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Olori Atuwatse III Challenges Africa To Take Ownership Of Creative Economy

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In March 2026, Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz, putting a fifth of the world's oil and LNG at risk.

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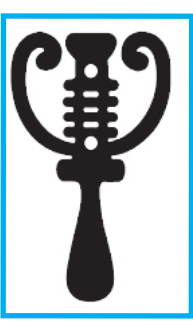
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WEEKEND

Vol. 43, No. 18,246

October 31 - November 1, 2026

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria N500

2027 Elections:

PRO-TINUBU GOVERNORS FACE GRASSROOTS TEST AS ATIKU, OBI MOBILISE FOR SHOWDOWN

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Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu (left) and his Deputy/gubernatorial candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr Kadri Obafemi Hamzat at the presentation of his manifesto at the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts, Iganmu, Lagos... on Friday. (Inset: Dr Kadri Obafemi Hamzat delivering his manifesto speech). **STORY ON PAGE 43**

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News

From **Sodiq Omolayo** (Abuja)
and **Rotimi Agboluaje** (Ibadan)

Solving Nigeria's Insecurity Requires Informed Policies, Technological Innovation – Defence Minister

MINISTER of Defence, Maj.-Gen. Christopher Musa (rtd) has stated that solving Nigeria's insecurity "requires informed policies, credible institutions, technological innovation and a comprehensive understanding of the human dimensions of conflict."

Musa, however, said the country had stepped up its game and was gradually improving the security situation.

This came as the military has disclosed that troops neutralised 217 terrorists and other criminals, rescued 349 kidnapped persons and arrested 333 suspects across the country in October 2026.

Meanwhile, the General Officer Commanding (GOC), 2 Division, Nigerian Army, Maj.-Gen. Auwalu Mahmuda, has charged troops deployed around the Old Oyo National Park to sustain their offensive operations and flush out bandits, terrorists and other criminal elements from the area.

Musa spoke on Friday at the TETFUND Centre for Excellence in Security Management while commissioning the CG Musa Security Management Hub donated to the Centre at the University of Ibadan.

The minister stated that "the academia occupies a strategic place in our national security management architecture."

He added that "the battlefield may reveal the immediate manifestations of insecurity but the university provides the intellectual environment to interrogate its causes, evaluate responses and develop sustainable solutions."

He hinted that the insecurity is getting prolonged because it is becoming difficult to get the needed security weapons and

ammunition, adding that Nigeria needs to begin to produce what it requires to end it.

Musa said: "Our intention is to expose our local producers to foreign and international manufacturers so that we can continue to produce what we need or what we rely on. Why insecurity continues to be prolonged is that we do not produce all we need."

"Most times when we go to buy, even with cash at hand, you can't get them off-the-shelf. And now with the wars going on in Ukraine, Russia and the Strait of Hormuz, it became extremely difficult buying as little as ammunition to use not to talk of Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs). Since our local manufacturers are doing their best, we need to escalate to an international level."

He further noted that the security challenges confronting the nation have become increasingly complex, interconnected and multidimensional.

"The threats we face continue to test our national resilience. Equally concerning are the underlying conditions that sustain insecurity, including extremism, weak governance systems, political manifestations and social exclusion among others. These realities remind us that security cannot be achieved through military operations alone. It requires informed policies, credible institutions, technological innovation and a comprehensive understanding of the human dimensions of conflict," he said.

According to him, "we will continue to encourage collabora-

***Says Nation Has Stepped Up Its Game, Recording Improving Results**

***Military Neutralises 217 Terrorists, Rescue 349 Kidnapped Nigerians In October**

***GOC Orders Troops To Clear Old Oyo Park Of Bandits, Terrorists**

tion between defence institutions and centres of learning to ensure that our security policies and operational approaches benefit from research, innovation and evidence-based analysis. It is also important that everybody plays a part because it is a whole-of-nation approach. If you see something, say something."

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Kayode Adebawale, thanked the donor for providing a facility that current and future generations will learn from.

"We hope and believe that this hub serves as the nexus for multidisciplinary research, and serves as a convening ground for policy makers and academics. The facility must not become a museum of security artifacts but (must) be used to generate data that will guide the Ministry of Defence and our security agents," Adebawale said.

The lead Researcher and Technical Officer at the Centre, Prof. Isaac Olawale Albert, while thanking the minister for ful-

filling his promise to the Centre, tasked him to ensure that more funds are made available to it.

Albert said it was important for the security agencies to patronise the centre and engage with its resource persons towards formulating and implementing the right security policies.

Speaking on Friday during the monthly press briefing on ongoing military operations for October 2026 in Abuja, the Director of Defence Media Oper-

ations, Maj. Gen. Michael Onoja, disclosed that 70 insurgents surrendered to troops during the period, while 105 firearms and 3,174 rounds of ammunition were recovered from criminal elements across various theatres of operation.

According to him, troops sustained offensive operations against terrorists, bandits, kidnappers, oil thieves and other criminal groups across the six geopolitical zones between September 30 and October 30.

Onoja said the operations also led to the dismantling of 49 illegal refining sites and the recovery of 756,837 litres of petroleum products in the Niger Delta.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (middle); National Security Adviser, Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu (right), and others including Governors and Ministers performed Umrah (lesser Hajj) early Friday morning in the holy city of Makkah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, offering prayers of gratitude to Almighty Allah and seeking His continued guidance and protection for Nigeria.

PHOTO: STATE HOUSE.

Registration Officers Introduced AI-Generated Photos Into Voter Register, INEC Explains

By **Joseph Onyekwere** (Lagos) and
Sodiq Omolayo (Abuja)

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has blamed some of its registration officers for introducing artificial intelligence-generated photographs and other questionable records into the preliminary Register of Voters ahead of the 2027 general election.

However, the Village Boys Movement (VBM) has called for the immediate resignation of the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Ojo Amupitan, and the commission's Director of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Dr. Lawrence Bayode, over the alleged irregularities in the preliminary register of voters.

The group also demanded the arrest and prosecution of all officials found culpable in the alleged manipulation of the register, including those accused of introducing fictitious information and photographs purportedly generated through Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The commission said some registration officers across the country allegedly used their official login credentials to in-

Group Demands Amupitan, INEC ICT Director's Resignation

roduce irregularities into the voter registration database, raising concerns about the integrity of the electoral register.

INEC's Director of Information and Communication Technology, Dr. Lawrence Bayode, disclosed this on Friday during an interview on *Arise Television*, explaining that the commission uncovered the irregularities through its Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS).

According to him, the system helped the commission identify questionable records and establish how some of the irregularities found their way into the database.

Bayode, however, said not all the suspicious photographs were AI-generated, as some resulted from what he described as very poor registration procedures.

"We have registration officers on the field. And these registration officers, they have login details to log into the system."

"So, what we have found is that some of these registration officers, not all of them now, some of them across the states nationwide, they've done different things to bring these ir-

regularities onto the register," he said.

He added that the commission had identified the questionable records and understood how some of the irregularities occurred, although he could not establish the reasons behind the actions of the officers involved.

"Some of these pictures are AI-generated. Some of them are not AI-generated, but very bad registration. And this thing got into the register by the registration officers and because they have access to register people."

"When the ABIS was run on the system, we saw these people. We know what they did. We know how they did it. But honestly, I don't know why," Bayode said.

In a statement issued on Friday in Abuja and signed by its leader, Tochukwu Ezeoke, the VBM described the revelations surrounding the preliminary voters' register as a serious breach of public trust capable of undermining confidence in the 2027 general election.

The group's reaction followed a reported admission by INEC's Director of ICT during an interview on *ARISE News* that

irregularities had been introduced into the commission's voter registration systems by individuals with authorised access.

VBM said the alleged inclusion of AI-generated photographs in the register raised serious concerns about the integrity of the electoral process and INEC's capacity to guarantee credible elections.

Describing the development as more than a technical malfunction, the movement argued that the commission must take responsibility for what it considered a fundamental breach of the country's democratic safeguards.

It questioned why those responsible had not been publicly identified and held accountable if, as reportedly acknowledged, INEC already knew how the irregularities occurred and the access points through which they were perpetrated.

The movement said Amupitan, as chairman of the commission, bore institutional responsibility for its operations and the credibility of the electoral process, while Bayode should answer for the integrity of the technological infra-

structure under his supervision.

It consequently demanded that both officials resign pending a full and independent investigation into the controversy.

The group further urged that all registration officers, technical personnel and other officials found to have introduced, facilitated or knowingly permitted falsified information into the register should be investigated and prosecuted where sufficient evidence establishes criminal liability.

It, however, stressed that the investigation should not be limited to junior officials if evidence points to the involvement or negligence of senior personnel.

VBM also called for a comprehensive independent forensic audit of the entire preliminary voters' register, including its databases, access logs, registration records, image submissions and modification histories.

According to the movement, the findings of the audit should be made public, with responsible officials identified where legally appropriate and every irregular entry properly accounted for. It insisted that

the exercise must be concluded before December 15, 2026, the proposed date for final certification of the voters' register, warning that no register found to be compromised should be allowed to proceed to certification.

The group also called on the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate any evidence of corruption, conspiracy, abuse of office or institutional complicity connected to the alleged irregularities.

It further demanded that INEC publish a detailed account of the irregularities discovered, the corrective measures taken and the safeguards being introduced to prevent unauthorised access, falsification or manipulation of voters' information ahead of the 2027 elections.

The movement maintained that the voters' register is a national democratic asset and not the private property of INEC officials, arguing that every Nigerian whose voting rights can be affected by irregularities is entitled to demand transparency and accountability.

Tinubu Prays For End To Insecurity, Seeks Lasting Peace In Nigeria During Umrah

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has offered prayers for lasting peace, national unity and an end to insecurity in Nigeria during the performance of the lesser Hajj (Umrah) in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

This is even as he has nominated six executive directors for the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), forwarding their names to the Senate for confirmation.

The President performed the Islamic religious rites early Friday at the Grand Mosque, Masjid al-Haram, where he circumambulated the Holy Ka'abah in an act of worship, devotion and thanksgiving to Almighty Allah.

Speaking with journalists shortly after the spiritual exercise, Tinubu described the Umrah as significant, saying it reflected his commitment to Nigerians, his responsibility as President and his faith in the will of Allah.

"I believe this Umrah is very significant for the love of our people, commitment to the job and our country, Nigeria; commitment to the will of Allah that His words must

• Nominates Six NMDPRA Executive Directors

prevail, and that there's no other God but Him and He's the only one that makes a human being what he can be and what he would be in life," he said.

The President said he was grateful to Allah for the opportunity to undertake the spiritual exercise and offer prayers for the country and its people.

"We have just prayed for our nation, for everyone to live in peace and harmony, happi-

ness and faith in God Almighty," he added.

Tinubu also sought divine guidance for the nation's leaders, praying that Allah would strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among Nigerians and grant the country lasting relief from insecurity and other challenges.

He expressed hope that Nigeria would sustain its march towards economic prosperity, social development and a more secure future for its cit-

izens.

The President reaffirmed his administration's commitment to building a peaceful, united and prosperous country where every Nigerian, irrespective of religious belief or background, could live in safety, dignity and harmony.

The nominees for the NMDPRA jobs comprise three serving executive directors seeking fresh terms and three new appointees. Upon confirmation, they will each serve a five-year tenure.

The three reappointed directors are Abiodun Adeniji, Executive Director, Finance and Accounts; Ogbugo Kalu Ukoha, Executive Director, Distribution Systems, Storage and Retailing Infrastructure; and Dr. Mustapha Lamorde, Executive Director, Health, Safety, Environment and Community.

The new nominees are Mobolaji Tajudeen Musa, Executive Director, Hydrocarbon Processing Plants, Installations and Transportation Infrastructure; Ogechukwu Modie,

Executive Director, Economic Regulations and Strategic Planning; and Said Abutalib, Executive Director, Corporate Services and Administration.

In a statement, the President's Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, said Tinubu had urged the Senate to expedite consideration of the nominations to ensure institutional continuity and strengthen the regulatory authority's oversight capacity.



Coordinator, PBAT Door-Door Movement, Comrade Sunday Asuku (left); Speaker, Delta State House of Assembly, Emomotimi Guwor; Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun; representative of Government Oweizide Ekpemupolo (Tompolo)/MD, Tantita Security, High Chief KestIn Pondi; and Alhaji Yakubu Muri Ajaka during the visit of the PBAT Door-Door Movement to the Ogun State Governor... on Friday.

Tax Ombud Seeks Nationwide Reach To Resolve Taxpayers' Complaints

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

THE Office of the Tax Ombud is seeking a partnership with the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) to extend its services to all 774 local councils, as part of efforts to improve access to independent and impartial resolution of tax-related disputes across Nigeria.

The Tax Ombud and Chief Executive of the Office, Dr. John Nwabueze, disclosed this at the opening of a three-day management retreat in Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, where he reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to protecting taxpayer rights and strengthening public confidence in the country's tax administration system. Nwabueze said the proposed collaboration with NIPOST would expand public access to the Office's services, particularly for taxpayers who might otherwise struggle to reach its facilities.

He said the Office was also intensifying public awareness campaigns to educate Nigerians about its mandate and the free services available to taxpayers seeking redress for grievances involving revenue authorities.

According to him, the Office was established in line with President Bola Tinubu's vision of strengthening tax administration through mediation and the prompt, amicable resolution of disputes between taxpayers and revenue authorities.

He stressed that an effective tax administration system required more than improved revenue collection, noting that fairness, transparency and public trust were essential to building a sustainable revenue system.

Why African Nations Must Fast-track Harmonisation Of Medicines Regulation — AHF

By Suliyat Tella

WITH more than 20 African Union Member States yet to ratify the African Medicines Agency (AMA) Treaty, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) is calling on African governments to accelerate ratification and regulatory harmonisation to expand access to affordable medicines and unlock Africa's pharmaceutical manufacturing potential.

The call comes as AMA convenes its inaugural week in Kigali, Rwanda, against a backdrop of continued dependence on imported medicines, fragmented regulatory systems and growing calls for African health sovereignty.

Africa's pharmaceutical mar-

ket is estimated at US\$30 billion, yet 70-95 per cent of medicines consumed on the continent are imported. Presentations during AMA Week also highlighted a pharmaceutical trade deficit of approximately US\$12.5 billion in 2020. While African countries continue to spend billions importing medicines from India and other global suppliers, fragmented regulatory requirements are constraining local manufacturers' ability to scale production and access regional markets.

As reported during AMA Week, 33 African Union Member States had ratified the AMA Treaty by October 2026. Accelerating ratification is essential to building a coordinated

continental regulatory system that supports local production while ensuring access to safe, effective and quality-assured medical products. "Africa cannot achieve health sovereignty while remaining heavily dependent on imported medicines and vulnerable to disruptions in global supply chains. We commend AMA for taking this bold step towards a more coordinated regulatory environment. We must now translate political commitments into action," AHF Executive Vice President. Penninah Iutung said.

Discussions during AMA Week highlight the practical barriers facing pharmaceutical manufacturers. Eighty per

cent of the local manufacturers present identified unpredictable regulatory review and approval timelines as a major challenge, 77 per cent cited differing regulatory requirements across African countries, and 54 per cent pointed to duplicated submissions, assessments and inspections.

These barriers increase costs, delay access to medicines and discourage investment in African pharmaceutical production. Harmonised requirements, predictable approval timelines, shared assessments and stronger collaboration among national regulatory authorities could help manufacturers serve multiple markets more efficiently.

Marwa Pledges Continued Support For Education Of NDLEA Officers' Families

By Bertram Nwannekanma (Lagos) and Tina Abeku (Abuja)

THE Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd), has reaffirmed his commitment to improving the welfare of personnel and their families, particularly by supporting the education of officers' children.

Meanwhile, the agency has warned applicants seeking recruitment into four agencies under the Ministry of Interior against making payments for the mandatory Drug Integrity Test (DIT), saying the exercise has already been fully funded by the ministry.

Marwa gave the assurance on Friday during a working visit to the newly established NDLEA Command School at

• Agency Says No Payment Required For Drug Tests By Applicants In Interior Ministry

the agency's barracks in Yola, Adamawa State.

During the visit, he inspected the school's facilities and interacted with pupils, students and members of staff.

Addressing the students, the NDLEA chairman urged them to embrace discipline, punctuality and academic excellence, describing these values as essential to achieving their future aspirations.

He advised them to take their studies seriously, read diligently and work hard to excel in their examinations. He also encouraged them to worship God, obey their parents and teachers, and shun illicit drugs.

Marwa pledged continued support for the development of the school to ensure that it provides quality ed-

ucation and grows into one of the leading institutions in the country.

He said the establishment of the school reflected the agency's commitment to providing children of its personnel with access to quality education within their immediate community.

The NDLEA chairman also met with members of the NDLEA Officers' Wives Association and other residents of the barracks.

The women expressed appreciation for the establishment of the pioneer command school, describing it as a significant investment in the education and future of their children.

They also commended Marwa's leadership and the transformation recorded in

the agency under his watch.

Marwa was accompanied on the visit by the Zone 2 Commander, ACGN Ishaku Yusuf Kwajafa, and other senior officers of the agency.

The NDLEA said arrangements had been concluded for the screening of applicants seeking employment into the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Federal Fire Service (FFS) and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).

In a statement on Friday, the Director of Media and Advocacy, NDLEA, Femi Babafemi, said the Ministry of Interior had made bulk payments to cover the drug tests for all new intakes, stressing that candidates were not required to pay any fee to participate in the exercise.

NCC Tasks Telcos On Transparency As Airtel Launches 'Open Network'

By Adeyemi Adepetun

IN a major push for accountability and enhanced service delivery within Nigeria's telecommunications sector, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has challenged telecommunications operators to embrace absolute transparency with subscribers.

The regulatory body emphasised that building robust, resilient networks requires bridging the communication gap between service providers and everyday consumers.

The call was made during the official launch of Airtel Nigeria's "Open Network" initiative in Lagos, an innovative digital platform integrated into the My Airtel Africa app. The platform is designed to allow subscribers to map network experiences, report localised coverage issues, and provide direct feedback.

Speaking at the event, the Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC, Dr. Aminu Maida, commended Airtel for taking a bold and unprecedented step towards open engagement.

Some Nigerian States, Institutions Are Getting Things Right — Report

By Moyosore Salami

DESPITE the criticisms directed at Nigeria's public institutions, the Nigeria Stability Index (NSI) has shown that some states and institutions in the country were getting things right.

Over the past nine months, the NSI has been spotlighting achievements by states and public institutions alongside its monthly surveys of public sentiment.

In education, the Federal Ministry of Education has featured for two initiatives: the N2.25 billion Student Venture Capital Grant designed to support 45 student innovators, and its coordination of the National Learning Assessment, an effort to better understand learning outcomes in Nigerian schools.

Elsewhere, Kaduna State was recognised for topping the 2026 Transparency and Integrity Index, while Rivers State was highlighted for the 105-bed Omoku Zonal Hospital.

Spotlight

www.guardian.ng

By Sulyat Tella

‘NO refund, no exchange’ policies are familiar in Nigeria’s business space. Businesses use them to set the terms under which customers can return purchased goods. But when a product is faulty or differs from what was advertised, such policies raise an important question: can a seller refuse a refund simply because the customer was told that returns were not allowed?

The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act (FCCPA) 2018 provides protections for consumers in Nigeria.

Section 122 sets out circumstances in which goods may be returned for a full refund, including when goods supplied for a particular purpose communicated to the seller prove unsuitable within a reasonable time. It also covers certain goods that consumers could not examine before delivery and that do not correspond with the description, sample or quality reasonably contemplated in the sales agreement.

Section 129 addresses prohibited transactions, agreements, terms and conditions, including provisions that seek to exclude or restrict legal obligations. The Act also protects consumers against misleading representations and provides for the quality and safety of goods.

These provisions do not give customers an unrestricted right to return goods whenever they change their minds. Whether a refund or another remedy is available depends on the circumstances of the purchase and the rights provided by law.

For some consumers, however, the distinction between a seller’s return policy and their legal rights becomes clear only after a purchase goes wrong.

When A Product Fails

James Abigail accompanied her mother to a microwave showroom in Ikorodu, Lagos, where they tested a Century microwave before buying it for 150,000.

The appliance worked during the test, but the experience changed when they took it home. According to Abigail, her mother tried to warm soup in it, but it did not work. She tried again with rice and encountered the same problem.

Her mother packed the microwave back into its carton and returned to the seller the following day.

“The seller refused to refund the money or exchange the appliance” Abigail said. He maintained that the microwave had worked when they tested it in the showroom before taking it away.

The disagreement continued for hours. Eventually, after Abigail’s mother raised her voice, the seller offered another brand, LG, but demanded an additional 60,000.

Abigail said her mother considered the extra charge unfair because they had bought the original microwave only the previous day.

“I am the one that eventually paid the

No Refund, No Redress And



60,000 for peace to reign,” she said.

They left with a different microwave, but Abigail remained unhappy with the way the transaction was handled. They had returned an appliance that, according to her account, did not work at home, yet they had to pay more to obtain a replacement.

For Peter Agbotai, a dispute over a computer accessory ended differently.

He bought a detachable laptop keyboard for 80,000 from a seller at Computer Village in Ikeja, Lagos, after the keyboard he had been using developed a problem.

He was in a hurry because the market was about to close. He tested the mouse function, which was the part that had given him trouble with his previous keyboard, but did not check all the keys.

He did not use the laptop for three days. When he eventually did, he discovered that the space bar on the new keyboard was not working.

Agbotai packed the keyboard into his laptop bag and returned to the seller the next day. He said the seller became defensive, raised his voice and insisted that he should have brought it back immediately. The seller also argued that more than three days had passed.

Agbotai, who said he was also angry during the exchange, threatened to report the matter to the police. At the time, he did not know about the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC). Later that night, the seller called to apologise and asked him not to involve the police. He

agreed to exchange the keyboard, and Agbotai returned to collect another one.

The exchange resolved the problem, but Agbotai said he learnt about the FCCPC only through social media some time later.

When Product Differs From Advertisement Morenikeji Alarape’s experience involved an online purchase. Around 2022, she bought a wig from a hair vendor on Instagram for 150,000.

The vendor had displayed a “No refund, no exchange” policy in the account’s biography before the transaction. Alarape saw it but believed that the hair she received would match what had been advertised.

She was disappointed when the wig arrived. Alarape described the hair as being in very poor condition and said the vendor did not explain why the product differed from what she had ordered. Instead, the seller directed her to the policy in the Instagram biography. Alarape attempted to improve the wig by revamping it, even though she had not worn it before. She remained dissatisfied, wore it twice and eventually stopped using it.

The experience has stayed with her. She said she still feels hurt when she remembers spending 150,000 on a product she did not consider worth the money.

Alarape said the experience changed how she approaches online shopping. She now prefers to buy from Temu because her experiences with its refund process have been more straightforward.

She recalled buying an item from the platform and was dissatisfied with its material. After she complained, a rider was sent to collect the item and she received a refund. She said the process took less than 30 minutes.

What The Law Says About Refunds

Speaking with a lawyer, Zaenab Olawunmi Adams on consumer rights and protection in Nigeria, she said businesses cannot use a blanket “No refund” policy to override statutory consumer rights under the FCCPA.

She explained that the law provides consumers with rights concerning the goods and services they purchase, including the right to return goods and obtain a refund in specified circumstances. However, she stressed that the remedy available depends on the nature of the transaction and the issue being raised.

“The rights of consumers to return or obtain a refund depend on the goods or services involved,” Adams said.

Section 122 is particularly relevant to disputes

involving goods that fail to meet a purpose communicated to the supplier. For example, where a customer tells a seller that a blender is needed to blend tomatoes and the product proves unsuitable for that purpose within a reasonable time after delivery, the circumstances may support a claim for a refund.

The section also covers certain goods that a consumer did not have the opportunity to examine before delivery. If the consumer rejects them within a reasonable time because they do not correspond with the description, sample or quality reasonably contemplated in the sales agreement, the Act provides for a full refund.

The question of what amounts to a reasonable time depends on the circumstances. A consumer who discovers a fault should not assume that they can wait indefinitely before reporting it. Promptly checking the product, documenting the problem and contacting the seller can help establish when the fault was discovered and what steps were taken.

Adams also referred to the Act’s provisions on the quality of goods and the obligations of suppliers. She said consumers are entitled to safe, good-quality goods that meet the relevant standards and are fit for their intended purpose. The law provides for remedies where goods fail to meet applicable requirements, although the precise remedy depends on the circumstances.

Adams put the distinction plainly: “I do not like it anymore” is entirely different from ‘this vendor sold me something defective or misrepresented from what was advertised, and I ordered based off the advertisements.’”

The FCCPA also provides a right to cancel an advance reservation, booking or order, subject to the conditions set out in Section 120. That provision allows a supplier or service provider to impose a reasonable cancellation charge in relevant circumstances. It should not be confused with an unrestricted right to return any product after a completed purchase.

Adams said consumers should therefore avoid assuming that every purchase can be reversed, just as sellers should not assume that displaying a no-refund notice removes every obligation they have under the law.

Does Seeing Policy Before Payment Change Anything?



Consumer Protection Dilemma

One argument sellers may make is that customers were informed of the return policy before buying. Alarape, for example, had seen the Instagram vendor's "No refund, no exchange" notice before paying for the wig. Adams said that displaying a policy in advance does not automatically remove rights provided by law.

Under the FCCPA, certain terms and conditions that seek to exclude or restrict legal obligations may be prohibited. Section 129 addresses prohibited transactions, agreements, terms and conditions, while other provisions of the Act deal with unfair contractual terms and notices.

This does not mean that every no-refund notice is unlawful in every circumstance. The legal position depends on what the policy covers, the transaction involved and whether the consumer is seeking a remedy that the law provides.

Taking Complaint To FCCPC

The FCCPC is responsible for protecting and promoting consumers' interests and enforcing the FCCPA. It receives complaints about consumer transactions and provides information to help consumers understand their rights and businesses understand their obligations.

The commission's zonal coordinator for the Southwest Zonal Office in Lagos, Dr Olubunmi Dorcas Otti, said consumers are entitled to products that are safe, of acceptable quality and suitable for the purpose for which they were purchased.

She explained that a consumer's complaint should be considered in relation to what the

seller promised and what the product actually does. If a buyer communicates a particular purpose to the seller and the product proves unsuitable, the consumer may have grounds to seek a remedy under the Act.

Otti said a seller cannot simply rely on a "No refund, no return" policy to refuse a remedy where a consumer is legally entitled to one because the product is defective or does not meet the agreed requirements.

The commission's role includes receiving complaints, examining the circumstances and taking appropriate action within its powers.

Otti said a seller's refusal to address a valid complaint does not remove the consumer's right to seek redress.

Consumers can submit complaints through the FCCPC's online complaint portal at complaints.fccpc.gov.ng. Otti said users are required to provide details of the transaction and follow the prompts to submit their complaint. Supporting documents can be attached, and the process generates a case number.

She advised consumers to retain proof of payment. Depending on the complaint, useful supporting material may include receipts, screenshots of advertisements, photographs or videos of the product, messages exchanged with the seller, warranty information and records of the seller's response.

The evidence helps establish what was bought, what was promised, when the problem arose and whether the customer attempted to resolve the matter directly

with the business.

Consumers who cannot afford a lawyer or the cost of taking a case to court can approach the commission with their complaint and available documents. Adams also advised consumers to seek legal guidance where necessary, particularly when a dispute involves questions about the rights available under the law.

However, consumers should be realistic about the process. Submitting a complaint does not automatically guarantee a refund. The commission must consider the facts and the applicable provisions before determining the appropriate steps.

Otti said the commission has offices in several locations, including Lagos, Ibadan, Osogbo, Awka, Port Harcourt, Katsina, Bauchi, Kano, Kaduna and Plateau State. Consumers who need assistance can seek guidance through the commission's available channels.

Building Awareness Among Consumers, Businesses

Otti said a lack of awareness remains a challenge in consumer protection. Some buyers may not know that they can report a transaction or that the law may provide a remedy when a product is defective or does not match what was agreed.

She said the commission explains the relevant provisions to consumers who approach its offices with complaints. Its public education work also includes workshops, seminars, radio and television programmes, market visits and educational activities in schools.

The commission runs Consumer Fans Clubs in primary schools, Young Consumer Clubs in

secondary schools and Consumer Ambassadors programmes in universities. These initiatives are intended to introduce consumer rights and responsibilities to people at different stages of their education.

It also produces educational materials in English, Nigerian Pidgin, Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. Otti said the commission uses these materials to make information more accessible to consumers who may not be familiar with the language of the law.

The commission's outreach also targets businesses. Otti said its engagement with traders and other businesses is intended to explain consumer rights, suppliers' obligations and the consequences of failing to comply with the law.

She said the commission had engaged banks and telecommunications operators in the previous year and was focusing on other sectors, including supermarkets and electricity distribution, in its subsequent outreach work.

The emphasis on business education reflects the fact that consumer protection is not only about informing buyers of their rights. Sellers also need to understand their obligations, how to respond to complaints and when a refund, replacement or another remedy may be required.

Otti said consumers who understand their rights are better placed to question poor products and seek help when disputes arise. She also noted that consumer education can encourage businesses to improve their practices when customers become more assertive about the quality of goods and services.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

With Student Competition, Lagos School Takes Chemistry Beyond Classroom

By Suliyyat Tella

COMPREHENSIVE Senior High School, please Alapere, Lagos, has taken chemistry beyond the classroom, giving students an opportunity to test their knowledge of the subject through practical activities, competitions and discussions on its application in everyday life and industry.

The initiative was part of the school's Chemistry Day celebration held on October 28, 2026, where students participated in periodic table challenges, listened to lectures on skills acquisition and explored career opportunities in chemistry.

The competition featured a periodic table arrangement and puzzle challenge for Senior Secondary School Three (SS3) students, alongside a periodic table writing challenge for SS1 students.

According to Ajjola Bamidele, the District II coordinator of the Chemistry Teachers Association of Nigeria (CHETAN), 59 out of 70 participants scored above 70 per cent, representing an 84.3 per cent pass rate, while 11 students scored below the mark.

The exercise was designed to test students' understanding of the periodic table and encourage active engagement with chemistry beyond conventional classroom teaching.

The event also featured lectures on education, skills acquisition and the application of chemistry in industry, as well as the launch of a school skills acquisition programme.

Speaking on building a future through education and skills acquisition, a lecturer at Yaba College of Technology Dr Oluseun Popoola, urged students to develop their natural talents and acquire relevant skills to improve their future opportunities.

She identified digital, vocational and soft skills as important areas young people should explore, noting that digital skills could provide opportunities to work remotely and earn from different parts of the world.

Popoola cited content creation as one of the entry points into the digital economy. She also identified fashion design, tailoring, plumbing and sanitary engineering as vocational skills that could help individuals meet their needs and address challenges within their communities.

She stressed that technical abilities alone were not

enough, highlighting the importance of soft skills such as communication, respect, courtesy and consistency.

In a lecture on the application of chemistry in industry, the managing director and chief executive officer of Fundamental Technology Limited, chemist Abdul Gafar Adeleye Tijani described chemistry as the engine room of industrial development.

He explained that chemists contribute to different stages of industrial production, including the identification and evaluation of raw materials, process development, product development and quality control.

He said industries across different sectors depend on the knowledge and expertise of chemists to function effectively, urging students to approach the subject with curiosity and seek to understand the principles behind chemical processes rather than simply memorising what they are taught.

The principal of Comprehensive Senior High School, Adedeji Adesanmi Olumuyiwa, commended the school's Department of Science for organising the programme, describing it as part of efforts to promote scientific knowledge, creativity, practical learning and innovation.

He recalled that the department organised a Science Day programme the previous year, expressing hope that the Chemistry Day initiative would become a lasting tradition in the school.

Olumuyiwa urged students to participate actively in the activities, ask questions and learn from the invited speakers. He also called on teachers and other departments to sustain the initiative, despite the transfer of some teachers who had been involved in organising previous editions.

Meanwhile, the convener of the convener of the event, Mrs Akindele Faosiyat Abidemi called on the government to intervene and support the expansion of the competition, urging philanthropists to contribute to the initiative.

She described skills development as a tool for tackling unemployment from the grassroots and stressed the need to move chemistry education beyond theoretical instruction to practical application.

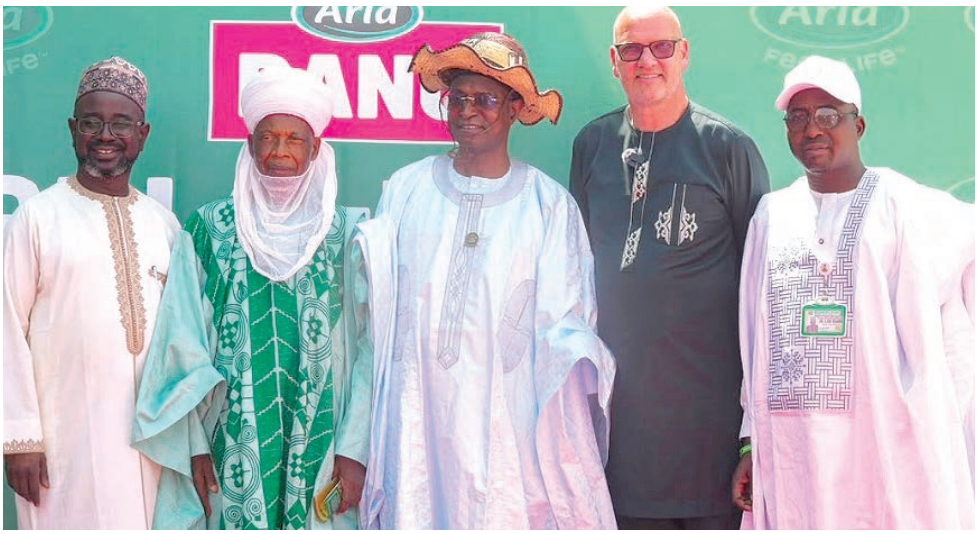
The celebration also marked the launch of the school's skills acquisition programme, reflecting efforts to expose students to practical competencies and opportunities beyond conventional classroom learning.



Students and invited guests at the 2026 Chemistry Day celebration at Comprehensive Senior High School, Agboyi-Ketu, Lagos, held on October 28.



Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd) (middle); accompanied by the Zone 2 Commander, NDLEA, Assistant Commander General of Narcotics (ACGN), Ishaku Yusuf Kwajafa and other senior Officers of the Agency during an inspection tour of the newly launched pioneer NDLEA Command School at the NDLEA Barracks, Yola, where Marwa interacted with students and staff, members of the Officers' Wives Association, and the barracks community, in Jimeta, Yola, Adamawa State... on Friday



Commissioner for Agriculture, Kaduna State, Murtala Dabo (left); District Head of Damau, Alhaji Auwalu Aliyu Damau; Minister of Livestock Development, Alhaji Idi Mukhtar Maiha; Head of Raw Milk Production, Arla Foods Nigeria, Snorri Sigurdsson and Vice Chairman, Kubau Local Council, Jafar Muhammad Kubau at the Arla-Dano Farm Open Day in Damau Kaduna State... on Friday.



Deputy General Manager, Supply Chain Management, FIRST E&P, Gboyega Akintobi, (left); Lead, Contracts and Procurement, FIRST E&P, Omorinsola Aweda; Chief Executive Officer, Marine Platforms Limited, Taofik Adegbite; General Manager, Integrated Gas Development, FIRST E&P, Yetunde Taiwo; Lead, Contracts and Procurement, FIRST E&P, Ivy Aisueni; and Senior Contracts Administrator, FIRST E&P, Temidayo Odulaja at FIRST E&P's 2026 Vendors' Day, held in Lagos ...recently.



Board Member, Charterhouse Lagos, Gordon Zhao (left); Scholarship Recipient, Iremide Olajomi-Otubo, and Director of Admissions and Marketing, Uche Okafor, at the Charterhouse Lagos Scholarship Award Ceremony

Metronotes

Rotary Club Of Abule-Egba Metro Unveils Classroom Renovation Project

By Isaac Taiwo

THE 16th President of the Rotary Club of Abule-Egba Metropolitan, Adejimi Olalekan Abiodun, has unveiled plans to renovate seven dilapidated classrooms at Meiran Senior High School as part of efforts to improve educational infrastructure and promote literacy in the community.

Abiodun disclosed this at his investiture ceremony, attended by the Rotary District 9111 Governor, Bukola Bakare, the District Governor-elect and other distinguished guests.

He described his administration's proposed projects as ambitious but achievable, noting that education, vocational training and technological advancement would be central to his leadership agenda.

According to him, the renovation of seven Senior Secondary School One (SS1) classrooms would serve as the club's flagship project, providing students with a more conducive learning environment. Beyond education infrastructure, the club plans to organise vocational training in tie-and-dye production and artificial intelligence (AI) to equip young people with practical and technology-driven skills needed to thrive in a changing world.

FG Begins N50,000 Monthly Cash Transfers To Vulnerable Nigerians

aBy Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

THE Federal Government has begun a new cash transfer programme offering 50,000 monthly to eligible vulnerable households across the country under the

National Emergency Relief and Stabilisation Intervention (NERSI).

The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Dr Bernard Doro, announced

this in a statement, on Friday, describing the initiative as a presidential intervention designed to provide immediate financial relief to Nigerians struggling with rising living costs.

Doro said the programme was introduced in response to global food inflation and the increasing cost of essential goods, which continue to put pressure on household finances.

Glovo, Verve Partner To Deliver Greater Value, Convenience To Nigerian Customers

By Ogueji for Emmanuel

GLOVO, a leading multi-category technology company, has announced a strategic partnership with

Verve International, a subsidiary of Interswitch Group and Africa's leading domestic payment cards and digital tokens brand, to deliver greater value, convenience,

and savings to customers across Nigeria.

The dynamic collaboration combines Glovo's multi-category platform with Verve's secure, convenient, and

accessible digital payment solutions to make purchases more rewarding for customers while supporting the adoption of digital payments.

By Kehinde Olaturji

AN indigenous information technology firm, Kecam Technologies Ltd. has been appointed authorised distributor of GstarCAD in Nigeria, in a move expected to expand

Nigerian IT Firm Secures GstarCAD Distribution Deal

access to computer-aided design software for businesses and professionals.

The partnership will provide architects, engineers, construc-

tion companies, manufacturers, institutions and other professionals with access to GstarCAD's design and drafting solutions.

GstarCAD is a computer-aided design software platform that supports DWG-based workflows, two-dimensional drafting and three-dimensional design.

Club Seeks Promotion Of Quality Education, Donates Learning Materials To Pupils

By Sunday Aikulola

AS part of efforts aimed at contributing to the growth of education in the country, members of Rotary Club of Lagos Central recently donated school bags, exercise

books, pen and pencils to pupils of St. Matthias Boys' Primary School, Lagos Island.

With the theme, 'Kokoka Impact,' President Rotary Club of Lagos Central, Folashade Oluwa-Giwa, said, 'we usually

go around schools in our vicinity and we select a school. Your school was chosen this year not by chance. We have also donated computers and toilets to neighbouring schools.'

Describing education as a social process, growth and life, she added, "we want to encourage pupils in primary schools. When they get to secondary schools, they can join the Interactors Club."

Tinubu Appoints Ahmad UDUTH Chief Medical Director

From Tunde Omolehin, Sokoto

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has approved the appointment of Professor Murtala Muhammad Ahmad as the seventh substantive Chief Medical Director (CMD) of the Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital

(UDUTH), Sokoto.

The appointment, which takes effect from October 20, 2026, is for an initial four-year term, according to a statement issued by the hospital's Head of Public Affairs, Mansur Wadata.

The appointment was con-

veyed in a letter signed by the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate, who congratulated Ahmad and urged him to bring his wealth of professional experience to bear on the hospital's administration.



Health Minister, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate (right) and Prof. Murtala Muhammad Ahmad

Tope Adenuga's Global Teachers' Conference 2026 Holds Nov. 7

By Suliya Tella

THE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The Faculty Company, Africa's leading education expert and a respected school leadership coach in Nigeria and England, Tope Adenuga is set to host the Global Teachers' Conference 2026, a school-based professional development initiative designed to strengthen teaching practice and improve learning outcomes.

The conference, with the theme: "The Teacher Effect," will hold on Saturday, November 7, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. WAT via Zoom.

Participating schools will host their teaching teams in school halls or designated training rooms while joining the virtual programme.

Speaking about the forthcoming event, Adenuga explained that the conference is built around a simple but powerful idea: teachers have a lasting influence on how children experience school, develop confidence and reach their potential. For him, improving education requires more than inspiring teachers for a day. It requires giving them practical tools, continued support and opportunities to learn collaboratively throughout the academic year.

Agege Motor Road: Motorists, Residents Groan Under Deplorable Mosalasi–Mushin Stretch

By **Gbenga Salau**

FOR many residents, commuters and motorists who ply the Mosalasi–Mushin section of Agege Motor Road daily, navigating the route has become an increasingly frustrating and exhausting experience. What should ordinarily be a routine journey to work, school, business or other daily engagements has turned into a struggle against potholes, damaged road surfaces and the constant fear of vehicle breakdowns or accidents. From motorists forced to manoeuvre dangerously to pedestrians struggling to find safe passage, the deteriorating condition of the road has imposed untold hardship on motorists and commuters.

The road is riddled with potholes, broken surfaces, and stagnant pools of water. The worst hit is the Mosalasi area of the road where a section of the road inward Mushin has become impassable for motorists forcing drivers to drive against traffic using the other land of the road. In that section, there are varied sizes of potholes and craters dotting the road. It was learnt this has been the case in the last three years with motorists and commuters living with the pains and trauma of riding daily on a deplorable road.

A resident, Animashaun Olalekan, said the Mosalasi section of the road is in bad condition start from Mosalasi to Ogunmokun Junction for about over two years now.

Also, Bankole Jimoh, said that the traffic he experienced navigating through the road a couple of night was crazy as a result of the bad condition of the road. According to him, government has failed Lagos residents in all ramifications.

“Can anybody point to at least sections of the entire stretch of the road without potholes and galloping from beginning to the end of those roads.”

Similarly, Abayomi Adekunle said driving through the corridor has contributed to his regular visits to his mechanic to fix his bus, as the bad road has exposed his car to damage, thereby increasing his maintenance costs. He added that the traffic around the area mostly peak periods sometimes can be terrible as a result of the state of the road.

On his part, Lawal Adeshina, noted that

the road has always been like that for some years, stating that after being patched, in few months, the road becomes deplorable again. “The market close to the road and indiscriminate refuse dumping has been a major challenge here. No matter how the drainage is cleared, they will get it clogged in few months and water will start staying on the road again.”

Another resident, Mr. Ayodeji Edidi, wondered what the state and local governments are doing with improved revenue that they are allowing roads across the state to become terrible.

“The first thing I want to say is that it is high time Federal Government returns back all these major roads to the state government. In fairness, that road is not a state road. It is a Federal Government road. But with the advent of giving these state governors and local councils getting more money, the federal government gives back some roads to state governments to manage. It is not only that road, there are so many roads around that are in deplorable states.

“The road is bad and one would have expected that the state government should have come to the aid of the Federal Government that is in Abuja, far away from the scene and people bearing brunt. This is because the road is a major one that is in the heart of the city and it is impassable, it is unheard of.”

He said that when going out, he often bypass the section of the road to avoid getting inflicted with pains using the road. “I have to bypass that road. Even though I live within the area, most of the time, I would rather go



A waterlog section of the road that is impassable for motorists



Drivers moving to the section lane, driving against traffic



A big crater under the Jibowu Bridge at Mosalasi Bus Stop

through alternative route that is longer. I would rather go through Itire Road or Fasoro.”

He called on the Federal Government to reclassify some roads especially as Lagos is no longer the federal capital.

“We can understand the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway as a trunk a road, but all these

inter locality routes still being classified as federal roads should be reclassified. When the Federal Government constructed all these roads, it was for its own good, now they have gone. So we should go back and start reclassifying the roads and give them to states. They are getting more money. They should do it.”

LASG Commits To Projects With Measurable Impact

By **Gbenga Salau**

Lagos State government has reiterated its commitment to move beyond project completion to measuring impact and strengthen project governance and safeguard public investments.

The development was highlighted at the 2026 Project Implementation Monitoring Unit (PIMU) Management and Stakeholders' Retreat, under the theme, “The THEMES+ Agenda: From Vision to Impact: Strengthening Project Management for Measurable

Outcomes”.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the retreat, the Chief of Staff, Mr. Tayo Ayinde, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Office of the Chief of Staff, Mr. Semiu Kadri, charged participants drawn from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to strengthen project monitoring, enforce accountability and ensure that government projects are delivered within approved budgets, timelines and quality standards. Ayinde emphasised that the suc-

cess of the THEMES+ Agenda must be measured not by the number of projects initiated or resources committed, but by the quality of projects delivered, their timely completion and their lasting impact on residents.

He further urged the participants to move beyond routine progress reporting by identifying implementation delays, resolving bottlenecks, ensuring compliance with quality standards and providing reliable information to support timely manage-

ment decisions.

He also called for stronger coordination across departments and effective implementation of agreed corrective actions.

Highlighting the state government's partnership with the Project Management Institute (PMI), established through a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2024, the Chief of Staff noted that the collaboration was designed to strengthen project management capacity across 45 project-executing Ministries.

Retiring Lagos Teacher, Lagferry Staff Win Apartment, SUV At COWLSO Conference

By **Gbenga Salau**

RETIRING Lagos State teacher on Grade Level 17, Mrs. Francisca Olaitan Lawal, has won a three-bedroom apartment, courtesy of Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, while Mary Odofin, a Level 9 officer with Lagos State Ferry Services (LAGFERRY), also emerged winner of a brand-new sports utility vehicle (SUV) at the just concluded 26th National Women's Conference of the Committee of Wives of Lagos State Officials (COWLSO).

The two women emerged as star prize winners during the gala night raffle draw at the three-day conference. Several other participants at the conference also went home with various gift items including shopping vouchers, return tickets to Ghana and London, among others.

Addressing the participants at the closing ceremony of the conference, Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, called on the Committee of Wives of Lagos State Officials (COWLSO) to strengthen its legacy of community service by ensuring that recommendations from its annual conferences translate into practical interventions that

improve lives.

He urged COWLSO to ensure that its impact extends beyond his administration and remains relevant to future generations.

“You must preserve the legacy of service while translating the resolutions of your annual conferences into practical programmes that improve the lives of residents,” says the Governor.

Sanwo-Olu commended COWLSO for its interventions in education, healthcare and support for vulnerable groups, including widows, children, elderly people and residents in need.

He noted that resources generated through the organisation's activities had been used to support medical outreaches, school projects and other community-focused initiatives. The governor also called for proper documentation of the conference recommendations to guide future administrations and stakeholders.

He urged members to preserve the unity and shared commitment that have sustained the organisation while build-

ing a stronger foundation for future generations.

He emphasised the importance of documenting the outcomes of the annual gathering to enable relevant stakeholders and succeeding administrations to consult the recommendations and implement those capable of advancing social development.

Sanwo-Olu noted that the value of the conference should be reflected in tangible results beyond the discussions and networking sessions, encouraging COWLSO to sustain its interventions and ensure that the knowledge generated at the event benefits communities across Lagos State.

He also acknowledged the responsible use of resources mobilised through conference registration fees and other contributions, noting that the funds had supported initiatives including medical screening programmes, school construction and the provision of care for elderly residents.

According to him, such interventions demonstrate how collective action and sustained partnerships can help address community needs and complement government efforts to improve the wellbeing of residents.

Politics

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2027: Pro-Tinubu Governors Face Grassroots

As Nigerians count down to the 2027 general elections, more than 31 governors supporting President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's re-election bid are desperately wooing the electorate to their camp, but opposition candidates, especially Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi, have also thrown down the gauntlets despite the odds stacked against them. In this report, **ONYEDIKA AGBEDO** writes that the outcome of the poll will certainly reshape the debate on the relevance of state chief executives in presidential contests as Nigeria consolidates its democracy.

TWO months and 16 days to the 2027 general election, many political watchers are wondering how the opposition parties intend to oust President Bola Tinubu from Aso Rock through the ballot with 34 state governors lined behind his re-election bid. These comprise 31 governors of the All Progressives Congress (APC)-controlled states: all North-West states (Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara); all North-Central states (Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau); all South-South states (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers); five out of the six states in North-East (Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe); four out of the six states in South-West (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo) and three out of the five states in South-East (Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo). Also, the Governors of Anambra, Osun and Abia states, Chukwuma Soludo of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Ademola Adeleke of Accord Party (AP) and Alex Otti of Labour Party (LP) respectively have openly thrown their weights behind Tinubu's re-election bid. And to strengthen the cross-party support by these opposition governors, the APC has named both Soludo and Adeleke into its Presidential Campaign Council.

So, as at today, only two state governors – Seyi Makinde of Oyo State and Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State, both of the Allied Peoples Movement (APM) – are opposed to Tinubu's bid to govern Nigeria for a second term of four years starting May 29, 2027. Makinde, who is of the same geo-political zone as Tinubu, is gunning for the presidency on the platform of the APM. Atiku Abubakar of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and Peter Obi of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), who also want Tinubu's job, have no state governor overtly backing their aspirations.

But they strongly believe they can win the election, especially considering the outcome of the 2023 presidential election where Tinubu, Atiku and Obi won 12 states each. Prior to the election, the APC governed 21 states; the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which fielded Atiku, governed 14 states while APGA was in control of one state. Labour Party, the platform under which Obi contested then, had no state under its control. Thus, many political analysts viewed the party as lacking the structure to prosecute a presidential election and wrote Obi off as an underdog in the race.

However, Obi retorted at every opportunity, saying Nigerians living in poverty made up his political structure. "I have said it before when people talk about structure, that my structure is the 100 million Nigerians living in poverty. That's five million people unemployed, those people who are finding it difficult to live. Nigerians are today spending over 100 per cent of their money on feeding. That is my structure. And above all, the

most important structure is the Almighty God," he said.

His performance at the poll proved him right. He came third in the race, polling 6,101,533 votes as against Atiku's 6,984,520 votes and Tinubu's 8,794,726 votes. And his votes came from states controlled by political parties with well-oiled structures, including Tinubu's Lagos where he defeated him with 9,848 votes. Obi polled 582,454 votes, Tinubu 572,606 votes, while Atiku scored 75,750 votes.

Heading into the 2027 elections, Atiku and Obi are still Tinubu's top challengers and they appear unperturbed by the number of governors the APC is parading. When opposition governors started defecting to the APC in early 2025, a chieftain of the ADC, Nasir El-Rufai, who is now in detention over alleged wiretapping, had underplayed the ability of governors to influence electoral outcomes.

Speaking in Kano in April last year while rallying Nigerians for an opposition coalition that could defeat the APC in the 2027 polls, El-Rufai had maintained that the feat could be achieved without support from governors.

"We are trying to offer Nigerians a real alternative – something different from what they have seen before. A governor has only one vote. Nigerians have many more votes than one governor or even 36 governors combined. It doesn't matter if you gather all the governors together; if the people of Nigeria say they are not with you, it is over.

Other governors supporting Tinubu's re-election also point to the achievements of his administration. These include GDP steady growth, falling inflation, naira stability, doubled FAAC allocations to states, rising foreign reserves, infrastructure renewal, NELFUND loans for indigent students, and consumer credit for young people, among others.

"The president had a sitting governor in Lagos and still lost Lagos. So, what is the real value of a governor? I was the governor of Kaduna State. I fought hard to deliver President Tinubu in my state, but I lost. That taught me a hard lesson – that elections are ultimately decided by the people, not by political figures," he said.

Former Osun State Governor and National Secretary of the ADC, Rauf Aregbesola, had also argued that governors could not guarantee electoral victory for the APC in the 2027 elections.

Speaking at the public launch of *The Loyalist*, a memoir by Bolaji Abdullahi, the ADC's National Publicity Secretary, in Abuja earlier this year, Aregbesola, a former political ally of President Tinubu, cited results from the South-West and South-East to argue that voters, not governors, decide elections.

He, therefore, urged the government to ensure free and fair polls to test the impact of political defections.

"I want to use results from two zones – just two zones – to show that when a party controls a state, it may not necessarily translate to votes. I want to use the results from the South-West and

South-East. In the South-West, the APC controlled all but one state. Despite this, the party's maximum performance in that election was 55 per cent, with the other parties sharing the rest.

"The same applied in Lagos. The APC candidate lost his ward, local government and state. So please, for goodness' sake, where is it claimed that governors win elections against the people's will? That is the South-West.

"In the South-East, the result is even more striking. The APC had only 5.8 per cent of the total vote from that zone. I'll stop at that. The results of these two zones clearly show that governors do not win elections – the people do.

"What we require from the government overseeing the election is a commitment to a free and fair process. So first, commit yourself to a free and fair election, and let us see what the result will be. That's what we're asking," he said.

Speaking in the same vein, ADC Presidential Campaign Council's Director of Media and Publicity, Kola Ologbondiyan, recently dismissed the suggestion that the absence of a state governor in Atiku's political camp would undermine his electoral prospects.

According to him, Atiku could improve on his 2023 performance without the backing of any governor by effectively mobilising Nigerians across the country.

He insisted that Atiku would personally take his campaign across the country rather than rely on surrogates to sell his candidacy to voters.

"Atiku will be everywhere and Nigerians will not accept proxy campaigns," he said.

Also, Obi's running mate, Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, said the APC's control of more than 30 states does not guarantee President Tinubu's victory in the 2027 elections.

Kwankwaso spoke in Port Harcourt during a town hall meeting with voters where he and Obi fielded questions on the 2027 general election.

The former governor of Kano and leader of the *Kwankwaso's* Movement cited the 2015 elections, when the then-President Goodluck Jonathan lost his re-election bid to Muhammadu Buhari, the APC candidate.

In the build-up to the 2015 election, the PDP, the platform on which Jonathan contested, controlled 21 states in the country. However, during the election, Jonathan won in 15 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), while Buhari won the remaining 21 states, according to results declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Eleven of the 21 states won by Buhari were controlled by the PDP at the time.

Referencing Jonathan's defeat in 2015, Kwankwaso dismissed suggestions that the ruling party's control of 31 states would guarantee victory for Tinubu.

"Jonathan was the sitting president and he lost the election. Those who think that because they have over 30 governors they cannot lose are making a very big mistake," he said.

Against this backdrop, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has warned governors and other members of the APC Presidential Campaign Council against claiming victory in the 2027 presidential election if they fail to deliver their respective states to President Tinubu.

Wike spoke during the inauguration of the APC Presidential Campaign Council in Abuja, where he was appointed coordinator for the FCT and Rivers State.

The minister, who is a chieftain of the PDP but was co-opted into the council by the party due to his strong support for Tinubu's re-election bid, said the priority of every council member should be to ensure the President's re-election, regardless of their position within the cam-



Test As Atiku, Obi Mobilise For Showdown

paign structure.

His words: "I want to say, if you don't deliver your states and the President wins, don't say we've won. It's not a question of whether I am chairman, secretary or member of this council. What is important is for the president to win."

"I told the Chief of Staff to the President, if the president doesn't win in Lagos, don't say we've won. By the grace of God, Rivers and FCT will vote massively for Bola Ahmed Tinubu."

Aligning with Wike, Kaduna State Governor, Uba Sani, has declared that it would amount to a failure for the party if any opposition candidate secures 25 per cent of the votes in the state in the elections.

Sani spoke during an interview with TVC last Sunday, expressing confidence that Kaduna would deliver more votes for Tinubu.

"In Kaduna State, allowing any candidate to even get 25 percent of the votes is a failure on our side," he said.

The governor attributed his confidence to projects and interventions by the Federal Government in Kaduna over the past three and a half years, saying residents should reciprocate the support by voting massively for Tinubu.

He recalled that the APC National Chairman, Nentawe Yilwatda, had said the North would give Tinubu 70 per cent of its votes, adding that Kaduna would deliver an even higher percentage.

Sani also commended Tinubu for handing over the Ahmadu Bello Stadium to the Kaduna State government, saying the state had plans to rebuild the facility into a 33,000-capacity stadium that meets FIFA standards.

The governor also cited the reconstruction of the 123-kilometre Kaduna-Birnin Gwari road, which he said had been abandoned for more than 40 years. He added that N178 billion had been released for the project.

He also thanked the President for the ongoing reconstruction of the Zaria-Soba-Kambuwa road and the proposed Kaduna metropolitan light rail project.

According to Sani, \$865 million had been approved for the rail project, while China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation, the contractor, had received \$300 million in mobilisation funds.

The governor said Kaduna now has four federal universities, including the upgraded Federal University of Education, Zaria; the Federal University of Applied Sciences, Kachia; and the proposed Shehu Musa Yar'Adua University of Petroleum Studies in Kaduna. He also listed the conversion of Kaduna Polytechnic into a federal university of technology.

Sani said the Federal Government's interventions in the state should motivate residents to vote massively for Tinubu in the next election.

He accused opposition parties of using artificial intelligence and doctored images to criticise the ruling party on social media rather than engaging voters directly.

"We are the only party that is reaching out, talking to the people," he claimed.

Other governors supporting Tinubu's re-election also point to the achievements of his administration. These include GDP steady growth, falling inflation, naira stability, doubled FAAC allocations to states, rising foreign reserves, infrastructure renewal, NLFUND loans for indigent students, and consumer

it for young people,

among others.

For Edo State Governor Monday Okpeholo, President Tinubu deserves a second term in office because more money has been made available to the states following the removal of petrol subsidy.

He spoke during the APC grassroots mobilisation tour of Esan South-East and Esan North-East Local Councils, saying Tinubu has performed beyond expectations.

He also insisted that the party's target of 2.5 million votes for President Tinubu in Edo was within reach and urged party supporters to stay committed to the cause.

Anambra State Governor, Chukwuma Soludo, has also expressed confidence that President Tinubu will secure a second term in office, saying it would provide an opportunity to accelerate the administration's reform programme.

Addressing Tinubu and members of the All Progressives Alliance Africa at the inauguration of APC presidential campaign council in Abuja recently, Soludo described the administration's economic reform direction as difficult but necessary, urging the President to sustain the course.

"The path you are going, the path that you have chosen, that you have had the courage to take, is difficult, but it is necessary," he said.

The governor had further described the next phase of the reform agenda as an opportunity to advance what he called "pragmatic progressiveness".

"It is the acceleration path towards what I call pragmatic progressiveness that we must entrench in Nigeria," he said.

Nevertheless, Atiku and Obi appear to be banking on the hardship induced by the economic reforms of the administration to convince voters to reject Tinubu at the poll.

Reacting to the report of the SBM Intelligence survey released last September, indicating that 67.4 per cent of respondents wanted the Federal Government to restore petrol subsidy, Atiku said the finding showed widespread dissatisfaction with President Tinubu's petrol policy and the rising cost of living.

In a statement issued by his Senior Special Assistant on Public Communication, Phrank Shaibu, Atiku said the survey result was evidence that Nigerians were seeking relief from higher petrol and transportation costs following the removal of subsidy.

"This survey is no longer merely about economic policy. It has become a democratic question. When an overwhelming majority of Nigerians declare that a government policy is destroying their lives, responsible leadership must listen," Atiku said.

According to the former vice president, petrol

ranked as the second-most cited national problem and the Tinubu administration's worst-rated policy issue, scoring 1.69 out of four in the survey.

He said the impact of higher fuel prices was reflected in increased transportation costs, food prices and operating expenses for businesses.

Atiku also cited regional variations in the survey, saying 32.4 per cent of rural respondents identified petrol as their primary concern, compared with 11.7 per cent of urban respondents.

He said petrol was also the leading concern among respondents in the South-West, at 30.5 per cent, and South-South, at 29.1 per cent.

He criticised the government's decision to remove subsidy, arguing that it was implemented without adequate measures to protect households, businesses and domestic production from the resulting economic pressures.

He also rejected what he described as attempts to rely on economic statistics and the Federal Government's compressed natural gas (CNG) programme to justify the policy.

"Nigerians do not eat GDP figures. A mother cannot take FAAC allocations to the market. A worker cannot fuel his vehicle with presidential promises. Any economic reform that does not improve the lives of the people has failed," he said.

Atiku said his proposed alternative would not restore what he described as the previous subsidy regime but introduce a production subsidy for petroleum products refined in Nigeria and sold domestically.

He said the proposed scheme would exclude imported petroleum products, have a fixed spending limit, require National Assembly approval and be subject to independent audits.

According to him, the measure would be aimed at reducing fuel prices, supporting domestic refining, creating jobs and improving purchasing power.

"The 67.4 per cent demanding relief represents a democratic majority. On the strength of that democratic mandate, we will replace Tinubu's policy of punishment with a policy of production, protection and affordability," he said.

Similarly, Obi accused the Tinubu administration of worsening Nigeria's economic challenges, declaring that he must leave office in 2027.

He

spoke in Abuja on Monday, October 26, at the inauguration of the NDC's national campaign council.

The former governor of Anambra said Nigeria was facing a crisis under Tinubu's leadership, insisting that Nigerians were seeking a change of government.

"Tinubu has led this country into a crisis. Today, everything is collapsing. From our engagements across Nigeria, Nigerians are looking for new leadership, and we assure you that we will create that leadership," Obi said.

Obi also criticised the administration over poverty, unemployment, corruption and insecurity, saying the country had recorded poor results across key development indicators.

He faulted Tinubu for launching his re-election campaign without accounting for the funds borrowed by his administration.

"Just last Friday, President Tinubu launched his second general campaign rather than explain to Nigerians what he has used the billions he borrowed to do.

"Rather than explain what he has achieved with the 2023, 2024 and 2025 budgets, he chose to blame the opposition for creating poverty.

"Let me assure you: we will not lead a government of blame. The purpose of governance is to solve problems, not to blame people. I will not blame anybody. We will create that new Nigeria that is possible.

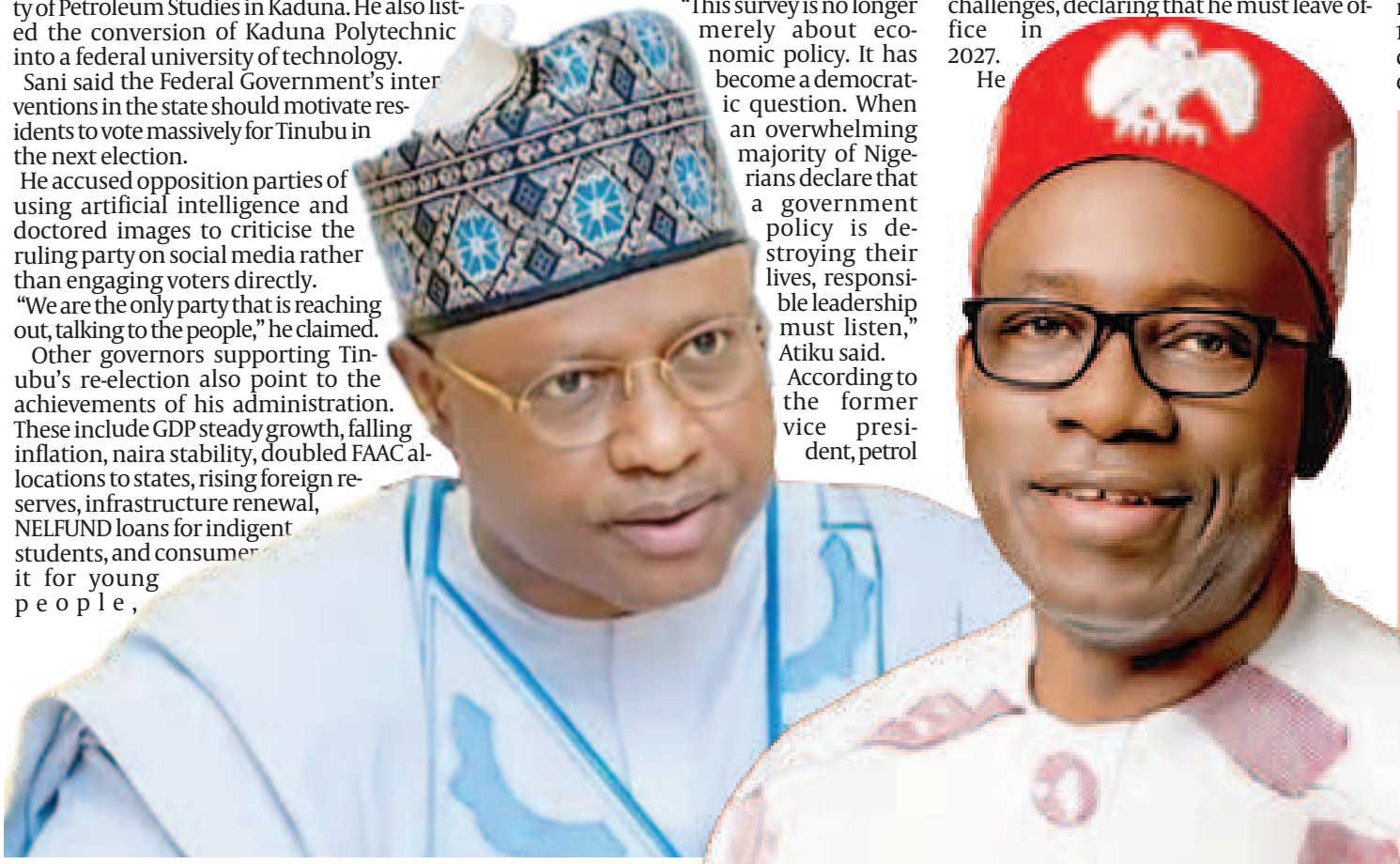
"We need a revolution that will turn this country around, and we are committed to that. The APC-led government under President Tinubu has failed Nigeria," he said.

However, the noise about restoring fuel subsidy as a campaign gimmick appeared to have mellowed following the warning by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that "blanket petrol subsidies are expensive, often benefit higher-income consumers disproportionately, and worsen fiscal pressures amid rising borrowing costs."

Also, political pundits have interrogated circumstances that fostered electoral successes recorded by the opposition figures such as Atiku and Obi in the 2023 elections and concluded that such factors might not impact the outcome of the 2027 poll.

Whether the electorate will key into the campaign messages of the governors or those of the opposition candidates remain to be seen. But one thing is clear: the governors are under test. This is the first time since the return of civil rule in 1999 that an absolute majority of state governors will queue behind a president seeking re-election. Therefore, the outcome of January 16, 2027 poll will further address the issue concerning the extent of their influence in presidential contests.

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Interview

Last week, Enugu Governor, Peter Mbah faced a town hall meeting where he spoke about the achievements of his administration in nearly four years, answered questions about his government and exuded confidence in securing the mandate of the people to continue in office next year. **LAWRENCE NJOKU** was there.

Having watched you work for nearly four years, tell us why Enugu should renew your tenure in 2027?

Let me invite Ndi Enugu to imagine something with me. Let us imagine the Enugu we knew four years ago. Let's just imagine an Enugu without Hotel Presidential. Let's imagine an Enugu without an International Conference Centre. Let's imagine an Enugu without Enugu Air. You don't want to imagine an Enugu without an International Hospital, an Enugu without CNG buses, The Niger Gas. It's endless.

Let's stretch the imagination a little further. Imagine an Enugu in four years time that will be generating 660 megawatts of electricity where you can live in the entire state and we are able to provide 24/7 electricity. You cannot come into your house and you have the lights off. Businesses can flourish. You can run your business for a whole week without worrying about the cost of diesel.

Just imagine an Enugu where we generate electricity and the people of Enugu are buying that at N120 because they own the coal that is powering the electricity. Imagine an Enugu where you just have to ride not just on our CNG buses but you have the monorail that can take you from point A to point B. Imagine an Enugu where you can fly from here to the UK, USA, China and Dubai.

We have asked you to do some imagination over what we were a few years ago before we came in. But even more profound is the work that we have ahead of us. You just imagine an Enugu where our children are receiving education that prepares them for the world because they have the evolving 21st century skills. They've been imbued with those skills. Imagine again an Enugu where all the roads are paved, where you don't have any part of the city with an unpaved road.

And so the decisions we make in the days, weeks and months ahead are quite decisive. It's going to be very decisive. So we do have a duty.

If these imaginations capture our fancy to do some work, that work is to uphold this Enugu of our dreams. We do have a duty to fight for it. We do have a duty to con-

Why Enugu Will Vote For APC Candidates In 2027 – Gov Mbah

to make sure that that bar does not come down, that that standard we have set, that Enugu trajectory, that Enugu story is sustained. So I would invite Ndi Enugu to continue to keep faith with us on this journey; this journey of greatness; this journey of growth and this journey of development.

Looking back at your campaign promises in 2023, do you think your vision is beginning to take shape?

Before our election in 2023, we had imagined what Enugu could become. We also outlined what Enugu could become and we challenged or urged our people to stretch their imagination. We imagined an Enugu where our young people could build their futures; an Enugu where businesses would flourish; an Enugu where our children would receive education that prepares them for the future; an Enugu where our people would have access to quality healthcare, live securely and take pride in a place they call home. So, I'm really excited to engage our people to see whether that ambition, in their view, is also beginning to take fiscal shape or whether it's still within their imagination. I would like to hear it from them.

Just imagine a few years back an Enugu without an international conference centre. This international conference centre has opened its doors to Nigeria and the world.

If you look beyond the walls, the Enugu International Hospital is about to be commissioned. There are several roads connecting our communities, transportation, Enugu Air, revamping our industries, building new ones. I mean, the list is endless.

A lot has been said about the smart school project. What has the budget performance been like for education?

What we have done over the last three budget cycles has been to dedicate 33 per cent to education. I think the lowest we came was 32 per cent. But on the average, it's been 33 per cent across the three budget cycles we've had since we assumed office.

Again, we did that because we could see the connection. Today, we hear quite a lot of talk about the smart green schools and, of course, all the beauty around it. But for us, it was never about the bricks and mortar. We recognised from the very onset that the sector needed aggressive intervention and in fact, something akin to an emergency declaration.

We couldn't expect our children just going through the motion of learning without actually acquiring the relevant skills required for the New World Order. So, what we've done is to transform the entire education system. For the first time in the history of the state, we provided access to early child learning in public schools. I don't think it happens anywhere in this country, where from age three, our children are able to assess learning.

Beyond learning, we're also able to use the same platform to

intervene in their health care.

Because when we bring the index child at age three, we also look at the health profile of that child. By the way, you know, in our smart schools, we have clinics.

Imagine an Enugu in four years time that will be generating 660 megawatts of electricity where you can live in the entire state and we are able to provide 24/7 electricity. You cannot come into your house and you have the lights off. Businesses can flourish.

And we also have the clinics manned by registered nurses. So, that way, we are able to assess the medical records of the kids. Most of these schools are in the rural areas, as you already know. And you may even have kids that do not have medical records. From that point, we'll begin to regularise their medical records, ensure that they have received their prophylaxis; the vaccinations that they ought to have taken before the age of three; that they are up to date with that.

The other major transformation in the education sector is we have also built a system where we now have basic one to basic nine. So, what used to be known as primary one, you get to primary six, you have to take your common entrance, then you go to another school, your parents will have to pay so much to get you enrolled in that. All that is now eliminated. In Enugu, in our smart green school location, you're able to start from your basic one all the way to basic nine, without interruption.

So you technically have 12 years of compulsory and free education. And when we say free, we mean free in the true sense of the word. That means there's no registration fee. You don't have to buy a uniform. As a parent, we provide uniforms to the kids. You don't buy any textbooks. You don't buy any notebook. They are all provided. And we've also done something very radical. We've transformed pedagogy. We've moved away from the rock system of learning to what we now refer to as an experiential system where we teach the kids by practicing.

So, beyond the digital skills that they all have to be exposed to at that very young age, we are also talking about each smart school having robotics, artificial intelligence hub, and all that. We have an innovation hub where these kids are taught how to build robots. Of course, we also have practical skills. The important thing now is that learning no longer travels in one direction where the teacher stands in front and is just giving to these kids what to memorise and repeat. The kids now see their classrooms as a creativity hub. They see themselves as potential problem solvers. They are exposed to the compelling social problems and they are taught how to address them.

Let's look at the quality of work on the smart schools and the incidents that have been recorded every time there's heavy rain. The smart schools we have in the state now, are they the smart schools of your dream? What are the smart schools you envisioned before you got into office in 2023?

Well, just imagine the scale of the projects we're talking about. What we have done in the last three years, building 268 smart green schools. And the buildings are outstanding.

It's perhaps, you know, something that probably could take 10 to 20 years to do. So, when you fast-track at that scale, you're bound to have tipping problems and we're not oblivious of it. We're not unmindful of the fact that these tipping problems would come. But the question is: Are we resolved to deal with them? Certainly, we would address them. We don't procrastinate. We wanted to do these

things at scale. That was the whole idea. Not to leave any child behind in the state. We could have decided to say, 'you know what? Let's do three smart green schools, one per zone.' That would still be great, because each smart school is bigger than a model school. Recall how model schools were built those days. You probably have one in one state or maybe even one per zone. But if we had just done three smart schools in the state, it would still be mega and would make headlines.

But we didn't say we wanted to build 17 smart green schools. We could have also built one per local government. We said every child in this state must have access to quality learning and we did 268 smart green schools. So, with the tipping problem, some structural defects here and there, roof going up, those are very insignificant challenges that we are addressing. We're going to address them. We're going to make sure all the schools are fit for purpose.

You talked about fast-tracking the project. Does this absolve the contractors of guilt with regards to the incidents recorded?

Certainly not! We do have records of these contractors. Those ones where you have these defects naturally go back to fix them. And for those we cannot, you know, those that have been recalcitrant, we blacklist. And there are consequences for that. Don't forget that we got an advance payment guarantee from all these contractors. And we do have an option to call those up if it becomes necessary.

Let's talk about your government's programmes in agriculture. How have they fared?

For agriculture, when we assumed office, we upgraded the Ministry of Agriculture. First, it was originally known as the Ministry of Agriculture. Then we moved it to the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-industrialisation. We did that not just because we wanted a fancy nomenclature; we did that because we realised the contribution of agriculture to our GDP. Don't forget that the target was to grow the GDP sevenfold in eight years. Agriculture is one of our critical sectors. We decided to activate all the state's assets in that area. The first thing we did was to have a joint venture with a company called Pragmatic Farm to activate our United Farm Products Limited, what used to be UPPL, but is now Enugu United Farm Products Limited (EUPPL).

We had a joint venture that would see an injection of about N100 billion into the investment in Farm Products Limited. Today, that plantation is very active. It's a total of 6,700 hectares of land.

Then, of course, a number of those trees were not producing because of their age. But today, we have over 2,000 hectares that have been cultivated and produced. Some of the old trees have also been activated, resold, you know, reduced to produce. We have reactivated what used to be AVOP, the Anambra Vegetable Oil Products. It is now EVOP, Enugu Vegetable Oil Products. We actually produce palm oil, at the UPPL production. But beyond the production of palm oil, we're even taking it a step further where we would soon receive the refinery because we also want the equipment for the refinery. We want to be refining the palm oil to vegetable oil and the rest of other ancillary products that would come from that.

We have what used to be known as the Songhai in Henneke, in Ezeagu. That was also dormant. Nothing was being done about it. It's 10,000 hectares of farmland. Today, it's fully active. We have a private investor that we're working with, a company called Tribu. So, it's known today as Tribu Songhai Farm. The Sunrise Flour Mill is also another example. It was dormant. It was docile.



Mbah

Interview

It was not doing anything. It was moribund. Today, the Sunrise Flour Mill is being reactivated with the cultivation of 10,000 hectares of land – cassava.

The list is endless. You know the intervention in the farm estates, what we're doing today. We have six pilot farm estates that are ongoing as we speak. The idea is to have at least 260 of those farm estates. Each has a minimum of 200 hectares of land where we have a total fence. We have a warehouse. We then push all the machinery so that we can migrate our smallholder farmers to mechanise, creating their ability to move from just subsistence farming methods to a mechanised farming system. I really don't want to spend the whole day talking about agriculture.

Would you say that Enugu State have reliable potable water?

I know this question and, of course, the familiar 180 days' commitment would come up. I told you in 180 days water would flow in every household and we were committed to that. We didn't make that commitment because we wanted to earn some public acclaim or for posturing. We knew where water ranked in the order of priority of our people. We knew how not having access to water keeps a child out of school. Or when they are supposed to be doing their homework, they are roaming around the streets looking for water. So we knew.

I recall during my campaign how I would walk on some streets and see kids, you know, filed up in a queue just trying to get water from a tanker. I saw all that. So, I knew it was something we needed to crack. I didn't want to spare any effort or time in resolving it.

I knew that I had committed during my campaign that I would solve this problem in 180 days. And I had done the analysis around the production segments; I realised that the state at the time was producing two million litres daily. Enugu needed 80 million litres to at least ensure that water flows in all the homes in Enugu. So, what did we do? Even before swearing in, we front-loaded the procurement because some of the items we needed to procure were long-lead items. They were not off-the-shelf so a lot of them would be customised. So we had to order for them. Some of them had a need time of about four months, particularly the big pumps. So, we front-loaded the procurement and we were able to save at least two months. Two months into our administration, the pumps arrived and we started working on increasing our production. We also reactivated the 9th Mile scheme, which had been dormant over the years. So by the 180th day of our administration, we were already able to produce 120 million litres.

But I'll tell you what happened. As those supplies increased, as we built the capability to produce at that scale, as the water got into the pipes, they began to burst. We started having burst pipes. So, the pipes were brittle. They had over-leased their design life. We also had to deal with some of the pipes that were asbestos. Some of the pipes had actually been, you know, built on. The right-of-way of those pipes had been compromised by buildings. So, you could see that what was already a complicated situation became even more complex. We had to start dealing with all that. We had a choice. Should we start pulling down those buildings that were on the right-of-way? Or should we start reconnecting, doing a new network? Well, these are our citizens. We shouldn't pull down their buildings. So the truth today is that Enugu can have a buffer of over 50 per cent to serve the entire city of Enugu with the production capacity we have.

What we're now dealing with is making sure that the water gets to the last mile. And we're doing that also aggressively. We've zoned the city. We have about 14 zones. And we have work going on across the 14 zones, connecting to the last miles. It's a bit slower because of all the obstructions you have to deal with.

And we've even procured trust-boring equipment so that we can do horizontal drilling. In most cases, we won't have to cut the road open. As I said, we will solve the water problem and I understand how important that is. We're on it. I get briefings on the

progress we're making in the water sector or sub-sector every day.

Poverty eradication, zero hunger and ease of doing business were among your measurable indicators. We studied your manifesto in 2023 and this was bold there. But taxes remain one of the biggest claims of Enugu residents. We are even told that your administration is overtaxing traders. What do you say to these claims?

This is one falsehood that has been so peddled that it's even beginning to take a semblance of a truth. Meanwhile, it does not exist and I think those who think we may be taxing more are essentially looking at the sort of growth we have recorded in our IGR and they somehow, because they couldn't have imagined such growth happening within the period it happened, felt perhaps the only justification is that we have burdened the people of Enugu to realise that. But that's far from it. I've tried to explain this in several fora.

We cannot legislate on taxation. It is not within the state's legislative purview. The issue of taxation is under the exclusive legislative list. The National Assembly will legislate on the rate of your personal income

tax, your company income tax, your VAT, your withholding tax, and all the other stuff you do with some duties and others. Now, I think perhaps what some would view as

taxation and maybe, in a generic term, also assume that it's payment they make for services – provision for removal of your waste, business premises, maybe water. When you go to apply for your C of O, fees that you pay and then maybe fees like management fees if you are living in an estate; your land use charge and all that. If you look at the fees we charge for those services, what we did was to enact a state law that consolidated, because what was the problem before now was businesses felt that there was multiple taxation. People were asked to pay taxes, tax for that, fees for this, rates for that, and charges for that, and we said, no, let's consolidate all that. Let's bring them into just one payment. And how much did we say we should charge? N36,000 annually for those businesses. And these include your business premises, a whole lot of rates are built into that. So, going to those people to ask for payments for any sort of thing is prohibited. And the way we looked at it was, if you do the calculus, this is barely N100 per day. It's N3,000

When this issue of taxation was raging, I just wanted to be on the path of caution. I set up a committee, I think, headed by the SSG or so. I asked that they do a comparison of what we charge for these services across, against other states around us. And I also said; get us the rates in Lagos and Abuja. I got that report from the committee, I think after three weeks. It was clear to us that in the entire Southeast, we charge by far the lowest rates in terms of those service areas. And then, what did I do with respect to land use charges? When we looked at the land use charge figure, before the committee's inauguration, the fees for land use charge was around N150,000, in some cases N200,000 and all that. We crashed it.

But because we have expanded the net, we now have more people. When we came in, we had barely 9,000 units that got their demand notice to pay their land use charge. But when we did the survey, we found out that we had over 800,000 billable household units that demand notice could be sent to. I said, well, since we have expanded the tax net, we can also crash the price so that there will be voluntary compliance. That was the whole idea.

We also had these complaints about people going to the market, I'm sure maybe from the local governments, to collect money. I made an announcement to stop that, that nobody should collect N100 or N200 from our market women. I ended that also.

Again, I don't want to talk about some of the recent announcements we have made with respect to even the tricycle riders, where we have also, again, crashed their fees. These really don't have much impact on our IGR. What

did we do to grow our IGR? First of all, we plugged all the leakages.

We ensured that nobody makes payments in cash on behalf of the state government. We have so far activated a whole lot of our dormant assets. We now earn quite a lot from those assets.

Before we came into the office, the Nike Lake Hotel, we were paying money to sustain it. The government was paying money to those running it at the time to ensure that the

place was alive. Today, we earn over N300 million from the sort of arrangements we got into. For Hotel Presidential, the government earns over N1 billion just from the sort of arrangements we have. The International Conference Centre, the government makes money. I don't want to start calling them, but some very huge amounts and this goes to all the other partnerships we have with the United Farm Products Limited, where the government owns 40 per cent of that arrangement.

The Sunrise Flour Mills limited, government also owns 40 per cent. At the Shongai, we own about 30 per cent or so of that arrangement. So, our government is making money from what were dormant assets before.

You said that in July this year, there would be a groundbreaking for a 660 megawatt coal-fired power plant with a 24-month construction timeline. This is October; we are yet to see it happen?

We have been ready since July but for the wet season. We do have the 660 megawatt plant procured not by the state. We're working with an investor. But the plant is ready. We need to do our own base, which is the civil work; we are even trying to do the road to the location. This plant is going to be sited at Amansiodo. It's going to be fed by coal and Amansiodo holds our largest reserve of coal. So, that's why we're citing the plant there because we wanted it to be close to the production plant. We're still committed to doing this, once we do the groundbreaking, to have it ready. As I talk to you, the plant is being brought in from China. So, everything is still on track. The reason we haven't done the groundbreaking, as we promised in July, is again because of the wet season. And now we're hoping that once we get a window, we'll just go for the groundbreaking and the civil works will start.

In the last two most and since the start of electioneering campaigns, you have opened your doors to more appointments. It is said that these were out of fear for the elections. What's your plan of sustaining them?

You're talking about whether the appointment is sustainable and about me being nervous. I think what I understand you to be saying is that at a time when a lot of people who think that the administration is coming to an end, we're doubling down, we're being proactive, we're saying no, there's still work to be done. I think you should give us credit for bringing in more hands to make sure that we accelerate the pace of work. And that's what we're doing. So, it's not being nervous.

It's actually saying that there's still a lot to do and we have to do it. And that's essentially what we're doing. It's not a problem.

Is APC paying the N150 million fee imposed

on political parties to paste campaign posters in Enugu?

Okay, so the fees that people pay for signage, it's not even an executive order. It is the law of a state. I think some people have actually gone to court to challenge that law and the court has given judgment that it is

l e g a l



because, as I said, it is established by law. Go back to the law. Go and review it. I challenge you to look at that law. You will never see in that law where it exempts APC. So, it means it's of general application. So, everybody is covered. You have to pay the fees. And of course, failure to do so is a violation of the law.

What is your take on President Tinubu's economic policies?

Before the bold and courageous decision made by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, we were almost at an economic precipice in this country. I'm sure you knew that the ways and means we had accumulated was over N27 trillion. What that means is like we're in a hole. The only way we were trying to get out of that hole was digging deeper. What would have happened if we had continued in that trajectory was a total collapse; we would have had a failed nation. You don't need to go far to see where these things have happened. He would have said, let's keep printing money.

When we talk about micro hardship, households, unemployment and all that, what we're witnessing or experiencing today would have been a child's play if those decisions were not made. The way a nation functions effectively is for you to, first of all, address the macro pressures. If you do not address those pressures, make sure that your indicators at the macro level are stable.

For example, today, we have a reserve that can sustain us for the next 10 to 11 months. Our foreign reserve is about 56 to 58 billion dollars – the highest in almost two decades. Now, you look at our foreign exchange. It has somehow stabilised because we allowed it to be driven by the forces of the market. So, it floats. It isn't any longer controlled. We were controlling what we couldn't back; that was why we were rapidly declining in our foreign reserve. So, it was arrested. Today, the economy is stabilised because all the indicators at the macro level are looking very good. Now, the next thing you want to push would be growth.

So, you have to stabilise the economy to attract those capital to come. And once they begin to come, what would you experience as a people? You have shared prosperity. You have a poverty level coming down because people are able to work. Their earning power is increasing. That's what this President has done. I think we must commend his courage to take that decision. In fact, we never had anybody in the first term of the administration, even in their second term, having the courage to take those bold decisions. We are on the right path. I can tell you from the numbers we're seeing and the growth we are witnessing now; we are seeing the lights at the end of the tunnel.

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Editorial

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Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan (1954–1926)

ONE strong anchor in the life of Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan, former governor of Delta State, is his firm commitment to any cause he believed in. His death on October 19, 2026, three days to his birthday anniversary, is a great loss to the nation in general, the medical profession in particular and Delta State especially. He was a man of remarkable character and a dedicated public servant, a distinguished medical doctor. With his death, Nigeria has lost one of her experienced medical practitioners and a public administrator par-excellence.

Born on October 22, 1954 of Itsekiri origin in Warri North Local Government Area of Delta State, he was educated at the Federal Government College, Warri between 1968 and 1974 and the University of Benin between 1975 and 1980 where he earned a bachelor degree in medicine and surgery (MBBS) and a diploma in Anaesthesia.

Before his sojourn into politics, Uduaghan started his career as a medical practitioner and worked as a medical officer at Delta Steel Company in 1983. Due to his competence, experience and professionalism, several hospitals wrestled for his service between 1989 and 1994 and this saw him navigating through the Westend Hospital Warri, Benoni Hospital, Benin City and Shell Hospital, Ogunu. He later established his own hospital in 1994.

Uduaghan ventured into politics even while practising as a medical doctor in his hospital. This did not arise for personal interest but desire to further serve his beloved state and nation. On August 6, 1999 the then Governor Onanefe Ibori of Delta State appointed Uduaghan as Commissioner for Health, serving from 1999 to 2003. He was later appointed as Secretary to the Delta State government, serving in that capacity from 2003 to 2007. Uduaghan subsequently became the executive governor of Delta State from 2007 to 2015. As governor, he was seen as a public servant whose leadership was devoted to Delta State's development and service to the nation. His tenure saw the state grow in infrastructural development.

In no small measure, Uduaghan contributed to the sustained peace and security in the Niger Delta, especially during the volatile era of militancy. He was reputed for being a man of dialogue when it came to dealing with any crisis. He was a bridge builder through his keen interest, frankness and presence of mind in driving his policies toward achieving the desired peace and development in Delta, especially during militants' attacks on oil facilities in the oil-rich region

Uduaghan was a visionary leader whose legacies of peace-building and human capital development would remain green for a long time in the minds of the people. Even as governor, he was always at his roots and impacting the lives of his people. He launched a popular maternal and child healthcare initiative, and a free medical services scheme for children under five years, pregnant women and nursing mothers. The intervention revolutionized the healthcare sector of many states across the country. His background as a medical practitioner equipped him for the project and he drove it with passion.

Under his visionary watch, the 'Delta Beyond Oil' initiative sought to diversify the state's economy and reduce its dependence on oil by growing other sectors. Uduaghan was not only determined but resilient in driving the programme, encouraging youth to go into agriculture with government support.

Uduaghan uplifted education in the state. First, he introduced the 'EduMarshal' programme whose mandate was to arrest children of school age seen hawking or idling at home and take them to school. This helped to significantly reduce the number of out-of-school children in Delta. His administration built modern classrooms and equipped science laboratories. There was a scholarship scheme that offered cash reward of N5 million for indigenous students with First Class from Nigerian universities to enable them go further in their studies.

Uduaghan was a member of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) and held various positions in the Warri branch (Bendel /Delta State). He was active in the Junior Chamber International (Jaycees) leadership development organisation, among others. After his stewardship as governor, his desire go to the Senate suffered a defeat in 2019 as he lost the Delta South Senatorial ticket to Senator James Manager. It appeared that the defeat sealed Uduaghan's political ambition as he returned to private life.

Uduaghan's politics was highly refined, with enviable display of tolerance. He was a detrabalised governor who became one of Delta State's most iconic leaders. No doubt, his death has created a void that would be very difficult to fill. He will be greatly missed

LETTER

Understanding And Managing Human Sexual Desire

Introduction

SIR: Libido, lust, and cravings represent interrelated manifestations of a fundamental biological urge necessary for the survival and reproduction of living things. In humans, libido is a normal physiological desire regulated by a delicate hormonal balance managed by the brain and organs. Primarily driven by hormones like estrogen and progesterone, this biological system works to balance sexual appetite, guarding against both extremes of impotence and unbridled sexual urges.

Historical and socio-cultural context

Historically, high libido served practical survival purposes. In agricultural societies, such as those of early ancestors, larger families provided necessary labor for agricultural productivity.

Historical and religious texts similarly document the long-standing impact of intense sexual cravings and their potential for personal and social turmoil. Today, hypersexuality or unbridled libido remains a prominent factor in personal infidelity, bigamy, and broader societal issues surrounding sexual misconduct.

Factors influencing libido and misconduct

While sexual misconduct is a

universal issue spanning all races and continents, specific environmental, biological, and lifestyle factors can exacerbate excessive sexual urges:

1. Socio-economic conditions: High rates of poverty, low educational opportunities, and lack of gainful employment leave large populations of young men idle without positive distractions, increasing susceptibility to unbridled urges.
2. Dietary intake: Large food consumption, particularly diets high in refined carbohydrates, can significantly elevate sexual desire compared to balanced meals containing adequate fats and proteins.
3. Novelty and boredom: As observed in behavioral studies of animals, familiarity over time can lead to lethargy, whereas introducing a new partner triggers renewed sexual hyperactivity—a biological phenomenon that often underlies infidelity in human relationships.
4. Substance use: Alcohol consumption lowers inhibitions by temporarily overriding moral boundaries and decorum, though it ultimately leads to physical exhaustion. In individuals with compromised liver

function, this effect is prolonged and destructive.

5. Aphrodisiacs and additives: The growing use of untested aphrodisiacs and synthetic food additives—often used by commercial food vendors to enhance taste—can unpredictably affect bodily health and hormonal balance.

Suggested remedies

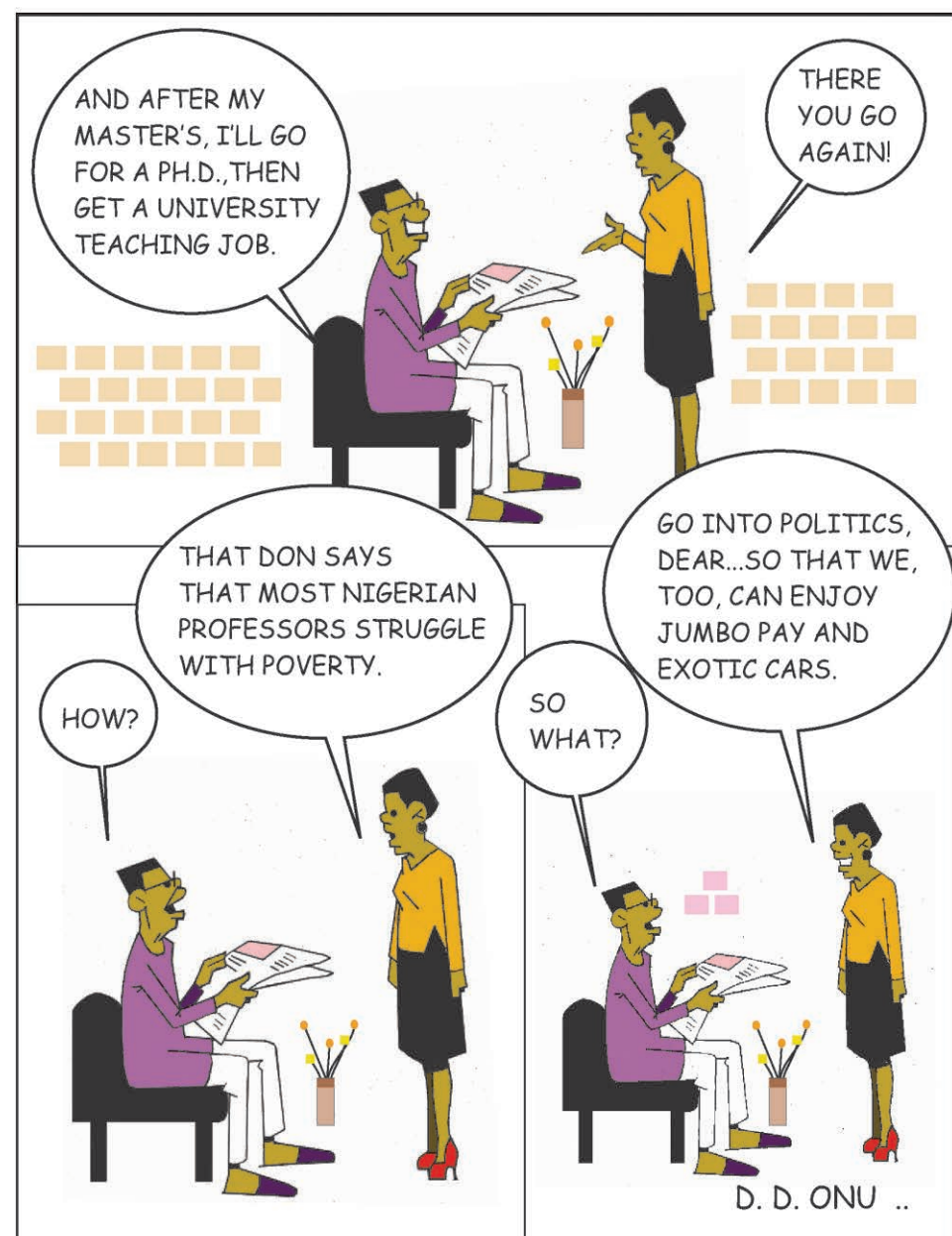
To address and manage excessive or harmful sexual appetites, a multifaceted approach is recommended:

- Medical evaluation: Consult a family physician for a comprehensive physical examination to rule out or treat underlying hormonal imbalances, diabetes, hypertension, or other medical conditions.

- Dietary adjustments: Practice temporary abstinence from alcohol and artificial food additives, while switching to a balanced diet lower in excess carbohydrates.

- Engagement and spiritual well-being: Avoid idleness by pursuing gainful employment, positive distractions, and personal or spiritual practices that promote self-discipline and purpose.

- Ademola Dixon is founder of Adebola Olugbenga Dixon Foundation and a retired medical practitioner.



Opinion

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The Emir Of Katsina: One Case, Two Judgments In The Same Court

By Rasheed Ojikutu

THE Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Abdulmumini Kabir Usman, has stirred political debate during the outgoing week, with his reported open criticism of All Progressives Congress (APC) delegates visiting his palace to seek support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's re-election campaign ahead of Nigeria's 2027 general election.. One thought that a more acceptable approach would have been a refusal to receive the delegates in his palace.

This is not to say that he doesnt have the right to criticise politicians. No, it is his constitutional right, moreso, that he is a recred leader but the question is “ Does he possess the credentials to criticise President Bola Tinubu's administration judging by his antecedent on the same subject in the past?”. This is the crux of the matter.

The first question is “What did the Emir say about insecurity when Muhammadu Buhari was President?” In a report published by The Sun on 7 August 2016, this same Emir addressed an audience at the launch of a book titled Limamin Kano Muhammadu Zaharaddeen Dynasty. According to The Sun, the Emir urged Northerners to stop criticising Buhari's administration on the grounds that the damage allegedly caused by 16 years of previous governments could not be repaired overnight.

He was quoted to have said:“President Muhammadu Buhari is trying his best to rectify the situation and we must support and encourage him.”. He went further to say “During this trying period, we as northerners are expected to support and encourage President Buhari and his team instead of joining others to criticize them.”.

The significance of these words to his present position cannot be ignored because of the suspected bias. Today, when the Emir challenges politicians over insecurity and unfulfilled promises, Nigerians are entitled to recall that, in2016, he urged Northerners to support Buhari rather than join others in criticising him.

The issue is not that the Emir must never change his position. It is whether the principles guiding his interventions have remained consistent.

Although, The NEWS on May 7, 2019 reported that , the Emir made a subtle appeal to President Buhari when the Minister of Agriculture, Audu Ogbeh, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Godwin Emefiele, visited his palace ahead of

an agricultural programme when he was quoted to have said “Hon Minister, tell the president that we have to take very good care of our people, security first. All these programmes, as good as they are, cannot be without security. Security is first and fundamental.” However, his subsequent reaction to the controversy involving Professor Sani Abubakar Lugga betrayed this genuine patriotic intention.

In February 2022, while Buhari was still President, Professor Sani Abubakar Lugga, the then Waziri of Katsina, became embroiled in a controversy over his public comments on insecurity.

Lugga participated in a strategic management retreat organised by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Ilorin, Kwara State, on 14 and 15 February 2022. A report published by The Sun on 25 February 2022 said Lugga had spoken about deteriorating security and the relocation of village heads from vulnerable communities to safer areas.

According to Lugga's own published account, the Katsina Emirate Council subsequently issued him a written query dated 21 February 2022. Note that he has been Waziri for 22 years.

Lugga maintained that he had spoken as an academic at a professional forum, rather than as an official spokesperson for the emirate. His account also challenged the procedure through which the query was issued. These are claims made by Lugga in his published explanation and should be understood in that context.

The dispute culminated in his resignation.

On 2 March 2022, The PUNCH reported that the Katsina Emirate Council had accepted Lugga's resignation as Waziri. The resignation took effect on 28 February 2022, according to a letter signed by the council's secretary.The report stated that the resignation followed a query issued over Lugga's comments on insecurity at the Ilorin seminar. This sequence of events should be examined along the position of the Emir on the October 22, 2026 delegates of the APC to his palace.. Another comment by the Emir during the October 22, 2026 visit of the APC delegation is “If you go to Kaduna, where is the Peugeot Automobile company? They have all collapsed. Why? And yet we remain silent. Where are the elders? We have to speak up.”

Speak up over what and at what time?. The fortune of the company started dwindling during the time of General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993). Peugeot's difficulties intensified during a period of economic restructuring and mounting pressures

on Nigerian manufacturing. This continued during the tenure of President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) and finally collapsed during the tenure of President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2023): Buhari inherited an automobile industry that had already experienced decades of decline. Where was the Emir of Katsina during these periods?

The Emir's question raises an important economic issue, but the historical timeline matters. Peugeot's decline began long before Bola Tinubu became President in 2023.

Consequently, if the Emir's reference was to the original decline of Peugeot Automobile Nigeria, it would be historically inaccurate to attribute the beginning of that decline solely to President Bola Tinubu's administration.

These questions provide more basis for critical examination of the Emir's intention because Nigeria's traditional institutions occupy a distinctive place in public life.This is because moral authority is strengthened by consistency.

It is also historically incorrect to completely blame the farmers' problems in Katsina on Buhari or Tinubu. These two administrations inherited an existing security crisis.

According to the European Union Agency for Asylum's October 2021 assessment, violence in Katsina was associated with cattle rustling, competition over land and resources, and attacks by armed groups. The assessment noted that insecurity spread from 2015 and that kidnapping and hostage-taking became particularly serious from July 2018 and that formed the basis of the message the Emir sent through Minister Audu Ogbe to Buhari in 2019.

Consequently, if the Emir is asking the present Federal Government to account for insecurity, that is a legitimate public concern. But an assessment of the problem should consider the record of successive governments rather than attributing the entire crisis to one administration.he most defensible historical answer is that Katsina's farmers faced longstanding land and resource disputes, while the modern banditry crisis began emerging around 2010, became particularly deadly by 2013-2014, and escalated again from July 2018.

The crisis, therefore, began before Buhari's presidency but became a major national security problem during his administration.

Judging by the above, the Emir of Katsina has not done well to have in Yoruba words “ Fa ori apa kan da apa kan si” literally means “ he should be consistent in his apportioning blame”.

• Rasheed Ojikutu is a Professor of Statistics (rtd), University of Lagos.

By Mohammed Manga

UNDER the ancient baobab of Zazzau at dusk, where generations have weighed wisdom, the elders teach that "you do not judge a farm by the bustle of its clearing, but by the fullness of its barn at harvest." They also say, "a well is not praised because it was dug deep, but because it never runs dry when the people thirst." Such is the test of a nation. Not the elegance of its declarations or the flourish of its ceremonies, but whether its systems endure, whether its processes are fair, and whether the ordinary citizen can find dignity without knowing someone at the top. The true measure of a state is what works when no one is watching.}

As Heraclitus observed, "no man ever steps in the same river twice, for it is not the same river and he is not the same man." Institutions are those rivers. They must keep flowing even when personalities change, lest society runs dry.

Nigeria at 66 sits at a historic confluence. As the Yoruba say, "Bi omi ba ku, a fi oju ana e wo" — when water dries, we study its former path. Our path is instructive. Long before amalgamation, governance here had form and fidelity: in the Sokoto Caliphate, the Emir led, the Waziri administered and the Alkali dispensed justice; in Oyo, the Alaafin ruled but the Oyomesi checked him. Colonialism scattered that indigenous order, and independence tasked us to build modern institutions from near scratch. Yet as Prof. Claude Ake warned, "the state in Africa has tended to become privatized." To return it to the people, as the Igbo adage says, "one finger cannot lift a load" — we need builders, not just occupants.

Global experience illuminates the path. Lee Kuan Yew transformed Singapore by insisting that "we have to re-invent ourselves continuously." Malaysia turned a commodity economy into an industrial powerhouse by disciplining its bureaucracy. Botswana built perhaps Africa's most trusted public service by insulating institutions from patronage. Rwanda rebuilt its judiciary after conflict by enforcing case timelines. The UAE turned desert outposts into effi-

How A Reformer Taught Institutions To Outlive Applause

cient service hubs by measuring every service and publishing results. As Dag Hammarskjöld taught, "it is more noble to give yourself completely to one individual than to labour diligently for the salvation of the masses." Institution-building is that complete giving.

It is at the level of everyday encounters with the state—where dignity is affirmed or denied—that public trust is won or lost. Citizens may applaud macro reforms, but they ultimately judge government by the courtesy at the counter and the reliability of service when no one is watching.

Viewed through that lens, the public service arc of Lt. Gen. (Prof) Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, —soldier, scholar, reformer and diplomat—offers a compelling case study.

His story began not in power, but in preparation. Born on March 14, 1954, in Zaria, he was formed at Barewa College and at the Nigerian Defence Academy as part of 17 Regular Combatant Course, commissioned in June 1977 as Second Lieutenant. He refused to let khaki limit knowledge. He earned a BSc in Criminal Justice, MA and M.Ed from Kent State University, USA, and a PhD in Criminology from the University of Keele, UK, becoming Nigeria's "first " Chief of Army Staff to hold a PhD.

For 33 unbroken years, he served with distinction: Aide-de-Camp to the Chief of Army Staff in 1979, Commander of Military Police Units, Special Investigator (1984-85), Registrar of the Nigerian Defence Academy (1993-1999), Chief Instructor at the Infantry Centre and School, Directing Staff at the National War College, GOC 2 Division, Ibadan (2007-2008), and Chief of Army Staff (2008-2010). Along that path, he laid the foundation for the Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Centre in Jaji, authored five seminal books, including _Criminology and Criminal Justice_, and held global academic laurels as Senior Fellow at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, Associate at Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, and Chairman of the University Advancement Centre at the University of Ibadan. He currently serves as Pro-

Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Capital City University, Kano.

In November 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari called him to perhaps his most difficult assignment: Minister of Interior. He inherited four agencies where morale was low and public cynicism high — the Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Prisons Service (now Nigerian Correctional Service), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and Federal Fire Service. Many called it a thankless ministry. He treated it as a laboratory for reform.

What does a scholar do with such a portfolio? He chose systems over slogans.

First, he professionalized. He carried out comprehensive reforms creating seamless pathways for career progression, training, appointment and promotion. Second, he digitized. He introduced biometrics, digitalized the international passport, deployed Advance Passenger Information with INTERPOL, and advocated local production of passports to cut cost and secure the national database. Third, he humanized corrections. He redesigned the prison system to reduce awaiting-trial congestion, procured operational vehicles, initiated 3,000-capacity model custodial centres, and mid-wifed the new Correctional Act to shift focus from punishment to rehabilitation in line with the UN Mandela Rules. Fourth, he resurrected forgotten institutions. The Federal Fire Service at the time had less than three functional trucks in Abuja. He revived it to over 40 modern trucks, water tankers, six zonal headquarters and a reactivated training school. Fifth, he institutionalized coordination. He created a Situation Room for emergency coordination, led the US-Nigeria Security Sector Reform dialogue, conceptualized the Institute of Domestic Security for strategic training of senior officers, and instituted the Interior Games to foster inter-agency collaboration.

Beyond uniform, as a criminologist, he founded the Foundation for Victims of Child Abuse and the Nigerian Society of Victimology —

affirming that the supreme art of governance is to prevent harm without noise.

Today, that same depth of preparation and proven capacity for institution-building has taken him to Beijing as Nigeria's Ambassador to China — one of our most strategic postings.

What, then, is the enduring lesson? If a scholar in uniform could transform four agencies often dismissed as moribund into institutions that now touch millions with dignity—issuing passports without tears, responding to fires without excuses, guarding borders with data — then what stops us from replicating that quiet architecture elsewhere? If process can replace patronage in Interior, it can replace it in primary health centres where drugs must be traceable, in public schools where promotion must be merit-based, in power distribution where metering must be transparent, and in local councils where budgets must be published.

This article is not a eulogy. It is a mirror held up to all who serve and all who oversee — for political office holders who set policy, legislators charged with oversight, heads of agencies who steer the engines of state, permanent secretaries and directors as custodians of institutional memory, and our revered minds on the Bench as guarantors of justice. The question remains: are we leaving this institution better than we met it?

Nigeria does not need louder government. It needs deeper institutions — systems that deliver when no one is clapping and endure when personalities have left. As Einstein said, "strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value." And as Prof. Ali Mazrui reminded us, "Africa's greatest challenge is not the absence of ideas, but the absence of institutions to carry those ideas."

May the quiet architect's lesson endure: build quietly, reform boldly, and leave the ladder down for others to climb.

• Mohammed Manga is a public policy analyst and writes on governance and sub-national reforms. Email: mohammed.manga.policy@gmail.com

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By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

OLORI Atuwatse III, wife of the Olu of Warri, has challenged African leaders to prioritise ownership, investment and economic benefits in the continent's creative industry, lamenting that Africa earns only about \$1 from every \$100 generated through global trade in creative goods.

Speaking on the second day of the Elevate Africa Convening 2026 in Accra, Ghana, she said the continent must move beyond celebrating its cultural influence to ensuring that creators and their communities derive tangible economic benefits from their work.

The convening, with the theme, "Africa: Defining Her Future," brought together stakeholders to deliberate on the continent's leadership, trade, cultural influence and development.

"Our soft power should do more than make the world lean in. It should make the world buy in," she said, stressing the need for Africans to own the brands, intellectual property and commercial platforms through which their creativity reaches global markets.

She described the second day of the event as the point at which Africa must translate discussions into practical action, identified Afrobeats, Nollywood and African fashion as examples of the continent's growing global cultural influence.

According to her, African music fills stadiums across the world, Nollywood continues to tell African stories to international audiences, while indigenous fabrics feature prominently on global fashion runways.

However, she questioned the economic returns accruing to African creators despite the growing international demand for their products.

"The rhythm is ours. The colour is ours. Too often, the receipt is made out to someone else," she said, asking: "Who owns the label? Who holds the rights? Who takes the profit home?"

She added that Africa must ensure that future generations inherit not only its cultural traditions but also the institutions and business structures required to generate prosperity from them.

Drawing comparisons with the United States and South Korea, Olori Atuwatse III said Africa could learn from countries that have successfully transformed cultural products into powerful economic assets.

She cited Hollywood, Korean skincare and Korean television dramas as examples of how cultural influence can stimulate consumer demand and generate commercial opportunities.

"We came to believe their stories, and our money followed our belief. That is soft power, and Africa has an abundance of it," she said, calling for similar strategies to strengthen the global reach of Afrobeats, Nollywood and indigenous African fabrics.

She urged governments, investors and business



Olori Atuwatse III Challenges Africa To Take Ownership Of Creative Economy

leaders to develop platforms and business models that would enable African creatives to own, distribute and profit from their work, rather than surrendering much of the value to external interests.

On youth development, the Olori expressed confidence in the capacity of young Africans to shape the continent's economic future but challenged political and business leaders to match their ambition with adequate support.

She observed that young people were increasingly creating opportunities, building businesses and developing solutions despite limited access to resources. Noting that the median age of Africa's population is about 19, she said the continent's youthful demographic presented enormous opportunities if properly harnessed.

"Our young people are moving. Are our institutions moving with them?" she asked, urging leaders to expand access to capital and markets while creating institutions that allow young people to participate meaningfully in decision-making.

She said the Elevate Africa Fellowship was among the initiatives working to advance opportunities for young Africans and called on other institutions to support the effort.

Olori Atuwatse III also called for stronger connections between Africans on the continent and

those in the diaspora, including people of African descent in the Caribbean, the Americas and other parts of the world.

Referring to discussions on reparatory justice at the previous day's Presidential Roundtable, she argued that restoring dignity to people of African descent must include confronting negative perceptions and strengthening relationships within the global African family.

Citing remarks by former Mauritian President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim on the loss of dignity associated with the transatlantic slave trade, she said the consequences remained visible in institutional practices, technology and everyday social interactions.

"That loss of dignity was built by a narrative. And what one narrative built, another can rebuild," she said, insisting that Africans must begin by changing how they perceive and relate to one another.

She particularly criticised divisions between Africans on the continent and people of African descent abroad, warning against derogatory labels and attitudes that undermine a shared identity.

"When we reject each other, we reject ourselves. But when we accept each other, we accept ourselves. When we elevate each other, we elevate our-

selves," she said.

The Warri Queen advocated sustained engagement, cultural exchanges and business partnerships as practical ways to rebuild trust, noting that personal relationships could challenge stereotypes and expose shared experiences.

Recalling the first Homecoming organised in the Warri Kingdom two months earlier to mark the anniversary of the Olu's coronation, she said the initiative had begun creating lasting partnerships between the Kingdom and members of the diaspora.

She further urged African governments to create an enabling environment for Black investors from the West, drawing inspiration from the historic Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which was destroyed in a racially motivated massacre in 1921.

She said meaningful investment opportunities could help build stronger economic ties and institutions across the continent.

The Olori said Elevate Africa was established to build bridges between individuals, countries and networks, enabling Africans to collectively define and implement a development agenda that protects their dignity and advances shared prosperity.

She urged participants to look beyond the celebration of African traditions and global recognition of its creative talents to focus on ownership, investment and sustainable economic returns. She also envisaged stronger partnerships between African businesses and members of the diaspora, supported by institutions that recognise their shared heritage and economic potential. "That is the future we have gathered here to define," she said, welcoming participants to the second day of the 2026 convening.

Also speaking the minister of Ghana Minister of Tourism and Creative Arts, Abla Gomashie said the is aimed at building a robust future for Africa, an Africa we all desire to take to the next level.

"For generations African narrative has been rich in history but the world looks at our resources through a singular lens which has culminated into a narrow global perception of Africa as merely a source of raw material in commodity like cocoa, gold and other mineral.

"But today, this gathering should offer us the opportunity shift the paradigm that Africa resources is not what is beneath it sold but in its people.

Other speakers includes, board member of The Osahon Okunbo Foundation, (TOOF), Nicole Asinugo, Ama Ofeibea Tetteh, Dr. Syleecia Thompson among others.

One of the major highlights was the signing of the Accra declaration by the royal majesties and presentation of a \$25,000 cheque to Adekola Emmanuel, the winner of the 2026 Thread of Africa.

Olajide Inspires, Promotes Traditional Art With New Show

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

AN Abeokuta-based visual artist and founder of Artitude Central, Amina Okikiolu Olajide, recently hosted an exhibition, which showed her artistic works, inspire other artists, and promote traditional and indigenous art for the benefits of the public.

Held in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital, the exhibition brought together artists, lovers of art, tourists and the community to discuss and appreciate beauty.

Olajide, who doubles as the Founder and Director of Choice Arts, said the essence of the show was to establish the fact that different people, with different beliefs can co-exist without any hassle.

"The essence of this exhibition is to show that you can always allow people to be who they are, believed in whatever they believe and can also co-exist in the



Olajide expaining inspiration behind works on display

same space. I could believe that reading a motivational book could ease my mind and you could believe that maybe reading a bible or a Quran is what works for you. Don't judge people based on their beliefs. Don't believe that your faith is actually the yardstick or benchmark to connect with the superior being," she said.

Olajide revealed that she got her partially paralysed hand back to life through painting, owing to a terrible accident that claimed many lives, adding she now sees arts beyond aesthetics, and beyond commis-

sioning, as it became part of her healing.

She said: "In 2021, I had an accident, eight people died. Surviving that accident was more of a miracle. I remember that when my husband got to that scene, the people he met there told him all the passengers died. What happened was that our driver died on motion, so we didn't know he was dead and apparently a ghost was driving us for about 10 minutes. It was a period that changed not just the relationship that I have with my body but my creativity and how I see life after that time.

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Founder of AgbekeAlaso-Oke Designs, a Nigerian fashion brand, Joan Adu, has launched a book, titled: *AgbekeAlaso-Oke: A Story of Passion, Art & Growth*, documenting its 10-year journey of reimagining indigenous Aso-Oke for contemporary fashion.

The launch was also used to celebrate a decade of creativity, entrepreneurship and cultural expression since the brand started its journey.

AgbekeAlaso-Oke Designs has spent the last decade exploring the versatility of Aso-Oke, blending the richness of Nigerian heritage textiles with modern design to create distinctive fashion pieces.

The book launch, held in Lagos recently, marked a double milestone: the unveiling of a publication chronicling the brand's journey and the celebration of its 10th anniversary. The event brought together industry professionals and guests to celebrate creativity,

AgbekeAlaso-Oke Launches Book, Marks 10 Years Of Creativity, Cultural Heritage

resilience and the power of storytelling in building enduring brands.

It featured a panel that had industry leaders, including the Group Managing Director of TDA Group, Dare Aliu; Founder and Creative Director of DT-CLOTHINGS, Odutola Damilola; and Director of Content at

Moniepoint Inc., Obinna Okerekeocha.

Speaking on the significance of the book and the anniversary, Adu said: "This book represents more than 10 years in business; it is a celebration of passion, faith, resilience and the courage to build something meaningful.



Group Managing Director, TDA Group Africa, Dare Aliu (left); Founder and CEO, AgbekeAlaso-Oke Designs, Joan Adu; Founder and Creative Director, DT-CLOTHINGS, Odutola Damilola; and Director of Content, Moniepoint Inc., Obinna Okerekeocha, at the launch of AgbekeAlaso-Oke: A Story of Passion, Art & Growth in Lagos, marking the brand's 10th anniversary.

Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by Shaibu Hussein

AFRIFF To Open November 1 With *Lady*
THE 15th edition of Africa International Film Festival will open on November 1st with Olive Nwosu's acclaimed feature directorial debut, *Lady*. The festival, which will run up until November 7, in Lagos, is to be held under the theme *Frames of the Future: Africa's Creative Intelligence*. Nwosu's *Lady* follows a fiercely independent female cab driver in Lagos who transports a group of night-shift sex workers across the city, exploring complex themes of economic survival, female agency, and sisterhood amid economic pressures. Starring Jessica Gabriel, Amanda Oruh, and Seun Kuti, the movie earned a Special Jury Award at the 2026 Sundance Film Festival and had been screened to wide acclaim at the Berlinale and in London. The movies Afriff premiere will kick off a week featuring 130 film screenings, masterclasses, and the AFRIFF Film & Content Market. Hakeem Kae-Kazim's 'It's the Blackness' has been announced as the closing film of this edition of the festival, which AFRIFF's Founder and Festival Director, Chioma Ude, said is designed to inspire new possibilities, encourage meaningful industry connections and help translate Africa's creative potential into sustainable opportunities.

Good Start For Tokyo International Film Festival

THE 39th Tokyo International Film Festival launched its 10-day run on October 26 with a procession of transparent umbrellas on the red carpet, as cinema luminaries from around the world protected themselves from a (mostly) light rain en route to the TIFF Opening Ceremony. Nevertheless, spirits remained high as nearly 300 filmmakers, actors and leading lights from across all 11 sections of the festival, as well as the members of TIFF's four competition juries, greeted an awaiting audience in ponchos before beginning their walk along the 250-meter carpet. Among the international guests on the carpet were veteran Indonesian director, Garin Nugroho and actor Nicholas Saputra, in town with their competition title, *Red Before Dawn*; Belgium-based director, Teodora Ana Mihai and actor Violet Braeckman (*Heyssel 85*); Macedonian American director Milcho

Manchevski and actors Sara Klimoska and Filip Trajkovikj (*Sister Brother Manhole Cover*); Chinese director Qiu Jiongiong and actors Wang Hi and Xue Xuchun (*Fuxi: Four Tales of Feasting*); actors Sunshine Teodoro and Nour Hooshmand of the Philippine film *Filipinana*. Also gracing the red carpet were members of the esteemed International Competition jury, led by Jury President Rolf de Heer, an Australia-based writer, director and producer, alongside Korean producer Oh Jungwan, DI colorist Yov Moor, and Japanese actor Watanabe Makiko. The red carpet also welcomed a delegation from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the organization behind the Oscars. The delegation included CEO Bill Kramer, Chief Membership, Impact, and Industry Officer Meredith Shea, and Amy Homma, Director and President of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures and Academy Collection. Inside the hall, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Akazawa Ryosei took the stage to welcome attendees, noting, "Japanese cinema continues to make remarkable strides. This year, *Kingdom: Battle of Souls* achieved the extraordinary feat of becoming the first film series in Japanese cin-

ema history to have five consecutive installments surpass 5 billion yen at the box office, with cumulative earnings exceeding 30 billion yen. I find the continued success of Japanese cinema extremely encouraging". The screening of the opening film 'Sukiyaki' followed speeches by distinguished personalities including Jury President Rolf de Heer. TIFF's 39th edition, running from October 26 to November 4 will feature 204 films, question and answer sessions, symposia, masterclasses, TIFF Lounge talk sessions and an enormous array of allied events. Fifteen titles are competing for the Tokyo Grand Prix in the festival's International Competition, drawn from 1,892 submissions from 112 countries and regions

... Names Award Recipient and Juror

THE 39th Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) has announced the recipients of the 2026 Kurosawa Akira Award. The award honours the renowned auteur's legacy and ongoing influence, and is presented to filmmakers who have made waves in cinema and are expected to help guide the industry's future. The award was revived in 2022 after a 14-year hiatus. The 2026 Kurosawa Akira Award will

go to directors O Mipo and Mohammad Rasoulof. Director O Mipo worked as a script supervisor after a stint at Obayashi Nobuhiko's production company, before making her feature directorial debut in 2006 with *The Sakai's Happiness*. In 2014, her film, *The Light Shines Only There*, won Best Director at the Montreal World Film Festival and went on to sweep 60 awards both in Japan and internationally. Her latest film, *How Dare You?* has earned high praise at home and abroad for its vivid portrayal of children's raw vitality. Director Mohammad Rasoulof, is an Iranian independent filmmaker, who has faced harsh government censorship, prison sentences, and filmmaking bans, yet has relentlessly pursued his unique method of filmmaking often relying on guerilla-style shooting. His courage continues to inspire creators worldwide. He won the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2020 for *There Is No Evil*, which was presented at the 33rd TIFF, and the Special Jury Prize at the 77th Cannes Film Festival for *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* in 2024, which was also selected as an Academy Award nominee for Best International Feature Film.



Consul General of Brazil in Nigeria, Ronaldo Lima Vieira; Consul General of France in Nigeria, Laurent Favier; Founder of AFRIFF, Chioma Ude; Group ED of Mikano, Joelle Haykal; Consul General of US in Nigeria, Brandon Hudspeth and Representative of the Minister of FMACTC & ED/CEO of the NFVCB, Dr. Shaibu Hussein

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

THERE are artists who work with instruments, and there are those who make an instrument of the human voice. For Olugbenga Fayehun, popularly known as Gbenga, poetry offers a way to explore the experiences, memories and cultural connections that shape how people understand themselves. That interest found a fitting setting at *Keys of Heritage*, a celebration of Nigerian music and cultural identity held on September 20, 2026 at the Agora Centre in Bletchley, Milton Keynes. Organised by Temi Commic Music, the event brought together different forms of artistic expression under the theme "A Live Musical Experience That Connects Tradition to Tomorrow". Gbenga's spoken-word contribution introduced poetry into a programme

At Keys Of Heritage, Spoken Word Meets Nigerian

celebrating rhythm, music and heritage. His participation raised a question that sits at the heart of contemporary cultural practice: how do artists preserve the meaning of inherited traditions while finding new ways to communicate them? Gbenga reflects on the connection between spoken word, sound and cultural identity in a post event interview. Your presentation at *Keys of Heritage* focused on sound and culture. What interests you about that relationship? "Sound carries more than melody. It can remind people of home, bring back memories and connect them to experiences they may share with others. With spoken word, I work with language, but rhythm is still important. The way you deliver a line, where you pause and how you use your voice can change how people receive the

message," he remarks.

The event celebrated Nigerian traditional music. Where does spoken word fit into that kind of programme? "I see spoken word as part of a wider tradition of telling stories. Across African cultures, stories, proverbs and music have helped people pass knowledge from one generation to another. Spoken word has its own identity, but it can still engage with those traditions," Gbenga says.

When Poetry Meets Rhythm

THE relationship between poetry and music is not difficult to recognise, although each form has its own demands. A musician can use melody and rhythm to establish an atmosphere; a spoken-word performer works through language, cadence and vocal expression. Both depend on timing and the ability to hold an audience's attention. At *Keys of Heritage*, Gbenga's appearance placed these qualities within a wider cultural programme. The event's emphasis on Nigerian artistic traditions provided a context in which poetry could be considered alongside music as another way of expressing identity and preserving memory. For a spoken-word artist, the stage is a space where language becomes immediate. A poem that might appear reflective on the page can acquire greater urgency through per-

formance. Equally, a carefully measured delivery can allow a line to settle, giving listeners time to consider its meaning. Do you think younger audiences are finding new ways to connect with heritage through live performances? "I believe there is room for that connection. Young people may encounter culture through different forms, including music, poetry, theatre and digital media. What matters is that the meaning is not lost. We should create opportunities for people to understand where certain traditions come from and why they still matter today. His answer points towards a broader challenge for cultural events. Heritage cannot remain relevant simply because it is celebrated on special occasions. It needs to be communicated, experienced and discussed in ways that allow people to develop their own relationship with it." **One Heritage, Many Expressions** THE theme of *Keys of Heritage* acknowledged that Nigerian culture cannot be reduced to a single sound or artistic tradition. Its message, "One Heritage. Many Rhythms. One People", placed unity alongside cultural diversity, recognising the many forms through which heritage can be expressed. For Gbenga, spoken word offers one route into that diversity. Poetry can explore personal experiences while

opening up questions about community, belonging and identity. Its flexibility allows the performer to move between reflection and commentary, making the art form particularly suited to conversations about cultural memory. What would you like audiences to take away from your work at an event like this? "I would like people to think about the stories behind the sounds and traditions they encounter. Culture is not just something we inherit; it is something we participate in. Every generation has a responsibility to understand it, appreciate it and find meaningful ways to pass it on," he confesses. The response to that idea need not be limited to Nigerian audiences. Cultural events in the United Kingdom bring people from different backgrounds into shared spaces, creating opportunities to encounter traditions beyond their own experience. Music and poetry can help make those encounters more accessible, giving audiences a point of connection even when they do not share the same cultural history. **The Work Beyond The Stage** Organised by Temi Commic Music, *Keys of Heritage* sought to connect traditional Nigerian expression with contemporary performance. Its combination of music and spoken word reflected an understanding of culture as a continuing creative process rather than a fixed collection of practices.



Osi Samuels:

A Technocrat's New Assignment As APIN CEO

By Opeyemi Babalola

AFTER over two decades of massive transformation and unprecedented growth, Professor Prosper Okonkwo bowed out as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of APIN Public Health Initiatives, Nigeria's leading HIV/AIDS prevention and public health institutions strengthening organisation.

Okonkwo, during the 25th anniversary of the organisation in Abuja in May this year, had hinted that he would be stepping down as the CEO by the end of September. Okonkwo is an academic to the core. It was his first calling and it would not be surprising if he is returning there.

Okonkwo had joined APIN as a project manager in 2004 and became its pioneer CEO in 2007. His tenure spanned the organisation's development into an independent Nigerian institution working with government, universities and international development partners.

It could be recalled that APIN was a project of the Harvard School of Public Health initiative supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It became an independent non-governmental organisation in 2007 and subsequently assumed direct responsibility for programmes previously managed through Harvard. Its work has included HIV services supported by the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief through the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

After becoming a wholly registered Nigerian organisation with its own board and piloting its own affairs, APIN broadened its activities to include tuberculosis, malaria, maternal and child health, and health systems strengthening. Its programmes have supported health facilities through laboratory development, workforce training and improved information systems, alongside clinical services and community interventions. It could also be recalled that under Okonkwo, the organisation moved into its ultra-modern corporate headquarters in Abuja which is full of positive ambience and equipped with the best working tools modern working environments are known for.

Okonkwo's contributions to public health also earned him the Health Activism Award at the 2023 BudgIT Active Citizens Awards, where he was the inaugural recipient in that category.

Even despite undeniable growth and positive strides under Okonkwo, a loyal servant has to leave one day and nature, they

say, abhors vacuum. And it was not surprising that the Board of the organisation did not waste time in approving the appointment of Dr. Jay Osi Samuels as the new CEO. Call him an insider, and one would not be missing the point. He was not only the Deputy Managing Director in charge of Programmes until his assumption of office as the new CEO, has spent over 20 years in the organisation. He has helped in setting up the structures, which included laboratories and regional offices which has made APIN the number one organisation amongst its peers.

Insiders within the organisation believed a better choice could not have been made better than Osi Samuels. Charismatic and an incredible team player, he has traveled extensively across all continents of the world which has honed his leadership skills. A top staff of the organisation who spoke to *The Guardian* on the condition of anonymity during the week said both senior and junior staff of the organisation were excited that Samuels was taking over as the new CEO.

His words: "Prof. Okonkwo did a marvelous job in APIN. He laid the foundation of what the organisation looks like today in terms of positive outlook and a wonderful working environment. But we are happier that someone like Dr. Jay (as he is fondly called) is taking over from him. He is not just a leader but a team player who always gets the best out of those around him. We are glad to have him as the new CEO."

In a statement released by the organisation confirming Dr. Samuels as the new CEO, *The Guardian* learnt that he had previously served as Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Programmes after joining APIN in 2006. His appointment brings to the top role a member of the leadership team who has helped direct its public health programmes and institutional development.

The leadership transition follows APIN's 25th anniversary celebrations and opens a new chapter for an indigenous organisation whose work has grown from HIV prevention and treatment to a broader range of public health interventions.

Samuels' resume is not only impressive but shows someone who is an expert in his field. He holds a medical degree from the University of Ibadan and a Master of Science degree in Epidemiology from Harvard T Chan School of Public Health.

Before joining APIN, he worked as a research associate at Harvard, studying the molecular epidemiology of HIV in Nigeria. His ex-

perience covers public health programme management, research and health systems strengthening.

As Deputy CEO, Programmes, Samuels oversaw APIN's programme directorates, guided the implementation of donor-funded interventions and coordinated new business developments. The role involved supporting health facilities to deliver sustainable services while aligning programme objectives with responsible resource management.

His work has also included leadership in electronic medical records and mobile health, alongside APIN's contributions to national health data systems. These areas connect the organisation's service delivery experience with the use of information to improve programme performance and patient care.

In his first official engagement with members of staff of the organisation, he spoke about 'From Legacy to Possibility: Our Next Chapter'. He paid massive tributes to Okonkwo and outlined an agenda to protect APIN's core programmes while building its capacity as a broader health systems institution.

"Grants begin and end. Projects begin and end. Donor priorities change. Institutions must endure," he told an ecstatic staff and called for a more diversified resource base and stronger partnerships with government, philanthropy, academia and the private sector.

His priorities include developing the APIN Research Institute, advancing digital transformation and positioning the organisation for opportunities beyond Nigeria. He also outlined plans to use his first 100 days to listen across teams and strengthen governance, financial management, procurement and programme performance.

New Chief Executive Officer of APIN Public Health Initiatives, Dr. Jay Osi Samuels

Business

NIGERIA'S plan to establish international-standard autism centres across its six geopolitical zones, promises to expand access to specialised healthcare. It also aims to strengthen research and improve support for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.

The initiative also offers an opportunity to build local expertise, promote early diagnosis and create a more coordinated system of autism care within the country's tertiary healthcare and education institutions.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has inaugurated a national committee to develop a framework for establishing the centres in selected university medical schools, with the proposed intervention being considered for its 2027 special intervention programme.

The initiative is coming when greater attention is being given globally to autism awareness, early intervention, inclusive education and the need to provide appropriate support for individuals with neurodevelopmental conditions.

Experts have said that by bringing specialised services, research and professional training together, the proposed centres could help strengthen the country's capacity to respond to the diverse needs of people with autism.

Although Nigeria has no comprehensive national data on autism prevalence, available estimates indicate the potential scale of the need. A 2025 analysis by Dataphyte, drawing on 2021 data, estimated that about 930 Nigerians per 100,000 people were living with autism, equivalent to approximately 0.93 per cent of the population. A 2024 research review also cited an estimate of about 600,000 Nigerian children living with the condition. While these figures are estimates rather than definitive national counts, they highlight the importance of expanding specialised services and generating more reliable evidence to guide planning and policy.

Globally, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that approximately one in 127 people had autism in 2021. The organisation

TETFund Moves To Bridge Autism Care Gap With Specialised Centres

recognises that autism is a diverse condition associated with differences in communication, social interaction and behaviour, with individuals having varying strengths, abilities and support needs.

Research conducted at the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital and published in 2024 also contributes to the growing body of Nigerian evidence on autism. The study examined 1,806 children with neurological disorders and identified autism symptoms in 28 patients, representing 1.6 per cent of the study population. The average age at diagnosis among the children identified was between three and eight years. Such studies demonstrate the value of strengthening local research to improve understanding of autism and inform clinical practice.

Speaking at the committee's inauguration in Abuja, TETFund Executive Secretary, Arc. Sonny Echono, said the proposed centres would provide early diagnosis, developmental assessment, treatment, rehabilitation, research and professional training, while promoting public awareness and supporting families and caregivers.

givers.

He explained that the initiative will build on the gains of TETFund's Special High Impact Intervention for medical schools, which is upgrading infrastructure and equipment for training professionals in medicine, pharmacy, nursing, dentistry and related disciplines.

According to Echono, establishing the centres across the six geopolitical zones would expand access to specialised autism services, strengthen local expertise and reduce the burden on families travelling long distances to obtain appropriate care.

The initiative is also expected to enhance the role of university medical schools in providing specialised healthcare while creating opportunities for collaboration among clinicians, researchers, educators and other professionals working in neurodevelopmental health.

Echono urged committee members to develop practical, evidence-based and sustainable recommendations supported by comprehensive needs assessments, realistic cost estimates, appropriate technical specifications, measur-

able deliverables and clear sustainability plans.

He also emphasised the importance of transparent criteria for selecting host institutions, including geographical spread, existing medical and academic facilities, human resource capacity, institutional commitment and the ability to sustain the centres over time.

The proposed intervention is being considered under TETFund's 2027 special intervention programme, subject to the committee's findings, identification of eligible institutions, resource availability and the necessary approvals. The committee is expected to expedite its work, particularly the identification of suitable universities and assessment of their requirements, to support planning for the proposed intervention.

Chairperson of the committee and Vice Chancellor, University of Medical Sciences, Ondo, Prof. Ebunoluwa Adejuyigbe, described the assignment as a significant step towards building a coordinated, accessible and sustainable system of autism care, research and community support in Nigeria.



Members of the Committee with Echono (fifth left).

Festival Wraps Up With Commitment To Expand Masterclass, Market Access

By David Emokpae

THE 23rd Abuja International Film Festival (AIFF) has wrapped up with a commitment to expanding its masterclasses, market access, and international distribution networks ahead of its next edition. The closing ceremony concluded with a celebration of cinematic excellence, as industry stakeholders, international delegates, and Nollywood icons gathered to witness the unveiling of winners across 18 prestigious award categories, reinforcing AIFF's position as a premier pillar of film, culture, and impact. The night's biggest winner was the Chinese feature, *The Shadow's Edge*, which walked away with three major plaques, including the coveted Golden Jury Award,

Outstanding Director (won by Larry Yang) and Outstanding Feature Film (Foreign). On the domestic front, the highly acclaimed film, *Evi*, directed by Uvoyou Adia, secured the top spot as the Outstanding Feature Film (Nigeria), while *Black Koro* by Chidera Sarah Onyejela won Outstanding Short Film (Nigeria). Also, Dr. Maureen Tamuno, the Group Managing Director of Abuja Investments Company Limited, was honoured with the Industry Merit Award, in recognition of her visionary leadership and strategic strides in championing the revitalisation of the Abuja Film Village. Through her aggressive drive for land development, state-of-the-art facilities, and collaborations with Nollywood guilds, she has successfully bridged critical gaps between institutional real estate investment

and the fast-growing creative economy, positioning Abuja as a premier hub for cultural and cinematic excellence. Accepting the recognition on behalf of her team, Tamuno shared her insights on the economic future of Nigerian cinema: "I am deeply humbled by this recognition from the Abuja International Film Festival. At Abuja Investments Company Limited, we view the creative industry not just as entertainment, but as a critical economic driver. Our work with the Abuja Film Village is designed to provide the world-class infrastructure that filmmakers need to produce globally competitive content. This award reinforces our commitment to empowering local talent and repositioning Abuja as the ultimate film capital of Africa." Speaking at the closing ceremony,

the Founder of the Abuja International Film Festival, Fidelis Duker, expressed his immense pride in the longevity and growth of the platform:

"For 23 years, AIFF has remained an



Kingsley Nwachukwu - Winner of the Student film category

unwavering bridge connecting African storytellers with the global stage. The ceremony was not about handing out trophies; it was a testament to the resilience, creativity, and evolving brilliance of contemporary filmmaking. Seeing a beautiful intersection of Nigerian and international cinema sweep these categories shows that our narratives are truly global." Adding to the sentiment, the Festival Director, Temitope Duker, highlighted the competitive nature of this year's entries: "The jury had an incredibly tough job this year. With exceptional entries from Russia, China, Cameroon, South Africa, and Ireland, the standard has been raised significantly. We congratulate all our winners who continue to push boundaries and inspire the next generation of visual storytellers."

FROM the infectious rhythms of Latin music to the unmistakable pulse of Afrobeats, Desperados and Young Jonn are bringing two cultures together on "Let It Go," a new track inspired by living in the moment. Some moments are best enjoyed without overthinking them: a spontaneous night out, an unexpected link-up with friends, or the song that gets everyone moving. Capturing this spirit of freedom and self-expression, Desperados has teamed up with award-winning Afrobeats producer, songwriter and artist Young Jonn for "Let It Go."

Produced by Yung Willis, the

Desperados, Young Jonn Create Let It Go

Grammy-nominated music producer whose production credits span some of the biggest names in African music. Having worked with notable artistes including Falz, Wizkid, Kizz Daniel, Davido, Niniola, BNXX, Zlatan, Patoranking and Ice Prince, Yung Willis brings his production expertise to the collaboration, helping shape a sound that connects global influences with the energy of Afrobeats. Rooted in the brand's identity and association with self-expression, Desperados continues to find meaningful ways to connect with the

younger audience through music, culture and premium experiences. With "Let It Go", the brand is using music as a touchpoint between its Latin roots and the energy of Nigerian culture. At the heart of the collaboration is "Guao Guao," the reggaeton track Desperados created in partnership with Venezuelan artist Micro TDH and Colombian producer Ovy On The Drums. Built around a sample of this unique record, Let It Go brings a Latin-inspired sound into Young Jonn's style, creating an Afrobeats song that reflects Nigeria's vibrant

music and nightlife culture. "Let It Go" is more than a fusion of two sounds. It is an expression of the Desperados vibe, where music becomes a way to encourage people to loosen up and enjoy moments that make life memorable. By connecting the global influence of Latin music with Afrobeats, the brand reinforces its place through music, culture, and self-expression.

Young Jonn's ability to reinterpret global influences through a distinctive Nigerian style makes him a fitting partner for this expression. Rather than recreating the original, he gave the sound a fresh identity, shaped by the rhythm and movement of Nigerian music. Whether it's the rhythm that takes over the dance floor, an ordinary link-up that turns into a memorable experience, the song captures the freedom of letting go and being fully in the moment.

By Daniel Anazia

NIGERIAN reggae singer, John Obinna Ibegbulem, popularly known as President Son, has released two albums, *Rasta Man No Violence* and *Straight Out of Oklahoma*, in a bid to revive conscious music and reconnect listeners with the genre's message of peace and social responsibility. The Imo-born singer says the albums explore complementary themes, with the first promoting love, peace and unity, while the second draws on his travel experiences to encourage young people to pursue their dreams despite challenges. According to him, *Rasta Man No Violence* blends reggae with local influences and urges Nigerians to embrace peaceful coexistence. "This is my way of telling the people that we need to love one another, we need to make peace in our communities. We need to treat our neighbours as our brothers and our sisters," he said. President's Son described *Straight Out of Oklahoma* as motivational, explaining that the decision to release both projects simultaneously reflected their compatibility. "That's why I think it's better to drop them the same day, at the same time," he stated. According to the reggae music

President Son Releases Double Albums To Revive Conscious Reggae

act who hails from Mbaize, Imo State, the albums are available on digital music platforms. *Rasta Man No Violence*, released under

Virgin Birds Entertainment, an Asaba-based record label, owned by actor Cyril Pharaoh Chukwuemeka, appeared on Audiomack on September 30.

The rising star began performing in primary school and was a member of the musical group Rough and Ready before it disbanded in 2003. He started his solo career in 2004 in Lagos, before he later travelled to Egypt in 2007.

In 2008, he moved to Tel Aviv, Israel, where he started singing and entertaining fun seekers with his kind of music at the beach. He returned to Nigeria in 2011 and released his debut single *President Son* a few days later, followed by the second single *From Jerusalem to Tel-Aviv* among other songs including *Nigeria* which he said was inspired by his conversation with a certain songwriter and singer.



By Daniel Anazia

AFRO-fusion artiste Jemiriye has released *Olúròunbí*, a new single with an accompanying music video inspired by a Yoruba folktale, exploring ambition, identity and the cost of pursuing success.

The song blends the artiste's commanding vocals with Nigerian rhythms, indigenous Yoruba chants, live orchestral instrumentation and modern production. It was recorded and produced across Paris



and the United States, while its accompanying video was filmed in Bali, Indonesia.

Rooted in Nigerian cultural heritage, the track asks a timeless question with sharp contemporary resonance: What would you sacrifice to become everything the world expects you to be?

Through the song, Jemiriye revisits the story of Olurounbi, a woman who longs for motherhood, prosperity and social status. In the folktale, she strikes a bargain with a sacred Iroko tree, promising her unborn child in exchange for her wishes. When the time comes to fulfill the promise, her anticipated prosperity gives way to anguish.

"Olúròunbí takes me back to those village nights under the stars," says Jemiriye. "As a child, I was drawn to the chant and rhythm. Growing older, I began to understand the weight of the story. It speaks to something deeply human—the desire for a better life, the pressure to prove ourselves and the danger of pursuing success without asking what it might cost us."

The artiste said she also sees parallels between the folktale and the pressures faced by women seeking to break professional and social barriers. "As a Black woman working to break barriers, I understand the pressure to over-promise, over-deliver and constantly prove your worth," she said.

TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

Who Did This To Porcupyne?

EDO based comedian and skit maker, Porcupyne, was last week, given the beaten of his life and is currently in the intensive care unit of an undisclosed hospital in Benin City, Edo State. And what is his offence? He reportedly publicly pledged support for a particular candidate in Nigeria's presidential election scheduled for January next year. T4T cannot independently verify whether the incident was just about his support for one of the candidates or there was a verbal altercation which led to the beating, but whatever the case was, violence should not be used to resolve political differences na. His fellow skit maker,

Samba was seen in a video claiming that Porcupyne would be flown abroad because he sustained injuries to his head which may have affected his brain. Under the video, a very mean and 'unjoyful' Nigerian said the assailants wanted to turn Porcupyne into a real life physically challenged person since they were not thrilled with his acting as a physically challenged in his skits! Porcupyne actually acts like one who is physically challenged in the videos he does with Samba. **Christmas Warning Came Very Early This Year** SOMEONE drew the attention of T4T to a video that went viral earlier in the week where a very popular Pentecostal Pastor(names withheld) was issuing a stern

warning to Christians especially members of his church not to ever harbour the thoughts of buying Christmas clothes if they have not paid their tithes. With a very stern face, perrhaps to drive home his message, the pastor added that it was a "dangerous" idea for any Christian to buy Christmas clothes when he has not paid his tithes. This is T4T's position: If as a Christian, you have not paid your tithes and or redeem your pledges to the Pastor, sorry, God, you truly have no business even thinking of buying a 'shimmy' talk more of a shirt. You want make God vex? But wait a bit, which bank account does God use in receiving the tithes? Just a harmless question o. Nor vex o.

Sokoto Budget Ministry To Strengthen Bureau Of Statistics, All Departments For Effective Service Delivery



Commissioner for Budget and Economic Development, Dr. Bashir Muhammad Achida

THE Sokoto State Bureau of Statistics and all departments of the Ministry of Budget and Economic Development are to be strengthened for optimum service delivery. This was disclosed by the Commissioner of the Ministry, Dr. Bashir Muhammad Achida, while declaring open a three-day capacity building workshop for newly-recruited staff on the Basic Principles of Budgeting, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. The workshop, organised by the Ministry in collaboration with UNICEF, is holding at Sokoto Guest Inn, Sokoto. Achida described the Bureau of Statistics as a critical institution in the state's develop-

ment process, noting that effective budgeting and planning depend on accurate and reliable data. According to him, the Ministry cannot function effectively without statistics, as data provides the foundation for identifying development priorities and ensuring appropriate allocation of public resources. He assured that every department will receive the necessary attention and support to improve performance, and urged staff to remain committed to their responsibilities. The commissioner further stressed the need to properly organize the Ministry's operations, considering that

many of its responsibilities involve both field and office-based activities. He expressed confidence that strengthening departments, building staff capacity, and enhancing availability of reliable data would lead to more effective planning and sustainable development in Sokoto State. In his address, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Buhari Umar Musheshi, who was represented by the Director Economic Planning, Sani Abdullahi, said "the workshop is designed to equip participants with foundational tools, frameworks and methodologies needed to excel in their assigned duties."

The Waiting Game (3)

By Segun Durowaiye
(08055356855)

Continued from GUARDIAN WEEKEND, October 24-25, 2026

THAT very day, Yetunde had made up her mind to end it all and kill herself because of the betrayal of trust from a person she loved wholeheartedly and desired passionately. Love can be tragic if it involves someone so close to one's heart. "This is a classic state of betrayal and trust from someone so dear to my soul..." she murmured to herself. But suicide is not even the right option, or so it seemed. The Almighty God does not approve of committing suicide, no matter what; it is a terrible sin with infernal judgement and damnation. And even legally, it is wrong. However, Yetunde had no option in her mind. She was madly in love with Bolu. There was no going back. It was Bolu or nobody else. She wanted a very painful death, considering all the psychological agonies and melancholy she had witnessed for the past 12 years when the only man she had ever loved, travelled overseas in search of the golden fleece. The very day she decided to kill herself was different from other days in the month of December. It was a pale and gloomy day for her. "Bolu... I am dying because of you," she soliloquized softly. "You know the bond of love between us... and you betrayed me... I am dying because of you... Nothing in this world can ever stop me..." she concluded, with tears coming down from her eyes. She sobbed and sobbed. Her heart was heavy with grief. She closed the door behind her and positioned the knife at the centre of her heart. She was wearing her night gown which was wet and drenched with tears. She shook her head sideways...sorrowfully. She prayed to God Almighty to accept her soul in heaven and forgive her sins for killing herself. The tears continued painfully.

She was about falling on the knife when the door suddenly opened; and surprisingly it was Bolu! Heavens! She couldn't believe her eyes as she turned around with disbelief. "Don't do that for Heaven's sake!" Bolu said, "I have come for you darling...I am so sorry it took this long...I changed location for a long while...I have been in Iowa, also in the U.S doing research work for several years, please forgive me darling...I have to marry you straight away because I have to travel with you, back to my base...I sincerely love you Yetunde...Oh, please take me back in your arms..." He was weeping like a baby; he stretched his hands towards the troubled lady. The knife dropped from her hand as she looked deep into the handsome face of her long lost lover. It was a long, piercing look; somehow touching and highly emotional. He moved closer to her, dropped the bag he was holding and hugged her tenderly and softly. He cleaned the tears that had gathered in her eyes with his perfumed white handkerchief. "Oh, I love you Bolu," she whispered, "without you there is no life...you have hurt me for years..." "Please, darling...take me back...I'm all yours..." he replied, caressing her gently. Two weeks later, the lovebirds got married. It was a grand society wedding. At the moment the couple were blessed with a bouncing baby boy named Ayotunde, which literally means 'Joy is back'. The couple now live in Iowa, in the United States. Though, it was hard for her to bear the loneliness and solitude, but Heavens smiled on Yetunde at last. And they lived happily ever after!

Concluded.

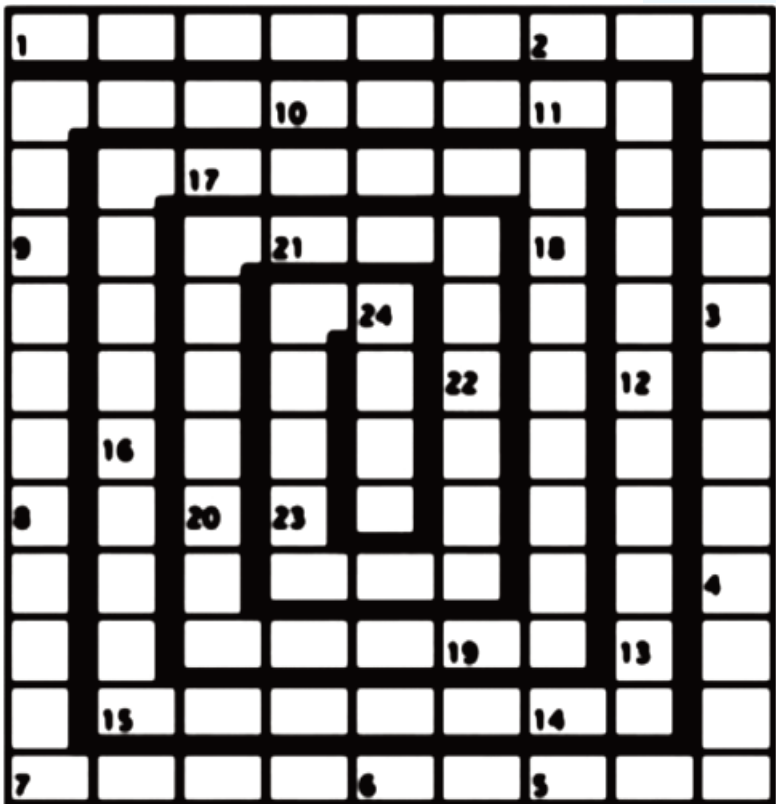
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Overlapping Word Game

Solution

- 1 Yaya Toure
- 2 Urethra
- 3 Angina
- 4 Natural
- 5 Alto
- 6 Toupee
- 7 Eerie
- 8 Elated
- 9 Educated
- 10 Teddy
- 11 Dynasty
- 12 Tycoon
- 13 Once
- 14 Central
- 15 Almost
- 16 Stature
- 17 Reprieve
- 18 Every time
- 19 Message
- 20 General
- 21 Alpaca
- 22 Calabar
- 23 Repair
- 24 Tree



Overlapping Word Game

- 1 Local council in Jigawa State, (8).
- 2 Uncontrollably independent, (7).
- 3 2-family dwelling, (6).
- 4 Somebody skilled or knowledgeable, (6).
- 5 Covering for floors, roofs, or walls, (4).
- 6 Seed of leguminous plant, (6).
- 7 Interfere in somebody else's concerns, (6).
- 8 Able to be read, (7).
- 9 Spoiling mark or flaw, (7).
- 10 Move back and forth, (5).
- 11 Hole in lock, (7).
- 12 Pope's representative, (6).
- 13 Basis for evaluation, (4).
- 14 Careful and painstaking, (8).
- 15 Wrongful dispossession, (5).
- 16 Become larger, (7).
- 17 Chancellor Merz's country, (7).
- 18 Sightlessness at night, (10).
- 19 Piano player, (7).
- 20 Unexpected or extraordinary, (7).
- 21 Transmission, (7).
- 22 Turn ship around, (7).
- 23 Local council in Oyo State, (6).
- 24 Solid chunk, (4).

Word Search

Types of Medication-2

Jab	Enema	Quinine
Oil	Emetic	Antigen
Pill	Purge	Inhaler
Drip	Linctus	Cordial
Tonic	Plaster	Powder
Spray	Laxative	Injection

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

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Birthday

JONATHAN, Dr. Dame Patience Faka (née Oba), former first lady is 69. Born on October 25, 1957, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, she earned her school certificate in 1976, and passed the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) in 1980.

In 1989, she obtained the National Certificate of Education (NCE) in Mathematics

and Biology from the Rivers State College of Arts Science, Port Harcourt.

She then proceeded to the University of Port Harcourt and studied for a B.Ed in Biology and Psychology. She was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Port Harcourt.

She started her career as a teacher at the Stella Maris College, Port Harcourt and at the Sports Institute, Isaka.

She then moved to the banking sector in 1997. She served as a marketing manager of Imiete Community Bank, after which she established the first community bank in Port Harcourt called the Akpo Community Bank.

She returned to the classroom briefly again as a teacher. Eventually she was transferred to the Bayelsa State Ministry of Education, where she served until May

29, 1999, when her husband became the deputy governor of the state.

On July 12, 2012, she was appointed Permanent Secretary in Bayelsa State by Henry Seriake Dickson. The appointment was unique considering she had been on leave from the civil service for over 13 years, since her husband became deputy governor in 1999.

In May this year, she

bagged a PhD in Psychology, Guidance and Counselling from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Port Harcourt, and has since urged Nigerians to embrace lifelong learning, highlighting the importance of quality education for a better society,

Compiled by Gbenga Akinfenwa, oluwagbenga.akinfenwa@guardian.ng orgbengaherkin@yahoo.co



Jonathan

Events



Prof. Lai Olurode (left) with Olupe of Oluponna, HRM Oba AbdulRafiu Mosobalaje and the Oloris at the 59th Oluponna Day held at District Council Primary School, Oluponna, Osun State



Globacom's Divisional Head, South East, Michael Ehumadu (left); Obi of Onitsha, Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe, and his wife, Igwenwanyi Ngozi Achebe, at the Royal Banquet held by Globacom in honour of the traditional ruler in Onitsha, Anambra State, on Wednesday. It was to mark the end of the 2026 Ofala Festival sponsored by the company.



The Majeobaje of The Cathedral of Holy Trinity, Omofe, Chief Afolabi Igbaroola, and his wife, Chief (Mrs) Bunmi after their decoration as the new Bobaselu and yeye bobalu of Ilesha by the paramount ruler of Ilesaland, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Clement Adesuyi Hastrup Ajimoko III at Owa Obokun Adimula Palace in Ilesha, Osun State ...last Saturday



Regional Manager of Moniepoint, Isoken Aigbomian (left); Principal Partner, Riago Legal, and Treasurer of Mentoring Committee, Nigerian Bar Association, Dr Rita George Okoh; Dr. Detola Williams; Convener, Leading Ladies, Dr. Morenike George Taylor; Ruth Chukwueke and Ranim Naghmouchi at the Leading Ladies Conference in Lagos

Most Nigerian Leaders Never Learnt Leadership Anywhere — Sam Adeyemi

• As Bolaji Idowu, Tobi Adeniyi, Timi Dakolo, Toyin Ayinde Headline Daystar's ELC 2026 On 'Leading in Uncertainty'

THE Senior Pastor of Daystar Christian Centre, Sam Adeyemi, has said that many Nigerians occupying positions of leadership were never trained to lead, warning that the country cannot afford leaders who learn on the job at a time of deep economic and social uncertainty.

Adeyemi spoke ahead of the 2026 edition of the church's annual Excellence in Leadership Conference (ELC), which holds on Thursday, November 5 and Friday, November 6, 2026, at Daystar Christian Centre, Oregun, Lagos.

"Sometimes, only God knows who's going to be governor. Who knows who's going to be senator tomorrow? And most people occupying leadership positions in our country have not learned leadership anywhere," he said.

He urged Nigerians not only to attend but to bring others along, describing the conference as "a great investment in their lives."

This year's conference is themed "Leading in Uncertainty", a subject the organisers said speaks directly to



Adeyemi and his wife, Nike Adeyemi

what Nigerian leaders in business, government, ministry and the creative industries are grappling with: volatile markets, rising living costs, policy shifts and a fast-changing world of work, all with a general election cycle on the horizon.

In a joint message, Adeyemi and his wife, Nike Adeyemi, who co-host the conference, said the theme explores "what it truly means to lead when the ground keeps shifting economically, socially, and personally," adding that participants would be equipped to "stand firm, think clearly, and lead boldly" and turn uncertainty into their greatest leadership advantage.

Retired School Teacher, Others, Urge Acceptance Of Children With Disabilities

By Isaac Chibuike

RETIRED school teacher at the Pacelli School for the Blind and Partially Sighted Children, Anastasia Koya, has called for an end to discrimination against persons with disabilities, urging parents to accept and support affected children rather than hide them.

She made the call in Lagos recently at the launch of her book, "Behold the Hand of God: My Decades of Teaching the Visually Impaired at Pacelli School for the Blind and How It All Began", held as part of activities marking her 80th birthday.

She said the book drew on her decades of teaching visu-

ally impaired children and was intended to change public attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

"I wrote it for everybody in Nigeria because some people cannot sit with a blind person. They run," she said.

Recounting her first encounter with the pupils, she said she was frightened but gradually learnt from other teachers and the Catholic sisters who ran the school. The experience, she added, taught her patience and the importance of listening.

She said some of the children had been abandoned by their families, while others were victims of war. Despite their circumstances, some

went on to become lawyers and professors. Although she taught the children only at primary school level, Koya said the experience also changed

her outlook on life.

The retired teacher said the idea for the book came from her son who had encouraged her to document her



Senior Special Assistant on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the president, Princess Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire (left); author, Aderonke Anastasia Koya; Christopher Koya; Partner, Goldwater Solicitors/ Chief Launcher, Obinna Ukpabi and MD/CEO Yomdass Investment Ltd, Johnson Adenaike, at the event

experiences and use them to teach others how to care for persons with disabilities.

She urged parents not to regard disability as a source of shame or a punishment for wrongdoing, stressing that children with disabilities could become doctors, lawyers, physiotherapists and other professionals if given the necessary support.

Koya also advised pregnant women to seek proper antenatal care and other medical services at health centres rather than rely on roadside chemists to reduce health complications that could lead to disabilities.

She warned that disability could affect anyone and urged

the public to stop looking down on affected individuals and their families. While acknowledging government efforts, she said citizens also had a responsibility to promote inclusion and support persons with disabilities.

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals, Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire, said the book documented Koya's efforts to help children with disabilities live meaningful lives and become self-reliant.

Orelope-Adefulire pledged to buy copies of the book for homes she works with and urged families at the event to purchase at least one copy each.

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

ASWISS-owned investment migration and advisory firm - Passport Legacy, has emphasised its commitment to providing solutions that extend beyond the initial citizenship process.

The Managing Director of Passport Legacy Nigeria, Ms. Weyinmi Oritsejafor, who disclosed this during an evening cocktail in Lagos, noted that

Passport Legacy Reiterates Commitment To Solutions Beyond Citizenship Process

• Hosts Evening Cocktail With Grenada CEO

investment opportunities, with special guest, Mr. Thomas Anthony, Chief Executive Officer of Grenada's Investment Migration Agency (IMA), provided opportunity for guests to engage directly with Grenada's investment migration leadership and gain insights into the country's Citizenship by Investment

(CBI) programme, its international mobility benefits and the investment opportunities available to prospective applicants.

Oritsejafor highlighted the firm's wider advisory offering beyond citizenship and passport acquisition. She explained that Passport Legacy operates under PL Group, which also en-

compasses real estate, government advisory and private client services, supporting clients with a range of international investment and lifestyle needs. "We are not simply a passport company; we do so much more than passports. Investment migration is just one facet of the services we provide."

Oritsejafor also highlighted

the group's real estate presence across Cyprus, Greece, Thailand, Bali and Dubai, alongside its government advisory work with Argentina and São Tomé and Príncipe. As Managing Director, she oversees Passport Legacy's Nigerian operations across its Lagos and Abuja offices, supported by a team focused on client advisory and application processing.

Guardian Fashion

● STYLE

● ELEGANCE

● LIFESTYLE

Heat-Wave Style: Cool Men In Linen

By Maria Diamond

THE men of style and their designers are putting 'Linen' fabrics of all shades, designs and styles to good use this season of heat waves even as it intensifies in Lagos and around the country.

Why not? 'Linen' is one superior breathable and cooling fabric, and a lot of men are regular heavy sweaters, thus with linen fabric, extracted from the long and strong inner stalks of flax plants, air flows freely while expelling heat/sweat generated from the body.

So of course it's only normal for men to seamlessly twirl towards the direction of the suitable cooling and absorbent fabric during the heat wave.

Linen speaks Luxury for men

Heat waves aside, there is something about linen fabrics when designed and styled for men that speaks and radiates luxury.

Women may not necessarily have or feel the same luxury aura when put in the same fabric. But with men, linen speaks the language of premium simplicity and coolness due to its strong but breathable texture and naturally absorbent of heat and sweat.

The firmness of linen fabric when designed and tailored for men regardless of the style stands on their manly body figure making them look cool, prim and proper gentlemanly.

Thus, on a very good classy-cloth-shopping day, men of style and class from around the world would go for any clothing made with fine linen fabrics before considering other additional choices due to its unmatched natural coolness and seamless skin comfort texture.

For the best of men, clothing and styling generally is about comfort and simplicity, little is much, anything otherwise is 'noise' and real men don't do noisy fashion.

'With men, linen speaks the language of premium simplicity and coolness due to its strong but breathable texture and naturally absorbent of heat and sweat'.



By Suliyat Tella

RATHER than focus exclusively on reading a book and analysing its characters and themes, discussing the ideas and connecting them to everyday lives should form a huge part of reading culture.

This is the take of 15-year-old Zahra Ahmed Ajetumobi, the founder of ‘Zahra Jet Book Club’.

Zahra, who is building a platform around sustainable development, children’s education and reading, believes that her book club is a movement where young learners come together; share their experiences, ideas and thoughts.

The club has attracted more than 2,000 members



Zahra Ajetumobi: Making Reading A Movement, Culture

• Building Better Society With Educational Content Creation

and according to Zahra, their enthusiasm has reassured her that the idea is working.

She believes this interest is partly due to the way the club is organised. By making the club a community, she gives members more opportunities to participate.

“During a discussion of Wonder, for instance, members explored inclusion and the importance of treating people equally, regardless of their appearance, background or financial status. These are subjects that members can discuss from their own experiences, even if they have not finished reading the book. Everybody can share an idea and experience, even if they haven’t fully read the book that we’re discussing. They can still have something to say,” Zahra explained.

Her first book, The Journey So Far, shares lessons from her experiences, upbringing and conversations with prominent figures, including President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and United Nations

‘If young people become more involved in sustainable development, pursue education and apply what they learn, they can help create a world where nobody is left behind’.

‘With respect, you’re really able to open doors of amazing connections with people. Connections are rooted in respect, in dignity and in kindness’

Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed.

From YouTube videos to global platforms, Zahra’s journey began with an interest in what other children were doing online.

As her knowledge grew, she found more opportunities to share what she learnt. Her interest in sustainable development emanated after a school lesson introduced her to the Sustainable Development Goals. She saw them as a checklist for building a better society and found a way to combine that interest with her experience in content creation.

Why education matters

Beyond reading, quality education is the issue Zahra says matters most to her. She links it to Sustainable Development Goal Four and believes that education can only transform society when people apply what they learn.

She questions why problems such as hunger and homelessness persist even as education becomes more accessible. “I believe that this is because whatever we’re learning or whatever information we have, we’re not applying it at the rate

that we should. We’re not applying it adequately enough.”

According to her, the challenge is not just to make education available but to ensure that knowledge translates into action.

She also sees her own education as closely connected to her advocacy. Lessons at school give her ideas and information she can use in her videos and other activities.

Managing these responsibilities requires intentional planning. She divides her time between school, studying, reading, making videos and relaxing with friends. Time blocking and grouping similar tasks help her stay organised.

She also credits her parents’ continued involvement in managing her social media accounts with allowing her to focus on other priorities. “Everything that I’m doing is actually part of my passion. It’s something that drives me every day”.

Societal, cultural values

Engaging with people internationally has also reinforced the importance of the values she learnt growing up in Nigeria.

Zahra says her Yoruba background taught her respect, discipline and integrity, values she believes have influenced how she builds relationships and approaches her work.

“With respect, you’re really able to open doors of amazing connections with people. Connections are rooted in respect, in dignity and in kindness”.

She also considers open-mindedness essential when engaging with people from different backgrounds. She believes being willing to consider other perspectives helps understand the world through different lenses and develop ideas that can improve society.

Her cultural values, she adds, have helped her build connections and develop herself while contributing positively to the people around her.

Meeting young people where they are

Zahra believes that young people must be met where they are as they will not be involved in anything they can’t relate to.

She sums up the idea in a quote she uses in her book: “If you can’t participate, then there’s nothing to anticipate.”

For Zahra, her experiences overtime reinforces her belief that young people must be intentional about their actions and the impact they want to make. “We are the future. The actions that we do today will affect tomorrow.”

She sites social media as an example of how the actions of young people can influence life beyond the internet.

She believes that if young people become more involved in sustainable development, pursue education and apply what they learn, they can help create a world where nobody is left behind.

‘Design Can Reshape Relationships, Workplace Productivity’

By Silver Nwokoro

THE value of design is often misunderstood, despite its presence in virtually every aspect of everyday life. The far-reaching impacts of design on human relationships, productivity and wellbeing, goes beyond aesthetics as its influence on how people live, work and interact.

“From clothing and furniture to television sets and buildings, design shapes people’s experiences, yet many people fail to recognise its deeper impact on their lives,” the founder of Design House, Osaru Alile-Abraham noted during the unveiling of Design House Open House: a living showcase and documentary, in commemoration of Design Week Lagos 2026.

Alile-Abraham explained that her experience of designing spaces had shown her how the physical environment could influence relationships among members of a family.

She also highlighted the potential of well-designed workplaces to improve employee experience and productivity, saying workers could become more willing to spend time in an office when the environment was properly designed.

“The return on investment that you get on a properly designed office space is incredible. A lot of people that work in the office want to stay there longer. They want to enjoy the space. They work harder just because of how beautifully the space is done,” she said.

She added that the same principle applied to hospitality spaces, noting that hotels and guest houses could encourage

people to stay longer when attention was paid to the overall experience, including how the space looks, feels and smells.

It was against this backdrop, she said, that Design House developed the Design House Experience, a mini docuseries designed to educate audiences about the processes and considerations involved in creating functional spaces.

Alile-Abraham described the project as both a documentary and an edutainment series, combining education with entertainment to give audiences insight into the work that takes place behind the creation of a space.

According to her, the design concept was guided by the need to create an environment that felt collaborative, carefully considered and calming.

Alile-Abraham said the philosophy behind the space could be summed up in three words: “create, connect, and rest.” “Design House plans to contribute to the growth of Nigeria’s creative economy primarily through education and practical training.

She disclosed that the Design House Creative Intensive, an eight-day programme, was organised for three young product designers who lived at the Design House facility in Lekki, Lagos, during the programme.

The participants were exposed to training in product design, legal practices, marketing, branding and financial management, she said.

Among those who taught the participants was Lani Adeoye, a product designer whom Alile-Abraham described as world-renowned and born and raised in Lagos. She said the partici-

pants were also given strategic creative problems to solve during the programme, adding that by the end of the eight days, they had developed solutions to challenges presented by interior designers at the beginning of the programme.

“There’s education and the impact that comes from education is one that may not be measured by numbers. But what I do know for sure is that when they leave here, it changes the trajectory of their careers and, in turn, can allow them to be able to impact other people that will continue to do the same thing,” she said.

Alile-Abraham said the Design House Experience differed from a conventional exhibition because the space would remain available beyond the immediate Design Week activities.

Describing it as a living showcase, she said the space was created in collaboration with brands and partners and would remain in place beyond the five-day Design Week period. “It’s not just going to be here for Design Week for the next five days. It’s going to be here all year round until probably next year. You’ll see it here any time you come,” she said.

She added that the project also exists online through the Design House Experience documentary, which is available on the Design House YouTube channel.

According to her, the documentary gives viewers an opportunity to understand the reasoning behind various design decisions and observe how architects, product designers and interior designers collaborate in developing a space.

AY Blames Payment Dispute As Fans Miss Cardiff Show

By Suliyat Tella
NIGERIAN comedian Ayo Makun, popularly known as AY, has blamed unresolved payment commitments for the disruption of his show in Cardiff, Wales, apologising to fans who waited for hours before leaving without seeing the advertised performances.
The comedian also called on the event organisers and his UK tour management to provide clear information on refunds for affected ticket holders. In a statement posted on his instagram page, AY said he and fellow comedians travelled to Cardiff to perform but were delayed by unresolved financial commitments.
He apologised to those who bought tickets and attended the show, acknowledging that they

deserved better organisation and timely communication.
“You should never have been caught in the middle of a payment dispute,” he said.
The comedian urged the public to listen to his full explanation of the incident before drawing conclusions, while calling on the organisers and UK tour management to resolve the situation for ticket holders.
However, he did not specify when refunds would begin or provide details of a process through which affected fans could reclaim their money.
The incident has drawn attention to the circumstances surrounding the event, with attendees expressing frustration over the prolonged wait and the absence of the advertised performers.

The comedian also confirmed that his remaining UK tour dates were still scheduled to hold, with performances billed for Birmingham on October 30, London on October 31 and Manchester on November 1.
AY, who has been active in the entertainment industry for more than two decades, thanked fans for their continued support and said he remained committed to honouring their trust.
He added that updates on the Cardiff incident would be shared through his official channels.



By Suliyat Tella
GOSPEL singer, Oluwakemi Aina has returned to music with the launch of her second album, *Ayomitide*, following a 14-year gap since her first album, *Olulana*, was released in 2012.
The five-track album was launched at Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Oke Igbala, Ketu, Lagos, where church leaders, members of the Sanctified Voices band and other guests gathered to support the singer.
Speaking at the launch, Aina said the album

Oluwakemi Aina Returns With New Gospel Album, *Ayomitide*

was inspired by the challenges she faced after releasing her first project and her gratitude to God for giving her another opportunity to continue her music ministry.
She said the title, *Ayomitide*, reflected her belief that God had shown her mercy and favour despite the difficulties she experienced over the years.
“It was about 13 years since I did the first album. There was a bit of a delay before releasing the next one. There were challenges and a lot that I cannot mention,” she said.
Aina said the process of recording and releasing the album was demanding, citing financial constraints and the physical challenges she faced along the way.
However, she said her passion for music and faith in God helped her complete the project.
The singer also noted that the new album differed from her first release because of the wider reach offered by digital platforms.
According to her, her songs were not available online when she released *Olulana* in 2012. The new album, however, is available on platforms

including YouTube and Audiomack, making it easier for listeners to access her music.
The album features five tracks: *Ayomitide*, *Mokio*, *Iyin ni mo mu wa*, *Praise Medley* and *Psalm 23*. Aina also said her older songs are now available online.
Looking ahead, the singer said she planned to produce music videos for songs on the new album, explaining that her first album did not have accompanying videos. She noted that the project would require additional funding.
Aina also used the occasion to encourage people living with disabilities to pursue their ambitions despite the challenges they might face.
She cited her experience of attending university, working in different offices, getting married and raising two children as examples of what she had achieved despite being physically challenged.
“You are only physically challenged. It does not affect who you are,” she said.



Femi Fowler Honoured As Visual Icon, Talent Architect Of The Year

By Silver Nwokoro
FOUNDER, Fowler Model Management, Femi Fowler has been awarded the “Visual Icon & Talent Architect of the Year” at the Achievers Awards International ceremony in recognition of his outstanding works in talent management, casting and choreography, photography, and visual storytelling.
Fowler is the founder and creative director of Fowler Model Management, established in Lagos in 2016. His work included scouting and developing models, supporting their professional growth, and placing talent internationally.
His fashion credits include serving as Casting Director for Tokyo James and Martell’s OSU capsule collection at Milan Fashion Week in 2021. In 2023, he handled casting and choreography for Maxivive’s *Okrika!* presentation at De Balie in Amsterdam.
Fowler’s photography and exhibition work includes *Black Rainbow* by Women in Rotterdam in 2023 and *Jollof for Love* at Hotel Arena in Amsterdam in 2025 among others.
The award recognises the range of Fowler’s work, connecting his support for emerging talent with the images and fashion presentations through which African identity is seen

LAUTECH Nanotechnology Group Holds 10th Int’l Conference On Nanoproduct Devt

By Gbenga Salau
THE LAUTECH Nanotechnology Research Group (NANO+) at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Nigeria has slated its 10th international conference on nanotechnology, themed: “Sustainable Nanotechnology: From Research to Reality 2.0” for November 23 to 27, 2026 at the university’s main campus, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria.
This year’s conference which builds on the past editions will be declared open by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Dr. Kingsley Tochukwu Udeh, SAN on Wednesday November 25, 2026.
In a statement by the Head of the Research Group, Prof. Agbaje Lateef of the Department of Pure and Applied Biology of the institution, the Vice-Chancellor of LAUTECH, Prof. Razaq O. Rom Kalilu will be the Chairman of the occasion, while the Executive Vice-Chairman of National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure, Mr. Khalil Suleiman Halilu is expected as a special guest of honour.
The keynote speaker is the Director-General of the Nigeria Natural Medicine Development Agency (NNMDA), Professor Martins Emeje, FAS.
The LAUTECH NANO 2026 conference is the 10th in the series to be organized by the research group in its 12 years of existence, being the largest number of conferences on nanotechnology to be organized by any group or institution in Nigeria.
The annual event has become a breeding ground for the new thinkers in nanotechnology. The workshop component of the conference which focuses on hands-on training on “Green synthesis, characterization and applications of nanoparticles” has been beneficial as a capacity-building strategy to develop experts in nanotechnology in Nigeria.

Caleb University Rally Students Against Drug Abuse

By Gbenga Salau
THE Caleb University Centre for Counselling and Development Services, in collaboration with the War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) Club, held a two-day Campus Mental Health Awareness and War Against Drug Abuse Programme, as part of activities commemorating the 2026 World Mental Health Day.
On the first day, there was an awareness rally on campus with the team distributing flyers and engaging students and staff on mental health and drug abuse. The rally terminated at the Administrative Block, where the University Bursar, Mr Adesina Abubakre, who represented the Vice-Chancellor, emphasised the importance of mental wellness and maintaining a drug-free campus environment for sustained academic excellence. He commended the Centre for its efforts in promoting mental wellness and working towards a

drug-free university.
Day two featured a mental health seminar titled “Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices, Real Change.” The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Olalekan Asikhia, represented by the Dean of Student Affairs, Prof Adetayo Olorunlana, noted that the programme was an important part of the university’s commitment to building the total person. The programme featured mental health talks, fastest finger games, a panel session, three keynote presentations, a mental health commitment session and the inauguration of student volunteers into the Students’ Community.
The first speaker, Dr Dokun Adededeji, who spoke on “Actualising a Drug-Free Caleb University: Stakeholders and Responsibilities”, emphasised that achieving a drug-free university requires honesty about substance use and active involvement of students, parents and the university management.

By Isaac Taiwo
ActionAid Nigeria, in collaboration with Inspire Youth Network, has called for greater youth inclusion in climate change policies, urging the government to reflect young people’s priorities in the country’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0).
Joseph Akaager, who works with ActionAid Nigeria on the Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPA II), made the call at the Southwest Regional Local Conference of Youth, organised to gather young people’s perspectives on climate change and contribute to a national youth statement ahead of global climate negotiations, includ-

ActionAid, Inspire Youth Network Seek Youth Inclusion In Climate Action

ing COP31.
Akaager said the initiative recognises young people as critical stakeholders in the efforts to reduce carbon emissions, promote sustainable practices and achieve net-zero emissions.
He urged Nigerians to embrace green jobs, tree planting, circular economy initiatives and environmentally friendly practices, stressing that collective action was essential to building a sustainable future.
According to him, the conference would ensure that the national youth statement reflects the diverse climate realities of young people across Nigeria’s six geopolitical zones.
He added that the statement would strengthen youth-led advocacy at national and international levels.
Akaager also called for climate justice, arguing that countries in the Global South, including Nigeria, should not bear disproportionate financial burdens for a crisis to which they have contributed relatively little, while adequate climate finance and compensation remain critical concerns.

Where did the drive and passion for aerospace emanate?

MY passion for aerospace began when I was still a young girl around 9-year-old. I live under a flight path and would regularly run out when I heard airplanes fly over my family home then. This led me to study Mechanical Engineering and during my internship at Arik Air, I was fully convinced that I wanted a career in aerospace and aviation.

What does it entail to be technical personnel in a broad field that includes aircraft maintenance, aerospace non-destructive testing, quality assurance and safety?

It requires technical competence, attention to detail, discipline, and a strong sense of professional ethics. When I think about what it means to be a technical professional combining aircraft maintenance, aerospace NDT, quality assurance, and safety, I don't just see a job description. I see a massive responsibility ensuring the safety of thousands of lives and the airworthiness of the aircraft.

Technically, you need to be sound, and your decision-making must be guided by approved procedures, accurate findings, and an uncompromising commitment to safety. You must also understand that even the smallest oversight can have serious consequences.

Beyond technical knowledge, the job requires integrity and the courage to stand by your professional judgement, even when the decision is difficult. You must be willing to keep learning because aviation technology and maintenance practices continue



‘Opportunities For Growth, Leadership Should Be Anchored On Competence, Not Gender’

AANUOLUWAPO ANNIE OJEWUNMI is a passionate mechanical engineer graduate with experience in Aircraft Maintenance, Aerospace Non-destructive Testing, Quality Assurance and Safety. She is currently a qualified Aerospace NDT Level II Technician working as an Aircraft NDT, Wheels and Brakes Technician at Air Peace. She founded the Young Aerospace Professionals Initiative, a mentorship programme designed to guide aspiring aerospace engineers through various career-building initiatives. She is also an aviation contributing writer at Runway Girl Network, where she writes Africa aviation articles for Aero International, a monthly German magazine devoted to civil aviation, and aerospace NDT at Aerospace Testing International. She has also been featured on AviNation in 2025, a youth-focused aviation and aerospace magazine in the USA. She was also recently featured by Women Thrive Magazine in 2026. She is an alumnus of the World Hydrogen Leaders Mentorship Programme; an alumnus of the Carrington Youth Fellowship Initiative of the United States Embassy in Lagos; a Member of Women in Green Hydrogen, and also recipient of the SOFEMA Aviation Leadership Scholarship in 2026. In this interview with MARIA DIAMOND she speaks about the necessity to bridge the gap between academia and the aerospace/aviation industry; the role and place of women in STEM education and the necessity to completely eradicate workplace inequality and gender bias that compels women to have to work harder to establish their competence and earn the same level of trust and recognition as their male colleagues.

to evolve.

Given your hands-on role at Air Peace as a Qualified Aerospace NDT Level II Technician, what are the most critical defect detection techniques you utilise on wheels, brakes, and airframe structures, and how does your work directly foster operational safety for West Africa's largest carrier?

In my work, the inspection method depends on the component to be inspected, the material it is made of, the type of defect being investigated, and the requirements of the applicable maintenance documentation.

For aircraft wheels and brakes, Eddy current testing (ET) can help identify surface and near-surface flaws in electrically conductive materials like the wheel hubs made of Aluminum.

Magnetic particle testing (MT) is used to detect surface and near-surface discontinuities in suitable ferromagnetic materials such as the wheel bolts, most of which are made of steel like Boeing B777 and Embraer E190.

Liquid penetrant testing (PT) is useful for detecting surface-breaking discontinuities in suitable non-porous materials. For materials which are non-ferromagnetic such as Inconel, consisting of Nickel and Chromium, PT is a perfect choice as methods such as ET and MT would not be effective in detecting cracks on it. Visual inspection is also essential for identifying conditions such as cracking, corrosion, wear, and other visible damage.

For airframe structures, the appropriate method also depends on the structure and material. Eddy current testing, ultrasonic testing, and other approved NDT methods may be used where specified by the relevant inspection procedure. Each technique has its own capabilities and limitations, which is why choosing the correct method is critical. My responsibility is to carry out inspections within my authorisation and qualification, follow approved procedures, evaluate indications against the applicable acceptance criteria, and ensure that findings are reported and documented correctly. Defects that might not be visible during an ordinary visual examination can sometimes be identified through appropriate NDT. This allows maintenance personnel to make informed decisions about the serviceability of a component. However, NDT is one part of a wider airworthiness and quality assurance ecosystem. Safe operations also depend on proper maintenance planning, engineering decisions, quality control, competent personnel, and regulatory oversight. My role is to ensure that the inspections entrusted to me are performed with the precision and integrity they require.

Having trained at Aerospace Inspection Training in the UK, how do global quality assurance benchmarks translate into daily maintenance workflows within the African aviation landscape?

I was fortunate to train at Aerospace Inspection Training in the UK, one of the leading aerospace NDT training facilities, where I received training in accordance with EN 4179 and NAS 410, the European and North American standards for aerospace NDT personnel qualification and certification respectively. These standards provide a framework for ensuring that inspections are performed by competent personnel using approved procedures and appropriate equipment, with accurate documentation of findings.

In my daily work at Air Peace, these principles guide how I inspect

aircraft wheels, brakes, and other components using methods such as fluorescent penetrant testing and eddy current testing. Within the African aviation landscape, applying these global benchmarks helps strengthen maintenance quality, regulatory compliance, and confidence in our local aviation capabilities. Ultimately, aviation safety has no geographical boundaries; the same commitment to quality and airworthiness must apply wherever an aircraft is maintained.

You founded the Young Aerospace Professionals Initiative to bridge the gap between academic engineering curricula and the practical demands of the aviation industry. What are the primary skill deficits you observe in recent engineering graduates, and how has your initiative successfully placed young talent into top-tier aerospace roles?

One of the biggest challenges is the gap between knowing engineering theory and understanding how that knowledge is applied in the industry. Our universities provide an important foundation, but many students graduate do not have sufficient exposure to aircraft maintenance, aerospace manufacturing, NDT, aviation regulations, technical documentation, or the different career pathways available in the industry. Some also lack professional networking skills and an understanding of how to position themselves for technical opportunities.

I experienced how important industry exposure was during my own internship in 2021. That experience helped me understand the profession in a way that lectures alone could not explain.

I founded the Young Aerospace Professionals Initiative, YAPI, in 2022 to help bridge that gap. Through mentorship, webinars, workshops, career guidance, and industry engagement, we introduce young people to professionals and opportunities they might otherwise never encounter. YAPI has reached more than 500 students and young professionals across Nigeria and Africa through our programmes and activities. We have also supported young people in accessing career opportunities, including placements and professional development pathways. For me, success is not simply the number of people who attend a webinar. It is when someone who previously had no idea that aerospace NDT existed begins training for that career, or when a student gains the confidence and industry knowledge to pursue an opportunity.

We are working towards a future in which young Nigerians and Africans are not only seeking opportunities in the global aerospace industry but are also equipped to build and strengthen the industry within their own countries.

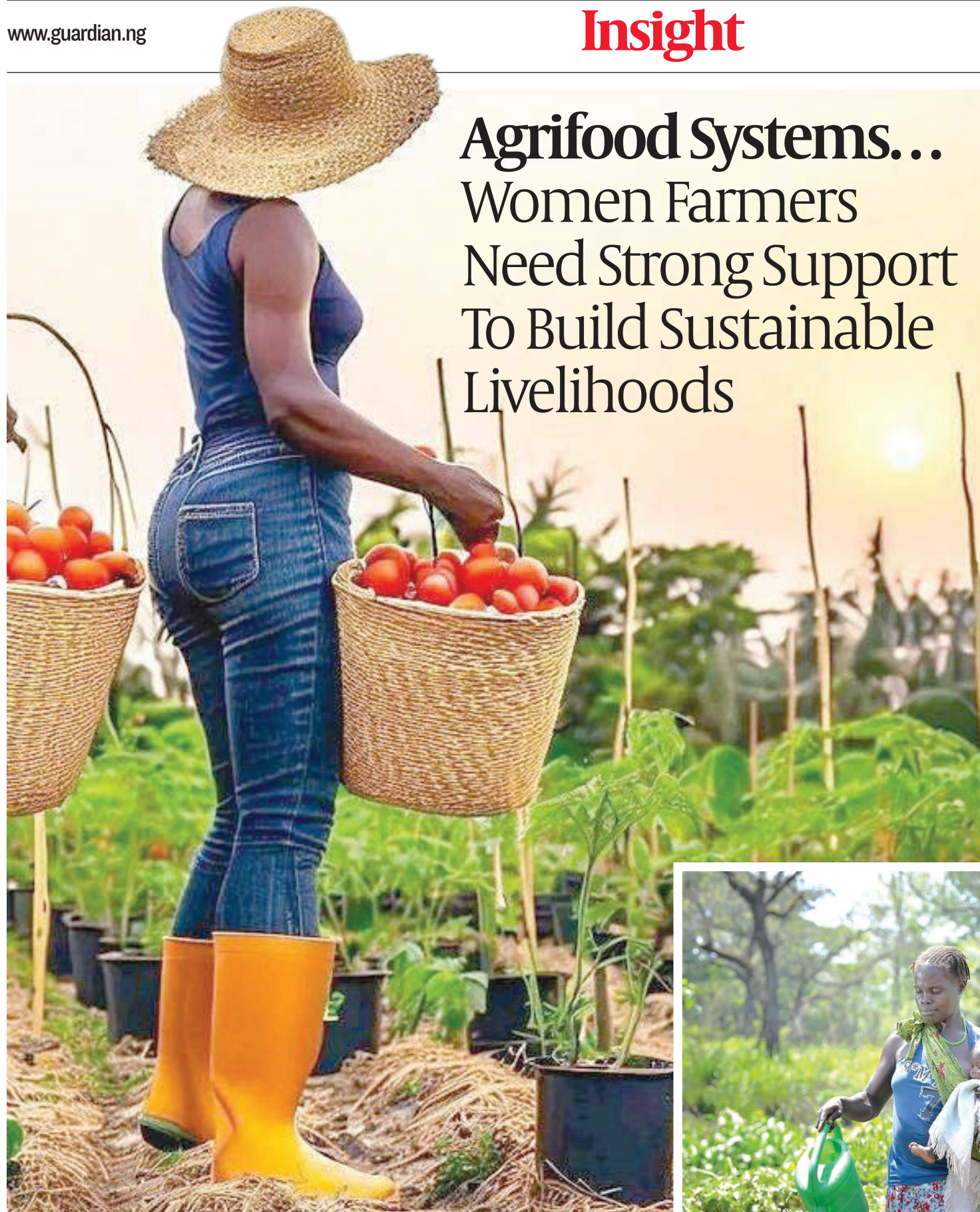
In this year 2026, there have been a number of aircraft incidents and accidents in Nigeria, what would you say is responsible for this sequence and how can the industry curb future occurrences?

I would be careful about attributing the incidents and accidents recorded in Nigeria this year to one particular cause.

Each of them must be investigated thoroughly as an accident, a serious incident, and an occurrence that may not have resulted in significant damage or injury. Aviation accidents are rarely explained adequately by speculation. Investigators examine several possible factors, including aircraft technical condition, maintenance history, operational decisions, crew actions, weather, airport infrastructure, organisational procedures, and other contributing circumstances. The actual findings must determine the conclusions.

From my perspective as an aircraft maintenance and NDT professional, one important priority is strengthening the systems that help identify and manage technical risks before they contribute to an occurrence.

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



Agrifood Systems... Women Farmers Need Strong Support To Build Sustainable Livelihoods

By Moyosore Salami

DATA from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) shows that 76 per cent of working women in sub-Saharan Africa are employed in agrifood systems, the largest share worldwide. Women in rural areas are also four times more likely to engage in off-farm work than men.

Despite their contribution, women continue to face barriers that limit their ability to expand production and increase their earnings. A farmer may spend months cultivating crops only to face rising input costs, inadequate storage or difficulty finding buyers willing to pay a fair price.

The challenge is not simply whether women can produce food, but whether they have the resources and opportunities to earn enough from their work to sustain their farms and support their households.

The challenges women farmers face form part of a wider pattern across agrifood systems, where women contribute through farming, processing, trading and other activities that support food production and household nutrition.

The FAO report identifies limited access to and control over natural resources as a major challenge for women across the sector. Women are also more likely than men to experience food insecurity.

The report further highlights gaps in social protection across the region. Only 13 per cent

of women receive cash benefits, while fewer than seven per cent have access to pensions.

Despite these barriers, women continue to sustain their livelihoods by diversifying their activities, establishing community savings and credit associations and implementing agroecological practices, among other strategies.

Hurdles of being a woman farmer

Women farmers' contribution extends beyond paid work. Unpaid care responsibilities, including fetching water and caring for children and older people while supporting household welfare and food and nutrition security.

These responsibilities can place additional demands on women who are also trying to maintain farms and increase their earnings. When they lack the resources to improve production or make adequate returns, their ability to reinvest in their businesses and withstand future costs can suffer.

The implications extend beyond individual farmers. Women's ability to earn a stable income from agriculture can affect their households, while their participation in farming, processing and trading remains important to the wider food system.

The ordeals

While it is an established fact that women play a significant role in Nigeria's agriculture, from producing food to processing and trading farm produce, yet, for many women, turning their labour into a stable livelihood

she said.

Without adequate funding, women may have to reduce the size of their farms or limit the inputs they use, affecting the quantity they eventually harvest. Even when they produce a good harvest, however, making a profit can remain difficult.

"When the crops are ready, you still have to look for who will buy them. If there is no good market, you may be forced to sell at a low price because you cannot keep the produce for long," Adewuyi said.

She noted that rising production costs, storage difficulties and expensive transportation could leave farmers with little profit even after a good harvest.

"Sometimes, you work hard and harvest well, but what you get back is not enough because the cost of farming has increased. If you cannot store the produce or take it to where buyers will pay better, you may not make much profit," she said.

Her experience shows how the challenges of farming extend beyond production. Without affordable ways to preserve and transport their produce, women may struggle to recover their costs and reinvest in their farms.

For some women, the challenge begins before they can plant a crop.

Balikis Ahmad, a vegetable farmer who wants to grow crops such as ugu, spinach and tomatoes for sale, said difficulty accessing land had limited her ability to expand her business.

"Sometimes, you have the willingness to farm and even know what to do, but you don't have the land. You cannot just enter somebody's land and start planting. You have to look for land you can afford, and even when you find one, you may not have the money to pay for it," she said.

The difficulty makes it harder for Ahmad to invest confidently in her farm. Beyond paying for seeds, fertiliser and other inputs, she must consider whether she will have access to the land for as long as she needs it.

Her experience highlights how the inability to secure affordable land can restrict women's plans to grow their farming businesses, even when they have the knowledge and willingness to produce food.

Can female farmers exercise control over resources?

Executive Director and Project Lead at Menitos Charity Foundation, Tolulope Daramola, said improving women's access to agricultural resources requires looking beyond ownership to consider whether they can exercise control over those resources.

She explained that discussions about land ownership often focus on whether women can obtain formal documents

without adequately considering their ability to manage the land and make decisions about its use.

In some communities, Daramola said, male farm workers may be unwilling to take instructions from a woman. A woman who owns or manages farmland may therefore have to employ a male manager or rely on a male relative to supervise workers.

The situation, she explained, is not necessarily a reflection of women's competence. Rather, it exposes attitudes that can undermine their authority even when they have the resources and knowledge to manage their farms.

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



remains difficult because of limited access to land, finance, agricultural services and markets.

A woman farmer, Abisola Adewuyi, said women contribute significantly to food production and rural economic activities but continue to encounter difficulties accessing funding, land, agricultural services and markets.

She explained that farming requires money at the right time, particularly for buying seeds and fertiliser, paying workers and maintaining the farm throughout the planting season.

"When I want to farm, I need money for seeds, fertiliser and labour. If the money is not available at the right time, it affects the way I prepare the farm and the amount I can plant,"

LONG before Rukmani began building a career in Nigeria's music industry, she found the power of song in the church. Growing up in Port Harcourt, she discovered at six that music could release feelings and give experience meaning. Years later, that bond between music and personal experience remains central to her artistry.

Now 25, the singer-songwriter has built a devoted following through intimate, emotionally resonant songwriting that stands apart from mainstream currents. Her carefully crafted catalogue is turning heads nationwide and marks her out as an artiste charting a distinct direction for Nigerian music.

Based in Lagos, Rukmani draws on R&B, soul and Afrobeats without being confined to any one of them. Her songs do not shy away from emotional uncertainty. They sit with it, tracing the complicated feelings that come with relationships, womanhood and the search for self-understanding.

Since launching her professional career in 2021, she has developed a sound rooted in emotional honesty, from her early releases to 'Angel On The Run' and her debut album, 3XL, which treats love, lust and loss as intertwined parts of human experience.

Guided by affecting vocals and poetic songwriting, she writes openly about desire, heartbreak, womanhood and self-discovery, often drawing on experiences she considers inseparable from her music.

"I can never separate my personal experiences from my artistry because my art is very personal to me," she once said. "How can I express myself without expressing exactly what needs to be? I need people to know that I'm just like them."

Rather than treating songwriting as a performance detached from the person behind it, she

Port Harcourt To Lagos: Rukmani's Struggle Finding Her Voice In Music Scene

approaches it as an extension of her emotional life. Her journey from Port Harcourt to Lagos is therefore more than a change of address. It is the story of an artiste seeking her place in a competitive landscape while staying close to the experiences that give her work its character.

Creating a sound from melody of genres

In an industry where artistes compete for attention, Rukmani starts somewhere more personal: the experiences she knows, the emotions she cannot easily separate from herself and the stories she wants listeners to recognise as their own.

Her music draws on R&B, soul and Afrobeats, but her identity rests less on those influences than on how she combines them to serve her stories. R&B gives her a framework for exploring relationships and vulnerability.

Soul shapes the feeling and expressiveness of her delivery. Afrobeats ties her work to the wider contemporary African musical conversation. Her voice and writing hold the three together, letting her move between emotional registers without losing the intimacy at the centre of her work.

One song may deal with desire or attraction yet reveal uncertainty. Another may consider heartbreak without reducing it to a simple account of loss. The result recognises the P of human relationships instead of forcing them into easy conclusions.

For Rukmani, the personal is more than inspiration. It is how she connects with listeners. She wants people to find something recognisable in her music, even when the circumstances behind a song are specific.

ic to her own life. She is not simply recounting experiences. She is making room for listeners to reflect on their own feelings and relationships through the stories she shares. From *Angel On The Run* to *3XL: Love, Lust, Loss* Rukmani's early work laid the foundation of a sound that favours intimacy, emotional openness and spontaneity. She did not merely release music. She introduced audiences to a distinctive approach to songwriting.

Angel On The Run expanded that world with an R&B-led sound that could reach listeners beyond Nigeria, while remaining rooted in personal expression. International recognition, however, is only one measure of an artiste's growth.

For Rukmani, the more fundamental task is to build a body of work that reflects her evolving perspective, a task that becomes more demanding once an artiste moves beyond the curtain raiser.

3XL deepens the themes that have shaped her music. It treats love, lust and loss as overlapping experiences, making room for the emotional complications that resist neat explanations. It also reinforces a central feature of her work: a willingness to acknowledge vulnerability without presenting it as weakness.

Her songs let softness and strength coexist. They accept that emotional openness can be difficult, particularly when relationships bring disappointment, but that it can also be a route to self-understanding.

For listeners working through their own experiences, this offers more than another person's relationship story. It offers recognition, the sense that complicated feelings are not theirs alone to carry.

Influences and individuality

Rukmani's outlook was shaped by the Nigerian artistes she listened to growing up, including Styl-Plus, 2Face and P-Square. Their influence forms part of the musical background from which she developed her own perspective, but her work is not a reproduction of what came before. Every emerging artiste must decide what to keep, what to reinterpret and what to contribute that is distinctly their own.

Her movement between R&B, soul and Afrobeats reflects that ongoing process. She treats genre not as a fixed boundary but as a means of meeting the emotional demands of each song. The unifying element is the perspective from which she writes.

Whether she is exploring desire, heartbreak or self-discovery, her material returns to one question: how can an individual experience be expressed so that another person can understand it?

Building a Place in Nigeria's Evolving Music Scene

For an artiste developing a distinct identity, the challenge is not simply to make music but to build a catalogue that communicates a recognisable perspective in a crowded field of sounds and stories.

Rukmani's releases so far suggest she will keep the emotional core of her music close to her own experience. Her

songs do not rely on genre labels or styling. They are shaped by the feelings and questions she wants to explore.

That does not remove the demands of building a career, which requires continued development, reach and creative choices that let the music grow. But a clear artistic perspective gives her a foundation. For Rukmani, it is an insistence that her music stay personal, and a belief that listeners should see her as someone who feels what they feel. It points to a relationship with her audience built on shared humanity rather than distance.

It is also a reminder that an artiste's voice involves more than vocal tone. It emerges from the stories she chooses, the emotions she explores and her willingness to express them honestly.

Softies Vibe: The Story Still Unfolding

Her latest release, *Softies Vibe*, an eight-track sophomore EP on desire, intimacy, self-assurance and vulnerability, adds a timely chapter. Released on Tuesday, October 27, it broadens the territory of *Angel On The Run* and *3XL* and brings her interest in tenderness and personal growth into sharper focus.

The EP opens with *MOG*, short for "Matter on Ground", on which the award-winning singer arrives with complete self-assurance, aware that she is the subject of attention and conversation. *Lock It In*, featuring Ema Onigah, pushes that confidence towards flirtation as she challenges a love interest to stop hesitating and act on what already exists between them.

Down for It leans further into desire and attraction, playing with the knowledge that she can stay on someone's mind long after the moment has passed, while *Sneaky Link* complicates that attraction with secrecy and borrowed time.

Built around trumpets, electronic textures and relaxed percussion, the track finds her caught in the thrill and moral tension of being the woman a man cannot stop thinking about, even as he goes home to someone else.

The push and pull between confidence and emotional exposure sharpens in the second half. On *Property*, featuring Tar1 she makes no attempt to disguise who she wants, and Tar1q meets her energy, turning the song into an exchange of mutual attraction, trust and emotional surrender.

Whine, with F3line, slows everything into a more intimate space shaped by close dancing and sustained chemistry. Top 5 then unsettles that certainty. Facing someone who has yet to decide where she belongs in his life, Rukmani lets vulnerability into the room without lowering her standards.

She may want him, but she has no interest in being one option among many. The EP closes with *Check on Me*, which returns to the self-assurance of "MOG" and confirms that she remains the "matter on ground" to the last.

Softies Vibe builds on the emotional intimacy of *Angel On The Run*, the love, lust and loss of *3XL* and the playful confidence of her recent singles *Serial Kisser* and *HIH* (Hot In Here). It also gives fuller shape to the "Softie" identity now central to her world.

For Rukmani, softness is not passivity and vulnerability is not weakness. "Being vulnerable doesn't erase the fact that I'm hard-working; it doesn't erase the fact that I'm loyal or that I'm a trustworthy friend. It doesn't erase the fact that when I want something, I go after it," she says. "I think that's the irony of being a Softie. We can be tender and emotional and vulnerable, and at the same time, we can be incredibly strong."

As her career develops, the challenge will be to keep widening her musical and emotional range without losing the intimacy that first drew her to songwriting. For now, her clearest statement of intent remains her belief that personal expression can create connection.



Bebuzee Deal Will Give AGN Members Other Sources Of Income — President

By Daniel Anazia

THE National President of the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN), Alhaji Abubakar Yakubu, has expressed optimism that the launch of the Actors Guild Community On-boarding platform on Bebuzee will unlock new financial opportunities for actors.

He made the remarks while being signed as the latest brand ambassador for Bebuzee, the US-based AI-powered super app that was recently launched in Nigeria. Yakubu joins seven other Nollywood stars — Patience Ozokwo, Ebele Okaro, Zubby Michael, Destiny Etiko, Segun Arinze, Sani Danja and Jide Kosoko — who were signed as ambassadors during the app's launch in Lagos.

The ambassadorial deals come ahead of the October 31 unveiling of the Actors Guild Community On-boarding platform, a dedicated community for AGN members on Bebuzee.

According to the company, every AGN member who joins the community will enjoy VIP status, while those who bring their content, fans and creative businesses onto the app will be paid instantly for whatever they post.

Bebuzee said it is targeting over one million members from the initiative. An insider disclosed that the AGN president facilitated the partnership to improve the earnings and welfare of Nigerian actors.

Speaking on the endorsement, Yakubu described the milestone as a personal achievement. "I feel so elated and happy about that personally," he said, adding that he is proud to be part of the revolution that will add something to practitioners' pockets.

He said that, as president of a very important association in the filmmaking ecosystem, it is time for members to begin to

benefit more directly from the movie industry. According to him, beyond mainstream artiste fees, practitioners need other means of survival.

"Apart from YouTube and other social media platforms, this will also add to their earnings for their creative work. The more they earn, the better it gets for them. They'll be proud of their industry, they'll be proud of their guild, and Bebuzee is coming at a time when I'm the president. I feel equally happy that, yes, members are going to benefit from it," the AGN chief said.

On the unveiling of the Actors Guild Community On-boarding platform, Yakubu said they plan to onboard a sizable number of members. "We'll launch a community where members are, and whatever they share brings in money. So, we want to onboard as many members as possible to make the community grow."

"We want to make that happen as soon as possible, like you've heard, by the end of this month. It is part of what we want to look at — between now and the end of the month, we have a sizable number of members to be onboarded," he said.



AMAA 2026: Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana In Race For Best African Film

• To Adaego With Love, The Herd Dominate Nomination List

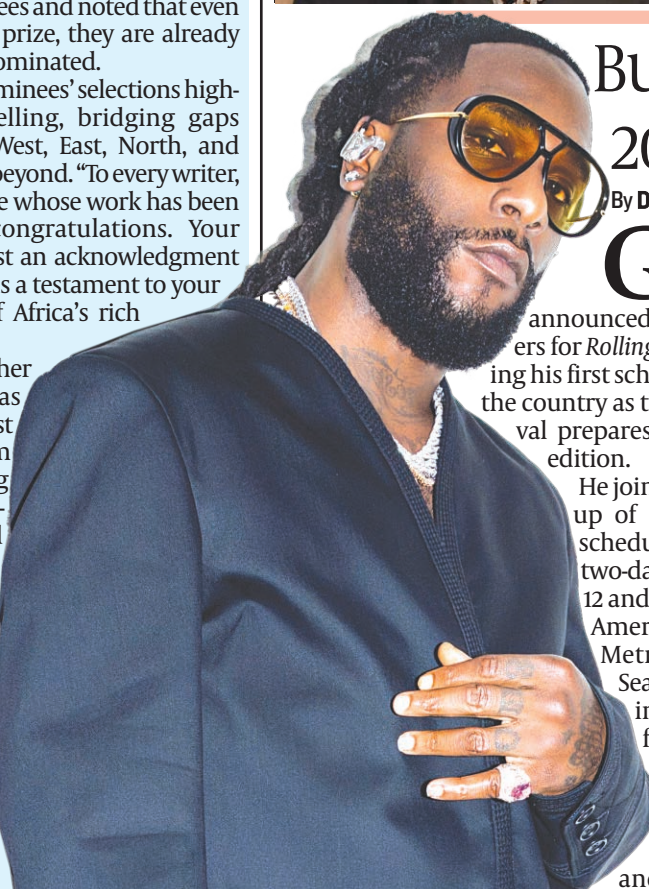
By Daniel Anazia

THE Africa Film Academy (AFA), the organisers of the Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA), has announced the nominees ahead of the 22nd edition. The nomination list was unveiled on Saturday, October 17, in a gathering of stakeholders and African film practitioners in Ikeja, Lagos.

According to AMAA Chief Operating Officer, Dr Raymond Anyiam-Osigwe the 22nd edition of the continental film awards ceremony will be held on November 15. He expressed felicitations to nominees and noted that even if they don't win the prize, they are already winners for getting nominated.

He noted that the nominees' selections highlight diverse storytelling, bridging gaps across sub-regions (West, East, North, and Southern Africa) and beyond. "To every writer, director, actor, creative whose work has been recognized today—congratulations. Your nomination is not just an acknowledgment of your hard work; it is a testament to your role as a guardian of Africa's rich narrative," he said.

Anyiam-Osigwe further noted that AMAA has become more than just an awards platform but a mirror reflecting Africa's shared struggles, triumphs and diverse cultures. "For over two decades, AMAA has been more than just an awards platform. It has been a mirror reflecting our shared struggles, our triumphs, our diverse cultures, and the fact that Africa is indeed a centre of creative excellence."



Phyno Unveils *Let That Sink In* Album

By Daniel Anazia

MULTIPLE award-winning rapper and performer Phyno has unveiled the title, track-list and release date of his forthcoming album, *Let That Sink In* (LTSI), which was done on Friday, October 30.

The 15-track project marks the Penthouse label chief's next major



album release following Full Time Job, which arrived in 2024. The new body of work is expected to showcase his continued blend of indigenous Igbo rap, hip-hop, highlife influences and contemporary African sounds.

Ahead of the album's release, the *No Guts No Glory* hitmaker has introduced listeners to several songs connected to the project, including *Na Afa Nna* (Freestyle), *Uzo Ano* featuring Flavour, *Healing* and *Beautiful*.

The releases offer a glimpse into different aspects of his artistry, from culturally rooted rap and introspective storytelling to melodic expressions of love and admiration. The latest single, *Beautiful*, presents a more affectionate side of the rapper, with lyrics delivered through his familiar interplay of Igbo, Nigerian Pidgin and English.

Burna Boy To Headline Rolling Loud India 2026 In Landmark Festival Debut

By Daniel Anazia

GRAMMYS winner and Afrobeats star, Burna Boy, has been announced as one of the headliners for *Rolling Loud India 2026*, marking his first scheduled performance in the country as the global hip-hop festival prepares for its second Indian edition.

He joins an international line-up of hip-hop heavyweights scheduled to perform at the two-day festival on December 12 and 13. With Burna Boy and American record producer Metro Boomin, and Big Sean headlining the opening day, alongside performers including GoldLink, Dhanda Nyoliwala and several emerging acts.

British rapper Skepta and Punjabi music star

Karan Aujla will lead the bill on the second day alongside ScHoolboy Q, Seedhe Maut, Wazir Patar and other performers, with Karan Aujla returning as a headliner for the second consecutive year, following his appearance at the festival's inaugural Indian edition last year.

The festival is being organised in partnership with the District, with the venue yet to be announced. Beyond its international star power, the festival is also positioning itself as a platform for India's expanding hip-hop community. Its 2026 line-up brings together performers associated with different regional languages and styles, reflecting the diversity of the country's rap culture.

Burna Boy's inclusion as headliner marks a significant milestone in his international touring career as he brings his music to a new audience in India. It adds an Afrobeats presence to a line-up dominated by interna-

tional hip-hop acts and artistes representing India's diverse rap scene.

For him the *Rolling Loud India 2026* booking represents another opportunity to take his music into a new market and connect with audiences who have largely encountered his work through streaming platforms and recordings.

The Africa Giant hitmaker has continued to expand Afrobeats' global reach, earning international recognition for projects such as *Twice as Tall*, which won the Grammy Award for Best Global Music Album in 2021.

He has built a global audience by blending Afrobeats with dancehall, reggae, hip-hop, and other musical influences. His international success has helped expand the visibility of Nigerian music, placing him among the African performers regularly featured on major global stages. He is the first African artiste to headline a UK stadium.

Fola's Chart Takeover Continues As *Four Songs* Dominate Streaming Scene

By Daniel Anazia

IN an era where the modern music economy is built on a rapid disposable single-drop cycle, sustaining a single hit is difficult; keeping multiple tracks locked on the charts simultaneously is a masterclass.

Singer-songwriter Fola is currently achieving just that. Across digital streaming platforms and radio airwaves, songs like *Miss U II* (Nriri), *Attention!*, *Waf*, and his high-profile collaboration *Treat U Right* alongside global pop royalty Ayra Starr are maintaining and unyielding simultaneous chart presence.

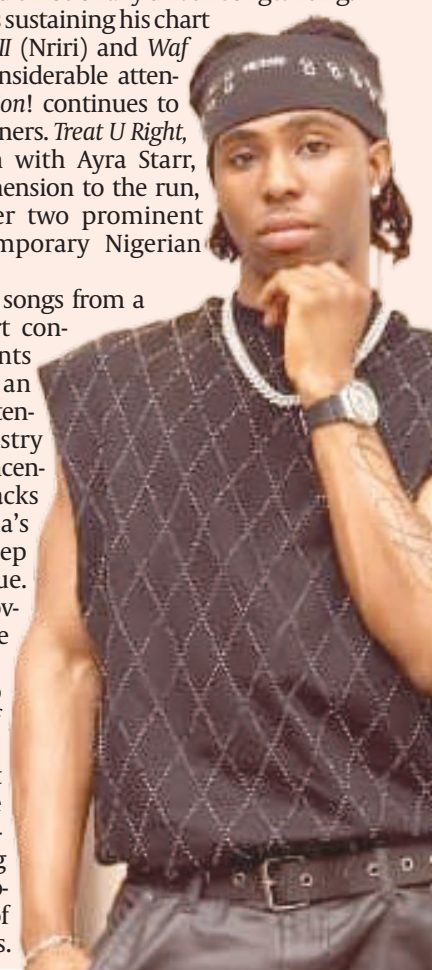
The development highlights sustained listener interest in the singer cum songwriter's growing catalogue and reinforces the momentum surrounding his latest releases. On Tuesday, October 20, the four songs occupied consecutive positions from fourth to seventh on the Apple Music Nigeria Top Songs chart, according to chart-tracking data.

The showing comes as the *Ginger Me* hitmaker continues to build on the success of his sophomore album, *9*, released this month. The 14-track project followed his debut album, *Catharsis*, and further showcased his blend of Afrobeats, R&B influences and emotionally driven songwriting.

Among the songs sustaining his chart presence, *Miss U II* (Nriri) and *Waf* have attracted considerable attention, while *Attention!* continues to connect with listeners. *Treat U Right*, his collaboration with Ayra Starr, adds another dimension to the run, bringing together two prominent voices in contemporary Nigerian music.

When multiple songs from a single artist chart concurrently, it points directly to an engaged, loyal listenership. For industry observers, this concentration of tracks proves that Fola's music holds deep retention value. Listeners are moving beyond passive single-track streaming to loop entire bodies of work.

The development also reflects the growing importance of streaming platforms in shaping the visibility of Nigerian artistes.



By Maria Diamond

THE president of the Hotel Owners and Managers Association of Lagos (HOMAL), Chief Samuel Olu Alabi has officially announced that the Federal High Court in Suit No: FHC/L/CS/906/2025 gave judgment in favour of HOMAL and granted all the reliefs sought by HOMAL in the non-cessation of harassment by the National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) towards its members, including invasion of many HOMAL members premises and closing of their businesses which were only reopened after payment of 2.5 million each to a company called "NIHOTOUR Training, Research and Consultancy".

The court ruling amongst others, states that the provision of the National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism Establishment Act 2022 bordering on or relating to standardisation, registration and certification of manpower requirements of the hospitality and tourism industry is illegal.

Recall that in June 11, 2025, a posse of policemen and NIHOTOUR staff, led by the Head, Inspection and Enforcement, Ibe Johnking Chinaza, imposed a lockdown on the operation of the Federal Palace Hotel & Casino, Victoria Island Lagos, disrupting activities in the hotel via acts of thuggery, harassment and bullying of staff of the hotel over illegal and unconstitutional certification, which eventually led to the brutalisation of one of the hotel's security guards.

"It took the court appropriate order to put a stop to the advance rampaging enforcement machinery of NIHOTOUR," Alabi noted during a press briefing with Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Journalists, and other stakeholders in the industry, at the Eko Hotel & Suites in Lagos during the week.

Why Was NIHOTOUR Created?

The National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) was created in 1987 consequent on a tripartite agreement executed between the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organisation and the Nigerian Government to provide vocational training in the Nigeria hospitality industry.

Nevertheless, for inexplicable reasons the two International Organisations later withdrew their participation in the activities of NIHOTOUR a few years after its creation.

From its creation and for many years thereafter, NIHOTOUR had no legal basis for its establishment. It was not until 2017 when tourism stakeholders were invited to the Federal House of Representatives to review a bill to set up NIHOTOUR.

At the public hearing, the stakeholders objected to many sections of the bill on the basis that the sections usurped the power of State Governments and functions of some other Federal Government agencies as provided by the 1999 Constitution as amended.

The NIHOTOUR ACT 2022

From 2017, nothing else was heard on the Bill, until an announcement regarding the enactment of the National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (Establishment) Act was made in the year 2022. Going through the Act, it was discovered that many sections that the stakeholders advised against were still retained in the Act.

Unconstitutional Powers

The HOMAL boss stated during the press briefing that "while some of the powers bestowed on NIHOTOUR are validly necessary for its operation as a training agency of Federal Government, nevertheless we considered all those aspects dealing with certification and registration of all employees, grading of personnel and quality of services rendered by hospitality, travel and tourism in Nigeria as invalid and ultra vires the constitution."

"Hence, in 2022, we drew the attention of those at the helm of affairs of NIHOTOUR then to avert plunging NIHOTOUR into a long drawn legal battle by refraining from those contentious and empire seeking sections."

Harassment of HOMAL members

On assumption of office of the current

HOMAL Wins Big Against NIHOTOUR's Registration Hurdles

- Agency Ordered To Refund Illegal Charges
- HOMAL Is Ready To Defend Any Appeal Action Thereafter – Alabi

Director General of NIHOTOUR Dr Abisoye Fagade in late 2024, he embarked on ambitious implementation of sections of the NIHOTOUR Act kept in abeyance by his predecessor in office.

According to Alabi, NIHOTOUR DG started by inviting Chief Executive of HOMAL to his office in Abuja with less than 48-hour notice and due to the late notices served, none of the members' representatives could attend the meeting. "This action was later followed by another letter issued in March, 2025 demanding the immediate registration of our members' Chief Executives and their Heads of Department.

"Based on proper legal advice, our association wrote a letter dated 10th March, 2026 to NIHOTOUR objecting to the demand made on our members' business and their principal officers. NIHOTOUR ignored this letter and reinforced their enforcement machinery with their DG visits to Nigerian Immigration Service and the then Deputy Inspector General of Police with a view to securing their assistance to compel our members' compliance," Alabi stated.

Emerging case

In view of non-cessation of harassment by NIHOTOUR, HOMAL had no option left than to file action at the Federal High Court in Suit No: FHC/L/CS/906/2025 in May, 2026 claiming many remedial reliefs.

Alabi revealed that notwithstanding this court action, NIHOTOUR continued its violent enforcement of the law. "Many of our members' premises were invaded and closed, their businesses were only re-opened after payment of 2.5 million to a company called "NIHOTOUR Training, Research and Consultancy. On one of their outings, a staff member was brutally injured. It took the court appropriate order to put a stop to the advance rampaging enforcement machinery of NIHOTOUR."

Alabi continued: "In parallel to the physical harassment, NIHOTOUR applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission to have the registration certificate of HOMAL obtained since 2018 withdrawn. According to NIHOTOUR, our association was being used to divert revenue meant for the Federal Government of Nigeria into our association purse. Similar letter was equally written to EFCC. We fought this withdrawal of certificate attempts by NIHOTOUR. They must have seen the futility behind their defense in the court and to de-register us to deprive us of legal representative capacity in court.

"Nevertheless, NIHOTOUR must have forgot-

ten that a group of people could come together and file a class action for and on behalf of others. We require no formal registration to do this," Alabi stated.

The HOMAL Boss also revealed that early this year 2026, in flagrant abuse of court process, six of HOMAL members were served with court papers in respect of another parallel case by NIHOTOUR against sixteen hotels in Abuja. "We are currently defending the interest of those members in court in Abuja and we trust that justice shall be ours soon."

The Judgment in Suit No: FHC/L/CS/906/2025

The court gave judgement in favour of HOMAL. It granted all the reliefs sought by HOMAL thus:

. That the provision of the National Institute For Hospitality And Tourism Establishment Act 2022 bordering on or relating to standardisation, registration and certification of manpower requirement of hospitality and tourism and to impose minimum manpower standards required to operate hospitality sector or to stipulate basic, intermediate and advanced skills required in the hospitality sector and tourism sector or to certify or register qualified personnel in the hospitality, hotels and tourism sector wholly situated and operating within Lagos State, is illegal, ultra vires and unconstitutional.

.That it is the Lagos State Hotels Licensing Authority law 2010 that regulates tourism within Lagos State.

.That NIHOTOUR lacks the constitutional power under the National Institute For Hospitality And Tourism Act 2022 to regulate and revoke the Operating License issued by the Lagos State Government by virtue of the Lagos State Hotels Licensing Authority law to the

claimants' members.

.That all regulations and enforcement done within the territory of Lagos State against the members of HOMAL by NIHOTOUR pursuant to the provisions of the National Institute For Hospitality And Tourism Act 2022 are unconstitutional, illegal, null and void.

.Mandatory Order is given for NIHOTOUR to refund all payments made by HOMAL members pursuant to its invasion and enforcement on its members.

.That a Perpetual Order of Injunction is given restraining NIHOTOUR and its agents from Forceful, arrest, detention, collection of money/fees and enforcement pursuant to the provision of the NIHOTOUR (Establishment Act, 2022).

.That the sum of N10,000,000.00 (Ten million naira only) is awarded against NIHOTOUR in favour of HOMAL.

Implication of the Judgment

Alabi said: "With this judgement, our members are protected from the physical and revenue onslaught of NIHOTOUR. We are not unmindful of the right of any of the defendants to file an appeal against the judgment given. Nevertheless, until the judgement is set aside by a higher court it defines our members' relationship with NIHOTOUR."

Necessary clarification

The HOMAL President stated that "it is pertinent to clarify that the issue at stake is not about upholding or improving the standard of our business.

"All our members are private individuals and corporations who have invested their hard earned resources in the development of the industry.

"Expectedly, they are always at the forefront of improving the physical and operating standards of their business. No one should fall for the exercise of development of manpower being used to cover the real intention of the government agency. How does one reconcile with the unconstitutional power given to the Federal Government Agency to regulate tourism establishments."

Alabi further said: "Our Association is ready to defend any appeal action taken, we assure our members to continue to run their business without fear of molestation from NIHOTOUR or any other Federal Government Agencies.

While some of the powers bestowed on NIHOTOUR are validly necessary for its operation as a training agency of Federal Government, nevertheless we considered all those aspects dealing with certification and registration of all employees, grading of personnel and quality of services rendered by hospitality, travel and tourism in Nigeria as invalid and ultra vires the constitution'.



From The Rector

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

YWCA Celebrates Anniversary, Renews Commitment To Women's Empowerment

By Chris Irekamba

THE Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Nigeria recently celebrated its 120th anniversary with a call for women to be committed to women's empowerment, leadership development and community service.

The theme, titled: "Empowering Women and Serving Our Communities," held at Archbishop Akinde Conference Centre, Bariga, Lagos brought together distinguished personalities, as well as members of the association to reflect on the organisation's rich history and its contributions to nation-building over the last 120 years.

Speaking at the event, the First Lady of Lagos State, Dr (Mrs) Ibi-joke Sanwo-Olu commended YWCA for its enduring legacy of impacting lives, promoting moral values and advancing the cause of women and girls across Nigeria.

She described the YWCA's journey as a testament to the power of faith-driven service and community development.

The First Lady, who was represented by Mrs Oyinda Ogunsanwo-Emmanuel said, "For 120 years, the YWCA has remained a beacon of hope, empowering women, nurturing young girls and strengthening communities, across our nation. As we celebrate this milestone, we must continue to build societies where women are equipped with the skills, opportunities and support needed to thrive and contribute meaningfully to national development."

Chairperson of the occasion, Justice Raliat Bukola Adebisi, praised generations of YWCA leaders for their dedication and sacrifice, describing the organisation as one of the most enduring platforms for women's advancement in Nigeria.

She said the association's commitment fostered leadership, education and social responsibility among women and had remained relevant in an ever-changing world.

Adebisi said: "The story of YWCA is the story of resilience, compassion and purposeful service. Its legacy reminds us that we have a responsibility to connect generations for sustainable development, by empowering women and girls to reach their full potential."

Delivering her keynote address, Professor Olugbemisola Mopelola moegun, charged women to embrace leadership opportunities and remain committed to service and community transformation.

She emphasised that empowering women goes beyond advocacy and must translate into practical actions that expand access to education, economic opportunities and mentorship for younger generations.

"Empowerment is not merely about occupying positions of influence; it is about creating pathways for others to rise. The next generation of women must inherit stronger institutions, greater opportunities and a culture of service that places humanity at its centre," moegun said.

The celebration also featured the presentation of "Awards of Impact" to distinguished women whose lives and contributions have positively influenced society.

Those honoured were Chief (Mrs) Olubisi Osinbajo, mother of former Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo; Ajasin's family in Ondo State, represented by Mrs Jumoke Anifowose alongside other eminent women recognised for their exceptional service, leadership and contributions to community development.

The National President of YWCA Nigeria, Mrs. Faith Jadu, urged members to preserve the association's enduring values and continue building on the foundation laid by its pioneers.

She described the celebration as a moment of gratitude, reflection and renewed commitment to the YWCA's mission.

Jadu said: "As we celebrate 120 years, we are not just looking back with gratitude; we are looking forward with responsibility. Nigeria needs what YWCA carries, women of integrity, women of skill, women of faith who will lead in the home, the church, the marketplace and in the nation."



National President, Mrs Faith Chem Jadu (centre) presenting an award to the Chair person of the event, Justice Bukola Adebisi, flanked by other dignitaries at the event



Dr Taiwo Akinola

Rhema Christian Church And Towers Begins World Convention 2026, 35th Anniversary Nov. 1

By Chris Irekamba

RHEMA Christian Church And Towers has announced its Rhema World Convention 2026, and 35th anniversary of the church scheduled to hold from November 1 to 8, 2026, at Champion Peace Cathedral, Sango-Ota, Ogun State.

The Presiding Bishop/Pastor-General of the church, Archbishop Taiwo Akinola, disclosed this last Tuesday

during the press conference held at Champion Peace Cathedral, Conference Hall in Sango-Ota.

Explaining the theme: "More Than Conquerors" taken from Romans 8:37, the Presiding Bishop said, "this is not merely a declaration of personal victory but a call to spiritual courage, responsible leadership, and decisive action in confronting national challenges..."

He sincerely thanked God for sustaining the ministry over the years as well as the privilege of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and raising men and women of His power, purity, and purpose.

He said the Convention would bring together believers, ministers, families, youths, senior citizens, and participants from diverse backgrounds for spiritual renewal, sound biblical teaching, fervent prayers, heartfelt worship, and life-transforming encounters with the supernatural power of God.

Calling on Christians to remain steadfast and hopeful, Akinola said believers could triumph through the unfailing grace and power of Jesus Christ. He quoted 2 Corinthians 2:14, which says, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ."

The men of God expected to minister during the programme, according to the Archbishop, include Bishop Tunde Akin-Akinsanya; Bishop Ayoola Olubusuyi; Bishop Israel Alaya; Bishop Adesina Olufade; Pastor Femi Gbenjo; Pastor Tofunmi Opalaye; Pastor Rotimi Daniel; Pastor Tunde Bolarinwa; Pastor Daniel Etebong Henshaw; and Pastor Samuel Olusakin, among others.

No One Goes To Heaven By Accident, You Must Prepare For It — Nwanegbo

The International Heaven and Fire Conference is a three-day conference hosted by Pastors Mike and Boma Nwanegbo. The event started on Thursday, October 29, and would end on Saturday, October 31, 2026. MIKE NWANEGBO is also the Regional Pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Europe Region 6, and President, Harvest of Nations Global. In this interview with CHRIS IREKAMBA, he shares his thoughts about the event and why it is important for both Christians and none Christians.

How important is this programme to Christians and none Christians?

THE heaven conference is the heartbeat of God. It is not the will of God that any one should perish but that all should come to the knowledge of God. This programme is to remind both Christians and none Christians that it is appointed unto man to die but once, after that judgment. It is either heaven or hell. Most people will prefer to go to heaven but the truth is that no one goes to heaven by accident, you must prepare for it. This conference is aimed at helping people to prepare for

heaven through Christ and through the knowledge of the word of God.

What informed you to start heaven and fire conference and for how long now?

I had a revelation where Jesus told me that Christians are so focused on this earth that they are no longer preparing for heaven. He pointed out that many come to him for earthly provisions and few come to him with the hope of spending eternity with him in heaven. He gave me 1 Corinthians 15:19, as my anchor scripture. "If only on this world, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." The confer-

• 'Heaven Conference Is The Heartbeat Of God'

ence started seven years ago.

What are the main objectives of this programme and its impact to participants and the nation at large?

Our main objective is to shift people's attention to heaven and help them prepare for eternal life through God's word. It is also to make people understand that Christianity is not focused on this world, but on eternity. Jesus came that we may have eternal life in him and through him. The impact has been significant by the grace of God. We have seen revival break out in several places after each programme.

Through this programme people had realised that they wasted all their time in church and not in Christ. They had wasted their time looking unto Jesus to provide their daily need and not looking unto him for eternal life, which is

more useful.

We have been to over 10 nations with this programme. We partner with Steve Crown, Gabriel Eziashi and Chidi David Ani as our music ministers as we go around the world.



Pastors Mike and Boma Nwanegbo (Hosts)

Fear God

Living Waters

By Pastor Lazarus Muoka

Founder/General Overseer
The Lord's Chosen Charismatic
Revival Ministries Worldwide

• For more messages and testimonies visit: www.tlccrm.org 08056889396



Text: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (KJV) "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

THERE is a word that our generation desperately needs to hear again and that is the word: Fear God. We live in a world where people fear men more than they fear God. Many are afraid of losing their jobs, their relationships, their possessions, or the approval of people, but they are not afraid of displeasing the One who created them and before whom they will one day stand.

The fear of God is not the same as being terrified of God. It is a deep reverence, honour, respect and awe for God that causes a person to take His Word seriously and desire to please Him. When a man truly fears God, he cannot live carelessly. The fear of God affects his decisions, his words, his relationships, his private life and his attitude toward sin.

Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." This means that genuine wisdom begins when a person recognises who God is and gives Him His rightful place in his life.

A person may be educated, intelligent, wealthy and influential, but if he does not fear God, he is missing the foundation of true wisdom. The fear of God teaches us to live with eternity in view.

The Bible tells us in Proverbs 14:27, "The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." What a powerful statement! The fear of God is not meant to destroy your joy; it is meant to preserve your life and keep you away from the traps that destroy the soul.

Many people fall into sin because they have lost the fear of God. Joseph had an opportunity to commit immorality secretly, but he refused because he feared God. When Potiphar's wife attempted to entice him, Joseph said in Genesis 39:9, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Lord, whatever You command, I will obey. Whatever You hate, I will avoid. Wherever You lead, I will follow. Whatever people say, I will remain faithful to You."

Notice his words: "sin against God." Joseph understood that sin is not merely breaking a rule; it is offending God. He knew that even if nobody else saw him, God saw him.

That is the true test of the fear of God: What do you do when nobody is watching?

You may hide your actions from people, but you cannot hide anything from God. Hebrews 4:13 declares, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

The fear of God brings integrity. Job is described

in Scripture as "a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (**Job 1:1**). Notice the connection between fearing God and avoiding evil. A person cannot genuinely claim to fear God while deliberately embracing the things God hates.

Psalms 97:10 says, "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil."

The fear of God produces hatred for sin. It makes holiness desirable and disobedience painful.

We need the fear of God in our homes. Parents need to teach their children that God is real, that His Word is true, and that life is accountable to Him. We need the fear of God in our churches, because church attendance alone does not make a person acceptable before God.

Jesus warned in Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

The fear of God will make us more concerned about obeying God than impressing people.

The fear of God produces righteous conduct toward others. One of the greatest reasons we must fear God is because judgment is coming. The world may speak as though everyone will eventually get away with everything, but the Bible says otherwise.

Paul declared in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things

done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

We will all give account. You may escape the judgment of men, but you cannot escape the judgment of God. You may convince people that you are right, but God knows the truth. You may hide your sins for years, but nothing is hidden from Him.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 says, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

This should cause every soul to examine his life.

What if today you were called to give an account before God? What would He find in your life? Would He find genuine faith? Would He find holiness? Would He find obedience? Would He find love? Would He find a heart that truly belongs to Him?

The fear of God also helps us overcome the fear of man. Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Many people compromise their convictions because they are afraid of what people will say. They know what is right, but they are afraid of rejection. They know they should stand for Christ, but they are afraid of being mocked. But when you fear God, the opinions of men lose their power over you.

The apostles demonstrated this courage when they were commanded not to preach in the name of Jesus. Their response was clear: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (**Acts 5:29**).

The fear of God gives a believer courage to stand. It is possible to have respect for people without allowing people to replace God in your life. Friends may leave you. People may misunderstand you. Some may laugh at your convictions. But if you stand with God, you are never standing alone.

Hebrews 3:15 says, "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

The fear of God should bring us to the cross. Christ came into this world to save sinners. He died for our sins and rose again. He is calling men and women to repentance, faith and obedience.

A life lived in the fear of God is a life lived with eternity in view. It is a life that says, "Lord, whatever You command, I will obey. Whatever You hate, I will avoid. Wherever You lead, I will follow. Whatever people say, I will remain faithful to You."

May God give us hearts that truly fear Him, lives that honour Him, and souls that are prepared to meet Him.

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

Multiple Miracles After An Encounter With The Lord's Chosen

MY name is Brother Anthony Chibueze. I encountered The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries in 2007 when I was afflicted with a leg poison called cancer of the leg (acha-ere in Igbo language). Then, one fateful day, as I was going to my shop, I met a Chosen pastor along the way and he offered me a Chosen handbill but I rejected it. He looked at my leg and saw that it was swollen, he enquired whether he should pray for me and I answered in the affirmative, then he prayed.

As at that time, my leg was as big as a log of wood. In fact, the experience was horrible, but after that prayer of the Chosen pastor, I slept at night and in the morning I woke up and found the leg deflected. Praise the Lord!

That miracle of healing made me to immediately join The Lord's Chosen and left my former Church where I was a treasurer. Another testimony is that I

have been urinating frequently for over 15 years. Sometimes I would urinate eight to ten times before daybreak.

The previous day, as the G.O was praying, he said, "those having frequent urination would only urinate once or not at all" and throughout last night I slept like a baby and only woke up this morning at about 4.00 a.m. to urinate. God of Chosen is so great. Praise the Lord!

Furthermore, yesterday, as the G.O was praying, he said that some people would receive alert, after the programme and I went home, lo and behold, I received an alert of N30,000 through my phone. Praise the Lord! I am here to return all glory, honour, thanksgiving and adoration to His holy name. Amen.

I pray for the G.O, his family and all the Chosen members worldwide, that God will grant us heaven at the end of our lives here on earth in Jesus name... amen.



Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, acknowledging cheers from members of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries, during Otti's arrival at the church's headquarters in Ilesha, Lagos... recently

BELIEVERS are expected to be exemplary in life, character and behaviour. However, no one can be an example to others in character, "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith [and] in purity" without beholding Christ, the Emancipator, who atones for our sins. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ, redirected the focus of the people to Jesus, saying He is the Saviour, the final Sacrifice and "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John the beloved, the inspired writer of the gospel according to St. John also presented Jesus Christ as the Lamb who is the sacrifice; the Light who shows us the mind of God; the Life who brings us out of death into life eternal (John 14:6); the Lord of the universe; the Liberator who came to set us free from sin, condemnation, shame and sickness; our Leader and Head of the Church; the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; and the Ladder that takes us from this earth to heaven.

Apostle John wrote these things about Jesus so that we might believe in Him. Trying to live a good, righteous life without conversion is as filthy rags in the sight of God. Jesus is our pattern and has given "us an example, that [we] should follow his steps." But before a sinner can follow His pattern of life, he/she must see Him as the Propitiator who can cleanse men from sin; and must turn away from the sinful life and follow Jesus, the Saviour. Only then will He impart His life of righteousness and faithfulness into them.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." In Genesis, the lamb that God provided for sacrifice

The Wonders Of Christ (1)

pointed to a time in the future when Christ will be sacrificed as a Lamb, for the salvation of the world. The Lamb is a Substitute. We should have died for our sins but He died in our place, as the Bible says, "All souls are mine... the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). But Christ came and took our place and God provided the propitiation, pardon and protection so that we will not die in our sin.

Christ is also our sin-Bearer (Isaiah 53:7; 1 Peter 1:18,19; Revelation 5:1-14). The blood of the lamb saved and protected the children of Israel from death in the land of Egypt. Likewise, when God sees the blood of Jesus on us, sickness, premature death, attacks, afflictions and eternal judgment will pass over us.

Our Redemption comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The Lamb is for the individual and any individual who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:21). The Lamb is for the family, as stated in Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The Lamb is also for the nation, as John 11:50 says, "It is expedient for us,

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor
W. F. Kumuyi



that one man should die... that the whole nation perish not." The Lamb is for the world, as John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Lamb is for the universe as noted in Revelation 5:1-14. This is the reason believers should reach out to every part of the world and remind them that the Lamb has been slain. To benefit from His sacrifice, sinners must look away from religion and self, and fix their gaze on Christ who has taken away their guilt, cleansed their heart from the pollutions of sin and set them free to live in righteousness.

• **Further Reading (KJV):** 1 Timothy 4:12; John 1:35,36,29; John 1:29; Isaiah 53:7; 1 Peter 1:18,19; Revelation 5:1-14; Acts 8:32-35; John 1:12; 2:11; 3:18,36; 4:42; 5:24; 6:69; 7:38; 8:24,31; 14:12; 1:29; 1 John 3:5-8; John 5:14; 8:11; Romans 6:6,18,22; John 1:29; 6:60,66-69.

Stop Talking And Listen (9)

Meditation on God's Word is a critical aspect of listening(cont)

"...and in His law he meditates day and night." (Ps 1:2)

THOSE seeking to live under God's blessing meditate on God's law (i.e., His Word) in order to know God by revelation and to shape their thinking, attitudes and actions. They read the words of Scripture, ponder them and compare them with other Scriptures. When meditating on a passage in the Bible, questions such as these cross their minds:

- Is God's Spirit applying this verse to my life and personal situation?
- Is there a promise here for me to claim?
- Is this passage revealing a particular sin I must strive to avoid?
- Is God issuing a command I must obey?
- Is my spirit in harmony with what the Holy Spirit is saying?
- Is the passage expressing a truth about God, salvation, sin, the world or my personal obedience on which I need to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit?

You can learn how to follow God by meditating on his Word. Meditating means spending time reading and thinking about what you

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus
Prof. Mercy Olumide



have read. It means asking yourself how you should change and live as God wants. Knowing and meditating on God's Word are the first steps toward applying it to your everyday life. If you want to follow God more closely, you must know what he says.

"When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches." (Ps 63:6) Along with prayer and reading God's Word, we should strive to centre our thoughts on God day and night. Remembering God must not be an occasional occurrence, but a repeated experience of looking unto heaven in praise, acknowledging His presence and Lordship, and communing with Him. Nothing would be better than that our first thought in the morning and our last thought at night be on His grace, character, love and plan for us. And when we find it impossible to sleep

during the night, we can again turn our minds and hearts to God.

A cure for sleepless nights is to turn our thoughts to God. There are many reasons we can't sleep. Some of them are illness, stress, and worry, but sleepless nights can be turned into quiet times of reflection and worship. Use them to review how God has guided and helped you.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us "13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15... Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you." (Jn 16:13-15)

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RESTORATION HOUR

Text: 2 Corinthians 6: 1-2

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)

GRACE is the ultimate hallmark of the Christian faith. It is the unmerited, undeserved favour of God towards broken humanity. Through the finished work of Jesus Christ, we are saved by grace through faith, not by our own works or merit. Yet, in 2 Corinthians 6:1, the Apostle Paul issues an urgent warning. He beseeches and implores us, not to receive this breathtaking gift in vain. The word, "vain" (kenos in Greek) means empty, fruitless, sterile, or coming to absolutely nothing.

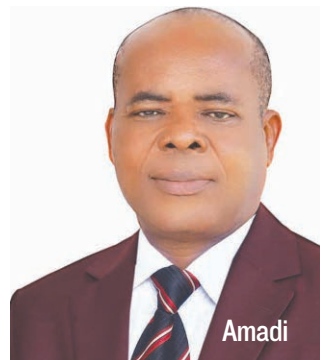
It is a tragic reality that a person can hear the gospel, experience the external blessings of the church, and yet allow the grace of God to result in complete futility in their life. To receive grace in vain is to treat the sacrifice of Calvary as a cheap commodity rather than a life-altering reality. It happens when we lay hold of the promise of forgiveness but refuse the power of transformation, choosing to remain comfortable in the very brokenness Christ died to redeem. True grace is never pas-

Maximising God's Grace (12)

sive; but active, dynamic force that demands a response.

The admonition of Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians Chapter 6 to "seek God now," "now is an acceptable time," and "do not let it come to nothing," all indicate a passing opportunity. The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins illustrates our need to make the most of this opportunity now (Matthew 25:6-13). This parable's major lesson is that both life and time are moving. Recall that 2 Corinthians is written to Christians. Paul's message is a call to strike while the iron is hot! The New Testament's instruction to Christians is, "Now is the time!" Everything is in readiness for success.

It is as though the *New Testament* writers are saying, "Don't be like the slave who refuses when presented with freedom, or the diseased person who rejects help when offered healing. God's door is open to us! Charge through it by cooperating with Him!" We as co-workers with Christ should take advantage of this time, with all zeal and concentration, all the powers at our command fulfill the kingdom as-



signment. We are not designed to be passive storage units of God's mercy, but meant to be conduits. God grants you the grace for an effective, soul-winning, life-transforming existence. When you use your spiritual gifts, stand as a witness for Christ, and work diligently to advance His kingdom, you are ensuring that His grace was not wasted on you. We are called to be faithful stewards of an infinite deposit, distributing the riches of His love into the ordinary spaces of our daily lives.

When we grasp the staggering cost of the mercy we have been given, we cannot help but pour ourselves out as a living sacrifice.

• **Today's Nugget:** Grace is not a cheap commodity. Prayer: Lord help me to be a faithful steward in the Kingdom. Prayer lines: 08033299824. Email: amadia-belukachi@gmail.com. Rev. (Dr) Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.



Pastor (Mrs) Folu Adeboye

RCCG Holds Kingdom Education Summit Nov.5

By Chris Irekamba

THE Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) will on Thursday, November 5, 2026, hold its Education Summit, themed: "Revisiting Kingdom Education: The Role Of Stakeholders," at the Church's International Headquarters, Redemption City, Mowe, Kilometre 46, Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

Disclosing this in a statement, the convener of the event, wife of the General Overseer and Mother-in-Israel, Pastor (Mrs) Folu Adeboye urged the participants to explore

the theme and areas of focus, which, according to her, include distinguishing secular humanism from a Biblical worldview and developing practical strategies in Biblical worldview and Apologetics, Transformational Teaching and Leadership, sustainable Funding for Christian Education, and Stakeholder Collaboration and Implementation.

The organisers said the programme would focus on the intellectual, spiritual and moral well-being of the child for a more

positive impact on the society, adding that it is a case of passing through the school and letting the school pass through the child.

The statement added that the Summit would bring together seasoned educators, educational administrators, senior pastors and other professionals to examine the role of stakeholders in the formal educational arm of the church.

It noted that the Kingdom Education had become imperative because of the myriad of challenges faced by today's school children.

"Most children struggle to process the multitude of information they are exposed to and thus unable to discern between good and evil. Kingdom education affords them a better understanding of whom they are, where they are coming from and their ultimate destination," Adeboye said.

The RCCG has about 350 primary and nursery schools in Nigeria and abroad, managed by the mission's formal educational agency, Christ the Redeemer's School Management (CRSM).

By Tim Akano

EVERY nation-state today is an orphan in an a la carte world. Nobody is coming to save you. Not Washington. Not Beijing. Not the United Nations. Not the solemn parchment of treaties or the polite applause of summit communiqués. The referee has left the pitch. The whistle hangs silent. The game continues—brutal, accelerating, and indifferent to those still waiting on ambulances for evacuation.

For Fourscores and one, the world lived under a fragile covenant: that international rules would restrain the strong, that alliances would shield the weak, and that institutions would punish aggression. The covenant was never pure. It was always a negotiation between power and principle. Yet the gap between the written rule and the will to enforce it has become a chasm no rhetoric can bridge.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, the United Nations rose with unusual clarity against the oppression of a weaker state. Sanctions, coalitions, and force followed. But when any of the permanent five—or those they protect—do the same, the UN catches a sudden cold. The machinery of collective security works best against the disposable. Against the powerful it stalls.

In March 2026, when Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas found itself held hostage by geography and resolve. Several American allies declined Washington's call for military assistance. The crisis did not invent a new truth; it merely stripped the old one of its last polite clothing. The world is not becoming lawless overnight. It is becoming selective in its enforcement—and the powerful have noticed. For any nation that intends to endure rather than merely exist, seven iron laws now stand before it like commandments carved into the stone of necessity.

LAW 1: Thou Shalt Not Outsource Thy Security

In 1994, Ukraine surrendered the nuclear weapons left on its soil in exchange for assurances. Russia, one of the signatories, returned first as slow encroachment and then as full-scale invasion. North Korea chose the opposite path. Its survival does not prove nuclear weapons are a guarantee; it proves that credible deterrence forces an adversary to calculate the price of ambition. Even the closest partnerships reveal their limits.

On 1 July, the United States declined to extend the USMCA, triggering annual reviews. Tariffs now strike steel, aluminium and automobiles from both neighbours. The 2025 decision to rename the Gulf of Mexico was symbolic theatre; the trade pressure is not. Talk of annexing Canada has faded, yet the economic leverage remains. Treaties between neighbours are not armour. The Quad—United States, India, Japan, Australia—and AUKUS have both shown strain. The Quad foreign ministers met in New Delhi in May, their first gathering in nearly a year; a leaders' summit has still not materialised. Analysts note that partners refused to be drawn into the Iran campaign or the Hormuz effort. An alliance is a force multiplier, never a substitute for national capability. Sovereignty that rests on the goodwill of others is overreliance on loan—and loans can be called in at the lender's convenience.

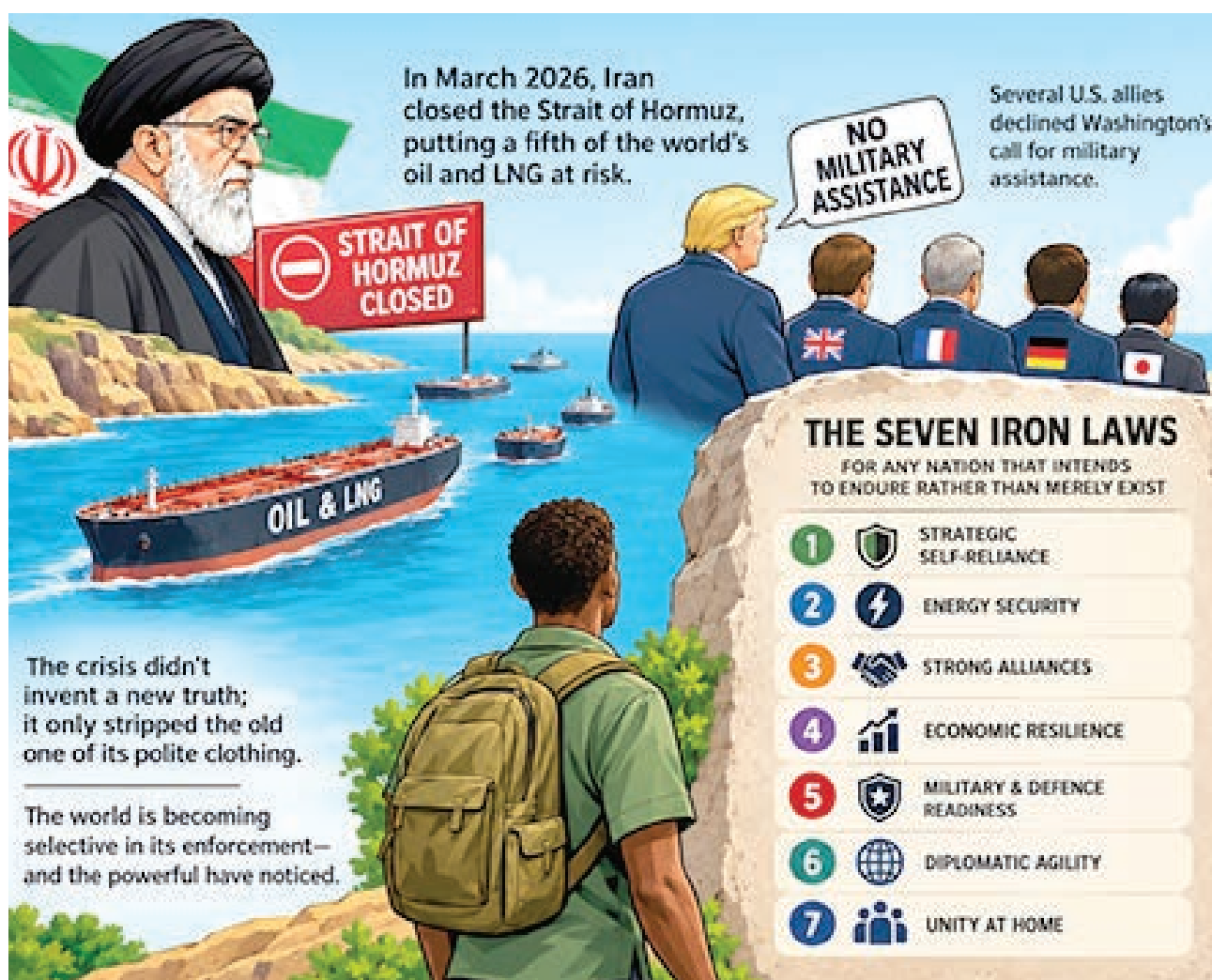
LAW 2: Thou Shalt Not Confuse Globalisation With Security

Globalisation creates wealth with the elegance of a well-tuned engine. Dependence without alternatives creates vulnerability with the suddenness of a power cut. A nation that imports its essential medicines, weapons, semiconductors, fertilisers and industrial machinery discovers, in crisis, that prosperity rests on someone else's permission. Russia's experience under sweeping sanctions revealed the quiet power of alternative buyers, suppliers and payment channels, even as the costs remained real. The recent tariff pressure across North America makes the same point in a different register: even partners with a free-trade agreement can weaponise interdependence. Trade with the world. Build the capacity to withstand the world's withdrawal. Every strategic dependency must possess an escape route, or it becomes a leash.

LAW 3: Thou Shalt Control Thy Critical Lifelines

Energy, food, water and communications are not merely economic commodities. They are the arteries of national survival. The Hormuz crisis showed how a narrow maritime passage can transmit military conflict into fuel prices, inflation and economic uncertainty across continents. A country that cannot power its industries, feed its people or maintain essential services during upheaval is sovereign in its flag yet vulnerable in its foundations. Renewable energy, resilient electricity grids, domestic food production, strategic storage and diversified transport routes are not luxuries of development. They are the sinews of autonomy. You cannot defend a nation whose lifelines you do not command.

LAW 4: Thou Shalt Distribute Power And Build Resilience When a leader falls, must a nation fall with him? When a headquarters is destroyed, must an entire system go blind? Resilient societies distribute responsibility, expertise and decision-making. Their institutions continue when individuals vanish. Their infrastructure recovers when one node fails. Centralisation can create efficiency; excessive centralisation creates a single point of catastrophic failure. Build institutions that outlive their founders, systems that survive their leaders, and networks that endure the loss of their



Nobody Is Coming To Save You

The Seven Iron Laws Of A World Without A Referee

centres. Resilience is the quiet architecture of endurance.

LAW 5: Thou Shalt Hold Thy House Together

A divided nation invites outsiders to turn its internal fractures into instruments of external power. Libya, Syria and Sudan stand as grim testimonies. Yet unity cannot be manufactured by fear, nor lasting cohesion bullied into existence. When citizens believe justice is selective, opportunity monopolised and their identities treated as threats, national loyalty becomes conditional. The strongest nations do not erase their differences. They construct institutions capable of managing them with fairness. Cohesion is built by justice, not imposed by force. A house that cannot hold itself together will eventually be held together by someone else—on their terms.

LAW 6: The Rulebook Binds Only As Strongly As It Can Be Enforced

The United Nations Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against another state's territorial integrity or political independence, subject to recognised exceptions. Yet the five permanent members possess the veto. When one of them is party to a conflict or protects an ally, enforcement becomes politically paralysed. NATO's Article 5 treats an armed attack on one member as an attack on all; Article 6 covers territory in Europe and North America, including Greenland. Scholars debate whether Article 5 covers an attack by another member. The treaty contains no expulsion or suspension clause.

The practical tools remain Article 4 consultations, each member's own judgment of "such action as it deems necessary," and the UN Charter itself. Even the strongest collective-defence pacts have blind spots. This does not render international law meaningless. It renders its application uneven. When the powerful can obstruct the referee, every nation must understand the precise limits of the whistle. Law without credible enforcement is aspiration, not armour.

LAW 7: Thou Shalt Compute, Or Be Commanded

In the twentieth century, steel, oil and uranium shaped the balance of power. In the twenty-first, chips, data, artificial intelligence, electricity and technical talent have joined that arsenal. During the 2026 Iran campaign, AI-assisted intelligence prioritised more than a thousand targets in the first twenty-four hours. Drone strikes damaged cloud facilities in the Gulf, disrupting services far beyond the battlefield. Computation had become both military advantage and vulnerable infrastructure. Countries that lack computing capacity, technological expertise and sovereign control over critical data risk becoming dependent on systems they cannot independently audit, maintain or replace. For Africa this is the defining opportunity—and the defining test—of our generation. We must train our talent, build reliable power, develop computing capacity, protect our data and create technologies that solve African problems. We must move

from importing intelligence to producing it. A continent that rents its intelligence risks renting its sovereignty.

Seven Laws. One Destiny

The old order asked: Who will protect you? The emerging order asks: What have you built that enables you to protect yourself? New alignments form in the vacuum. On 7 August, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye signed the Makkah Defence Agreement, later renamed the Makkah Defence Alliance. On 5 October, they agreed to rapid deployment of forces to Saudi Arabia. Qatar has been signalled as a possible joiner; Bangladesh has expressed interest.

The arrangement is not an "Islamic NATO," yet the de-Americanisation of the Gulf security has begun. Nuclear umbrellas are being shopped. Pakistan's defence minister said its capabilities "will be made available" to Saudi Arabia. France has offered extended deterrence to eight European allies—Germany, the United Kingdom, Poland and others—not to Ukraine, and the final decision remains with the French president. The trend is real: second umbrellas are in demand.

Africa stands outside every canopy, while other countries are rebalancing its alliances. The Pelindaba Treaty is a promise not to build nuclear weapons, not a promise of protection. Every umbrella has an owner. Africa's sky has none. Sovereignty is not secured by flags, speeches or signatures alone. It is forged through capable institutions, productive economies, reliable infrastructure, social cohesion, technological competence and partnerships entered from strength rather than need.

We cannot build our future on the assumption that the world owes us rescue. We cannot educate our children for an economy we do not intend to construct. We cannot celebrate political independence while surrendering our technological and economic future. Partnership is essential; isolation is foolish. But partnership without capability is simply dependence wearing a more elegant name. The referee left the pitch. The game did not stop. There are nations preparing for the new world, and nations still waiting for the old one to return. Africa must decide which it will be. Nobody is coming to save us.

Nations that fail to prepare for the world that is coming will be condemned to suffer the world that arrives. Our future depends on what we build today—with deliberate purpose, urgent resolve and clear eyes—before the next crisis turns our neglected responsibilities into irreversible consequences.

Tim Akano is Geopolitical Analyst, Public Intellectual and Technopreneur Founder, Out-of-School Children/Almajiri/Vulnerable Children-to-Tech Foundation, Tim Akano Foundation / Semiconductor Africa Initiative. He can be reached through: timakano1@gmail.com; www.timakano.com

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON NIGERIA'S LEADING AND RELIABLE DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE FIRMS CHAMPIONING PRIVACY, COMPLIANCE AND DIGITAL TRUST

The growing importance of data protection companies in safeguarding personal information, ensuring regulatory compliance, strengthening cybersecurity resilience, and promoting digital trust across both the public and private sectors cannot be overemphasized. As Nigeria's digital economy continues to expand, organizations increasingly depend on trusted data protection service providers to secure sensitive information, mitigate cyber risks, comply with the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA), and build confidence among customers, investors, and stakeholders.

Without doubt, data protection firms have become indispensable partners in today's technology driven environment. From data privacy consulting and compliance audits to cybersecurity solutions, governance frameworks, employee awareness programmes, and incident response services, these organizations are playing a strategic role in protecting Nigeria's digital infrastructure. Their

commitment to global best practices, innovation, regulatory compliance, and operational excellence continues to enhance business sustainability while fostering confidence in the country's rapidly advancing digital space.

In recognition of these remarkable contributions, The Guardian is spotlighting leading data protection compliance firms that have distinguished themselves through exceptional service delivery, innovation, professionalism, regulatory compliance, and an unwavering commitment to data privacy and information security.

Meet the organisations helping businesses and institutions protect valuable information, meet regulatory requirements, strengthen cybersecurity practices, and build greater confidence in Nigeria's growing digital economy.



OLUJOKE ALIU, SAN, Co-Managing Partner, Aluko & Oyebo, (Dispute Resolution)



ADEOLU IDOWU, Co-Managing Partner, Aluko & Oyebo (Head, Governance, Risk & Compliance; Head, Private Wealth)



SUMBO AKINTOLA, Partner, Aluko & Oyebo (Telecommunications, Media & Entertainment, and Technology)



IFEOMA PETERS, Managing Partner, DNL Partners and Lead Consultant in Data Protection and Regulatory Compliance



VICTOR ITA EKPENYONG, Team Lead, Floliz Nigeria Limited



OKEY OKUZU, Founder/Chief Executive Officer, InStrat Global Health Solutions Limited



TUNDE AWOPEGBA, Chief Technology Officer, Stransact Audit



CONFIDENCE AMUDA, Co-Founder/Managing Director, Privalex Advisory Limited



TOBILOBA ADEWUMI, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Cyberline Limited



ADEOLA ADEDIPE, SAN, Managing Partner, ALPHA & ROHI

ALPHA & ROHI: Bridging the Gap Between Data Privacy and Digital Trust

At a time when personal information has become a valuable business asset, ALPHA & ROHI is strengthening the connection between legal compliance, privacy rights and corporate accountability. Led by Adeola Adedipe, SAN, MCI Arb. (UK), Managing Partner, the full-service law firm helps organisations navigate data protection requirements while protecting the individuals whose information drives their operations. Through practical legal solutions, the firm seeks to make privacy protection an integral part of responsible business management.

ALPHA & ROHI established its data protection practice in response to the gap between privacy rights and the practical mechanisms required to uphold them in an increasingly digital economy. Businesses now depend on electronic transactions, cloud computing, customer databases and artificial intelligence. Although these technologies improve efficiency, they also expose organisations to unauthorised disclosure, cyberattacks, excessive data collection and regulatory penalties.

Nigeria's data protection framework, particularly the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 and the General Application and Implementation Directive 2025, requires organisations to pay closer attention to how they collect, process, store and share personal information. However, awareness does not always translate into compliance. Many businesses struggle to interpret regulatory requirements, establish lawful grounds for processing data and implement appropriate policies and technical safeguards.

These challenges affect organisations differently. Financial institutions, hospitals, educational institutions, technology companies and retailers handle different categories of information and face distinct risks. ALPHA & ROHI addresses these concerns as corporate governance responsibilities requiring clear accountability, effective procedures and cooperation between management, legal teams, employees and technology personnel.

The firm provides data protection compliance assessments, Data Privacy Impact Assessments (DPIAs), regulatory advisory, policy development, employee training and internal capacity building. As a Data Protection Compliance Organisation (DPCO), it also helps clients review and update their policies in line with applicable legal requirements.

What distinguishes ALPHA & ROHI is its client-specific approach. Rather than treating compliance as a standardised

exercise, the firm considers each organisation's business model, operational risks and legal obligations. Its dispute resolution experience also strengthens its ability to identify potential liabilities, anticipate legal complications and protect clients' business interests.

A significant milestone in the firm's data protection practice came through a keenly contested judicial review matter in which it represented Nigeria's data protection authority in proceedings involving a major social media company. The matter resulted in a consent judgment providing for changes to the company's privacy and cross-border data transfer practices, alongside a Data Privacy Impact Assessment for Nigerian data subjects.

The outcome demonstrated the importance of legal expertise in addressing privacy concerns involving international technology companies. It also reinforced the need for organisations to ensure that appropriate safeguards protect personal information

transferred across national borders.

Beyond regulatory compliance, ALPHA & ROHI identifies human error as a persistent threat to data security. Employees may expose confidential information through insecure communication channels, poor handling practices or failure to recognise phishing attempts. Limited public awareness of privacy rights also leaves some individuals unable to recognise or challenge inappropriate data processing.

Artificial intelligence presents additional concerns, including the disclosure of personal information through AI tools, excessive data collection, inaccurate outputs and unfair automated decisions. Uncertainty about how third-party platforms store, reuse or transfer information further complicates compliance.

To strengthen internal controls, ALPHA & ROHI advocates action across management, processes, technology and employees. Management must establish clear accountability and appropriate compliance arrangements, including appointing a Data Protection Officer where required by law. Organisations must also define legitimate processing purposes and comply with applicable data protection principles.

Technical measures should include appropriate access controls, network protection, authentication, encryption and pseudonymisation, particularly for sensitive information handled by banks and hospitals. Regular employee training is equally important in promoting responsible data handling and helping staff recognise security threats.

For Managing Partner Adedipe and his team, effective data protection requires continuous attention rather than occasional policy reviews prompted by regulatory pressure. Organisations must understand what information they collect, why they need it, who can access it and how they will protect it.

Over the next three to five years, ALPHA & ROHI aims to contribute to wider awareness and stronger compliance with the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023. Its ambition is to build a practice recognised for professional excellence, practical legal guidance and its contribution to responsible data management.

The firm's message to data-driven enterprises is that data protection represents an investment in responsible business conduct. By respecting privacy rights, strengthening internal controls and meeting legal obligations, organisations can protect individuals while building stronger relationships with customers, employees, partners and regulators.

Through its combination of legal expertise, dispute resolution experience and practical compliance support, ALPHA & ROHI continues to pursue its commitment to protecting personal information and strengthening digital trust in Nigeria.



ADEOLA ADEDIPE, SAN, MCI Arb. (UK), Managing Partner, ALPHA & ROHI



Aluko & Oyeboode: Advancing Data Protection, Legal Excellence and Digital Trust

In Nigeria's increasingly digital business environment, the protection of personal information has become a defining responsibility for organisations seeking to maintain public confidence, meet regulatory obligations and sustain commercial growth. Behind every digital transaction, customer record, employee database and business relationship lie an obligation to handle information responsibly. Meeting this obligation requires more than legal awareness. It demands sound corporate governance, effective risk management and a clear understanding of how technology intersects with the law. It is within this demanding environment that Aluko & Oyeboode continues to apply its legal expertise to data protection, regulatory compliance and the broader responsibilities of corporate accountability.

With Olujoke Aliu, SAN, and Adeolu Idowu as Co-Managing Partners, alongside Sumbo Akintola as Partner, the firm brings together complementary experience in dispute resolution, corporate governance, regulatory compliance and technology law. Their combined professional strengths reflect the multidisciplinary approach required to help businesses navigate Nigeria's data protection requirements while managing the commercial and operational risks associated with digital transformation.

Founded in 1993 by Bankole Olumide Aluko and Gbenga Oyeboode, Aluko & Oyeboode has developed into an established full-service commercial law firm, advising Nigerian and international clients across several industries. With offices in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt, the firm has built its practice around an understanding of Nigerian law, international commercial transactions and the regulatory considerations that shape business decisions. Its work in data privacy, data protection and cybersecurity reflect the growing importance of protecting information as organisations expand their digital operations.

The introduction of the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 strengthened the country's legal framework for protecting personal information and established clearer responsibilities for organisations that determine how personal data is processed. Businesses must now pay closer attention to the information they collect, the purposes for which they use it, the parties with whom they share it and the safeguards they maintain. For organisations operating across multiple sectors, these obligations can present complex legal and operational questions.

Aluko & Oyeboode approaches these challenges through its Data Privacy, Data Protection and Cyber Security practice, supported by its wider expertise in governance, risk and compliance. The firm advises organisations on applicable regulatory requirements, privacy obligations and the legal implications of handling personal information. Its approach recognises that data protection cannot be separated from employment practices, technology arrangements, commercial contracts and management accountability. As a licensed Data Protection Compliance Organisation, the firm is also positioned to support relevant compliance processes under Nigeria's data protection framework.

At the centre of this work is the need to translate legal obligations into practical measures that organisations can implement and sustain. A company may have privacy policies and cybersecurity systems in place, yet remain exposed if employees mishandle sensitive records, vendors operate without adequate contractual safeguards or management fails to enforce established procedures. Effective compliance therefore requires continuous assessment, appropriate controls and clear responsibility across the organisation.

Olujoke Aliu, SAN, Co-Managing Partner, brings extensive experience in litigation, arbitration and commercial disputes to the firm's leadership. Having joined Aluko & Oyeboode in 2003, she progressed through its ranks and became its first female litigation partner in 2015. She assumed the role of Co-Managing Partner in January 2023 and was conferred with the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria in October 2026.

Her professional experience covers commercial disputes involving financial institutions, multinational corporations, energy companies and technology

businesses. Her work has included employment matters, shareholder disputes, maritime operations, construction disputes and debt recovery. This breadth of experience provides valuable insight into the legal consequences that may arise when business relationships break down or organisations fail to meet their contractual and regulatory responsibilities.

Data protection failures can expose organisations to regulatory investigations, financial liabilities, reputational damage and litigation. Addressing these risks requires legal advisers who understand both the applicable law and the commercial circumstances in which disputes emerge. Aliu's experience in dispute resolution and commercial litigation complements the firm's wider regulatory practice, reinforcing the importance of anticipating risks and resolving legal challenges with sound professional judgement.

Adeolu Idowu, Co-Managing Partner, brings substantial experience in corporate governance, regulatory compliance and legal risk management. Her professional background includes senior in-house positions at MTN Nigeria, Schlumberger and Etisalat Nigeria, where she handled legal, corporate secretarial and compliance responsibilities. These roles provided direct experience of the demands associated with managing regulatory obligations within large organisations and across different jurisdictions.

At Aluko & Oyeboode, Idowu leads the Governance, Risk and Compliance and Private Wealth practices. Her areas of expertise include data protection, anti-money laundering, bribery and corruption, competition and consumer protection, regulatory compliance and investigations. Her experience enables her to approach compliance from both legal and operational perspectives, helping organisations understand their responsibilities and establish appropriate internal governance structures.

For Idowu, the connection between governance and compliance is particularly important because effective data protection depends on decisions made throughout an organisation. Management must establish clear policies, allocate responsibilities, provide employee training and ensure that compliance procedures reflect actual business practices. These measures help organisations move beyond formal documentation towards consistent accountability and responsible information management.

Sumbo Akintola, Partner, contributes specialised experience in the legal and regulatory issues affecting technology-driven businesses. She heads the firm's Telecommunications, Media, Entertainment and Technology practice, advising clients on matters involving data protection and privacy regulation, competition law, licences and permits, commercial collaborations, corporate restructuring, divestments and investments.

Her work is particularly relevant as businesses increasingly depend on digital platforms, cloud-based services and external technology providers. These arrangements raise important questions about who can access personal information, how

information should be protected, what responsibilities service providers must assume and how organisations can manage legal risks arising from technology partnerships.

Akintola's experience helps connect regulatory requirements with the commercial realities of digital business operations. For organisations operating across several jurisdictions, this understanding is valuable when addressing cross-border data transfers, contractual responsibilities and compliance requirements that may differ between markets. Her technology-focused practice complements the firm's broader legal capabilities, enabling clients to consider privacy obligations alongside their commercial and operational objectives.

Beyond its leadership, Aluko & Oyeboode's multidisciplinary structure provides a foundation for addressing the different legal issues that can emerge from a data protection concern. A security incident, for instance, may require an organisation to assess its regulatory reporting obligations, contractual exposure, relationships with affected customers and potential litigation risks. These matters often involve several areas of law and require coordinated professional advice.

The firm helps clients address such concerns through legal guidance on privacy obligations, contractual protections, governance arrangements and regulatory exposure. Practical measures include reviewing personal data collection procedures, maintaining appropriate records of processing activities, implementing access controls, training employees and assessing the compliance arrangements of external service providers. Organisations must also establish procedures for identifying and responding to security incidents, with clear responsibilities for escalation and remediation.

This approach is particularly important in Nigeria, where digital adoption continues to increase the volume of personal information handled by businesses. Financial institutions, telecommunications companies, healthcare providers and technology businesses must balance operational efficiency with their obligations to protect the people whose information they process. Strong data governance helps organisations reduce avoidable risks while maintaining confidence among customers, employees, investors and business partners.

Over more than three decades, Aluko & Oyeboode has developed a broad commercial legal practice serving clients across multiple industries. Its professional recognition includes rankings and acknowledgements from international legal directories such as Chambers Global, Legal 500 and IFLR1000. Its participation in the Africa Legal Network also supports its ability to assist clients with cross-border commercial interests and legal considerations.

As Nigeria's digital economy expands, the need for responsible information management will continue to influence corporate governance and business strategy. Organisations must recognise that compliance requires informed leadership, effective internal controls and a workforce that understands its responsibilities. The ability to protect personal information is increasingly connected to reputation, stakeholder confidence and sustainable commercial relationships.

Through the leadership of Olujoke Aliu, SAN, and Adeolu Idowu, alongside Sumbo Akintola's experience in technology and regulatory law, Aluko & Oyeboode brings together complementary strengths to address these demands. Its work reflects the importance of combining legal expertise with practical understanding of business operations, helping organisations manage regulatory responsibilities, strengthen accountability and protect sensitive information.

For businesses seeking to navigate Nigeria's data protection requirements, the firm's multidisciplinary approach offers a framework for addressing privacy as an integral part of corporate responsibility. By helping organisations understand their obligations and manage the risks associated with personal information, Aluko & Oyeboode continues to contribute to stronger compliance practices and the development of lasting digital trust.



OLUJOKE ALIU, SAN,
Co-Managing Partner,
Aluko & Oyeboode,
(Dispute Resolution)

ADEOLU IDOWU,
Co-Managing Partner,
Aluko & Oyeboode (Head, Governance,
Risk & Compliance; Head, Private Wealth)

SUMBO AKINTOLA,
Partner, Aluko & Oyeboode
(Telecommunications, Media &
Entertainment, and Technology)

IFEOMA PETERS: Strengthening Data Protection and Digital Trust in Nigeria

As Nigeria's digital economy expands, protecting personal information has become a critical responsibility for organisations across the public and private sectors. From financial transactions and healthcare records to employee information and online services, personal data now plays a central role in how institutions operate, make decisions and serve their customers. Yet, as the volume of information collected and processed continues to grow, so do the risks associated with its misuse, exposure and inadequate protection. Addressing these challenges requires more than an understanding of regulatory requirements. It demands sound legal knowledge, effective governance, practical risk management and a sustained commitment to building public trust.

For Ifeoma Peters, Managing Partner at DNL Partners and Lead Consultant in Data Protection and Regulatory Compliance, these responsibilities form the foundation of her professional practice. Through legal advisory services, compliance audits, policy development, training and institutional capacity-building, she works with organisations to strengthen their data protection practices and integrate privacy considerations into their operations.

At DNL Partners, Peters leads data protection audit and business development initiatives, helping organisations understand their obligations, identify weaknesses in existing systems and implement measures to address them. Her approach combines legal interpretation with practical solutions designed to fit the realities of different institutions. Rather than treating compliance as a collection of documents, she encourages organisations to establish processes that guide how personal information is collected, accessed, used, stored, shared and eventually disposed of.

Her professional contributions extend beyond individual organisations to initiatives that support the development of data protection policy and regulatory awareness in Nigeria. One of the notable examples is her involvement in the Edo State Digital Policy Project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. As part of the initiative, she contributed to the development of the Edo State Data Protection Regulation and the Intellectual Property Policy for Public Institutions.

The project addressed important questions about how public institutions should manage information, protect personal data and approach intellectual property within a more digitally connected administrative environment. Developing policies for public institutions requires an understanding of legal requirements as well as the practical circumstances in which government agencies collect, maintain and exchange information. Such frameworks must provide direction while supporting the effective delivery of public services.

Her engagement with regulatory education is equally significant. She developed a training script for the Nigeria Data Protection Commission's Virtual Privacy Academy, an initiative undertaken through a collaboration between Mastercard and the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC). The programme contributes to the wider effort to improve understanding of privacy principles and data protection responsibilities among relevant stakeholders. She has also served on the drafting committee for the Nigeria Data Protection Act General Application and Implementation Directive (NDPA-GAID). Her participation in this process places her among professionals who have contributed to the development of guidance intended to support the application and implementation of Nigeria's data protection framework.

Her advisory and training engagements have included the Edo State Government, Ogun State Government, the Nigerian Institute of Management and the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria, among other institutions. These engagements demonstrate the relevance of data protection across different professional and administrative settings. Government agencies, professional bodies and private organisations may handle different categories of information, but all require appropriate procedures for protecting personal data and maintaining accountability.

Peters' professional development has also been shaped by a combination of legal education and specialised training in information security and governance. She holds an LL.B from Lagos State University, obtained her Bachelor of Laws qualification at the Nigerian Law School, Lagos Campus, and earned an LL.M from the University of Lagos.

Recognising that effective data protection increasingly requires knowledge beyond traditional legal practice, she obtained the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 Lead Auditor qualification after completing relevant training and a skills-based examination. ISO/IEC 27001 provides a framework for establishing, implementing, maintaining and continually improving an information security management system. Knowledge of the standard helps professionals assess whether an organisation has appropriate processes for identifying and managing information security



IFEOMA PETERS,
Managing Partner, DNL Partners and Lead Consultant
in Data Protection and Regulatory Compliance

risks.

She has also completed The Definitive GRC Analyst Master Class at Simply Cyber School and an Introduction to Cybersecurity course through Cisco Networking Academy. These qualifications complement her legal background by strengthening her understanding of governance, risk management, information security and the controls that support responsible data handling.

Her professional affiliations include membership of the Nigerian Bar Association, the NBA Section on Business Law and the Digital Rights Lawyers Initiative. She also serves on the Advisory Board of the Data Privacy Lawyers Association of Nigeria (DPLAN). These connections provide opportunities to engage with legal and professional discussions on privacy, digital rights, business regulation and emerging compliance challenges.

At DNL Partners, Peters applies this combined expertise to a range of data protection services. These include compliance audits and regulatory filings, enterprise-wide privacy assessments, gap analysis and remediation, data mapping, policy and procedure development, privacy risk assessments and staff training. The objective is to help organisations understand the information they hold, the purposes for which they use it and the safeguards required throughout its lifecycle.

A typical engagement may begin with examining an organisation's records of processing activities, privacy notices, internal policies and contractual arrangements with third-party processors. The review may also consider whether the organisation has identified an appropriate lawful basis for processing personal information, established suitable retention periods and created procedures for responding to data subject requests.

Through this work, Peters and her team have conducted and filed more than 100 data protection compliance audits and delivered training to over 100 organisations. These engagements have provided experience across different sectors and organisational structures, where the nature of personal information, operational processes and exposure to risk can vary considerably.

For Peters, the most useful compliance framework is one that employees can follow in practice. Responsibilities should be clear, reporting channels accessible and management oversight consistent. When these elements are established, organisations are better positioned to detect weaknesses early, respond proportionately and demonstrate that privacy is part of everyday decision-making rather than an isolated legal exercise.

Among the persistent challenges Peters identifies are phishing, ransomware, unauthorised access, human error, weak internal controls and inadequate oversight of external service providers. These risks can be intensified by limited public awareness and careless disclosure of personal information on social media. In many cases, the problem is not solely a lack of technology but a failure to establish clear procedures and ensure that people understand how their actions can expose information to harm. Peters advocates a proactive approach built around understanding what data an organisation holds and who can access it. Appropriate access controls, strong authentication, secure information systems, employee awareness programmes and clear retention and disposal procedures can help reduce exposure. Organisations also need incident response plans that establish how suspected breaches should be reported, assessed, contained and addressed.

She also recognises the importance of effective regulatory oversight. The NDPC has a central role in promoting compliance and holding organisations accountable for their responsibilities. Transparent enforcement and clear communication can help organisations understand the consequences of failing to protect personal information, while encouraging the adoption of better practices across the wider economy. Publicly debated regulatory matters, including the NDPC's handling of its case involving Meta, illustrate the attention that data protection enforcement can attract and the importance of clarity, accountability and public confidence in regulatory processes.

For Peters, sustainable progress requires cooperation between regulators, organisations, legal practitioners, technology professionals and the public. Individuals need to understand their rights and exercise caution when sharing personal information, while organisations must take responsibility for the systems and decisions through which data is collected and processed. Regulators, in turn, need to provide guidance and apply the law in a manner that supports accountability and confidence in the data protection framework.

Looking ahead, Peters intends to deepen her expertise, expand her work across more sectors and support organisations with increasingly complex data operations over the next three to five years. Her priorities include enterprise-wide privacy assessments, compliance remediation, privacy governance, risk management, practical training and policy development. She also aims to help organisations respond to emerging regulatory requirements and the risks associated with artificial intelligence.

The growing use of AI presents important questions about how personal information is collected, analysed and used to produce automated outputs. Organisations adopting these technologies need to consider what data enters their systems, whether its use is appropriate, how access is controlled and what safeguards are required to address potential risks. These questions make it increasingly important for privacy, legal, governance and technology teams to work together from the early stages of planning and implementation.

DNL Partners' wider vision is to rank among the world's first-tier commercial and litigation law firms, guided by innovation, professional excellence and practical business solutions. Within this ambition, data protection and regulatory compliance represent areas where legal expertise can help organisations respond to changing expectations while strengthening their internal governance.

Ultimately, Peters sees data protection as both a legal responsibility and a foundation for trust. People are more likely to engage with organisations when they have confidence that their information will be handled responsibly. For businesses and public institutions, that confidence can support stronger relationships, more accountable operations and a more credible digital presence.

Her work continues to focus on helping organisations move from simply recognising their obligations to putting effective safeguards into practice. As Nigeria's digital economy develops, the ability to protect personal information will remain an important measure of institutional responsibility. Through legal advisory services, policy contributions, training and practical compliance support, Ifeoma Peters is working to make data protection a meaningful part of how organisations operate, govern themselves and earn the trust of the people they serve.



VICTOR ITA EKPENYONG: SAFEGUARDING THE DIGITAL FUTURE AND REDEFINING TRUST THROUGH FLOLIZ NIGERIA LIMITED

In an era when personal information has become one of the most valuable assets in the digital economy, protecting data is no longer merely a regulatory requirement; it is a defining test of institutional responsibility, cybersecurity readiness and public trust. At the forefront of this critical mission is Victor Ita Ekpennyong, a data protection consultant, cybersecurity expert and digital trust advocate whose professional work is helping organisations translate compliance obligations into practical safeguards for information and technology.

With over seven years of experience spanning data protection, regulatory compliance, cybersecurity and professional training, Ekpennyong has built a career around helping organisations identify vulnerabilities, strengthen information governance and embrace responsible data management. As Team Lead at Floliz Nigeria Limited, an award-winning Data Protection Compliance Organisation recognised by the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) as the Best Performing Data Protection Compliance Organisation in Nigeria, he is actively contributing to efforts to embed data protection into organisational culture, transforming it from a mere compliance obligation into a fundamental part of everyday operations, decision-making, and institutional accountability.

His experience cuts across financial institutions, government agencies, telecommunications companies, educational institutions and technology-driven enterprises. From nationwide data protection training initiatives involving MTN Nigeria to capacity-development programmes for National Youth Service Corps personnel and more than 850 staff and partners of the Nigeria Education Repository and Databank, his work reflects a commitment to building the knowledge and institutional capacity required to protect information in an increasingly interconnected world.

Beyond compliance audits, cybersecurity assessments and regulatory advisory, Ekpennyong champions a broader understanding of digital trust, one founded on accountability, technical preparedness, professional competence and respect for personal information. Through his work at Floliz and as host of the Digital Trust Podcast, he continues to advance conversations on data protection, emerging technologies, cybersecurity and the responsibilities that accompany digital transformation.

In this interview, he discusses the vision behind Floliz Nigeria Limited, the realities of implementing Nigeria's data protection framework, the cybersecurity threats confronting organisations, and the practical measures institutions can adopt to protect sensitive information. He also shares his perspective on the future of digital trust in Nigeria and Africa, making a compelling case for why organisations must look beyond regulatory compliance to embrace a culture of sustained accountability and security.... Excerpt.

Floliz has positioned itself within Nigeria's data protection and compliance space. What inspired its establishment, vision and mission?

Floliz was established to bridge the gap between regulatory expectations and practical implementation. As organisations embraced digital technologies, many lacked the expertise and structures to protect personal information effectively. Our vision is to become one of Africa's most trusted data protection and cybersecurity advisory organisations. Our mission is to help institutions protect information, manage digital risks, meet regulatory obligations and build lasting trust through advisory services, technical assessments and professional training.

What key data protection and compliance challenges does Floliz address?

The central challenge is the difference between compliance on paper and compliance in practice. Some organisations have privacy policies but inadequate procedures, incomplete processing records, weak third-party oversight or limited management involvement. The Nigeria Data



VICTOR ITA EKPENYONG,
Team Lead, Floliz Nigeria Limited



Protection Act, 2023, and General Application and Implementation Directive, 2025, provide a stronger framework, but effective implementation remains essential. We help organisations embed privacy into governance, daily operations, technology and employee practices.

What are Floliz's core services?

We offer data protection audits, regulatory filings, Data controller and processor registration, Data Privacy Impact Assessments, policy development and outsourced DPO support. Our cybersecurity services include Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing (VAPT), risk assessments and remediation guidance. We also provide governance and regulatory advisory, ISO management systems implementation and certification-readiness support, and professional training through NDPC-recognised programmes and our partnership with the Institute of Information Management (IIM) Africa.

What makes Floliz different from other compliance firms?

We combine regulatory knowledge, technical cybersecurity expertise and practical capacity development. Floliz was recognised by the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) as the Best Performing Data Protection Compliance Organisation in Nigeria. With over seven years of sector experience and more than 1000 compliance audits in our track record, we focus not simply on identifying gaps, but on helping clients correct them and sustain measurable

improvements.

What are the company's most significant achievements?

Our NDPC recognition is a defining milestone. We have conducted more than 1000 data protection compliance audits and delivered large-scale training for prominent institutions. These include nationwide data protection training for MTN Nigeria staff and partners, programmes for National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) personnel, and training for over 850 staff and partners of the Nigeria Education Repository and Databank (NERD). These engagements demonstrate our ability to deliver practical solutions at scale.

What common compliance gaps do you encounter, and how do you address them?

Recurring gaps include inadequate privacy notices, incomplete processing records, weak retention controls, missing DPIAs, insufficiently supported DPOs and poor breach-response arrangements. Some organisations mistakenly consider registration or annual filings sufficient. We assess existing controls, identify risks, develop prioritised remediation plans and support implementation, monitoring and staff training. Compliance must be a continuous organisational responsibility.

What are the biggest threats to personal data in Nigeria?

Major threats include phishing and social engineering, ransomware, vulnerable web applications, insecure databases, cloud misconfigurations, insider mistakes and third-party weaknesses. Artificial intelligence can also make impersonation more convincing and introduce new privacy risks. Often, preventable governance and security failures are as damaging as sophisticated attacks. Organisations need proactive assessments, prompt remediation, access controls, monitoring and incident preparedness.

How can organisations strengthen data protection and cybersecurity?

Leadership must treat privacy and cybersecurity as enterprise-wide responsibilities, not simply IT matters. Organisations should understand the data they hold, restrict access, oversee vendors and apply appropriate retention controls. Regular VAPT, multifactor authentication, patching, security monitoring and tested incident-response plans are essential. Equally important are role-specific training and management accountability. Effective protection depends on leadership, people, processes and technology working together.

What are Floliz's priorities over the next three to five years?

We aim to expand professional training, deepen cybersecurity and digital risk capabilities, strengthen our work on AI and emerging technology governance, and explore technology-enabled compliance solutions. We will also grow our international management systems advisory services and pursue strategic partnerships across Africa. Our goal is to become a recognised African centre of excellence in data protection, cybersecurity and professional capacity development.

What message do you have for existing and prospective clients?

Trust is earned through accountability and demonstrated protection of information. We thank our existing clients for their confidence and remain committed to responsive, high-quality service. To prospective clients, our promise is practical expertise, measurable results and continuous support, not compliance documentation alone. Data protection and cybersecurity are investments in resilience, reputation and sustainable growth. *At Floliz, compliance is not the ultimate destination. Trust is.*

OKEY OKUZU: Driving Healthcare Innovation Through Technology and Strategic Leadership

Okey Okuzu is an accomplished healthcare visionary whose career reflects a commitment to using technology, strategic thinking and innovation to improve healthcare delivery, particularly in underserved markets and communities. Through his work in digital health, international pharmaceutical strategy and financial services, he has championed practical solutions to some of the persistent challenges confronting healthcare systems. From deploying electronic health records across thousands of primary health facilities to advancing mobile learning, disease surveillance and health insurance technology, Okuzu has consistently focused on translating technological possibilities into solutions that address real healthcare needs.

His approach to healthcare innovation recognises that improving access to quality medical services requires more than the availability of skilled professionals and medical facilities. It also depends on reliable information systems, effective disease monitoring, continuous professional development and efficient administrative processes. In many underserved communities, gaps in these areas can affect the quality, accessibility and coordination of healthcare services. Okuzu has devoted much of his professional career to exploring how digital technology can help bridge these gaps and strengthen the systems that support healthcare delivery.

In 2010, he founded InStrat Global Health Solutions to advance global health innovation by identifying and deploying technology-based solutions in underserved markets. The establishment of the organisation marked a defining point in his career, bringing together his experience in business strategy, financial services and healthcare to address practical challenges through innovation. His vision was to promote technologies that could be implemented within existing health systems and adapted to the needs of the communities they serve.

Since its establishment, InStrat Global Health Solutions has advanced mobile health innovation in Africa through the commercialisation of several technology platforms. These include the first large-scale deployment of facility-based electronic health records across thousands of primary health facilities, an early-warning disease surveillance and notification system, a mobile learning application used to train more than 30,000 health professionals, a homegrown health insurance management system designed to comply with Nigeria's Contributory Health Insurance Laws, and a smart, multi-disease mobile screening application used for surveillance of tuberculosis, HIV, asthma, pneumonia and other conditions.

The large-scale deployment of electronic health records across primary health facilities represents an important contribution to the digitisation of healthcare services. Reliable patient information is central to effective medical practice, enabling healthcare professionals to document clinical encounters, access relevant records and support continuity of care. Electronic records can also strengthen the organisation of health information, improve documentation and provide a more structured basis for administrative planning.

At the primary healthcare level, these capabilities are particularly important because such facilities serve as the first point of contact for many patients. However, limited resources and fragmented record-keeping can make it difficult to maintain consistent patient information. By advancing the deployment of facility-based electronic health records across thousands of primary health facilities, Okuzu has helped demonstrate how digital platforms can support healthcare operations at the level where many essential services are delivered.

His work also extends to disease surveillance, an area in which timely information can make a significant difference to public health preparedness and response. Through an early-warning disease surveillance and notification system, he has supported the application of technology to the monitoring and communication of potential health threats. Effective surveillance systems help relevant institutions receive information, monitor emerging concerns and coordinate responses to public health risks. Such capabilities are particularly valuable where timely notification is necessary to protect communities and limit the spread of disease.

Another notable aspect of his healthcare innovation efforts is the development of a mobile learning application that has been used to train more than 30,000 health professionals. Continuous professional development remains essential in healthcare, where medical knowledge, clinical practices and

treatment approaches continue to advance. Yet, geographical barriers, limited resources and demanding work schedules can restrict access to conventional training programmes, particularly for healthcare workers serving remote and underserved communities.

Mobile learning offers a practical means of extending training opportunities through digital platforms. By enabling healthcare professionals to access learning materials through mobile technology, such applications can support more flexible professional development and help widen access to relevant information. The use of Okuzu's platform to train more than 30,000 health professionals demonstrates the potential of digital learning to reach a substantial audience and support the development of healthcare capacity.

His work in health technology also recognises that effective healthcare delivery depends on efficient financing and administrative systems. In this regard, he advanced the development of a fully homegrown health insurance management system designed to comply with Nigeria's Contributory Health Insurance Laws. The platform reflects the importance of developing solutions that respond to the country's legal and operational requirements rather than relying exclusively on systems designed for different environments.

Health insurance administration involves several interconnected processes, including enrolment, records management, claims processing and coordination among relevant stakeholders. When these processes are poorly organised, they can create administrative difficulties and affect the smooth operation of insurance schemes. Digital management systems can help structure these activities, improve information handling and support more organised administration.

The development of a locally designed system tailored to Nigeria's contributory health insurance framework highlights the role of homegrown innovation in addressing national healthcare priorities. As efforts continue to expand access to affordable medical services, effective health insurance administration remains important to the functioning of healthcare financing arrangements. Okuzu's work in this area illustrates how technology can support the administrative structures that underpin access to healthcare.

He has also advanced a smart, multi-disease mobile screening application designed for surveillance of tuberculosis, HIV, asthma, pneumonia and other conditions. These diseases present different clinical and public health challenges, making effective screening and surveillance important to their management. A mobile application that supports multiple screening activities can provide a structured means of collecting relevant information and assisting healthcare workers in monitoring health conditions.

When appropriately integrated into healthcare processes, mobile screening tools can support the identification of potential health concerns and contribute to the collection of information required for public health planning. The use of a multi-disease platform also demonstrates the potential of adaptable technology to support several healthcare priorities within a common digital framework.

Although Okuzu is now closely associated with

healthcare technology, his professional journey includes substantial experience in investment banking and financial services. He built an extensive career in these sectors across Africa, working with organisations such as JPMorgan Chase Capital Markets on privatisations, debt and equity offerings, and project-structuring advice for major corporations across the continent.

These assignments exposed him to complex financial transactions, corporate decision-making and the strategic considerations involved in structuring business opportunities. Investment banking requires analytical ability, commercial judgement and an understanding of how organisations mobilise resources to achieve their objectives. This experience provided a strong foundation for his subsequent work in corporate strategy and technology-driven healthcare innovation.

At Ecobank Transnational, Okuzu conceived, founded and led Eco Securities Ltd., Ecobank Nigeria's investment banking subsidiary. The achievement demonstrated his ability to develop a business concept and establish a specialised operation within a larger financial institution. It also reflected his experience in leadership, business development and the organisation of financial services.

His career subsequently expanded into the international pharmaceutical industry, where he spent approximately ten years in leadership roles at Pfizer Inc.'s global headquarters in New York. During this period, he developed business strategy for the company's lead division, gaining experience in the strategic demands of a major multinational pharmaceutical organisation.

He later served as Strategy and Innovation Lead at Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, where he identified opportunities to innovate strategic managed-markets business models. The role required an understanding of healthcare markets and the commercial considerations that influence how pharmaceutical products are positioned and made available. His responsibilities strengthened his exposure to strategic innovation and the development of business models within a complex healthcare environment.

His experience at Pfizer and Novartis complemented his earlier work in financial services, giving him exposure to different aspects of organisational leadership, commercial strategy and innovation. These experiences also provided useful context for his decision to establish InStrat Global Health Solutions, where the application of technology to healthcare requires both an understanding of health needs and the ability to develop workable approaches to implementation.

As healthcare systems increasingly explore emerging technologies, Okuzu is now leading the responsible development and application of artificial intelligence to address longstanding and emerging health challenges. AI offers opportunities to support the analysis of health information, strengthen decision-making processes and improve the delivery of services. Its application in healthcare, however, requires careful attention to data quality, privacy, security, accountability and the limitations of automated systems.

Responsible AI development must also consider the circumstances of the communities and institutions expected to use these technologies. For underserved markets, effective solutions must respond to local healthcare priorities, account for available infrastructure and support the work of healthcare professionals. The objective is to ensure that technological advancement translates into practical improvements rather than introducing systems that are difficult to implement or sustain.

Okuzu's experience across digital health, pharmaceutical strategy and financial services provides a multidisciplinary perspective on these challenges. His work reflects the importance of connecting technological development with institutional needs, responsible implementation and the practical realities of healthcare delivery. As AI becomes an increasingly important part of healthcare innovation, these considerations will remain central to developing solutions that can serve patients, professionals and health systems effectively.

His academic background has also contributed to his professional development. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and a Master of Business Administration in finance and strategy from Columbia Business School in New York. His education provided a foundation in economic analysis, financial management and strategic decision-making, disciplines that complement his experience in investment banking, multinational pharmaceutical organisations and health technology entrepreneurship.

From his early career in African financial services to leadership positions at international pharmaceutical companies and the establishment of InStrat Global Health Solutions, Okuzu has built a professional record that connects business strategy with technological innovation. His work in electronic health records, disease surveillance, mobile learning, health insurance administration and multi-disease screening reflects a sustained interest in developing practical solutions for healthcare systems.

OKEY OKUZU, Founder/Chief Executive Officer, InStrat Global Health Solutions Limited



INSTRAT GLOBAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Tunde Awopegba: Strengthening Data Security and Regulatory Compliance in Nigeria Through Stransact Audit

Tunde Awopegba, Chief Technology Officer at Stransact, is a seasoned technology leader with over 14 years of experience in enterprise systems, cybersecurity and digital infrastructure. He leads the development of secure, scalable technology solutions that support business operations and regulatory compliance. He holds academic qualifications in Information Science Management and Computer Science and is a member of CPN and NCS. He previously served as Mozilla Country Representative for Nigeria.

In this interview, following Stransact Audit's recognition by The Guardian as one of the Leading and Reliable Data Protection Compliance Organisations Championing Privacy, Compliance and Digital Trust, Awopegba discusses the firm's vision, its approach to data protection and regulatory compliance, emerging cybersecurity challenges and the importance of building lasting digital trust. Excerpt....

Stransact Audit has positioned itself within Nigeria's data protection and compliance space. Please tell us about the company's vision, mission and the circumstances that led to its establishment.

At Stransact Audit, our vision is simple: to help organisations build trust through strong governance, compliance and responsible business practices.

The firm was established because we saw businesses facing increasingly complex regulatory requirements and digital risks, often without the practical support needed to navigate them. As technology became more integrated into everyday business, data became one of organisations' most valuable assets, but also one of their greatest responsibilities.

We recognised the need for a firm that could bridge the gap between regulatory obligations and business realities. Today, that remains at the heart of what we do: helping organisations protect what matters most while achieving their strategic objectives.

What specific data protection, privacy and compliance challenges in the Nigerian business environment is Stransact Audit primarily focused on addressing?

One of the biggest challenges we see is that many organisations genuinely want to comply with regulations but often struggle to translate requirements into practical actions.

We frequently encounter gaps in data governance, employee awareness, third-party risk management and overall accountability for personal data. Many organisations are also trying to balance innovation and digital transformation with increasing regulatory expectations.

Our focus is helping businesses embed privacy and compliance into their everyday operations so that they are not merely complying with regulations, but also strengthening trust with customers, employees and other stakeholders.

What are the core services offered by your establishment, and how do these services help organisations protect personal data while meeting their regulatory obligations?

Our services include data protection compliance audits, privacy assessments, outsourced Data Protection Officer services, policy development, compliance advisory, employee training and broader governance, risk and compliance consulting.

What makes these services valuable is that they are designed around people and practical realities. We help organisations understand where their risks are, implement appropriate safeguards and create sustainable systems that protect personal information.

Ultimately, our goal is to help organisations meet their compliance obligations while building confidence among customers, employees, investors and regulators.

What makes Stransact Audit different from other data protection and compliance consulting firms in Nigeria?

I believe our strength lies in the fact that we bring together expertise in audit, risk management,

governance and regulatory compliance.

More importantly, we approach every engagement as a partnership. We take time to understand our clients' businesses, their challenges and their goals. Compliance is not just about policies and documentation; it is about helping organisations operate more effectively and responsibly.

Our clients appreciate that we provide practical solutions that work in the real world, not just theoretical recommendations.

What would you identify as some of the company's most significant milestones and achievements since its establishment?

One achievement I am particularly proud of is the trust we have built with our clients over the years.

We have supported organisations across multiple sectors in strengthening their compliance frameworks, improving governance standards and better protecting personal information. We have also contributed to increasing awareness of privacy and accountability through training, advisory engagements and thought leadership initiatives. For us, every organisation that becomes more compliant, more secure and more trusted because of our support is a significant achievement.

What are the most common data protection compliance gaps you encounter among Nigerian organisations, and how does Stransact Audit help clients close these gaps?

The most common gaps include limited employee awareness, weak data governance structures, outdated policies, lack of data inventory, poor documentation practices and inadequate oversight of third-party processors.

What we have learned over the years is that compliance challenges are rarely caused by bad intentions. More often, organisations are simply overwhelmed by competing priorities or unsure where to start.

Our role is to simplify the process, identify areas of risk and work closely with management teams to



implement practical solutions that are both effective and sustainable.

From your experience working with organisations, what are the major threats currently putting personal data at risk in Nigeria?

Cyberattacks remain a major concern, but the reality is that human factors continue to account for many privacy incidents.

Whether it is phishing attacks, poor password practices, unauthorised access or simple mistakes, people remain both the

strongest and weakest link in data protection.

This is why organisations need to invest not only in technology but also in awareness, training and a culture of accountability. Protecting data is ultimately about protecting people, and that responsibility extends across every level of an organisation.

How can organisations strengthen their internal controls, employee practices and cybersecurity measures to reduce the risk of data breaches?

The first step is recognising that data protection is everyone's responsibility, not just that of the IT department.

Organisations should establish clear governance structures, regularly train employees, conduct risk assessments and implement appropriate security controls. Leaders must also set the tone from the top by demonstrating that privacy and security are business priorities.

I often say that technology can provide strong defences, but it is people and culture that determine whether those defences hold up over time.

What are Stransact Audit's major strategic priorities for the next three to five years?

Our focus is on deepening our expertise in data protection, cybersecurity, governance and regulatory compliance while continuing to deliver exceptional value to our clients.

We also intend to play a more active role in shaping conversations around privacy, digital trust and responsible data management in Nigeria. As the regulatory and technological landscapes continue to evolve, organisations will need trusted advisors more than ever, and we are committed to being one of those trusted partners.

What message would you like to send to existing and prospective clients about Stransact Audit's commitment to helping organisations protect personal information, achieve compliance and build lasting digital trust?

My message is straightforward: compliance should never be viewed as a burden. When approached correctly, it becomes a powerful enabler of trust, resilience and sustainable growth.

Every organisation holds information that belongs to real people: customers, employees, investors and partners who expect it to be handled responsibly. Protecting that trust is not merely a legal obligation; it is a business imperative.

At Stransact Audit, we remain committed to helping organisations navigate an increasingly complex environment with confidence. We are passionate about helping our clients do the right things, the right way, while building businesses that people can trust for the long term.

"In today's digital economy, trust is earned through accountability. Organisations that protect data, respect privacy and embrace good governance will always be better positioned to succeed. Our role is to help them achieve exactly that." – Tunde Awopegba

TUNDE AWOPEGBA,
Chief Technology Officer,
Stransact Audit

PRIVALEX ADVISORY: BUILDING DIGITAL TRUST BEYOND THE COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

From regulatory collaboration to boardroom implementation, a multidisciplinary Lagos-London team is helping organisations embed privacy, cybersecurity and responsible AI.

A privacy notice may explain what a business promise. The harder question is whether it can demonstrate where personal data goes, who can access it, and what happens when something goes wrong. As Nigeria's data protection framework matures, PrivaLex Advisory is working to close that gap. Established in 2024, PrivaLex is a specialist data protection, cybersecurity and technology-governance consultancy operating from Lagos and London. Licensed by the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) as a Data Protection Compliance Organisation (NDPC/DPCO/12767), it brings together Nigerian-qualified lawyers, international privacy practitioners, audit professionals, cybersecurity specialists and trainers to translate regulation into working business controls.

A SEAT AT THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

PrivaLex's contribution extends beyond client engagements. The firm is one of only two professional firms partnering with the NDPC on Important Privacy Action Trends (IMPACT), an initiative advancing discussion of privacy rights, accountability and emerging regulatory risks. Co-Founder and Managing Director Confidence Amuda has contributed to IMPACT discussions on Compliance Audit Returns and demonstrating accountability.

FROM RULES TO WORKING SYSTEMS

PrivaLex's teams map how information moves through an organisation, identify risks, design proportionate safeguards and embed the procedures and reporting that make compliance work. Its services cover statutory audits and filings, privacy governance, outsourced Data Protection Officer support, cross-border transfers, breach preparedness, cybersecurity assurance and AI governance.

Its experience spans financial services, healthcare, education, technology, cybersecurity and professional services. Clients receive practical tools, from data inventories and risk registers to staff training and board-ready reporting, rather than policies without clear ownership.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PRACTICE

PrivaLex operates through a partnered team with distinct legal, audit, technical security and training capabilities. Its Lagos professionals lead client fieldwork, implementation, NDPC filings and regulatory engagement. Its UK-based practitioners bring expertise in UK and EU GDPR requirements, international transfers and the

expectations of overseas partners. Working together, the teams support clients from initial assessment through sustained governance, without relying on any single adviser.

CONFIDENCE AMUDA | CO-FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR

Amuda is a lawyer and privacy governance specialist who co-founded PrivaLex to make rigorous privacy advice practical for business. He brings a decade of professional experience across the United Kingdom, Europe and Africa, advising boards, executives and legal teams on data protection, information governance and technology risk. His work spans hundreds of risk assessments and internal and external audits, including data protection impact assessments, vendor due diligence and compliance reviews. He has served as an appointed DPO for regulated organisations.

A Barrister at Law with an LLM from Robert Gordon University, he holds the FIP, CIPP/E, CIPM, CDPO and ISO/IEC 27001 Lead Implementer credentials. He guides the firm's direction alongside colleagues who lead its specialist audit, security, training and regulatory workstreams.

"Every organisation that holds personal data is asking people to trust it. Compliance is how you keep that promise, and it only works when it is built into how the business runs." — Confidence Amuda

DEVELOPING THE PROFESSION

Through PrivaLex Academy, the firm is strengthening Nigeria's privacy workforce. Its structured programmes have trained more than 100 practitioners; together with masterclasses, continuing legal education and wider awareness initiatives, including work with the Nigerian Bar Association's Institute of Continuing Legal Education, its programmes have reached nearly 2,000 participants. PrivaLex is accredited by the Institute of Information Management to train Certified Data Protection Officer candidates, is a UK registered training provider, a PECB Authorised Training Partner and is an NBA-ICLE-accredited continuing professional development provider.

The Academy also advances responsible AI practice, including risk assessment, human oversight and governance aligned with ISO/IEC 42001.

For PrivaLex, the future of data protection is not merely satisfying regulatory obligations. It is building the systems, professional skills and institutional accountability that let organisations operate responsibly, innovate with confidence and earn lasting trust across Nigeria's digital economy.

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Co-Founder/ Managing Director,
PrivaLex Advisory Limited

 **PrivaLex Advisory**
...Compliance Redefined, Privacy Secured

Tobiloba Adewumi: Driving Excellence in Data Protection and Cyber security Through Cyberline Limited

Cyberline Limited is a licensed Data Protection Compliance Organisation (DPCO) providing data protection, privacy, cybersecurity and regulatory compliance services to organisations across Nigeria and other African markets. Founded by Tobiloba Adewumi, a certified data protection and privacy professional; Barrister Rotimi Abimbola, a legal practitioner with over 28 years of post-call experience; and Alex Oduwole, a businessman and finance expert with business interests in Nigeria and the United Kingdom, the company helps organisations navigate regulatory obligations and emerging digital risks.

Under the leadership of Tobiloba Adewumi, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Cyberline adopts an implementation-driven approach, helping businesses translate regulatory requirements into practical and sustainable compliance programmes. Its services include Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) compliance audits and registration, GDPR and Kenya Data Protection Act compliance, outsourced Data Protection Officer services, privacy training, cybersecurity assessments, Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing (VAPT), and network, application and cloud security assessments.

Adewumi has extensive experience supporting organisations across financial services, technology, telecommunications, manufacturing and other sectors. His engagements include Keystone Bank, Unified Payments, A.G. Leventis, DCSL Corporate Services, Mutual Benefits Group, Paralex Bank and Sparkle Microfinance Bank. His work covers enterprise-wide privacy assessments, regulatory filings, compliance remediation, governance frameworks and employee

training. He also facilitated a three-month, bank-wide cyber security and data protection training programme for Keystone Bank and has delivered Data Protection Officer and Data Champion capacity-building programmes. He holds a GDPR certification from PECB.

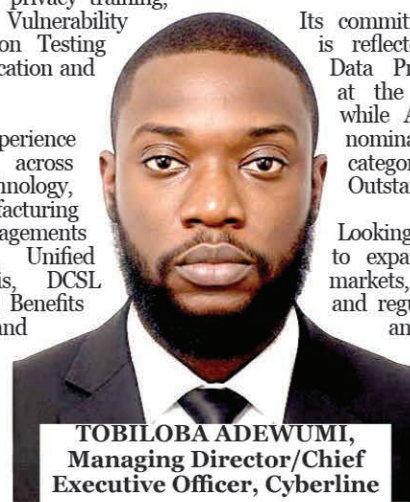


Cyberline addresses common compliance weaknesses, including incomplete data processing records, outdated privacy policies, inadequate vendor oversight, limited employee awareness and weak internal controls. Its approach integrates people, processes and technology, helping organisations strengthen accountability, manage privacy risks and embed compliance into everyday operations rather than treating it as a documentation exercise.

The company's cybersecurity services also address threats such as phishing, ransomware, social engineering, unauthorised access and insecure applications. Through security assessments, employee awareness programmes, access controls and incident response planning, Cyberline helps clients improve their ability to prevent, detect and manage data breaches.

Its commitment to privacy excellence is reflected in its nomination for Data Privacy Team of the Year at the PICCASO Awards Africa, while Adewumi has also received nominations in individual award categories, including Most Outstanding DPO.

Looking ahead, Cyberline plans to expand into additional African markets, strengthen its cybersecurity and regulatory advisory capabilities, and develop technology-enabled compliance solutions. It also supports organisations seeking to enter or serve European markets through GDPR compliance and cross-border privacy guidance.



TOBILOBA ADEWUMI,
Managing Director/Chief
Executive Officer, Cyberline

www.guardian.ng

NEWS

Solar Power Offers Up To 90% Savings On Fuel, Grid Electricity Costs – Akejelu

By Gbenga Salau

THE National Sales Director of Dyque Energy, Samson Akejelu, has said that an investment in solar energy has the potential to save individuals and businesses about 80 to 90 per cent of the cost often spent on fuel and national grid consumption.

He stated this at the Nigeria Energy 2026 forum where Dyque Energy had an exhibition booth where it showcased to participants how solar can change the dynamics around energy spending for homes and businesses.

According to him, with a solar system installed, it

technically makes the system the primary source of energy, while the secondary source of energy becomes the diesel generator or national grid.

He said this is what Dyque Energy does for its clients.

"If you look around the ecosystem right now, it seems like the energy business is more like it. And then you find multiple other products from inverters, batteries and other solar products. Apart from the quality of our products, we don't joke with our after-service. We have about 467 customer service centres across Nigeria. And our response time when there's a problem is within 24 hours," he said.

He added that all their products are Artificial Intelligence (AI) monitored. "What sets us apart is the 10 years warranty for our products. And five years of the 10 years is a replacement warranty. That, I think, is a good way for us to pride ourselves to say we are the best in the industry," he said.

Also, the Country Manager, Dyque Energy, Jackie Kangfei Lu, said that the company has more than 20 years experience in the Nigerian market as it belongs to the Transition Group. He added that his company's energy offerings are an energy requirement that is a necessary solution for Nigeria locals.

UI Inaugurates New VC On Monday

THE new Vice Chancellor of University of Ibadan, Prof. Peter Olamakinde Olapegba, would be inaugurated on Monday, November 2.

The event is scheduled for the University's Trenchard Hall where Emeritus Prof. Akin Akande will preside.

The Inauguration Lecture titled 'The African University In A New World Order, The Imperative Of Knowledge Sovereignty And Relevance'

will be delivered by Prof. Akin Ogundiran of Northwestern University, Everyton, Illinois, USA.

Olapegba was until his appointment the University Deputy Vice Chancellor, Administration.

One of his numerous research works has led to the development of culturally relevant and globally accepted scales to measure constructs in social psychology, contributing to both theoret-

ical foundations and practical applications.

He has published extensively, with over 130 scholarly works, including books, chapters in books, monographs, journal articles, and creative pieces. His work has addressed critical issues such as HIV/AIDS, sexual behaviour, domestic violence and quality of life, providing models for behavioural change and attitudinal improvement.

Telesurgery In Nigeria: We Said It Could Be Done, Now Comes The Harder Part

By Obi Davies-Ekwenna

A follow-up to “Telesurgery in Nigeria: Ready or Not?”, published on Page 18 of The Guardian of July 7, 2025.

IN July last year, I told readers of this newspaper about a girl named Amina. She was seven, from Zamfara, and her grandmother had carried her for days across Nigeria in search of a surgeon. I invented Amina. I did not invent the distance. In our country, where you live still determines, far too often, whether a surgeon can reach you in time.

I asked readers to imagine a surgeon in Lagos operating on a patient hundreds of kilometres away through a robot. The real question was never whether the machine could do it, but whether Nigeria could assemble the skills, institutions and discipline required to do it safely. Sixteen months later, I can tell you that it has been done. I can also tell you that doing it was the easy part. Too often, new medical technologies are proven and perfected in wealthy countries before reaching Africa twenty years later, second-hand and already outdated. Our patients pay for that delay with their lives. We do not have to accept it. We can participate while the technology is still being developed, train our people and help write the rules. Telesurgery is the test of whether we mean it.

On September 19, 2026, I sat at a robotic console at Redeemer’s Health Village in Mowe, Ogun State. About 500 kilometres away, at Nisa Premier Hospital in Abuja, a patient with a kidney tumour lay on the operating table. For parts of that operation, my hands moved the instruments inside the patient from Mowe. At the bedside in Abuja were Dr Wesley Ekeruo, a seasoned robotic surgeon based in the United States, and DrLemuchNabasu, consultant urologist, who led the Nisa team alongside an experienced anaesthesia team. They remained responsible for the patient throughout and could have taken over at any moment. The operation lasted about three hours, with a satellite link carrying the signal and a mobile network available as backup. Early reports indicate that the patient is doing well.

Those facts matter, but one successful operation does not establish that a technology is safe, superior or affordable. We owe the patient proper follow-up and honest answers. Did the technology make the operation safer? Did it spare the patient a journey or reduce the cost of treatment? Would conventional care have achieved the same result? These are questions for patients, not press releases. The operation was described as a first for Nigeria and West Africa, but the robot was the least remarkable thing in the room. What made the milestone possible was months of preparation: selecting the right patient, training the local team, repeatedly testing the connection, defining responsibilities and planning for failure. RoboMed Global, Redeemer’s Health

Village and Nisa Premier Hospital had to work as one.

On October 21, 23 and 24, our teams performed additional robotic operations, including a prostatectomy and a pyeloplasty, using three different forms of remote assistance. The distinctions are important. Telesurgery means the distant surgeon controls the instruments; teleproctoring means a remote expert watches and guides the surgeon operating at the bedside; while telementoring involves teaching the surgeon over time until the necessary skills become theirs. One operation may involve more than one approach, but advice from afar must never be presented as control from afar. I will hold my own team to that rule publicly. Our goal is not to perform more operations from a distance, but to make the surgeon at the bedside so capable that remote assistance becomes a choice, not a crutch.

On October 25, DrVipul Patel performed a robotic prostatectomy between two hospitals in Florida, about 35 miles apart, with DrMarcioMoschovas and a trained team at the bedside. ABC News reported the development, and I congratulate them on the achievement. Nigeria’s operation took place on September 19, five weeks before the Florida procedure. We have a saying at home: Naija no carry last. This time, we did not. But this is not a race or a boast. The significance is that, for once, a Nigerian team and an American team stood on the same frontier in the same season rather than twenty years apart. The Florida procedure was conducted under a research permit from the American regulator, which allows investigation but does not amount to approval for routine use. American researchers are still measuring outcomes, network failures, cybersecurity and emergency responses. Nigeria must demonstrate the same seriousness, adapting international safety and training standards to our hospitals, networks and patients.

If Nigeria learns one lesson from these developments, it should be that telesurgery is not something you simply buy. A robot does not operate; a team does. The bedside surgeon, anaesthetist, nurses, engineers responsible for the machine and spe-

cialists maintaining the connection are not assistants to a distant star surgeon. They are the reason that surgeon can begin. We must therefore systematically document complications, readmissions, dropped connections, delays, emergency handovers, local team performance, patient experiences, journeys avoided and the full cost of treatment. These records should be independently assessed and monitored long after discharge. Failures must be reported as carefully as successes. A field that races to declare firsts risks losing public trust; one that honestly measures its mistakes will earn it.

On October 22, we opened the RoboMed Academy at Redeemer’s Health Village in partnership with the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria and Redeemer’s University. The Minister of Education, DrTunjiAlausa, announced that qualified professionals would receive support through TETFund’s local scholarship programme. This commitment should be judged by funded training places, demonstrated competence and graduates capable of teaching the next generation. Africa cannot build its surgical future on visiting experts, foreign maintenance contracts and fellowships available only to those who can afford to travel abroad. Surgeons need simulation and supervised practice, theatre nurses require specialised training, and engineers must be equipped to maintain and repair the machines locally. The greatest product of remote technology should ultimately be the Nigerian team that no longer needs it.

Nigeria needs a common regulatory framework for telesurgery covering professional qualifications, informed patient consent, equipment and network checks, data protection, emergency procedures and accountability when things go wrong. These rules should be developed collectively by government, regulators, professional colleges, hospitals and patients, rather than handed down by any single company or institution, mine included. Every centre adopting the technology should document its operations, publish outcomes and costs, and submit its performance to independent assessment. Training academies should report the performance of their graduates, while hospitals should be transparent about who pays and who benefits.

Equally important, we must continue asking whether the resources committed to telesurgery might deliver greater health benefits if invested in basic surgical services where they are absent. Telesurgery cannot replace safe anaesthesia, blood supplies, electricity, sterile instruments or a surgeon at the bedside.

•Obi Davies-Ekwenna, MD, FACS, is Professor of Urology and Transplantation; Founding Partner, President and CEO of RoboMed Global; and an internationally recognised robotic and transplant surgeon. His work focuses on surgical education, equitable access and strengthening surgical capacity in low-income and underserved settings. He leads RoboMed Global, a developer of robotic surgical programmes, telesurgery initiatives and surgical training in Africa.



Obi Davies

How Indiscipline Boosts Poverty Among Nigerians

By Sunkanmi Ajiboye

NIGERIA is a country blessed with all the resources needed to make her prosperous. From abundant mineral resources and fertile soil to favourable weather conditions and a large pool of human resources, Nigeria has enormous potential.

Yet, despite these advantages, poverty is still widespread. One major factor that deserves serious attention is indiscipline—not only among citizens but also within public institutions and systems of governance.

Even a government with good intentions will find it difficult to achieve sustainable results where indiscipline is deeply entrenched in society. Development requires citizens who respect laws, pay their taxes, protect public property, reject corruption, and understand that the common good must sometimes take precedence over personal interest.

Government recognised the importance of national orientation decades ago when it set up the Mass Mobilization for Social Justice, Self-Reliance, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), with Professor Jerry Gana as its Director-General. Many Nigerians will remember the Professor’s energetic mobilisation campaigns and the memorable message: “Whatever you want to do, do it well.”

That message was simple, but it carried a profound national-development philosophy: excellence, responsibility and commitment should become part of our everyday culture.

MAMSER eventually gave way to the National Orientation Agency (NOA). The question, however, is how effectively national orientation has continued to influence the behaviour of Nigerians. Are we still deliberately building a culture of discipline, patriotism, responsibility, and respect for the law? Or have we gradually allowed the message of civic responsibility to become less prominent in our national life?

Consider the recent argument by Dr. Donald Duke that petrol could potentially be sold at about 300 per litre. Whether that price is economically achievable would depend on several factors, including crude oil prices, refining costs, exchange rates, transportation, taxation, and government policy.

But the broader point is worth examining. Even where government succeeds in reducing the cost of petroleum products, the benefits can be undermined if our systems are poorly regulated and our borders, markets and distribution channels are exploited in ways that encourage diversion and arbitrage. Nigeria’s domestic supply must serve Nigerians, while legitimate region-

al trade should be managed in a way that does not undermine domestic availability. This brings us to the difficult subject of corruption.

A considerable proportion of Nigerians understand that corruption contributes significantly to poverty and underdevelopment. Yet corruption does not exist only because some people steal public resources. It survives because there are often people willing to offer bribes, people willing to receive them, people willing to look the other way, and systems that make it possible for wrongdoing to continue without adequate consequences.

Therefore, the fight against corruption cannot be left entirely to government.

What can we, as citizens, do differently? We must begin to rebuild a culture in which honesty, discipline and responsibility are valued—not merely preached. We must teach our children that examination malpractice is wrong even when it offers an advantage. We must discourage bribery even when it provides a shortcut. We must stop celebrating people simply because they have gotten wealth without asking how that wealth was acquired. We must respect queues, traffic regulations, public property, contractual obligations, and the rights of other citizens.

Most importantly, the rule of law must

become part of our public culture.

Laws must not exist merely on paper. Government must demonstrate the political will to enforce them fairly and consistently. Institutions responsible for preventing and prosecuting crime must be strengthened, while citizens must understand that the consequences of wrongdoing are real and apply regardless of status.

Government has a major responsibility, but citizens also have one. If we genuinely want a prosperous Nigeria, we must move beyond asking only:

“What can government do for me?”

We must also ask:

“What can I do to make Nigeria better?”

Our resources can give us opportunities, but discipline, integrity, productivity, and responsible citizenship are what can turn those opportunities into national prosperity. Nigeria does not lack resources. We must begin to confront the behaviours, systems and institutional weaknesses that prevent those resources from delivering their full value to the people. Perhaps the time has come for another serious national conversation on orientation, discipline, and civic responsibility. A word is enough for the wise.

•Ajiboye is FRPA and can be reached through Sunkanmi4@gmail.com

Verve Rewards First Batch Of Goodlife Promo Winners

By Sulaimon Salau

VERVE, a payment card and token brand, has rewarded the first batch of winners in its ongoing Verve National Consumers Promo. At the prize presentation ceremony in Lagos, five customers received N1 million each, while other winners received gift vouchers for their loyalty and patronage. Speaking at the event, Divisional Head, Growth Marketing (Tokens & Inclusion), Verve International, ChidiOluoha, said the Verve Goodlife Promo was designed to appreciate customers for their continued trust and loyalty.

Firm Positions Vendor Ecosystem To Support Safe, Efficient Operations

By Sulaimon Salau

FIRST Exploration and Petroleum Development Company Limited (FIRST E&P) has said it is positioning its vendor ecosystem to support safe and efficient operations, contribute to Nigeria's production and energy security priorities, and create long-term economic value. This was disclosed at its 2026 Vendors' Day in Lagos, bringing together its leadership, business teams, vendors and service providers to strengthen the partnerships and capabilities required to support safe, efficient and sustainable growth. Held under the theme, "Partnering for Sustainable Growth: Driving Innovation, Value and Energy Security Together."

inDrive Launches Tricycle Service To Expand Affordable Mobility Options

By Eno Bassey

AGLOBAL mobility and delivery services platform, inDrive, has launched its tricycle service, Keke, in Nigeria, expanding its fair-price model to three-wheelers and offering commuters a more affordable option for shorter trips. The new service is a response to the growing demand for accessible and safe transportation, particularly among commuters travelling shorter distances. Designed for trips within an estimated six-seven kilometre radius, the keke option offers a lower-cost alternative for completing shorter journeys. In line with existing restrictions on tricycle operations along certain major roads and highways, the service will focus primarily on shorter-distance trips. It provides passengers with an additional mobility option that combines affordability, convenience, and safety.

‘Collective Action, Purposeful Partnerships Key To Delivering Lasting Sustainability Outcomes’

By Sulaimon Salau

AS the drive towards making the environment better continues to gain momentum, it has been said that collective action and purposeful partnerships are key in delivering lasting sustainability outcomes. This was one of the submissions at the inaugural Africa Sustainability Forum 2026. Participants at the forum, that included leading businesses and industry stakeholders recommitment to sustainability, pledging to reduce waste, use resources responsibly, support green innovation, create jobs and promote inclusive economic growth. The pledge was part of the resolutions reached at the forum, held in Lagos, under

the theme “Sustainable Futures: Driving Just Transitions, Green Growth and Shared Prosperity.” The forum, which was convened by TheNumbersNG.com, brought together business leaders, policymakers, sustainability professionals and other stakeholders to explore practical ways of advancing Africa's sustainable development. In a goodwill message, the Sustainability Manager at Nestlé Nigeria Plc, Chinwe Obi, emphasised the importance of collective action and purposeful partnerships in delivering lasting sustainability outcomes. “At Nestlé Nigeria, we believe that sustainability requires collective action,

purposeful partnerships and a shared commitment to creating long-term value for people, communities and the planet,” she said. Obi commended the Africa Sustainability Forum for providing a platform that brings together diverse voices to advance meaningful dialogue and practical solutions for Africa's sustainable development. The Managing Editor, TheNumbersNG.com and Lead Coordinator, Africa Sustainability Forum (ASF), Elvis Eromosele, noted that the emphasis on collaboration reflects the growing recognition that Africa's sustainability ambitions require coordinated efforts by businesses, government institutions, investors,

development partners and communities. From waste management and recycling to clean energy, responsible manufacturing and inclusive employment, the transition to a greener economy presents both urgent challenges and opportunities for innovation and growth. “For businesses, this means integrating sustainability into their operations and value chains while identifying ways to reduce environmental impact, conserve resources and create shared value. For policymakers and other stakeholders, it calls for enabling policies, effective partnerships and investments that make sustainable choices more accessible and economically viable.



Director, FBS Reinsurance Limited, WoleOshin (left); Chairman, BalaZakariyau; Head of Lagos Control Office, National Insurance Commission (NAICOM), Dr Julius Odidi; Director, FBS Re, Fola Daniel; Managing Director/CEO, Ganiyu Musa; and Executive Director, Business Development and Technical Operations, Shola Ajibadeat the insurance industry leaders forum in Lagos.

Author Offers Essential Financial Literacy To Nigerians Abroad

By Sulaimon Salau

CERTIFIED Financial Counsellor, Daniel Adeyinka has released a free Reader's Edition of his book How Money Works in Canada: A Newcomer's Guide to Banking, Credit, and Building Your Life with Confidence. It gives newcomers, and the organisations that support them, a chance to read the full first chapter before deciding on the book. The book, published by

Babanlar Press, explains banking, credit and debt in Canada in plain language, for people planning a move, those who have just arrived, and anyone still finding their feet. Drawing on his personal experience of relocating across Nigeria, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada within five years, Adeyinka combines lived experience with professional expertise in mortgages, life insurance, and financial

counselling. The book offers an empathetic, plain-language roadmap designed to turn financial confusion into confidence. The Reader's edition opens with a story many newcomers will recognise. Adeyinka walked into a mall in Winnipeg to buy a SIM card. He was surprised by the price, then asked for a soft credit check and his Social Insurance Number. In the UK, where he had lived before, the same purchase

involved no credit check. The experience taught him that in Canada a phone plan is often a first contract with the credit system. Adeyinka said: "One of the biggest challenges newcomers face isn't necessarily a lack of financial knowledge. It's that they're trying to apply what they already know to a system that works differently. "My goal isn't to tell newcomers what to do with their money.

Interswitch Leverages Lifestyle Events To Drive Brand Engagement Ahead Of Festive Season

By Sulaimon Salau

INTERSWITCH has launched a strategic marketing campaign aimed at deepening consumer engagement and brand loyalty through two flagship lifestyle events scheduled for December festive season. The initiative aligns the company's core consumer brands with key lifestyle sectors, focusing on fitness and wellness for its Verve card brand and music entertainment for its Quickteller plat-

form. The campaign kicks off with "Vervelife," an integrated fitness and wellness event at the Eko Convention Centre on November 21, designed to strengthen consumer affinity with the Verve brand. This will be followed on November 28 by "QuicktellerInsomniaQ" at The Landmark Centre, a musical event combining contemporary artists, DJs, and a classical orchestra, targeted at expanding

Quickteller's market reach within the cultural sector. Divisional Head for Brands & Communications at Interswitch, TomiOgunlesi, said: "Detty December, as it has come to be globally renowned is one of the most vibrant cultural moments in Lagos, and Interswitch is proud to be at its heartbeat. "With Vervelife and QuicktellerInsomniaQ, we are creating and amplifying branded experiences that meet consumers at their pas-

sion points; fitness and wellness with Verve, and music with Quickteller. This is how we build brands that live in culture, not just in transactions." He said the back-to-back experiences underscore Interswitch's premium on branded consumer experiences, built around strategically identified passion points: fitness and wellness for Verve, and music for Quickteller.

Jumia Nigeria Unveils Black Friday Campaign With Nearly 60% Discount

By Sulaimon Salau

JUMIA Nigeria has unveiled its 2026 Black Friday campaign, "No Manage Am," offering discounts of up to 60 per cent from October 30 to November 30. The month-long campaign will feature deals across essential and lifestyle categories, giving shoppers more opportunities to replace worn-out products, upgrade everyday essentials and purchase items they have been putting off, while making their budgets go further. To support the increased demand expected during the campaign, Jumia has upgraded its platform capacity to accommodate approximately three times the traffic recorded during last year's Black Friday. The campaign was announced at a media briefing attended by Chief Executive Officer of Jumia, Temitayo Ojo, alongside Chief Commercial Officer, Oluwafemi Ajulo; Chief Marketing Officer, Lere Awokoya; Chief Operations Officer, Marilyn Oruwari; and Head of Public Relations, Henry Enyinnaya. Inspired by the familiar Nigerian expression "No Manage Am", the campaign speaks to a relatable reality: making do with things that no longer work as they should, whether it is a faulty charger.

New Companies Join SureGifts As Redemptions Hit 1.3m Nationwide

By Sulaimon Salau

SUREGIFTS, Nigeria's leading Senterprise rewards platform, has announced the addition of Konga, MedPlus and i-Fitness to its growing merchant network, as total gift card and voucher redemptions on the platform surpass 1.3 million nationwide. The additions further expand a network of more than 400 merchants across Nigeria with redemption activity spanning major cities and states nationwide. The expansion reflects growing demand from businesses for rewards that give recipients more choice in where and how they spend. Through SureGifts, businesses can reward employees, customers and partners through a single rewards network. Recent additions of Konga, MedPlus and i-Fitness will broaden the network across online shopping, healthcare and wellness, joining brands including Market Square in groceries, SLOT in electronics, Domino's Pizza in food, Filmhouse Cinemas in entertainment, ORIKI and Swarovski in lifestyle and Ikeja Electric and Eko Electricity Distribution Company in utilities.

Why Improving Food Security Requires More Than Fertiliser Use

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

RISING from a two-day Fertiliser Summit, stakeholders in the agricultural sector have reiterated the importance of soil data, soil testing and crop-specific fertiliser recommendations in improving farmers' outcomes.

Organised by the Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T), Obafemi Awolowo University, in partnership with the Fertiliser Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria (FEP-

SAN) and the Fertiliser and Inputs Support Services (FISS) Department of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, the 2026 Nigeria Fertiliser Summit on Phosphorus and Food Security: Challenges in Food Production Systems in Nigeria, was held between October 19 and 20 in Abuja.

It brought together researchers, policymakers, fertiliser manufacturers, regulators, development partners and farmer representatives to examine how nutrient management can con-

tribute to improved agricultural productivity and food security.

During the opening session, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi, who was represented by Director, Agricultural Land and Climate Change Management Services, Mr. Oshadiya Olanipekun, acknowledged the contribution of the Regional Hub for Fertiliser and Soil Health for West Africa and the Sahel, noting that collaboration with the Hub creates opportunities to leverage regional expertise, technical support and methodologies for site-specific fertiliser recommendations.

Similarly, the Vice-Chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, Prof. A.S. Bamire, stressed that improving agricultural productivity goes beyond fertiliser use alone and requires responsible nutrient management, research, innovation and stronger partnerships.

Throughout the summit, speakers challenged the idea that agricultural transformation can be achieved simply by increasing fertiliser application. Discussions instead focused on fertiliser-use efficiency, balanced fertilisation, nutrient management and fertiliser recommendations tailored to local conditions.

"Improving crop productivity is not only about applying fertilizer. It is about ensuring the right nutrient is applied in the right amount, at the right place, and under the right conditions," said soil scientist and modelling expert at IAR&T, Prof. Vincent Aduramigba-Modupe, who was one of the summit organisers.

A major focus of the discussions was the growing role of soil data and information systems in agricultural decision-making. Participants highlighted the importance of digital soil maps; soil information systems, laboratory services, site-specific nutrient recommendations and digital advisory tools in helping farmers and advisers make more informed decisions.

A Visiting Scientist with the Regional Hub and Professor of Soil Science at Bayero University Kano, Prof. Jibrin Mohammed Jibrin, described soil intelligence as fundamental to achieving food security.

"The basis of food production and food security is the soil. You need healthy soil to produce well and feed the nation with nutritious food. To do that, you need soil intelligence," he said.

Presentations by the Regional Hub highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen evidence-based nutrient management across Nigeria and the wider West Africa and Sahel region. These include the development of digital soil maps, support for national soil information systems, laboratory assessments and the validation of site- and crop-specific fertilizer recommendations.

According to the Senior Agronomist at the Regional Hub, Dr. Bello Muhammad Shehu, improving phosphorus management is not simply about increasing fertiliser application.



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.

Wandeville, Stakeholders Seek Improved Nutrition, Quality Seeds

From Joke Falaju, Abuja

WANDEVILLE has reaffirmed its commitment to expanding access to nutritious food, strengthening agricultural marketing and improving nutrition among vulnerable communities.

The Chief Executive Officer of Wandeville, Yewande Kazeem who gave the assurance during its 10 years anniversary celebration in Abuja, said the organisation had spent the past decade connecting agriculture and nutrition to communities through social marketing.

She expressed excitement over the organisation's growth and appreciation to its partners, adding that it was looking forward to expanding its impact in the next decade.

Kazeem said the organisation would focus on improving access to nutritious food, creating demand for improved seeds, expanding into the livestock sector and strengthening the link between nutrition and health.

Also speaking, the Country Director of Nutrition International, Dr Osita Okonkwo, said Nigeria needed urgent and coordinated action to address malnutrition, particularly among children in internally displaced persons' camps and communities affected by insecurity and natural disasters.

Okonkwo said an estimated five million children were malnourished in Nigeria, warning that the problem

had become a national emergency because insecurity and economic challenges were limiting access to adequate nutrition across the country.

He said addressing the crisis required restoring farmers' access to their farms, helping displaced families return to their communities where possible and providing food assistance to vulnerable households.

According to him, children diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition should receive appropriate treatment, including ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), followed by adequate nutrition to support their recovery.

He also called for improved nutrition education and more balanced meals for vulnerable families, stressing that providing rice alone to displaced persons was insufficient without other foods containing essential micronutrients.

Okonkwo urged the government and development partners to ensure that children aged six months to five years in high-risk communities had access to appropriate nutrition, while pregnant women should receive essential micronutrients and supplements.

He acknowledged ongoing government interventions, including the development of policy frameworks, a proposed national nutrition bill, a reported \$26 million investment in the Child Nutrition Fund and the N774 initiative.

Firms Partner For Cold Room Production

By Eniola Daniel

WORRIED by the lingering challenges of post-harvest losses in Nigeria, Ecotutu and Lange and Grant have entered into a partnership for the production of cold room, with the promise of more innovation to shape the agricultural sector.

During the launch of the Cold Room Showroom in Surulere, Lagos witnessed by executives from the Rural Electrification Agency (REA), the Nigerian-American Chamber of Commerce, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), and other organisations, the two firms stated that the move is another step towards making innovative cold storage and quality

construction solutions more accessible, as well as finding practical and reliable solutions.

Through the partnership, the two firms also showcased construction solutions, including insulated sandwich panels for cold rooms, prefabricated buildings, roofing panels, EPS fiber cement products, and light-gauge steel systems.

Speaking at the event, the CEO of Lange and Grant, Tunde Okoya, said: "Our core competence is the manufacture of structural insulated panels, which are the main building block in the manufacture of cold rooms. We are happy to partner with Ecotutu; we share the same ethos in terms of innovation, a strong belief in the economy, and a

commitment to cutting down post-harvest losses in Nigeria."

On his part, CEO, Ecotutu, Babajide Oluwase, said: "As a company, we are aware of the problems and opportunities across the food value chain in Nigeria. We decided to design and build energy-efficient cold-room solutions that cater to preservation from the point of harvest to aggregation, market points, and ultimately the final consumer."

"We are mindful of our environment as a country that is energy-poor, so these solutions are primarily powered by solar energy. They are also designed to be automated. Beyond storing agricultural produce, they can be used to store vaccines.

Agro-firm Targets 5% Contribution To Nigeria's 1.5m Tonnes Palm Oil Output

By Silver Nwokoro

An agro-real estate firm, PalmCrest, is targeting a five per cent contribution to Nigeria's 1.5 million metric tonnes yearly palm oil output as it expands its oil-palm plantation operations across Ogun and Oyo states.

The project, which combines agricultural land ownership with oil-palm cultivation and professionally managed plantation operations, has set a long-term vision of producing 75,000 metric tonnes of palm oil yearly from 30,000 acres of agricultural land.

At a press conference to give out the company's project, the Chief Executive Officer of Reftop Homes Limited, Dr. David Assogba, urged

Nigerians to return to farming, stating that agriculture remains critical to achieving food self-sufficiency and reducing dependence on crude oil.

Assogba said Nigeria had neglected its agricultural potential despite the importance of palm oil across West Africa. "Palm oil is not a new thing to us. In all West African states, palm oil is not a new thing. We have neglected not standing on where we are," he said.

He urged Nigerians to change the perception that farming is meant for poor people, noting that agriculture could provide significant economic opportunities nothing that farm is the next thing, farm is the next oil.

Explaining the Palmcrest model, he said the company sells land to indi-

viduals and assists them with farming, with the yield shared between the company and landowners based on an agreed percentage.

The Board Chairman, Reftop Homes Limited, Dr. Akin Akinpelu said the company is targeting 30,000 acres of agro-real estate holdings as part of efforts to build long-term economic value through land ownership, agricultural productivity and asset management.

Akinpelu who disclosed this while outlining the company's growth strategy, noted that Reftop's combined agro-farm portfolio currently stands at approximately 6,500 acres, comprising its three PalmCrest phases and an existing productive farm in Idiroko.

Abiodun Pledges N1b Support For Traders, Artisans

•Targets two Million Votes For Tinubu In Ogun

From Azeez Olorunlomu, Abeokuta

OGUN State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, has reaffirmed his commitment to delivering two million votes for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the January 16, 2027, presidential election, disclosing that his administration has channelled more than N1 billion in financial support to traders, artisans, small business owners and cooperative societies across the state.

Abiodun made this known on Friday at the 2026 International Community Development Day and World Trade Day celebrations in Ogun State, where he called on traders, artisans, cooperative societies and community leaders to mobilise massive support for the President and other All Progressives Congress (APC) candidates in the forthcoming elections.

The governor said the financial interventions were part of his administration's commitment to strengthening grassroots enterprises, creating employment and improving the livelihoods of residents.

He explained that N500 million had been provided through the Oko 'Owo' Irinse Dapo Soft Loan Initiative to support artisans, traders and small business owners, while more than N500 million had also been disbursed to cooperative societies through the state's revolving loan framework.

He added that his administration had extended financial support to more than 200 Community Development Associations to strengthen community-driven development across towns, villages and neighbourhoods.

On the 2027 elections, Abiodun urged Nigerians to demonstrate confidence in President Tinubu by voting massively for him on January 16, 2027, insisting that the country was beginning to reap the benefits of the economic reforms introduced by the Federal Government.

By Moyosore Salami

THE Chairman, Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), Prof. Tunji Olaopa, has proposed measures that governments could deploy to harness the gains of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for development.

Olaopa spoke on Thursday, in Abuja, on 'Media And Information Literacy, AI and Youth Creativity' during a stakeholders' dinner organised by the International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI) in partnership with UNESCO to mark the 2026 Global Media and Information Literacy

Sowore, Team Injured In Ekiti Incident As Police, AAC Give Differing Accounts

By Oludare Richards

THE presidential candidate of the African Action Congress (AAC), Omoyele Sowore, has sustained injuries during an incident involving him and some associates at a restaurant in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, with the police and the politician offering differing accounts of what happened.

While the Ekiti State Police Command described the incident as an altercation with some individuals at the restaurant and dismissed reports that Sowore was kidnapped, the AAC candidate insisted that he and members of his team were attacked by armed men.

The incident reportedly occurred on Friday, shortly after Sowore completed an interview with Midas FM 90.5

in the state capital.

In a statement, the Police Public Relations Officer, Sunday Abutu, said the command received an alert about the incident and immediately deployed operatives to the scene.

Abutu said the police rescued Sowore and took him to the Police Hospital in Ado-Ekiti, where he was receiving treatment for what the command described as a minor injury. "The Command wishes to categorically clarify that Mr. Sowore was not kidnapped. Rather, preliminary information indicates that he had an altercation with some individuals at a restaurant in Ado-Ekiti, following which the police were immediately alerted," the statement said.

The police added that Commissioner of Police, Falade Adegoroye Michael,

had ordered an investigation to establish the circumstances surrounding the incident, identify those involved and ensure that anyone found culpable was brought to justice.

The police have urged members of the public to remain calm and avoid circulating unverified information, assuring that the investigation would establish the circumstances of the incident.

However, Sowore rejected the police account, insisting that the incident was not an altercation but a violent attack on him and his associates.

"There was no altercation! We were attacked!" he declared in a post on his X account.

He also accused the Department of State Services (DSS) of providing the attackers with his team's location, alleging that the agency had

been trailing and harassing them since their arrival in the state.

In another post, Sowore claimed that the attackers came from the Ekiti State Government House and alleged that they had received tracking and operational support from the DSS.

The AAC had earlier raised the alarm over the incident, saying the whereabouts of its presidential candidate were unknown and calling on the police, DSS, Independent National Electoral Commission and other relevant agencies to intervene.

The party's campaign spokesperson, Abdulkareem Musa, described the development as a serious security concern and called for an immediate investigation and measures to guarantee Sowore's safety.



Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr Oyeniyi Adebayo (left); Speaker, Ekiti State House of Assembly, Adeoye Aribasoye; Deputy Governor, Chief (Mrs) Monisade Afuye; Ekiti State Governor, Mr Biodun Oyeibanji; Senate Leader, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele; former Ekiti State Governor, Engr Segun Oni; and State Chairman, All Progressives Congress (APC), Barr. Sola Elesin during the inauguration of Ekiti APC Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), in Ado-Ekiti... on Friday.

2027: Oyeibanji Inaugurates Ekiti APC Presidential Campaign Council

By Isaac Taiwo

EKITI State Governor, Mr. Biodun Oyeibanji has inaugurated the state's All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council, charging the members to accelerate grassroots mobilisation and secure victory for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the 2027 presidential election.

The inauguration ceremony, held at the Conference Hall of the Governor's office in Ado-Ekiti on Friday, brought

together key party leaders, including the Deputy Governor, Monisade Afuye; Speaker, Ekiti State House of Assembly, Adeoye Aribasoye; former governors, former deputy governors, serving and former members of the national assembly and the state House of Assembly, serving federal political appointees, governorship candidates of other political parties, local council chairmen and political stakeholders from across the 16 local

councils of the state.

Addressing members of the council shortly after the inauguration, Oyeibanji emphasised that the critical task before the council is not organising campaigns and rallies, but ensuring that registered voters who failed to participate in previous elections are identified and mobilised to vote.

He said the focus should be on unit-by-unit tracking of registered voters across the state.

Reflecting on the state's gubernatorial poll where the party secured 85.7 per cent of total votes cast, Oyeibanji declared that anything short of 90 per cent of total number of registered voters for Tinubu would be a collective failure on the PCC members.

"The real work is to get the voters registered in a unit and identify those who don't want to vote. Our focus should be on voter tracking," he said.

How To Harness Gains Of AI For Development – Olaopa

(GMIL) Week.

According to Olaopa, through a proper understanding of Media and Information Literacy (MIL), various competences are being developed for the proper deployment of AI tools. He referred to educational models that help in source evaluation and fact-checking, and AI literacy and integration, that lead to responsible generative AI use that paves the way for empowered youth creativity, ethical content creation and innovative problem solving.

To Olaopa, when generative AI tools are integrated into literacy curricula, they hold the potential of considerably reducing the cognitive load for younger learners, making complex research and information synthesis more accessible.

According to him, MIL equips youth with the capacity to detect automated text or graphics, and to set strict boundaries, cross-examine outputs and counter hidden AI biases.

"Thus, a mastery of the dual disciplines of MIL and AI res-

cues technology from the trap of being an automated shortcut. It rather becomes a path for multi-faceted development," he said.

He said that to get the best of media, information literacy, AI and youth creativity, the educational system should be reworked to reflect learning models that align with contemporary technological reality.

He also said that this should lead to reviewing policy frameworks to formally blend data literacy and AI ethics into mainstream school systems.

Stressing the need for institutional hubs like academic libraries and community media networks that should be empowered to ensure basic AI literacy for marginalised youth, he said this should lead to bridging the infrastructural gap.

He decried a situation where while advantaged youth are familiar with even the advanced world of media and AI, there are disadvantaged youth without access to the basic knowledge of media and AI tools, let alone information literacy.

Hamzat Promises 4,000 New BRT Buses, Additional Five Maternal Health Facilities

• He Is Best Option, Say Sanwo-Olu, Obanikoro, Sosan, Others

By Seye Olumide and Gbenga Salau

LAGOS State Governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, has promised to increase the state's public bus fleet from 1,000 to 5,000, upgrade 100 primary healthcare centres and expand maternal and child healthcare facilities from 10 to 15 if elected governor in 2027.

Hamzat, who unveiled a 100-point development agenda for the state, also pledged to expand health insurance coverage, build two general hospitals, improve access to affordable housing and create more employment opportunities for residents.

Presenting his manifesto, tagged 'The Lagos Promise (Ileri Eko),' at the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts, formerly National Theatre, Iganmu, Lagos, on Friday, the deputy governor said his administration would prioritise residents' welfare and ensure that government commitments translate into measurable improvements in their lives.

The manifesto, built around seven pillars, themed, 'PROMISE,' contains 87 firm commitments and 13 aspirations, covering healthcare, education, transportation, security, housing, economic opportunities, governance and environmental resilience.

Hamzat, who described a promise as a debt the government must repay, said his proposed administration would introduce measurable targets and a public performance scorecard to enable residents monitor the implementation of its policies.

He promised to extend the Ilera Eko health insurance scheme, which currently covers nearly two million people, to one in every three Lagos residents, with priority given to poorer households and vulnerable groups.

He also pledged to deliver new general hospitals at Ogombo and Ibeju-Lekki, complete ongoing projects at Massey Children's Hospital, Ojo and Somolu, and expand access to maternal and child healthcare in underserved communities.

According to him, every child resident in the state would be accounted and catered for because they are the future of the state. He also promised special interest in women, describing them as the first government a child knows.

On transportation, the APC candidate promised to extend the Blue Line rail project to Okokomaiko, advance the Green Line from Marina to the Lekki Free Trade Zone.



CHANGE OF NAME

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ABHULIMEN : I, formerly known as, Abhulimen Clifford, now wish to be known and addressed as, Abhulimen Clifford Omo, All former documents remains. General public take note.

ADAMS : I, formerly known as Adams Olapeju Elizabeth now wish to be addressed as Mautin Olapeju Elizabeth. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Kayode Oluwajobi now wish to be addressed as Kayode Oluwabukola Oluwajobi . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Oneh Chika, wish to be addressed as known and addressed as Oneh Chika Praise. All documents remain valid, general public take note

ADDITION OF NAME : I, Mohammed Jimoh Adigun, formerly known as Mohammed Jimoh, now wish to be addressed as Mohammed Jimoh Adigun. All documents and records bearing either name refer to one and the same person. General public, relevant authorities and organisations, take note

ADETOYINBO : I, formerly known as Kauna Matilda ADETOTINBO now wish to be addressed as Kauna Matilda Bawa. All former documents remain Valid. General Public take Note.

AJIFOWOBAJE : I, formerly known as Deborah Damilola Ajifowobaje now wish to be addressed as Deborah Damilola Adewale-Alfred. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

AKINJAYEJU : I, formerly known as Akinjayeju Motunrayo Helen now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Aromire Motunrayo Helen. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

AKOMEN : I, formerly known as, Ikhine Catherine Akomen, now wish to be addressed as, Ikhine Catherine Akomen Onuwab-hagbe,, All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

ANOZIE : I, formerly known as Anozie Tochi Precious now wish to be addressed as Umunna Tochi Precious Anozie.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

AROGUNDADE : I, formerly known Arogundade Oluwatoyin Rayo now wish to be addressed as Arogundade Oluwatoyin Motun-rayo -Risi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BETHEL : I, formerly known as Chioma Better and Bethel Nwanosike, now wish to be addressed as Samuel Chioma. All documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHINEMEYA : I, formerly known as Madueke Chinemeya Iheaku, now wish to be known and addressed as Chinemeya Madueke Iheaku. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHINWE : I, formerly known as Ezech Ogechukwu, now wish to be addressed as Ogechi Chinwe Iheaku. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHIWETALU : I, formerly known as Chiwetalu Otubo, now wish to re-affirm and be addressed as Chiwetalu Joshua Otubo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHUKWU : I, formerly known as Miss Chukwu Ifeoma Joy, now wish to be addressed as Mrs Nwazue Joy Ifeoma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHUKWU : I, formerly known as Miss Chukwu Ifeoma Joy, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Nwazue Joy Ifeoma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF INFORMATION : I, Olowolaju Bamidele Joseph is the same person abbreviated as Olowolaju B. J. My correct date of birth is 06/09/1966. All documents remain valid, general public take note

CONFIRMATION OF NAME : I, Formerly known as Anita Amarachukwu Umenze now wish to be addressed as Anita Amarachi Umenze. Nigerian Immigration Services, Take note

CONFIRMATION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Aine Spiff now wish to be addressed as Aine Warigbani Spiff. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly Achinedu Faith Mogbolu now wish to be addressed as Mogbolu Faith . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Ajah Winifred Nwayinbuife now wish to be addressed as Ajah Winifred Nwayibuife . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME/DOB : My name was wrongly arranged as Nwatu, Emmanuel Chinomso on my BVN instead of Emmanuel, Chinomso Nwatu, Correct DOB: 12/7/1996. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME/DOB : My name was wrongly arranged as Nwatu, Emmanuel Chinomso on my BVN instead of EM-MANUEL, Chinomso Nwatu, Correct DOB: 12/7/1996. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME : My name was erroneously written as Okoye Benedeta Amaka in my BVN instead of Okoye Benedeth Amaka. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : My name was wrongly written on my bank account details & BVN as Taiwo Fausat instead of Oyewole Taiwo. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

DAMOLA-OKESIJ : I, formerly Miss Damola-Okesiji Adebola Taiwo now wish to be addressed as Mrs Alaba Adebola Taiwo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

DECLARATION OF AGE : I, Shaji Ayoola Odushote hereby state that my date of birth was wrongly captured as 24/05/1982 instead of 24/05/1977. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

EBONG : I, formerly known as Oriahi Precious Onyekachukwu now wish to be addressed as Ebong Precious Onyekachukwu . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

EGBEDOJA : I, formerly known as Miss Egbedoja Elizabeth Bolaji now wish to be address as Mrs Kehinde-Ojo Elizabeth Bolaji . All former documents remain valid. Public note.

EHIGIAMUSOE : I, formerly known as Ehigiamusoe Osamede Precious now wish to be addressed as Idiado Osamede Precious .All former documents remain valid general public take note

ELEBE : I, formerly known as Michael Ifeoluwa Nwankego now wish to be addressed as Elebe Ifeoluwa Nwankego . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

EMMANUEL : I, formerly known as Emmanuel Isaac Akaze, now wish to be addressed as Emmanuel Ugoakaze. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ERUMOLE : I, formerly known as Victor Luck Erumole now wish to be addressed as Victor Nzubechi Erumole . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ESTHER : I, formerly known as Miss George, Esther Efetobore now wish to be known as Mrs. Etsenake, Esther Efetobore. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

FAITH : I, formerly known as Miss Oba, Faith now wish to be known as Mrs. Okolo, Faith. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

HILLARY : I, formerly known as Abioye Hillary Rihanat Doyin now wish to be addressed as as Cabrera Diffang Abioye Hillary . All former documents remain valid . General public take note take note

IDARA : I, Formerly known as Idara Friday Edim now wish to be addressed as Oniya Idara Oluwole. All former documents remain valid . General public take note

IDOWU : I, formerly known as Miss Idowu Mariam Opeyemi now wish to be known as Mrs Bello Mariam Opeyemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

INGBIASE : I, formerly known as Salome Dooshima Ingbiase now wish to be addressed as Salome Dooshima Onokaye.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ISAIAH : I, formerly known as Precious Tamaralayefa Egbabo now wish to be addressed as Tamaralayefa Johanness Isaiah. All former documents remain valid . General public take note

JAPHETH : I, formerly Miss Amarachi Favor Japheth now wish to be addressed as Mrs Amarachi Favor Obinna Ibe Nnate. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

LASISI : I, formerly Lasisi Adesola Khadijat now wish to be addressed as Gbadamosi Adesola Khadijat. All former documents remain valid . General public take note

MIRABEL : I, formerly known as Miss Totolaye, Mirabel Ebiyon now wish to be known as Mrs. Orogun, Mirabel Ebiyon. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

MURAINA : I, formerly known as Esther Mosunmola Muraina now wish to be addressed as Esther Mosunmola Kayode. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

MURAINA : I, formerly known as Olajumoke Fauzia Lawal now wish to be addressed as Fauzia Olajumoke Adama. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NANI : I, Formerly known as Esieg-buya Toritsetsean Esimisan now wish to be addressed as Nani Toritsetsean Esimisan . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

NJOKU : Formerly known as Onyinyechi Clare Njoku, now wish to be known as Onyinyechi Clare Amaefule. All former documents remain valid.. FUTU, AE-FUNAI, Banks , public take note

OAKHAMEN : I, formerly known as, Oakhamien Wisdom Eiseme, now wish to be addressed as, Momodu Wisdom Isemen, All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

OBOH : I, formerly known as, Obob Itohan Precious, now wish to be addressed as, Akhaimen Itohan Precious,. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

ODIHILI : I, formerly known as, Odihili Momoh Usman, now wish to be addressed as, Lukpata Martin Odey, my DOB is, 31-01-2004, not, 21-03-2002, Former documents remains valid, note.

OGUNLEYE : I, formerly known as Funmilola Victoria Ogunleye. now known and addressed as Mrs. Funmilola Victoria Yolo. All former documents remains valid. General public note.

OGUNS : I, formerly known as Roselyn Osedebamen Aghedo now wish to be addressed as Roselyn Osedebamen Oguns . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

OKEKE : I, formerly known as Okeke Chioma Jennifer now wish to be addressed as Uba Chioma Jennifer. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKEUGO : , Formerly known as Miss Okeugo Calister Makuochukwu, now wish to be known as Mrs. Eze Calister Makuochukwu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKOLI : I, formerly known as Okoli Amaka Monica now wish to be addressed as Ezeonyebuchi Amaka Monica . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLADIMEJI : I, formerly known as Akinsanya Akinwunmi Oladimeji now wish to be addressed as Akinsanya Oladimeji Akinwunmi.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLAYEMI : I, formerly known as Oyelade Abdulsalam Olayemi now wish to be addressed as Oyelade Abdulsalam Oladim All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ONI : I, formerly known as Mary Funmilayo Oni now wish to be addressed as Mary Funmilayo Adetula . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ONWUDIWE : I, formerly known as Onwudiwe Goodness Sopuruchi now wish to be known as Longjohn Goodness Mienye. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ORUGBOH : I, formerly known as Orugboh Ofuafuo now wish to be addressed as Atahine Erhi-ofuafuo . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

OSE : I, formerly known as, Monday Courage Ose, now wish to be addressed as, Monday Courage,. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

OTOBOR : I Formerly known as Tessy Enifome Udufowe now wish to be addressed as Tessy Enifome Otorbor . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

OWOYEMI : I, formerly known as Miss Owoyemi Funke Ruth, wish to be addressed as Mrs Olarewaju Funke Ruth. All existing documents remain valid. Public, take note.:

PETER : I, formerly known as Peter Enogieru Stewart now wish to be addressed as Peter Stewart Enogieru. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

SEKINAT : I, Formerly Miss Sekinat Olayide Alli, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Hannah Olayide Durowoju. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

SOWUNMI : I, formerly Miss. Tejumola Juliana Sowunmi, now wish to be known as Mrs. Tejumola Juliana Adekoya. All former documents remain valid. Embassy and general public note.

TARI : I, Formerly known as llesanmi Lisa Azaka now wish to be addressed as Hope Tari . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

UMOERA : I, formerly known as, Miss Umoera Blessing Oselumese, now wish to be addressed as, Mrs Esegbe Blessing Oselumese,, All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

UNIYINE : I formerly known as Uniyine Friday Umokan now wish to be known as Umokan Godswill. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ZION : I, formerly known as Zion Michael Eze, now wish to be addressed as Zion Eze Michael. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ECOWAS Moves To Tackle Climate-driven Displacement In West Africa

By Oludare Richards

THE Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is developing a regional action plan to address population movements driven by climate change and environmental degradation, amid rising displacement linked to floods, drought, desertification and other environmental hazards across West Africa.

The Director of Free Movement of Persons, Migration and Tourism at the ECOWAS Commission, Albert Siaw-Boateng, said stronger regional cooperation, evidence-based policies and investment in resilience were urgently needed to address climate-related human mobility.

He spoke at the second meeting of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA) Thematic Working Group on Climate Change, Land Degradation, Desertification, Environment and Migration, held in Abuja.

The scale of the challenge is reflected in data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), which recorded approximately 12.7 million internal disaster displacement movements in West Africa between 2009 and 2023.

The World Bank's Groundswell Africa analysis also estimates that without adequate climate and development interventions, the region could have up to 32 million internal climate migrants by 2050.

Cabinet Reshuffle: Yusuf Redeploys Information Commissioner, Assigns Portfolios To Six Others

From Murtala Adewale, Kano

KANO State Governor, Abba Kabir Yusuf, has reshuffled the State Executive Council, re-deploying two serving commissioners and assigning portfolios to six newly appointed commissioners as part of efforts to strengthen governance and enhance service delivery.

The reshuffle followed the swearing-in of six new commissioners, three advisers and 19 permanent secretaries by the governor.

Announcing the changes shortly after the swearing-in ceremony, Yusuf disclosed that the Commissioner for Information and Internal Affairs, Abdullahi Ibrahim Waiya, had been redeployed to the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Similarly, Hamza Kachaco,

who previously headed the Ministry of Solid Minerals Resources, was reassigned to the Ministry of Environment.

With the redeployment of the two commissioners, the Ministries of Information and Internal Affairs, and Solid Mineral Resources are now without substantive commissioners.

The governor also announced the portfolios of the six newly sworn-in commissioners, assigning them to existing vacancies in the State Executive Council.

According to Yusuf, Air Commodore Salisu Yusha'u (rtd.) has been assigned to the Ministry of Internal Security and Special Services, while Ibrahim Namadi Dala will oversee the Ministry of Commerce and Investment.

SON Rewards MATE Energy With MANCAP Award

By Daniel Anazia

In an energy market where product quality, safety and regulatory compliance are critical to consumer confidence, MATE Energy Industries Limited has received a major endorsement from the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), earning the Mandatory Conformity Assessment Programme (MANCAP) award for sustained quality standards under the 10-year category.

The recognition comes as the lubricant blending company strengthens its quality assurance capacity through investments in laboratory equipment, with plans to attract more international manufacturers to Nigeria.

It also places the company's commitment to product con-

sistency and compliance in focus, while highlighting the growing importance of locally manufactured energy products meeting established national standards.

Speaking shortly after receiving the award, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of MATE Energy Industries Limited, Akinrotogun Muhammad-Rabiu, said the company had invested about N478 million in laboratory equipment to ensure its products met national and international standards.

He explained that the company invested close to N100 million in laboratory equipment at the beginning of its operations, following staff training, and committed another N378 million to laboratory equipment as of January 2026.

‘King Harry And The Ballon D’or

LAST week, it was announced. The winner of the 2026 Ballon d’Or is Harry Kane of England. That means he is the best player in the world in 2026. Without doubt, Harry is a great football player, one that has won several laurels in England and in Europe, particularly with his German Club. In front of goal, he has a special ‘nose’ for burying the ball behind goalkeepers. He is so good that he has scored more goals than any other player in Europe for three seasons. His club has been German and European champions. And so on and so forth. So, ordinarily, he should qualify for any individual title in Europe and, probably, in the world without much fuss. Yet, when his name was mentioned as winner of the most prestigious individual football title in the world last week, there was an audible gasp among many football faith-

ful around the world. How? Harry Kane, best player in the world? You mean that Harry Kane that we all know and have seen through the past years and at the recent World Cup, is the best player in the world? How? Whatever happened to the Messis, Ronaldos, Neymars, exceptionally gifted players who would leave moments of sheer brilliance lingering in people’s minds long after matches have been concluded? Whatever happened to players that have almost single-handedly won the biggest titles? Where are the players so brilliant on the ball that analysts would comb through poetic literature to describe them? Messi and Ronaldo set standards impossible to match. For almost two decades they have dazed the world with the sheer brilliance and artistry, their achievements becoming current benchmarks for Ballon

d’Or winners, setting standards that great players like Harry Kane would find hard to match. Even in the twilight of their careers, Messi and Cristiano continue to light up the football skies. I have asked myself over and over again: had Argentina defeated Spain in the final match of the 2026 World Cup, who would have questioned Messi’s claim to another Ballon d’Or? If that is true, it means that the greatest player that ever played the game only got denied the award because he failed to win the most coveted 2026 World Cup trophy. He was close. Harry Kane did not even get to the finals. Apart from scoring a few critical goals that lifted England, he did not play exceptionally well throughout. There was not one memorable great move by Harry throughout the World Cup.



Agreed that performance at the World Cup was not part of the criteria for the selection, or is it? Harry is a great player, but surely not in the league of Ronaldo and Messi, on the ball, when the best in the world is being considered. The best player in the world must have more than just one or two great skills. He must come with a retinue; ability to provide leadership that transforms matches, make moves that leave pictures in the mind of fans; leave fans salivating for more of them. Harry Kane comes close, but is not quite there. Where is Rodri, whose midfield performance for Spain won them the World Cup - easily the greatest midfield player of this generation, making football elegant, graceful and so simple and beautiful? Where is Hakim, the most solid, most compact, most creative attacking full back in the world? Where is Mbape, the galloping striker, whose skills and speed belong in the realm of the gods?

Read the remaining story online www.guardian.ng

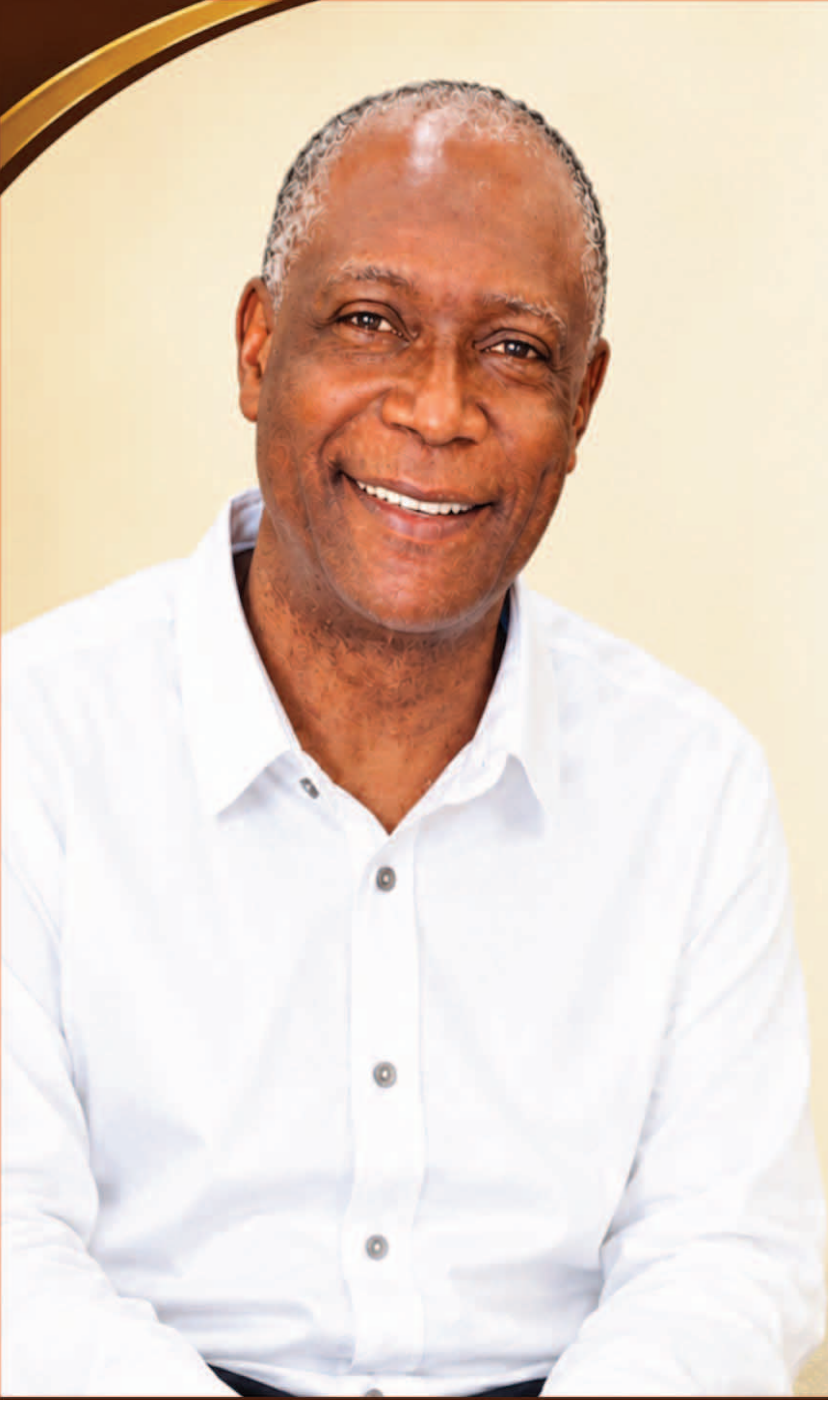
Omotosho: ‘There’s Something For Everybody In New DSTV’

By Christian Okpara

SATELLITE television broadcasting outfit, Multichoice, which is now on the Canal+ stable, has affirmed that it is ready to satisfy all its subscribers’ tastes, no matter how exotic they look. The outfit introduced its most significant product update in years on Tuesday in Lagos, bringing more of Africa’s greatest entertainment live to subscribers, starting from November 5, 2026. Under the new structure, DStv packages

will comprise Starter, Select, Sports and Premium, while GOtv customers can choose from Easy, Starter, Select and Sports. According to Multichoice, the new package line-up is designed around how customers watch today, with clearer choices, more accessible content and greater value across the portfolio. Speaking while unveiling the new packages, CEO of MultiChoice Nigeria, Kemi Omotosho, said: “Our focus is on giving subscribers better value and access to the

entertainment they love. “The strength of our platform is the combination of African entertainment, leading international content and unrivalled live sports in one place. We’ve reimaged our packages to better reflect how customers watch today, with tailored options specifically for general entertainment and sports fans.” She said that for the first time, some of DStv’s biggest channels will be available at significantly more accessible price points.





ANGLICAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL
UBULU UKU OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION
(AGSUOBA)
LAGOS CHAPTER

WE HAVE LOST A
LEADING LIGHT

With profound sadness but total submission to the will of Almighty God, the Executive Committee (EXCO) and all members of the Anglican Grammar School Ubulu Uku (Delta State) Old Boys Association (AGSUOBA), Lagos Chapter, announce the transition to glory of a distinguished Old Boy, an icon and a selfless leader,

Dr Geoffrey Chukwunwiken Ohen Jr.
aged 69 years.

He slept in the Lord on Monday, September 22, 2026.

Dr Ohen's leadership was marked by selfless service, uncommon dedication, integrity, and unsurpassed brotherly love. He will be sorely missed.

We mourn with his immediate family and share in the sad and irreplaceable loss of their husband, father, grandfather and dependable leader.

May Dr Geoff Ohen rest in eternal peace in the bosom of Almighty God..

Signed:

Ben Omife: President
Godwin Ofulue: Vice President

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Youth Olympic Games: NSC Hopeful As Rush For Medals Begins In Dakar

From **Gowon Akpodonor**, Dakar, Senegal

THE National Sports Commission (NSC) believes that the nation's young athletes will excel at the 2026 Youth Olympics, which gets underway in Dakar, Senegal, this weekend.

Team Nigeria, with a contingent of 19 athletes, made up of 12 boys and seven girls, are already in Dakar for the fourth Summer Youth Olympic Games, the first Olympic sporting event being hosted on African soil. It will run from October 31 to November 13.

NSC Director General, Bukola Olopade, said on Friday that the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games provides an important platform for Nigeria's emerging athletes to gain valuable international exposure, compete against some of the best young talents in the world and build experience towards future senior-level competitions, including the Olympic Games.

Team Nigeria is targeting an improved performance than it recorded at the maiden edition 16 years ago in Singapore.

At Singapore 2010, Nigeria recorded its best moment by winning four medals, made up of two gold, one silver and one bronze, to be ranked 29th overall in the world.

Eight years later, at Buenos Aires, Argentina 2018, Nigeria also got a total of four medals made up of one gold and three silver to finish in 48th position in the general medal

table.

This time around, Nigeria is optimistic of surpassing its past performance as rush for medals begin in Dakar, Senegal.

For Olopade, the 2026 Youth Olympics in Dakar is very historic. "You all are history makers to be part of the first Olympic Games to be held in Africa," he reminded the athletes. "This is why I am very confidence that these games will mark the beginning of greatness for all of you."

Olopade urged the Nigerian contingent to make the country proud in Dakar, and translate months of preparation into impressive performances on the continental and global stage.

"You have to be worthy ambassadors in Senegal," Olopade said, just as he urged the athletes to compete with pride, dignity and patriotism at the Games.

"We have selected you all to represent the country in your various sports because you represent the core crop of our future stars and I want you all to

stay focused, disciplined and passionate about your careers," Olopade said.

He assured them of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's fatherly commitment to their growth and development both in sports and their education. Some of the athletes flying Nigeria's flag in Dakar are products of the Invited Junior Athletes (IJA), a programme launched by the NSC barely two years ago.

The Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics, which is being attended by a large crowd of over 2,700 athletes from various countries across the globe, will see Team Nigeria compete in six sports: athletics, boxing, road cycling, swimming, table tennis and beach volleyball.

The Games is holding across three host zones, Dakar, Diamniadio and Saly in Senegal.

The opening ceremony will hold this Saturday (October 31) at the Diamniadio Olympic Stadium, with competitions in table tennis and beach volleyball commencing immediately.

Track and field (Athletics) accounts for Nigeria's largest contingent with nine athletes (five girl and four boy), swimming four athletes (two women and two men), table tennis two representatives (a

boy and a girl), while Nigeria will also field one female boxer, one female road cyclist and a two-athlete women's beach volleyball team.

The young athletes had a 21-day local camping programme in Abuja from October 9 to 29 before their departure to Dakar.

NSC Declares Enugu Ready To Host 2026 National Sports Festival • President Tinubu To Kick Off Games

By **Christian Okpara**

THE 2026 National Sports Festival will go ahead as scheduled, the director general of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Bukola Olopade, has said.

Olopade, who also disclosed that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, will personally declare the 23rd Games, also known as Coal City Games Enugu 2026, open on November 28.

Speaking at the end of the joint technical meeting of directors of sports from the various states, members of the Main Organizing Committee (MOC) and the Local Organising Committee (LOC), held at the Best Western Plus Hotel, Nza Street, Independence Layout Enugu, after their inspection of venues and facilities for the festival, Olopade said the flag-off date is sacrosanct as Enugu is good to go.

The director general said that the technical meeting was highly productive and resolved critical issues relating to the successful hosting of the Games.

He disclosed that major concerns raised about facilities have been addressed, adding that after direct engagement with contractors handling the upgrade of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium and other venues, work has fully mobilised.

Olopade described Enugu as a great and secure sporting city and urged Nigerians to disregard negative narratives, stating that Nigeria has shown resilience and capacity to host major sporting events.

"This is a profound National Sports Festival for me for so many reasons. What we have seen in Enugu gives us confidence. The people of Enugu are enthusiastic and eagerly waiting to welcome all of us to this wonderful, great city," he said.

Earlier, Enugu State Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Lloyd Ikechukwu Ekwereamadu, welcomed NSC officials, Directors of Sports from across the federation, Technical Directors of various sports and Secretaries of Sports Federations to Enugu. He thanked them for their diligence to details and assured that their observations will be corrected to ensure everything is in shape before the opening ceremony.

Arsenal Ready To Sell Odegaard If He Delays To Sign New Deal

ARSENAL star, Martin Ødegaard's future with the Premier League winners needs sorting as he, at least reportedly, remains open to joining another top club, reports *sportswitness.co.uk*.

The Norway international initially joined Arsenal on loan from Real Madrid in January 2021 and made his stay permanent later that year.

He has a key role under Mikel Arteta, who has even handed him the captain's armband. The midfielder has scored 46 goals and contributed 47 assists so far for the Gunners.

Last season, Ødegaard managed a goal and eight assists from 1,984 minutes from 36 matches as he struggled with multiple injuries, limiting his

game time.

This season, he has four goals and an assist for Arsenal in 994 minutes from 14 matches. In September, the 27-year-old explained he's happy to put the injury frustration behind him.

The former Real Madrid man has over 20 months left on his contract and his long-term future needs sorting.

Arsenal are pushing for his renewal and Sky Deutschland, who covers the latest,

mentions Bayern Munich's interest. This isn't new as there have been talks between the two parties in the task.

Bayern Munich weren't able to secure his services in the past, while he 'can envision a future move' to Germany. This should please the Bundesliga winners, who have already discussed his name within the club.

The English champions have taken action and are working on the Norwegian's extension. Their plan is to avoid letting him enter the final year of his contract. In other words, the Gunners want to secure his extension before the end of this season.

Behind the scenes, Arsenal have held in-

tial informal talks with Martin Ødegaard over a new contract. If there's no agreement for the renewal, the Emirates club 'would be open to selling' him next summer.

He won't be short of options and has received approaches from several unnamed clubs. Bayern Munich are his suitor, but it's unclear whether there has been a fresh approach from them recently.

For now, Ødegaard is a target for Vincent Kompany's side but isn't a priority just yet.

It looks like his camp are using Bayern Munich's timid interest to put pressure on Arsenal to secure an improved deal for the renewal.

This Weekend's Football Matches

Saturday

EuroMatch NPFL

Doma United v Ikorodu City

English Premier League

Chelsea v Man United

Bournemouth v Leeds United

Brentford v Nottingham Forest

Coventry v Sunderland

Hull City v Ipswich Town

Man City v Brighton

Tottenham v Crystal Palace

Aston Villa v Fulham

Spanish La Liga

Levante v Atlético

Rayo Vallecano v Celta Vigo

Real Betis v Málaga

Barcelona v Alavés

German Bundesliga

Augsburg v Freiburg

Leverkusen v Stuttgart

Borussia M'gladbach v Paderborn

Schalke 04 v RB Leipzig

Werder Bremen v Hoffenheim

Bayern Munich v Borussia Dortmund

Italian Serie A

Bologna v Monza

Udinese v Roma

AC Milan v Inter Milan

French Ligue 1

Troyes v Le Mans

Former El-Kanemi Warriors Chairman Commends Tinubu, Dikko Over NFF Reforms

AFORMER chairman of El-Kanemi Football Club of Maiduguri, Bashir Abiso, has commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his commitment and determination to get Nigerian football on the right path.

Speaking when he paid a courtesy call on National Sports Commission (NSC) Chairman, Shehu Dikko, at his office recently, Abiso said that the reform will contribute in changing the outdated football administration, allowing stakeholders would be involved in the promotion and development of football game across the country.

He assured that the much-awaited normalisation committee, when constituted, would do everything possible to guarantee fair representation of all the interest groups in the leadership of the Nigerian football.

While appealing to all football stakeholders to continue to support and rally round the present administration's efforts towards reforming the NFF, he called on the commission to also ensure the actualisation of the desired goal.

Abiso also expressed optimistic

that the Commission will select members of the normalisation committee of the NFF based on

merit and vetted record, since FIFA has given approval to Nigeria on football reform.



Former El-Kanemi Warriors Chairman, Bashir Abiso (right), with NSC Chairman, Shehu Dikko, during the visit.

Celebration of our Beloved Father!

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." (Ps 103:1)

A portrait of Peter Obafemi Akinlaja, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a blue traditional Nigerian robe and a red and white patterned cap. He is seated and resting his chin on his hand. The background is a soft-focus image of a white building with a blue sky.

Peter Obafemi Akinlaja

September 12, 1935 - September 8, 2026

Events:

Wake keep: Wednesday, November 25th 2026

Time: 1pm

Venue: MFM Palm Avenue, Mushin

Burial Service: Thursday, November 26th 2026

Time: 9:00am

Venue: MFM Palm Avenue, Mushin

Internment: Redemption Camp Burial ground (Strictly private)

Reception: Friday, November 27th 2026

Time: 1:00pm

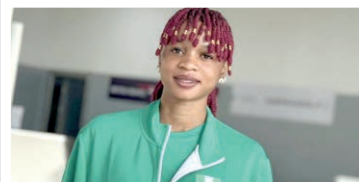
Venue: Whitestone Event Place, Ikeja (by invitation only)

Forever Loved, forever remembered, forever cherished.

Survived by his loving wife, Abiola, many children, grandchildren,
in-laws, siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces and all.

Signed:

The Children



INSIDE STUFF WITH MARTINS OLOJA



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#2027: Quick Facts Tinubu's Campaigners Should Fear

The Promise Of Future Vs Pain Of Present: The Spreadsheet Fallacy

WHEN President Bola Ahmed Tinubu took oath on May 29, 2023, he announced two reforms in one sentence: "Subsidy is gone" and forex unification. In policy circles in Washington, London and at the IMF, it was hailed as bold. In Oyingbo market, Sabon Gari in Kano, and Oja Oba in Ibadan, it was felt as shock. Three years later, the divergence between the reform spreadsheet and the street reality is the biggest political risk to the January 2027 election. The campaign flag-off in Kaduna last weekend with controversial attendance is not just poor mobilisation - it is a referendum on presidential attention. People did not come because they felt the campaign so far hasn't addressed what they live through. And the deepest problem is not just high prices. It is that the institutions that should cushion pain and build trust are either silent, captured, or seen as serving only the powerful.

'How reforms hit welfare'

Fuel Subsidy Removal: The 24-hour shock without shock absorber. Petrol was N185 per litre. On May 30, 2023 it was N600. Today it is N1,400-N1,500 depending on state. Diesel is about N2000+. The fiscal logic was sound: Nigeria spent N4.5 trillion on subsidy in 2022, more than health, education and infrastructure combined. It was riddled with smuggling to Niger, Cameroon, Benin. It benefited the rich with many cars more than the poor. Or so it was claimed and believed. But the welfare logic failed on sequencing. Transport is 40% of cost of food in Nigeria. Food moves from Benue to Lagos by truck burning diesel. Tomatoes move from Jos to Onitsha by truck. When diesel triples, food price triples. When petrol triples, school run, hospital visit, going to farm all triple. Small businesses - barbers, tailors, welders, cold room operators, business centres - run on petrol generators because power fails. Their daily cost moved from N3,000 to N10,000. Many have shut down. All landlords nationwide join the bandwagon: rents too triple. Government announced palliatives: N35,000 wage award for federal workers for 6 months, N25,000 cash transfer to 15 million households, 3,000 CNG buses, N100bn CNG infrastructure, Student Loan Scheme, Consumer Credit Scheme.

The problem: By the end of 2024, only about 30% of targeted cash transfers had reached beneficiaries according to World Bank monitoring. CNG buses: Fewer than 500 deployed in 12 months. Wage award: Many states did not pay. Student loan: 100,000 beneficiaries out of 2 million students. People experienced removal on day one, palliative on day 300 - if at all.

'Forex Unification: The N460 to N1,500 Earthquake'. Before, CBN had multiple windows - official N460/\$, BDC N700/\$, I&E window N600/\$. Big companies with political access got N460 to import. Others bought at N700. It created corruption - round-tripping billionaire class. Tinubu unified to N1,500/\$. Official logic: Price discovery, attract portfolio investors, stop arbitrage. But Nigeria is import-dependent for what matters most to poor households: Rice, wheat, fish, sugar - 40% imported; Drugs - 70% imported - Fertilizer raw materials imported - Industrial machines, spare parts imported. When naira moved to N1,500/\$, a bag of imported rice that landed at N30k became N90k. A diabetic drug that was N5k became N18k. A bag of fertilizer from N20k to N45k. Local production did not scale to replace imports because interest rate went to 26.75% MPR, making borrowing impossible for farmers and manufacturers. So we got imported inflation without import substitution.

NBS data: Food inflation peaked at 40.87% in June 2024, the highest in 28 years. Headline inflation hit 34%. Even after rebasing and slight cooling to 23-25% in 2026, food basket cost remains 200% higher

than May 2023. Minimum wage moved from N30k to N70k - a 133% increase - but food inflation was 300% increase. Real wage collapsed.

'The Northern farmer and insecurity - The double tax'. This is the most excruciating part. In Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, Niger, Benue, Plateau, farmers now pay two taxes: Tax to bandits to go to farm, and tax to government in form of high input cost. Many in the North have abandoned farms entirely for 2-3 planting seasons. SBM Intelligence reported over 1,300 farmers kidnapped in 2024 alone in North West. Over three (3) million hectares of farmland have been inaccessible. When farmer leaves farm, supply drops. Price rises. Then we blame subsidy removal alone, but insecurity is equally responsible. Tinubu's reforms did not create insecurity, but they made it more expensive - because farmer now needs more money for diesel, fertilizer, and also ransom contribution. Result: Nigeria's food production deficit is estimated at 30-40% below demand.

Band A electricity tariff: From N68 to N209: Government removed electricity subsidy for Band A customers - those who supposedly get 20 hours. Tariff jumped from N68/kWh to N209/kWh - over 200% increase.

Argument: Power sector needs N3 trillion subsidy yearly. Removing it for those who can pay will allow DisCos to invest and improve supply. And it will free money for health and education.

Reality on ground: Many Band A feeders get 6-12 hours, not 20. But they pay Band A rate. Small shops that were paying N50k monthly now pay N200k. Cold room operators shut down. Hospitals pass cost to patients. Hotels too greet customers with huge bills. For households, it is crushing because it came same month as fuel price increase and school fees increase. Three shocks in one quarter.

'School fees and health out-of-pocket'

Federal universities were underfunded for years. After subsidy removal, federal allocation to education did not double to compensate. Government told universities to be self-funding. Result: Many federal universities increased fees from N45k to N150k-N350k. State universities doubled. Private universities now N1m-N3m. For health, NHIA covers less than 10% of population effectively. Over 70% of health spending in Nigeria is out-of-pocket - one of highest in world. When drug price tripled due to forex, when hospital now charges for diesel for generator, when doctor charges more due to his own fuel cost, poor household skips hospital. Maternal mortality, child mortality worsen silently.

This is why multidimensional poverty has deepened. NBS Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022 said 133 million Nigerians multidimensionally poor - deprived in health, education, living standards. Since 2023, with school fees up, health costs up, food up, that number likely worsened, not improved.

'Then the trust deficit - Why institutions aren't cushioning'

This is the part the governing party's campaign is not addressing, and it is the most dangerous. Reforms require trust. Citizens will endure pain if they trust that institutions will protect them from exploitation, that savings from subsidy will



Yari, DG Campaign Council



Wike

not be stolen, that quality will be assured, that the powerful will also sacrifice. In Nigeria today, trust in public institutions is collapsing. How can administration ask for trust for long-term reform when basic quality control agencies are not visibly protecting people? This institutional failure feeds the narrative: "Government can enforce subsidy removal in 24 hours, but cannot enforce quality of service, cannot enforce anti-corruption against its own. So government is strong against poor, weak against rich and powerful."

Why campaign messaging fails:

The promise of future vs pain of present: Campaign message is: "Endure, after 2027, you will see \$1 trillion economy, refineries will work, naira will stabilise, student loan will reach all." Voter's reality is: "I need to feed my child today. I need to pay Band A today. I need drug today. I need to go to farm without being kidnapped today." Economists call it discount rate - poor people discount future heavily because survival is today. Promise of 2028 does not pay school fees in October 2026.

The Kaduna flag-off and Osun yellow card:

Poor attendance in Kaduna last weekend matters because Kaduna is core APC state, former Nasir el-Rufai's base, key Northern vote. If the ruling party cannot fill a stadium in Kaduna with rented crowd and government presence, it means organic enthusiasm is low. Osun 2026 should be remembered: APC lost Osun, the home state of Tinubu's political lineage, because voters were angry about economy and stayed away from APC. That yellow card should have directed strategists: Economic pain is political pain. If same apathy repeats in North West and North Central, where farmers are displaced, where food inflation is highest, where insecurity is worst, APC could face shock.

The exchange rate on ballot: Nigerian voter may not understand MPR or GDP, but understands exchange rate. When Tinubu came, dollar was N700 black market, now N1,500. Even if it is market-reflective, voter sees it as devaluation of his life. Opposition can simply say: "We will bring dollar to N800." It may be economically impossible, but politically potent. Because people feel forex burden daily - school fees, drug, fuel.

The spreadsheet fallacy: Administration's strategists show slides: Reserves up from \$33bn to \$42bn, debt service down from 97% of revenue to 60%, trade surplus, Dangote refinery producing, Port Harcourt refinery partially working, GDP growth 3.5% above population growth. All true. But market woman's spreadsheet is: Garri was N800 per paint, now N3,500. Transport from Iyana Ipaja to CMS was N500, now N1,500. NEPA bill was N8k, now N30k. Salary is same. Until both spreadsheets align, promises won't deliver victory.

What needs to happen: "They need to be afraid of consequences". Fear in democracy is good. Fear of voters should drive policy. What should administration do in next 90 days before January 2027 campaigns peak?

Direct address, not propaganda: President himself should do monthly media chat where he does not read speech, but answers: **Where is subsidy money? Why is Band A still poor? Why are drugs fake? Why are farmers still not back?** Apologise for sequencing mistakes. Nigerians forgive leader who admits pain. **Rebuild institutional trust visibly:** Direct NCC to publish quarterly quality of service report with refunds for poor service. Mandate telecoms to compensate for data loss. Halt further tariff hike until quality improves. Direct EFCC/ICPC to prosecute at least 3 serving or APC-aligned figures with prima facie cases to show impartiality.

Security as food security: Declare emergency on farmer security. Create special agro-security corps to protect farming corridors in Benue, Niger, Zamfara, Katsina for dry season farming. Show number of farmers returned, not just number of bandits killed.

Real, immediate palliative that people see: Not cash transfer announcement, but: Reduce Band A tariff for SMEs by 30% for six (6) months; subsidise fertilizer at farm gate, not in Abuja; make NHIA cover basic drugs for under-5 and pregnant women free; compel states to show what they did with tripled FAAC.

Stop assumptions, start listening: Cancel big stadium flag-offs. Do town halls in markets, farms, campuses where people can ask rude questions. The poor attendance in Kaduna is not logistics failure - it is trust failure. In the main, reforms are not bad. Nigeria needed to remove subsidy and unify forex. Even critics like me agree long-term. But reform without empathy, without institutional trust, without sequencing, without protecting the poor from exploitation by telecoms, fake drug sellers, corrupt officials - becomes punishment.

There is real danger in the assumptions that campaigns anchored on what reforms will bring after 2027 will be clincher. Reason: The same voter who is hungry, who cannot farm, who pays Band A, who buys fake drug, who sees NCC do nothing, who sees EFCC chase only opposition - that voter does not vote on future spreadsheet. He votes on present pain. If the ruling party campaigners are not afraid now, they will be afraid on ballot day in January 2027. So, here is the thing, Tinubu should address concerns of people directly. Not through aides, not through press releases and Op-Ed pieces, but face-to-face. In democracy, people are not data points. They are hungry, insecure, and watching who cares. The yellow card in Osun was a warning. Kaduna's empty seats are second warning. There may not be a third.

Published by The Guardian Group, Rutam House, Isolo, Lagos Tel: 01-4489600
Abuja Office: Plot 415 Olu Awotesu Street, Off Idris Ibrahim Crescent, Off Obafemi Awolowo Way, Jabi District, Abuja. Tel: 08065290744
Advert Hotlines: 01-4489619, 08023015115 08031930899, advert@guardian.ng; Circulation Hotline: 07038746449
All correspondence to Guardian Newspapers Limited, P.M.B. 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria.
E-mail: Letters@guardian.ng; www.guardian.ng
Editor: KABIR ALABI GARBA

ABC (ISSN NO 0189-5125)

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