniel

THE curtain may have fallen on the 70-day intense run of Big Brother Naija Season 11, but the real journey is only beginning for its breakout stars. After clinching the coveted crown and a staggering N160 million grand prize package, featuring N90 million in cash and a brand-new SUV, 21-year-old Accounting and Finance student, Temitope Nkem Chigbue, known on the show as Temi Nkem, is set to trade her winning for smart investments and personal growth.

Born and raised in London, England, she became the youngest winner of the reality TV show after Ilebaye Odinaya, who won the show in 2023 at the age of 22. Her victory on this year’s edition of the show with the tagline ‘Show Ya Sef’ is unique due to a mix of

unprecedented show formats, statistical milestones, and her unconventional path through the game.

The Ibusa, Delta State indigene, emerged winner with 25.87 percent of the total votes cast in the finale. The fifth female winner of the show after Mercy Eke, Phyna, Ilebaye and Imisi says she intends to make thoughtful financial decisions rather than rush into spending her winnings.

Reflecting on her victory during the prize presentations on Tuesday, Temi Nkem said the win gives her a sense of breaking a stereotype as the youngest contestant to win the show. She stated that the highlight of her experience was when she won the Betpawa Friday Night Arena Game, which

boosted her confidence in the game.

“I was told that I do not have a chance of winning because I came from abroad, so it feels good to prove that wrong. I thank the plat-

form for giving me a chance to participate. I never knew I was going to win if not, I won’t be begging for immunity. My strategy was to have fun and be myself,” she said.



By Maria Diamond

EVER wondered why France, a unitary, semi-presidential republic, with its capital and largest city being Paris has for decades remained the most visited country in the world?

There is hardly a-to-visit-country list of individuals from around the world that doesn't include Paris. Actually, most times, Paris tops the list when it comes to the list of countries to visit.

Why is this? Is it the attraction of this ancient city that started off as a Celtic settlement over 2,200 years ago? Or is it the people? Is it the culture or the economy? Is it the iconic landmarks or its diverse region? What makes France on the wish list of everyone who wants to see the world?

Located in the Western Europe with estimated 69.1 million people in 2026, France is a social and cultural economy that thrives in agriculture, tourism, gastronomy manufacturing and nuclear energy etc.

The capital city, Paris, being the most visited, is the main cultural and economic centre of the French Republic as it is officially called, with its common language being French.

World Most Popular Destination

Millions of international travelers go through the hurdles to acquire the visas just to visit France and see the famous city of Paris, a popular tourist destination that offers a dense concentration of iconic landmarks, world-class art museums, a historic culinary scene, and deep cultural influence.

For years, Paris has been a leading tourist destination. It constantly ranks first in the most visited countries in the world till date.

Everyone wants to go to Paris

Every year, millions of visitors dream it and make it happen based on its tourist attractions including famous landmarks, delicious food culture, topnotch fashion industry, romance, shopping opportunities, the café culture, art collection, parks and gardens etc.

France's rich heritage, culture and diverse iconic sites definitely ticks one of the many reasons the country is famous, making it a must-visit destination for travellers seeking firsthand authentic tourism and hospitality experiences.

France stands out for its culture and its exceptional history. The capital city, Paris, constantly welcomes over 102 million international visitors yearly who want to explore everything the city has to offer.

Iconic sites, museum, arts, scenic spots in Paris

With Paris comes the pleasure of seeing iconic sites, as it is home to some of the

France: World Most Popular Destination



world's most famous historical, cultural and architectural landmarks such as:

. **Eiffel Tower** – This is the famous 330-metre tall wrought iron lattice tower built by Gustave Eiffel for the 1889 Universal Exposition.

. **Cathedrale Notre-Dame de Paris** – This is a historic 12th-century Gothic cathedral located on the Ile de la Cite.

. **Basilica of the Sacre-Coeur** – this is a striking



Romano-Byzantine white-domed church sitting atop the hill of Montmatre.

. **Arc de Triomphe** – A monumental triumphal arch at the centre of Place Charles de Gaulle (Place de L'Etoile) honouring those who fought for France.

. **Pantheon** – This is a grand neoclassical church and mausoleum in the Latin Quarter containing the tombs of notable French figures.

. **Louvre Museum** – This is one of the world's largest art museums, housed in a former royal palace and recognised by its iconic glass pyramid entrance, home to thousands of works including the Mona Lisa.

. **Musee d'Orsay** – This is housed in a Beaux-Arts railway station, featuring an extensive collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces.

. **Sainte-Chapelle** – This is a royal Gothic chapel celebrated for its soaring stained-glass windows.

. **Montmartre** – This is a historic hillside neighborhood known for its winding cobblestone streets, artists, and bohemian history.

. **Musee de l'Orangerie** – This is located in the Tuileries Gardens, famous for housing Claude Monet's large Water Lilies murals.

. **Pere Lachaise Cemetery** – This is France's most famous cemetery, the resting place of numerous historical figures, artists, and writers.

. **Jardin du Luxembourg** – This is a sprawling 55-acre formal garden featuring tree-lined promenades, lawns, and the 17th-century Medici Fountain.

Global Love Nest

For lovers and couples who need a time out from their regular life for a perfect alone-time to vacate or celebrate their romantic relationship, Paris tops the list of countries for this.

Paris is popularly known as a perfect destination for happy endings in romantic relationships. This is why it is called the 'City of Light', a perfect world for the Cinderella and Prince Charming of this world.

Even when marriages struggle, Paris is always the first destination for couples who want to attempt a fix – something about its magical cupid ambience that makes love flourish and fixes broken hearts.

'Even when marriages struggle, Paris is always the first destination for couples who want to attempt a fix – something about its magical cupid ambience that makes love flourish and fixes broken hearts'.

'Paris is popularly known as a perfect destination for happy endings in romantic relationships. This is why it is called the 'City of Light', a perfect world for the Cinderella and Prince Charming of this world.'

YTHLF Receives Aviation Scholarship Boost For Young Participants

By Maria Diamond

AS part of its commitment to creating opportunities for young Nigerians who aspire to build careers in the aviation industry but may lack the financial capacity to pursue professional aviation courses, the Universal School of Aviation (USA) is offering N2 Million worth aviation scholarships for participants of the forthcoming 14th edition of the Youth Tourism and Hospitality Leaders Forum (YTHLF).

The scholarships will be awarded through a raffle draw during the event scheduled to hold on Thursday, October 29, 2026, in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Disclosing this development, the Convener of YTHLF, Omololu Olumuyiwa, described the scholarship initiative as another demonstration of the forum's commitment to empowering young people and opening pathways to sustainable careers in the tourism, hospitality and aviation sectors.

According to him, the lucky beneficiaries will be selected during the raffle draw session at the 14th YTHLF. "This is not just

about attending an event; it is about creating real opportunities for our young people. Many youths are passionate about aviation and have the ambition to acquire professional training, but financial constraints often stand in their way. These scholarships will give some of them the opportunity to take that important first step," Olumuyiwa said.

He further disclosed that YTHLF has consistently facilitated scholarship opportunities for young people over the years, with some past beneficiaries now gainfully employed in the aviation industry. "This is one of the things that gives us the greatest satisfaction at YTHLF. We have seen some of our scholarship beneficiaries go through training, acquire professional qualifications and eventually secure employment in the aviation industry. That is the kind of impact we want to continue making," he added.

The partnership with the Universal School of Aviation therefore represents more than financial support; it is an investment in the future of Nigeria's aviation, tourism and hospitality industries.

As the industry continues to require a new generation of skilled professionals, initiatives

such as YTHLF are providing a platform where young people can gain exposure, mentorship, professional connections and, importantly, access to opportunities that can transform their lives.

The 14th YTHLF, which is focused on developing the next generation of tourism and hospitality leaders, is expected to bring together young leaders, students, industry professionals, government representatives and other stakeholders.

For the prospective beneficiaries, the scholarship raffle promises to be one of the major highlights of the forum, with the opportunity to acquire aviation training potentially becoming the beginning of a rewarding career in the industry.

YTHLF, since its establishment, has remained committed to its core objective of creating awareness, empowering young people and promoting tourism, aviation and hospitality as viable career and economic development opportunities.

This scholarship initiative further reinforces that commitment and demonstrates that investing in young people today is an investment in the future of Nigeria's tourism, hospitality and aviation sectors.



Omololu Olumuyiwa

From The Rector

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

By Stephen Wolemonwu

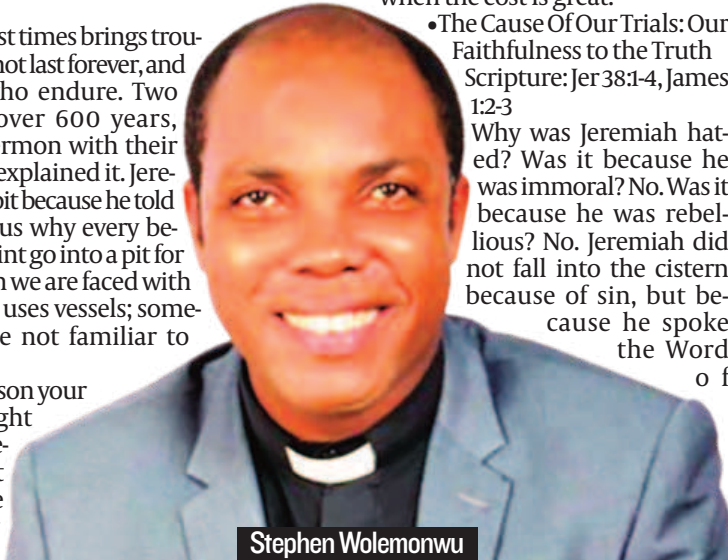
Jeremiah 38:1-13; James 1:1-15

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." James 1:12:

Introduction

SAYING the truth most times brings trouble, but trouble will not last forever, and God crowns those who endure. Two men, separated by over 600 years, preached the same sermon with their lives. One lived it, one explained it. Jeremiah went into a miry pit because he told the truth. James tells us why every believer must at some point go into a pit for telling the truth. When we are faced with these challenges; God uses vessels; sometimes vessels that are not familiar to bring us out.

Could it be that the reason your faith has never brought you into conflict is because you have not yet spoken the whole truth? Remember, our



Stephen Wolemonwu

The Cost And Crown Of Truth (1)

Lord Jesus did not suffer because He deceived; He suffered because He declared, 'I am the Truth.' And the Truth is never silent, never convenient, never safe. It confronts, exposes, and demands a response. To follow Christ is not merely to believe quietly, but to proclaim boldly, even when the cost is great.

• The Cause Of Our Trials: Our Faithfulness to the Truth
Scripture: Jer 38:1-4, James 1:2-3

Why was Jeremiah hated? Was it because he was immoral? No. Was it because he was rebellious? No. Jeremiah did not fall into the cistern because of sin, but because he spoke the Word

o f

God faithfully. He stood before kings and princes and declared what God had said: 'Surrender, and you will live.' And the princes cried out, 'Let this man be put to death, for thus he has spoken the truth!' (Jeremiah 38:4).

Truth always offends power. Truth unsettles the comfortable. Truth exposes the hidden. James calls it 'diverse temptations'—trials that come not because we are faithless, but because we are faithful. Your faith is not just what you believe in silence; your faith is the truth you dare to speak aloud. And make no mistake because the devil does not fight you for what you don't believe. He fights you for the truth you proclaim, because truth is dangerous to darkness.

So, like Jeremiah, do not be surprised when your faith draws opposition. Do not be shaken when your obedience brings trials. For the cistern was not Jeremiah's defeat, but his testimony. And every trial you face for the sake of truth becomes a witness that your faith is alive, unshaken, and unstoppable."

A man who sells pure honey in a market where everyone dilutes theirs will be hated not because his honey is bad, but because his pure honey exposes the fake ones. Your pure life,

your refusal to lie, to bribe, to join gossip, to compromise - it convicts others.

Don't be surprised when standing for truth at work, in family meetings, or even in church; brings you persecution. It is not a sign that God has left you; it is a sign that you are carrying His Word faithfully.

• The Character Of Our Trials: Temporal, Not Terminal

(Jer 38:6-10; James 1:4, 11-12)

Note two things: First, it was a cistern, not a grave. It had no water at that moment, but it was built to hold water again. Your trial has boundaries. It is a cistern, not an endless abyss. No challenge or trial lasts forever—it is temporary. Jeremiah's pit was deep, miry, without water, and death seemed certain—but it was not his final destination. In verse 10, the king himself commanded, 'Take thirty men... and lift Jeremiah out.' James 1:11 reminds us that like the flower of grass, trials fade. They have an expiry date. And in verse 4, James declares, 'Let patience have her perfect work.' God did not prevent the pit, but He provided a deliverer in the pit.

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

By Charles Ighele

DO you always struggle before you say, "I am sorry." Do you feel many times that people are just unfair to you? Then you have a problem.

When you struggle apologising, then you have to deal with the spirit of pride. You are the only one that can constantly deal with this spirit and begin to form a new habit by replacing it with spirit of humility. Only you can heal yourself. A proud person will always see a humbling situation humiliating. He will prefer to argue, wanting the other person to understand. Heal yourself, develop your human spirit by allowing the spirit of humility to become a central

Spouses Who Struggle To Apologise

part of your human spirit.

Many people keep saying that their spouses do not know how to apologise and if at all they do, they do it without feelings attached.

Early in my marriage to Carol, we, some of the time struggled apologising to each other. But as we became more Christ-like and more mature, we trained our human spirits to learn how to apologise without struggling to do so. Make your child apologise properly without struggling so that he/she will not export this into his/her marriage and future relationships.

Very importantly, couples should learn to say, "I am sorry" not only when the quarrel has started but also as a means of preventing the matter from getting bigger.

For some, it is more painful and demeaning apologising to a younger one even if they are aware that they are wrong. Peter (not real name) saw it as belittling. During his youth service year, he met a fellow corps member who had no problem apologising.

He will also turn up the next day looking confident and joking with the person he apologised to the previous day. He never felt embar-

rassed or angry even when he had to say, "I am sorry" for what was not his fault. His parents brought him up well. In fact, he "followed peace with all men" (Hebrews 12:14). This made him earn more respect. He was always a happy fellow. Peter writes, "I envied him while I wondered how he could throw his pride away. This was something

I couldn't bring myself to do." Before now, Peter always believed in winning his cases through arguments like a lawyer in the court. Peter continues "But now I know better, that it is the mature



Ighele

person that apologises."

Do not see whoever apologises as the weaker person. It

is a sign of maturity. One of the things we deliberately do in our home is to compel each of our children to know how to apologise to each other no matter who is older. Whenever we found out that anyone overreacted, an apology was demanded for overreacting. With this training we are preparing them for their spouses and society so that they can live happier lives. In case you are grown up and find it difficult to apologise, it is a sign that you are an immature person occupying an adult body. Humble yourself and grow up so that you can enjoy a better life. Love you!

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

Lord's Chosen Holds Women Programme, 'Thou Has Found Favour With God' Oct 24

By Chris Irekamba

AS The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries begins its women programme, titled: "Thou Has Found Favour With God" on October 24 and 25, 2026; and "Hope For The Needy" on November 28 and 29, 2026, its General Overseer Worldwide, Pastor Lazarus Muoka has urged members of the church to pray, prepare and ensure that they come to every weekly and crusade programmes with new converts.

The General Overseer gave the order, last Sunday, while speaking during the Combined Service, themed: "He That Reapeth Receiveth Wages" held at the church's headquarters in Ijesha, Lagos.

Quoting Jn. 4:30; Lk 13:6; Matt 16:15, the cleric called on Christians to go out and win souls for the Lord, saying that is why they are in the kingdom to bring others to Christ.

He said: "In recent times many have changed the gospel and even lost the focus why they were created. The purpose why we were converted is to do God's will."

Muoka reminded Christians that the com-

• To Hold 'Hope For The Needy' From November 28 To 29, 2026

mand of Jesus, "follow me and I will make you fishers of men" is still very relevant today. "You and I, are converted to be instruments in the hands of God. We are to fish others and win them to Christ that is why we are in the kingdom. So, go and bring others to the kingdom and establish them and God will multiply his blessings upon you," Muoka said.

He urged them not to isolate God in their lives or feel they can make it without Him, adding that God has the power to pay wages and give eternal life.

"You shall serve the Lord and He shall bless your bread, take your sickness away. If you serve the Lord, the author of life He will make you to fulfil your years. Yes, I have heard testimonies of how God delivered Chosen brethren from their enemies and kidnappers, ritual killers and so on."

Muoka, citing the example of the disciples, said they abandoned the preaching of the gospel and went afishing but caught nothing. He stressed that when Christians are out-

side the will of God they will not prosper.

"When Jesus came into their situation, He urged the disciples to cast their net in the right side and they caught plenty fishes. When you abandon what God has asked you to do you will end up getting nothing in life. Whoever wants to receive wages and blessings from above must obey the Lord and do His will," Muoka said.

The General Overseer, while urging members of the church to examine their lives and make God happy by winning souls for Him, reminded them that God has principles.

He said: "If you are not winning souls God's judgment is upon you and He has given you a lot of testimonies to enable you win souls but you have not obeyed him. No wonder your prayers are not answered. If you are born again, try me and try my God if your situation will not change. Can human being be more righteous than God? If somebody is working for you, do you pay the person his

or her wages? If you promise to win souls everyday I will hear your testimony because he that reapeth shall receive wages. Can God lie?"

Muoka called on the church to change their names and begin to bear "Fishers of men," saying that is the only name he would like to hear from members starting from today.

He said: "From today your name must change to fisher of men in your location. I am not in support of any other name than this, 'Fishers of men' that is when we will know that heaven recognises you. From today that is the name your Pastor recognises and likewise any other person in this church. Let that happen today, and I will hear your testimony. Is there any body who is willing to take up that name 'Fisher of Men' from today I decree blessings upon you in Jesus name and everything you do in life will end up in blessings. From today you will do what Peter did, he cast the net in the right side and your net will never be empty."

Mark8v36 says, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (KJV) Prov. 16v25 "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (KJV)

EVERY human life is governed by devotion. Whether acknowledged or not, every heart is living for something. The true question is not whether we live for a cause, but who we live for. At the core of all spiritual struggle lies this eternal conflict: living for God or self.

This is not merely a moral discussion; it is a matter of lordship. Someone is ruling the heart. Either God reigns, or self sits on the throne. Scripture makes it clear that both cannot rule together. Jesus declared plainly:

"No man can serve two masters." — Matthew 6:24 (KJV)

Yet many attempt to do just that by serving God with words while serving self with their lives. This divided living weakens spiritual power, silences conviction, and leaves the soul restless and unfulfilled.

From the beginning, self-centred living has been the root of man's separation from God. Adam's fall was not simply an act of disobedience; it was the choice of self-will over God's command. That same spirit still whispers today: "Live for yourself. Protect your comfort. Follow your desires." But God's call has never changed. He calls men and women out of self and into surrender.

The Great Divide: Self-Centred Life Or God-Centred Life

Living for self is natural to the flesh. It requires no effort, no discipline, and no surrender. The flesh desires control, recognition, pleasure, and independence from God. Living for self says, "My will first. My plans first. My comfort first." Even religious activity can be shaped by self when God is served only when convenient.

The apostle Paul warned of this condition: "For all seek their own, not the things

Living For God Or Self

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



which are Jesus Christ's." — Philippians 2:21 (KJV)

Self-centred living may appear successful in the eyes of the world, but it is spiritually empty. Jesus spoke strongly against gaining the world at the cost of the soul:

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" — Mark 8:36 (KJV)

The tragedy of living for self is not always immediate destruction; often it is slow spiritual death. Prayer becomes shallow, obedience becomes selective, and conviction becomes rare. The heart grows comfortable with compromise. What once troubled the conscience no longer stirs the soul.

Self-living promises freedom, but it produces bondage. It promises satisfaction, but it delivers emptiness. Solomon, who tasted pleasure, wealth, and achievement, concluded:

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. My will first. My plans first. My comfort first. Even religious activity can be shaped by self when God is served only when convenient.

"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity." — Ecclesiastes 1:2 (KJV)

On the other hand, living for God begins with surrender. It starts when a soul recognises that life was never meant to be self-directed. God did not create man to live independently of Him. True life is found only when God is at the centre.

Paul captured this truth when he said: "For to me to live is Christ." — Philippians 1:21 (KJV)

Living for God means yielding ownership of our lives back to the One Who created and redeemed us. Scripture declares: "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price." — 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (KJV)

This life is not about religious performance, but about daily surrender. It means asking not, "What do I want?" but "What pleases God?" It means allowing God to govern our decisions, relationships, ambitions, and desires.

Jesus made the cost clear: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." — Luke 9:23 (KJV)

Self-denial is the doorway to spiritual life. The cross represents death to self-will and resurrection into God's purpose. Those who refuse the cross remain bound to self. Those who embrace it discover true freedom.

Living for God does not remove trials, but it gives meaning in the midst of them. It does not promise ease, but it offers peace. Isaiah reminds us: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." — Isaiah 26:3 (KJV)

A God-centred life bears eternal fruit. It is marked by obedience, humility, and a growing love for righteousness. It seeks God's glory rather than personal applause. Jesus said: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." — Matthew 5:16 (KJV)

Every day, we stand at a spiritual crossroads. One path is wide, popular, comfortable and living for self. The other is narrow, demanding, eternal and living for God. Jesus warned:

"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction... Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life." — Matthew 7:13-14 (KJV)

There is no neutral ground. Delayed surrender is still refusal. Partial obedience is still disobedience. God does not share the throne of the heart. He demands full devotion and not to burden us, but to save us.

Joshua's challenge remains urgent today: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." — Joshua 24:15 (KJV)

At the end of life, titles will fade, possessions will vanish, and applause will be silenced. Only one thing will matter—whether we lived for God or for self. Paul reminds us:

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." — 2 Corinthians 5:10 (KJV)

For those who lived for self, that day will bring regret. For those who lived for God, it will bring reward. The faithful will hear the words that define true success:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant." — Matthew 25:21 (KJV)

God is calling today—not to religion, but to surrender. Not to self-improvement, but to transformation. Not to a divided heart, but to a life fully yielded to Him.

The question remains: Are you living for God, or self?

The answer is written not in words, but in the direction of your life.

"I have set before you life and death... therefore choose life." — Deuteronomy 30:19 (KJV)

May grace be given to you to choose rightly. Amen.

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

MY name is Brother Bartholomew. I worship at Afro Region Branch of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries.

By the grace of God, I joined this great movement in April, 2003.

First, I want to ask God for forgiveness because there was a testimony that I supposed to have shared in

'God Favoured Me With A Bus Worth N4m'

2001, but it was delayed till now. So, please God show me mercy and pardon me. In 2001, I had accident twice and God saved me, without sustaining any injury. Praise the Lord!

Another testimony is that my sister in-law called me

one day and requested to know what I was doing for a living. As at that time, I was not doing anything, but believing God, He would give me something to do. So, I informed her that I was not doing anything but believed that God would intervene

and settle me. The way she responded surprised me. She said I should tell her what I think I should do and I said transport business. To God be the glory, the next day, she gave me a huge amount of money that I should go with their eldest

brother to purchase a vehicle worth about N3.5m.

By the time, we changed the tyres and did the papers, everything amounted to about N4m.

Unexpectedly and to God's glory, she gave me the vehicle free of charge. Please join

me to thank this God of Chosen, He is so great.

My prayer for our General Overseer is that God, Who called him will always be with him and through his ministry, all of us will make heaven at last in Jesus' name.



Rector, More Grace Bible Institute (Bible Training Institute of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries), Pastor Lazarus Muoka (left) encoaging the graduands who bagged Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A) from the school in Ilesha, Lagos...recently

If there was one man in the Bible who was always conscious of God's goodness and favours in his life, it was King David, and he never failed to praise God for this. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Like him, we should always express our gratitude to God Who grants us forgiveness and freedom from our sins, heals our sicknesses, preserves and satisfies us with the good things of life.

We should serve the Lord with gladness and come before His presence with singing; for "the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." God is our Creator, Maker, Deliverer, Sustainer, Provider and gracious Benefactor, the Saviour who has set us free from the bondage, domination and control of sin and the Devil. Being an impartial and gracious God, He does not discriminate against His children who are truly saved by grace.

"I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Converted believers embrace and uphold the truth at all times. They manifest godly character and consecration as true believers.

The Psalmist recalls the mercy of the Lord, which brought him out of the wilderness of sin into the wonder of His salvation. Therefore, he said, "I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing." As believers, we should always recollect God's "abundant mercy [which] hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Springs of Wisdom

By Pastor
W. F. Kumuyi



Our Gracious Benefactor (1)

As a beneficiary of God's mercy, the psalmist resolved to sing of God's praises. His confession, "My heart is fixed, O God... I will sing and give praise," reveals his determination, diligence and commitment. Although many believers promise to praise and worship God in any situation, they forget their avowed commitment and dedication to Him when challenges arise, or for some, when there is no storm in sight. Re-

gardless of our circumstances, the Lord wants us to be firm in our consecration and service to Him. Such is the character of a transformed believer.

Just as waste papers are converted into something useful, a worthless and godless life is transformed through salvation. The character of a transformed believer is not only evident in the presence of other believers; it abides wherever he goes. If we are truly transformed, we will "behave [ourselves] wisely in a perfect way... [and] walk... with a perfect heart" anywhere we find ourselves. We will hate whatever Christ hates such as sin, compromise, corruption and the evil people do in the secret. We will not identify with the wicked and we will sever relationship with those who trade in gossip.

As believers, we need trustable companions around us. Although Jesus Christ is our faithful Friend, we must have other faithful friends around us who will support our vision, ideals and goals in life. They should be friends who are willing to contribute to our lives, make us happy, prosperous and progressive. However, we need wisdom to make friends who will help and not hurt us; lift and not bring us down; exalt Christ in our lives and not destroy our conviction. While we expect to have perfect, good and gracious friends, we too must endeavour to be perfect, good and gracious. By so doing, we can boldly say, like the psalmist, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts."

• **Further Reading (KJV):** Psalms 100:1-5; 103:1-5; 105:37; 101:2,3; 101:1; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3; Psalms 57:7; 108:1; 112:7; 101:2-5; 101:6; 119:60,63.

Stop Talking And Listen (7)

The principal way God speaks to us is through Scripture (Cont)

LISTENING to God through the Scripture leads to repentance—"godly sorrow" "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." (2 Cor 7:10)

"Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation" refers to the sorrow for our sins that results in changed behaviour. Many people are sorry only for the effects of their sins or for being caught ("the sorrow of the world"). Compare Peter's remorse and repentance with Judas' bitterness and act of suicide.

Both disowned Christ. One repented and was restored to faith and service; the other took his own life.

Although the principal way God speaks to us is through Scripture, God also speaks directly to our hearts in words other than those of Scripture. God also speaks to us through the inner voice—the gentle impress of the Spirit that brings the message of heaven direct to the human heart.

• The Holy Scripture is God's inspired Word
Read 2 Tim 3:10-17

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus
Prof. Mercy Olumide



reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Tim 3:16,17)

3:16 The Bible is not a collection of stories, fables, myths, or merely human ideas about God. It is not a human book. Through the Holy Spirit, God revealed his person and plan to certain believers, who wrote down his message for his people (2 Peter 1:20,21). This process is known as inspiration. The writers wrote from their own personal, historical, and cultural contexts. Although they used their own minds, talents, language, and style, they wrote what God wanted them to write. Scripture is completely trustworthy because God was in control of its writing. Its words are entirely authoritative for our faith and lives. The Bible is "God-breathed." Read it, and use its teachings to

guide your conduct.

The whole Bible is God's inspired Word. Because it is inspired and trustworthy, we should read it and apply it to our lives. The Bible is our standard for testing everything else that claims to be true. It is our safeguard against false teaching and our source of guidance for how we should live. It is our only source of knowledge about how we can be saved. God wants to show you what is true and equip you to live for him. How much time do you spend in God's Word? Read it regularly to discover God's truth and to become confident in your life and faith. Develop a plan for reading the whole Bible, not just the familiar passages.

The psalmist states that God exalts two things above all else: His name and His Word (Ps 138:2)

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RESTORATION HOUR

Text: 2 Corinthians 6: 1-2

Maximising God's Grace (11)

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)

2CORINTHIANS 6 is about the tragedy of a wasted gift. Imagine someone gifting you a priceless, authentic masterpiece painting. Instead of hanging it up, you take it home, throw it in a dark closet, and let it gather dust. The gift is still real, it is still incredibly valuable, but to you, it has become useless. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul is warning the Corinthian Church about. He uses an urgent word: "beseech." This isn't a casual suggestion; it is a desperate, passionate plea. Paul is begging believers not to take the radical, life-altering grace of God and render it empty, fruitless, or in vain.

Grace is an unmerited favour and getting what we do not deserve. We deserved judgment; we received mercy and justification through Jesus Christ. Grace is a transforming power and active power of the Holy Spirit working within us

to change our desires, our character, and our actions. Grace invites us into partnership with the Divine. Paul notes that we are "workers together with Him. We receive grace 'in vain' when we live without change. If we claim to be saved by grace but our lives look exactly the same as the rest of the world, we have wasted its purpose. Grace is meant to teach us to deny ungodliness (Titus 2:11-12). We receive grace in vain when we use it as license to sin. Grace frees us from sin, not to sin. We abuse the grace of God when we turn into legalism. If you rely on your own good works to be right with God, you are saying Christ's sacrifice wasn't enough (Galatians 2:21). Grace is given to us to bear fruits. God pours grace into our lives so that it flows out to others. If we hoard His blessings, forgiveness, and love without sharing them, we are choking the pipeline of grace.

Paul quotes Isaiah to emphasise that grace has a timeline: "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The urgency of maximising grace is "now." Do not postpone obedience. Procrastination is a subtle way of treating grace in vain.

Assuming you have "plenty of



time" to get right with God, to forgive that person, or to step into your calling is treating grace as a cheap thing. Every single day we wake up, we are given a fresh supply of grace. It is designed to help us overcome today's temptations and fulfill today's assignments. We should maximise the grace of God in our daily living. Grace is given to us to help us live a fruitful Christian life. Grace is a kingdom advantage to every believer. Let us ensure that the grace we have received is producing faith, holiness, love, and good works in our everyday lives.

2 Corinthians 6:2 tells us that now is the accepted time. When scripture speaks of the "accepted time," it refers to the dispensation of grace and the era we are living in right now. Right now, God is actively looking in grace upon a fallen world. He is sitting on a throne of grace, ready to hear the cries of a repentant heart and respond with immediate forgiveness. Why God de-

By Isaac Taiwo

INTERNATIONAL Miracle Service (IMS), in collaboration with the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Agbowo-Ikosi Chapter as well as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Agbowo-Ikosi Chapter, Lagos State recently held a three-day crusade at Agbowo-Ikosi.

The crusade, themed "Emi Ni (It Is I, Be Not Afraid)," and held at Agbowo-Ikosi Open Ground, Agbowo, Lagos, brought spiritual revival, healing and social support to residents of the community. Lead Pastor of IMS and Evan-

IMS In Collaboration With PFN, CAN Ends 3-day Crusade

gelistic Ministries, Andrew Umoru, said the outreach was designed to bring salvation, deliverance and supernatural turnaround to the lives of residents.

Umoru said the crusade reflected the ministry's commitment to taking the gospel beyond church buildings to communities where people could experience its transformative impact.

He added that Jesus Christ never confined His ministry to one location or wait for people to come to Him, but

travelled through different towns and cities, preaching the gospel and healing those oppressed by the devil.

"Jesus wasn't staying in one place. He wasn't staying in one cathedral. He wasn't sitting on an armchair waiting for people to come. He went to Decapolis, Galilee and Jerusalem, preaching the gospel," he said.

Umoru noted that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, enabling Him to go about doing good and healing those oppressed by the devil.

He said: "We were at Agbowo-Ikosi for the same gospel of Jesus Christ and brought salvation and deliverance to the people of Agbowo-Ikosi and reconciled them with God."

On the impact of the programme, the cleric disclosed that the three-day programme attracted a large turnout of people and those with different challenges were delivered.

Beyond spiritual ministrations, Umoru said the crusade featured medical outreach and food distribution as part of the ministry's commitment to ad-

dress the physical needs of the community.

He explained that the medical exercise involved doctors, including eye specialists drawn from different parts of the country, and catered for adults, youths and children.

The initiative, he said, was informed by the belief that evangelism should be accompanied by practical expressions of compassion, particularly towards vulnerable members of society.

Citing Jesus Christ's feeding of more than 5,000 people

during His earthly ministry, Umoru said the church had a responsibility to respond to hunger and other pressing social needs.

He said the traditional ruler of Agbowo-Ikosi, alongside his chiefs and other subjects were at the crusade, which reinforced the message of peace, unity and positive change.

Umoru called on the government to improve infrastructure in the community to attract investors, stimulate economic activities and enhance residents' living standards.

Issakaba Returns, 25 Years After

By Daniel Anazia

TWENTY-FIVE years after, *Issakaba*, an epic inspired by the true-life events of the Bakassi Boys of the South-East and the alleged reign of sorcerer, Eddy Nawgu, in Anambra, is set to return. One of Nollywood's memorable classics, veteran filmmaker, Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen, is bringing the film back to the big screen with *Issakaba: The Return*, a sequel scheduled for nationwide cinema release on November 13.

The return promises more than a nostalgic reunion with a film that helped define an era of Nigerian home-video entertainment. It also revisits a story whose central concerns — crime, community security and the search for justice — remain relevant to contemporary Nigeria.

Set 25 years after the original story, the sequel introduces a new generation of characters and more sophisticated wave of crime and



insecurity, bringing the familiar hero into a changed social landscape.

At the heart of it is Ebube portrayed by Sam Dede, the fearless leader of the Issakaba Boys, a group that confronted criminals terrorising its community. Ebube now retired, and the Issakaba Boys disbanded, must return to rescue the community from the new, more sophisticated crimes such as ritual killings and kidnapping that have overrun the land: The old charms no longer work. The state is overwhelmed, and the elders must summon Ebube, a man who carries justice like a cross, one last time. This time, the battle is generational; old Issakaba versus new evil, odeshi versus AI-assisted juju.

Imasuen is revisiting that world with Dede reprising his role as Ebube.

The film leans into what made the original great: action, horror, traditional mysticism — but shot with drones, cinema-grade sound and

Asaba's lush forests doubling as both spiritual realm and warzone.

The trailer shows Ebube — the soul of the franchise — older, bearded, slower but heavier. "Men with evil minds lurk in the dark, but justice is mine," he said.

The production returns legends like Sam Dede as Ebube; Chiwetelu Agu, Mike Ogundu, Alex Osifo, Charles Okafor, Francis Onwochei and Ben Olaye, while also bringing together established Nollywood names and younger entertainers, including Chidi Mokeme, Iyabo Ojo, Regina Daniels, Nosa Rex, Yekini 'Itele' Ibrahim, Sani Denja, Mark Angel, who provides comic relief as a vigilante; and Phyna, BBNaija winner, and first female celebrity boxing champion.

Speaking at a media preview to herald the film release, Imasuen said the decision to revive the film is not simply about capitalising on a familiar title. The filmmaker pointed to the continuing relevance of the issues that inspired the original, noting that the security challenges of today have evolved beyond the armed robbery and political thug-gery depicted in the earlier film.

"What we screamed about 25 years ago has not left us, and is even worse now. So there is a need for reintroducing *Issakaba*," he said, adding that "When *Issakaba* was released in 2001, Nigeria was already grappling with violent crime, communal insecurity, and the ability of conventional security structures to respond effectively to the realities faced by ordinary people."

By Daniel Anazia

IN Nigeria's evolving music industry, where emerging talents are constantly seeking ways to distinguish themselves, TJ Vybez is building an artistic identity around confidence, relatable lyrics, and contemporary African sounds.

With a discography that includes *Illegal*, *Myself*, *Available*, and *Baddie* contained in his Extended Playlist (EP) titled *I Must Succeed*, the singer is gradually expanding his creative footprint. His new song *YAWA* introduces another dimension to his artistry, combining energetic street expressions with messages of ambition, perseverance and self-belief.

As a rising Afrosounds artiste, TJ Vybez believes in originality, creativity and expressing real-life experiences through music. His sound is principally influenced by his environment, life challenges and the determination to succeed against all odds.

Beyond entertainment, he wants his music to reflect ambition, confidence and the realities of life. "I want

TJ Vybez Returns With YAWA, Drops Cinematic Visual For The Song

people to listen to my music and feel something they can relate to," he said.

According to him, *YAWA* was inspired by the idea of standing your ground and

remaining focused on your journey. "Everybody has dreams, but along the way, you encounter distractions, competition and people who may not understand your vision," the singer stated.

He described the song as an expression of confidence, survival and the determination to move forward despite challenges. "It's a song people can enjoy, but there is also a message behind it.

"The message in *YAWA* is to encourage people to believe in themselves and never give up on their dreams. Life comes with challenges, but you cannot allow every obstacle to stop your progress. Sometimes you have to stay focused, work hard and trust the process," he added.

Despite having a rich catalogue, the singer gave *YAWA* a cinematic music video rather than a conventional performance video that was directed by multiple award-winning filmmaker, Ino Moses, who created a meeting point between the song and a film that resonates with audiences.

Commenting on the visuals, TJ Vybez said he wanted to communicate something beyond the lyrics. "Music is powerful, but when you combine it with storytelling, people can experience the message differently. The idea was to create a video that people would not only watch because they enjoy the

song, but also because they are interested in the story," he explained.

On working with Moses, the singer said the director brought a filmmaking perspective to the project. "I wanted a director who understood storytelling and could interpret the energy of the music visually, and Ino Moses fit in.

33 Years After, Agbara Nla: The Return Proves Nollywood Blockbusters Don't Need December Window

By Daniel Anazia

FOR years, the Nollywood box office has followed one rule: if you want a blockbuster, release in December. Filmmakers and distributors relied almost exclusively on the year-end festive window to drive record-breaking theatrical revenue.

However, the industry rulebook has now been rewritten with *Agbara Nla: The Return*, a Mount Zion Film Productions' modern reimagining of the title, challenging the tradition. The film opened with N170.6 million, the biggest non-December opening in Nollywood history and the third-biggest opening in the nation's film industry ever, behind only *Everybody Loves Jenifa* and *Behind the Scenes*. It also set records for the biggest October opening and the biggest opening for a faith-based film in Nigeria.

A remake of Mike Bamiloye, the gospel cinema pioneer's 1993 classic, *Agbara Nla*, which is also known as "The Ultimate Power", a Yoruba Christian film that became one of the defining productions of Nigeria's faith-based movie industry 33 years ago.

Directed by Damilola and Joshua 'Jay Mikee' Mike-Bamiloye, both sons of Bamiloye, and released in cinemas on October 1, the film's success is significant not only for its producers but also for an industry accustomed to concentrating its biggest theatrical releases around the festive season.

Preview screenings between September 25 and October 1 drew 12,134 admissions and about N70 million, before the film even opened nationwide. The result was the biggest first-day gross for a Nollywood movie, and Lagos alone accounted for 50.8 percent of its revenue.



TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

That Yoruba Movie Star And His 'Good Wife'

YORUBA movie star, Yinka Quadri, is the luckiest married man not only in Nigeria but across the African continent. In fact, in T4T's next life, he will tell Angel Gabriel to give him the kind of wife bro's Yinka is married to at the moment. You may be wondering why T4T is so ecstatic today and is even wishing for a 'good thing' in his after life when he is not 60 years of age, yet. This is it.

Some couple of days ago, Quadri was on a TV programme, one of the many online ones and he revealed something that shocked not only T4T but probably majority of married men who saw the interview.

"My wife knows I'm dating other actresses. When we finish shooting and some of the actresses I'm dating come to sleep in my house, my wife gives them food, even though she knows they're my girlfriends. She doesn't complain." T4T did not believe what he heard, so, he took it back and plugged his Air Pods so as to hear better. It was what he heard. Really? So, that kind of wife still exists in present day Nigeria, when we are not in 1914?

So many people erroneously attach polygamy to T4T's Urhobo nation only, even though T4T's late father was faithfully married to his mother, and the only time he saw a happy polygamous home was in 1979 during the burial of

the father of a then very wealthy man. His three wives, all in matching traditional attires, were dotting over the man, as they deliberated among themselves on what to do. That public show of affection and togetherness should not be interpreted to mean the home front was a peaceful one sha, because T4T was not able to independently verify that, but it made polygamy looked enticing to T4T even at that young age. And now, uncle Yinka Quadri has made polygamy more tantalizing. That is why T4T has made it one of his strongest prayer points to Baba God to make him command Angel Gabriel to turn it into a reality in his next life.

But what will one call what Quadri is doing at the moment? It does not look like polygamy because he did not say the women he brings home for his wife to entertain are his other wives, they are girlfriends, he said. Well, without mincing words, a very blunt social media user told the 60 something year old actor in the comments section of the video on Facebook that he was "irresponsible and promiscuous." As mean as the person sounded, T4T cannot help but agree with the young commenter. But that won't stop T4T from continuing to ask Baba God to give him the kind of wife Quadri has now, but in his next life, not this one, because Mrs T4T will just use a short Yoruba pestle to pound both T4T and the girlfriend he brought home and may someone not appear on TVC News for a bad reason, in Jesus name! Amen.

When A TV Reporter Releases 'FireHarms'

EVERYBODY is a journalist now in this era of the Internet. Just get a smart phone or laptop, buy some microphones and you are a broadcaster especially if you can afford to open a blog. And so, T4T was watching one of these emergency journalists who covered the recent court judgment on four kidnappers in Edo who were recently sentenced to death for the kidnapping of a housewife at a vegetable market in Benin City in August this year. The young girl was so full of energy as she recounted the events that led to the conviction and sentencing of the four kidnappers. Her energy was contagious until she got to the point where she said the police at the point of arrest exchanged gunfire with the kidnappers and later recovered two pump action 'fireharm's from them. T4T thought he did not hear well. 'fireharm's'? She repeated the 'fireharm's' two more times and it became clear she had mother tongue interference. Well, there is nothing wrong in having a mother tongue interference, it stems from the background you grew in. Some Urhobos T4T knows pronounce Lagos as 'Nagos', London is 'Nondon', but playing wannabe broadcaster with your mother tongue interference is the offensive part of it. You either train your interference out or leave that field entirely, but these emergency journalists nor go gree o. Dem die dia! So, young lady, it is FIREARM, not 'fireharm', abeg, T4T dey beg you.

By Suliya Tella

EIGHT students from three public secondary schools in Sepeteri, Oyo State, have received scholarships from the TOMEF Foundation for the 2026/2027 academic session, as the organisation marked the 15th edition of its scholarship award and lecture.

The students, comprising five girls and three boys, were honoured at a ceremony held at Sepeteri Town Hall in Saki East Local Council of the state on Friday, October 16, 2026. The event had the theme, "Education for Impact: Building Tomorrow's Leaders".

The scholarship scheme, which began in the 2012/2013 academic session, supports academically gifted students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, covering uniforms, core textbooks and official school fees throughout their three years of senior secondary education.

According to the founders, Dr Ahmed 'Tunde Popoola and his wife, Mrs Mariam Mojisola Popoola, the initiative addresses a familiar problem: children who have the ability to excel but lack the resources to pursue their education without interruption. What began as support for five students across three schools has grown into a programme that has supported more than 106 scholars over 15 years, according to the foundation.

Speaking at the event, Popoola said the scheme was stimulated by the belief that a child's circumstances at birth should not determine the limits of their ambitions. "Fifteen years ago, my wife and I began with a simple belief that where a child is born should never limit how far they can dream," he said. He recalled how the founders had seen talented children struggle because they lacked access to books, mentors and the support needed to pursue their education.

"TOMEF Foundation grew out of that conviction. What started as a small effort to support five students across three schools here in Sepeteri has, over 15 years, become a growing family of more than 106 scholars, many of whom have since gone on to become graduates, working professionals, and mentors themselves to the next generation coming up behind them," he said. Popoola said the foundation had supported students from Community High School, Muslim Grammar School and Obalufon Grammar School in Sepeteri, with beneficiaries progressing to universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and colleges of health technology across Nigeria. He added that more than 80 per cent of the foundation's scholars had gained admission into higher institutions, describing the figure as a key measure of the scheme's progress.

"We are proud to say that over 80 per cent of our scholars have gone on to gain admission into higher institutions, a figure that sits at the very heart of what this scheme set out to achieve," he said.

"But beyond the certificates and the admission letters lies something harder to put a figure on, the confidence we have watched take root in a child who once doubted whether such a future was even available to someone like them," he said. He acknowledged the contributions of teachers, parents, interview panellists, coordinators, sponsors and other supporters who have sustained the scheme over the years.

"TOMEF Foundation will keep opening doors but it is what you do once you walk through them that will define you." He added.

How the scholarship works

Established to encourage economic self-sufficiency, environmental responsibility and community development, TOMEF Foundation uses education and enterprise development to help young people realise their potential and contribute meaningfully to society. Its scholarship scheme focuses on students at a critical stage of their education: the three years of senior secondary school. The support is conditional on satisfactory academic performance and conduct, as reported by the school principal.

According to the foundation, applicants must be academically outstanding, come from financially disadvantaged homes and demonstrate good character. Selection involves a written examination and an oral interview conducted by a committee. The process is designed to ensure that scholarships are awarded on merit while taking financial need into account.

The founders also committed to including at least two girls in the annual selection. However, the foundation said it had not needed to enforce the requirement because girls had continued to qualify through the

TOMEF's Educational Uplifting For Sepeteri Students 15 Years On



A cross section of TOMEF Foundation 2026/27 scholarship beneficiaries from Muslim Grammar School, Community High School and Obalufon Grammar School and their school principals in Sepeteri, Saki East LGA of Oyo State.

selection process.

By the 2021/2022 academic session, the foundation had supported 60 scholars across the three participating schools, including 32 girls. Its beneficiaries have proceeded to at least 17 higher institutions in Nigeria, including the Federal University of Technology, Minna; the University of Abuja; Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto; and Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso.

For students whose families might otherwise struggle to meet the costs of schooling, the assistance provides more than relief from immediate expenses. It also gives them the opportunity to concentrate on their studies without the same level of financial pressure. The foundation's work has extended beyond the provision of scholarships. Its activities include mentoring, coaching, capacity-building workshops and one-on-one business clinics with experienced practitioners.

Between 2012 and 2015, TOMEF Foundation represented Nigeria in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor and produced the country's reports for the period. In 2015, it also partnered with Exxon-Mobil and Shell to organise an empowerment day for final-year students of the College of Medicine, University of Lagos. The foundation's activities reflect its broader interest in helping young people develop the skills and confidence to participate in economic and social life.

Former scholars reflect on their journeys

For past beneficiaries, the scholarship's significance is best understood through the opportunities it has made possible. Abdulazeed Aminu, the foundation's first undergraduate scholarship awardee, who attended the Federal University of Technology, Minna, said the support marked an important milestone in his educational journey. At a time

when the foundation was mainly known for supporting secondary school students, Aminu's undergraduate scholarship enabled him to continue his education with financial assistance.

"The scholarship meant much more to me than financial support. It relieved a significant part of the financial pressure that came with my university education and allowed me to focus more fully on my studies," he said. He added that the support also strengthened his sense of responsibility towards his education and future. "Knowing that someone believed in me enough to invest in my education made me want to work harder and make the opportunity count," he said, expressing gratitude to Popoola and his wife.

Daniel Temiloluwa Oyesola, a beneficiary of the 2020/2021 academic session, said the scholarship had helped him pursue his education with greater confidence. Now a 400-level student of Nutrition and Dietetics at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Oyesola said the experience had changed how he viewed opportunities and personal responsibility.

"The scholarship also changed my mentality. It taught me to value opportunities, remain committed to my goals, and understand that my background or challenges should not determine how far I can go," he said. He said he hoped to support others in the future, just as the foundation had supported him.

"I am deeply grateful to TOMEF Foundation for believing in young people like me

and investing in our future. I hope that one day, I will also be in a position to give back and positively impact someone else's life, just as TOMEF Foundation has impacted mine," he said.

Edwin Goodluck Emmanuel, a beneficiary of the 2025/2026 academic session, also credited the foundation with providing support and opportunities that had made a difference in his life. He praised its commitment to helping young people pursue a better future, expressing gratitude to those behind the initiative.

Building beyond Sepeteri

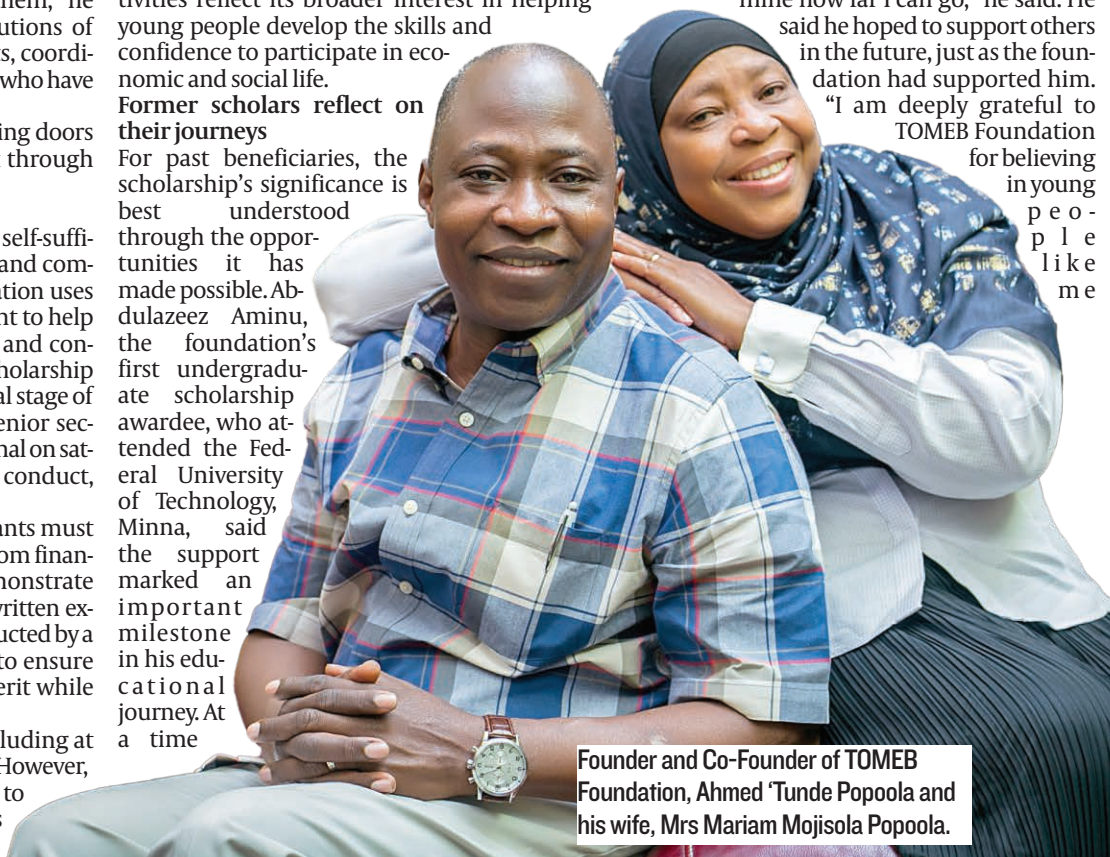
At the 15th edition of the scholarship award and lecture, the foundation brought together professionals from finance, academia and public service to discuss education and leadership. The event was chaired by Dr 'Bade Adeshina, chairman of Health Assur Ltd. The guest speakers were Professor Y. K. Yusuf of the Department of English at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and Alhaji Bashir Tayo Lawal, FCTI, CNA, a deputy director and tax controller at the Nigeria Revenue Service.

Their participation reflected the foundation's emphasis on the contribution of different professions to developing individuals and strengthening communities. The foundation's organisers also acknowledged the work of volunteers and supporters who have helped administer the scholarship. These include teachers who identify promising students, panellists who conduct examinations and interviews, coordinators who manage the programme in Sepeteri, and sponsors who support students and resource persons.

Although the awards ceremony takes place on a single day, the scholarship's support continues throughout the beneficiaries' secondary school years. Its success therefore depends not only on selecting students but also on the sustained involvement of the people responsible for helping them remain in school and meet the programme's requirements.

As the foundation marks 15 editions of the scheme, its stated ambition is to extend the initiative beyond the three schools in Sepeteri to other schools in Oyo State and, eventually, other states, depending on available resources. For now, its work remains centred on helping students in the community gain access to education and progress to higher institutions.

The eight recipients for the 2026/2027 academic session are Oyesola Deborah and Oyesola Dorcas of Community High School, and Adeleke Aishat, Muftau Aishat, Olayinka Sodiq, Usman Aishat, Sefiu Abdurahman and Muideen Jamiu of Muslim Grammar School.



Founder and Co-Founder of TOMEF Foundation, Ahmed 'Tunde Popoola and his wife, Mrs Mariam Mojisola Popoola.

Spotlight

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The Long Wait Inside Nigerian

Why Authorised Judicial Officers Should Access

Across Nigeria, people taken into state custody spend weeks, months or even years waiting for the chance to go back home. For some, the wait has ended in permanent illness. For many others, it is death; like the case of the 37 persons who died in a custody in Niger State recently. **GBENGA SALAU** reports on why the investigation into the recent case must ensure that steps are taken to avoid recurrence in the future.

PATRICK Okoroafor was 14 when he was arrested in 1995. He was sentenced to death at 16. Amnesty International said his trial was grossly unfair and documented how his sentence moved from death to life imprisonment and eventually to a reduced term before he was released in April 2012. He had spent 17 years in custody.

There was also the case of Moses Akatugba, who was arrested as a teenager and spent about a decade in prison, including on death row, before receiving a pardon in 2015. Amnesty International documented his release and described him as a torture survivor.

For some detainees, the physical consequences are even more immediate. In June 2025, the Oyo State Chief Judge freed 77 inmates from Abolongo Correctional Facility after reviewing their cases.

Some of those awaiting trial were suffering from tuberculosis and kidney problems and were released partly on health grounds.

In February 2026, Amnesty International published an investigation into the Anti-Kidnapping Unit of the Imo State Police Command, popularly known as Tiger Base. The organisation reported prolonged arbitrary detention, overcrowding, poor ventilation and unsanitary conditions, alleging that detainees suffered severe health complications and that some people died in detention.

One documented case by Amnesty concerned Okechukwu Ogbedagu, who was handed over to the Tiger Base unit in 2022 and died about three months later.

Amnesty said it had reviewed an autopsy report, which recorded asphyxiation as the cause of death.

Another detainee, Japhet Njoku, died in May 2025; Amnesty reported that police officials told his family he had been beaten to death and that attempts to conduct a court-ordered autopsy had repeatedly failed. The allegations have not been adjudicated in court.

For a family whose relative has been arrested, the first hours are filled with frantic phone calls and unanswered questions. Where was he taken to? Which security agency arrested him? What is he accused of? Has he seen a lawyer? When will he appear in court? Is he being fed? Is he sick? Is anyone looking after him? Then the waiting begins. Yet, a person may enter a police cell accused of stealing, mining illegally, protesting, belonging to a banned group or committing a far more serious offence.

The allegation may ultimately be proved or dismissed. A court may convict or acquit. A prosecutor may withdraw the case. Bail may be granted. A judge may discover that the accused has already spent longer time behind the bars than the sentence the law permits. But none of those possibilities matters once the cell door is slammed against a detainee.

That is the grim reality behind Nigeria's continuing struggle with prolonged detention, deteriorating health in custody and deaths involving people under the control of security and law-enforcement agencies.



'Nigeria Should Introduce National Custodial Death, Detention Safeguards Framework'

The reported deaths of 37 people in the custody of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in Niger State on September 17, 2026, have brought into painful focus, what many Nigerians go through while in detention or what a family member goes through when a relative is in detention.

The men and boys had been arrested during operations against suspected illegal mining around the Wushishi-Lukoto area of Minna.

Within days, 37 were dead. The government has not yet established the cause of death, and an independent federal committee is investigating the arrests, detention conditions and circumstances surrounding the deaths.

Commenting on the incident, the Executive Director of CISLAC, Auwal Musa Rafsanjani, observed that the reported deaths of 37 people in NSCDC custody represent a grave human-rights crisis and a serious test of state accountability.

He maintained that: "Whatever allegations may have been made against the deceased, they were under the control and protection of the Nigerian State. Their rights to life, dignity, humane treatment and due process did not disappear because they were detained."

President, Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA), Professor Uju Agomoh, noted that it is important to state that the deaths of 37 people in NSCDC custody must not be treated solely as an isolated tragedy or as a question of individual misconduct because it raises a fundamental question about whether

Nigeria has an effective system for protecting the lives and dignity of every person deprived of liberty, regardless of which government agency holds them.

"The 37 deaths, therefore, provide an opportunity to answer a much larger question: Can Nigeria guarantee that every person taken into state custody can be accounted for, medically cared for, protected from torture and ill-treatment, brought before lawful authority within the prescribed period, and, if that person dies, have their death independently investigated, and their family receive the truth? If the answer is not yet demonstrably yes, the appropriate response is not another isolated investigation. It is a national reform of the detention architecture itself."

The World Prison Brief recorded 81,902 people in Nigeria's correctional facilities as of June 22, 2026. Of that number, 53,428, or 65.2 per cent, were pre-trial or remand prisoners. The system was operating at 125.6 per cent of its official capacity. The history of Nigerian detention contains cases in which temporary detention became a substantial part of a person's life.

Sharing his experience in a chat with *The Guardian*, a Lagos-based estate agent, Mr. Qamar Oduga, narrated how his brother was allegedly tortured to death by the Police. He said his brother, Abdulmojeed, was arrested by the police at Ikota Police Post on February 11, 2025. He claimed his brother was arrested after his neighbour, a certain Ms Stasia Nora, reported him of drawing her hand while he and her boyfriend were walk-

ing on a staircase, which led to the nails she fixed falling off in the process.

Oduga said: "Nobody informed the family about his arrest. We learnt of his death on Wednesday, which was the day after his arrest. On that Tuesday, as usual, his wife was expecting his call, but he didn't call. When she didn't receive the call, she decided to call him, but unfortunately, his number was ringing, yet there was no response from the other end. His wife, who was heavily pregnant, became worried. She was not on the Island when the incident happened at Ajah."

"My brother's wife was with my mum, receiving antenatal care at a hospital in Ikorodu. She kept calling her husband that Tuesday night, but no one picked up the call. The same thing happened on Wednesday morning, February 12, 2025."

"At this point, she was worried and called their estate manager, Mr Jacob. The man said he had been trying to reach her too. It was Mr Jacob who informed my brother's wife that her husband had been arrested by the police."

When my sister-in-law asked for the cause of his arrest, the estate manager said it was because his neighbour, Ms Nora, accused him of drawing her hand on the staircase.

"That was when Abdulmojeed's wife

While inaugurating the committee to probe the death in the custody of the NSCDC Niger State Command, the Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, who promised justice would be done, said: "Examine individual or institutional compatibility. Also, recommend appropriate disciplinary, administrative, or legal action against any persons found guilty. Recommend compensation or other remedial measures for the families of the deceased where applicable. Any attempt by anybody to destroy or conceal evidence, intimidate witnesses, or obstruct this investigation will be treated as a serious offence against the nation, and it will not be tolerated."



Minister of Interior,
Dr. Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo

Spotlight

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Detention Facility Unhindered

informed the family. My elder sister, my brother (the youngest son of the family), and my sister-in-law gathered and went to the Ikota Police Post to see our brother. The plan was to go there and possibly bail him."

He continued, "On getting to the police station, my elder sister asked for Abdulmojeed Oduga, but they said there was nobody by that name in their custody. However, the estate manager insisted that my brother was being held there. My family started raising the alarm that they would not leave the police station until the officers produced my brother.

"They didn't tell us immediately. They claimed that he had been transferred to Ajah Police Station. We had to move to Ajah Police Station. When we got there, they started denying that they had my brother in their custody.

"It was only when my sister and brother started raising their voices that the officer in charge of the post, Alhaja Modinat Alaka, came out. She was the one overseeing the operation of the Investigating Police Officer, Mrs Azeezat, who had arrested my brother. So, it was Mrs Alaka who addressed my family.

"She started saying that we should take heart. My family members were shocked and asked what she meant by "take heart." Meanwhile, Mrs Alaka was well-known to our family. It was my family that supported her to go to the police academy.

"We lived together in Isale-Eko, Lagos Island. She begged my family to remain calm. My sister had sensed that tragic news was about to be broken and led my sister-in-law outside. They moved her away from the police station and drove her back to Ikorodu. They didn't want her to know about the situation owing to her condition. I received a call after the police told my family that my younger brother had died in detention. They had to call me to come to the police station as the first son of the family," Oduga said.

Expressing how he felt about what his brother went through and the trauma it has inflicted on the family, Oduga said: "It is deeply saddening and we can never recover from the loss as a family because the trauma will remain forever. I am still chasing the case with my lawyer till date as we are expecting the corona inquest registrar to give us a date to commence the inquest but it seems some set of people are working against the corona inquest secretly not to commence for some months now. But our lawyer and I decided two weeks ago that it's better we take the case to high court because the registrar seems to be delaying the case intentionally in order not to fix a date to start the corona inquest for months and deceiving us that she will get back to us and we are following the lawful process. It's deep sadness and forever in our memories."

Similarly, Sunday Ifedi was detained alongside his wife, Callista, by the DSS in November 2021 over an alleged link to IPOB. He said they were initially released but were later detained after being summoned to sign a document. After four years without prosecution, Ifedi was released without explanation, but authorities did not disclose his wife's whereabouts. He later learnt through an activist that Callista had reportedly died in custody about two years earlier. Ifedi said the ordeal caused him severe emotional distress and high blood pressure.

This is why the recent tragedy in a custody in Nigeria is not only about what happened in one cell, on one night. It is also about what happens when the state takes control of a human being and the ordinary safeguards surrounding that person become difficult to see. This is more so that many security agencies operate detention facilities.

Agomoh stated that Nigeria has detention facilities operated by the Nigeria Police Force, NSCDC, DSS, military authorities, NDLEA and other enforcement bodies, in addition to the Nigeria Correctional Service.

"A Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA) mapping of detention centres in Nigeria shows that over 12 agencies operate detention centres. Cumulatively, the country is

estimated to have thousands of detention centres.

For example, the Nigeria Police Force operates approximately 2000 police stations and roughly 1,537 divisional police headquarters nationwide. This is just one agency. The issue of having different agencies with multiple detention facilities creates several risks.

"A person can effectively 'disappear' (unaccounted for) because no centralised database tracks all persons in detention across all facilities, and because detention facilities do not use a tamper-proof register to document detainees, as recommended to Nigeria during the country's universal periodic review (UPR). This is particularly dangerous when families cannot establish: where someone is; who is holding them; when they were arrested; when they will be released; whether they have been transferred; and whether they are alive."

She also stated that in 2018, the NHRC nationwide police detention audit covered 188 police detention facilities across 26 states and the FCT. "Earlier, NHRC work also audited detention facilities operated by the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Security (DSS), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Nigerian Customs Service, the Nigerian Army, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and the NSCDC.

"The Commission reported worsening conditions in some facilities, particularly SARS facilities, and identified the problem of increasing ungazetted detention locations. The 2018 audit and subsequent reporting identified recurring structural problems including: overcrowding; inadequate health facilities and personnel; inadequate infrastructure; difficulties transporting detainees to court; weaknesses in case-file management; barriers to legal representation; problems concerning bail and payment of fines/bail; and the need to renovate facilities."

Rafsanjani stated that Nigeria must also end the practice of detention facilities operating beyond meaningful independent scrutiny.

"The National Human Rights Commission and authorised judicial officers should have unhindered and unannounced access to every detention facility operated by the Police, NSCDC, military, intelligence agencies and other enforcement bodies. There should be no secret, unregistered or unmonitored detention facility in a democratic society governed by law."

He further called for the immediate establishment of a National Electronic Custody Register showing who has been arrested, where they are held, the legal basis and duration of detention, transfers, access to lawyers and families, serious injuries, releases and deaths. Every deprivation of liberty must leave an auditable institutional record.

On her part, Agomoh stated that there is no publicly verifiable evidence that shows a single, comprehensive, continuously updated national register covering every government detention facility and every person held in government custody.

"That is a significant accountability problem. In fact, Nigeria's Human Rights Committee review in 2019 called for an effective national system of statistical data and specifically noted the need

for a central detention register covering persons at all stages of deprivation of liberty. The same UN review raised concerns about detention conditions in police cells, military facilities and other places of detention, including overcrowding and inadequate access to medical care. The implication is profound. Accountability becomes reactive rather than preventive.

"The state discovers the problem only when a crisis hits. The 37 deaths demonstrate why a national detention database should not be regarded as an administrative convenience. It is a life-protection mechanism. There is an urgent need for a National Detention Register, containing information on all detention facilities, the agency responsible for it, their location, designated capacity, current population, name/ID of every detainee, date/time of admission, legal basis for detention, date of court appearance, date of release/transfer, medical assessment, serious injury, death in custody, cause/manner of death, and autopsy/forensic report."

On the reforms that should be undertaken, Agomoh suggested that the Federal Government should introduce a National Custodial Death and Detention Safeguards Framework, applicable to every government agency that arrests or detains people.

"Every government detention facility should have a unique registration number. The central database should record: facility name; responsible agency; lawful capacity; current population; each detainee's name/identifier; date/time of admission; arresting authority; legal basis; charge; court date; medical screening; transfers; release; and death, if applicable.

"Every death should automatically generate a record containing: identity; age; facility; date/time of admission; date/time of death; apparent cause; forensic cause; whether an autopsy occurred; investigating authority; investigation status; prosecution; disciplinary outcome; and compensation/reparation. This directly responds to the long-standing UN concern about incomplete Nigerian data on deaths in custody."

She also suggested making every death in government custody an automatic trigger for independent investigation; forensic examination; preservation of evidence; notification of independent oversight bodies; notification of family; and review of medical records. "There should be no discretion based on whether officials initially describe the death as "natural", "disease-related" or "unexpected."

"Every detainee should receive medical screening: on admission; after any use of force; whenever illness is reported; after transfer; and before prolonged detention. Medical personnel must be able to report injuries or suspected ill-treatment independently of custodial officers.

"Every detention facility should have a legally enforceable maximum occupancy. No government agency should be permitted to place more



Comptroller-General of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Sylvester Ndidi Nwakuche

people in a cell simply because there is nowhere else to put them. If a facility reaches capacity, the agency must use alternatives rather than create conditions that endanger life, as provided under section 12(4-12) of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019).

"All oversight bodies/mechanisms should have unrestricted access; unannounced inspection powers; access to registers; access to medical records subject to appropriate confidentiality; private interviews with detainees; authority to photograph/document conditions; and mandatory government response to recommendations.

"Every detention facility should have: trained first responders; emergency medication; first-aid equipment; functioning communication systems; emergency transport; referral arrangements with hospitals; protocols for mass illness; protocols for suspected poisoning/chemical exposure; and protocols for respiratory emergencies.

"Where appropriate, cameras should cover entrances; corridors; custody areas; interrogation areas; and cell approaches. Officers implicated in an incident should not be able to delete or control relevant recordings. The Federal Government should immediately conduct a national mapping exercise covering all detention facilities operated by: Police, NSCDC, DSS, military, NDLEA, Customs, Immigration, EFCC, ICPC, other federal enforcement bodies, and state enforcement agencies.

"The objective should be to identify every place where the state deprives a person of liberty, not simply places officially designated as Nigerian Correctional Service Custodial/Correctional Centres."

Rafsanjani stated that every death in government custody should automatically trigger a prompt, independent, impartial and transparent investigation and the agency in whose custody a person dies must never be allowed to investigate itself as the sole authority.

"Beyond this incident, the Federal Government should order an independent nationwide audit of all detention facilities operated by security and law-enforcement agencies, covering overcrowding, legality of detention, ventilation, sanitation, food, water, medical care, access to lawyers and families, and compliance with human-rights standards.

"Accountability must extend to the chain of command. Any commander or senior official who authorised dangerous conditions, knew or should reasonably have known about serious abuses and failed to act, concealed evidence, obstructed investigations or shielded responsible officers must also face investigation and appropriate disciplinary or criminal consequences."

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



Beyond The Studio: Kikelomo Atanda-Owo Abati's Journey Of Reinvention

By Suliyat Tella

FROM journalism to corporate leadership, entrepreneurship and broadcasting, Kikelomo Atanda-Owo Abati's career has taken several turns. At the seventh anniversary of her talk show, she celebrated the journey and unveiled a new podcast with her husband, Reuben Abati.

When Kikelomo Atanda-Owo Abati started *Real Talk With Kike*, she was stepping into a new phase of a career that had already taken her through journalism, corporate management and entrepreneurship. The programme would become one of the ways she returned to the media, bringing public officials, business leaders and other influential Nigerians into conversations about issues affecting the country.

Seven years later, she was back in a room filled with many of the people who had watched her journey, this time to celebrate the programme's anniversary and more than 20 years in the media industry.

The celebration, held on Saturday, October 10, at Eko Hotels and Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos, also marked the unveiling of the *Reuben and Kike Abati Podcast*, a new project she will host with her husband, Dr. Reuben Abati.

The anniversary offered an opportunity to look at the career behind *Real Talk With Kike*, the people who have supported its host and the decisions that brought her to this point.

According to actress Shaffy Bello, who has known Kikelomo since the early days of the show, the achievement was worth celebrating because she had seen some of the difficulties that came with the journey.

"We're very proud of her. I'm extremely proud of her," Bello said at the event.

She recalled the conversations they had during difficult periods in Kikelomo's life, when she needed encouragement to get through the storms. She also remembered visiting her at Silverbird after the programme had been running for about a year.

From journalism to corporate leadership

Kikelomo's early career was rooted in journalism. In an interview published by *The Guardian* in 2019, she recalled starting at Silverbird Communications before moving to TVC and later working as a columnist and journalist with Nigerian Compass.

She subsequently moved into corporate roles, working in marketing and finance at Kruss Atlantic, taking on a senior supervisory role at the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service, and working in media and content management at Great Places to Work Nigeria.

Her career later took her to Peculiar People's Management, where she worked with clients across several sectors, including banking, government, telecommunications, oil and gas, and religious organisations. She rose to the position of senior vice-president and handled projects involving international clients.

The shift from journalism to corporate work was a significant change, but it broadened her experience beyond reporting and broadcasting. It brought her into contact with organisations, executives and the demands of managing relationships, communicating ideas and delivering projects.

She had also spent years building professional experience before deciding to establish her own organisation.

In her 2019 interview with *The Guardian*, Kikelomo described the move into entrepreneurship as a turning point. After more than 12 years working for different organisations, she wanted to build something of her own. It was a decision that came with uncertainty, particularly because having a salaried job and running a business were different experiences.

She went ahead to establish Z-Edge, a consulting business focused on areas including corporate training, management, marketing communications and related services.

The experience would become part of the foundation for her return to the media. Rather than approaching broadcasting only as a presenter, she could draw on her understanding of corporate organisations, public relations, business and the people responsible for making decisions.



Chief Executive Officer, Air Peace Limited, Alex Onyema (left); Chairman/CEO, Nigeria in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), Abike Dabiri Erewa; Kikelomo Atanda-Owo Abati; her husband, Reuben Abati; Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy Hannatu Musa Musawa at the 7th anniversary of Talks with Kike in Lagos.

She also established the Kike Hub Foundation, through which she has pursued social responsibility initiatives.

Her work outside broadcasting has remained part of her professional identity. It also helps explain why *Real Talk With Kike* has sought to bring people from different sectors into the same conversation.

Finding her way back to broadcasting

Kikelomo's return to the media was not a return to where she had started. The industry had changed, particularly with the growth of social media and digital technology, and she had to adapt to a different media environment.

In a 2022 interview with *The Guardian*, she spoke about leaving a senior corporate position because she wanted personal growth and the opportunity to build her own organisation. She also described her return to the media as challenging but rewarding, with technology changing the way journalists and broadcasters worked.

Real Talk With Kike grew out of that renewed engagement with broadcasting. The programme, which has aired on Silverbird Television and Inspiration FM, was conceived as a platform for conversations about issues with national and public relevance. Its focus has included politics, the economy, health, education, tourism, aviation and other matters affecting Nigerians.

The aim was not only to give guests room to speak, but to bring decision-makers and stakeholders into discussions that could help audiences understand issues and consider possible solutions.

Kikelomo's professional background gave her experience of both the media and the corporate world. The show created a space where those experiences could meet.

Its seventh anniversary was therefore a milestone for the programme, but also for a career that had moved through several fields before finding a new expression in broadcasting.

The anniversary theme, *Beyond the Studio*, reflected that ambition. The gathering brought together government officials, business leaders, media professionals and figures from the creative industry to discuss leadership, innovation, culture and the media's role in national development.

The people behind the milestone

The event featured a keynote address delivered by Lagos State Secretary to the Government, Bimbola Salu-Hundeyin, who represented Deputy Governor Dr Obafemi Hamzat.

In her opening remarks, Salu-Hundeyin praised Kikelomo's work and acknowledged her comments about the need to do more to bring women together and support them.

She said women were proud of Kikelomo's hard work and sincerity, adding that support did not always have to be financial. Sometimes, she said, it meant being present.

That point also emerged in remarks by the

chairman and chief executive officer of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), Dr Abike Dabiri-Erewa, who described Kikelomo as resilient as she believed in what she was doing, even through difficult periods.

Kikelomo also recognised seven men who, she said, had offered support, opportunities or interventions at different points in her life and career. They were the late former Oyo State governor, Abiola Ajimobi, Eko Hotels and Suites general manager, Danny Kioupourogrou, Air Peace chairman Allen Onyema, publisher Dele Momodu, Otunba Sesan Rufai, Oba Ghandi Afolabi Olaoye and Emma Heru-Oriakhi.

Her acknowledgement was not presented as a claim that men mattered more than women. Rather, she reflected on the specific ways those individuals had supported her. She also spoke about becoming more intentional about supporting other women and helping them gain opportunities and seats at the table.

Among the women she acknowledged were her godmother, chair of Ecobank Nigeria, Bola Adesola, and Omowunmi Milakani, whom she described as a significant figure in her life.

The event was not limited to speeches and professional discussions. A performance by saxophonist Beejay Sax, an Eyo masquerade display and a raffle draw featuring valuable gifts added a cultural and celebratory element to the occasion.

Beyond the studio and the national conversation

The keynote address returned to the question of what public conversations should achieve. Speaking on behalf of the deputy governor, Salu-Hundeyin delivered a speech that linked leadership, innovation, culture and the media to the practical challenges facing Nigerians. It opened with the example of manufacturers leaving the national electricity grid because unreliable power makes business increasingly difficult.

The address argued that the success of leadership should be measured by changes in people's lives, not announcements made at conferences.

"The test of our success is not what we announce at conferences," it stated. "It is what changes in the lives of our people."

The speech also highlighted the roles of government and private enterprise in creating jobs, improving infrastructure and supporting innovation. It acknowledged that progress required more

than policies and promises: government needed to provide predictable rules and functional infrastructure, while businesses needed to invest, create jobs and develop local capacity.

The themes continued in two panel discussions. The first, titled "Leadership: Fixing the System — Policy, Accountability and the Next 10 Years", was moderated by Kikelomo. It featured Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy Hannatu Musa Musawa; Dabiri-Erewa; Reuben Abati; and Onyema.

The discussion covered governance, policy implementation, accountability and the responsibilities of public officials and the media.

Musawa spoke about governance, legacy and the need for data to assess whether policies were being implemented and producing results. Dabiri-Erewa emphasised communication, arguing that government officials needed to explain their actions clearly, while also raising concerns about toxicity on social media and the need for responsible journalism.

Reuben Abati questioned how professional standards could be enforced in an era when social media had widened the number of people producing and distributing information. His intervention raised a question central to journalism: who is responsible for upholding standards when public conversation increasingly takes place outside traditional media organisations?

Onyema discussed the challenges and prospects of the aviation sector, including flight delays, airline capacity, entrepreneurship and the role of aviation in national development.

The second panel, "From Traditions to Trends: How Culture Shapes Our Values and Nationhood", was moderated by media entrepreneur Chude Jideonwo. Its panellists included broadcaster and media trainer Eugenia Abu, Kioupourogrou, actress Shaffy Bello, food blogger Yemisi Odusanya, popularly known as Sisi Yemmie, Yinka Adebayo, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria Director of Public Affairs Henry Agbebire, and Reverend Esther Ajayi.

The discussion examined culture, identity, creativity and the ways Nigerians present themselves to the world.

Bello urged people to embrace authenticity and continue learning, reflecting on her own experience of working abroad and returning to Nigeria. "America trained me, but Nigeria made me," she said.

Sisi Yemmie spoke about cooking, passion and the potential to share Nigerian food and culture with wider audiences. Adebayo argued that Nigerians sometimes underestimate what the country has to offer, particularly as Nigerian music and culture gain international attention.



Kikelomo

Minds, Healthy Bodies: Experts Push Nutrition, Green Spaces

By Adamu Abuh, Abuja

FOR an Abuja resident spending hours in traffic, a worker struggling with rising living costs or a parent worried about the quality of food available to the family, maintaining a healthy lifestyle can seem like another burden in an already demanding routine.

Yet, experts say, better health could begin with simple changes: eating fresh, locally available foods, growing vegetables at home, spending more time outdoors and finding ways to manage the pressures of everyday life.

These formed the focus of discussions in Abuja on Saturday as medical practitioners, nutritionists and agricultural experts called for greater attention to the links between nutrition, mental health and the environment, urging Nigerians to embrace preventive healthcare and make healthier living part of their daily routines.

The gathering marked the fourth anniversary of Revitalise Wellness and Holistic Gardens and coincided with World Mental Health Day 2026. Participants highlighted the need for accessible green spaces, household gardening and community-based initiatives to improve well-being beyond the hospital.

At the centre of the initiative is Revitalise Wellness and Holistic Gardens, which seeks to connect healthcare, nutrition, nature and gardening by encouraging individuals and families to take greater responsibility for their wellbeing.

Founder of the centre and Chief Executive Officer of Child Care and Wellness Clinics, Abuja, Dr Yashua Alkali Hamza, said healthcare should extend beyond treating illnesses to addressing the lifestyle, nutritional and environmental factors that influence people's health.

A paediatric neurologist and public health specialist, Hamza said her experience in medical practice had reinforced the importance of considering patients' physical, emotional and nutritional needs.

Child Care and Wellness Clinics began operations in February 2013 to provide family-centred healthcare. The wellness centre was subsequently established to encourage people to relax, reconnect with nature and pay greater attention to their overall wellbeing.

"Medicine should be holistic. Those things that they call unorthodox medicine should not be called unorthodox. Everything should be together," she said, advocating an integrated approach to healthcare.

"Our bodies are powerful. They are our best medicine. But the only problem is that we get in the way. We get in the way by lifestyle, by not nourishing it," she added.

Hamza said wellness should encompass what people eat, how they manage stress and whether they give their bodies the support needed to maintain good health.

"When we talk about wellness, we must look at the whole family and the whole environment. A child may come to the clinic with a medical problem, but we also need to ask about nutrition, sleep, emotional wellbeing and the conditions at home," she said.

She urged families to regard preventive healthcare as a practical, everyday responsibility rather than something reserved for hospitals or people with substantial financial resources. "Prevention begins with the small decisions people make daily. It can begin with choosing better food, creating time to rest, spending time in nature and learning how to care for the body before illness develops," she said.

Hamza also highlighted the value of gardening, describing it as an activity that could provide food while encouraging physical activity and supporting mental wellbeing.

"Gardening gives people more than vegetables. It gives them activity, responsibility, connection and a reason to step away from the pressures of daily life. These things can support both physical and mental health," she said.

For many Nigerian households, however, eating healthily involves more than understanding the nutritional value of different foods. Food prices, household income, access to fresh produce and the time available to prepare meals all influence dietary choices.

Experts therefore emphasised the importance of making nutritious food affordable and accessible, noting that encouraging the consumption of fresh, locally available produce and supporting household food production could help families improve their diets.



They also cautioned that organic produce was not automatically more nutritious than conventionally grown food, stressing that food safety, proper handling, clean water and safe cultivation practices remained essential.

The call for a broader understanding of health was echoed by paediatric and family healthcare practitioner Dr Muinat Oyelakin, who said effective healthcare required practitioners to consider the individual as a whole.

Drawing on more than 10 years of experience in childcare, Oyelakin said physical conditions, nutritional deficiencies and psychological wellbeing could interact to influence health outcomes.

"Wellness is derived from the individual. It could be mentally, physically, or it could be nutritional deficiency," she said.

She identified counselling, nutritional guidance and attention to emotional wellbeing as important components of comprehensive healthcare, urging Nigerians to become more conscious of their food choices and living environments.

For parents, she said, supporting a child's wellbeing required more than responding to illness. It also involved ensuring adequate nutrition, recognising emotional distress and providing opportunities for physical activity and healthy development.

Beyond the consultation room, agriculturist and founder of CHC Agritech Africa, Ruby Ross, advocated greater investment in sustainable agriculture and urban gardening, arguing that households could contribute to food production even where land was limited.

Ross, who said she had visited about 20 states since beginning her agricultural advocacy activities in 2018, highlighted the role of women in food production and household nutrition.

She said her organisation was involved in an initiative promoting organic farming in 100 communities across parts of the Niger Delta, with plans to train farmers and encourage sustainable agricultural practices.

According to her, the initiative uses microbiome technology and beneficial microorganisms to improve soil health and support agricultural production.

Ross challenged the assumption that gardening was possible only for people with large plots of land or those living in rural communities.

With suitable containers, safe growing media, adequate sunlight and access to water, she said, households could cultivate selected vegetables in courtyards, balconies and other available spaces.

"Today, I want you to think of taking action because it is very important to take action in what we do," she told participants.

For families struggling with food costs, a small garden could supplement household supplies while helping children understand where food comes from and why nutrition matters. Gardening could also promote physical activity, environmental awareness and shared responsibility among family members.

Community gardens, meanwhile, could bring residents together to exchange knowledge, acquire practical skills and work towards common goals.

However, sustaining urban gardening requires access to water, suitable growing spaces, affordable materials and knowledge of safe cultivation methods.

To address some of these challenges, Ross proposed establishing a Green Skills Gardening Club in collaboration with Revitalise Wellness and Garden Centre to provide practical training and encourage more residents to embrace gardening.

She urged participants to start with a few vegetables before expanding into other crops, while calling for stronger links between farmers, producers and markets that recognise quality and sustainable agricultural practices.

Such partnerships could connect urban consumers seeking fresh produce with farmers looking for reliable markets, while creating opportunities for small-scale enterprise and skills development, particularly among women and young people.

The discussions also highlighted the psychological benefits of connecting with nature, particularly in rapidly expanding cities where traffic congestion, noise, demanding work schedules and overcrowding can limit opportunities for relaxation.

Accessible green spaces can provide places to walk, exercise, socialise and take a break from daily pressures. Gardening offers another way to introduce nature into everyday life through planting, watering and caring for vegetables and other plants.

Although gardening is not a substitute for professional mental healthcare, spending time in natural surroundings and participating in meaningful outdoor activities may support stress management and psychological wellbeing.

Participants argued that parks, community gardens and other green spaces should therefore be considered important elements of urban development rather than optional amenities.

For Abuja, where urban expansion continues to reshape neighbourhoods, safe and accessible outdoor spaces could help residents incorporate recreation and physical activity into their daily routines.

Revitalise Wellness and Garden Centre is seek-



ing to connect these concerns by providing a space where discussions about health can translate into practical activities involving nutrition, gardening and environmental awareness.

During the anniversary event, the centre's manager, Catalina Mathias, conducted participants around the gardens and briefed them on the wellness services available.

As part of its fourth-anniversary activities, the centre, in collaboration with CHC Agritech Africa and the Association of Diplomatic Women in Nigeria, is scheduled to launch an Urban Gardening and Green Skills Hub at CWC Childcare and Wellness Clinic in Mabushi, Abuja.

The proposed hub is intended to combine gardening, practical training, wellness activities and community participation, providing residents with opportunities to acquire gardening skills and incorporate greener practices into their daily lives.

Its long-term impact will depend on sustained participation, accessible training and arrangements for maintaining the gardens beyond the launch.

President of Women Inspire Africa, Ambassador Tina Kenechukwu, also emphasised the importance of partnerships in promoting mental health awareness, agricultural development and women's empowerment.

Kenechukwu, a television presenter, said World Mental Health Day provided an opportunity to encourage conversations about psychological wellbeing while building collaboration among businesses, non-governmental organisations, foundations and other groups working to improve people's lives.

She said Women Inspire Africa had more than 100 businesses and organisations in its network, identifying agriculture, entrepreneurship, health awareness and women's economic participation as potential areas for collaboration.

Teenagers' mental health coach Coach Ifoma similarly highlighted the need to support young people experiencing emotional and psychological challenges, particularly when these difficulties affect their education, relationships and everyday activities.

Their contributions reinforced the need for families, schools, healthcare providers, community organisations, farmers and policymakers to work together in promoting healthier living.

For Revitalise Wellness and Garden Centre, the challenge is to translate the discussions into practical activities that individuals and communities can adopt and sustain. The proposed Urban Gardening and Green Skills Hub and gardening club offer potential avenues for extending the initiative beyond awareness campaigns.

Tribute

Maria Chiamaka Uzukwu: A Golden Jubilee And A Heartbreaking Farewell

By Obianuju Uzukwu

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” — Psalm 116:15

THERE is a profound mystery in the Christian understanding of life and death: the conviction that even when the human heart is broken by separation, hope remains alive in the promises of God. For the believer, death is not merely an ending; it is a threshold beyond which faith dares to see what mortal eyes cannot yet behold. Yet, this assurance does not make grief less human. It does not silence the questions that arise from a wounded heart, nor does it erase the tears that accompany the departure of someone deeply loved. Rather, it offers a light by which the bereaved may navigate the darkness, trusting that the God who gives life remains faithful even in the hour of loss.

It is against this solemn theological backdrop that the life and passing of Rev Sr. Maria Chiamaka Uzukwu must be understood. Her story is one of extraordinary commitment, consecrated service and a vocation faithfully pursued over five decades. But it is also a story of a painful emotional contradiction: the joy of celebrating 50 years in the Lord's vineyard, followed almost immediately by the silence of loss.

There are moments in life when joy and grief meet at a crossroads, leaving the human heart struggling to reconcile the beauty of celebration with the pain of an unexpected farewell. Such is the poignant paradox surrounding the life and passing of Rev. Sr. Chiamaka, a consecrated woman whose golden jubilee of religious profession should have remained an enduring celebration of 50 years of faith, sacrifice and service in the Lord's vineyard. Yet, so soon after that remarkable milestone, the celebration gave way to mourning, and gratitude for a life of service became entangled with the anguish of an irreparable loss.

How does one adequately mourn a woman who devoted five decades to answering God's call, only to be confronted with the painful reality of her departure so soon after celebrating that sacred commitment? How does a family find words for a loss that seems to have arrived just when there was every reason to rejoice? Perhaps the only consolation lies in the enduring truth that although a life may come to its earthly end, the goodness it has planted in human hearts continues to speak long after its bearer has departed.

For Chiamaka, the golden jubilee was more than an anniversary. It was a testimony to a life surrendered to God, a vocation faithfully pursued and a promise made in youthful conviction and sustained through decades of service. Her passing so soon after that celebration has made her story even more poignant: a golden milestone followed by a heartbreaking farewell, a moment of thanksgiving overshadowed by grief, and a life whose legacy deserves to be celebrated even through tears.

Born into the devout Christian family of Nze Raphael Obidinbu Uzukwu and Theresa Nwakuche Uzukwu, née Nnabuife of Obuluisiuzo, both of blessed memory, Chiamaka hailed from Umuosebe, Uzoakwa, Ihiala, in Ihiala Local Council of Anambra State. Her beginnings were rooted in the values of faith, discipline and devotion that would later become defining features of her life's journey. Her parents could scarcely have imagined the full dimensions of the vocation that would unfold from the foundation they laid. Yet, in the traditions of a faith filled home, the seeds of a life devoted to God and humanity were already being nurtured.

Her educational journey began at St. Raphael Primary School, Awkuzu, where she studied



from 1964 to 1968 and obtained her First School Leaving Certificate with distinction. She subsequently proceeded to the Daughters of Divine Love Juniorate for her secondary education between 1970 and 1973, earning her West African School Certificate. These formative years prepared her not merely for a profession but for a vocation that would demand intellectual discipline, spiritual maturity, emotional resilience and an enduring commitment to the welfare of others.

Upon completing her secondary education, she responded decisively to the call to religious life. She joined the Congregation of the Daughters of Divine Love and made her religious profession on June 6, 1976. That solemn commitment became the defining turning point of her life. It was a yes to God, but also a yes to service; a willingness to place her gifts at the disposal of others; a decision to make education, compassion and the formation of young minds instruments of a larger spiritual purpose.

Fifty years later, that commitment stood as the defining testament of her earthly journey. Her golden jubilee was not simply a celebration of the passage of time. It was an acknowledgement of the faithfulness with which she had lived the promise she made in 1976.

For Chiamaka, education was much more than the transmission of knowledge. It was an opportunity to shape character, nurture potential and prepare young people to take their places in society with confidence and responsibility. Following her religious profession, she received professional teacher training at Holy Ghost Teacher Training College, Uwani, Enugu, between 1976 and 1977. She began her teaching career at St. Thomas Primary School, Udi, where she served from 1977 to 1979.

Her intellectual curiosity and commitment to professional development soon took her beyond Nigeria's shores. Between 1979 and 1981, she pursued studies in child psychology and education at Leoben University, Germany, before proceeding to the University of London, England, from 1981 to 1983 for further studies.

Returning to Nigeria in 1983, she brought with her a broader understanding of education, child development and the responsibilities of those entrusted with the formation of young people. Her commitment to learning did not end there. She continued her academic development through postgraduate studies at Abia State University between 1987 and 1989 and Imo State University between 2001 and 2003 respectively. This sustained pursuit of knowledge reflected an important dimension of her vocation: the conviction that service becomes more effective when it is supported by learning, competence and a willingness to grow.

Saying Goodbye To Theresa Ikhuo-Eko Okoghenun

By Joseph Okoghenun

AS the late Madam Okoghenun Ikhuo-Eko Theresa is laid to rest today, October 17, 2026, at Eko-Omoataman, Ebulen-Uzea, in Edo State, it is an appropriate time to reflect on the remarkable journey of a woman whose life was characterised by resilience, family devotion, humility and enduring faith.

Madam Okoghenun passed away in the early hours of July 21, 2026, at the age of 90. She was born on March 15, 1936, into the family of the late Pa Omoataman Okoh, the great Road Overseer of the former Ishan Division and founder of Eko-Omoataman Village, Ebulen, Uzea, in the present day Esan North East Local Council of Edo State. She was the first surviving daughter of the family, a distinction that formed an important part of her family history.

The early years of Madam Okoghenun's life were marked by painful losses. At a tender age, she lost her mother, Afemhonta, and her two siblings. These experiences exposed her to hardship and sorrow while she was still young. She was subsequently raised by her grandmother, Mama Ayi, who provided care and support during her formative years. Unfortunately, her grandmother also died not long afterwards.

In the face of these successive losses, her stepmother, the late Mary Omoataman, and her father, Omoataman, stepped in to provide the care, guidance and support she needed. Their intervention helped her navigate a difficult childhood and laid the foundation for the resilient woman she would become.

Growing up in an era when formal education for girls was not widely accessible, Madam Okoghenun learnt important lessons through family life, farm work and household responsibilities. These experiences taught her discipline, humility, patience, hard work and the importance of serving others. She developed practical wisdom and an appreciation for the value of perseverance.

From her early years, Madam Okoghenun was known for her calm disposition, kind heart and strong sense of responsibility. These qualities remained evident throughout her life, demonstrating that a person's character is reflected not only in material possessions or educational achievements, but also in how they treat others and respond to life's challenges.

In due course, Madam Okoghenun married the late Mr. Daniel Okoghenun of Ibhicolulu-Ewessan, Irrua, in the present day Esan Central Local Council of Edo State, as

a younger wife. Their marriage opened a new chapter in her life, bringing responsibilities and opportunities to build a home and raise a family.

Their union was built on companionship, commitment and mutual respect. As a wife and mother, she devoted herself to the welfare of her household, working hard to provide a stable environment in which her children could grow and develop. She believed in the importance of discipline, honesty, respect and responsibility, values she sought to instill through both instruction and personal example.

Their marriage was blessed with four children: the late Mrs. Rosa Okoduwa (1956-2003), Ms Cecilia Okoghenun, Mr. Paul Okoghenun, Chief Executive Officer of Rahony Travels, and Joseph Okoghenun, formerly of *The Guardian* newspaper. She also had an adopted daughter, Mrs. Maria Okoedion, who demonstrated exceptional devotion by caring for her until her final moments.

As a mother, Madam Okoghenun was deeply committed to the welfare and upbringing of her children. She understood the sacrifices required to raise a family and worked tirelessly alongside her husband and her late father, Omoataman, to contribute to the family's stability and wellbeing. Her dedication reflected the sacrifices made by many mothers who place their children's needs above their personal comfort. Through her example, she helped impart values that could be passed from one generation to another.

Following the death of her husband, the nonagenarian relocated to Igieduma village, near Benin City, in 1998. The move marked a significant transition, requiring her to adjust to a new environment and navigate life without her lifelong companion. Despite the challenges associated with widowhood and relocation, she faced this period with courage, dignity and patience.

She gradually established herself within the community, forming relationships



with neighbours and friends and becoming a peaceful member of her new environment. Her calm nature and considerate disposition helped her maintain meaningful relationships. She valued peaceful coexistence and understood the importance of living harmoniously with others. Her ability to adapt to changing circumstances while remaining faithful to the values that had guided her from childhood was an important feature of her character.

One of the most significant developments in Madam Okoghenun's later years was her opportunity to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Through this study, she gained a deeper understanding of God's Word and the hope it offers for the future of humankind.

In 2007, she was baptised as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, marking an important milestone in her spiritual journey. Her growing faith greatly influenced her outlook on life and strengthened her hope for a peaceful new world under God's Kingdom.

The Bible's promises provided her with comfort and reassurance as she reflected on the hardships, bereavements and other challenges she had experienced throughout her long life. She came to cherish the prospect of a future in which suffering, pain and death would no longer afflict humankind. This hope became a source of encouragement and helped her face life's uncertainties with greater confidence.

One scripture that reflected the hope she valued was Psalm 22:26, which speaks of the meek eating and being satisfied and those seeking Jehovah praising him. Her faith gave her a meaningful source of encouragement and strengthened her anticipation of the blessings associated with God's Kingdom.

Madam Okoghenun remained grateful to Jehovah for the long life she enjoyed, recognising that reaching the age of 90 was a privilege, particularly considering the difficulties she had faced from childhood. Her Bible-based hope remained an important part of her life until she died on July 21, 2026.

Madam Okoghenun lived through nine decades of remarkable social, cultural and personal change. Her journey encompassed childhood bereavement, family responsibilities, widowhood, relocation and the discovery of a faith that brought her comfort and hope. Through these experiences, she demonstrated perseverance and the importance of maintaining dignity and kindness in the face of life's challenges.

Court Dismisses N250m Negligence Suit Against Garki Hospital

By Tajudeen Kareem

An eight-year fight over an asthma prescription ends in a full dismissal, vindicating a pharmacist, a paperless hospital — and, lawyers say, a rule of evidence that keeps medical claims won on proof, not sympathy.

The High Court of the Federal Capital Territory has dismissed in its entirety a N250 million medical negligence suit against Garki Hospital Abuja and Ruth Emeje, a staff pharmacist, closing one of the more closely watched tests of electronic medical record-keeping in Nigeria's courts.

The suit, Mohammed Oluwale Lawal v. Garki Hospital Abuja & Anor, Suit No. CV/1357/18, was delivered by Justice M. A. Hassan last week. In the ruling, the court rejected the claimant's case as "built on speculation, conjectures and unsubstantiated assumptions," held it unmeritorious, and characterised it as an attempt to extort an institution the claimant acknowledged had saved his life.

But the judgment's significance stretches beyond one hospital's legal bill. It turned on three questions that Nigerian healthcare will face with growing frequency as medicine goes digital: what a pharmacist's dispensing record actually proves, whether an electronic audit trail can be trusted as evidence, and how a patient with a genuine grievance is meant to meet a burden of proof that most never clear.

The case

THE dispute began with an emergency. On January 5, 2018, the claimant, Mr. Lawal, presented at Garki Hospital in acute severe asthma — a presentation physicians treat as life-threatening. He was stabilised with a salbutamol nebuliser and prescribed 60mg of the corticosteroid Prednisolone, dispensed as twelve 5mg tablets, under a prescription transmitted through the hospital's electronic medical record (EMR) system.

The claim later filed against the hospital and Mrs. Emeje alleged that the pharmacist had unilaterally altered the prescribed dosage, and that the medication caused severe health complications. The claimant sought 250 million in damages.

The defence, led by NekabariAnnah of AnnahNekabari& Associates, put the EMR itself at the centre of its case. On the account given in the statement, the digital record showed the pharmacist dispensed exactly what the physician prescribed, and that the claimant's reading of the record mistook routine automated clinical queues — the system's ordinary workflow entries — for a dosage change.

Four findings, as reported in the statement, carried the day. First, that the dose fell within

• 'A Ruling Built On Digital Records, High Bar Of Nigerian Negligence Law'

the standard of care: expert testimony cited the British National Formulary's adult dosing for acute severe asthma, in which a single 40–60mg oral Prednisolone dose is accepted practice. Second, that the EMR established the prescription was dispensed as issued. Third, that no irreversible injury was proved — the palpitations the claimant described are a recognised, non-dangerous side effect of salbutamol, the drug that cleared his airways. And fourth, that the claimant produced no medical report, no expert witness and no diagnosis from any physician, in Nigeria or abroad, to substantiate the alleged long-term harm.

"This victory is not just for Garki Hospital or Pharmacist Ruth Emeje; it is a victory for clinical accountability and technological innovation in Nigerian healthcare," Mr. Annah said, adding that despite "five years of expensive, vexatious litigation," the hospital's chief executive, Dr. Ibrahim Wada, "never wavered" in maintaining the electronic tracking systems the defence relied upon.

The law's high bar

THE outcome will surprise no litigation lawyer. Nigerian courts have long held that medical negligence claims are won on evidence, not on unfortunate outcomes. A claimant must establish, on the balance of probabilities, four elements: a duty of care, a breach of that duty, causation linking the breach to the injury, and actual damage — principles traced to Donoghue v Stevenson and applied by Nigerian appellate courts, including in Ojo v Gharoro (2006).

Negligence is never presumed merely because treatment ended badly. Claims must be based on concrete evidence, the Nigerian law states.

Two evidential rules did the heavy lifting here. The first is expert testimony: under section 68 of the Evidence Act 2011, judges — who are not doctors — rely on qualified experts to define the standard of care and say whether it was breached, and appellate authority holds that failure to call an expert can be fatal to a claim (Delta State Hospitals Management Board v Onome, Court of Appeal, 2022).

The second is the strict proof of special damages: a headline demand of 250 million must be pleaded and proved with particularity — invoices, medical reports, records of loss — and courts repeatedly throw out claims that are speculative or inflated.

On the standard of care itself, Nigerian courts follow the reasoning of Bolam v Friern

Hospital Management Committee (1957), as refined in Bolitho (1998): a practitioner is not negligent where they acted in line with a practice accepted by a responsible body of medical opinion, provided that opinion withstands logical analysis. The BNF dosing cited at trial sits squarely inside that framework.

The case is also an early showcase for section 84 of the Evidence Act, which governs electronically generated evidence. The EMR — prescription logs, dispensing entries, automated workflows — functioned as what lawyers call the best evidence: a contemporaneous record made in the ordinary course of business, which courts consistently prefer over recollections offered years later. Ironically, the same system the claimant's case depended on became the instrument of its dismissal.

The ethics on trial

BEHIND the legal rules sit ethical questions the judgment does not resolve. The pharmacist's chain of accountability. Professional pharmacy ethics place the dispenser as the last check in the medication chain — obligated to dispense as prescribed, to flag dangerous orders, and to document any intervention.

The allegation of a "unilateral change" was, in ethical terms, the gravest possible charge against a pharmacist, because unauthorised alteration of a prescription is precisely the conduct the profession exists to prevent. That the audit trail cleared Mrs. Emeje matters for the profession: it shows documentation protecting a practitioner, not just prosecuting one. The corollary is equally true — where an EMR shows a real alteration, no dispensed and-logged

error will hide.

Records as a two-sided ethical instrument: Electronic records are often framed as management tools; this case reframes them as an ethical guarantee to patients. Under the National Health Act 2014, patients hold enforceable rights to information about their treatment and access to their own health records (National Health Act 2014) — the very records that decide negligence suits. Hospitals that market paperless systems inherit a duty to keep those systems tamper-evident, certifiable and patient-accessible.

The litigation-ethics dilemma: The court's language about extortion reflects a genuine problem: fabricated or speculative claims impose real costs on hospitals, which ripple into the cost of care and push clinicians toward defensive medicine. But the mirror image deserves equal attention.

Genuine victims of medical error face an evidence wall — independent experts are expensive, medical records can be slow to obtain, and most Nigerians injured by negligence never litigate at all. A jurisprudence that is rightly tough on speculators can be, incidentally, impenetrable for the meritorious claimant.

Scholars of Nigerian health law have long flagged this imbalance between professional accountability on paper and practical patient redress (Adejumo&Owolabi, 2020).

The PPP backdrop — and its scrutiny

THE judgment lands on a hospital that is itself an experiment. Garki Hospital Abuja, a Federal Capital Territory Administration facility, had sat shut for roughly six years before, in March 2007, the FCTA signed a concession agreement with Nisa Premier Hospital to manage and operate it — the first hospital public-private partnership concession in Nigeria, with Dr. Ibrahim Wada at its helm through the transition to a fully paperless, EMR-driven facility.



Mohammed Oluwale Lawal

Foundation Gives Chromebooks, Internet Devices To 11 Children With Cerebral Palsy

By SuliyatTella

THE Let Cerebral Palsy Kids Learn Foundation has given Chromebooks and MiFi devices to 11 children with cerebral palsy to help them communicate and learn. The devices were handed over at a ceremony in Lagos on Friday, October 9. They were funded by Harde Business School and participants in the July 2026 cohort of its Business Leadership Executive Programme (BLEP).

The Chromebooks run a customised communication application built for users with different physical abilities. The MiFi devices will give the children the internet access they need to use it. The app offers three ways to interact. An eye mode lets users navigate with eye movements, and a head mode works through head movements. A classroom keyboard can be used with hand gestures.

The foundation said the options are meant to suit each child's abilities. DamiOguntunde, chief executive of Harde Business School, was represented by Jola Atoki, who delivered his remarks and welcomed guests. Oguntunde spoke about why the school backed the project and why children need access to assistive technology.

He said he hoped the devices would make a real difference to the beneficiaries. Two parents, Adebimpe and Adewimimo, described the difficulties their families faced in communicating with their children before the devices. They said the technology could help their children express their needs, thoughts and feelings. Seun Popoola, who spoke for the BLEP cohort, said the group raised funds because disability should not stop children from expressing themselves. He said members look forward to seeing how the devices improve the children's communication and learning. The foundation said the project

is aimed at communication barriers, especially for children who find speech or conventional ways of interacting difficult. It said such tools give children other ways to share ideas and take part in lessons and everyday life.

It added that handing over the devices is only the first step. The children will need guidance and regular practice, and continued support from parents, caregivers, teachers and relevant professionals. The foundation plans follow-up activities and will collect feedback to assess the impact and identify any

extra support needed.

The foundation thanked Harde Business School and the BLEP cohort for their funding. It said it hoped the project would encourage more organisations to invest in assistive technology and inclusive education. The Let Cerebral Palsy Kids Learn Foundation supports children with cerebral palsy through programmes on learning, inclusion and accessibility. It works through advocacy and partnerships to help children get an education, communicate and reach their full potential.



“Open For More” Promo Grand Prize Winner Drives Home

• 50m Car As 1,075 Consumers Win Big

By Sulaimon Salau

GUINNESS Nigeria Plc has concluded its Guinness Open For More national consumer promotion, rewarding 1,075 consumers over 10 weeks, with Queen Thompson emerging as the grand prize winner of a ₦150 million Toyota Land Cruiser Prado SUV.

At the grand prize presentation held at the company's headquarters in Lagos, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Guinness Nigeria Plc, Girish Sharma, presented the vehicle keys to Thompson, whose win capped a campaign celebrating consumer loyalty nationwide.

Speaking at the event, Sharma said: “I’m particularly excited that the winner is a woman. Many didn’t know that Guinness consumers are now 50-50 men and women. The dynamics are changing as we deepen commitment to rewarding consumer loyalty.”

inDrive Commits ₦132m To Driver Reward Campaign In Lagos, Abuja

INDRIVE, a global mobility and delivery services platform, has committed more than ₦132m to a driver reward campaign across Lagos and Abuja from October 5 to December 16, 2026.

The initiative is meant to recognise drivers and create more value for their participation on the platform.

The campaign will award 916 prizes, including two cars, four full-academic-year school fee awards, 40 smartphones, 40 television sets, and 830 shopping vouchers. Winners will be selected through six live-broadcast draws, while the two cars will be awarded to drivers who complete the highest number of rides over the full campaign period.

Drivers will qualify by reaching the platinum tier, with every completed ride counting as an entry. This means drivers who complete more rides during the campaign will have more opportunities to participate in the draws and qualify for rewards. Full terms and eligibility criteria are available on the inDrive app.

Speaking on the campaign, Country Manager, inDrive Nigeria, Timothy Oladimeji, said the initiative reflects the company’s commitment to creating more value for drivers while reinforcing the principles that underpin its platform.

Oladimeji added that the campaign provides drivers with additional opportunities to benefit from their activity on the platform.

SNPERA Partners NDPC To Strengthen Data Security

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Nigerian Ports Economic Regulatory Agency (NPERA) has moved for stronger collaboration with the Nigerian Data Protection Commission (NDPC) to enhance data privacy, security, and responsible data management to strengthen its regulatory role.

The Director-General/Chief Executive Officer NPERA, Akutah Pius, speaking when the National Commissioner/Chief Executive Officer of the NDPC, Vincent Olatunji, and his team paid a visit to NPERA’s Abuja Office, described the collaboration between the two agencies as essential.

Noting that data plays a critical role in the agency’s regulatory operations, he stressed the need for a deeper understanding of data privacy, information security, and the effective management of data to support the Agency’s evolving responsibilities.

According to him, cooperation with the NDPC would help strengthen NPERA’s capacity to handle data responsibly while promot-

ing compliance with relevant data protection requirements.

Olatunji earlier congratulated NPERA on its transition from the Nigerian Shippers’ Council to the Nigerian Ports Economic Regulatory Agency, describing the devel-

opment as an important milestone in the agency’s institutional evolution.

He explained that the NDPC is responsible for safeguarding personal data and promoting compliance with data protection standards across public and private sec-

tor organisations.

The visit provided an opportunity for both agencies to explore areas of mutual interest, particularly data privacy, information security and the responsible use of data in strengthening institutional effectiveness.



President, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Hajiya Queensley Sofuratu Seghosime (left); and the Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC Limited, Engr. Bashir Bayo Ojulari during a courtesy visit to the NNPC Towers, in Abuja.

ALX Africa Buys Youth Skill Development, Employability

By Sulaimon Salau

ALX Africa has taken a leading role in championing youth skills and employability across Nigeria by driving the conversation on translating programme funding into real-world career opportunities.

To tackle the growing pressure on funders to prove that investments yield lasting employment, ALX Africa recently convened top foundations, NGOs, and development partners for a high-level roundtable themed “From Funding to Outcomes”, aimed at turning financial commitments into

measurable results for young people.

Speaking at the session, in Lagos, Regional Manager for West and Central Africa at ALX, Ruby Igwe, said the sector’s challenge lies less in funding than in how programmes are delivered.

She said: “There is real money going into youth skills and employability in this country, but too many programmes do not deliver the jobs and the change they promised. They rarely fail at the funding stage. They lose their way in the middle, in how they are delivered. That is the gap we want to close.”

Bringing to bear its expertise as a technical, delivery and implementation partner for organisations seeking to run youth programmes at scale, Igwe points to ALX’s track record in Nigeria saying more than 150,000 young people have gone through its programmes and moved on to jobs, careers and improved livelihoods.

At the roundtable, participants shared what is working in youth development, where programmes are falling short, and what they need from delivery partners to achieve measurable

impact.

The conversation also explored how funders and partners can work together to reach more young Nigerians with programmes that lead to jobs and livelihoods.

Notable attendees at the roundtable included acting Executive Director of Junior Achievement Nigeria, Olaolu Akogun; Secretary, Rotary Club, Olorunfemi Micheal; Founder of FABE International Foundation, Temitope Okunnu; and Growth and Partnership Manager at TechQuest STEM Academy, Anita Agbakoba, among others.

Ebenco Refinery Nears Commissioning, To Add 30,000 bpd To Nigeria’s Capacity

By Sulaimon Salau

NIGERIA’S domestic refining capacity is set to receive a boost of 30,000 barrels per day (bpd) as Ebenco Global Link Limited receives official regulatory authorisation from the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) to introduce hydrocarbons into its modular refinery.

The clearance marks a major operational milestone, officially pushing the facility into its final commissioning stage.

Located in Koko, Delta State, the 30,000 bpd modular refinery facility represents a key indigenous project aimed at enhancing local petroleum production and strengthening Nigeria’s energy security infrastructure.

The NMDPRA’s approval follows the successful completion of a comprehensive Pre-

Start-Up Safety Audit (PSSA) conducted at the facility between September 14 and 15, 2026, confirming that the refinery meets required safety and operational standards for hydrocarbon introduction.

The company, in a statement, said the refinery will now proceed with a 90-day reliability test, including a 72-hour non-stop performance test, under the monitoring of

the NMDPRA.

“The development marks an important transition for the Ebenco Refinery, moving the facility from pre-start-up preparations into the hydrocarbon introduction, commissioning and performance-testing stage.

“As commissioning activities progress, the NMDPRA pre-commissioning team will continue to provide regulatory guidance, while

Ebenco is required to submit daily reports covering commissioning activities, operating performance and product quality, the company stated.

The Authority has also stipulated that prior approval must be obtained for product offtake during commissioning, while any shutdowns or safety incidents must be reported alongside their causes and corrective actions.

NBGN Tasks FG On Continuous Private-sector Development

By Sulaimon Salau

TO compete globally, the NEPAD Business Group Nigeria, NBGN, has urged the Federal Government to continuously encourage the activation of private-sector development across Africa and Nigeria in particular.

In a statement, the Chairman of NBGN, Bashorun J. K. Randle, stated this while com-

mending the late Bamanga Tukur for pioneering private-sector development in Nigeria.

He said: “If truly Africa and Nigeria in particular want to compete in the global economy, like the late proponent of economic integration and private-sector development, Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, policy makers should continually

see it as a point of responsibility to sustain his rich private-sector development legacy.”

According to Randle, “Tukur’s life was defined by service, vision, and dedication to national advancement. In his capacity as Executive President, Grand Patron, and President Emeritus of the African Business Roundtable, ABR,

MSS Celebrates 20 Years of Industry Leadership, Unveils Future Growth Vision

By Sulaimon Salau

NIGERIA’S leading event technology company, Mobile Screens and Sound Limited (MSS), has marked two decades of pioneering innovation, industry transformation and excellence with a landmark gala event recently in Lagos.

The event, themed The Art of Experience, brought together an influential gathering of business leaders, government officials, industry stakeholders, clients, partners and friends of the brand to celebrate a company whose innovations have helped shape the modern events landscape in Nigeria.

For 20 years, MSS has remained at the forefront of event technology, delivering the sound, visuals, staging and technical expertise behind some of Nigeria’s most significant corporate, entertainment, government and cultural events.

From introducing cutting-edge LED screen technology at a time when it was largely unfamiliar to the market, to becoming one of the country’s most trusted providers of integrated event production solutions, MSS has consistently redefined what is possible in the live experiences industry.

How Union Bank Nurtures, Retains Generational Customers – Survey

By Suliyat Tella

ASURVEY has revealed how Union Bank of Nigeria has nurtured and retained generational customers, some of whom have maintained banking relationship with the foremost Nigerian financial institution for two or more generations.

The survey, commissioned by the bank, revealed hundreds of families and businesses that have maintained relationships with it for 60 to 80 years, since the days when it was still known as Barclays Bank.

Some of the customers who were surveyed claimed the relationship with Union Bank had become so strong as to take the form of inherited family traditions.

One of those surveyed was the Managing Director of Dala Foods Limited, Alhaji Ali Madugu, who said the relationship with the bank was established by his grandfather in the 1950s, when the bank was still known as Barclays Bank.

“My grandfather was involved in the trans Saharan trade during those days and at a point, he was encouraged to open an account with Barclays Bank. In the early 1970s, my father also opened his own account with the bank.

IsDB, IFAD Mobilise \$750m For Food Systems, Rural Transformation

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have signed a new agreement, aimed at mobilizing up to \$750m in co-financing to drive sustainable agricultural development.

The expanded partnership, targeted at stepping up joint investment in food systems and rural transformation, combines the financing power, specialised expertise, and global reach of both institutions. Together, they will scale up investments to advance their shared goals: transforming rural economies, eradicating poverty, and strengthening food security.

Chairman of the IsDB Group, Dr. Muhammad Al Jasser, said the renewed partnership between the two institutions will build on nearly five decades of successful cooperation.

“Together, we will leverage our collective expertise and resources to strengthen resilience, expand opportunities, and improve the lives of rural communities across our member countries.”

The President of IFAD, Alvaro Lario, highlighted the economic ripple effect of the initiative: “Through this agreement, we are scaling up investment in the first mile of food systems to create jobs, increase incomes and build more prosperous and resilient rural economies. When rural people have the opportunity to build businesses, connect to markets, and earn a decent living, the benefits extend far beyond rural areas.”

Under the new Cooperation and Co-financing Agreement, the IsDB and IFAD are developing a joint action plan to translate the ambitious goal into tangible investments. The plan will broaden cooperation across critical areas, including agribusiness value

chains, market access, rural finance and financial inclusion, climate adaptation, sustainable natural resource management, and water access. The agreement paves the way for expanded private-sector operations to support agribusinesses and rural small-to medium-sized enterprises.

To maximize impact, the partnership will leverage the full capabilities of the wider IsDB Group. This collaborative approach cre-

ates new avenues for blending development finance, trade finance, investment, and risk mitigation to support rural transformation.

Participating affiliates include the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD), the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), and the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC).

This landmark agreement marks a dynamic

new chapter in a partnership that began in 1980. Since then, IsDB and IFAD have successfully co-financed 29 projects with a combined value of approximately \$1.45b.

The new \$750m target underscores a bold, joint commitment to accelerate this cooperation and deliver transformative investment at greater scale across common member countries.



Some of the climate-resilient agricultural produce showcased by farmers at the Foundation for Sustainable Smallholder Solutions (FSSS) event to commemorate the 2026 World Food Day in Bauchi.

‘Nigeria Needs Integrated Agric Ecosystem To Meet Recognised Standards’

From Cornelius Essen, Abuja

THE Managing Director of Autodex Nigeria Limited, Prince Tony Ifeakandu has stated explicitly that Nigeria needs to build an integrated agricultural ecosystem that would produce efficiently, record fewer losses, and finances strategically to meet recognised standards, as well as exports competitively.

Ifeakandu made the assertion in Abuja on the upcoming Farmfatech Expo 2026, the third edition of Nigeria’s Farm, Food and Allied Technologies, bringing together policymakers, financial institutions, investors, technology providers, farmers manufacturers, and development partners.

He also explained that the event is strategically scheduled for November 9-11, saying that the participation would reflect the importance of bringing finance, policy, agricultural development, trade, risk management and security into a coordinated national conversation.

“Our agricultural challenge is not simply how to produce more food, but how to mechanise production, expand irrigation, preserve harvested crops, improve logistics and storage, and transform outputs into commercially viable products for domestic consumption and export.”

Ifeakandu added that post-harvest losses represent major economic opportunity, and “if we could preserve, process, commercially export the agricultural produce it currently loses after harvest, the additional value generated could be transforma-

tive for the national economy.”

According to him, Farmfatech Expo therefore will place particular emphasis on modern drying systems, storage infrastructure, cold-chain development, standardised logistics, processing and market access, mobilising Nigeria’s Agricultural Ecosystem for Industrialisation.

Also, the Chairman of Organising Committee, Dr Nnamdi Ezeani, emphasised that the aims are to move the conversation beyond agricultural potential towards practical collaboration, investment and measurable outcomes, and driving local manufacturing, technology transfer, finance and export for Africa’s prosperity.

He argued that agricultural potential cannot be fully converted into economic prosperity without bringing together government, financial institutions, investors, manufacturers, farmers, technology providers and development partners to develop practical solutions.

On certification and traceability, Ezeani stated that they are trying to strengthen farmers’ identification, product, quality assurance and standards required for domestic and international markets, while aligning production, logistics, certification and processing with regional and global market requirements.

“Therefore, we need mechanisation, irrigation, modern processing, drying, storage, cold-chain infrastructure and efficient logistics to reduce post-harvest losses and make our agricultural products competitive in local and international markets,” he added.

Bauchi Farmers, FSSS Celebrate World Food Day With Climate-resilient Agric Produce

From Rauf Oyewole, Bauchi

FARMERS in Bauchi State have showcased climate-resilient agricultural produce and alternative livelihood products at an event organised by the Foundation for Sustainable Smallholder Solutions (FSSS) to commemorate the 2026 World Food Day.

The event, brought together farmers and beneficiaries of the foundation’s interventions across seven local council areas in Bauchi North Senatorial District to showcase agricultural technologies, farming practices and products aimed at strengthening food security and improving livelihoods.

The Emir of Katagum, Umar Faruq, urged farmers to embrace dry-season farming, saying reliance on rain-fed agriculture alone could undermine efforts to achieve food security amid changing weather conditions.

The emir, represented by the Uban Doma of the emirate, Umbaru Lili Hassan, said farmers should apply the knowledge and technologies acquired through the foundation’s training to expand agricultural production beyond the rainy season.

“Our people are farmers, but I am aware that the training by this group has empowered you with new technologies. So, I call on you to take the training seriously, especially for dry-season farming,” he said.

He added, “We can no longer survive only with rainy-season farming. We need our farmers to embrace dry-season farming.”

The emir expressed optimism that the adoption of improved farming methods would enhance agricultural productivity and contribute to food security in the state.

Speaking at the event, the Lead Brand and Communication Manager of FSSS, Clinton Inene, said the celebration provided an opportunity to showcase the achievements of the foundation’s interventions over the past year.

He said the programme covered Katagum, Gamawa, Giade, Itas Gadau, Jama’are, Zaki and Shira local council areas, with a focus on strengthening farmers’ resilience to climate change, improving household livelihoods and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

“Today is more like a combination of all the activities that we have been doing for the past one year in Bauchi North. What we have been doing in these local councils is building resilience on the farm and strengthening the livelihood resilience of farmers,” Inene said.

He explained that the foundation had introduced agroforestry, water-conservation techniques, irrigation systems, fertilisers and drought-resistant seeds to help farmers adapt to changing weather conditions.

According to him, agroforestry encourages farmers to grow trees alongside crops to improve soil quality and mitigate the effects of adverse weather conditions.

He said water-conservation techniques would help farmers retain

water beyond the rainy season, while irrigation systems would enable them to cultivate crops during dry periods.

Inene said the foundation also organised a farmers’ market where beneficiaries displayed agricultural produce and products from skills acquired through its livelihood support programme.

He noted that some beneficiaries had diversified into non-farm businesses, including bag production, paint-making, soap production and hairdressing, to generate additional income and reduce their dependence on farming.

The manager stressed that food security required more than increasing agricultural production, noting that access to balanced and nutritious meals was equally important.

He said the foundation was promoting backyard gardening, fruit-tree cultivation and the rearing of small livestock, including goats, rabbits and chickens, to improve household nutrition while providing additional sources of income.

One of the beneficiaries, Umar Abdulraheem, a rice miller from Gojon Jeji in Jama’are local council, said support from the foundation had improved his business and enabled him to establish a more organised enterprise.

Abdulraheem said the foundation provided him with milling machines and constructed a structure for his business, improving his working environment.

Achebe Commends Glo’s Commitment To Preservation Of Cultural Heritage

THE Obi of Onitsha, Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe, has commended Globacom for its strategic support for the Ofala festival, noting that the partnership has been instrumental in transforming the festival into a globally acclaimed cultural event.

At the 2026 Ofala Festival on Friday, Achebe gave a massive nod of appreciation to the technology company for being a principal sponsor of Ofala for the past 15 years. “Their partnership has transformed the festival from a palace ritual to a world-renowned cultural festival. Since 2011, Globacom has stood with us as our principal partner – now 15 consecutive

years of unwavering commitment.

“In good times and challenging times, Globacom has helped us preserve the authenticity of Ofala while enhancing its presentation, documentation, broadcast and global reach. They have helped take a living heritage to the global stage,” Achebe noted.

He also praised the vision of the Chairman of Globacom, Dr. Mike Adenuga Jr., for his commitment to the preservation of Nigeria’s cultural heritage.

“I thank Globacom and its Chairman, Otunba (Dr) Mike Adenuga, Jr., GCON, a true man of culture, for his vision and belief that culture is not a lux-

ury but a foundation for unity,” Achebe stated.

He added that the theme of this year’s edition, ‘Igba Mbo, Iga N’Iru’ – Strive and Advance – is a call to industry, excellence, self-improvement and collective progress.

“It reflects the spirit of our forebears who built a kingdom on the Niger, and it speaks to our youth who must carry that heritage forward with enterprise and purpose,” he said.

Offering his warm regards to the Igwe and the good people of Onitsha, Adenuga said, “our association with the Ofala Festival since 2011 has been much more than a corporate partnership.

FUHSI Chancellor Tasks Graduates On Service To Humanity

From Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan

THE Chancellor of the Federal University of Health Sciences, Ila-Orangun (FUHSI), Osun State, Alhaji Ibrahim Ibn Umar Ibrahim El-Kanemi, has charged graduating students of the institution to dedicate their knowledge and skills to serving humanity, particularly the vulnerable, the forgotten and the voiceless.

El-Kanemi gave the charge on Friday during the university’s maiden convocation ceremony held at the university pavilion in Ila-Orangun, Osun State.

Addressing the graduates, the Chancellor urged them to embrace three essential principles as they begin the next phase of their lives: character alongside knowledge, service before self and life-long learning.

He urged them to pursue their ambitions with humility and ethical conduct, while upholding the values of the institution and making it proud through their actions and professional practices.

The chancellor expressed gratitude to Almighty God for the historic occasion, describing the convocation as an important milestone in

the university’s development.

Also speaking, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Akeem Olawale Lasisi, expressed appreciation to the graduating students, distinguished guests, members of the congregation and the university’s Governing Council for their contributions to the institution.

Lasisi described the maiden convocation as a significant milestone in FUHSI’s history, noting that the university had recorded progress within a few years of its establishment.

He urged the graduates to uphold ethical standards and demonstrate professionalism in their respective fields.

PUBLIC NOTICE
LOSS OF TITLE DOCUMENT

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC OF THE LOSS OF ORIGINAL TITLE DOCUMENT BEING DEED OF CONVEYANCE, BELONGING TO CAROLINE OLABISI MAJEKODUNMI, IN RESPECT OF THE PROPERTY SITUATE, LYING AT ISOLO-AIYETORO MUSHIN, AND KNOWN AS PLOT NO. 39 OF S. A. AJAO’S LAYOUT AT MUSHIN IN IKEJA DIVISION OF THE WESTERN REGION OF THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA, REGISTERED AS NO. 39 ON PAGE 39 IN VOLUME 179 AND DATED 17TH JANUARY 1957, AT THE LAGOS STATE LAND REGISTRY, ALAUSA, IKEJA, LAGOS, NIGERIA.

THAT THE DEED OF CONVEYANCE HAS BEEN IN MY POSSESSION AND CUSTODY UNTIL I DISCOVERED IT TO BE MISSING/LOST AND ALL EFFORTS TO TRACE THE MISSING TITLE DOCUMENT HAVE PROVED ABORTIVE.

THAT THE PROPERTY IS NOT SOLD, MORTGAGED OR DEPOSITED IN ANY BANK FOR FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS.

THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ALL AUTHORITIES CONCERNED AND THE LAGOS STATE LAND REGISTRY, LAND BUREAU OFFICE, ALAUSA IKEJA, LAGOS SHOULD TAKE NOTE.

SIGNED:
CAROLINE OLABISI MAJEKODUNMI

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT, 2020 (AS AMENDED)
COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

NOTICE OF
ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING 2026

(Pursuant to Section 237(1), 238, 240, 241 (1), 242 - 244 of CAMA and Articles 49 and 52 of the Articles of Association)



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the 48th Annual General Meeting of Arbico Plc. ("the Company") shall be held at 11:00 a.m., on Thursday, 12 November 2026, at Ilubirin Mixed Use Development Ring Rd, Lagos Island, Lagos State, Nigeria and via teleconference, to transact the following business:

AGENDA:

ORDINARY BUSINESS

- Presentation of Audited Financial Statements along with the Accompanying Reports**
To receive and consider the Reports of the Directors and the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2025 together with the Auditor’s Report and the Audit Committee Report.
- Retirement and Re-election/Appointment of Directors**
To retire one-third of the Directors of the Company and to re-appoint or appoint new Directors in place of those retiring from office or those duly nominated by member(s) of the Company in accordance with the provisions of the Company’s Articles of Association and the Companies and Allied matters Act, 2020 (as Amended).
- Re-appointment and fixing of remuneration of the Auditors**
To re-appoint as External Auditors of the Company, the firm, Kreston Pedabo, and to authorize the directors to fix the remuneration of the External Auditors.
- Election of members of the Audit Committee**
To elect members of the Audit Committee of the Company.
- Disclosure of remuneration of the Company’s managers**
To disclose the remuneration of the Directors of the Company.

NOTE:

- Proxy**
A member of the Company entitled to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting is entitled to appoint a Proxy to attend and vote on his/her behalf. A proxy need not be a member of the Company. A proxy form is enclosed and if it is to be valid for the purpose of the Meeting, it must be completed, duly stamped by the Commissioner of Stamp Duties and deposited at the registered office of the Company or the office of the Registrar of the Company, Apel Registrars Limited at 8, Alhaji Bashorun Street, off Norman Williams Crescent, South-West Ikoyi Lagos or forwarded by email to registrars@apel.com.ng or obalola@apelasset.com not later than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting. A corporate member of the Company is required to execute a proxy under seal. Please note that the Company will bear the cost of stamping the proxy forms in line with the guidelines issued by the Corporate Affairs Commission.
- Live Streaming of the AGM**
The AGM will be a hybrid meeting and will be streamed live online. This will enable Shareholders and other Stakeholders who choose not to attend physically to follow the proceedings. The link for the AGM live streaming will be made available on the Company’s website at www.arbico.ng.
- Audit Committee**
In accordance with Section 404(6) of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 (as Amended), any member may nominate another shareholder as a member of the Audit Committee by giving notice in writing of such nomination to the Company Secretary at least 21 days before the Annual General Meeting. Section 404 (5) of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 (as Amended) provides that all the members of the Audit Committee shall be financially literate and at least one (1) member shall be a member of a professional accounting body in Nigeria established by an Act of the National Assembly. The Code of Corporate Governance 2018, issued by the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria, pursuant to the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act of 2011 (as amended via 2023 Amendment Act) also provides that members of the Audit Committee should be financially literate and able to read and interpret financial statements.
- We therefore request that those nominations be forwarded with a copy of the nominee’s curriculum vitae.
- Closure of Register of Members**
The Register of Members and Transfer Books of the Company will be closed from 3 November 2026 to 6 November 2026 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of updating the Register of Members.
- Rights of Shareholders to Ask Questions**
Shareholders have a right to ask questions at the Annual General Meeting and shall be required to send their written questions at least five (5) days before the Meeting.

Dated this 15th day of October 2026

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

S & A NOMINEES

S & A NOMINEES LIMITED

S & A NOMINEES LIMITED
Company Secretary
FRC/2015/COY/00000006079

www.arbico.ng

2027: IPC Urges Journalists To Prioritise Fact-checking Ahead Of Polls

From **Adewale Momoh, Akure**

THE International Press Centre (IPC), Lagos, has called on journalists in Ondo State to strengthen fact-checking, verification and professional accountability in their reporting as the country prepares for the general election in 2027. According to the centre, accurate, balanced and issue-based reporting is essential to protecting public trust, promoting informed participation and strengthening democratic accountability during the electoral process.

The position was stressed during an interface with members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), editors and

publishers on professional and democratic accountability in journalism ahead of the polls held in Akure, Ondo State.

The engagement was organised by the IPC under Component Four (Support to Media) of the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN III) programme.

The IPC Programme Manager, Stella Nwofia, who spoke on behalf of the centre's Executive Director, Lanre Arogundade, said the engagement was timely as the country approaches another election cycle, stressing the need for media professionals to reassess their reporting practices and

strengthen their capacity to provide credible, inclusive and public-interest information.

While emphasising that elections go beyond political campaigns, rallies, candidates and the announcement of results, she maintained that they also involved citizens' aspirations, concerns and expectations of leadership.

"Beyond reporting political activities and electoral events, the media has a responsibility to facilitate informed public discourse, scrutinise political promises, hold public officials accountable and ensure that citizens' voices are heard in the democratic process," she said.

NUC Tasks Graduates To Solve Problems, Drive National Development

By **Adelowo Adebunmi**

THE National Universities Commission (NUC) has called on Nigerian universities to embed quality assurance as an enduring institutional culture while tasking fresh graduates to harness their knowledge to solve societal problems and drive national development.

The commission's Executive Secretary, Prof. Abdullahi Yusuf Ribadu, made the call on Friday at the 5th Convocation Ceremony of Trinity University, Yaba, Lagos.

Ribadu, represented by Head of the NUC Lagos Office, Dr. Ayoteju Ogun, said the light of a university shines brightest when its graduates establish

themselves through knowledge, integrity, innovation and service to humanity.

He said: "The world you are entering will demand more than certificates; it will demand competence, creativity, integrity and resilience. Do not wait for every opportunity to come your way, develop the capacity to create opportunities for yourselves and others."

Reaffirming the commission's commitment to strengthening the quality and global competitiveness of Nigerian universities, the NUC boss emphasised that quality assurance must transcend mere regulatory compliance to reflect effective teaching, credible assessments and entrepreneurial solutions.

Aligning with the NUC's vision for societal impact, the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Trinity University, Pastor Samuel Olatunji, delivered a passionate charge to the 323 graduating students, urging them to stay in the country, build resilience and lead the process of national renewal.

"To the youth of Nigeria, you are not helpless. You are gifted, creative and resilient. Do not trade your hope. Build where you are, serve where you are and lead where you are. The future of this nation will be written by those who refuse to give up on it. Go into this country and heal it; go into its economy and build it," he charged graduates.

Makinde Assures LAUTECH Teaching Hospital Staff Of Minimum Wage Payment

From **Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan**

OYO State Governor and Presidential Candidate of the Allied Peoples Movement (APM), 'Seyi Makinde, has assured striking workers at the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) Teaching Hospital, Ogbomoso, that the state government will address all their outstanding demands.

The governor stated that issues including salary arrears, minimum wage arrears, promotion arrears and the Medical Residency Training Bill would be resolved promptly. He appealed for understanding from the workers, noting that the state's economic challenges stem from rising financial obligations that now far exceed available revenues.

Speaking during a meeting with stakeholders at the teaching hospital, Makinde explained that despite public assumptions about increased federal allocations, Oyo State's wage bill has risen sharply from N4.5 billion in 2019 to N18 billion in 2026. He added that

major infrastructure projects have also become significantly more expensive, citing the 76-kilometre Iseyin-Fapote-Ogbomoso Road, which cost N43 billion in 2023 but would now require at least N200 billion due to inflation and broader economic pressures.

Makinde said: "Initially, I didn't want to respond to those who are on strike. But if there are challenges, we must find ways to solve them. You put this government in place. The first step is for you to call off the strike, and once you assure me of that, we can move forward. This is our state; how we lay our bed is how we will lie on it."

He emphasised the need for workers to be considerate, given the state's current financial realities.

"When I assumed office in 2019, FAAC was around N6-N7 billion, and the first salary bill I signed was N4.5 billion. Today, the same road project we executed for N43 billion would cost N200 billion. That is our situation," Makinde said.

Adebayo Promises To Overhaul Justice System To Address Inequalities

From **John Akubo, Abuja**

THE 2027 presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Prince Adewole Adebayo, has launched a scathing attack on Nigeria's criminal justice system, accusing it of protecting the rich while poor citizens suffer harsh punishment for petty offences. "We cannot have a criminal justice system run by criminals," he declared, promising a sweeping overhaul if elected president.

Adebayo spoke in an address delivered on his behalf by his campaign's Chief Media and Communications Adviser, Mark Adebayo, at the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR) annual lecture in Lagos, themed, 'Understanding Human Rights Beyond Emotions and Personal Interests.'

In his address titled, 'The Counter-Intuitive Architecture of Human Rights,' Adebayo questioned a system he said appeared to punish the poor harshly while allowing

wealthy individuals accused of corruption to enjoy privileges.

He contrasted a poor person jailed for stealing bread worth N1,000 with powerful individuals accused of diverting trillions of naira in public funds.

"The one who steals trillions from the treasury is taken to and fro court in luxury jeeps," he said, promising to reform the criminal justice system to ensure equal treatment before the law, protect the innocent and punish those found guilty.

Adebayo warned that perceived double standards were destroying public confidence in the justice system and encouraging self-help.

He also defended the right of every accused person to legal representation, fair hearing and the presumption of innocence, regardless of the allegations against them.

According to him, defending an accused person does not amount to endorsing the alleged crime.



Cross section of Nigerian Army Officers' Wives Association (NAOWA) during a sensitization programme on Nigerian Army operations and their roles to mission success in Port-Harcourt... on Friday.

PHOTO: NAN

Govt Must Invest In Medical Education To Transform Healthcare, Says Faduyile

By **Sunday Aikulola**

THE Senator representing Ondo South Senatorial District, Prof. Francis Faduyile, has called for deliberate investment in medical education to transform the nation's healthcare system.

He stated this at the recent ninth Felix Dosekun Memorial Lecture organised by the College of Medicine, University of Lagos (CMUL) with the theme, 'Quality Medical Education as a Pillar for Achieving Universal Health Coverage.'

The event formed part of activities marking the College Week 2026.

Faduyile stated that the nation's ambition to provide accessible and affordable healthcare depends on the competence and capabilities of health professionals.

"We must invest deliberately in medical education, not simply as an academic obligation. We must also invest in research and digital infrastructure."

"We must create a health system of retaining the professionals that we train. We must review the curricula, invest in community based education and primary healthcare exposure. We must do more digital and AI simulation and faculty development," he said.

He advised medical educators to be teachers, mentors and innovators.

Accion Commits To Delivering Financial Solutions To Curb Business Challenges

By **Ngozi Egenuka**

ACCION Microfinance Bank has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening relationships and delivering financial solutions that support individuals and businesses.

It stated this at the South-West edition of its Regional Customer Forum in Sango-Ota and Ibadan, which formed part of its 20th anniversary activities. Conversations on customer experiences, evolving financial needs, service delivery and solutions available to support personal and business goals were some of the topics discussed at the forum.

Speaking at the Sango-Ota forum, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Accion Mi-

crofinance Bank, Mr. Taiwo Joda, reaffirmed the bank's commitment to delivering customer-focused financial solutions, noting that meaningful customer engagement remains central to the bank's strategy for sustainable growth.

He explained that the Regional Customer Forum was designed to provide a platform for open dialogue, allowing the bank to better understand customers' evolving needs and gather valuable feedback that will help shape future products, services and customer experience initiatives.

"We recognise that the financial landscape is constantly evolving and customer expect-

tations continue to change. To remain relevant and effective, we must continuously improve our service delivery, embrace innovation and create solutions that truly meet their needs," he said.

Speaking on the significance of the engagement, Regional Bank Head, Mr. Ebenezer Adeoye, noted the bank's dedication to supporting businesses and communities across the South-West.

"The South-West region continues to demonstrate remarkable entrepreneurial potential. Engagements like this allow us to better understand the realities our customers face and respond with solutions that truly make a difference."

Why Constituents Should Support Ogah's Re-election Bid - Mgbenkemdi

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

APROFESSOR of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapist, Ejike Hyacinth Mgbenkemdi, has called on the people of Isuikwuato/Umunneochi Federal Constituency to support the re-election bid of the member representing the constituency, Dr. Amobi Godwin Ogah.

Mgbenkemdi, who hails from Umudim Ngodo, Isuochi, said the debate ahead of the 2027 elections should focus less on political sentiments and more on what representatives have achieved with the mandate entrusted to them.

He said Ogah, who entered the National Assembly in 2023, had in his first term at-

tracted attention to healthcare, education, infrastructure, agriculture, youth development, women empowerment and economic support.

"Three years may be short in the calendar of politics, but it can be long enough to reveal something important about a leader: direction. And direction matters," Mgbenkemdi said.

The professor said reported interventions in healthcare, including work around Isuikwuato General Hospital, Achara Hospital, medical outreaches and provision of equipment, should be assessed based on the difference they make in the lives of residents.

He also pointed to education-related interventions such as scholarships, WAEC support, classroom projects and ICT initiatives, arguing that investment in education could have effects beyond the tenure of any politician.

"A politician may leave office. A student who receives education may change an entire family," he said.

On empowerment, Mgbenkemdi said initiatives involving grants, vehicles, tricycles, motorcycles, equipment and other forms of business support should ultimately be measured by whether they help beneficiaries become more economically independent.

African Enterprises Possess Immense Resilience –Ajani

By Gbenga Salau

THE President, Seed Nigeria Network, Omololami Ajani, has said that African enterprises possess immense resilience in navigating complex operating environments marked by infrastructure gaps, currency volatility and shifting policies.

Ajani stated this while delivering the welcome address at the Seed Nigeria landmark inaugural summit, Seed G3 2026 (Growth • Grit • Global) in Lagos, where he reflected on the decade-long journey of the Stanford Graduate School of Business initiative in Nigeria and the profound power of peer entrepreneurship.

The conference was anchored on the theme, 'Resilience to Relevance: Scaling African Enterprises for Global Markets.'

Ajani wondered if survival must always be the greatest achievement of African businesses.

"Seed G3 2026 is designed to push us beyond survival mode, to build institutionalised companies capable of competing internationally, attracting institutional capital and scaling sustainably," he said.

Otti Support Group Picks Ogah As BoT Chairman

By Christian Okpara

FORMER Minister of State for Mines and Steel Development, Dr. Uche Ogah, has been named the chairman of Board of Trustees (BoT) of Ottomania Legacy Group, a political campaign group, whose mandate is to mobilise support for Dr. Alex Otti's re-election as Abia State governor.

Ogah is also listed as chairman of the Advisory Board, which includes members drawn from different professional and public service backgrounds.

The body has former world wrestling champion, Osita Offor, also known as De Ultimate Commander, as its president, while former Finance Minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iwuala is one of the body's patrons.

Director of Publicity and Spokesperson of the group, Bright Ejike, in a statement made available to The Guardian on Friday, listed High Chief Raymond I. Nkemdirim, Pastor Caleb O.N. Ajagba, Henry Okoroafor, Ikechukwu Uwanna, Navy Commander McDonald Ubah (rtd.), Mazi Sunny Afurobi, Chimezie Ukaegbu, Dr. Salome Obiukwu, Prince Emeka Kalu and Lady Grace Ibeh as the movement's conveners.

Listed alongside Prof. Okonjo-Iwuala as patrons are several political leaders, public office holders, professionals.

Shettima Charges Oyebanji To Raise Governance Standards In Second Term

From Terhemba Daka (Abuja) and Ayodele Afolabi (Ado-Ekiti)

VICE President Kashim Shettima has charged Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji, to raise the standard of governance, expand opportunities for young people and deliver greater public value in his second term, warning that his renewed mandate comes with higher expectations.

Shettima gave the charge on Friday in Ado-Ekiti while representing President Bola Tinubu at Oyebanji's inauguration for a second term.

He said the governor must justify the confidence reposed in him by improving public services, opening more opportunities for the youth and ensuring that the needs of underserved communities remain central to government policy.

According to the Vice

President, Oyebanji's re-election should spur him to greater service rather than complacency, with the next four years requiring the same generosity of spirit, humility and willingness to listen that earned him victory.

"The louder the applause, the greater the obligation it announces," Shettima said.

Addressing the governor, he added: "They have examined your first term and entrusted you with their next four years. Honour that judgment by opening more doors for the young, raising the quality of public service and keeping faith with those whose voices are seldom heard at occasions such as this."

Shettima congratulated Oyebanji on his renewed mandate, describing it as a testament to democratic accountability and the work

required to earn public trust.

He also attributed the support enjoyed by the Tinubu administration and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to public recognition of the need for economic reforms aimed at securing Nigeria's economic survival.

He said Tinubu had confronted fiscal burdens and structural distortions that would have caused greater damage if left unaddressed, adding that the sacrifices Nigerians had endured must ultimately translate into improved livelihoods and wider economic opportunities.

"Their patience deserves an economy that rewards work, expands opportunity and makes public resources answer more faithfully to public needs," he said.

Shettima thanked Ekiti resi-

dents for renewing the APC's mandate, saying the party must remain conscious of its obligation to the electorate.

He cited investments in roads, schools, healthcare facilities and electricity, alongside the Ekiti Agro-Allied International Cargo Airport, as initiatives expected to improve connectivity, support businesses and expand economic opportunities.

Shettima assured the state of continued support from the Federal Government, while acknowledging the state's contributions to Nigeria's intellectual and political development.

In his inaugural speech, Oyebanji thanked the people for giving him another term, pledging to sustain the state's unity and deliver on their expectations.



Oyo State Governor and Allied People's Movement (APM) Presidential Candidate, Seyi Makinde (left); his deputy, Bayo Lawal; former Deputy Governor of Oyo State, Alhaji Hamid Gbadamosi; and Secretary to the Oyo State Government, Prof Musibau Babatunde during the stakeholders consultative meeting on year 2027 budget, held at International Conference Centre, University of Ibadan. PHOTO: OYO GOV'S MEDIA UNIT.

Lagos Announces N200m Agrithon Initiative To Transform Food Systems

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

LAGOS State government has set aside N200 million for the Lagos Agrithon 3.0 initiative aimed at scaling up youth-led agribusinesses and agritech innovations to transform the state's food systems from farm to fork.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, who announced this on Friday at an event to commemorate the 2026 World Food Day in Ikeja, called on all stakeholders to renew their

commitment to a common purpose: a Lagos where food is not just available but accessible, safe, nutritious and affordable.

Sanwo-Olu, represented by his deputy, Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, said the measure of the successes recorded by the state is not the number of programmes launched or facilities built, but the lasting improvement in people's lives.

He said: "Five priorities must guide us. Firstly, accelerate

innovation and the adoption of appropriate technology. Secondly, deepen partnerships with food-producing states, investors, development partners and research institutions. Lagos cannot achieve food security alone.

"Thirdly, invest in the people who drive our food economy, with access to skills, finance, technology and markets. Fourthly, reduce post-harvest losses through better storage, processing, logistics and market coordination. And

fifth, pursue affordability, nutrition and sustainability together."

The governor noted that this year's World Food Day with the theme, 'Innovate Today, Nourish Tomorrow,' highlights the need for new ideas and practical solutions to address hunger and malnutrition.

He said the day also calls for sustained commitment and decisive action to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, nutritious food.

Olanipekun, Ajileye Urge Careful Enforcement Of Cybercrime Laws

By Moyosore Salami

TWO renowned legal scholars, Wole Olanipekun (SAN), Visiting Professor of Practice, Federal University Oye Ekiti (FUOYE), and Alaba Omolaiye-Ajileye, Professor of Law at National Open University, have separately advocated a cautious, balanced and constitutionally-guided application of Nigeria's cybercrime laws, warning against the use of criminal defamation and cyberstalking provisions to suppress legitimate criticism and freedom of expression.

The duo, who were guest lecturer and guest speaker respectively at FUOYE's Faculty of Law Fifth Annual Public Lecture, held in the University, were also of the opinion that cyber and digital communication technologies, as imperative and useful as they are, remained grave security and human dignity concerns to the world in view their exceptional peculiarity.

The gravest, according to them, is the peculiar difficulty or almost impossibility to police the application and use of the technologies.

The lecture, titled 'The

Jurisprudence of Criminal Defamation and Cyberstalking Under Nigerian Law: Examining the Intersection of Legal Theory, Human Dignity and Digital Responsibility,' examined the complex legal and ethical questions arising from the increasing use of digital communication platforms.

Omolaiye-Ajileye, a retired judge of the High Court of Kogi State, expressed concerns over the fact that the technologies operate in a lawless and borderless global arena where there is no one or common enforcement agent to police it.

He further noted that their decentralised characteristics make them available for all characters to use and operate, largely for commission of crimes and assault on human dignity.

Olanipekun, a former National President of the Nigerian Bar Association, while corroborating the fear raised by Omolaiye-Ajileye, however warned against attempts to deploy national or territorial laws in protecting individuals against online harassment, cyberbullying, reputational attacks and other forms of digital abuse.

NCC Sets Up Working Group To Improve Internet Governance

By Isaac Chibuike

THE Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has launched an Internet Governance Working Group to improve stakeholder participation and address compliance gaps, following a survey that found only two of 19 licensees fully ready to implement the Internet Code of Practice (ICOP) 2026.

Presenting the findings at the commission's Internet Governance Symposium in Lagos, the NCC's Head of Governance Unit, Dr. Ibiso Kingsley-George, said licensees needed clearer implementation guidelines, reporting templates and guidance on the code's requirements.

She said cybersecurity obligations and provisions on artificial intelligence (AI) were among the most difficult requirements for licensees to meet.

The survey covered 47 respondents from industry, academia and civil society, including seven mobile network operators, five internet service providers and 12 academic institutions.

Tinubu Seeks Speedy Confirmation Of Six Nominees For INEC Jobs

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has urged the Senate to expedite the confirmation of six nominees to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), as the commission moves to fill vacancies ahead of the 2027 general election.

The nominees comprise four national commissioners and two Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs), whose appointments are expected to strengthen the commission's personnel ahead of the next electoral cycle.

According to a statement on Friday by the President's Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, Tinubu has also reappointed Dr. Bala Bila as the national commissioner representing the North-East.

The president nominated Professor Mustapha Aliu to replace Prof. Abdullahi Zuru as the North-West representative and Bashir Muhammed Umar to succeed Prof. Muhammad Adamu as the North-Central representative.

He also nominated Mrs. Oluwatoyin Babalola, the current Resident Electoral Commissioner in Osun State, as the national commissioner representing the South-West. She is to replace Prof. Cornelius Ajayi, whose tenure expires on October 24.

CHANGE OF NAME

ADDITION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Olorunfunmi Ajose now wish to be addressed as Olorunfunmi Princess Oyinkansola Mautin Ajose . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Oriaku Nancy now wish to be addressed as Oriaku Nancy Chioma . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Miss Gbadamosi Oreoluwa Daniella now wish to be addressed as Miss Gbadamosi Oreoluwa Hairat Daniella All former documents remain valid. General public note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Nwafor Franca now wish to be known as Nwafor Francisca Kaodilichukwu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADEBAYO: I, formerly known as Adebayo Balikis Omowunmi now wish to be addressed as Sanni Balikis Omowunm. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADEWUSI: I, formerly known as Cassandra Adunola Poroye Benson now wish to be addressed as Cassandra Adunola Poroye Adewusi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADEYEYE : I, formerly known as Miss Adeyeye Omolade Christiana now addressed as Mrs. Irinsanmi Moyin Omolade. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AGENT: I, formerly known as Agent John Fungbe now wish to be addressed as Oyadongha John Funkekeme. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AIYENOMURO: I, formerly known as Aiyenomuro Olu-funnlola Oluwakemi now wish to be addressed as Adeniyi Olu-funnlola Oluwakemi. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

AKHANENE: I, formerly known as Ogwu Madonna now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Madonna Augustine Akhanene . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

AKINTOYE: I, formerly known as Miss Akintoye Temitope now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Egungbohun Temitope . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ANI : I, formerly known as Ani Maureen Nwanneka now wish known and addressed as Okorie Maureen Nwanneka. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ANUNAGBA: I, formerly known as Anunagba Blossom Ogochukwu now wish to be addressed as Anunagba Zane Kenechukwu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

AYO: I, formerly Ayo Moses Oluwademilade, now wish to correct my name to be addressed as Anifowose Moses Sunday. Former documents remain valid. General public, and authorities take note.

BOGUNJOKO: I, formerly known as Miss Omolola Bogunjoko now wish to be addressed as Mrs Omolola Adekanye. All former documents remain valid. General Public note.

CHINEDU: I, formerly known as Chinedu Precious Mmuka now wish to be addressed as Precious Brendan Njoku. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: That, Okosun Victoria, and, Okosun Omonigbo Victoria, is same person now wish to be addressed as Okosun Victoria. All former documents remains valid . General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Gift Ime Essien now wish to be addressed as Johanna Gift. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : My name was wrongly written Adekanbi Foluke Angel Instead of Adekanmbi Foluke Abigeal. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Oko Jaja Favour now wish to be addressed as Okojaja Favour Michael. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME I , formerly known as Okeke Mary Ann Ozioma now wish to be addressed as Okeke Benedin Ozioma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME ON BVN: That my name was formerly written as Hassan Olaniyi Bolaji on my BVN, I now want to correct it to Oseni Jamiu Niyi henceforth. Other documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Ibiwoye Shola Olaniyi now wish to be addressed as Ibiwoye Olushola Olaniyi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, Mary Omoikhefe Ukpominan, Mary Ukpoma, Ihonde Mary .Ahonde Mary O. now to be addressed as Mary Omoikhefe Ukpomwan. All former documents remain valid. Public note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Oyetola Adeyemi Emmanuel now wish to be addressed as Oyetola Emmanuel Adeyemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

DAVID: I, formerly known as Miriam David, now wish to be addressed as Kalu Miriam Eke. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

DAVIS : I, formerly known as Anthony Davis Uchendu now wish to be known as Ahaneku Anthony Uchendu. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

EMEMOBONG: I, formerly known as Bassey Claire Ememobong now wish to be addressed as Bassey Emem-Obong Claire. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ENOOBONG: I, formerly known as Bassey Joan EnoObong now wish to be addressed as Bassey Eno-Obong Joan. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

FARAYOLA : I, formerly Moriam Olayinka Farayola now wish to be addressed as Moriam Olayinka Usman. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

GABRIEL: I, formerly known as Taiwo Kehinde Gabriel now wish to be addressed as Omolayole - Taiwo, Kehinde Gabriel .All former documents remain valid. General public take note

GANIU: I, formerly known as Miss Ganiu Mariam Opemipo, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Olanipekun-Ganiu Mariam Opemipo. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

IFEBUCHE : I,formerly known as Edeh Chioma Ifebuche now wish to be addressed as Edeh Chioma Jessica, my DOB is, 10-06-1996 not 10-06-1989. All former documents remains valid, public note.

IKENNA: I, formerly known as Ebere chinecherem Mary now wish to be addressed as Ikenna chinecherem Joy. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

KAMALE: I, formerly known as Grace Adamu Kamale now wish to be addressed as Grace Fidelis Kamale All former documents remain valid. General public take note

KANMA: I, formerly known as Isibhakhomen Deborah Onabulu now wish to be addressed as Isibhakhomen Deborah Kanma . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

KEGHNENGE : I, formerly known as Mrs. Patience Idia Keghnenge, wish to be known and addressed as Miss. Patience Idia Ogedegbe. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

KINGSLEY : I, formerly known as Ogbejesi Chidera Rita now wish to be addressed as Kingsley Chidera Rita . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

LADELE: I, formerly known as Osundiya Abisola Oluwapelumi now wish to be addressed as Ladele Abisola Oluwapelumi . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

MENE: I,formerly known as Nuka-Gbarayeghe Mene Duune now wish to be addressed as Nuka-Gbarayeghe Mene . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OBOH: I, formerly known as Mr. Oboh Israel Arouriwo, now wish to be addressed as Mr. Richard Israel Arouriwo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OBUEZE : I, formerly known as Miss Obueze Genevine Ngozi, now wish to be known as Mrs. Enebe Genevine Ngozi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OGBONNA: I, formerly Miss Ogbonna, Jeanne Ugomma now wish to be addressed as Mrs Gabriel, Jeanne Ugomma. Former documents remain valid. General public and authorities take note.

OGUGUO : I, formerly known as Miss Oguguo Ihuoma Paschaline now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ntiegbulem Ihuoma Paschaline. Former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

OHAE: I, formerly known Ohale-Charles Thelma Princess now wish to be addressed as Ohale Thelma Nkechi Chiamaka .All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OJO: I, formerly known as Mrs, Tumininu Abisola Ojo now wish to be addressed as Mrs Oluwatumininu Abisola Ojo . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OKORO: I , formerly known as JaneFrancis Kelechi Okoro now wish to be addressed as JaneFrancis Kelechi Alexander . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLADOKUN: I, formerly known as Bukola Oluwaseun Bakare now wish to be addressed as Bukola Oluwaseun Oladokun .All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLAGUNJU: I, formerly known as Helen Chiakame Stephen now wish to be addressed as Helen Chiakame Olagunju. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLAIIYA: I, formerly Olaiya Naomi Anuoluwapo now wish to addressed as Olaiya Naomi Adeola. Former documents remain valid. General public, WAEC and authorities take note.

OLAORE : I, formerly known as Olaore Oluwatobi Damilola now wish to be addressed as Daniels Oluwatobi Damilola. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OMISSION OF NAME: AMADI: I, formerly known as Amadi Joseph, now wish to be addressed as Amadi Joseph Chukwuma. My NOUN Degree, Transcript, and English Medium Certificate bearing the omitted middle name remain valid as one and the same person. Foreign Academic Evaluation Agency/Board, CIMEA, Foreign Institutions, Embassies, and the general public take note.

OMONIYI : I, formerly known as Omoniyi Temitope Rosemary now wish to be addressed as Mrs. George Temitope Rosemary.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ONUOHA: I, formerly known as Miss Onuoha Bethel Akudo now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Olumba Bethel Akudo. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

ORUNJA: I, formerly Orunja, Oluwabusola Folasade now wish to be known as Orunja, Marianne Busola. All former documents remains valid. NIGERIAN IMMIGRATION public take note

OSAZEE: I, formerly known as Odaro Uyi Osazee now wish to be known as Odaro Uyi Osaze. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OVO: I, formerly known as Miss Ovo Patience Uyoyo now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Okorefe Patience Uyoyo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

PECULIAR: I, formerly known as Miss Akpan Peculiar now wish to be known as Mrs. Ubreye, Peculiar. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

SUNDAY : I formerly known as Sunday Mercy Itohan now wish to be addressed as Ogedegbe Mercy Itohan M y DOB is 30-10-2001 not 10-10-2001. Former documents remains valid, public note.

News Extra

Otukpo Diocese Urges Prayers For Abducted Catholic Priest

By Felix Uroko

PALPABLE fear and anxiety have enveloped residents and the Catholic faithful in Benue State following the abduction of Rev. Fr. John Inalegwu Otache, the Parish Priest of St. Margaret's Parish, Ajegbe-Awume in Ohimini Local Council.

The cleric was allegedly intercepted and taken away by unidentified gunmen on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, along the Otobi Amejo-Ajegbe Road while returning to his parish from Otukpo.

The Catholic Diocese of Otukpo confirmed the incident in an official statement issued on Thursday by the Diocesan Chancellor, Rev. Fr.

Joseph Aboyi Itodo.

Expressing deep grief over the incident, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Otukpo, Most Rev. Michael Ekwoyi Apochi, appealed to the Christian faithful and well-meaning citizens to pray fervently for the priest's unhurt return, even as efforts were being intensified to secure his freedom.

"United in one heart and mind, we commend our brother, Fr. John, and all those in the kidnappers' den throughout the country to the efficacious intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary for their speedy and safe release from the hands of their abductors," the Chancellor added.

Group Urges Women Entrepreneurs To Collaborate, Leverage Technology For Growth

By Victor Gbonegun

FORMER Commissioner for Industry, Trade and Cooperatives in Edo State, Mrs. Afie Braimoh, has charged women entrepreneurs to embrace collaboration as a critical strategy to grow in business in the country.

She spoke at the NECA's Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW) 2026 summit titled, 'Rise, Lead and Transform' in Lagos.

The forum featured fireside chats and panel discussion on how women can leverage digital adoption, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the media to grow their businesses and ways to become women of influence in the society.

Braimoh said to rise, lead and

transform, there was a need to empower women to know what is important in business and trending the path to development.

"Women are the bedrock of any economy and we can do so much more, but we are so underrepresented in the global market and even locally. Women should be empowered with information, technology, AI. It's no longer about big companies; it's about women learning to collaborate. Every woman cannot be doing the same thing. When we come together, and bring our best skills and strengths together, we grow together. We must learn to reach out to another woman so we can all grow together," she said

ITF Has Positioned Nigeria For Global Competitiveness – Ogun

From Isa Abdulsalmi Ahovi, Jos

THE Federal Government's decision to establish the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) was informed by the fact that 10 years after independence in 1960, the country was still grappling with the twin problems of replacing the departing colonial workforce with qualified Nigerians and growing the industrial base of the new nation.

The Director-General of ITF, Dr. Afiz Oluwatoyin Ogun, stated this while marking the 55th anniversary of the Fund at its headquarters in Jos as well as his three years in office. Ogun pointed out that the ITF was charged with providing a pool of qualified Nigerians to

occupy key sectors of the economy, maintaining that the Fund has positioned Nigeria for global competitiveness.

"Today, 55 years later, we celebrate this landmark as a tribute to our commitment to resilience as an organisation. I am aware that we had to overcome numerous hamstrings and debilitating challenges that stood in our path while also contributing significantly to the goals and objectives of the Federal Government," he said.

According to him, in spite of the historic achievements of his predecessors, the current management was not resting on its oars.

CAF Beach Soccer AFCON Qualifiers

Ghana Mobilises Support Against Nigeria As Decisive Second Leg Holds In Keta

By Christian Okpara

GHANAIAN football officials have started mobilising support for their beach soccer national team ahead of the decisive leg of their Senegal 2026 African Beach Soccer Nations Cup qualifier against Nigeria. The Black Sharks of Ghana will host Nigeria's Super Sand Eagles tomorrow at the Keta Emancipation Beach. The first leg of the encounter ended in a thrilling 3-3 draw in Kaduna. According to reports from Accra, the Black Sharks have been preparing intensively in Keta with a view to beating Nigeria to the Beach Soccer Africa Cup of Nations ticket. A win will see the hosts through to the Beach Soccer Africa Cup of Nations in Senegal. The story said that the officials have been

• Kaduna Sure Sand Eagles Will Prevail

mobilising fans in the Volta Region and beyond to troop to the venue to support the Black Sharks to victory. Meanwhile, the Director of Sports Development in the Kaduna State Ministry of Sports Development, Hassan Buba, has assured the Super Sand Eagles that they will not lack support during the second leg of the tie in Ghana. Buba gave the message on behalf of the Kaduna State Commissioner for Sports Development, Ben Kure, during a visit by the Sand Eagles before their departure from Kaduna Thursday morning. He assured the players and officials of the

state government's support as they prepare for the decisive encounter. He also conveyed the commissioner's goodwill message, explaining that the latter was unable to attend due to another important engagement outside the State. He urged the team to maintain discipline throughout their stay in Ghana, offered prayers for a successful outing, and further

reaffirmed the state's support for the team, expressing confidence in their ability to secure a positive result. "We are solidly behind you in spirit, even though we cannot be physically present in Ghana. We are praying for you. Insha Allah, you will return victorious," he added. The Sand Eagles will travel to Ghana seeking to secure qualification for the 2026 Beach Soccer Africa Cup of Nations following a 3-3 draw in the first leg.

Nathaniel Idowu U-16 Football League

Race For Super 4 Slots Hots Up As League Enters Business End

By Daniel Akinola

THE title contenders are beginning to emerge as the Nathaniel Idowu U-16 Football League enters the business end at the New Maracana Sports Complex, Tolu, and the Nathaniel Idowu Football Pitch, Orege. The race for a place in the Super 4 reaches a crucial stage today as Week 7 delivers five important fixtures across the venues. After six rounds, Young 11 FA lead the standings with 16 points, followed by Fortune FA on 13, SC Heritage on 11, and Atico FA occupying the final qualification spot with 10 points. However, the race remains wide open, with Ajegunle United SC also on 10 points and St. Petersburg FA just one point further back on nine. The top four teams at the end of the league phase will progress to the Super 4 semi-finals and final. League leaders Young 11 FA remain unbeaten with five wins and one draw. Having scored 13 goals and conceded just two, they have established themselves as the team to beat. Their biggest test this weekend comes against fourth-placed Atico FA, who boast one of the league's most potent attacks with 19 goals. A victory for Young 11 would strengthen their grip on top spot, while Atico could reinforce

their Super 4 hopes with a statement result. Another major fixture sees second-placed Fortune FA face fifth-placed Ajegunle United SC. Fortune FA have been the league's most prolific side with 23 goals and will be eager to maintain pressure on the leaders. Ajegunle United, level on points with Atico, know a victory could propel them into the top four and significantly tighten the qualification race. Third-placed SC Heritage face bottom-placed Seraphic FA seeking to consolidate their position among the leading contenders. Heritage have remained consistent throughout the campaign and will view this as an opportunity to strengthen their hold on a Super 4 place. Elsewhere, sixth-placed St. Petersburg FA take on Bright Stars SA knowing that three points could move them closer to the qualification positions. Moore Wins Foundation FA and Divinely Blessed FA also meet in a fixture that could impact the middle section of the table. With qualification places on the line and contenders separated by only a few points, Week 7 promises excitement, drama, and potentially significant movement in the standings.

Fury Vs Joshua Title Decision Sparks Fresh Questions Ahead Cardiff Showdown

TYSON Fury and Anthony Joshua's December 11 clash in Cardiff will carry world title stakes after Frank Warren confirmed the WBA super heavyweight belt will be on the line, reports *sportsnaut.com*. The announcement adds a world championship to their long-awaited showdown at Principality Stadium, with the promoter confirming the decision in an interview with Sky Sports News. The contest will headline a Netflix card and marks the first meeting between the two British rivals after years of failed attempts to arrange the bout. However, the WBA decision has raised questions because Murat Gassiev currently

holds the organisation's regular heavyweight title. Warren said the winner would claim a version of the belt as boxing looks to establish a clear heavyweight champion after Oleksandr Usyk vacated his titles. The result could also shape plans for major heavyweight title unification fights in 2027. Speaking to Sky Sports News, Warren revealed that the WBA had sanctioned the bout as a world title fight. "That is the case at the moment. That's going to be on the line." He explained the contest's importance after Usyk vacated his titles. "Whoever wins that, they've got a version of the belt and the objective, after Usyk vacated all the belts, is to

find out who's the best, who's going to hold all the belts, who's going to be the No 1 heavyweight," Warren said. "I'm sure Usyk will be back in next year as well. It's going to be really, really exciting times." Warren later repeated the confirmation, telling reporters: "Yes, it's on the line. They've (WBA) confirmed." The decision has attracted attention because Gassiev holds the WBA regular heavyweight title. He won the secondary belt by stopping Kubrat Pulev in late 2025 and later became full champion after Usyk left in June. Gassiev defended his title against Peter Kadiru in July.

Business

TETFund's Innovation Hubs Offer New Pathway To Research-driven Economic Growth

FOR decades, Nigeria's tertiary education system has faced a persistent contradiction: tertiary institutions producing research findings that rarely translate into commercially viable products, industrial solutions or job opportunities. The consequences extend beyond the academic environment as industries continue to depend heavily on imported technologies while promising discoveries by local researchers often struggle to progress beyond conference presentations, journal publications and laboratory prototypes. Against this backdrop, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has commenced the establishment of Innovation Hubs in 45 beneficiary tertiary institutions to reposition research as an instrument of economic transformation. The hubs are intended to provide researchers with facilities to develop home-grown solutions, strengthen collaboration, refine prototypes and commercialise innovations. Their potential significance, however, will depend on whether they can address the structural barriers that have historically prevented research institutions from translating ideas into products for citizens.

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono, disclosed the initiative at the closing ceremony of Cohort 34 of the Research for Impact (R4i) programme in Abuja. He described the investment as part of the Fund's commitment to building a knowledge-based economy through research and innovation. Echono, who was represented by the Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Arc. Babatunde Olajide, said the hubs will provide researchers with opportunities to apply the skills acquired during training, sustain collaborative research and transform innovative ideas into marketable products. The initiative comes at a time when countries increasingly depend on technological capabilities, research-driven enterprises and skilled human capital to strengthen productivity and competitiveness. For Nigeria, where economic diversification, employment generation and industrial development remain pressing priorities, the ability to convert local knowledge into practical solutions could deliver substantial benefits. "Education remains a critical cornerstone of nation-building

while technology has taken centre stage globally in transforming lives, generating wealth and shaping nations," Echono said. Implemented in collaboration with Innov8 Technology Hub, the two-week programme equips academics with research development techniques, practical innovation skills and expert mentorship to transform ideas into solutions, marketable products and viable enterprises. The 48 participants in Cohort 34 were drawn from 12 beneficiary institutions, providing them with opportunities to gain hands-on experience and develop research-driven responses to societal challenges. According to Echono, participants from previous cohorts have developed several prototypes, some of which have been patented. These outcomes demonstrate the programme's potential to connect academic discoveries with commercial opportunities and encourage researchers to pursue the practical application of their work. With the proposed Innovation Hubs, researchers are expected to have a more supportive environment to develop ideas and explore ways of taking their products to the marketplace. The 45 institutions selected for the initiative are expected to provide a broad foundation for research and innovation across the country. Among the institutions represented in Cohort 34 are Umaru Musa Yar'Adua University, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike; Gombe State University and the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti. Others are Federal University, Wukari; Federal University of Technology, Ikot-Abasi; Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Rivers State University, Federal University, Lokoja; Air Force Institute of Technology, Kaduna; Ladoke Akintola University of Technology and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. Their geographical spread and diverse academic strengths offer opportunities to develop solutions suited to different sectors of the economy. Agricultural institutions, for instance, could contribute technologies for food production, processing and preservation, while engineering and technology-focused institutions could advance renewable energy, digital solutions and manufacturing. Research across other disciplines could support improvements in healthcare, education and public service delivery. Recognising the importance of teamwork, TETFund has increased the number of participants nominated by each selected institution from one to four to bring together researchers from complementary scientific disciplines, encouraging knowledge-sharing and the development of collaborative research teams.



Some of the participants at the training

CAF Champions League

Enugu Rangers Bank On Fans Support To Overcome MC Alger In Abeokuta

El-Kanemi Dream Of Upsetting Raja Casablanca In Ikenne

By Christian Okpara

ON paper, MC Alger of Algeria have the better rating than their hosts, Enugu Rangers, but the Flying Antelopes believe that the game on the pitch this weekend will decide the better side.

Enugu Rangers are experienced campaigners on the continent, but they meet an MC Alger side who have mastered the art of getting to the business end of the championship very well.

The last time Rangers got to the group stage of the CAF Champions League, the finished outside the qualification range hence their determination to get to the semifinals, at least, this term.

To do this, the Coal City boys are calling on all Nigerian football lovers to troop out en masse to sing them to victory at the MKO Abiola Stadium, Abeokuta, Ogun State, tomorrow.

This is the second preliminary round fixture of the Champions League and

Rangers need a good win at home to make the return leg less stressful.

On Thursday, Rangers General Manager, Amobi Ezeaku, appealed to members of the Nigerian football family to demonstrate their solidarity with the team by attending the encounter and providing the necessary encouragement.

He said that the game became more important to the country since Rangers carry the hopes, pride and aspirations of Enugu State and the country on the continental stage.

Ezeaku acknowledged that a strong performance and positive result in Abeokuta would place the Flying Antelopes in a more favourable position as they pre-

pare for the return leg in Algeria.

He said: "Your presence will make a difference," the management declared, emphasising the importance of "unity, belief and collective commitment to Nigerian football."



Eaglets Ready To Overcome Niger Republic Setback With Victory Over Côte D'Ivoire – Eboboritse

AHEAD of Saturday's must-win clash against Côte d'Ivoire, Golden Eaglets head coach, Eboboritse Uwejamomere, says his team is ready to overcome the setback suffered against Niger Republic and secure victory over the Ivorians. Speaking at a press conference at Stade du 4 Août in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on Friday, Eboboritse urged his players to remain calm, recalling that Nigeria lost their opening matches at the 2018 and 2021 editions of the WAFU-B U17 Championship but bounced back to qualify. "We had a setback in the game against Niger Republic, but we are in great spirit to overcome it as we play Côte d'Ivoire on Saturday," Eboboritse said. "It is a dicey situation. We are calm and reminding the players of how we want to play. We have analysed Côte d'Ivoire, how they play, their strengths and weaknesses.

"There is just a little bit of pressure because it is a must-win game for Nigeria. So, we have to keep the players composed and believing in themselves, knowing that we can get the result we need. The Ivorians are a very good side. They can fight, but we also have to fight and show them how much we want the victory. We know what we have to do to beat them. I'm confident," he concluded.

The Golden Eaglets lost 1-2 to Niger Republic on Wednesday, which has rendered the clash with the Ivorians a must-win, as the Ivorians drew their own game against the Nigeriens and have one point coming into tomorrow's encounter.

Udezue: New NBBF Will Build On Ezisting Foundation For Greater Basketball

By Daniel Akinola

NEWLY elected vice president of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), Ugo Udezue, has pledged to team up with the other board members and progressive stakeholders to give the game a new lease of life.

Speaking after the elections in Abuja that gave him the vice presidency unopposed, Udezue thanked the delegates to the elective NBBF congress, Nigerian basketball lovers for

the belief they have in his capacity to serve.

While congratulating the new NBBF President, Dr Mustapha Abdullahi, on his new office, the AFA Sports boss pledged his support and the belief that the new board will build on the foundations laid by the previous administrations for a better Nigerian Basketball ecosystem.

He said that the board is committed to serving all six zones and the FCT equally for tangible and balanced grassroots

and infrastructural development.

Udezue said: "I am deeply grateful to the delegates of the elective congress for the trust you placed in me today. This victory belongs to every state association, coach, player and fan who believes Nigerian basketball can stand among the very best in the world.

"I warmly congratulate Dr. Mustapha Abdullahi on his election as President. I look forward to working closely with him and the new Board

to build on the foundations laid by those who served before us.

"To the South East, and to every zone that stood with us: thank you. Our work now is to serve all six zones equally. That means better facilities, stronger leagues, and national teams run with the professionalism our athletes deserve.

"To my fellow candidates, I extend my respect and an open hand. Let us move forward together. The work begins now."

on how allegations against that official are handled," says Gatama.

"Yet the prolonged silence surrounding this case fuels suspicions of protection. Those suspicions must be examined independently, so that they can either be substantiated or dispelled through verifiable facts. I ask you to support that examination, including any scrutiny of your own potential role in the handling of the case."

Gatama submitted his first complaint to FIFA Ethics via its portal on 22, 2025.

Cameroon FA Demands Infantino, Motsepe Stop Protecting Eto'o Amid Alleged €500K+ Fecafoot Cash Embezzlement

CAMEROON FA (Fecafoot) stakeholders have written an open letter to FIFA president, Gianni Infantino, and Confederation presidents asking why FIFA has not acted or responded to a complaint first made in June 2025, that its president Samuel Eto'o pocketed €567,570 that should have been made to the federation, reports insideworldfootball.com.

The case concerns a Russia-

Cameroon friendly in 2023 and the payment covers the proceeds from the match that was due to Fecafoot. Instead the money was paid by Russia into Eto'o's personal account at the Qatar National Bank in Doha.

The letter, signed by Guibai Gatama, a member of the FECAFOOT Executive Committee until 2025, accuses Infantino of politically protecting Eto'o. Eto'o has been Africa's most

vocal supporter of Infantino in his battle to hang on to his presidency in the wake of multiple accusations of corruption, poor and damaging leadership of FIFA, including his political support for US president Donald Trump, and his attempt to sell off FIFA's commercial rights into a Trump-linked private-equity backed new company.

"A football official's political support must have no bearing

Itauma Confident Of Second Chance At World Title

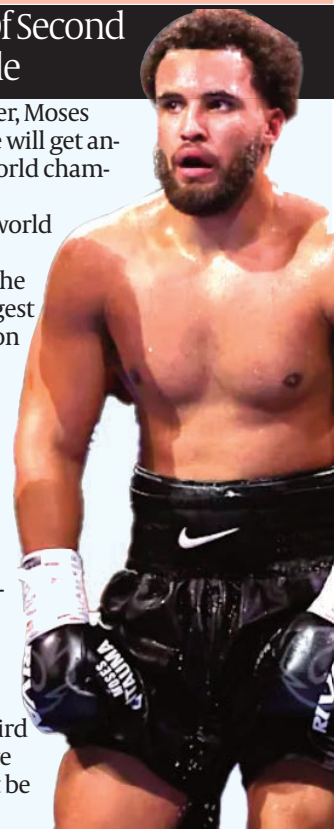
BRITISH heavyweight boxer, Moses Itauma, says he is sure he will get another chance to become a world champion, reports BBC.

The 21-year-old lost his first world title fight to Croatian Filip Hrgovic in August, missing the chance to become the youngest heavyweight world champion since Mike Tyson in 1986.

Itauma had previously won all 14 of his professional fights, 12 by stoppage, establishing himself as one of the division's most exciting young prospects.

Speaking to BBC South East and Radio Kent in his first interview since the defeat, the Chatham fighter was choosing to see the positives from the experience.

"I always say I'd rather be third than second because if you're third you know you couldn't be number one," he said.



Man City FFP: Club Face 60-Point Deduction, Owner Forced To Sale Stake

WHILE there are yet no pronounced penalty on Manchester City for breaching the English Premier League Financial Fair Play rules, there are reports that the Premier League leaders are likely to face a 60-point deduction, with the owner, Sheik Mansour, ordered to sell the club, according to football365.com.

Manchester City have appealed the guilty verdict pronounced on them for playing against the rules, but many followers of the game believe that only a miracle will save the club from extreme punishment.

TalkSPORT presenter Alan Brazil recently insisted that he had been told that Man City are likely to get a 60-point deduction in a potential leak of the punishment.

Brazil said: "I'm hearing a 60-point deduction, which will please people and still give City a chance of surviving.

"I don't know whether it's this season. I can't see how that can be this season because of the timing, when they get it through it'll be too late. Is it next season? But they are talking about a 60-point deduction."

But former Rangers striker, Ally McCoist, hit back: "I think a lot of people wouldn't think that's enough. Obviously we'll have to wait and see how this appeal goes.

"If they didn't win the appeal, I think people would be looking for a stronger punishment than that."

The UK government would support the "most extreme" punishment for Man City if that's what the Independent Football Regulator decides.

Excitement As Swimming Takes Centre Stage At 2nd Pan African School Games

THE Olympic-size swimming pool at James Hope College, Lekki, was buzzing with excitement on Friday as young athletes from more than 11 schools competed in the swimming events of the 2nd Pan African School Games.

The three-day competition, organised by Seun Akinbohun, Busola Tejumola and Aderoju Ope-Ajayi, aims to promote athletic excellence while creating opportunities for education, career development and cultural exchange among young people.

Swimmers aged 11 to 15 competed across various events, with participants battling

for honours in the Under-11, Under-13 and Under-15 categories. The event also attracted hundreds of parents and guardians who turned out to cheer on the athletes.

Speaking during the competition, co-organiser Aderoju Ope-Ajayi said passion and a desire to make a difference in youth sports inspired the organisers to continue despite financial challenges.

"2025 was our first edition, and it was tough. Our passion, drive and desire to make a difference in sports motivated us to keep going," she said.

Ope-Ajayi acknowledged the support of



Swimmers walking to the pool at the second Pan Africa School Games, which began yesterday in Lagos.

sponsors and partners, describing their contributions as vital to the success of the competition.



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Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road: Danger Of Diversion

A road that began as a dream and became a nightmare'

EVERY great nation has a signature road. America has Route 66. Germany has Autobahn. UAE has Sheikh Zayed Road. Nigeria wanted to have Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway - a 700km, 10-lane superhighway from Victoria Island, Lagos to Calabar, Cross River, passing through Ogun, Ondo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom.

On paper, it is beautiful architecture: Coastal road that will unlock coastal economy, reduce travel time, create jobs, link Lekki Deep Sea Port to all Niger Delta ports, open tourism. But in reality, before the first 30km is even finished, the project has become architecture in ruin. Ruin of procurement, ruin of transparency, ruin of trust.

Firm scratch: The 15 trillion naira project (some say N15.6 trillion, some say \$13 billion, depending on which day Minister David Umahi speaks) has been mired in controversy from day one: No appropriation details in 2024 budget. No competitive bidding. No public Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report. Conversion of original coastal railway tracks concept to road without explanation. Question over propriety - why coastal highway over original Lagos-to-Calabar road networks that are already dead? Curiosity over Eko Atlantic City and Eko Hotel where Gilbert Chagoury - owner of HITECH Construction - owns 75% equity, and where the road now begins. Now, Minister Dave Umahi speaking in tongues about possible diversion to align with East-West Road, a development that will exclude Ondo and Delta region. What is now coastal about a road that runs inland?

This is not just a road project. It is a national security asset. It is a 700km strategic infrastructure. A minister cannot just rush to a media house to announce a road diversion of such magnitude in a cavalier manner. This is a presidential function. It requires thorough briefing to National Assembly in a good country where laws rule rather than men. Reason? We are bound to ask: What happened to the cost and consequences of cutting short the expectation of Ondo and Delta people? Before this opaque process, rerouting controversies and Chagoury's involvement affects Tinubu's government and his re-election bid in 2027, there should be presidency's clarification, accountability and civic engagement. This piece is that warning. Mr. President, this road diversion and lack of transparency around it can be a time bomb you need to defuse before it is too late.

The original sin - procurement without process: The first ruin in this architecture is procurement. Nigeria has a law: Public Procurement Act 2007. It says all federal projects above N100 million must go through open competitive bidding, must be advertised, must have BPP certificate of no objection, must have FEC approval with details.

Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road - N15 trillion - is the biggest road project in Nigerian history. Bigger than Second Niger Bridge (N400bn). Bigger than Lagos-Ibadan Expressway (N300bn). Yet no appropriation details. In 2024 Appropriation Act, there was no line item of N15 trillion for Lagos-Calabar. What we saw was N500 million for "coastal road" in Ministry of Works budget. How do you fund N15 trillion with N500 million? Later, we heard it is under "unforeseen infrastructure fund" or "borrowed money." National Assembly never debated N15 trillion.

In a democracy, even President cannot spend N15 trillion without National Assembly appropriation. That is Section 80 of Constitution. Where is the appropriation? Presidency must clarify. The

project was awarded to HITECH Construction Company Limited - owned by Gilbert Chagoury, a long-time friend and business associate of President Bola Tinubu. Awarded on single-source, not competitive. Minister Umahi said, "HITECH is the only company that can do it because they did Eko Atlantic." That is not procurement law. Even if they did Eko Atlantic, you must advertise and allow Julius Berger, CCECC, Arab Contractors, Setraco, etc to bid. That is transparency. Why single-source a N15 trillion project to a friend's company? That question alone is enough to derail a government in a country where laws rule.

The Son Connection: What about the connection of the HITECH project where the President's son, Seyi Tinubu, is clearly a director/board member of a HITECH subsidiary - CDK

Integrated Industries? CDK is linked to HITECH. The company says Seyi is not directly on HITECH board, but corporate registry shows overlapping directorships. Even if not direct, perception matters.

In public procurement, conflict of interest is enough to void process. If President's son has business relationship with contractor handling N15 trillion project, the presidency must come clean with full disclosure of beneficial ownership, not just press statements. Otherwise, opposition will use it in 2027 as part of proof of state capture.

This is the first architecture in ruin: Procurement opacity. And it is avoidable. All presidency needs to do is publish: Full BPP certificate, FEC memo, bidding documents, cost per km, funding model. Publish it on Ministry of Works website. Let Nigerians see. If you don't, you give all opposition elements a campaign jingle for 2027: "15 trillion road to Chagoury's house."

The environmental ruin: Where is the EIA report? Every major road project in Nigeria must have Environmental Impact Assessment under EIA Act 1992. For coastal road, it is even more critical because you are building on Atlantic shoreline - fragile ecosystem, mangroves, fishing communities, erosion. Where is the EIA report for Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway? Environmental activists asked Ministry of Environment. Ministry said they have not seen it. NOSDRA said they have not seen it. Local communities in Okun Ajah, Lagos - whose houses were demolished for first 30km - said they never saw any EIA consultation. They woke up one day and saw bulldozers. Minister Umahi said EIA is "ongoing" even as construction is ongoing. That is illegality. You cannot start construction before EIA. EIA must come before, not after.

What do we say about clear absence of details

of EIA? That the road will destroy coastal environment, fishing livelihoods of millions, increase coastal erosion, (has already destroyed part of Landmark Beach, which contributed N10bn tourism yearly, without compensation? And Landmark is just one. What of 200 other small businesses demolished in Lagos without proper valuation? What of fishing communities in Ondo - Ayetoro, a community already sinking due to ocean surge - that will be further destroyed by coastal road if EIA is not done?

Mr. President, you are from Lagos. You know what Atlantic

surge did to Bar Beach in 1990s before Eko Atlantic built sea wall. If you build coastal road without EIA and sea wall protection, Atlantic will wash the road



Umahi

Oborewori

Aiyedatiwa

away in 10 years. That will be waste of N15 trillion. Publish EIA. Hold public hearing in all eight coastal states. That is law. That is transparency. That is how to find architecture in ruin. It isn't too late.

The conceptual ruin: - road or rail? And what is coastal about inland diversion? Original concept under President Goodluck Jonathan and even under President Buhari's 2016 plan was Lagos-Calabar Coastal Railway - a standard gauge railway line along coast to move goods and people.

Railway makes sense for coastal economy: Heavy goods from Lekki Deep Sea Port to Calabar port, to Onitsha, to link to hinterland. Why was it converted to road? Who converted? What is the feasibility study that says road is better than rail? What of existing Lagos-Calabar road networks - Benin-Sagamu, Benin-Warri, Warri-Ughelli, East-West Road - that are already dead and need fixing? Why build new superhighway when old highways are death traps?

What is propriety over original Lagos-to-Calabar road networks? If you have N15 trillion, why not fix East-West Road that has been under construction since 2006 and has killed thousands? Why not dualize Benin-Warri road that takes six (6) hours for 100km? Why new coastal road? Government has not explained. Minister says coastal road will be tolled and will pay for itself. But who will pay N5, 000 toll per 100km when Nigerians cannot afford fuel?

And now, worst ruin: Diversion to align with East-West Road.

Minister Umahi recently told the media that because of terrain challenges in Ondo and Delta (swampy, expensive), they may divert the road inland to align with East-West Road from Bayelsa to Cross River, thus excluding Ondo and Delta coastal axis from project. Wait. What is now coastal about a road that is inland? If

you exclude Ondo (200km coastline, oil-producing, with deep sea port plan) and Delta (Warri, Koko, with ports), what is coastal?

This diversion talk is political dynamite. Ondo

State is APC state. Delta is PDP but with APC governor now. Both expected economic boom from coastal road - jobs, tourism, port access. Now you tell them road will not pass their coast? The people of the areas are asking: What happened to cost and consequences of cutting short expectation of Ondo and Delta people? And who gave Minister power to announce diversion of a N15 trillion national security asset on television? Such decision requires FEC, requires National Assembly briefing, requires presidential announcement, not minister's media chat. If diversion is true, why will Ondo and Delta vote for APC in 2027? They will see it as betrayal. And opposition will say: "They took coastal road to Eko Atlantic at a convergence where Chagoury owns 75% equity in Eko Hotel and owns Eko Atlantic City where the road begins, and abandoned Ondo and Delta."

That narrative will stick. Because perception is reality. Optics matter.

The Chagoury question - EKO Atlantic, EKO Hotel Where Coastal Road Begins: This is the most sensitive ruin. Must be handled with transparency.

Gilbert Chagoury is a respected Lebanese-Nigerian businessman. He built Eko Atlantic City - a \$6 billion city reclaimed from Atlantic. He owns 75% equity in Eko Hotel and Suites (through his company). He owns HITECH.

Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road begins at Eko Atlantic City - at Ahmadu Bello Way, Victoria Island - exactly where Chagoury's Eko Atlantic is. Coincidence? Maybe. But in a country where optics matter, it looks like road was designed to increase value of Eko Atlantic, not to serve national interest. Eko Atlantic plots sell for \$1,500 per sqm. If coastal road begins there, value jumps to \$3,000 per sqm. So HITECH builds road with federal money, and Eko Atlantic owned by same HITECH owner gains value. Is that not conflict?

Presidency must clarify: Was there independent alignment study that shows Eko Atlantic is best starting point? Or was alignment chosen to benefit Eko Atlantic? Publish alignment study. **Also clarify beneficial ownership:** What is relationship between HITECH, Eko Atlantic, Eko Hotel, and CDK where Citizen Seyi Tinubu is a director? Let Nigerians see that there is no conflict. If there is, disclose and recuse. Silence on this can be dangerous for democracy.

Time bomb can be defused! Mr. President, Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road can be your legacy like Lekki-Ikoyi Bridge you designed as Lagos Governor. It can open coastal economy and make you father of modern coastal Nigeria. But as currently managed - opaque procurement, no EIA, Chagoury controversy, son link, diversion talk by minister without presidential briefing - it is ruin, not architecture. And ruin derails re-election. Opposition is waiting. In 2027, they will not campaign on your achievements in fuel subsidy removal or tax reform. They will campaign on "N15 trillion road to nowhere, road to Chagoury's house, road that excluded Ondo and Delta." Don't give them that bullet. A road that is supposed to connect Nigeria should not divide Nigeria. A road that is supposed to be coastal should not become inland overnight via minister's press interview. A road that is supposed to be national security asset shouldn't be diverted in a cavalier manner. Take charge, Mr. President. Defuse time bomb before 2027.

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