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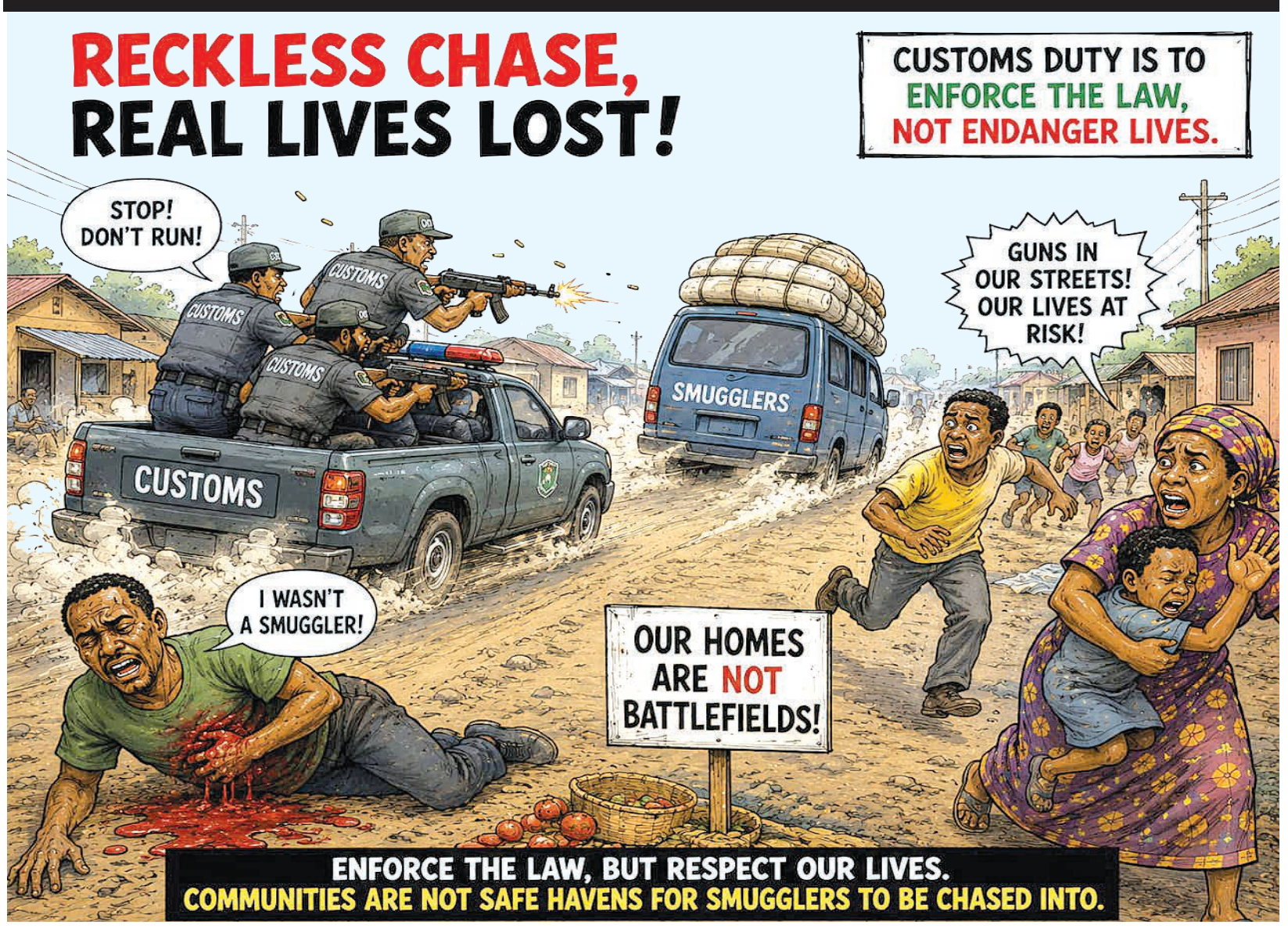
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Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

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'Relationship Between Nigeria, South Africa Too Important To Be Defined By Headline, Viral Video'

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

THE Consul General of South Africa, Lagos, Prof. Bobby Moroe, has called on the media to report the truth about events in his country, because the relationship between Nigeria and South Africa "is too important to be defined by a headline, by a viral video or by the actions of a few."

He spoke on the occasion of a tourism and media roundtable to clear perception, which many have formed since protests over migrants and undocumented persons living in South Africa began.

The roundtable was held on September 2, 2026, at the South African Consulate General Office, Lagos.

"We know what you have seen. We know the images that have circulated. We know the WhatsApp forwards and the videos that keep people awake at night," he said.

The Consul General urged the media to report the context and not what is perceived because, "there is a danger in a single story. If you only read one page of a book, you will misunderstand the whole book. To call 65 million South Africans 'xenophobic' because of the criminal acts of a few is to read only one page."

He said: "What we witnessed in parts of South Africa were acts of criminality by certain sections of society. They were acts born of frustration with crime, with unemployment, with service delivery. They were not government policy. They are not the position of the majority of 65 million South Africans.

"Crime does not have a nationality. Poverty does not have a passport. And frustration does not speak only one language."

Moroe said the South African government has acted, and continues to act.

"First, law enforcement was deployed immediately to protect life and property—for South Africans and for foreign nationals. Second, the President, Ministers, Premiers, and community leaders went on record to condemn the violence, because silence in the face of wrong is complicity. Third, we opened reporting channels so that anyone who was a victim could get assistance, regardless of where they come from."

While reiterating his country's commitment to Nigeria, he said, "the roundtable is not a reaction. It is a reaffirmation of our relations with the people and the government of the Federal republic of Nigeria."

According to him, "Nigeria is not just another country to South Africa. Nigeria is our most important partner in West Africa. This is not politics. This is history. This is economics. And that will not change because of a difficult week or a difficult month."

He assured that the country's diplomatic mission here in Lagos is fully open and operational. "Our colleagues in Abuja are also open. We are here to serve you. The doors are open. The lights are on. The South African Consulate in Lagos and the High Commission in Abuja are still issuing visas to Nigerians. There is no ban. There is no slowdown. There is no closure. Applications are being processed daily."

He concluded by saying, "to our tour operators, keep selling South Africa. Sell it with confidence. It is safe. It is beautiful. It is ready. And Nigerians are welcome."

PAPSS Targets 100% African Adoption Within Five Years

As Network Expands To 38 Countries This Year

By Helen Oji

THE Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) has set a target of achieving full coverage of African countries within the next five years as it enters the second phase of its expansion.

Speaking at a media parley in Lagos on Friday, Chief Executive Officer of PAPSS, Mike Ogbalu III, said PAPSS is currently connected to 30 African countries and expected to increase the number to about 38 countries before the end of 2026.

According to him, the immediate target is to achieve about 80 per cent coverage, including all the continent's major economies, while the longer-term goal is to bring all African countries onto the payment infrastructure.

"Our key target is to achieve 80 per cent, which will include all the major economies. But by the end of the next five years, we expect to have all countries," Ogbalu said.

He noted that South Africa remains the only major African economy yet to join the PAPSS infrastructure, adding that discussions with the country have been positive.

"The only big market that we do not yet have on the continent is South Africa. But we are engaging and the engagement has been positive. We have been able to address most of the issues that they have raised and we hope that soon they will join," he said.

Ogbalu disclosed that PAPSS has completed the first phase of its rollout, which focused on spreading the infrastructure across the continent and has moved into a second phase, which centred on deepening adoption and developing more services for the end users.

He also stated that the first phase involved building the payment infrastructure, connecting central banks, commercial banks, financial institutions and payment switches across Africa.

According to him, PAPSS has connected about 200 financial institutions and more than 60 switches across the continent, including 10 national switches.

He pointed out that the system has also reduced the time required for cross-border payments in Africa from between three and five days to as low as seven seconds, representing a 99 per cent reduction in transaction time.

Ogbalu also stated that PAPSS has reduced the cost of cross-border payments by as much as 95 per cent and recorded transaction volume growth of more than 1,000 per cent this year compared with the previous year.

He said the next phase would focus on making the infrastructure more useful to consumers, small businesses, merchants and technology companies.

"We have created an infrastructure that allows technology people to create on a platform. People are now innovating around the user experience that ties this infrastructure to the end users," he said.

On transaction movement, he said that PAPSS is increasingly seeing transactions move from bank branches to mobile banking, internet banking, USSD and other digital channels.

According to him, banks that integrate PAPSS into their digital channels have recorded between three and four times increases in transaction volumes.

He also noted that PAPSS was creating opportunities for African businesses to see the continent's population of about 1.4 billion people as a single market.



Group Chief Operating Officer, Computer Warehouse Group, Afolabi Sobande (left); Chairman, Nigerian-South African Chamber of Commerce (NSACC), Dr. Ijeoma Jidenma; Chief Financial Officer, MTN Nigeria, Modupe Kadri; Group Managing Director at SO&U, Udeme Ufot; Chief Executive Officer, Seams and Stitches, Yemi Chukwurah; and Chief Executive Officer, BHM Holdings, Ayeni Adekunle, during the Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce's August Breakfast Forum held at Eko Hotel & Suites Victoria Island, Lagos.

Tax Reform Has Reduced Burden On Low-Income Earners – Revenue Board

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Joint Revenue Board (JRB) has said Nigeria's tax reform has reduced the burden on low-income earners and eliminated multiple nuisance taxes.

The Executive Secretary of the JRB, Olusegun Adesokan, stated this while giving an overview of the progress recorded one year into the implementation of the tax reform.

A post obtained from the board's X handle on Friday said Adesokan spoke at the 160th meeting of the JRB in Kaduna State, with the theme, 'One Year of Reform: Assessing Progress and Addressing Challenges.'

He said the reform had also provided relief for low-income earners and micro-scale businesses, contrary to concerns that it had increased the tax burden.

"Addressing the misconception that the tax reform has increased taxes, the reform has rather reduced the tax burden on low-income earners, eliminated multiple nuisance taxes while providing reliefs for low-income earners and micro-scale businesses," he said.

Adesokan said 18 state Houses of Assembly had domesticated the harmonised taxes and levies law, which was designed to address overlapping and multiple taxation across the country.

According to him, the legislation had reduced more than 50 collection items previously administered by states and local councils to nine sub-heads.

He added that the law had also abolished cash collection and the mounting of roadblocks for revenue collection.

The executive secretary said the measures had recorded significant progress in harmonising taxes and levies across the sub-national governments.

The JRB, Nigeria's apex body for revenue administration, convened the meeting to assess progress under the new revenue regime, identify gaps and address emerging challenges.

In his opening remarks, JRB Chairman, Dr. Zacch Adedeji, represented by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Nigeria Revenue Service, Muhammad Abubakar, said the meeting was a call for revenue authorities to take stock of the progress made, address identified gaps and confront emerging challenges.

He said the ultimate measure of the reform's success must be improved revenue mobilisation, greater compliance, a better taxpayer experience and stronger contributions to national development.

The meeting was declared open by the Kaduna State Governor, Uba Sani, who said the reform had expanded opportunities for domestic resource mobilisation and strengthened the country's capacity to finance development.

Sani urged the JRB to identify bottlenecks affecting revenue collection, institutional weaknesses creating friction between revenue authorities and taxpayers, and opportunities for technology to improve efficiency in revenue administration.

He said: "The objective of the reform should not be simply to collect revenue; it should be to build a tax system in which compliance becomes easier, enforcement becomes more intelligent and voluntary compliance becomes a norm."

Sani expressed his delight with the tax reform, stressing that apart from eliminating duplication of taxation, it has enhanced revenue generation.

He observed that the national tax revenue has so far risen to N21.6 trillion since President Bola Tinubu introduced tax reform in 2026.

According to him, the nation's revenue was approximately N10.1 trillion in 2023, N21.6 trillion in 2024, and about N36.8 trillion in 2025.

Adesokan appreciated the governor for hosting the meeting and for his consistent support of the tax reform initiative. He particularly commended Uba for nominating a member of the Board and outgoing Executive Chairman of Kaduna State Internal Revenue Service, Mr. Jerry Adams, as his running mate for the 2027 gubernatorial election.

News

2027: Falana, Obe Urge Religious Bodies To Defend Democracy, Citizens' Rights

By **Moyosore Salami**

HUMAN rights lawyer, Femi Falana (SAN), and renowned pro-democracy activist, Ayo Obe, have urged the Church to play a more active role in protecting democracy by monitoring government budgets and defending the rights of citizens ahead of the 2027 general election.

They made the call during Bishop Mike Okonkwo's yearly birthday lecture titled, 'Democracy at the Crossroads: Electoral Credibility, Judicial Integrity and the Future of Nigeria," held at the Muson Centre, Lagos, on Thursday.

Falana, who was the chairman of the occasion, said the church has a responsibility to look beyond spiritual matters and pay attention to how public resources were managed, particularly at a time when the country was facing growing concerns over insecurity, poverty, political violence and weak accountability.

He said religious institutions could not afford to remain passive when decisions taken by government directly affect the lives and welfare of their members.

Falana urged the church to scrutinise government budgets at all levels and monitor how public funds are being spent.

He also called for the establishment of a human rights body within the church to monitor violations against church members and other Nigerians.

According to him, religious institutions could contribute to the protection of democracy by holding government accountable and ensuring that public resources are used for the benefit of citizens.

He said democracy should not be viewed only from the perspective of elections, stressing that accountable leadership, public service, welfare and the security of citizens are equally important components of a democratic society.

Falana warned that Nigeria's democracy was at a crossroads ahead of the 2027 general election, citing threats of political violence, rigged party primaries, weak electoral credibility and concerns over judicial integrity.

He said elections remain the foundation of democracy and that citizens must be allowed to participate freely and peacefully in the democratic process without fear, intimidation or threats.

The human rights lawyer noted that disputes arising from rigged elections were usually taken before election petition tribunals and the courts, but expressed concern that many petitions were dismissed on technical grounds or because petitioners were unable to prove allegations of electoral malpractice.

He said the situation had emboldened those who rig elections to challenge their opponents to seek redress in court.

Falana also pointed to the governorship elections in Anambra and Ekiti states as examples of credible elections, noting that none of the candidates who lost in the two states filed petitions challenging the results.

He also referred to the August 15, 2026, governorship election in Osun State, saying the decision of the All Progressives Congress (APC) to accept the result and congratulate the winner meant the election would not be challenged at the tribunal.



Speaker, Rivers State House of Assembly, Mr Martins Amaewhule (left); Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara; Commissioner for Finance in Rivers State, Mr Lekue Kenneth and the Majority Leader, Rivers State House of Assembly, Mr Major Jack, during the signing of the 2026 Appropriation Law in Port Harcourt.

Customs Intercept Smuggled Vehicles With Presidency Plate Numbers

From **Murtala Adewale**, Kano

THE Nigeria Customs Service, Kano/Jigawa Area Command, has intercepted smuggled vehicles with Presidency plate numbers in ploy to invade the Service's control.

Besides, the Command said it generated N25 billion between July and August 2026, putting its revenue generation between January and August at N88,925,099,742.70 billion.

Briefing journalists on the revenue performance and update on the other activities of the Command, Acting Comptroller of Customs, Usman Adamu, revealed what he described as a new trend of smugglers flagging official plate numbers on smuggled vehicles to invade Customs control.

Apart from the labelled vehicles, Adamu revealed interception of eight units of suspected diverted transit truck heads with Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N300,905,856 million and seven units of different brands of smuggled vehicles with Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N410,542,056 million.

He further revealed the arrest of foreign consumables including parboiled rice, vegetable oil, spaghetti and unregistered pharmaceuticals constituting economic sabotage to the country.

He added: "In line with our mandate and the Service's commitment to combating smuggling and protecting Nigeria's economy, public health, national security and environment, the Command has sustained robust enforcement operations across its area of responsibility.

Tackling Nigeria's Insecurity Problem Requires Comprehensive, Long-term Solutions, Says Soyombo

By **Debo Oladimeji**

A LECTURER in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos, Prof. Omololu Soyombo, has said that tackling the problem of insecurity in Nigeria requires comprehensive, long-term solutions that address the factors contributing to it.

He noted that creating employment opportunities, reducing poverty, improving education and implementing meaningful institutional reforms would go a long way to address Nigeria's security challenges.

Speaking on Friday in Lagos during his exaugural lecture titled, 'Why We Are Where We Are: A Sociological Analysis of the Trials and Travails of Security Control in Nigeria" and the presentation of his autobiography to mark his 70th birthday, Soyombo stated that crimes occur everywhere in Nigeria but violent crimes such as terrorism, kidnapping and banditry are more prevalent in the northern states.

According to him, insecurity is more concentrated in rural areas, with the perpetrators targeting places of worship, schools, markets and military bases, while making occasional forays into urban areas and cities.

He added: "Prominent school attacks include: Chibok, Dapchi, Kagara, Greenfield and Oriire. Borno State was reported to be the most impacted state, with 38,255 deaths from terrorism as at 2023.

"The question now is: how did we get to where we are now? What are we doing wrong? What are we not doing right? This lecture is useful for addressing many of the pressing problems of our contemporary Nigerian society–whether the challenge of under-development, political instability, moral degeneration, infrastructure decay, high unemployment, high poverty, unbridled corruption, terrorism, banditry, poor healthcare services and infrastructure, high child and maternal mortality, low technological development, poor electricity supply, etc. All the problems are intertwined in such a way that once we find the key to solving one of the problems, it can give a clue to solving other problems."

He added that from a demographic perspective, the age of 70 is remarkable and worth celebrating.

"In my case, it is even more so because it also marks a milestone point-statutory retirement. I would have served the University of Lagos for 45 years, one month, and five days. Demographic statistics indicate that only 7.3 per cent of people in the world live to be 70 years or older. More specifically, for Nigeria, only about 1.6 per cent of the population are 70 years or older, although the percentage has been growing in recent times."

Campaigns: Ogun Government Vows To Sustain Peaceful Environment

From **Azeez Olorunlomeru**, Abeokuta

THE Ogun State government has vowed to sustain the peaceful political environment in the state ahead of the 2027 general election, assuring political parties and their candidates of the freedom to campaign, mobilise and seek the support of voters without intimidation or harassment.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Information and Strategy, Kayode Akinmade, gave the assurance while featuring on a live radio programme in Abeokuta, saying the administration of Governor Dapo Abiodun remained committed to ensuring that political activities across the state were conducted peacefully and within the law.

Akinmade said the government had deliberately created an atmosphere in which opposition parties could operate freely, noting that their posters, flyers and billboards were being displayed across the state after complying with established procedures.

He stressed that unlike the tension and instability associated with the 2019 election period, the government would not allow political activities in the run-up to the 2027 elections to degenerate into violence, intimidation or disorder.

"Governor Abiodun has made it clear that what happened in 2019 must never happen again in Ogun State. Political competition should not translate into violence, intimidation or a breakdown of law and order," he said.

According to him, the government is engaging security agencies, civil society organisations, traditional rulers, religious leaders and other critical stakeholders to ensure that campaigns and other political activities remain peaceful across the state's 20 local councils.

Akinmade warned political parties and their supporters against acts capable of heating up the polity, stressing that while every political actor has the right to campaign and canvass for votes, such rights must be exercised responsibly and within the law.

He said the government would continue to support the security agencies in protecting lives and property and ensuring that voters, candidates, journalists, electoral officials and other participants can carry out their responsibilities without fear.

The special adviser also called on political parties to focus their campaigns on issues, programmes and their records of service rather than resorting to thuggery, hate speech, misinformation or personal attacks.

He urged residents to reject vote-buying and other electoral practices capable of undermining the credibility of the electoral process, while encouraging all stakeholders to respect the guidelines of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Akinmade said the peaceful conduct of elections was a collective responsibility, urging the media, traditional institutions, civil society, security agencies, political parties and the electorate to play their respective roles in protecting the peace of the state.

Ondo Commissioner Advocates Increased Community Health Education

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

THE Ondo State Commissioner for Education, Prof. Igbekele Ajibefun, has called for increased and regular health education among communities in the state to improve health awareness, early discovery of life threatening ailments and timely seeking of medical attention to save lives.

Ajibefun made the call as the Special Guest of honour at a two-Day Free Medical Outreach at Ilutitun Osoro organised by the Augustus Adeniyi Fanoro Memorial Health Foundation for diabetic/sugar, hypertension, arthritis and malaria fever patients.

The programme was co-sponsored by the CEO of Ilutitun Micro-finance Bank, Mr. Teni Faromoju; National Vice President, Manuwa Memorial Grammar School Old Students Association, Dr. Stephen Fasawe (FCA); General Ola Ohunye (retd.) and Mr. Doyin Adekanle.

The commissioner, represented by a senior director from the ministry, Mr. Loye Akinbuwa, expressed delight at the massive turnout of members of the community, especially the direct involvement of its paramount ruler, Oba Ernest Idepefo, and the various churches in the mobilisation of residents for the programme.

NTA Celebrates Former NBC DG Danladi Bako At 69

By **Suliyat Tella**

FORMER Director-General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Dr. Danladi Bako, has been celebrated for his contributions to Nigeria's broadcasting industry as he marks his 69th birthday.

The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), in a congratulatory message signed by its Director-General and Chief Executive Officer, Salihu Abdulhamid Dembos, described Bako's years in public service as significant to the development of broadcasting in Nigeria.

Dembos, on behalf of the management and staff of the NTA, extended warm congratulations and best wishes to Bako.

The NTA said Bako's tenure at the broadcasting regulatory agency remained an important part of the history and development of Nigeria's broadcasting industry.

It noted that through his leadership, experience and commitment to the profession, Bako contributed to the growth of an industry that plays an important role in information dissemination, education, national integration and democratic development.

"Your years of service, particularly your tenure as Director-General of the National Broadcasting Commission, remain an important part of the history and development of Nigeria's broadcasting industry," the NTA said.

Special

Border Communities Bear Brunt

For those living at Nigeria's smuggling corridors, the sound of speeding vehicles or gunshots is no longer strange. These people are used to such sound like new babies to suckling. While the Nigeria Customs Service has a legal mandate to combat smuggling, the decision to pursue suspected smugglers into populated communities, sometimes, at dangerous speeds and with firearms discharged, raises a difficult question: where does legitimate enforcement end and unacceptable risk to innocent lives begin? The growing concern is, therefore, not whether smugglers should be stopped, but how they should be stopped without putting the lives of ordinary Nigerians at unnecessary risk, **GBENGA SALAU** *writes.*



JIBIA Town, Katsina State. August 2021, a Customs border patrol vehicle driving at high speed while chasing a suspected rice smuggler lost control and plowed into a group of roadside bystanders and villagers, leaving multiple dead and over 20 others with severe injuries.

Earlier in July, along the Daura–Kano Road in Jigawa State, a suspected smuggler attempting to evade arrest struck and killed a customs officer during a stop-and-search operation.

Recently, in Oko-Afo, Badagry, Lagos State, precisely, in July, 2026, during an operational pursuit of a commercial bus suspected to carry contraband rice, customs operatives reportedly discharged firearms in a populated street, resulting in a stray bullet striking and killing an innocent resident and injuring two others.

Similarly, sometime in November 2024, Obada Idi-Emi, Ogun State, was buried in grief, as a civilian bystander was killed by a stray bullet during an intense exchange of gunfire by Customs personnel and suspected smugglers.

In Ota-Idiroko Road, Ogun State, around May 2017, a high-speed pursuit and subsequent shootout at the Onibuku junction led to civilian and suspect casualties.

The list is endless.

However, one of the most widely reported incidents occurred during the 2021 Eid-el-Fitr period in Iseyin area of Oyo State.

According to residents and media reports, customs officers were pursuing a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) allegedly transporting smuggled rice through Iseyin when officers opened fire.

Several civilians were reportedly killed and others injured. This incident sparked widespread protests. One of the persons who lost his life in the Iseyin incident was Ibrahim Onisile, whose wife had a six week baby she was nursing when he died from customs stray bullet.

Onisile was not the only victim, others included 31 year-old Tobi Opeyemi; Abdullahi Abdulazeez, who was said to be 32 years at the time of the incident and Timothy Gbadegesin, a 34-year-old commercial tricycle rider.

Findings revealed that Gbadegesin was fixing his motorcycle tyres when a gunshot from customs hit him. He died on the spot.

However, five years after the Iseyin incident, the mother of one of the victims, Lady Evangelist Bosede Akinlotan, narrated how the incident happened and how it has inflicted pains on the family, disclosing that the customs officers were chasing smugglers when the incident occurred.

She also added that the families of the victims were promised N20 million as compensation, which they have not received, though they were told that government has released the money, to whom, they do not know.

Akinlotan said: "He was with me before the incident. But shortly after the bullet hit him, I was called that he was hit by a bullet from Customs officers and he died along with the Okada rider who was carrying him to the hospital. We were invited to Abuja after the member of House representing us had raised the issue on the floor of the National Assembly and we went. Through our lawyer, all the victims' families were promised N20 million. The N20 million was also to cater for a victim of similar incident in Ibarapa. However, we have not got anything despite we went to Abuja twice over the matter. Though, we later learnt that the money had been paid, which we never received anything."

Akinlotan disclosed that his son was 30 years when the incident occurred and had three children.

She revealed that his late son's wife remarried after the incident and left the three children in her care.

According to her, his son, Samson Oluwatobi Akinlotan, was a bricklayer at the time the incident occurred.

She revealed that despite the burden of nurturing her three grandchildren since the demise of their father, God has been faithful in taking care of the children. She said the three children are 10, 12 and 14 years.

She also provided some insight to the tragedy that occurred when they were trying to get a compensation.

According to her, one of those leading the advocacy for parents of victims to be compensated, Kola Bello, died in an accident a week to when we were told the N20 million compensation would be paid.

Akinlotan, however, revealed that the House of Representative member representing Iseyin when the incident happened pledged to support the upkeep of the children, which he has not relented in doing till date.

"There have been several incidents that have happened after then, may be because my son was very popular and loved by the people was why it became very prominent as people were pained."

A resident of Badagry-Seme corridor, Abraham Oke, revealed that he had seen not less than 10 injured individuals, aside from about five other persons dying from stray bullets or getting knocked down.

He noted that smuggling is very complicated and involves a lot of networking, observing that many of the chases owe to a breach in agreement or the need to 'show' the government that they are working.

Oke insisted that if the Nigerian Customs Service were to be relied on in its discharge of duties, it should engage in intelligence-led operations, "but every checkpoint wants to operate in isolation and to fight for their 'pockets'."

He also suggested that the service should strengthen its internal operations and collaboration mechanism that will ensure effective and efficient service delivery as an agency.

He also argued that prioritising the welfare of officers could make them to be more humane in carrying out their enforcement.

He stated that government and the Nigerian Customs Service should know that lives are worth more than any revenue; therefore, priorities of the agency should be rightly adjusted and adequately implemented.

He also called for awareness and sensitisation of officers and the surrounding environment.

"It will interest you to know that more than 70 per cent of smuggling activities in the border area are powered and sponsored by non-residents or natives. Smuggling is expensive and requires a wide network," Oke stated.

Stakeholders are of the opininon that the fight against smuggling is a legitimate responsibility of the state, but enforcement cannot be measured only by the goods seized or smugglers apprehended.

When customs officers chase suspected smugglers through communities, drive recklessly or discharge firearms and residents are injured or killed, the human cost becomes part of the story.

For families caught in such incidents, the distinction between an anti-smuggling operation and a preventable tragedy may offer little comfort.

It was, therefore, not surprising when there was tension in Ajara area of Badagry, Lagos State mid-July 2026, when a suspected rice smuggler and customs officers drove recklessly into the community.

For many residents who witnessed the incident, it was not a palatable experience, as they pondered over the negative consequences of the action, especially as children were moving across the roads.

It was gathered that the youths prevented the officers from going away with the bags of rice seized from the man who rode in an SUV because community leaders and stakeholders had earlier warned and protested that chasing smugglers into their community often endanger residents.

In the video of the altercation between the Customs officers and the youths, gunshots were heard. It was, however, gladdening that the confrontation between the two did not degenerate into death or anyone getting injured.

However, while the Nigeria Customs Service has a constitutional responsibility to curb the illegal movement of goods

Feature

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Of Anti-Smuggling War

across the country's porous borders, concerns are mounting over enforcement operations that have reportedly left residents caught in the crossfire of high-speed pursuits and exchanges of gunfire with suspected smugglers.

This is because these are communities where farmers, traders, schoolchildren and commuters share the same roads used by smugglers.

They, however, argued that the manner customs and some other security agencies carryout their enforcement, leave a thin line between legitimate law enforcement and avoidable danger.

Dovinon Whenayon Zachariah, a resident of Badagry commenting on the recent incident, said: "This unprofessionalism of the Nigeria Customs in Badagry federation has ended the life of many youths. I remembered some years ago, when they chased a bike carrying bags of rice down to the Oglogbo Community Sea Beach, their reckless shooting and unprofessionalism, led to a young boy of 12 years getting hit by a stray bullet on his back while playing football. Till date, nothing has been done. It is high time our traditional rulers stand against this, because the youths have been advocating putting an end to this unprofessionalism for quite long."

Similarly, another resident,Sesede Toviho, described the incident as so absurd and unacceptable.

"I am sure Badagry Local Council and Badagry West LCDA have had several engagements with them concerning this, but it looks like it's not stopping and this is dangerous to us the populace. It's until all others and community people wake up and take the bull by the horn before these people know we're not joking. I know for sure that if it's just to talk without taking actions this will continue to happen and it could affect anybody.

"One happened as I was going to work just opposite Badagry Grammar School (BGS), you needed to see the way they were chasing this bike man with two bags of rice o, and a parent was taking her children to Wesley School and they almost hit them.

"The Customs later hit the bike man on the covet and then he stood up and ran across the road without watching. Now, let's assume a car or even a bike was coming at that time and it hit the man, or what if the man had hit his head on the covet when they fell him down, what if they had hit the bike man carrying those pupils and their mum? This has to stop."

From the comments on the facebook page, though the latest incident, there was no casualty, earlier incidents have resulted in injuries and death of victims. But such incidents are not limited only to Badagry.

Also commenting, Sewanu Michael felt that probably because there is no single official consolidated figure published about those shot and who died from stray bullets from Customs officers make stakeholders not to pay much attention to the issue.

He stated that several documented incidents have been reported in the media over the last six to seven years. He said that in 2019, it was reported that three students were shot at an illegal checkpoint in Inogi Community, Badagry West LCDA, with two of them becoming amputees.

He added that around 2016 and 2017, a woman, Mrs Patience Oni, was allegedly killed by stray bullets during a customs raid near Badagry Roundabout.

He also said that in 2016, two boys, ages 10 and 12, were hit by stray bullets during a clash over petrol smuggling in Sokenu Compound, Seme. He, however, disclosed that they were treated at the customs clinic and survived.

On whether intelligence-led operations could reduce the need for dangerous vehicle chases, Michael stated that intelligence-led operations shift the focus from reactive road chases to proactive disruption.

According to him, the Customs can deploy intelligence led operation by targeting the network, not just the goods. "They should use surveillance, informants, and data analysis to identify warehouses, financiers, and smuggling routes before goods move."

He also suggested intercepting smuggled goods at storage points some of which are very popular and hideouts instead of chasing moving vehicles on public roads.

He further said that deployment of technology will help, with the agency deploying scanners, drones and maritime monitoring at waterside exit points in Badagry to track boats without high-speed pursuit.

He added that inter-agency collaboration with joint patrols among security agencies as well as better intel sharing, which will reduce surprise confrontations.

He is also of the opinion that community engagement and partnership is critical which he thinks will help to reduce mob resistance by working with local leaders.

"Some clashes occur when 'unscrupulous elements' try to set seized items ablaze. This reduces high-speed chases that endanger officers, smugglers, and civilians."

On how policymakers should balance revenue protection against the duty to protect citizens' lives, Sewanu stated that the balance should be revenue without casualties, which is human lives first.

He added that Standard Operating Procedures must mandate that firearms are a last resort, especially in populated areas.

He also stated that border communities like Seme generates more than 10 billion yearly, investing part of that revenue in border livelihood programmes will reduce reliance on smuggling.

According to him, it is important that accountability is prioritise through investigating and prosecuting excessive force cases. This would help to build public trust.

He also said efforts should be geared towards improving legal trade facilitation through faster, cheaper, and clearer import processes, which would reduce the incentive to smuggle, protect revenue without raids.

Similarly, President, Badagry Division Youths Employment Initiative, Mukaila Oluwafemi, said the peole are not asking that customs officers should abandon the duties empowered by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"But we plead that once a vehicle has left the main road and entered any community in Badagry West or has crossed Gbaji Bridge into Badagry Town or Ajara Town, the chase should stop there. Lives of Nigerians are more important than one bag of rice. We have seen cases where people are killed over rice, and that same rice will still be distributed and eaten across the country, including the East and the North.

"If the issue is with those using containers, please focus your operation on that. But chasing a man carrying one bag or two bags of rice into our communities is putting innocent lives at risk.

To be honest, I have not seen this kind of customs operation in any other country I have traveled to. Let us be more professional about this job. The safety of citizens is the primary responsibility of every responsible government and all security agencies.

"We beg you in the name of God. If there is an exchange of gunfire inside our communities, innocent people will be victims: pregnant women, school children, and residents who have nothing to do with it. Let your men be more active at the border and at official checkpoints approved by the Federal Government. Do not bring the chase into our communities."

Responding to the different queries, the Spokesperson of the Nigeria Customs Service, Abdullahi Aliyu Maiwada, stated that the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) operates strictly within its constitutional mandate to protect the national economy, public health and national security from illicit trade.

He noted that the decision to pursue fleeing suspects is grounded in duty, as unmonitored contraband often includes arms, ammunition, and dangerous goods that pose broader threats to society.

"However, the Service does not and will never justify operations that deliberately put innocent lives at risk. The discharge of firearms in populated areas is strongly discouraged and restricted.

"In almost every recorded instance where engagement occurs within communities, officers are subjected to sudden, violent ambushes or hostile crossfire initiated by organised criminal syndicates or paid mobs attempting to forcibly retrieve seized goods. While officers possess a right to self-defense our operational directive prioritises tactical intelligence and interception at border lines over high-speed pursuits in residential areas."

A Professor of Criminology and Security studies at Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ebonyi State, Smart Otu, noted that the the pattern of customs officers or security agencies chasing smugglers and criminals into communities is outdated, because every serious organisation should be intelligence driven.

"If you do intelligence policing and anti-smuggling, you don't even allow them to get to a point where you begin to chase them into the communities. "

This is because of its implications, stray bullets could hit innocent people, which make the Customs as an organisation inefficient.

It is a system that should not be tolerated at this 21st century. However, we are in a system where there is no accountability so they still result to this kind of crude method but I think it is not acceptable in this era. What we need to do is to do more of intelligence policing, you can even use the local, and get these people before they even get to the point of chasing them.

"In serious environment, even before the smugglers leave their locations, they have information, and so they intercept them at the point of entry. It should be all about intelligence driven process. If you are doing an intelligence driven anti-smuggling, or generally anti policing you must have a right source of information where as the people are leaving their locations. It is like what happens in most cases under drug trafficking, especially in most advanced countries they have this intelligence, once you have loaded yourself with the drugs, information gets to them all they need to is to protect the source of information, so that the informant will not be exposed because these smugglers are generally very ruthless if they are able to get the source of the leak. Now, the world has gone technological in terms of fighting crimes. If they mount the necessary surveillance, again at the right place they will be able to detect these smugglers before they get to the point of chasing them with their foot or with their bike or with their vehicle."

Otu said that the Customs and its officers have continued to use crude methods that endanger residents in its operations to arrest smugglers because officers and their bosses have not be held accountable in cases where people died or get injured from such operations.

He noted that in a sane clime, the system holds every officer accountable for his or her action which is not the case in Nigeria.

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



Customs Boss, Adeniyi

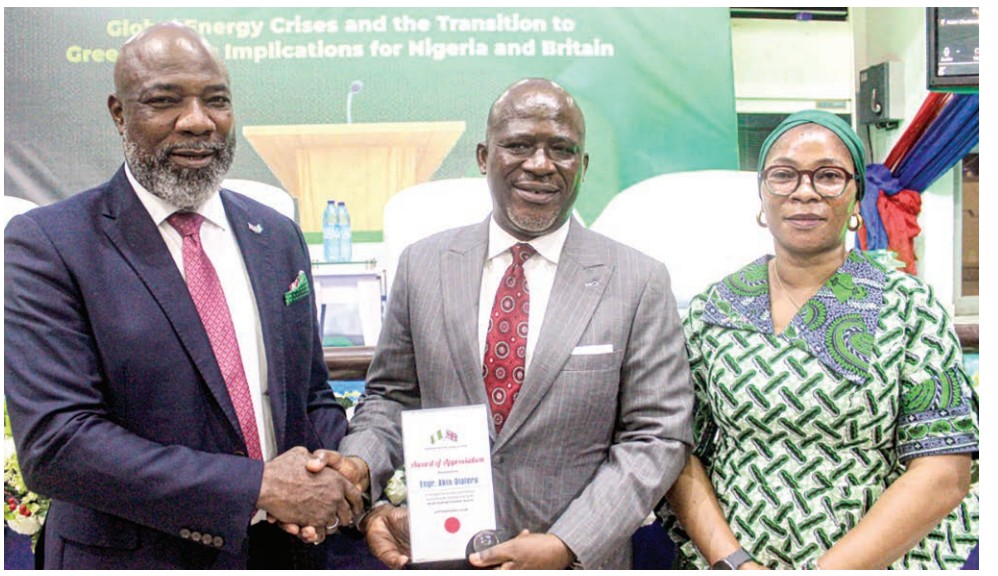
Diary



Senator Osita Izunaso (left); former Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mrs. Farida Waziri and her son, the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Phoenix SW Security Ltd, Ibrahim Waziri at the recent wedding of the daughter of former Minister of Defence, Gen. TY Danjuma (rtd) in Marbella, Spain.



Deputy Ambassador, Embassy of Cuba to Nigeria, Amb. Ana Flavia (left); former Minister of Interior, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola; the author of the book, Olakunle Abimbola and book talk host, and Literary Agent, Salamatu Sule, at the unveiling of the book; "*Ogbeni: The Osun Renaissance Years*", in Abuja ...on Thursday.



President, Nigerian-Britain Association, Ademola Sanya (left); Chairman/Chief Executive Officer (CEO), OMNI-BLU Aviation Ltd/Keynote Speaker, Akin Olateru, an engineer and Registrar/Chief Executive, NIM/ Chairman, Events Committee, NBA, Dr. Taiwo Olusesi at the 2026 Yearly Lecture Series of Nigerian-Britain Association held in Management House, NIM Headquarters, in Lagos,



High Chief Adewale Netufo (left); Most Special Apostle Ilesanmi Ademusire; Chairman, Augustus Adeniyi Fanoro Memorial Health Foundation, Mr. Abiodun Fanoro; Paramount Ruler, Morubodo Kingdom, Oba Ernest Idepefo; and a member of the seven-man Medical Team, Mrs Blessing Kayode, during a two-day yearly Free Medical Outreach for Diabetic, Hypertension, Arthritis, and Malaria Fever patients, organised by the Foundation at Ilutitun, Ondo State.

Metronotes

Rechael Okonkwo's Nkoli Mega Carnival Provides Free Healthcare To Nsukka Residents

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

NOLLYWOOD actress, Rechael Okonkwo, popularly known as Nkoli Nwa Nsukka, has provided free medical care to over 5,000 residents during the eighth edition of her yearly Nkoli Mega Carnival in Nsukka, Enugu State,

The medical outreach, organised in partnership with the Franklin Junior Foundation, brought together doctors, nurses, laboratory personnel and other healthcare professionals to attend to residents with various health concerns. Beneficiaries received free consultations, medications, wheelchairs, walking aids and reading glasses, while patients requiring further treatment were referred to hospitals,

Speaking on the initiative, Director of Programmes at the Franklin Junior Foundation, David Ofogba, said the foundation partnered with Rechael to bring accessible healthcare to residents who may otherwise struggle to afford basic medical services. According to Ofogba, the outreach had attended to more than 5,000 patients, with those requiring specialised care referred for further treatment.

New Governance Blueprint Unveiled At Book Presentation In Abuja

A NEW publication documenting a model of sub-national development, institutional reform and people-centred governance has been launched in Abuja, with policymakers, academics, civil society actors and media practitioners describing the work as a valuable resource for present and future African leaders.

Entitled "*Ogbeni: The Osun Renaissance Years*" *and authored* by Olakunle Abimbola, the book was formally presented at a public policy gathering hosted by Rovingheights in Garki, Abuja, amid discussions on how sub national governments can achieve sustainable socio-economic transformation despite fiscal constraints and other governance challenges.

Rather than serving solely as an administrative memoir, the publication presents an analytical account of governance and development, drawing lessons from the 2010 to 2018 administration in Osun State and documenting practical approaches that can potentially be adapted by other sub-national entities across Africa.

KSM Lagos Metro To Launch N2b Endowment Fund, Archbishop Martins Pledges Support

THE Knights of St. Mulumba (KSM) Nigeria, Lagos Metropolitan Council, is set to launch a N2b Endowment Fund aimed at creating a sustainable financial foundation for its charitable activities.

The initiative was announced during a visit by a KSM Lagos Metro delegation, led by the Metropolitan Grand Knight, Sir Nosa Ehigiator, to the Catholic Archbishop of the Metropolitan See of Lagos, Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins, at the Lagos Archdiocesan Chancery on Monday, August 30, 2026.

The Endowment Fund will be launched on September 26, 2026, at St. Leo Catholic Church, Ikeja.

Archbishop Martins welcomed the initiative as "a welcome development" for KSM and the Church, pledging to offer whatever support he could.

ParentalPal Summer Camp Ends In Lagos

By **Tobi Awodipe**

WHAT began as a six-week holiday learning and creative exploration, ended over the weekend in a colourful celebration. The event, ParentalPal's Summer Camp 2026, brought together children, parents, facilitators and staff for a Showcase and Children's Trade Fair in Lagos.

The programme, which hosted 54 children from 47 families, was designed to move beyond conventional holiday activities by creating opportunities for children to learn, experiment and discover their individual strengths.

Firm Launches Operations To Drive 360-degree Business Transformation, Sustainable Growth

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

DAC Consulting, a 360-degree management consulting firm, has officially commenced operations with a commitment to helping organisations address complex business challenges through integrated solutions spanning People, Process and Product Management.

The firm said its approach is designed to strengthen leadership, improve organisational effectiveness, optimise business processes and drive sustainable business growth.

DAC Consulting is entering the market at a time when organisations across industries are contending with changing workforce dynamics, rapid technological advancement, evolving customer expectations and increasing pressure to improve performance and productivity.

Lagos Country Club Inaugurates Project Falcon At 77th Anniversary

By **Sunday Aikulola**

MEMBERS of the Lagos Country Club recently marked its 77th anniversary, even as they commissioned Project Falcon, a major sustainable project described as a gift to the next generation.

In his address during the club's 77th Anniversary Gala Night and commissioning of Project Falcon in Lagos recently, President of Lagos Country Club, 'Seyi Adewunmi said: "The infrastructure that was upgraded today was built 77 years ago. We have rebuilt the structure. It's a gift to the next generation. Inside this infrastructure are offices, e- sport section, which is a game for the future generation. We must also continually bring our past into the future. For instance, the wood that was used 77 years ago is still the same wood that we used. It cannot be found in any market."

He advised Nigerians to always go out and participate in elections so that they can choose leaders of their choice.

Ooni, Nwachukwu, Faloughi, Others To Grace Rotary Club 's Investiture Sept. 6.

HIS Imperial Majesty Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja 11, Ooni of Ife; His Highness (Dr) Ephraim Fagha Faloughi-Spiff; former External Affairs Minister, Maj Gen Ike Nwachukwu (rtd); Chairman and Founder DSE Foundation, Chief Tunde Fanimokun; and Superintendent Naval Dockyard Ltd, Rear Admiral Ibrahim Shehu are among dignitaries expected to grace the Rotary Club of Bourdillon Prestige Charter President investiture ceremony on Sunday, September 6, 2026, at 3 pm at Naval Dockyard, Ahmadu Bello Way, Victoria Island, Lagos

Its President, Winifred Ebiye, said: " The Chairman of the occasion is the Founder of DSE Foundation, Chief Tunde Fanimokun; and Special Guest of honour is Rear Admiral Ibrahim Shehu, Superintendent of Naval Dockyard Ltd. Chief host is Rotary International District 9112 Governor, Layi Abidoye."

"The selfless projects are aimed at transforming and creating lasting impact in our community,such as improving basic education and literacy; provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and environment, among service projects", she said.

Despite N16.2b Spent, Ijede Road Yet To Be Reconstructed, Still Deplorable

Residents Lament Poor State Of Road

By **Gbenga Salau**

FOR many residents of Ikorodu living around and between Oke Eletu and Ijede, the daily prayer is for the Lagos State government to come fix their road. And it seems government knows about their plight which is why it made budgetary provision for the reconstruction of the road. But the reality on ground is that despite the 2025 budget performance document revealed that N16. 2 billion had been spent to repair and reconstruct the road, the road is still in a deplorable state with residents and motorists bearing the brunt.



According to the 2025 budget performance document, of the N16. 2 billion budgeted for the reconstruction of the road, a large chunk of the money was spent between first and third quarter with only N4.655 million spent in the fourth quarter. The budget document also revealed that while N16.209 billion was provided in the appropriation document, as at the end of 2025, N16,202 billion was spent on the project. According to the budget document, what was left unspent was N6.9 million

The Ikorodu residents along that corridor are however wondering how N16.2 billion was spent on the reconstruction of the road with no noticeable impact on the outlook of the road, especially that it is almost one year that a larger chunk of the money for the road was said to have been spent.

Commenting, a resident, Adebimpe Abimbola, stated that when the government reconstructed the road from Elepe down to Kingsfield, many of the residents thought the government would construct it down to Ijede, but they didn't. "Then they came back, they did from kingsfield down to Gberigbe. They completed Gberigbe road since 2025, but they have refused to come to Ijede.

"The road is very bad. You do not get bus when you are going home, especially at night. Thank God, it's not even raining again, but during the rainy season, It was worse."

Abimbola noted that even the Gberigbe Road that was constructed, the government cannot boast it spent such a huge amount up to N16 billion on that road. "They just completed that road in 2025, and every now and then, they are always coming back to patch it. They used interlocks, yet everytime, either contractors or public works are always coming to fix something on the road."

Abimbola stated that she is shocked to hear that about N16.2 billion has been spent to fix a road that was not repaired not to talk of complete overhaul.

Another resident, Mr. Ajayi Olokungboye, sharing the pains residents and motorists go through as a result of the appalling state of the road, disclosed that the House of Representative member, representing Ikorodu Federal Constituency, Jimi Benson only did Ewu Owa down to Abule Eko. "They have not constructed it down to Abule Eko, they are just doing gutters. But you see from Gbodu down to Ijede, they did not do anything.

"The road is now worse. Before, Ijede from garage was N700, now it is N1000. Before the fare even got to N700, it used to be N500. It is this bad road that made transporters to increase the transport fare. Even with the N1000 charge as transport fare, you will wait for long before you get bus. During rainy season, we had it worse. Even with the N1000 being charged, you might not get bus. I always had to go pass Ewu Owa, it is a long journey but it is better. Sometimes, I do stay at work and not go home because of the state of the road."

AI Must Augment, Not Replace Teachers, Says Lagos Deputy Governor

By **Ruth Ononye**

THE Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, has called for responsible integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Nigeria's education system, stressing that the technology should strengthen teachers rather than replace them. Hamzat made the call at the 13th Professor Adetokunbo Babatunde Sofoluwe Memorial Anniversary Lecture held at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Akoka, Lagos.

The lecture, organised by the UNILAG Alumni Association, Lagos Branch, in conjunction with Yaba Local Council Development Area (LCDA), is themed, "Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for the Sustainable Development of Nigeria's Education System."

Hamzat said Nigeria's education crisis goes beyond inadequate funding, noting that challenges in planning, coordination, delivery and access to reliable information also affect the sector.

According to him, AI can help education authorities make better decisions by providing real-time information on student enrollment, teacher availability, infrastructure and the effectiveness of public investments.

He said AI could also assist teachers in developing learning materials and exercises suited to different levels of ability, assessing students, identifying learning gaps and supporting marking.

Hamzat urged teachers not to perceive AI as a threat to their profession but as a tool that could strengthen their ability to teach and connect with students.

He said while AI could generate information, identify learning gaps and assist with academic tasks, it could not replace the human understanding, communication and emotional connection teachers bring to the classroom.

He also advocated the development of AI systems that reflect Nigeria's linguistic and cultural diversity, rather than relying solely on systems designed around English and foreign contexts.

The deputy governor further warned that unequal access to digital devices and technology could widen the existing education gap between children from privileged and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Hamzat further raised concerns about the protection of students personal information as AI becomes increasingly integrated into education.

Earlier, the Chairman of the occasion, Owoeye Adedeji Adeyemo, said the memorial lecture remained a means of preserving the legacy of Prof. Sofoluwe, whom he described as a visionary, mentor and champion of academic excellence.

Adeyemo noted that the 13th edition marked the first time the UNILAG Alumni Association, Lagos Branch, partnered with Yaba LCDA for the lecture.

He said the partnership represented a bridge between "town and gown", demonstrating how academia and grassroots governance could collaborate to promote development.

Lagos Pledges Minimal Inconvenience For Road Users, Residents During Turnbull, Parkview Intersections' Reconstruction

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

LAGOS State government has pledged that there will be minimal inconvenience for road users and residents during the reconstruction of Turnbull and Parkview intersections along the Gerrard Road corridor in Ikoyi, Lagos.

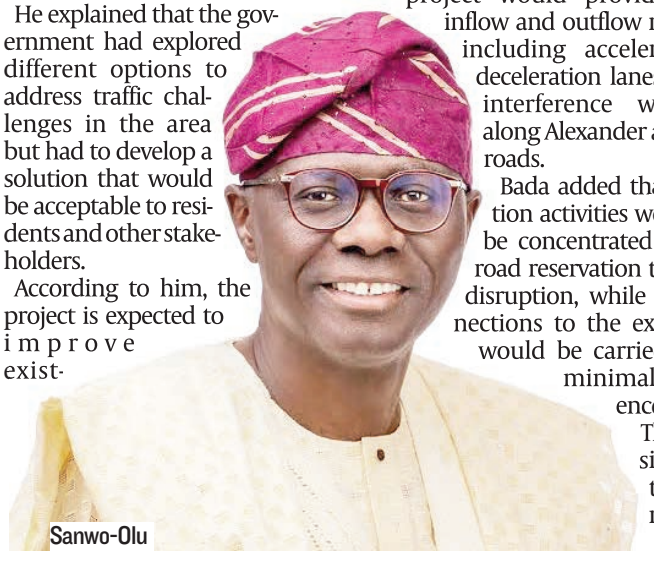
The state Commissioner for Transportation, Mr Oluwaseun Osiyemi, disclosed this during a stakeholders' engagement on the proposed junction improvement project held in Ikoyi on Thursday.

Osiyemi said the project was designed to address traffic challenges around the intersections and improve the flow of vehicles along the corridor.

"What we are doing here is actually junction improvement work at the intersection. The whole idea is to enhance that intersection in such a way that we reduce congestion," he said.

He explained that the government had explored different options to address traffic challenges in the area but had to develop a solution that would be acceptable to residents and other stakeholders.

According to him, the project is expected to improve existing traffic conditions while minimising inconvenience to road users and residents.



Sanwo-Olu

The Director of Transport Engineering at the Lagos State Ministry of Transportation, Engineer Bolaji Folarin Bada, said the project would involve the improvement of two junctions through the introduction of channelised traffic flows, acceleration and deceleration lanes.

He explained that the existing junctions posed challenges because some roads joined the major road at approximately 90 degree angles.

"The design concept for the two junctions is simple. The idea is to make sure that you don't have a lock-down of Alexander Road," Bada said.

He said the Turnbull junction would be redesigned to allow a more seamless flow of vehicles onto Alexander Road, with a channelised island introduced to control traffic movement.

At the Parkview junction, he said the project would provide separate inflow and outflow movements, including acceleration and deceleration lanes, to reduce interference with traffic along Alexander and Gerrard roads.

Bada added that construction activities would largely be concentrated within the road reservation to minimise disruption, while major connections to the existing road would be carried out with minimal interference to traffic.

The commissioner said the government would also work closely with residents and owners of utilities to prevent disruptions to essential services during construction.

He noted that the area contained several underground facilities, including fibre-optic cables, water infrastructure and electricity installations.

He added that construction activities would be managed around traffic patterns, with work reduced or suspended during peak periods and intensified during off-peak hours.

The contractor handling the project, Engineer Folorunsho Owolabi of Concept Limited, assured stakeholders that measures would be put in place to maintain traffic flow throughout the construction period.

Owolabi said the contractor was targeting the completion of the project within three months, although Osiyemi said the project had a six-month timeline and expressed confidence that it could be completed earlier.

Chairman, Banana Island Residents Association, Mr. Bidemi Sonoiki, said discussions surrounding the project had been ongoing for about a year following concerns over persistent traffic congestion around Banana Island.

He commended the Lagos State government for accommodating the project in its budget and expressed optimism that it would improve movement for residents and other road users.

During the meeting, stakeholders raised concerns about the possible impact of the construction on traffic, estate access roads and underground utilities, including fibre-optic infrastructure.

Politics

Reading NDC's 'Shaky' Electoral Design Ahead Of 2027 Polls

Riding on the strong demographic momentum inspired by its presidential standard bearer, Mr. Peter Obi, the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) seems to be overwhelmed by the sudden burst of fame it enjoys on the way to its first participation in a general election. The party's preparation for the major electoral contest is proving to be less than tidy in view of the internal ambiguities that belie the recent allegations of a jumbled list of nominated candidates, LEO SOBECHI reports.

EVERYTHING about the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) appears to be ad hoc, improvised and rushed. As a political party, it could be said that NDC did not undergo a period of weaning needed to refine its structures.

Barely five months to the 2027 general election, the platform that made headlines as a breakaway from the coalition of opposition figures in the African Democratic Congress (ADC), has continued to manifest signs of premature delivery that follows induced labour.

Encouraged by his performance in the 2023 presidential poll on the platform of the Labour Party (LP), Obi and his supporters had claimed that the leadership crisis in the LP was stoked by some external forces, which they said did not want him on the 2027 presidential ballot. As such, troubled by the prolonged leadership contention caused by Julius Abure's tenure elongation plots, Obi, alongside the Abia State Governor, Alex Otti, and other members of the party's caucus, decided to set up the Senator Nenadi Usman-led Caretaker Committee to oversee the affairs of the party pending the conduct of a substantive national convention.

Nonetheless, as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) vacillated in implementing the Federal High Court judgment, which declared that Abure, having exceeded his tenure, does not have a legitimate claim to the office of national chairman of LP, Obi decided to leave the LP and pitched his political tent with the bourgeoning coalition of opposition leaders on the platform of ADC.

But no sooner than he joined ADC that Obi also found that the ADC was actually a special purpose vehicle being readied for the 2027 presidential run of former vice president Atiku Abubakar, who also abandoned the equally troubled Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on which he contested the 2023 general election.

Not even Obi's offer to serve for just one term or the argument that the Presidency should remain in the South for the next four years in line with the zoning principle could sway the ADC leaders. Having come to the realisation that the odds were stacked against the possibility of him flying the flag of the opposition coalition in the ADC, the former LP presidential candidate again migrated to the NDC with the former presidential candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso.

At the height of the schemes for the 2027 presidential contest, Obi had entered into a political understanding with Kwankwaso, assuring that since the zoning convention between the North and South favours an extra four years of the Presidency in the South, he would not breach that principle.

Consequently, after committing that promise in writing and the document attested to before Kwankwaso's supporters, under the auspices of Kwankwasiyya Movement, and the larger national leadership of the NDC, Obi and Kwankwaso flocked into the NDC, which has former Bayelsa State governor and Senator representing Bayelsa West Senatorial District, Seriake Dickson, as its national leader.

Internal Contradictions

Although Obi and Kwankwaso and their supporters – the Obidients and Kwankwasiyya Movements – were received into NDC with fanfare, it did not take long before they began to experience new irritations. Guaranteed of their joint ticket, Obi and Kwankwaso did not find their new political abode an easy platform to exercise authority.

To the newcomers, the NDC, presented as an unusual political party, which was unlike the LP, NNPP and ADC that jettisoned. Though it had a national chairman like every other registered political party, the occasion of a supreme leader brought about some tricky organisational settings that was not easy to grapple with.

As things turned out, the incongruities in the management of diverse relationships within the party played out as NDC embarked on its candidate selection process in readiness for the 2027 general election. The tributaries of electoral cum political interests represented by the Dickson aboriginal members, the Obi and Kwankwaso groupings, threw up a knotty challenge that the newcomers did not envisage.

Matters came to a frenzied pitch when two out of the three tendencies – Dickson and Obidients – clashed over the choice of party's flag bearer for the Abuja senatorial contest. While the Obidients lined behind the activist Muslim amazon, Hajiya Aisha Yesufu, the Dicksonites preferred Amaanda Pam in apparent show of solidarity for aboriginal/foundation members.

Although the quiet supremacy battle left the Obidients with the short end of the stake, it was to a large extent a crude awakening to the realities of seeking a life-saving political shelter after a long peregrination across different platforms.

Exulting and feeling triumphant with the obvious humbling of the Obidients, Dickson waxed magisterial as the supreme leader when he appeared on Charles Aniagolu's Arise Prime Time television to boast of his political magnanimity: "Nobody is more qualified than me to run for president. Don't disparage me or my party; if you think it is easy to form a political party, go and form your own. People should learn to respect their hosts."

> *In both Anambra and Kano States, where NDC selected its presidential and vice-presidential candidates, the national leader made sure to protect his own loyalists from being swallowed up by the rampaging Obidients and Kwankwasiyyans.*

That fateful June 10, 2026, his voice thundered through the television screen. The supreme leader, who is also known as Ofrapepe (white dragon), contended that instead of doing NDC a favour, it was NDC that was doing the Obidients a favour.

The cold water that Dickson's unguarded television utterances threw on the rising momentum of the NDC dampened the enthusiasm of some of the Obidients and Kwankwasiyya members. While some Obidients retreated to the ADC, their Kwankwasiyya counterparts in Kano State chose to line behind Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf (Abba Gida-Gida).

But as former presidential runners, who needed an emphatic contest on a combined ticket, both Obi and Kwankwaso fell back on the good offices of mutual associates to douse the ember of creeping mistrust and mutual suspicion through backchannel fence-mending.

However, just like mumbling subsists long after madness is cured, the harm has been done. Insider sources disclosed that as a result of the far-reaching implications of Dickson's utterances on national television, which many considered beneath a leader of a national political party going to a major electoral battle, the senator decided to hire three seasoned administrators and media professionals as aides.

In a statement announcing the appointments, the NDC National Publicity Secretary, Osa Director, explained that while Sani Takori would serve as Dickson's Political Adviser, VinMartin Ilo, formerly of African Independent Television, and Steve Nwosu, formerly of *The Sun* and *The Nation* newspapers, are to function as Chief Technical Adviser and Spokesman, respectively.

According to Director, the new hands are intended to "strengthen the operations, administration and strategic communication of the former Bayelsa State governor and the NDC."

Party Primaries: New Worries, Yawning Gaps

IF the war of words between activist Aisha Yesufu and the aboriginal NDC leaders unsettled the party, the brawl became a telling metaphor about the intricate leadership structure of the party.

While on paper Senator Moses Cleopas Zuwoghe is designated as the National Chairman of the party, the final decision on the management of internal relationships and affairs of the party rests on the supreme leader. For the national chairman and the founder of the party to hail, not only from the same geopolitical zone, but also the same state, shows how determined the leader is to avoid sharing glory, if not fear of possible hijack.

Yet, for the national leader to be gunning for a senatorial seat while promoting the candidacies of presidential runners exposes the minefields along NDC's path to the future. It was this doormat leadership mentality that exposed the weakness of the party's structure during the National Assembly and gubernatorial primaries.

In both Anambra and Kano States, where NDC selected its presidential and vice presidential candidates, the national leader made sure to protect his own loyalists from being swallowed up by the rampaging Obidients and Kwankwasiyyans. That these parallel line-ups exposed the tenuous nature of the NDC platform could be seen in the recent allegations of uploading strange names on the INEC portal as the party's candidates in Anambra State.

The controversies over the NDC's nominated candidates' list did much to echo Yesufu's claims that the party subverted democratic process of choosing its candidate in the Federal Capital Territory. "I understood what I was getting into; I knew that the quality of our politics has not yet risen to the occasion that values-based candidates do not easily emerge by merit in a system built to resist them," the Edo State-born Yesufu had stated.

Against that doubtful background, when recently the NDC accused INEC of smuggling some strange names into the list of its nominated candidates, many Nigerians took the allegation with a bag of salt. Many were wondering whether the national leader and the national chairman reconciled their lists before sending them to INEC.

In a statement signed by its National Chairman, Senator Moses Cleopas Zuwoghe, NDC noted that by systematically removing its nominated candidates for the 2027 general election and replacing same with strange persons unknown to the party, INEC was unwittingly supplanting its capacity to be competitive in the February 8, 2027, State Assembly poll in Anambra State.

While the NDC leadership hinted that INEC must have connived with unknown persons to doctor the list of its nominated candidates in Anambra State to favour an unnamed political party, the electoral rejected that claim.

The Chief Press Secretary to the INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, Dayo Oketola, told journalists that it was grossly misleading for NDC to claim that its list of candidates was doctored, stressing that being a non-partisan body created by law, INEC does not dabble into the process of candidates' nomination.

But maintaining his stance, the NDC chairman noted that "the worst INEC could do in a situation whereby the names submitted by the party did not tally with those that INEC claimed to have received from its monitoring teams on the field, was to leave the space blank, not to preload fictitious names and prevent the party from loading its genuine candidates.

"At the very worst, INEC could have left us with no candidates for those positions, if they knew they were unwilling to engage us in addressing any perceived anomaly. . .Even as we move to approach the court of competent jurisdiction to seek redress and restore our authentic candidates, the general public and our millions of supporters should note that these are not our candidates," the chairman asserted.

Clouds Around Dickson

Before the dust raised by the NDC's allegation could settle, a Human Rights Activist and former Presidential Adviser, Mr. Okoi Obono Obla, chided the party for manifesting a lack of thoroughness and seriousness in its preparation for the 2027 polls.

Further, it was observed that while the presidential and vice presidential candidates of the party are counting on their support and followership to put up a good show during the presidential poll, some of the NDC leaders were busy looking for what they could find to fend for themselves.

In the prevailing prebendal politics, where those influential stakeholders were busy searching for moneybags instead of capable and competitive candidates, the INEC's publication of the provisional list exposed the structural infirmities of the NDC.

As such, resting his analysis on what he described as the "Cost of Empty Slots," Obla argued that the opposition party's failure to field candidates in some 12 states could negatively affect its presidential fate on January 16, 2027. Although the former Presidential Adviser did not include Nasarawa among the 11 states that he listed, he expressed the view that "if NDC enters the triple election of Jan 16, 2027 with 233 LGAs (30.1% of Nigeria) and 141 Federal Constituencies blank, it will cost 4-6 million votes on Jan 16 - not from lack of popularity, but from lack of ballot presence and agent coverage."

Obna's assertions broached what many NDC stakeholders were whispering in hushed tones: suggestions that the party had some under the table deals with some incumbent and outgoing governors, leading to the failure to field guber candidates in 12 states. That could explain the National Publicity Secretary's disclosure that NDC used placeholders in the affected states.



Politics

Kashim Shettima: Toast To A Dutiful Diamond Jubilee

By Is'haq Modibbo Kawu

ON the 2nd of September, 2026, Vice President Kashim Shettima celebrated his 60th birthday. This must be a very special Diamond Jubilee for Nigeria's number two citizen. He has come a very long way in a life that has been packed with remarkable events. Kashim Shettima has become one of the most visible politicians in Nigeria today, and in the position of Vice President, he has made very admirable efforts to speak for the administration that he is a part of with very admirable conviction and competence.

He is a very compassionate human being and those who are close to him can attest to his very caring nature, an ability to forgive, and a very patriotic commitment to the very best interests of our dear country. I wrote this piece to commemorate his 58th birthday two years ago. I have reproduced the piece in a slightly re-edited manner for his Diamond Jubilee, his 60th birthday, because the piece has retained a currency which speaks to Shettima's enduring presence in the Nigerian public space. Happy 60th birthday, Your Excellency, Vice President Kashim Shettima.

Shettima was born on September 2nd, 1966. And what a year to be born! It was indeed one of the most defining years in Nigerian history. 1966 was the year of the first coup, which ended the post-colonial administration that had seen Nigeria into independence, six years earlier, in 1960. By July 1966, there was the counter-coup and a spiraling of events that led Nigeria into a Civil War, which was estimated to have led to the death of two million Nigerians on both sides of the divide.

Thankfully, the war ended in 1970, and in one of the most magnanimous platforms of post-war reconciliation ever seen in recent history, Nigerians on both sides of the divide re-embraced themselves and began the processes of national development. Warts and all, the immediate post-war years saw a rapid development in Nigeria which opened up vistas of national and personal advancement that we can only look back on now, in nostalgia, against the backdrop of the challenges that we face today.

Shettima came into consciousness in a very hopeful period in Nigeria's evolution, and the hallmark of that stage was the relatively good educational system within which he studied and graduated. He studied agricultural economics at the University of Maiduguri, a second generation institution, and would do his national service in Calabar, Cross River State. Those were the years when national service was still national and a service.

This background is important to understand the evolution of Shettima's persona, and the manner that has informed his politics, and choices he made in the period since he was appointed into the cabinet of Borno State as Commissioner for Finance and Economic Development by Governor Ali Modu Sheriff in 2007.

Between 2007 and 2011, he would serve as Commissioner in five ministries: Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Education, Agriculture and Health. These are the landmark ministries in any cabinet. It might not have been willed, but it was obvious that Shettima was getting a rounded and holistic understanding of the governance process in Borno, an understanding that fate would then prepare as a platform of ascendancy to the highest office of Governor of Borno, following the tragic killing of Modu Fannami Gubio in January 2011. Shettima became the go-to candidate in February 2011. He would win the April 2011 gubernatorial election as the candidate of the ANPP. He then earned even more votes four years later, as he stormed to a second term as Borno State governor in 2015.

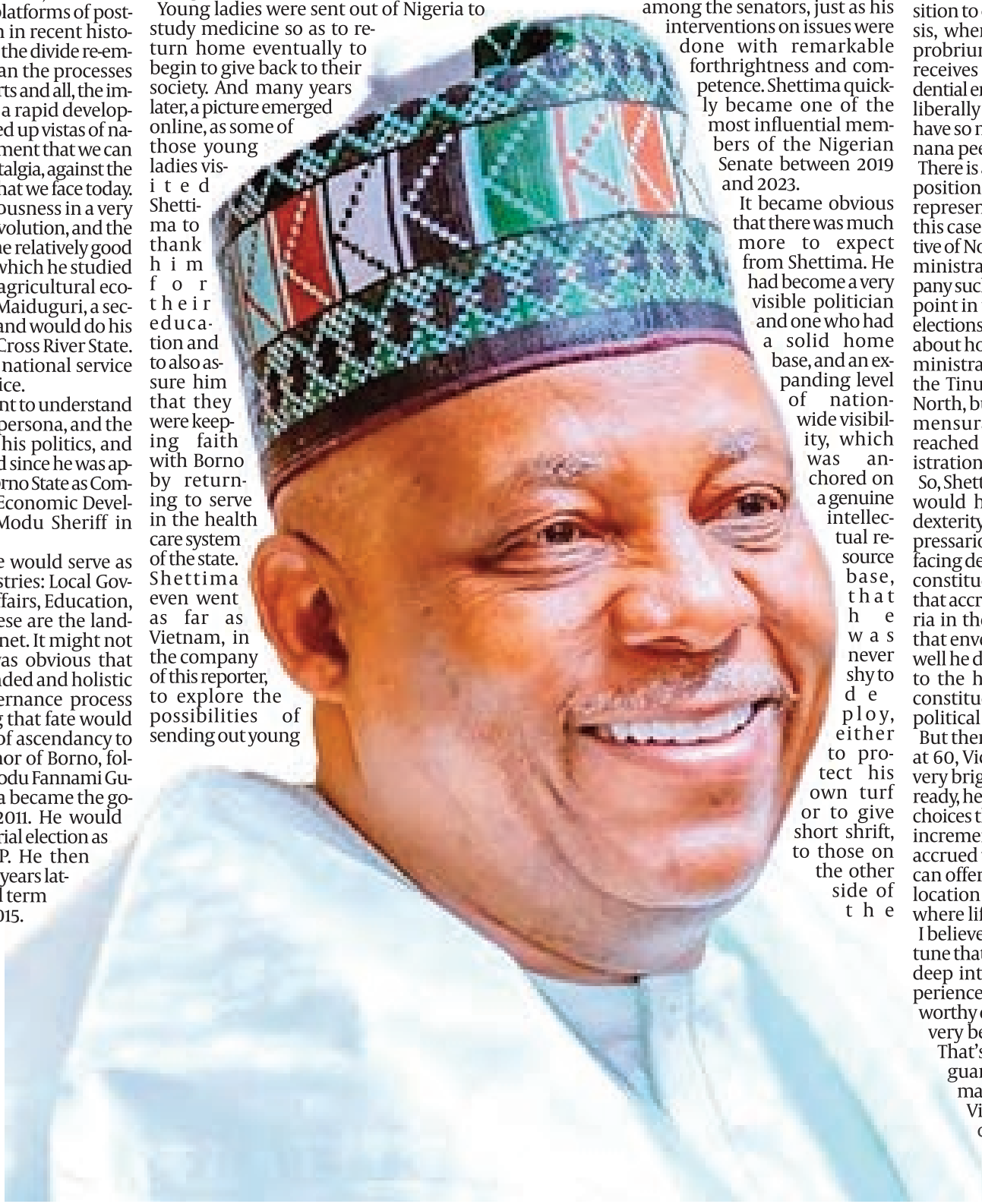
Shettima's tenure in Borno State coincided with what was one of the most tragic phases in the long history of Borno, dating back to the Kanem-Borno tradition. The Boko Haram insurgency dealt huge blows and shook the society to its roots. Shettima occupied the unenviable position of leadership, which demanded the most courageous personal choices to ensure that the state didn't completely dissemble.

Shettima took the decision to provide leadership from the front. There was the need to continue to give hope through a well thought out development agenda in education, agriculture, health care, infrastructural development, attempting to provide solutions for problems of everyday life, and keeping people's hope alive, and letting them to be constantly aware that the insurgency would not be allowed to determine the present and future of the state, as well as that of our country.

I was privileged to earn a ringside seat, in a manner of speaking, so I saw at very close quarters the herculean efforts that Shettima and his team put into keeping their state going, and planting those truly remarkable seeds that began to germinate and deepening hope for the vast majority of the people of Borno. It was, therefore, heartwarming to see new schools, the types of which weren't available in other parts of the country. That was a direct challenge to the insurgency that targeted schools and killed teachers, as well as abducted children.

Borno began to invest massively in the most modern agricultural equipment to redefine agriculture, even when the insurgency delighted in slaughtering farmers. Borno was indeed determined to regain its agriculture. The same went for health care facilities, as well as massive human capital development investments. It was within that sensibility that he created the Borno State University (now Kashim Ibrahim University) that is deepening its place today as a major institution of learning in Nigeria.

Young ladies were sent out of Nigeria to study medicine so as to return home eventually to begin to give back to their society. And many years later, a picture emerged online, as some of those young ladies visited Shettima to thank him for their education and to also assure him that they were keeping faith with Borno by returning to serve in the health care system of the state. Shettima even went as far as Vietnam, in the company of this reporter, to explore the possibilities of sending out young people from Borno to study modern approaches to fisheries. Borno, after all, had always been one of the biggest producers of fish in Nigeria!



Nigerians took note of Shettima's efforts to develop his state in those crowded eight years in power, despite the ravages of Boko Haram. His counterparts in the northern states voted him as Chairman of the Northern States Governors' Forum, and he began to show remarkable troubleshooting skills within the region, while also reaching out to people all over the country. The Nigerian press delighted in the developments taking place under Shettima in Borno State, and they festooned him with accolades. Over several years, many Nigerian newspapers recognised his strides, and they gave him numerous awards.

And by the time that his tenure was coming to an end in 2019, he did the most remarkable thing; one that would ensure that he genuinely secured a legacy that couldn't be erased. Shettima selected a successor in Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum, an outstanding scholar and public servant, who not only continued his legacy but has taken the development agenda to an even higher level. Between the two of them, a Nigerian success story of how to transition from one leader to another has been admirably told to a nationwide applause!

Shettima left his position as Borno State governor with his head held high, as he transitioned into the Nigerian Senate. He began to operate at a different level within the Nigerian public space; he took to the new environment like duckling to water and became a compelling member of the upper chamber of the Nigerian legislature. He began to build bridges among the senators, just as his interventions on issues were done with remarkable forthrightness and competence. Shettima quickly became one of the most influential members of the Nigerian Senate between 2019 and 2023.

It became obvious that there was much more to expect from Shettima. He had become a very visible politician and one who had a solid home base, and an expanding level of nationwide visibility, which was anchored on a genuine intellectual resource base, that he was never shy to deploy, either to protect his own turf or to give short shrift, to those on the other side of the political divide. This shouldn't surprise. The cut and thrust of the cloak-and-dagger world of Nigerian politics is never for the faint-hearted. Shettima understood that early enough, and he appeared prepared to take politics head-on, and it seemed to have worked for him so far.

It probably didn't come as a surprise for the most discerning observers of the Nigerian political space that Shettima was going places. And when he was named as running mate by President Bola Tinubu, it was a culmination of the political build-up which started all those years ago in Borno State, when he was first invited into the Borno State Executive Council by Governor Ali Modu Sheriff. That opportunity is one that Shettima consistently remembers as the point of embarkation that was generously offered by Sheriff, who he continuously refers to as his leader and mentor.

Today, as Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Kashim Shettima has a different level of responsibility in our society. He is expected to be the closest adviser of the President, and a man who is expected to be the voice and face of the number one citizen. He is visible but must not block the views of the President. He is to talk, explain, analyse and interject, within parameters that give the plaudits to the President. That's in the nature, content and context of the presidential system of government.

Shettima seems a good student of this political system and is at peace with the roles outlined for the number two citizen. That is why he plays the role of the ultimate PR impressario of the administration in a tireless fashion. Sometimes, it can be a very thankless position to occupy, because in times of acute crisis, when the administration faces the opprobrium of the people, the PR impressario receives a lot of flak from the people. Presidential environmental politics can often be too liberally a space of treachery, and the floors have so many visible and hidden political banana peels!

There is also a second but related worry in the position of the vice president. He is seen as a representative of a broad constituency. In this case, Shettima is the leading representative of Northern Nigeria within the Tinubu administration. The expectations that accompany such a position are enormous. And at this point in time, and as we prepare for the next elections, people in the North are quite restive about how much they've gotten from the administration. Most of the votes that brought the Tinubu administration came from the North, but there is very deep angst that commensurate levels of dividends have not reached Northern Nigeria under the administration.

So, Shettima has his work cut out for him. He would have to show remarkable political dexterity, balancing his position as the PR impressario of the Tinubu administration, with facing deep interrogations from his Northern constituency about openings and accesses that accrued for the people of Northern Nigeria in the "Emilokan/Awalokan" firmament that enveloped our country since 2023. How well he does that balancing and reaching out to the hearts and minds of the Northern constituency, might actually define his own political legacy in the long run.

But there can be no gainsaying the fact that at 60, Vice President Kashim Shettima has a very bright political future ahead of him. Already, he is building that future now, with the choices that he is making on a daily, and on an incremental, basis. He has been lucky to have accrued the solid experience of what politics can offer, either as Easton's "authoritative allocation of values," or the Hobbesian jungle where life is "nasty, brutish, and short".

I believe that he would lean on the good fortune that's followed him so far, along with his deep intellect, and a maturing political experience, to continue to make the most noteworthy choices that would resonate with the very best interests of the Nigerian people. That's because it's such choices that can guarantee political survival for Shettima in the long run. Happy 60th birthday, Vice President Kashim Shettima, my dear brother and friend.

• *Dr. Kawu, a broadcaster and a political scientist wrote through kawumodibbo@gmail.com*

By **Baba Dantiye**

Senator Kawu Sumaila: The Making Of An Enigmatic Politician

POLITICS, by its nature, produces different categories of leaders. Some follow familiar patterns, easily defined by their ideology, alliances and methods of operation. Others remain difficult to categorise because they continually challenge expectations and adapt to changing circumstances. Senator Kawu Sumaila belongs to this latter category—a politician whose career has been marked by resilience, conviction, controversy and an uncommon ability to remain relevant across changing political seasons.

To understand Kawu Sumaila is to examine more than the offices he has occupied. It is to explore the qualities that have sustained his political journey: grassroots connection, strategic adaptability, personal courage and the willingness to make decisions that do not always conform to popular expectations. These characteristics have made him one of the most intriguing political figures to emerge from Kano State in contemporary Nigerian politics.

The description of him as an enigmatic politician reflects the complexity of his public persona. To his supporters, he is a courageous and independent-minded leader who has consistently defended his convictions. To his critics, some of his political choices have generated questions and debate. Yet, both perspectives acknowledge one important fact: Kawu Sumaila has remained a significant presence in the political landscape.

His journey reflects the realities of Nigerian democracy, where political survival requires more than occupying public office. It demands the ability to build relationships, maintain public trust and navigate a constantly changing environment. Many politicians rise quickly but disappear when circumstances change. Sumaila's experience demonstrates a different trajectory—one built on persistence and the capacity to recover from political challenges.

From his early involvement in politics, he demonstrated a strong understanding of grassroots mobilisation and the importance of maintaining direct contact with ordinary citizens. Unlike politicians whose influence depends largely on elite networks, his political strength has consistently been associated with his connection to communities and supporters who identify with his style of engagement.

This grassroots foundation became one of his greatest political assets. In a society where personal relationships often influence political choices, accessibility and visibility remain powerful tools. Sumaila understood that politics is ultimately about people, and that lasting relevance depends on the confidence and loyalty of those who believe in a leader's commitment to their aspirations.

His career also illustrates an important reality about democratic politics: success is rarely achieved through a single election or political opportunity. It is the product of years of organisation, perseverance and strategic judgment. Political journeys are often filled with moments of uncertainty and the ability to remain focused during difficult periods separates enduring figures from temporary actors.

One of the defining features of Sumaila's political identity has been his readiness to express his views openly. In an era where many public figures prefer cautious and carefully managed communication, his forthright approach has distinguished him. It has earned him admiration from those who see it as courage and attracted criticism from those who consider it confrontational.

However, controversy has not diminished his political relevance. Instead, it has often placed him at the centre of public discussions. His willingness to take clear positions, even when they attract disagreement, has reinforced the perception of a politician who values conviction and political engagement over silence and convenience.

The story of Senator Sumaila is therefore not simply about political offices or electoral victories. It is about the making of a personality shaped by perseverance, public interaction and an independent approach to politics. His career provides a window into the complexities of leadership in Nigeria, where influence is built not only through power but through relationships, resilience and the ability to remain connected with the people.

As Kano continues to occupy a strategic position in Nigeria's political affairs, understanding figures such as Sumaila offers valuable insight into the dynamics of political endurance. His journey represents the triumphs, challenges and contradictions that define democratic politics.

The defining feature of Sumaila's political career has been his remarkable capacity for survival and reinvention. Nigerian politics is an environment where fortunes can change rapidly, alliances shift and political relevance can easily disappear. Yet, throughout these uncertainties, he has demonstrated an ability to remain engaged, rebuild his political base and continue to command attention.

Political resilience is often tested not during moments of success but during periods of disappointment and uncertainty. Many political careers have declined after setbacks, but Sumaila has repeatedly shown that adversity can become an opportunity for renewal. Rather than withdrawing from public life, he has continued to participate actively in political conversations and contests, maintaining the determination that has become a defining part of his identity.

His political journey also highlights the importance of adaptability. Democracy is not static; it requires leaders to respond to changing realities, emerging challenges and new expectations from the electorate. Successful politicians are often those who understand the need for strategic adjustment while preserving the core values that define their public image.

Sumaila's political decisions have sometimes attracted intense debate, particularly regarding alliances and political movements. Such decisions have been interpreted differently by observers. Supporters often view them as evidence of independence and political calculation, while critics question the consistency of his choices. However, these debates are part of what makes his political story significant.

In politics, perception matters greatly. A leader's actions are often judged through different lenses depending on political interests and expectations. For Sumaila, controversy has frequently accompanied his political journey, but it has also contributed to his visibility. Rather than fading from public discussion, he has remained a subject of analysis because his actions often generate conversation.

This is perhaps one of the paradoxes of his political career: the same qualities that attract criticism from opponents are often the qualities that strengthen his appeal among supporters. His independence, direct communication style and willingness to challenge established positions have created both admiration and disagreement.

Another important aspect of his political evolution is his ability to maintain relevance beyond temporary political circumstances. In a political environment where some individuals depend heavily on the support of powerful patrons or temporary alliances, Sumaila's endurance has been linked to the personal political structure he has built over time.

Grassroots politics remains central to understanding his influence. Nigerian elections are ultimately decided by voters and politicians who maintain strong connections with their communities often possess an advantage during periods of uncertainty. His continued relevance suggests that personal trust and long-term engagement remain important factors in political success.

His experience also reflects a broader lesson about leadership: popularity alone is not enough, and political office alone does not guarantee lasting influence. Enduring political figures are those who combine public visibility with organisational strength, communication ability and a clear understanding of the concerns of ordinary citizens.

Beyond the controversies and political calculations, Sumaila's career demonstrates the complexity of democratic leadership. Leaders are often required to balance principles with pragmatism, loyalty with independence, and immediate political realities with long-term objectives. Navigating these competing demands requires judgment and political maturity.

The evolution of his career shows that politics is not merely a contest for positions; it is also a contest for relevance. Remaining influential over time requires constant engagement with the electorate and the ability to adapt without losing one's identity.

For this reason, Sumaila represents an interesting case study in Nigerian politics. His journey challenges the assumption that political influence depends solely on conventional structures. It demonstrates that personal conviction, grassroots connection and resilience can create a political force capable of surviving changing circumstances.

The Kawu Sumaila phenomenon is therefore not defined by controversy alone. It is shaped by a combination of determination, strategic thinking and the ability to remain connected to supporters who see value in his style of leadership.

Beyond political contests and changing alliances, the true measure of any public figure lies in the quality of leadership provided and the relationship maintained with the people. Political office may provide visibility, but enduring influence depends on trust, accessibility and the ability to respond to public expectations. These qualities form an important part of understanding Sumaila's political journey.

One of the characteristics associated with his leadership style is his emphasis on direct engagement with the people. In an era where politics is increasingly influenced by media narratives and digital communication, he has continued to demonstrate the importance of personal interaction. For many politicians, maintaining contact with constituents after elections becomes a challenge; for Sumaila, grassroots connection has remained central to his political identity.

This connection explains, to a large extent, why his political relevance has endured. Constituents often judge leaders not only by major policy decisions but also by accessibility, responsiveness and a sense of belonging. The relationship between a politician and the electorate is built over time through repeated interaction and shared experiences. It is this foundation that provides political strength beyond temporary circumstances.

As a representative of the people, his role has also involved balancing local expectations with national responsibilities. Legislators operate in a complex environment where citizens demand immediate solutions to everyday challenges, while national institutions require attention to broader issues of governance, legislation and public policy. The ability to navigate these competing responsibilities is one of the central challenges of democratic representation.

Sumaila's public life demonstrates that effective representation requires more than occupying a seat in government. It requires communication, advocacy and the ability to remain connected to the concerns of ordinary citizens. His political approach has consistently reflected an understanding that leadership is ultimately measured by the confidence people place in those who represent them.

Another significant aspect of his personality is his confidence in expressing his views. Political leadership often involves difficult choices, and leaders who take clear positions may inevitably attract criticism. However, democratic societies also require individuals who are willing to contribute openly to public debate.

His forthrightness has therefore become both an advantage and a challenge. Supporters regard it as evidence of courage and authenticity, while critics sometimes see it as a source of political tension. Yet, the ability to provoke discussion is itself an indication of relevance. Politicians who have no influence rarely generate sustained debate.

The senator's career also highlights the importance of political adaptability. In a constantly changing environment, successful leaders must understand when circumstances require new strategies. Adaptability does not necessarily mean abandoning principles; rather, it reflects an awareness that effective leadership requires responding intelligently to changing realities.

The ability to combine conviction with flexibility is one of the most difficult challenges in politics. A leader who refuses to adapt may become irrelevant, while one who changes without a clear purpose may lose public confidence. Sumaila's journey illustrates this delicate balance between maintaining identity and responding to political realities.

His political experience also provides lessons for emerging leaders. First, grassroots relationships remain one of the strongest foundations of democratic leadership. Second, that resilience is essential because political careers are rarely without challenges. Third, public figures must be prepared to accept criticism as part of the responsibility of leadership.



Sumaila

Politics

Yari's Political Experience Will Strengthen Tinubu's 2027 Bid, Says Atoyebi

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

THE Convener of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Ideological Group (BAT-IG), Bamidele Atoyebi, has described the appointment of Senator Abdulaziz Yari as Director-General of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2027 Presidential Campaign Council as strategic and well deserved.

Atoyebi, in a statement, said although Yari's appointment had generated mixed reactions, his assessment of the senator's political career and grassroots activities since September 2025 had convinced him that he was well suited for the role.

President Tinubu had on August 22, 2026, formally unveiled the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council, with Yari as Director-General, Imo State Governor Hope Uzodimma as Secretary and the President as Chairman.

Atoyebi said he had little knowledge of Yari's political trajectory until September last year, when he learnt that the senator was seeking to work with support groups ahead of the 2027 general election.

He said this prompted him, as Convener of BAT-IG, to examine Yari's political background and activities more closely.

According to him, the assessment revealed an experienced politician with considerable grassroots reach and organisational capacity.



Yari

Yari served as a member of the House of Representatives between 2007 and 2011 and was Governor of Zamfara State from 2011 to 2019. He also served as Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum between 2015 and 2019 and currently represents Zamfara West Senatorial District in the National Assembly.

Atoyebi said his assessment of Yari was further strengthened by a personal encounter with the political network around the senator.

He recalled that he was once invited to engage former local government chairmen at a forum in Abuja and later discovered that Yari had sponsored the gathering and hosted the participants.

Although he arrived after Yari had left the venue, Atoyebi said he met the delegates and used the opportunity to present BAT-IG's message in support of President Tinubu.

"For me, that experience offered an important lesson: serious political mobilisation is built long before election day," he said. "The scale of grassroots organisation attributed to Yari showed me that he has invested considerable attention in building relationships across political structures."

Atoyebi also noted Yari's involvement in the private sector, saying the senator became Chairman of Geregu Power Plc in December 2025 following a change in ownership involving MA'AM Energy Limited's acquisition of a 95 per cent stake in Amperion Power Distribution Company, which holds the controlling interest in Geregu Power.

He said the combination of Yari's political experience, organisational reach and private-sector exposure made his appointment understandable and defensible.

The BAT-IG convener therefore rejected calls for the appointment to be opposed, urging political parties outside the APC to concentrate on strengthening their own structures rather than attempting to determine who should manage the ruling party's campaign.

"I believe Yari has the capacity to mobilise across the North-West, North-East and North-Central while contributing to a broader national campaign," he said.

Atoyebi also pointed to the inclusion of other experienced political figures, including former Borno State governor, Senator Ali Modu Sheriff, as evidence that the APC was assembling a campaign structure with considerable political experience.

He said the 2027 re-election bid of President Tinubu would require individuals with a strong understanding of grassroots politics, political organisation and coalition-building.

"As Convener of BAT-IG, I believe President Tinubu's re-election campaign requires people who understand grassroots politics, organisation and coalition-building. From what I have observed and studied about Senator Yari since September last year, I believe he can deliver," he said.

Atoyebi, however, said the ultimate verdict on the Tinubu administration would be determined by its performance, stressing that continued delivery of tangible results would constitute the strongest campaign for the President ahead of the 2027 election.

"Ultimately, Nigerians will judge the administration by its results. If the reforms and policies of the Tinubu administration continue to produce tangible improvements as being witnessed, I believe the strongest campaign for 2027 will be the results themselves," he said.

He expressed confidence that the APC could retain the Presidency in 2027 and sustain what he described as the Renewed Hope agenda.

"I believe we can win in 2027, continue the Renewed Hope agenda and build a foundation strong enough for Nigerians to demand continuity beyond 2027," Atoyebi said.

Credential Marketing, Not Hero Worship: Putting Yari's Record In Focus

By **Bello Tijani**

THERE is a difference between political communication and political worship. Nigeria often confuses the two.

Once a politician receives an important appointment, congratulatory advertisements appear, extravagant adjectives multiply and previously sober adults begin competing to describe the appointee in language usually reserved for historic figures.

The result is frequently counterproductive. Rather than strengthening credibility, exaggerated praise creates suspicion.

This is why the communication around Senator Abdulaziz Abubakar Yari's emergence as Director-General of the APC Presidential Campaign Council requires a different approach.

Credential marketing offers that alternative. The principle is uncomplicated: do not instruct the public to admire the man. Put his record on the table.

Yari's formal political résumé already provides substantial material. He has been involved in party politics since 1999. He served in the House of Representatives between 2007 and 2011.

He governed Zamfara State for two terms between 2011 and 2019. His fellow governors elected him Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum in 2015.

Since 2023, he has represented Zamfara West in the Senate. And on August 22, 2026, he was formally announced as Director-General of the APC Presidential Campaign Council. Those facts do not require embellishment. What they require is context.

What did he learn from party administration? How did eight years of executive government shape his understanding of political organisation? What relationships came from leading the Governors' Forum? What has his Senate experience added? How extensive are his grassroots networks? What evidence exists of his political mobilisation for President Tinubu before his latest appointment? What humanitarian activities has he undertaken, and can their scope be independently verified?

These are far stronger subjects for public communication than endless declarations of loyalty and greatness.

There is already evidence that Yari's involvement in the President's political project predates his appointment as campaign director-general. The Renewed Hope Network associated with him was publicly launched in March 2026 as a vehicle for nationwide political mobilisation around President Tinubu and his administration. Reports also documented its mobilisation activities around the APC convention later that month.

There is similarly a developing public record around humanitarian interventions associated with him. It was reported in August that a three-year programme had reached approximately 1.7 million people in Zamfara, with its latest phase involving 145 truckloads of maize and 42,000 bags of semovita for displaced persons and vulnerable households.

These are precisely the kinds of claims credential communication should interrogate and document. Not merely repeat. If the figures are accurate, preserve the evidence. If photographs exist, catalogue them. If beneficiaries can be identified, record their communities.

If political mobilisation occurred before the appointment, construct the timeline. If newspaper reports contemporaneously documented particular interventions, make them accessible.

The purpose is to build a public archive. This is where traditional newspapers and social media can complement one another effectively. Newspapers provide depth, institutional memory and a searchable record.

A serious personality profile can examine Yari's political evolution. An interview can interrogate his understanding of the campaign assignment. A background analysis can assess his relationships across the North.

A special report can examine humanitarian interventions. Another piece can revisit his years at the Governors' Forum and ask what that experience means for managing a presidential campaign.

Social media then performs a different function. It can turn a 1,500-word newspaper investigation into a timeline. An interview becomes six quote cards.

A humanitarian report becomes a documented infographic. A career profile becomes a 60-second chronology. Archival photographs can establish dates and relationships without overbearing commentary.

In this model, social media does not invent the credential. It amplifies the documented record. That distinction is crucial in an age of political cynicism.

The contemporary audience is considerably more suspicious of propaganda than political actors sometimes realise. Grand claims are instantly questioned. Numbers are challenged. Old videos are retrieved. Contradictions are exposed within minutes.

A successful credential campaign therefore needs to anticipate scrutiny rather than fear it. Every important claim should pass a simple test: Can we prove this? That should be the discipline governing the communication around Yari.

The objective should not be to manufacture an immaculate political personality. No politician with a career spanning more than two decades should expect to escape criticism, controversy or disagreement. Nor should credential communication attempt to immunise anyone from legitimate questions.

Its purpose is narrower and more credible: to ensure that assessments are made with the relevant record available.

Yari's appointment to coordinate a presidential campaign is important enough to justify scrutiny of the experience he brings to it.

His time as governor matters. His leadership of the Governors' Forum matters. His legislative experience matters. His party background matters.

His political relationships matter. His pre-appointment activities around the Renewed Hope project matter. His humanitarian interventions, where verifiable, matter.

And his North-West roots and broader northern relationships form part of the political context within which his new assignment will operate.

The intelligent communication strategy is therefore not to shout louder. It is to document better.

In the end, the most effective credential marketing may be the kind that hardly looks like marketing at all.

Put the facts in the public domain. Establish the chronology. Provide the evidence. And allow the record to speak.

• *Tijani writes from Kano*

Editorial

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Alfred Bandele Kasunmu (1934 – 2026)

THE death of Professor Alfred Bandele Kasunmu (SAN) is not just another solemn entry in the obituary columns of the Nigerian legal profession. His passing is an occasion for reflection on a tradition of legal practice that appears increasingly waning in intellectual rigour, integrity, and etiquette. Kasunmu represented the lawyer's identity of that era when the law was treated as a calling rather than merely a lucrative occupation.

Professor Kasunmu, who died on Sunday, August 9, 2026, at the age of 92, was one of the distinguished figures of the Nigerian legal profession whose career traversed scholarship, legal education, public service, and advocacy. Born on May 23, 1934, in Lagos to parents from Ilesa, Osun State, he attended Baptist Academy, Lagos, before proceeding to the University College London, where he obtained his Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws degrees. He also studied at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 1961-1962. Called to the Nigerian Bar in 1964, he began teaching law at the University of Ife the same year before joining the University of Lagos in 1971.

At the University of Lagos, Kasunmu rose to become Professor of Law and served as Dean of the Faculty of Law from 1973 to 1975. His scholarly contribution was demonstrated early in his career with the publication, alongside a co-author, of Nigerian Family Law in 1966, a work that reflected the intellectual seriousness with which his generation approached the development of Nigerian jurisprudence. He also edited The supreme court of Nigeria, 1956-1970.

He was also a public servant of distinction, serving as Attorney-General of Lagos State from 1975 to 1978. In 1978, he was appointed a Senior Advocate of Nigeria. He subsequently founded Professor A.B Kasunmu's Chambers LP in Lagos and remained in active legal practice for decades, eventually becoming the oldest surviving SAN in active practice. His professional engagements extended beyond advocacy to arbitration, notaries practice, and service as an international expert on Nigerian law.

Yet, for all these achievements, Kasunmu's most enduring legacy may be found, not necessarily in the titles he accumulated or the positions he occupied, but in the values he represented. Kasunmu belonged to what many lawyers nostalgically describe as the good old days of the Nigerian Bar. It was a generation populated by men and women whose names carried authority long before the proliferation of social media, spectacular offices and elaborate professional titles. Their reputation was built in courtrooms, chambers, law books and, above all, through years of diligent and disciplined service to the law.

Kasunmu represented an era in which lawyers debated law. They argued over principles, jurisprudence and the proper development of the law. They disagreed vigorously without necessarily becoming disagreeable. The courtroom was an intellectual arena in which the strength of an argument, rather than the volume of the advocate's voice, determined its worth. That culture is worth recovering.

One of the troubling developments in contemporary legal practice is the increasing tendency to elevate technicality over substance. Procedure is indispensable to the administration of justice, but when technical rules become ends in themselves, the law risks losing its essential purpose. The finest lawyers of Kasunmu's generation understood that advocacy was not simply about discovering procedural loopholes through which a case could escape. It was about helping the court arrive at justice through a compelling exposition of the law, while being masters of procedure. But their mastery was accompanied by a deeper appreciation of the philosophy and purpose of law. They appreciated that a lawyer could win a point and yet lose the larger argument about justice.

In his era, Kasunmu and many of his contemporaries were regarded as largely incorruptible. Their professional standing could not be simply purchased or negotiated. They did not come cheap because excellence never does, but neither did legal fees assume some of the extraordinary proportions associated with certain contemporary practitioners.

Kasunmu and his professional colleagues did not entirely lose its social conscience. He handled numerous cases pro bono, compared to the present age in which access to justice remains one of the most serious challenges confronting ordinary Nigerians.

A legal profession that serves only those who can afford it cannot fully discharge its constitutional and moral responsibilities. The lawyer is a professional and deserves to be properly remunerated. But the law is also an instrument of justice. The willingness of distinguished advocates to deploy their knowledge and standing in the service of people who could not afford their fees was a powerful reminder of that truth.

Kasunmu's influence extended beyond the courtroom. That universities and other institutions have erected statutes and created enduring memorials in honour of distinguished legal figures of his generation speaks to the depth of their contribution to society. Such monuments are not merely celebrations of individuals; they are reminders of standards.

The real monument to Kasunmu, however, should not be cast in bronze. It should be found in the conduct of lawyers who come after him. His generation understood that legal etiquette mattered. Respect for the court mattered. The manner in which a lawyer addressed a judge mattered. Civility towards colleagues mattered. The dignity of the profession mattered. These were not cosmetic conventions but essential components of professional responsibility.

Kasunmu's death offers an opportunity for renewal. The Nigerian legal profession needs lawyers who can combine intellectual brilliance with moral courage; lawyers who understand that advocacy is not merely a contest to be won but a responsibility to the administration of justice; lawyers who can command substantial fees without allowing money to become the measure of professional worth; and lawyers who remain willing to represent the vulnerable when circumstances demand it.

If the Nigerian Bar can rediscover the virtues of integrity, scholarship, civility, public service and fidelity to the deeper purposes of law, then the death of Professor Alfred Bandele Kasunmu will have occasioned something more enduring than mourning. It will be an invitation to restore the noblest traditions of the profession, so that the good old days can become the foundation of a better tomorrow.

LETTER

How Lagos' Rail Revolution Is Reshaping Urban Mobility

SIR: As Lagos Rail Mass Transit Blue Line marks three years of commercial operations, the transformative rail project is emerging as a defining symbol of the Sanwo-Olu administration's commitment to modern, sustainable, and integrated public transportation.

Three years ago, on September 4, 2023, the Lagos Rail Mass Transit (LRMT) Blue Line commenced commercial passenger operations, opening a new chapter in the history of public transportation in Lagos.

From its initial 12 daily trips, the Blue Line has progressively expanded to about 94 daily trips, providing thousands of Lagos residents with a faster, safer, more predictable and more environmentally sustainable alternative to road transportation.

The milestone represents far more than the operation of a railway: It is the evidence of Lagos State's determination to build a modern mass transit system capable of supporting the mobility needs of a rapidly growing megacity.

For commuters travelling between Mile 2 and Marina, the Blue Line has brought greater predictability to daily journeys, reduced dependence on congested roads and provided an alternative that is largely insulated from the traffic gridlock that characterises many major Lagos corridors.

The Blue Line has demonstrated the value of rail transportation as a critical component of an integrated urban mobility system. Its electrified operations are contributing to Lagos State's broader climate and sustainability objectives by reducing reliance on fossil-fuel-powered road vehicles and, consequently, contributing to the reduction of transport-related emissions.

As Blue Line operations expand with more trips, and more commuters shift from private cars and conventional road transportation to mass transit, the environmental benefits are expected to become even more significant. The railway is therefore not simply moving people; it is contributing to the long-term vision of a cleaner, greener and more sustainable Lagos, with public transportation playing a central role in the State's ambition towards a low-carbon and eventually zero-emission transport ecosystem.

The impact of Blue Line extends beyond the tracks. The project has created direct and indirect employment opportunities across train operations, engineering, maintenance, security, station management, customer service, ticketing, cleaning, retail and other supporting services. It has also stimulated economic activity around stations and along the railway corridor, creating opportunities for businesses and encouraging new patterns of commercial development.

This is where the concept of Transit-Oriente. Development (TOD) becomes increasingly important. With appropriate planning, areas around Blue Line stations can evolve into vibrant mixed-use communities where residential, commercial, recreational and business activities are integrated with efficient public transportation.

Such development can reduce the need for long-distance journeys, encourage walking and other forms of non-motorised transport, improve access to economic opportunities and increase the value and productivity of areas connected to the rail network. The Blue Line is consequently becoming an important catalyst for urban regeneration and economic development.

While the first three years have demonstrated what rail can achieve in Lagos, the bigger ambition lies ahead. The Lagos State Government and the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) are working towards completing the remaining infrastructure required to take the Blue Line fully to Okokomaiko by 2027.

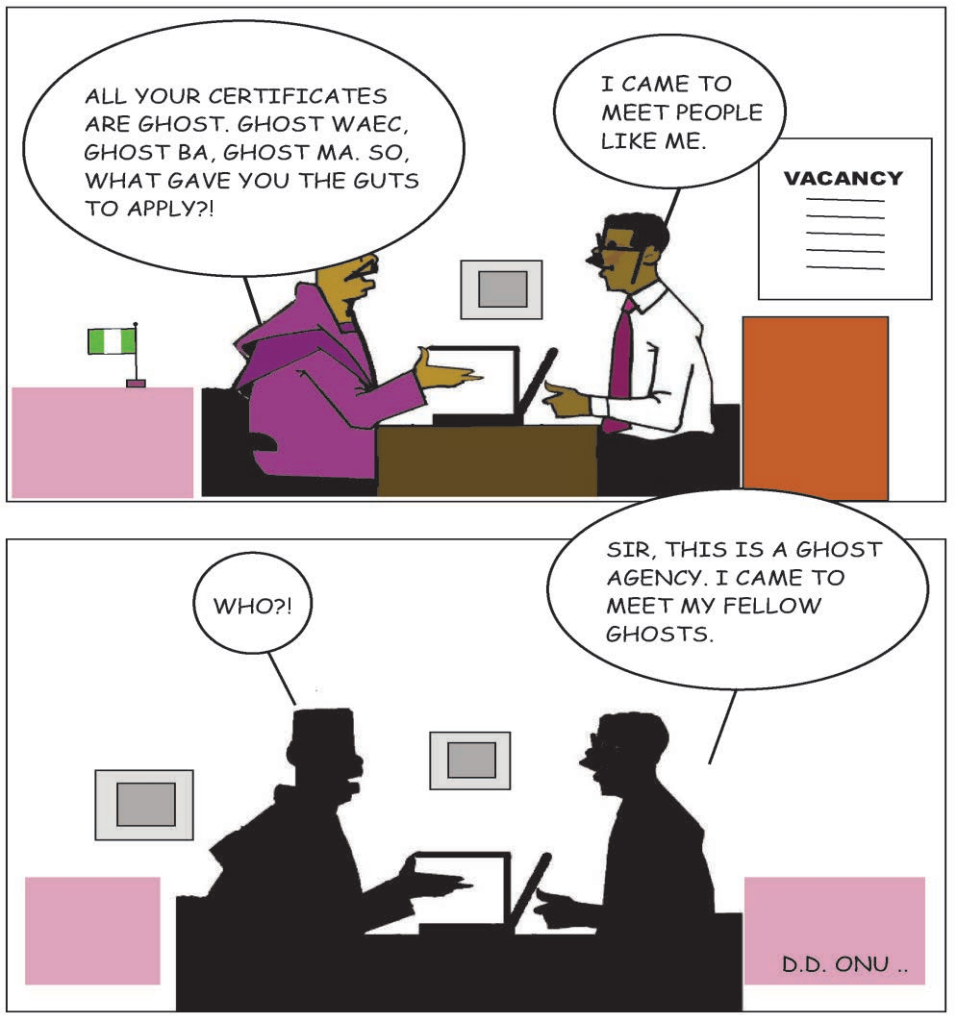
The completion of the entire corridor will significantly extend the reach and impact of the line, bringing rail services closer to a much larger population and creating stronger connections between communities along the corridor.

The extension will also strengthen the integration of rail with other modes of public transportation, including buses and other first and last mile services, thereby making the public transport system more seamless and convenient for commuters. The ultimate objective is an integrated transportation network in which commuters can move easily from one mode to another, using a system that is reliable, affordable, safe and sustainable.

The third anniversary of the Blue Line is, therefore, an appropriate occasion to celebrate the vision and political commitment that made the project possible. The Lagos Rail Mass Transit Blue Line stands as one of the most visible expressions of Governor Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu's THEMES+ development agenda and his administration's determination to transform transportation infrastructure in Lagos.

• *Kolawole Ojelabi is the Head, Corporate Communication at LAMATA. Tel: 08094499138*

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Opinion

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Before You Blame The World, Examine Yourself

By **Sunday Ayodele Enikanselu**

THERE is an undeniable fact about human nature: most of us are remarkably good at examining other people while rarely subjecting ourselves to the same scrutiny.

We examine our leaders. We examine our governments. We examine our spouses, children, colleagues, neighbours and friends. We are often quick to identify the weaknesses, mistakes and failures of others. Yet, when the mirror is turned towards us, many of us suddenly become less GT interested in examination.

We have explanations for almost everything that goes wrong around us. The government is responsible. The economy is responsible. Our employers are responsible. Our spouses are responsible. Our parents are responsible. Our colleagues are responsible. Society is responsible.

Sometimes, these explanations may be justified.

But there is a question that every responsible adult must eventually confront: What about me? What part of my present condition is the result of my own decisions, habits, priorities, attitudes and choices? That question is neither an accusation nor an invitation to blame ourselves for everything that happens in life. Rather, it is an invitation to accept responsibility for the part of our lives over which we have influence.

This is where self-assessment, self-review and self-examination become indispensable.

Every responsible organisation periodically evaluates its performance. Companies audit their accounts. Banks assess their financial positions. Governments review policies. Schools evaluate performance. Professionals undergo appraisal.

Yet many adults go through decades of life without conducting a serious review of their own progress, decisions, relationships, character, priorities and direction.

We simply continue. We work. We earn. We spend. We marry. We raise children. We pursue careers. We acquire property. We attend social functions. We solve one problem after another .And the years keep moving.

Then, sometimes in the quietness of retirement, disappointment, personal crisis or old age, a person suddenly asks: "Is this really the life I intended to live?"

That question can be painful. It can also come too late. This is why every adult needs the discipline of self-assessment, self-review and self-examination. They are different but interconnected disciplines of personal management.

Self-assessment asks: Where am I? Self-review asks: How did I get here? Self-examination asks: Who am I becoming? Together, they can provide a powerful compass for navigating the journey of life.

Where Am I?

Self-assessment is the honest appraisal of our present condition. It requires us to take stock of our lives. Where am I professionally? Where am I financially? Where am I intellectually? Where am I physically and emotionally? Where am I in my relationships? Where am I in my family life? Where am I in my contribution to society?

Most importantly: Am I making meaningful progress?

This question is important because progress should not be defined only by money, position or possessions. A person may become wealthy and yet become poorer in character.

Another may occupy a prestigious position while losing the respect and affection of those closest to him.

Someone may build a successful business but destroy his health in the process. Another may acquire impressive academic qualifications but stop acquiring wisdom.

A person may have thousands of followers on social media and yet have nobody with whom he can have a genuinely meaningful conversation. We must therefore be careful about what we call success.

The important question is not merely:"What have I acquired?" It is: "What have I become?"

That is the beginning of genuine self-assessment.

How did I get here?

Knowing where we are is important. Knowing how we arrived there is even more important. That is the purpose of self-review. Self-review requires us to revisit our decisions, habits, relationships, priorities and assumptions. What decisions brought me to where I am today? Which decisions have helped me? Which ones have harmed me? What opportunities did I recognise and pursue? Which opportunities did I ignore? What mistakes have I made repeatedly? What lessons have I actually learnt from my failures? Have I been making decisions based on wisdom, or merely on emotion, pressure, pride, fear and the desire to impress others? These questions become particularly important in Nigeria, where social expectations can exert enormous pressure on individual choices.

From childhood, many of us are taught what success should look like. Get a good education. Get a good job. Build a house. Buy a car. Get married. Have children. Send them to good schools. Acquire social status. Be seen as successful. There is nothing wrong with these aspirations.

The problem begins when a person spends an entire lifetime pursuing a definition of success created by other people without ever asking whether that definition is meaningful to him or her.

Self-review provides an opportunity to pause and ask: "Am I living my own life, or merely performing the life society expects me to perform?" That is a profound question.

Who Am I Becoming?

Self-examination takes us deeper.

Self-assessment looks at our present condition. Self-review looks at our past decisions. Self-examination looks at our character and our emerging identity.It asks who we are becoming beneath our titles, possessions, social standing and public image. Am I becoming more honest? More disciplined? More patient? More compassionate? More responsible? More humble? More tolerant? More courageous? More generous? More grateful? Or, am I becoming increasingly arrogant, impatient, selfish, bitter, intolerant, wasteful and entitled? These are difficult questions because they remove the protection of excuses. But adulthood requires the courage to ask difficult questions. It is possible to deceive other people. It is even easier to deceive ourselves. And self-deception is one of the most dangerous forms of deception because the victim and the perpetrator are the same person.

The Danger Of Blaming Everybody Else

One of the clearest signs that a person needs serious self-examination is the persistent habit of blaming everybody else. The government is responsible. The economy is responsible. My boss is responsible. My colleagues are responsible. My spouse is responsible. My parents are responsible. My friends are responsible. Society is responsible. Sometimes these explanations are valid. Circumstances genuinely affect human lives.

Nigeria's economic realities, unemployment, insecurity, inflation, inadequate infrastructure and institutional weaknesses can create genuine obstacles for individuals and families. But even when circumstances are difficult, there remains an important question: What is within my control? That question separates responsibility from helplessness. We cannot control everything that happens to us. But we can control many of our responses. We can improve our knowledge. We can improve our skills. We can change destructive habits. We can manage our time better. We can reconsider our relationships. We can apologise. We can forgive. We can learn. We can save. We can plan. We can change direction. We can begin again.

Personal responsibility does not mean pretending that external circumstances do not matter.It means refusing to allow circumstances to become a permanent explanation for everything that happens in our lives.

Your Life Needs A Performance Review

A company that refuses to review its performance will eventually lose its competitiveness. A bank that never reviews its financial position exposes itself to unnecessary risk. An institution that never evaluates its policies will eventually become irrelevant. Why should a human being assume that his or her life will automatically improve without periodic review? Every adult should occasionally conduct a personal performance review.

Sit down. Remove the noise. Put away the excuses.

Ask yourself some uncomfortable questions.

How is my health? How is my marriage? How are my children? How are my finances? How is my career? How are my friendships? What am I learning? What am I contributing? What am I wasting? What am I tolerating that I should no longer tolerate? What am I doing that I should stop? What am I failing to do that I should start?

And perhaps the most important question: If I continue exactly as I am today for the next ten years, where will I be? That question can be frightening.It can also be transformative.If the answer is not where we want to be, then we have been given something extremely valuable: an opportunity to change direction before the future arrives.

• *Prof. Sunday Ayodele Enikanselu, retired, wrote from Lagos*

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

Aiyedatiwa, Citizens' Interest And The Politicians In-between

By **Debo Akinbami**

THE theme refreshes the mind about the precursors to February 23, 2009; day one of Ondo's finest leaders, Dr. Olusegun Agagu, was ousted as Governor. Agagu led Ondo State between 2003 and 2009, before the court voided his re-election bid. He came across as a governor of a rare class. He was a polymath ideologue and first rate scholar who prepared for governance and had his programmes planned out before hand.

Dr. Agagu, as governor, served with heart. He did so well in elevating the state he so much loved but was amply distracted by politicians; and, eventually consumed by them. The rest, as they say, is history. Agagu's saga may have gone, but the derivable, hard lessons of the season leave with us. Life teaches us, as humans, through experiences, after all; and our depth derives from the same.

Like Governor Aiyedatiwa, Agagu was not faultless, but was hard to fault on performance terms. He made good marks and left a good remembrance. Even the fiercest of his critics conceded to his sterling performance as governor. The weird antithesis, however, was in the fact that the same Agagu, who was largely loved by citizens, was loathed by politicians. His sin, as politicians put it: "He was "tarring the roads without tarring the throats."

Agagu's failure to tar the politicians' throats was his unpardonable sin. And this starkly reminds us that what excites the citizens may sometimes infuriate political actors. In effect, when politicians applaud a leader, he is "tarrying their throats". Given this scenario, a leader not worth his salt may be distracted by what interests the political class at the detriment of the citizens. Politicians want the monies in their pockets. It doesn't matter if the roads are death-traps. And when this is not within their reach, they manipulate the people.

For the love of Ondo, Agagu tarred more roads than throats; and, for so doing, the political class rewarded him with treachery, but his name is written in gold, nonetheless; in the hearts of the people he governed with good conscience. The intrigues of the time may have put the odds against him, but, in the end, posterity puts him in good stead. Agagu's ordeal took an inter-party detour, Aiyedatiwa's detractors inhabit his party. But the seasons are different, and so are the personalities involved.

From the moment it became obvious that the silver-bearded dude would lead the state, politicians had converged around him to pontificate on the shape of tomorrow, at veiled costs. They told tales about how his name dictates his pace, and how nothing compares to his manner of luck. At their peak of baits, they masturbated. But the governor, like an adroit tactician, said less. He simply looked on as interpreters fed fat on deciduous tales.

Aiyedatiwa understands both the games and the guts; even more than political interpreters thought he does. In his tunnel of turbulence, he had learned the harder way and armed himself ahead. He would rather take all in strides as he rides rough through the routes, absorbing even acerbic dabs- the obscure and obvious- with equal calm; the same quietude that grants him repeated wins. Whatever happens, what matters to Governor Aiyedatiwa is the people's welfare, so that by the time he quits the temporary office, his conscience would remain his ally.

In other letters, the writer had forewarned the innocent public to be wary of a gang of paid critics who daily faults the Aiyedatiwa-led regime to lay the bed for a desperate ambition of a minister who employs the politicians to recreate the 2009 magic. Their routinal criticisms take objective semblance, whereas they are lured more by material gains than public interest. Some are tools in the hands of politicians who have vainly sworn to repeat history under a different guise.

The writer had nudged the people about an ominous ambition that makes room for all sorts of characters- tricksters, impostors and false hailers; an ambition that assembles bogus political dramatists and theorists who, at full throttle, boast bareface about how the same senatorial district which had just completed its own round would force itself back to power against the fair rotational tradition.

But, in all these, Governor Aiyedatiwa concentrates on adding values to the state. He has something going for him. Not of magic or mystics; yet, it is not an easy-peel for the simpletons. Only the shrewd few who can tinker with a recondite trajectory would break down the white magic about him. Applied or implied, none should contend the fact that Aiyedatiwa is a product of rare experience. His routes explains his haste to help the state defeat his hitches, his resolve to fix sundry infrastructural flaws and reconfigure the state for the benefit of all. And, beneath his broad smile lies a sturdy political will that stops at nothing when he puts his mind to a course.

The politicians have always been around as part of the power-mongering process, but they are rarely loyal to the people; only to their stomachs. The man who leads this time, in many respects, is of a different breed. He wants every Ondo citizen to be at ease; to be physically secure and prosper. Not to feed the politicians fat and leave the masses hungry. And this is how shrewd and depth defines Aiyedatiwa's acts. He belongs in the rare class of gifted leaders and bears profound gifts that he makes no fuss about. He cares about all but suffers no fools.

• *Dr. Debo Akinbami, PhD, is the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor of Ondo State on Public Communication.*



With immense
pride,
we heartily congratulate

Oloye (Dr.)
Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan
"Apesinola of Ibadan"
on his prestigious installation as the
"Balogun of Oyo"
and
Hajia
Ameenat Olabimpe Oluwa-Adeduntan
on her honourable installation as the
"Ayinba Balogun of Oyo"
by His
Imperial Majesty, Iku Baba Yeye,
Oba Abimbola Akeem Owoade I,
The Alaafin of Oyo
on Saturday,
5th September 2026.

This distinguished recognition is a testament to your exemplary leadership, unwavering commitment to humanity, and enduring service to the advancement of society and the rich cultural heritage of the Oyo Kingdom.

May your new titles usher in greater wisdom, honour, strength, and continued impact as you uphold the dignity and noble traditions of the ancient Oyo Empire.

Congratulations
on this well-deserved honour.

With Best Wishes

1. Ms Oyindamola Jasmine Emmanuel
2. Mrs Monsurat Amasa-Oyelude
3. Alhaja Shukainat Olayemi Bashua- Kuye
4. Alhaja Idayat Funmi Raji
5. Alhaja Olaide Ibraheem
6. Alhaja Funmilayo Oniru-Atolagbe
7. Alhaja Anifat Olanrewaju Oluwa- Olowookere
8. Hon Olanike Bashua
9. Hon Habibat Omowunmi Ogbara
10. Mrs Abiola Abiodun
11. Mrs Yetunde Omorode
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13. Mrs Oluwatoyin Oluwa
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Dan Oriade: Jagaban, An Unrepentant Democrat

Dr. Oriade Daniel, leadership strategist, nation-builder and lead author of the new book, JAGABAN: The Unrepentant Democrat, speaks with The Guardian ***GREGORY AUSTIN NWAKUNOR*** *about the inspiration behind the project, its research methodology and the lessons embedded in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's leadership journey, which dominates the offering.*

You began the Tinubu book project in early 2025 and it is on the cusp of release. What inspired the project and why did you consider it appropriate at this point in time?

THE project arose from my sustained interest in leadership, nation-building and the forces that shape political outcomes. From the outset, our objective was not merely to document President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's life, but to examine his political journey as a practical leadership case study. His evolution – from pro-democracy activism and legislative service to governing Lagos State, building national influence and becoming President – demonstrates that political leadership is rarely the product of one election or one moment of opportunity. It is usually the cumulative result of preparation, relationships, strategic positioning and resilience.

Also, the timing is important, because Nigeria is asking serious questions about governance, reform, institutions and its democratic future. As the country approaches another electoral season, discussion should move beyond slogans and partisan emotions. This book is neither campaign propaganda nor an indictment. It studies the man, his methods, decisions, alliances, controversies, victories and setbacks. Nigeria must begin to study its leaders, not merely praise or attack them, because every consequential journey contains lessons and warnings for the next generation.

Your book is entitled *JAGABAN: The Unrepentant Democrat – A Masterclass in Political Strategy and Nation-Building: A Global Leadership Case Study Using the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Leadership Journey.* What informed this ambitious title?

Every part of the title was deliberately chosen. 'Jagaban' captures the public identity of a political combatant and strategist who is rarely intimidated by opposition. 'The Unrepentant Democrat' reflects his persistent engagement with democratic politics – from resistance to military rule to legislative service, state governance, party formation, coalition-building and the presidency. 'A Masterclass in Political Strategy' describes the practical core of the book. Tinubu's rise was built over decades through preparation, negotiation, talent identification, institutional positioning and an understanding of timing. His journey teaches that political ambition without structure is merely a wish. 'Nation-Building' introduces the greater test: whether the ability to win power can be converted into effective governance, stronger institutions, national cohesion and improved lives. The final phrase explains our methodology. We use real decisions, conflicts, alliances, setbacks and victories to extract les0sons that can be studied beyond Nigeria. Tinubu is not presented as flawless. We will examine strengths, criticisms, limitations and consequences. Sometimes leadership teaches us what to emulate; at other times, what to question, improve or avoid. That balance is the book's intellectual foundation.

This is not the first time you have written a book about a major political figure. Many years ago, you wrote *IBB: The Misunderstood Patriot,* and now you are writing *Jagaban: The Unrepentant Democrat – A Masterclass in Political Strategy and Nation Building.* Why do you seem attracted to writing about controversial political personalities?

Thank you. I believe that is an important observation.

Yes, some years ago I wrote *IBB: The Misunderstood Patriot,* a book that examined the leadership journey and national influence of former Military President General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. Now, I am writing *Jagaban: The Unrepentant Democrat – A Masterclass in Political Strategy and Nation Building*, which examines the leadership philosophy and political strategy of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Some people have asked whether I deliberately choose controversial personalities. My answer is simple: I choose consequential personalities.

As a researcher and leadership writer, I am interested in individuals whose decisions, leadership styles, and influence have significantly shaped Nigeria's political landscape. Such individuals naturally attract admiration from some people and criticism from others. That is the nature of leadership. My responsibility is not to write for applause or condemnation; it is to document history, analyse leadership, and preserve lessons for future generations.

Several books and articles have already been written about President Tinubu. What will make yours fundamentally different?

The difference lies in purpose, methodology and application. We are not producing a conventional biography that merely records offices, elections and personalities. For every major episode, we ask: What challenge did he face? What options were available? Which strategy did he adopt? Who were the stakeholders? What outcome followed, and what might have been done differently? It is a research-driven leadership biography structured through practical case studies. We will distinguish facts from allegations, achievements from political claims, and strategic success from effective governance. Relevant chapters will compare his experience with leadership situations in other societies, identifying which principles are universal and which are peculiar to Nigeria.

Besides, each chapter concludes with transferable lessons and reflective questions. Readers will not simply be told what happened; they will be placed inside the decision-making environment. Tinubu, therefore, becomes more than the subject of a political story – his journey becomes a classroom for politicians, executives, public administrators, researchers and students.

Tinubu has survived political battles that ended the careers of many contemporaries. What do you think has accounted for his unusual capacity for political survival?

His survival appears to rest on long-term thinking, strategic patience, relationship management, adaptability and organisational discipline. He rarely approaches politics as a single election; he treats it as a continuing process of building influence, developing people and preparing for future opportunity. He also understands that setbacks are not always permanent defeats. Rather than disappear after disappointment, he reorganises, waits and returns through a different route or coalition. Another strength is building networks that operate beyond his immediate personality and outside election seasons. However, survival must not automatically be equated with democratic excellence. A durable structure can provide continuity, but it may also raise concerns about concentrated influence, accountability and internal democracy. The deeper lesson is not merely how to remain relevant, but how to build enduring institutions without weakening competition. Political survival becomes valuable to society only when influence is converted into responsible governance and measurable public benefit.

Is there a significant difference between Tinubu the political strategist and Tinubu the President, and has his political genius translated into national governance?

There is an important difference. Political strategy concerns acquiring influence, building coalitions, managing opposition and winning power. Governance concerns using that power to strengthen institutions, implement policy and improve citizens' lives. Tinubu's political credentials were established over decades, but his presidential record must be assessed separately through measurable outcomes. His administration has shown willingness to take difficult decisions, notably reforms to fuel subsidies and foreign exchange. Recent assessments indicate stronger growth and improved macroeconomic stability, but poverty, food insecurity and the cost of living remain serious concerns. It is therefore premature either to declare the administration an unquestionable success or dismiss its reforms entirely. The evidence presents a mixed and evolving picture. The final test is not whether reform looks impressive in reports, but whether it produces employment, affordable food, reliable infrastructure, security and stronger institutions. Political genius may win power; nation-building is measured by what that power delivers.

Tinubu's political journey has been accompanied by significant controversies. How will the book examine them without becoming defensive or accusatory?

We are approaching every controversy with evidence, context and fairness. A serious book must neither suppress legitimate questions nor repeat allegations as though repetition makes them facts. We will distinguish verified facts, judicial findings, official records, political claims, media reports, opinions and unresolved allegations. Where an issue is relevant, we will explain its origin, examine available evidence and document how Tinubu or his authorised representatives responded. Where the evidence does not support a definite conclusion, we will say so. Objectivity does not mean creating artificial balance between truth and falsehood; it means applying the same evidential standard to supporters, critics and the subject himself. Our purpose is neither to defend Tinubu at all costs nor prosecute him through literature. Readers may disagree with our conclusions, but they should see that those conclusions emerged from disciplined research and fair evaluation.

Tinubu is often described as a coalition-builder and talent hunter. Is his approach genuine mentorship, strategic calculation or both?

I believe it is both. Genuine mentorship and strategic calculation are not necessarily opposites. A leader may recognise talent while understanding that capable people strengthen an organisation and extend its influence. Tinubu appears willing to identify people with competence, ambition or electoral value and create opportunities for them. His coalition-building also reflects an understanding that politics involves managing diverse interests; successful coalitions are built by identifying a common objective, negotiating differences and creating sufficient value for the parties to remain committed. Yet mentorship must not become permanent political ownership.



Oriade

National Troupe Deepens Nigeria's Cultural Heritage At *Roots & Roofs* Show

By **Florence Utor**

THE National Troupe of Nigeria (NTN), under the leadership of its Artistic Director/Chief Executive Officer, Hajja Kaltume Bulama Gana, has continued to strengthen Nigeria's cultural diplomacy, international partnerships and institutional capacity through the performing arts and digital transformation.

At its recent exhibition titled, *Roots & Roofs,* held at the Kolanut Gallery, Asokoro, Abuja, the troupe captivated audiences with *When Walls Remember*, a one-movement dance oratorio, combining dance, music, narration and indigenous performance traditions.

The performance, which formed part of the *Roots & Roofs:* Pan-African Indigenous Skills Development (PAID) Programme, explored the relationship between African architecture, culture, community and memory.

Through a symbolic journey across cultural spaces including the Yoruba *Àgbo Ilé*, Northern Nigerian *Zaure*, royal courtyards of Benin, Igbo Obi, Bida brass-working communities, Vunon festival grounds and the Tiv Agbajen, the production portrayed African architecture as a living repository of identity, creativity, communal values and cultural continuity.

The *Roots & Roofs* initiative of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation (CBAAC) was implemented in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut Nigeria, British Council Nigeria, Embassy of Spain in Nigeria, Embassy of Ireland in Nigeria, Institute of African and Diaspora Studies (IADS), and the National Troupe of Nigeria.

The project is supported by Spaces of Culture under the Partnerships for Culture programme funded by the European Union through EUNIC Global.

In a further demonstration of cultural diplomacy, the troupe is deepening the cultural relationship with China through a unique musical exchange featuring Chinese traditional drums alongside indigenous Nigerian drums, creating a platform for cultural dialogue and mutual appreciation between both Nations.

Meanwhile, the NTN is strengthening its internal capacity through an intensive Digital Literacy and Capacity Building Training Programme for staff. The initiative aligns with the Federal Government's drive towards a paperless, efficient and digitally enabled civil service and is aimed at improving staff digital competence, operational efficiency, transparency and service delivery.

Through these initiatives, the National Troupe of Nigeria continues to demonstrate its commitment to preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage, promoting international cultural exchange, embracing innovation and building a more efficient and globally relevant cultural institution.



Gana, second right and other participants at the event

Broadcast Content Across Borders

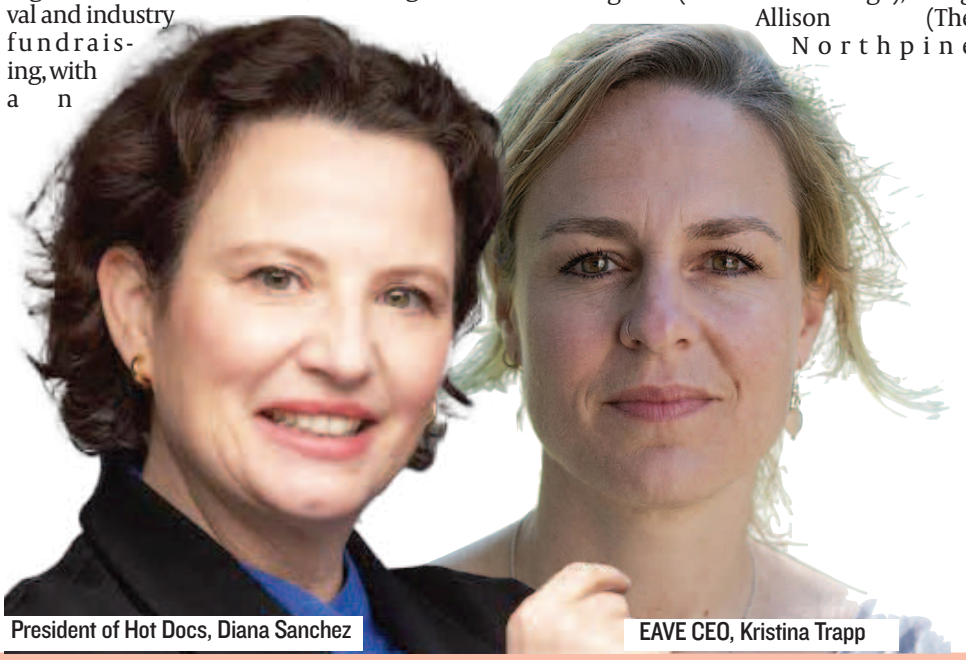
Compiled by **Shaibu Husseini**

DFM Announces Equitable Coproduction Programme For 2026

THE Durban FilmMart (DFM) has announced a new Equitable Coproduction programme for its 2026 edition, designed by EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs) and bringing four leading EAVE experts to Durban to address one of the most pressing issues in international filmmaking: how to build coproductions that are fair, transparent and sustainable for all partners involved. Taking place under the theme 'Shifting Worlds: Turning Towards Ourselves,' the 17th Durban FilmMart, scheduled from October 9 to 12, 2026, continues to expand its Industry Programme to meet the practical needs of producers navigating an increasingly global production landscape. The Equitable Coproduction programme, delivered across a masterclass series and a dedicated clinic, gives delegates both the frameworks and the individual guidance needed to structure partnerships that share power, risk and reward more evenly. "Co-production has always been positioned as a route to bigger budgets and wider access, but we have often identified that those partnerships are not always fair," says Durban FilmMart Institute Director, Magdalene Reddy. "By presenting a programmatic element-based EAVEs recently developed Equitable Coproduction research and report DFM is equipping producers with practical tools to negotiate equitable creative, financial and legal. For EAVE CEO Kristina Trapp, the Impact Think Tank on Equitable and Inclusive Production Practices was created to examine the structural realities shaping independent production and develop practical responses. "DFM was a natural partner in adapting and delivering this comprehensive, hands-on programme for African producers," Trapp said, adding that the programme aim to provide clear steps, best practices and practical tools for integrating inclusive production and coproduction practices into professional workflows, empowering producers to create meaningful and lasting change across the continent.

A New President For Hot Docs Film Festival

DIANA Sanchez has been elevated to President of Hot Docs, effective immediately. Alongside Hot Docs' Board of Directors, Sanchez has restructured the executive leadership team to better accomplish the organisation's long-term strategic goals and growth. Accordingly, Sanchez has appointed Mara Gourd-Mercado (currently at CPH:DOX) to the position of Executive Director, Hot Docs. Gourd-Mercado begins her new role on October 19, 2026, and will report to Sanchez. In her new role as President, Sanchez will concentrate on the organisation's strategic direction — artistic oversight, government relations, business development, and major financial partnerships — while safeguarding Hot Docs' long-term health and stability. Gourd-Mercado will lead day-to-day operations and fiscal management of the organisation and the festival, including festival and industry fundraising, with an additional focus on industry programming, a revitalised Hot Docs Forum, and ties with the Francophone doc community in Canada and abroad. "On behalf of the board, I want to congratulate Diana on this new role and on all the phenomenal work she has done to stabilize and elevate Hot Docs," said Julie Bristow, Chair, Hot Docs. "As we look to the future, this enhanced executive leadership team enables Diana to focus on what matters most: taking Hot Docs to the next level while ensuring it is financially secure, resilient, and nimble. I'm also absolutely delighted to welcome Mara to Hot Docs. Her experience and skills blend seamlessly with Diana's, and I know they will make a remarkable team." With a new board structure now in place, Julie Bristow and Aaron Zeghers' roles on Hot Docs' Board of Directors have been solidified. Bristow is now the Chair, while Zeghers is the Vice Chair. Hot Docs' Board of Directors comprises Chair Julie Bristow (Catalyst); Vice-Chair Aaron Zeghers (The Infinite Image); Doug Allison (The Northpine Foundation); Caroline Harvey (Senior Communications Strategist); Merit Jensen-Carr (Merit Motion Pictures); Lea Marin (Netflix Canada); Habiba Nosheen (Akelo Media); Noah Segal (Elevation Pictures); and Marc Serpa Francoeur (Lost Time Media / Better Together Films). Hot Docs has also restructured its cinema operations to better align resources with future goals. As a result of these changes, a small number of theatre roles have been consolidated or eliminated. Hot Docs extends its sincere gratitude to those impacted for their hard work and service. This restructuring does not affect the upcoming schedule or the quality of Hot Docs' patron services.



President of Hot Docs, Diana Sanchez

EAVE CEO, Kristina Trapp

Tokyo International Film Festival Announces Spotlight Screenings

THE Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) has announced three spotlight screenings that will occur during the 39th edition. The festival's Opening Film will be *Sukiyaki*, a heartwarming music-themed entertainment revealing the untold story behind "Sukiyaki"— the historic song that topped the *Billboard* charts and remains one of the world's best-selling tunes. The Centerpiece will be *Godzilla Minus Zero*, the epic sequel from the Oscar-winning Visual Effects team behind *Godzilla Minus One*, showcasing the next evolution in the global Godzilla phenomenon. It is the the first Japanese production to be Filmed for Imax. The TIFF Closing Film will be the Korean non-stop action-thriller *Colony*, directed by Yeon Sang-ho of *Train to Busan* (2016). The film, depicting a desperate struggle for survival against infected hosts driven by an advanced collective intelligence, had its world premiere at this year's Cannes Film Festival and swept the box office in Korea and other Asian countries. With a rich variety of genres—drama, tokusatsu, and action-thriller—these three films headline this year's festival lineup. We hope you will enjoy these films and many others in the heart of Tokyo this autumn, as the 39th TIFF unspools, from October 26 to November 4.

Mighty Mouse Legacy Lives On As AJ Celebrates Icon

By **Balkis Ademuyiwa**

FOR those who knew the DJ, musician and mentor, John Aigbokhan Oboh, popularly known as Mighty Mouse, his story demonstrates how creativity and determination can transform a community.

From his studio in Ajegunle, Oboh helped nurture a musical movement whose influence extended beyond the community and shaped the careers of generations of Nigerian artistes.

Saturday, August 29, 2026, the world celebrated the life and enduring contribution of this late producer at the maiden Mighty Mouse Legacy Concert in Lagos.

The event, which attracted musicians, producers, creatives, community leaders and members of the Ajegunle music community, was organised to honour Oboh, who was widely described by colleagues and admirers as a pioneer and father of Ajegunle music.

Speaking at the event, Ehiguese Daddy Hyde, a prominent figure in Nigeria's reggae and dancehall community and one of the organisers, said the concert was aimed at celebrating Mighty Mouse not only for his musical achievements but also for the opportunities he created for young people.

"We are not only celebrating the man who created a sound. We are celebrating the man who created opportunities for people," Hyde said.

Mighty Mouse emerged during a period when Ajegunle was becoming a major centre of grassroots popular music in Lagos. He developed a distinctive musical style that blended African rhythms, Edo Esan samba, reggae, jazz, local percussion and contemporary sounds.

His Jahoha Studio in Ajegunle became an important centre for the development of the emerging Ajegunle music movement.

Beyond recording music, the studio provided an environment where young artistes, producers, engineers and other aspiring creatives could acquire skills and develop their talents.

Organisers said several artistes associated with the rise of Ajegunle music, including Daddy Showkey, Daddy Fresh, Baba Fryo and Marvellous Benji, among others, were connected to the creative environment built around Mighty Mouse.

His contribution, they noted, therefore, went beyond producing records, as he helped create an ecosystem that gave young people the opportunity to discover their abilities and pursue careers in music.

Friday Obianu, popularly known as Prof Linkin, whose hit song "I Don Jogodo" enjoyed significant airplay in the early 2000s, described Mighty Mouse as a generous and influential figure who helped artistes overcome financial barriers.

Obianu, who said Mighty Mouse mastered his popular song, recalled that the late producer frequently created opportunities for upcoming musicians who could not afford professional studio sessions.

According to him, Mighty Mouse ensured that lack of money did not prevent young musicians from recording and developing their musical ideas.

"Without him, we would not have the opportunity to be in the studio to produce our own songs," he said.

Veteran musician Friday Igwe, popularly known as Baba Fryo, described him as a hardworking man who contributed significantly to the growth of artistes and producers in Ajegunle.

He described Oboh as a revolutionary who used music to speak against oppression and advocate for the people, saying his death represented the loss of an important figure in the Nigerian music industry.

Chairman of the Performing Musicians Employers' Association of Nigeria, PMAN, Ajegunle Chapter, Bright John Odede, popularly known as Sir Boj, said the concert was established to keep Mighty Mouse's vision alive.

Belemzy: From Party Floor To Gospel Field

By **Daniel Anazia**

FOR 15 years, Houston's party scene was Princess Belemzy now Apostle Queen Belemzy's world. But on August 21, 2016, everything changed. Her journey is a testament to radical transformation. She describes that day as the moment God dramatically redirected her life.

Born Belema Abili and hailing from Patani in the oil-rich Delta State, she spent two decades in Nigeria before relocating to the United States, marking the beginning of a complex, winding path that ultimately led to her divine calling.

During these years, the vibrant entrepreneur was a fixture of the entertainment scene, living life as a high-profile party promoter in Houston. Church was far from her mind, and personal hardships eventually mounted.

A broken marriage, the loss of her left eye, and a forced relocation back to her parents' house with her son left her world fractured. "Everything was hard. The only thing I had to do was submit to God," she reflects.

According to her, that submission unlocked a profound spiritual awakening with the Holy Spirit that left her speaking in tongues for more than four hours. The following day, she picked up her phone and began preaching online. The very next day, August 22, 2016, an irresistible mandate dropped into her spirit: go online and preach.

Despite protesting that she lacked formal training, the Holy Spirit assured her of His guidance. Armed only with her phone and divine backing, she began preaching daily. "I didn't know how to preach, but the Holy Spirit told me, 'Don't worry, I'll help you."

Her identity shifted alongside her spiritual growth. Initially known in her promotion days as "Princess Belemzy"— a moniker reflecting a lifelong, intuitive sense of royalty—her ministry underwent a higher coronation.

On November 11, 2022, a deeper spiritual elevation led to her crown as a queen. Today, she leads the Queen Belemzy Ministries School of Power. What started as a hesitant step of obedience has blossomed into a decade-long digital ministry, completely untethered from traditional seminary walls yet reaching souls across continents.

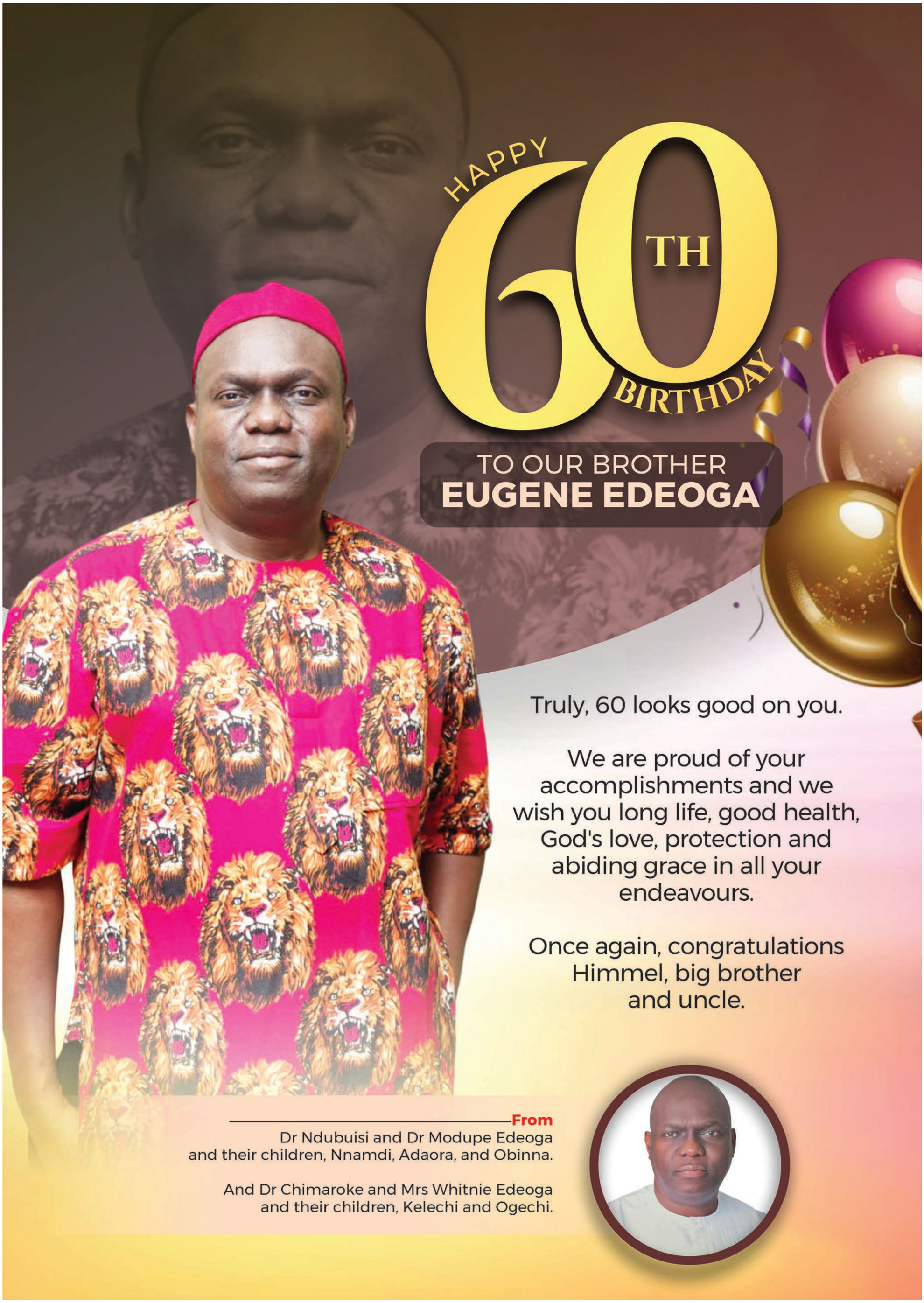
Explaining the divine moniker, she notes that God imparted a heavy mandate of healing to her name, making her a vessel of spiritual authority to the nations. "He anointed me, crowned me as a queen.

According to her, starting, the ministry was known as Princess Belemzy Ministries School of Power, but now "we've upgraded it to Queen Belemzy Ministries School of Power. God gave me the School of Power part because He said He has put so much power in me to heal the world.

"So I'm the Queen of Power. That's what you saw, the power of God working here. Yeah, so that's the School of Power; that's how it came. God Himself gave me that name for the ministry."



Queen Belemzy


HAPPY
60TH
BIRTHDAY
TO OUR BROTHER
EUGENE EDEOGA
Truly, 60 looks good on you.
We are proud of your accomplishments and we wish you long life, good health, God's love, protection and abiding grace in all your endeavours.
Once again, congratulations Himmel, big brother and uncle.
From
Dr Ndubuisi and Dr Modupe Edeoga and their children, Nnamdi, Adaora, and Obinna.
And Dr Chimaroke and Mrs Whitnie Edeoga and their children, Kelechi and Ogechi.

Irene Agbo Brings Marketplace To Life In *The Crown*

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

BRADFORD'S cultural landscape was enriched by theatre, music and storytelling at the Bradford African Festival of Arts (BAFA) 2026, where African creativity found expression through a diverse programme of performance. Among the festival's theatrical offerings was *The Crown*, an immersive production written and directed by Daniel Okezue and produced by Prolific Arts.

Set in a bustling market square, *The Crown* explores leadership, public trust and the relationship between power and ordinary people. The story begins with the arrival of a King, played by Debola Akran, amid rumours that taxes and levies imposed on market sellers have increased. His appearance is intended to reassure his subjects, but the unease within the marketplace reveals the deeper question at the heart of the play: can authority truly understand the people it governs?

Among the performers who gave that question its human dimension was Irene Agbo, who played one of the market women.

Agbo's performance was notable for its naturalness. Rather than treating the role as a peripheral character within the King's story, she inhabited the marketplace as though it were a genuine social environment. Her interactions, reactions and physical presence helped establish the sense of a community whose daily life had been disrupted by rumours of economic hardship.

The strength of Agbo's performance lies in her understanding that immersive theatre requires more than delivering lines. The performer must help create the world itself.

In *The Crown*, the market is not simply a backdrop. It is where people work, exchange information, express concerns and encounter authority. Agbo's market woman becomes part of that social fabric.

Her performance is grounded rather than exaggerated. She allows the character's personality to emerge through interaction and reaction, giving the impression of an ordinary woman whose concerns are inseparable from the economic realities of the marketplace.

"I saw my character as somebody who represents the everyday person," Agbo said. "She may not have power, but she has a voice, and what happens to her livelihood matters."



That understanding gives the role greater dramatic weight.

Agbo is not simply responding to the King. She is helping the audience understand why the King's arrival matters.

One of Okezue's most effective choices is the contrast between the royal world and the marketplace. The King wears the crown, but the market women bear the consequences of decisions made within the structures of power.

Agbo's performance captures that tension without turning the character into a political caricature. Her character remains human, concerned about her livelihood, attentive to the developments around her and connected to the wider community.

"What I liked about the role was that it wasn't about being the loudest person," she explained. "It was about being present and making the audience feel that these people have real lives beyond what we see on stage."

In a production built around immersion, subtle reactions can be as important as dramatic declarations. Agbo's ability to remain engaged with the action around her contributes significantly to the illusion that the marketplace exists independently of the audience.

Agbo shared the marketplace with Adeyinka 'SuperGirl' Akinremi and Issifu Dee Amponsah, who played fellow market sellers. Together, the three performers supplied the social energy of the community.

Their collective performance created a sense of everyday activity against which the King's arrival acquired significance.

Around them, the wider ensemble, Antonio Ghattie, Big Johny and MC Sege as village chiefs, Kemisola 'Erioro' and Emmanuel Yanmife Faremi as town crier and chanter, and Adeoluwa 'MC Crown' Adebisi as talking drummer, contributed to the production's distinctive African theatrical vocabulary.

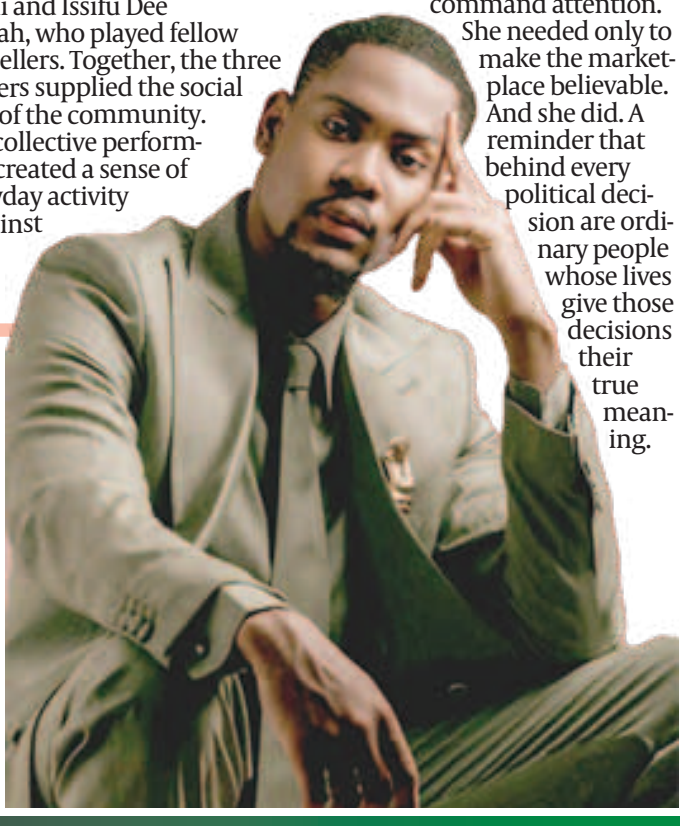
At a deeper level, The Crown uses the market woman to explore the relationship between governance and lived experience.

Taxation may be a political decision, but for the market seller it is an economic reality.

The King may speak of welfare, but the market woman measures welfare through the ability to earn, trade and sustain her livelihood. Agbo's performance helps make this distinction tangible.

Written and directed by Daniel Okezue and produced by Prolific Arts as part of BAFA 2026, The Crown demonstrates how African storytelling traditions can be adapted into contemporary immersive theatre. Agbo's performance sits comfortably within that vision.

She did not need the crown to command attention. She needed only to make the marketplace believable. And she did. A reminder that behind every political decision are ordinary people whose lives give those decisions their true meaning.



From Youtube To The Big Screen: Clinton Ezewele Makes Cinema Debut In Five Figurines

By Balkis Ademuyiwa

CLINTON Joshua Ezewele is entering a new phase of his career. Known to millions as one of Nollywood's fastest-rising young actors, Clinton Joshua is preparing for his theatrical cinema debut, taking on a role unlike anything he has played before.

For an actor who built his name on volume and instinct, racking up over a hundred film credits since his 2023 screen debut in When Angels Meet, this new role marks a deliberate shift in register.

Ezewele, born in Lagos State to Edo State heritage, has spent the past three years building one of the most extraordinary grassroots careers in contemporary Nollywood. Since his screen debut in When Angels Meet in 2023, produced by Uchenna Mbunabo of One and Two Films, he has accumulated over a hundred film credits, won the Best New Actor of the Year Award at the Nollywood Honours 2023, founded Clinton Joshua Film Limited, and amassed a combined digital following of more than two million across Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

Clinton Joshua's rise has been built on instinct, speed, and an unusual closeness with his audience.

His theatrical debut, in a moral thriller arriving in Nigerian cinemas later this year, is best understood not as a departure from where he started, but as the next step in a career built on graduating from one stage to the next.

For Clinton Joshua, the work continues. What has changed is the size of the canvas, and the depth he is now reaching to fill.

TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

Like P Square, Like El Rufai's Clan

JUST when Nigerians are trying to make sense of the mystery behind the forever family feud of identical musical twins, Peter and Paul Okoye of the defunct P Square duo, they were hit with a fresh blow of another nasty brawl of sons of embattled politician, Nasir el Rufai.

El Rufai, a former Governor of Kaduna State has been in detention for months now over a wide ranging allegations of corruption and phone wiretapping.

But the travails of their father did not seem to bother Bashir el Rufai and Mohammed el Rufai as both recently decided to tear into each other in what may eventually turn out to be a reenactment of the P Square's.

Bashir publicly accused his older brother, Mohammed, of abusing banned substances and alcohol. Bashir made the allegations in a post on his X account on Saturday, August 29, 2026, amid an apparent family dispute whose cause remains unclear.

In the post, Bashir launched a scathing attack at Mohammed, who represents a constituency in the House of Representatives. He alleged that the lawmaker consumes alcohol and some other hard stuff (nor be T4T mouth you go for hear am).

Bashir wrote: "That is your member in the House, representing a whole populace, but prefers alcohol and***. Yes, you."

If El Rufai's family and village people fail (just as P Square's failed) to rein in the two young men now, that the tiger has not fully left its cage, the public may be witnessing yet another P Square saga.

T4T has wondered what will make blood brothers fight dirty in public to the extent of going for each other's jugular.

Anyway, instead of the two little El Rufais to join heads together and find a way to get their father out of the jam he is in currently, they are running to X (Twitter) to disgrace themselves for the public to cheer. An X user may be right when she said they are acting this way because they have food to eat. T4T agrees. *If dem dey hungry and eye dey turn dem, dem nor go remember wia X dey.*

Odumeje *Jump Am Pass*

ANAMBRA State-based miracle Pastor, popularly called Odumeje, the man who has publicly boasted of having so many powers (some he has not even touched) recently showed he also has powers to avoid afflictions.

Odumeje is one of T4T's favourites online. He hardly scrolls past his videos, not only because of the humour but the seeming originality of the Pastor. So, there was this video of Odumeje that popped up recently where a man who came for "healing and deliverance" was heard telling Odumeje that before he came to his church, another pastor had prayed for him and one of the Pastor's hands paralyzed.

Odumeje paused for some seconds and in his usual frank manner, asked the man: "So, why are you here?"

Yes, why did the man go to Odumeje, really? To also cause one of his hands to be paralysed like the other Pastor, too?

Someone commented on the video that Odumeje who claimed to have "so many powers" should not be afraid of a man who is going about paralysing the hands of Pastors with God knows what evil powers he has, but T4T replied him that perhaps, our dear Daddy Odumeje had not collected the 'power' that could stop hands from paralysing, yet.

In summary, Odumeje is a smart man. There is an Urhobo proverb that says, the man who hides or runs and survives a war is the true warrior, not the dead hero.

Wiz Kid, Oya, Help Flavour, Please!

A washed-out Afro pop artiste, Kelly Hansome, stirred a very nonsensical controversy recently when he accused the Yoruba ethnic stock of deliberately not wanting to assist artistes from the South Eastern region. He cited the example of how Afro pop star, Wiz Kid was able to fill O2 Arena in the UK with the help of the large crowd of Yoruba people living in the UK, but Flavour, another Nigerian star from the SE region could not sell out that same venue because he claimed the Yorubas refused to buy his tickets. He also said he came to Lagos and learned how to speak Yoruba but Yorubas refuse to go to his own state, Imo, to learn Igbo language. T4T never knew the young man was this vain. Who force am to come Lagos?

In all T4T's adult life, he has not seen this kind of very stupid claim, and what made it even more pathetic was that it gained traction and caused a momentary online war between the Igbos and Yorubas.

T4T has given the needless issue a hard thought and this is his submission. Please, dear Wiz Kid, when next you want to go to O2 Arena, hold Flavour by his hands and introduce him to all your Yoruba fans in the UK and order them to buy his next show tickets, abeg. And also, Yoruba people should henceforth begin to relocate to Imo state to learn Igbo language and put it in their songs as bros Kelly Hansome has done with the Yoruba language.

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NewsExtra

Sokoto Gov's Wife Urges Mothers To Prioritise Kids' Upbringing

From **Muhammad Gazali Garba,** Sokoto

SOKOTO State Governor's wife, Hajiya Fatima Ahmed Aliyu, has urged internally-displaced mothers in the state to prioritise theirr children's upbringing, despite the challenges posed by insecurity.

She also called on them to inculcate sound moral and religious values in their children to protect them from social vices and criminal tendencies.

She made the appeal during her visits to Tangaza and Binji local councils, where she interacted with internally-displaced persons (IDPs) affected by security challenges.

Mrs. Aliyu said the visits were aimed at identifying with the affected communities, understanding their immediate needs, encouraging them and reassuring them of the state government's commitment to addressing the challenges confronting them.

She disclosed that Governor Ahmed Aliyu had begun the distribution of subsidised food items to residents across the state, with a portion of the commodities specifically reserved for women to be distributed free of charge.

She said the initiative reflected the governor's commitment to cushioning the effects of economic hardship on women and other vulnerable members of society, particularly those whose livelihoods had been affected by insecurity, while assuring the communities that the governor remained committed to



Hajia Aliyu

tackling insecurity in the state.

She urged the women to teach their children Islamic principles, help them distinguish between right and wrong, and protect them from negative influences that could expose them to criminal activities and other social vices.

She further stressed that children brought up with strong moral and religious values would be better equipped to resist peer pressure and attempts by criminal elements to recruit or influence them into wrongdoing.

Also speaking at the two events, the Commissioner for Women and Children Affairs, Hajiya Hadiza Ahmed Shagari, commended the governor's wife for her sustained humanitarian interventions and concern for women and other vulnerable people across the state.

Shagari described Aliyu as a compassionate and caring mother who had consistently demonstrated concern for the welfare of women, particularly those living in rural communities.

She recalled that the governor's wife had earlier assisted a family in Binji following the birth of triplets, noting that the family was invited to the Government House, where relief assistance was provided.

The commissioner said the latest visits to Binji and Tangaza further demonstrated her commitment to standing by communities experiencing hardship and insecurity.

She appealed to residents to remain united and prayerful while supporting government efforts to restore lasting peace and security in the state.

Representing the wives of the Chairmen of Tangaza and Binji local councils, Hajiya Shafaatu Aliyu and Hajiya Amina Umar, respectively, commended Aliyu for the visit and her continued support for women and vulnerable members of the communities. They said her presence had encouraged families affected by insecurity and demonstrated the state government's concern for their welfare.

They pledged their continued support for initiatives aimed at improving the wellbeing of women and children in their respective communities, while urging residents to remain united and support efforts to restore lasting peace and security.

ShortStory

Shadows Of Destiny (3)

By **Segun Durowaiye (08055356855)**

Continued from GUARDIAN WEEKEND, August 29-30, 2026

THERE was confusion, big trouble and pandemonium as the young boy laid on the floor! "What's the problem, Banky?" his mum stood up and rushed towards him. Before she could get to where the boy was sitting in the expansive living room, the boy was already down and battling with life. He was gripped in another convulsive and epileptic fit. Mrs. Olamide was confused and heart-broken.

"Oh my God! Banky! Banky!! Banky!!!" she screamed, totally confused, "What's the matter again? Help! Heeelp!! Heeeelp!!!" she wailed as she trembled all over during the hopeless situation.

Aina, the housemaid, was the only person at home that eventful Sunday. And she was in the kitchen cleaning up. Immediately she heard the screams of her madam and boss, she instantly dropped what she was doing and rushed out of the kitchen, heading for the living room.

"Hah, madam, what's wrong with Bankole?" she asked, shaking with fear.

"God, help me. . .em. . .emm. . .he's always having this convulsive and epileptic fits for many years and we've tried many traditional and orthodox medicine, but no cure. . .yee. . .help me God!" the woman cried. Aina sighed, looked up and sighed once again.

"Do you have onions and bitter kola at home, Madam?" Aina inquired from the confused woman. "I have onions, Aina, but I don't have bitter kola. . .it's in the kitchen," she replied, still trembling. "Okay, I am coming," Aina said and ran out of the living room, heading for her room; the next minute the young boy was foaming in the mouth and still jerking spasmodically. "Yee! Banky! Don't die please, Banky! God help meee!" Mrs. Olamide cried.

In a jiffy, Aina was back with onions and bitter kola. She knelt beside the young boy, then forced the onions down the throat of the boy and she put the bitter kola in her own mouth, chewed and sprayed it on the boy's face. The next moment the boy hiccupped thrice and staggered up. He touched his belly, lowered his head and vomited three dead lizards one after the other!

"My God!" exclaimed Mrs. Olamide, "What is this? Good gracious!" Then the young boy sat down gently and cleaned his mouth. "Sorry, dear," Aina said, "Are you okay now?" she asked. "Yes, I'm okay, thank you ma." Bankole replied softly. "Oh, I'm so grateful and happy, Aina!" said Mrs. Olamide, "Oh, this is awesome and great! Ha, how can I ever repay you for this marvelous feat you just performed? You've healed my son, Aina! You've healed my son, Aina! You've healed him!" she repeated excitedly.

"Not to worry, Madam! It's not my doing! It's God's miracle!" she said. "From today onwards your lovely son won't suffer this convulsive and epileptic fits again, I promise," she added.

"Oh, Aina. . .please, what exactly do you want me to do for you? I will do it Aina! You're simply great!" Mrs. Olamide couldn't control her emotions. She was overwhelmed with deep and palpable joy!

"Madam, what else do I need from you? You've given us shelter and food. I want nothing more."

From that day onward, Bankole never suffered epilepsy or convulsive fits any more. Mrs. Olamide was overjoyed. She phoned her husband a week later and told him about the development. Mr. Olamide was so happy he volunteered to sponsor the trip of Aina and her husband to the United States of America. In some few days time, Mrs. Olamide paid for the international passports of Aina and that of her husband. Their travelling documents were processed and before one could say Banky, Aina and her husband, Dipo Balogun, had relocated to the U.S.A. Mrs. Olamide herself joined her husband in the U.S. three months later.

That was how Aina's fortune, an erstwhile Labourer, and her poor husband changed for the better. Since the beginning of the new millennium, Aina and her husband had relocated and were now working in a food processing company owned by the Olamides in New Jersey, United States of America. And they were so happy and glad that fortune had finally smiled on them because they were now paid worthwhile dollars as salary. And they lived happily ever after.

Concluded.

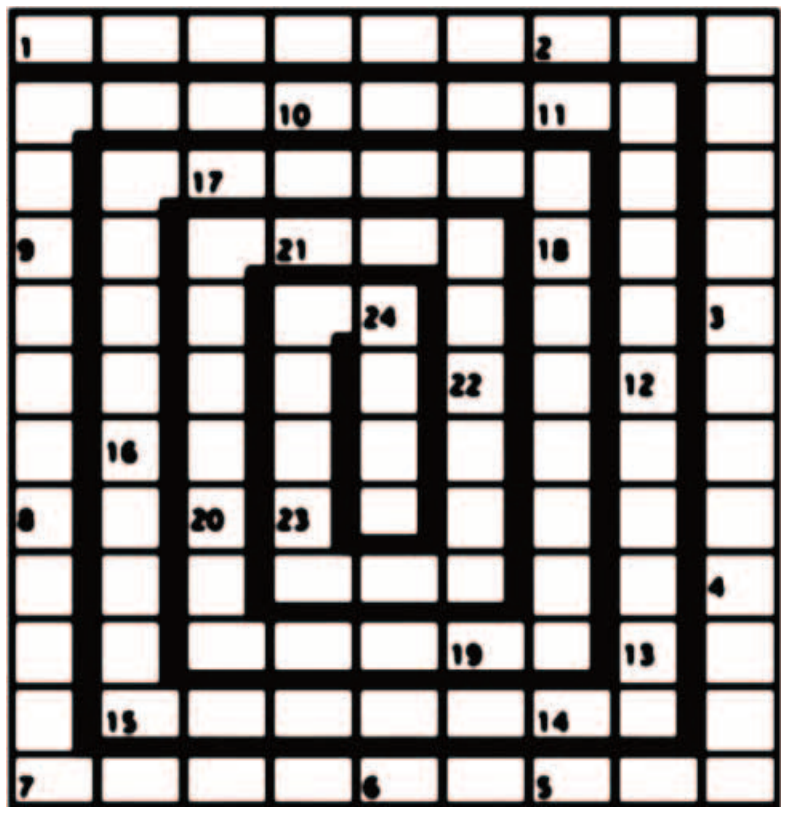
Interested sponsor/sponsors for this SHORT STORY column should please contact: 08023015115 or 08055356855.

Overlapping Word Game

with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
olulana3@yahoo.com

Solution

1 Timouni
2 Impeach
3 Hectic
4 Icicle
5 Exit
6 Italic
7 Icing
8 Ghana
9 Anambra
10 Ramble
11 Blemish
12 Shovel
13 Eland
14 Android
15 Idiot
16 Tinubu
17 Uranus
18 Salamander
19 Deride
20 Essien
21 Ngala
22 Akpabuyo
23 Yodel
24 Lute



Overlapping Word Game

1 African Footballer of the year 1994, (7).
2 Local council in Anambra State, (8).
3 Burrowing rodent, (6).
4 Very knowledgeable through study, (7).
5 Body part for producing milk, (4).
6 Accomplish something, (6).
7 Enter country by military force, (6).
8 Cease something, (6).
9 Individual's standing, (7).
10 Substance from plants, (5).
11 Buy stocks or bonds, (6).
12 The United State President, (5).
13 Urgent request, (4).
14 Not difficult, (6).
15 Recover consciousness, (6).
16 Prove something, (6).
17 Of colour of butter, (6).
18 Traveller without destination, (8).
19 Overwhelming happiness, (7).
20 Impatient, (7).
21 Happening in the season of spring, (6).
22 Somebody from Alsace, (8).
23 Once a year, (6).
24 Of wings, (4).

Word Search

Local Govt. Areas in Borno State

Bama	Abadan	Konduga
Shani	Damboa	Monguno
Dikwa	Mobbar	Magumeri
Marte	Askira Uba	Maiduguri
Gubio	Guzamala	Kwaya Kusar
Gwoza	Kala Balge	

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

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Birthdays

BANKOLE, Suarau Olayiwola Alani, politician, businessman, Egba chieftain and father of the former Speaker, House of Representatives, will 85 on September 17, 2026.

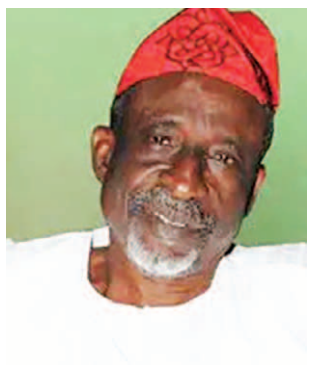
He was born on September 17, 1941 and attended Baptist High School, Abeokuta.

He was an Ogun State gubernatorial candidate on three separate occasions; he ran on the platform of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in 1979 and again in 1983, but was replaced by Soji Odunjo, the latter year.

He joined the National Republican Convention Party (NRC) in 1989, and later became a member of the All Nigeria's Peoples Party (ANPP). He became National Vice Chairman and later acting National Chairman before leaving the party for Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 2000.

He is the chairman of West African Aluminum Products (WAAP). He is also the founder of Freight Agencies Nigeria Ltd, the first freight company in West Africa. Married to Atinuke Bankole, the Ekerin Iyalode of Egbaland, he holds the titles of Oluwo of Iporo Ake and Seriki Jagunmolu of Egbaland.

ADEGEYE, Chief Sunday Adeniyi, popularly known, as King Sunny Adé (KSA), a Nigerian Singer, Songwriter and multi-instrumentalist will be 80 on



Bankole



Adegeye

September 22, 2026.

Born on September 22, 1946, in Osogbo to a royal family in Ondo, his father was a church organist, while his mother, Maria Adegeye (née Adesida), was a trader.

The Legendary juju singer is a multi-award-winning songwriter and multi-instrumentalist. He is regarded as one of the first African pop musicians to gain international success and fame.

He is known for his longevity in the Nigerian music scene, fluid dance moves, boundless stage energy and vast collaborative variety.

King Sunny Ade's music is characterised by, among other instruments, the talking drum and the guitar. His music is in the age-old tradition of singing poetic lyrics, ewi and praise singing of dignitaries, as well as components of juju.

KSA introduced the pedal steel guitar, synthesisers, clavinet, vibraphone, and tenor guitar into the juju music repertoire.

He used these instruments not as an attempt to innovate, but as a substitute for traditional jùjú instruments, which were too difficult to find or impractical for touring.

The pedal steel guitar, for instance, was added to his repertoire as a sound-alike for an African violin, Wikipedia states. Sunny Ade has collaborated with major artistes such as Manu Dibango and Stevie Wonder, as well as younger Nigerian artists such as WasiuAlabiPasuma and Bola Abimbola.

Also, his brief recordings with Island Records opened the floodgates for other world music artists like Senegalese Youssou N'Dour, Mali's Salif Keita and many others. In the 1980s KSA embarked on a career in Hollywood.

His music was featured in the 1983 film Breathless, starring Richard Gere, the 1986 comedy; One More Saturday Night, and Robert Altman's 1987 comedy O.C. and Stiggs.

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

Events



The Impact President of Rotary Club of Ikeja, Kayode Osokomaiya (middle) surrounded by some leaders of the club led by District Governor Nominee, Rotary International District 9111, Ade Oyenekan; Past Assistant Governors, Assistant Governors and Past Presidents, including Olusegun Osunkeye, during the cutting of the 59th Anniversary cake of the club at The CEO Afternoon Enterprise Series 2026 held at Marriot Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos...



Former Vice Chancellor, University of Lagos (UNILAG)/Chairman of the occasion, Prof. Rahaman Ade Bello (middle); Chief Imam, UNILAG Muslim Community/Guest Speaker, Prof. Ismail Musa (left); and former Chairman of the UNILAG Muslim Community, Prof. Lai Olurode (right) at the Walimatul Qur'an of the UNILAG Estate Muslim Community, Magodo Phase I, Isheri, Lagos.



Metro Grand Knight, Knights of St. Mulumba Nigeria, Lagos Metropolitan Council, Sir Nosa Ehigiator (right) presenting a copy of the Metro's Endowment Fund Donor Information Brochure to Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins, Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, at the Chancery of the Archdiocese ...on Monday.



Chairman, Board of Trustees, Lagos Country Club, Aare Kola Oyefeso (left); Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi; President, Lagos Country Club, Seyi Adewunmi and others during the club's 77th Anniversary Gala Night and commissioning of Project Falcon in Lagos... recently



Head, Corporate Communications, Sustainability & CSR, Guinness Nigeria Plc, Olukemi Ogunsakin (left); Senior Brand Manager, Guinness, Ife Odedere; winner of the Guinness Open for More National Consumer Promo, Sylvester Gunbor; and Category Head, Beer, Guinness Nigeria Plc, Mayor Esiaba, during the presentation of a N1 million cash prize to the winner in Lagos.



Managing Director of SureGifts, David Fisayo (left); Head of Marketing and Communications, SureGifts, Tiyan Omo-Idehen; Founder, Ingenuity HR Solutions, Bolaji Shote; Founder of Talent Factory, Felix Bissong and Partnership Lead of SureGifts, Odunola Alabi, during SureGifts Unwrapped Stakeholders Forum held in Lagos.

Rotary Club Of Ogudu GRA Inducts New President, Marks 20th Anniversary

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

THE Rotary Club of Ogudu GRA has marked its 20th anniversary with the installation of Ayodeji Odumosu as its 20th president, setting the stage for a new era of service and community impact.

The well-attended ceremony, held at the OGRA Hall, in Ogudu, Lagos brought together prominent Rotary leaders, members, friends and dignitaries to celebrate two decades of the club's contribution to humanitarian service.

Among them were the District Governor, Layi Abidoye; District Governor-elect, Uyi Sowebi; District Governor-Nominee, Ehi Braimah; immediate Past District Governor, Lanre Adedoyin; and Past District Governor, Omotunde Lawson.

Others included Past District Governor, Dr. Olajide Akeredolu; Assistant Governor Omotunde Olaleye, Dr A. Umaru and several other Rotarians.

The club, which was chartered 20 years ago by Onikepo Oshodi, used the occasion not only to celebrate its journey but also to formally usher in a new leadership team for the 2026-27 Rotary year.

The chairman of the occasion was the Executive Director of Lagride Nigeria Limited,. Saliu Adeniyi Rasaq, while the Royal Father of the Day was Alayeluwa, Oba Makinde Ademola Stephen Kayode, Onigemo I and Owa of Igbajo. The chief launcher was the CEO of Nuch Allied Ltd, Nnamdi Chukwu.

During the ceremony, Odumosu formally assumed office as the 20th president of the club and subsequently inaugurated the board members who will work with him throughout the Rotary year.



Ayodeji Odumosu (middle) with some leaders of Rotary International District 9112 during his investiture as the 20th president of the Rotary Club of Ogudu GRA in Lagos.

The new board comprises Adetunji Adeniyi, President-Elect; Rtn. Sharon Onyeneke, Secretary; Olusegun Aseniyi, Treasurer; Franca Nwosa, We-Care Chair; Lucy Bruno, Sergeant-at-Arms; Sunday Adedokun, Service Projects Chair; Aliyu Umaru, Rotary Foundation Chair; Wasiu Paramole, Membership Chair; Mary Okoh, Club Administration Chair; Oluwagbemileke Afolabi, Immediate Past President; Joy Uzoho, Youth Service Chair; and Michael Okiki Gbenro, Public Image Chair.

Akeredolu, AKS, will serve as board adviser.

Speaking on the new president, District Governor Abidoye described the Rotary Club of Ogudu GRA as a great club and expressed confidence in Odumosu's capacity to deliver impactful leadership.

"This is a great club and their new president, Odumosu, is a good and impactful Rotarian. He has done a lot of things and I know that with his official inauguration today, he is going to perform greater exploits for the club in this Rotary year," he said.

Chairman of the Investiture and 20th Anniversary Planning Committee, Emmanuel Smith, described Odumosu as focused, disciplined and determined.

Guardian Fashion
● STYLE ● ELEGANCE ● LIFESTYLE







Flying In Stylish, Cool Co-ord Set Pieces

By **Maria Diamond**

THE concept of 'travel-light' emanated from the necessity for ease and comfort of travelling and this shouldn't only relate to going on a trip with brief baggage but also dressing light and simple to the airport for flight.

Why deck up looking cumbersome to the airport when you can fly-easy in the cool, simple, and comfy coordinated sweat suit set, jogger set, hoodie set or tracksuit set?

Airport Fashion: Little Is The New Much

When it comes to keeping up with travel/flight style and fashion steeze, little is the new much. No man or woman of cool fashion sense goes to the airport dressed in anything that isn't casual anymore, except maybe politicians whose official duty is expected to kick-off from the point of departure to arrival and thereafter. But if your destination is home or a hotel from the airport, your best steeze is a casual set.

Why Stylish Casual Co-ord Sets Is Best For Airport Trip

. With Co-ord (coordinated) set which is a matching up and down piece, your appearance is polished and well groomed without the feeling or portrayal of casual ordinariness.

. The texture of fabrics used for the sweat suit set, jogger set, hoodie set and tracksuit set keeps you warm and fresh in the plane even if you have to do a layover or stopover.

. Although casual, these sets of outfits are simply coordinated and elegant for both men and women such that they can be worn into any gathering or setting including a formal room if there is no time for a change of cloth on arrival.





Sleeping To Live

• Wellness Sleep Routine For Recovery, Hormone Balance, Cognitive Function

By **Maria Diamond**

IN a world where everyone is going through something, ensuring a balanced sleep time daily may be the only saving grace for wellness and sound mental health. Thus, going through life without organised sleep equates running empty on wellness and healthy living in all aspects.

Why You Should Sleep

Everyone needs sleep to survive. This is because sleep time is how the body and brain rest to allow essential health recovery, cognitive function and hormone balance.

How Sleep Happens

Sleep happens when two internal biological mechanisms: circadian rhythm and homeostasis work together to help your brain transition from being awake to sleeping and vice versa.

The two internal biological mechanisms are basically a natural internal clock regulated by the brain chemicals and signals that releases calm after being awake for long to slow down active cells for the body to go into rest mode. This is why the ability to stay awake and sleep is beyond subconscious control.

However, as the hurdles of life kick in day after day, sometimes, the ability to return to rest mode after a long day of 'awakeness' becomes almost impossible.

For some, sleep comes easy but creating the time for it based on a tight work life schedule and other activities becomes the challenge thereby struggling with the biological sleep drive until it becomes difficult to sleep.

For others, sleep doesn't just happen for them easy as their hyper active brain wouldn't give their mind and body the permission to calm and allow sleep to take over its duties. This is where the sleep routine comes in.

Make A Functional Sleep Routine

A functional sleep routine does not only capture and control the hyperactive chemical that struggles with sleep drive but also helps individuals with unending daily activities draw the line.

Structure an organised bedtime activity that prepares your body for sleep within a stipulated time every day with self-discipline. For instance, if you plan to sleep by 10pm:

. You must ensure to return home at 6pm every day as though your life depends on it.

. Have a bath and dinner if you haven't already within an hour. By 7pm settle into a clean and body soothing sleep wear.

. Make your bed with a clean sheet.

. Minimise the lighting in your home.

. Get into bed by 8pm/8:30pm.

. Relieve the day's activities if you have to in bed and you can do so with a choice cocktail in bed.

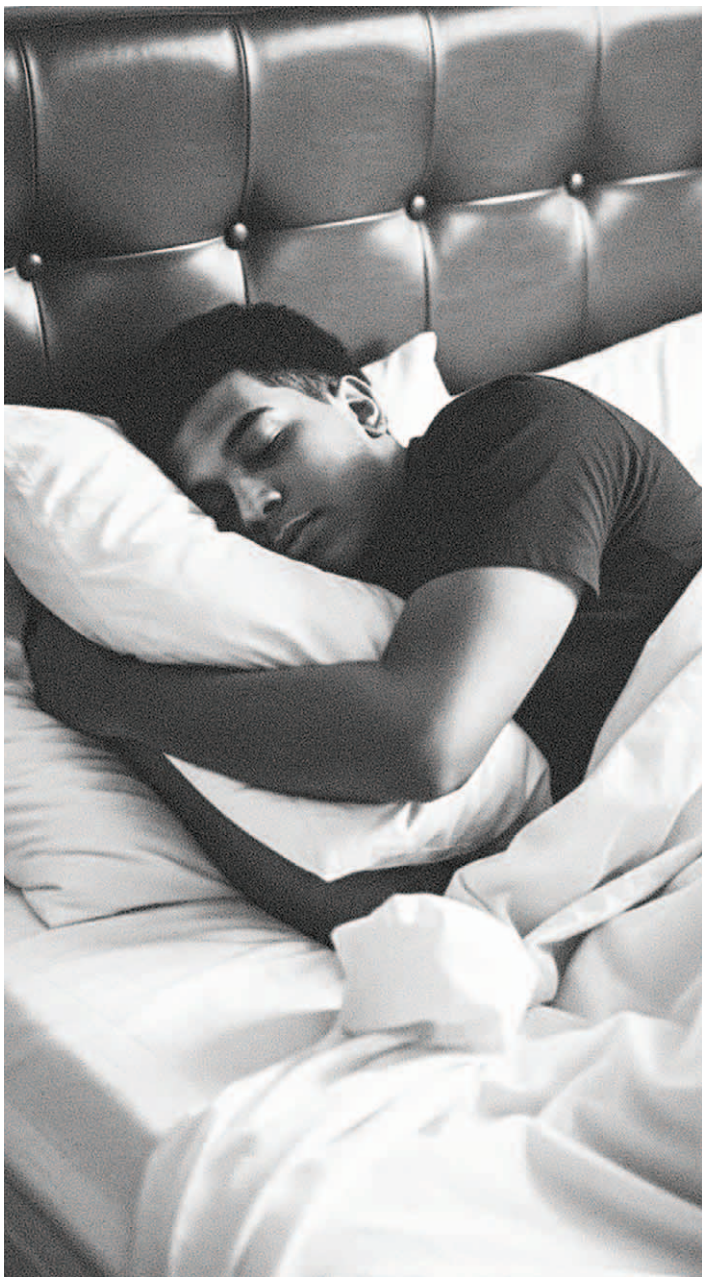
. You can also read in bed to unwind.

. If you're married or with a partner and there is desire for couple's time, by all means, do so within another hour.

. At this time your brain is fully relaxed and the sleep drive kicks in within minutes and here comes the long stretch sleep from 10pm to 5am. A 7-hour night sleep is all you need for recovery, hormone balance and cognitive function.











TPT International Named Among Africa's Leading PR Consultancies

By **Suliyat Tella**

TPT International, one of Nigeria's established strategic communications and reputation consultancies, has been named in the inaugural Africa Consultancy Performance Index 2026, published by Earned First, placing the Nigerian firm among consultancies recognised for their performance, creativity, innovation and impact across the African PR landscape.

The inaugural Index benchmarks PR consultancies across five key dimensions: Business Performance, Creative Impact & Client Outcomes, Innovation & Thought Leadership, Talent & Culture, and Industry Leadership—with an emphasis on firms demonstrating the capacity to create influence beyond their domestic markets.

TPT International's inclusion alongside prominent global, continental, and African consultancies, including Retroviral, Clockwork, Dialogue Communications, Edelman, Burson Africa, WE Communications, and Chain Reactions Africa, represents significant recognition for the Nigerian consultancy and another indication of the growing visibility of Africa's home-grown communications industry.

Founded and led by Adetokunbo Modupe, popularly known as Toks Modupe, TPT International has built its reputation around strategic public relations, corporate reputation, public affairs, brand communications and influence management.

With more than three decades of experience in the communications industry, Modupe has been a prominent practitioner and advocate for the evolution of PR practice in Nigeria. He has served in leadership roles within the Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria (PRCAN) and remains actively involved in professional and industry development.

Under his leadership, TPT International has developed a diverse portfolio spanning corporate, government, public affairs, consumer and development-sector communications.

TPT is also a member of the WE Communications global network, providing the consultancy with access to international expertise and capabilities while maintaining its African market insight and local strategic intelligence.

The Earned First recognition comes at a time when African PR is increasingly moving beyond the traditional role of media relations towards reputation management, strategic influence, narrative development and stakeholder engagement in an increasingly complex communications environment.

Daura Emirate Turbans Jibrin As Sarkin Maganin Kasar Hausa

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

THE Daura Emirate in Katsina State has turbaned Alhaji Dr Mukhtar Jibrin as the Sarkin Maganin Kasar Hausa Babba, in recognition of his commitment to promoting the good of the people and the society at large.

The turbanning ceremony was carried out by the Emir of Daura, Alhaji Dr Umar Faruk Umar, CON, the 60th traditional ruler of the emirate.

Speaking during the ceremony, the Emir prayed for the new titleholder and advised him to lead with the fear of God. He also urged Jibrin to carry everyone along in the discharge of his responsibilities and in all his dealings.

In his response, Jibrin expressed profound appreciation to the Emir and the Daura Emirate for the honour. He pledged to abide by the laws and traditions guiding the emirate and to follow the instructions and advice given to him.

Jibrin, a prominent practitioner and advocate of traditional medicine, has continued to play an active role in Nigeria's natural health sector through his work with LAMJIB Herbal Mixture.

His supporters said his efforts have contributed to the promotion of indigenous remedies, cultural preservation and the growing interest in natural and sustainable approaches to wellness.

The new Sarkin Maganin Kasar Hausa Babba currently serves as the Vice President, North-West, of the National Association of Nigerian Traditional Medicine Practitioners (NANTMP).

He also holds several other traditional titles, including Sardaunan Dnata, Santurakin Bago of Gombe State and Wanban Funtua.

Born on December 28, 1980, in Kulluru, Jahun Local Council of Jigawa State, Jibrin began his education at Aujara Primary School, where he studied from 1986 to 1992.

He subsequently attended Government Secondary School, Aujara, from 1992 to 1998, before proceeding to Hausawa Islamic School in Kano State for further Islamic education.

The turbanning added another milestone to Jibrin's career and his involvement in the advancement of traditional medicine in Nigeria, as he continues to advocate the preservation and development of indigenous knowledge and healthcare practices.



Omole-Golden Rotary Club President, Bakare, Pledges Sustainable Projects

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

ROTARIAN Dr. Omowunmi Bakare, the newly invested 23rd President of the Rotary Club of Omole-Golden, has pledged to implement sustainable community service projects focusing on healthcare, education, economic empowerment, environmental protection and peacebuilding during her 2026/2027 tenure.

Bakare made the commitment at her investiture ceremony in Lagos, where she outlined seven key areas of focus for her administration in line with Rotary International's theme for the year, Create Lasting Impact.

She said her administration will prioritise disease prevention and treatment, maternal and child health, water, sanitation and hygiene, economic and community development, environmental protection, basic education and literacy, as well as peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

According to her, the projects would be designed not merely to provide immediate assistance but to create sustainable benefits that would continue beyond her tenure.

"Impact is not just about what we do today, it is about what remains tomorrow," Bakare said.

She said her experience as a physician, academic and humanitarian would inform her approach to leadership, particularly in strengthening health advocacy, preventive care and community health initiatives.

Digital, Entrepreneurial Skills Headline Tahsin Academy

By **David Emokpae**

A NEW Islamic boarding institution in Nigeria is positioning itself to prepare young people for both spiritual growth and the digital economy through a model that combines Qur'anic education with technology, entrepreneurship and leadership training.

Tahsin Academy, described as a modern boarding school built on "Holistic Skills and Noble Values," said its objective is to develop well-rounded, disciplined and future-ready learners by balancing faith-based instruction with practical, marketable competencies.

According to the Director of the Academy, Alhaji Abubakar Sadiq Mustapha, the institution integrates Qur'anic memorisation, Arabic and Islamic studies with digital technology, entrepreneurship, leadership development and character building.

"The Academy combines Qur'anic memorisation, Arabic and Islamic education with digital technology, entrepreneurship, leadership development and character building," Abubakar said. "Its distinctive educational model is based on a balance of Islamic knowledge and digital skills, with the objective of producing learners who possess strong moral values alongside practical competencies needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world."

A central pillar of the programme is technology and digital skills training. Students receive hands-on instruction in areas including software development, graphic design, digital marketing, video editing, AI productivity tools and computer maintenance.

Abubakar said the training is designed to go beyond basic computer literacy. "Students are being prepared for the opportunities of the future. The purpose of this training goes beyond simply teaching students how to use computers; it is designed to give them practical, marketable skills that can enable them to work, innovate, provide digital services and create businesses," he said.

inDrive Honours Hardworking Lagos Driver With Brand New Car

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

A GLOBAL mobility and urban services platform, inDrive has presented Felicity Eseke, a Lagos-based driver popularly called the "Super Mum" driver, with a brand-new Wuling XC250 2025 in recognition of her years of sacrifice and hard work raising five children while driving on the platform.

The car was handed over during a presentation ceremony at Ikeja City Mall, Lagos, in the presence of popular content creator Akinyemi Oluwaseun popularly known as Asherkine, inDrive drivers, and other well-wishers.

The incredible story of Eseke gained attention immediately after her daughter, Louisa Eseke, reached out to inDrive to express how her mom has been a source of inspiration over the years, and wanted her to feel loved and appreciated for not only her dedication to her family but also the commitment and hard work she puts into her job daily.

Eseke, who joined inDrive five years ago, has completed more than 2,766 rides on the platform, using the income to support her household and keep all five children in school.

Country Manager, inDrive Nigeria, Timothy Oladimeji, said that the reward was meant to celebrate human stories behind the thousands of people who use the platform to earn a living and support their loved ones.

"Eseke's story represents determination, sacrifice, and an unwavering commitment to her children. She reminds us that behind every trip is a person with a dream, a family, and a reason to keep going. We are proud to celebrate her and recognise the incredible journey she has undertaken for her children," he stated.

Institute Seeks Context-driven Practice, Stronger Professional Standards

By **Silver Nwokoro**

THE Sustainability Professionals Institute of Nigeria (SPIN) has called for the contextualisation of sustainability practices to reflect Nigeria's economic, institutional and social realities.

It also urged stronger professional standards to move the sector from compliance to strategic business decision-making.

The institute made the call at its inaugural Sustainability Conference. The hybrid conference, themed, "The Adaptive Enterprise: Sustainability Strategies for Challenging Times," brought together sustainability professionals, business leaders, policymakers, investors, financial institutions and other stakeholders to examine how organisations can remain resilient and create long-term value amid growing uncertainty.

In his opening remarks, President of SPIN, Prof. Kenneth Amaeshi, said sustainability practitioners must avoid simply importing frameworks developed for other environments without adapting them to local circumstances.

"Let us not make sustainability another form of imperialism travelling around the world. We must contextualise it to meet our needs," he said.

Amaeshi acknowledged the role of global standards but stressed that their application should produce outcomes relevant to Nigeria's economic, institutional and social context.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) Aminu Umar-Sadiq, in his keynote address, identified economic volatility, climate change, geopolitical shifts, energy transition, technological disruption and regulatory changes as factors increasingly influencing how organisations operate, allocate capital and create value.


Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan


Senator Ireti Kingibe


Senator Ipalibo Banigo


Senator Idiat Adebule

Where Are The Candidates For Balance Women Representation In The Red Chamber?

By **Maria Diamond** and **Moyosore Salami**

AS the 2027 general elections approaches and the campaign officially kicks off in Nigeria, the big elephant question in the room filled with Nigerian women from the grassroots to the top remains who will go for us?

Who will multiply the seating numbers of only four women to a matchup ratio with the 105 male senators in the 10th Assembly in 2027 and make the difference that can only be clear in more numbers than mere four.

Since the inauguration of Nigeria's 10th National Assembly in June 2023, female legislators have continued to make their mark in a political environment long dominated by men, advocating inclusivity, development and social justice. Yet, their presence in the federal legislature remains low.

Women occupy only four of the 109 seats in the Senate and 16 of the 360 seats in the House of Representatives. That puts female representation in the 469-member National Assembly at about 4.3 per cent.

The four women in the Senate are Ireti Heebah Kingibe, representing the Federal Capital Territory (FCT); Ipalibo Banigo, representing Rivers West; Idiat Oluranti Adebule, representing Lagos West; and Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, representing Kogi Central.

Their backgrounds cut across engineering, medicine, education, public administration, law and business.

Thus, as the 2027 general elections momentum fully peaks, their political fortunes have also begun to take different turns. Three have secured party tickets to seek another term, while Banigo's return bid has been thrown into uncertainty after she was disqualified from the APC senatorial primary in Rivers.

Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan

THE resilient and fearless Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan is a lawyer, entrepreneur and politician representing Kogi Central in the Senate known for her bold advocacy for industrial revival.

The first elected female Senator in Kogi State who has made a name for herself in Nigeria's political landscape was born on December 9, 1979 in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria by a Nigerian father, Dr. Jimoh Abdul Akpoti, and a Ukrainian mother, Ludmila Kravchenko.

She studied Law at the University of Abuja and was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2005. She later obtained a postgraduate degree and an MBA in Oil and Gas Management from the University of Dundee, Scotland.

Before becoming a senator, Akpoti-Uduaghan was involved in business and politics. She contested the Kogi State governorship election in 2019 on the platform of the Social Democratic Party.

She won the Kogi Central senatorial election in 2023 after a legal battle over the result, becoming the first elected female senator from Kogi State.

Her time in the Senate has been marked by controversy between her and the Senate President Godswill Akpabio. The episode generated debate over the treatment of women in politics and the position of female lawmakers within political institutions.

Akpoti-Uduaghan has remained politically active and is seeking another term. She was affirmed as the PDP candidate for Kogi Central at the party's senatorial primary and subsequently received her Certificate of Return.

Her 2027 contest is expected to be closely watched, particularly with former Kogi State Governor Yahaya Bello seeking the APC ticket for the same senatorial district.

Senator Ireti Kingibe

IRETI Kingibe, the veteran in the FCT who is known for her zero tolerance for violence against women and champions women's rights, was elected to represent the FCT in the Senate in 2023 on the platform of the Labour Party (LP).

She was born on June 2, 1954, and raised in a culturally diverse home to a Yoruba-Fulani Muslim father and a Delta Ibo-Bonny Christian mother. She studied Civil Engineering at the University of Minnesota, United States. She had earlier attended Queen's College, Lagos, and Washington Irving High School in the United States.

Kingibe first contested the FCT senatorial election in 2003 under the defunct All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). She later joined the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) before returning to the electoral contest on the LP platform in 2023.

She has also worked in public service and diplomacy and served as Nigeria's ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Kingibe, who is the younger sister of Ajoke Mohammed, wife of former Head of State, the late General Murtala Mohammed, has remained active on issues concerning the FCT and women's participation in politics. She currently chairs the Senate Committee on Women Affairs.

Ahead of the 2027 election, she defected from the LP to the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and secured the party's ticket for the FCT Senate seat, polling 17,535 votes at the primary held in May. Her victory has, however, been challenged in court by another aspirant.

Senator Ipalibo Banigo

SENATOR Banigo's commitment to quality representation, women empowerment, policy advocacy and impactful bills earned her a place in the 10th Senate.

The Nigerian medical doctor and politician representing Rivers West and currently serving her first term in the senate after being elected to represent the Rivers West Senatorial District in 2023 on the PDP platform.

Banigo obtained her MBBS from the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, and later earned a Master's degree from the Harvard University School of Public Health. She also obtained diplomas in Tropical Hygiene and Dermatology from the University of London.

She worked in the Rivers State Ministry of Health, where she held several positions, including Director of Public Health Services, Acting Commissioner and Permanent Secretary. She later served as Secretary to the Rivers State Government and was the first female Deputy Governor of Rivers State from 2015 to 2023 under former Governor Nyesom Wike.

Banigo's political future changed after she defected from the PDP to the APC in March 2026. The move was linked to her support for President Bola Tinubu's re-election and the political realignment in Rivers State.

However, the defection did not secure her a place on the APC ballot. The party disqualified her from participating in its Rivers West senatorial primary, a decision she rejected and protested.

With Felix Obuah emerging from the APC process, Banigo currently has no APC ticket for the 2027 election. Unless she secures another platform, her time in the senate will end with the 10th Assembly.

Senator Idiat Adebule

FROM Lagos politics to the Senate, Idiat Oluranti Adebule represents Lagos West in the Senate on the platform of the APC.

Before her election to the Senate, Adebule served as Deputy Governor of Lagos State from 2015 to 2019 under former Governor Akinwunmi Ambode. She did not serve as deputy governor until 2023, as earlier stated.

The educationist, Adebule holds a doctorate degree in Curriculum Studies from Lagos State University. She began her career as a lecturer at the Michael Otedola College of Primary Education and Lagos State University.

She later served in the Lagos State Post Primary Teaching Service Commission, now the Teachers' Establishment and Pensions Office. She was also appointed Secretary to the Lagos State Government in 2011 before becoming deputy governor.

Adebule was elected to the Senate in 2023 and has since combined legislative work with constituency interventions.

Ahead of the 2027 election, she has secured the APC ticket to retain the Lagos West senatorial seat. She emerged as the party's candidate through an affirmation process after being the sole aspirant at the primary.

She will therefore return to the field in 2027 to defend the seat she won four years earlier.

More Women Underway For 2027 Senatorial Seat

THE four women currently in the Senate are not the only women seeking seats in the Red Chamber ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Nkechi Nwaogu

Former two-term Abia Central senator, Nkechi Nwaogu, announced her return to the political contest after obtaining nomination and expression-of-interest forms. However, she later moved away from the APC to the Nigeria Democratic congress (NDC) to run for the Abia Central Senatorial seat in the 2027 elections.

First Lady Eunice Ortom

In Benue, former First Lady Eunice Ortom has emerged as the PDP's candidate for Benue North-West after party stakeholders backed her candidacy.

Ngozi Kene-Chiedu

In Anambra, Ngozi Kene-Chiedu emerged as the APC candidate for Anambra Central ahead of the 2027 general election. The state party later ratified the emergence of its senatorial candidates.

Muheeba Dankaka

Dankaka is also a potential candidate seeking the APC ticket for Kwara South and received the backing of party stakeholders.

How Yemoja Festival In Brazil Attracts 150 million Tourists Yearly

The diplomatic relations between Nigeria and Brazil was launched in 1961. After Nigeria, Brazil is the country with the largest population of black ancestry with more than 100 million people of African, mostly Nigerian descent. For decades, the two countries have explored shared economic and cultural history. In this Interview, the Acting Consul General, Ronaldo Vieira, spoke with ***ADEWALE ADEOYE*** *and* ***SAMUEL OGUNSONA*** *on trade, economy, Orisa worshipers and the renewed cultural and economic ties between the two countries.*

Since you came as the Acting Consul General of Brazi lto Nigeria what has been your experience about the people?

THANK you very much for the question. It is my second time in Nigeria. Between 2021 and 2023, I was the Deputy Ambassador of Brazil in the Embassy in Abuja. During that time, I learned a lot and I got so interested in Nigeria that I decided to take a PhD course. My thesis was on Brazil-Nigeria relations, which I successfully completed last September almost one year ago. And, I believe, that after I presented my thesis, I was invited to take charge of the Consulate in Lagos. So, it's been almost two months I have been here, but I'm not so new to Nigeria.

When I came, a crowd of people welcomed me here. And I've been working very much on the basis of this network that I have built along the years. Because you can consider that from 2021 up to now, I haven't walked away from Nigeria because after my term in Abuja, I went through studies and now I'm back here at the Consulate of Brazil in Lagos.

Your Phd thesis on Nigeria-Brazil relationship is interesting. What were the striking things you discovered?

Well, you know those theses, you need to select all academic work, you need to select your objective, so, you cannot really study everything. So, I did a historical study of the Brazil and Nigeria relationship since 1961. But my research was more on the impact, the role and the presence of the second dimension of politics in Nigeria which is the traditionalists, the traditional monarchies. I think this is something that most scholars haven't studied when they do international relations because officially, the countries are linked through their formal ties. We deal with the official government, and you know that the traditional governments of Nigeria are not part of that particular system. Despite of that, I have realised that traditional monarchs have great impact in promoting the economy, in promoting cultural exchange, and also in promoting political ties because they have access to the formal presidency. And this is a knowledge that I experienced in Abuja that is very important and most scholars were not aware.

What about the cultural aspect in your findings?

Well, there are two points on the cultural aspect. This is part of what we are trying to implement here. Our cultural (in Brazil) ties are more linked to a small part of Nigeria, which is the Yoruba, but not the entire group of the Yorubas. Our links are with the Yoruba who are traditionalists. So, the link between Brazil and Nigeria is mostly the Orisa worshipers and Brazil for instance was not aware of that. In Brazil, it's common that people think that the entire country worship Orisa. So, the cultural aspects that I found was very interesting to argue in my research to highlight how diverse Nigeria is with 371 ethnic groups, according to some official sources because it's not a number that you can say it is the final because there are lots of research that Nigerians need to consider.

Another thing I also noticed culturally is that most of the books that make reference to Nigeria are written by foreigners in developed countries. And most of the studies lack field studies. I checked with some researchers who have some knowledge about Nigeria and I realised that none of them have travelled to Nigeria. So, how come if you don't do field research, you can just trust (all) the reports of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank or the United Nations (UN) agencies. We have to be more careful about that. The greatest finding on cultural aspects is to highlight that Nigeria is a very important country in Africa and Nigeria has one of the most diversified cultures and those cultures are not new, they go back 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000 or even 10,000 years. Maybe they changed their names, but they were there. What was striking for me was the cultural diversity and how strong the different cultures are preserved, their values and the knowledge.

You are talking about culture, which are the strongest Nigerian cultures in Brazil that remained immune from Western civilization? For instance, you have Sango, you have Iyemoja.

Thank you very much for asking me that question. And it is much more complex than we think. Recently, I read a report from a Brazilian institution that does statistics. And we discovered that among the Orisa worshippers, 60 per cent were not black. And most black people in Brazil were, in fact, Christians. So, 60 per cent of the Orisa worshipers in Brazil are actually not black.

I will not say that they are white because this discussion of black and white might work well between Nigeria-European countries, but with Brazil it is very complicated because we are mixed. I give you an example, we have two words in Brazil for black. We have black and nigger (negroid) and according to the official classification of the ethnicity of people, I don't fall in the group of blacks but I fall in the groups of niggers (negroid). I know nigger doesn't sound a good word in English so maybe the translation is not correct but if it is black, the word in Portuguese is preto and the other word nigger is negro. I fall into the category of negro but I don't fall into the category of preto, so I am an African descendant.

I am of mixed race. All mixed-race people come in the same group of the negros. And pretos are the ones, the Africans who moved to Brazil and didn't mix with white people or indigenous people of Brazil. This is also something very interesting that Nigerians don't know about. Maybe because most of our interactions come from the white business people coming to Nigeria and you don't see many blacks (from Brazil) in Nigeria and also probably you've never seen the indigenous people of Brazil.

Can you tell us more about indigenous people of Brazil?

The history was very difficult. I don't want to go into details now because our focus , but in another occasion, we can talk about it. We have more or less than 2 million original people of Brazil. Most of these people don't speak Portuguese and they live in, I wouldn't say secluded societies, but they have independence in their settlements. Obviously, they interact with urban people, they can use the official documents of Brazil, but they are not obliged to use the documents. So, like you have the NIN in Nigeria, the original people of Brazil don't have to go and look for any kind of these documents. But if they want, they can. Most of them don't speak Portuguese. Now, the University of Brasilia has done a great job for the past 30 years. The University of Brasilia did the research to describe the languages of the original people of Brazil. At the moment, they have in their database 191 languages. This is very new because when I was at school, when I was little, I didn't get any information on the original people of Brazil. And now this discussion is coming out. I believe it is like this for many.

Thanks to the Black Movement of Brazil, because since 1989 with the constitution of democracy in Brazil, there has been a lot of work, researches on the empowerment and emancipation of the black people of Brazil.

Before, we didn't have much studies on the condition, the situation, the history of the black people of Brazil. These studies were carried out and I believe that the Black Movement of Brazil brought together the strength for the original people of Brazil to fight for the right of existence because writing and studying a culture is bringing it into existence because people don't know, if you don't write, if you don't talk about it, isn't it?

How will you describe the strenght, of for instance the traditional worshipers in Brazil, in terms of the population?

The biggest festival in Brazil is actually related to Orisa. It's related to Yemoja. It holds (yearly) on February 2. More than 150 million people go to the seaside for the festival. We have more than 150 million people. Brazil has more than 8,000 square of coast line. All the coast lines are filled with people who come for the festival. The festival doesn't last long. It's one day. It starts in the morning with the sunrise and closes by night. What is interesting is that, although we have only two million worshipers of Orisa, we have this huge amount of people who come to celebrate Yemoja. And in our syncretism, Yemoja is related to the mother of Jesus, Mary. Mary is very much appreciated in the Brazilian culture. So, I believe that syncretism is the one that brings people together for the festival. For some, the festival is really religious but for most of Brazilians who come to the event, it is a cultural manifestation. This one is more Brazilian. For the carnival you get people coming from all over the world. The Carnival is the second largest festival of Brazil. If you search the carnival in Brazil in Rio de Janeiro because we have more than 50 different types of carnival during that period.

I'm going to talk about the one that you might know, the carnival in Rio de Janeiro. It works as a championship, same as football. So, they have, if I'm not wrong between 14 and 16 teams, but for the carnival we call them the school of Samba. It's between 14 and 16 School of Samba and they compete in the parade. So, there would be for two days between midnight and 7:00 in the morning. Parades of the School of Samba with judges and I believe in that one, you have a million people participating and it is televised worldwide.

And on the third day, only the champions will go back to the avenue for the parade. And there is a specific avenue they built in Rio de Janeiro. The same as you have stadiums. We have some Sambodromo… it's very similar to a stadium.

What is the future of Sango worshiping in Brazil and what inspired you as a person to be Sango faithful?

Well, it came as a personal development. I was brought up in a very strict Christian family. So, at the age of four I was already reading the Bible. I started reading and writing very early in my life. My family saw me as a potential religious leader. I was moving along with them and I did many different studies of the Bible. I also researched the Qur'an and other religions. At some point, something clicked in my mind and this is very personal. I was brought up by my white family. Unfortunately, my father who was black was late when I was about four or five years old. For some reasons, I was adopted by a white family. I lost my ties with my blackness. So, it was only when I entered the university that I got in contact with all these studies by the Black Movement of Brazil, Pan-Africanism and black literature. It clicked in my mind that I had no reference whatsoever about my blackness, about my Africanness.

I thought I needed to look at this. Where I come from the Sango worshipers, most of them are black. I started connecting with them. I felt so great about it, little by little, I started studying it more. There are some ideas of Christianity that don't fit me. When I looked at the Orisa thing, I realized that the Orisa are not God, apart from Olodumare. They (Orisa) are not saints either. They are energies of different parts of nature. The whole philosophy of the Orisa, at least in Brazil is we are all parts of the same nature. We need to integrate ourselves again. I thought that philosophy was so beautiful that I started researching even more.

Then I discovered that the Yoruba civilisation is strong and much older than we think. While in Brazil, people who are not from the old community think that this is primitivism, this is ignorance. I found that the basis of the Greek philosophy in the Yoruba history that came much before the Greeks. The way the Yoruba people did their monarchies with the council of the elders, this is democracy. This is the beginning of the studies of democracy. But people didn't know much about it. That was why I decided to research more. Now I'm studying it and I'm studying Yoruba language. I'll try to learn it and maybe translate some of the books on that beautiful culture to the Brazilian society. For me, personally, as a worshiper of Sango, I'm not related to any religion. I don't think shrine is a church. I don't think shrine is a religion. For me, it's just the place you go to connect yourself with some energies. Sango is the energy of thunder. There are another beautiful things about the Orisa. This is really a personal question you ask me. I was not expecting that, but as you ask me, I'm going to release another beautiful aspect of the Orisa. The Orisa shrines don't have rules to enforce. They just say they give you guidance. All this mentality that we live around sins, we are sinners, we have to be careful, we are sinners. I think this oppresses us too much. I don't see that in the shrine of Sango. I go there only for the mythological knowledge to get the lessons. But the priests or the leaders of the Shrine, don't come to me and say, "Don't do this. You have to do that." This imposition of morality, no. They tell you a story. You learn from it. This I think is deep rooted in the Yoruba civilization. To allow people to learn with their own capacity because people are different. When you tell me a story, I will get one result. You might get a different one. And that is how we are a different people, learning how to live in this world.



Ronaldo Vieira

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F.A.S.T Accelerator Trains Fashion Entrepreneurs, Empowers With Business Tools

By Maria Diamond

CREATED from the understanding that talent alone is not enough to build a sustainable fashion business, the Fashion Advancement and Startup Training (F.A.S.T) Accelerator, a joint initiative by FashionEVO Programmes and 360Creative Innovation Hub, recently trained emerging entrepreneurs with strategic business tools and core operational skills to build competitive and sustainable brands.

The inaugural cohort held at the British Council, Lagos, featured a pitch, graduation ceremony and certification delivered as a 100 per cent fully funded, zero-cost programme for selected founders.

Throughout the programme, participants completed intensive physical and virtual sessions covering brand positioning, financial literacy, storytelling, marketing, business pitching, and strategic expansion.

The event also featured a business showcase enabling founders to present their collections directly to facilitators, industry leaders, and ecosystem partners.

In her remarks during the ceremony, Founder and CEO of FashionEVO and YD Company, Dr Yetty Ogunnubi, said: "F.A.S.T Accelerator was conceived as a platform where emerging fashion entrepreneurs could strengthen their business knowledge, understand their markets, develop practical strategies, and gain the confidence to take their businesses to the next level. This first cohort is the beginning of a long journey of growth and impact."



Managing Director, 360Creative Innovation Hub, Blessing Ebere Achu, also highlighted the importance of creativity and collaboration in driving the success of the F.A.S.T cohort, while expressing appreciation to the facilitators, judges, British Council and participants for their contributions and encouraging the graduates to make the most of the opportunity ahead."

Deputy Country Director at the British Council, Chilufya Besa, commended the graduates and reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to the creative economy: "Today is about recognising your commitment, creativity, and hard work, but more importantly, it is about celebrating what comes next."

The central highlight was the F.A.S.T Pitch Competition, where 10 finalists presented their business models, market opportunities, and growth plans.

Akwaaba African Travel Market 2026: Gambia Tourism Minister To Lead Delegation

By Maria Diamond

THE Gambia Tourism Board (GTBoard) delegation is set to showcase its country's tourism potentials at the oncoming 22nd edition of Akwaaba Africa Travel Market scheduled to hold at the Eko Hotel & Suite from September 13–15, 2026 bringing together key players from across Africa's tourism, travel and aviation industries.

Leading the Gambian delegation is the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Honourable Abdoulie Jobe, accompanied by Deputy Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Amie Njie; Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Gambia Tourism Board, Mr. Momodou Bamba Saho and Director General of the Gambia Tourism Board, Mrs. Ida Jeng Njie, alongside tourism stakeholders from The Gambia.



The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Gambia, Honourable Abdoulie Jobe.

The GTBoard sees the event as part of its broader destination marketing strategy aimed at diversifying tourism markets, developing new trade partnerships and creating opportunities for the Gambian private sector.

Through its presence at Akwaaba 2026, The Gambia is expected to use Africa's leading travel trade gathering to position itself as not only a leisure destination, but also a competitive hub for business tourism, investment, events and regional travel.

The participation underscores the growing importance of intra-African tourism and the need for stronger partnerships among destinations, travel businesses and aviation stakeholders across the continent.

A major focus of The Gambia's participation at Akwaaba 2026 will be the promotion of the country as an emerging Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) destination in Africa.

The 2026 Akwaaba Travel Trade Expo will provide a major platform for The Gambia to strengthen business relationships and deepen its footprint in Nigeria and the wider African travel market.

As part of its participation, Team Gambia will host a Destination Gambia Promotional Cocktail Reception on September 12, ahead of the main expo. The event will bring together travel agencies, tour operators, airlines and aviation stakeholders, logistics companies, investors and other tourism industry professionals.

VOALS Kenya 2026: African Women Call For Greater Voice, Influence In Leadership

By Isaac Taiwo

AT the inaugural Kenya edition of the Voice of Africa Leadership Summit (VOALS), stakeholders have called for African women to take greater ownership of their voices, identities and influence in shaping the continent's future.

The four-day event held at the International Argyle Grand Hotel, Nairobi, recently was convened by the founder of VOALS, Dr. Yetunde Folami, bringing together business leaders, executive coaches, philanthropists, mentors and other changemakers from Nigeria, Kenya, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The summit focused on leadership, mentorship, influence and the need to create stronger platforms for women to participate meaningfully in decision-making across Africa.

The programme commenced with an outreach to the University of Nairobi, where students of the Faculty of Pharmacy received an empowerment lecture and gifts from Folami and the Amsha Africa Foundation.



Dr. Yetunde Folami and her husband, Dr. Charles Folami flanked by Coach Bola Matel-Oko and Olugbesoye Olujimi, Olufemi Odeyemi in Nairobi, Kenya recently.

Modupe Mabawonku and Uche O'Keem also spoke to the students, emphasising the importance of service and impact as essential components of effective leadership.

Speaking on the titled, 'Leadership Renaissance: Reclaiming Identity, Voice and Influence', Folami urged African women to confidently occupy leadership spaces and use their influence to contribute to the development of their communities and the continent.

Executive coach, Bola Matel-Okoh, in her session, "Owning Your Authority: The Inner Work of Leadership," examined the personal transformation required for effective public leadership.

Àjose Deepens Conversations On Healing, Justice, Women's Health

By Maria Diamond

THE Terra Academy for the Arts (TAFTA), in partnership with Vision Spring Initiatives (VSI), recently staged the third showcase of *Àjose*, a compelling theatrical production and radio drama initiative using creative storytelling to encourage conversations around women's health, social responsibility, and healing.

The performance, which was staged at the Multipurpose Hall, Yaba College of Technology Lagos received strong audience engagement, with moments of laughter, emotion and reflection throughout the production that combined entertainment with social conversations.

The response further highlighted the effectiveness of using culturally relevant storytelling to address sensitive issues while creating a safe environment for dialogue.

Through emotionally engaging performances and culturally grounded storytelling, *Àjose* explored themes of healing, justice, compassion, wellbeing and collective responsibility, with particular attention to conversations surrounding women's reproductive health; thus, demonstrating the power of theatre to make complex and often sensitive issues more relatable and accessible.



This further strengthened *Àjose*'s growing impact, demonstrating how creative expression can support education and encourage meaningful behavioural change.

With each showcase, the production has continued to create spaces where audiences can reflect, engage and openly discuss subjects that are often difficult to address.

TAFTA, working in partnership with VSI, oversaw the creative development and implementation of the production, ensuring that the storytelling remained engaging, accessible and relevant to young audiences while maintaining the quality and professionalism expected of the initiative.

Founder of TAFTA, Bolanle Austen-Peters, said: "The journey of Àjose *across* these showcases has shown us once again how powerful storytelling can be when it connects directly with people's lived experiences. Theatre gives us an opportunity to approach difficult conversations with empathy while creating room for learning, reflection and change. Seeing audiences continue to engage so strongly with the production reinforces why platforms like this are important."

ITPN, NABTEB To Revolutionise Technical, Vocational Education In Nigeria's Travel, Tourism, Hospitality Industry

By Maria Diamond

REPRESENTING a significant step towards professionalising Nigeria's travel tourism and hospitality industry, the Institute for Tourism Professionals of Nigeria (ITPN) and the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at significantly boosting Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria.

The landmark agreement establishes a collaborative framework for both institutions to leverage their statutory mandates in the regulation, development, assessment and quality assurance of technical and vocational skills.

A key objective of the partnership is to strengthen professional competence and develop robust capacity for training and assessment within the Hospitality, Catering, Travel, and Tourism sectors.



Registrar/CEO, NABTEB, Dr. Mohammed Aminu Mohammed and President, ITPN, Chief Abiodun Odusanwo, displaying the signed MoU document.

Interview

Nigeria's Future Depends On The Quality Of Its Education System — Prof. Olaniyan

Pioneer Vice-Chancellor of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo Town, Prof. Olanrewaju Olaniyan, in this interview with ***ROTIMI AGBOLUAJE****, says Nigeria's education crisis is no longer about policy formulation but implementation. The Professor of Economics and First Class graduate at the University of Ibadan also shares his thoughts on the country's out-of-school children challenge, insecurity, teacher education, digital learning, the impact of the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFund) and the reforms needed to reposition the education sector.*

With about 20 million children not in school, Nigeria is estimated to have one of the highest numbers of out-of-school children in the world. Why has the problem persisted despite years of intervention?

THE first reason is poverty. Many parents simply do not have the financial capacity to keep their children in school. When families struggle to meet basic needs such as feeding, housing and healthcare, education often becomes secondary. In some cases, children are withdrawn from school to support family income through trading, farming or other economic activities.

The second factor is insecurity. Across several parts of the country, schools have become vulnerable to attacks, kidnappings and other forms of violence. Once communities perceive schools as unsafe, parents naturally become reluctant to send their children there. We have seen situations where entire schools were shut down because of security threats.

The third issue is weak policy implementation. Nigeria already has laws and policies designed to guarantee access to education. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act, for example, provides for free and compulsory education and even prescribes penalties for parents who fail to send their children to school. Yet I am not aware of any significant enforcement of those provisions. The problem is that we often focus on policy formulation without paying equal attention to implementation. We have many good policies in this country, but implementation remains weak. If we consistently enforce existing laws, we would begin to see meaningful improvements.

That said, I believe some of the figures being quoted about out-of-school children require closer scrutiny. I participated in research on the issue and found that the figure might be lower than what is being bandied around. Nevertheless, whether the figure is 10 million or 20 million, the reality is that too many Nigerian children are outside the classroom. That should concern everyone.

What do you consider the greatest threat to education in Nigeria today?

Without doubt, it's insecurity. No education system can thrive in an atmosphere of fear. When students are kidnapped, teachers attacked or schools forced to close, learning is disrupted. Parents become afraid, teachers become demoralised and students lose confidence in the system. Insecurity affects every aspect of education. It affects enrolment because parents are reluctant to send their children to school. It affects retention because students may discontinue their studies. It affects staffing because teachers are unwilling to accept postings to unsafe areas. If we significantly reduce insecurity, many educational challenges will become easier to solve. Investments in infrastructure, curriculum reform and teacher development can only yield maximum results when schools operate in safe environments.

Let us talk about the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFund). What impact does it have?

NELFund is one of the best interventions in the education sector in recent years because it is helping to expand access to higher education. Many students who would otherwise have dropped out because they could not pay tuition fees are remaining in school because of the scheme. For institutions like ours, it has also improved student retention. What makes the programme particularly attractive is its repayment structure. Beneficiaries are not required to begin repayment until they secure employment. That removes much of the anxiety associated with educational loans.

The scheme is therefore serving two important purposes. First, it is supporting students who face financial challenges. Second, it is helping institutions maintain enrolment and recover fees that might otherwise remain unpaid. If properly managed and sustained, NELFund can become a major instrument for democratising access to higher education in Nigeria.

There are concerns about rising tuition fees across tertiary institutions. Are those concerns justified?

The concerns are understandable because families are under enormous economic pressure. However, we must also consider the realities facing institutions. Quality education is expensive to provide. Universities require laboratories, libraries, ICT facilities, classrooms, power supply, internet connectivity and qualified personnel. When you compare what institutions spend on training students with what students actually pay, you will realise that higher education in Nigeria remains heavily subsidised.

Many compare current fees with what they paid years ago without considering inflation and the rising cost of operations. Universities cannot provide quality education without adequate funding.

The challenge is therefore finding a balance between affordability and sustainability. That is why support mechanisms such as scholarships, grants and student loans are important.

Some argue that the quality of teacher education is declining.

If we invest in teachers, enforce existing policies, strengthen security and embrace innovation, we can build an education system capable of driving national development and competing with the best in the world.

Do you agree?

The issue is more complex than many people assume. The quality of teacher education can't be separated from the quality of the broader education system. Universities receive students from secondary schools, which in turn receive pupils from primary schools. Weaknesses at one level inevitably affect the next. People often focus criticism on tertiary institutions, but the reality is that educational quality is cumulative.

I also believe the narrative that Nigerian education has completely lost quality is exaggerated. We continue to see Nigerian graduates excel internationally. Many are admitted into competitive postgraduate programmes abroad and perform exceptionally. Also, countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada and others continue to recruit Nigerian-trained teachers and professionals. If our graduates were not adequately trained, those opportunities would not exist. This does not mean there is no room for improvement. There certainly is, but we should avoid the temptation of dismissing everything about our educational system as inadequate.

What can be done to improve teacher quality?

The first priority is continuous professional development. Unlike doctors, accountants and lawyers who are required to update their knowledge regularly, many teachers stop formal professional development after graduation. That is a major weakness.

Education is dynamic. Teaching methods evolve and technology changes. Student behaviour changes. Teachers must, therefore, continue learning throughout their careers.

The second priority is strengthening teaching practice programmes. Practical classroom experience remains one of the most important aspects of teacher preparation. Student-teachers should spend adequate time in schools under proper supervision.

The third priority is improving access to quality instructional materials. Teachers need current textbooks, teaching aids and digital resources to perform effectively. We must also improve teacher welfare. When teachers are poorly remunerated, it becomes difficult to attract and retain talented individuals in the profession.

How should Nigeria prepare teachers for the demands of the 21st-century classroom?

The world has changed significantly. Today's learners are digital natives. Many students interact with technology from an early age and access information through digital platforms. Therefore, teachers must be prepared to operate effectively in that environment. At Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, we are investing heavily in ICT infrastructure. We encourage lecturers to digitise teaching materials and make them accessible online. Students can access course content through electronic devices rather than depending entirely on printed materials. Technology should not replace teachers but it should enhance teaching and learning. The teacher of the future must combine subject knowledge, pedagogical competence and digital literacy.

You have spent three years as pioneer Vice-Chancellor of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education. How would you assess the journey?

The journey has been challenging but highly rewarding. When I assumed office, the institution had just transitioned from a College of Education to a university. There was uncertainty among staff and stakeholders regarding what the future would hold. One of our first priorities was staff transformation. We successfully conducted the redesignation of both academic and non-academic staff from College of Education cadres to university cadres. We also secured approval from the National Universities Commission (NUC) for 50 academic programmes. Today, 49 of those programmes are running successfully. After accreditation, 44 programmes received full accreditation while five obtained interim accreditation. Student enrolment has grown steadily. We admitted more than 2,600 students in our first year, over 3,000 in the second year and more than 3,000 in the third year. Today, we have about 8,700 students and expect the figure to exceed 12,000 when our pioneer set enters the final year. For a university that is only three years old, I consider that significant progress.

What would you consider your most significant achievements?

First is the successful establishment and accreditation of academic programmes. Second is student enrolment growth. Third is industrial harmony. Before the university was established, the institution experienced recurring disruptions. In the last three years, we have not recorded any major student unrest, staff unrest or closure. We achieved this through communication, transparency and stakeholder engagement. Staff and students are encouraged to express their concerns and we address issues promptly.

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



Olaniyan

Issue

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How Nigeria Is Turning The Tide On Medical Tourism

As a direct response to the new policy thrust of the Bola Tinubu administration, a cluster of new cancer centres, a first-ever robotic surgery in Owerri, a 540 billion federal bet, and a wave of returning diaspora doctors are quietly rewriting Nigeria's healthcare story — and testing whether the country can finally reverse a medical tourism bill once measured in the billions.

By Tajudeen Kareem

FOR two decades, medical tourism in Nigeria flowed in only one direction — outward. Presidents sought care in London, executives in Dubai, mothers in Delhi, and the middle class in Cairo and South Africa.

Indeed, the Nigerian Medical Association, NMA, estimates that roughly two billion dollars still leaves the country annually for treatment abroad. But a cluster of developments — new cancer centres, a landmark robotic surgery in Owerri, a N540 billion federal investment, and a quiet return of diaspora doctors — suggests the arrow may finally be beginning to flip.

The story's emblematic moment came on Friday,August21, 2026, at the Imo Robotics and Oncology Centre, IROC, housed in the Imo Specialist Hospital Complex at Umuguma, Owerri. There, Professor Kingsley Ekwueme — a UK-based consultant robotic and laparoscopic surgeon and an indigene of Imo State — led an international team drawn from Europe and the United States in performing the state's first-ever robotic-assisted surgery: a prostate cancer procedure of the kind Nigerians have historically crossed oceans to receive, while Governor Hope Uzodimma watched from behind the glass.

Ekwueme was blunt about the stakes: "The success rate of robotic surgery for cancer, especially prostate cancer, is phenomenal," and patients "should not have to suffer prolonged incontinence or loss of sexual function after prostate surgery" — precisely the reasons so many Nigerians have boarded planes for this specific operation, and why a well-run centre in Owerri might keep them home.

Critically, IROC was conceived as more than a single procedure. It operates under a Public-Private Partnership in which, by the governor's account, the majority of funding is private-sector — a structure meant to guarantee the equipment does not suffer the usual Nigerian fate of bright ribbons, commissioned machines, and then dust. Skill transfer is built into the design: the centre is intended as a training hub for Nigerian surgeons and technicians alongside visiting international teams, so the console does not "go cold" when Ekwueme flies back to the UK. Alongside this, Uzodimma has appealed to residents to enrol in the Imo State Health Insurance Scheme, recognising that the affordability question could make a mess of the goog intentions of government.

The early signs of reversal extend well beyond Owerri. Private tertiary hospitals in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt now report that between ten and fifteen per cent of their specialist patients arrive from outside Nigeria — from across West and Central Africa, and from a diaspora slowly regaining trust in specialists at home.

Tertiary hospital in Lagos alone treated more than three thousand foreign patients in 2023. Most strikingly, the Central Bank of Nigeria's data shows formal outbound medical-tourism spending fell by more than ninety-six per cent year-on-year in the first half of 2025, collapsing from $2.38 million in H1 2024 to just $0.09 million in H1 2025 — though this captures only formal FX channels, not the far larger informal flows.

Cancer has been the disease powering the outbound exodus. A diagnosis once amounted, for anyone who could afford it, to a ticket to India, South Africa, the UK or the US: radiotherapy was patchy, linear accelerators broke down and stayed broken, and waiting lists ran to months.

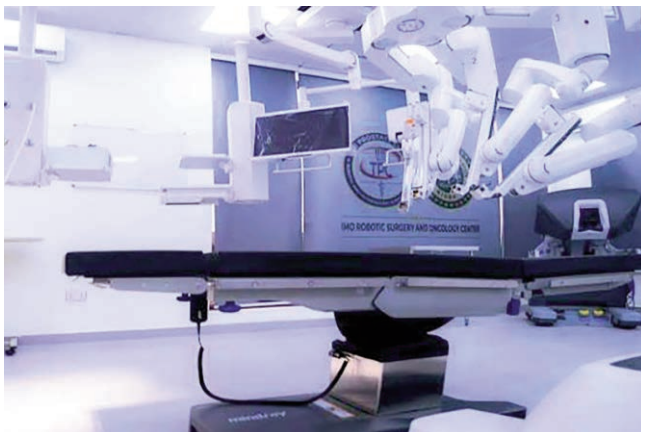
Nigeria's new cancer centres are trying to unwrite that story. In Idi-Araba, Lagos, the NSIA-LUTH Cancer Centre — a 2019 joint venture between the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority and the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, now also known as the MedServe-LUTH Cancer Centre — has grown into a high-volume outpatient oncology centre delivering radiotherapy, chemotherapy and palliative care through modern linear accelerators.

Also, government has approved an upgrade of the UCH Oncology Centre in Ibadan, with new linear accelerators and advanced diagnostics, while UCH has also received as donation the Olufunke Kikelomo Cancer Centre for research and treatment. Every course of radiotherapy completed at home is, in the ledger of medical tourism, one less flight boarded.

In Kano, the Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital — recently ranked Nigeria's number-one healthcare facility in a national assessment — saw a raft of 2025-approved projects including a cardiothoracic centre, a paediatric complex, radiology renovations and a nursing students' hostel, alongside a new School of Paramedic Technology.

In Enugu State, Governor Peter Mbah is set to commission the 300-bed Enugu International Hospital, billed as the biggest hospital in the South-East, fitted with modern, specialized diagnostic and medical tools.

Faith-based institutions are not left behind.The Redeemed Christian Church of God has built the 150-bed Redeemer's Health Village at Redemption City on the Lagos–Ibadan Expressway corridor, offering primary, secondary and tertiary care from dental and renal services to trauma, emergency and intensive care.Together, these facilities sketch the outline of something Nigeria has long lacked: a distributed spine of credible tertiary care that no longer requires a passport.



Facility at Imo Robotics and Oncology Centre in Owerri.

At the federal level, the government has now supplied the balance sheet to match the states' flagship gestures. The Federal Executive Council last week approved infrastructure projects worth roughly 540 billion for the National Hospital, Abuja and an associated cancer institute. About 255.66 billion is earmarked for the National Hospital itself — a new administrative block, modular clinics and theatres — with the explicit ambition of elevating it toward quaternary status, the level at which a hospital handles the country's most specialised interventions.The remaining 302.3 billion will fund a standalone National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment, targeting the disease that has driven the biggest medical-tourism outflows.

Around this sits a wider financing architecture: the Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative launched in 2023; a $1.2 billion Sector-Wide Approach, SWAp, aligning donor and government spending; a US government commitment of nearly $2 billion in grant funding between April 2026 and December 2030; a national commitment to allocate at least six per cent of budgets to health; and a partnership with the University of Chicago Medical Centre to upskill Nigerian medical professionals.

The NMA's two-billion-dollar annual outflow estimate has not been retired; it sits beside the CBN's 96 per cent drop as a reminder that the headline figure tracks only formal channels — not the cash in suitcases, the wire transfers through relatives, or the school fees quietly rebadged.

The workforce picture is grimmer still: only twenty to thirty per cent of Nigerian-trained doctors stay in the country; some 75,000 nurses have left since 2017; the doctor-to-patient ratio hovers around 1:4,000, nearly seven times worse than the WHO's 1:600 benchmark; and 68 per cent of returning diaspora physicians report delays in licence validation — the bureaucracy of homecoming often slowing the homecoming itself.

Equally worrisome is the fact that out-of-pocket spending still accounts for more than seventy per cent of health expenditure, and most visible gains — over 60 private tertiary hospitals, 23 diagnostic centres, 6 catheterisation labs and 2 dedicated oncology centres — sit on the private side of the ledger. Is this a healthcare reset, or world-class care for the rich alone?

What would harden the moment into a shift? Workforce retention through pay, conditions, career pathways and a non-humiliating licence-validation process; universal health-insurance uptake; a durable federal financing floor at or above the six-per-cent commitment held for a decade rather than a year; and, above all, equity — extending the private-sector standard into public hospitals and rural facilities, so that "world-class Nigerian healthcare" stops meaning, in practice, a private wing in a mainland Lagos suburb.

• Kareem is a public policy analyst.

The Safety Net Beneath The Worker

By Aisha lawal

A WORKER leaves home expecting an ordinary day at work.There are the usual greetings from colleagues as they arrive at the workplace, assignments waiting to be completed and deadlines to meet. The hours pass with the regular routine of work, before finally returning home to attend to family responsibilities.

For many workers, this routine is so familiar that there is little to no reason to imagine it ending differently.

But accidents do not always announce themselves. A fall at a construction site. A machine malfunctioning in a factory. Exposure to harmful substances. A road accident while carrying out an official assignment. In a blink of an eye, an ordinary workday can become a life-changing experience.

A serious workplace injury may mean medical treatment, time away from work and in some cases, never being able to work again. For a family that depends on that income, the impact of that injury affects everyone.

This raises the question: what happens to a worker when the very work that provides a means of livelihood becomes the source of injury, disability, occupational diseases or even death?

For such workers, theses consequences do not have to be faced without support, this is where the Employees Compensation Scheme comes in.

Administered by the National Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF), the Employees Compensation Scheme provides a form of protection for employees who suffer injuries, disabilities, occupational diseases or death that comes from or in the course of work.

The scheme is designed to provide compensation and other forms of support to affected employees and, where applicable their dependant. But what exactly does this protection entail, and how does an employee access it when an accident occurs?

The protection provided under the Employees Compensation Scheme goes beyond a single compensation payment. Depending on the circumstance of the case, the scheme provides both cash and non-cash benefits to employees affected by work-related injury, disability or occupational diseases. These may include periodic compensation for eligible disabilities, medical and health care services, counselling, daily subsistence allowance where applicable, prosthetic appliances and vocational rehabilitation.

For an employee recovering from a workplace injury, this means that the impact of the accident is beyond the immediate moment of injury. Medical treatment may be required, the employee may be unable to work for a period of time, or the injury may permanently affect their ability to earn a living. Rehabilitation can become an important part of helping the worker return to work or adjust to their new reality.

But having a safety net is only useful if work ers know how to access it.

The process begins with reporting the incident. The employee is expected to notify the employer, while a dependant may do so in the case of the employee's death. The employer then takes the next step by filing the compensation claim with NSITF and completing the required forms.

This means that an employee does not have to navigate the entire claims process alone. The employer has an important role to play in ensuring that a work-related incident is reported and that the necessary claim is submitted.

For a worker who has suffered an injury, access to medical care can be an important part of the recovery process. However, recovery does not always end when a worker leaves the hospital. Some injuries may affect an employee's ability to perform the same duties or return to work in the same capacity.

For some employees, returning to normal after an injury may require more than financial assistance.

This is where rehabilitation comes in

Vocational rehabilitation can help affected employees regain the ability to work or adjust to circumstances in which their previous duties may no longer be possible.

For an employee or family to benefit from this protection, knowing that the scheme exists is only the first step. Knowing what to do when an employment-related injury, occupational disease or death occurs is equally important.

For workers, understanding this process can make the difference between simply knowing that a safety net exists and knowing how to access it when it is needed most.

After all, a workplace accident can happen in a moment, but its consequences can last much longer. For an employee whose ability to work, earn and support a family has been affected, compensation, medical care and rehabilitation can provide more than financial assistance—they can form part of the journey towards recovery and rebuilding a livelihood.

For the worker who leaves home expecting an ordinary day, an accident can change everything in a matter of moments. But understanding what happens after that moment—from reporting the incident to accessing compensation, medical support and rehabilitation—can help ensure that a workplace injury does not become a burden the employee has to face alone.

• Lawal is a Mass Communication student of the Nile University, Abuja.

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African Food Systems Forum 2026: With TAAT Model, New Phase Of Food Systems Underway

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

AS the 2026 African Food Systems Forum (AFSF) wraps up in Kigali, Rwanda, stakeholders have renewed efforts towards ensuring that Africa builds food systems that just don't survive the next shock but are ready for it.

Held from September 1 to 4, 2026, the AFSF is the continent's most important yearly convening – where heads of state meet scientists, capital meets projects and commitment becomes action.

Now in its 20th year, the Forum has catalysed billions in agricultural investment, shaped continental food policy through the Malabo Declaration, and built an unrivalled network of stakeholders committed to advancing Africa's food systems.

The 2026 edition in Rwanda convened under the theme: Investing in Agri-Food Systems – brought together over 5,000 delegates from over 50 countries for four days of high-impact programming, deal-making and policy dialogue.

For the days the event lasted, the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme was at the front and centre in two high-level events shaping how Africa invests in agriculture for the years ahead — one looking back at what worked during the continent's most recent food security emergency, and one looking forward at how to scale proven science through the world's development finance institutions.

In recent years, Africa's food systems have absorbed shocks after shocks — the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflict, the disruption of the Russia-Ukraine war, and, most recently, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which sent food, fuel, and fertiliser costs climbing across the continent.

When the Russia-Ukraine conflict cut off roughly 30 million metric tons of cereal supplies from the Black Sea region, the African Development Bank (AfDB) moved quickly, launching the $1.5b African Emergency Food Production Facility (AEFPF). Across 35 countries, the facility pushed out improved seed systems, expanded fertiliser access, deployed technology, reformed policy, and built new partnerships — with TAAT technologies forming the backbone of the response.

With the intervention, more than 45 million metric tons of foods were produced; over 406,000 metric tons of certified seed and 2.9 million metric tons of fertiliser were distributed, and close to 15 million farmers were reached — 38.8 per cent of them women.

On September 2, a High-Level Side Event at the Kigali Conference Centre unpacked what made that possible and what it means for the future.

As AFSF 2026 brings together the continent's agricultural leadership in Kigali, TAAT's track record — from emergency response to long-term investment architecture — offered a clear answer to the question the forum keeps returning to: how does Africa build food systems that don't just survive the next shock but are ready for it?

Titled "From Emergency Responses to Food Systems Resilience: Lessons Learned from the AEFPF for Africa's Next Generation of Agricultural Investments," the session brought together ministries of agriculture, national research systems, development partners, CGIAR centres, the private sector, financial institutions, and farmer and youth organisations to examine how the facility's approach — grounded in TAAT's proven technologies — can be built into national investment programmes rather than reserved for the next crisis.

Discussions focused on scaling what worked, strengthening the partnerships that enabled rapid deployment and building the monitoring and evaluation systems that will let a technology-driven response outlast the emergency that triggered it.

On September 3, TAAT's model moved to the centre of a different conversation: how to get proven agricultural science into the hands of the international financial institutions that fund large-scale transformation.



Open air market

Capacity Building For NITR Staff On African Trypanosomiasis, Tsetse Fly Challenges

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

THE International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has concluded a five-day technical training programme on capacity building for 12 staff of the Nigerian Institute for Trypanosomiasis Research (NITR) on Tsetse fly, Animal African trypanosomiasis (AAT) and Control interventions Atlases.

According to a statement signed by the Head, Information and Public Relations Unit (PRU) of NITR, Kaduna, Hafsat Suleiman Mohammed, the training, facilitated by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, was held between August 31 and September 4, 2026 at the NITR Headquarters, Kaduna, Kaduna State.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology (HMIST), Dr. Kingsley Tochukwu Udeh, who declared the training opened, commended the institute for hosting the training and for its continued contribution to research and development.

He also appreciated the technical cooperation and support of the IAEA, FAO and its technical experts and partners for supporting knowledge exchange and capacity development in the areas of tsetse and trypanosomiasis control.

Udeh stressed that the training is a step towards addressing the challenges posed by African trypanosomiasis and tsetse fly, and its implications for agricultural productivity, food security and the livelihoods of communities that depends on livestock.

He further asserted that effective responses to these constraints require reliable scientific evidence and appropriate information on the distribution of disease, vectors and control activities.

"In this regard, the development of the proposed atlases represents an important opportunity to strengthen the availability and use of evidence for research, planning and disease control activities."

He reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to promoting the application of science, innovation and technology in addressing the nation's development priorities.

The IAEA sponsored technical cooperation programme is being conducted under the AFRA RAF5094 project titled: "Enhancing Regional Capacity Building for the Implementation of the Sterile Insect Techniques (SIT) as a component for Area Wide Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Management."

The 12 participants of the institute are expected to participate in an interactive technical training session where they will learn how to systematically collect, collate, clean/format, merged, old and newly acquired entomological, parasitological and control interventions field data into centralised database.

The mission of the programme is to provide technical support for the "Atlas Project", while equipping participants with the knowledge and skills required to independently develop, update and publish the National Tsetse, AAT and Control interventions atlases.

In addition, it also seeks to strengthen participants' technical expertise in project development and baseline distribution mapping, by enabling them to gather accurate geo-spatial data required to form the requisite atlases.

The participating team is expected to be able to independently develop, update, and publish standardized national level Entomological and Parasitological atlases, as well as produce Control Atlas to support evidence based planned surveillance, and disease control toward the elimination and the eventual eradication of the menace of African trypanosomiasis; a veritable ministerial deliverable and presidential priority of the renewed hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration.

NSPRI Empowers Students, Teachers On Postharvest Management

By **David Emokpae**

IN its bid to entrench post harvest management of agricultural products in Nigeria, the Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute (NSPRI) has taken the campaign to schools, to create awareness among the students.

Part of the move was NSPRI's hosting of a Postharvest Loss Reduction Summer Class and Capacity Building on Tomato Value Addition for Lagos Teachers, held between September 2 and 3, 20026 in Lagos.

According to the institute, the two initiatives were aimed at exposing students and teachers alike to practical knowledge and capacity building, while also preparing them for careers in agriculture.

The Lagos Zonal Coordinator of NSPRI, Dr Shuaeeb Oyewole, said the urgent need to intensify efforts in reducing losses in post harvest losses in Nigeria, necessitated the introduction of an outreach programme tagged: "Catch Them Young Initiative," aimed at creating awareness at a tender age among Nigerian students.

According to Dr Oyewole, this initiative "will not only inform them of the benefits individual citizens and Nigeria stand to gain in terms of food security, but could also awaken the talents in them by choosing a career out of this and become job creators and employers of labour."

According to the organisers, the Postharvest Loss Reduction Summer Class serves as a follow-up to the career talk initiative programme NSPRI is currently undertaking in secondary schools in Lagos State. This edition had two batches, which comprised 60 students across secondary and tertiary institutions.

The programme ran from August 17 to September 3, with each batch gaining hands-on knowledge in fruit snack production from pawpaw and pineapple, fish snacks from catfish, various fruit juices from pineapple, orange, watermelon, beetroot and coconut, and soya milk and spiced cheese from soybean.

"The summer class was full of exceptional experiences on the part of the participants, while the facilitators had a great opportunity to positively impact the lives of future agripreneurs, employers of labour and wealth creators. Specifically, the participants were able to use their hands to turn pineapple and pawpaw fruits into pineapple rings and pawpaw flakes, respectively, applying appropriate value addition techniques," said Dr. Oyewole.

Teachers from various schools also benefited from the initiative as they were prepared for a sustainable means of survival through the Capacity Building on Tomato Value Addition for Lagos Teachers initiative.



Olorogun (Dr.)
Michael Christopher Onajirevbe Ibru, OFR
December 25, 1930 – September 6, 2016

10 Years Without Our Beloved Father, Patriarch and Family Icon

In Loving Memory of **Olorogun Michael Christopher Onajirevbe Ibru**

Ten years have passed since our beloved father, patriarch, brother, uncle, and family icon answered the call to eternal rest. Yet, the passage of time has done little to diminish the love we hold for you or the memories of the remarkable life you lived.

You were a pillar of strength to the Ibru dynasty, a source of wisdom and guidance, and a man whose presence brought warmth, unity, and purpose to those around you. Your humility, generosity, courage, vision, and unwavering commitment to family remain an enduring part of the legacy you left behind.

As your siblings, we are profoundly grateful to God for the privilege of sharing our lives with you. You taught us the importance of family, hard work, integrity, compassion, and service to others.

Your remarkable achievements may have made your name renowned, but your character, kindness, and devotion to family made you truly unforgettable. The values you lived by continue to guide us, while the memories we cherish continue to bring comfort to our hearts.

Though we deeply miss your presence, we take solace in knowing that your life was one of purpose and lasting impact. Your legacy lives on through the family you nurtured, the lives you touched, and the many generations that will continue to celebrate your name.

Ten years on, we remember you with love, honour you with gratitude, and celebrate the extraordinary life you lived.

May your gentle soul continue to rest peacefully in the bosom of the Lord. Amen.

Signed:
Goodie M. Ibru OON DSc (Hon)



OLOROGUN (DR.)

MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER ONAJIREVBE IBRU, OFR

December 15, 1930 - September 6, 2016

Forever Remembered, Forever Loved

In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Grandfather and Great-Grandfather

Ten years may have passed since you left us, but your love, wisdom, and remarkable legacy continue to live on in our hearts.

You were a source of strength, inspiration, and guidance to generations of our family. We are grateful for the values you instilled, the lives you touched, and the beautiful legacy you left behind.

Your memory remains a blessing, and your name will forever be cherished by the generations that came after you.

Rest peacefully, dear Grandfather. You are deeply missed, forever loved, and eternally remembered.

Signed:
Christopher Ebruba Ibru
On behalf of the Grand children and Great-Grand children

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR LEGENDARY CHAIRMAN, THE HUMBLE FISHERMAN



Olorogun (Dr.) Michael Christopher Onajirevbe Ibru, OFR

December 25, 1930 – September 6, 2016

Our Founder.
Our Leader.
Our Mentor.

Ten years have passed since you left us, yet your presence continues to guide and inspire this Organisation.

You were more than our Chairman and leader. You were a mentor, a visionary, a consummate humanist, a patriot and, to many of us, a father.

You taught us to pursue excellence, to think beyond the present and to serve with purpose. Above all, you had a remarkable gift for making work meaningful, fulfilling and even joyful.

We remain deeply grateful for the privilege of being part of the vision you built and for the opportunities you gave us to contribute to nation-building.

Ten years on, your values remain our compass, your vision remains our inspiration, and your legacy lives on in all that we do.

Rest peacefully, Sir.

Your light continues to shine.

Signed:

For Management & Staff
Ibru Organisation

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GuardianWoman

Workplace Crèche: Closing Anxiety, Job Performance, Productivity Gap For 9-5 Nursing Mothers

By **Moyosore Salami**, **Suliyat Tella** and **Ruth Ononye**

THE joy of motherhood starts with the ability to be physically available to care for your helpless infant. However, in a society where all hands have to be on deck to earn a living and provide for the family especially in an era where this generation of men now constantly demand that women should equally bring money to the table, nursing mothers no longer have the luxury of staying back home 24/7 to play the role of motherhood on standby.

More so, Nigeria's maternity leave duration according to data from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is approximately 12 weeks, which requires new mothers to return to their workplace when their babies are barely three months old.

The question then is what happens to the three-month-old infant whose mother has to return to work if she must keep her job? Who will take care of the baby? Where will the mother take the child? How does she successfully breastfeed exclusively for at least the required six months to aid seamless nurturing and growth? When she leaves for work what happens to the infant? Where does the baby stay while the mother works and who takes care of the child? What happens to the child in a case of emergency when the mother is far away at work?

How Does A Mother Really Breathe When She Leaves A Three Month Old Infant Behind For Work?

THE connection between a mother and her baby is a deep physical and emotional bond driven by oxytocin hormones that stimulates shared feelings built from conception to delivery and close contact.

Thus, it becomes very difficult for new mothers to stay away from their infants for as long as 9am-5pm and remain completely mentally and emotionally stable.

This means that she can be at work but her mind is partly at home where the child is, wondering and worrying if the baby is well. Meanwhile, her attention to work becomes divided thereby leading to poor performance and productivity, hence the need for workplace crèche.

Why Workplace Crèche Should Be Considered By Employers Of Labour

FOR many working mothers, returning to a 9-to-5 job after the three-month duration maternity leave, this often means navigating the demanding responsibilities of their careers alongside the equally demanding responsibilities of motherhood. For nursing mothers, the challenge can be even greater as they try to meet their babies' nutritional and emotional needs while fulfilling expectations at work.

Although employment provides financial stability and professional growth, the demands of long working hours, commuting, childcare and breastfeeding can leave many mothers struggling to maintain a healthy balance between their careers and family life.

According to a paediatrics and child health expert, Professor Adeboye Muhammed Nurudeen, the needs of a three-month-old baby include affection, breastfeeding, care, warmth, protection, hygiene and immunisation. He said babies at that age are still heavily dependent on their mothers.

Acknowledging the necessity for some working mothers to return to work after the three-month maternity leave, he advised the need for a close-by crèche, preferably workplace crèche.

The professor of paediatrics however noted the importance of standard care for children at the crèche, stating that hygiene should be maintained, the baby should be protected and the child's feeding should be handled carefully.

Nurudeen also said in a situation where there is no available workplace crèche and the mother had to take the child to a caregiver or a crèche elsewhere, he emphasised the need for natural exclusive breastfeeding but noted that if a mother had to express breast milk, she must pay attention to how the milk is collected, stored and fed to the baby. "Strict hygiene must be maintained during the process," he said, warning that contamination could expose the baby to infections. "This is particularly important because the first six months are the period in which exclusive breastfeeding is recommended."





According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), breastfeeding support remains inadequate in Nigeria and identifies insufficient maternity leave policies and lack of workplace support among the challenges that mothers encounter.

The World Health Organisation and UNICEF recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. UNICEF says only 29% of Nigerian infants aged 0–5 months are exclusively breastfed.

In a 2023 statement, UNICEF Nigeria said only 9% of organisations had a workplace breastfeeding policy, with the figure falling to 1.5% in the public sector at the time. The organisation called for paid maternity leave, flexible return-to-work arrangements, lactation breaks and adequate facilities to enable mothers to continue breastfeeding.

At state level, maternity leave policies also vary. UNICEF reported in 2025 that only 12 of Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory provided paid maternity leave of up to six months.

This means the experience of a working mother can depend on where she works, the policy of her employer and the kind of job she does.

Speaking to *The Guardian* on her experience, Mrs Ekezie Celina said returning to work meant leaving her baby with a caregiver because her workplace had no crèche. Her maternity leave lasted about three months, and her baby was also about three months old when she resumed work. "It was difficult at first, but I gradually adjusted," she said.

Ekezie said she maintained regular contact with the caregiver and made efforts to ensure her baby was properly cared for while she was at work. But balancing her responsibilities was tough. "My biggest challenge was balancing my work responsibilities with caring for my baby, especially dealing with tiredness and making sure my baby's needs were met," she said.

She also continued breastfeeding after returning to work, breastfeeding before leaving home and immediately after returning. When possible, she expressed and stored breast milk.

Her experience was made easier by the support she received from her employer. She said her office was patient and lenient with her as a new mother. But she believes it could have been better and easier if her employer had provided a workplace crèche and reasonable breaks for breastfeeding mothers".

For Omoyeh Ebhota, a banker, returning to work came even before her baby was three months old. Her maternity leave lasted 60 working days, and her baby was two months and three weeks old when she resumed.

She said: "Seriously I wasn't mentally ready when I resumed work, but I just had to. My organisation does not have a crèche, so I had to look for a school with a day-care facility close to her home. It was a difficult time. Most times I felt like crying. I wish I could just resign and take care of my baby but I couldn't, the family needs the money."

Ebhota also revealed that she had planned to breastfeed her baby exclusively for six months, but returning to work before the baby reached three months changed the plan. "My baby had to start taking formula."

She further noted that once she resumed work, she was expected to perform her duties. The support she received came mainly in the form of some flexibility in her working hours. She could sometimes close by 3pm or resume at 9am, depending on the arrangement available to her. Still, the adjustment did not remove the pressure of having a very young baby far away from her during the working day.

Ebhota believes maternity leave should be extended to six months. "It will be a great relief for nursing moms," she said.

Also speaking, Mrs Ruth Ozor, a cashier who works six days a week, the challenge became particularly difficult when her child fell ill recently. "After informing my supervisor, I was given permission to take the child to the hospital. Then I had to bring my mother to help care for the child while I returned to work."

Reflecting on the experience, she said balancing her responsibilities as a mother and an employee was difficult, particularly when her child needed attention and she had limited childcare support.

Akinwale Oluwafunke Ebunoluwa, a Personal Assistant to the Chief Security Officer at Lead City University, the challenge is particularly overwhelming because she is breastfeeding.

She said the regular breastfeeding needs of a baby could sometimes conflict with work schedules, meetings and other professional responsibilities, requiring her to carefully plan her day around her child's needs while maintaining productivity at work. "The biggest challenge I encounter is striking a balance between my job and motherhood. Managing the demanding responsibilities of my career while ensuring that my breastfeeding baby receives adequate nourishment, attention and emotional care," she said.

Ebunoluwa also described the physical and emotional demands of combining work with breastfeeding as exhausting, particularly when there is limited time for adequate rest. She said: "Sometimes I feel guilty when work takes me away from my child. However, I try not to let the guilt overwhelm me, as my job is also important because it helps me provide for the family and secure a better future for the child too. I focus on making the time I spend with my child meaningful and ensuring that my child receives adequate care when I am at work."

A school receptionist and mother of a four-month-old baby, Mrs Tofunmi Fashola, said the transition from maternity leave back to work was made easier due to her workplace crèche, as it allowed her to concentrate on her duties while checking on her baby from time to time.

She also applauded her understanding boss and supportive husband helping her manage the demands of work and motherhood.

Bode Ultimate Connects People, Creates Emotions Through Music

By **Eniola Daniel**

ONI Olabode Opeyemi, known by his stage name, Bode Ultimate, is a performing artiste. His music is deeply rooted in Nigerian culture, particularly, the traditional Yoruba culture. He started his musical journey in 2020 and has grown as a live performer by working across different genres and adapting to the needs of different audiences. In this interview, he spoke about his handling live performance, collaboration and others.

Tell us about yourself and how you fell in love with music

I am a professional live-band artiste specialising in premium concerts, private and public events, and special occasion gigs. I started my own band in 2020, but my journey with music began much earlier. I have been singing since I was five years old, so, music has always been a major part of my life.

Over the years, I have developed my vocal ability, stage presence, versatility, and understanding of live audiences. What I love most about music is its ability to connect people, create emotions, and turn an ordinary event into a memorable experience.

Which music genres and specific set-lists are you most comfortable playing on short notice?

I am very versatile and comfortable performing different genres depending on the event and audience. I can perform afrobeats, highlife, juju, fuji, r&b, pop, reggae, gospel and popular international songs.

For Nigerian events, I am particularly comfortable with traditional and contemporary juju and other African sounds. I also make sure my set-lists are flexible because every audience is different. I can quickly move from classic songs that people know and love to current hits that get the younger audience involved.

How do you learn new material or key signature changes before a live gig?

I prepare by listening to the original song carefully, studying the structure, lyrics, chord progression, and arrangement. If there are key changes, I make sure I understand where they happen and communicate with the instrumentalists before the performance. I also rehearse the song repeatedly with the band so that everyone understands the arrangement. My goal is to be prepared enough that when we get on stage, the performance feels natural rather than rehearsed.

How do you handle technical failures like a broken string or mic feedback mid-performance?

The first thing is to remain calm and avoid allowing the audience to feel that something has gone seriously wrong. As a live performer, I understand that technical issues can happen at any time. I communicate quickly with the band and sound engineer while keeping the performance moving. If an instrumentalist has an issue, another musician can fill the space, or I can engage the audience while the problem is resolved. The priority is always to maintain the energy and professionalism of the show.



Next Afrobeats Star, Lucky Yay, Turns Doubt To Confidence

By **Eniola Daniel**

BEFORE stepping into the MTN Next Afrobeats Star stage, Lucky Yay, believed in his talent. Though he often wondered how far this would take him, he pressed on. Today, following the inaugural season of the competition, that uncertainty has given way to confidence as the emerging artiste continues to build his career with renewed conviction.

Reflecting on the experience, Lucky Yay says the competition transformed the way he views his career.

"The journey has been a great one. Before now, I had the vision, but there was always this little cloud of doubt in my head asking; 'Is this really possible?' Now, the results have shown me that nothing is impossible," he said.

That confidence has shaped the way he approaches his music. While his audience has continued to grow since the competition, Lucky Yay says his greatest motivation comes from creating songs that resonate with listeners and leave a lasting impact.

"It's not just the numbers," he said. "It's the messages I get from people telling me how they relate to my songs. That makes me want to work even harder."

For the singer, every song begins with intention.

"I want to make music that touches people. I want people to hear what I'm saying and see themselves in it," he said.

The artiste also credits the competition with providing the resources and industry support needed to turn his creative vision into reality.

"Before signing the deal, I had the vision but not all the resources. Now I have the opportunity to bring those ideas to life," he said.

As preparations begin for season 2, Lucky Yay hopes his story will encourage aspiring musicians to remain committed to their dreams, regardless of the challenges they face.

"Dreams do come true if you believe, have faith, work hard and put God first," he said.

Through MTN's Next Afrobeats Star, emerging artistes gain access to mentorship, industry exposure and the professional support needed to develop sustainable careers in music. As a new generation of contestants prepares to take the stage, Lucky Yay's experience shows how the right opportunity can inspire confidence and unlock potential.



'AI Will Amplify Afrobeats, Not Replace It'

By **Eniola Daniel**

THE future of Afrobeats will be shaped by a partnership between human creativity and artificial intelligence, according to Adekunbi Fowosore, CEO of Kbee Promo World, who said that AI is already transforming how the genre is created, produced and promoted globally.

Speaking on the impact of technology on Nigeria's biggest music export, Fowosore said AI should be treated as a tool to expand reach, not a substitute for the cultural identity that makes Afrobeats unique.

Fowosore noted that AI is now embedded in both the studio and the marketing room.

"In music creation and production, artists and producers can use AI tools to explore sounds, develop ideas, experiment with arrangements, improve production quality and work more efficiently," she said.

On promotion, she said that the impact is even bigger.

"AI can help identify audiences, analyse listening behaviour, create marketing content, personalise campaigns and determine, which markets are most likely to respond to a particular song.

"At Kbee Promo World, I see AI as an additional tool for the music industry, not a replacement for the human creativity that makes Afrobeats unique," she added.

The Kbee CEO said AI presents a major opening for Afrobeats to grow beyond Africa, but warned of risks around ownership and authenticity.

"I see AI primarily as an opportunity, but it has to be used responsibly. Afrobeats has already become a global sound, and AI can accelerate that growth by helping artists reach audiences they may not have had access to before.

"The threat comes when AI is used to copy artists without permission, create music without proper ownership, manipulate streams or remove the human identity from the music. Technology should amplify creativity, not exploit it," she stated.

Fowosore said independent and upcoming artists stand to benefit the most, as AI lowers the cost of professional marketing.

2Baba Returns With *Oldest Young Man*, Ends Six-year Album Hiatus

By **Daniel Anazia**

AFTER a six-year wait, Nigerian music icon, 2Baba, is returning to the album scene with *Oldest Young Man*, a project that marks another chapter in one of Nigeria's most influential Afrobeats and R&B artistes.

The *African Queen* hitmaker broke the news of the new project via his Instagram handle with the message: "I've lived it. I've seen it. I'm still here. My new album, *Oldest Young Man*, will soon come."

The new album marks his first since his last full-length release and represents another of Afrobeats' most enduring careers. It arrives after a period in which the legendary artiste has largely remained selective about full-length projects, making its release particularly significant for fans that have followed his journey from the early days of Nigerian contemporary pop to the genre's current global era.

For the multiple award-winning legend whose career has spanned more than two decades and helped define the sound of modern Nigerian pop, the announcement lands as both a comeback and a statement of survival.

The return is more than another album release; it represents an opportunity to reconnect with listeners while demonstrating the staying power of an artiste whose career has survived changing musical trends, shifting audiences and multiple generations of Nigerian music.

It comes at an interesting moment for Afrobeats. Nigerian music has moved from being largely regional to becoming a major force in global popular culture. A new generation of artistes is now taking the sound to international audiences, while veterans such as 2Baba remain living links to the foundations on which the industry was built.

2Baba's 2004 breakout hit *African Queen* helped establish him as one of the defining voices of Nigeria's modern pop era, and subsequent albums: *Grass 2 Grace, The Unstoppable, Away & Beyond, Ascension,* and *2020's Warriors*, have kept him a fixture of the industry's upper tier even as new generations of artistes have risen around him.



Goldberg Revs Up 'Back to Bar 2.0' With Airtime Rewards, N250,000 Weekly Wins

By **Daniel Anazia**

AS Europe's biggest leagues return, premium, award-winning ABV lager, Goldberg, is giving fans more to cheer about with its popular 'Back to Bar 2.0' consumer activation, offering consumers instant airtime rewards and a chance to win N250,000 every week.

The return comes after a first edition that gave consumers more than the usual match day experience. Through the first edition, consumers received instant airtime rewards, while selected winners earned trips to the United Kingdom and Qatar to experience football beyond their local viewing centres and bars.

Speaking on 'Back to Bar 2.0', Senior Brand Manager, Goldberg, Nigerian Breweries Plc., Kunle Aroyehun, stated that the refreshed campaign is designed to deepen the premium beer brand's connection with football fans who are also consumers, while bringing excitement and rewards to bars and social gatherings across the country.

"The jerseys are coming back out; weekend plans are being rearranged, and group chats are warming up again. Across Nigeria, the familiar arguments about who will win the league have already begun

"The first edition of 'Back to Bar' showed us how strongly consumers connected with the campaign. The response was clear: people showed up, participated, and made it a part of their experience. Seeing that success made it an easy decision to bring it back. With 'Back to Bar 2.0', we are building on that momentum by creating even more opportunities for consumers to come together, enjoy their time at the bars and be rewarded," he said.

Aroyehun explained that at the heart of the activation is a simple proposition: consumers can participate, enjoy the experience and stand a chance to receive instant rewards, with the weekly cash prize, which is adding a bigger incentive to the campaign.

"With the Spanish La Liga and the English Premier League already underway, followed by another weekend of major European league action, club football is once again taking over screens and conversations around the world."

PMAN Pays Tributes To Dolly Parton, As Obama Mourns

By **Daniel Anazia**

NIGERIA'S entertainment community has joined the global outpouring of tributes following the death of American country music legend, Dolly Parton, with the Performing Musicians Employers' Association of Nigeria (PMAN) honouring the late icon's extraordinary contribution to music, entertainment and humanitarian causes.

Parton died on August 25, in Nashville, Tennessee at the age of 80, following a brief battle with cancer. Her death brought an end to a career spanning more than six decades and established her as one of the most influential singer-songwriters and entertainers of her generation.

In its tribute, PMAN National President, Pretty Okafor described Parton as a global icon whose "voice, artistry and humanity transcended borders, generations and genres." He praised her resilience, compassion and commitment to excellence, noting that her contribution extended far beyond music.

"Dolly Parton was more than a singer. With timeless songs like *Jolene, I Will Always Love You, 9 to 5,* and *Coat of Many Colours*, she taught the world that music can be both powerful and kind.

"Beyond the stage, her generosity touched millions—from donating hundreds of millions of books through her Imagination Library to funding research that helped create life-saving vaccines. She showed us that an artist's true wealth is in how much light they give to others," Okafor said.

The tribute arrives at a time when Afrobeats and other African sounds are commanding unprecedented international attention, and Nigerian artistes are increasingly performing on global stages, collaborating across genres and building audiences outside Africa.

Okafor stated that the tribute from the performing musicians' umbrella body is significant because Parton's influence was never confined to country music or the United States. Her songwriting, distinctive personality and ability to build connections across generations made her a global cultural figure.

Empahsised is Parton's influence, which Okafor insists, extends beyond performances. "As President of PMAN, I celebrate a woman who lived in the light and used her platform to unite people across backgrounds and generations.

"Her humility, work ethic, and love for people remain a blueprint for musicians everywhere, including here in Nigeria. We urge our members and music lovers to honor her by spreading joy, supporting literacy, and lifting others through our art, just as she did.





Riick Delivers *After Midnight*, A New EP For Late-night Hours

By **Daniel Anazia**

FAST-emerging afro-fusion artiste, Riick, whose sound blends Afrobeats, R&B, and pop influences with emotionally driven storytelling, is introducing a deeply personal chapter of his musical journey with the release of his debut project, *After Midnight* (EP).

Released on Friday, August 28, the project arrives with a title that does a lot of the storytelling on its own. 'After Midnight' is a familiar shorthand for the hours when guards come down, honesty gets easier, and music tends to hit differently.

It's the kind of framing that promises something more intimate than a typical single-driven release: a body of work meant to be experienced in one sitting, in the quiet stretch of night it's named for.

Nigerian and African artistes have leaned into similarly moody, late-night sonic territory in recent years, using shorter EP formats to explore a tighter emotional register than a full album typically allows — love, longing, restlessness, and reflection.

From Content Creator To Contract: Shoday's Long Road To Sony Music UK

By **Daniel Anazia**

THE journey to true success is rarely a straight line. It often winds through unexpected detours and moments of reinvention. For Nigerian singer and songwriter Shoday, the path from making viral social media skits to a major deal with 5K Records and Sony Music UK is a study in timing, perseverance, and undeniable talent.

Long before his melodies filled streaming playlists across Africa, Shoday was part of the wave of digital creators experimenting with comedy skits online. While many treated skit-making as an endpoint, he saw it differently — an audition stage to build an audience and sharpen his creative instincts.

The leap from content creator to serious recording artiste is a tightrope walk; critics' box creatives in, and breaking past the "skit maker turned singer" label demands sonic excellence. Shoday let the music answer for him, blending soulful Afrobeats with an infectious street-pop cadence that resonated with listeners and proved his artistry was no fleeting stunt.

That grind culminated in a deal with 5K Records and Sony Music UK — a seal of approval placing him alongside some of the industry's most exciting global talents and offering a bridge for the homegrown Afrobeats sound onto world stages.

How US Inequitable Policies, Restrictions Put Immigrant, Non-immigrant Nigerians On Visa Processing Dilemma



US Consulate

Chief Executive Officer, Travel Lab Nigeria Ltd: Shalom Asuquo

- The Reality Of US Visa Policy, Processing
- Why Nigeria Matters To The US
- The US Federal Court Intervention On Paused Immigrant Visa Issuance For Nationals Of 75 Countries Including Nigeria

By **Maria Diamond**

OBTAINING a United States Visa has been one of the most sought-after destinations for Nigerians looking to travel for diverse reasons including tourism, education, business, relocation, medication, etc. For decades, the US immigration policy and visa issuance had been about meeting basic qualifications and applicants who presented satisfactory requirements were granted visas in diverse categories and those who didn't were denied.

Needless to say, there was never really a time when the US visa processing was easy for Nigerians but, the requirement and procedure was fair at all stages until it wasn't, giving rise to sudden dramatic, drastic landscape change in US visa application policies.

Today, Nigerian applicants face a combination of shortage of visa availability, restrictions of some visa categories, visa bond that is up to $15,000, tougher interview requirements, expanded security vetting, and the unbridle growth in demand.

This development reveals something bigger than a change in the appointment process. The US visa policy towards Nigeria shifted from a system largely centered on applicant qualification to one increasingly concerned with several additional questions such as: Will you leave when you're supposed to? Can your identity and background be independently verified? Does your digital history support the story of your application? Are you financially sufficient? Does your travel fall within current national security restrictions? And in some cases, can substantial financial security be attached to your promise to leave? – to mention a few.

So, for Nigerian travellers therefore, the US Visa process has become less forgiving of inconsistency and more dependent on careful preparation.

This was the take of Travel Expert and Chief Executive Officer of Travel Lab Nigeria Ltd, Shalom Asuquo.

Nigeria/US Visa Process: The Scale That Changed

One of the major shocks came on July 8, 2025 when the US revised the reciprocity schedule for Nigeria, limiting most non-immigrant and non-diplomatic visas to single entry with a three-month validity period.

According to Asuquo, "the US visa has been one of the most frustrating travel processes for Nigerians between July 2025 and August 2026. So, the story is no longer simply about whether an applicant can secure an interview date or convince the consular officer in charge that they intend to return home.

"In 2025, the Nigeria B1-B2 visa which many travellers were now accustomed to receiving was revised to three months single entry which is from five months multiple-entry to three months validity one single entry.

"The Nigerian government formally protested the decision, noting that the decision also affected other categories including the F-Visa, the J-Visa and also argued that the policy placed additional burdens on Nigerian travellers, students, professionals and also families. To understand the scale that changed consider this: initially it was a B1-B2 arrangement which was up to sixty months, that is five years and multiple entry. Then the new reciprocity schedule was three months single-entry. This reality puts a Nigerian executive who previously obtained one visa and travels periodically to the US over several years in a situation where he or she now potentially requires a new visa application for a future trip after using one single visa.

"But it didn't even end there; by January 2026 the entire situation changed again as the presidential proclamation introduced much more intense restrictions and Nigeria was now placed among 19 countries subject to partial visa rejection. So, for Nigerian nationals covered by that proclamation, the United States partially suspended the issuance of B1, B2 visas, F-visa which is student visa, M-visa which is vocational, J-visa which was the exchange programme and they were subject to limited exceptions.

"This distinction is extremely important to note – it is incorrect to just say America stopped issuing all visas to Nigeria. That is not what the official policy says. Other non-immigrant categories are not automatically captured simply because the applicant is from Nigeria while specific exceptions and case by case national interest exceptions can also apply. So, applicants covered by the proclamation may still submit applications and attend interviews but the State Department warned that they may nevertheless be eligible for visa issuance admission," Asuquo noted.

She continued: "The proclamation applies to affected foreign nationals who were outside the US in January 2026 and did not have a valid visa at the time. The State Department explicitly states that visas that were valid before the proclamation took effect were not revoked simply because of the proclamation. This is an important distinction for Nigerians still holding valid visas as they had to look at every part of it. So, if they had to reject or revoke your visa, there were other things that were considered."

The US Visa Bond Programme

"Another extraordinary development took effect in Nigeria from January 21, 2026. Nigeria was added to the US Government visa Bond programme. This meant that for a Nigerian passport holder who is otherwise eligible for a B1/B2, whose case can proceed to issuance, the consular officer can require a visa bond between the sums of $5,000 to $15,000. The amount is determined during the interview process as they are looking at other risk factors. At $15,000, that is the substantial financial commitment before considering air fare, accommodation or normal visa application fee which is $185,000," Asuquo noted.

She however stated that the bond is frequently misunderstood as it is not an additional visa application fee and paying it does not guarantee a visa. "Applicants should not simply go online and pay $15,000 hoping that it will improve their chances. The State Department specifically instructs applicants to post a bond only after a consular officer directs them to do so using the official US Government process so that if a traveller complies with the term within the authorised period, the bond can be canceled and the money returned to the person who posted it. The State Department also says that bond is also returned where the visa holder never travels before the visa expires or where the applicant or traveller applies for admission but is denied entry. So, there is therefore a powerful message behind that policy.

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From The Rector

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

Radical Hospitality—Touching Stranger At The Gate (1)

(Psalm 119:161-176, Lev. 19:33-37, 1Corinth 13:1-13, Luke 10:25-37) *And he said: "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him: "Go and do likewise,"* ***Luke 10:37.***

Introduction

WE live in a time when walls are rising faster than bridges. Across the globe, people are becoming more self-centered, measuring worth by money rather than mercy.

In Nigeria, politicians are increasingly becoming fraudulent, trading the trust of the people for personal gain. Religious leaders, once shepherds of unity, now fracture the flock along tribal lines. Prejudice has crept into the church, dividing believers by language, blood ties, and cultural heritage.

The stranger at the gate is no longer welcomed; he is feared, ignored or exploited. Yet, the gospel calls us to something radically different. In a world obsessed with self, Christ calls us to self giving love. In a society where corruption and tribalism thrive, the church is summoned to radical hospitality—an evangelism that does not merely preach, but touches, heals and embraces the outsider.

Radical hospitality is not optional; it is the heartbeat of the kingdom. It is the Samaritan crossing the road to bind wounds. It is Israel commanded to love the foreigner as themselves. It is Paul declaring that without love, all gifts and tongues are noise. It is the Psalmist delighting in God's word, which teaches us to live beyond prejudice.

In this age of division, the church must rise as a community of welcome, tearing down walls of creed, culture, and class and opening the gates wide to the stranger. For in touching the stranger, we touch Christ Himself.

Men, through religious walls, cultural differences, and societal status, have built barriers that divide humanity. These walls are erected by prejudice, fear, and pride—walls that separate Jew from Gentile, rich from poor, insider from outsider. Yet the gospel of Christ is the great demolisher of these walls.

• **Religious walls:** Pharisees in Jesus' day drew lines of purity and exclusion, but Christ touched lepers, ate with sinners and welcomed tax collectors.

• **Cultural walls:** Samaritans and Jews despised one another, yet Jesus made a Samaritan the hero of mercy in Luke 10.

• **Societal walls:** Status and class often dictate who is "worthy" or "acceptable," but Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13 that without love, all status and gifts are meaningless.

Radical hospitality is the gospel's answer to human walls. To touch the stranger at the gate is to touch Christ Himself. Evangelism is not only



Stephen Wolemonwu

preaching across pulpits, but also breaking barriers across cultures, religions, and social divides—showing that in Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one," (Gal. 3:28). We are all one in Christ.

What Is Radical Hospitality?

In the context of this discussion, radical hospitality means going far beyond ordinary kindness or polite welcome. It is the gospel driven practice of opening our lives, our homes, and our hearts to those who are different, marginalised, or even despised by society. It is "radical" because it cuts against the scuffle of our age—an age where self interest, corruption, tribalism and prejudice dominate.

Radical hospitality confronts self centeredness: In a world where people are increasingly money conscious and self absorbed, it insists that the stranger's need is as important as our own comfort.

• **Radical hospitality resists corruption and tribalism:** In Nigeria and beyond, where politicians exploit and religious leaders divide along ethnic lines, it calls the church to embody Christ's love that transcends tribe, language and blood ties.

• **Radical hospitality heals prejudice:** Where the church has been fractured by cultural and linguistic walls, it reminds us that in Christ there is no Jew or Gentile, no slave or free, no Hausa, Yoruba or Igbo, but one body united in love.

• **Radical hospitality is evangelism in action:** It is the Samaritan crossing the road to bind wounds, Israel commanded to love the foreigner, and Paul declaring that without love, life is meaningless.

• *Venerable Stephen Wolemonwu is the Rector, Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State (08035413812)*

The Mature Spouse

By **Charles Ighele**

IN every relationship there are bound to be times of disagreements and quarrels. These areas of disagreements and quarrels have caused many people their marriages. Some men might quarrel with their wives because they did not prepare the meal on time. Some wives will quarrel with their husbands because they did not put their shoes or shirts or suits at the appropriate place. Or maybe the husband did not give them money or buy things for them.

It must be said that in every relationship, your partner must do something you may not like. When your wife offends you, what do you do? When your husband offends you, what do you do? Do you keep malice? Do you deny him or her sex? Do you deliberately stay away at work longer than you used to thereby denying your spouse your comfort, warmth and presence. Do you as the man go about drinking with your friends? Do you as the woman also to stop preparing the meal at home? Or when you even do, do you leave him to serve himself. Do you stop doing his laundry alongside yours? Do you leave your bedroom to another room? Some spouses even give their partners what is the "silent treatment."

I would like to state unequivocally here that none of the afore mentioned post quarreling treatments would in any way help settle the disagreement or quarrel. Rather, it would further strain your relationship and give room to the devil to penetrate into your love life. In situations like this, I have often times stated that it is the more mature of the spouses that should budge and make peace with the spouse. When this is done the door is shut against the devil from ministering evil things.

Maturity here has nothing to do with age. Maturity is a thing of the mind. When you keep malice with your partner or give the "silent treatment" to your partner you are only giving an opening to the devil in your life. After apologising to your partner, you could bring up that issue later in a more relaxed ambience filled with joy, love and romance. Keeping malice or giving the "silent treatment" or denying each other love/romantic treats is not mature. When there is a quarrel between spouses, it is the more mature in the relationship that makes the first move towards resolving the issue. ***Love you!***

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



Ighele

Herbs, Roots Combined With Prayers Bring Rapid Results To Prayers, Says Akandu

PASTOR BLESSING EMEKA AKANDU *is the Founder and General Overseer of The Genuine Seekers of Salvation Church, Igando, Lagos. Akandu, who recently marked his 9th anniversary in ministry, told* ***OMIKO AWA*** *reasons his church does not collect offering and tithe, but emphasise the use of herbs and roots, alongside prayers to administer healing on people of different sickness.*

You just cocked nine, how did you come into ministry?

TO be precise, it all started in 1978, when the late Reverend Obinna Ezekiel of Christian Pentecostal Church (CPM) in one of his village evangelism came to our village. He came with a film that dealt on the story of a man that lived a careless lifestyle and was involved in an accident with his bicycle and died and went to hell. As a boy, the story touched me and right then, I made up my mind never to live a careless lifestyle.

The next day, Rev Ezekiel saw me in my father's compound when he and his ministers came to carry their musical equipment and other materials kept in our house, and said to my father, "this your son is going to be a great man of God." My father was not their member; he only allowed the church to keep their items in our house because it was very close to their crusade ground. Since that pronouncement, his words have been ringing a bell in my head.

However, from the year 2000 to 2010, the call began to manifest and I became a member of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). I became a worker and attended the church's Bible College. I later left RCCG for Life Seed, a Pentecostal Church, where I served as an assistant pastor. For some reasons, I left Life See in 2015 and became an iterant evangelist, preaching at different places to different people. I did this till 2016, when I had a dream, where a voice instructed me to live according to Psalm 15. Waking, I read the passage and made up my mind to live according to the dictates of the passage. I began to do so, and my life began to change drastically for the better. I began to understand many spiritual things and then, started the church.

Before this time, I had gone to a camp at Ishasi to pray; I was there for one week, seeking the face of God on how to



Pastor Blessing Emeka Akandu

run the church. It was at the campground that I got the revelation to overlook money.

I was also instructed not to collect tithes, offerings or urge members to sow seeds or give money for one thing or the other. The Holy Spirit instructed, I should make the church a place where the word of God would be clearly and truly preached. Then, I asked: "how would the church grow or be able to handle its needs? The voice replied: "The church does not belong to you. All I want you to do, is to put a basket at the back of the congregation in the church and anyone that wants to give anything can drop it in the basket. Do not make giving compulsory." He also instructed that before the church closes that I should stretched my hand towards the basket and bless it, adding that the words, offering time, tithes, seed sowing or anything that pertains to money should not be mentioned.

I asked what would the name of the church be and he gave me a book that contains the names of churches that had existed and are no more. He pointed at some names and said; they are no more because they were not faithful. He asked: "Will you be faithful to me?" I answered in the affirmative and he said: "The church shall be called, 'The Genuine Seekers of Salvation Church.' He said, if I would be faithful in my calling that over 65 per cent of Nigerians will make heaven. Returning home, I discussed what the Lord had shown to me with my immediate family and some neighbours. On February 5, 2017, I started the church in my street. The attendance, including myself, was 13; we all lived in the same neigbhourhood. I did not preach that day, but praised and worshipped the Lord. After that, I told the congregation my encounter with the Lord and knelt for the remaining 12 members to pray for me. Bro. Emmanuel Ajoko coordinated the prayers and immediately he finished, he shouted offering time, and I called him to order— there is no offering please.

There Is No Alternative To Jesus Christ

*"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," (**Acts 4:12**).*

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



APOSTLE PETER, who said these words under the heavy unction of the Holy Ghost, stand as the ultimate boundary of human hope and the final authority on the destiny of the soul. In a world that is constantly searching for a back door into heaven, a shortcut to peace, or a substitute for righteousness, the word of God remains an immovable rock. We live in a generation that prides itself on "many ways" and "personal truths," yet the reality of eternity is not governed by human opinion, but by divine decree.

There is no alternative to Jesus Christ because there is no other person in the history of the universe who could bridge the infinite gap between a Holy God and a fallen humanity. To seek another way is not just an error in judgment, but a rejection of the only lifeline thrown to a drowning world.

The fundamental reason there is no alternative to Christ lies in the nature of our condition. The Bible is clear on this, according to Romans 3:23: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Sin is not a social mistake or a temporary lapse in character; it is a spiritual death sentence. Romans 6:23, tells us that "the wages of sin is death," and this is a debt that no human being can pay for himself or herself, let alone for another. We see men and women, today, trying to pay this debt through the currency of "good works," yet Isaiah 64:6 reminds us that "all our righteousness are as filthy rags" in the sight of a thrice-holy God. You cannot wash a stained soul with dirty water, and you cannot redeem a fallen life with the efforts of a fallen nature. There had to be a perfect, sinless substitute and that is a Lamb without blemish and without spot. He has taken our place upon the altar of divine justice. Only Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, could fulfill this requirement.

When Jesus stood among His disciples and declared in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me;" He was not offering one option among many. He was stating an exclusive biological and spiritual reality. Just as there is no alternative to light to dispel darkness, same way there is no alternative to Christ to dispel the spiritual blindness of the human heart. Many look to philosophy, seeking to think their way into peace, but philosophy only discusses the problem while Christ provides the cure. Many look to religion, seeking to perform their way into favour, but religion is man's attempt to reach God, whereas the Gospel is God reaching down to man. There is only "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," (1Timothy 2:5). Any other mediator is a counterfeit; any other path is a dead end.

> Sin is not a social mistake or a temporary lapse in character; it is a spiritual death sentence. Romans 6:23, tells us that "the wages of sin is death," and this is a debt that no human being can pay for himself or herself, let alone for another.
> And without shedding of blood is no remission." It was not just any blood, but the precious blood of Christ that paid the ransom. When we realise the magnitude of the price paid, we understand the gravity of looking for an alternative. To suggest there is another way is to suggest that the sacrifice of Jesus was unnecessary

The Cross of Calvary is the final proof that no alternative exists. If there had been any other way to save humanity—if keeping the law could have done it, if animal sacrifices could have sufficed or if human sincerity were enough—then the Father would never have allowed His Only Begotten Son to endure the agony of the Cross. The blood of Jesus is the only substance in the universe that has the power to cleanse the conscience from dead works. Hebrews 9:22, says: "And without shedding of blood is no remission." It was not just any blood, but the precious blood of Christ that paid the ransom. When we realise the magnitude of the price paid, we understand the gravity of looking for an alternative. To suggest there is another way is to suggest that the sacrifice of Jesus was unnecessary. But God, in His infinite wisdom, knew that only the Creator could redeem the creature.

The power in the name of Jesus is unparalleled because it is the only name that carries the authority of heaven. Philippians 2:9-10 tells us that God has "given him a name which is above every name: that the name of Jesus every knee should bow." There is no other name that makes demons tremble, no other name that brings instant peace to a troubled mind, and no other name that can translate a soul from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. When a sinner cries out to that name, they are not calling upon a theory; they are calling upon a person who is "upholding all things by the word of his power," (Hebrews 1:3). There is no alternative to His power because His power is the very power of the Godhead.

Furthermore, the sufficiency of Christ is total. He does not need our help to save us; He only needs our surrender. We are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Romans 3:24). This is the "soul-converting" power of the message: that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He does not wait for you to become an alternative version of yourself before He accepts you. He takes the broken, the shattered, the rejected, and the vile, and by His Spirit, He makes them new. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," (2 Corinthians 5:17). This transformation is not a renovation of the old life, but the importation of a new life—His life. No other system or belief can offer a new birth; they can only offer a new coat of paint on an old tomb.

To the one who is searching, the message is simple: stop looking for an alternative. You will find no rest for your soul in the dry wells of this world. The invitations of Christ are always personal and urgent. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I shall give you rest," (Matthew 11:28).

Finally, we must consider the consequence of rejecting the only way. If there is no alternative to Christ for salvation, then to be without Christ is to be without hope. John 3:36 warns us: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." This is the sobering reality that fuels the urgency of the gospel. It is not an act of intolerance to tell a man that there is only one bridge over a chasm; it is an act of supreme love. The bridge is Jesus Christ. He was bruised for our iniquities and wounded for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:5). He stood in the line of fire so that we could stand in the hall of grace.

There is no alternative to Jesus Christ because He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the Bread of Life that satisfies the hungry, the Living Water that quenches the thirsty, and the Light of the World that guides the lost. He is the Advocate,Who pleads our case, and the King, Who is coming again to rule in righteousness.

Whether you are at the height of success or the depth of failure, your need for Him remains the same. Trust in Him today with all your heart. Lean not unto your own understanding or the shifting opinions of society. Anchor your soul in the truth of Acts 4:12. There is no other name. There is no other way. There is no other Saviour. Jesus Christ is not a better way; He is the only way!

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

'God Fought My Battle, Healed Me Of 15-year Chronic Pile'

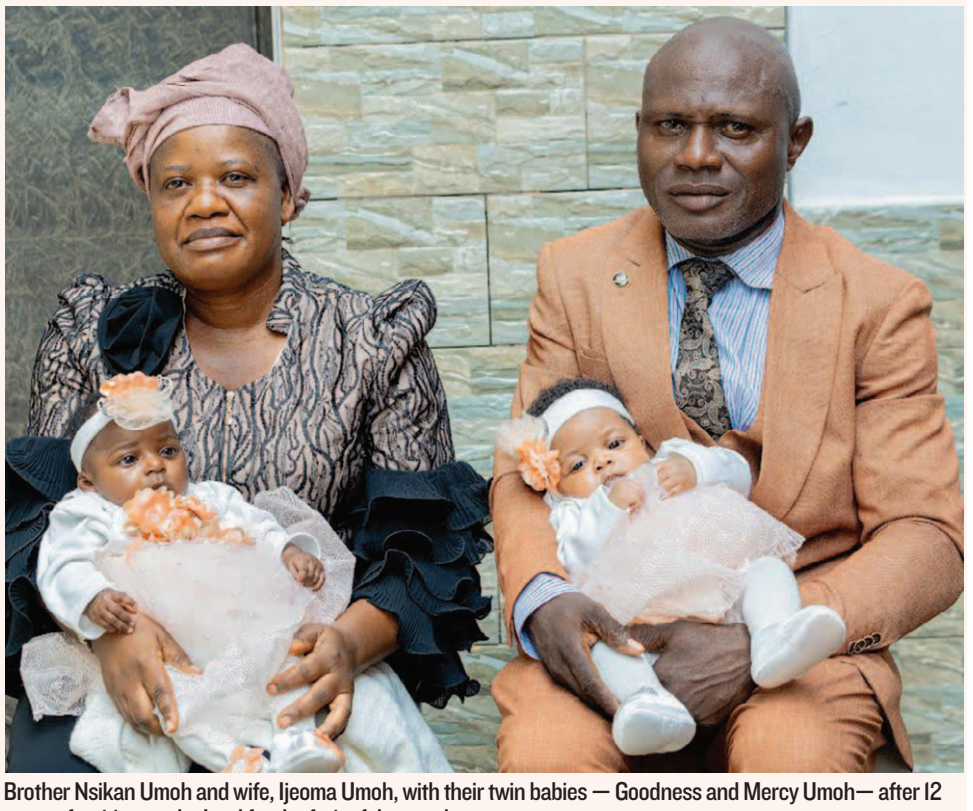
MY name is Moses Sodipo. I am from Ogun State, but I reside at Alaba, international market, Lagos. I joined The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries this year. After joining the church, God showed me many things to prove that He is the owner of The Lord's Chosen.

I recently relocated to my house in Alaba, so that, I will live closer to the church. Before now, l did not know that a particular tenant was the brain behind my not relocating to my house after its' completion. He had been bragging that he came from a particular place in the South East, and feels that he can live in the house without paying rent. The man and his10 children have been a thorn on my flesh. However, last Thursday, as l was coming home, he saw me and began to shout fire, fire, and ran away.

In fact, God of Chosen is so great that He drove the troublesome tenant away from my house after he bragged that he would live for a donkey's years without paying a kobo. Oh, l thank God so much.

Another testimony is how I joined The Lord's Chosen. It was one fateful Friday, l was coming back from a prayer meeting and l saw people in a crusade in that area and when I looked at the cable, l saw the G.O. of this ministry preaching and God said to me this is the man I have been telling you about. Without wasting time I joined them in that regional crusade, and after the crusade, I demanded to see the pastor of that branch. It was after seeing him that I came to the headquarters in Ijesha, Lagos, and to the glory of God, l have been experiencing real peace in my heart. To crown it all, God of Chosen healed me of an age-long pile (hemorrhoid) that had afflicted my life for 15 years. Praise, the Lord!

I pray for our G.O. and all Chosen members worldwide; heaven at last in Jesus' name... *Amen!*



Brother Nsikan Umoh and wife, Ijeoma Umoh, with their twin babies — Goodness and Mercy Umoh— after 12 years of waiting on the Lord for the fruit of the womb

Holiness In A Corrupt Community (1)

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor W. F. Kumuyi



WHEREVER they are, and under whatever situation, Christ's followers are expected to courageously defy all impediments and uphold a strong conviction and commitment to holiness. This was expressed clearly by Jesus Christ, Himself, to the Churches in Asia Minor. In the message to the church in Pergamos, for instance, the Lord Jesus says:"I know thy works."

He commended their steadfastness, but had "a few things against (them)." He knows everything about us, as well. Whenever Christ speaks to correct us, it is intended to ensure that we are ready at His coming. Therefore, we should not be offended, when the Holy Spirit, acting through servants of God, point out our spiritual state in a direct manner. The appropriate response is to"repent" so that all the things that were wrong and brought controversy against the church, ministers and members, will be removed. Otherwise, it would attract "the sword" from Christ. He is loving, merciful and compassionate when we believe in Him, follow His precepts and live by faith and grace in righteousness. However, for those who go astray or allow corruption and the works of the flesh to control their character and conduct, Christ says He would "fight against them."

Whatever the condition of the church today, we can still make amends, renew our faith and commitment to Christ, and become overcomers. The Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, introduces Himself to the church as He who was dead and yet, alive again. He has conquered death, defeated Satan, and overcome all evil and the world. He alone possesses and wields the sharp sword that no adversary can withstand.When the renegade Prophet Balaam left his house to meet Balak, King of Moab, the Lord sent an angel with a sharp sword in his hand with which he would have killed the seer, but for the intervention of his ass. The sword is an instrument of judgment against the adversary. However, the "sword of my mouth" refers to the words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ against corrupters and people who introduce erroneous and damnable doctrines of devils into the church.

As believers under the preeminent Christ, we have the same Word to teach all nations. As we speak the Word faithfully, the Spirit of God will use it to convict the people to take a stand for Christ, by turning away from their sins. It is that sword of the Spirit in the hand of God's anointed servants that convicts sinners of their transgression.

When the Lord anoints us with the Holy Ghost, He empowers the word that we speak to enlighten sinners on their spiritual condition, and leads them to plead for redemption from the powerful influence of sin and evil. "For the word of Godis quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Through that sword of the Spirit, our Lord Jesus Christ brought conviction on the men of Israel who wanted Him to pronounce judgment on the woman caught in adultery. While they were convicted in their hearts on hearing the words of Jesus, they missed the chance to obtain salvation from Him. Instead, they walked away from His presence, unlike the adulterous woman who waited until Christ pardoned her sins. Those who stay with Christ when they are convicted of their sins receive mercy and grace for salvation, peace of mind and a transformed life. When Christ returns at the end of the age, He will "destroy(the Antichrist) unto the end," and with the sharp sword that proceeds out of His mouth, He will "smite the nations" that would be deceived to accept the mark of the Antichrist and follow him.

• Further reading (King James Version): Revelation 2:12-17. Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12,13; John 8:7-11. Isaiah27:1; Daniel 7:26; 8:25; 11:45; 2 Thessalonians 2:8,9; Revelation 19:15,16,19-21, Revelation 2:14-16. Hebrews 9:27; 10:27-31. Revelation2:13,17. Hebrews 11:27. Revelation 2:17; Mark 4:23,24. Revelation 2:17.

MFM Takes Deliverance Crusade To North Carolina, Florida

THE Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) USA Mega Region 2 is set to take its evangelical outreach to a new level with major church property dedications and deliverance crusades scheduled for North Carolina and Florida in September.

The programmes, which will feature the General Overseer of MFM, Dr. D.K. Olukoya, are expected to attract worshippers, Nigerians in the diaspora and other Christian faithful from across the United States.

Principal Regional Overseer of MFM USA Mega Region 2, Pastor Olumide Oni, said the programmes were designed to impact positively on the spiritual lives of Christians in the United States and, in the language of the ministry, "depopulate the kingdom of darkness."

Oni said the crusades would provide an opportunity for people burdened by what he described as satanic yokes to seek deliverance, while many others would encounter what he called "the God of uncommon power."

He said the programmes were open to people of all nationalities, including Nigerians both at home and abroad, particularly those residing in or travelling to the United States during the period.

According to him, the events would also provide an opportunity to rally prayers and support for the continued expansion of the ministry's evangelistic work in the United States.

The North Carolina Church Property Dedication and the Great North Carolina Deliverance Crusade will hold on Thursday, September 17, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at The Alliance Convention Center, 1214 Turrentine Street, Burlington, North Carolina.

Lagos, Nigeria Are Proud Of You, Sanwo-Olu Tells Muoka At Youth Programme

By Chris Irekamba

THE Lagos State Governor,BabajideSanwo-Olu, has said that Lagos and Nigeria are proud of the General Overseer of the Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries Worldwide, Pastor Lazarus Muoka, for encouraging Nigerian youths to be godly and responsible citizens.

He also commended Muoka's wife, Mummy G.O., Pastor Mary Muoka, and the entire church for being a force behind Pastor Muoka. The governor disclosed this, last week, at the Church's yearly youth programme for 2026, titled: "The Youth That Knows The Lord," taken from Daniel 11:32 and held at the Lord's Chosen Revival Ground in Ijesha, Lagos. He said the church did very well for convening the programme and bringing together young people from across Nigeria and beyond to attend the life-transforming encounter with God.

Describing theprogramme as a remarkable one, the governor who was represented at the event by his Deputy, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, said, "to see such a large gathering of young people united by faith, purpose and the desire to grow is deeply encouraging. Lagos is proud of you, and Nigeria is proud of you. So, our father, Pastor Lazarus Muoka, we thank you very much."

Sanwo-Olu noted that the theme of the programme may appear very simple, but very profound.

He quoted Eccl. 12:1, 6, which says: "Remember now your creator in the days of your youth before the difficult days come and the year draw near you, when you say I have no pleasure in them. He explained the meaning of the word, "remember" as something more than just thinking about God.

Maximizing God's Grace (5)

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

Text: 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

Key verse: 2 Corinthians 6:1: "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain," (KJV).

2CORINTHIANS 6:1 was an urgent and powerful message delivered by the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth. Apostle Paul entreated the brethren to make good use of the Grace of God, rather than waste it. Grace is the most expensive gift in the universe. It cost God the life of His only begotten Son on the cross. It is His unmerited favour, His divine enablement, and His transforming power given to us freely. Yet, the scriptures reveal a sobering truth: it is entirely possible to receive this magnificent grace and still have it mean absolutely nothing in your daily life. To receive grace in vain means to let it go to waste, to render it empty, fruitless and devoid of purpose. Today, we must ask ourselves: Are we truly maximising the power of God's grace, or are we taking it for granted?



Amadi

Some believe that because God's grace is infinite, it does not matter how they live. But true grace does not excuse sin; it delivers us from it. Turning grace into a free pass for a compromised lifestyle is a mockery of the cross. Titus 2:12, states that God's grace "teaches us to say, 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. When we try to fight temptations purely out of human strength, we ignore the Holy Spirit. If we rely on our own natural power, we become as dry and dead as a branch cut off from the vine. One of the evidence that we have received grace is to bear fruits of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual fruit is not something human effort can manufacture; it is the natural, outward overflow of a heart surrendered to Christ. Grace acts as the spiritual lifeline, drawing nutrients from the root (Christ) to produce visible characteristics in the believer. In John 15:5, Jesus teaches: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Look at the very next verse. Paul quotes the Old Testament and says: "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," (2 Corinthians 6:2).

• Today's nugget: Abide in Christ constantly. Prayer: May your grace never be in vain in my life. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com, Rev. Abel UkachiAmadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.

Stop Talking And Listen (1)

Synthesis

PRAYER is conversation with God, particularly His covenant people. Therefore, the beginning of your conversation with God is to ensure that you are a member of His covenant people by being regenerated (Born again). Regeneration comes to those who repent of sin, turn to God, and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation. A regenerated person has the Spirit of Christ. Furthermore, before you can listen to God you must be able to comprehend His methods of communication with people and how to recognise His voice.God communicates with us through divers ways, but the most important method is through the Holy Scriptures.

Some other ways of communication are through the promptings of the Holy Spirit, dreams, visions, still small voice, preachers, teachers and concerned friends, trials and suffering, prophecy and prophets, inner conviction, circumstances, open and closed doors (obstacles), simple objects. The Holy Spirit lives within the child of God in order to lead him or her to think, speak and act according to God's word.

The Spirit's prompting comes by (a) reading God's Word, (b) praying and fasting, (c) listening to godly preaching and teaching, (d) earnestly desiring and valuing the manifestations of the Spirit, (e) heeding the counsel of Christian parents and trusting spiritual leaders. Meditating on God's word after reading and studying it is critical to listening.

It is critical to note that God will never contradict His written words, and if we believe we have heard His voice telling us to do something that is contrary to what He says in the scripture, it is definitely not God's voice we have heard.

In biblical terms hearing is absorbing and accepting information about God. Learning is understandingits' meaning and implications. Observing is putting into action all we have learnt and understood.

All three parts are essential to listening and a growing relationship with God. We hear with our ears, but there is a deeper kind of listening with the mind and heart that is necessary in order to gain spiritual understanding from God. Listening involves focusing our minds, bodies and senses. Listening to Christ means not merely hearing, but also obeying.

Some obstacles to listening and obeying God's word are hard-heartedness, pride, worry, spiritual lukewarmness, self-sufficient prosperity and worldliness, fear, opposing pressure from other people, and peer acceptance. Don't wait until you go through calamities before listening to God's words. Consider what God may be telling you, and obey Him before time runs out. Notice how believers prayed in Acts 4:23-31. They did not ask God to remove the problem, but to give them the strength and courage to deal with it. Listen and obey God's instructions no matter the cost.

"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge," (Acts 4:19).

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Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus Prof. Mercy Olumide



Africa Sustainability Forum To Spotlight Green Growth, Shared Prosperity

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Africa Sustainability Forum (ASF) 2026 is set to bring together policymakers, business leaders, regulators, investors, development partners and sustainability professionals to explore practical solutions for advancing sustainable development across the continent.

The forum to be hosted by TheNumbersNG.com and scheduled for October 20, 2026, at Oriental Hotels, Lagos, is themed: "Sustainable Futures: Driving Just Transitions, Green Growth and Shared Prosperity."

According to the organisers, the forum is designed to move sustainability conversations beyond commitments and declarations towards practical action, partnerships and measurable impact.

The Lead Coordinator of the Africa Sustainability Forum, Elvis Eromosele, said the event would focus on some of the critical issues shaping Africa's economic and environmental future.

He said the forum was conceived as a platform for stakeholders to examine how Africa can pursue economic growth while addressing environmental challenges and ensuring that the benefits of development are broadly shared.

NACCIMA Urges Nigerian Investors To Tap Into $7trn Global Halal Economy

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) has called on business leaders, investors, financial institutions, entrepreneurs, academics and government representatives to attend the forthcoming London Halal Forum 2026.

NACCIMA described the event as a strategic platform for Nigerian businesses to explore investment opportunities, forge international partnerships, expand market access and deepen their understanding of the rapidly growing global halal economy.

The National Public Relations Officer of NACCIMA, Mrs. Madinat Adigun-Oladotun, disclosed that the forum will hold from October 10 to 11, 2026, at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre, London, United Kingdom.

Organised by Halal360 in partnership with key institutions, including the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD).

'NPERA Act Will Curb Arbitrary Port Charges, Strengthen Oversight'

By Sulaimon Salau

NIGERIA'S maritime sector is set for a major regulatory shake-up, with the newly enacted Nigerian Ports Economic Regulatory Agency, (NPERA) Act expected to curb arbitrary port charges, strengthen oversight and create a more transparent and predictable business environment, the Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of NPERA, Pius Akutah, has said.

Akutah stated this in an interview with the media on the implications of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's assent to the NPERA Act, 2026.

He described the new legislation as a major milestone in the evolution of Nigeria's maritime sector, saying it has fundamentally changed the architecture of port economic regulation by giving NPERA clearer statutory and enforcement powers.

He explained that under the new framework, charges for regulated port services can no longer be imposed arbitrarily, as service providers will be required to comply with approved tariffs, standards, and regulatory procedures.

The NPERA Boss said the new regime represents a shift from an approach largely driven by negotiation and persuasion to one backed by clear legal authority.

He also highlighted a broader change in the agency's mandate.

According to him, while the Nigerian Shippers' Council primarily focused on protecting the interests of shippers, NPERA is now mandated to balance the interests of both service users and service providers.

Akutah said the new regulatory framework is expected to promote transparency, fairness and predictability across the port system while giving investors and users greater confidence in Nigeria's maritime economy.

Despite the expanded mandate, he stressed that NPERA would not be starting from scratch.

The agency, he said, would build on the structures, workforce, institutional knowledge and experience accumulated by the Nigerian Shippers' Council over the years.

He added that staff would undergo specialised training to equip them with the skills required to deliver on NPERA's broader economic regulatory responsibilities.

On the transition, Akutah disclosed that an in-house steering committee had already been established, with a ministerial steering committee also expected to support the process.

He said implementation plans covering the first 30, 90 and 120 days had been developed to guide the transition and ensure a structured commencement of the agency's mandate.

Beyond institutional preparations, Akutah identified stakeholder awareness and compliance as critical to the success of the new regime.



Events and Sponsorship Manager, Leadway, Oluwakemi Lasisi (left); Group Head, Agric Finance and Solid Minerals Group, Dr. Olushola Obikanye; Convening and Partnerships, IDH, Promise Oyesina; Group Executive, Corporate and Investment Banking Division, Sterling Bank Ltd, Dele Faseemo; Marketing Manager, Noor Takaful, Samuel Oluwafemi, and Brand and Communications Manager, Leadway, Niyi Abiola, at the Agriculture Summit Africa Press Conference, held in Lagos. PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

'Fintechs, Banks, Infrastructure Providers Must CollabortaeTo Boost Financial Innovation In Africa'

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Managing Director, Payment Processing & Switching, Interswitch Purepay, Akeem Lawal, has highlighted the critical role of collaboration between fintechs, commercial banks, infrastructure providers and regulators in building a financial ecosystem that can scale without compromising trust, compliance or resilience.

Lawal stated this while speaking at The Borderless Experience 2026 in Lagos on the future of African Fintech.

Also at the event, in a conversation with the CEO, Zest, Kemi Okusanya, and moderated by the Founder & Publisher, Condia, Benjamin Dada, he emphasised that fintechs cannot - and should not - be expected to solve the challenges of financial innovation alone.

"I don't think the fintechs can solve it alone," he noted, underscoring the need for commercial banks and infrastructure providers to create the compliant and transparent layers that enable Fintechs to focus on innovation.

"For Interswitch, this represents a fundamental principle of Africa's digital financial evolution: innovation is only as powerful as the infrastructure that supports it," he stated.

As Fintechs continue to transform how individuals and businesses access and move money, trusted infrastructure providers have a critical role to play in enabling secure, compliant and resilient financial ecosystems. The collaboration between innovators, established financial institutions, infrastructure providers and regulators will therefore be essential to ensuring that Africa's Fintech revolution is not only rapid, but sustainable.

Climate Financing For MSMEs Key To Africa's Withstanding Climate Change Impact – Experts

By Sulaimon Salau

AFRICA'S ability to withstand the growing economic impact of climate change will depend largely on how effectively financial institutions place women, smallholder farmers and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises at the centre of climate financing, experts have said.

The call was made at the Africa Inclusive Climate Finance Conference 2026, convened in Lagos by LAPO Microfinance Bank (LAPO MfB) in partnership with the World Savings and Retail Banking Institute (WSBI).

Themed, "Gender-Smart Finance for Climate-Smart Agriculture: Building Inclusive Rural Economies," brought together financial institutions, regulators, development finance organisations, technology companies and private-sector stakeholders to examine the intersection of climate resilience, financial inclusion, women's economic empowerment and sustainable enterprise.

In her speech, Cynthia Ikponmwosa, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, LAPO Microfinance Bank, said the climate challenge was also a financing challenge, particularly for communities whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and informal economic activity.

"Climate resilience cannot be separated from financial inclusion. If women farmers, rural households and small businesses cannot access the capital they need to adapt, then climate finance will remain disconnected from the realities of the people it is meant to serve," Ikponmwosa said.

Uba Sani's Reforms Aided Kaduna Ease of Doing Business Ranking –Maikori

By Sulaimon Salau

KADUNA State rose from eighth to second on Nigeria's ease of doing business ranking, driven by reforms introduced under Governor Uba Sani, the Chief Strategic Adviser on Inter-Governmental Affairs to the Kaduna State Government, AuduMaikori has said.

Speaking on a television business programme in Lagos, Maikori attributed the improvement to a combination of security stabilisation, mining sector restructuring, and infrastructure investment that has repositioned Kaduna as one of the country's more attractive investment destinations.

"Kaduna is now the second state in Nigeria for ease of doing business by PEBEC," he said. "Three years ago when Senator Sani came into power, it was number eight." Describing the state's investor engagement as "business unusual," Maikori argued that Kaduna's mining sector reforms in particular have distinguished it from other resource-rich states. He cited the July 2026 Memorandum of Understanding between the state, the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) and advisory firm Core International, describing the arrangement as a half-billion-dollar investment structured to keep mineral rights within state control.

ARCON Holds Maiden Special Recognition Awards October 23

By Sulaimon Salau

THE maiden edition of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria Special Recognition Awards (ASRA), has been slated for October 23, 2026 with the theme, "An Evening of Many Honours". At the event, deserving individuals, brands, organisations and industry practitioners would be recognised across four major categories: Advertising Compliance, Public Sector, Private Sector and Individual Recognition.

Nominations for the awards opened on August 31 and close on September 13, while submission of supporting evidence starts September 14 to 19, with voting commencing September 20 to 27.

Speaking at a press briefing to unveil the award, Director-General of ARCON, Dr Olalekan Fadolapo, said the initiative was initially conceived to recognise compliance but was expanded to accommodate other important contributions to the advertising sector.

Noting that regulation and compliance is critical to ARCON's mandate, he said recognising good work could also encourage responsible practice .

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON NIGERIAN'S 10 LEADING AND MOST 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.



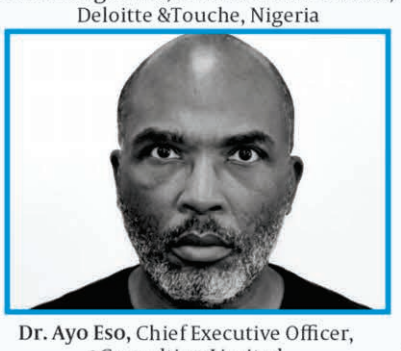
Yomi Olugbenro, Chief Executive Officer, Deloitte &Touche, Nigeria



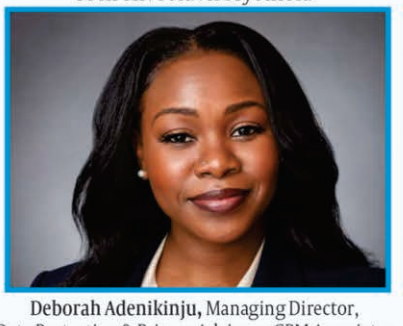
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Josephine Tite-Onnoghen, Senior Associate, Ikeyi Shittu & Co



Dr. Ayo Eso, Chief Executive Officer, 3Consulting Limited



Deborah Adenikinju, Managing Director, Data Protection & Privacy Advisory, GPM Associates



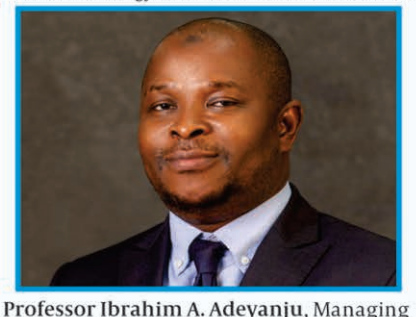
Kamoru Emmanuel Umoru, Founder/ Chief Technology Officer, Accuvice Solutions Limited



Bamgbose Oluwagbenga Iyanda, Founder/ Chief Consultant, GUUT Technologies Limited



Olubunmi Abayomi-Olukunle, Lead Counsel,Balogun Harold



Professor Ibrahim A. Adeyanju, Managing Director/CEO Galaxy Backbone (GBB) Limited

Balogun Harold: Redefining Data Protection as a Value Driver for Africa's Digital Economy



Olubunmi Abayomi-Olukunle,
Lead Counsel,Balogun Harold

As Nigeria's digital economy accelerates, personal data has become a critical commercial asset, powering financial services, technology platforms, analytics, and cross-border commerce. For Balogun Harold, data protection is more than a compliance obligation, it is essential infrastructure required for businesses to grow, innovate, and operate with confidence.

Led by Partner Olubunmi Abayomi-Olukunle, Balogun Harold has built its data protection practice on a longstanding foundation in technology legal advisory. Established to advise investors and operators across technology, banking and finance, infrastructure, and energy, the firm has guided clients on the legal, regulatory, and privacy issues arising from data use since before privacy emerged as a distinct regulatory discipline in Nigeria. That foundation informs the firm's central philosophy which is that, data protection should enable responsible commercial data use rather than become a purely defensive exercise.

The Misuse of Privacy Litigation & Cost Burdens

Balogun Harold offers a distinct, reality-tested perspective on the key challenges defining Nigeria's data protection ecosystem. The firm notes the growing practice among human rights activists of framing routine operational data disputes primarily as constitutional fundamental rights claims. Activists frequently conflate "dignitary privacy," which is constitutionally protected under Section 37 of the 1999 Constitution, with statutory data protection regulation. By framing minor operational lapses, such as the absence of a website privacy policy, as fundamental rights violations, activists attempt to leverage constitutional enforcement tools against commercial entities, improperly portraying legitimate businesses as bad actors. The firm advocates for a balanced jurisprudence where privacy disputes are evaluated within the proper statutory thresholds and defenses established by data protection legislation rather than broad constitutional claims.

Also, Balogun Harold notes the rising operational costs of compliance in Nigeria, pointing out that because the national data protection implementation model explicitly incorporates broader social objectives like job creation, businesses will likely continue to bear a substantial financial burden to comply. The firm maintains that relying on manual compliance processes is financially unsustainable and that manage these rising costs, companies must transition to software-driven, automated compliance systems.

Balogun Harold notes that organizations invest significant resources in collecting and protecting personal data, yet often fail to consider how that same data can support better products, greater efficiency, and stronger customer relationships. Far from viewing frameworks like the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) or GDPR as inherently punitive, Balogun Harold emphasizes that compliant data re-use enables companies to safely maximize the utility and profitability of their data assets, effectively offsetting compliance expenditures through increased productivity and innovation. The firm believes that leadership teams must manage an increasingly complex compliance burden while ensuring that privacy governance actively enables them to realize legitimate commercial value.

Lifecycle Advisory, Proprietary Tech, and Operational Risk

Balogun Harold provides comprehensive legal guidance across the complete data protection lifecycle. Its core practice encompasses regulatory representation and defense before the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC), pre-litigation legal opinions, defensive privacy litigation, compliance audits, risk remediation, policy drafting, and large-scale contractual re-paperings. To help organizations maintain continuous compliance affordably, the firm operates a dedicated DPO-as-a-Service practice and invests in proprietary technology platforms such as www.dataprotectionaudit.ng. Supported by international certifications from the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP), PECB, and the Institute of Information Management (IIM), the firm has advised over 100 corporate clients.

In identifying operational risks, Balogun Harold highlights the recurring gap between documented privacy policies and actual business operations. The firm cautions against specific vulnerabilities, including conflating Chief Technology Officer or Chief Information Officer (CTO/CIO) roles with that of a Chief Data Protection Officer (DPO), employee use of personal devices for corporate data handling, unmonitored data re-use beyond original consent parameters, and weak third-party vendor oversight. To resolve these vulnerabilities, the firm designs practical remediation programs incorporating continuous data mapping, enforceable data processing agreements, strict access controls, and routine penetration testing.

Building the Next Generation of Digital Trust

Looking ahead, Balogun Harold's ambition is to build a leading African legal practice at the intersection of technology, data, financial regulation, and digital business. Its data protection strategy focuses on supporting the NDPC in building a mature privacy ecosystem, helping organisations navigate data sovereignty, and contributing to policy efforts aimed at positioning Nigeria for international "adequate jurisdiction" status. Achieving recognized adequacy will eliminate global friction for cross-border data transfers, reducing transactional barriers for Nigerian enterprises entering international markets. Ultimately, Balogun Harold urges executive leadership teams to elevate privacy governance to the board level, converting regulatory compliance into business infrastructure and digital trust into a lasting competitive advantage.

GPM Associates: Building Practical Privacy Governance Beyond Compliance

As organisations collect and process increasing volumes of personal information, protecting data has become central to institutional accountability and public trust. Information relating to identity, finances, health, education and employment carries significant responsibilities, making effective data protection essential to responsible business and governance.

GPM Associates has been involved in Nigeria's privacy ecosystem from its formative years. As one of the country's pioneer Data Protection Compliance Organisations, the firm contributed to work that produced the draft Nigeria Data Protection Regulation from the earlier 2017 guidelines. This experience gave the firm valuable insight into the development and intent of Nigeria's data protection framework.

At the forefront of this work is Deborah Adenikinju, who leads the Data Protection and Privacy Advisory practice at GPM Associates. With more than a decade of experience spanning implementation science, data management, research and policy, Adenikinju brings a multidisciplinary perspective to privacy governance. She helps organisations translate regulatory requirements into practical systems that can be implemented, measured and sustained.

Her work is particularly focused on the Nigeria Data Protection Act and broader privacy obligations, with an emphasis on moving organisations from formal compliance towards embedded accountability. Her experience working with sensitive data and vulnerable populations has also strengthened her commitment to protecting the rights of data subjects.

Adenikinju is an IIM certified Data Protection Officer (CDPO) and a Certified Information Privacy Professional/Europe (CIPP/E). She holds a Master of Public Health degree from Emory University. These qualifications, combined with her implementation science background, inform a practical and rights centred approach to privacy governance, responsible innovation and digital trust.

Today, as a Data Protection Compliance Organisation licensed by the Nigeria Data Protection Commission, GPM Associates continues to help organisations understand and implement their privacy responsibilities. Its approach recognises that compliance should not begin and end with an audit, filing or policy document. Instead, privacy should become part of everyday governance, decision making, risk management and institutional culture.

This philosophy is reflected in the firm's approach to implementation. GPM Associates develops proprietary assessment methodologies, tailored governance frameworks and practical tools that help organisations understand their privacy position and identify clear priorities for improvement. Rather than applying a standard model to every client, the firm considers each organisation's operating environment, regulatory exposure, available resources and level of maturity.

For GPM Associates, innovation means making effective privacy governance more accessible and practical. Assessments should provide clarity. Governance frameworks should support measurable improvement. Digital tools should help organisations understand their obligations and determine the actions required to address identified gaps.

One example is the Insurance Brokers Data Protection Compliance Support Initiative, developed to strengthen data protection compliance across the insurance brokerage sector. The initiative combines capacity development with practical implementation support and recognises that organisations operate with different levels of institutional capacity and resources.

This emphasis on accessibility also extends to public education. GPM Associates regards helping the wider public understand data protection as part of its civic responsibility. Because data protection ultimately exists to protect people, the firm uses public education initiatives and accessible awareness content to demystify data protection and make privacy concepts accessible, empowering individuals to better understand their rights and engage more confidently with organisations that collect and process their information.

For Adenikinju and GPM Associates, the individual remains central to the privacy conversation, as behind every dataset is a person, and decisions involving personal information can influence access to healthcare, finance, employment, education, identity services and other essential opportunities. Building a strong privacy culture therefore requires both institutional accountability and informed data subjects who understand their rights.

The need for this approach is becoming more pressing as artificial intelligence, digital identity, cross border data transfers and connected digital services reshape how personal information is collected and used. Organisations require privacy governance that can respond to emerging technologies and risks while remaining grounded in the rights and interests of individuals.

GPM Associates is therefore positioning its privacy practice around an integrated approach that connects regulatory understanding with practical implementation, strengthens institutional capability and extends privacy awareness beyond the organisations it advises. Through this approach, the firm seeks to help organisations move beyond compliance documentation and develop privacy systems that function in everyday operations.

Led in its Data Protection and Privacy Advisory practice by Adenikinju, GPM Associates continues to champion a model of privacy governance that is practical, proportionate and sustainable. Its work reflects a broader commitment to strengthening institutional accountability, protecting data subjects and building the digital trust required for Nigeria's growing digital economy.



Deborah Adenikinju,
Managing Director, Data Protection & Privacy Advisory, GPM Associates

TheGuardian SPECIAL FOCUS ON NIGERIAN'S 10 LEADING AND MOST RELIABLE DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE FIRMS CHAMPIONING PRIVACY, COMPLIANCE AND DIGITAL TRUST

3Consulting Limited: Building Digital Trust Through Data Protection, Cybersecurity and Responsible Innovation

As organisations increasingly depend on technology and personal data, protecting information has become central to business continuity, regulatory compliance and customer trust. At the forefront of this transition is 3Consulting Limited, an IT and business process consulting firm that has evolved into a specialist provider of data protection, cybersecurity and emerging technology governance solutions.

Led by Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Ayo Eso, 3Consulting brings more than three decades of experience across finance, trading, manufacturing and technology consulting. An economist, technology consultant, researcher and business adviser, Eso has built his career around finance, payment systems, fintech, financial inclusion and technology, giving him a practical understanding of how data and digital systems influence modern organisations.

Established in 2007, 3Consulting initially focused on IT and business process consulting, serving clients across banking, telecommunications, oil and gas and manufacturing. As data became increasingly important to business operations, the company recognised that privacy could no longer remain an auxiliary concern. It subsequently developed data protection as a dedicated practice, growing alongside Nigeria's regulatory framework from the NDPR to the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023.

Today, 3Consulting is an NDPC accredited Data Protection Compliance Organisation, with a mission centred on securing organisational operations while maximising growth potential. Its approach combines innovation, data protection and ethical governance to help organisations use technology responsibly while creating sustainable growth and lasting digital trust.

One of the major challenges the company addresses is the gap between knowing data protection requirements and implementing them effectively. Many organisations have privacy policies but lack comprehensive data inventories, practical data mapping, tested breach response procedures, effective data subject rights processes or properly empowered Data Protection Officers. The growing use of cloud services, third party vendors, cross border processing and artificial intelligence has created additional risks.

3Consulting responds through an integrated range of services covering data protection audits and regulatory filing support, Data Protection Impact Assessments, outsourced DPO services, privacy policy development, data management, AI governance consulting, incident response management, encryption testing and API security testing. By combining governance expertise with technical capability, the company ensures that compliance extends beyond documentation to the systems and processes that actually handle personal data.

This multidisciplinary approach is one of 3Consulting's major differentiators. Its professionals hold recognised credentials in data protection, privacy management, privacy technology, information security and incident management, including certifications from IAPP and PECB. Through its partnership with PECB and engagements across Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Botswana and Kenya, the firm brings a broader African perspective to privacy and compliance.

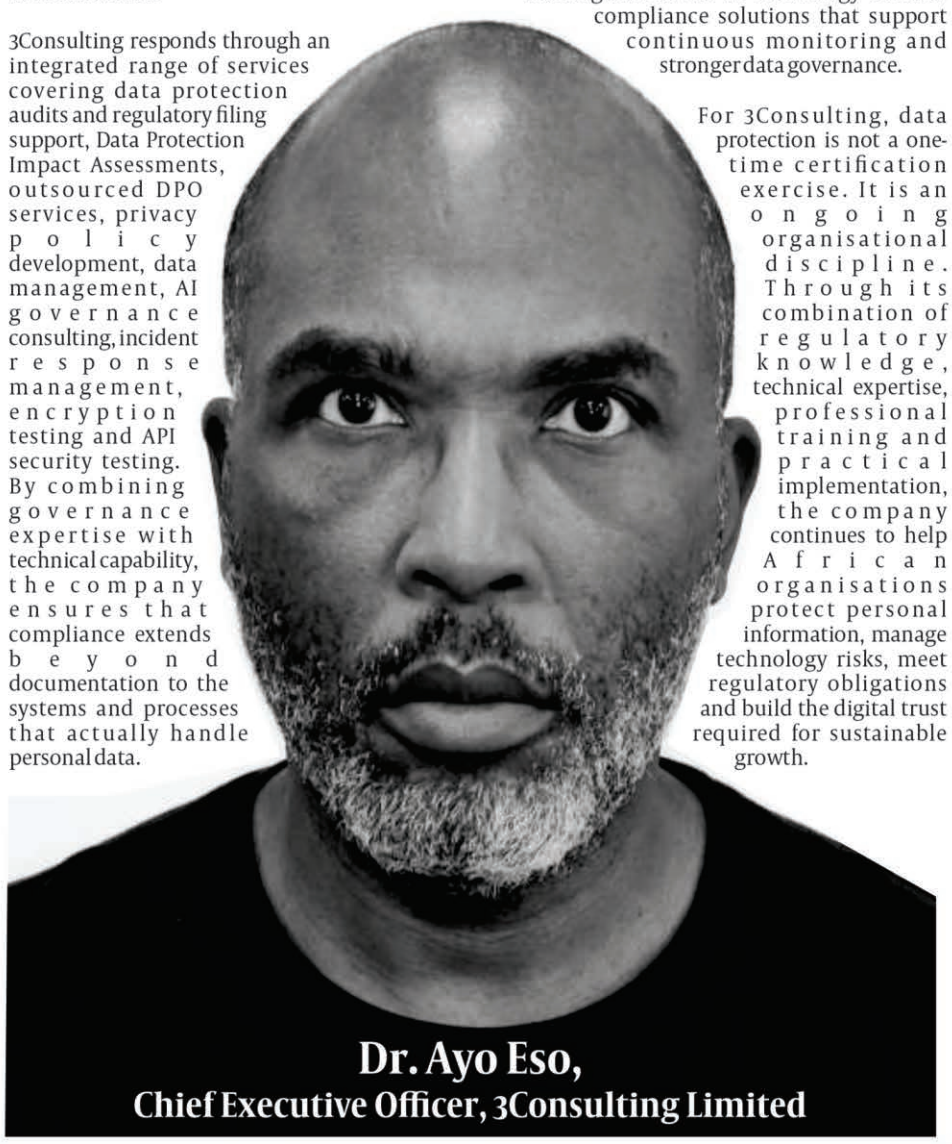
The company's milestones include accreditation as an NDPC Data Protection Compliance Organisation and its partnership with PECB to deliver Certified Data Protection Officer training. Its expanding African footprint, including its relationship with Tri core Consulting in Zimbabwe, has strengthened its capacity to support organisations across multiple regulatory environments. It has also advised organisations responding to data localisation requirements, NDPA implementation and emerging AI governance challenges.

For Dr. Eso, the threats to personal data are increasingly interconnected. Phishing, social engineering, weak access controls, poor third-party oversight and insider risks remain significant concerns, while uncontrolled use of public AI tools introduces another layer of exposure. Employees can inadvertently submit customer, confidential or commercially sensitive information to external AI systems without understanding how that information may be processed or retained.

3Consulting therefore advocates layered protection built around least privilege access, encryption, system maintenance, continuous employee training, clear privacy ownership, third party oversight and tested incident response plans. It also emphasises responsible AI policies, data classification and practical controls that prevent sensitive information from being exposed through unauthorised tools.

Looking ahead, 3Consulting plans to deepen its AI governance and assurance practice, expand across Africa and strengthen its support for regulated sectors, particularly financial institutions and government organisations. The company also intends to expand professional training and invest in technology enabled compliance solutions that support continuous monitoring and stronger data governance.

For 3Consulting, data protection is not a one-time certification exercise. It is an ongoing organisational discipline. Through its combination of regulatory knowledge, technical expertise, professional training and practical implementation, the company continues to help African organisations protect personal information, manage technology risks, meet regulatory obligations and build the digital trust required for sustainable growth.



Dr. Ayo Eso,
Chief Executive Officer, 3Consulting Limited

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON NIGERIAN'S 10 LEADING AND MOST RELIABLE DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE FIRMS CHAMPIONING PRIVACY, COMPLIANCE AND DIGITAL TRUST

Deloitte &Touche Nigeria: Championing Data Protection and Cybersecurity in Nigeria's Digital Economy

As Nigeria's digital economy continues to expand, organisations are handling larger volumes of personal and business information across increasingly complex technology environments. This growth has made data protection, cybersecurity, privacy governance and regulatory compliance critical components of responsible business. For Deloitte &Touche Nigeria, the challenge is not simply helping organisations meet regulatory requirements, but enabling them to build lasting capabilities that protect data, strengthen trust and support sustainable growth.

At the helm of Deloitte &Touche Nigeria is Yomi Olugbenro, the firm's Chief Executive Officer and a seasoned adviser on tax and fiscal policy. An alumnus of The University of Manchester, United Kingdom, and a Fellow of both the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria and the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria, Yomi has built extensive experience across specialised tax and business advisory assignments. His expertise covers business tax, employment tax, international tax, transfer pricing, transaction tax, tax dispute resolution, tax strategy and risk, tax structuring and tax optimisation.

His professional network extends across international and national clients, regulatory authorities and leading industry voices. He serves as Chair of the Board of Tax and Fiscal Policy Faculty of ICAN and previously chaired the Indirect Tax Faculty of CITN. He is also a regular speaker at local and international conferences, bringing strategic insight to discussions on business, taxation and economic development.

Under this leadership, Deloitte &Touche Nigeria continues to advance its purpose of "to make an impact that matters", supporting organisations in managing risks, meeting regulatory obligations and building public trust.

The firm's Nigerian history provides an important foundation for this role. Its roots can be traced to Akintola Williams & Co., established in Lagos in 1952 by Chief Akintola Williams, Nigeria's first chartered accountant. The organisation was created to meet the need for indigenous accounting expertise and has since developed into a multidisciplinary professional services firm. As technology and regulation have transformed the business environment, data protection and privacy have become increasingly important elements of its advisory work.

For Deloitte, one of the biggest challenges facing Nigerian organisations is the tendency to view data protection as a regulatory exercise rather than as a permanent business capability. Many organisations understand their immediate compliance obligations, but struggle to embed privacy into governance structures, business processes, technology environments and corporate culture.

Deloitte's approach is therefore focused on helping organisations move from basic compliance to mature privacy capability. Regulatory reporting remains essential, but it represents only one part of a comprehensive privacy programme. The firm helps organisations design, transform and operationalise data protection frameworks aligned with the Nigeria Data Protection Act, sector specific requirements, international good practices and the organisation's own risk and business environment.

This approach is reflected in the breadth of Deloitte's services. Its wider professional services cover Audit and Assurance, Consulting, and Tax and Legal services. From a data protection perspective, its offerings include data protection assessments and audits, privacy transformation and implementation, Data Protection Impact Assessments, data mapping and inventory, Data Protection Officer as a Service, breach impact assessments, privacy automation, data sovereignty assessments and data protection training.

These services are designed to help organisations understand the information they hold, identify privacy risks, establish accountability and implement appropriate controls. Deloitte also helps organisations strengthen internal capabilities by training employees on their responsibilities and, where necessary, providing experienced professionals to supplement existing teams.

What distinguishes Deloitte is its combination of local knowledge, global expertise and multidisciplinary capability. Data protection is approached as a business and trust issue rather than simply a legal or technical obligation. Privacy specialists work alongside cybersecurity, risk, governance and regulatory professionals to develop solutions that reflect the realities of each organisation.

This integrated approach has supported Deloitte's standing internationally and in Nigeria. The organisation has maintained its position as the world's largest professional services organisation for 10 consecutive years and has been recognised by Gartner as a global leader in cybersecurity services for 15 years. In Nigeria, Deloitte has contributed to national cybersecurity strategy and policy development and received recognition from key government institutions. Its cyber team has also represented Africa in the global Cyberlympics, while several professionals have earned national and industry recognition for contributions to cybersecurity, privacy and data protection.

Yet, despite increasing awareness, significant compliance gaps remain across the Nigerian business environment. One of the most common is the gap between awareness and implementation. Employees may understand that privacy matters, but often lack the practical, role specific knowledge required to apply privacy principles to everyday decisions.

Another challenge is visibility across the data lifecycle. Organisations may struggle to identify what personal information they hold, where it is stored, how it moves across departments and systems, who has access to it and how long it is retained. The growing use of cloud services, third party providers and cross border processing creates additional regulatory and operational risks.

Deloitte addresses these challenges through a combination of people, process and technology interventions. It helps organisations improve visibility across their data environments, strengthen governance and accountability, enhance third party oversight and evaluate data sovereignty and regulatory exposures.

The threat environment is also changing. Cyberattacks remain a major risk to personal information in Nigeria, with phishing, stolen credentials, identity theft and social engineering continuing to expose organisations and individuals. Artificial intelligence is making these attacks more sophisticated by enabling criminals to produce more convincing and personalised messages at scale.

Employees and external service providers also represent important risk points, particularly where they have access to large volumes of personal information. A weakness within any part of the data chain can expose the organisation and the people whose information it holds.

The rapid adoption of AI presents another emerging concern. Organisations are increasingly using AI tools without fully understanding what personal information employees may enter into those systems, where such information is stored or how it may subsequently be processed. For Deloitte, AI itself is not the problem. The greater concern arises when adoption moves faster than the governance, privacy and security controls required to manage it responsibly.

The response therefore requires more than sophisticated technology. Organisations need clear privacy policies, continuous employee education, strong oversight of service providers and responsible AI governance. They must understand their data environment and establish clear controls around access, storage, processing and use.

Looking ahead, Deloitte &Touche Nigeria's strategic priorities remain anchored in its purpose of making an impact that matters for clients, employees and society. Over the next three to five years, the firm plans to deepen client relationships, deliver distinctive services and help organisations create sustainable value.

It will continue strengthening its position as a trusted voice in the market through research, insights and contributions to important business and policy conversations. Investment in people and emerging capabilities will also remain central, particularly in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and technology transformation.

For existing and prospective clients, Deloitte's message is centred on partnership. Organisations increasingly need advisers who understand that data protection affects reputation, customer confidence, regulatory standing and long-term business performance.

Deloitte &Touche Nigeria brings together global experience, local understanding and practical expertise to help organisations protect the personal information entrusted to them. Through stronger governance, effective privacy programmes, cybersecurity capabilities and responsible technology adoption, the firm seeks to help businesses meet their obligations while creating an environment where data can be used responsibly and strategically.

In an economy where trust increasingly influences how customers, employees, investors and business partners engage with organisations, Deloitte's data protection practice represents an important part of its wider commitment to helping businesses manage risk, respond to technological change and build lasting digital trust.



Deloitte.

Yomi Olugbenro,
Chief Executive Officer,
Deloitte &Touche, Nigeria

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON NIGERIAN'S 10 LEADING AND MOST RELIABLE DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE FIRMS CHAMPIONING PRIVACY, COMPLIANCE AND DIGITAL TRUST

Tech Hive Advisory: Deji Sarumi's Vision for Building Digital Trust Through Privacy, Technology and Regulatory Intelligence

As organisations across Africa accelerate their adoption of digital technologies, the need for responsible data management, strong governance and regulatory preparedness has become increasingly important. At the intersection of technology, law and corporate governance, DejiSarumi has built a career focused on helping organisations navigate this complex environment.

A Partner and Co-founder of Tech Hive Advisory Africa, Sarumi directs the firm's strategy and implementation, bringing extensive expertise in data protection, privacy, information technology and regulatory intelligence. A certified information privacy professional, he has advised organisations across Africa and Europe on privacy and data protection compliance, developed corporate privacy programmes, conducted training and helped businesses establish governance systems capable of responding to changing regulatory expectations.

His professional experience spans financial institutions, health technology companies, telemedicine platforms and other technology driven organisations. Rather than treating compliance as a one-time exercise, Sarumi advocates continuous monitoring, testing and improvement. His approach is designed to ensure that privacy frameworks work in practice and remain aligned with business objectives and international standards.

His influence extends into policy and legislative development. Sarumi has contributed to several important technology and regulatory initiatives, including the Nigerian Startup Act, Data Protection Bill, Digital Rights and Freedom Bill and Electronic Transaction Bill. He also contributed to the ECOWAS draft Supplementary Data Protection Act, reflecting his longstanding interest in building regulatory systems that support responsible digital growth across Africa.

His advisory experience also covers high value equity investments, debt issuances and market infrastructure projects. As a thought leader, he regularly writes on emerging issues including intellectual property in the era of generative artificial intelligence, cross border data flows and African startup regulation. He has facilitated data protection training for Qatar government officials and spoken at major platforms including the Africa Tech Summit in Kigali, the UNDP Timbuktoo Fintech Accelerator and the NBA SBL Business Law series. His contribution to legal and technology innovation earned him the Practitioners Award at the Africa Legal Innovation Awards in 2021.

These experiences have shaped the philosophy behind Tech Hive Advisory Limited. The firm was established in response to the growing influence of technology on business, law and society. Sarumi and his partners identified a significant gap in the market. While technology adoption was accelerating, many organisations lacked a strategic partner capable of connecting technical implementation with data protection, regulatory compliance, technology policy and corporate governance.
Tech Hive therefore set out to empower organisations to innovate responsibly while building strong digital trust frameworks. Its ambition is to become Africa's premier advisory firm at the intersection of technology, law and corporate governance.

From its early years, the firm has focused on practical challenges within Nigeria's data protection environment. One major priority has been helping organisations move from check box compliance to sustainable privacy programmes. Tech Hive has supported more than 100 organisations in developing enterprise-wide privacy structures rather than limiting compliance to annual filings.

The firm also helps businesses navigate cross border data transfers, conflicting regulatory requirements and multi-jurisdictional obligations. Through regulatory intelligence and policy advisory, it helps organisations understand legislative developments and prepare for their commercial implications.

Its services cover data protection advisory, compliance audits, privacy programme development, DPO as a Service, Compliance as a Service and cybersecurity. Its security teams conduct configuration reviews, application penetration testing and infrastructure assessments while helping clients align with standards including ISO 27001, ISO 27701 and ISO 9001.

Artificial intelligence governance has also become a significant area of practice. Tech Hive conducts AI impact assessments, algorithmic vulnerability testing and pre-launch assessments for risks such as prompt injection and personal information leakage. It also develops responsible AI policies and governance frameworks.

A major differentiator for the firm is its emphasis on technology enabled compliance. Its proprietary SaaS platform, Ulinzi, automates important compliance workflows including vendor risk management, Records of Processing Activities mapping, policy generation and Data Subject Rights Requests. The platform currently supports compliance processes across Africa and the Gulf Cooperation Council region.

The depth of the firm's expertise is reflected in its team, which includes five Fellows of Information Privacy and more than ten certified specialists. Members of the team have contributed to national regulatory frameworks, supported capacity building for data protection authorities and participated in international discussions shaping the future of privacy and AI governance.

Research is another important pillar. Tech Hive has produced more than 50 publications and research reports, including its annual Roundup on Data Protection in Africa since 2020 and annual data protection predictions since 2019. Its research has covered digital lending, tracking technologies, the internet of bodies, deceptive design and AI regulation in Africa.

The company has also developed initiatives such as Privacy Lens Africa, Privacy Guide Africa, the Legal Basis Project, UlinziQuest and the AI Risk Library. These platforms translate complex regulatory requirements into practical tools and accessible resources. Its Privacy Bar and Bants and Brew the Basis initiatives further extend the conversation through audio content reaching audiences in more than 50 countries.

The firm's achievements have attracted significant recognition. It was recognised as Most Outstanding Data Protection Compliance Organisation in 2025 by the Nigeria Data Protection Commission, with the recognition presented in February 2026. It also received the Lexology Client Choice Award in the Data category in 2026. Tech Hive has been recommended for AI Regulatory and Compliance in the Lexology Index in 2025 and 2026 and was named Country Leader for Data in 2023 and 2024. It also received the African Corporate Counsel Forum Community Award in 2025.

Yet, for Sarumi, the work remains centred on practical problems faced by organisations. Common gaps include poor data mapping, weak third-party management, policies that exist without implementation, inadequate management support, untested incident response plans and insufficient employee awareness. The growing problem of shadow AI, where employees use artificial intelligence tools without proper assessment of privacy and security risks, has added another layer of concern.

Tech Hive responds by combining regulatory knowledge, business understanding and technical expertise. Its approach involves implementation, employee training, risk assessments, control testing and continuous improvement. Sarumi believes organisations must understand where personal data moves, who has access to it, how vendors handle it and what happens when an incident occurs.

TECH HIVE ADVISORY

He also advocates defence in depth. Organisations should establish clear data handling policies, provide role specific privacy and security training, enforce multi factor authentication, apply least privilege access, encrypt sensitive information and conduct regular risk assessments. Incident response plans should also be tested through simulations so that organisations can act quickly when breaches occur.

Looking ahead, Tech Hive plans to strengthen its presence across East, West and Southern Africa and the GCC region, building on existing work in Kenya, Rwanda, Gambia, Qatar, the European Union and the United States. The firm also intends to scale Ulinzi, making automated compliance, RoPA mapping and vendor oversight more accessible to businesses of different sizes.
Emerging technology governance will remain another priority, with increased focus on audits, risk assessments, threat modelling and pre-launch vulnerability testing.

For Sarumi, compliance should not be viewed as an obstacle to innovation. He sees responsible data management as a foundation for digital trust and sustainable business growth. As artificial intelligence adoption and cross border digital commerce continue to expand, organisations will need privacy programmes that are practical, adaptable and commercially relevant.

Through Tech Hive Advisory, Sarumi is positioning privacy and regulatory compliance as strategic business functions rather than administrative obligations. His work reflects a broader commitment to helping African organisations innovate responsibly, protect personal information and build the trust required to compete in an increasingly connected economy.



Deji Sarumi,
Partner/co-founder,
Tech Hive Advisory Africa

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON LEADING AND MOST RELIABLE DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE FIRMS CHAMPIONING DIGITAL TRUST IN NIGERIA

WHERE DOES DIGITAL TRUST LIVE?
Galaxy Backbone: Building Secure Infrastructure for a Connected, Sovereign and Digital Nigeria

IN Today's digital world, trust has become one of the most valuable assets an organisation can possess. Every transaction depends on it. Every digital service requires it. Every organisation that collects, processes, stores or manages data must earn it. But as Nigeria's digital economy continues to grow, an important question becomes increasingly relevant: Who can organisations trust with their most critical digital assets?

For nearly two decades, Galaxy Backbone Limited (GBB) has been quietly building an answer. As the Federal Government's strategic digital infrastructure and shared services provider, Galaxy Backbone has continued to build and operate the infrastructure, systems, capabilities and standards required to support a secure, connected and increasingly digital Nigeria.

Today, GBB stands at the intersection of digital infrastructure, data sovereignty, cybersecurity, privacy, resilience and national development, providing trusted platforms upon which government institutions, businesses and organisations can build their digital future.

DATA PROTECTION IS MORE THAN COMPLIANCE. IT IS ABOUT TRUST.

At Galaxy Backbone, data protection is not viewed merely as a regulatory obligation. It is a fundamental pillar of digital trust, well embedded in its Integrated Digital Transformation Strategy (IDTS) 2025 to 2028 document. So, in an era where organisations hold increasing volumes of sensitive information, protecting data means protecting people, institutions, businesses and national interests.

This philosophy continues to shape the way Galaxy Backbone designs its infrastructure, develops its services and manages its operations. Through a combination of strong governance, robust technical safeguards, internationally recognised standards and continuous human capacity development, GBB is building an environment where organisations can confidently host, manage and protect their critical digital assets.

From the earliest stages of service development, privacy and data protection considerations are embedded into GBB's operational processes. Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) and appropriate privacy safeguards help ensure that potential risks are identified and addressed as new cloud services, software deployments and digital solutions are developed. This is because in the digital economy, security cannot be an afterthought. Trust must be built into the system from the beginning.

A HOME FOR NIGERIA'S CRITICAL DIGITAL ASSETS

Data is increasingly becoming one of the world's most valuable resources. For governments, it supports better decision-making and improved public services; For businesses, it drives innovation, competitiveness and growth; For individuals, it represents identity, privacy and personal security. This is why where data is hosted and how it is protected, matters.

Galaxy Backbone provides secure national infrastructure for hosting and managing critical digital assets, supporting Nigeria's growing need for data sovereignty, security and resilience. At the heart of this capability are GBB's world-class data centres, including the Tier III National Shared Services Centre (NSSC) in Abuja and the Tier IV Data Centre in Kano. Galaxy Backbone is uniquely positioned as the only public sector organisation in Nigeria operating both Uptime Institute-certified Tier III and Tier IV data centre infrastructure, providing secure and resilient environments for organisations seeking reliable hosting, cloud and co-location services.

These facilities provide organisations with the confidence that their critical infrastructure and digital assets are hosted within secure environments designed around resilience, availability, business continuity and internationally recognised standards because your data deserves more than storage. It deserves protection, resilience and trust.

SECURITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS

In a world of constantly evolving cyber threats, security is not a one-time investment. It is a continuous responsibility. Galaxy Backbone's security capabilities include a 24/7 Security Operations Centre (SOC) and advanced monitoring and incident detection capabilities designed to provide continuous visibility across critical infrastructure and networks.

Through security monitoring, event management and incident response mechanisms, GBB strengthens its ability to identify potential threats, respond to incidents and support the protection of critical digital infrastructure and assets. Across its national digital infrastructure, GBB continues to deploy robust security controls, including appropriate encryption, access management and logical separation mechanisms to help safeguard data and digital services.

This commitment reflects a simple but powerful principle: Digital transformation without security is not transformation, it is exposure.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE. PROTECTING TRUST.

Galaxy Backbone's role extends far beyond the walls of its data centres. Through its expanding national fibre infrastructure and digital backbone, that spans across 28 states of the federation and over 5000 kilometers of fibre, GBB is helping to connect government institutions and strengthen the foundations upon which Nigeria's digital future is being built.

As organisations become increasingly dependent on connectivity, cloud computing, data and digital platforms, the need for secure and resilient national infrastructure has never been greater. GBB continues to invest in infrastructure that supports this national ambition, connecting institutions, enabling digital services and creating platforms that can support the next phase of Nigeria's digital transformation. But infrastructure alone is not enough. The infrastructure must be governed properly. It must be secure and it must be resilient and finally, it must operate according to standards that inspire confidence.

GLOBAL STANDARDS. NIGERIAN CONFIDENCE.

GBB's commitment to excellence is reinforced through its Integrated Management System and alignment with internationally recognised standards and frameworks. These include key certifications and standards covering: Information Security (ISO27001). Business Continuity (ISO 22301), Service Management Systems (ISO 20000) Service Quality and Excellence, (ISO 9001) and Payment Card Industry Data Security (PCI DSS)

The organisation's continuous commitment to these standards demonstrates a deliberate approach to building an organisation that can compete and operate at world-class levels. These certifications are not simply credentials. They represent a commitment to quality, service excellence, business resilience and information security. They demonstrate that a Nigerian organisation can build, manage and sustain critical digital infrastructure according to globally recognised standards.

CHAMPIONING PRIVACY AND COMPLIANCE

As Nigeria's digital ecosystem continues to expand, the importance of responsible data governance continues to grow, Galaxy Backbone plays an important role in supporting this ecosystem. As a major provider of ICT and cloud infrastructure, GBB supports the hosting and processing of critical public sector systems and digital services while also maintaining its responsibilities for the protection and responsible management of data within its operations.

GBB is also licensed as a Data Protection Compliance Organisation (DPCO), enabling it to support organisations with data protection compliance, awareness, capacity development and other relevant privacy and governance services. Through targeted professional development, GBB continues to strengthen its internal capacity with professionals equipped with specialised expertise in data protection, privacy governance, risk assessment and compliance.

The organisation also supports broader awareness and capacity development across institutions, helping to deepen Nigeria's culture of responsible data management, because the future of Nigeria's digital economy will not be built on technology alone. It will be built on responsible technology. Technology that protects privacy. Technology that safeguards institutions. Technology that earns public confidence.

DATA SOVEREIGNTY IS A NATIONAL IMPERATIVE

As more organisations move their operations into the cloud, questions around data sovereignty are becoming increasingly important. Where is your data? Who manages it? What standards protect it? And how resilient is the infrastructure supporting it? Galaxy Backbone believes Nigeria must continue to strengthen its capacity to host, manage and protect critical digital assets within secure national infrastructure. By providing trusted data centre, cloud and digital infrastructure capabilities, GBB is helping organisations maintain greater confidence in the security, resilience and governance of their digital assets. For public sector institutions, financial institutions and private-sector organisations, this presents an important opportunity: World-class infrastructure. Built for Nigeria. Available to organisations that are building the future.

LEADERSHIP WITH A CLEAR VISION

Under the leadership of its Managing Director/CEO, Professor Ibrahim Adeyanju, Galaxy Backbone continues its deliberate transformation into a stronger, more resilient and globally competitive digital infrastructure organisation. The vision is clear: To build an institution that is trusted. An organisation that operates according to world-class standards. An organisation that provides exceptional value. And an organisation capable of playing a defining role in Nigeria's digital and economic transformation.

This commitment has continued to drive investments in infrastructure, people, processes, governance, service excellence and international standards. For the leadership of Galaxy Backbone, reputation is not built through words alone. It is built through infrastructure that works. Through services that can be trusted. Through standards that are maintained. Through people who understand the responsibility of protecting critical digital assets and through an unwavering commitment to delivering greater value to Nigeria.

YOUR DIGITAL FUTURE DESERVES A TRUSTED PARTNER

For organisations navigating an increasingly complex digital environment, choosing where and how to host critical systems and data is no longer simply an IT decision. It is a business decision. A security decision. A resilience decision and ultimately, a trust decision.

Whether you are a government institution seeking secure shared infrastructure, a financial institution requiring resilient hosting capabilities, or a private-sector organisation looking for a trusted environment for your critical digital assets, Galaxy Backbone provides the infrastructure and expertise to support your digital journey.

With world-class data centre capabilities, national digital infrastructure, cybersecurity operations, cloud services and a deep commitment to privacy and international standards, GBB continues to position itself as a trusted partner for organisations that understand the value of secure and resilient digital infrastructure.

THE FUTURE IS DIGITAL. THE FUTURE MUST ALSO BE SECURE.

And as Nigeria continues its journey towards a more connected, innovative and digitally enabled economy, Galaxy Backbone remains committed to one enduring purpose: To provide the trusted digital infrastructure upon which Nigeria can build securely, resiliently and with confidence.



Ikeyi Shittu & Co.: Advancing Practical Data Protection Through Law, Ethics and Digital Trust

In an increasingly data driven business environment, organisations are under growing pressure to protect personal information while using data responsibly to support business decisions. For Ikeyi Shittu & Co., this responsibility sits at the intersection of law, business objectives and professional ethics, an approach that has earned the firm recognition as one of Nigeria's 10 Leading and Most Reliable Data Protection Compliance Firms Championing Privacy, Compliance and Digital Trust.



IKEYI SHITTU & Co.
Barristers and Solicitors

Established in April 2005, Ikeyi Shittu & Co. has built its practice around a clear mission, to deploy the law in the service of clients in a manner that enables them to lawfully achieve their business objectives. At the heart of this mission is a strong emphasis on ethics and a practical understanding of the realities businesses face.

Speaking on the recognition, Josephine Tite-Onnoghen, a Senior Associate in the firm, explained that Ikeyi Shittu & Co.'s approach to data protection is founded on helping organisations balance their legitimate need to use personal data with individuals' right to privacy under the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA).

The firm supports businesses in developing and implementing personal data processing governance frameworks and monitoring those frameworks to ensure they remain effective. Its approach goes beyond adopting standard templates. It requires a thorough understanding of Nigerian data protection law and practice, a clear appreciation of each client's circumstances and the ability to develop governance instruments and processes suited to those realities.

As a licensed Data Protection Compliance Organisation, Ikeyi Shittu & Co. provides a broad range of services to local and international clients. These include general advice on applicable data protection laws and compliance requirements in Nigeria, drafting data privacy governance instruments, establishing internal privacy governance, enlightenment and accountability frameworks, registration of data controllers and processors with the Nigeria Data Protection Commission, development and implementation of compliance schedules, data compliance audits and Data Privacy Impact Assessments.

The firm also provides Data Protection Officer services, supporting organisations that require professional guidance in managing their privacy responsibilities and maintaining appropriate compliance structures.

What distinguishes Ikeyi Shittu & Co. is its cultureof understanding the client before providing legal advice or compliance support. Rather than simply reciting provisions of the law or issuing generic recommendations, the firm considers the client's business, operating environment and peculiar circumstances. It also seeks to understand the underlying reasons and philosophy behind legal requirements, enabling it to develop solutions that meet regulatory expectations without losing sight of commercial objectives.

This client centred approach has helped the firm build lasting confidence among its clients. According to Tite-Onnoghen, one of the firm's significant achievements since its establishment has been the continued trust clients have placed in its advice and support, with that confidence growing over the years.

Despite increasing awareness of data protection, the firm identifies a significant compliance gap among Nigerian organisations. Some businesses understand that they process personal data and recognise their obligations under the NDPA, while others either assume they are not subject to the law or remain unaware that their activities involve the processing of personal data.

Ikeyi Shittu & Co. addresses this awareness gap through newsletters and regulatory updates published on its website, providing organisations with information on developments in data protection and the importance of complying with applicable requirements.

The firm identified risks that can easily be overlooked in everyday business operations. One ofsuch risk is the continued use of manual files and paper records containing personal information. Even organisations with digital information management systems may still collect personal data manually before transferring it into electronic systems. A common example is the traditional visitors' register found in many offices, where visitors provide names, telephone numbers and addresses. Such registers may be kept in unsecured locations, leaving personal information inadvertently exposed to members of the public.Cyber attacks represent another significant threat, particularly for small businesses that may lack the resources to deploy robust digital defence systems. These risks reinforce the need for organisations to view privacy and security as ongoing responsibilities rather than isolated compliance exercises.

Looking ahead, Ikeyi Shittu & Co. plans to deepen its knowledge of data protection law, particularly in areas where legal interpretation remains uncertain. The firm intends to apply this knowledge to the benefit of clients while contributing, where appropriate, to the development of the law in ways that balance competing interests. It will also continue its efforts to create greater awareness about data privacy.

TheGuardian SPECIAL FOCUS ON NIGERIAN'S 10 LEADING AND MOST RELIABLE DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE FIRMS CHAMPIONING PRIVACY, COMPLIANCE AND DIGITAL TRUST

ACCUVICE SOLUTIONS LIMITED: BUILDING DIGITAL TRUST AT SCALE

Nigeria's digital economy is creating new opportunities for businesses and citizens, but the growing use of personal data also brings greater responsibility. Banks, fintechs, hospitals, professional services firms, manufacturers and technology companies increasingly depend on data to deliver services and make decisions. For Accuvice Solutions Limited, the challenge is helping organisations use that data responsibly while turning regulatory obligations into practical systems that can withstand scrutiny.

Founded by Kamoru Emmanuel Umoru, Accuvice is a Nigerian privacy, data governance, information security and responsible artificial intelligence consultancy focused on making compliance practical, measurable and sustainable. As Founder and Chief Technology Officer, Umoru has more than six years of experience helping organisations translate complex regulatory requirements into governance structures, technology controls and sustainable compliance programmes.



He holds an MSc in Applied Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics, with Distinction, from the University of Bradford, an MBA in Management Information Systems from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology and a BSc in Accounting from the University of Lagos. He is an Associate Chartered Accountant of ICAN and holds professional credentials covering data protection, GDPR training, ISO 27001, ISO 27032, ISO 42001 and OneTrust privacy management. He is also a member of the International Association of Privacy Professionals.

His work spans banking, fintech, investment, legal and professional services, media, engineering, manufacturing and internet services. He has led engagements covering data protection audits, privacy governance frameworks, Records of Processing Activities, data mapping, Data Protection Impact Assessments, retention programmes, vendor assurance, cross border transfers, data subject rights, breach management and executive training.

Umoru has also developed risk-based gap assessments, regulatory traceability tools, compliance dashboards, risk heat maps and prioritised remediation plans. Selected engagements under his leadership have recorded post remediation compliance outcomes of between 96 and 100 per cent. He has supported organisations responding to regulatory investigations and data breach concerns by coordinating evidence, response strategies and corrective actions.

This practical approach is central to Accuvice's work as a licensed Data Protection Compliance Organisation helping businesses interpret and implement the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, the General Application and Implementation Directive 2025 and other relevant frameworks. Its approach begins with understanding how personal data moves through an organisation, from collection and storage to access, third party sharing, retention and deletion. The firm then uses this evidence to develop practical interventions through audits, gap assessments, DPIAs, outsourced Data Protection Officer services, policy development, remediation, third party risk reviews, training and awareness programmes.

Its wider practice connects privacy with information security, cybersecurity, business continuity, cloud security and IT service management, including support for standards such as ISO 27001 and ISO 22301. This integrated approach reflects Accuvice's belief that effective privacy governance depends on the interaction of people, processes, technology and operational resilience.

Technology is central to that vision, as CTO, Umoru led the development and launch of Accuvice's AI powered compliance platform, designed to reduce dependence on fragmented spreadsheets, email chains and manual follow up. The platform provides a shared environment for assessments, evidence, remediation and reporting, supporting workflows including compliance audits, DPIAs, Legitimate Interest Assessments, DPO reviews, AI governance assessments, vendor risk management and remediation tracking.

Its dashboards give authorised teams and reviewers visibility into responsibilities and progress, while AI assisted guidance helps users navigate complex requirements. Human experts remain responsible for interpretation, professional judgement and assurance, ensuring that automation supports accountability rather than replacing it. Accuvice applies this model through its four-stage approach of Evaluate, Intervene, Scale and Monitor, allowing organisations to identify risks, introduce appropriate controls, extend effective systems and track improvement continuously.

accuvice SOLUTIONS LIMITED

The company reports that more than 100 organisations across Nigeria use its platform, with client feedback spanning financial services, insurance, engineering, education and consumer goods. Organisations including Capival Investment Limited, Skydd Insurance Brokers Limited, Moniepoint Microfinance Bank Limited, AIM Consultants Limited, Edubanc Financial Services Limited and Wazobia Beauty and Cosmetics Limited have highlighted outcomes such as clearer remediation priorities, stronger vendor governance, improved documentation, more actionable impact assessments and better staff understanding of privacy responsibilities.

Accuvice also places emphasis on developing people. Through professional training, executive awareness and public education across its digital platforms, the firm simplifies regulatory issues and provides practical guidance on lawful processing, purpose limitation, breach readiness, privacy champions, regulatory filings and continuous compliance. The objective is to ensure that privacy is understood across an organisation rather than left solely to compliance teams.

Responsible artificial intelligence forms another growing area of its practice. Accuvice assesses privacy, fairness, explainability, security, human oversight and bias across the AI lifecycle, from data selection and system design to deployment and monitoring. This enables organisations to identify risks early and introduce safeguards before AI systems affect customers, employees or other stakeholders.

TheGuardian SPECIAL FOCUS ON NIGERIAN'S 10 LEADING AND MOST RELIABLE DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE FIRMS CHAMPIONING PRIVACY, COMPLIANCE AND DIGITAL TRUST

GUUT Technologies Limited: Safeguarding Africa's Digital Future, One Enterprise at a Time



Bamgbose Oluwagbenga Iyanda, Founder/Chief Consultant, GUUT Technologies Limited

As African businesses accelerate their adoption of digital technologies, the need for stronger cybersecurity, data protection, risk management and technology governance has become increasingly important. At the centre of this transformation is GUUT Technologies Limited, a Nigerian technology company building secure, resilient and compliant digital systems for organisations across Africa and beyond.

Founded in 2009 and incorporated in December of the same year under RC-860407, GUUT began as an IT consultancy and has grown into a full spectrum technology partner with expertise spanning cybersecurity, data protection, governance, risk management, business continuity, artificial intelligence and enterprise technology. Headquartered in Abuja Nigeria, with strategic operations extending to Lagos, the United States, United Kingdom, Kenya, Malawi Rwanda and Uganda. The company has developed a growing international footprint while maintaining a strong understanding of the African business environment.

Mr.BamgboseOluwagbengaIyanda, Chief Executive Officer, a Computer Science graduate of Olabisi Onabanjo University. Bamgbose holds an Executive MBA in Information Systems alongside specialised qualifications in meteorology, photovoltaic technologies and ICT. He is internationally certified across ISO 27001, ISO 27701, ISO 42001, ISO 31000, business continuity, IT service management, incident response, AI governance and many more. His experience cuts across, aviation, banking, telecommunications, power, judiciary and public sector engagements which has given GUUT a multidisciplinary foundation for solving complex technology and risk challenges.

Institutions such as the Nigerian Stock Exchange, Jaiz Bank, GTBank, fintech companies and Huawei have engaged GUUT for technology, cybersecurity, risk and compliance related services. The company has also delivered strategic capacity building on cyber security and AI for board members of TAJ Bank. As a licensed Data Protection Compliance Organisation, GUUT has successfully implemented Data Protection Regulation for educational institutions such as Mountain Top University and Modibbo Adamawa University.

Its reputation has been further strengthened by positive client feedback. The former Chief Risk Officer of the Nigerian Stock Exchange commended GUUT's timely training and contribution to enhance risk management, while Heritage Bank's Division Head of Enterprise Risk Management praised its thorough audits and post audit follow-up. Jaiz Bank also recognised its IT service management training as an excellent experience.

Cybersecurity remains a key focus of GUUT's operations, with services spanning across penetration testing, vulnerability assessments, cybersecurity architecture, security audits. Its Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC) practice supports organisations in implementing internationally recognised standards, including ISO 9001, 27001, 27701, 22301, 31000, 20000, and 21001, as well as applicable GDPR requirements.

Among its successfully implemented projects, GUUT delivered the ISO 21001 Educational Management Systems (EOMS) for the Office of Education Quality Assurance (OEQA) Lagos, which became the first to be certified in Sub-Saharan Africa. The company also implemented ISO 9001 Quality Management System (QMS) for the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), further demonstrating its expertise in strengthening institutional quality and operational standards.

AI governance and risk management are emerging areas of focus, with GUUT supporting organizations in understanding AI related risks and establishing responsible governance structures. The company has also delivered AI governance and risk management engagements for banking professionals across East and West Africa.

GUUT's global reach is further enhanced by strategic partnership in Kenya and Rwanda, including business integration partnerships with Fortinet and Huawei, as well as collaborations with (PECB) in Canada and TRECERT in Germany. In addition, the firm collaborated with the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) in driving ISO 27001 ISMS and ISO 27701 PIMS and also have strategic partnership with the Joint Revenue Board (JRB) in delivering ISO 27001 ISMS, ISO 22701 PIMS and ISO 9001 QMS.

Beyond technology, GUUT places strong emphasis on people and institutional capability. Its team combines certified professionals with practical expertise, providing solutions that integrate technology, governance, people and processes. The leadership team includes Bamgbose alongside Professional Directors Prof. Kwon Heechoon of South Korea and Dr. Prakash Rajput of Indian, whose expertise span innovation and managed security solutions.

As Africa's digital economy continues to expand across fintech, e-commerce, digital government and technology-driven businesses, GUUT Technology Limited is positioned to support organizations in building stronger digital resilience. Through its specialised expertise, international partnerships and commitment to continuous support, the company helps African enterprises protect information, manage risks, meet global standards and optimise enterprise value.

For GUUT Technologies, securing Africa's digital future is more than an ambition; it's a practical responsibility. Through technology, governance, cybersecurity and human capacity development, the company continues to help organisations build secure, resilient systems equipped to support sustainable growth.

Adefunke Embraces New Name, ADESEWA, Marks Four Years Of Leading AFCAC

By Suliyat Tella

THE Secretary-General of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), AdeSewa Adeyemi (formerly known as Adefunke Adeyemi) has embraced her new name as she marks four years in office, describing it as a reflection of her personal evolution and the broader dimensions of her identity, work and growth.

AdeSewa introduced the name in a personal statement reflecting on her journey, experiences and leadership that have shaped her beyond her role in African aviation.

"AdeSewa represents a version of me that feels more aligned with who I am today. We are constantly evolving through experience, growth and the different seasons of life. Sometimes, we arrive at a point where we recognise a version of ourselves that feels more true, more intentional and more aligned," she said.

The announcement comes as she marks her fourth year as Secretary-General of AFCAC, a position she assumed in September 2022 and was subsequently reappointed for a further three-year term.

At AFCAC, AdeSewa has led the Commission's work across aviation safety, security, connectivity and environmental sustainability, as well as the implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) across the African Union's 55 Member States.

Her leadership at AFCAC builds on more than 25 years of experience across aviation, law, trade, transportation, sustainability and international development. Before taking on the role, she held senior regional leadership positions at the International Air Transport Association (IATA), where she championed African connectivity and aviation policy.

Her career has included significant contributions to the advancement of SAATM, advocacy efforts that contributed to unlocking more than $2 billion in blocked airline funds in specific African markets, and COVID-19 industry advocacy that supported approximately $3 billion in financial relief and policy measures for African aviation.

Beyond aviation, AdeSewa has continued to build a body of work shaped by her interests in leadership, social impact and legacy.

She authored Singular - Living your best life, a book that explores identity, purpose, leadership and the journey of becoming, with a sequel currently underway. She is also co-founder and Board of Trustees Member of Female Initiatives for Impact (FIFI), an initiative focused on empowering women, advancing opportunities and driving meaningful social impact.

Through Africa 54/7, she has also created a platform to amplify African stories, ideas, opportunities and possibilities.

These different pursuits reflect a broader dimension of her work: a commitment to creating, building and contributing beyond the immediate demands of a professional role.

"I have always been drawn to creating and building. Whether it is an institution, an idea, a platform or an opportunity for others, I want the work to transcend the immediate moment and carry lasting meaning. Increasingly, I think about what we create, what we leave behind, and what has the power to outlive us," she added.

As she begins this next chapter, AdeSewa says her focus is not on leaving behind the work she has done, but on creating space for more of it.

"There is still so much I want to do, create and contribute. I want to continue building things that matter, nurturing people, creating opportunities and using every platform available to me to make a meaningful difference," she said.

For her, embracing AdeSewa is a celebration of the beauty in continuity and a new expression of an evolving story. It honours the experiences that have shaped her while making room for the possibilities that lie ahead.



AdeSewa

Spotlight

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No Sacred Cows: Inside EFCC's 34-month War On Corruption, Cybercrime

From **Bridget Chiedu Onochie,** Abuja

ON assumption of office three years ago, the Executive Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Olanipekun Olukoyede, promised to do things differently, assuring Nigerians of his readiness to fight financial crimes and other acts of fraud without fear or favour.

About 34 months after, he was elated that although more works are still ongoing, he has, nevertheless, kept the agenda of proper focusing on the commission's mandate in the interests of Nigerians.

This commitment, he said, has culminated in the recovery of a staggering sum of N1.233 trillion proceeds of fraud and other criminal activities.

Noting that assets recovery has been one of the major pillars of his stewardship, Olukoyede put other figures recovered between October 1, 2023, and June 30 this year at $684.478,457.32, £373,905.78, €9,343,803.66, in addition to recoveries in other currencies.

He made the revelation at a media forum to present his stewardship early in the week. The EFCC head told Nigerians that he took the appointment with a clear commitment and that through sustained enforcement, institutional reforms and stronger collaboration with partners within and outside the country, the commission under his watch, has consistently been on the path of progress.

Olukoyede revealed that the inroads achieved have helped in stimulating growth in the economy and have gradually helped to rebuild the image of the country while optimizing foreign direct investments.

"Today, I want to place before Nigerians the measurable outcomes of that work, what those outcomes mean for our economy and financial system, and the direction in which the Commission is moving."

He disclosed that between October 2023 and July this year, the Commission received 49,673 petitions, investigated 39,615 cases, filed 14,476 cases in court and secured 10,872 convictions, bringing a conviction-to-filing ratio to 75.1 per cent. In the first quarter of this year, the EFCC boss said the commission recorded 1,370 convictions, indicating frightening spike in criminal activities across the country.

"These results reflect diligence, resilience and a prosecutorial approach anchored on evidence and courtroom outcomes", he added.

More frightening, however, is the disclosure of a shifting trends in financial crimes. According to the Commission, the number of petitions and case analysis indicated an increase in Advance Fee Fraud popularly known as 419 as well as cybercrime, both of which he said, represented two-third of all recorded offenses.

He said: "Our 2024 to 2026 year-to-date category data recorded 46,288 offences across nine major typologies. Advance fee fraud and cybercrime together, represented nearly two-thirds of recorded offences.

"However, between 2024 and 2025, total recorded offences rose by 24.1 per cent, with notable increases in procurement fraud, bank fraud, cybercrime and economic-governance offences."

According to the E.C, the statistics implies that the fight against economic and financial crime is not only about grand corruption but include majorly, cyber enabled crimes.

He expressed worries that a financial institution can be brought down in a minute by cyber criminals if drastic measures are not taken to address the trend.

"Every day, we are protecting citizens, businesses and institutions from fraud, cyber-enabled crime and other forms of economic exploitation.

In what he termed, 'Accountability without status exception', the chairman boasted that the days of sacred cows were over in the country as the commission continues to pursue complex and high-profile matters without regard to status.

These he stated, include ex-governors, ministers and other public office holders, heads of agencies, financial-sector operators and corporate officials.

Recently, the commission secured convictions of some high-profile Nigerians, including former Minister of Power, Saleh Mamman, who was handed 75 years jail term over N33.8 million fraud; former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM), Robert Orya, who was jailed 490 years over N2.4 billion fraud and former Acting Accountant General, Chukwunyere Nwabuoku, jailed 72 years for money laundering.

"The principle is simple – no office or title places anyone beyond the reach of the law. We will continue to investigate professionally, prosecute on the strength of evidence and allow the courts to determine guilt or innocence."

Moreso, the commission said it recorded 920 cases with 212 convictions secured on crimes involving money laundering, unlicensed Bureaux de Change, illegal mining, virtual assets and terrorist financing, with money laundering and unlicensed Bureau de Change cases accounting for the largest share of the portfolio.

Also, while approximately N397.26billion (33 per cent) of the naira recovery represented direct recoveries for the federal government, the sum of N836.34billion being 67 per cent of the amount, represented indirect recoveries made on behalf of ministries, departments and agencies, state revenue services, companies, individuals and foreign victims.

Olukoyede however believed that recovery can only truly meaningful when it is not re-looted but used to fund critical sectors of the economy or to rightful beneficiaries.

For instance, the EFCC head informed that in August 2024, the federal government directed that N50 billion each be allocated to the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) and Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation from proceeds of crime recovered by the EFCC.

"Further NELFUND and Credit Corp funding from EFCC recoveries (50Billion Naira each) was subsequently approved in 2026.

A recovered property, NOK University was converted to a Federal University of Applied Sciences, Kachia, Kaduna State, where a total of 1,909 students matriculated in December 2025.

"These are students, who ordinarily would not have been afforded the opportunity of tertiary education. We can also imagine the impact of the institution on the local economy of Southern Kaduna. In addition, another Private university of High-Value has just been finally forfeited to the Federal Government."

Also, the sum of N661.32 billion and $492.37 million were released to beneficiaries, including about N325.35 billion paid directly to individuals and corporate bodies while N335.97 billion was released to various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Nigerian Revenue Service and States internal revenue services, alongside releases to other public institutions, companies and individuals.

"When recovered criminal value helps finance education and household credit, enforcement moves beyond punishment to restoration and productive national use," he said.

He added that the federal and state tax recoveries amounted to approximately N288.1 billion over the period, including about N173.2 billion in federal tax recoveries and N114.9 billion attributed to States' Internal Revenue Services. This was achieved through the revenue mobilisation mandate of the commission.

"This is fiscal value recovered through enforcement of existing obligations, not through the imposition of new taxes. In addition, approximately N257.2 billion in naira recoveries were recorded for federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies, demonstrating how anti-corruption enforcement can reinforce the revenue capacity of the government.

For the EFCC boss, the result of anti-corruption fight shows that corruption enforcement can restore fiscal space, strengthen federal and sub-national revenue, and return working capital to institutions, companies and citizens

Beyond serving as deterrent, he believed that every recovery, prosecution and conviction also support financial-market integrity, protect the extractive and digital economies and strengthen the country's international credibility.

Beyond cash, the commission has equally secured the forfeiture of 10,053 tangible assets under interim and final court orders between October 2023 and July 2026. These, according to the commission, included 8,198 electronic items, 1,177 real-estate assets, 370 automobiles, 251 plots of land as well as schools, factories, hotels, shops, oil rigs, barges, 102 tonnes of solid minerals, machinery and aircraft.

Proceeds from disposal under final forfeiture orders amounted to approximately N12.07 billion and were paid to the Federal Government.

Another gain of Olukoyede anti-graft war is restoring the integrity of the country's financial system and attendant exit from grey list. Nigeria was removed from the Financial Action Task Force Grey List in October 2025.

"Sustained enforcement in money laundering, terrorist financing asset freezing and confiscation, virtual assets and other higher-risk sectors formed part of Nigeria's wider national effort to address deficiencies in the anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism framework", he said.

In the foreign-exchange market, the commission said its enforcement against unlicensed Bureaux de Change reinforced the regulatory reforms by the Central Bank of Nigeria, stressing that the commission recorded 234 BDC cases and 73 convictions within the last three years.

"The overarching objective is to support a more formal, transparent and compliant retail foreign-exchange market and close channels vulnerable to illicit finance, speculation and round tripping. This has improved macroeconomic stability with long-term benefits for the average citizen

Admitting that the milestones recorded by the commission over the past three years may not have been possible without the support of partners, Olukoyede said that considering the fact that organised crime is increasing in sophistication and cut across national borders and jurisdiction, it requires the cooperation of international law enforcement organisations.

"At the EFCC, collaboration is central to our mandate. Domestically, we work with law-enforcement agencies, regulators, the judiciary, ministries, departments and agencies, and state revenue authorities.

"Internationally, our cooperation extends to partners including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, INTERPOL and other national and international law-enforcement agencies.



Ola Olukoyede

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

2027: FOGOCOM Mobilises Members For Tinubu's Re-election, National Conference

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE Forum of Governing Council Members in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions (FOGOCOM) has commenced nationwide mobilisation for the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the 2027 general election.

The forum also stepped up preparations for its national conference scheduled for September 29 at the NAF Conference Centre, Abuja.

The development was disclosed in a statement issued by the Chairman, Media, Publicity and ICT Sub-Committee of the FOGOCOM-TSG National Conference Planning Committee, Benedict Aguele, on Friday.

The statement said the forum renewed its support for the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Tinubu administration during a strategic engagement and nationwide briefing by its leadership.

The National Chairman of FOGOCOM, Chief Akin-Thomas Babajide, commended members for their loyalty and contributions to what he described as efforts towards good governance, educational development and nation-building.

Babajide said the administration had laid a foundation for economic growth, education reforms, infrastructure development and improved governance.

KingMakers To Sponsor 'The Bridge Fellowship' 2026 Cohort

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

KINGMAKERS has announced its title sponsorship of The Afara Initiative's flagship programme, 'The Bridge Fellowship,' for the 2026 cohort.

The Bridge Fellowship, renowned for its impactful leadership development programming and innovative curriculum, is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of leaders in Nigeria.

With KingMakers' support, the fellowship aims to further expand its reach and enhance its programme, providing unparalleled opportunities for personal and professional growth to young leaders selected for the prestigious programme.

This partnership marks a significant milestone as the fellowship welcomes its largest student intake yet.

"We are thrilled to partner with The Afara Initiative for a fourth time as the title sponsor for The Bridge Fellowship and are excited to welcome the newest cohort fellows," said Gossy Ukanwoke, Managing Director of KingMakers.

"At KingMakers, we believe in the power of technology and education to drive positive change."

Makinde Questions Petroleum Pricing Framework, Seeks Fairer Deal For Nigerians

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

OYO State Governor, Seyi Makinde, has questioned the petroleum pricing framework in Nigeria, arguing that the debate should go beyond whether fuel subsidy should be restored or completely removed.

Makinde, in the September 2026 edition of his newsletter, The Business of Governance, said Nigerians deserved to understand the factors determining the price of petroleum products in an oil-producing country.

The governor said the country needed to interrogate whether the existing pricing framework was appropriate and enabled Nigerians to derive fair benefits from the nation's natural resources.

According to him, Nigerians should have access to clear information on the assumptions underpinning petroleum prices, including crude oil price benchmarks, refining costs and margins, exchange-rate assumptions, logistics and distribution costs, taxes and levies.

He said making such information publicly accessible would enable Nigerians to interrogate the basis of the prices they pay for petroleum products and compare them with available alternatives.

Makinde also rejected the argument that Nigerians should pay higher prices for petroleum products to eliminate the price differential that makes smuggling into neighbouring countries profitable.

"Nigerians should not be made to bear the cost of government's inability to secure its borders," he said.

The governor said the country needed to "reset" its systems and institutions rather than focus solely on individuals occupying public offices.

He noted that despite successive changes in government, new policies and promises of a new beginning, millions of Nigerians continued to grapple with poverty, insecurity, limited economic opportunities and poorly performing public institutions.

According to him, Nigeria's challenges were therefore rooted in systems, institutions and structures that continued to reproduce outcomes that failed to serve the majority of citizens.

He said his proposed "Reset Nigeria" movement would focus on rebuilding the country's systems and institutions to make them work for every Nigerian.

Makinde said the national reset would require accountable leadership and active citizenship, stressing that the process could not be achieved by one individual or government alone.

"This will not be an instant transformation, nor will it be the work of one person. It must be a deliberate national effort supported by a clear roadmap, measurable priorities and the sustained participation of Nigerians at home and abroad," he said.

He disclosed that further editions of the newsletter would address his proposed approaches to resetting the economy, security architecture, education system, institutions and the nation's social and political order.

Makinde also said he would share lessons from his public service experience and explain how they had shaped his vision for Nigeria.



Director, Technical Services, Lagos Water Regulatory Commission, Mr Idowu Olowu (left); Country Director, WaterAid Nigeria, Ms Evelyn Mere; Managing Director, Lagos Water Corporation, Mr Mukhtaar Tijani; Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Bayroyal International Limited, Mr Owoeye Peter; and Executive Director Operations, Lagos Water Corporation, Mrs Helen Taiwo, during the contract signing of the Ojokoro Waterworks Rehabilitation, in Lagos... on Friday. PHOTO: NAN

Court Nullifies Recognition Of Lagbua Family As Fifth Iragbiji Ruling House

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

THE High Court of Justice sitting in Iragbiji, Osun State, has upheld the 2013 decision of the Osun State government on the recognised ruling houses of Iragbiji, setting aside a 2025 decision that recognised the Lagbua Family as the fifth ruling house.

The judgment was delivered on August 21, 2026, by Justice G.O. Lawal of the Iragbiji Judicial Division in Suit No. HIR/3/2025.

The case was instituted by representatives of the four recognised ruling houses in Iragbiji—Ajibode, Ogunmolu, Osungbemi and Arodoye.

The dispute centred on the decision of the Osun State government in 2025 to reopen and approve the recommendation of the 2010 Aderibigbe Judicial Panel of Inquiry, which recommended the inclusion of the Lagbua Family as a fifth ruling house.

According to a statement on Friday by the Press Secretary to the Aragbiji, Aderibigbe Adetayo Samson, the court held that the Osun State government had previously considered the matter in 2013 and rejected the request of the Lagbua Family.

The government's decision was reportedly communicated through an official letter and subsequently published in the Osun State Gazette.

The court held that the 2013 decision had effectively brought the earlier panel process to an end and that the government could not reopen the matter and approve the same report in 2025 without following the appropriate legal process.

Justice Lawal also found that the four recognised ruling houses were not given notice or an opportunity to be heard before the 2025 decision was taken.

The court held that the action amounted to a breach of the rights of the four legally recognised ruling houses.

Sokoto Govt Cautions Opposition Against Using Insecurity As Campaign Strategy

From **Tunde Omolehin**, Sokoto

THE Sokoto State Government has cautioned opposition political parties and their candidates against politicising insecurity, saying the fight against banditry and other criminal activities requires collective action rather than partisan blame.

The government said political differences should not be allowed to undermine efforts to protect lives and property, particularly as security concerns persist in parts of the state.

The Special Adviser to Governor Ahmed Aliyu on Security Matters, Col. Ahmed Usman (retd.), gave the warning while responding to concerns raised by the African Democratic Congress (ADC) governorship candidate, Manir Muhammad Dan'iya, over reported threats against residents of the state.

Usman said the government and security agencies were taking the reported threat seriously and had commenced efforts to assess the situation and prevent any possible attack.

"The reported threat to Kebbe is being treated with the seriousness it deserves. Relevant security agencies are working with the state government, traditional institutions and local communities to assess the situation and take appropriate measures to prevent any attack," he said.

He appealed to residents of Kebbe and other vulnerable communities to remain calm and vigilant, urging them to promptly report suspicious movements and activities to security authorities.

The statement comes amid renewed security concerns in parts of Sokoto State, particularly Kebbe, where communities have reportedly experienced attacks, displacement and threats to their livelihoods by suspected criminal elements.

The governor's aide said the security challenges confronting the state did not begin under the present administration, arguing that insecurity had become entrenched in some areas before Aliyu assumed office.

Eti-Osa APC Stakeholders Insist On Restoration Of Noheem Adams's Ticket

By **Shakirah Adunola**

AN internal rift within the Lagos State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has deepened as party elders, ward executives and grassroots members from Eti-Osa Constituency I convened a world press conference to demand the immediate restoration of the party's ticket to Noheem Adams.

Addressing journalists and community stakeholders, representatives of the constituency, which included APC's apex leader in Eti-Osa, Taiwo Jegede Jacob, expressed growing frustration over the alleged suppression of the primary election results held on May 20, 2026.

According to the stakeholders, Adams secured a decisive victory with 7,638 votes compared to his opponent's 1,225 votes, a margin they argue reflects an unequivocal mandate from the local electorate.

The party leaders warned that ignoring the primary results risks undermining internal democracy and damaging the APC's prospects in the upcoming general election.

Anchor University Inaugurates New Governing Council

By **Isaac Taiwo**

THE Chairman, Board of Trustees (BOT), Anchor University, Lagos, Pastor Obinna Nkemjika, has assured that the institution would continue to pursue its vision of producing competent, capable and morally upright graduates who would make their mark anywhere in the world.

Nkemjika gave the assurance at the recent inauguration of the third Governing Council of the university, held at the Senate Executive Chambers of the institution in Lagos.

He said the university was committed to producing graduates who are not only academically sound, but also spiritually and morally grounded to provide effective leadership in Nigeria and beyond.

According to him, the institution has, since its establishment, pursued aggressive infrastructural development, recruitment of competent academic staff and introduction of professional programmes to improve the quality of education offered to students.

He recalled that when the current BOT came on board in 2021, the university had about 600 students and only two professors.

Nkemjika, who is also the State Overseer, Deeper Life Bible Church, Abia State, said the institution had since increased its number of professors.

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CHANGE OF NAME

ADDITIN OF NAME: I formerly known as, Oseghale Ehikhioya, now wish to be addressed as, Oseghale Ehikhioya John All former documents remains valid . General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I ,formerly known, as Okri Oghenekevwe now wish to be addressed as Okri Kelvin Oghene , All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADEBISI: I, formerly known as Miss Adebisi Sinmilade Rukayat now to be addressed as Mrs Oyewumi Sinmilade Rukayat. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

ADEGOKE : I, formerly known as Esther Yetunde Adegoke now wish to be addressed as Esther Adegoke Olubunmi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADEMOLA: I, formerly Bunmi Mercy Ademola now wish to be known as Ademola -Ajala Oluwabunmi Mercy. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADENUSI: I, formerly know as Miss Olufunke Abosede Adenusi now wish to be addressed as Mrs Olufunke Abosede Olugbile. All former documents remain valid. General Public note.

ADESEUN: I, formerly know as Miss Victoria Adenike Adeseun. now wish to be known as Mrs. Victoria Adenike Omikunle. All firmer documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADEWOLE : I formerly known as, Adewole Comfort Omoihoro, now wish to be addressed as, Adams Comfort, my DOB is, 04-02-1980, not 20-02-1983, Former documents remains valid. Public note.

ADEYEMI: I, formerly known as Adeyemi Sunmisola Oluwabukolanow wish to be called Oluwayomi Sunmisola Oluwabukola. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AFUMMADU : I, formerly known as Afummadu Jecinta Chidimma, now wish to be addressed as Anyigbo Jecinta Chidimma. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

AGWU: I, formerly known as Valerie Chimziterem Agwu, now wishes to be addressed as Valerie Ijeoma Azuma Nto. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AJILEYE: I, formally known as Zainab Morenikeji Musa now wish to be addressed as Zainab Morenikeji Ajileye all former documents remain valid . General public take notice .

ALIMAT: I, formerly known as Hammed Alimat Sadiat, now wish to be addressed as Hammed Halimat Olamide. All previous documents remain valid. General public, take note.

ALLEN : I formerly known as Allen Joseph Adejo now wish to be addressed as Allen Joseph Odey Ajeyiuwiah. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

AMAEBI : I, formerly known as Amaebi Eyifeoru Henry now wish to be addressed as Eyifeoru Henry Finine. All former documents remain valid. Banks, public take note.

AMASA : I, formerly known as Rachael Oluwabusola Amasa , now wish to be addressed as Rachael Oluwabusola David-Ariyo. . All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

AMAYE-DIKE: I, formerly known as Amaye-Dike, Alero Elizabeth now wish to be addressed as Amaye, Alero Elizabeth. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AMOO : I , formerly Miss Amoo Alice Adenike now wish to be known as MrsOjo Alice Adenike. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ANNASTACIA : I, formerly known as Miss Umeugo Chinasa Annastacia now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Umewezie Chinasa Annastacia, .All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ATSIKIDI: I, formerly Miss Rhoda Ilamosi Edogame now Mrs Rhoda Ilamosi Atsikidi. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. General public note.

AYODEJI : I, formerly Miss Ayodeji Yewande Veronica now wish to be known as Mrs Taiwo-Ojo Yewande Veronica. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

BALOGUN : I, formerly known as Balogun Michael Atai now wishes to be addressed as Attai Michael Attai . All former documents remain valid general. General public take note

BELLO: I, formerly known as Mrs. Bello Motunrayo now wish to be addressed as Mrs Kazeem Motunrayo Modinat . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BILL : I, formerly Miss Patience Uro Bill now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Patience Olayinka.. All former document remain valid . General public note.

CHIAMAKA: I, formerly known as Ezenna Praise Chiamaka now wishes to be addressed as ThankGod Praise Chiamaka . All former documents remain valid. General public takes note.

CHIUGO: I, formerly known as Chiugo Mirabel Ezechinyere now wish to be addressed as Chiugo Mirabel Ijezie . All former documents remain valid general public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Francis Julius Oveze now wish to be addressed as Francis Oveze Julius . All former documents remain valid. General public takes note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as Adewale Olukayode Okubanjo on my Passport, instead of Adewale Olukayode Adeniyi Okubanjo. All documents remain valid . Public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as Emmanuel Erika, instead of Erika Onyinyechi Emmanuel.. All documents remain valid General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured in my BVN as Togun Ayibagebra Ebunoluwa instead of Togun Ayibagebra Ebunoluwa Victoria as it is in NIN and All other official documents. General Public please take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: That, Ukpebor Ehigie and ,Ehigie Ukpebor is same person, now addressed as Ukpebor Prosper Ehigie my DOB is, 29-11-2006, not, 29-11-2005, former documents remains valid, public note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME : I, Ashaka John Thompson, state that my name was incompletely rendered as Ashaka John on my WAEC, B.Tech Certificate (Federal University of Technology, Minna), and NYSC Discharge Certificate. I hereby confirm that Ashaka John and Ashaka John Thompson refer to one and the same person. All my academic certificates, birth certificate, National Identity Card, official documents, and general public records remain valid. Corporate organizations, relevant authorities, and the general public please take note

CYPRIAN : I, formerly known as Cyprian Udochukwu Faith, now wishes to be addressed as Nwafor Udochukwu Faith. All documents bearing my former name remain valid. Public note.

EBOIZIEGBE I formerly known as Eboiziegbe Joy Isaac, now wish to be addressed as Isaac Juliet Obehi. . All former documents remain valid. General pub lic take note.

EBOZELE : I formerly known as, Ebozele Wisdom Joshua, now wish to be addressed as, Ebozele Wisdom . All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

EKWU : I formerly known as Ekwu Ogochukwu Loveth now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ebuka Ogochukwu Loveth.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EMMANUEL : I , formally known as Emmanuel Nancy Nneoma now wish to be addressed as Nancy Nneoma Uchenna- Ekenta all former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ESAN: I, formerly known as Esan Folasade Deborah now wish to be addressed as Ifeanyi Folasade Deborah All former documents remain valid. General public takes note

FATIMEHIN: I, formerly known as Bola Bamidele Fatimehin now addressed as Bola Bamidele Anifowose. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

FUNMILAYO: I, formerly known as Enitan Mopelola Funmilayo now wish to be addressed as Enitan Mopelola Yetunde. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

GEORGE: I, formerly known as Mr. George Olufemi Oyenekan now wish to be addressed as Mr. Femi Adetunji Oye-oluwafemi.. All former documents remain valid . General public note.

HADIZA : I, formerly Hadiza lawan now wish to be addressed as Khadija Abubakar Lawan, . All former documents remain valid . Deneral. General public take note

HENSCHEL: I, formerly Mrs Henschel, Oluwatoyin Mercy, now wish to be addressed as Miss Adejokun, Oluwatoyin Mercy. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

HYMAN : I, formerly know as Hyman Blessing Mkpuruoma now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Uchechukwu Blessing Mkpuruoma All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

IGONIKON: I, formerly known Damiete Igonikon now wish to be addressed as Damiete Mpaka Welsch. .All former documents remain valid . Deneral. General public take note

IZEBHIJIE : I formerly known as, Miss Izebhijie Isibhakhomen Anthonia, now wish to be addressed as, Mrs Christian Anthonia Isibhakhomen ., All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

JAYEOBA: I, formerly Miss Jayeoba Rebecca Kemi now wish to be known as Mrs. Aladesofin Rebecca Kemi. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

JOY: I, formerly known as Miss Ugwuishiwu Joy now wish to be known as Mrs. Onofegara Rume Joy. All former documents remain valid. Public notice

KOPSU : I, formerly Damalak Seyilnen Kopsu now wish to be addressed as Damalak Seyilnen Paul .All former documents remain valid . General public take note .

KOSTADINOVIC: I, formerly Ifeyinwa Stella Kostadinovic Nee Ofodile now wish to be known as Stella Ifeyinwa Kostadinovic. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

NWANNEKA : I, formerly known as Sunday Samuel Nwanneka E now wish to be addressed as Sunday Ekwe Samuel. All previous documents remain valid. General public, take note.

OBASI: I, formerly known as Obasi Chibuzor Oyidiya, now wish to be addressed as Ben-Chima Chibuzor Oyidiya. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ODO : I formerly known as, Odo Nnedi Loveth, now wish to be addressed as, Odo Nnedinso Loveth, . All former documents remains valid general public take note.

ODOH : I formerly known as Odoh Chinonyelum Sylvaline, now wish to be addressed as Attah Chinonyelum Sylvaline. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ODAFE: I, formerly Miss ODAFE PRECIOUS now wish to be addressed as Mrs. PRECIOUS AKPOGHENE-DINWANBOR All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OGUNDELE: I, formerly known as Ogundele Kehinde Oluwatimileyin now wish to be addressed as Ogundele Kehinde OluwatimileyinOge . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OJIBE: I, formerly known as Miss Ojibe Perpetual Chinenye now wish to be known as Mrs Nwosu Perpetual Chinenye. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OJO :: I, formerly know Asolufunlayo Olubusola Ojo now wish to be addressed as Olufunlayo Olubusola Ogundiran , All former documents remain valid , General public take note

OKONKWO: I, formerly Miss Okonkwo Euphemia Ogochukwu now wish to be addressed as Mrs Aniawonwa Euphemia Ogoo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLAJIDE: I, formerly known as Olajide Zainab Temitope now to be addressed as Ibikunle Zainab Temitope. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

OLADEPO : I, formerly known **Oladepo Zainab Titilope** now wish to be addressed as **Hassan Zainab Titilope**. .All former documents remain valid general. General public take note

OLERU: I, formerly known as Miss Blessing Chimezirim Oleru now wish to be addressed as Mrs Blessing Chimezirim Clinton.. All former document remain valid . General public note.

OLUFISAYO : I, formerly known as Olufisayo Mary Oluwadamilola now wish to be addressed as Adebusuyi Mary Olufisayo all former documents remain valid general public take note.

OMOLOYE: I, formerly Miss Folake Uwamusi Omoloye now wish to be addressed as Mrs Folake Uwamusi Toome-Omoloye. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

OPAWOLE: I, formerly Opawole Adewunmi Serifatu now wish to be as known as Opawole Adewumi. Adewunmi. All. former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OSAGIELE : I formerly known as, Inegbedion Osagiele Christopher, now wish to be addressed as, Inegbedion Christopher All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

OSEMWINVIE: I, formerly known as Osemwinvie Godsgift now wish to be addressed as: Ogbeiwi Godsgift All former documents remain valid. .General public take note.

OTOIJAGHALE : I formerly known as, Otoijaghale Maris, now wish to be addressed as, Ikharebhore Stellamaris Ihoeghian, my DOB is, 17-01-1991, not, 16-02-1991, and, 17-01-1991, Former documents remains valid. General public take note.

OZEGIN : I ,formerly known as, Miss Ozegin Joy, now wish to be addressed as, Mrs. Aisedionlen Joy Ozegin ,All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

POPOOLA : I, formerly known as Grace Boluwatife Popoola now wish to be addressed as Grace *Bolu*watife Adedeko. . All former documents remain valid. .General public take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME: I, Ogwueche Obiora Hampo is same person as Hampo Obiora Robinson but now called Ogwueche Obiora Hampo. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

SADOH : I formerly known as, Miss Sadoh Ibhade Juliet, now wish to be addressed as, Mrs Oriabure Ibhade Juliet, former documents remains valid, general public note.

SILAS: I, formerly know as Silas Ude Nnenna now wish to be addressed as Agu Nnenna Esther. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

TAIWO : I ,formerly known, as Miss Taiwo Temilola Janet now wish to be addressed as Mrs Adewara Temilola Janet. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

TAIWO: My name was mistakenly captured on my BVN as Ogundipe Fiasyo Kehinde, infested of Taiwo Kehinde Fisayo . All former documents remain valid. .NIN ,General public should take note.

UDEH: I, formerly known as Udeh Daberechi Fulness now wish to be addressed as Onyekwe Daberechi Fulness All former documents remain valid. .General public take note.

UMEUGO: I, formerly known as Miss Umeugo Chinasa Annastacia wish to be addressed as Mrs Umewezie Chinasa Annastacia, former documents remain valid. Public take note.

UKAEGBU: I, formerly known as Miss Ukaegbu Precious Chizoba now wish to be addressed as Mrs Nnadi Precious Chizoba.. All former document remain valid . General public note.

VINCENT : I formerly known as, Vincent Ehimen, now wish to be addressed as, Osebhor Ehimen, my DOB is, 05-04-2005 . All former documents remains valid . General public take note.

News Extra

Boko Haram Attacks Borno Guber Candidate's Convoy

From **Njadvara Musa**, Maiduguri

SUSPECTED Boko Haram terrorists, on Thursday, attacked the convoy of Mustapha Gubio, Borno State All Progressive Congress (APC) gubernatorial candidate, along the 187-Maiduguri-Gubio-Damasak Road.

It was learnt that Gubio's convoy came under heavy attack at Kareto deserted village at about 2:30 p.m, but the attackers were swiftly repelled by a combined team of security forces, including soldiers, police, NSCDC, DSS, CTJF and the vigilante groups

According to a source, the incident occurred during a thank-you campaign tour by Gubio and his team to the northern part of the state, comprising six local councils.

"It was a terrifying moment for us; we came under heavy attacks by terrorists yesterday," said the insider.

"The terrorists fired several RPGs on our convoy, followed by sporadic shooting. Luckily, our security agencies gallantly repelled the attacks. Police armoured vehicles were damaged, but there was no casualty," he said.

While confirming the attack, Force Public Relations Officer, Ani Iniedu, said the police and security foiled an attack on the convoy of a governorship candidate in Borno State.

August Meeting: Amstel Awards Business Grants To Five Women In Abia

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

AMSTEL Malta has awarded business grants to five women in Abia State, providing them support to grow their businesses, pursue their ambitions and be their best as entrepreneurs.

The brand granted the awards at the yearly August Meeting of Abia State women held at the New Government House, Umuahia.

It used the gesture to encourage the women to be their best and give them more reasons to look and feel good.

Across the South East, August is a time when women at home and abroad return to their matrimonial hometowns to reconnect with their communities and celebrate the heritage and traditions that shape their lives.

This yearly homecoming, popularly known as August Meeting, is a longstanding tradition where women unite to support one another, deliberate on community matters and contribute to the development of their communities.

This year in Abia State, Amstel Malta added to that celebration by creating memorable experiences for women at the meeting, recognising not only their contributions to their communities but also the importance of taking a moment to celebrate themselves.

Sports

Change Is Coming To Nigerian Sports - Finally

THERE is the prospect of a genuine sports revolution in the air. There is a refreshing spirit across the land. There are glimpses of a new dawn for the entire sports sector through the developments in football. Beyond sport, there are also emerging, the faint outlines of a new nation from 2027.

Things are coming together.

Things are falling into place and fitting in like a jig saw puzzle. Even the Universe is involved in the evolving 'conspiracy'. Otherwise, who can explain the spate of coincidences in developments in Nigerian sports?

Presidential support

It was all kick-started by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. He directed that proper sports reforms take place. And he backed his directive with the money to get it done. Such level of presidential interest has not been seen since the era of late Admirql Augustus Aikhomu. The president means business, and everyone knows it.

The NSC - getting things done!

The National Sports Commission, NSC, bosses have been very busy, demonstrating proficiency in managing the crisis-situation in Nigerian football and maneuvering through the maze of difficult issues.

They dealt with the disbandment of the board of the NFF masterfully. It went without any outcry, or resultant crisis. They led a delegation to the headquarters of FIFA and came back with a bouquet of flowers (that I hope are not coated with hidden poisons)from the embattled president of FIFA. I hope they now have the clearance to carry out the needed reforms in Nigerian football without involving the Congress of the NFF. That organ should have been dismantled as well, and without the threat of any sanction for 'Third-Party interference' hanging on our necks.

The NSC, I hope, are now set to advance matters to the next level - setting up a body of credible, neutral, and knowledgeable persons to dismantle the old failed system and to create new instruments for genuine football development in the best interest of the country.

Allen Onyema - The Pace Setter!

A few days before that, Dr. Allen Onyema, Chairman of AirPeace Airline, had approved that the 'file' of the Olympic Gold Medalists of 1996 be dusted, and that the names of the heroes be uplifted again and inscribed in Gold on the 'NIIA Sports Diplomacy Wall of Fame' at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs in Lagos.



The induction ceremony will be held in October/November, 2026, a year that marks the 50th anniversary of the 1976 Olympic Games Boycott led by Nigeria, as well as the 30th anniversary of Nigeria's greatest moment in sport, the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.

Two of Nigeria's great sports ambassadors will also be decorated on the day - late captain and manager of the Super Eagles, Stephen Okechukwu Keshi; plus the only world record breaker and holder in Nigeria's athletics history, Tobi Amusan.

Governor Uba Sani - a New Titan

Then, last week, came the bombshell. In my humble reckoning, the best news of the year came from Kaduna.

Read the remaining story onlinewww.guardian.ng

Turning Basketball Court To STEM Classroom For Underserved Children

As Nigeria struggles to provide science education for vulnerable children, an initiative Dunk- to-Discovery is seeking to help kids in orphanage homes achieve their dream science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). ***KINGSLEY JEREMIAH*** *reports.*

THE basketball court at MO Arena in Abuja was transformed into more than a place for shooting, dribbling and competition when children from Hope for Survival Orphanage gathered for an unusual learning experience earlier this week.

At the centre of it was 16-year-old Olaedo Christabel Nwabueze, who believes a basketball court can also become a classroom, where underserved children discover science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through an activity they already enjoy.

Her initiative, Dunk-to-Discovery, emerged from a 21-working-day volunteering experience at the orphanage, where she encountered children with limited access to books, learning materials and even basic household items that many other children take for granted.

Rather than leave with sympathy alone, Nwabueze began thinking about how she could combine her passion for science and basketball to create an opportunity for the children. "I am very good at science and I am very good at sports. Why don't I bring my passion to help these vulnerable children?" she asked

The idea, simple but potentially powerful, was to use basketball to make STEM relatable, practical and enjoyable for children who may not ordinarily have access to laboratories, technology or specialised learning resources.

Nwabueze explains that the rubber grips on basketball shoes, for example, can introduce children to the principle of friction because they help players maintain contact with the court and avoid slipping, while the angle at which a ball is shot can become an introduction to mathematics and physics.

"I wanted to give them access to these things and make them more aware of science and technology things that can actually help them," she said. Rather than treating STEM as a difficult subject confined to textbooks, the initiative encourages children to see science in ordinary activities, with the court becoming a practical environment where curiosity can be developed through play.

Nwabueze believes the approach can eventually be adapted for schools and communities across Nigeria, particularly for children whose circumstances limit their exposure to STEM opportunities.

Business

TETFund: Lighting Up Nigeria, Projecting Culture Of Excellence Across Africa (2)

IN a bold move to unlock Nigeria's vast human and natural resources, stimulate innovation and accelerate socio-economic transformation, TETFund recently approved N7.5 billion for 174 cutting-edge research projects under the 2025 National Research Fund (NRF) Grant Cycle.

That intervention represents more than a financial commitment. It is a recognition that Nigeria cannot educate its way into prosperity merely by producing graduates. The country must also produce ideas, technologies, intellectual property, solutions and enterprises capable of solving its most pressing developmental challenges.

The Fund's support for research into vaccines for diseases such as COVID-19 and Lassa fever further demonstrates the potential of tertiary institutions to become engines of national problem-solving rather than simply centres for the transmission of knowledge.

Similarly, the provision of substantial innovation funding to university students signals a shift from the traditional model in which students are expected merely to graduate and search for employment.

The emerging model is one in which young Nigerians can be encouraged and supported to become creators, innovators, employers and entrepreneurs – even before leaving university. That is precisely the kind of thinking required to build a knowledge economy.

TETFund's planned second National Research Fair, expected in November, provides another important platform for this emerging ecosystem. The Fair offers an opportunity to identify, showcase and support innovative ideas from across the country, regardless of the social or economic background of their originators, provided they successfully navigate the established expert evaluation process.

Such platforms matter because many potentially transformative Nigerian ideas never progress beyond laboratories, lecture rooms, notebooks and prototypes. The challenge is to create pathways through which research can move from idea to prototype, prototype to product and product to enterprise.

A properly structured research and innovation ecosystem can strengthen Nigeria's knowledge economy, improve industrial competitiveness, create employment and provide practical solutions to some of the country's most urgent developmental problems.

Excellence Has No Finish Line

For the Board and Management of TETFund, excellence appears to have no finish line. The Fund seems increasingly determined to challenge itself at every turn – to exceed previous accomplishments, close the door against institutional complacency and demonstrate that what was once considered impossible can become achievable through vision, discipline, resources and purposeful execution.

Its ultimate ambition should therefore be viewed beyond the immediate construction of buildings or provision of equipment. The bigger opportunity is to help transform Nigeria into a global powerhouse in knowledge, research, innovation, science, technology and human capital development.

And there is a sense of urgency about this. Nigeria cannot afford to wait indefinitely. The country possesses an enormous reservoir of youthful talent, intellectual capacity, natural resources and entrepreneurial energy. What is required is the institutional architecture to convert these assets into sustainable national prosperity.

TETFund is one of the institutions positioned to play a defining role in that transformation. Its growing impact is therefore not simply about the number of projects commissioned, buildings constructed, researchers supported or institutions reached. It is ultimately about changing the possibilities available to the Nigerian student, researcher, academic and innovator.

Nigeria's Opportunity To Lead

TETFund may well have started as an intervention agency designed to rescue Nigeria's tertiary institutions from years of infrastructural and developmental neglect. But the trajectory today suggests something considerably bigger. The Fund is increasingly demonstrating that a Nigerian public institution can build systems, break its own records, institutionalise excellence and become a reference point for others.

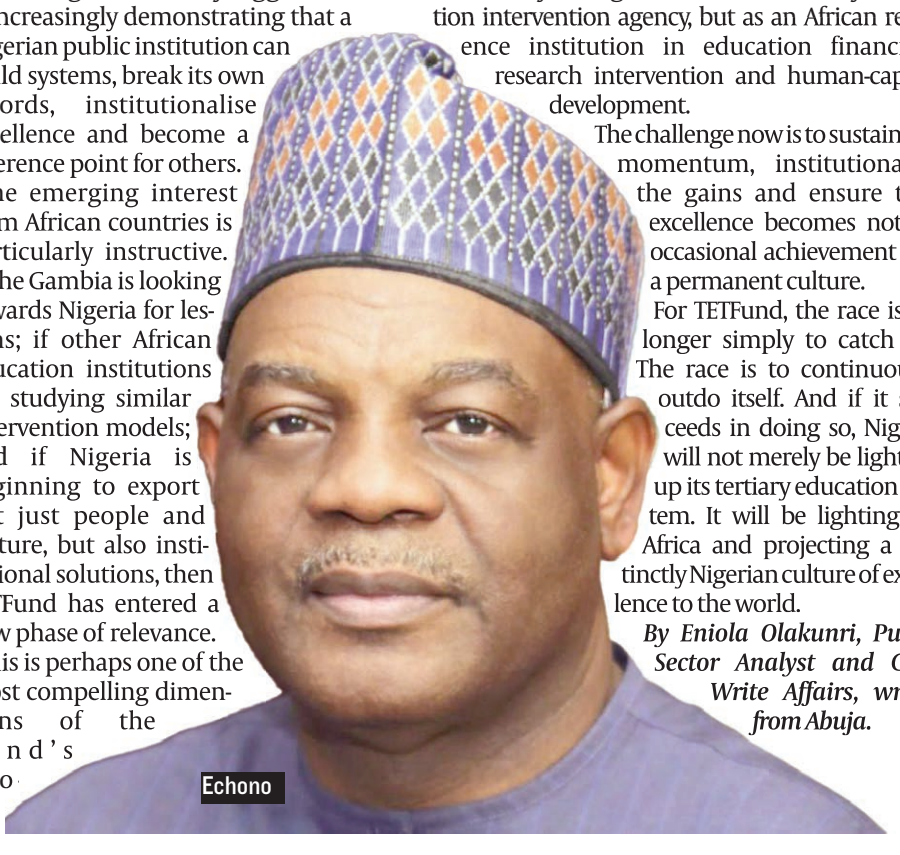
The emerging interest from African countries is particularly instructive. If The Gambia is looking towards Nigeria for lessons; if other African education institutions are studying similar intervention models; and if Nigeria is beginning to export not just people and culture, but also institutional solutions, then TETFund has entered a new phase of relevance.

This is perhaps one of the most compelling dimensions of the Fund's evolution. Nigeria has for too long been accustomed to importing models, ideas and institutional frameworks from abroad. There is absolutely nothing wrong with learning from successful countries. But there comes a point when a nation must also begin to develop solutions worthy of emulation by others.

TETFund appears to be approaching that point. With the support of its Board of Trustees under the leadership of the Right Honourable Aminu Bello Masari and the focused management team led by Arc. (Dr.) Sonny S.T. Echono, the Fund has an opportunity to deepen this trajectory and establish itself not merely as Nigeria's foremost tertiary education intervention agency, but as an African reference institution in education financing, research intervention and human-capital development.

The challenge now is to sustain the momentum, institutionalise the gains and ensure that excellence becomes not an occasional achievement but a permanent culture.

For TETFund, the race is no longer simply to catch up. The race is to continuously outdo itself. And if it succeeds in doing so, Nigeria will not merely be lighting up its tertiary education system. It will be lighting up Africa and projecting a distinctly Nigerian culture of excellence to the world.



By Eniola Olakunri, Public Sector Analyst and CEO, Write Affairs, writes from Abuja.

TheGuardianSports

www.guardian.ng

'Different Administrators, Familiar Problems In NFF Since 1970'

By Gowon Akpodonor

• As Okoku Clamours For Ex-Players To Lead Nigeria Football

FOR United States-based former Super Eagles player, Paul Okoku, it is time for ex-players to become President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

"This is part of my continuing investigative examination of nearly six decades of Nigerian football leadership," Okoku, now a football analyst, told The Guardian. "I'm asking whether former footballers, who have rarely been entrusted with leadership at the top of the NFF, including its presidency, are being judged by the same standards applied to the non-footballers who have historically administered the federation?

"From the 1970s to 2026, Nigerian football has largely been led by military officers, government appointees, businessmen, bureaucrats and career administrators. Former internationals have served on boards and technical structures, but not with sustained control of the federation's presidency," he said.

Okoku, vice captain of the 1983 Flying Eagles squad, said: "Because we played football does not automatically mean we can lead football. That is correct. But being a lawyer, businessman, politician, accountant, journalist, civil servant or career administrator does not automatically make someone a good football leader either.

"Leadership must be measured by competence, integrity, preparation, vision, accountability and results. So, apply the same standard to everyone.

"How can an entire group of ex-footballers be declared incapable of succeeding when it has never been given a meaningful opportunity to build a leadership record at the very top of the NFF, including its presidency?

"Nigeria has produced generations of former footballers with university education, advanced degrees, business experience, coaching credentials and leadership experience inside and outside sport. Some would fail, and some would succeed. That is true of every profession.

"You cannot fairly hold footballers accountable for a leadership failure they have never collectively been given the opportunity to produce. Set transparent standards, allow qualified people to compete, and then judge the individual.

"President Bola Tinubu's football reform directive creates an opportunity to examine nearly six decades of history—not to claim footballers automatically have the answers, but to learn from the record.

"But representation must also come with responsibility: footballers must organise, speak collectively and help build structures that protect the rights, welfare and dignity of current and future players," he stated.

Okoku also spoke on the recent NFF's fact-finding committee, saying: "Fanny Amun's 2026 fact-finding exercise examined administrative, technical, financial, organisational and developmental problems affecting Nigerian football.

"He later spoke publicly about allegations involving unequal payments and interference in technical decisions.

"Why are investigators in 2026 still examining problems recognisable across generations? Accountability also goes beyond welfare. In 2009, $236,000 was reported missing from a safe at the football federation's secretariat, resulting in investigation and legal proceedings. The issue today is not assigning guilt retrospectively."



Weep not...Super Eagles coach Eric Chelle seems to tell one of his players after Nigeria crashed out of 2026 FIFA World Cup



NSC Chairman, Mallam Shehu Dikko

Falconets Set For Spain's Test As 2026 FIFA U20 World Cup Begins

By Gowon Akpodonor

AFTER ten days of preparations in Trzebnica, Nigeria's women U20 team, Falconets, is set for their opening fixture against European giants, Spain, at the 2026 FIFA U20 Women's World Cup in Poland.

The Nigerians arrive in Katowice, Poland, on Thursday and checked into the Novotel Katowice Centrum as preparations enter the final stretch for Monday's Group F encounter against Spain.

The Falconets spent 10 days in Trzebnica, where Head Coach Moses Aduku and his technical crew focused on tactical organisation, technical execution, physical conditioning and team cohesion.

The camp also provided the players the opportunity to acclimatise to the Polish environment and build match sharpness ahead of the global tournament.

As part of their final preparations, Nigeria played two international friendly matches, recording a 1-0 victory over hosts Poland before drawing 1-1 with Korea Republic. Mary Mamudu scored the winning goal against Poland and was again on target against Korea Republic, giving the Falconets a positive return from their two warm-up games.

Russell: 'Breaking Amusan's World Record Was One Of My Goals'

OLYMPIC champion, Masai Russell, has revealed that breaking Tobi Amusan's 100m hurdles world record was one of the major targets she set for herself this year, but the American insists her job is not yet complete.

Russell ended Amusan's four-year reign as world-record holder last week at the Weltklasse in Zurich, clocking 12.09 seconds to erase the Nigerian's 12.12 mark.

Speaking at the Diamond League Final prerace press conference in Brussels on Thursday, the 25-year-old said her focus has now shifted to winning major titles, beginning with the Diamond League Final.

"My goal for the year was these two meets, the Diamond Final and the Ultimate Championships," Russell said.

Arsenal Face Double Injury Blow Ahead 'Super Sunday' Clash With Chelsea

ARSENAL could be without two key players for their Premier League clash with Chelsea at the Emirates this Sunday.

Mikel Arteta's side face a stern test at the weekend as Xabi Alonso's high-scoring Blues head to north London.

Chelsea beat west London rivals, Fulham, 3-2 in Alonso's first competitive game in charge before an equally exciting 4-3 win over Brighton last weekend.

The Gunners, meanwhile, have made a perfect start to their title defence, beating Coventry City and Aston Villa in their first two games of the season.

The defending champions will look to send a message to one of their potential title rivals at the weekend, but could be without Bruno Guimaraes and Cristhian Mosquera after both weren't seen in training on Thursday.

Guimaraes missed Arsenal's league opener against Coventry after sustaining a knock in the Community Shield victory over Manchester City.

The Brazilian midfielder made a substitute appearance against Villa last time out, but could now be set to miss out again this Sunday.

Saturday Premier League Fixtures

Newcastle Vs Bournemouth 12:30
Brentford Vs Sunderland 15:00
Brighton Vs Leeds 15:00

Saturday Spanish La Liga

Athletic Club Vs Atletico Madrid 15:15
Rayo Vallecano Vs Racing Santander 17:30
Villarreal Vs Deportivo 20:00

Stakeholders Call For Omagbemi's Return To Super Falcons

By Gowon Akpodonor

TO build confidence in the Super Falcons ahead the fast approaching Los Angeles 2028 Olympics qualifiers, many Nigerian football stakeholders want both the National Sports Commission (NSC) and the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to bring back United States-based former coach, Florence Omagbemi, to the team.

The Super Falcons failed to defend their AWCON title last month in Morocco, where they ended up in the quarterfinal, losing 1-0 to Cameroon.

And for the first time ever, the Super Falcons failed to pick a ticket to the 2027 FIFA World Cup, losing 1-2 to South Africa in the African play-off in Morocco.

With the qualifiers for Los Angeles 2028 Olympics fast approaching, many fans believe Omagbemi is the best choice to rebuild confidence in the players following her past exploits with the team.

In 2026, Omagbemi becamse the first African woman ever to win AWCON as both player and coach, when she led the Super Falcons to beat Cameroon 1-0 in the final watched by President Paul Biya and thousands of the fans of the home team in Yaounde. She set that record despite being owed eight months salary. The then NFF leadership refused to renew her contract, an action which did not go down well with many Nigerians.

Omagbemi was nominated for the Best FIFA Women's Coach 2017.

For many fans, Omagbemi deserves to be called back to the team in the build up to the Olympics qualifiers, which begins in October, because according to them, she led the Super Falcons with discipline, unity and Nigerian spirit.

"Nobody understands the Super Falcons blood and spirit more than Florence Omagbemi," one of the fans said on a radio programme monitored in Lagos on Friday.

As a player, Omagbemi captained the Super Falcons for 16 years, winning the WAFCON title four times (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004). She played in four FIFA Women's World Cups, including the historic quarterfinal at USA '99 (Nigeria's best ever). She also played in two Olympics football events, Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004.

"Now look at South Africa, they trusted their ex-captain (coach Desiree Ellis), and she won them AWCON. We have our own Desiree Ellis in Florence Omagbemi but we keep chasing foreign coaches," another fan said.

"Omagbami knows our girls, she has the respect, she has won the AWCON title and she is still ready to serve Nigeria," the fan added.



Nigerians want coach Florence Omagbemi back in Super Falcons

D'Tigress Suffer Defeat In 2026 FIBA Women's World Cup Opener

By Gowon Akpodonor

NIGERIA'S D'Tigress began their 2026 FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup campaign with an 81–99 defeat to South Korea in Berlin, Germany.

The Group B encounter was competitive for much of the first half, with Nigeria trailing by three points at halftime.

South Korea increased the pressure after the break and eventually pulled away to secure an 18-point victory.

South Korea took a 26–22 lead after the first quarter, but Nigeria responded well in the second period.

D'Tigress outscored Korea 23–22 in the second quarter, reducing the deficit slightly but still going into halftime behind 48–45.

The third quarter remained relatively close, with Korea winning it 20–17.

The biggest separation came in the final period. South Korea scored 31 points in the fourth quarter, while Nigeria managed 19, allowing Korea to finish with an 18-point victory.

Overall, South Korea outscored Nigeria 51–36 in the second half.

South Korea's Three-Point Shooting Proves Decisive

Nigeria's shooting numbers tell an interesting story.

D'Tigress shot 50 percent from the field, making 33 of their 66 attempts. South Korea shot 52 percent, converting 36 of 69 attempts.

Nigeria was actually more accurate when shooting for two points, making 27 of 46 attempts (59 percent), compared with South Korea's 22 of 41 (54 percent).

In simple terms, South Korea made 14 three-pointers, while Nigeria made only six.

Amy Okonkwo was Nigeria's leading scorer, finishing with 22 points. She shot 8-of-15 from the field and was particularly effective from three-point range, making 4 of 8 attempts.

Okonkwo accounted for four of Nigeria's six made three-pointers and finished with an efficiency rating of 24. Her performance was one of the positives Nigeria can take from the defeat.

South Korea's standout performer was Jihyun Park, who led all scorers with 27 points. Park also made a significant impact defensively, recording six steals, while contributing six rebounds and two assists.

D'Tigress face Hungary this Saturday September 5, before meeting France on September 7 in their remaining Group B games.



D'Tigress in their opening World Cup match in Berlin, Germany on Friday

In Loving Memory of a World-Class Father & Patriarch





Today, 6th September 2022, marks ten years since the Lord called you home to eternal rest and higher service.

A decade may have passed, but your remarkable life, distinguished character, wisdom, and enduring legacy remain deeply etched in our hearts. Your exceptional resourcefulness, ingenuity, compassion, and noble virtues continue to inspire us and all those whose lives you touched.

We remain profoundly grateful to God for the priceless gift of having you as our father, patriarch, mentor, and role model. The values you instilled in us and the example you set continue to shape our lives and guide generations after you.

Your remarkable accomplishments and the legacy you built will forever shine as a beacon of inspiration to your family and humanity.

Though you are no longer with us physically, your memory lives on, your legacy endures, and your impact remains everlasting.

Rest peacefully, dear Father and Patriarch. You are loved, cherished, and remembered forever.

Signed:
Peter Ibru
On behalf of the Children.

OLOROGUN (DR.)

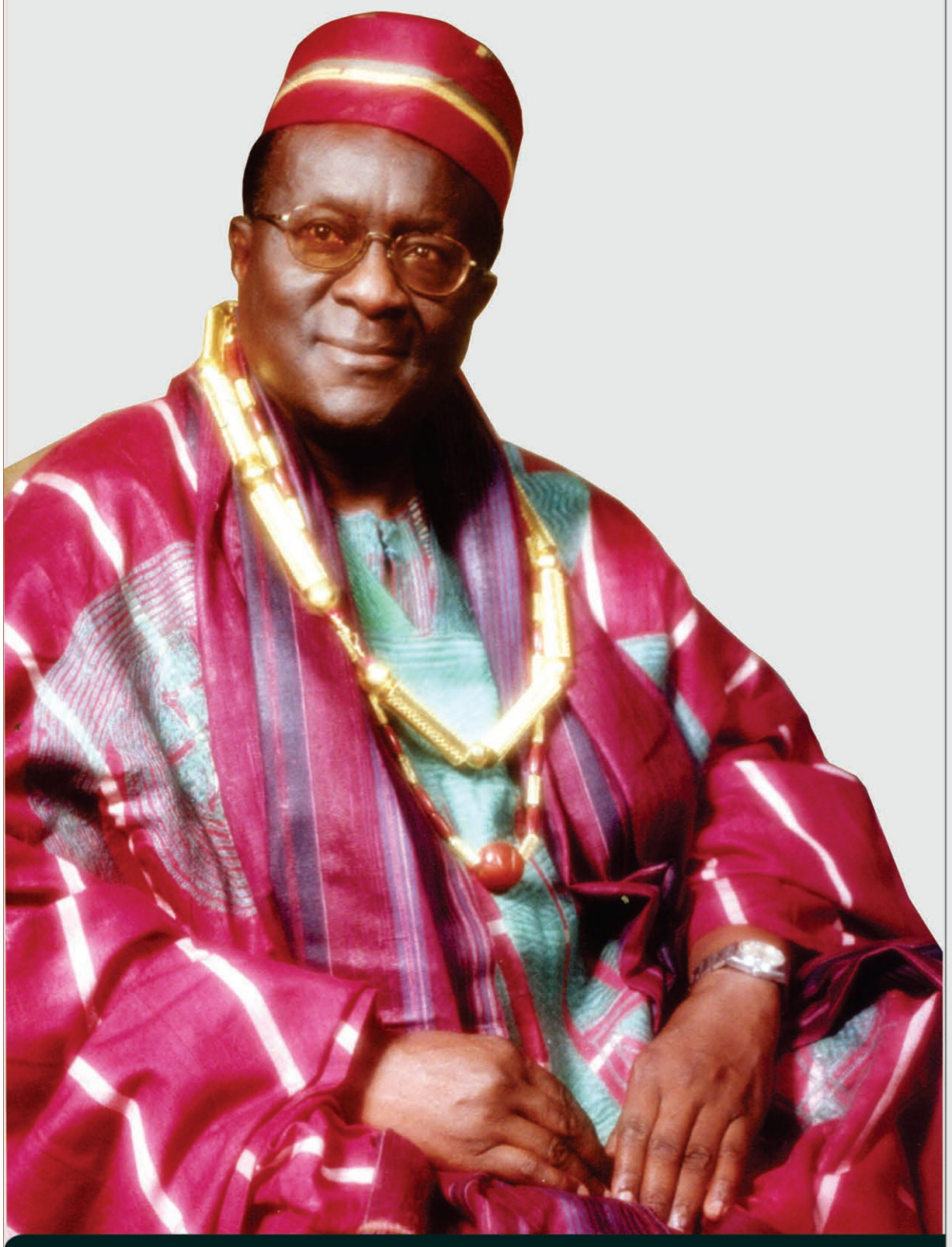
MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER ONAJIREVBE IBRU, OFR

December 15, 1930 - September 6, 2016

IBRU
Since 1956

17TH YEAR REMEMBRANCE

Senior Advocate of the **Masses!** Senior Advocate of **Nigeria!!**
Senior Advocate of the **People!!!** Senior Advocate of **Progress!!!!**
It has been **17 years** today since you left us
The Nigerian nation misses you.
We miss you the most because of the **fondness, love** and **unbelievable opportunities you gave to us** to be the **closest** and **dearest** to you. **Rest in Peace ...**



CHIEF GANI FAWEHINMI,
LL.D, D.Litt., SAN, SAM, GCON
(Friday 22nd April, 1938 - Saturday 5th September, 2009)

WIVES:
Mrs. Ganiat Ibukun Fawehinmi
Mrs. Sadiat Abike Fawehinmi

CHILDREN & SPOUSES
Mohammed Fawehinmi
Saheed & Jolomi Fawehinmi
Basirat & Tunji Biobaku
Hafusat & Tunde Oni
Toyin & Peter Komolafe
Idiat & Saliu Aliyu
Simbi & Tola Osho
Rabiat & Lanre Morakinyo
Aminat & Philip Eboka
Rukayat & Tunde Adelakun
Mubarak Fawehinmi
Yusuf & Morenkeji Fawehinmi
Kamal & Oluwakemi Fawehinmi
Tajudeen Fawehinmi
Miss. Aishat Fawehinmi

GRAND-CHILDREN:
Oladeni Biobaku
Adedoyin Biobaku
Abiodun Oni
Busayo Oni
Bayo Oni
Bunmi Oni
Emmanuel Komolafe
Elisha Komolafe
Oluwaseun Osho
Oluwaseyi Osho
Oluwasemilore Osho
Oluwafikunayomi Fawehinmi
Taiwo Fawehinmi
Kehinde Fawehinmi
Jadesola Morakinyo
Folajimi Morakinyo
Khadijat Aliyu
Ameenat Aliyu
Salihu Aliyu
Joshua Eboka
Marilyn Ifeoluwa Ihioma Eboka
Chisom Aria Eboka
Folafoluwa Adelekun
Mofifunoluwa Fawehinmi
Ore-Oluwa Go Lan Fawehinmi
Ire-Oluwakitan Adasa Fawehinmi

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FOR AND ON BEHALF OF
THE FAMILY

Five years on

IN LOVING AND EVERGREEN MEMORY



Brig. Gen. Anthony Ukpo (rtd.), KSS

July 1947 – September 2021

Five years have passed since you left us, yet the memory of you remains as vivid as ever. Your wisdom, your warmth and your quiet strength continue to guide everything we do. You lived with honour, served with distinction and loved without measure. We miss you every day.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon him.

Fondly remembered by his wife, Sally Ufuoma Ukpo; his children, Yegwa and Obiebelem Ukpo, Anthony Jr. and Isabelle Ukpo, and Marie-Thérèse Ukpo-Oguntayo and Kayode Oguntayo; his grandchildren, Anna Ukpo, May Ukpo and Noëlle Oguntayo; and the Ukpo family.

Mr. Yegwa Ukpo
on behalf of the Ukpo family

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'Different Administrators, Familiar Problems In NFF Since 1970'
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INSIDE STUFF WITH MARTINS OLOJA



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Why Should We Celebrate 'Daily Times' @100, FRCN @75?

'A Birthday Without The Birthday Child'

ON June 1, 2026, "Daily Times" (of Nigeria) turned 100 years. In April, 2025, Radio Nigeria / FRCN turned 75 years. This tribute is about two institutions that taught Nigeria how to read and hear itself. How did we mark it? With awards dinners in Abuja on Thursday this week. Marked with speeches in Abuja in April 2025. Yes, with a newspaper that no longer prints giving awards to citizens who should weep about dancing on the grave of Adeyemo Alakija's "Daily Times". With a radio station that has more than 30 stations but speaks in 30 whispers. That is not celebration. That is a funeral with cake.

This is a time of reflection, not celebration. The only way to celebrate "Daily Times" at 100 and "Radio Nigeria" at 75 is to recover them, restructure them, and restore them. Anything else is meretricious. Reason? "You don't celebrate a library by burning the books and giving awards in the ashes."

"DAILY TIMES" @ 100 - From "The Times" To "The Timid".

JUNE 1, 1926, Lagos: The "Daily Times" was born. Founded by **Adeyemo Alakija, Richard Akinwande Savage, Ernest Ikoli** and others. It was not just a newspaper. It was Nigeria's first draft of itself. In the 1950s and 60s, "Daily Times" was the biggest newspaper in Africa. Circulation: over 400,000. Later, "Sunday Times" under the famous **Gbolabo Ogunsanwo** doubled the data. Correspondents in London, New York, Accra, Harare etc. "The New York Times" once sent a delegation to study it. That is how big we were. Even Cecil King, the British press baron, once bought a stake. Not to colonise it, but because he saw the commercial and editorial power of a black nation learning to document and talk to itself.

By the 1980s, "Daily Times" had buildings, (real estate) in Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, Port Harcourt. It had a printing press that could print 100,000 copies per hour. It had a photo library that documented independence, civil war, coups, democracy, politics, policy, education, etc. Then came military intervention in politics. And later, civilian intervention in business.

The 2004 sale: The Obasanjo administration sold "Daily Times" to Folio Communications, a private company. The argument: government should not run business. Fair enough. But what happened next was beyond privatisation. It was liquidation of a critical national asset by neglect.

Today, "Daily Times" does not print. It does not have newsboys. It does not have a functional newsroom. Nor does it have a boardroom. It has a carcass of not-fit-for purpose warehouses in Lagos. It has a website. It gives awards that trigger a bumper publication for awardees only. Let that sink in: Africa's once largest newspaper is now giving awards without publishing the news it was born to publish. Meanwhile, "The Punch" founded in 1970 — still printing. "The Guardian" founded 1983 — still printing. "Vanguard" founded in 1984 — still printing. So the question is not "why did others survive?" The question is: Why did we sell the crown jewel to people who had no interest in the crown? That is how not to celebrate 100 years.

RADIO NIGERIA @ 75 - From The Voice of The People To 30 Fragments

SIMILARLY, in April, 1950, the Nigerian Broadcasting Service began. In 1957, it became "Radio Nigeria". In 1978, it became FRCN. For 75 years, it has been in every village, every market, every barracks via Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Pidgin, English. During war, during peace, during Ebola, during COVID. Radio Nigeria is the reason a farmer in Sokoto and a student in Enugu



Minister of Information, Idris Malagi

heard the same national anthem at 6am. But today, FRCN operates about 30 stations, with 30 budgets, 30 DGs in practice, and one (1) federal headache. Meanwhile we also have: "NTA": over 75 stations and channels. "Voice of Nigeria": 1 short-wave station talking to the world. Three public broadcasters. Three boards. Three DGs. Three salaries. One mandate: serve the public.

Early this week in Lagos, **Bimbo Oloyede**, the first female presenter of Network News on NTA, launched a legacy book, **"Communication and Media in Nigeria: Celebrating Bimbo Oloyede's Contribution to Five Decades of Theory, Practice and Transformation"** to mark her arrival on the 7th Floor two years ago. The hall was full. **Engr. Vincent Maduka**, 90 years old, first Director General of NTA, inherited from Western Nigeria Television (WNTV), which was seized by the military in 1977, was there.

Almost all the living broadcasters who grew up when there was one public broadcaster were there. That gathering was the real celebration. Because it remembered when we had one voice, one vision, one BBC-style institution.

What we have now is fragmentation. That is how not to celebrate 75 years.

The crime of selling institutional memory: Here is what we lost when we sold "Daily Times" carelessly:

1. **The Library:** "Daily Times" had the richest photo and newspaper archive in West Africa: 1926 to 2004. Independence speeches. Azikiwe's editorials. Civil war photos. Fela's court cases, colonial footprints, etc. That archive should have been digitised and should have been competing with the "Library of Congress" for research grants. Instead it is in a warehouse, that may have decayed.
2. **The Brand Equity:** "Daily Times" is a brand older than 90% of Nigerian companies. You cannot build that in 10 years. We sold it for quick cash.
3. **The Training Ground:** Every major editor at a time in Nigeria passed through "Daily Times": Tony Momoh. Sam Amuka-Pemu. Segun Osoba. Tola Adeniyi. Haroun Adamu. Ray Ekpu. Dele Giwa. Stanley Macebuh. Lade Bonuola. Femi Kusa. Onyema Ugochukwu, etc. We sold the academy, recklessly.

Selling "Daily Times" to investors who had no plan to run a newspaper is like selling Aso Presidential Villa to a hotelier and calling it reform. The new owners are not evil. They are businessmen. But they bought assets, not mission. And the mission died. What do we then celebrate?

Again, the curiosity of three public broadcasters

LET'S do the math. FRCN: 30 stations + HQ Abuja. NTA: 75 stations + HQ. AbujaVON: 1 station + HQ Abuja. Three HR departments. Three engineering departments. Three newsrooms covering the same federation.

What does "BBC" do? One corporation. TV + Radio + Online. What does "SABC, Africa" do? One corporation. What does "Ghana Broadcasting Corporation" do? One corporation. What do we do? We have "Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation" in theory, but three "Broadcasting Corporations" in practice. The result: 1. **Diluted budget.** NTA gets capital vote, FRCN gets overhead, VON gets nothing. 2. **Duplicated coverage.** 3 crews at Aso Villa. 3. **No global voice.** VON is weak because it has no TV like "VoA" and no domestic base.

I have argued for years: Merge FRCN + NTA + VON into **NIGERIA BROADCASTING CORPORATION,** NBC. One Board of Trustees, (not Directors). One CEO. One budget. One mandate: serve the federation, not just the federal government.

That is how BBC serves Britain. That is how SABC serves South Africa. That is how we can celebrate 75 years of "Radio Nigeria". Not by cutting anniversary cake while transmitters are down.

What a real celebration looks like: If we are serious, here is what June 1, 2026 and Dec 1, 2025 should have looked like:

For "Daily Times" @100:

1. **Recovery or resale to living legends/ successful newspaper barons:** The Federal Government should use right of first refusal to buy back the "Daily Times" brand and assets from the current holders. Or force a resale to a consortium of media veterans: Segun Osoba, Sam Amuka, Tola Adeniyi, Yemi Ogunbiyi, Lade Bonuola, Ajibola Ogunshola, Tokunbo Awolowo, Nduka Obaigbena, Frank Aigbogun, etc. People who understand that a newspaper is not real estate.
2. **Digitise the archive:** Partner with Google, Library of Congress, and five Nigerian universities. Put 100 years of "Daily Times" online. Charge subscriptions. That archive alone can make $2-5m a year.
3. **Re-launch as "Daily Times" digital + Weekend Print.** If you can't afford daily print in 2026, you need a **"Sunday Times"** with analysis, with history, with the weight of 100 years before you can recapitalise for daily print.
4. **Build the "Daily Times" Museum:** At the old Lagos HQ. Charge tourists. Show kids what journalism looked like.

For Radio Nigeria @75:

1. **Pass a Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation Bill:** Merge FRCN + NTA + VON. One law. One board. One purse. 2. **Build NBC Digital:** One app. Radio + TV + Podcast. For diaspora. Monetize it. 3. Celebrate the people: Honour George Bako, Vincent Maduka, Christopher Kolade, James Audu, Tony Iredia, Bimbo Oloyede, Bisi Olatinlo, Soni Irabor, John Momoh, and others who built the organic broadcasting industry. Give them equity in the new NBC, not just plaques. That is celebration. Not awards without newspapers and quality audiences.

The philosophy behind this piece: You can't celebrate decline and mediocrity. We have a culture problem in Nigeria: We celebrate anniversaries of institutions we have killed. We celebrate 60 years of independence with 'Electricity Distribution Companies still failing. We celebrate 100 years of "Daily Times" without a single copy on the newsstand. We celebrate 75 years of "Radio Nigeria" while youth listen to podcasts. This is a culture of low expectations. Digital technology in 2026 does not reward nostalgia. It rewards relevance. If the organic "Daily Times" were alive today, it would be **Substack + YouTube + Data journalism.** If the classic "Radio Nigeria" were customer-centric today, it would be BBC Sounds + **TikTok** news. But you cannot innovate what you have abandoned. And here is the thing, we can't celebrate a bundle of mediocrity and call it legacy. Legacy is what you hand over, not what you hand out as awards.

The economic case: Let's talk money, because that is the only language that moves government. **"Daily Times" Archive:** "The New York Times" archive earns $15m annually from licensing. If we digitise "Daily Times" and sell access to universities globally, we can earn $2-5m per year. For 100 years. That is better than selling the building. **Merged NBC:** Three broadcasters = 3x overhead. Merge them, save N30bn annually. Use it to buy content, pay staff, and build NBC Studios in Lagos and Abuja to compete with Netflix Naija. This is not expenditure. This is investment. **What the Lagos gathering for Bimbo Oloyede taught us:** Bimbo Oloyede's book launch was not just a book. It was a rebuke. 90-year-old **Vincent Maduka**, an engineer inherited from FG-seized WNTV, who ran **NTA** when it was one, when the idea was "one Nigeria, one television, was there. Today, we have undone that idea. We have three TVs called one. The elders from Radio and Television in that room were saying without words: "Bring back the institution. Not the party." That is the template for celebrating. Gather the living, apologise to the dead institutions, and rebuild.

Here is the denouement our leaders should reflect on: June 1, 1926 gave us "Daily Times" April, 1950 gave us "Radio Nigeria". They are not just media houses. They are Nigeria's institutional memory. To celebrate them with dinners while the newspaper does not print and the radio does not lead is to insult our ancestors. The only way to celebrate is to recover and restructure them. Recover "Daily Times". Buy it back. Digitise it. Relaunch it. Let it compete with NYT, not just with blogs. Restructure "Radio Nigeria": Merge FRCN, NTA, VON into "Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation". One voice, global reach. Fund Memory: Budget for archives, not just for awards. If we do not do this, in 10 years our children will ask: "Daddy, what was "Daily Times"?

And we will show them a website and an award plaque. That will be the real tragedy. We cannot celebrate decline. We cannot celebrate a culture of low expectation in a 21st century that digital technologies shape every minute. We must celebrate by rebuilding. Reason: a nation that forgets how to document and speak to itself through digital journalism has already begun to die.

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