

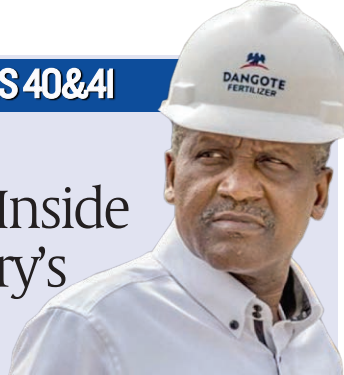
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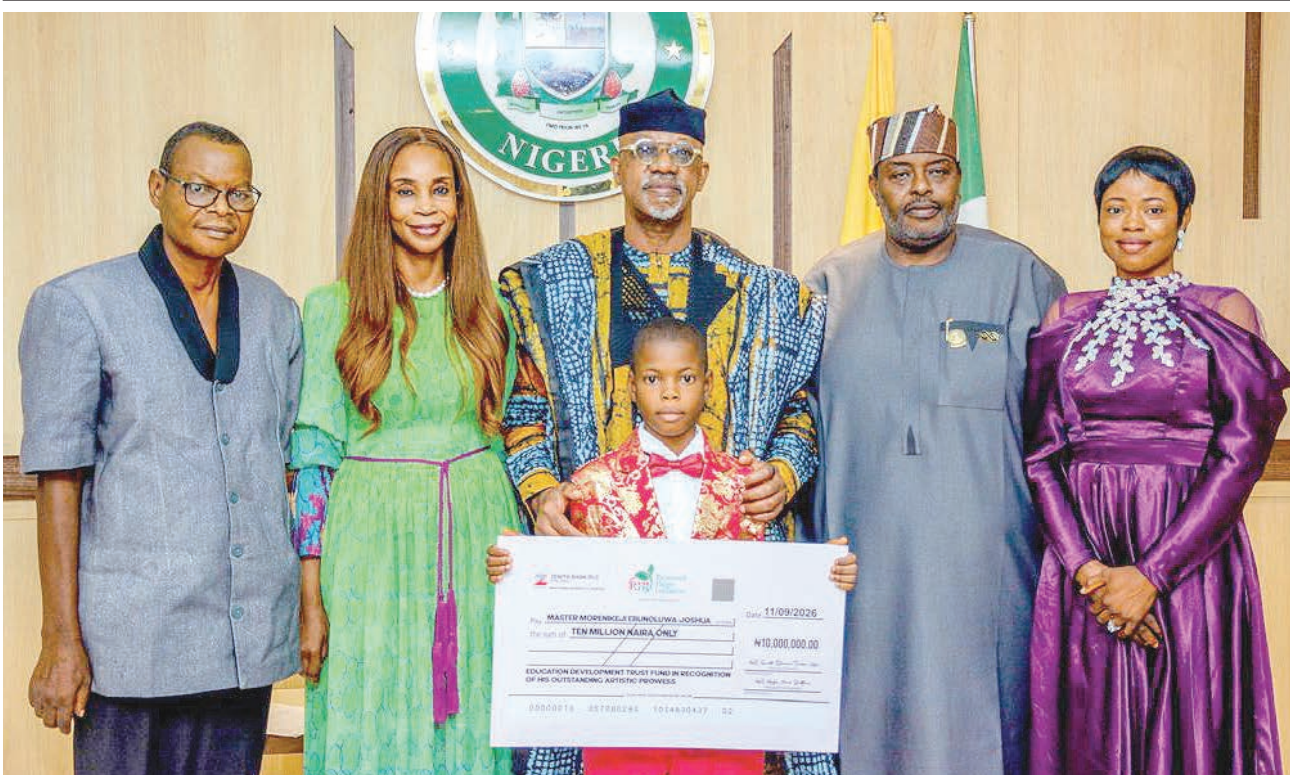


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Father of the 12-year-old artist who recently presented a portrait of the First Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, to her in Abeokuta, Mr Bosun Morenikeji (left); Senior Special Assistant, Public Administration, Office of the First Lady of Nigeria, Mrs Adeola Bali; Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun; Hon. Wahab Alawiye-King, Senior Special Assistant on Public Affairs and Strategy, Office of the First Lady of Nigeria, Hon. Wahab Alawiye-King; the artist's mother, Mrs Taiwo Morenikeji; and the young artist, Ebunoluwa Morenikeji, holding a dummy cheque of N10 million, representing the cash gift promised her by Senator Oluremi Tinubu in Abeokuta. STORY ON PAGE 43

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News

NASS Suspends Official Visits To South Africa Over Xenophobic Attacks

From Sodiq Omolaoye, John Akubo (Abuja) and Ngozi Egenuka (Lagos)

THE National Assembly (NASS) has suspended all official visits to South Africa and ordered a boycott of legislative activities hosted or organised by South African authorities over continuing reports of xenophobic attacks against Nigerians and other African nationals.

This came as Cameroon has identified agriculture, energy and transport as key areas where stronger economic co-operation with Nigeria could deepen trade and investment between the two countries.

According to a statement issued on Friday by the Clerk to the National Assembly, Kamoru Ogunlana, the NASS took the decision following consultations between the leadership of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Under the resolution, all official visits to South Africa by the National Assembly, its committees, lawmakers, officials and staff have been suspended until further notice.

The boycott also covers conferences, seminars, workshops, parliamentary meetings, legislative ex-

- **Cameroon Seeks Stronger Ties With Nigeria**
- **Lists Agriculture, Energy, Transport As Key Areas**

changes and other programmes organised or hosted by South African legislative authorities.

The National Assembly said the ban extends to both physical and virtual participation in South African-hosted legislative activities.

The development followed what the lawmakers described as “grave concern” over continuing reports of xenophobic attacks, violence, intimidation, destruction of property and other forms of hostility against Nigerians and other African nationals living in South Africa.

The National Assembly leadership said it was particularly concerned by reports of Nigerians being killed, injured and displaced, with some forced to abandon their businesses, investments, homes and other properties.

It said the incidents had continued despite repeated appeals by the Nigerian Government and other stakeholders to the South African authorities to take decisive measures to protect Nigerians and other foreign nation-

als and bring perpetrators of xenophobic violence to justice.

“In view of these developments and following consultations between the Leadership of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the National Assembly has resolved to suspend all official visits to the Republic of South Africa and to boycott South African-hosted or South African-organised legislative activities and engagements until further notice,” the statement read.

The leadership acknowledged the intervention of the Federal Government and other

stakeholders, including efforts to assist affected Nigerians and facilitate the evacuation of Nigerian nationals from South Africa. The National Assembly, however, stressed that its decision was not intended to undermine Nigeria’s long-standing historical, diplomatic and people-to-people relations with South Africa. Rather, it said the measure was aimed at expressing its concern over the safety, dignity and welfare of Nigerians living and conducting legitimate businesses in the country. The lawmakers called on the South African Government to

take urgent and concrete measures to protect Nigerians and other African nationals within its territory and prevent further xenophobic attacks.

They also demanded thorough investigations into reported incidents, the arrest of suspected perpetrators and the prosecution of those found culpable in accordance with the law.

The Clerk to the National Assembly has consequently been directed to communicate the resolution to senators, members of the House of Representatives, committees, departments, directorates, officials and staff to ensure strict compliance. The leadership also called on the leadership of state Hous-

es of Assembly to take note of the decision and consider adopting similar measures.

The National Assembly said it would continue to monitor developments concerning the safety and welfare of Nigerians in South Africa.

The lawmakers added that the suspension and boycott would remain in force until further notice, subject to review by the leadership as circumstances warranted.

The Director of Investment Promotion at the Investment Promotion Agency of Cameroon, Emmanuel Tamungang, called for stronger ties with Nigeria while speaking on the sidelines of the Invest in Lagos and Expo Forum held in Lagos.

Shettima Leads Nigeria’s Push For Deeper BRICS Partnerships In India

From Terhamba Daka, Abuja

VICE President Kashim Shettima has arrived in New Delhi, India, to represent President Bola Tinubu at the 18th BRICS Leaders’ Summit, as Nigeria seeks to deepen economic and diplomatic partnerships with member and partner countries of the bloc.

The summit, being held under the theme, ‘Building Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability,’ provides Nigeria with an opportunity to expand trade and investment ties while advancing cooperation in critical sectors of the economy.

Shettima is leading a high-level Nigerian delegation comprising the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu; Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole; Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani; Minister of Environment, Balarabe Abbas Lawal; among other senior government officials.

Ahead of the summit, Odumegwu-Ojukwu said Nigeria would use its participation to explore new partnerships and investment opportunities in agriculture, technology, artificial intelligence (AI), trade, the digital economy and other strategic areas.

The minister said Nigeria was particularly interested in drawing from India’s experience in leveraging technology and artificial intelligence

to create opportunities for its large youth population.

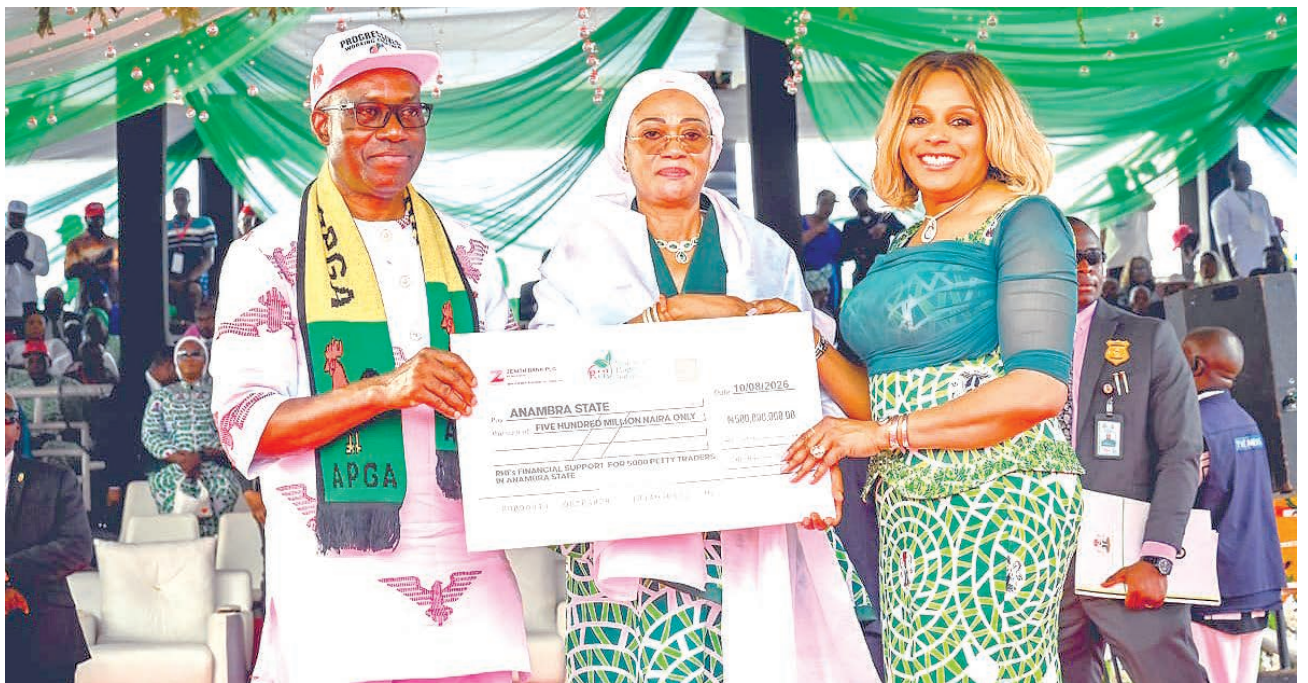
“India is firm in its expertise in agriculture and, of course, even in the digital economy. In fact, prior to this, we had a session dealing with women in the digital economy and artificial intelligence, and we are leveraging India’s greatest strength, which is in the engagement of its youth population,” she said.

Similarly, Oduwole said the Tinubu administration was working to deepen Nigeria’s trade relationship with India, which she said had previously reached about \$14 billion.

She disclosed that major investors of Indian origin had indicated interest in meeting the Nigerian delegation, stressing that Nigeria also maintains significant trade relationships with several BRICS countries.

“And so, deepening those relationships will further strengthen the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s administration. India used to buy Nigerian oil quite a lot, so we are looking at how to expand that with everything going on in the world,” Oduwole said.

At the summit, Shettima is expected to join leaders of BRICS member and partner countries, as well as representatives of invited international organisations, for high-level deliberations on inclusive global growth, resilience, innovation and sustainable development.



Anambra State Governor, Charles Soludo (left); wife of the President, Oluremi Tinubu; and wife of the Governor, Nonye Soludo during the presentation of Renewed Hope Initiative Financial support for 5000 petty traders in Anambra State.

Fresh Crisis Looms In Varsities As ASUU Threatens Strike

From Owede Agbajileke (Abuja) and Oluwole Ige (Osogbo)

THE relative calm in Nigeria’s public universities may soon be disrupted, as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has threatened to reactivate its suspended nationwide strike “without any further notice” unless the federal and state governments urgently address the outstanding issues affecting university lecturers.

In a strongly worded statement titled, ‘Why ASUU May Go on Strike Again,’ issued by its President, Prof. Christopher Piwuna, on Friday, the union warned that the poor implementation of the 2025 Federal Government-ASUU Agreement, unpaid salaries and unremitted third-party deductions were driving Nigeria’s public universities towards another industrial crisis.

ASUU said its emergency National Executive Council meeting held on September 5, 2026, resolved to notify the government and other stakeholders that the union could call its members out on strike within the shortest possible time.

“Unless immediate and concrete steps are taken to fully and comprehensively address issues bordering the welfare and well-being of Nigerian academics, ASUU-NEC will not accept any blame for calling out its members on a nationwide strike action within the shortest time possible,” the union said.

The union said three-and-a-half months’ salaries out of the seven-and-a-half months withheld under the Buhari administration remained unpaid, despite

- **Alleges Poor Implementation Of The 2025 FG-ASUU Agreement**
- **Chides Adeleke For Extending UNIOSUN VC’s Tenure**

acknowledging that President Bola Tinubu had released four months.

It said the unpaid salaries had caused lecturers’ “enormous financial and psychological discomforts,” adding that the withheld income had lost more than 50 per cent of its value to devaluation since 2022.

The Union also alleged that billions of naira deducted from lecturers’ salaries for pension contributions, staff cooperative societies and union check-off dues had not been properly remitted for several months.

It warned that it was “fully prepared” to call out its members if nothing concrete was done to resolve the deductions issue.

ASUU also took aim at state governments over implementation of the 2025 agreement, commending Abia State Governor, Alex Otti, and state slike Bauchi, Ekiti, Ogun, Benue, Yobe, Adamawa, Kebbi, Katsina and Borno for commencing implementation.

It said Kano, Edo, Plateau, Taraba, Gombe and Bayelsa had pledged to begin implementation in September or October 2026, while warning other governors against allowing their universities to slide into “industrial crisis of monumental proportions.”

The union also condemned the reported two-year tenure extension granted to the Vice-Chancellor of Osun State University, Prof. Clement Adebooye, by Governor Ademola Adeleke.

ASUU argued that the university’s law

provides for a single five-year tenure for the vice-chancellors and accused the governor of setting a bad precedent by hurriedly amending the law to accommodate the extension.

The union warned that the development could reignite rancour, sycophancy and administrative witch-hunt in the university system.

ASUU further criticised the Federal Government’s handling of the broader economic situation, arguing that the reported macroeconomic growth had not translated into improved living conditions for Nigerians.

It backed the call by the President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Joe Ajaero, for an immediate review of the national minimum wage, saying workers’ purchasing power needed protection through the indexing of wages to inflation.

The union called on students, parents, media practitioners, labour leaders and other Nigerians to intervene in the “brewing crisis” before it escalates.

“ASUU cannot guarantee uninterrupted academic calendar at the expense of the existential needs of our members,” it declared.

The union said its doors remained open for dialogue with the Federal and state governments, but warned Nigerians against blaming ASUU if it was forced to resume its suspended strike over the government’s failure to provide a satisfactory response to its demands.

News

Ogun APC Fully Ready For 2027 — Abiodun

From Azeez Olorunlomu, Abeokuta

THE All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ogun State is fully prepared for the 2027 general election, Governor Dapo Abiodun has declared. Abiodun spoke on Thursday when thousands of party supporters and members of Caucus 7202 converged on the Dipo Dina International Stadium, Ijebu-Ode, for a mega rally in support of the party's governorship candidate, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, popularly known as Yayi.

The rally, which drew supporters from the 20 local councils of the state, underscored the growing mobilisation by the APC ahead of the elections and provided a major platform for the party and its support groups to reaffirm their commitment to victory in 2027.

Addressing the gathering, Abiodun said the massive turnout was a clear demonstration of the APC's strength, unity and readiness for the elections, noting that the party had built a formidable grassroots structure across the state.

He said the achievements of his administration over the past seven years had provided a strong platform for the APC to seek the continued confidence of the people of Ogun State.

The governor also com-

mended the peaceful conduct of the party's activities, describing the emergence of its candidates, particularly Adeola, as a significant development in the political history of the state.

According to him, the unity and maturity displayed by party members had strengthened the APC and positioned it for victory in the coming elections.

Abiodun expressed confi-

dence in Adeola's ability to provide effective leadership if elected governor, citing his experience, exposure and years of service in the public sector.

He charged APC members and supporters to intensify grassroots mobilisation, stressing the need to take the party's message and achievements to every ward and community across the state.

The governor also reaffirmed Ogun's commitment to de-

living two million votes for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the 2027 presidential election.

Adeola, in his remarks, described Abiodun as a "silent achiever," saying the governor's seven years in office had witnessed monumental achievements and laid a solid foundation for the future development of the state.

He pledged to build on the

achievements of the present administration and sustain the development trajectory of the state if elected.

The APC governorship candidate also dismissed claims of any working arrangement between him and opposition political parties ahead of the 2027 elections, urging APC members to remain vigilant and reject what he described as overtures from opposition elements.



Secretary to the Lagos State Government, Abimbola Salu-Hundeyin (left); Special Adviser to Lagos State Governor on Health, Dr. Kemi Ogunyemi; wife of the Lagos State Governor, Dr. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu; Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Tolani Sule; Chairman, All Progressives Congress (APC) Lagos State, Cornelius Ojelabi; Head of Service, Olabode Agoro and others during the official commissioning of the Ultra-Modern Hostel Facilities at Lagos State College of Nursing, Igando, Lagos... on Friday.

Education Minister Commends NHEF's National University Advancement Programme

By Debo Oladimeji

THE Minister of Education, Dr. Maruf Tunji Alausa, has commended the Nigeria Higher Education Foundation (NHEF) for its National University Advancement Programme Forum.

The minister also directed that all universities' advancement offices should be under the Office of the Vice Chancellor.

Speaking in Abuja at the opening ceremony of the first National University Advancement Programme Forum meant for the vice chancellors and officials working in the advancement offices of federal universities, organised by the

NHEF in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Education, Alausa said the vice chancellors of Nigerian universities need to rebuild their advancement offices and staff them with knowledgeable people.

"Take the advancement offices away from under the registrar; bring them under the office of the vice chancellor. The 18 universities' vice chancellors that are here, I want you to send out a memo and tell all your colleagues that the Minister of Education has directed that all university advancement offices must be under the Office of the Vice Chancellor effective immediately. "You should put a tenure, at

least five years, for your director of advancement, which at your liberty can be renewed. The final beneficiary will be your institution, your students and, more importantly, you. It is your legacy. So, protect them. Those offices should be under your purview. And give them all the attention.

"The NHEF has developed a technology platform to help you build your data. We are going to vet the platform. The platform will be transferred over to the Federal Government. It will be the Federal Government's property. So, get all your advancement offices to use that platform. We will pay for it. But your data will be individual to you. The

Federal Ministry of Education will not see any data. We will just help you post it. Every institution will have its own log in. But we are supporting the technology platform for you," Alausa said.

He urged the vice chancellors to continue to give the advancement officers and directors all the support they need financially, advising them to ensure that they attend training and also build a pool of staff.

He added: "Don't just put one person in your advancement office. They will retire at some point. You don't want to start all over again. You start building institutional memory."

Fund Women As Economic Assets, Not Beneficiaries, Says Olori Atuwatse III

By Suliya Tella

QUEEN Consort of the Warri Kingdom, Olori Atuwatse III, has called on governments, financial institutions and global investors to stop treating African women as beneficiaries of charity and instead recognise them as economic assets capable of driving sustainable growth across the continent.

Speaking at the AIM Congress 2026 during a session themed, 'World Governments as Incubators for Tolerance and Shared Growth,' Olori said financing women should focus on strengthening their agency and entrepreneurial capacity rather than benevolence, stressing that African women already power the continent's economy but remain grossly un-

derfunded.

She said the Royal Iwre Foundation established the EstablishHER initiative after discovering that many women-owned businesses remained small not because of lack of ability, but because of limiting beliefs and poor access to mentorship.

"We invest in the whole woman first, and then her enterprise. Before anyone sees a business plan, she sees a counsellor, a therapist and a coach. Mindset first is not soft; it is what makes the money work," she said.

Olori Atuwatse III disclosed that results from the foundation's 2025 Academy showed women who could identify their limiting beliefs increased from 45 to 81 per cent, while profit tracking rose from 37 to 78 per cent. She added that the founda-

tion had also launched the EstablishHER Entrepreneurship Fund, describing it as patient capital designed to support women-owned businesses beyond short-term lending cycles.

Speaking on the impact of the programme, the Warri Queen said six graduates had independently launched the HER3000 Initiative with the goal of training 3,000 women in vocational skills, financial literacy and entrepreneurship, while another beneficiary, Anabel Ezewu, had trained over 100 women and youths free of charge through five editions of her own programme.

She noted that many successful women entrepreneurs, including Tessy Emekarhe of Warri, had expanded opportunities for others despite never being

recognised by financial institutions as investable businesses.

The Olori urged investors to adopt longer-term financing models, replace collateral-based lending with cash-flow and guarantee-backed financing, and prioritise leadership development alongside access to capital.

"A woman who has been established goes on to establish others. Agency does not sit still in a woman's business; it travels. Women reinvest up to 90 per cent of their income back into their communities. "Do not finance the African woman as a beneficiary. Finance her as an economic asset. Fund formation, not just facilities; price patience into your investments and measure the women they empower, not just the women you train," she stated.

Japan, Africa Deepen Creative Ties As Toei Animation Backs Nigerian Studio

By Joseph Onyekwere

A new chapter in Japan-Africa creative collaboration is unfolding through animation, with Japanese animation giant, Toei Animation, announcing an investment and production partnership with Nigeria's CR motion+ to develop a new animated short film based on the studio's original intellectual property, Trials of the Spear.

The partnership, announced by the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), represents a significant development in efforts to build commercially viable links between Japan's world-renowned animation industry and Africa's rapidly expanding creative sector.

The project emerged from the TAIDO African Animation Challenge, a talent development initiative implemented by JETRO in collaboration with Arc & Beyond and other partners to identify, mentor and develop animation talent across Africa.

Under the programme, two African animation studios, Animax FYB Studios of Ghana and CR motion+ of Nigeria were selected through JETRO's Africa Business Desk to participate in a six-month mentorship programme with Japanese animation professionals.

Anidugbe Makes Agric Accessible To Professionals With Daily Food Farms

By Balikisi Ademuyiwa

ENTREPRENEUR and creative executive, Mofoluwato Anidugbe, has ventured into agriculture with the launch of Daily Food Farms, a managed agricultural platform aimed at making land ownership and food production more accessible to professionals and individuals.

Anidugbe, who serves as Vice President and A&R at the music label where he works alongside his brother, singer Kizz Daniel, said his experience in entertainment, fashion and hospitality has shaped his approach to building businesses and creating systems that can grow beyond him.

He said his interest in agriculture developed from a simple concern about the rising cost of food and the question of where the food consumed by Nigerians comes from.

According to him, further research into the agricultural sector revealed an opportunity to create a model that allows people to participate in farming without necessarily becoming full-time farmers.

"I don't see agriculture as me suddenly becoming a farmer. I see it as another chapter of the same story which is building something, putting the right people and systems around it, and hopefully creating something that can outgrow me."

2027: Group Unveils Odu'a House Initiative To Deepen Political Debate In S'West

From Azeez Olorunlomu, Abeokuta

As part of efforts to improve the quality of political discourse, strengthen democratic accountability and promote development-oriented leadership in the South-West ahead of the 2027 general election, a new regional political platform, the Odu'a House Initiative, has been unveiled in Ibadan, Oyo State.

The initiative, conceived by the Association of Retired Heads of Service and Permanent Secretaries in the South-West, is modelled after Chatham House, the London-based international affairs think tank, and is expected to provide a neutral and intellectually engaging forum where political aspirants can present, defend and debate their programmes before the electorate.

The association said the platform would also establish a properly documented archive of political engagements, policy proposals and ideas for the benefit of scholars, journalists, policymakers and future generations.

The Regional President of the association and former Chairman of the Ogun State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Demola Badejo, disclosed details of the initiative when he led members of the association on a visit to the management of the Tribune Group in Ibadan.

Badejo was accompanied by the Regional General Secretary, Pastor (Mrs) Adenike Olufadewa; Assistant General Secretary, Alhaji Adekunle Adegbite; and an Oyo State member, Adeyanju S.

Special

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Stale Curricula Produce Job-Market

As technology and emerging industries rapidly reshape the labour market, Nigerian universities continue to produce graduates whose academic training does not always translate into the practical skills employers require. The widening disconnect between university curricula and workplace demands is leaving graduates struggling to find relevant employment, while employers are increasingly forced to provide additional training. With countries such as China aggressively reshaping university programmes around emerging economic needs, MOYOSORE SALAMI examines what Nigeria can learn and what is already being done to close the gap.

MANY Nigerian graduates obtaining a university degree are expected to provide a pathway into employment. But as the labour market changes and employers demand new and practical skills, some graduates are finding that their academic qualifications alone are not enough to secure the opportunities they expected.

The gap between university education and the workplace has left some graduates seeking additional training, taking jobs unrelated to their fields of study or spending months searching for employment.

Oluwatimilehin Sotonade, a Political Science graduate, had expected her university education to prepare her for a career in non-governmental organisations, development organisations, government-related institutions and possibly the military. She also believed her degree would give her a strong foundation to secure employment after graduation.

But when she began searching for work, the reality was different. Sotonade told *The Guardian* that finding employment was more difficult than she had expected, as many of the opportunities she encountered either required experience she did not have or appeared to favour people with connections. She also found limited opportunities directly related to what she had studied.

Her search for employment also exposed skills she needed but had not adequately acquired during her university education. She realised that employers required practical and digital competencies, including administrative skills, communication, customer service and proficiency in Microsoft Office.

"I realised I needed several practical and digital skills, including administrative, communication, customer service, Microsoft Office, and other workplace-related skills. These were not adequately covered in my university education," she said.

To improve her chances of securing better opportunities, Sotonade began taking additional courses and training to develop the skills she lacked. While some of the courses were free, others required her to spend her own money, which she considered necessary to improve her chances of getting better employment.

Now working in a bank, she said the job helps her make ends meet, although it is not what she really wants to do.

Her experience has, however, changed her perception of what a university education should provide, particularly as she has had to acquire additional skills after graduation to remain competitive in the labour market.

"My experience has made me realise that a university degree alone is not enough; universities also need to equip students with practical, digital and industry-relevant skills that match the changing labour market," she said.

Similarly, a Mechanical Engineering graduate, David Eze, did not end up pursuing a conventional career in engineering after leaving university. He is now working as a product designer, a field that requires a different set of skills from those he formally acquired in the university.

He disclosed that moving into product design required him to learn skills outside his university curriculum, particularly around design processes, digital tools and understanding users' needs. Although his engineering background has remained useful in developing his analytical and problem-solving abilities, he had to acquire the specialised knowledge required for product design separately.

According to him, the transition was not necessarily a rejection of his university education, but an indication of how graduates increasingly have to adapt their skills to opportunities emerging outside their original disciplines.

"I studied Mechanical Engineering, but I eventually moved into product design. I had to learn a lot of things outside what I was taught in school because product design requires a different approach and different tools," he said.

He said his experience has made him realise that universities need to give students opportunities to develop transferable and practical skills that can allow them to move into emerging careers, rather than preparing them only for traditional jobs associated with their degrees.

Blessing Nwosu, a graduate of Biochemistry, found herself



University students during lecture

moving into digital marketing after graduation, despite having spent years preparing for a career in the sciences.

She said her university education gave her a strong academic foundation, but the jobs she encountered after graduation required competencies that were not part of her undergraduate training. Rather than remain unemployed while waiting for an opportunity in her field, she began learning digital marketing, content creation, social media management and basic analytics.

Nwosu said the transition was initially difficult because she had to learn how to use digital tools and understand how businesses communicate with customers, while also building a portfolio to demonstrate what she could do.

"I did not study anything related to marketing in school, so I had to start learning from the beginning. What I studied is still useful because it taught me how to research, analyse information and pay attention to details, but I needed another set of skills to enter the field I eventually chose," she said.

She eventually began taking on communications and marketing projects, which provided practical experience and helped her establish a career outside the discipline she studied.

Recent evidence suggests that the challenge extends beyond the number of jobs available. A World Bank analysis of Nigeria's labour market found that only about one in 10 workers occupies managerial, professional, technical or clerical positions requiring advanced skills. Even among Nigerians with post-secondary education, more than half were unable to secure such jobs, pointing either to a mismatch between the skills acquired through higher education and employer requirements, or to a shortage of high-skilled positions in the economy.

The mismatch is also reflected in the wider labour market. A 2026 report by Proten International found that nearly 60 per cent of employers surveyed considered Nigerian graduates inadequately prepared for their roles, while more than 55 per cent of graduates were working in fields unrelated to their academic backgrounds. The report identified gaps in communication, technical and digital skills among the concerns raised by employers.

The figures come against a labour market where simply being classified as employed does not necessarily mean a graduate has found productive or suitable work. Nigeria's current labour statistics count people as employed when they have worked for at least one hour during the reference period,

a measure that captures the country's large informal economy but does not necessarily show whether workers are in jobs that match their qualifications or provide adequate incomes.

The World Bank has similarly identified a skills mismatch as one of the challenges confronting young Africans, noting that curricula can evolve more slowly than economies and that universities have not always been designed with employers sufficiently involved in the process. It also points to an experience gap, where young people are expected to have workplace experience before they have had the opportunity to acquire it.

The consequences extend beyond individual graduates. The World Bank's 2026 Human Capital Index Plus report found that deficits in health, education and workforce skills are costing the country the equivalent of 111 per cent of future labour earnings. Nigeria's education pillar score was 64, compared with a median of 88 among lower-middle-income countries, while its tertiary education completion rate stood at 113 per cent.

The problem, therefore, may not be solved simply by producing more graduates. As the economy changes, universities are increasingly being asked to prepare students not only for existing professions but also for industries and occupations that are emerging around technology, digital services, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and other areas.

The World Bank's analysis of online job vacancies in Nigeria also pointed to changing demand for skills, providing evidence that employers are seeking capabilities that education and training systems need to track more closely.

The National Universities Commission (NUC), which regulates university education in Nigeria, has in recent years taken steps to make university programmes more responsive to changes in the economy and the labour market. The commission began the process of replacing the old Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) with the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS), which was unveiled in December 2022.

The new curriculum framework was designed to strengthen the relevance of university education and equip graduates with skills considered necessary for the changing world of work. Under the CCMAS, universities are expected to implement 70 per cent of the prescribed curriculum, while the remaining 30 per cent is left to individual institutions to develop according to their peculiarities and areas of strength.

The commission has also continued to introduce new

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Misfits

programmes under the framework. In 2025, NUC said 879 new programmes were introduced in Nigerian universities based on the CCMAS. It also disclosed that it was assessing Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), university-industry linkage offices and entrepreneurship development centres, while conducting labour-market surveys to identify the skills required by industry.

NUC's interventions also extend to entrepreneurship and emerging areas of knowledge. The commission has advocated the integration of entrepreneurship education into university programmes, while partnerships with industry organisations have focused on areas including innovation, digital skills, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and entrepreneurship.

However, evidence from the commission's own accreditation exercises shows that the existence of a revised curriculum does not necessarily translate into uniform practical skills acquisition across universities.

An accreditation report on the Statistics programme at the University of Uyo, following a visitation in December 2024, found that practical exercises did not adequately cover the curriculum and rated the acquisition of relevant hard and soft skills as average. Another accreditation report on Economics at the University of Ilesa noted that while students demonstrated entrepreneurship skills, they lacked soft skills in Economics.

These findings come against the experiences of graduates such as Sotonade, Eze and Nwosu, who acquired additional competencies after leaving university to move into or compete for jobs in fields different from their undergraduate training.

The situation also places attention on what happens between the development of a national curriculum framework and its implementation within individual universities. While the CCMAS provides institutions with room to introduce courses and content suited to their environment, the quality of practical exposure, industry engagement, digital training and other workplace competencies can still vary from one institution to another.

NUC's own framework recommends periodic review of academic programmes, with universities expected to review programmes at least once every five years. The continuing need for graduates to acquire skills outside their degree programmes, however, shows that curriculum relevance also depends on how quickly universities translate such reviews into what students learn and practise before graduation.

Education expert, Michael Adebayo said many Nigerian university curricula had not kept pace with the rapidly changing demands of the labour market.

Adebayo who is also the Managing Director/CEO, Oredian Education Resources Limited, noted that several programmes remained heavily theoretical and were still built around conventional disciplines, while employers increasingly required digital competence, innovation, problem-solving and practical industry skills.

He said Nigerian universities needed to embrace what he described as "new-age courses" that respond directly to emerging sectors and future workforce demands.

In the areas where the gap

between university training and employer expectations was most visible, he identified Information Technology, Engineering and the Medical Sciences.

Adebayo said employers increasingly required graduates who could apply knowledge practically, work with modern technologies, analyse problems and adapt quickly to changing professional environments. He therefore called for stronger practical training, digital skills, laboratory exposure and industry-based learning.

He also identified inadequate research capacity, limited funding, weak university-industry linkages and irregular academic calendars as some of the factors making it difficult for universities to update their curricula as industries and technology evolve.

"Without sustained investment in research and innovation, universities find it difficult to anticipate emerging trends and continuously revise their programmes," he said.

On strengthening the relationship between universities and employers, he advocated stronger and more structured university-industry collaboration, similar to practices in many developed economies.

He said universities should work directly with industries when designing and reviewing curricula, while programmes should incorporate internships, practical projects, industrial attachments and real-world problem-solving.

"This will produce graduates who are not only academically qualified but also practically competent and work-ready," he said.

He listed major lessons for universities and policymakers to include proactiveness, industry relevance and futuristic education.

He said universities needed to anticipate rather than simply respond to changes in the labour market, while policymakers should encourage flexible curricula, investment in research and technology, innovation-driven education and stronger collaboration between academia and industry.

"The objective should be to produce graduates who are prepared not merely for today's jobs, but for the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow," he said.

Over the past 12 years, China added about 21,000 undergraduate programmes while discontinuing or suspending about 12,000 that were considered no longer aligned with socioeconomic development needs, according to the country's Ministry of Education. In 2024 alone, 1,673 new programmes regarded as urgently needed for national strategies were established, while 1,670 were discontinued.

The restructuring has also involved programmes linked to artificial intelligence, intelligent manufacturing, data science, robotics and other emerging areas.

China's Ministry of Education said the adjustment was intended to make higher education respond more quickly to national strategies, technological development and market demand. Its system now includes an annual mechanism for updating the undergraduate programme directory, while universities are encouraged to conduct talent-demand forecasting before establishing programmes.

The approach was further demonstrated in the 2024 review, when 1,839 new undergraduate programmes were approved, 1,428

"University and industry must create platform for joint programmes where students work on real industry problems while still in school. A technology student, for example, should be able to work with a fintech company on a real product challenge. An economics student could analyse an actual market problem. A business student could work on a real go-to-market strategy. That creates a much healthier feedback loop: universities understand what industry needs, employers understand what students are being taught, and students graduate with a clearer understanding of where their knowledge fits in the real economy. Ultimately, universities produce knowledge and human capital, while industry provides an environment where that knowledge is tested and converted into economic value. The two should be much closer."

programmes were cancelled and 2,220 stopped admitting students. The new programme catalogue included areas such as carbon neutrality science and engineering, marine science and technology, intelligent molecular engineering, medical device engineering and several AI-related programmes.

The adjustment of programmes has therefore become part of a wider attempt to match the supply of university-trained workers with changing economic priorities.

Nigeria's own reforms through the CCMAS and the introduction of new programmes reflect a similar recognition that university education cannot remain static as industries change. The difference is also visible in the scale and regularity with which China reviews programmes that no longer correspond with its economic and technological priorities.

Curriculum gaps and the need for change

Chairman of the Editorial Board of The Guardian and former Vice-Chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Professor Wale Omole, said curriculum development had been a major part of his experience in academia, having worked on curricula from his time as a head of department and dean to his tenure as vice-chancellor.

Reflecting on his experience, Omole said Nigerian universities were not doing enough to ensure that their curricula remained responsive to changing needs.

He recalled that during his tenure as vice-chancellor, efforts were made to develop new curricula for the university, alongside investments aimed at improving the institution's capacity, including the establishment of a computer centre.

According to him, the experience reinforced the importance of continuously reviewing what universities teach and how students are prepared for life beyond the classroom.

Omole stressed the importance of change in institutions adding that institutional development required people to look beyond individual interests and work towards the wider good of organisations.

He said universities needed people who were willing to contribute to institutional development and make sacrifices for the advancement of others, noting that a lack of such commitment could hinder organisational progress.

Omole noted further that curriculum should not be understood only in terms of academic courses or technical knowledge. He recalled that the education system he experienced as a young person incorporated practical activities, discipline, personal responsibility and lessons that prepared students for everyday life.

He said students were taught practical skills and responsibilities, including maintaining their environment, cooking and taking care of themselves, while lessons and stories were also used to teach values and encourage comprehension and critical thinking.

Omole argued that some of these practical elements of education had been lost and should be reconsidered as part of preparing young people for life and work.

He said education should not only be about academic qualifications but should also equip young people with



Special Feature

All-encompassing Training Is Required To Change The Narrative—Omole

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practical knowledge and the ability to apply what they learn.

According to him, the curriculum should expose students to knowledge that is useful to their everyday lives and help them develop habits and competencies that remain valuable beyond school.

“Then what is most important is teaching them. So, when we are teaching them, they will love them,” he said.

Employers See A Different Gap

Chief Executive Officer, TradeStack, Ibrahim Lukman, said young graduates joining the organisation generally demonstrate intelligence, curiosity and willingness to learn, with many showing strong digital exposure and comfort with technology.

He, however, said there was often a significant gap between academic preparedness and workplace readiness, noting that the ability to pass examinations or understand theoretical concepts does not necessarily translate into solving real business problems, communicating professionally, taking ownership of tasks or working effectively within a team.

“One of the biggest gaps I have observed is discipline. Some young people need significant guidance around punctuality, consistency, accountability, attention to detail and following through on commitments. They sometimes expect very detailed instructions before taking initiative. There is also a growing mentorship gap. Interestingly, even with the rise of AI and easy access to information, young professionals still need human guidance. AI can give you an answer, but it does not teach you professional judgement, integrity, emotional intelligence, work ethic or how to navigate ambiguity. So I would say the talent is there, but workplace readiness still needs to be deliberately

Abullahi Yusufu

developed,” he said.

On where graduates require the most additional training, Lukman identified problem-solving, communication, discipline and ownership, alongside teamwork, project management, critical thinking, leadership, commercial awareness and professional ethics.

“The areas where I see the greatest need are not necessarily academic knowledge, but the practical competencies that allow someone to turn knowledge into value.

“The first is problem-solving. In the workplace, problems rarely come neatly packaged like examination questions. You have to understand the problem, ask the right questions, research, make assumptions, test solutions and take responsibility for the outcome.

“The second is communication. Young professionals need to learn how to write professional emails, communicate with colleagues and clients, present ideas clearly, document their work and ask for help appropriately.

“Third is discipline and ownership. We have to teach people that being given a task means being responsible for the outcome, not simply completing an instruction. There is a difference between activity and productivity,” he said.

He added that AI literacy was increasingly important, but said young professionals needed to understand how to use artificial intelligence as a productivity and reasoning tool without allowing it to replace their own thinking.

“And increasingly, they need AI literacy. I don’t mean simply knowing how to prompt ChatGPT. They need to understand how to use AI as a productivity and reasoning tool without allowing it to replace their own thinking. The danger is

creating a generation that can generate answers very quickly but cannot independently determine whether those answers are correct,” he said.

Lukman said the nature of work had also changed rapidly, particularly in technology, fintech and digital businesses, where traditional professional roles increasingly require knowledge across different disciplines.

“The biggest change has been the speed at which technology is changing the nature of work. In technology, fintech and digital businesses, for example, you can no longer look at a role purely from a traditional professional perspective. A product manager needs to understand technology, data, customer behaviour and increasingly AI. A developer needs to understand security, business requirements and user experience. A designer needs to understand product strategy and user psychology.

“AI has accelerated this significantly. Some tasks that previously required hours of manual work can now be completed in minutes. This means the value of an employee is increasingly determined by their ability to think, make good decisions, solve problems and use technology effectively rather than simply perform repetitive tasks.

“We are moving from a world where access to information was the advantage to a world where the ability to interpret information, apply it and make sound decisions is the advantage.

“For young professionals, therefore, adaptability has become one of the most important skills. What you learn today may change significantly within a few years, so the ability to continuously learn is now almost as important as the qualification you hold,” he said.

On whether universities were keeping pace with those changes, Lukman acknowledged some progress but said the speed of change in industry remained significantly faster than the pace at which academic curricula were usually updated.

“There has been progress, but I don’t think the change is happening fast enough. Universities still play an extremely important role in developing intellectual capacity and providing foundational knowledge. However, the speed at which industry is changing is significantly faster than the speed at which academic curricula are usually updated.

“There can be a considerable difference between learning what a concept means and learning how that concept is applied in a real organisation.”

There’s No Serious Handshake Between Town And Gown – Egbewole

The University of Ilorin recently hosted the 37th Annual General Conference and Assembly of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (CVCNU), where pressing issues concerning the state of education and possible solutions to the challenges confronting the sector were dissected, analysed and addressed by university administrators. In this interview with OPEYEMI BABALOLA, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Prof. Wabab Egbewole, speaks on the crucial role of universities in producing employable graduates through relevant curricula, as well as the need to incorporate employers’ expectations and industry requirements into academic programmes.

From the experience of Vice-Chancellors, how significant is the gap between what Nigerian universities teach and the skills employers currently require from graduates?

WELL, I don’t know about what operates in other universities, but as far as the University of Ilorin is concerned, the skills gap that is needed in industry are already embedded in our own curriculum. Recall about two years ago, the National Universities Commission came up with what they call CCMAS, Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard, which has also emphasised the embedding of industry skills into the teaching of the courses. But more importantly, in our university, University of Ilorin, we have what we call UniLearning Inspire,

which is a programme that is done between us and nine industries across Nigeria, where their skill needs are also taught to the students as part of the process of preparing them for the world of work. So, the gap is being bridged gradually, and I believe that the skill sets that are needed in these industries are now being taught in the schools.

What are the biggest challenges universities face in updating curricula quickly enough to keep pace with technological and labour-market changes?

Well, by the National Universities Commission standards, it’s supposed to be every two-year review process. But we also appreciate the fact that the systemic design of universities will make it generally possible to meet the two-year cycle. But I believe that every university should design a process where every lecturer teaching a programme would be in a position to review, re-engineer and reposition the courses that he or she is teaching. To that extent, I believe it’s something that we should take seriously. For us as a university, we have an in-built mechanism of, even if you are not changing the curriculum, you are expected to update your courseware on an annual basis by incorporating new learning and updating the curricula. In terms of techno-

logical changes, we all know that technology is not static. Technology is dynamic. The rate at which technology is moving is what we will struggle to keep pace with. I believe that universities in Nigeria should endeavour to keep that pace. But we must also recognise the challenges that we have as a people in terms of finances, in terms of capacity, in terms of even technological development. As much as those challenges are there, which we must recognise, the only thing that I believe we should do as universities is to ensure that we put some process in place to continuously struggle to meet with technological development. I believe that if we consciously and deliberately have that mindset, we will not be left behind technologically.

How extensively are Nigerian universities currently working with industries on curriculum development, internships, practical projects and other forms of workplace exposure?

Well, like I said, because the CCMAS that was introduced by the National Universities Commission has provided a 30% intervention for designs for each university. So, I believe that

What I think is the gap that I see personally now is that there still exists no serious handshake between the universities and the industries. And this we should do consciously by ensuring that the skill sets of the industries are identified by the universities and incorporated in their curricula. But more importantly, the industry should also come to the universities to let them identify these skill sets for the use of their industries.

each university should be able to use the 30% window to ensure that we constantly do this engagement.

For instance, if the University of Ilorin wants to teach chemical engineering. NUC will provide the courses or the curriculum which is just 70%. They expect every university to provide the remaining 30% so that they can hone it, so that they can adapt it to their peculiar situation.

What changes do Vice-Chancellors believe are necessary to ensure that graduates leave university with not only academic qualifications but also the practical, digital and transferable skills required in today’s labour market?

Like I said earlier also, every university ought not to be producing graduates for graduates’ sake, but graduates for industry, or graduates for the society. And that is why the practical skills that will be needed should be embedded in the curriculum.



Egbewole



Choirs performing at the funeral service of a renowned veteran organist/music teacher, Rev. John Aina, at the Apostolic Faith Church Headquarters, in Lagos ...on Friday
PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN



Village Head, Mfamosing, Ntufam Paul Ntui (left); Procurement Director, HBM Nigeria Plc, Gabriel Ibiyemi; Member, Cross River State House of Assembly, Linus Bassey; Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Cross River State, Ekpenyong Cobhams; Group Chief Executive Officer, HBM Nigeria Plc, Lolu Alade-Akinyemi; Commissioner for Solid Minerals, Cross River State, Effiong Ekara, and Logistics Director, HBM Nigeria Plc, Osaze Aghatise, during the commissioning of CNG Mother Station at Mfamosing, Cross River.



Edo State Deputy Governor of Edo State, Dennis Idahosa (left) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Megastar Media Community/Convener, Megastar Man of the Decade Award, Dr. Adeniyi Ifetayo during presentation of letter of invitation to the Deputy Governor at the Government House, Benin to serve as one of the panelists at the Award Ceremony in October, 2026.



Business and Market Intelligence Analyst, Leadway Assurance, Emmanuel James (left); Head of Commercial Business Division, Leadway Assurance, Olawale Alao; Project Director, Insurance Sector Strengthening Programme (ISSP), Bukola Ifemade; Commissioner of Insurance, National Insurance Commission, Olusegun Omosehin; Project Manager, ISSP, Betty Adepoju, and Head, Corporate Services, Leadway, Niyi Abiola, at the official launch and unveiling of the Insurance sector strengthening program in Abuja

Metronotes

FG Appoints Awe As Pro-Chancellor/Chairman, FUTA Governing Council



Dr. Awe

THE Federal Government has appointed Dr. Olugbenga A. Awe as the new Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA). The letter conveying his appointment dated July 30, 2026 and signed by the Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, reads: "I write to convey approval for your appointment as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State. Your appointment takes effect from July 29, 2026." Awe replaces Her Excellency, Senator Nora Ladi Daduut, who has been appointed as the country's ambassador to South Korea. Awe is a distinguished physician, academic, entrepreneur, and visionary leader whose career reflects excellence in medicine, higher education, enterprise, and public-spirited service.

e-Waste: Stakeholders Partner To Tackle Renewable Energy

By Sunday Aikulola

TO tackle growing e-waste challenge associated with the nation's expanding renewable-energy sector, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), E-waste Producers Responsibility Organisation

Nigeria (EPRON) and E-Terra Technologies Limited have commenced conversations on possible collaboration. The engagement followed a facility tour of E-Terra's Materials Recovery and Recycling Facility (MRRF), Abule-Ado, Lagos, by UNIDO

and EPRON representatives, followed by a cross-section meeting on the responsible management of solar panels, inverters, batteries and other renewable-energy equipment at end-of-life. Technical Advisor, Division of Circular Economy and Green

Industry, UNIDO, Satoko Takenoshita said: "Developing appropriate systems for recovering and recycling end-of-life solar equipment, batteries and related technologies will be critical to ensuring a truly sustainable energy future."

World Physiotherapy Day: Gbagada General Hospital Seeks Promotion Of Healthy Living

By Suliyyat Tella

GBAGADA General Hospital, Lagos, has marked the 2026 World Physiotherapy Day with a Walk for Life exercise to promote physical activity, healthy living and awareness

of the role of physiotherapy in managing stroke and cardiovascular diseases. The walk, held on Tuesday, September 8, was organised as part of the hospital's week-long activities to commemo-

rate the a yearly event. Management and staff of the hospital participated in the exercise, which also provided an opportunity for workers to unwind and encourage one another to maintain an active

lifestyle. The theme of 2026 World Physiotherapy Day is "Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease," with the sub-theme, "Role of Physiotherapy in Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease."

inDrive Records 96% Surge In App Installs As Passengers Embrace Fair Choice

A GLOBAL mobility and delivery services platform, inDrive, is gaining traction among Nigerian consumers as the country's ride-hailing mar-

ket continues to evolve, recording a 96 per cent increase in app installs and emerging as the number one ride-hailing app in Nigeria by installs.

According to an independent third-party data from Sensor Tower, inDrive has continued to grow its active user base, further strengthening its position

in Nigeria's evolving ride-hailing market, as consumers increasingly turn to mobility options that offer affordability, and control over their rides.

Didi, Kura Rice Processors Launch Whole Grain Products Amid Nutrition Concerns

TWO Kano-based rice processors, Didi Rice Limited and Kura Brothers Limited, have launched their whole grain rice products, marking a significant step towards expanding access to locally produced

nutritious rice for households and institutional markets. The products were launched with support from TechnoServe Nigeria through the West African Fortified Parboiled Unpolished Rice

(WAFPUR) Project at an event in Kano that brought together representatives from government, the private sector, development organisations, traditional and religious institutions, consumer protection

agencies and the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. The launch came amid growing concerns around nutrition and the need to increase access to nutritious food options.

2027: Titi Fagbote Empowers Yewa North Women, Mobilises Support For Yayi

By Opeyemi Babalola

ACHIEFTAIN of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ogun State, Titi Fagbote, popularly known as Ayoka, has empowered 50 women, comprising hair-

dressers, fashion designers and older women in Yewa North Local Council of the state with cash to support their livelihoods and strengthen grassroots mobilisation for the party's 2027 gov-

ernorship candidate, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, popularly known as Yayi. Speaking at the programme held at Omidokun Hall, Ayetoro, Yewa North Local Council, Fagbote said

the initiative was also aimed at inaugurating members and supporters of the Ayoka Women for Yayi group and mobilising them to work for Senator Adeola's success at the polls.

Ekiti @ 30: State Announces Youth Essay Competition, Offers N1.5m Top Prize

AS part of activities to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the creation of Ekiti State, the Ekiti State at 30 Anniversary Planning Committee has announced a youth essay competition designed to give young Ekiti people a platform to shape the conversation about the future of the State.

The competition, entitled "Ekiti at 30: My Dream and Agenda for the Next Thirty Years," invites young Ekiti people to envision the kind of State they want to see by 2056 and propose practical steps that government, communities, institutions, the private sector and citizens can take today to make that vision possible.

The essay competition is open to Ekiti indigenes aged 18 to 35, whether resident within or outside the state. Participants are encouraged to explore issues including agriculture and food security; education and human-capital development; technology and innovation; entrepreneurship and job creation; arts, culture and tourism; infrastructure and urban development; healthcare and social protection; governance and civic responsibility; and environmental sustainability.

Politics

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TAPGUN: Tinubu Will Not Be Frightened Out Of Office

Chief Fidelis Tapgun is a former Plateau State governor and Nigeria's Ambassador to Kenya. In this interview with **LEO SOBECHI**, the former Director General of Obasanjo/Atiku Presidential Campaign traces the fall of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the moves by the opposition to defeat President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the 2027 elections, stressing that unlike former President Goodluck Jonathan, Tinubu is in control.

Like you predicted, PDP has become comatose that it cannot wage electoral battles competitively. How does that make you feel?

WELL, I don't know whether to say it makes me feel bad or feel good, because everything that has happened was self-inflicted. And when you self-inflict yourself, then it's your palaver. It is you that will look for medicine to cure yourself. It was self-inflicted.

If there was transparency and honesty from the beginning, we wouldn't have found ourselves where we are; but people were just selfish, people were after themselves. This party was formed for the people. It wasn't formed for any individual. That is why it is called the Peoples Democratic Party.

But people turned it into their own personal estate. Like I said, it's self-inflicted. People who caused the problems are alive; they know themselves. The truth of the matter is that PDP still exists on the ground in Nigeria today, whether people like it or not. And it is the party that will outlive all the other parties that are on the ground, as far as I am concerned.

But we found ourselves where we are. And the elections are coming. There are two factions of the party. One is being supported by government, the other one is not. Of course, government will look for support, which is what they have done in this case.

And they have encouraged (Nyesom) Wike and they have seen his capacity to break the PDP into pieces. He said it from the beginning when they did this thing to him at the Eagle Square. He said, okay, we shall see. He has carried out his threat and it has worked.

But we are moving into this election. He is not going to play any role in this; he's just there to cover up. The government is firmly in control of everything, firmly in control, whether anybody likes it or not.

And this government, this President is not like Jonathan that was frightened out of office by people. Tinubu will not be frightened out of office. He will carry out his mandates; he will do what he wants to do and we will see what happens to the party after this period.

But what I just keep on telling people is that PDP is the only party that is really on the ground in Nigeria today, whether anybody likes it or not. And I'm sure even the President knows that.

It is just the leadership crisis that caused this thing and I don't blame the President for encouraging the crisis, because he knows that if he had left the PDP the way it was, he would have had a headache in the coming elections.

But some people argue that since the G5 got the upper hand after Atiku people left, they should have rebuilt the party despite Wike's demand that the party should forget about 2027?

That's what I kept telling you - that the people were just after their own personal interest. The G5, where are they today? It is only (Dr Samuel) Ortom and the former governor of Enugu State that are with the Wike camp. Governors Seye Makinde and Bala Mohammed have gone.

So, you see why I told you that the people are just pursuing their own personal interest. If they had stayed together, things would have been different. That's the complaint that some people are making about Peter Obi. The party is in trouble, you won't stay and sort it out, you move. They didn't stay; it's only Wike that sustained the thing.

So Ortom is there, trying to hold Benue. Wike has got an appointment; the Ambassadors -Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi and Dr Okezie Ikpeazu - are technically in APC, because with the appointments you can't say they are in PDP. So, they are technically in APC. You can't say they are in PDP.

Then, Bala Mohammed and Makinde have gone and formed another party, the Allied Peoples Movement (APM) with Makinde as the presidential candidate. They are strong PDP people. Makinde is doing well in Oyo State. Whether people like it or not, he did very, very well in Oyo, and Bala is doing very well in Bauchi. So, the question is why can't you stay and hold this thing together? Stay with Wike, because at the end of the day, PDP will bounce back.

PDP has fielded Senator Sandy Onor as its presidential candidate, even though he doesn't have the national clout to win the election. But in a number of states now, there are insinuations that the party, either through arrangement or electoral choice, can win some governorship seats. Do you think that optimism is realistic?

I've always been an advocate of candidates emerging by consensus of the people of the state. And the candidate must be a candidate that can prove himself or herself to be worthy of that position, not just imposition.

Every governor has moved

to APC and they have the APC backing them. Now, where will you go and negotiate or tell a governor that even though you are APC, let PDP win. Where will you do that? And what explanation are you going to give? What explanation would the national leadership of the party give to that state for failing to win the election in those states?

But there are states where defector governors have some question marks either about capacity or acceptability. Don't you think that PDP can also, because of this handshake with APC, have some leeway?

Well, that's what I'm just saying. You are talking of capacity or incompetence or something. If APC allows that it would mean they are incompetent; that is the truth of the matter. Accepting that the governors are incompetent means that they are incompetent. I mean allowing the governors to fail is accepting that the governors are incompetent. And how will they portray themselves to the public?

There are two state governors who were in the last batch to move like your state governor, Caleb Muftwang and Dauda Lawal. Based on what is on the table now, do you think it was wrong for them to leave PDP at the 11th hour?

Well, for me, I have never advocated for people moving from one party to another. It has never been my favourite stance all along. I have never wanted it anywhere. If your party is doing badly or has done badly, fix it. That is the only way we can grow. Discipline, it's not about jumping.

So, I didn't see any reason for anybody to move away from his original party to another. If you won on PDP, stay on your PDP. If you won on APC, stay on your APC. If you won on AD, stay on your AD. Why move to another party?

But I don't know what was the attraction, what the Federal Government lured them with. Only God knows what attracted them. Like in my state, for instance, you know there were crises. And we know how the crisis started from the beginning and it didn't end well with anybody. That's why we lost the House of Representatives, the Senate and House of Assembly seats

So, all of these ones that are in the field saying that they want to take over, anyway, when they begin their campaign, we will see what they have to offer Nigeria. But, for me, I think we already have a government that knows exactly where it wants to take Nigeria in the eight years in office.

completely from the courts. Even the governorship, we lost at the courts. It's just that the President wanted, you know, and asked that they should be.

So, it's a faulty system itself and that's why I'm just not an advocate of imposition for people to vote for. You don't. If anybody is going to emerge as candidate, it must be a consensus of the people of the state. And there must be a credible process of elimination for candidates who want to contest, to know their background and their capacity, including where they are coming from and if they can deliver, not just coming into office.

You have to come to office with something to deliver to the people, because that's the essence of being a governor in particular. The problem has been in Plateau all along. They are talking about this, but I don't feel comfortable with it.

Because, it will look like, okay, if you say he's incompetent, why did you take him into the APC? Now that you have taken him, why would you allow him to fail the election? And winning elections in Nigeria, you have to belong. So, if you think he's incompetent, okay, why did you take him? Now that you have taken him, you wouldn't allow him to lose elections.

Why I feel very uncomfortable about this is that the tenure should be two terms of eight years. They are going for the first four years now. Anybody that stops half way, his people will not be happy because of this sensitive nature of the zoning system all over the country, where the position has to move from one place to the other.

So, if it is eight years, and these ones have spent four years, and you say they are incompetent, and you want to change them, you bring another person to come and do only four years, the person coming must do only four years so that it moves.

That person coming to do four years, what is he going to do in four years? For me it means you are using the population as Guinea pigs. So, I don't think that is the solution to all these things. The solution is to be able to have a system that spells out the conditions that candidates must meet before they emerge as flag bearers to contest elections, especially for governorship positions.

Looking at the coming election, do you think Nigeria will cross over this 2027 in peace and in unity?

It will cross in peace and in prosperity. That is the prayer of all Nigerians. We have gone through a lot. And for me, this President is the only one that has a vision of what he wants to do for this country more than all of them that have been in the past.

Honestly, he's the only President that has come to office with a vision of what he wants to do for the country. And he's pursuing them one by one. I think this is the only way we can gain from people's experience in this country. It is not this noisemaking from the opposition that has been shouting all over the place.

So, all of these ones that are in the field saying that they want to take over, anyway, when they begin their campaign, we'll see what they have to offer Nigeria. But, for me, I think we already have a government that knows exactly where it wants to take Nigeria in the eight years in office. Once it takes Nigeria there, I believe that the next person that will take over should be able to be that sort of person also, and take us also from that place for another eight years. That's how we should be moving. That's how the country will develop. It's not sentiments.

I talked to some of my people in America the other day. They sent videos of young people who are just making noise on TikTok, abusing the government. I said, look, all these things will not work in Nigeria of today. We just want quick fixes. We are not America. America is celebrating 250 years of independence. They didn't start like that. It's a slave country. People suffered there. And they had to go through difficult periods in their lives to get to where they are today.

So, we are enjoying what people suffered 100 years ago. We are just 65 years old of independence and we are making noise. I said we can't continue like this. This country has to grow. What is going on today is a reform that we need to do and the pains that we need to endure so that our grandchildren -not even our children - and our grandchildren will benefit and the country will move forward.

We have to acknowledge people that are doing well. You are accusing this man of being a rogue, but he is delivering. Even though it is difficult and nobody said this was going to be easy.

Even he didn't say it was going to be easy. And he keeps on acknowledging that people are suffering, everybody knows. But we have to be patient.

For me, this election will go on very well. And the man will come back and he will restructure the country. I am just calculating in my brain. He will restructure this country, so that people will go back to where they were and start. Not people reaping what they did not sow and they are benefiting more than the people who did the sowing. I am very optimistic of this country. Nigeria is a great country and we have everything it takes.

For me, honestly, this reform that is going on is my greatest joy. And he is doing it without fear. So, I say the man has no godfather. He has no godmother. He came on his own. Therefore, if we are going to benefit from it, please support him. Let us benefit from this thing. Let the country grow.

There is a subtle attempt to polarise the country between North and South due to the influence and activities of former vice president Atiku Abubakar. Do you think the North will support the political insurgency of Atiku?

I don't think so. I don't know what he's counting on. He's my man, but I really do not know what he's counting on. I don't really know because if you follow the trend of what has happened since Tinubu came to office, he has tried to get all parts of the country together.

And this thing about the Presidency rotating between the North and the South, Buhari left. Tinubu took over from Buhari. Buhari wanted to give it to (Ahmad) Lawan in the North. That was why Tinubu said, no, this is our turn, the Yoruba time. And when he said Yoruba turn, he said it's my turn, because he installed all the people. And he took it against all odds.

They were all watching, they were all looking and he grabbed the thing from them. So, he's just spending his four years, and you see he (Atiku) wants to take it away, to come to the North and do what for heaven's sake?



Tinubu Has Laid A Good Economic Blueprint For Nigeria – Ojo

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ekiti State and Managing Director of Federal Housing Authority (FHA), Oyetunde Ojo, in this interview with **OLUDARE RICHARDS**, bares his mind on the governance style of President Bola Tinubu and the strides currently being recorded under the Renewed Hope Agenda of the administration in the housing sector.

It has been over three years since President Tinubu assumed office. How can you describe his governance style?

FROM any angle one chooses to look at it, President Tinubu has demonstrated capacity and competence. In the last three years, the president has successfully laid strong economic and infrastructural foundations for Nigeria.

Without mincing words, I would say the President has done excellently, especially in the area of infrastructure, economic management and security matters.

Nigerians often fail to look at where we were coming from. In the area of infrastructural development, there is hardly any part of the country that has not experienced new road construction and other developmental projects. Also, perhaps because of the background of President Tinubu as a financial expert, he has created a good economic blueprint for Nigeria.

So, what's your take on the administration's performance in the area of security? Don't you think things are getting worse?

No, things are not getting worse, except that some narratives are being projected by political pessimists who don't want any good news about the administration. For instance, despite the coordinated efforts that led to the recent rescue of schoolchildren and teachers in Oyo State, some people still went out with propaganda to undermine the Federal Government. Even when one of the men on the rescue mission was killed, some people still chose to politicise it and tagged it a 'Federal Government arrangee kidnap'. I almost shed tears hearing such a statement.

In fact, to appreciate President Tinubu's contribution to security, we may need to take a trip back to a few years ago. During that period, there were a series of bombings in the Federal Capital Territory, including the one that happened near the Police Headquarters. Today, we must give credit to the Nigerian Army and the coordination between the Army and the Air Force, down to other security networks in the country.

Unfortunately, today, some incidents are exaggerated by the naysayers who ordinarily don't expect anything good from this administration.

When soldiers are killed, social media amplifies it, but when terrorists are neutralised, nobody talks about it. We should stop celebrating negativity.

I am not saying there are no security challenges, but I can tell you that many reports circulating are not accurate. There are improvements, even if challenges still exist. On security, there are obviously some things that one cannot comment in order not to undermine the efforts of Mr. President and the service chiefs. But all I can say is that a lot is being done to address the issue, both the natural and those that many of us know are politically motivated to make the Tinubu administration unpopular.

The administration's economic policies have been described in some quarters as retrogressive. What is your take?

Anybody who promotes the argument that the Tinubu administration's economic policies are poor is definitely saying so out of ignorance. Perhaps for political reasons, people are being sentimental and allowing their emotions to direct their thoughts. From the first day in office, the president's economic policies have been focused on structural reforms to reset Nigeria's economy. We will all recall that he took the bull by the horns the very first day he took over by removing the subsidy. Interestingly, almost all those who contested with him promised to do the same during their campaigns because a secondary school student of Economics knew then that Nigeria was sitting on gunpowder. Sadly, the same set of people are now criticising the same thing they campaigned against because they lost the election.

Aside from removing fuel subsidies, he has unified exchange rates and reduced government deficits. These policies aim to improve long-term growth, but of course, the policies came with initial hitches, but it has long term advantages. This policy frees up public funds for infrastructure and other developments.

The Central Bank removed multiple overlapping exchange rate systems to create a single, unified market. This aimed to attract foreign investment, though it initially caused a steep drop in the value of the Naira, but now we are getting over it.

But the policies are believed to make life difficult for the

masses. It got to the peak recently when former vice president and presidential

candidate of the ADC, Atiku Abubakar vowed to reverse the subsidy removal if elected president in 2027?

Before I react to Alhaji Atiku's promise, let me state that Nigerians want good economic growth, improved infrastructure and good governance, but we don't want to make any sacrifice. Obviously, we want to make an omelette without breaking some eggs. It is not possible.

As we speak, the dollar has remained stable for months but nobody is talking about it. Why do we focus only on negative news? The dollar is a major global currency, and the United States protects it aggressively. Despite this, Nigeria's economy is gradually improving. We should celebrate progress where it exists.

Back to what I can call 'Atikonomics development projection,' I will conclude that Alhaji Atiku has simply made a political statement to gain traction. Alhaji Atiku is human and there is possibly no way he would not sound desperate. He has contested and failed several times. Now, age is no more at his advantage, and he sees the 2027 general election as his last chance. He wants to explore every means if it means deceiving Nigerians. He doesn't care about the consequences of the statement. The Turaki Adamawa wants power by all means; either by hook or crook. It's sad that a supposed elder statesman can be that desperate and undermine the fact that power belongs to God as established in the Holy Quran and Bible.

Again, I will pardon Alhaji Atiku if his submission was based on ignorance because as at the last time I checked, he was neither an economist nor a finance expert. But I will definitely not spare his economic advisers for not being patriotic enough to educate Alhaji Atiku on what could consolidate the current administration's economic achievement.

That said, let me state that removal of subsidy is a subject that cuts deep into the social and economic fabric of Nigeria and, in fact, the survival of an average Nigerian. Therefore, using the issue of subsidy to play politics at this point is economically hitting Nigerians below the belt. The point is that an average Nigerian believes that the subsidy regime was unsustainable. That is a consensus that is no brain-

From the first day in office, the president's economic policies have been focused on structural reforms to reset Nigeria's economy. We will all recall that he took the bull by the horns the very first day he took over by removing the subsidy.

er on its own. Unfortunately, previous administrations lacked the political will to hold the bull by the horns until Asiwaju Tinubu came on board.

So, you assume it was the best way to go when Tinubu removed it?

Of course! We shouldn't forget in a hurry that both Alhaji Atiku and Mr. Peter Obi also promised, prior to the 2023 elections, that fuel subsidies would go. The conversation that Nigerians should be having right now is how subsidy removal will benefit them more than it is doing right now, not its inherent but cheap politicisation.

And what are the benefits?

As a country whose foreign exchange earnings come mainly from crude oil, spending the amount of money we were spending to keep the subsidy regime going was just impossible to sustain.

One major benefit of subsidy was freeing scarce foreign exchange earnings, which also is help-

ing in strengthening the naira against the dollar. There is also the complete elimination of rent seeking and the naked fraud that is glaringly associated with fuel subsidy. This has to do with the criminal disparity between what some marketers imported in and what they submitted as subsidy claims.

Besides, subsidy removal is clear: more money for development. Instead of committing huge resources to subsidising fuel, the government can invest more in roads, electricity, healthcare, education and other things that directly affect our daily lives. We are seeing that already across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

It also means less waste and abuse. The old subsidy system created room for inflated consumption figures, smuggling and leakages we couldn't account for in the past. Removing it closes much of that window and gives us a better chance of ensuring that public resources actually serve the public.

Then, there is local refining and investment. A market-driven system encourages investors to refine fuel locally and compete, rather than relying on the government to keep prices artificially low.

So, what happens if it's reversed?

While it is politically expedient to promise to restore fuel subsidy, the negative implications can only be imagined. The nation will go back to that regime of struggling to raise foreign exchange to buy (import) expensive refined products to be sold at cheaper rates at home. The fallout of this is that the bulk of the nation's foreign exchange would be going into sustaining the fuel subsidy regime. I think no Nigerian wants to go back to this.

There will also be a drastic reduction in revenue accruable to governments at all levels since what comes into the federation account would have been drastically affected, albeit negatively, by the cost of keeping the subsidy regime going.

I remember a former Minister of Finance, Kemi Adeosun, once revealed in an interview that there was no minister who did not say subsidy was killing Nigeria while she was in government. According to her, the Muhammad Buhari administration tried a different approach to cushion the effect, but none worked. She also stated that Nigeria was then subsidising the whole West African region. According to her, the money Nigeria was spending on subsidy was the money meant for roads, education and health.

Also, in a related development, the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, said prior to the 2023 elections that any candidate who campaigned that he would not remove subsidy must be disregarded by Nigerians. He simply concluded that such a politician was merely deceiving the people.

Can you please tell Nigerians your achievement in the Federal Housing Authority (FHA)?

It may be difficult for me to speak as an individual rather than as a team leader. Succinctly speaking and in line with the Tinubu administration to address challenges related to housing deficit across Nigeria, the FHA is working round the clock to provide solutions and create a seamless platform for Nigerians to own a house irrespective of class or geographical location.

As a revenue-generating agency, I have also ensured that since I assumed office, my remittance has increased drastically. For instance, within half of this year alone, we have paid N3 billion into the consolidated revenue account.

In the area of provision of shelters for Nigerians, we have gone beyond the FCT. We have been mandated to acquire land in 28 states of the federation for housing development and the commencement of Renewed Hope Estates in 17 states in the first phase. Also, several inherited housing projects in Abuja and Ibadan have been completed.

Another achievement is that the Authority has digitised its property records, which is now secured on the Galaxy Backbone platform, and we are working towards full automation of our operations to ensure faster and more seamless service delivery.



By Mikail Mumuni

POLITICS in Nigeria, and particularly in Ogun State, has a curious habit of transforming questions that ought to be settled by facts, records and the law into emotional battles over identity. The latest controversy being stirred against Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, popularly known as Yayi, over his state of origin falls squarely into this familiar pattern.

As the 2027 governorship election approaches, some political actors and groups have questioned Yayi's claim to Ogun indigeneship. They argue that his long political association with Lagos renders his roots in Ogun West suspect. Others, including the Ogun State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and various groups supporting the senator—who has emerged as the party's governorship candidate—have dismissed the allegation as politically motivated.

There is no dispute that Yayi's political career was largely built in Lagos. He represented Alimosho in the Lagos State House of Assembly, later served as member representing Alimosho Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, and subsequently became senator for Lagos.



Yayi: The Needless Controversy Over Ogun Indigeneship

West. In 2023, however, he successfully contested and won the Ogun West senatorial seat. He currently represents that district and has secured the APC ticket for the 2027 Ogun governorship election, in which he is widely regarded as a frontrunner.

It is understandable that his growing acceptance among the Ogun electorate has unsettled opponents. They appear prepared to deploy every available weapon against him, including the questioning of his indigene status. Yet political history is not, by itself, proof of ancestry. A politician can build a career in one state and later return to, or seek office in, another state to which he has legitimate familial or ancestral ties. Nigeria's political landscape is replete with such examples. One notable case is that of Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, a long-serving former Lagos State Commissioner for

Works, who later returned home to become governor of Osun State.

The APC has maintained that Yayi possesses both maternal and paternal connections to Ogun, including links to Abeokuta and Yewaland. An Ogun group has publicly reaffirmed his claim to Ilaro and described him as a bona fide indigene. Several prominent stakeholders in the state, among them the Alake of Egbaland, Oba Adedotun Aremu Gbadebo III and the Olu of Ilaro and Paramount Ruler of Yewaland, Oba Kehinde Gbadewole Olugbenle, have embraced him as their son.

More importantly, there is a clear legal dimension that should not be lost in the noise. Section 177 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) sets out the qualifications for election as governor. A candidate must be a Nigerian citizen by birth, at least 35 years old, sponsored by a political party, and educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent. The Constitution does not treat a history of political representation in another state as an automatic disqualification from seeking the governorship of a state to which the candidate is otherwise legally entitled to belong. This is the position of the law. It cannot be subverted by social-media agitation, however vociferous.

Ogun is not an ethnically homogeneous political territory. It comprises diverse historical communities—the Egba, Yewa, Ijebu and Remo peoples—each with its own identity and political traditions. Reducing the governorship contest to the exclusive preserve of those who have spent their entire political careers within the state's borders is an unhealthy and ultimately self-limiting mindset.

The real questions for 2027 in Ogun State should centre on competence and vision. Who can meaningfully address the state's infrastructure deficit? How will the next administration attract investment and create sustainable jobs? What con-

crete agenda exists for education, healthcare, agriculture and industrial development? How will security be improved? What will the candidate do differently from previous administrations? And, perhaps most critically, can he unite Ogun's varied political and social interests?

These are the issues that ought to dominate the conversation. The indigeneship question is legitimate only if there is credible evidence of a legal impediment. If, however, it is merely a political device designed to portray a formidable opponent as an outsider, then the Ogun electorate deserves better.

Senator Adeola is not the first contender for the Ogun governorship to be branded a "non-indigene" by opponents. Critics once claimed that Chief Olusegun Osoba, the Ak-inrogun of Egbaland and a former governor of the state, was from Osogbo in Osun State. Senator Ibikunle Amosun, who governed for eight years and had earlier represented Ogun Central in the Senate, was equally portrayed by some adversaries as a Fulani man. Senator Gbenga Daniel, who preceded Amosun, has also been labelled by political historians of convenience as being of Delta State extraction. The "non-indigene" tag has become a recurring weapon deployed against any serious contender for the highest elective office in the Gateway State.

Political opponents have every right to challenge a candidate's ambition. Elections are contests, and every aspirant must be prepared for scrutiny. The pertinent question is whether the current indigeneship controversy is being used to address a genuine constitutional issue or simply to construct a narrative aimed at diminishing a strong opponent.

Ogun politics must rise above pettiness. Calling a candidate a stranger does not make him one. Calling someone an indigene does not, by itself, establish the claim. What matters is evidence—and there is none that demonstrates Senator Adeola is not from Ogun State.

Ultimately, it is the voters of Ogun, not self-appointed registrars of indigene status, who will decide whether Yayi is the person they want to govern them in 2027. That decision will rest on far more consequential questions than the ones currently being amplified for political effect.

• *Mumuni, journalist and historian, is from Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital.*

2027: Why Ndigbo Must Seek Mainstream Politics, Strategic Alliance

By Banji Alabi

THERE is no-gain-saying the fact that no man or nation can experience radical and positive changes using the same methods or strategies all the time. This is a global fact; it is a fact that both the Ndigbo and the 2023 presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Mr. Peter Obi must, in their enlightened self interest, come to terms with.

Towards the 2023 presidential election, Obi was daily gallivanting from church to church seeking and enjoying fake adoption and endorsement from most of these church leaders the way they deliver fake miracles and prophecies instead of seeking strategic alliances and partnership. He was also ubiquitous at every conceivable Internal Displaced Persons' camp whipping up sentiments instead of seeking strategic collaboration capable of increasing electoral values. Let it be said that there is no crime in identifying with unfortunate Nigerians that circumstances forced them to have their homes in IDP camps; but to use that to whip up sentiments against government lies the question of how this can honestly translate to electoral fortunes for the ex-governor of Anambra State. Currently his partnership with Alhaji Rabi Kwankwaso's one state NNPP, and now fractured beyond redemption, is yet to be seen as a magic wand or as a strategic alliance. And as if jinxed, he did not only abandon what could have gone for his legitimate platform that was fast becoming a harmattan fire; he jumped boat for a solace at the Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC) where he permanently remains a stranger and endangered specie also. In one fell swoop, he poured into the Atlantic all the gains from his labour in the Labour Party, the gains and the strength he could have used to negotiate and seek functional strategic collaborations. He failed to learn from Tinubu's party faithfulness, loyalty and resilience, which eventually earned Asiawaju electoral reward. Obi's jinx did not stop at the above as he chose to take after former vice president Atiku Anubakar as a nomadic party-politician changing political parties as he changes dresses.

Let us be brutally honest with ourselves: elections are not won on Twitter trends or eloquent soundbites. Elections are won with structure, collaboration and boots on the ground. You don't win the Presidency with vibes. You win it with wards, LGAs

and polling units manned by loyal party agents.

Rhetoric may win you applause; structures win you Aso Rock. The last governorship election in Anambra State exposed this truth. Obi couldn't even deliver his own backyard. He sponsored a candidate for governorship in his home state and the man came a distant third. If you can't command your own state, how do you intend to command a nation of 36 states plus the Federal Capital Territory?

The facts are damning. In 2023, Obi had no party agents in over 60 per cent of polling units nationwide. No agents, no results sheets, no defence. That is not an oversight; that is unseriousness. Power is not donated. Power is captured through organisation, alliances and relentless groundwork. It is not captured through press conferences and pontificating. Obi's presidential career ended in 2023 and he will fail again.

So, what must Ndigbo do? The time for politics of isolation is over. I make this appeal without apology. Ndigbo must vote massively for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Then we must sit at the table and negotiate for a big, undeniable stake in this government—ministries, agencies, economic corridors, infrastructure. That is how power works.

Look at history. After the annulment of June 12, 1993, election, the Yoruba nation did not retreat into

anger. They built alliances across the North, South-South, and Middle Belt. They organised, they negotiated, and they forced the hand of the political class. By 1999, both the Alliance for Democracy/All People's Party and People's Democratic Party fielded only Yoruba candidates—Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and Chief Olu Falae. That was not luck. That was structure. That was strategy.

Ndigbo can and must do the same. But it starts with collaboration, not confrontation. It starts with building bridges in Kano, Kaduna, Ilorin, Lagos, Owo, Ibadan, Port Harcourt and Calabar. It starts with being present in every ward, every LGA, every state. It starts with aligning with the man who holds the levers of power today—President Tinubu.

Rhetoric without structure has failed us. Protest votes without alliances have failed us. Only mainstream politics delivers the Presidency. The pathway to an Igbo Presidency is through national collaboration, not regional isolation.

Igbos must come to the mainstream of Nigerian politics. We must play national politics to win nationally. We must negotiate from strength, not from sentiment. We must trade votes for concrete development, federal presence, and a clear, enforceable pathway for a

President of Igbo extraction in the near future. Vote Tinubu, negotiate hard, build alliances to capture power. The door to the mainstream is open. Let us walk through it together, and strategically. "Ka anyi jekota. Aka nri kwo aka ekpe, aka ekpe akwo aka nri"—meaning, when the right hand washes the left hand, the left hand too will wash the right hand. Bola Ahmed Tinubu will triumph, *insha Allah*.

• *Alabi Esq. is a Lagos-based human rights lawyer and National Chairman Ondo State Eminent Persons Group.*



The Judicial Amazon: Justice Amina Adamu Augie

By Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo

THERE are lives that do not merely ascend; they illuminate. Honourable Justice Amina Adamu Augie is one such life — a woman whose career reads, in hindsight, as a quiet but unyielding rebellion.

Not shouted from podiums, but lived one classroom, one courtroom, one principled judgment at a time, until the record shows she reached a summit few could have foreseen when she first sat as a young magistrate in Argungu.

On 3rd September 1953, in Lagos, a girl named Anne Eva Graham was born to Mr Patrick and Hajia Hauwa Eva Graham — one of nine children, hailing from Kebbi State in Nigeria’s North West.

Seventy years later, to the very day, she would walk out of the Supreme Court of Nigeria for the last time as a sitting Justice — not because her mind had dimmed or her hand had wearied, but because the Constitution itself said 70 was enough.

Between those two September mornings lies one of the most instructive careers in modern Nigerian jurisprudence. **The Making of a Pan-Nigerian Jurist**

Long before she became known for moving between judicial divisions, Augie’s life was already a study in movement. Between 1958 and 1971, her schooling carried her across the country — Abadina School in Ibadan, Hope Waddell Primary in Calabar, Holy Rosary Primary in Enugu, Queen Amina College in Kaduna.

A child of the civil-service era, she was, in effect, pan-Nigerian before “pan-Nigerian” was a virtue anyone spoke of.

It is tempting, looking back, to see in that itinerant childhood the seed of a jurist who would later be entrusted with disputes cutting across nearly every geopolitical zone of the country.

She read Law at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) from 1972 to 1977, proceeded to the Nigerian Law School, and was called to the Bar in 1978—the same year that marks the beginning of the forty-five years of public service her valedictory tributes would later celebrate.

A Name That Crossed a Religious Line

The name by which she is universally known — Amina Adamu Augie — carries its own quiet story.

Born Anne Eva Graham, she later took the Muslim name “Amina” upon her marriage to the late Senator Adamu Baba Augie, a union that also brought her the honorific “Hajia,” widely used in public life and official records.

Beyond the name, her public roles reflected deep engagement with Muslim civic life: she served on the Kebbi State Pilgrims Welfare Board and was honoured by the Federation of Muslim Women’s Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), among other recognitions that speak to a life lived across Nigeria’s religious and cultural lines.

While the precise moment or formal process of any religious conversion is not definitively documented in publicly available sources, the trajectory is clear: from Anne Eva Graham to Hajia Amina Adamu Augie, a jurist whose identity and service bridged communities in a country where such bridges are both rare and necessary.

That bridging — of regions, of institutions, and, symbolically, of faith traditions — would become a subtle but steady theme in a career that insisted on principle over pedigree.

Love, Deferred Ambition, and the Long Road Back

Here is where the record turns human. In 1980, Augie enrolled at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, to pursue her Master of Laws. She completed her examinations — and then had to suspend the completion of her thesis to move to Lagos with her husband, the late Senator Adamu Baba Augie, a politician and broadcaster.

It is a small sentence in the archives, but it carries real weight: a woman who had already cleared every academic hurdle put her own unfinished chapter down to follow her husband’s life.

She did not abandon the ambition — she simply deferred it, the way so many capable women of her generation learned to defer without resentment, and returned to it later, eventually pursuing further study at the University of Lagos.

It is a reminder that even the most formidable careers are rarely executed straight lines; they are negotiated, paused, and resumed.

Her marriage also gave Nigeria something else worth noting on a day like this: a daughter, Aisha Augie-Kuta, who grew up to become one of the country’s most celebrated photographers and filmmakers, winning Creative Artist of the Year at the 2011 Future Awards.

Aisha has spoken of how her father put a camera in her hands as a child — meaning the Augie household produced, in the same generation, both a Justice of the Supreme Court and an award-winning visual artist. That is not a footnote. That is a family’s quiet, twin excellence.

The Unglamorous Years

After her call to the Bar, Augie did not begin at the top. She

joined the Legal Aid Council in Sokoto — the kind of posting that asks a young lawyer to serve the poorest, least powerful litigants in the system.

She lectured for a period, then served as Senior State Counsel in the office of the Chief Counsel to former President Shehu Shagari, before returning to Sokoto State with her husband and children, where she became Chief Magistrate in Argungu (1988-1992) and later a Judge of the High Court (1992-2002).

Even while sitting on the Bench, she kept teaching—first at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, from 1989, then as an Associate Lecturer there through 2002 — alongside stints at Ahmadu Bello University and the Nigerian Law School.

Colleagues would later describe teaching as her “first love.” It is a detail that recasts the entire judicial career that followed: this was never simply a woman climbing a ladder. It was a teacher who happened to also be a judge, carrying the instinct to explain, to reason patiently from first principles, into every courtroom she sat in.

Beyond the Bench, she also chaired Sokoto State’s Recovery of Public Properties Tribunal (1995-1996) and later a Failed Banks Recovery tribunal — thankless, high-friction assignments in asset recovery that rarely make it into anyone’s highlight reel, but that speak to a reputation, even then, for being trusted with difficult and unpopular work.

Seven Years, Four Cities: The Court of Appeal Era

Elevated to the Court of Appeal in 2002, Augie spent the next 14 years building the body of judicial work that would eventually recommend her for the apex court.

What is easy to miss, amid the list of appointments, is the sheer physical and personal cost of appellate service in Nigeria: she served as Presiding Justice of the Benin Division (2009-2010), then Enugu (2010-2011), then Kaduna (2011-2012), then Lagos (2012-2016)—a new city, a new home, a new set of colleagues and cases, roughly every year or two, for the better part of a decade.

It was during this period, in 2006, that she sat on the Court of Appeal panel in ‘Ngige v. Obi’, which dismissed Chris Ngige’s appeal and affirmed the tribunal’s finding that Peter Obi — not Ngige — had been the legitimately elected Governor of Anambra State in 2003.

It is one of the quieter facts of her career, overshadowed later by her more famous Supreme Court election rulings, but it deserves its place in any honest account: Augie was one of the appellate judges who put Peter Obi into Government House, a full decade before Anambra’s most litigated governorship saga produced its Supreme Court sequels under other panels.

A Reputation Forged in Fire

On 7th November 2016, Augie was elevated to the Supreme Court of Nigeria — becoming only the sixth woman in the nation’s history to sit on its highest bench. It is worth pausing on that number. Sixth. Not first, but still, after decades of independence, still single digits. That she arrived there not from Lagos’s legal aristocracy but from the magistracy of Argungu and the rotating dockets of four appellate divisions makes the achievement, if anything, more remarkable.

Her Supreme Court tenure placed her at the center of Nigeria’s most consequential — and most contested — political and constitutional battles:

- She sat on the eight-Justice panel that removed the PDP’s Emeka Ihedioha as Imo State Governor and installed Hope Uzodinma in his place, and personally delivered the lead judgment disqualifying Uche Nwosu from that same race over double nomination.
- She was part of the panel that unanimously nullified APC’s David Lyon’s victory in Bayelsa State in February 2020 — and when Lyon, his deputy, and the APC later sought to reopen that judgment, it was Augie who delivered the lead ruling dismissing their fresh application, describing it as “highly vexatious, frivolous and gross abuse of the judicial process.”
- She sat on the panel that affirmed Yahaya Bello’s victory in Kogi’s 2019 governorship race.
- In 2022, her panel upheld Ademola Adeleke’s election as Osun State Governor.
- In 2023, in one of her final acts on the Bench, she delivered the lead judgment dethroning the Obong of Calabar over non-compliance with traditional

selection processes.

When advocates attempted to reopen the settled Imo judgment years later, she held firm: “There must be an end to litigation... the decision of the Supreme Court is final for ages in a matter.”

In the same spirit, she imposed 30 million fines each on two Senior Advocates of Nigeria for what she deemed a vexatious filing — an unmistakable signal that the Court’s patience for procedural gamesmanship in political cases had limits.

Admirers nicknamed her the “Aristotle” of the Supreme Court — a nod to a mind that reasoned with rigour and did not flinch from unpopular conclusions. Her own words capture the philosophy behind the reputation: “Judges, amongst others, must have integrity of character and do what is right according to the law.”

An Honest Reckoning

Turning full circle: Beauty, Brains, and a Trail for Nigerian Women

On 3rd September 2023 — her seventieth birthday, and the constitutionally mandated retirement age for appellate Justices — Augie retired from the Supreme Court after forty-five years of unbroken public service, from Legal Aid lawyer to Chief Magistrate to High Court Judge to Justice of the Court of Appeal to Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

At her valedictory session, her aged mother, Hajia Hauwa Eva Graham, flew in all the way from Chicago to witness her daughter’s send-off — an elderly mother crossing an ocean to see her child close a chapter that had opened, for both of them, on a Lagos morning seven decades earlier.

It is fitting, in a way that few careers manage; that her birth and her retirement share a single date on the calendar. Every 3rd September, Nigeria is really marking two things at once: the arrival of Anne Eva Graham into the world in 1953, and the completion, exactly seventy years later, of the extraordinary public life that Anne Eva Graham — known to history as Justice Amina Adamu Augie, JSC — built for herself, and for the women who will follow the trail she cleared.

She was a teacher who taught Nigerians useful lessons — and politicians bitter ones. Her landmark rulings, especially on Obi and beyond, taught a generation of politicians that the judiciary was a viable route to power, and that the rule of law could be both shield and sword.

She was grace and grit in one person: a woman of striking beauty whose intellect was her most enduring ornament; a jurist whose courage was matched only by her courtesy; a resident of many cities who never lost her bearings because her compass was principle.

To Nigerian women, she is model and trailblazer: proof that a girl from a civil-service family, schooled in many towns and tempered by many moves, can rise to the apex of the law without surrendering her humanity.

To the nation, she is a reminder that the Bench can be both dignified and decisive; that elegance in language and firmness in judgment are not opposites, but partners.

Happy Birthday, My Lord. May your legacy continue to light the path for those who come after.

• *Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo, CEO, Museums and Monuments Academy, lives in Montreal, Canada*



Amina Augie

Editorial

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That Despicable Torture In Ekiti

THE alleged torture of a farmer in Ekiti State by four masked gunmen searching for his missing younger brother is a reminder of the growing disregard for the rule of law among Nigerians. It represents a disturbing drift towards jungle justice amid worsening insecurity. Whatever grievance the assailants believed they had, they had no legal authority. The perpetrators must, therefore, be brought to book. The government must also strengthen people's confidence in its ability to investigate crimes satisfactorily, so that no one needs to resort to self-help outside the boundaries of the legal system.

The victim, Oguntuase Ademola, was reportedly working on his farm in Ode-Ekiti when the armed men struck. They pummelled him with sticks, demanding information about the whereabouts of the younger brother. The attackers showed him a photograph of the missing man, threatening to kill him unless he revealed his brother's location. Ademola informed investigators that he had neither seen nor communicated with his brother for more than four years after the latter travelled to Kaduna State in search of work. The family's last information suggested that the brother fled Nigeria after surviving a bandit attack.

The brutality inflicted upon the hapless farmer reflects a trend that has recurred over decades. Across the country, individuals and

mobs often assume the roles of judge and executioner. The recent killing of a student in Plateau State, where a young man was reportedly tortured to death on suspicion that he had stolen a mobile phone, is a case in point. Subsequent reports indicated that the allegation was unfounded and that the supposedly stolen phone was never recovered from him. However, irreversible injustice had already been done by the time the facts emerged. Humans are fallible and susceptible to being stripped of rationality by mere suspicion or rumour. Without proof, public anger is unleashed in the guise of justice.

Many Nigerians have become frustrated with the criminal justice system, with victims of crime frequently complaining that investigations drag on indefinitely. Suspects are released under circumstances that leave unanswered questions. In some cases, prosecutions collapse after years of delay, or case files disappear. In other instances, complainants lament that justice has been denied them as investigations end without assuring resolution. In the end, citizens lose whatever confidence they still have in the law and its enforcement institutions, and are encouraged to fend for themselves.

Weak policing and ineffective investigations indeed exist. Yet they must not legitimise violence. Institutional shortcomings must never become an excuse for citizens to

inflict punishment upon one another. To tread this path is to risk descending into a situation where the strongest or the most heavily armed becomes the arbiter of guilt. Such an arrangement is incompatible with democracy and civilisation.

Torturing a farmer in Ekiti or a student in Plateau, or anywhere else in the country, is a grave assault on human dignity. It deliberately inflicts pain to extract information and has a tendency to produce unreliable information. Victims will most likely be inclined to say anything that would put a stop to their immediate suffering. Section 34 of the Nigerian Constitution guarantees every individual's right to the dignity of the human person and prohibits torture as well as inhuman or degrading treatment. That protection is reinforced by the Anti-Torture Act, 2017, which criminalises torture and affirms Nigeria's commitment to internationally recognised human rights standards.

The vulnerability of farming communities across many parts of Nigeria is becoming increasingly obvious, with kidnappings, violent intimidation, extortion and attacks. Fearful farmers are forced to choose between cultivating fewer hectares, abandoning their lands or relocating altogether. Reduced agricultural activity inevitably leads to food shortages and rising prices. If the government is to boost efforts at national food security, it must prioritise securing rural communities both as a policing obligation and an economic necessity.

The police are said to have commenced investigations into the Ekiti incident. The response is welcome. Nigerians have witnessed the announcement of investigations only to see them disappear from public consciousness. This case must not be allowed to suffer such a fate. The perpetrators should be identified. Investigators should determine the possible motivations for the assault. Questions about how the assailants located the victim and whether they received assistance from local collaborators should not be left unanswered.

Public confidence flows from consistent evidence that crimes are investigated and offenders are brought before the courts.

This is only possible where institutions are deliberately empowered to discharge their constitutional obligations and discourage vigilantism. Criminal investigations cannot achieve significant results without adequate personnel, reliable intelligence gathering and modern technology. Victims deserve regular updates on the progress of investigations; otherwise, prolonged silence will continue to fuel suspicion, frustration and the temptation to illegally speed up the wheels of justice. Rural policing also demands greater attention through improved patrols and community engagement.

Every Nigerian must reject the assumption of powers reserved for lawful authorities. Two wrongs never make a right. While the instinct to avenge wrongdoing or compel information through violence may appear attractive, it invariably results in greater injustice. Communities become trapped in vicious cycles of revenge from which extrication is difficult. Individuals suspected of serious crimes retain the right to lawful investigation and a fair trial. The rule of law demands it, and citizens must insist that this remains the norm.

More than an isolated violent encounter on a farm, the Ekiti farmer's ordeal restates the decades-old question about the kind of society Nigeria envisages. If it is to remain a constitutional democracy, then it must be emphasised that this model of governance forbids private individuals from investigating, interrogating or punishing fellow citizens on the basis of personal suspicion. In Ekiti, the victim was a farmer whose only apparent offence was having a missing brother. In Plateau State, it was a student falsely accused of theft. Somewhere across the country, anyone could be the next.

It is time the government improved the quality and speed of criminal investigations so that justice is seen to be effective and credible. Citizens, in turn, must resist every impulse towards jungle justice. The authority to investigate crime, determine guilt and impose punishment belongs exclusively to institutions established by law. Once that principle is abandoned, no Nigerian can truly regard himself or herself as safe.

LETTER

N60b Democracy! Why Osun State Needs More Than Just e-Results

SIR: Osun State's gubernatorial election was a "tsunami" of tenacity; it was also a warning. If Nigeria continues to allow the cost of power to rise, we risk a future in which only the highest bidder gains access to our institutions. Excellence in governance is the only way to break this cycle—because elections are temporary, but development remains.

The Osun election of August 15, 2026 is now history. Governor Ademola Adeleke has secured his mandate with 511,067 votes, successfully holding off the APC's Bola Oyebamiji, who polled 444,815. Supporters have celebrated, and political actors have moved on.

However, if we treat this simply as a closed chapter, we miss the most vital diagnosis of our current democracy. Osun was a victory for procedural transparency, yet it confirmed that we remain trapped in systemic financial corruption.

Transparency Paradox

Osun offered us a "transparency paradox." On one hand, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) achieved a remarkable technical milestone. Monitoring by the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) confirmed that by the morning after the election, 98.06 per cent of polling-unit results were publicly available on the IReV portal. This was not merely a performance metric; it was a systemic success that largely curtailed the traditional manipulation of result sheets at collation centres. Yiaga Africa's independent projec-

tion confirmed that the INEC figures accurately reflected the ballots cast.

Yet, this triumph of process only served to highlight the decay of practice. While we succeeded in counting the votes, we failed to prevent vote-buying. Reports of vote-trading, with sums ranging from N10,000 to N50,000, remained a pervasive reality on election day. We have perfected the digital architecture of the ballot, but the "shadow economy" of Nigerian politics—the financing that operates outside the view of any portal—continues to undermine the integrity of the voter's choice.

Economics of voting

The allegations of spending—with figures ranging from N60 billion to N110 billion thrown around by political camps—cannot be ignored simply because they are unverified. Whether these amounts were fully deployed is secondary to what the figures represent: the alarming commodification of the governorship stool.

Consider the opportunity cost. With a state capital expenditure budget of approximately 402.7 billion, an alleged N60 billion expenditure represents a massive diversion of resources. Every naira poured into this "shadow economy" is a naira subtracted from rural roads, primary healthcare, and teacher training. We have reached a point where the cost of acquiring political power now eclipses the capacity to deliver

governance. When public office is treated as a commercial investment, the electorate is no longer the beneficiary; they become shareholders in a system designed to recoup the investor's capital.

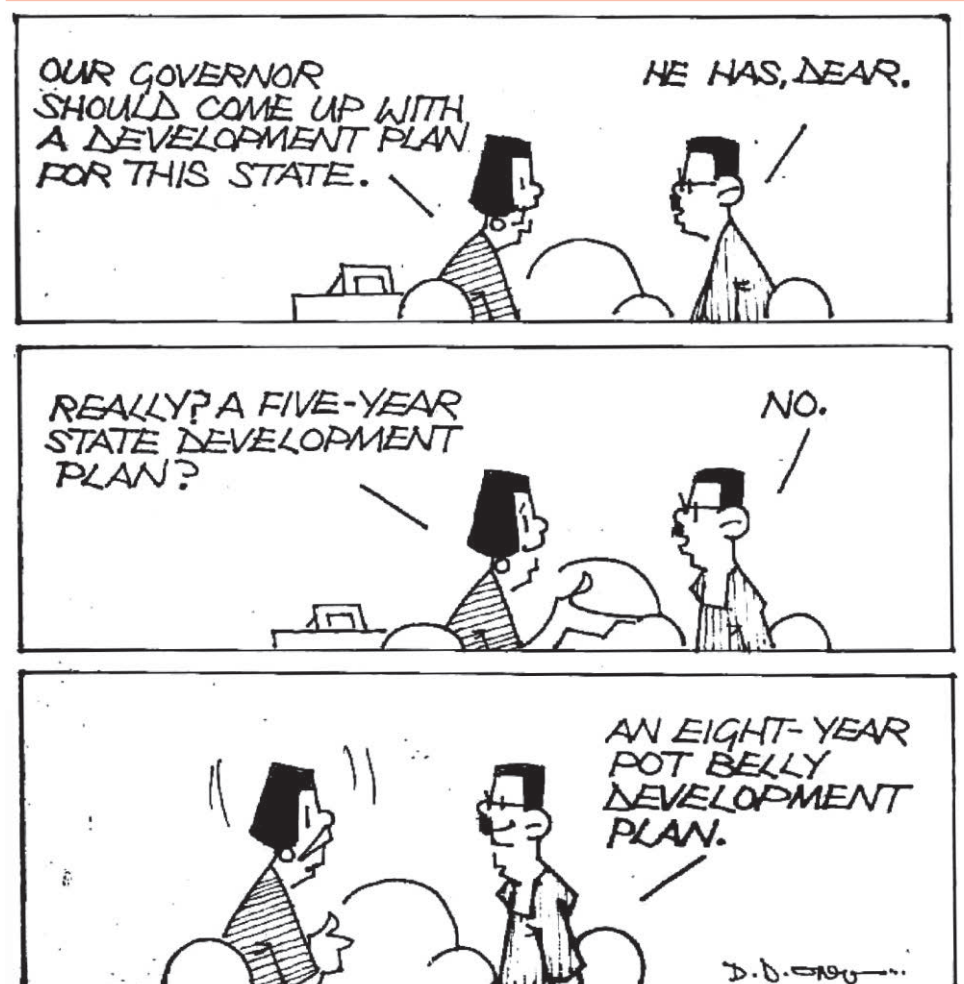
Litigious cost of politics

The opportunity cost of politics does not end at the ballot box. With the All Progressives Congress (APC) currently studying the results and exploring avenues to approach the petitions tribunal, we are entering the next phase of the drain on public and party resources. In Nigeria, electoral contests are not decided by ballots alone; they are now multi-year legal battles. This shift transforms our politics from a competition of ideas into a contest of legal endurance, further diverting the administration's attention from governance to litigation. The cost is not just in the naira spent on campaigns, but in the institutional stagnation that follows a contested result.

Governance as the only antidote

The result in Osun State is only a mandate, not a legacy. Governor Adeleke has the renewed opportunity to demonstrate that the best response to an expensive, high-stakes election is to deliver tangible governance. As we look toward 2027, with the INEC projecting a voting population of over 100 million, Osun serves as a critical warning.

• Ebuka Ukoh, a PhD student and co-author of *Built By The Ancestors*, wrote from his base in New York, the United States.



Opinion

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Wanted: Concerted Investment In Sports For Massive Gains

By **Babatunde Akinbinu**

FOR millions of Nigerian Arsenal supporters, there is understandably considerable excitement about what Mikel Arteta and his players might achieve this season. My own thoughts, however, wandered beyond the footballers on the pitch and towards the large professional workforce operating quietly behind them. Among Arsenal's medical personnel is Takahiro Yamamoto, the Japanese soft-tissue therapist who has worked with the first team since 2015. That raised a simple question: why should Nigerians imagine their opportunities at Arsenal mainly as footballers, supporters or commercial partners? Why are Nigerian doctors, physiotherapists, sports scientists, analysts and other specialists not similarly visible within clubs of this stature?

The question becomes more striking when the football histories of Nigeria and Japan are placed beside each other. Nigeria won the inaugural FIFA U-16 World Championship in China in 1985, defeating West Germany 2-0 in Beijing. Japan would not make its senior FIFA World Cup debut until France 1998, thirteen years after Nigeria's Golden Eaglets became world champions. Nigeria later won Olympic football gold, qualified repeatedly for FIFA World Cups and supplied generations of players to professional leagues around the world.

Yet more than forty years after that first global triumph, Nigeria has not produced a comparable international pathway for the professionals who develop and sustain athletes. We have proved repeatedly that our athletes can travel; we have been much less successful at creating similar routes for the expertise travelling behind them.

There is an equally useful African example in South African physiotherapist Dr. Tanushree Pillay, whose career developed through her country's strong rugby structures. After accumulating substantial domestic and national-team experience, she worked around the Springboks before eventually entering the medical structure at Paris Saint-Germain. Her progression shows that African origin itself does not prevent a practitioner from reaching sophisticated European sporting institutions. The more important question is whether that professional first has somewhere credible to build a convincing record at home.

Nigeria's Fragmented Pathway

Nigeria does not completely lack sports medicine or sports science expertise, and any serious discussion must acknowledge that fact. Experienced national-team doctors and physiotherapists exist, private rehabilitation centres are emerging, and universities already conduct research in relevant fields. The University of Medical Sciences in Ondo, for example, established an Institute of Sports Science and Medicine in 2024. These are encouraging developments, but they still resemble separate islands rather than parts of one connected national career system.

A young Nigerian physiotherapist considering sports specialisation must therefore ask where a serious career will lead after additional years of training. The same question confronts graduates interested in biomechanics, exercise physi-

ology, sports psychology, nutrition, performance analysis or strength and conditioning. Passion cannot sustain specialist professions when other fields provide clearer employment, advancement, recognition and financial security. Nigeria will struggle to produce internationally competitive specialists until these careers first make professional and economic sense within Nigeria.

The starting point should be wherever athletes are already employed and public or private money is already being spent. Every leading professional football club should progressively maintain properly qualified medical, physiotherapy and physical-performance personnel as part of club licensing requirements. Clubs should also provide access to nutrition, psychology and performance analysis, using shared regional arrangements where full departments are presently unaffordable. Better support should improve player performance and availability, increase IGR for largely government-owned clubs and improve returns for private club owners.

The principle should extend beyond football to athletics, basketball, boxing, wrestling, rugby, volleyball, handball and Nigeria's other competitive sports. Federations should maintain teams of qualified professionals working regularly with elite athletes and development programmes rather than assembling support personnel mainly before foreign competitions. Academies similarly need medical screening, injury prevention, nutrition, conditioning and rehabilitation alongside the coaches and scouts traditionally employed. Each setting can become both an athlete-development environment and a genuine source of employment for trained specialists.

Universities represent another obvious opportunity because Nigeria already teaches medicine, physiotherapy, psychology, nutrition, physical education and other relevant disciplines across many institutions. Competitive university sport can support practical performance centres where students learn, academics conduct useful research and surrounding athletes receive specialist services. Such centres would help connect classroom knowledge with Nigerian athletes, clubs and academies requiring those services. They would also give younger professionals somewhere credible to acquire experience before national or international opportunities arise.

State governments can build similar capacity from money already spent on stadiums, clubs, festivals and sporting competitions every year. States preparing teams for National Sports Festivals should maintain permanent medical and performance teams throughout the competitive cycle instead of assembling them episodically. Lagos, Ogun, Gombe and other states have announced sporting investments and training initiatives that deserve acknowledgement. The next question is how many specialists these programmes consistently train, employ, certify and expose to higher levels of practice.

The federal sports system faces the same challenge despite years of investment in sports medicine, facilities and high-performance development. Nigeria already has professionals

who have worked at Olympic Games, FIFA competitions, African championships and other important international events. Their accumulated experience should become an educational resource through planned mentoring, understudy appointments and real opportunities for younger practitioners to accompany national teams. Every Olympic cycle should leave Nigeria with more experienced specialists than existed when preparations for that cycle began.

What Professional Bodies Must Do

Professional associations must also accept a larger share of responsibility rather than leaving every expectation with government. NASMED, NAPER-SD, the Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy and related specialist bodies already sit between universities, professionals, employers and sporting institutions. Their conferences and advocacy are useful, but members should increasingly see clear routes from association participation into training, mentorship, certification and employment opportunities. International affiliations should produce professional openings that ordinary qualified members can realistically access.

Their collective responsibilities are straightforward and should be measurable over time. They should help define minimum standards, organise meaningful continuing education, create mentorship networks and connect younger practitioners with experienced sports professionals. They should also negotiate credible international attachments, encourage research addressing real Nigerian performance problems and publish the opportunities created for their members. Professional bodies should help make their disciplines attractive career choices rather than remain organisations known mainly through conferences, elections and annual meetings.

Government recognition of these associations should equally carry responsibility for maintaining credible membership records and professional standards. Associations represented within sporting committees should show what training, placements and career opportunities their participation has generated for qualified Nigerians. Cooperation across disciplines is particularly important because modern athlete care involves doctors, physiotherapists, scientists, psychologists, nutritionists and other specialists working together. Nigerian sport will benefit more from shared standards and joint development than from professional bodies defending isolated territories.

A practical response is to create international opportunities for people who have already demonstrated competence within Nigerian sport. Universities, federations and government can negotiate attachments with foreign clubs, sports medicine centres, universities and established performance institutions in different countries. Nigerian embassies and high commissions can help identify credible partners and make institutional introductions rather than leaving every practitioner to start from nothing. International training should become something qualified professionals can compete for through open and transparent programmes.

• **Dr. Babatunde Akinbinu, MBChB, MPH, MPA, MBA, MPhil is Former Executive Board Member, Ondo State Football**

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

By **Sam Adeleke**

FEW months ago, I found myself thinking about a client I had never expected to see in the headlines. His name is Ridwan Adisa Balogun. Before his name became associated with the Russia-Ukraine war, Ridwan was simply a Nigerian looking for opportunity abroad. He approached us seeking a one-way ticket to Russia on a tourism visa. He told us he was travelling in search of work. We advised him against it. The circumstances did not make sense to us, and travelling on a tourism visa in search of employment raised obvious questions about what would happen when he arrived. He decided not to take our advice and proceeded with his journey.

What happened next is a story I wish I did not have to tell. Ridwan eventually found himself recruited into the Russian military and sent to the frontline in the war against Ukraine. The pay was good and he even sent some money home to his folks. However, that joy was short-lived. In January 2026, he was captured by Ukrainian forces near Lyman. Around the same period, reports emanated from Russia, which somehow filtered to his loved ones in Nigeria that he has been killed on the frontlines. A man who had left Nigeria looking for work was reportedly a dead soldier in a foreign war.

Then came the extraordinary part. He was alive. Ridwan made an SOS appeal for the Nigerian government to intervene and help bring him home. Through a charitable Ukrainian NGO, that appeal reached Nigerians

The Nigerian Job-seeker Who Ended Up In A War

and the wider public. He explained in the video, that trended online in February 2026, that he had travelled to Russia looking for civilian employment as a mechanic or engineer (which was his occupation back home in Nigeria), only to find himself signing a military contract he could not understand. He said the documents were in Russian and he was not permitted to use his phone to translate them. He was subsequently trained alongside others and deployed to the battlefield. As I write this, Ridwan has not returned home. So, for me, this is not an abstract conversation migration, it has a face, it has a name and it is personal.

Over the past decade, my work has taken me across more than 16 countries and into conversations with governments, tourism organizations, mobility practitioners, aspiring migrants, Diaspora communities and young Africans searching for opportunities beyond their borders. I have always believed that international mobility can be a force for good. People should be able to travel, study, work and build better lives across borders. However, mobility only works when people move with accurate information, proper documentation and informed consent.

The greatest danger facing many young Africans today is not the absence of opportunity. It is the growing sophistication of those

who sell them false opportunity. Ridwan's experience illustrates why deceptive recruitment is much bigger than a migration problem. Across Africa, many young people are being targeted with promises of lucrative jobs, security positions, technical employment and other opportunities abroad. Unfortunately, some later find themselves in situations radically different from what they were promised. It is an open secret that some countries take advantage of desperate Africans with misleading employment offers, contracts in unfamiliar languages and deployment into combat.

As a sovereign nation, Nigeria must move from being reactionary to being proactive by building a system that prevents them. To be fair, the Nigerian government has already recognised the danger. Infact, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has warned Nigerians against deceptive recruitment into foreign armed conflicts and directed Nigerian missions abroad to strengthen consular vigilance. Institutions such as the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCom) have also built significant experience around citizen welfare, migration governance and the protection of Nigerians overseas. However, prevention has to begin before the airport.

Finally, as Africa's most populous nation and one of ECOWAS' most influential member, Nigeria has the diplomatic weight to place deceptive recruitment firmly on the regional

agenda. ECOWAS can facilitate intelligence sharing, coordinated monitoring, victim protection and public awareness across West Africa. The African Union can take the conversation further by developing continental principles around ethical recruitment and the protection of African workers and job seekers abroad. We cannot tell young Africans to dream bigger and then leave them alone to navigate an increasingly sophisticated global marketplace of deception.

Ridwan Balogun wanted a job. He did not set out to become a soldier; that distinction matters. So, the goal should never be to discourage Nigerians from seeking opportunities abroad. It should be to make sure that when Nigerians cross borders in search of a better life, they do so safely, legally, transparently and with dignity. Our responsibility as a country is to make sure that desperation never becomes an open door for exploitation. Nigeria has the opportunity to lead that conversation for Africa. We should not wait until the next Ridwan becomes a headline. Sam Adeleke is a tourism and cross-border mobility expert who has worked with governments, development agencies, and private-sector organizations across Africa. Having travelled across 16 countries, his work focuses on migration, labour mobility, ethical recruitment, and the protection of vulnerable populations.

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After Residency, Kokopelli Set To Tell African Stories With Epignosis I: Our Story First

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

THE need for Africans to tell their stories forms the fulcrum of maiden artists' residency: *Once Upon a Time* (OUT), 'Our Story First', organised by Kokopelli Art Foundation, Lagos, the non-commercial arm of Kokopelli Gallery.

The residency, a structured creative retreat for artists of African origin and heritage whose practices are in active formation, is focused on the premise that the first account of a people should be given by them. "Africa has never been short of talent or of stories. What has been scarce is infrastructure: the access, the mentorship and the room in which a practice can be built rather than merely begun. Talent without infrastructure produces individual careers. Infrastructure produces a generation," said the gallery in a statement.

Featuring five young artists from four countries, Estifanos Solomon Gashaw (Ethiopia), Victor Anachuna (Nigeria), Putin Bempong (Ghana), Falhane Ogoun (Benin Republic) and Vurzie Kimnaton (Nigeria), the residency, which opened on August 24, ran till September 6, and is followed by a fifth anniversary exhibition, *Epignosis I: Our Story First*, opening to the public on September 12, 2026.

The residency had eight facilitators covering practice sustainability, artistic voice, materials and methods, iconography, research, copywriting and artist statements, legal protection (copyright and contracts), and personal branding: Qudus Onikeku (Sustaining the Practice), Seun Alli (African Artist's Signature and Unique Voice), Ato Arinze (Materials and Methods), Prof. Abiodun Akande (Iconography), Victor Ehikhamenor (Research Methods), Belinda Doubara Yanga (Writing Your Practice: Copywriting and Artist Statements), Titilope Mustapha (Legal: Copyright, Contracts and Protecting Your Practice), and Taiwo Adeyemi (Personal Branding for Artists).

They were joined by five 'flash mentors' —

Duke Asidere, Ayoola Gbolahan, Akinbode Adebisi, Kelani Abass and Juliet Ezenwa — who each hosted a resident for a concentrated, one-day apprenticeship in their working studios.

These people supported the cohort to produce one resolved work each for the show, which runs until November 8 at Kokopelli Gallery, on Ademola Street, Ikoyi, Lagos.

The residency also involved field trips, where the artists immersed themselves in historical sites such as Old Secretariat in Marina, Badagry, Lagos Island, the Brazil Quarters, Jaekel House and Nigerian Railway in Ebute Metta.

Director of Kokopelli, Dare Herald, said the initiative is a response to a long-standing distortion of African narratives by outsiders. "We believe that Africa has a lot of stories to last generations. But over the years, a lot of our artists seem to be distracted because of many factors. It could be because that's where they live; because it's the trend of things to be; because that's what the collectors want to buy, or something like that. But we know that we need to tell our stories by ourselves," he said.

"As a matter of fact, in recent times, we've seen situations where foreigners tried to tell our stories for us. In the process of doing that they mix things up. So, we know that it's best most times for us to tell our stories by ourselves so that we don't lose context," Herald said, adding, because of this, there are now African artists who are conscious and very intentional about the African story.

He said the programme is a deliberate revival of a dying culture of post-school apprenticeship in the visual arts.

According to him, "we believe that the culture of apprenticeship in arts is dying. Before, when an artist finishes from school, the person looks to position him/herself to a master, an established artists who gives him/her some rudiments of the art, as well as put them on a better foundation. This was life after school.



One of the artists, Falhane Ogoun, from Benin Republic at work.

That's how it was done. But unfortunately, that culture is dying. So, we have to factor into the system and the structure of this residences that every year, our residence participants take in at least an established artist for one day. It is supposed to be an experimental phase, because this is the first time we're doing it, but I think so far it's been going so well."

Selected from hundreds of applications, the inaugural cohort, the foundation's first alumni, the OUTliers, so to say, genre spanned painting, printmaking, installation and photography, with practices oriented to social critique, identity, environment and the politics of representation.

The selection criteria emphasised two to five years of experience and a clear sense of self-identity. "We were looking for two to five years of experience. We had over 400 applications, those 500, but a lot of them were taken off because they had like five to 10 years of experience," Herald said. "Secondly, we were looking for people who had inclinations. You know, self-identity."

Herald noted that African artists have never been short of talent or stories. But that what has been scarce is infrastructure — the access, the mentorship, the opportunity — that al-

lows those stories to become practices, careers and legacies.

"This residency is our contribution to building that. We called it *Once Upon a Time* because that is how a story announces itself before it begins. It signals that what follows is not a record but a telling, and that a telling belongs to whoever decides to tell it."

According to Herald, "this is life after school and unfortunately the culture is dying, so, we have factored it into the system and structure of this residency. Every year, our residents and participants will be taken to at least one established artist for one day or half a day for a flash mentorship."

Curator, Kokopelli Gallery, Mr. Jibola Williams, disclosed that the residency initiative by Herald resonated with him as a multi-disciplinary artist and that it is designed to inspire next generation and make them remember that values of the old still have merit today.

"I feel strongly that as Africans, our heritage and culture, the things that have made us who we are, from our teachers, parents and communities, and our understanding of our cultural essence, even before Western and Asian influences, are very important.

Quintessence Unveils A Collector's Eye

THE Quintessence Gallery on Victoria Island, Lagos, will on Saturday, September 12, unveil its maiden *Collector Studies*, *A Collector's Eye: Prof. Egun Clark x Alimi*. The show marks the beginning of Quintessence Collector Studies, a new series examining collectors who have played important roles in sustaining Nigeria's cultural ecosystem. It is also meant to interrogate what private collections can reveal about artistic practice and cultural memory over time.

Alimi Adewale, whose works will form the bulk of the collection, is a Nigerian artist who uses the medium of painting, sculptures and installations to explore urban issues and the lives of everyday people in cities.

His practice combines elements of minimalism and abstraction to evoke the dynamism and intensity of the cosmopolitan environment. Most of his work has a profusion of rich textures and oftentimes an uncommon sculptural finish.

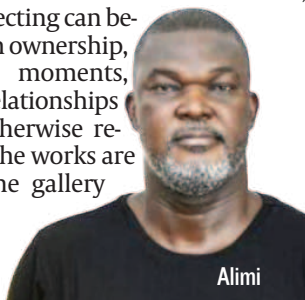
"The gallery spends a great deal of time looking at artists with much less attention given to the people who collect their works, live with it over many years and, in doing so, help preserve another kind of record," it said.

"For this first edition, works by Alimi from the private collection of Prof. Egun Clark are brought together to consider one central question: What can a private collection reveal about an artist over time? Seen together, the works offer a view of Alimi through the sustained attention of one collector,

showing how collecting can become more than ownership, preserving moments, changes and relationships that might otherwise remain unseen. The works are not for sale," the gallery noted.



Clark



Alimi

How Ijeoma Is Redefining Art Curation, Amplifying Girls' Voices In Rivers With Her Stage

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

IN Nigeria, curation of culture and arts has experienced a remarkable change from being a mere showcasing to life-changing impacts through expressions. In today's world, the curators are more concerned with leveraging societal culture and arts to portray stories of real experiences and inspire social change.

To this end, there are growing attention around promoting societal change for certain groups, to emphasise in particular, the protection of the girl child against vices, social stratification and abuse which has characterise most advocacies and humanitarian activities involving sanitary pad distribution to girl children in schools, raising awareness against abuses and patriarchal marginalisation, and other meaningful activities, without the curation of art.

A closer look at the arts curation space in Rivers State reveals a rich colorful cultural life, which mirrors the outstanding work of the founder of Egbema Girl Child Education Foundation (EGCEF), Anointing Nkeiruka Ijeoma.

The organisation uses art curation to highlight the voices of young girls and raise awareness on female genital mutilation, girls education, gender expectations or identity, and against social vices like sexual assault and all forms of abuse,.

Ijeoma has built upon her curative initiative over the years by significant pioneering programs like the ONELGA girl child Day and Ohaji Egbema Girl Child Day in 2020, Orashi Girl Child Day in 2021, and Rivers State Girl Child Day in 2022. These programmes features mixtures of expression through music, dance, spoken word, drama, and other creative expressions to celebrate the girl child and narrate the untold stories of the girl child in an unprecedented way.

As a curator, Ijeoma has gained prominence through its vision that



Ijeoma on set of *Her Stage*

brings the ideal girl child transformation into existence, the tenets of which are based on her training as a lawyer, who graduated from Rivers State University (RSU), Port Harcourt, and an unassuming quest built upon solid familiarity with her moral cultural background as a native of Egbema in Rivers State, Nigeria. These attributes form the curative qualities that has distinguished her creative expression in the art scene.

Ijeoma considers as most primary mission, the opportunity to change the narrative of every downtrodden and disadvantaged girl child by inspiring confidence in young teenage girls through the expressions of art.

Recently, on July 17, 2026, at Omoku, Ijeoma curated *Her Stage*, a platform that was used to give a voice to the girl child through expression of art. The guiding philosophy of *Her Stage* was simple yet powerful, reflecting one stage, many voices, and countless stories.

It featured a multi-disciplinary art making platform that brought together many girl-children in a room, showcasing rich moral rectitude that enriches the cultural bank of Rivers State and Nigeria at large, with a message that speaks through the lens of arts and culture by giving every girl child in attendance, a chance to be heard, bringing expression to life, creating social dialogue, and projecting their concerns to the fore.

Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by Shaibu Husseini

TIFF Announces Special Screening Of *The Last Photograph*

THE Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) has announced a special screening of Zack Snyder's *The Last Photograph*, which will make its World Premiere at 6:30pm on Sunday, September 13, in the John Bassett Theatre, TIFF's new screening venue at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Starring Stuart Martin (*Army of Thieves*) and Fra Free (*Hawkeye*), the latest from Zack Snyder (*300*, *Watchmen*, *Man of Steel*) follows an ex-DEA agent seeking revenge in a South American jungle where dangerous terrain and inner demons intermingle. Public tickets go on sale today at 12pm ET. *The Last Photograph* | Zack Snyder | USA World Premiere Special Event The 51st edition of the Toronto International Film Festival, presented by Rogers, runs September 10 to 20, 2026.

Tickets Sold Out For World Premiere Of Nigeria's *Secret Lives Of Baba Segi's Wives*

ALL three screenings of the screen adaptation of Lola Shoneyin's 2010 debut novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* including the world premiere on September 13, is sold out! Directed by Daniel Oriahi and executive produced by a team lead by EbonyLife Group Managing Director Mo Abudu, critics have described Oriahi's interpretation of *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* as sharp, funny, and thought provoking. Like the novel, this adaptation presents a devastating portrait of polygamous family life in contemporary Nigeria. The narrative revolves round Baba Segi (played by award winning actor Odunlade Adekola), a wealthy and haughty patriarch, who spent years building a household, and marrying several women in the process. Baba Segi has as his first wife Iya Segi (Iyabo Ojo), second, Iya Tope (Mercy Aigbe), third, Iya Femi (Bimbo Ademoye), and the fourth and youngest, university-educated yet naïve Bolanle (Omowunmi Dada). The new wife upsets the tentative balance struck by the

first three wives, who have been locked into rivalries, secrets, and mutual survival strategies, each trying to solidify their own status. An enquiry on why the youngest wife failed to conceive, set off a chain of revelations that unravel the fragile order holding the household together. The film features many of Nollywood's finest talents.

African Cinema Makes Strong Presence At TIFF

THERE is a strong presence of African cinema at the 2026 Toronto International Film Festival. Ten African films are featuring on the festival programme. A major platform for African filmmakers at this year's TIFF will be Global African Hub backed by pan-African institution Canex Creations, a subsidiary of Afreximbank's Fund for Export Development in Africa. Canex Creations was launched in 2025 to help expand the reach of the continent's creative sector. The Global African hub aims at providing a base for the continent's filmmakers and executives to connect with international partners at the TIFF market. The hub is widely considered as a significant step up for Canex, which last year attended with short film, *Dust to Dreams*, directed by Idris Elba. Five African productions and co-pros are featuring in the festival's Centrepiece. The five films are *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, *Ben'Imana Congo Boy*, *Future Tense and Soumsoum* and *The Night of the Stars*. John Trengove's *The Smell of Apples* will also world premiere in Platform, while Ghanaian feature *Zjili: A Story of Sisterhood* and the *Burdens of Excess* will screen in Discovery. Six African works-in-progress will also have market screenings at TIFF.

Final Honouree For TIFF 2026 Named

THE Toronto Film Festival (TIFF) CEO Cameron Bailey has shared the list of the final

honourees of this year's TIFF Tribute Awards, presented in partnership with Rolex. Academy Award-winning legend Helen Mirren will receive the TIFF Share Her Journey Groundbreaker Award, presented by Joanna Griffiths and the Women of Knix; acclaimed cinematographer Adam Pietkiewicz will receive the TIFF Variety Artisan Award; beloved Canadian actor, writer, director, and producer Seth Rogen will be presented with the TIFF Norman Jewison Career Achievement Award, presented by The Budman Family; and award-winning filmmaker Bassam Tariq will receive the TIFF Rising Talent Award. An additional TIFF Special Tribute Award will be presented to global superstar Fan Bingbing. Honourees will be joining previously announced recipients Penélope Cruz, Lee Chang-dong, Rosalind Eleazar, Siân Heder, and Isabelle Huppert. "Helen Mirren and Fan Bingbing bring bold, compelling performances to this year's Festival, building on iconic bodies of work," said Cameron Bailey, CEO, TIFF. "Bassam Tariq's

Your Mother, Your Mother, Your Mother will

confirm his reputation as a dazzling storyteller, and we recognise Adam Pietkiewicz for crafting never-before-seen images from one of the world's most remote regions. And we will be forever grateful to writer, actor, director and producer Seth Rogen for sharing his wildly Canadian talents with the world." Taking place Sunday, September 13 at Fairmont Royal York Hotel Toronto, the eight yearly awards gala is TIFF's largest annual fundraiser with proceeds supporting TIFF's impact initiatives, expanding access to bold world-class cinema while advancing artist development, industry leadership, community engagement, and year-round cultural impact. The evening will see industry peers, international filmmakers, and distinguished honourees gathered to celebrate cinematic excellence as awards are formally presented during an intimate ceremony, with the full list of presenters to be announced on September 9. Presented in partnership with Rolex, with support from RBC, Fairmont Royal York Hotel, and Don Julio.



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70

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Happy 70th Birthday, Chief!

Chief (Dr.)

CHIDI ANYAEGBU, CON

Signed:
Bishop Dr.
Victor Ogo Mbanisi
Chairman, Banex Group



Oral Inquiry Into Oru, Ancestral Roots Of Ijaw Nation

By Kingsley Kemebradigha Kuku

THE history of a people is more than a record of dates and migrations. It is the collective memory through which a people understand who they are, where they came from and what they have contributed to civilisation. For the Ijaw, or Ijo/Izon people, the question of origin is therefore fundamental to our identity.

One of the enduring traditions within Ijaw historical consciousness is the connection between the Oru, also remembered in some traditions as Horu or Tobu-Otu, and the emergence of the Ijo nation.

When our elders say ‘Ijo are Oru,’ the statement should not be understood in the modern biological sense of ‘race.’ It is better understood as an assertion of ancestry, ethnogenesis and cultural continuity. The tradition holds that the Oru constituted a foundational ancestral population from which the Ijo/Izon identity subsequently emerged.

The ancient Oru are traditionally associated with the waterways of the Lower Niger and Niger Delta. Rivers, creeks, islands, mangrove forests and the Atlantic coast were not merely their environment, they were the foundations of their civilisation. Water provided routes for migration, communication, commerce, fishing, settlement and political interaction.

This riverine character is essential to understanding Ijaw civilisation. The river was a highway, the creek a pathway, and the canoe an instrument of economic and social life. The traditional description of the ancestors as Tobu-Otu—the ancient people, and in related traditions as water people, therefore carries profound cultural meaning.

The Oru-Ijo tradition consequently suggests that the Ijaw did not appear suddenly as a modern ethnic category. Rather, the Ijaw identity developed through a long process of ancestry, migration, settlement, interaction, political organization and cultural consolidation.

The central historical question is, therefore, not simply whether Oru and Ijo are identical names. It is: What role did the ancient Oru population and tradition play in the ethnogenesis of the Ijaw nation?

From Oru To Agadagba-Bou

ACCORDING to Ijaw oral traditions, ancient Oru populations moved through the river systems of the wider Lower Niger and eventually established communities in the Niger Delta. These traditions should be approached with respect and with scholarly discipline. Oral history is particularly important for societies whose histories were preserved for generations

through elders, genealogies, songs, place names, rituals and institutions.

At the centre of the Ijaw traditional narrative stands Agadagba-bou, traditionally associated with the Igbedi Creek/Wilberforce Island area of present-day Bayelsa State. It occupies a special position in Ijaw historical memory as an ancient centre of political, cultural and spiritual organisation.

The tradition further associates this development with Father Ijo, Ujo or Izonowei, remembered in some accounts as Pere Ijo. Significantly, this ancestral figure is connected with the Oru. Thus, the traditional narrative links the emergence of the Ijo political identity with an Oru ancestral foundation.

Another important feature is the tradition of the nine ancestral lines, or Isena-Ibe, associated with the formation of the Ijo community. Among these is Oru (Tobu). This is significant because it places Oru within the traditional genealogical memory of the Ijaw rather than treating Oru as an external theory imposed upon Ijaw history.

Over subsequent generations, populations dispersed from ancestral centres and established communities throughout the Niger Delta. The development of the Ijaw nation was therefore not necessarily one single migration from one location to another, but a prolonged process of dispersal and ethnogenesis.

Different communities developed their own political institutions, dialects, traditions and identities. Across the wider Ijaw family emerged communities and political formations including the Gbaraun, Kalabari, Nembe, Okrika, Andoni, Bonny, Opobo, Apoi, Arogbo, Egbema, Gbaramatu, Kolokuma, Gbaran, Ogulagha and many others.

Their diversity does not necessarily contradict a common ancestral consciousness. It can also be understood as the consequence of centuries of settlement, geographical separation, interaction and political development within the complex environment of the Niger Delta.

The Ijaw nation may therefore be understood as an example of ethnic continuity combined with political and cultural diversity.

History, Evidence And The Ijaw Civilisation

THE Oru-Ijo thesis must ultimately be subjected to multidisciplinary scholarship. Several categories of evidence should be brought together.

First is oral tradition. Ijaw elders and traditional institutions have preserved accounts of Oru, Tobu-Otu, Father Ijo, Agadagba-bou and ancestral lines. These traditions deserve systematic documentation before they disappear with successive generations.

Second is linguistics. Ijo/Ijoid languages constitute a distinctive linguistic grouping with a long and complex history. Comparative linguistic research can help illuminate the antiquity of language communities and their historical interactions with neighbouring peoples.

Third is archaeology. The Niger Delta contains enormous archaeological potential. Ancient settlements, pottery, tools, burial practices and other material remains may provide additional evidence about the antiquity and movement of populations in the region.

Fourth is anthropology and comparative history. Ijaw traditions should be studied alongside the historical traditions of neighbouring peoples, including those of the Lower Niger, ancient Benin and other surrounding societies.

These disciplines should not be seen as competitors to Ijaw oral history. Properly conducted, they can test, refine and illuminate it.

It is important, however, to distinguish historical tradition from independently established historical proof. The existence and importance of the Oru-Ijo tradition deserve documentation, but every element of its chronology cannot presently be presented as archaeologically proven. This distinction strengthens rather than weakens the historical inquiry.

We should not manufacture history. We should recover it, investigate it and preserve it. The most responsible formulation is therefore:

The Oru, or Tobu-Otu, constitute an important ancestral tradition within Ijaw historical consciousness and are remembered as a foundational population in the ethnogenesis of the Ijo/Ijaw nation. Through generations of migration, settlement, political organization and cultural development within the Lower Niger and Niger Delta, the diverse communities that constitute the Ijaw nation emerged. This interpretation also invites a broader understanding of Ijaw civilisation. The Ijaw should not be remembered merely as people who inhabited the creeks and coastal areas of the Niger Delta.

They should also be studied as a people whose ancestors developed a distinctive riverine and maritime civilization adapted to an extraordinarily complex aquatic environment.

Appreciation, Cultural Memory And The Way Forward

Before concluding, I wish to express my profound appreciation to the distinguished Ijaw historians, scholars, writers, traditional historians and custodians of our oral, spiritual and cultural heritage whose lifelong efforts have preserved the memory and identity of our people. I particularly acknowledge Professor E. J. Alagoa and Professor Tekena N. Tamuno for their foundational scholarship on Ijaw and Niger Delta history; S. K. Owonaro and Benaebi Benatari for documenting and preserving Ijaw historical traditions and ancestral narratives; and Chief Kuro Kowe, as a spiritual and oral historian and custodian of ancestral knowledge.

We must equally honour Professor J. P. Clark, whose poetry, drama and literary works brought the landscape, experiences and cultural consciousness of the Niger Delta to national and international attention. I also acknowledge High Chief Government Owezide Ekpemupolo (Tompolo) for his prominent contemporary role in the preservation and promotion of Ijaw cultural identity, heritage and consciousness, including support for traditional institutions and ancestral values.

Beyond these distinguished names, I salute our kings, chiefs, elders, clan heads, storytellers, traditional priests, community historians and family custodians who preserved our history across generations. Their collective contribution reminds us that Ijaw history lives not only in books and archives, but also in oral traditions, sacred knowledge, genealogies, rituals, songs and the memories of our people.

Our task is not to manufacture history, but to preserve it, investigate it, test it where necessary, and transmit it responsibly to generations yet unborn. The Oru tradition is therefore not merely a question of where the Ijaw came from; it is also a question of what civilization our ancestors created.

When our elders say ‘Ijo are Oru,’ we should hear in those words an assertion of ancestral memory and continuity. Oru is part of the story of Ijo. Our responsibility is to ensure that this story is neither lost through neglect nor distorted through careless historical claims. Our history belongs to all of us, but we owe a special debt to those who preserved it for us.

• Kuku, Esq., holds B.Ed, MSc, PhD, LL.B, BL, LL.M.



Kuku

Enters The New Balogun Of Oyo Kingdom

By Femi Adesina

IT was the radiance of kings last Saturday at the palace of the Alaafin of Oyo as His Imperial Majesty, Oba Abimbola Akeem Owoade I, led a battery of traditional rulers from far and near to install a new Balogun (war leader, Captain) for the kingdom.

Dr Adesola Adeduntan, FCA, was an accomplished banker, indeed, the former Group Chief Executive Officer of FirstBank. He is also Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Abiola Ajimobi Technical University, Ibadan. Now he adds another title to his already well bedecked cap. Balogun of Oyo.

Alaafin Owoade, accompanied by His Imperial Majesty, the Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba (Senator) Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja, Arusa I, the Oluwo of Iwo, Oba Abdulrasheed Akanbi, the Olowu of Owu, Oba (Professor) Saka Adelola Matemilola, many other monarchs from across Oyo and neighbouring states, captains of industry, technocrats, and other high net-worth people turned out at the installation ceremony, held within the precinct of the Alaafin's palace. There was also a high-level contingent of Lagos traditional rulers, including the Oniru of Iru land, Oba Abdulwasii Omogbolahan Lawal, and the Olu of Iwa and Apapa, Oba Morufu Amodu-Tijani. Enters the new Balogun of Oyo, successor to Dr Omololu Olunloyo, a former governor of Oyo State.

Come and see traditional drumming at its quaintest,

most scintillating. And the drummers were not just old men, but included boys as young as four, five years old. Tradition and culture at its best. And you could hear panegyrics as well as chants that make the head swell.

A lot of rumours had attended the relationship between the Alaafin and the Olubadan over the months, how they were at loggerheads, and at no love lost. All that was laid to rest when the two monarchs ushered Adeduntan and his wife, Hajia Ameenat Olabimpe Amope Oluwa-Adeduntan, installed Ayinba Balogun of Oyo, into the hall. A rapturous welcome heralded them.

A lot of plaudits attended Adeduntan as he took the new title. Most significant was that from the President and Commander-in-

Chief of the Armed Forces, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. He described the installation of the new Balogun as “both an honour and a call to greater service,” adding: “I trust that you will continue to deploy your experience, influence and resources towards promoting peace, opportunity, development and the preservation of our rich cultural heritage.”

The President recalled the illustrious banking career of Adeduntan, his

continuing contribution to national development through enterprise, education and philanthropy, and urged the new Balogun to “bring to the service of the Alaafin, the Oyo Kingdom and its people, the same discipline, strategic foresight and commitment to excellence that have distinguished your professional and public life.”

It will be recalled that in his 9-year tenure as MD/CEO, Adeduntan turned FirstBank into a digitally driven institution, raising the number of customer accounts from about 10 million to over 40 million.

Since retiring from FirstBank, Adeduntan has increasingly turned his attention to enterprise and philanthropy. He is Founder and Chairman of Sequoia Holdings, whose flagship minerals business, Sequoia Minerals & Metals, is building district-scale positions across Nigeria's critical, precious and industrial minerals belts. Through the Adesola Adeduntan Foundation, he is also investing in education and healthcare, including modern Grade ‘A’ Primary Healthcare Centres being developed within the palace complexes of the Alaafin of Oyo and the Olubadan of Ibadanland.

Oba Owoade described the Balogun title as one of the most revered and senior, historically saddled with the responsibility of leadership, courage, and defence of the Oyo Kingdom. He challenged the new Balogun to deploy his experience for the development, peace and unity of the kingdom.

Adeduntan expressed gratitude for the honour, and pledged to serve with humility, integrity and commitment, describing the Alaafin as kind, social, giving, and “typically builds deep personal bonds with the people. He is known for resolving conflicts peacefully (and for avoiding them in the first place)... He is a dynamic ruler.”

Chief Bode Thomas was Balogun before Dr Olunloyo. Now, the Apesin Ola of Ibadanland, (where he hails from) is the new one. May he serve well. Amen.



Balogun Adeduntan and his wife, Ayinba Ameenat

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

There are performers whose voices command attention, and there are artists whose presence transforms a space long before applause arrives. Adeyinka ‘Super Girl’ Akinremi belongs to the latter category. Her artistic practice has never been confined to a single discipline. Instead, it has evolved through theatre, music, voice acting, broadcasting and choreography, creating an artistic language that is as much about storytelling as it is about performance. This multidisciplinary identity found another compelling expression during *World in Colour*, a celebration of the World Day of Cultural Creatives held at Arnot St. Mary CofE Primary School in Liverpool. Organised through a partnership between Arnot St. Mary CofE Primary School, CHAC CIC, Red19 Creatives CIC and ROOTS & Radiance Network CIC, the event brought together visual artists, photographers, performers, educators and culture practitioners for a day that celebrated creativity in its many forms. The programme featured workshops, photography exhibitions, fashion showcases and live artistic presentations, creating an environment where different art forms existed not in competition but in conversation. Within that landscape, Adeyinka’s performance emerged as one of the day’s defining moments. Accompanied by the expressive saxophone artistry of Dayo Sax and Laitan Desmond, she delivered a vocal performance that felt less like a musical interlude and more like an unfolding narrative. Rather than overpowering the instrumen-

Adeyinka On Voice Acting, Theatre, Creative Blogging

tal accompaniment, her voice entered into dialogue with it, allowing melody, silence and improvisation to shape the emotional rhythm of the performance. There was a noticeable theatrical intelligence behind every phrase. A few weeks after the event, *The Guardian* spoke with Adeyinka over the telephone about the performance and the artistic journey that brought her to this point. She was quick to trace the foundations of her work back to voice acting, a discipline she believes continues to shape everything she does on stage. “Voice acting taught me that emotion doesn’t depend on movement,” she reflected. “You have to paint pictures with nothing but your voice. When I moved into theatre and music, I wasn’t leaving voice acting behind; I was simply giving those stories a physical presence.” Her explanation illuminated what had been evident during the performance. Watching Adeyinka sing, one senses that every lyric carries intention. She understands not only how to perform a song but how to inhabit it. The result is a performer who communicates equally through expression, gesture, timing and silence. Her years in theatre are equally apparent. Rather than treating songs as isolated musical pieces, she approaches each performance as a dramatic journey with emotional progression. The audience is not merely invited to listen; they are gently drawn

into the emotional landscape of the work. Increasingly, this appears to define Adeyinka’s artistic philosophy. Her performances resist spectacle for its own sake. Instead, they seek connection between performer and audience, between story and sound, and between culture and lived experience. When I mentioned that her stage presence often feels more conversational than performative, she agreed. “I’ve always wanted people to feel included rather than impressed,” she said. “Whether I’m singing, acting or hosting, I’m trying to create a space where people recognise something of themselves. That’s where genuine connection begins.” In many ways, this reflects a wider movement taking place within contemporary community arts practice. Across cities such as Sheffield and Liverpool, artists are becoming cultural connectors as much as performers, moving comfortably between education, community engagement and artistic production. It is a shift that has become increasingly visible among multidisciplinary practitioners who view creativity not simply as entertainment but as a means of building relationships, preserving identity and encouraging participation. Adeyinka’s work sits comfortably within that conversation. Her ability to move across voice acting, theatre, broadcasting and music demonstrates an artist interested less in artistic labels than in communication itself. Each discipline informs the next. The sensitivity developed through voice acting deepens her musical interpretation. Her theatrical experience enriches her stagecraft. Broadcasting sharpens her relationship with audiences. Choreographic understanding gives physicality to musical expression. She sees these experiences not as separate careers but as chapters of the same creative journey. “People often ask which one I love most,” she



told me. “The truth is, they all serve each other. Theatre gives my music character. Music gives my theatre emotion. Broadcasting teaches me how to listen. Every discipline has made me a better storyteller.” That sense of continuity explains why her artistic practice feels remarkably cohesive despite its breadth. What made her performance at the event particularly memorable was the generosity with which she occupied the stage. There was no urgency to impress, only a quiet confidence in allowing the work to unfold at its own pace. Supported by the textured improvisations of Dayo Sax and Laitan Desmond, she created moments where voice and instrument appeared to converse rather than accompany one another. The performance became an exercise in listening as much as singing. Perhaps this explains why audiences remained attentive throughout. In an age when live performance often competes for attention through spectacle, Adeyinka demonstrated that sincerity remains one of an artist’s most compelling qualities. Her contribution also reflected the wider ambition of *World in Colour*. The event was not simply a showcase of artistic talent but a celebration of creativity as a shared cultural language. “I hope people leave believing that creativity has the power to heal and connect us. If someone walks away feeling more hopeful, more confident or simply reminded that their story matters, then the performance has achieved its purpose,” she said.

By Daniel Anazia

The release of the 2026 Headies Awards nominee list has sparked a significant industry debate following an open letter from acclaimed Afro-Gospel artiste, Akinade Ibuoye, popularly known as Gaise Baba, who has publicly criticised the organisers over the systemic categorisation of faith-based music. His criticism came days after the Ayo Animashaun-led organisers released its list of nominees for its 18th edition, which spans 35 categories. Fola leads the pack with 10 nominations, followed by Omah Lay with eight, while Mavo and Wizkid each picked up seven. Gaise Baba himself



Gaise Baba

The Headies 2026 Nominations: Backlash Over Treatment Of Gospel Music

remains on the list this year with a nomination for Best Inspirational Single for his hit track *No Turning Back II*, featuring Lawrence Oyor. Also on the list and in the category are Sunmisola Agbebi, Sinach, and other gospel acts. While this year’s ceremony is scheduled for October 25 in Toronto, Canada, the artiste’s core grievance extends far beyond his single nod. Instead, he has trained a sharp spotlight on how mainstream award bodies structurally isolate gospel music, restricting spiritually themed tracks to a designated niche rather than evaluating them on their sonic merit and broader cultural footprint. In an open letter

shared on his social media pages on Friday, August 28, the *No Turning Back* hitmaker argued that gospel songs deserve a shot at mainstream recognition when they meet the same artistic standards as secular records, rather than being confined to inspirational categories. He noted that a rap song about money or fame is judged purely on its craft, while a gospel record with comparable quality is often boxed into a separate lane. “A rap record is a rap record. It does not stop being rap because of what the artiste chooses to rap about,” Gaise Baba said, challenging the notion that spiritual lyrical content should automatically disqualify a song from competing alongside secular counterparts in categories like Best Rap Single or Song of the Year. “Whether the record is about money, fame, sex, debauchery, or faith, the craft, pen game, cadence, delivery, and the flow are what make it a rap record, not the subject matter. A rap song with gospel content, considered only within gospel or inspira-

tional categories and never as rap, is being quietly removed from a conversation it has every right to be part of,” he added. Gaise Baba’s letter also revisited the 2024 edition, where he had been nominated in the newly introduced Inspirational Music category alongside AnendlessOcean, Mercy Chinwo, Dunsin Oyekan and Limolabaze. According to him, the winner in that category was never announced or brought on stage during the live broadcast — an omission he called disrespectful to the nominated creatives. He argued that once a category and its nominees are announced, time should be found to call it on stage, in full view of the audience. The singer, who has spent more than 15 years in the Nigerian music industry, said he first attended The Headies in October 2012, when he was signed to Sanctified Records and had been active in the industry for just over two years.

TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

That Nollywood Actress Needs An English Lesson

On Tuesday, Nollywood actress, Evan Okoro, one of the leading figures in what is now known as ‘Asaba Nollywood’ (Nigerian film actors that churn out home videos every other week from the Delta State capital, Asaba), released a video online. She began the video in a rambling manner, and when she clarified she was speaking in ‘parables’, it dawned on T4T why she was indeed rambling rather incoherently, because according to her, she was talking to a particular government official(s) who she claimed to have met some days earlier and assured her he or they would sort out the issue that was bothering her, and T4T could only figure the issue had to do with her Asaba home, which was facing a threat of demolition by the state government. Last year, she was seen on video tearing her wig off, well, literally, as she screamed that her only achievement in all her years of acting was about to be taken from her because government officials claimed the land where the house sits was on a waterway or something. That could only be the plausible explanation for her ‘parable’ video of Tuesday because she kept mentioning the unnamed government official(s) and bemoaning why they appear to be reneging on their words on “resolving the issue”.

Now, what you read above is actually not the news here. In the course of the video, Evan Okoro was heard boldly issuing a mild threat to the ‘government officials’ and this was how she concluded her warning: “Don’t take my silent for weakness.” T4T had to rewind the video twice to confirm what he thought he heard. “Don’t take my silent for weakness.” T4T played back again and he heard what he was searching for: ‘Silent’. Yes, silent. “Don’t take my silent for weakness.” The nickel dropped. How a supposed top Nollywood actress would release a video with such an embarrassing ‘murder’ of English to the public is sad. With her straight face, it was clear Evan Okoro had no idea that she was supposed to use silence in place of the ‘silent’ she used, so, she should have said: “Don’t take my silence for weakness”. If person wey dey act film in English dey make dis kain mistake and her fans see her as a role model who nor go fit make mistakes like dat, wahala dey o. Auntie Evan, please, it is “Don’t take my silence for weakness,” not “Don’t take my ‘silent’...” I Go Save, The Comedian ‘Voltron’ THE ongoing move by the people of Effurun in Uvwie Council of Delta State to ensure that the aura of Warri does not engulf its ethnic identity is still raging on. Recently, female comedian, Realwarripikin had to cancel her

comedy show when she insisted on not changing the event venue billed to hold in Effurun but was being promoted as Warri. The advocates of “Effurun is not Warri” threatened Realwarripikin with legal actions and picketing the event on show day. She chose to cancel entirely. Another comedian, this time, a male, I Go Save, T4T gathered, is not taking any of what Realwarripikin took. The same people had reportedly written to him to change the name of Warri in the promotional items for his oncoming show in Effurun. Unlike Realwarripikin, I Go Save is doubling down and threatening fire for fire. T4T saw a video where I Go Save was blowing hot and telling whoever cared to listen that he was not Realwarripikin and anybody who dared to disrupt his show would face severe consequences. He spoke in Pidgin English. Someone in the comments section had one word for him: “Voltron”. If you grew up in the late 60s and 70s through the 80s, you would know the popular TV animation programme for kids, Voltron: Defender of the Universe. That is what I Go Save is, Voltron. Instead of bros I Go Save to do wetin owners of the land want, he is foaming in the mouth like Godzilla. T4T will keep you posted how the standoff will play out anyway.

'Lagosians Must Be Part Of Sanitation Solution'

By Bertram Nwannekanma

At the height of a Lagos downpour, a plastic bottle tossed into a drainage channel can seem like a small, almost insignificant act. For the person throwing it away, it may be nothing more than getting rid of an empty container. But for a family living downstream, that same bottle can become part of a blockage that turns a heavy rainfall into a flooded street, a damaged home or a night spent trying to keep water out.

This is the human face of Lagos' sanitation problem.

The consequences of indiscriminate waste disposal are rarely experienced by the person who drops the refuse.

They are often borne by someone else — a trader whose goods are damaged by floodwater, a commuter stranded by a flooded road, a family forced to wade through dirty water, or a child exposed to an unhealthy environment.

Yet whenever Lagos' streets become dirty or drains become clogged, the conversation often returns to one familiar question: where is government?

There is a comforting version of the Lagos waste debate in which government is responsible for everything. If a street is dirty, government has failed. If a drainage channel is filled with plastic bottles, government has failed. If someone empties a refuse bag on a road median at midnight, some-



A resident arrested for dumping waste into drain during rainfall...on Wednesday

how government is still expected to take the blame.

Government certainly bears enormous responsibility for environmental sanitation. It must provide an efficient waste-management system, ensure regular collection, maintain infrastructure and enforce environmental laws.

But a city of more than 20 million people cannot be kept clean exclusively by workers employed to clean up after everybody else.

At some point, behaviour becomes policy.

That reality lies at the heart of one of the most difficult questions facing environmental management in Lagos: can government create a clean city without first creating a culture that rejects dirty behaviour?

The evidence suggests that the answer is no.

In April 2025, the Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) disclosed that more than 300 people had been ap-

prehended for waste-related offences during intensified surveillance operations conducted with the Lagos State Environmental Sanitation Corps. The offences included illegal dumping, some of it carried out under the cover of darkness.

The troubling aspect of that figure is not simply the number of people arrested. It is the behaviour that made the arrests necessary in the first place.

Every person who dumps refuse into a canal understands, at some level, that somebody else may eventually pay the price. Every business that deposits waste on a road median transfers its private responsibility to the public.

Every household that refuses formal collection and quietly disposes of its waste elsewhere effectively asks responsible residents to subsidise its behaviour.

The consequences go far beyond an untidy street.

A plastic bottle thrown into a drainage channel may remain there during the dry season, but when heavy rainfall arrives, it can become part of a blockage that contributes to flooding. A refuse pile beside a road can obstruct traffic, attract rodents and create unhealthy conditions for residents. Indiscriminate dumping can also contaminate water and degrade entire neighbourhoods.

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

Mystery Of The Black He-Goat (1)

By Segun Durowaiye
(08055356855)

ADEOSUN had one fervent passion, and that was an insatiable thirst for women. It was on a Saturday. Time was exactly 6p.m. He was cruising around the city in his Tokunbo car, evidently searching for a pretty damsel to spend the night with.

Such are the common traits and expectations of casanovas the world over, and he was no exception. He had been driving for the past 30 minutes with no luck; all the 'babes' he saw didn't quite meet the quality and standard he wanted.

Just then, as he was negotiating a bend at the popular Masha Bus Stop in Surulere, he spotted this enchanting and sweet-looking lady, walking alone towards Ogunlana Drive.

'Yeah, this is it!' he thought. The lady was simply beautiful. She had all it takes to make a man glow with desire! Her steps, too, were rhythmical and had cadences and flow. It seemed she was dancing to some unheard heavenly music as she walked. Her steps were calculating and sensuously inviting. Everything about her was out of the ordinary. She looked exactly like an angel.

'Pimm! Pimm!! Pimm!!!' Adeosun blared the horn of his car beside the charming lady. 'Oh, lady! How far are you going? Let me give you a ride,' he told her.

I'm not going too far. Thank you,' she replied softly.

'Hey, sweet babe, come let me drop you. .angels like you shouldn't do stressful walking. .'

'I said don't worry mister. .'' she said politely.

'Dear, I mean no harm. Let me drop you, I really don't mind. It's not proper for angelic queens to walk on dusty roads,' he pressed further, digging out sweet words from his bag of tricks.

'Well. .okay, if you insist,' she capitulated. And immediately Adeosun opened the door

of the vacant seat beside him. 'Thank you, sir,' she said again; and this gladdened the heart of the young man. 'Well, how do we begin?' Adeosun said, adjusting his designer shirt. 'My name is Adeosun Koleosho. You can call me Ade for short. I'm a banker. I work with Gems International Bank in Victoria Island, Lagos. What's your name sweet Seraph? And how are you doing? Oh, lady, you remind me of my first love! The semblance is just too much, and I'll do anything to show my love for you!'

'Don't bother yourself sir, I'm a married woman,' she replied gently, 'I can't have a second husband. It's not possible,' she added in a sweet, enchanting tone.

'Ha, ha, here we go again,' Adeosun said in a smooth, baritone voice, 'Baby, I really don't mind. I repeat, I'll do anything just to have you. If it's money I'll spoil you silly with it! And if it's love, oh boy, I'll give you the best!'

Then he fumbled for his briefcase, opened it instantly and dipped his hand inside it. Lord have mercy! The briefcase was filled to the brim with crisp N500 notes. He brought out two bundles and landed it dexterously on the beautiful lady's laps.

'Here. .take these,' he said, 'just for your weekend. Now tell me your name and everything I need to know. I'm really serious about this relationship. I'm in love with you already.' 'Ha, my God! What's happening?!' the lady exclaimed. 'I told you I'm married, what else do you want?' she asked.

'I don't give a damn. This is a tip of the iceberg. Promise me your love and I'll take you to paradise, no doubt about it!' Adeosun said excitedly. .

To be continued.

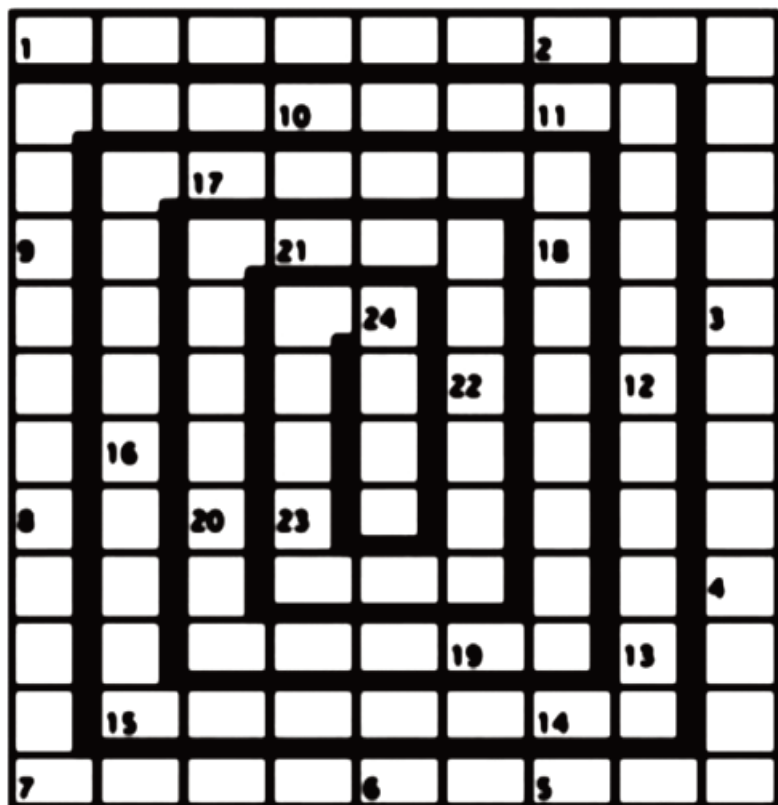
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with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
olulana3@yahoo.com

Overlapping Word Game

Solution

- 1 Amuneke
- 2 Ekwusigo
- 3 Gopher
- 4 Erudite
- 5 Teat
- 6 Attain
- 7 Invade
- 8 Desist
- 9 Stature
- 10 Resin
- 11 Invest
- 12 Trump
- 13 Plea
- 14 Easier
- 15 Revive
- 16 Verify
- 17 Yellow
- 18 Wanderer
- 19 Rapture
- 20 Restive
- 21 Vernal
- 22 Alsatian
- 23 Annual
- 24 Alar



Overlapping Word Game

- 1 The Ogun State capital city, (8).
- 2 Able to be realised, (8).
- 3 Large body of soldiers, (6).
- 4 Having disadvantageous obligations, (7).
- 5 Previously owned, (4).
- 6 Controller of program content, (6).
- 7 Animal without mother, (6).
- 8 Shaped like ring, (7).
- 9 Highly attractive quality, (6).
- 10 Avoid something unpleasant, (5).
- 11 Be transferred to another, (7).
- 12 Relating to blood in veins, (6).
- 13 Drug taker, (4).
- 14 Carried and deposited by ice, (7).
- 15 Decoration on Christmas tree, (6).
- 16 Free time, (7).
- 17 Lie back, (7).
- 18 Discuss terms of agreement, (9).
- 19 Somebody who teaches, (7).
- 20 Very knowledgeable through study, (7).
- 21 Intense fear, (5).
- 22 System of interdependent parts, (8).
- 23 Hit something forcefully, (5).
- 24 Give somebody work, (4).

Word Search

Past Lagos State Police Commissioners

Isa	Peter	Chichi
Auta	Alkali	Damali
Tsav	Misau	Bakare
Aliru	Daura	Gololo
Umar	Amadu	Aghedo
Alihu	Tawani	Akintola

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

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Birthday

OYEDEPO, Bishop David Olaniyi, cleric, Christian author, businessman, architect and the founder and presiding Bishop of the Faith Church, also known as Winners' Chapel International, Ota, Ogun State will be 72 on September 27, 2026.

Born on September 27, 1954, Oyedepo a native of Omuraran, Irepolodun Local Council, Kwara State, was born in Osogbo, Osun State.

He was raised in a mixed religious family. His father, Ibrahim, was a Muslim

healer. His mother, Dorcas, was a member of the Holy Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S), a branch of the Aladura movement in Nigeria.

He studied Architecture at the Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin and worked briefly with the Federal Ministry of Housing in Ilorin before resigning to concentrate on missionary work. Oyedepo received a PhD in Human Development from Honolulu University, Hawaii, United States of America.

He founded the Living Faith Church Worldwide in 1981.

The church was first called Liberation Faith Hour Ministries. Two years later, on September 17, 1983, Pastor Enoch Adeboye, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), ordained Oyedepo and his wife, Florence Abiola Akano (known as Faith Abiola Oyedepo) to become pastors and officially commissioned the new church. Five years later, Oyedepo was ordained as Bishop.

Oyedepo is the president of David Oyedepo Ministries International (DOMI).

DOMI is the umbrella organisation comprising Living Faith Church Worldwide (a global network of churches), World Mission Agency (WMA); the global missionary arm of the church's operations, Dominion Publishing House; the publishing arm of the church, Covenant University, and the Social Development Missions projects - made up of hospitals, maternity homes, schools, etc.

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



Oyedepo

Events



Nominee "Sustainable Energy Development Personality of Decade", Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer (CEO), UTM FLNG, Dr. Julius Rone (left) and CEO, Megastar Media Communications/Convener Megastar Man of the Decade Awards, Dr. Adeniyi Ifetayo during presentation of nominations letter to Rone ahead of the award ceremony in Abuja.



Member Representing Oshimili South Constituency, Delta State House of Assembly, Bridget Anyafulu (left); General Manager, Corporate Social Investment & Social Performance, Seplat Energy Plc, Esther Icha and Delta State Commissioner for Secondary Education, Dr Kingsley Ashibuogwu, at the commissioning/handover of the fully-equipped state-of-the-art STEAM Laboratories in Zappa Basic Secondary School, Asaba to the Delta State Government...recently.



Members of the Ayoka Women For Yayi at the empowerment programme facilitated by a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ogun State, Titi Fagboto, in Ayetoro, Yewa North Local Council...recently



Representative of Edo State Governor, Ken Ihensekhien, a lawyer, (left); His Royal Highness, Zaiki Anthony Abumere II, the Onojie of Ekpoma, and President of Uhielo Devt Forum (UDF), Zuberious Edeoghon, at the Uhielo Development summit held at Ekpoma, Edo State...recently



Camp Director, Idara Uwatt addressing a cross-section of children and parents at the just-concluded ParentalPal Summer Camp in Lagos.

The Glam & Fire Confab Holds Oct. 3

THE Glam & Fire Conference, a yearly event for Christian women and the general public convened by Peggy Ovat holds on October 3, 2026, at 9am at SOMI Church, Lekki, Lagos.

The Convener, Mrs. Peggy Ovat, said "the conference aims to help business women to discover their identity in Christ and fulfill their divine purpose."

Ovat disclosed that the conference would help young women understand who they are in Christ, empower them, and provide practical life workshops and economic support, including micro-grants for women entrepreneurs with small businesses. She stated that the sessions include: prayer, revival, teaching messages and interactive workshops on successful marriage and relationship guidance.

Speakers include Pastor De-

bola Deji Kurummi, founder of IMMERSE Coaching company, Executive Director at Ideation Hub Africa, and President at Kingdom Leaders Global Alliance; Prophet Steve Ovat, Lead Pastor of the SOMI church, Lekki Lagos; and Toyosi Etim Effiong, Founder and Chief Strategy Officer of That Good Media.

Ovat further said the conference, which is its fifth edition will feature keynote sessions, panel discussions, a brief documentary on the group, raffle draw, and fashion booth where participants will collect free fashion items".

"As a build up to the conference, SOMI Church will be having outreach programme to secondary schools in Mende community to encourage young girls to focus more on virtues and value than on the distractions and peer pressure that may derail their destiny," she added.

At 125 Years, African Church Must Preserve Its Heritage, Says Odufuwa

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Primate of the Africa Church, His Eminence Augustine Afolabi Odufuwa has emphasised the need for the church to preserve its heritage, while embracing necessary reforms and innovations.

Odufuwa, who stated this during a press conference in Lagos, to unveil the church's 125th anniversary logo and theme, stressed the need to prepare young people to shape the church's future.

The main celebration, scheduled to hold on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, featuring a Thanksgiving Service, goodwill messages, awards, anniversary cake cutting and the launch of legacy projects, the Primate said the anniversary would celebrate 125 years of faith, sacrifice, service and divine preservation.

"Today, we do more than unveil a logo or announce a

programme. We open a new chapter in a story that God began 125 years ago. 125 years have witnessed changing generations, societies and circumstances, yet remained anchored in Christ's Gospel. Our testimony is simple: God has been faithful," he said.

The primate, who said the church's history was woven into Nigeria's religious and social history, expressed gratitude to the founding fathers and mothers for their faith, courage and sacrifices.

"The anniversary theme is 125 Years of Grace: A Future Unfolding, from Isaiah 43:19. The theme deliberately joins remembrance with expectation. The first part is our testimony. The second is our mandate.

"We celebrate what God has done, but we refuse to believe that our greatest days are behind us. Grace brought us here; grace must lead us for-

ward. The next chapter requires a Church faithful to Scripture, conscious of its heritage and responsive to its times.

"There is need to prepare young people to shape the church's future. Our young people must not merely inherit our history; they must be equipped to shape the next chapter. This is why the programme has been designed not as a single-day ceremony. It is a season of remembrance, renewal, evangelism, service and celebration," he said.

Odufuwa said activities to mark the anniversary would include a 40-day countdown campaign from September 4 to October 12, featuring historical facts, interviews, podcasts, documentaries, digital engagements and prayer videos.

According to him, historical activities would include a

National Bible and History Quiz and a Historical Essay Competition for younger generations, among others.

On his part, the incoming Lay President of the church, Prince Debo Oduguwa, who stated that the church's founding fathers did not only pursue soul-winning, but also established schools and hospitals to meet the needs of their immediate environment, said the founders faced numerous challenges but weathered all storms to make the church impactful.

The Chairperson, 125th Founders' Day Anniversary Planning Committee, Elder Gladys Obajulaiye, said the anniversary was designed not merely as a series of ceremonies but as a season of remembrance, renewal, service, fellowship and legacy, urging Nigerians to reflect on the church's journey of faith, sacrifice and service.

Saint Peters' African Church, Ilawo To Install Chiefs @ 60th Anniversary

As part of activities lined up for its 60th Founders' Day Anniversary, commencing from Monday, September 14 to 20, 2026, the Saint Peters African Church, Ilawo, Abeokuta, Ogun State is set to install new Church Chiefs - Chief Abraham Adebayo Shoyoye as *Baba Ijo*; Chief Mrs Comfort Oladunni Aina as *Iya Ijo*; Chief Anthony Ajani Olufade as *Otun Baba Ijo*, while Chief Mrs Bernice Asabi Oladipo will be installed as *Otun Iya Ijo*. The installation service, scheduled for Saturday, September 19, alongside Anniversary Thanksgiving; Awards Presentation; N100

million Fund Raising for Investments and Launching of St. Peter's Church Nursery and Primary School Project will be conducted by the Archbishop of Ogun Province, Most Rev. Solomon Ojumu.

The anniversary starts with Revival from Monday, September 14 to Wednesday, September 16. On Thursday, September 17, there will be Health Check-up and Archdeaconry Novelty Football Match, while visitation to the Church aged members and Orphanage Home with gifts holds on Friday, September 18.

By Maria Diamond

AN elegant wedding dress however simple comes as a long-term future target for every girl-child from age-10, and for some early dreamers it begins way before they clock 10. She dreams it. She desires it. She craves it. She imagines it and then she creates it in her head and mind – a perfect elegantly built wedding dress with her adult version glowing beautifully in it.

For some girl-child, the prince charming comes into the picture, but for a whole lot of these girly girls, it's just her and her radiant look in her beautiful wedding dress.

Suffice it to say, a wedding dress comes early in a girl child's future thought process, way before she could relate with career thoughts and dreams for other future plans.

Any wonder the designers who can make wedding dresses build a standout career just by being able to create a perfect replica of this life-long dream dress when that stage of the future arrives for every woman.

If there is any dress that every woman wants to name perfection, it is her wedding dress – everything else can struggle to fit in but her dress should radiate an elegant, sophisticated and graceful perfection.

Perhaps this is why quite a number of female celebrities in Lagos, single and married didn't miss a chance to show up in their best wedding dream dress concept to honour the invitation to the premiere of the film 'A Mama Deola Wedding Story' a plot narrative on a lavish wedding ceremony rooted in African culture produced by Folagade Banks and directed by Femi Adebayo.

Designers of some of the wedding dresses worn to the premiere

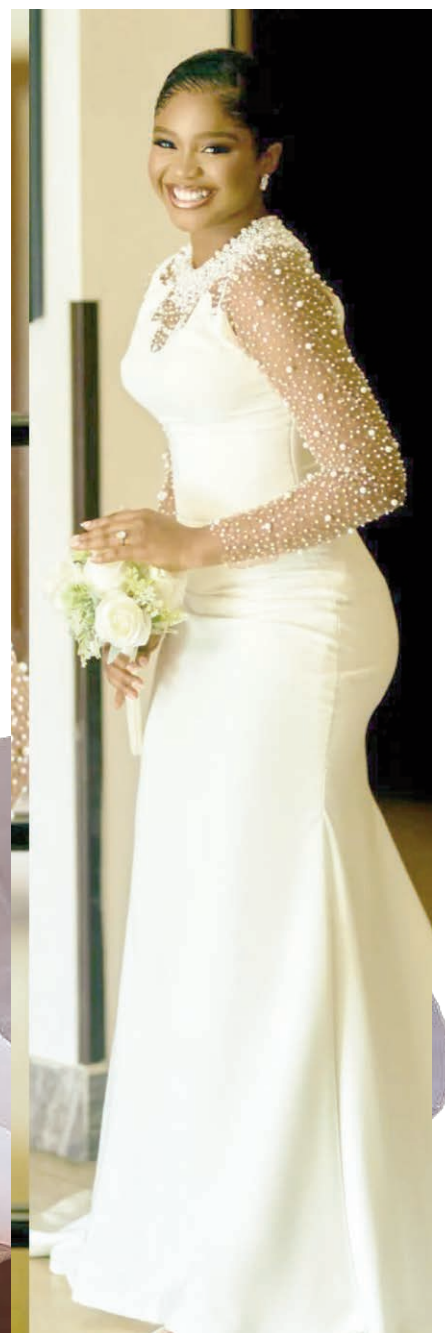
. **Douzngrace Collection** designed Toyin Abraham's stunning Muslim inspired white bridal dress.

. **Medlin Couture** designed Kate Henshaw's dress – nude-line lace gown featuring delicate floral embroidery and pearl details.

. **Juliet Peters** designed Mo Bimpe Adedimeji's off-white bridal mini dress. She is seen looking elegantly beautiful in her simple mini wedding dress while holding her lovely husband as the power couple they truly are.

. **Veekee James** did it herself and did it as well as expected with a bespoke white ball-gown. She also designed Osas Ighodaro's custom bridal couture corset dress embellished in crystals.

That Girl In Her Dream Wedding Dress



Tale Of Nigerian Kitchen Evolution

By Suliya Tella

THERE was a time when preparing a Nigerian meal began long before the cooking pot went on the fire. It could start with soaking beans overnight, gathering firewood, washing ingredients and sitting beside a grinding stone to process pepper, egusi or beans.

For some families, preparing food meant hours of pounding, grinding, chopping and stirring, with different hands joining in to get the work done.

Today, the case is different. A blender whirs for a few minutes, a food processor handles what once required considerable effort, and an air fryer cooks food with little or no oil. In some homes, even the preparation of traditional foods like pounded yam has moved from the mortar and pestle to a machine.

The Nigerian kitchen has not simply acquired more appliances. It has undergone a change in how time, effort and even responsibility are organised around food.

However, the argument over whether traditional methods produce better food has not disappeared with the old manual methods.

Some Nigerians maintain that ingredients processed manually have a distinctive taste or texture.

For 58-year-old Mariam Adeyinka, the difference is particularly striking. Growing up in Iseyin, Oyo State, Adeyinka's childhood kitchen was built around manual labour. She helped her mother hawk akara, which meant preparing large quantities of beans for sale. "We grind the beans for the akara the night before and it was in a lot of quantity," she recalled.

Grinding the beans was only one part of the process. After that came gathering firewood for frying and other tasks involved in preparing the akara. At the time, however, Adeyinka did not necessarily see the work as unusual. There was no blender waiting on the kitchen counter and no gas cooker that could replace the firewood. The hard work was simply what cooking required.

"Honestly, for me then, it was stressful, but as there was no other alternative like blender or gas cooker, it looked like the norm for me," she said. Beyond that, pepper, egusi and other ingredients were also processed with the grinding stone.

That kind of labour, repeated every day, was once an ordinary part of food preparation for many Nigerian households. According to Adeyinka, she still owns a grinding stone, but largely as a reminder of the past.

What she does not want, however, is for her children to experience the same level of physical labour. "I can't subject my children to that kind of labour. I have a blender and other food processors."

Her kitchen now contains several appliances, including a blender and food processor. She is also looking forward to buying a swallow maker, another example of how technology is gradually taking over tasks that once required considerable physical effort.

For Adeyinka, this is not about rejecting the past. It is about refusing to make hardship a requirement simply because previous generations endured it.

Responding to whether traditional methods produce better food than food processors, Adeyinka disagrees. She said: "There is no difference. Once you have your ingredients right, you are good to go"

Even within her home, there is disagreement. Her husband prefers stew made with pepper ground on a grinding stone, while she remains convinced that the method makes no meaningful difference.

Her embrace of modern kitchen technology extends beyond grinding. One appliance she is particularly pleased with is her air fryer, which allows her to prepare food with less oil. "At my age, I am 58 years old, so I should not be eating too much oil," she said.

For her, the appeal of the modern kitchen is therefore not only speed. It is also convenient and the possibility of adapting cooking to changing needs.

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



Foundation Receives Over 20,900 Entries, Moves To Selection Stage

By **Gbenga Salau**

MTN Foundation received 20,983 nominations nationwide during the sixth phase of its ‘What Can We Do Together’ (WCWDT) initiative. The nomination exercise followed the launch of the 2026 call for nominations in May. The initiative targets public primary healthcare centres and secondary schools, inviting Nigerians to nominate deserving health and educational facilities in their communities for possible

upgrades. The deadline was subsequently extended to June 22, giving more communities the opportunity to participate in the initiative. With nominations and physical verification now closed, 149 nominated facilities across Nigeria have been assessed. The facilities comprise 113 public primary healthcare centres and 36 schools under the Science Laboratory Upgrade intervention. The verification exercise involves on-site assessments to confirm government ownership, accessibility,

existing infrastructure and overall condition, as well as facility’s suitability for revitalisation or upgrade. Following the completion of this phase, the programme will now move into the selection stage, during which approved facilities will be identified for intervention. The community-driven model is central to the initiative, giving Nigerians an opportunity to drive development within their own communities. The Foundation is focused on

improving access to quality healthcare and creating better environments for practical science learning through the upgrade of public primary healthcare centres and science laboratories. Executive Director of the MTN Foundation, Odunayo Sanya, said the programme is aimed at “supporting the development of stronger communities by improving access to essential healthcare services and giving the next generation of scientists, engineers, and doc-

tors access to facilities where they can learn through practice and imagination.” Under Phase 6, MTN Foundation plans to revitalise 40 Public Primary Healthcare Centres, renovate and equip 15 public secondary school science laboratories nationwide. Nigerians who submitted nominations are encouraged to stay connected to MTN Nigeria’s official channels as the process progresses and the final recipient communities are announced.

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

AS part of efforts aimed at ensuring that Methodist High School, Arigbajo, sustain its status as one of the model schools in Ogun State, the Alumni body – the Methodist High School, Arigbajo Old Students Association (MEHSOSAI), convened a Set Executives Conference, to mobilise all the members towards consolidating the achievements of the school. Held at the Conference Hotel, Abeokuta, with theme: “Leading Together: Harnessing Our Alumni Network for Growth and Legacy,” the MEHSOSAI President, Dr. Clement Obadimu in his opening remarks emphasised the need for all members to support the body for the col-

MEHSOSAI Holds Parley To Advance Alma Mater

lective benefits of all. This was followed by the keynote address delivered by the Board Trustees Chairman, Chief Fatai Abiodun. There were three different lectures – Returning to Roots, Celebrating our Heritage – a pull from our school learning to shape the future, delivered by a former National Vice President of the association, Ogbeni Kolawole Isola. This was followed by another lecture – Leading with Clarity, Courage and Commitment: the 3C’s Leadership skills for 2026 and Beyond, presented by Emeritus President, Alhaji Shuaib Sokunbi, while the third lecture – Transparent Books, Trusted Leadership, Modernising Alumni Financial Systems, was delivered by Alhaji Tajudeen Amodu FCA of 1980 set. Aside the lectures, there were also sub-group deliberations and symposium, which mainly focused on identifying the challenges and major encumbrances affecting the body. According to the communiqué issued at the end of the retreat, the set executives were charged to imbibe exemplary qualities that can be passed down to upcoming sets. Emphasis was laid on the need to imbibe the

3Cs – Clarity, Courage and Commitment by leaders to drive positive change in their sets, while the importance of cultivating the 3Cs to make set executives better listeners, communicators and collaborators were also stressed. “Set leaders must apply confront, compete and conquer model to achieve challenge-focused leadership. There is need for commitment across board, as it is glue that holds the team together, reflecting a leader’s dedication to the sets visions.” The importance of prudent and transparent accounting system by all sets were also emphasised, while a sound of warning to avoid weak financial systems that may lead to mistrust in the sets was raised. During the sub-group deliberations, several challenges were identified as critical to be addressed, in order to keep the Alumni progressing. They include discrimination against some members, communication gap, inadequate finance, lack of respect for others, lack of welfare opportunities, leadership crisis, lack of skills/empowerment workshops and time management during meetings among other issues.



Foundation Distributes Over 200 Back-to-School Packs To Orphan, PWDs

By **Gbenga Salau**

AS part of efforts to ensure that children of widows, widowers and those with disabilities do not have challenge returning to school as a result of basic school materials, Human Development Initiative Foundation (HDIF) has provided over 200 pupils in some local councils in Lagos State with back-to-school packs. Each pupil was given items such as school bags, notebooks, socks, sandals, mathematical sets, and other writing materials. In her welcome address, the Executive Director, HDIF, Mrs Olufunso Owasanoye, stated that the gesture is part of efforts to support government in reducing out-of-school children. “Your decision to leave your homes, work, and responsibilities to honor our invitation shows the great value you place on the education of vulnerable and marginalized children in Lagos State.” Providing reason for the initiative, she stated that HDI commitment to education has grown to a new level – supporting orphans, children of widows and widowers, and children living with disabilities to fulfill their dreams. “Many of them carry great ideas and potential within them. This is the purpose of the event you are witnessing today. With millions of children still out of school, vulnerable children are among the hardest hit by economic hardship. Many experience instability and emotional stress. “The HDI Education Trust Fund (HDI-ETF) was established to reduce these numbers and address the plight of children who are at high risk of dropping out due to disability, the loss of a parent, or the inability of a surviving parent or guardian to meet their educational needs. “We believe that education is the gateway to human development. Being an orphan, a child of a widow, or living with a disability should never be a barrier to accessing quality education. Every child deserves the opportunity to learn and to contribute positively to society.

Upswing Beat For Calabar Entertainment Conference, Festival

By **Gbenga Salau**

HIT FM, the leading radio station in Cross River State, and organisers of the Calabar Entertainment Conference & Festival (CECF) are pleased to announce the renewal of First Bank of Nigeria Limited as the Official Banking Partner of the festival for the second consecutive year. The renewed partnership underscores FirstBank’s enduring commitment to promoting Nigeria’s creative economy and supporting platforms that foster innovation, entrepreneurship, investment, and sustainable economic growth. Now in its 10th edition, the Calabar Entertainment Conference & Festival has become one of Nigeria’s foremost gatherings for stakeholders in the creative and entertainment industries. The festival brings together policymakers, business leaders, investors, artists, media professionals, content creators, and young entrepreneurs to explore opportunities shaping the future of Africa’s creative sector. Speaking on the renewed partnership, the executive producer of the Calabar Entertainment Conference & Festival, and CEO, Hit FM, Patrick Ugbe, described FirstBank’s continued support as a strong endorsement of the festival’s vision.

Indomie Heroes Awards Enter Decisive Stage As Judges Screen Top Entries

By **Moyosore Salami**

THE search for Nigeria’s most inspiring young heroes has entered a decisive stage as the Indomie Heroes Awards 2026 moves closer to unveiling this year’s winners following the conclusion of the Judges’ Sitting. The journey to the final 18 began with the official call for entries by Dufil Prima Foods, makers of Indomie, which invited Nigerians to nominate exceptional young people whose actions demonstrated courage, compassion, resilience and impact. Entries were received through the official Indomie website, while commissioned research agencies also sourced and verified authentic hero stories from across the country. The agencies were tasked with providing supporting evidence for each submission, including photographs, videos, witness testi-

monials and other relevant documentation, where applicable. From almost 500 entries, the project team reviewed the submissions and supporting materials before selecting the 18 outstanding stories across the three categories: Physical Bravery, Social Bravery and Intellectual Bravery. The finalists were subsequently presented to a five-member judging panel comprising Nyma Zibiri, Lawyer, Television Host and Public Affairs Commentator; Kehinde Adegboyega, Executive Director, Human Rights Journalists Network Nigeria; Biodun Kolawole, Educator, Financial Literacy Advocate and Youth Development Champion; Oluwatosin Babasanya-Craig, Corporate Coach, Leadership Consultant and Education Specialist; and Victory Ashaka, Youth Advocate, Spoken Word Artist and Social Impact Leader.

Cardinal Broadcasting Expands With 93.5 Area FM

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

THE Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Cardinal Broadcasting Limited, Lady Doja Allen, has expanded the company’s broadcasting portfolio with the launch of 93.5 Area FM, becoming one of the few female executives to own and lead a multi-station private radio operation in Nigeria. In a statement, Allen said the development marks Cardinal Broadcasting’s transition from operating City 101.5 FM as a single-station business to becoming a multi-brand broadcasting company in Nigeria’s highly competitive

radio industry. For years, Nigeria’s private radio landscape has largely been shaped by male industry leaders, including Ameen Mousalli of AIM Group, Chris Ubosi of Megalectrics, and Tajudeen Adepetu of Group8, whose organisations operate multiple radio stations across the country. Allen’s entry into that category comes after more than 15 years of leading City FM’s growth and repositioning within Lagos’ urban radio market. Speaking on the expansion, Allen described the launch of 93.5 Area FM as a major milestone in the company’s

growth strategy. She explained that while City FM had established its identity in Lagos’ urban broadcasting space, Area FM would adopt a distinct approach by focusing on the language, lifestyle and everyday experiences of ordinary Nigerians. “Area FM is designed to communicate with listeners in ways that cut across ethnic, social and economic boundaries,” Allen added. According to her, the new station is expected to create complementary commercial opportunities for the company while enabling it to serve different audience segments across Lagos.

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Subject	Percentage
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Literature-in-English	100% A ¹
Geography	100% A ¹
Accounting	100% A ¹
Civic Education	100% A ¹
Agricultural Science	100% A ¹
Physical Education	100% A ¹
Chemistry	100% A ¹ -B ²

Subject	Percentage
Digital Technologies	100% A ¹ -B ²
Technical Drawing	100% A ¹ -B ²
English Language	100% A ¹ -B ³
Biology	100% A ¹ -B ³
Economics	100% A ¹ -C ⁴
General Mathematics	100% A ¹ -C ⁵
Physics	100% A ¹ -C ⁶

CELEBRATING OUR SCHOLARS



IKEYI, NWABUNDO S.*
(9A's)



ONYIA, ORIEL N.*
(8A's, 1B)



MICHAEL, ANTHONY A.
(8A's, 1B)



GRANVILLE, DENZEL D.*
(5A's, 4Bs)



AJIDE, QAYYUM O.
(4A's, 5Bs)



IFEORAH, TOCHIM C.*
(4A's, 4Bs)



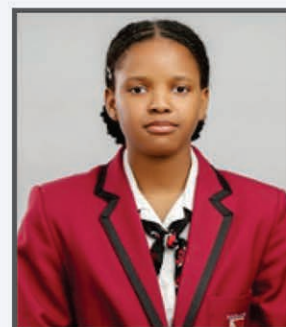
NWACHUKWU, CHERYL A.
(4A's, 5Bs)



FASHEITAN, VICTORIA O.
(3A's, 4Bs, 1C)



ILOKA, BELUCHI Y.
(3A's, 3Bs, 2Cs)



OSEMEKA, DORIS C.
(3A's, 3Bs, 2Cs)

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Interview

www.guardian.ng

Dr. MORAYO AFOLABI-BROWN is one of the top female thought leaders in the Nigeria media industry with expertise in communications, high-level management and implementation. She holds a PHD in Philosophy from Prowess University USA; a Master's Degree in Marketing and Media Communications from Pan Atlantic University, Lagos and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science with a minor in African Studies from Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA. She also holds certifications in Advanced Leadership, Public Relations, Public Speaking, Content Development, Script Writing, Time Management, and Neurolinguistic Programming. She is amongst the top 25 Most Influential Women In Journalism Africa (WIJA). The Queen of Talk TV as she is popularly called is the host of 'The Morayo Show'. Prior to this, she was the host of 'YourView' on TVC where she hosted over 2,500 episodes before she resigned. In this Interview with **MARIA DIAMOND**, she speaks about the technicalities involved in having women fit into leadership roles in male dominated sectors, the importance of career consistency and the necessity for more women to vie for political positions in the leadership of Nigeria.

'Nobody Is Handing Women Success, They Are Earning It Beyond Expectations'

After several years hosting 'YourView' on TVC and having risen to the level of Managing Director in the organisation, what made you decide it was time to leave?

THE first time it occurred to me that it was time to leave was when 'YourView' turned 10 in the year 2023. I wanted to mark this landmark recognition of YourView being such a huge success and I try to push for the ladies of the show to be celebrated, but at the time I think TVC wasn't ready for it and I didn't know why. Then it occurred to me that perhaps it was time to start conceiving the idea of having my own show where I can have better control. However, by December of that year I became the Managing Director TVC Entertainment and I wanted to do so much more, but even with that position I still had restrictions. Then I knew it was time to leave for good. I realised I have invested almost 20 years in the media industry and I've done a good 12 years in television. I have built enough social capital to bet on myself and so I decided to start my own show.

Was 'YourView' solely your idea or TVC's?

Yes, it was wholly, completely and totally my idea. I created it. I recruited all the ladies – I auditioned them. I designed what the show was going to be about. I had my producer supporting me. I had lived in the US back in the 90s, and I was there when they started 'The View' hosted by Barbara Walters on television where she gathered actresses, journalists, and different people together – a talk show featuring panel of women discussing current issues, interviewing politicians and celebrities, and I told myself that when I got to Nigeria, I would do something like this. So that was where I got the concept from. I wanted a show similar to that where we have different women from different backgrounds coming together and just share their views about society, health, lifestyle, governance etc. So that was the concept of the show and I created it, but of course I didn't have the

intellectual property because I created it as a staff for the company and I couldn't claim intellectual property for the show.

Tell us about the transition from 'YourView' to 'The Morayo Show'?

The transition was beautiful because I had given 12 years of myself into 'YourView'. I hosted the show; I brought in all the women on that show. I'm proud of the work that they do. I think we've matured to the point where it was time for me to move on. I didn't see myself being there for the rest of my life from day one. I knew that at some point I had to migrate to other things. For me, it was always the dream to hand over YourView at some point. So, starting my own show was me pursuing my own dream – having something different, which I believed that if God gave me the grace to start with YourView, He would also give me the awesome grace to start my own show and He did with 'The Morayo Show'.

When you conceived 'The Morayo Show', what was the ideology behind it?

The Morayo show is still evolving. When we started the show, the objective was to have regular Nigerians in the audience sharing their views. So, it's like YourView on a higher level – not just four/five women. Now we have 100 people sharing their thoughts, their views on society and helping them to understand things better. So, when they speak their mind, I bring an expert to help them clarify. The idea is to educate these Nigerians, make them see things differently and in doing that we bring joy, happiness, love, laughter to them. Then we crown it up with the celebrity guest just to make it more fun. But the real authentic aim is to bring the person on the street on the show, hear their views about life, marriage, children, parenting, religion, governance, and then the professionals and experts we bring on the show will educate them, re-enlighten and redirect their thinking. The truth is if the middle class are getting reoriented, getting exposure and are not carrying along those at the bottom, we are wasting our time. A society cannot be built up down, a society is built ground up. So, we must carry everybody along. We must give the average Nigerian a platform of expression.

Are there specific thematic preoccupations for 'The Morayo Show'?

The initial idea was to make it fluid, but coming in season three we are making it a bit more thematic where every day we have a direction on specific topics such as health, children, family, women empowerment etc. We want to have a more defined structure.

Having been in the talk show space for years, some even call you "The Queen of Talk TV", how has this career path shaped your personality and character?

Well, it has helped me to be more responsible. When people call you the Queen of Talk TV, you have to carry a lot of responsibility to the people who believe in you. So, it has helped me to be more resolute in ensuring that I stay focused on my vision, I don't look left, I don't look right, I stay in the talk show space that I do.

Does being the daughter of Alao Aka Bashorun have an influence on your personality?

Perhaps it does. My father was an activist. Activism in our house was normal. I have a brother who is also an

activist – he is a politician. So, it's in me to ask questions, it's in me to challenge the status quo, it's in me to believe that there's so much more a society can be. That is who I am – it is my DNA. My father raised me in a home where we discussed newspapers and society. He made sure we heard the 9-o'clock news and I always saw people come to the house asking my dad his views on different things – politics etc. So those things really shaped the kind of person I am today.

What drives your passion for general interest and soft power journalism?

I think it's just my optimism about Nigeria. I really believe that Nigeria will be better and I believe that Nigeria will be better in my lifetime. This drives me. I keep asking myself the same question: Morayo what role are you playing to make Nigeria better? How can you contribute to make Nigeria better? What is your show going to do differently? That optimism inside me is my constant drive to play my part in making sure this nation is better.

Would you agree to the argument that success is handed over to women on a platter of gold as opposed to most women's testimony of having to work twice as hard as men to attain success?

Nobody hands success over to women; we work hard for everything we get. I used to work at HiTV and I worked my butt off. I worked really closely back then. We were in charge of the Premier League before DSTV took over. We were the foremost cable station in Nigeria at the time. I was the one in charge of content acquisition and also sponsorship. I remember working to the point where even my CEO at some point said Morayo what type of car do you want? You are working really hard and he blessed me with a Prado at the time. So, I don't think anybody is handing success over to me. I had shown my worth. I think women have to work twice as hard as men because there are expectations. A lot of things happen to us, we have to go through a lot of things outside work. We have to go through pregnancy stages, maternity leave, we have issues of life, family, children, in-laws and so many things we carry as women. So, we have to work twice as hard and even harder to meet up with our male counterparts. Women today are studying hard, they are not sitting back waiting for someone to give them something, they are doing double degrees, they are doing extra classes, they are going for conferences, they are renewing their skills. Women are going above and beyond expectations to become better, nobody is handing over anything and we are working hard to get what we have today.

As a leading woman in your field, are you of the opinion that there are peculiar challenges that most women aiming for the top encounter that wouldn't be the case with men?

Yes, women face those challenges. I will share a story. For many years I was Deputy Director in the organisation where I worked. I wanted to become the Director and I worked really hard. I tried my best to make my boss know how much work I have done to deserve that position and when I didn't get through eventually, frustration caused me to resign. When I wanted to leave, my boss told me I had to find someone to replace me and I hired a man as Head of Programmes to take over for me. Three months after I left, he became Director. I was shocked because I worked so hard and I didn't get an opportunity to be Director, but this man I had hired as Head of Programmes immediately got the position. I called the man and asked how it happened and he told me that he and the boss hung out at a club in South Africa and he told him that he wanted to be Director and the boss said sure, when they get back to Lagos and that was it. This shows that there are certain things as a woman that I couldn't get even with hard work but men know how to get these things away from work. Obviously, there are certain relationships men build with themselves that women can't get through by mere hard work. This man I replaced myself with, got the same Director position I worked several years to attain but couldn't within three months after hanging out with the CEO in South Africa.

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



By Maria Diamond, Moyosore Salami, Suliyat Tella and Ruth Ononye

HERE is a proscribed disposition around the issues of menstruation in this part of the world, such that even women consider being quiet about the excruciating pains, complications, burden and trauma attached to this monthly bleeding way of life in order to avoid being offensive.

Thus, a regular African woman hides the issues and complications around her period. If for unforeseen reasons her period's cat is let out of the bag in any form in the public: stains, pains or mood swings, she apologises for being a woman and hides herself in shame.

This is why even when she experiences period complications as bad as excess bleeding that threatens her existence, heavy clotting, excruciating painful cramps/dysmenorrhea, anemia and bleeding between periods, she feels compelled to deal with the trauma in silence because her society would not hear of it, her boss would not hear of it, her job will suffer and she would be tagged unproductive.

"Unfortunately, the same society would shame a woman who is of conception age but unable to do so based on complications that might have erupted from menstrual inadequacies," Dr. Amarachi Chuka, a fertility expert stated when asked why the issues around menstruation are kept inside the closet.

Explaining the difference between a normal menstruation and abnormal, Dr Chuka said: "A normal monthly menstruation or period is a moderate bleeding that lasts three to seven days within a 21-35 days cycle and accompanied by mild physical and maybe emotional symptoms as the case may be. These symptoms include lower belly or back ache caused by contracting uterus, mood swings, bloating, mild acne, tender breast etc.

"While abnormal or irregular period is when it is accompanied with severe pains that stops you from doing normal daily task; the bleeding soaks through the sanitary package every hour for several hours; period last longer than seven days and cycle is shorter than 21 days or longer than 35 days, or when you miss your period for three to four months in a row without being pregnant."

She continued: "With abnormal periods there is most likely an underlying health issue that can affect a woman's reproductive health and fertility. This is because menstruation and womanhood are intertwined. A woman's ability to conceive and become a mother is mostly dependent on how healthy her menstrual cycle leading to ovulation is.

"Irregular cycles make it hard to track ovulation

Womanhood: Navigating Societal Oddities In The Face Of Menstrual, Fertility Complications

hereby lowering the conception chances. It can also cause gestational diabetes or high blood pressure during pregnancy.

"Also, abnormal bleeding more often than not points to reproductive health issues such as endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and uterine fibroids."

The fertility expert however noted that for some women, their period comes easy and there is nothing to tell, but for a whole lot of other women, their monthly period comes with complications that demand intentional gynecologist care.

The question however is why should women continue to bear the brunt of severe menstrual pains and complications in silence just because the society perceives everything surrounding a woman's monthly period a normal female genetic peculiarity that should not be openly discussed? What is normal about pain – any kind? What is normal about a situation that could lead to reproductive health issues and fertility complications? What is normal about bleeding out one's ability to live healthy?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), more than two in three women and girls experience menstrual pain. In a 2026 systematic review cited by WHO estimated that 71 per cent of women and girls experience dysmenorrhoea, with the condition capable of affecting daily activities and quality of life.

WHO notes that severe menstrual pain can be a reason to seek healthcare, particularly when it interferes with everyday life. Menstrual pain can also occur alongside conditions such as endometriosis, uterine fibroids, while conditions including PCOS can cause irregular periods and other menstrual problems.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

POLYCYSTIC Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a hormonal disorder that causes irregular periods, high androgen level which is the male hormone and small cysts on the ovaries. The symptoms of PCOS include the following:

- . Irregular Periods – related to heavy bleeding, inconsistent period and missed period.
- . Skin Issues – causing severe acne and sometimes excessive oil skin.
- . Excess Hair Growth – on the face, chest and back.
- . Fertility struggles due to irregular ovulation.

Endometriosis

ENDOMETRIOSIS is a long-term medical condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside of the uterus. It is accompanied with severe pelvic pain which is associated with menstrual cycle and worsens over time. Symptoms are: Painful periods also known as dysmenorrhea, heavy or abnormal bleeding, infertility, pain during bowel movement or urination, fatigue and digestive issues.

Uterine Fibroids

UTERINE Fibroids are non-cancerous growth made of muscle and connective tissues that develop in or on the wall of the uterus. The symptoms include heavy menstrual bleeding, pelvic pressure, back pain, pain during sex and frequent urination. However, research revealed that some women with uterine fibroids have no symptoms at all.

The fertility experts said all of the above reproductive health issues are closely-knit with abnormal bleeding and menstruation in women.

Different Menstrual Strokes For Diverse Women

OLAMIDE Ojo, who is above 40, said her menstrual pain is particularly severe on the first day. According to her, the pain is

so sharp and intense that she cannot stand or function until she receives an injection. Even then, the relief is only partial.

She also bleeds for seven days. "Is this something that can be considered normal, or could there be an underlying issue causing such severe pain? I genuinely want to understand," Ojo asked.

While menstrual cramps are common, the severity can vary considerably. Some women experience discomfort that passes within hours, while others describe pain accompanied by vomiting, back or leg pain, heavy bleeding and an inability to carry out normal activities.

Mrs Ngozi, menstrual difficulties developed later in life. She said her periods were relatively smooth when she was younger but became increasingly difficult after pregnancy and childbirth.

Her periods became unstable and irregular, eventually leading to a diagnosis of polycystic ovary syndrome, PCOS.

She said the changes have left her frustrated and increasingly uncomfortable with the thought of menstruation.

Her experience shows that menstrual health can change at different stages of a woman's life, while changes in menstrual patterns and pain may sometimes be linked to underlying medical conditions.

Chidinma Ogu, menstrual pain has not led to hospitalisation, but it has affected her ability to carry out everyday responsibilities.

She described the sensation as though something was constantly twisting or pulling inside her stomach. "It's a very intense cramping in my lower abdomen which sometimes spreads to my lower back," she said.

Ogu said she began to realise that her experience might be different after having open conversations about

menstruation with other women and noticing that she appeared to experience more severe pain and mood changes than some of them.

The pain, she said, sometimes affects her productivity, particularly when she is required to stand for long periods. "Things that would take less effort will seem difficult. I'll just want to lay down in bed and wait for the pains to reduce," she said.

She manages the pain by lying down in a comfortable position and using a warm compress when it becomes unbearable. She said she has never used pain-relief medication or sought medical attention for the pain but perhaps she should.

The experience also affects her emotionally. "When I am in much pain, I can become irritable, frustrated and emotionally drained. It can be difficult to remain positive at that time," she said.

Ogu said the severity of her symptoms is sometimes misunderstood by people around her. "Most times when people see when I am going through this severe menstrual pain, they would have that expression that says: it's just your period, what is the big deal, without understanding that I am genuinely struggling internally, physically, emotionally and mentally."

While menstrual pain is common, persistent or debilitating pain should not automatically be dismissed as something every woman must endure.

However, the experience has affected different aspects of their lives, from productivity and emotional wellbeing to their ability to attend school or carry out normal responsibilities.

Yet, despite the severity or changes in their symptoms, some women continue to receive dismissive responses when they complain about menstrual pain.

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

Most times when people see when I am going through this severe menstrual pain, they would have that expression that says 'It's just your period, what is the big deal', without understanding that I am genuinely struggling internally, physically, emotionally and mentally.

It's not just menstrual pain for some of us – there's a mental feeling of danger to our body and also our health, one that is inevitable.

Beyond the physical symptoms, the reluctance to openly discuss severe menstrual experiences makes it difficult for some women to receive understanding and support.



The reggae artiste, Ras Murphy Van Anthony, once commanded great patronage in the country. Since the emergence of afrobeats as the dominant voice in the street, reggae music has been pushed to the margins. In this no-holds-barred interview with DANIEL ANAZIA, the former factional leader of PMAN hints on possible rebirth of the genre.

Who is Ras Murphy Van Anthony?

I AM Ras Murphy Van Anthony of the Survival and True Reggae Band. I was born as a child with dreadlock, and my mum was a wonderful singer in the Church, and whenever she sang, you felt the soul of her voice. Even at home, whenever she sang, I ran to listen to her. At the age of nine, I was already a good singer. I was singing and performing in different club-houses in the old Bendel State. Because of my hair, people started calling me Junior Marley. Then I didn't even know who Marley was until I clocked 14, and fans began to call me Junior Rasta, and then I started singing reggae music and also joined them whenever they were going for their rehearsals every month. That was how the spirit of a true Rasta man came upon me

Why reggae?

I will say reggae music chose me because it gives me more inspiration. Also, it is the easiest way to pass a good message to the world. Growing up, I listened to the cries of the common man, and when I heard Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, and later Sonny Okosun, I knew this was my calling. As I said earlier, I was born with dread. So, becoming a reggae musician was a spiritual awakening. Reggae music is about consciousness, identity and truth. Highlife entertains, juju celebrates, pop excites, but reggae liberates. Reggae gave me a voice to speak for the voiceless. It gave me a message, a mission, and a movement. It is not just music; it is prophecy with drums and bass. With reggae music, I am content with whatever I have; I am self-disciplined and of good character. And not just that, because of the spirit of God in me, I'm able to hold on to one woman.

Some people today wear dreadlocks: Some are natural, others are for fashion. For you, what does 'Rasta' mean? Is it the hair, faith, lifestyle or philosophy?

Rasta to me is philosophy and levity. It's not just the dreadlocks; it is discipline, love for Jah, love for humanity, and living in truth. Someone can also be a true Rasta without carrying dreadlocks. The hair is a symbol, but the heart is the real covenant.

When you have faith, everything will work out for you. Then philosophy is the final word.

You came up in the era of Majek Fashek, Ras Kimono, Orits Wiliki, Peterside Otong. Describe that era and what the energy was like?

Although during the time of these artistes, I was much younger, their energy was so strong, with good music and competition. That era was fire; I call it the golden era. We had real messages; the energy was revolutionary. When Ras Kimono climbed the stage, the whole place shook. Majek was a prophet with a guitar. They were not singing for fame; they were singing for freedom.

What made reggae of the 80s/90s so powerful?

The times were hard — military rule, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and suffering everywhere — people needed a voice. The message was so real and power-

‘Reggae Music Is Not Dead, It’s Undergoing Finetuning’

ful; the live bands gave it power. The beats and the production were energetic because reggae music has different patterns of beats. You could feel the bass in your chest. It was not programmed on a laptop like we have today; it was played with sweat and soul.

Which song from that era still gives you goosebumps today?

The Mandators — *Crisis*; Majek Fashek — *Let the Righteous take over the earth*, and Ras Kimono — *What’s Gwan*. Each of these songs captured Nigeria perfectly then, and it still does today.

Would you say the genre is dead or just under?

Reggae music is not dead; it cannot die; it’s just underground, waiting for its season. Truth never dies; it only goes quiet for a while. When the suffering increases, the movement will rise again because the people will need its message.

Afrobeats stars like Timaya, Burna Boy, Patoranking, BNXN, Ruger and Qing Madi, among others, borrow heavily from reggae/dancehall. Is that a tribute?

I respect all these artistes but can't say anything about some of them because they are not reggae artistes, except Patoranking, who carries, or still carries, the reggae spirit. Let's be honest, they are standing on the foundation we built; they should give more honour to the root. They call it Afrobeats, but the blood in it is reggae.

Why hasn't Nigeria produced a new Majek or Kimono in 20 years? What's missing — talent, labels, or courage?

Well, I will say that what is missing is courage and structure. Everything in life has its time and season; the focus of the media now is on Afrobeats music, and nobody wants to front a reggae artiste. The talents are there, but the labels want quick money; radio wants payola, and many young artistes are afraid to be conscious. Majek and Kimono were fearless. Today, many want to trend, not to speak the truth.

Can conscious, message-driven music compete in an era of 15-second TikTok hits and streaming numbers?

Yes, it can, but we must be wise. We cannot ignore TikTok and streaming, but we must not sell our soul to them. Unlike in the 80s and the 90s, when there was no internet, conscious, message-driven music was fire. I don't think there's any new wave for now; a 15-second hit fades, but a message lives forever. We need to package consciousness in a way the youth can digest.

What do you think of the new wave of Nigerian reggae/dancehall artistes? Who excites you?

I see some fire coming up with artistes like Oge Kimono, and some

underground youths in the ghettos are keeping it real. I am excited by any youth who chooses a message over noise. They need support, not discouragement.

Given the current hardship in Nigeria, do you think the genre still has a place in the protest music space?

This is a painful question. The hardship in the country today is more than before, but protest music is silent. I'm glad everybody is feeling the heat because they don't want to listen to reggae music; all they want to hear is worldly music. Many artistes are compromised; the streets are boiling, but I tell you, soon the music will catch up with the pain.

How does your faith/spirituality shape your music?

Though I'm a Rasta, but Rasta for Jesus; I'm a born-again Christian, which is why I play Gospel/Root reggae music. My spirituality is the root of my music. I serve Jah, the Almighty. Rasta is not against God; it is about knowing God in truth and living righteously. In Nigeria, people misunderstand us, but I respect all faiths. Love is my religion.

If you were to write a protest song for Nigeria, what would the chorus be?

United we Stand; Nigeria, wake up, enough is enough. It's simple, direct, and from the heart of the masses.

How does a reggae artiste survive financially in Nigeria today?

The truth is that if you think of CDs or Streaming, you will go hungry. Let me speak for myself: the truth is that whatever position you hold today, think of tomorrow because today is not forever. I survived today because I'm into a genuine business, and by God's grace, I will never lack.

Live band culture is dying; DJs have taken over. What has that done to musicianship in Nigeria?

Live band is dead as far as I'm concerned because, when it comes to originality, it has weakened musicianship. Nowadays, people use Disc Jockeys (DJs) to get what they want; they don't even want to pay their instrumentalists. The artistes nowadays want to make more money for themselves alone, instead of making money to pay their instrumentalists. Gone are the days when instrumentalists made money; that's why many instrumentalists are now playing for the churches. When you kill live bands, you kill training grounds for young instrumentalists. We must bring back the culture of live performance.

What's the biggest lie(s) the Nigerian music industry told your generation, and is it still telling the new generation?

The biggest lie Nigerian music has ever told is to make us believe that our music is not selling the way we expect it to be. Also, "just blow, and you will be rich forever." Many blew and ended up broke because there was no structure, no savings, and no royalties. That lie is still being told today, only now it is packaged as "go viral."

50 years from now, when the history of Nigerian reggae is written, how do you want Ras Van Anthony's name to appear?

As far as I'm still alive, only God can tell about my tomorrow because my hit song is on the way. I want my name to appear among those who kept the fire burning when others ran to commercial music; a defender of roots reggae and a fighter for musicians' rights.

What concrete steps in your view can revive reggae music culture in Nigeria. Is it festivals, radio, collaborations with Afrobeats stars?

We need dedicated reggae festivals, we need radio airplay without payola, and we need conscious collaborations with Afrobeats stars. A pure roots track by some of the Afrobeats stars with reggae blood like Patoranking, Timaya with a veteran will help create a bridge and bring the youth back to reggae culture.

If you could do a collaboration album with three current Nigerian artistes to bring reggae back to the mainstream, who would they be and why?

If I want collaborate with any artiste in Nigeria that would be Davido because he is very humble; Patoranking because he has the reggae foundation, and Asa, because she has the soul and message. Together, we would make a powerful statement.

What are you working on now—new album, tour, book, mentorship?

I'm working on a new album titled *United We Stand*. I am also planning a national consciousness tour with my Survival Band, focused on peace, unity, and survival.

Will Nigerian reggae rise again? If yes when?

Yes! It will rise again by Jah grace, and that time is now. The people need a voice, fire is already kindling underground.

Majek Fashek's *Send Down The Rain* or Ras Kimono's *Under Pressure*, Which will you go for?

Looking at the current condition of Nigeria now, I will go for Ras Kimono *What's Gwan* and *Under Pressure*, because Nigeria is under serious pressure right now — economic pressure, social pressure. But we also need God to *Send Down the Rain* as answer to our prayer for healing. Both are relevant, but *Under Pressure* speaks louder today.

One reggae song every Nigerian politician should be forced to listen to?

Ras Kimono – *Under Pressure*; they need to remember that the people have rights, and power without justice will not stand.

What's your advice to a 17-year-old in Ohaozara who wants to do reggae?

My advice to him would be to focus on his lyrics, a good beat, and good production. Learn to play an instrument, read, meditate, and do not chase quick fame. Reggae is a mission, not just music.





Akindele, Waje, Aiyeola, Chukwuka Unite With Mic In Ore Mi, Soundtrack for *The Four*

By Daniel Anazia

NOLLYWOOD powerhouse, Funke Akindele, has once again proven that her creative reach extends far beyond the director's chair. Ahead of the December 11 theatrical release of her highly anticipated blockbuster, *The Four: No One Fights Alone*, the multi-award-winning screen diva has united with three of the industry's formidable talents — Waje, Bisola Aiyeola, and Chioma Chukwuka — to record the official soundtrack, titled, *Ore Mi*. Produced by Tolu Obanro, popularly known as Tyanx, the track is a soulful, evocative composition that serves as the emotional heartbeat of the film: the strength and tenderness of real friendship. It moves fluidly between English, Yoruba, and Igbo. Rather than opting for a generic promotional single, the quartet stepped into the booth to craft something deeply personal and culturally resonant. "Bisola, Waje, Chioma and I did a thing.

We got into the studio to create one of the soundtracks for *The Four*, and we wanted to make something that felt personal and familiar. "Something with that beautiful folktale feeling we grew up with, telling stories through music; especially stories of friendship, love, and the bond we share," Akindele wrote with excitement as she announced the song's release across major streaming platforms. She noted that the folktale feeling in the song isn't incidental; it's the entire premise of the film. According to the actress, director and film producer, the creative vision was to capture the nostalgic warmth of traditional storytelling. *The Four* follows Esosa and three fiercely loyal women whose devotion to a young man they love tests their courage, faith and unity to breaking point. Casting the same real-life energy between Akindele, Waje, Aiyeola and Chukwuka into a song about sisterhood turns *Ore Mi* into something closer to a companion piece than a marketing add-

on — four women who share genuine chemistry on screen, extending that same bond into the recording booth. Blending rich harmonies with evocative lyricism, *Ore Mi* bridges generations, celebrating the kind of communal bonds that define the African experience. With the song already circulating and fans creating their own friendship videos, Akindele has once again turned pre-release buzz into something audiences can participate in, not just watch for. Following the massive success of her 2024 holiday collaboration, which saw her team up with music superstars like Falz and D'banj for *Everybody Loves Christmas*, a strategic fusion of music and cinema is becoming Akindele's roll-out signature hallmark.

Burna Boy Is First Nigerian Artiste To Hit 4b YouTube Views

By Eniola Daniel

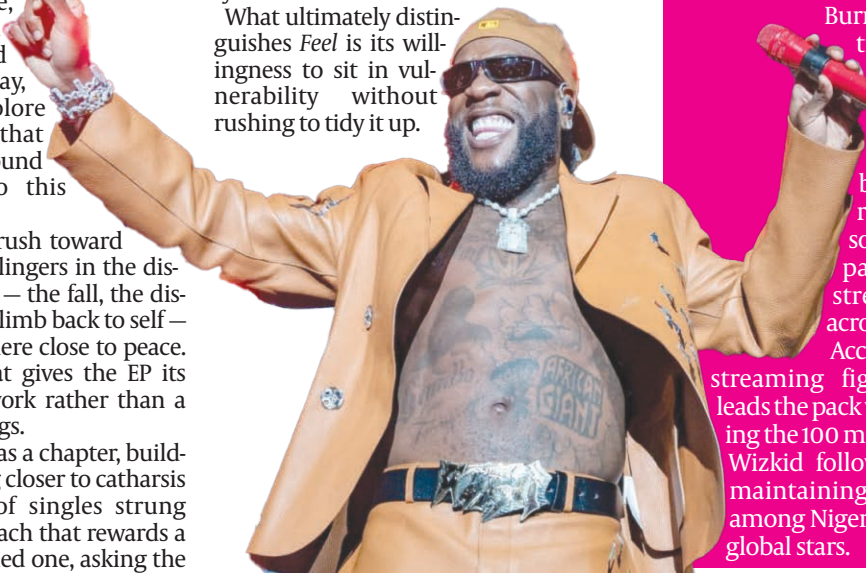
AFROBEATS star, Damini Ogulu, known popularly as Burna Boy, has surpassed four billion views on YouTube, becoming the first Nigerian and Sub-Saharan African artiste to hit the mark. The feat was reported in connection with the combined views recorded on Burna Boy's official YouTube channel, where his music videos have continued to attract audiences across the world. In 2021, Burna Boy reportedly became the first Nigerian artiste to surpass one billion total views on the platform. Burna Boy has also continued to make a strong impact globally, with five of the country's biggest artistes recording at least 10 songs that have surpassed 100 million streams on Spotify across all credits. According to the latest streaming figures, Burna Boy leads the pack with 23 songs crossing the 100 million-stream mark. Wizkid follows with 18 songs, maintaining his position among Nigeria's most-streamed global stars.

With *Feel*, OSA Turns Heartbreak Into a Seven-track Homecoming

By Daniel Anazia

NIGERIA-born, New York City-based songwriter, producer, and cypher, Osamede Omorodion, known professionally as OSA, has released his latest music project, *Feel*, a seven-track record that plays out less like a conventional EP and more like a diary — one that traces the arc of falling, losing yourself, and slowly finding your way back. Blending Afrobeats, R&B, and hip-hop into a sound built around identity, growth, love, and vulnerability, OSA uses *Feel*, which arrived on Wednesday, September 2, to explore emotional terrain that many artistes talk around but few commit to this directly. The project doesn't rush toward resolution. Instead, it lingers in the discomfort of each stage — the fall, the disorientation, the slow climb back to self — before arriving anywhere close to peace. That structure is what gives the EP its shape as a body of work rather than a loose collection of songs. Each track functions as a chapter, building toward something closer to catharsis than a typical run of singles strung together. It's an approach that rewards a full listen over a shuffled one, asking the

listeners to sit with the project's arc rather than skip straight to a highlight. The rapper enlists a strong supporting cast to help carry that arc, bringing in features from Toyé, Aema, and Nosa, among others. Rather than functioning as guest verses bolted onto the songs, each collaborator appears to slot into the EP's emotional register, reinforcing the project's throughline instead of pulling focus from it, a sign of intentional curation rather than a features list assembled for visibility. What ultimately distinguishes *Feel* is its willingness to sit in vulnerability without rushing to tidy it up.



Nigerian Streaming Platform, Kava, Fills Netflix Gap, Reaches 125 Titles

By Eniola Daniel

NIGERIAN movie streaming platform, Kava, has continued to fill the gap created by the exit of Netflix. In a game-changing move for African entertainment, Kava was unveiled, ushering in a bold era for Nigeria's film industry and for African creators. Kava launched in July 2025 as a joint venture between Filmhouse Group and Inkblot Productions, built to give Nollywood a dedicated global streaming home at a time when bigger platforms were scaling back on African content. The service went live for Nigerian and diaspora audiences with a modest catalogue of just over 30 titles, but that number would grow fast. Almost three years after Netflix has its last supper in Nigeria, Kava has dished out 125 titles and 102,000 subscribers. Registered users stand higher still at more than 270,000, reflecting the wider group of people who have created accounts. Growth has come from weekly title additions,

region-specific pricing, and the ability to offer cinema releases shortly after their theatrical runs, which has proved especially useful for diaspora viewers. The platform has continued to offer viewers a consistent stream of fresh, cinema-quality entertainment, while viewers find films across every genre; drama, romance, comedy, epic, thriller and more, reflecting the rich range of African storytelling and spotlighting creators across Nigeria and the diaspora. The CEO, Kava, Kene Okwuosa, said: "This is more than a platform, it's an ecosystem for African content, focusing on underserved global demand. KAVA exists to serve audiences and also represents both a cultural leap and a commercial opportunity. We're not just streaming films, we have built a digital infrastructure for the future of African cinema. We want our audiences to feel the joy of seeing their language, their humour, their struggles and triumphs on screen. To feel seen, and like they're part of something bigger."

Shallipopi Explains Silence On Legal Battle With Dapper Music

By Daniel Anazia

SINGER Crown Uzama, Shallipopi, has explained his recent silence over his ongoing dispute (court case) with his former signed-on record label, Dapper Music and manager, Damilola Akinwumi. In a statement shared on his social media pages, the singer said his legal team and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) advised him to stop publicly commenting on the case while an active investigation is underway. That means no more diss tracks, no more call-outs, no more social media posts addressing the dispute, a sharp reversal from the very public offensive he'd been running for weeks. "I cannot fight for myself using my music nor my words. I cannot sing about it, talk about it, or share it on any media platform for now. My legal team and the EFCC

have advised me that for justice to be served, I need to step back and trust the legal process. I have been told that rushed justice can lead to injustice," he said. The dispute between the parties became public in mid-August, when Shallipopi, alongside fellow former Dapper Music signees, T.I Blaze and Seyi Vibe, accused Akinwumi of contractual breaches and financial mismanagement within days of each other — a wave of allegations striking enough in its timing that observers, noted how coordinated it looked, even though the artistes appear to have acted independently. T.I Blaze's claim centered on an unexplained 1.2 billion; Shallipopi's allegations went further, accusing Dapper of withholding royalties from 46 of his songs and using his signature on a 10-year distribution deal involving Virgin Music Group.



By Maria Diamond

If you convert the whole of Africa into a domestic travel environment, it will boom – it will be like traveling from Lagos to Ibadan and come back the same day if you wish to; and the distance by air from Lagos to Abuja is even more than the distance to Ghana from Lagos, yet you pay two or three times the flight ticket because of these taxes and charges that came from our holdouts from our colonial past.

This is the response of Travel and Tourism Expert and Organiser of Akwaaba African Travel Market, Ikechi Uko to why there are still a lot of hiccups in Intra-Africa travel.

According to Uko in an Interview with *The Guardian*, the issues around Intra-Africa travel lingers because of the history of colonialism by diverse colonial masters whose exploitation conquest instilled prejudices amongst the people hereby constituting a divide in the region long after the barbaric imperial era was aborted.

These, Uko said, were all colonial holdouts that have seeped into the current consciousness of every African who now portrays his fellow African as bad.

"Intra Africa travel continues to pose a huge challenge because of our colonial history. We were divided, lines were drawn on the sand and on maps and we were told we are people from different countries.

"The supposed developmental journalism being done by foreign radio stations made Africans see other Africans in a negative light. You are being told Nigeria has corruption issues, Nigerians are these and that. You're being told that some other Africans are drunks, lazy etc. So, we have negative narratives about every other African country that we got from colonial masters which are not exactly true.

"I have travelled a lot around Africa and I don't see the difference, but the economies are different and people have perceptions and prejudices. These prejudices come into play when it comes to visas and intra-Africa travel; every African thinks he is better than his neighbour. You could see all the fights are between neighbours: Nigeria and Cameroon had the Bakassi Peninsula conflict; Togo and Ghana had issues, Senegal and Gambia had their conflict; Uganda and Tanzania; Rwanda and Burundi had diplomatic tension; South Africa and Zimbabwe etc.

"These colonial holdouts are the root cause of the challenges affecting intra-Africa travel, but the younger generations are seeing the world differently and our job is to help break down these barriers so Africa can extract real value from its huge population."

The travel and tourism expert however urged all Africa's to move past these prejudices and start mending fences starting within each country in the region, from flight cost, to visa hurdles, limited infrastructure and fixing all bottlenecks around travel and tourism.

Thus, as a follow to his diplomatic resolution, Uko was asked about the place of Nigeria tourism in the global sphere?

He responded: "Nigeria hasn't played a very active role in global tourism but as the giant of Africa, a country naturally blessed by God; it is inevitable that people will take notice. However, we have not really been intentional about tourism in terms of organising, preparing, building facilities, creating access, market, distribution etc. We have not done any of those things well as a way of selling or promoting the country to the global space as a

Perception, Prejudices Undermining Intra-Africa Travel – Ikechi Uko



destination. However, regardless of this, people still find us and with the growth of Nollywood and Afrobeats, the world knows we exist, what we do with it is now where we are at.

States Investing In Destination Nigeria With Clear Results?

The industry expert said the level of tourism development in Nigeria now is quite impressive. "In a state like Taraba, the federal government is doing good roads of the scenic hills, the state is investing, and bringing in the private sector and they are resuscitating the festivals. Enugu is top of the pile; Akwa Ibom – massive investment; even Cross River is coming back with most things; Ekiti is playing fantastically well; Lagos upgrades; in Osun state, the Ooni of Ife Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi Ojaja 11 and his group have sustained the festival and the activities going on; Plateau is

also doing well with tourism – they are repositioning themselves and recalibrating. I know the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is also getting involved in some of those projects.

"Now if we have about 10 states playing at that level, then you will know that Nigeria can proudly go to the international market place and say here we are, come visit. So, some states have been intentional about investing in tourism. The biggest tourism investments I have seen on the ground in Nigeria presently are from Lagos, Akwa Ibom and Enugu states, they are doing extremely well – these are new developments that need to be commended. Get ready for Enugu – the tourism products are slowly being delivered. The Nsude Pyramids, the 700m canopy walkway and now the first zipline in Nigeria. By October/November, the testing and training would have been completed and the commissioning would begin. The Governor is doing new roads to Awhum, Okpatu, Ngwo and Nsude to link the first phase of the products. Tourism enriches," Uko said.

Destination Nigeria As Global Tourism Consumption?

"Nigeria's tourism strong point has always been in culture that was why the ministry was initially culture and tourism. I am not surprised that Detty December and all the homecoming things in November and December are hugely successful.

"So, you have the Carnival Calabar and the Detty December, those ones are global frontlines' now, and it's just because of who we are, our culture, our conviviality and our energy – that's what the world will come to buy. This is the biggest gift we have to give to the world for now."

Uko however noted that going forward, Ogbudu, Chappal Waddi Taraba Mambila, Plateau Jos, the Ikogosi, are world class products that Nigeria can position for global consumption based on the success of the cultural elements.

Akwaaba Travel Expo @22

As the organiser of the widely attended Akwaaba African Travel Market around the region, Uko was asked how he conceived the concept and what is the magic wand behind the consistency and growth of the travel expo for 22 years and counting?

He replies: "The idea emanated from the need to market Africa to Africans. I wanted to do an African version of the World Travel Market (WTM) – marketing Africa to Africans and getting Africans and the world to travel within Africa. I am happy that 22 years down the road, we have made a success of the journey.

"The consistency of Akwaaba African Travel Market is simply, each year, we stand up and go out and I continue the marketing I have done. Initially people didn't want anybody to travel within Africa. As pioneers, part of what helped us stay long in the game is when the whole of Africa started understanding the vision. Africans started traveling to Africa. Today, almost all the top destinations in Africa get the highest number of travellers from their neighbouring countries. So, we are happy that Africa eventually caught up with our vision and that success has helped sustain the vision."

He continued: "For this year, we are expecting delegates from so many places but the biggest gain is that we are having the Minister of Tourism from Gambia with a big delegation to Akwaaba African Travel Market.

"We are having quite a lot of tour operators from around the continent, we are bringing the tour operators from the different countries that are hosting Africa Cup of Nations 2027 (AFCON) to come and engage with our partner. We are doing something phenomenal that nobody has done before; we are creating the platform for sports to grow. This is the high point of getting the Akwaaba travel trade expos to this stage."

Accra Weizo: Promoting Seamless Cross-Border Travel, Tourism Growth, Regional Integration Across The Sub-Region

Accra Weizo is the cross-border road travel trip across the region starting from Nigeria to Cotonou, Lome and Accra, organised by the Travel and Tourism Pro, Ikechi Uko between June and July yearly. However, for this year, the trip is yet to be held.

Intra Africa travel continues to pose a huge challenge because of our colonial history. We were divided, lines were drawn on the sands and on maps and we were told we are people from different countries.

Colonial holdouts are the root cause of the challenges affecting intra-Africa travel, but the younger generations are seeing the world differently and our job is to help break down these barriers so Africa can extract real value from its huge population."

The biggest tourism investments on ground in Nigeria presently are from Lagos, Akwa Ibom and Enugu States, they are doing extremely well – these are new developments that need to be commended.

Travel and Tourism Expert and Organiser of Akwaaba African Travel Market, Ikechi Uko.

From The Rector

Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor Delta State. www.ibrucentre.org

Radical Hospitality: Touching Stranger At The Gate (2)

By Stephen Wolemonwu

(Psalm 119: 161-176; Lev. 19: 33-37; 1Corinth 13: 1-13; Luke 10:25-37)

THEREFORE, radical hospitality is the gospel lived out through welcome, mercy, and justice. It is evangelism not only with words but with deeds that touched the stranger at the gate, embracing the outsider, and showing the world that Christ's love is stronger than the walls men build.

1. Breaking Down Walls of Division (Leviticus 19:33-37; Luke 10:25-37) Humanity has always built walls of religion, culture, tribe, and status that divide us from one another. These walls are often reinforced by fear, pride, and prejudice. But God's word calls His people to something radically different.

• **God gave us a Command (Lev. 19):** Israel was told to love the stranger as themselves, remembering they too were once strangers in Egypt. This command breaks down the wall of exclusion.

• **Christ gave us an Example (Luke 10):** In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus shows mercy that crosses boundaries of ethnicity, religion, and social status. The Samaritan broke down the wall of hostility by touching the wounded man.

• **We have a Mandate:** Evangelism begins not with sermons but with tearing down barriers.

To see every person as neighbour is to see them as someone Christ died for. Evangelism begins with breaking down walls and seeing every person as neighbour, regardless of tribe, tongue, or social standing. Where men build walls, Christ commands us to break them down.

2. Building Bridges of Love (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)



Stephen Wolemonwu

Paul reminds us that love is the supreme ethic that validates every ministry. Without love, preaching becomes noise, prophecy becomes empty, and knowledge becomes arrogance. Love is the bridge that connects us to others when walls of prejudice, tribalism, and corruption try to keep us apart.

• **Love is the Foundation:** Evangelism without love is hollow. It is love that gives credibility to our witness.

• **Love is Action:** Radical hospitality is love made visible through bridges built where walls once stood. It is the Samaritan crossing cultural boundaries to bind wounds.

• **Love is the power that Transforms:** When the church practices radical hospitality, it demonstrates a love that touches lives, heals divisions, and points directly to Christ. Evangelism is not only proclamation but demonstration of love that builds bridges and touches lives with the gospel. Walls divide, but love builds bridges—and those bridges carry the gospel to the stranger at the gate.

3. Building our life on the Word That Endures (Psalm 119:161-176) The psalmist, though persecuted, delights in God's word because it is eternal and trustworthy. Unlike human systems that collapse under corruption, tribalism, or prejudice, the word of God stands firm.

• **The word is guidance in Righteousness:**

Scripture is not just read; it shapes us to walk in justice, mercy, and truth.

• **The word gives us strength in Persecution:** When rulers fail and society falters, the word sustains us with courage to practice radical hospitality.

• **The word "gingers" our audacity for Hospitality:** Hospitality is not a cultural nicety but a biblical command. The word insists that love, mercy, and welcome are marks of holiness. Radical hospitality is not a social trend but a biblical mandate rooted in God's eternal word. When we build on the word that endures, it builds in us a love that welcomes the stranger at the gate.

Conclusion

Beloved, radical hospitality is not just about opening our doors, but about opening our hearts. It is the gospel lived out in welcome, in compassion, and in love without limits. When we embrace the stranger, we embrace Christ Himself. As we go forth today, may we be a people who make room at the table, extend grace beyond boundaries, and embody the Kingdom of God in every act of welcome. Let us live so that no one ever doubts they belong, because in Christ, all are home.

• **The Ven. (Dr) Stephen Wolemonwu, Rector, The Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor** stephenwolemonwu@gmail.com, 08035413812.

By Charles Ighele

MANY times, experiences of life condition people's reactions. There was this lady who was into a relationship with a young man. This young man broke this lady's heart.

This bitter experience made this lady's heart to harden towards any advances of the opposite sex. When a man approaches her, she will tell him straight away, "I do not fall over men anyhow. The only man I ever befriended

slapped me three times and broke my heart. I hope you will not do such to me o. I fear men o." This lady built a shell around her, which made it difficult for her to relax and carry on with her normal life.

I want to counsel here that when you are in a relationship, learn to forget about past wounds and disappointments. Do not drag old experiences to affect your new relationship negatively. This is what the Bible refers

Forgetting Past Wounds

to as putting new wine in old wine skin. There must be a dislocation or destruction. Learn wisdom from your previous experience but do not allow negative experience to make you look at life in a negative way. Do not torment your partner with unnecessary information and do not harass your partner with negative vibration from the past.

Forget your past wounds. The Bible says, forgetting those things, which are behind, press forward. Press forward to a brighter future. Males or females who speak and behave like the case narrated above hardly have healthy relationships. In fact, it frustrates the partner and many pack it up. Help yourself. Forget past wounds. A man whose heart was bro-

ken in a previous relationship vowed never to give his heart totally to any woman again. When he eventually got married to one of the best women on earth, they could not enjoy the best of each other.

Learn from experience but know where to draw the line. Know how to differentiate new wine from old wine. Love you!

• **Bishop Charles Ighele is the General Superintendent of Holy Spirit Mission, Lagos.**



Ighele

Uwagba Urges Christians To Reconsider Their Approach To Politics, Governance

By Chris Irekamba

CHRISTIANS have been urged to reconsider their approach to politics and governance.

A Nigerian Christian author and thought leader, Mrs. Jumoke Uwagba, made the call recently during the unveiling of her newly released four-volume, titled: Gods And Governance series. She argued that believers cannot continue to pray about society while refusing to understand or influence the systems that shape it.

The author said her decision to write the books emerged from years of observing the relationship between faith, leadership, power and society, adding that she began questioning the widely held Christian assertion that "politics is a dirty game" at an early age. The four books are Gods And Politics: ... gods in governance (Book 1), Gods And Politics: ... the systems of



Uwagba

power and the responsibility of the gods (Book 2), Gods And Politics: ... from governance to legacy. (Book 3), and God And Government (Book 4).

While recalling her experience, Uwagba said: "I kept asking whether politics itself was really the problem." She explained further that her concern deepened as she watched Christians withdraw from politics and governance because they regarded them as worldly or corrupt.

"I came to see that withdrawal was not neutrality. It had consequences," she said.

Martins Applauds KSM Lagos Metro N2b Endowment Fund

By Chris Irekamba

THE Catholic Archbishop of the Metropolitan See of Lagos, Most Rev. (Dr.) Alfred Adewale Martins has applauded the Knights of St. Mulumba (KSM) Nigeria, Lagos Metropolitan Council's N2b Endowment Fund, describing the initiative as "a welcome development" for KSM and the Church.

Archbishop Martins spoke recently when he received a KSM Lagos Metro delegation led by the Metropolitan Grand Knight, Sir Nosa Ehigiator, at the Lagos Archdiocesan Chancery. He pledged his support to the initiative.

The cleric noted that older churches had sustained their activities partly through investments, adding that the Archdiocese of Lagos was also considering similar initiatives through its Finance Council.

Sir Ehigiator, who explained the rationale behind the project said KSM could no longer

• To Be Launched On September 26

rely indefinitely on members' contributions to finance its expanding responsibilities, particularly amid Nigeria's economic challenges. He said excessive reliance on dues and levies could discourage younger people from joining

the organisation.

The fund, according to him, "is designed as a permanent pool of invested capital, with the principal preserved and prudently invested while investment income supports approved charitable pro-

grammes. The N2b target, which will be launched at St. Leo Catholic Church, Ikeja, Lagos on September 26, is intended to provide a lasting financial foundation for KSM Lagos Metro's charitable mission, as well as creating a sustainable financial foundation for our charitable activities."



Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, Most Rev. (Dr.) Alfred Adewale Martins (middle), flanked by Metro Grand Knight, Knights of St. Mulumba Nigeria (KSM), Lagos Metropolitan Council, Sir Nosa Ehigiator (third right); Chairman, Endowment Fund Committee, Worthy Brother Emmanuel Dumuje (second right); Metro Secretary, Sir Michael Olofinlade (first right); Provost I, Ladies of St. Mulumba, Lagos Metro, Lady Efe Ehikhuemen (third left); Worthy Provost 2, Lady Bernadette Ojo (second left); and Chairperson, KSM Lagos Metro Endowment Publicity, Media/Communications Subcommittee (first left), Lady Neta Nwosu, during KSM Lagos Metro team's visit to the Archbishop recently at the Chancery of the Archdiocese.

The Church's Earnest Expectation

Text: Romans 8:19 (KJV) "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

THERE is something the Church must never lose sight of: there is an expectation upon the people of God. Heaven is waiting, the world is waiting, and God Himself is looking for a people through whom His glory can be revealed. The Church was not redeemed merely to occupy seats, attend services, sing songs, and go through religious activities. The Church was redeemed to manifest Christ, proclaim His salvation, demonstrate His power, and prepare the world for His coming.

The Bible says, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." This is a solemn statement. Creation is waiting. Humanity is groaning. A generation is searching for hope, direction, righteousness, peace, and deliverance. In the midst of darkness, God has placed His Church as a light.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."

The Church, therefore, has a divine responsibility. We cannot afford to live carelessly when the world is desperately looking for an answer. We cannot afford to become so occupied with material things that we forget eternity. We cannot become so comfortable that we lose our burden for dying souls. There is an expectation upon us.

The earnest expectation of the Church is first the manifestation of Christ in our lives. Christianity is not merely a profession of the lips; it is the revelation of Christ through a transformed life. The world should be able to see something different in the believer.

Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

This is the heart of true Christianity. Christ must live through us. Our character must testify of Him. Our conduct must testify of Him. Our speech must testify of Him. Our decisions must testify of Him. Our homes, businesses, relationships, and private lives must testify that Jesus Christ is Lord.

The Church cannot effectively preach holiness while living in worldliness. We cannot preach forgiveness while holding bitterness in our hearts. We cannot preach truth while practicing deception. We cannot preach salvation while living like those who have never en-

Living Waters

By Pastor Lazarus Muoka

Founder/General Overseer

The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries Worldwide

• For more messages and testimonies visit: www.flccrm.org 08056889396



countered Christ.

The world needs to see Christ in us.

The earnest expectation is also that the Church will shine in a dark generation. We are living in a world where moral values are rapidly declining, sin is becoming normal, and many people have lost their sense of eternity. Yet the darker the night becomes, the more necessary the light becomes.

Philippians 2:15 says, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

God did not place us in this generation by accident. He knew the condition of our world before He saved us. He knew the challenges we would face. He knew the temptations surrounding us. Yet He called us to shine.

We must not hide our faith because of opposition. We must not compromise because of pressure. We must not exchange eternal values for temporary acceptance. The Church must remain the Church.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

There is an expectation upon every child of God to live in such a way that others will be drawn toward God.

But there is another earnest expectation: the salvation of souls.

The Church exists to reach the lost. The heartbeat of Christ is for souls to be saved. Jesus came into this world because humanity was lost in sin. He did not come merely to improve people's finances or make them comfortable on earth. He came to save sinners.

Luke 19:10 declares, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

If Christ came to seek and save the lost, then the Church must carry the same burden. There are men and women around us who are dying with-

out Christ. There are young people searching for meaning. There are families suffering because sin has taken control of their homes. There are people smiling outwardly while inwardly they are broken. There are souls who may never hear another message if we refuse to preach to them.

Paul declared in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

The Gospel is still the answer.

The Church must, therefore, arise and preach Christ again. We must preach repentance again. We must preach holiness again. We must preach righteousness again. We must preach heaven and hell again. We must remind men that eternity is real and that every soul will stand before God.

The earnest expectation is that the Church will wake up from spiritual slumber.

There is a danger of becoming religious without becoming spiritual. A person may attend church and still be far from God. One may know Christian language without knowing Christ. One may carry a Bible without obeying its message. One may sing about heaven while living for this present world.

Jesus said in John 14:3, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Christ is coming again. This truth should affect the way we live. If we truly believe that Jesus is coming, we cannot afford to live carelessly. We must be ready. We must keep our garments clean. We must remain faithful. We must not allow the attractions of this world to steal our affection for Christ.

Titus 2:13 says, "Looking for that blessed hope,

and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

What a blessed expectation!

One day the trumpet shall sound. One day the dead in Christ shall rise. One day the struggles of this present life will be over. One day faith will become sight. One day we shall see the King in His beauty.

But while we wait, we have a responsibility. Jesus said in Mark 13:33, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."

We must watch. We must pray. We must work. We must preach. We must win souls. We must live holy. We must remain faithful until He comes.

Finally, the Church's earnest expectation is the manifestation of the glory of God. God desires to reveal His glory through a people who are yielded to Him. The early Church demonstrated what God can do through surrendered vessels. They prayed, preached, suffered, served, and carried the gospel everywhere.

Acts 1:8 says, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me."

The Church needs more than activity; we need the power of the Holy Ghost. We need men and women whose lives have been surrendered to God. We need believers who will stand in the gap for their generation.

The question is: What is God expecting from you?

Perhaps you have been saved but have become spiritually cold. Perhaps you once prayed with passion but have gradually lost your prayer life. Perhaps you have allowed worldly pursuits to take the place of your devotion to Christ. Today, God is calling you back.

And if you have never genuinely surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, this is your moment.

Church attendance cannot save you. Religion cannot save you. Good works cannot save you. Only Jesus Christ can save.

Acts 4:12 declares, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Come to Christ while there is still opportunity. Repent of your sins. Turn away from the old life. Surrender completely to Jesus. Do not postpone the decision that concerns your eternity.

Jesus Christ is coming again.

And when He comes, may He find us faithful, watchful, holy, fruitful, and ready.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus." — Revelation 22:20 (KJV)

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

How A Sister Was Restored By Divine Mercy After Being Deceived Out Of Chosen

SISTER Nonye Onyinyechi resides in Festac Town, Lagos. She became a member of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries in 2003 and worships in Festac 1.

Testifying how she came to the church, our sister said she had many problems including serious breast pain. This pain, according to her, made her to visit many churches, but all to no avail. She said that in one of the churches where she went, she was given a bottle of olive oil to drink several times, and the instruction was that she must finish the bottle and yet there was no solution.

When there was no solution, Sister Onyinyechi said her younger brother instructed that she should go to The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries. She said she obeyed and when she came, the G.O mentioned her case, she stated that she was surprised that the breast pain disappeared, after his

prayer. Praise the Lord!

As soon our sister received her miracle, she disclosed that her eyes/ears opened and she could hear G.O's salvation message on: "do not paint your fingers, avoid wearing chains, earrings and rings among others."

According to Sister Onyinyechi, this message was too hard for her to bear, so she stopped coming to the church, claiming that, after all, there are other churches out there. She also added that Bishop usually came to their house because her elder

sister is a reverend sister.

"So why would Chosen tell me not to do make up, I can no longer bear this," Sister Onyinyechi said.

After she left Chosen, something happened. Somebody visited her shop and she gave the client a handbill, the per-

son turned and asked her, "it is like you want to serve God." She replied and said to the person "why did you say that?" The client said any time she came to her shop, she would give one handbill or the other, that if she wants to serve God, she should go

to The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries.

As the client left her shop that day, Sister Onyinyechi said she began to think over it and that prompted her to come back to Chosen and ever since she has been with the church. **Praise the Lord!**



A cross section of testifiers testifying how they received their healing after Pastor's prayer, during the last Easter Retreat.

IN His letter to the church in Pergamos, Christ condemns the corruption that had infiltrated the church, and called on both ministers and members to repent including those who claim to belong to Him. Specifically, He rebukes the minister of the church who, despite serving the people, tolerates and ignores the erroneous teachings of some leaders in his congregation who held to "the doctrine of Balaam," that promoted backsliding and sinful behaviour, and earned the condemnation of the Lord.

Christ condemned the doctrine of Balaam, highlighting the negative practices in the church in Pergamos. Some members of that church had backslidden and forgotten the teachings on the new life in Christ. They learned to place stumbling blocks before faithful believers, teach them to "eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." Christ condemned these practices then and He still condemns them today. The doctrine of Balaam is, in fact, the doctrine of the devil, designed to mislead people and cause them to slide back into their old, sinful habits. Therefore, believers should not emulate "positive preachers" who focus solely on uplifting messages while neglecting to address the evil prevalent in the lives of their members.

Christ hates the deeds of backsliders. Despite the efforts of the minister in the church at Pergamos, there were leaders who clung to "the doctrine [and deeds] of the Nicolaitans." They subtly injected their corrupt and evil practices into various aspects of the church activities, influencing others to backslide. Similarly, today, some people labour diligently, but neglect to monitor their congregation's spiritual state and fail to address the spread of evil within the church. Despite your busy schedule as a minister in the church, you must beware of the spread of corruption in the church and take action to stop it.

Christ confirms the impending judgment on the backsliders in the church of Pergamos, warning them of the damnation of burning in hell. He urges them to repent and embrace the con-

Holiness In A Corrupt Community (2)

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor
W. F. Kumuyi



victing Word that rescues from eternal condemnation. Today, Christ's ministers must preach the uncompromising Word, intercede for backsliders, counsel them and reverse the influences of the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans in their minds, so as to rescue backsliders from a regrettable eternity. Christ desires that His followers should repent from all evil ways, consecrate themselves and live in holiness. This is essential to avoid His wrath on the final day.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The Lord calls out everyone who has an ear to hear. He wants us to be consecrated, courageous and to prevail despite the corruption in our environment. He desires us to hold fast to His word and name, and not deny the faith we have received from Him, so that we can overcome on the last day. One man in

the church in Pergamos who stood out by Christ's reckoning was a man called Antipas.

Christ testifies of him as a courageous hero, who did not deny the faith in the face of martyrdom in a community where Satan manifests brutal authority. Anyone who stands firm and maintains spiritual integrity amidst persecution, contradiction, error, corruption and the devil's crushing power, is a courageous hero before Christ. Such were Bible personalities like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Daniel, Paul the apostle, Peter, John and other apostles, as well as those before them, like Moses. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." The Lord desires to make each of us a hero that stands firm on God's word, uncompromising regardless of challenges. Christ commends them for taking to heart what they had been taught.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Commendable hearers are characterised by readiness to hear from God. They ask Him to correct areas in their lives that displease Him, desiring a heart that obeys God and pleases Him in all things. The outcome of true hearing is not just receiving information, but taking heed to what we hear. We take heed to what we hear when we obey it fully, correct our ways and walk in the narrow path that leads to eternal life.

Christ promises a concealed heritage to those who overcome the influences of erroneous preachers like Balaam, seducers, temptations, works of the flesh, contradictory doctrines and sinful propensities that can cause us to stumble. Those who practice Christ's message of righteousness will receive this reward.

• **Further Reading (King James Version):** Revelation 2:12-17. Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12,13; John 8:7-11. Isaiah 27:1; 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. Revelation 2:13,17. Hebrews 11:27. Revelation 2:17; Mark 4:23,24. Revelation 2:17.

Teenagers, Youths, Adults Benefit From Free Skills Acquisition Programme

By Oluwayomi Ayenibiwo

OVER 400 teenagers, youths and adults from Magboro and neighbouring communities in Ogun State benefited from a five-day free skills acquisition programme organised by Dynamic Impact Christian Centre (DICC) as part of its community development initiative.

The event, tagged IGASP 2.0 (Impact Get A Skill Programme), was designed to equip participants with practical skills that could enhance their financial independence, self-reliance and contribution to their communities.

The beneficiaries were trained in barbing, hairdressing, shoemaking, soap making, air-freshener production, facial makeover, web design, graphics design, content creation and live streaming, video editing, sewing and pattern design, among others.

Dynamic Impact Christian Centre (DICC), which was founded by Pastor Kayode Olutayo and his wife, Pastor Kemi Olutayo is a year and seven months old. Its mission, according to the Lead Pastor Olutayo, is to build a generation that seeks after God. The Lead Pastor, who is

popularly known as PKO, said the initiative was conceived to empower young people and provide a productive alternative to idleness and involvement in social vice. He added that the programme was particularly aimed at helping youths to resist restiveness and avoid drugs, crime, cultism and thuggery.

Olutayo said: "Last year, we began IGASP, and we had over 200 who registered and were taught different skills. It is in its second year now; we did this to impact the youths of the community instead of allowing them to loiter on the streets, engaging in smoking and gangsterism." He said the programme was organised for youths who had recently completed their secondary school or in tertiary education and those awaiting admission, NYSC call-up or employment, as well as those already employed but interested in acquiring additional skills.

He urged the attendees to maximise their potential with the skills acquired, adding that the opportunity could become gateways to new careers, businesses and opportunities for them to become a blessing to their families and communities.



Pastor Kemi Olutayo (right) giving certificate of participation to one of the attendees during the programme

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 6:2, "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." (KJV)

OFTEN times people will procrastinate to do a thing or take a decision until "tomorrow." "Tomorrow" is often described as the most dangerous word in the spiritual vocabulary. Procrastinating on accepting Christ is a common human tendency, driven by the false assumption that time is guaranteed or that a "more convenient season" will come later. The Bible speaks directly to this mindset in 2 Corinthians 6:2, emphasising that salvation is an urgent, present-moment decision rather than a future option. Scripture frequently warns against as-

Maximising God's Grace (6)

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

suming we have a tomorrow. Proverbs 27:1 states, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth." Similarly, James 4:14 reminds us that human life is like a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. We live in a world consumed by scheduling, deadlines, and notifications. We plan for tomorrow, invest for retirement, and schedule our lives months in advance. Yet, when it comes to the matters of the soul, humanity suffers from a spiritual disease called procrastination. That is the biblical danger of tomorrow. We treat eternity as an appointment that can be indefinitely rescheduled.



God does not speak in vague seasons or distant tomorrows. When the Holy Spirit speaks regarding your eternity, restoration, and deliverance, He uses a single, urgent word: "Now." In his second letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul issues a powerful, pressing appeal by quoting the prophet

Isaiah to remind us that we are living in a unique window of history—the era of divine favour. "Now" is the accepted time of salvation. "Now" means the present window of divine favour. The word "accepted" in the original Greek text (dekto) carries the meaning of a highly favourable, delighted, and welcome time. It denotes a specific season where God's grace is actively extended, and the door of mercy is wide open. Right now, we live in the dispensation/age of grace. God is not looking upon humanity in final judgment today.

• **Today's Nugget:** "Now" is the day of salvation. Prayer: Lord I accept you "Now" into my life. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com, Rev. (Dr) Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.

Stop Talking And Listen (2)

Read Psalm 85:1-13

"I will listen to what God the LORD will say. . ." (Ps 85:8) "Speak, for Your servant hears" (1 Sam 3:10)

ANOTHER element that should be present in our prayer time is listening to God. Many believers fill every moment of their devotions by talking and never wait to hear what God might want to say to them. The one true God described in the Holy Bible speaks. The main way God speaks to us is through Scriptures. Jesus said: "My sheep hear My voice" (Jn 10:27).

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says. . ." (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)

Importance of listening to God

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat" (Rev 2:17)

"hear what the Spirit says." We must heed the warnings of the Holy Spirit today. He continues to speak the same words Christ spoke to the seven churches of Asia, commanding us to overcome sin in the world and not to tolerate immorality. If we fail to overcome in this important area, we lose God's favour and presence, the Spirit's power and in the end become enemies of the kingdom of God. If, on the other hand, we overcome, we receive the hidden manna of spiritual life and a "white stone," signifying the triumph of our faith over all that sought to destroy our devotion to Christ.

Conditions for effective listening to God. Prayer as we have de-

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus
Prof. Mercy Olumide



finer is conversation with God, particularly His covenant people. Therefore, if you are conversing with God as your Father and Friend you must be able to listen and hear Him when He responds to your petitions. Furthermore, you must be able to comprehend how he communicates with His covenant people and recognise His voice.

Jesus Himself has said: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." (Jn 10:27). See also Jn 10:3,4. Therefore, the beginning of your conversation with God is (1) to ensure that you are a member of His covenant people and (2) you know His methods of communication.

How do you become a member of His covenant people—a Christian? "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Rom 8:9) Who is the Holy Spirit? How do you receive the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and is imparted to us through the breath of Jesus Christ (John 20:22). If you have sincerely trusted Christ for your salvation and acknowledged him as Lord, then the Holy Spirit has come into your life, and you are a Christian.

"He breathed on them, and said to them: 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (Jn 20:22)

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From Caring For The Elderly To Educating The Next Generation: Kaleyewa House Extends Adamolekun’s Legacy

By Itunu Ajayi

TWENTY-FOUR years after Dr. Olukemi Adamolekun’s life was cut short, the organisation she founded is not only caring for elderly Nigerians, it is now investing in young people who will shape the future of healthcare and social work.

When Adamolekun conceived the idea of *Kaleyewa House* more than two decades ago, caring for the elderly was hardly at the centre of public discourse in Nigeria. But as someone who has lived in the United States and had observed the systems of care for older people in a dignifying way, she began to ask a simple but important question: what would happen to elderly Nigerians as traditional family structures change and more children moved away from their hometowns?

In her effort to develop a workable model for elderly care in Nigeria, Adamolekun engaged with AssistGuide Information Services (AGIS), an American elder-care organisation to see what level of intervention she could accessed.

Drawing from her experience of the systems of care in the United States, she worked to adapt the concept to the Nigerian environment. Her intention was to partner with AGES (African Gerontological Society) and IFAN (International Federation on Ageing-Nigeria).

This gave birth to *Kaleyewa House*, which means growing old with dignity, beauty, grace, and respect. *Kaleyewa* was conceived as a pioneering intervention for elder-

ly people, particularly in Iju and Itaogbolu of Ondo State. Its original vision was broader than simply distributing food, medical care and accommodation for vulnerable elderly people, but an elder-care ecosystem. As a result, she began asking what could be done.

And her goal was not to simply copy the American system, but adapt the principles of care to Nigerian realities. Reason, she undertook a needs assessment in Iju and Itaogbolu. The findings were remarkably practical: elderly people needed food, medical care and assistance with rent.

But Adamolekun was not able to see that vision fully realised. She was murdered in Ibadan on May 4, 2002, while travelling in connection with the work of *Kaleyewa House*, barely a year after the organisation was

registered as a non-profit.

But her death did not terminate the project. Her husband, Professor Ladipo Adamolekun, her children and others who believed in her vision decided that her vision would not die with her. They kept her legacy alive.

Kaleyewa’s model was strikingly simple but practical. It identified the needs of elderly people and responded to them directly. Today, hundreds of elderly beneficiaries received food and medical assistance, while particularly vulnerable people—including those who are bedridden or unable to attend public programmes—are reached in their homes. Some beneficiaries also receive assistance with rent.

In an environment where elderly care has historically received limited sustained attention, *Kaleyewa House’s*

persistence is significant. Its work also appears to have anticipated a challenge that Nigeria would increasingly face: the weakening of traditional systems in which elderly parents could automatically expect to live with or be supported by their children.

However, what began as one woman’s idea has survived more than two decades and continues to provide practical support to elderly people in the two communities.

At the recent celebration of Adamolekun’s 80th posthumous birthday, a retired principal, who was a pioneer volunteer at the Home, Chief Adedipe Adegboye, providing insight to the journey of the Home, said a survey of elders in the two communities were done at the onset of the programme. He said apart from food items, elders also got free clothes, shoes,

bags and torch lights. He reiterated the commitment of the organisation in giving health counseling to beneficiaries whenever food distributions were done.

His words. “The initial plan of the founder was to be giving money to beneficiaries but due to my experience in the community on what the needs of the people are, I advised her to concentrate on food, healthcare and accommodation. We distribute food items that include rice, beans, salt and Maggi, which the elders requested changed to locust beans. This distribution is done six times in a year.” Adegboye called on well spirited Nigerians to partner with the organisation to expand its scope.

A childhood friend of Adamolekun, Mrs. Omotewa Aderibigbe said her friend tried to make her

fall in love with Mathematics, a subject she never understood how anyone could be comfortable with.

Her words: “Kemi was my childhood friend. We attended the same Pry School, and the same Secondary School (Fiwasaye Girls’ Grammar School, Akure). Growing up together in the village, was fun, but under very strict discipline. Being together was our cherished bond. We used to go to the stream in the bush to wash our clothes in preparation for school resumption.

We would then enter the stream, and bathed with our dresses on. It was all giggles. I used to pity her when she was sent home for school fees along with some of us, because, I saw her traumatized in the midst of affluence”.



Family, Associates Eulogise Ozo Ramsey Onyia

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

TRIBUTES poured in torrents penultimate Sunday in honour of the former chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), in Enugu and Anambra states, late Ozo Ramsey Onyia, who died at the age of 79.

Onyia was state chairman of the SDP in Anambra and later in Enugu State between 1991 and 1993. At a thanksgiving service for the eventful life he lived and the success of his burial, attended by family members, friends, business and political associates, held at the St Peter’s Anglican Church, Okwojo, Ngwo, Udi local council, Enugu State, they all testified to the leadership of sacrifice and exemplary life of the late sage.

His eldest son, Ozo Fredrick Onyia, described his father as a man of many noble characteristics, stressing that he was humble and dedicated to the service of his people. “He loved his place. He loved the people around him. He loved his family so much. My father believed in hard work. He led a principled life. He believed in equity. He believed in fairness. He believed in justice. There are so many good things that one can start saying about my father. But to sum it up, my father was a man who believed in being noble.

He lived that life and he mentioned humility almost every time. And in his words, ‘you’re not humiliated because you’re humble’, he stated.

Adding, he said, “I will only say that I am grateful that I have the opportunity to step into his shoes. They are quite big, but he has made sure that my feet are long enough too.” Late Onyia’s fourth daughter, Dr Chizobaljioma, described him as “almost an excellent human being”, explaining that he was kind, loving, and gave himself fully to all his children, the community and every other person that needed him. “He was always available, he had an open-door quality, and he could come down to everybody’s level to relate with them. “I’m taking away his name. The name he preserved for us. He lived a very reputable life, and we are grateful to God because his free will has been following us from when we were born till now that he has left. His goodwill has been following us, and I intend to carry on that legacy of good name, that legacy of putting others before myself”, she said.

First daughter of the family, Pastor Ngozika Anochirimonye Agu described him as the “model of fatherhood”, saying her father had answer to every stage of her life. “My father had an answer to every question I had at

every level of my life. My daddy was the most daunting man that I’ve ever met. He was loving, he was loyal, kind, very sacrificial,



extremely sacrificial. He was one man that shared his life with a generation.

“We had the privilege of getting my father steeped down to document a percentage of his life, his work, and his journeys. I will encourage every man out there to get that book and read about the life and the legacy of Ozo Ramsey Onyia. My father is the kind of man that comes in a whole generation. It will teach them how to be fathers, husbands, leaders, and generally servants. I’m just going to pray for my siblings and I that God will help us to bear this irreparable loss. The loss of my daddy has always been our worst nightmare. And that is the worst heat of our lives. So, my prayer to my siblings and I is that God, the Holy Ghost, the comforter, will find a way to comfort us”, she said.

In a sermon during the service, Ven Dr Pius Chukwu, had urged the gathering to always trust and hope in God, explaining that He had never abandoned those He created. He stated that current challenges would always find solutions with their sublime trust and faithful service in God. He praised the children of late Ramsey Onyia for their steadfastness and services to God, urging them not to depart from the good works, reputation, name and courage that stood him out while he lived.

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON MAJOR METERS MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN NIGERIA.

Unistar Hi-Tech Systems: Bolarinwa's Long Road in Nigeria's Metering Industry

As Nigeria steps up efforts to bridge its electricity metering deficit, indigenous manufacturers such as Unistar Hi-Tech Systems Limited are playing an increasingly important role. Its Vice Chairman, Benjamin A. Bolarinwa FCA, LL.B, has been part of the company's journey and the wider push for a stronger local metering industry.

Established in 2003, Unistar was created to address Nigeria's need for dependable electricity meters and reduce reliance on imported products. The company has since grown from a relatively small operation into a manufacturer with more than two million meters installed across Nigeria. It says its Lagos manufacturing facility has an annual production capacity of more than 1.2 million meters and employs more than 200 people.

Bolarinwa's involvement with the company dates back at least to the period when Nigeria's electricity distribution companies were being urged to support local meter manufacturers following the power-sector privatisation.

In January 2016, Bolarinwa, then identified as Vice Chairman of Unistar, attended a meeting between local meter manufacturers and the

then Minister of Power, Works and Housing, Babatunde Fashola. The meeting focused on accelerating meter deployment, supporting local manufacturing and addressing the sector's estimated-billing problem.

His comments at the time offered an insight into one of the enduring difficulties confronting indigenous manufacturers. In 2015, Bolarinwa told the News Agency of Nigeria that poor patronage from electricity distribution companies had forced Unistar to reduce its workforce and halt further production because hundreds of thousands of completed meters remained in storage.

The challenge highlighted a contradiction that has persisted in Nigeria's electricity market: while millions of consumers need meters, local manufacturers have at various times struggled with demand, financing and the willingness of distribution companies to purchase locally produced equipment.

Bolarinwa brought to that conversation a background rooted in finance and business management. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria lists him as a Fellow of the Institute, with the professional designation FCA. Its membership records identify him as Benjamin Atilade Bolarinwa and

show qualifications including HND and LL.B, alongside ANIM and FCTI credentials.

His legal education also adds another dimension to his role in a highly regulated industry. A National Open University graduation record shows Bolarinwa completed an LL.B degree, graduating with Second Class Lower Division.

Under its current leadership structure, Unistar lists Bolarinwa as Vice Chairman, alongside Dr. D.W. Atsu as Chairman and Dr. Babafemi Oluwaseun Obasanjo and Barr. Oba Olubiyi Obasanjo as Executive Directors.

The company has also expanded its technological base. Its current manufacturing operation includes automated production, assembly, testing, calibration and quality-control processes. Unistar says every meter undergoes functional testing and calibration verification before leaving the factory. Its technology development efforts include smart metering, communication modules and anti-tampering features.

For Bolarinwa, the evolution of Unistar mirrors the wider evolution of Nigeria's electricity market. The company has moved from simply supplying prepaid meters to



Mr. Benjamin Bolarinwa, FCA, LLB
Vice Chairman,
Unistar Hi-Tech System limited.



Prince Kalu Ikpemini
Founder/CEO,
Kayz Consortium Limited.



Engr. Luke Anyaehie
Managing Director,
Holley Metering Limited.



Joseph Tegbe
Minister for Power.

positioning itself within a more sophisticated metering ecosystem involving smart technology, local manufacturing, regulatory compliance and technical support.

As Nigeria pushes to meter millions of unmetered electricity customers, the experience accumulated by indigenous manufacturers such as Unistar — and executives such as

Bolarinwa who have witnessed the sector's difficulties first-hand — could prove increasingly important.

The challenge now is not merely producing meters, but ensuring that Nigerian-made metering technology remains commercially viable, technologically relevant and capable of supporting a more transparent electricity market.



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Delivering Accurate Metering ... Powering the Future

Beyond the meter: Kalu Ikpemini's quest to close Nigeria's power gap



Prince Kalu Ikpemini
Founder/CEO,
Kayz Consortium Limited.

As Nigeria struggles to close its persistent electricity metering gap, indigenous manufacturers are seeking to turn the challenge into an opportunity for local industrial development. Among them is Kayz Consortium Limited, led by Prince Kalu Ikpemini, whose push for deeper local production reflects both the promise and challenges of building a home-grown metering industry.

For Prince Kalu Ikpemini, the electricity meter is more than a device hanging on a wall. It is a measure of trust between electricity providers and consumers, a tool for revenue assurance and one of the building blocks of a functional power sector.

That conviction has shaped the journey of Kayz Consortium Limited, the power equipment company he founded and leads as President/Managing Director, and driven its ambition to build a local manufacturing ecosystem around electricity metering.

His motivation, he says, began with a simple observation: millions of Nigerian homes, businesses and industrial clusters were paying for electricity without a reliable way of measuring what they consumed.

"Our interest and passion stem from a determination to eliminate energy poverty in Nigeria and across the African continent. Seeing millions of households and industrial clusters, particularly commercial hubs, struggle with estimated billing and inadequate power infrastructure drove us into the metering and power sub-sector," Ikpemini told The Guardian.

The scale of the problem remains considerable. The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) reported that Nigeria ended 2025 with 12.16 million active electricity customers, of whom 6.97 million had meters. About 5.19 million customers were therefore still without meters and exposed to estimated billing.

Although the national metering rate improved from 46.57 per cent in 2024 to 57.27 per cent in December 2025, the figures underline the size of the gap that remains.

It is this gap that has sustained Kayz Consortium's relevance in an industry where policy, financing, foreign exchange and local manufacturing capacity often determine how quickly the problem can be addressed.

But Ikpemini's story is not simply about making

meters. It is also about the difficulty of building an indigenous manufacturing company in a sector still heavily dependent on government policy and foreign technology.

A business born from a national problem

Kayz Consortium was established in 2002, with interests extending beyond electricity meters to water meters, natural gas and aquaculture, according to documents relating to an investment transaction involving the company.

Its emergence as a significant player in electricity metering became more closely associated with Nigeria's power sector reforms after 2013 and 2014.

The unbundling of the electricity industry created opportunities for private companies to participate in areas previously dominated by government. For Ikpemini, the enormous shortage of electricity meters offered an opportunity to combine business with industrial development.

"At the onset of the unbundling of the power sector in 2014, some of us decided to venture into the metering sub-sector, taking advantage of the massive metering gap that existed in Nigeria and other African countries," he said.

"At the time, the government promised to encourage local manufacturers. For us, this also provided an opportunity to create employment for our numerous unemployed youths."

Kayz subsequently became part of the country's growing metering ecosystem. NERC's records list the company as a Meter Asset Provider (MAP), while its manufacturing and assembling facility has received inspection certification from the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA).

The company is also listed by NEMSA among meter manufacturing and assembling facilities and holds a permanent manufacturer code under the Standard Transfer Specification (STS) system used in prepaid electricity metering.

Kayz has also participated in efforts to accelerate metering in the Aba Ring-Fenced Area, where Aba Power has been rolling out prepaid meters.

In 2025, the company was identified as one of the firms working with Aba Power on its mass metering programme. It was expected to assemble 90,000 meters between April and December, with a 130-man workforce and eight expatriate technical personnel supporting the operation and transferring knowledge to Nigerian workers.

The Aba project reflects the direction of Kayz's business beyond equipment production: local assembly, technical training, installation and participation in a wider electricity ecosystem.

Building capacity beyond assembly

For Ikpemini, local content is not simply about putting imported components together in Nigeria. His ambition is to progressively increase the proportion of each meter that can be produced locally.

The company has invested in human capital by sending engineers to China and Singapore for intensive training in metering, software and information and communications technology. The engineers spent nine months with foreign partners before returning to train Nigerian technicians.

That strategy is being extended to the company's industrial base in Abia State.

According to Ikpemini, Kayz has completed the Kayz Industrial Park at Ugwuawwu, Elu Ohafia, in Abia State. An injection-moulding facility is being installed there to produce plastic components used in meters, including meter boxes, while a surface-mount technology (SMT) facility is being produced in China.

He expects the SMT facility to begin production in

the first quarter of 2027 and projects that it could reduce the company's foreign exchange requirements by about 85 per cent.

The move is particularly significant for a Nigerian manufacturer operating in an environment where foreign exchange volatility has increased the cost of imported components.

It also reflects Ikpemini's long-standing argument that importing complete meters may address immediate shortages but does little to build the industrial capacity required to sustain the sector.

In 2021, when The Guardian visited Kayz's factory and warehouse in Abuja, more than 26,000 meters were reportedly in stock. Ikpemini said then that the factory could produce as many as 15,000 meters daily, but weak domestic patronage had pushed the company to consider exports to other African markets.

The episode captures one of the contradictions of Nigeria's metering problem: the country needs millions of meters, while indigenous manufacturers can struggle to secure predictable orders and payment.

The policy problem

For Ikpemini, the problem is not simply a lack of demand, but the structure through which demand is converted into actual orders.

He recalls the Presidential Metering Initiative contracts awarded in 2022 after an assessment, bidding and procurement process. According to him, Kayz and other local manufacturers made financial commitments, sourced funds and entered into arrangements with overseas suppliers before the contracts were cancelled.

"For local manufacturers like us, who had made investments through local and foreign financial institutions and entered into commitments with foreign manufacturers of meter components," the reversal created significant problems, he said.

The experience, in his view, exposed a weakness that continues to worry manufacturers: policy uncertainty.

The company also argues that local manufacturers have not received the level of government-backed patronage envisaged when the power sector was unbundled.

"Kayz Consortium has never benefited from any government-funded meter supply contracts in Nigeria," Ikpemini said, stressing that the company was not asking for preferential treatment but equal opportunity to compete.

His concerns echo remarks he made in an earlier interview with The Guardian, when he criticised inconsistent policies and called for financing arrangements that would allow manufacturers to invest without being crippled by high borrowing costs.

The issue remains important because metering is not merely an equipment problem. Accurate customer enumeration and metering are central to energy accounting, revenue recovery and the commercial performance of distribution companies.

For manufacturers, however, the challenge is ensuring that regulatory programmes translate into predictable demand.

Looking beyond Nigeria

One of the defining aspects of Ikpemini's business strategy has been his interest in the wider African market.

In 2021, he told The Guardian that Kayz had exported meters to Rwanda and Uganda and was exploring the Ghanaian market. The company had supplied about 5,000 meters to Rwanda and more than 2,500 to Uganda at the time.

The exports were partly a response to weak domestic patronage and the need to keep production capacity active.

The experience also brought the company into conflict with government authorities. In his latest interview, Ikpemini recalled that Kayz's attempt to export meters in 2022 was stopped by officials because Nigeria itself was experiencing a shortage.

He considers the position contradictory, particularly because Nigeria is a signatory to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). His argument is that Nigerian manufacturers should

be allowed to build scale by serving both domestic and regional markets.

That ambition is now being matched by international partnership.

Chinese power equipment firm Dayu Electric Technology disclosed a transaction involving a 40 per cent interest in Kayz in 2025. The transaction documents described Kayz as a Nigerian company established in 2002 and focused principally on electricity meter production and sales, alongside other businesses.

The partnership potentially provides Kayz with access to technology, equipment and international manufacturing networks, while giving its Chinese partner a foothold in Nigeria's electricity metering market.

For Kayz, it marks another phase in its evolution—from an indigenous assembler seeking patronage to a Nigerian manufacturing company seeking to connect local production with global technology and capital.

The man behind the business

Ikpemini's career extends beyond the boardroom. He is also the President-General of the Ohafia Improvement Union, the socio-cultural organisation representing the 26 communities of the Ohafia clan in Abia State.

Under his leadership, the organisation has pursued interventions in education, infrastructure and community development. In 2026, for instance, it pursued the establishment of computer-based testing centres for students in Ohafia and engaged government authorities over infrastructure and community issues.

His community involvement has also earned him several recognitions, including a Special Recognition Award from the Nigeria Festival of Awards in 2021, the Distinguished Son of Ohafia Award in 2022, an Excellence Award for Most Industrious from the National Youth Service Corps in 2023, and recognitions from the Rotary Club of Umuahia and the Ohafia Improvement Union in 2024.

He was also recognised as a Distinguished Agripreneur by Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, in 2025.

But the thread running through Ikpemini's business philosophy is not awards or titles. It is manufacturing.

His argument is that Nigeria cannot sustainably close its infrastructure deficits by relying indefinitely on finished imports. The country needs companies that can assemble, manufacture, train workers, develop technology and compete beyond its borders.

That philosophy is now being tested by Kayz's next phase: deeper local production, the industrial park in Abia, technology partnerships and its growing involvement in the Aba metering programme.

A bet on local capacity

Nigeria's metering challenge remains substantial despite years of government programmes and private investment. More than five million active customers were still unmetered at the end of 2025.

Kayz Consortium is therefore operating in a market where demand is not in doubt. The harder questions are whether manufacturers can secure predictable orders, access affordable finance, manage foreign exchange exposure and compete on equal terms with imported products.

Ikpemini's answer is to push Kayz further into local production.

"Ending estimated billing is essential to restoring public trust and guaranteeing financial liquidity in Nigeria's electricity supply industry," he said.

For Kayz, the objective is therefore bigger than selling meters. It is to build a manufacturing chain around the meter—from components and software to skilled workers, installation and regional exports.

Whether that ambition can be matched by consistent public policy and sustained demand will determine how far the company goes.

For now, Ikpemini is betting that closing Nigeria's metering gap requires more than importing meters. It requires building the capacity to make them at home.



Kayz 3008 Three-Phase Smart Prepayment
Meter with CIU



HOLLEY

Metering Nigeria and Africa

Driving Nigeria's Metering Future Through Technology and Local Manufacturing

Nigeria's Metering Future Lies in Local Manufacturing – Engr. Luke Anyaehie, MD/Group COO

Engr. Luke Anyaehie is the Managing Director of Holley Metering Limited (Holley Nigeria), a flagship subsidiary of Celdon Group, a Nigerian metering company established in 2016 and now a significant player in the electricity metering industry.

Holley Nigeria has expanded from meter deployment into **local manufacturing and assembly of electricity meters**, as well as the **production of meter boxes**. The company holds approvals as a **Local Meter Manufacturer and Assembler (LMMA)** and **Meter Asset Provider (MAP)**, supporting its growing role in Nigeria's electricity metering value chain.

Holley has also developed a **NEMSA-certified metering manufacturing and assembly facility in Abuja**, with its facility at Plot 609, Idu Industrial Layout, Abuja, duly inspected and certified by NEMSA. The company's **Single-Phase and Three-Phase meters** have also undergone the relevant certification processes, reinforcing its commitment to quality, compliance and local production.

Holley Nigeria is committed to local content, technical capacity development, job creation and reducing dependence on imported finished meters, while advocating greater opportunities for Nigerian manufacturers in large-scale metering programmes.



BUILDING MORE THAN METERS

At Holley Nigeria, we believe that closing the Nigeria's metering gap should catalyze support to build local industrial capacity, establishing the sub-sector as export hub to serve Sub-Saharan Africa market.

Our commitment goes beyond production and supply of meters. We have invested hugely in Local Content via backward integration, Job Creation, Skills Development, Technology Transfer and Quality Sustainability and have established Metering Technology Training Institute (MTTI) under relevant approval by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

OUR CAPABILITIES

- LOCAL MANUFACTURING & ASSEMBLY
- METER ASSETS PROVIDER (MAP)
- TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Local Manufacturing | Metering Solutions | Smart Metering | Technical Support

For more Info: Plot 609 Idu Industrial Area, Abuja | holley@celdongroup.com | www.celdongroup.com | 0708-649-8850

Holley Metering Limited: Building local capacity to close Nigeria's metering gap

Nigeria's persistent electricity metering gap has created both a challenge for the power sector and an opportunity for local manufacturers. As the country pushes to improve revenue collection, reduce estimated billing and strengthen the distribution network, companies such as Holley Metering Limited are betting on local manufacturing, technology and skilled manpower to help bridge the gap.

For Engr. Luke Anyaehie, the electricity meter is more than a device that measures consumption. It is a critical link between electricity supply, revenue collection and consumer confidence.

That belief has shaped the work of Holley Metering Limited, which has grown from a metering services company established in 2016 into a local manufacturer and assembler seeking to play a bigger role in Nigeria's effort to close its persistent electricity metering gap.

The challenge remains substantial. The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) reported that 6.66 million of the 12.03 million active registered electricity customers were metered as of September 2025, leaving approximately 5.36 million customers without meters, which represents a significant portion of consumers still relying on estimated billing. The commission also recorded 228,614 meter installations in the third quarter of 2025, with the Meter Asset Provider (MAP) framework accounting for more than three-quarters of the installations.

It is within this market that Anyaehie, Managing Director of Holley Metering, is positioning the company around local manufacturing, technology and technical capacity.

"Accurate and reliable metering is fundamental to revenue assurance, transparency and customer confidence," Anyaehie told The Guardian.

The company's strategy has evolved beyond simply deploying imported meters. Anyaehie said Holley has secured approval from NERC as a Local Meter Manufacturer and Assembler (LMM), alongside its Meter Asset Provider licence.

Its manufacturing and assembling facility at Idu Industrial Area, Abuja, is listed by the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA) as an approved facility. NEMSA says the facility was inspected and found to have met applicable technical standards, specifications and safety requirements. Holley is also listed among the manufacturers recognised by NERC in its 2024 annual report.

For Anyaehie, these regulatory approvals are not merely compliance requirements but building blocks for a domestic metering industry capable of supporting the wider electricity market.

"Our strategy is built on four pillars: technology, local manufacturing, human capital and quality assurance," he said.

The company said its single-phase and three-phase meters have obtained NEMSA Type Test Certifications, while its operations cover manufacturing, assembly, testing, installation and maintenance. The emphasis on local capacity is significant because Nigeria's metering challenge has historically been accompanied by heavy dependence on imported equipment, exposing operators to foreign exchange pressures, shipping costs and other external risks.

Anyaehie said Holley's objective is to reduce reliance on imported finished meters by expanding local manufacturing and

developing the skills required to support the entire value chain.

"At Holley, we are deliberately building local capacity to reduce dependence on imported finished meters," he said, adding that the company is investing in skilled personnel, technical training and technology-driven processes.

The company's footprint also extends beyond manufacturing. Under the MAP framework, Holley has worked with several electricity distribution companies, including Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC), Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHEDC), Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC), Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC), Kaduna Electricity Distribution Company (KAEDCO) and Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC), according to the company.

Its participation in the MAP programme dates back several years. In 2019, NERC named Holley among the MAPs appointed by PHEDC to provide meters within its franchise area. The commission also listed Holley among companies granted "No Objection" to participate in meter procurement processes in 2018.

The company remains visible in DisCo metering programmes. AEDC currently lists Holley among its approved MAP vendors, while IBEDC has also published Holley meter prices among its MAP offerings.

Beyond hardware, Holley has also developed a digital dimension to its metering operations. Its MeterToken application, described on Google Play as a subsidiary of Holley Metering, is designed for the purchase and management of electricity units in Nigeria. The application was updated in June 2026.

Yet, Anyaehie believes local manufacturers still face obstacles that could slow the expansion of domestic capacity.

He pointed to procurement requirements in some World Bank-supported metering programmes, particularly turnover thresholds that he said could make it difficult for qualified Nigerian LMMs to compete with larger foreign companies.

His argument is not against foreign participation, he said, but for procurement structures that give qualified Nigerian manufacturers meaningful access to major projects through appropriate turnover requirements, local-content provisions, consortium arrangements or phased contracts.

The concern reflects a broader question facing Nigeria's power sector: whether efforts to close the metering gap can simultaneously build an industrial base capable of producing the equipment locally.

For Holley, the answer lies in connecting both objectives. Anyaehie said the company's ambition is to deliver internationally competitive meters while creating jobs, transferring technical knowledge and retaining more economic value within Nigeria.

"Nigeria has the capacity to solve its metering challenge locally, and Holley Metering Limited is committed to being part of that solution," he said.

As the country pushes to reduce estimated billing, improve revenue assurance and strengthen the financial sustainability of electricity distribution, companies such as Holley are seeking to make metering not just a service business, but part of Nigeria's wider industrial and energy-sector development.

Group Backs Atiku On Subsidy Reversal, NElfund Cancellation

From Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta

THE Atiku Nioo Campaign Organisation has backed former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar's call for the reversal of fuel subsidy and cancellation of the Nigeria Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), arguing that the subsidy removal and the introduction of student loans compounded the current hunger and hardship facing Nigerians.

The organisation also described the sudden removal of fuel subsidy shortly after the current administration assumed office in 2023 as a "sudden death" for Nigerians, arguing that the policy has contributed to the continued rise in the prices of food

items and other essential products.

It criticized President Bola Tinubu-led administration over its Renewed Hope policies, arguing that the hardship faced by Nigerians has worsened under the current government, particularly in the areas of security, electricity, the economy, infrastructure, and other critical sectors.

The Founder of the organization, Prince Muiwa Fafowora, speaking in Abeokuta, Ogun State, stated that following the removal of the subsidy, the prices of goods and services, as well as the cost of living, have skyrocketed, pushing the country to the brink of hyperinflation.

Fafowora noted that Abubakar was speaking for millions of Nigerians when he called for the return of fuel subsidy, noting that its reversal would not return citizens to the long queues at petrol stations, reduce the minimum wage as speculated, or plunge Nigeria's economy into collapse.

He said the reversal could be implemented without any negative impact on Nigerians, due to the revival of some local refineries and the establishment of the Dangote Refinery, expressing regret that Nigeria continues to import fuel despite the removal of subsidy and still grapples with unstable petrol pump prices.

Obanikoro Urges APC Members To Remain Lawful, Faithful As Campaigns Begin

By Gbenga Salau

THE Director-General of the APC Campaign Council in Lagos State, Senator Musiliu Obanikoro has urged party members and supporters to remain faithful, disciplined and law-abiding as they canvass for votes ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Obanikoro made the call while speaking with party faithful in marking the commencement of electioneering activities.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (IN-EC) had designated September 9, 2026, as the official commencement of campaign activities for the 2027 general elections.

Ogun Attorney General Condemns Human Trafficking

By Chris Irekamba

OGUN State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr. Oluwasina Ogungbade, has condemned human trafficking, describing it, as a crime against humanity.

He said this during a three-day capacity-building workshop to enhance the state's investigation, prosecution and handling of trafficking cases.

Declaring open the training organised by the Schools Anti-Trafficking Education Advocacy Project (STEAP), in partnership with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and

the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and convened by stakeholders across security, welfare, legal, civil society and the media sectors, Ogungbade, emphasised the necessity of thorough investigation to secure justice, and lauded the initiative's timeliness.

The Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice was represented by the Solicitor General and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Mr. Olusegun Olaotan at the event, held at the Ministry of Justice Conference Room, Oke-Mosan, Abeokuta.

Sokoto Govt Enjoins Stakeholders To Remain Resilient As Academic Session Begins

From Tunde Omolehin, Sokoto

SOKOTO State Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Professor Ahmad Ladan Ala, has called on principals and other education stakeholders across the state to remain resilient, committed and dedicated to their responsibilities as the state prepares for the commencement of the 2026/2027 academic session.

Ala made the call during a meeting with school principals in the state ahead of the new academic session. The commissioner urged principals to intensify monitoring and evaluation in their respective schools, stressing the need for them to lead by example and demonstrate the level of dedication expected from their subordinates.

He commended the principals for their support and contributions to the development of education in the state, assuring them of the continued commitment of the Sokoto State government in improving the education sector.

According to him, the principals have contributed significantly to the achievements recorded by the administration of Governor Ahmad Aliyu, particularly in the area of education.

Ala expressed optimism that Sokoto State would soon rank among the top five states in Nigeria in terms of educational performance, noting that the government would continue to provide the necessary support and resources to achieve this objective.

Winners Of Mike Okonkwo Essay Competition Get Prizes

By Iyabo Lawal

THE three winners of this year's Bishop Mike Okonkwo National Essay Competition for Secondary Schools in Nigeria have been rewarded with cash prizes, plaques and trophies.

The prizes were presented to Clinton Chimenem Agburum of Deeper Life High School, Port Harcourt, who came first; Mosorireoluwa Alimi-Adeiga from Holyland Senior College, Ipaja, who was first runner-up, and Oloruntimilehin Elijah Oladipo from Isolo Comprehensive Senior High School, who emerged second runner up. The awards were presented at the 25th Mike Okonkwo lecture in Lagos.

Agburum, who scored 72 per cent in the first round and 85 per cent in the second round, averaging 79 per cent, got N800,000 cash prize, a laptop, plaque and trophy. Alimi-Adeiga, with 75 per cent in the first and second rounds and an average of 75 per cent went home with N500,000, a laptop and plaque, while Oladipo, with 70 per cent in the first and second rounds, and an average of 70 per cent got N400,000, a plaque and tablet.

Officials of the three secondary schools got computer sets for the outstanding performance of their students.

African Beverage Brands Pivot To Culture, Global Scale

By Sulaimon Salau

AFRICAN beverage leaders, investors, and creatives converged in Nairobi recently for The New Pour Summit '26, themed "Liquid Resilience: Future-Proofing Beverage Brands in Africa's VUCA Markets."

Broadcast across five African markets, the summit delivered a clear message: the future of beverages belongs to brands built with the African consumer at the centre.

Convened by Tosin Balogun, Co-Founder of Drinkabl Africa, the summit mapped the journey of African beverage brands from idea to scale.

"The New Pour Summit is designed to bring together the thinkers, doers, and investors shaping the future of African beverages. We are moving from ideas to execution, building brands that start in Africa and scale globally. Investment follows clarity, and our goal is to bring absolute clarity to the African beverage ecosystem," he said.

A major highlight was the unveiling of The New Pour Report 2026, the inaugural industry intelligence report built on ten trends and 15+ data sources. The report shows capital shifting toward Southern and Sub-Saharan Africa, driven by demographics, urbanization, and connectivity.

MTN Deepens CSR Commitments With Over N34b Social Investment

By Sulaimon Salau

MTN Nigeria Foundation has revealed that over N34 billion has been spent on social investment executing over 54 unique projects, reaching over 33million people, 3500 communities, 590 and local councils.

The Executive Secretary of the foundation, Mrs. Odunayo Sanya, revealed this at the closing ceremony of the 2026 MTN-SAIL teachers fellowship programme for 5000 teachers. She added that over N207 million has been invested on the MTN-SAIL teachers fellowship from 2024 to date, with 8704 teachers impacted.

According to her, the fellowship is executed in two phases and teachers from 36 states and Abuja have been impacted.

She further said that the foundation focus on capacity building, health and empowerment which are streamlined into two operational portfolios of national priority and youth empowerment.

The Chairman, MTN Nigeria Foundation, Dr. Mosun Belo-Olusoga, represented by Mr. Simon Aranonu, a director of the foundation, noted that the future of the nation is present in the classrooms long before it is reflected in its boardrooms, laboratories.

FG Implores Danish Investors To Explore Opportunities In Nigeria's Marine, Blue Economy

By Sulaimon Salau

The Federal Government has called on Danish investors and businesses to take advantage of the vast investment opportunities in Nigeria's marine and blue economy, assuring them of attractive incentives, strong returns and a friendly business environment.

The Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola, made the call in Copenhagen, Denmark during a bilateral meeting with Denmark's Minister for Business and Competitiveness, Martin Lidegaard, as Nigeria stepped up efforts to attract Danish investment, technology and expertise into the country's maritime sector.

The meeting was part of the activities of Nigeria's delegation to Denmark on

Maritime and the Blue Economy, led by Oyetola, with discussions focused on investment, maritime infrastructure, technology, green transition, port efficiency, skills development and sustainable economic growth.

The minister and his delegation also held discussions with other senior representatives of the Danish government and players within Danish maritime sector.

The minister said Nigeria had moved beyond establishing the institutional framework for the Marine and Blue Economy and now entering a phase focused on project development, investment mobilisation, improved sector performance and capacity building.

"Nigeria is looking for partnerships that can improve sector performance, attract investment, deploy technolo-

gy, strengthen skills and safety, advance sustainability and create quality jobs," Oyetola said.

He emphasised that Nigeria's marine and blue economy was open for investment, pointing to opportunities across ports and logistics, shipbuilding and repair, maritime services, digital technology, fisheries, green shipping, renewable energy, marine infrastructure, financing and multimodal connectivity.

According to him, Nigeria's extensive coastline, inland waterways, large consumer market and strategic location within West and Central Africa provide investors with access to a wide range of opportunities across the maritime value chain, with significant potential for long-term commercial returns.

He noted that the presence

of Danish-origin companies in Nigeria's maritime sector demonstrates the viability of the market and provides a solid platform for expanding commercial relations between both countries.

The minister urged Danish businesses to look beyond existing investments and explore emerging opportunities in Nigeria's maritime value chain, stressing that the country needs strategic partners capable of bringing capital, technology, expertise and innovation into the sector.

Lidegaard welcomed the prospect of closer engagement with Nigeria's Marine and Blue Economy agenda and stressed the importance of practical partnerships involving businesses, government institutions, technology providers and knowledge institutions.



Obi of Onitsha, His Majesty, Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe (left); MD/CEO, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, Mrs. Olubunmi Kuku; MD/CEO, Bank of Industry, Dr. Olasupo Olusi; Immediate Past President, African Development Bank, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina and the Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi at the DTN @ 100 Times Heroes Awards in Abuja, where Olusi received the National Development Award.

NERC Urges DisCos To Scale Up Network Upgrades

By Sulaimon Salau

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) has issued a revised Order on the utilisation of earned Non-Administrative Operating Expenditure (Non-Admin OpEx) by successor electricity Distribution Companies (DisCos).

The order, which takes effect from September 4, 2026, is aimed at accelerating network upgrades, improving

service reliability and ensuring that available revenues are invested in critical infrastructure projects.

It follows a regulatory review of DisCos' revenue utilisation for the 2025 market cycle.

Under the revised Order, DisCos are required to establish and maintain dedicated Capital Expenditure (CapEx) Provision Accounts to fund approved network improve-

ment projects.

A portion of earned Non-Admin OpEx will be earmarked for network rehabilitation, reinforcement and expansion, based on each DisCo's debt profile.

NERC said debt-free DisCos would be required to remit 50 per cent of earned Non-Admin OpEx to their CapEx accounts from August 2026, increasing to 60 per cent from February 2027.

The Commission also directed that all projects funded through the CapEx Provision Account must receive NERC approval and be reported quarterly.

For DisCos owing the Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading Plc (NBET) and the market operator, the order requires them to complete debt reconciliation and submit Commission-approved repayment plans within 180 days.

NACCIMA Strengthens Trade Relationship With Moscow To Buoy Nigeria's \$1tr Economy Target

By Sulaimon Salau

In a strategic bid to boost Nigeria's non-oil export earnings and accelerate the nation's trajectory toward a \$1 trillion economy, the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (NACCIMA) has deepened trade and economic collaboration with the Moscow Export Center (MEC).

The bilateral engagement, aimed at creating structured

business-to-business (B2B) links, digital trade integration, and export-driven growth, coincides with preparations for the upcoming Russia-Africa Summit scheduled for October 28-29 in Moscow.

Highlighting the scale of Moscow's commercial leverage, the Chief Executive Officer of the Moscow Export Center, Stepanov Vitaly, who led the delegation to Nigeria, emphasised that the Russian capital serves as the principal

gateway for bilateral trade, accounting for half of all Russian exports to Nigeria.

He said: "Speaking of numbers, we account for 25 per cent of Russia's non-energy exports. And if we were to talk about export of services, we account for more than 40 per cent of overall Russia's export of services, including IT services. We also have a major role in terms of trade and economic relations with Nigeria, because 50 per cent of overall Russia's export to

Nigeria comes from Moscow-based business.

"We are very keen on establishing new economic ties with Nigerian business partners and organizations," he said.

Vitaly explained that MEC, a regional government agency established in 2017, facilitates foreign market access for Moscow-based exporters, providing state support, marketplace integration, and export grants to cushion high local borrowing costs.

Samsung Moves To Expand Market Share With New Offering

By Sulaimon Salau

SAMSUNG Electronics has launched Galaxy S26 FE, the newest addition to the Galaxy S26 family and the first in the lineup to launch with One UI 9 — bringing the latest premium Galaxy experiences to more users and a form of strong competitor to Apple's iPhone lineup. Speaking at a media conference held in its office in Lagos, the company said the event was organised to create greater awareness around the Fan Edition (FE) range and its role in expanding access to the S-series experience.

The Head, Product Marketing, MX Division Omolade Agbadaola, stated that the FE series had been designed to introduce consumers to the S-family, particularly those who may not be able to purchase the higher-end Ultra models. "FE has been in existence since the S20 FE, which is about six variants ago. It has always been the product we look to introduce to consumers as a welcome badge into the S family," she said.

She further said that while Samsung's flagship S-series typically launches with three major variants, the standard model, Plus and Ultra, the FE serves as an alternative entry point into the flagship ecosystem.

Journalists Laud Customs Controller Gambo's Anti-smuggling Feats

By Sulaimon Salau

The outgoing Controller of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Federal Operations Unit (FOU), Zone 'A', Comptroller Gambo Aliyu, has received commendations from maritime journalists under the Network of Nigerian Maritime Journalists (NNMJ), for his outstanding leadership, professionalism and contributions to the fight against smuggling.

The journalists, who paid a farewell visit to Aliyu in Lagos, described him as a media-friendly Customs officer who distinguished himself through integrity, accessibility and intelligence-driven anti-smuggling operations.

Speaking during the event, Aliyu disclosed that the FOU Zone 'A' had generated and recovered more than N2 billion into the federation account in the last nine months.

He also revealed that the Unit intercepted more than 21,000 bags of smuggled rice, equivalent to approximately 35 truckloads, during the period under review, alongside illicit drugs and other prohibited items.

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Consumers As Shareholders: Inside Dangote Refinery's N2.15tr IPO

By Moyosore Salami

WITH the planned Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Dangote Petroleum Refinery, Nigerians who have, for years, depended on refined petroleum products are set to get an opportunity to own a stake in one of the country's biggest industrial assets.

President of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, who spoke on the forthcoming offer, said the IPO would enable Nigerians to move from being mere consumers of energy products to becoming owners of the refinery.

The proposed offer comprises 4.1 billion ordinary shares at N525 each and is expected to raise about N2.15 trillion if fully subscribed, with retail investors forming a major target of the offer.

The offer price means that an investor can subscribe for a minimum of 10 shares for N5,250, opening the opportunity to Nigerians who may not have previously considered investing in a large industrial company.

Dangote described the proposed listing as more than a financial transaction, saying it would give Nigerians an opportunity to participate in the value being created by the refinery and strengthen their connection with the country's industrial development.

"Every day, Nigerians use products that depend on refined petroleum. What makes this IPO unique is that it gives people the opportunity not only to consume but also to participate as owners in the industrial system that powers economic life," he said.

The offer comes as the refinery, which began operations in 2024, has grown into a major supplier of refined petroleum products in Nigeria while expanding its reach into other African markets. The company is also planning to increase its processing capacity to 1.4 million barrels per day by 2029.

For prospective investors, however, the attraction of owning part of the refinery goes beyond its size and strategic importance, as questions around valuation, profitability, crude supply, refining margins and expansion costs are likely

to determine the long-term value of the investment.

A stockbroker, Muktar Mohammed, said investors should look beyond the Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) business and consider the wider operations of Dangote as a global business, including its growing supply of diesel, aviation fuel and other petroleum products.

"I think you need to look at the business that they are into and now most of us are just looking at the PMS business but also you need to look at Dangote itself as a global business, looking at its sales across Africa and now it sells globally especially in aviation fuel and also diesel supply.

"Nigeria has not been importing any litre of diesel. Dangote refinery seems to be the one providing diesel for most of the major and independent market and so that tells you the kind of potential it has.

"So, investors should consider that and it's one of the largest single train refineries. Its ability to improve its capacity also to go to about 700,000 barrels per day, that also is exciting. So, when you look at all these, I think this shows that there's a lot of good value for the share."

Mohammed said investors should also pay attention to the difference between the price of the private offer and the IPO price, arguing that the movement from N419 to N525 would be relevant in assessing the potential value of the shares.

He said investors would also need to consider the refinery's earnings, cost of sales and whether the shares were being offered at a discount or premium compared with other companies in the petroleum sector.

"If you also look at that the private offer was actually done at N419 and the initial public offer at N525. That shows you that already as retail investors, they are already keen into something that has the potential to grow.

"When the refinery is listed, there's a lot of things to consider that will determine the performance of the share based on what we are hearing and based on the numbers we are hearing, if not even those numbers have not been officially confirmed.

"Most of the funds here will be used mostly for the expansion

of the Dangote refinery so investors will have to look at that. Again, you have to look at the sale side, how much it gains to sell and cost of sale.

"Investors will have to look at the earnings per share, what type of value, are we buying at a discount or not?"

Comparing the proposed Dangote Refinery shares with other petroleum companies listed on the Nigerian Exchange, Mohammed said investors should consider the market prices of companies such as Seplat, Aradel and TotalEnergies Nigeria against the scale of Dangote's operations.

"But for me, if you look at everything and you look at the current price of the major petroleum companies that are listed on the stock exchange, Dangote seems to be the cheapest and even if it's the biggest among them.

"If you look at Seplat, you look at Aradel, you look at what price, even you look at Total which only just represent the marketing and what price they are selling compared to what Dangote is doing, so all that are what investors should look at in terms of the numbers when buying that share.

"So for me, I think a lot will be determined by its capacity, the ability to have enough good oil. Once that is achieved, I think we will see this performance and I have no doubt that his return for investors will be good especially in the area because the cost of sales and the sales that they will be doing, like I said, they are supplying refined petroleum product, aviation fuel and other petroleum products not just in Nigeria, Africa and also global."

Mohammed said the IPO could also have an impact on the Nigerian capital market by attracting a new generation of retail investors.

"I think what we are going to be seeing now as we got this, like I said, this offer will most likely have new retail investors. They will definitely be the one dominating this IPO. So that for me is good.

"So that means we'll have a lot of Nigerians that will be participating in the stock market. If you look at the Tinubu economic blueprint, one sector that has benefited from these

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reforms is the equity market. So, it's good that we begin to see a lot of Nigerians coming.

"I think majorly we'll see a new orientation, a new knowledge on the stock exchange, especially to the younger generation of the Gen Z. The other generation, the millennials and others started getting into stock during the First Bank recapitalisation that attracted a lot of retail investors into the market.

"So, this also will attract new retail investors into the market and they will not just become just for the IPO, they will also begin to buy other stocks.

"So, it will increase the number of local participation in the equity market and that would also be a positive because already the locals are already controlling the market and with this refinery being listed and we have a lot of local participating in it and also a lot of locals that will continue to be in the market that will increase the participation of local investors."

More importantly, the size of the refinery and its recent financial performance have placed the company at the centre of discussions about whether the IPO represents good value for investors.

The refinery, which has a processing capacity of 700,000 barrels per day, recorded an after-tax profit of \$1.82 billion in the first half of 2026, a significant turnaround from the \$476 million loss recorded for the whole of 2025.

The company has also announced plans to invest \$14.3 billion to increase its processing capacity to 1.4 million barrels per day by 2029, with further investments planned in petrochemicals and other areas of the business.

While the expansion could increase the refinery's production and revenue-generating capacity, analysts say the figures alone may not be enough to determine whether the shares represent good value.

Financial analyst, Kingsley Ndimele, said the refinery's turnaround from a \$476 million loss in 2025 to a \$1.82 billion profit after tax in the first half of 2026 was significant, particularly for a new company coming into the capital market through an IPO.

According to him, the refinery generated \$13.9 billion in revenue during the period and retained about \$2.6 billion as earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA), despite its high operational costs.

He said the figures represented a significant turnaround and could make the refinery attractive to both existing and new investors.

"I don't think even existing companies in the capital market, if you can see an existing company that does that kind of turnaround, it's going to be a significant attraction for investors, for both existing and new investors, come to think of a new company that just comes into the market, even with an IPO," he said.

Ndimele who is also the Founding Partner, Kingsley Ndimele LLC, said the movement from loss to profit also gave investors tangible evidence of the refinery's earning power, but cautioned against relying solely on the recent performance because of the risks associated with the downstream oil and gas sector.

He said although the turnaround was impressive, investors needed to understand that refining margins in the downstream sector were relatively low compared with the upstream segment and could be affected by changes in the oil market.

"For every positive part of the financials, we should expect the other side. For anyone that wants to use that as a metric to invest in the IPO should just be careful," he said.

On the refinery's ability to generate sustainable earnings for shareholders, Ndimele said substantial and recurring earnings were expected of a public limited liability company, but the nature of the oil and gas business made future profitability dependent on several factors.

He noted that the refinery's plans to produce refined petroleum products, fertilisers and other by-products, while selling locally and internationally, would expose it to both wider market opportunities and foreign exchange risks.

According to him, the company had a high chance of recurring profits if demand remained strong, crude oil prices remained relatively stable and market conditions were favourable.

"Dangote actually has, due to their capacity, a high chance of recurring profits, like very big high chance," he said.

Ndimele, however, said no one could guarantee that profitability would continue if global developments affected crude oil or the wider oil and gas sector.

He said the structure being developed by Dangote appeared to place considerable attention on investors' profitability and capital appreciation, including the possibility of

making dividend payments a priority.

He added that the refinery's first-half performance, if sustained throughout a full year, could translate into a reasonable earnings per share for investors.

"If in six months they can generate as high as \$1.82 billion profit after tax, they should be able to generate a reasonable amount than that, times two, times three, if at all they run for a full year," he said.

With the IPO priced at N525 and the private placement at N485, Ndimele said investors could use the company's earnings and eventual earnings per share to assess the value of the shares.

He, however, stressed that investors must distinguish between the performance of the company and the reaction of the stock market after listing.

According to him, the primary market performance of the IPO could differ from what happens when the shares begin trading on the secondary market, where retail investors, investment banks and investment houses would determine demand and supply through their trading activities.

"Regardless of the company's performance, the market will still react to price," he said, advising short-term investors to be cautious while long-term investors could view a decline in the share price as an opportunity to acquire more units.

Ndimele said investors should therefore not assume that buying the IPO at N525 meant the shares would necessarily maintain that price once they entered the secondary market.

He said some investors could participate in the IPO while retaining funds to buy more shares after listing, depending on the market's reaction.

"One thing shareholders should know is that after the IPO, they will still come to secondary markets and by coming to secondary markets, that's where major players will also come in again," he said.

He identified foreign exchange as one of the major risks that could affect the company's earnings, given the exposure of the naira to the dollar and the refinery's participation in international trade.

"Foreign exchange, we all know how the naira is exposed to dollars and this company, according to Dangote, well, we all know that the naira we know today is volatile. So, I don't really know how it's going to play out, but exchange rates are a risk to them," he said.

Ndimele also identified refining margin as another major risk, explaining that the profitability of downstream companies depended largely on the spread between the cost of crude oil and the price at which refined products could be sold.

"Unlike the people upstream that have their own risk, the major risk for people downstream is just a risk of refining margin. So, their profitability can reduce if the spread is not available for them," he said.

He explained that even where the refinery increased the price of its products in response to higher crude costs, the increase might not necessarily translate into a corresponding improvement in profit margins.

According to him, a refinery could record high turnover from selling large volumes of products while still experiencing lower profitability if the margin between crude oil costs and refined product prices narrowed.

"So, it can really affect the profitability of the company, even though they are selling a lot of volume, the profit might still be low," he said.

Competition and supply risks, he added, are other factors investors would need to monitor as more private refineries emerge in Nigeria.

Ndimele noted that other major investors were also developing refinery projects, including BUA, while other players were emerging in the sector.

"Competition will come, which might in the long run reduce their supply rates. So, it's another risk that a long-time investor should pay attention to," he said.

On the potential benefits of the expansion, Ndimele said moving from 700,000 barrels per day to 1.4 million barrels per day could significantly increase the refinery's revenue-generating capacity and long-term cash flow.

According to him, the expansion would require the company to retain significant capital, which could affect the amount available for distribution to shareholders as dividends.

"By then retaining capital, they might not really give much profits for sharing. They might not put more profit on the sharing table for either shareholders or even the stakeholders. They might want to be retaining capital for expansion, which is another thing that investors need to pay attention to," he said.

He, however, cautioned investors against assuming that

doubling production capacity would automatically double profits.

"It is important to also know that if they double the capacity, it does not mean they will double the profit," he said.

Ndimele explained that higher capacity would also bring higher operational and management costs, meaning that the additional revenue generated would have to be weighed against the expenses required to operate the expanded facility.

"As they are earning \$1.8 billion or \$2 billion, it doesn't mean they will be earning \$3.6 billion in profit. Operational cost will increase, management cost will increase, a lot of things will increase," he said.

He said the refinery could, however, achieve substantially higher profitability if its refining margins remained favourable and the expanded capacity translated into increased sales at profitable prices.

According to him, asset utilisation would also be important, as investors would need to know how effectively the refinery could use its machinery and other assets to generate returns.

"You just need to have an extensive balance sheet of the company to have a better say on this," he said.

Ndimele also cautioned that the planned expansion would take time and that the investment horizon of Nigerian investors should be considered when assessing the IPO.

He noted that many Nigerian investors regarded six months or one year as a long-term investment, whereas in the capital market, a much longer period would ordinarily be required to assess the full benefits of a major industrial expansion.

"But if we have people that can actually leave the money for a long time till when the execution of 1.4 million barrels will be done, then it is a good one," he said.

Ndimele added that the IPO could still provide an attractive opportunity, but investors needed to approach it with a long-term outlook rather than expecting quick gains from the listing.

"The IPO is not bad, but anyone willing to buy the IPO should have a little more money to buy more units if, per adventure, the market drops down below N525, so they can mark up more units and position themselves for the long term," he said.

Oil and gas expert, Prof. Wumi Iledare, said the IPO was both a matter of national economic importance and an investment proposition, but warned that the two should be assessed separately.

"With 4.1 billion shares offered at N525 each and expected to raise about N2.15 trillion, the offering would give Nigerians direct access to one of the country's most strategic industrial assets.

"Nationally, the refinery could strengthen domestic fuel supply, reduce dependence on imported refined products, conserve foreign exchange, create jobs, generate tax revenue, support exports and improve energy security. These benefits could accrue to Nigeria even if the shares do not deliver exceptional investor returns.

"For shareholders, however, the central issue is valuation. Investors must assess what they are paying, how much earnings and free cash flow the business can sustainably generate, and whether expected returns compensate for the risks.

"A strategically important, world-class asset can still be overpriced if its valuation assumes unusually high earnings will persist.

"Recent profitability should therefore be treated cautiously. Refining margins are cyclical and influenced by crude and product prices, regional supply conditions and global market disruptions.

"Investors should distinguish between reported profits and cash generated after operating costs, taxes, working capital and capital expenditure."

For the oil and gas sector, the refinery's ability to secure crude at competitive prices will remain another major factor in determining how much value it can create for shareholders.

Although the refinery has increasingly supplied Nigeria's domestic market and is positioned to serve other markets, a portion of its crude supply is imported. Industry concerns around crude availability, pricing and logistics could therefore affect production costs and refining margins.

An oil and gas expert, Andy Ohiomoba, said the prospects remained strong, given the refinery's scale and its potential to serve both Nigeria and the wider African market.

"The prospects are strong. Dangote Refinery is already a major operating asset with the capacity to serve Nigeria and export to other markets."

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Battle Against Fall Armyworm:

Sentinel-X Validation Trials Progress Ahead Of Planned National Rollout

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

AS Nigeria continues to confront the challenge of improving domestic food production, efforts to evaluate new technologies for managing Fall Armyworm—a destructive pest that has become a major threat to maize cultivation across Africa—have reached another milestone with the ongoing validation of the Sentinel-X agricultural technology.

According to Prexea Technologies Limited, the company's leading field deployments in partnership with technical collaborators, pilot trials are nearing completion across Nigeria's six agro-ecological zones, with a national rollout expected after the conclusion of the validation process.

A Persistent Threat to Maize Production

SINCE its first detection in Africa in 2016, Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) has spread rapidly across the continent, attacking maize and more than 80 other crops. It remains one of the most significant biological threats to food security in sub-Saharan Africa.

For Nigeria, the implications are particularly important. As one of Africa's largest maize producers, the country has experienced substantial production losses attributed to Fall Armyworm infestations. Earlier, regional assessments estimated that yearly economic losses to Nigeria's maize sector could range from approximately \$750m to \$1.86b if effective management measures are not implemented. More recent modeling studies indicate that under severe infestation, yield losses can exceed 70 per cent in affected fields, depending on environmental conditions and crop management practices.

Against this backdrop, researchers, policymakers and farmers continue to seek environmentally sustainable and economically viable approaches to pest management.

Demonstrating Field Performance

TO provide stakeholders with an opportunity to observe the technology under field conditions, Prexea Technologies recently organised a Green Field Day in Abuja. The event brought together farmers, representatives of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, officials of the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service, agricultural extension personnel, consultants and development partners.

The programme showcased results from pilot deployments already completed in Kaduna State, the Federal Capital Territory and other locations, while providing a platform for technical discussions on the ongoing validation programme.

The General Manager of Prexea Technologies Limited and lead agronomist for the project, Mrs. Martha Solomon, said the Green Field Day was intended to keep stakeholders informed throughout the validation process rather than wait until the technology's commercial introduction.

According to her, the exercise enabled participants to examine field observations, engage directly



Team Lead, Sentinel X Project, Ms. Martha Solomon.

with technical experts and farmers, and better understand the objectives of the nationwide evaluation.

Multi-State Validation Programme

THE validation programme has so far covered locations in Kano, Kaduna, Keffi and Kwali, with additional trials planned for Bauchi, Kwara and Oyo states to complete testing under different ecological conditions.

Prexea reports that preliminary observations from the completed sites indicate reduced Fall Armyworm damage and improved

crop health following deployment of Sentinel-X. The company says it is documenting these observations through field assessments involving farmers, agricultural extension officers, and government representatives before any nationwide commercial rollout.

One of the demonstration sites in Lere Local Council of Kaduna State was revisited after treatment to evaluate crop performance.

Solomon said farmers and extension officers who monitored the fields before and after deployment reported noticeable differences in

plant health and pest damage.

She noted that evaluations across multiple ecological zones aim to determine whether the technology performs consistently under different farming conditions before wider adoption is recommended.

Government Oversight

OFFICIALS from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security have participated in the field validation exercises, observing crop conditions before and after deployment as part of the evaluation process.

Dr. Jalal Maihula of the ministry explained that government participation is intended to provide independent oversight by assessing agronomic performance, pest severity, and overall field outcomes before any large-scale deployment.

"Our responsibility is to ensure that every required validation step is completed," he said during the Green Field Day. Based on observations from the sites visited and feedback from participating farmers, he described the preliminary outcomes as encouraging while emphasising the importance of completing the full validation programme before broader deployment.

An Evidence-based Introduction

UNLIKE many agricultural products that enter the market immediately after importation, Prexea says it undertakes multi-location field trials involving government agencies, farmers and techni-

cal stakeholders before launching Sentinel-X commercially.

According to the company, the objective is to generate practical evidence under Nigerian farming conditions and build confidence among farmers, regulators and institutional partners.

The evaluation includes both the Sentinel-X Pest Control component, designed to reduce Fall Armyworm infestation, and the Sentinel-X Crop Booster component, which the company says supports crop vigor through improved nutrient utilisation.

Looking Ahead

ALTHOUGH the validation programme has yet to conclude, the field demonstrations represent an important step in assessing whether innovative technologies can contribute to integrated pest management and improved maize production in Nigeria.

As the remaining ecological-zone trials are completed, attention is expected to shift towards the national launch of Sentinel-X and the publication of the full validation findings. For policymakers and farmers alike, the ultimate measure of success will be whether the technology delivers consistent, independently verifiable results across diverse farming systems while supporting Nigeria's broader objectives of improving agricultural productivity, strengthening food security and reducing reliance on chemical pest-control interventions.

Agricultural Transformation: Compelling Option For Governor Dauda Lawal

By Ishaq Abdul Maihula

IN Zamfara State, agriculture is not just another sector of the economy, nor is its development a policy option that the Governor Dauda Lawal administration can afford to treat as unimportant. First, more than 80 per cent of the state's population is engaged in agriculture, according to the Zamfara State Ministry of Agriculture, with Governor Dauda Lawal himself asserting that the sector contributes more than 70 per cent of the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). With a population of about 5.8 million people, the statistics tells a compelling story; that the fortunes of agriculture are inseparable from the fortunes of the state itself. For the state, improving agriculture means more than increased food production. It means improving livelihoods, creating employment, raising rural incomes, strengthening food security and raw materials for industries.

The main objective of the state's agricultural policy is to position Zamfara State as a leading agricultural hub through innovative practices, sustainable food production and the empowerment of farmers. This is consistent with the Governor Dauda Lawal administration's decision to make agriculture and food security one of the six priority areas of its agenda. More importantly, it provides a strategic framework for moving agriculture beyond seasonal farming to a more comprehensive system that addresses the agricultural chain of production—from improved seeds, water and mechanisation to extension services, storage,



processing, financing, transportation and access to markets. The distinction is important: while a programme may provide fertilizer to a farmer in a planting season, a strategy must answer the question of how that farmer can produce more, earn more and remain productive beyond that particular season. It is these challenges that the Lawal administration's agricultural agenda seeks to address.

This explains why the familiar slogan, "Farming is our Pride," carries such deep meaning in Zamfara State. Although the slogan was not created by Governor Lawal, his administration has given it renewed significance by placing agricultural development at the very centre of its economic agenda.

Since assuming office in 2023, his administration's interventions have ranged from the distribution of fertilizer and improved seeds to agrochemicals, irrigation support, agricultural equipment, extension services and efforts to strengthen the agricultural value chain to ensure that the farmers get value for their products. The significance of this approach becomes clearer when considered against the realities facing farmers across many northern states, where high input costs, insecurity, climate change issues, inadequate irrigation, limited access to modern equipment, and post-harvest losses have combined to make farming increasingly difficult. For a state such as Zamfara, addressing these myriad of challenges is funda-

mental to achieving its economic goals.

The reach of these interventions is equally significant. In 2024, Governor Lawal took the distribution of agricultural assets and inputs beyond the state capital, touring all 14 local government areas under the FADAMA III/NG-CARES agricultural recovery programme. The intervention was designed to reach farmers with essential inputs, improved seeds and farming equipment, reflecting an understanding that agricultural transformation must be felt in the rural communities where production actually takes place. By taking support directly to farmers across the state, the administration demonstrated that its agricultural policy was intended to reach the communities where farming is the mainstay of livelihoods.

One of the outstanding features of Governor Lawal administration's agricultural policy is its emphasis on the smallholder farmer, while also encouraging commercial farming. The government's 2025 wet-season intervention provides a striking example. In July 2025, the administration distributed 59,205 bags of fertilizer, alongside 34,800 kilogrammes of rice seeds, 80,000 kilogrammes of maize seeds, 23,740 litres of herbicides, 11,735 litres of insecticides and 23,470 sachets of seed-dressing chemicals, with 98 trucks deployed for the fertilizer distribution. These figures are significant because agricultural transformation cannot be achieved without addressing the basic constraints confronting farmers.

Oando Boosts Oil, Gas Workforce With 12-Month Drilling, Digital Training

By Suliya Tella

OANDO Energy Resources Nigeria Limited (OERNL), a subsidiary of Oando Plc, has commenced a 12-month drilling engineering training programme for young Nigerians in partnership with the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) and Hilong Oil Service & Engineering Nigeria Limited.

The human capacity development programme, which commenced on September 4, 2026, in Port Harcourt, is designed to equip participants with specialised drilling skills and practical experience as indigenous companies take on greater ownership and operational responsibilities in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. The programme will combine classroom instruction with structured on-the-job training, with participants expected to gain exposure to the practical demands of drilling and other petroleum operations.

OERNL said the initiative was aimed at developing a pipeline of Nigerian technical professionals who could support the safe, efficient and sustainable operation of oil and gas assets.

The participants will receive training in Basic Drilling Engineering Operations, Well Planning and Design, Measurement While Drilling (MWD), Logging While Drilling (LWD), drilling rig operations and well-log data analytics.

Devastating Rainstorm Wreaks Havoc In Isua Akoko

A HEAVY downpour accompanied by strong winds recently caused significant damage to several houses in Isua Akoko, the headquarters of Akoko South-East Local Government Area of Ondo State.

The persistent downpour and rainstorm submerged residential areas, ripped off roofs, homes, and damaged public infrastructure.

It was gathered that the heavy rainfall accompanied by the storm started on Monday night, 7th September, 2026. Ecological factor also contributed to the high flooding experienced during and after the rain. Some street lights, solar panels/poles, electrical installations were affected.

Natives and residents of the agrarian community have expressed shock over the havoc wreaked on the community following the devastating rain storm that blew off the roofs of several residential buildings, a primary school and pulled down solar and electricity poles. The heavy rainfall triggered widespread flash flooding and severe damage. Witnesses said the rain, which lasted several hours, led to the destruction of residential buildings, fences and other structures in the town.

FG Settles N18b Pension Of Ex-Nigeria Airways Workers 20 Years After

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

THE Federal Government has paid 18 billion in outstanding benefits to 2,100 former workers of the defunct Nigeria Airways, with another 600 beneficiaries expected to receive their entitlements within the next few days. The payment, covering beneficiaries in batches one to seven, brings the number of former workers whose claims are being settled to 2,700.

While announcing the payment, the government said the benefits were calculated on the basis of documented and verified obligations and did not include any adjustment for inflation over the more than two decades the airline was liquidated.

The disclosure, however, raised questions about the real value of the payments to former workers who have waited for about 20 years to

• Pays 12,000 Local Contractors

receive benefits that were due them.

Explaining the position, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, said the government recognised that the value of money declines over time but maintained that the immediate responsibility was to settle the obligations established by official records.

According to him, any decision to adjust the benefits beyond the documented liabilities would have to be considered separately and was not part of the current settlement.

The minister acknowledged the hardship associated with such delays, particularly for pensioners, noting that an amount that might have been sufficient when a worker retired could have lost much of its purchasing power over

time. He said the government was nevertheless determined to address inherited obligations rather than allow them to remain unresolved.

Of the 2,700 beneficiaries covered by the current exercise, 2,100 have already been paid, while the claims of 600 others in batches eight and nine are being finalised.

The government also said there was no discrimination between junior and senior former employees in determining beneficiaries.

For former workers who have died, the government said their benefits would be paid to their next of kin, beneficiaries or estates, subject to the necessary legal procedures.

The settlement is part of a wider government programme to clear inherited financial obligations, includ-

ing pension arrears and verified debts owed to indigenous contractors.

On contractor debts, the minister said the government had deliberately changed its payment priority to favour smaller businesses, many of which depend on government payments to meet salaries, suppliers and other operating expenses.

He said contractors owed 50 million or less were initially prioritised, resulting in payments to more than 2,000 contractors.

The threshold was subsequently raised to 100 million, with another group of contractors covered.

The government, he added, had now paid more than 12,000 indigenous contractors, while larger contractors with much bigger outstanding claims could be engaged for negotiated settlements.



One of the buildings destroyed by the rainstorm in Isua Akoko, Ondo State.

Ogun Releases N6.75b For Gratuity, Additional Pension Benefits

From Azeez Olorunlomu, Abeokuta

THE Ogun State government has released N6.75 billion for the payment of gratuity and Additional Pension Benefits (APB) to retirees in the state.

The Head of Service, Mr. Olanrewaju Saka, disclosed this in a statement on Friday, saying the release was part of the government's continued efforts to address outstanding pension obligations and

improve the welfare of retired workers.

According to him, N2.751 billion was released to pay gratuity to 432 beneficiaries, while another N4 billion was released for the payment of APB to eligible retirees from July 2025 to date.

Saka said the government remained committed to ensuring that workers who had served the state meritoriously received their retirement benefits despite competing

demands on the state's resources.

Explaining the APB, Saka said it was introduced to cushion the difference between the pension benefits retirees would have received under the old Defined Benefit Scheme (DBS) and what they are entitled to under the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS).

He explained that while workers under the CPS have retirement savings in their Retirement Savings Accounts,

some retirees could receive lower benefits than they would have been entitled to under the former scheme. The APB, therefore, provides an additional payment from the state government to eligible retirees to bridge part of that gap.

Saka stressed that the APB is separate from the funds in retirees' Retirement Savings Accounts and does not reduce the savings accumulated in those accounts.

Worshipper Stabs Islamic Cleric After Juma'at Prayers In Sokoto

From Tunde Omolehin, Sokoto

A POPULAR Islamic scholar, Sheikh Musa Lukuwa, was stabbed by a worshipper shortly after Juma'at prayers at a mosque in the Mabera area of Sokoto metropolis on Friday.

The incident reportedly triggered a mob attack by other worshippers, who descended on the assailant and beat him to death.

The Police Public Relations Officer in Sokoto State, DSP Ahmed Rufa'i, confirmed the

incident, saying one person was killed during the violence.

Rufa'i said the deceased was killed by a mob after he allegedly used a knife to stab Lukuwa in the stomach immediately after the Friday prayer.

According to him, Lukuwa, who led the Friday congregation attended by the assailant, was rushed to the Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital (UDUTH), where he is currently receiving treatment. He added that the body of the deceased had been evacuated, while no arrest had been made

in connection with the incident.

The police spokesperson said the situation was under control, urging residents to remain calm and law-abiding.

Lukuwa had recently come under criticism following allegations that he made blasphemous remarks concerning Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), triggering anger among some Muslim faithful in the state.

A gangster, Dahiru Maibarewa, had also publicly

threatened to kill Lukuwa at the first opportunity over the remarks attributed to the Islamic scholar.

The threat reportedly heightened tensions and sparked demonstrations in parts of Sokoto metropolis.

At a press conference on September 4, 2026, an Islamic cleric, Sheikh Abubakar Yagawal urged Muslims to reject and oppose any cleric who engages in blasphemous content, regardless of the circumstances, in the interest of peaceful coexistence.

Oluremi Tinubu Fulfils N10m Pledge To 12-Year-Old Ogun Artist

By Balikisi Ademuyiwa

NIGERIA'S First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, has fulfilled her N10 million education pledge to 12-year-old Ogun State artist, Master Morenikeji Ebunoluwa Joshua, less than a month after being impressed by his artistic talent.

The N10 million Education Development Trust Fund, presented to Joshua through the Ogun State government, is to support his education through tertiary level.

The First Lady had announced the pledge on August 18 after spotting Joshua displaying a portrait he had painted of her at the launch of the South-West Zonal National Food Bank Programme at the Cultural Centre, Kuto, Abeokuta.

Impressed by the quality of his work, Tinubu invited the young artist to the podium and immediately pledged N10 million towards his future education.

Presenting the cheque on behalf of the First Lady, Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, described the fulfilment of the pledge as a demonstration that "a promise made is a promise kept."

Nigerian Communications Professionals Must Be Regarded, Respected — Experts

By Moyosore Salami

IN recognition that the communications profession has undergone a fundamental transformation in the digital era, Nigerian professionals in the field have ended a conversation on the future of strategic communications in the country with a call on practitioners to assert their value.

The conversation occurred during a high-level roundtable of industry professionals, institution builders, academics, and founders convened by strategic communications consultant and Founder of Comms54, Rukeywe Dukuye, to interrogate the current state of strategic communications, both in Nigeria and across the global landscape.

The gathering, held under the theme, 'The Future of Strategic Communications in Nigeria,' brought together voices from across the profession to discuss a deepening identity problem that has blurred the lines between public relations, marketing communications and the broader discipline of strategic communications.

Guests and attendees on the tables included Sola Abulu, Founder, SA&A Strategy and Communications Consulting and Training Firm; Tolulope Olorundero, Founder and Chair, PRFW; Dr. Beryl Ehondor, Lecturer.

CHANGE OF NAME

ABDIEL: I formerly known as Odiugo Oghenegare Elvis now wish to be addressed as Abdiel Oghenegare Calm all former documents remain valid . General public take note.

ABRAHAM: I, formerly Miss Popoola Faith Folasayo, now wish to be addressed as Mrs Abraham Faith Folasayo. Former documents valid. General public, and authorities take note.

ABUBAKAR: I, formerly known as Abubakar Rabiat now wish to be known as Balogun Rabiat Abubakar. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ABUGA: I formerly known as Edozieuno Ujunwa Esther now wish to be addressed as Abugu Ujunwa Esther all former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, Yomi Kasali want to add my middle name to my names, now Mathew Abayomi Kasali as it is in my NIN. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

ADEMULEGUN: I, formerly known as Folasade Christianah now wish to be addressed as Aderinoye folasade christianah. All former documents remain valid . General public take.

ADENIKE: I, formerly known as Omisore Aanu Adenike now to be addressed as Oluwan'sore Aanuoluwapo Adenike. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADEOYE: I, formerly known as Adejumo Olayinka Rhoda now wish to be addressed as Adeoya Olayinka Rhoda . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ADEWUNMI: I, formerly known as Sophia Etinosaomoragbon now wish to be addressed a. Sophia EtinosaAdewunmi . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

ADEDOYIN: i, formerly known as Aronimo Adedoyin Mary now wish to be addressed as Arimoro Adedoyin. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

ADEYEMI: I formerly known as Adeyemi Mojirayo Esther now wish to be addressed as Adewole Mojirayo Esther all former documents remain valid general public take note

ADEYEMI: I, formerly Mrs. Adeyemi Salamat now Miss Raji Abisoye Salamat and My correct DOB is 30/05/1992 not 30/04/1992. All former documents remain valid. Public nite.

AGADA: I, formerly known as Mary Adiza Agada now wish to be addressed Mrs. Mary Adiza Akor. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AGU: I, formerly Agu Dominic C, wish to correct my name to Agu Dominic Chibuzor. Former documents remain valid. General public, NYSC, and authorities take note.

AKERELE: I, formerly known as Ologun Bose now wish to be addressed as Akerele Bose . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

AKINWALE: I, formerly known as Akinwale Ayinla now wish to be known and addressed as Akinwale Simeon Temilola, all former documents remain valid.

ALARAPE: I, formerly known as Alarape Nafisat Olufunmilola now wish to be addressed as Sam-Ojebode Nafisat Olufunmilola . All former documents remain vali. General public take note.

ANTHONY: I, formerly known as llawagbon Joy now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Anthony Joy . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ATOCHI: I, formerly known as Worlu Atochi now wish to be addressed as Worlu Miracle. All former documents remain valid . General take note.

AUDU: I, formerly known as Miss. MISS. AUDU VERA Odufa now to be addressed as MRS. IHIMEKPEN VERA ODUFA . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BALOGUN: I, formerly known as Balogun Michael Atai now wishes to be addressed as Attai Michael Atai . All former documents remain valid general. General public take note.

BENYE: I, formerly Miss Edith Nkechi Benye now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Edith Nkechi Abolo . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BISIRIYU: I, formerly known as Ogungbamila Oluwafemi Damilola now wish to be addressed as Bisiriyu Oluwafemi Damilola all former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHIBOGU: I, formerly known as Liya Ayomikun Chibogu now wish to be addressed as Liya Ayomikun Anamali. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: Esther Nnenne Ibeabuchi Agha, Agha Nnenne Ibeabuchi, Atenaga Nnenne Ibeabuchi, Nnenne Ibeabuchi Esther, and Atenaga Nnenne is same person.

CORRECTION OF NAMES: My name was wrongly written on my Perm Voters Card as Kilanfisewo Adepeju Afis instead of Kilanfisewo Adepeju Afusat. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH: That BVN captured my name as Onah Joe-Kingsley Chukwuemeka, instead of Onah Chukwuemeka Joekingsley In NIN. Correct DOB, 27th/june/1963. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Somade, AbiodunIdowu now wish to be addressed as Somade -Idowu, AbiodunBolaji . All former documents remain valid . General take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Precious Ohwovoriole instead of Oviri Precious Ohwovoriole. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAMES: My name was wrongly written on Yorgure Precious Bariunazor instead of Yorgure Faith Bariunazor. All former documents remain valid . General take note

DAISY: I, formerly known as Miss Anthony, Daisy now wish to be known as Mrs. Ogbonnaya, Daisy. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

DOMINKOVIC: I, formerly known as Blessing Chiemena Ahuchaogu now wish to be addressed as Maria Blessing Dominkovic . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

EDHERE: I, formerly known as Awa Paul Marylyn Chidinma now wish to be addressed as Edhere Marylyn Chidinma. All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

EKE: I formerly known as Edith Ifeanachor now wish to be addressed as Edith Eze. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ENENCHE: I, formerly known as Janet Enenche now wish to be addressed as Janet Enenche Unuigbe. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ETIM: I, formerly known as Rosemary Pius Etim now wish to be addressed as Immaculata Pius Etim . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

EVANS: I formerly know as Evans Favour Ngozi now wish to be addressed Mrs Chibuike Favour Ngozi All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

FADUGBA: I, formerly known as Babajide Bukola Iyanuoluwa now wish to be addressed as Fadugba Bukola Iyanuoluwa . All former documents remain valid . General documents remain valid . General public take note

FAUGA: I, formerly known as Ade-doyin Oluwakemi Oladepe now wish to be addressed as Adedoyin Oluwakemi Fauga All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

GRACE: i, formerly known as miss Ugomba, Okwuchukwu Grace now wish to be known as Mrs. Mokwugwo, Okwuchukwu Grace. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

HUSSAIN: I, formerly known as Oluwatemitope Adijat Hussain now wish to be addressed as Temitope Khadijah Hussain . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

IGBOEGWU: I, formerly Miss Igboegwu Anne Chioma now known and address as Mrs Onyeonoro Anne Chioma. All former documents remain valid. Banks public note.

JAGUN: I, formerly known as Jagun Olubunmi Anuoluwapo now wish to be addressed as Balogun Olubunmi Anuoluwapo . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

JAYESIMI: I formerly known as Jayesimi Olufunmilayo Janet, Jayesimi funmilayo Janet, Jayesinmi funmilayo Janet now to b known as Ademola-Jayesinmi Funmilayo Janet. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

JOE: I formerly know as Joe Robert Favour Amarachi l now wish to be addressed as Mrs Egbo favour Amarachi All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

JOHN: I, formerly known as Aladesuru Olurotimi John now wish to be addressed as Aladesuru Oluwarotimi Oladokun . All former documents remain valid. Public nite.

KOKO: I, formerly known as Grace Udo Ekong now wish to be addressed as Grace Nengi Koko . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

KONYENHI: I, formerly known as Miss. Konyenhi Berrit now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ebohon Berrit. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

MBADUGHA: I, Formerly known as Mbadugha Anthonia Ngozi, now wish to be known as Nwagba Anthonia Ngozi. All former documents remain valid. Authorities concerned, general public take note.

MESHIOYE: I formerly known as Meshinoye Saheed Olayori now wish to be addressed as Meshioye Saheed Olayori . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

MORDI: I, formerly Miss. Mordi Adetutu Eziafa now wish to be known as Mrs. Arokoola Adetutu Eziafa. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NDUDI: I, formerly Miss Ndudi Joy Okwugwuni now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ndudi Okwugwuni Udomi. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

NOAH-AKANJI: I, formerly known as Jade Oluwanifemi Noah-Akanji now wish to be addressed as Jaden Oluwanifemi Noah-Akanji. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NOSE: I, formerly known as Emmanuel Chibuike Nose now wish to be addressed as Chibuike Oghene-Eguono. . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NWACHUKWU: I, formerly Nwachukwu Emilia Onyinyechi now wish to be Nwoko Emilia Onyinyechi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NWOKE: I, formerly known as Nwoke Maryann Chialuka now wish to be addressed as Mrs Chimindinu Maryann Chialuka . All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

NWOKENNA: I, formerly Miss Nwokenna Chisolum Sandra now wish to be known as Mrs. Amaefule Chisolum Nonyelum Ada Sandra. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

OBARIKE: I, formerly known as Obarike Joy Elizabeth, now wish to be addressed as Onma Joy Elizabeth. All former document remain valid. General public take note.

OBIEZE: I formerly known as Miss Obieze Perpetua Chioma, now wish to be addressed as Mrs Chielo Perpetua Chioma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OBIORA: I, formerly known as Blessing Obiora Ogbonta now wish to be addressed as Blessing Ogbonta. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ODEYEMI: I, formerly known as Miss Grace Oluwadamilola now wish to be addressed Mrs. Grace Oluwadamilola Oghene-Eguono. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OGBEWU: I, formerly known as Igbo Blessing now wish to be addressed as as Ogbewu Blessing Sarah. All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

OGBOLU: I, formerly known as Ogbolu Blessing Onyinyechi, now wish to be known as Oluchukwu-lkpade Blessing Onyinyechi. All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

OKEKE: I, formerly known as Okeke Ifunanya Paulina now wish to be known as Edhe Ifunanya Paulina. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKELANA: I, formerly known as Miss Okelana Mary Oluwakemi now to be addressed as Mrs Adegbite Mary Oluwakemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKEREKE: I, formerly known as Cecilia Okereke now wish to be addressed as Ogbonna Cecilia Ijeoma, All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

OKPANACHI: I, formerly known as Pauline Chenemi Okpanachi now wish to be addressed as Chenemi Ifeanyi. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

OKUSAGA: I, formerly known as Okusaga Abiodun Christiana now wish to be addressed as Triumphant Omolara Christiana . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

OLADIPUPU: I, formerly known as Hammad Oladipupo Adisa Balogun now wish to be addressed as Oladipupo Ammed Balogun . All former documents remain valid general public take note.

OLABISI: I, formerly known as Miss Abisoye Sonia Olabisi now wish to be addressed as Mrs Abisoye Sonia Odu-soga All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLADIRAN: I, formerly known as Deborah Modupe Tijani now wish to be addressed as Deborah Modupe Oladiran. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLOWOMEYE: I, formerly known as Olowomeye Oluwatosin Mary, now wish to be known as Ajakaye Olanrewaju Oluwatosin Mary. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

OLUWADARE: I, formerly known as Fadare Olamide Henry, now wish to be addressed as Oluwadare Olamide Henry. All Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ONARO: I, formerly Miss Ehioma Edouwaye Onaro now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ehioma Edouwaye Ugboh . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ONYEALI: I, formerly known as Onyeali Emeka now wish to be known as Hart Tamunotonye Godswill . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ONYIA: I, formerly known as Miss. Onyia Blessing Uzumma now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Agha Blessing Uzumma. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

OSAGIEDE: I, formerly known as Miss Osagiede Lovina Ibhade now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Idiakheua Lovina Ibhade. Fformer documents remains valid. General public note.

OSATUYI: I, formerly Miss Osatuyi Yetunde Kate, now wish to be known as Mrs. Oribamishe Yetunde Kate Opeyemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OSEREMEN: I, formerly known as Ajogbor Oseremen now wish to be addressed as Ajogbor Oseremen Wisdom. My DOB is 24-09-1997 not 05-08-1997. Former documents remains valid. Public note.

OWOEYE: I, formerly known as Etuk Anita John now wish to be addressed as OwoeYE Anita . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

OYEBADE: I, formerly known as Oluranti Oluremi Oladele, now wish to be addressed as Oluranti Oluremi Oyebade . All former documents remain valid. NIBSS, General public take note.

OYEBOLA: I formerly known as Quadri Oyebola Oyekanmi now wish to be addressed as Oyebola Ooreoluwa Oyekanmi . All Former documents remain valid . General public take note.

OYELEKE: I, formerly known as Miss Oyeleke Bolarinwa Elizabeth now wish to be known as Mrs. Babalola Bolarinwa Elizabeth. All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

OZAH: I, Formerly known as Miss Ozah Adaugo Linda, now wish to be known as Mrs. Chukwuji Adaugo Linda. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

RE-ARRANGEMENT/ADDITION OF NAME: My name was captured in some documents as Anene Ifeanyi Chidinma, instead of Ifeanyi-Anene Chidinma Chigozie. All former documents remain valid. Authorities concerned, general public take note.

SAKA: I, formerly known as Muri Tadoh now wish to be addressed as Saka Muri Tadoh now . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

SALIU: I, formerly known as Omolara Christiana Oguntunde now wish to be addressed as Omolara Christiana Saliu. All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

SAMUEL: I, formerly known as Ivy Reuben Benimo now wish to be addressed as Ivy Samuel . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

SEMILOLA: I, former known as Oye-makinde Semilola Samuel, now wish to be known as Oyemakinde Oluwasemilola Samuel. Former documents remain valid, public note.

SONDE: I, formerly Mories Morolayo Sonde now wish to be known as Mories Morolayo Atoki. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

SYLVIA: I, Formerly known as Sylvia Uzoamaka Benedict now wish to be addressed as Sylvia UzoamakaNdubuisi . All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

UGWOEGBULEM: I. formerly know as Ugwoegbulem Chidinma Favour l now wish to be addressed as Mrs, Ekenedo Chidinma favour. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

UHEGBU: Formerly Miss Uhegbu Glory Ebubechi now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ngobidi Glory Ebubechi. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

UMAH: I, formerly known as Umah Benjamin Iniobong now wish to be addressed as Umah Benjamin Umah . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

WATHEN: I, formerly known as Damilola Awoyemi now wish to be addressed as Damilola Wathen . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ZUOBAI: I, formerly known as Miss. Zuobai Ebiere Blessing, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ogbe Ebiere Blessing. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NewsExtra

PTDF Reaffirms Commitment To Research, Human Capital Development

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

THE Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) has said it would continue to promote human capacity development, research and innovation in Nigeria, especially in the petroleum and energy sector. It, therefore, urged universities in the country to leverage opportunities provided by the fund to deepen research in the petroleum and energy sector.

The Executive Secretary of the Fund, Prof. Shaiubu Shehu Aliyu, stated this at the PTDF Professorial Chair on Petroleum Geology at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Represented by the agency's Director, Research and Development, Mrs. Favour Adaure-Prince, he stated that the workshop is focused on modern geophysical technologies for petroleum and energy exploration.

He argued that the growing application of modern geophysical technologies in petroleum and energy exploration made capacity development in the area increasingly important.

According to him, initiatives such as the PTDF Professorial Chairs demonstrate the Fund's commitment to supporting knowledge development and strengthening expertise in Nigerian institutions.

"PTDF remains committed to human capacity development, research and innovation through initiatives such as the PTDF Professorial Chairs.

"Encourage participants of this training to maximize this opportunity by learning, sharing ideas and applying the knowledge gained to research, teaching and industry challenges.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME

I hereby notify the general public that, I, formerly known and recorded in some documents as **OMOTOLA OLAYINKA ASAKE BAMGBOSE, OLAYINKA BAMGBOSE / BAMGBOSE OLAYINKA, OLAYINKA OROMA BAMGBOSE / BAMGBOSE OLAYINKA OROMA, BAMGBOSE OLAYINKA OMOTOLA**, all refer to one and the same person.

I have elected to retain and use the name **BAMGBOSE OLAYINKA OMOTOLA** for all official, statutory, banking, academic and professional purposes.

This notice serves to confirm and regularise the consistency of my name across all records.

Demystifying And Humanising FIFA

ON behalf of all Nigerians I welcome the delegation from FIFA to Nigeria. I wish them an enjoyable and fruitful stay. I pray that this will be the last time Nigerian football officials shall invite FIFA to the country for the purpose of resolving our self-inflicted domestic problems. Each time we did so (invite them) we put the organisation in a tight corner, making them to walk the thin line between Intervention and interference. According to FIFA's fundamental principle, each of its members must be an independent private organisation. Secondly, the member's internal affairs must not be interfered with by any Third Party, including government and FIFA itself. It is simple and straightforward. We conformed to it for decades. Suddenly, in 2004, the situation changed. Since then, Nigeria must now hold the world

record for inviting FIFA to come and meddle in its domestic affairs. Nigeria has been doing so since it discovered that 'inviting FIFA' is a formula that allows any form of 'manipulation' to be carried out without consequence. The mere presence of FIFA officials around sends Nigerians scurrying for cover, proper electoral process abandoned, inadvertently creating what has now become catalyst for the 'worst' football governance structure in Nigeria's history. Successive Executive Boards deployed the same FIFA formula, the presence of an ordinary official used to achieve any narrow agenda. It was so simple. Every four years since 2004, FIFA has become a witness to the perpetuation of a faulty system of electing the leadership of Nigerian football. Nigeria is paying the price now!

The consequence for FIFA is that in the eyes of Nigerians, the organisation is a monster, an Albatross around the neck of the country. Many aggrieved persons resorted to the civil courts frustratingly and worsened the situation. The court judgements were never respected or enforced. The fear of FIFA became the beginning of wisdom for all Nigerians. Even when the Nigerian government saw wisdom in changing the system it was forced to withdraw its actions at the mention of FIFA.

It was all an exaggerated and misplaced lie! It was a 'dummy' that worked for decades because it was never allowed to be properly scrutinised by those benefiting. Even the media fell for the 'dummy'. Many sports journalists were complicit in spreading the fear, either through silent



conspiracy, or in ignorance of the true situation. Either way, FIFA, without realising it, became complicit too. The plot sustained for the sake of 'peace' that lasted four years each time, and has now brought Nigerian football to its knees - the worst period in Nigeria's football history.

This weekend, FIFA are back again, invited to come and use their presence to validate whatever will happen after their consultations with various stakeholders.

For some reason, FIFA's reaction this time is different. FIFA stated clearly in their letter to the new acting Secretary-General of the Nigeria Football Association, that their coming is not an interference. They are coming at the invitation of the secretariat to listen to stakeholders and to make an assessment of the situation and nothing about the elections must go on. Nigeria is on good ground.

For the first time since 2004, this present FIFA has extricated itself from any accusation of interference. It is intervening on request.

Read the remaining story online www.guardian.ng

Edo Absent, Team Delta Takes Command At Calabar Zonal Elimination

By **Gowon Akpodonor**

TEAM Delta had a field day on Day one of the zonal elimination in Calabar, Cross River State for the National Intermediate Games.

In some of the events held on Friday, Delta female football team beat Rivers 3-0, and in female volleyball, Delta also beat host Cross River in two straight set.

In beach volleyball, Delta beat Bayelsa, and also defeated Rivers in female cricket event played on Friday.

The *Guardian*, however, learnt on Friday that only Edo State was unable to participate in the zonal

elimination in Calabar owing to lack of funds. But the chairman of the state cricket association was said to have funded only the cricket team to the zonal elimination.

Team Delta went to Calabar with a strong contingent of about 400 athletes and 63 technical officials, determined to secure qualification tickets as the South-South Zonal Elimination.

Despite the postponement of the National Intermediate Games till next year, the National Sports Commission (NSC) wants the zonal elimina-

tion for the Games to hold.

Soon after the completion of the zonal elimination for the National Intermediate Games on September 12, all the states will commence the zonal elimination for Enugu 2026 National Sports Festival.

Team Delta contingent, comprising athletes, coaches, technical officials and other members of the delegation, arrived in Calabar on Wednesday ahead of the zonal competition, which serves as the gateway to the national stage.

The opening phase of the competition commenced with the screening of athletes and a technical meeting

to ascertain eligibility and familiarise participating states with the rules, fixtures, venues, schedules and other technical requirements.

Addressing the contingent before the commencement of the competition, the Chairman, Delta State Sports Commission, Onoriode Oborevwo, charged the athletes and officials to remain disciplined, focused and committed throughout the championship.

The Commission Chairman urged the athletes to compete with the confidence and fighting spirit for which Delta is renowned.

Business

Bridging The Computer Divide, TETFund's Bet On Digital Access

FOR millions of students in public tertiary institutions, the computer is still an expensive educational tool rather than a basic part of campus life. A laptop can cost several months of a family's income while the cost of data, electricity and repairs adds another layer to the challenge. Students, who cannot afford personal computers often, rely on smartphones, borrowed devices or commercial business centres.

But a smartphone and a computer do not provide the same educational experience. A student may be able to read a message, watch a lecture or conduct a quick search on a phone but writing a long research paper, analysing data, programming, editing multimedia content, using specialised academic software or participating in advanced digital training requires a more substantial computing environment.

This is where access goes beyond laptop ownership. A student may own a laptop but have no reliable electricity or internet connection. Another may not own one but have regular access to a properly equipped university facility. What matters ultimately is whether students can consistently access functional computers, electricity, connectivity, digital resources and a suitable space for learning.

There is no reliable national figure showing how many students in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions enjoy such access. But available studies offer an indication of the challenge. A 2025 study of 1,500 tertiary students in Adamawa State for instance, showed that 74 per cent reported access to smartphones, compared with 61 per cent for laptops and 22 per cent for desktop computers. The figures cannot be projected nationally but they illustrate the gap between access to mobile technology and access to conventional computing devices.

The problem is not uniquely Nigerian. Across Africa, universities and governments are adopting different approaches to ensure that students are

not excluded from digital learning simply because they cannot afford a computer.

The University of Ghana has adopted a particularly direct approach through its One Student, One Laptop initiative. Launched as part of the university's digital inclusion strategy, the programme provides laptops to selected students, particularly those who need financial support. By June 2026, another 152 students had received laptops, while the university had continued to expand the scheme through institutional and private-sector support. The university has also re-equipped computer laboratories.

The Ghanaian experience demonstrates an important principle – personal ownership remains valuable even where universities provide computer laboratories.

South Africa provides another useful example. Universities have invested in campus computer laboratories, digital access programmes and innovation spaces that allow students and wider communities to use computers and other digital tools. Rhodes University, for instance, operates a digital access programme that provides reliable internet, devices and computer laboratories while supporting minicomputer laboratories and mobile labs in surrounding communities.

These models show that the digital divide is not simply a question of whether a student owns a device. It is about creating an ecosystem in which people can access devices, connectivity, software, digital skills and spaces in which those resources can be used productively.

The commissioning of the N1 billion ICT Digital Experience Centre at the University of Cross River State, UNICROSS, Calabar, by the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, has

brought that possibility into sharper focus. The facility established under the Renewed Hope Initiative, in partnership with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), provides students with laptops, desktop computers, digital resources and free internet access.

UNICROSS is one of six pioneer institutions selected under the programme, with one centre established in each geopolitical zone. Other beneficiaries are Ekiti State University, Federal Polytechnic, Oko; Kaduna State University, Kwara State University and Taraba State University. TETFund's Board of Trustees approved N1 billion for each of the six zonal centres under its 2024 strategic intervention, making the UNICROSS facility the South-South centre.

The significance of the model is that a student does not have to first own a laptop before gaining access to meaningful computing. A student, who has previously depended on a smartphone can walk into the centre and work on a computer, conduct research, access online materials and develop digital skills.

Chairman, TETFund Board of Trustees, Rt. Hon. Aminu Bello Masari, said the centres are intended to expose students and lecturers to Artificial Intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, robotics and

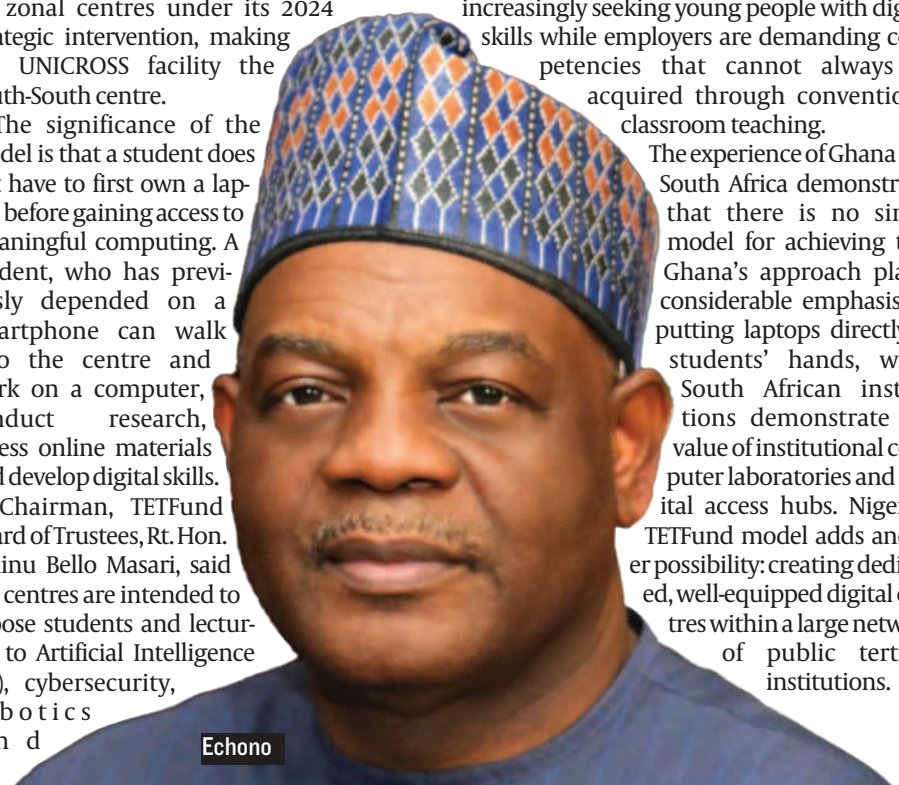
software development.

TETFund Executive Secretary, Arc. Sonny Echono, has indicated that the six centres are only the beginning. He said the intention is to extend the model to 270 beneficiary institutions.

According to Echono, another 15 facilities are expected to be completed before the end of January 2027, while work is ongoing on about 50 other facilities through the upgrading of existing ICT centres or construction of new ones.

The potential impact extends beyond students studying computer science or engineering. A student of agriculture could use digital tools for data analysis and precision agriculture. There is also a wider economic argument. Africa's economies are increasingly seeking young people with digital skills while employers are demanding competencies that cannot always be acquired through conventional classroom teaching.

The experience of Ghana and South Africa demonstrates that there is no single model for achieving this. Ghana's approach places considerable emphasis on putting laptops directly in students' hands, while South African institutions demonstrate the value of institutional computer laboratories and digital access hubs. Nigeria's TETFund model adds another possibility: creating dedicated, well-equipped digital centres within a large network of public tertiary institutions.



Echono

www.guardian.ng

NFF Reform: Controversies Ahead Stakeholders' Meeting With CAF, FIFA

By Gowon Akpodonor

WHAT appears to be a major controversy may have emerged ahead of Monday's meeting between the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and visiting top officials from the Confederation of African Football (CAF) and World Football governing body (FIFA).

Among other things, the visit is to enable both CAF and FIFA vet the list of people picked by the National Sports Commission (NSC), the NFF and other stakeholders for the proposed Normalisation Committee to reform the nation's football following the resignation of former president, Ibrahim Gusau, his entire board and the Secretary General, Mohammed Sanusi.

Already, the NFF has selected nine State FA chairmen and 18 other representatives to meet with the visiting CAF and FIFA officials on September 14 at Abuja Continental Hotel.

Apart from the State FA chairmen, who got the highest number of nine invitees in the NFF letter, dated September 9, 2026, and signed by NFF Acting Secretary, Emmanuel Ikpe, others stakeholders like Coaches Association, Referees Association, Players Union, NPFL, NWFL, NNL and NLO had three invitees each. However, the situation seems not to be going down well with Players Union.

Chairman of the Advocacy for Nigeria Football Reform Initiative, Harrison Jalla, a voice in the Players Union, told The Guardian that the NFF's decision to allocate just three slots to the Players Union as against nine for State FA chairmen was wrong.

"We won't take it," Jalla, who has been in the forefront of the struggle for Reform in Nigeria football said. "We are going there with the same number of people allocated to the FA

Chairmen to speak out our mind in this meeting with CAF and FIFA on Monday. We have been in the forefront calling for this reform in our football system. Now that the process is about to begin, the NFF wants to create an imbalance in the structure. They must not push us aside. The same nine slots given to the State FA chairmen should be given to the Players Union. We are major stakeholders and the earlier the NFF realise this, the better for everyone," Jalla stated.

Monday's meeting with the visiting CAF and FIFA officials is coming amid serious questions surrounding NFF finances and accountability amounting to around N40billion.

The House of Representatives is said to be beaming its searchlight on the alleged mismanagement of roughly \$25 million in FIFA

and CAF development grants received between 2015 and 2025, while anti-corruption agencies are said to be examining a separate 12 billion government intervention fund — bringing the financial questions surrounding Nigerian football to roughly 40 billion.

"We need genuine reform," Chief Executive Officer of Monimichelle Sports Management Company, Ebi Egbe, told The Guardian.

"If Congo can jail its FA President over diversion of \$1.3million, Nigerian football officials cannot continue to dodge prosecution for bigger scandals," he added.

Canada-based Nigerian journalist, Emmanuel Tobi said: "Nigeria does not need a return to the old system. There must be transparency, accountability, credible elections and a football administration that puts Nigerian

football first. This is the opportunity to fix the system, not simply rearrange the people running it. But will FIFA and CAF help provide the roadmap for the Nigerian football reset?," he asked.

Sardauna Memorial Stadium Is FIFA-approved Hybrid Synthetic Turf, Says Egbe

THE give Nigerian youths a platform to showcase their football talent, Zamfara State Governor Dauda Lawal embarked on stadium is now wearing a new look following the speed at which the construction being handled by Monimichelle Sports Facilities Construction Ltd, is moving.

Located at the heart of the community, the Sardauna Memorial Community Stadium is a FIFA-approved Monimichelle PU Hybrid Synthetic Turf, engineered to provide high-performance playing conditions while delivering the durability required for intensive community and elite football use.

"The pitch is complemented by a piston controlled automated sprinkler system, providing efficient and uniform irrigation for consistent pitch performance and maintenance," Chief Executive Officer of Monimichelle Sports Management, Ebi Egbe, told The Guardian on Friday.

"This is more than the construction of a stadium. It is an investment in grassroots football, youth development, community engagement and the future of sports in Zamfara State.

"At Monimichelle Sports, we build sports facilities that speak for themselves," Egbe stated.

Akpata Charges Junior Female YellowGreens To Write New Chapter In Bangladesh

By Christian Okpara

WITH nothing more left to prove in the continent, president of the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF), Uyi Akpata, has charged the junior women's national team, the Junior Female YellowGreens, to go beyond their sixth finish, which they achieved at the last T20 U-19 World Cup in South Africa.

The 2027 edition of the championship will be hosted by Bangladesh and Nepal. The president also challenged the team to keep raising the bar.

Nigeria finished sixth at their previous U-19 World Cup in Malaysia. This time, with experience, preparation and a talented group of players, expectations are naturally higher.

Speaking at the reception held for the girls at the Tafawa Balewa Square Cricket Oval on Monday, Akpata said: "The first time we went, we did not have any experience. We didn't know what to expect, and we came sixth. So what do we expect this time? We know what to expect; we are better prepared, and we have a group of talented young stars," he said.

But the president was careful not to burden the players with a predetermined finishing position. His message was simpler—and perhaps more powerful: "Let's just give it 100 per cent."

The reception was attended by teammates, friends, members of the NCF board and supporters who gathered to celebrate a team that has once again put Nigerian women's cricket on the global stage.

But beyond the applause, photographs and celebration, the reception became a moment of recognition, reassurance and renewed ambition.

For the young players, Tanzania was more than a tournament. It was a test of character, unity and belief—and they passed it.

Saturday Premier League Fixtures

Aston Villa Vs Nott' Forest 15:00
Bournemouth Vs Brentford 15:00
Chelsea Vs Hull City 15:00
Crystal Palace Vs Ipswich 15:00
Liverpool Vs Fulham 15:00
Tottenham Vs Everton 17:30
Sunderland Vs Arsenal 20:00

Saturday Spanish La Liga

Racing Santander Vs Alavés 13:00
Osasuna Vs Espanyol 15:15
Athletic Club Vs Elche 17:30



NSC and NFF officials with FIFA President, Gianni Infantino and others during the visit to Zurich a few days ago

By Gowon Akpodonor

UNITED States-based former Green Eagles player, Francis Moniedafe, wants Nigeria football re-jigged for a better result.

Moniedafe was part of the then Green Eagles team alongside players like Godwin Odiye, Segun Odegbami, Mudashiru Lawal, Samuel Ojebode, Mike Nsuk, Joseph Erico, Thompson Usiyan and others, who became prominent names in Nigerian football. His association with the Green Eagles extended through the 1970s and into the period preceding Nigeria's historic triumph at the 1980 Africa Cup of Nations. Moniedafe traveled to the United States to further his education

U.S.-based Ex-Green Eagles Player, Moniedafe, Seeks 'New Life' For Nigeria Football

just before the 1980 AFCON, which Nigeria won on home soil.

His football journey continued at North Carolina State University, where he combined education with collegiate football and established himself as an accomplished defender.

Moniedafe remained involved in football in different capacities, including coaching, refereeing, administration and advocacy. He eventually became President of the Nigerian Ex-International Footballers Association (NE-IFA), an organisation comprising former Nigerian internationals, many of

whom are based in the United States.

He has said that the nation's former internationals living in the diaspora are prepared to become active participants in discussions surrounding the rebuilding and development of Nigerian football.

"The Nigerian Football Federation (NFF) has a monumental opportunity to drive change that has immense consequences for the country's football," he told The Guardian.

"However, opportunity does not equate to accomplishment. Action is what equates to accom-

plishment. Thus, the NFF and the Nigerian football family are being called to action. We, at the Nigeria Ex-International Footballers Association (NEIFA), join that call. "Years ago, we watched Nigeria's football begin a certain descent to death, asphyxiate towards irrelevance, and it seems to be all induced by legal suicide. In essence, the electoral regulations were hamstringing Nigeria's football. It regurgitated caliber of men who focused on simply returning to the office not based on progress made by the nation's football but based on a small circle of friendships with other football officials. Each year represented a further nail in the proverbial Nigerian football coffin.

Enugu City Marathon Was More Than A Race – Nilayo Boss

By Gowon Akpodonor

FOR organisers of the recently concluded second Enugu City Marathon, the event was 'more than a race.' "It was an economic driver and a platform for city branding," Managing Director, Nilayo Sports Management, Mrs. Yetunde Olopade, told The Guardian during the week.

"Beyond the economy, the Enugu City International marathon is a statement of identity. When the world watches Enugu run, the world learns Enugu's name, as a

safe, vibrant, and capable host city open for tourism, investment, and talent," Mrs. Olopade said.

She continues: "Year one (2025 edition) was our introduction to the world, and this Year two was our standard. With the prize structure, Enugu is ready to host world-class competitions."

For over 12 years now, Nilayo Sports Management Limited has been in the forefront of organising marathon races across major cities in Nigeria. From Lagos to Abeokuta, Kaduna, Abuja and Yenagoa, Ni-

layo has made marathon races a yearly routine for the people. For the organisation, Nigerians, both young and old must be part of the immense benefit of participating in marathon races.

It was the turn of Enugu State a few days ago, and the outcome was marvelous for both the runners and people of Enugu State.

It started in 2025, but Nilayo Sports decided to raise the bar for the 2026 edition tagged 'Tomorrow Runs Here,' which held on Saturday, August 29.

The 2026 race drew massive interest from elite runners, grassroots athletes and fun participants across Nigeria, Africa and the diaspora.

With over 3,000 athletes in attendance, the race lived up to its expectation with a tight contest among East African runners, who have proven over time their dominance in world marathon races.

Kenya's Edwin Kipyego and Ethiopia's Zenebe Aberu won the prizes in the male and female 42KM elite categories pocketing \$15,000 each. The second position winner in the elite category went home with \$10,000, while winners of the third, fourth and fifth positions also smile home with \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000 respectively.

Nigerian runners also showed their strength in the 10KM race, which was designed to encourage mass participation and unearth homegrown road-running talent. The Nigerian winner of the 42km pocketed N3 million; second position, N2 million; third position, N1.5m; fourth place, N1 million, and the fifth position winner got N500,000.

In the 10km marathon (for Nigerian runners only), the first position winner went home with N1 million, second position N750,000, third position N500,000, fourth position N300,000 and fifth position N200,000.



Marathon runners at the second Enugu City International Marathon on August 29, 2026 The CEO, Nilayo Sports Management, Mrs Yetunde Olopade (right) spoke on economic benefits of Enugu City Marathon



Prof. Kimse Amaebi
Biye Okoko

Sunrise: 28th July 1940 - Sunset: 13th September 2020

Six YEARS WITHOUT YOU



Dad, we miss you deeply. Everyday there's always something that reminds us of you.

Thank you for teaching us the beauty of a rich legacy.

Your words shaped us, but your life well lived showed us the true meaning of impact.

With all our love

Franebi, Eriye & Deniye

We love you dearly.





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#2027: How Your Voter Card Can Reshape Nigeria...

'A Card Smaller Than Your ATM, Stronger Than Their War Chest'

IN January 2023, I wrote a piece in this same *Inside Stuff* column titled "Your PVC is your power of mass destruction." I was not calling for violence. I was calling for votes. I argued then that instead of agonising on Twitter (now X), instead of cursing on radio, instead of protesting without a plan, young Nigerians should preserve and use their PVCs as weapons to "blow away" the vices that have held Nigeria down: incompetence, corruption, impunity, and the politics of stomach infrastructure. No one was sure that call was heeded as we had in May 2023 what we are to vote for or against on January 16, 2027. Their offerings so far are on the 2027 ballot. But specifically, an off-season election, in Osun state last month, (August 9, 2026) that theory was tested and it worked. Federal power. Incumbency. Bullion vans. Mega rallies. And behold, the people won. The majesty of people power!

The pre-election mega rally in Osun state last month didn't change the result. Money flew. Helicopters landed. But the PVC spoke louder. That is the lesson: There are no polling booths on social media. The BBC generation can make all the noise online, but on election day, only the card counts.

This simple voter-education piece is about that power we shouldn't discount. That there is power in your Permanent Voter Card (PVC). The power in your participation. And how together, they can defeat 'transactional leadership' that has held Nigeria down, reproachfully.

Here is the message of hope to all of us: "A PVC is not plastic. It is a contract. It is a gun without bullets. It is a veto without violence."

What is transactional leadership and why it thrives?

Before we talk about the cure, let's name the disease. Transactional leadership in Nigeria is simple: "I give you rice, you give me your vote. I tar 1km of road, you forget three years of failure. I pay your WAEC fees, you ignore my looting." It runs on three pillars:

1. **The economy of desperation:** When food inflation is 40%, when energy tariffs chase Dangote and BUA out of business, when GDP data is used as "escapism" from the reality of multidimensional poverty, people become cheap to buy. A bag of rice on eve of election looks like salvation. Or so it seems.

2. **The theatre of mega rallies:** Planes. Drums. Nollywood stars. Billboards from Abuja to Lagos. The goal is intimidation: "We are too big to lose. But #Osun 2022 and 2026 proved it: Mega rallies did not translate to mega votes.

3. **The weaponisation of apathy:** The system wants you tired. "All politicians are the same." "My vote won't count." "INEC will rig it." Complacency is the mother of voter apathy. And apathy is the father and birthplace of transactional leadership. Transactional leaders don't need your ideas. They need your silence. But your PVC destroys that silence.

The PVC – An anatomy of a weapon: What is a Permanent Voter Card?

It is not just ID. It is leverage. It is equality. In the polling booth, the billionaire and the *okada* rider have one vote each. No aide. No convoy. That is the only place in Nigeria where power is truly 1-man-1-vote.



It is memory: Your PVC remembers what GDP press releases forget: The price of garri. The hours without light. The child out of school. You bring that memory to the ballot. **It is mass destruction of bad systems:** I can repeat this. One PVC cannot change Nigeria. But 93 million PVCs can. 93 million PVCs can blow away:

- A minister who thinks Twitter is governance
- A governor who uses poverty as campaign strategy
- A party that thinks incumbency is immunity

It is proof of citizenship: In 2023, INEC recorded over 93.4 million registered voters. In the Osun off-season election 2026, voter turnout beat projections because people believed their card mattered. The card is not magic. It is math. And math defeats money when people show up.

Osun 2026 and the proof – When people power defeated federal might:

Let's talk about that off-season election. The ruling party came with everything: Federal might. State resources. Mega rallies. Traditional rulers. "Stomach infrastructure." The opposition came with one thing: organization + angry voters with PVCs. Result: The vigilant people won because: Voters were competent in civic engagement. They knew polling units. They came early. They guarded votes. They were not intimidated. Helicopters did not vote. Drones did not vote. People did. Yes, people voted issues, not stomach. They rejected GDP grammar and asked about food prices, school fees, hospital bills. That is the template.

It was not perfect. But it proved one thing: Incumbency + Money < PVCs + Anger + Organization. That is how not to be intimidated by rallies.

The social media trap: - "NO polling booths on Facebook/Twitter (x)"

Let's address the BBC generation directly. You are loud. You are smart. You are global. You trend #EndSARS. You trend #NotTooYoungToRun. You trend everything. But my 2023 warning still stands: There are no polling booths on social media. 'Likes' don't

elect councilors. 'Retweets' don't pass budgets. 'Threads' don't appoint judges. **What happens?** We substitute activism for voting. We protest for three days, then stay home on election day. We assume virality = victory. One million tweets ≠ one million votes. We get surprised by results. "How did he win?" He won because his voters came out.

This is not to shame online engagement. Social media is for agenda-setting. But the ballot is for decision-making. The transactional leader loves that you will tweet for four (4) years and vote for four (4) hours. Break the cycle.

—**The enemies of PVC power:** If your PVC is a weapon, these are the enemies trying to jam it: **Enemy 1: Complacency** – "I'm not interested in politics." Translation: "I'm interested in the consequences of politics." Complacency hands power to those who show up. **Enemy 2: cynicism** – "All of them are the same." No. They are not. Check records. Check budgets. Check debates. Cynicism is a luxury poor people cannot afford.

Enemy 3: intimidation – Mega rallies. Thugs. "We will deal with you."

Osun 2026 proved that intimidation fails when people decide. Come in groups. Vote. Stay. Watch.

Enemy 4: escapism with data – "GDP grew by 3%." But garri grew by 60%. Don't let statistics gaslight your lived reality. Vote that reality. Read what this authority, **Aaron Levenstein** says about statistics: *'Statistics are like bikinis. What they reveal is suggestive. But what they conceal is vital.'*

How to use your PVC as weapon of mass destruction: This is the practical manual: Preserve it. Laminate it. Photograph it. Know your polling unit.

Check INEC portal two (2) weeks before election. A lost PVC on election day is a vote for the other side you don't like.

Mobilise five (5) people: You + 4 friends, family, church/mosque members. Adopt this "PVC Pact": We will go together. We will stay together. We will vote issues. 93 million voters start with five (5).

Vote competence, not compensation: Reject rice. Reject N5,000. Ask 3 questions:

1. What is your plan for food inflation? 2. What is your plan for electricity tariffs? 3. Show me your track record. If they can't answer, your PVC should answer for them. **Stay and protect your vote:** Don't vote and run. Stay. Watch counting. Take pictures of results. Upload to IReV. Transactional leaders thrive in darkness. Your telephone is the light.

Hold after election: The PVC is not just for voting. It is for holding.

Town halls. FOI requests. Recall processes. The card gives you moral authority for four years. The economics of participation: Let's talk money, because transactional leaders do.

Cost of NOT voting:

- 40% food inflation

- N225/kWh electricity tariff
- Companies leaving Nigeria
- ASUU strikes
- Insecurity

Cost of voting:

Transport to polling unit. Four (4) hours of your time. Which is more expensive? When big businesses leave because of energy crisis, they don't call you. But they are affected by who you vote for. When multidimensional poverty rises, it is not because of GDP. It is because of choices made by people you put in office. Your PVC is an economic tool. Use it.

Defeating transactional leadership – The 2027 blueprint: 2027 is coming. Here is how people power wins: 1. **Early registration:** Don't wait till December 2026. Get your PVC now. Transfer. Update. 2. **Issue-based campaigns:** Don't ask "which party?" Ask "what plan?" Plan for agriculture. Plan for power. Plan for jobs. No plan, no vote. That is how to enthrone transformative or servant leadership.

3. **Kill the mega rally myth:** Osun taught us: rallies don't vote. People do.

Organise house-to-house. WhatsApp groups. Campus town halls.

4. **Monitor the money:** Track campaign finance. Ask: "Where did this money come from?" Transactional leadership is funded. Expose the funders.

5. **Build post-election accountability:** Elected them? Good. Now track them. Use BudgIT. Use Tracka. Use your PVC as license to question.

A message of hope to the young Nigerian: To the one tweeting from London, Toronto, and Lekki: We see you. We need you. But remember: Diaspora remittances build houses. Diaspora votes build nations. If you have a PVC, come home to use it.

If you don't, get someone with one to use it well. Don't let "japa" become "ja pa da" – run and abandon. Nigeria is not a Twitter space. It is 240 million people who wake up and need light, food, and safety. Your PVC is how you speak to them.

The contract: Your PVC is a contract between you and Nigeria. It says:

"I will not agonise. I will organise. I will not complain. I will choose. I will not be bought. I will be the buyer - of leadership." Transactional leaders want you to believe you are powerless. Osun 2026 proved you are not. History will prove you are not.

Believe me. Have faith in the truth they always hide in a grave, which doesn't stay there: **that the people power in PVC and participation is real.** It is the only power that can defeat incompetence, corruption, and the politics of "take this and forget."

So preserve the card. Use the card. Guard the card. Reason? In 2027, the ballot will not ask for your followers. It will ask for your thumbprint. And that thumbprint is the loudest noise you will ever make. It is about our country. Believe me. Nigeria can fulfill destiny despite the present danger. But let's defeat complacency first. Let's participate in 2027 elections.

Action Points: 1. **Check your PVC status:** <http://cvr.inecnigeria.org>. Pledge 5: Get 5 people to vote with you. Hashtags: #PVCisPower #NoPollingBoothsOnTwitter #DefeatTransactionalLeadership.

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