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'New Breeds' Ambush Atiku As Light Dims On Opposition's Search For Single Presidential Contender





SCAN TO READ GUARDIAN LIFE

UP & DOING/PAGE 14

NNPC Unveils Smart Stations To Reshape Nigeria's Fuel Retail Sector



The Guardian WEEKEND

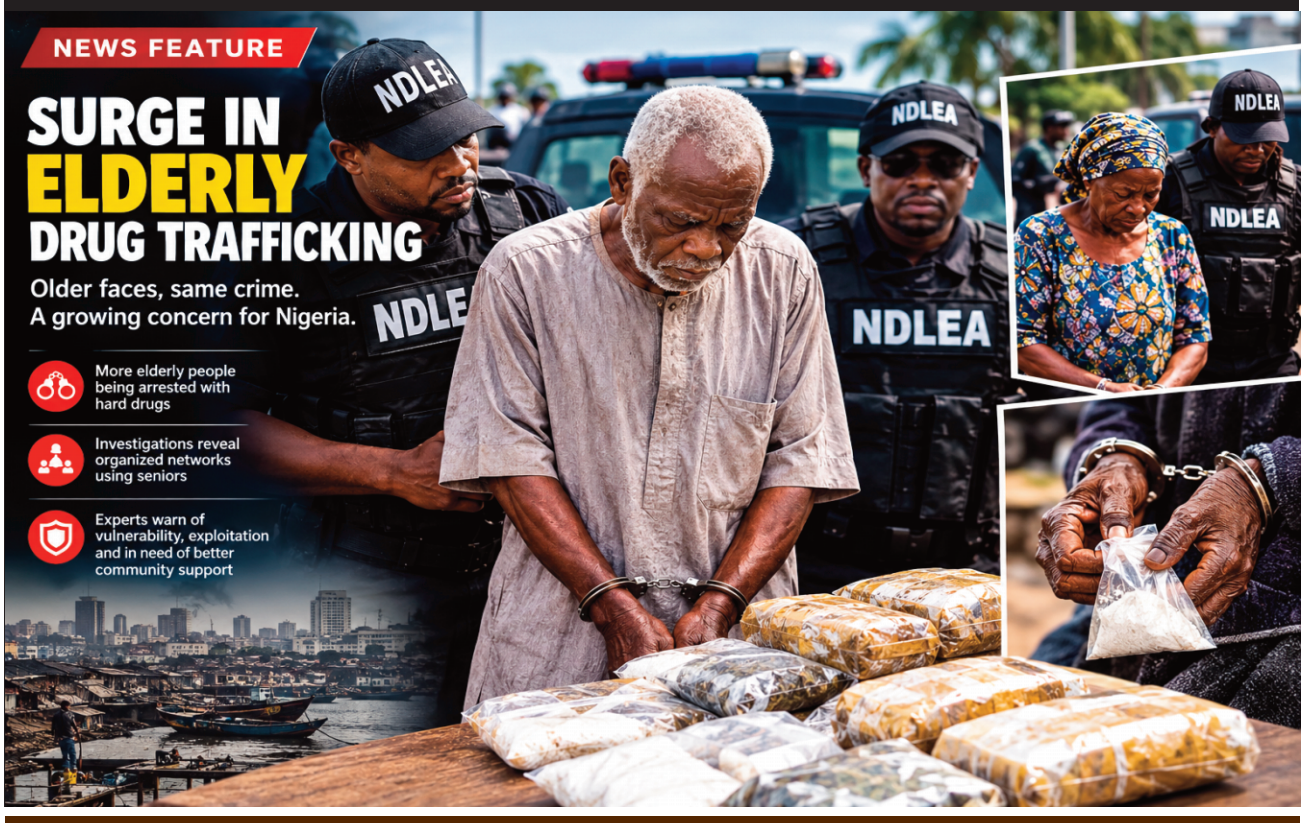
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SEC APPROVED RECEIVING AGENTS AND ELECTRONIC APPLICATION CHANNELS

BANKS

Access Bank PLC Citibank Nigeria Limited Ecobank Nigeria Limited Fidelity Bank PLC	First Bank of Nigeria Limited First City Monument Bank Limited Globus Bank Limited Guaranty Trust Bank Limited	Jaiz Bank Keystone Bank Limited Lotus Bank Parallex Bank Limited	Polaris Bank Limited Premium Trust Bank ProvidusUnity Bank PLC	Stanbic IBTC Bank Limited Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria Limited Sterling Bank Limited	Taj Bank Union Bank of Nigeria PLC SunTrust Bank Nigeria Limited	United Bank for Africa PLC Wema Bank PLC Zenith Bank PLC

ISSUING HOUSES, STOCKBROKERS AND OTHERS

ISSUING HOUSES

Vetiva Advisory Services Limited
FirstCap Limited
Stanbic IBTC Capital Limited
Chapel Hill Denham Advisory Limited
Absa Capital Markets Nigeria Limited
Afrinvest Capital Limited
CardinalStone Partners Limited
Comercio Partners Capital Limited
Cordros Advisory Services Limited
Coronation Merchant Bank Limited
Cowry Asset Management Limited
Ecobank Development Company Limited
FCMB Capital Markets Limited
Finmal Finance Services Limited
First Ally Advisory Limited
FSDH Capital Limited
Futureview Financial Services Limited
Greenwich Capital Limited
Meristem Capital Limited
Quantum Zenith Capital & Investments Limited
Quest Merchant Bank Limited
Rand Merchant Bank Nigeria Limited
Renaissance Securities (Nigeria) Limited
SCM Capital Limited
Tiddo Securities Limited
United Capital PLC

STOCKBROKERS

Absa Securities Nigeria Limited
Afrinvest Securities Limited
Alpha10 Global Market Limited
Anchoria Securities Limited
Apel Asset Limited
APT Securities & Funds Limited
ARM Securities Limited
Arthur Stevens Asset Management Limited
Associated Asset Managers Limited
Atlass Portfolio Limited
Ava Securities Limited
Bauchi Investment Corporation Securities Limited
Belfry Investment & Securities Limited
Bestworth Assets & Trust Limited
BGL Securities Limited
Blue Marina Securities Limited.
Calyx Securities Limited
Camry Securities Limited
Capital Assets Limited
Capital Bancorp Plc
Capital Express Securities Limited
Capital Trust Brokers Limited Cardinal Stone Securities Limited
Cashville Investments & Securities Limited
CDL Capital Markets Limited
Centre Point Investment Limited
Century Securities Limited
Chapel Hill Denham Securities Limited
Chartwell Securities Limited
Citi Investment Capital Limited
City Code Trust & Invest Company Limited
Compass Investments & Securities Limited
Cordros Securities Limited
Core Securities Limited
Coronation Securities Limited
Cowry Securities Limited
Crane Securities Limited
Crossworld Securities Limited
Crown Capital Limited
CSL Stockbrokers Limited
De-Lords Securities Limited
DLM Securities Limited
Dominion Trust Limited
DSU Brokerage Services Limited
Dunbell Securities Limited
Dynamic Portfolio Limited
ECL Asset Management Limited
EDC Securities Limited
Edgefield Capital Management Limited
EFG Hermes Nigeria Limited
El-Elyon Alliance and Securities Limited
Equity Capital Solutions Limited
Eurocomm Securities Limited
Express Portfolio Services Limited
Falcon Securities Limited
FBC Trust & Securities Limited
FCSL Asset Management Company Limited
Fidelity Finance Company Limited
Financial & Analytics Capital Limited
Financial Trust Company Nigeria Limited
Finmal Finance Services Limited
First Integrated Capital Management Limited
First Securities Brokers Limited
FIS Securities Limited
Foresight Securities & Investment Limited
Forte Financial Limited
Forthright Securities & Investments Limited
Fortress Capital Limited
FSDH Capital Limited
FSL Invest Limited
Fundvine Capital & Securities Limited
Futureview Securities Limited
GDL Stockbrokers Limited
Gem Assets Management Limited
Gidauniya Invest & Sec Limited
Global Asset Management (Nig) Limited
Globalview Capital Limited
Golden Securities Limited
Goldenbridge Stockbrokers Limited
Gravitas Stockbrokers Limited
Greenwich Securities Limited
Gruene Capital Limited
GTI Securities Limited
Harmony Investment & Securities Limited
Heartbeat Investments Limited
Hedge Securities and Investments Company Limited
Heritage Capital Markets Limited
ICMG Securities Limited
Icon Stockbrokers Limited
Imperial Assets Managers Limited
Innova Securities Limited
Integrated Trust & Investments Limited
Interstate Securities Limited
Investment One Stockbrokers Int'l Limited
Investors & Trust Company Limited
ISAM Securities Limited
ITIS Securities Limited
Kapital Care Trust & Securities Limited
Kedari Capital Limited
Kinley Securities Limited
Kofana Securities & Investment Limited
Kundila Finance Services Limited
Lambeth Capital Limited
Lead Securities & Investment Limited
Lighthouse Asset Management Limited
Magnartis Finance & Investment Limited
Mainstreet Bank Securities Limited
Maven Asset Management Limited
MBC Securities Limited
Mega Equities Limited
Meristem Stockbrokers Limited
Midas Stockbrokers Limited
Milestone Capital Management Limited
Mission Securities Limited
Molten Trust Limited
Morgan Capital Securities Limited
Mountain Investment & Securities Limited
Network Capital Limited
Networth Securities & Finance Limited
Newdevco Investment & Securities Limited
Nigerian Stockbrokers Limited
Norrenberger Securities Limited
Nova Finance & Securities Limited
Osborne Capital Markets Limited
PAC Securities Limited
Parthian Securities Limited
Pilot Securities Limited
Pinefields Investment Services Limited
PIPC Securities Limited
Pivot Capital Limited
Planet Capital Limited
Portfolio Advisers Limited
Primewealth Capital Limited
Prominent Securities Limited
PSL Capital Limited
Pyramid Securities Limited
QCapital Limited
Quantum Zenith Securities & Investments Limited
Rainbow Securities Limited
Readings Investment Limited
Regency Assets Management Limited
Rencap Securities (Nig) Limited
Resort Securities Limited
Reward Investment & Service Limited
Rostrum Investment & Securities Limited
Rowet Capital Management Limited
Royal Crest Finance Limited
Sankore Securities Limited
Santrust Securities Limited
Securities & Capital Management Company Limited
Securities Africa Financial Limited
Security Swaps Limited
Shalom Investment & Securities Limited
Shelong Investment Limited
Sigma Securities Limited
Signet Investment & Securities Limited
Skyview Capital Limited
Smadac Securities Limited
Solid Rock Securities & Investment Plc
Spring Board Trust & Investment Limited
Spring Trust & Securities Limited
Stanbic IBTC Stockbrokers Limited
Standard Union Securities Limited
StoneX Financial Nigeria Limited
The Bridge Securities Limited
The Brook Securities Limited
Tiddo Securities Limited
Tomil Trust Limited
Topmost Securities Limited
Tower Securities & Investment Company Limited
Trade link Securities Limited
Traders Trust & Investment Company Limited
Transworld Investment & Securities Limited
Trinity Securities Limited
Trustbanc Capital Management Limited
Trusthouse Investments Limited
TRW Stockbrokers Limited
Tyndale Securities Limited
UIDC Securities Limited
UNEX Capital Limited
United Capital Securities Limited
Valmon Securities Limited
Valueline Securities & Investments Limited
Vetiva Securities Limited
WCM Capital Limited
WSTC Securities Limited
Zedcrest Securities Limited
Zion Stockbrokers & Securities Limited

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION CHANNELS

S/N	Financial Intermediaries	
1.	Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) Invest Portal	https://www.invest.ngxgroup.com/login
2.	Access Bank Plc Portal	https://stocks.accessbankplc.com
3.	Ecobank Nigeria Limited Portal	https://www.ecobank.com/
4.	Fidelity Bank Plc Portal	https://online.fidelitybank.ng/#/login
5.	First Bank of Nigeria Limited Portal	https://www.firstbanknigeria.com/home
6.	First City Monument Bank Limited Portal	https://fcmb.com/
7.	Globus Bank Limited Portal	https://globusbank.com/
8.	Guaranty Trust Bank Limited Portal	https://dangote-ipo.squadinc.co/
9.	Jaiz Bank Plc Portal	https://publicoffer.jaizbankplc.com
10.	LOTUS Bank Limited Portal	https://www.keystonebankng.com
11.	Keystone Bank Limited Portal	https://iposelfservice-dev.lotusbank.com
12.	PremiumTrust Bank Limited Portal	https://premiumtrustbank.com/dangoteipo
13.	ProvidusUnity Bank Plc Portal	https://ngx-offer.providusbank.com/
14.	Stanbic IBTC Bank Limited Portal	https://smebanking.stanbicibtc.com/auth/login
15.	Sterling Bank Limited Portal	https://sterling.ng
16.	TAJBank Limited Portal	https://ibank.tajbank.com/login
17.	Union Bank of Nigeria Plc Portal	https://uniononline.unionbankng.com/OnlineBanking/
18.	United Bank for Africa Plc Portal	https://www.ubagroup.com/
19.	Wema Bank Plc Portal	https://www.alat.ng/
20.	Zenith Bank Plc Portal	https://www.zenithbank.com
21.	**InvestNaija** (Chapel Hill Denham Securities Limited)	https://app.investnaija.com
22.	**Vetiva Invest** (Vetiva Securities Limited)	https://vetiva-invest.com/
23.	**Afrinvestor** (Afrinvest Securities Limited)	https://www.afrinvestor.com/
24.	**AnchoriaApp** (Anchoria Securities Limited)	https://app.anchoriaonline.com/

S/N	Financial Intermediaries	
25.	**Bancorp TradePal** (Bancorp Securities Limited)	https://www.capitalbancorpngonline.com/Bancorp_TradePal/login
26.	**CS Alpha** (CardinalStone Securities Limited)	https://app.cardinalstone.com/
27.	**Coronation Wealth** (Coronation Securities Limited)	https://coronationwealth.ng/
28.	First Securities Brokers Limited Portal	https://firstinvestipo.first-securities.com
29.	**Advanta** (FSDH Capital Limited)	https://webapp.fsdhcapital.com/investments/ipo
30.	**FutureView Invest** (Futureview Securities Limited)	https://futureviewgroup.com/stockbroking-securities/
31.	**InvestNow** (United Capital Securities Limited)	https://www.investnow.ng/login
32.	**Meritrade** (Meristem Stockbrokers Limited)	https://dangoteipo.meristemng.com
33.	MorganCapital Securities Limited Portal	https://www.morgancapitalgroup.com/
34.	**i-Invest** (Parthian Partners Limited)	https://www.i-investng.com/
35.	**Tiddo Invest** (Tiddo Securities Limited)	https://dpripo.tiddosecurities.com/
36.	**Zedcrest Wealth** (Zedcrest Securities Limited)	https://app.zedcrestwealth.com/register
37.	**SabiVest** (Africa Prudential Plc)	https://marketplace.sabivest.com/
38.	**Bamboo** (Bamboo Systems Technology Limited) *Sponsored by Lambeth Capital Limited*	https://app.investbamboo.com/signup
39.	**Flutterwave** (Flutterwave Technology Solutions Limited) *Sponsored by Chapel Hill Denham Securities Limited*	https://flutterwave.com/ng/
40	**Ladder** (Ladder Technology Systems Limited) *Sponsored by Chapel Hill Denham Securities Limited*	https://ladder.africa/sign-up
41.	**MTN MoMo** (MoMo Payment Service Bank Limited) *Sponsored by Chapel Hill Denham Securities Limited*	https://www.momo.ng/
42.	**Moniepoint** (TeamApt Limited) *Sponsored by Vetiva Securities Limited*	https://teamaptltd.com/

S/N	Financial Intermediaries	
43.	**Paga** (Pagatech Limited) *Sponsored by Chapel Hill Denham Securities Limited*	https://www.mypaga.com/
44.	**Payaza** (Payaza Africa Limited) *Sponsored by Vetiva Securities Limited*	https://payaza.africa/
45.	**PiggyVest** (Piggytech Global Limited) *Sponsored by Chapel Hill Denham Securities Limited*	https://www.piggyvest.com
46.	**Airtel Smartcash** (Smartcash Payment Service Bank Limited) *Sponsored by Chapel Hill Denham Securities Limited*	https://smartcashpsb.ng/
47.	**we.yan** (we.yan Nigeria Limited) *Sponsored by Chapel Hill Denham Securities Limited*	https://www.weyan.app/
48.	**Cowrywise** (Cowrywise Financial Technology Limited) *Sponsored by Meristem Stockbrokers Limited*	https://my.cowrywise.com/login
49.	**MyInvestar** (First Ally Asset Management Limited) *Sponsored by First Securities Brokers Limited*	https://myinvestar.ng/
50.	**Revve** (Linearsend Inc.) *Sponsored by Edgefield Capital Management Limited*	https://www.revveme.com/
51.	**Paystro** (Paystro UK Limited) *Sponsored by Meristem Stockbrokers Limited*	https://www.paystro.com/
52.	**Remita** (SystemSpecs Holdings Limited)	https://login.remita.net/remita/home.do
53.	**VBank.ng** (VFD Microfinance Bank Plc) *Sponsored by Anchoria Securities Limited*	https://vbank.ng/
54.	Ecobank Transactional Incorporated *Sponsored by Ecobank Nigeria Limited*	Eligible African Investors should contact Ecobank Transactional Incorporated in the relevant jurisdiction
55.	SBG Securities (Pty) Limited *Sponsored by Stanbic IBTC Stockbrokers Limited*	Eligible African Investors should contact SBG Securities (Pty) Limited in the relevant jurisdiction

Retail Investors shall submit applications electronically through any of the Receiving Agents or Electronic Application Channels listed.

Qualified Investors shall also submit applications electronically/physically through any of the Receiving Agents or electronically through Electronic Application Channels listed

*The above table is based on electronic application channels that have successfully concluded an independent Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing (VAPT) exercise and have executed sponsorship agreements (as applicable) as at the date of this Prospectus

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Groups Task FG On Deaths Of 37 Alleged Illegal Miners In NSCDC Custody

From **Terhemba Daka, Ameh Ochojila, Joel Oladele, Johnson Eyiangho, Ernest Nzor** and **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja

PUBLIC anger has intensified following the deaths of 37 suspected illegal miners in NSCDC custody in Niger State, with rights groups and political organisations call for a transparent probe into how the detainees died. While authorities have said investigations and autopsies are being conducted to establish the cause of death, concerns over the circumstances of the detention have deepened demands for accountability and answers from government.

In response, President Bola Tinubu has ordered a full, transparent and unhindered investigation into the deaths of 37 persons suspected to be illegal miners who died in the custody of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in Minna, Niger State.

This was even as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said it has commenced a preliminary investigation into the deaths, while the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) and Hope Behind Bars Africa demanded independent inquiries into the incident.

The Federal Government has also assured that nobody found culpable would be shielded, with the Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, deploying a high-powered team to Niger State to investigate the circumstances surrounding the deaths.

The President, who expressed deep concern over the reported deaths, said no Nigerian should lose his or her life while in government custody as a result of negligence, abuse, inhumane treatment or dereliction of duty.

'Deaths Of Miners Amount To Grave Failure Of State'

The deaths occurred after the suspects were arrested during enforcement operations around the M.I. Wushishi/Lukoto axis of Niger State on September 15 and 16.

In a statement on Friday, Tinubu said the circumstances surrounding the deaths must be thoroughly established, with any official found to have contributed to them through action, abuse or negligence held accountable in accordance with the law.

"While the Federal Government would continue to combat illegal mining and other criminal activities across the country, enforcement operations must be conducted strictly within the law and with full respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of every person in custody.

"The fact that these individuals were suspected of illegal mining does not in any way remove their right to life, dignity and humane treatment while in government custody.

"Government will not tolerate mass deaths arising from official negligence, dereliction of duty or failure by public officials to protect the lives placed under their care," he said.

The president directed that the investigation should cover the circumstances of the arrests, the condition of the detainees when they were taken into custody, the conditions under which they were detained, the number of persons held at the facility, the medical attention provided to them and the events that led to their deaths.

He further directed the relevant authorities to ensure that the investigation was comprehensive, transparent and free from interference.

Tinubu also warned that administrative sanctions against officers implicated in the incident must not be allowed to replace criminal investigation or prosecution where the evidence establishes culpability.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, said the Federal Government regarded the protection of the lives, dignity and fundamental rights of every Nigerian as a solemn responsibility.

Idris conveyed the condolences of the Federal Government to the Governor of Niger State, Mohammed Umaru Bago, the government and people of the state, traditional leaders in Wushishi and the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives.

He said the circumstances surrounding the deaths required a thorough, transparent and impartial investigation.

According to him, the Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, had ordered the suspension of the Niger State Commandant of the NSCDC, Suberu Siyaka Aniviye, and directed a full investigation into the incident.

He, however, cautioned against prejudging the outcome of the investigation, saying the government's responsibility was to establish the facts and ensure that justice was served.

Similarly, Alake expressed profound shock over the deaths and extended his condolences to Governor Bago, the bereaved families and the people of Niger State.

He said the ministerial team deployed to the state would collaborate with other investigators to establish the facts surrounding the incident and provide a comprehensive report.

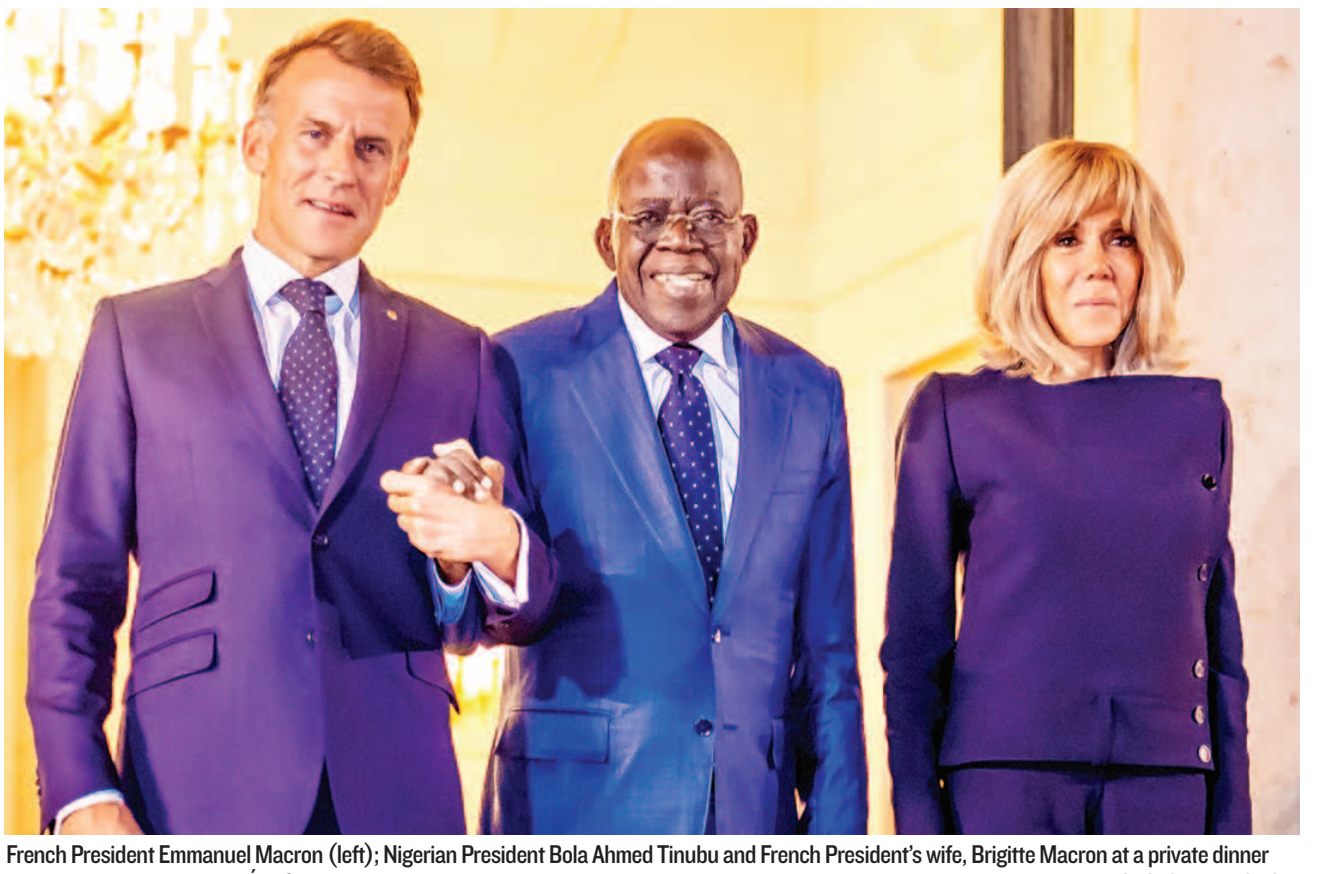
The NHRC also commenced a preliminary investigation into the deaths, with its Executive Secretary, Tony Ojukwu, SAN, saying the incident raised serious human rights concerns.

Ojukwu said the deaths occurred after the suspects were arrested during enforcement operations in the Wushishi-Lukoto area on September 15 and 16, adding that the bodies of the deceased were subsequently deposited at the General Hospital, Minna.

He condemned the incident and expressed concern over the circumstances surrounding the deaths, while commiserating with the families of the deceased and the people of Niger State.

The NHRC boss directed the commission to establish the cause of death and called for an independent forensic autopsy, as well as the preservation of all relevant evidence.

He also urged investigations being conducted by the Minister of Interior and the NSCDC to be transparent, thorough and consistent with international standards governing potentially unlawful deaths in custody.



French President Emmanuel Macron (left); Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and French President's wife, Brigitte Macron at a private dinner for President Tinubu at the Élysée Palace, in France... on Friday. PHOTO: STATE HOUSE

Troops Kill Four Terrorists, Foil ISWAP Attacks On Borno Bases

By **Helen Oji**

TROOPS of the Northeast Joint Task Force (JTF), Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK), have killed four terrorists and foiled attacks by Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) fighters on Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) in Borno State.

The attacks were foiled at the Gajiram FOB in Nganzai Local Council and the Mairari FOB in Guzamala Local Council of the state.

OPHK Media Information Officer, Capt. Mohammed Goni, disclosed this in a statement on Friday, saying the operations also led to the surrender of two Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) terrorists, including a Qaid (commander), with weapons. He said four terrorists' corpses were recovered during subsequent exploitation, alongside AK-47 rifles, magazines, ammunition, RPG bombs and a camcorder, among other items.

Goni said troops who sustained injuries during the engagements were stabilised and airlifted to hospital for treatment. He said the terrorists advancing towards FOB Gajiram on September 17 were detected early by troops supported by Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets.

"Troops immediately adopted appropriate defensive measures, while the Air Component OPHK provided close air support. Faced with the coordinated response, the terrorists withdrew from the vicinity of the location into adjoining areas," he said.

According to him, ISWAP terrorists subsequently attacked FOB Mairari later that night but were met with stiff resistance from troops, supported by close air support from the Air Component. "The attack was successfully contained, inflicting casualties on the terrorists, and maintained the integrity of the FOB," he said.

Goni added that the Commander, Sector 3 OPHK, subsequently conducted a post-engagement assessment of the affected locations to evaluate the situation, commend the troops and coordinate follow-on actions.

NAFDAC Links Ondo Mass Deaths To Methanol-contaminated Alcoholic Concoctions

By **Ijeoma Nwanosike**

48 Deaths, 15 Arrested, 182 Cases Recorded

THE National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has reported that 48 people have died after consuming suspected locally prepared alcoholic and herbal concoctions in parts of Ondo State, with preliminary laboratory findings indicating high concentrations of toxic methanol in samples of the suspected drinks.

The agency, in an update by its Director-General, Prof Mojisola Adeyeye said 182 cases had been recorded, with five victims now totally blind and two others partially blind.

The incident, which was initially reported in early September affected residents of Odigbo Town, Araromi-Obu, New Town, Odole, Okele, Orita Odigbo and Oniparaga in Odigbo Local Council. The report also listed Irele Local Council among the affected locations.

According to NAFDAC, the number of reported deaths initially stood at 31, comprising 20 in Odigbo Town and 11 in Araromi-Obu, but increased as investigations and surveillance progressed.

The agency said 90 affected persons had been admitted and subsequently discharged, while six remained hospitalised. Another 31 were treated as outpatients, while the remaining cases involved varying degrees of illness and complications.

NAFDAC said the clinical features reported among affected persons included headaches, generalised body weakness and pain, visual disturbances, difficulty in breathing and altered consciousness, with some cases deteriorating rapidly.

The agency disclosed that 15 people had so far been arrested in connection with the suspected production, sale and distribution of the implicated locally produced alcoholic and herbal beverages.

As part of its investigation, NAFDAC said samples of the suspected concoctions had undergone laboratory examination and toxicological studies to determine their chemical composition and identify potentially toxic substances, adulterants, contaminants or undeclared ingredients.

It said toxicological, microbiological and chemical screening was conducted on 15 unlabeled samples, while acute oral toxicity tests were performed on laboratory mice in accordance with its standard operating procedures and OECD guidelines.

The preliminary findings showed that all the samples caused critical illness in the test animals, while approximately 50 per cent mortality was recorded in six of the 15 samples analysed.

NAFDAC said the critically ill mice recovered after 24 hours of administration, but noted that there was a possibility that they could die if exposed to a second dose.

The agency further disclosed that chemical screening detected Cannabis indica in 11 samples, while gas chromatography confirmed the presence of high concentrations of methanol.

It explained that methanol was a highly toxic substance capable of causing severe health complications, including blindness, organ failure and death.

According to NAFDAC, the combination of high mortality recorded during animal testing and the confirmed presence of methanol strongly suggested that the samples posed a serious public health risk.

However, it stressed that the findings remained preliminary and required further confirmatory analyses.

The agency said additional testing was ongoing to quantify the methanol concentration and identify other possible toxic agents in the suspected drinks.

News

Stakeholders Plot To Unlock Nigeria's $100b Tourism, Creative Economy Opportunity

By **Daniel Anazia**

STAKEHOLDERS in Nigeria's tourism and creative industries have called for stronger public-private partnerships, and investment to unlock the country's $100 billion tourism and creative economy opportunity.

Speaking at the Ember to Remember National Private Sector and Stakeholders' Conference, held under the theme, From Celebration to Economic Growth, Unlocking Nigeria's $100 Billion Tourism and Creative Economy Opportunity, the stakeholders said the country could turn increased economic activities during the ember months into jobs, revenue and sustainable growth.

The conference brought together investors, technology innovators, hospitality operators, cultural entrepreneurs and government officials to discuss ways of boosting end-of-year economic activities, domestic tourism and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

In her keynote address, the Minister of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Hannatu Musa Musawa, described the conference as timely, noting that the ember months remain a vibrant period for commerce, entertainment and movement of people in Nigeria.

Musawa said Nigeria possesses cultural and creative assets, including music, fashion, food, heritage, festivals and hospitality, which could be harnessed to drive economic growth.

She said millions of Nigerians and visitors travel, celebrate, reconnect and spend time across cities and communities, particularly between September and December.

According to her, activities associated with the ember months, including Detty December, carnivals, festivals and family homecomings, could be structured to create jobs, generate revenue and improve Nigeria's global visibility.

The minister said the focus of the initiative was to convert increased economic activities during the period into sustainable economic value by creating jobs, attracting investment and strengthening tourism's contribution to the national economy.

A major highlight of the conference was the unveiling of MyCityApp and MyLagosApp, digital lifestyle and city-discovery platforms designed to connect users with events, restaurants, hotels, nightlife, tourist attractions and verified local businesses across Nigerian cities.

Musawa said the Federal Government was committed to creating an enabling environment for the creative and tourism economy to thrive, stressing that technology would play a central role.

She said the platforms would help tourists find hospitality and cultural experiences while giving small businesses greater visibility. The minister urged stakeholders to take ownership of Nigeria's destination marketing, adding that the ministry would continue to partner with private sector initiatives aimed at promoting culture, boosting domestic tourism and projecting the country's soft power.

Also speaking, the Chief Executive Officer of *My City App*, Ifeoma Chukwu, said the platform was developed to address difficulties faced by residents and visitors in finding trusted businesses, services and experiences across Nigerian cities.



Secretary to Oyo State Government, Prof. Musibau Babatunde (left); Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde; Deputy Governor, Alhaji Bayo Lawal; Head of Service of the state, Dr Adenike Fasina, during a meeting between the Governor and Senior Management State Civil Servants in Ibadan... on Friday. PHOTO: NAN

Makinde Extends Oyo Workers' Wage Award By Three Months

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

OYO State Governor, 'Seyi Makinde, has extended the wage award for state workers by another three months, assuring civil servants that the transportation subsidy introduced by his administration to cushion economic hardship will also continue.

Makinde announced the extension, on Friday, shortly after resuming official duties at the Governor's Office, Agodi, Ibadan, following his annual leave. His deputy, Bayo Lawal, had served as acting governor during his absence.

Addressing civil and public servants who welcomed him back to office, Makinde said the decision to extend the wage award was necessitated by prevailing economic challenges confronting workers and residents of the state.

He said his administration remained concerned about workers' welfare, particularly amid rising costs and pressure on household incomes. The governor also highlighted his administration's adherence to constitutional provisions, particularly the transfer of power to his deputy during his absence.

Makinde further assured workers that the transportation subsidy would continue as part of measures to cushion the impact of prevailing economic challenges.

Again, Nigeria Threatens Licence Revocation In Push For More Oil Production, Revenue

By **Kingsley Jeremiah**, Abuja

NIGERIA has renewed its threat to revoke dormant upstream oil licences, signalling a tougher enforcement of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) as the government seeks to unlock additional crude production from idle assets amid mounting pressure to raise output and revenues.

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), on Friday, issued what it described as a final compliance notice to holders of Petroleum Prospecting Licences (PPLs) awarded under the 2020 Marginal Field Bid Round, the 2022/2023 Mini Bid Round and the 2024 Licensing Round, warning that failure to execute approved work programmes could trigger relinquishment and revocation proceedings.

The move revives the government's "drill-or-drop" policy, a cornerstone of the PIA designed to prevent companies from holding acreage without developing it.

In a circular signed by the Commission Chief Executive, Mrs Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan, the regulator said licences were granted for finite periods and were tied to mandatory work commitments, adding that continued possession depended on performance rather than ownership.

The commission cited Sections 77, 78, 88, 96 and 97 of the PIA, saying it could refuse extensions, require relinquishment, call in work-performance securities and commence revocation proceedings against non-performing licence holders.

Companies have until October 31, 2026, to submit their compliance status, explain constraints affecting execution and provide revised implementation schedules.

Although the regulator acknowledged that financing constraints, rig shortages, security challenges, host-community engagement, infrastructure limitations, regulatory approvals and partner disputes could slow development, it maintained that such issues would not automatically excuse non-performance.

"The Commission's objective is to increase production, not forfeiture," it said, while offering to work with operators within the limits of the law to resolve genuine implementation challenges.

The latest warning affects three licensing exercises that collectively brought hundreds of investors into Nigeria's upstream sector. The 2020 Marginal Field Bid Round covered 57 marginal fields and produced 128 successful awardees that made complete or partial signature-bonus payments.

Subsequently, the 2022/2023 Mini Bid Round produced 25 winners and 10 reserve bidders, while the 2024 Licensing Round announced 19 winners and six reserve bidders.

The renewed enforcement comes as Nigeria struggles to maximise production from existing assets despite fresh investments and regulatory reforms introduced under the PIA. Rather than focusing solely on awarding new licences, the commission appears increasingly determined to ensure previously allocated acreage translates into drilling activity and commercial production.

The policy also reflects a broader shift towards performance-based asset management, where operators that fail to meet agreed work obligations risk losing acreage to investors deemed capable of developing the resources.

Police Arraign Two Women Over Alleged False Publication On Access Bank

By **Oludare Richards**

THE Police, on Friday, arraigned two women before the Federal High Court in Lagos over alleged conspiracy and transmission of a false publication concerning Access Bank Plc, claiming that the lender was shutting down its operations.

The defendants, Iderenyin Samuel Umoh and Fineness Monday Esu, were arraigned on a three-count charge filed by the Police prosecuting counsel, Barr. Stanley Nwafoaku, of the Directorate of Legal Services, Federal Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), Alagbon, Ikoyi, Lagos.

The Police alleged that the defendants conspired with other persons, now at large, to transmit a false publication through computer systems and networks, claiming that Access Bank was shutting down its operations with effect from September 23, 2026. It urged customers to close their accounts and withdraw their funds.

When the three-count charge was read to the defendants, they pleaded not guilty. Following their pleas, Barr. Nwafoaku urged the court to remand the defendants in the custody of the Nigerian Correctional Service and adjourn the matter for trial.

However, Barr. Cynthia Nwanpu, who appeared for Barr. Ifenna Okeke, counsel to both defendants, urged the court to grant a short date to enable the defence file a formal bail application.

Alakoso Of Epe Calls For Local Interventions To Ease Fuel Subsidy Removal Impact

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE Alakoso of Epe Kingdom and prominent traditional and community leader, Barrister Omodele Olatokunbo Ibrahim, has called for collective action at the local council level to cushion the economic hardship associated with the removal of fuel subsidy by the Federal Government.

Ibrahim made the call during a special prayer session held at the Eid Praying Ground in Okebalogun, Epe, for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Dr. Kadiri Obafemi Hamzat ahead of the forthcoming elections.

The prayer session, attended by Grand Imams representing the five Ibile divisions of Lagos State, was organised to seek divine guidance and pray for the success of Tinubu and Hamzat in the forthcoming elections.

Speaking at the gathering, the traditional leader advocated practical interventions to reduce the impact of rising transportation and food costs on residents, stressing that communities and local councils could play a significant role in cushioning the effects of the economic reforms.

According to him, the removal of fuel subsidy under the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu represents a painful phase of economic recovery which, while expected to contribute to economic stabilisation in the long term, has imposed significant short-term hardship on citizens.

Bayelsa APC Dismisses Rainbow Coalition, Backs Tinubu's 2027 Bid

By **Seye Olumide**

THE Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Bayelsa State, Warman Weri Ogoriba, has dismissed the relevance of the emerging Rainbow Coalition in the state, saying the party has the structures and grassroots support to back President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and other APC candidates in the 2027 general elections.

Ogoriba, in a statement, said the Bayelsa APC remained focused and organised, with structures across the state's eight local councils and political wards. He said the party would not be distracted by political alliances outside its structure, adding that its priority was to consolidate its membership, strengthen internal cohesion and deepen grassroots mobilisation ahead of the elections.

According to him, the party's task was to remain organised, disciplined and committed to advancing the APC and supporting its candidates at all levels. Ogoriba said the combination of the party's existing structures, members, stakeholders and grassroots networks would provide the foundation for its campaign in 2027. He urged APC members and supporters across the state to remain united and focused, assuring them that the state leadership would continue consultations with stakeholders and mobilisation across communities.

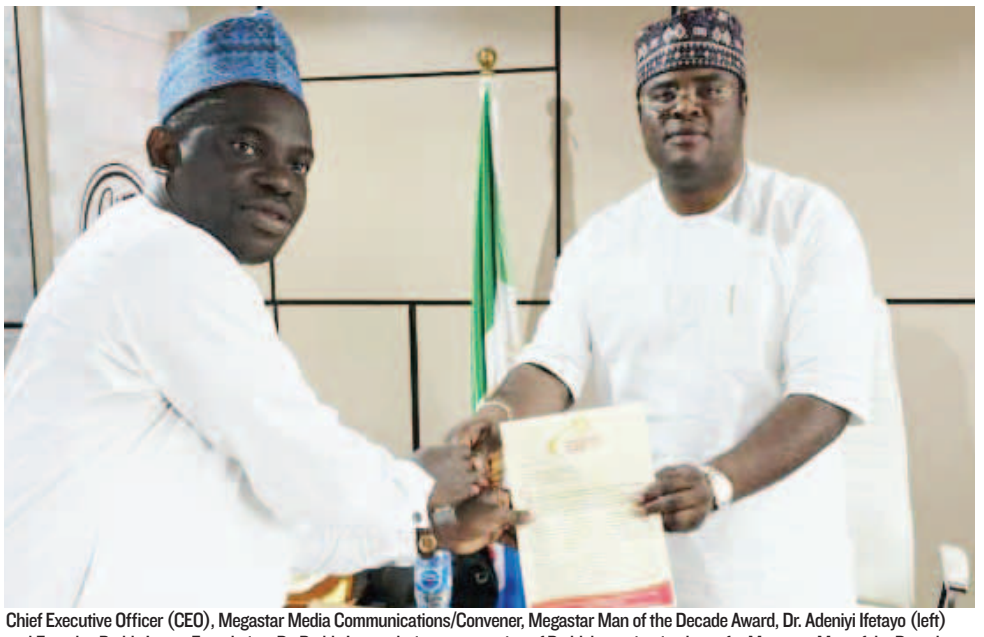
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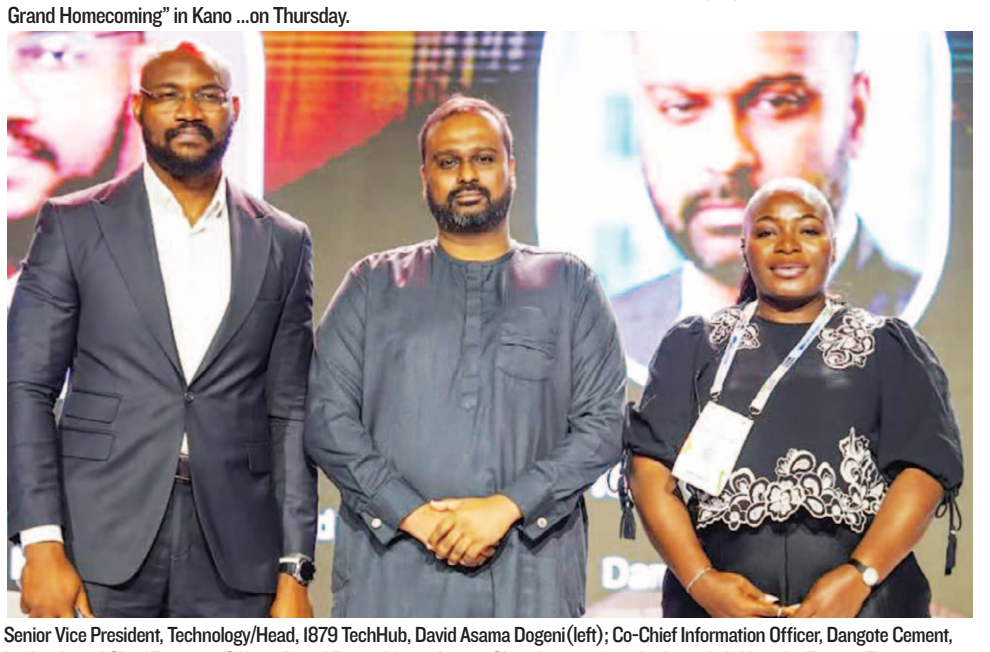
British Deputy High Commissioner in Lagos, Jonny Baxter(left) and Abia State Governor, Alex Otti, at the stakeholders' forum of the United Kingdom's Digital Access Programme (the State-Level Policy, Regulatory and Institutional Reforms Enabling Digital Transformation (SPRIRET) in Abia.



Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Financial Derivatives Company, Bismarck Rewane (left); President/Chief Executive (CE), Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote; Emir of Kano, His Highness, Muhammadu Sanusi II; (Special Guest of Honour & Chairman); CEO, The CFG Advisory, Adetilewa Adebajo ; President of the Supreme Council for Shariah in Nigeria, Prof. Bashir Aliyu Umar, at the Dangote Petroleum Refinery Initial Public Offering (IPO) Roadshow tagged "Kano Grand Homecoming" in Kano ...on Thursday.



Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Megastar Media Communications/Convener, Megastar Man of the Decade Award, Dr. Adeniyi Ifetayo (left) and Founder, Paddy Iyamu Foundation, Dr. Paddy Iyamu during presentation of Paddy's nomination letter for Megastar Man of the Decade Award in Benin City



Senior Vice President, Technology/Head, 1879 TechHub, David Asama Dogeni(left); Co-Chief Information Officer, Dangote Cement, Ian Lesile and Chief Executive Officer, Digital Equity Africa, Justina Oha, during a fireside chat titled "AI on the Factory Floor-Manufacturing's Next Leap" at GITEX Nigeria 2026, in Lagos.

Metronotes

Alokolaro Sworn In As 10th NBA-SBL Chairman



Alokolaro

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

MANAGING Partner of TNP (The New Practice), Baba Alokolaro, has been sworn in as the 10th Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association-Section on Business Law (NBA-SBL).

Alokolaro was sworn in on August 27, 2026, in Port Harcourt, succeeding Ozofu 'Latunde Ogiemudia. He previously served as Vice Chairman of the section under Ogiemudia for two years and will lead the NBA-SBL Executive Council for the 2026–2028 term.

The NBA-SBL is the principal platform within the Nigerian Bar Association for business law policy, practice development and engagement among the legal profession, government, regulators and the private sector.

Established in 2004 under its pioneer chairman, George Etomi, the section convenes the Annual Business Law Conference, which attracts government officials, regulators and members of the business law community across the region.

Groups Expand Education Programme To Nine Correctional Centres

By **Sunday Aikulola**

AS part of efforts aimed at providing qualitative education to Nigerians, the Centre for Legal Support and Inmate Rehabilitation (CELSIR), in partnership with VCare for Development Foundation (VCDF), is expanding its Education for Correctional Centres programme to nine correctional centres across the country. No fewer than 500 learners are also set to receive support for registration and preparation for the General Certificate Examination (GCE).

Executive Director, CELSIR Joke Aladesanmi, said the expansion represents a significant step in the organisation's efforts to make quality education accessible to learners in correctional centres.

The programme will extend beyond Lagos correctional centres where CELSIR has traditionally provided education support, reaching five additional correctional centres, three adult and two juvenile centres.

PMI Unveils Certification Examination To Equip Project Leaders

By **Moyosore Salami**

AS artificial intelligence (AI) automates tasks and reshapes how work gets done, the Project Management Institute (PMI) has unveiled a refreshed Project Management Professional (PMP) certification examination, launched globally to equip project leaders for the skills employers need now.

With some technical skills at risk of becoming obsolete within five years, PMI says the urgency for project professionals to move beyond tools and timelines has never been greater. "We regularly refresh the examination to ensure it continues to reflect how project professionals work, the challenges they face, and the capabilities organisations expect from them. This is part of that ongoing evolution," said Managing Director, PMI sub-Saharan Africa, George Asamani.

Sun King Expands Solar Inverter Range, Launches Solar-powered Freezer

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

AFIRM, Sun King has expanded its solar inverter portfolio in Nigeria to 30 kVA and launched PowerFreeze, a solar-powered refrigeration system aimed at helping households and businesses tackle unreliable electricity supply, food spoilage and rising generator costs.

The company unveiled the products in Lagos during an event attended by customers, partners and government representatives, with discussions centred on the growing role of solar energy in meeting the electricity needs of Nigerian homes and businesses.

The expansion increases the company's PowerHub range from the existing 2.2 kVA and 3.3 kVA systems to include 5 kVA, 10 kVA, 15 kVA and 30 kVA options.

Pistis Foundation's UBOMI Returns To Ibadan, Lagos, Targets 10,000 Beneficiaries

PISTIS Foundation, the social intervention arm of The Elevation Church, has announced the 2026 edition of UBOMI, its flagship free medical and surgical outreach, which will hold in two cities this year: Ibadan from September 21–25, and Lagos from October 19–23, 2026. Together, the two outreaches are targeting 10,000 beneficiaries — the largest combined reach in the programme's history. The programme provides a broad range of services, including medical consultations, diagnostic investigations, pharmaceutical support, dental care, eye care, general and specialist surgical procedures, health education and more, at no cost to beneficiaries.

Omoyinmi Elected President As Ikeja Club Holds AGM

MEMBERS of the prestigious Ikeja Club have elected a new Executive Committee to run the affairs of the club for the next term during its Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Abayomi Akin Omoyinmi, a lawyer, emerged as the new President, while Otunba Adebiyi Ayinde Olaibi was elected Vice President.

Other members of the new executives include: Mr. Babatunde Obakoya as General Secretary; Mr. Babatunde Olonade, Social Secretary; Mr. Mustapha Dawodu, Publicity Secretary; and Mr. Adefisayo Samuel, Financial Secretary.



Omoyinmi

Foundation Crowns Oluchi Odii As Winner Of Wole Oguntokun Legacy Award

STREET Project Foundation successfully staged the Seventh edition of the *Do What U Love (DWUL) Festival* recently in Lagos. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Wole Oguntokun Legacy Award, which honours theatre, storytelling, and social advocacy among young Nigerians aged 18–35.

This year's recipient, Oluchi Odii, was celebrated for a two-decade body of work as a singer, songwriter, actor, and producer that embodies everything the late Wole Oguntokun (1967–2024) stood for: bold storytelling, mentorship, and social transformation through theatre and the arts.

With the theme: "*The Creator's Market,*" this year's festival brought together creatives, storytellers, entrepreneurs, and dreamers for a day of pitch competitions, poetry slams, stage performances, masterclasses, panel discussions, and the highly anticipated Wole Oguntokun Legacy Award (WOLA) ceremony.

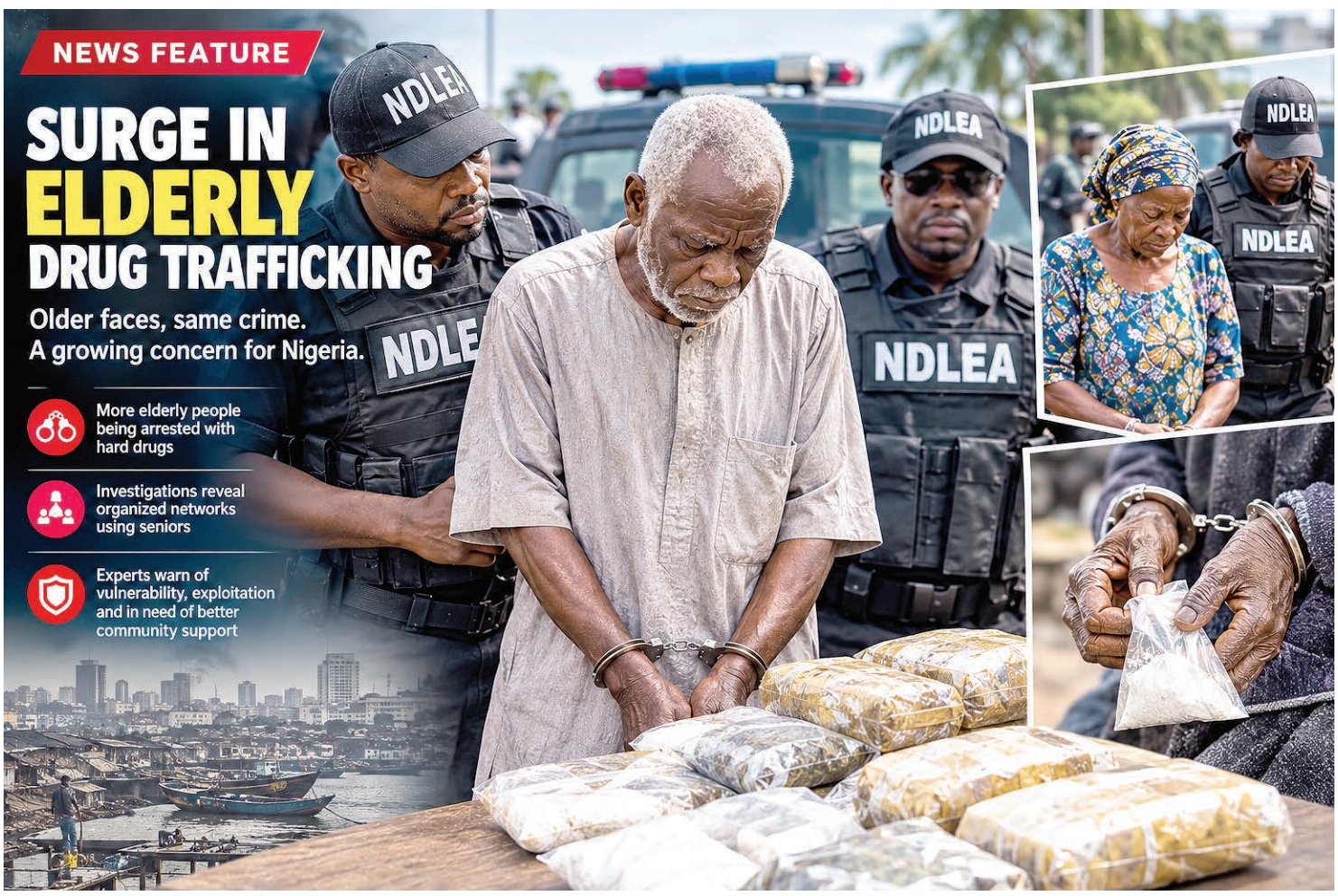
The moderator was Godsdelight Agu while panelists included Chekwube Isaac, Elizabeth Adams, Roddie Law, and Emy Josephs, who shared insights on creativity, purpose, and building sustainable careers doing what they love.

Special

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Why Drug Trafficking Is Luring

*The growing arrest of Nigerians aged 60 and above for drug-related offences is raising concerns over the changing face of illicit drug trafficking in the country. In this report, **MOYOSORE SALAMI** examines why elderly Nigerians are attracted to drug trade and what could be done to curb the trend.*



NIGERIA is facing a disturbing increase in the arrest of elderly people for drug-related offences, with suspects aged 60 and above being caught with cannabis, tramadol and large consignments of cocaine. While some appear to have been drawn into the illicit trade by financial difficulties, others have been linked to drug networks as couriers, dealers or custodians of illegal substances.

In March 2026, a 74-year-old man was arrested at the departure hall of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, while allegedly attempting to smuggle 11 kilogrammes of cocaine to the United Kingdom.

The septuagenarian was arrested while attempting to board British Airways flight BA082, bound for Heathrow, London, on Saturday, March 14, 2026.

Disclosing this in a statement, NDLEA spokesman, Femi Babafemi, said a search of the suspect's luggage revealed blocks of cocaine concealed inside food items, including ground dry pepper.

He said the cocaine, weighing 11 kilogrammes, was carefully wrapped in foil papers and balloons before being hidden among the food items.

Babafemi noted that the suspect claimed he was travelling to London for vacation.

The case is not an isolated oneinvolving an elderly Nigerian at an airport.

A 67-year-old Nigerian-British grandmother, Mary Yetunde Barek, was arrested by NDLEA operatives at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Ikeja, Lagos, after 13 kilogrammes of cocaine were allegedly discovered in her luggage.

Barek, who works as a caregiver in the United Kingdom, was arrested at the departure hall of Terminal 2 while attempting to board a Virgin Atlantic flight to London on Sunday, June 28, 2026.

A search of her luggage reportedly led to the discovery of 31 large wraps of cocaine packaged to resemble bunches of plantain and weighing 13 kilogrammes. The elderly woman later admitted ownership of the seized cocaine, according to the agency.

While the two airport arrests involved elderly people allegedly transporting large quantities of cocaine outside the country, another case involving a 101-year-old woman showed that older Nigerians are also appearing in local drug-dealing cases.

On August 15, 2026, NDLEA operatives arrested Esther Ogunmabo, a 101-year-old great-grandmother, in Ilisan, Ogun State, with 90 grammes of skunk, a strain of cannabis, packaged in retail sachets. The centenarian reportedly told operatives that she sold the substance to people in her community.

Ogunmabo said she resorted to the illicit drug trade after her provisions shop was razed by fire. She added that one of her daughters, who resides in Lagos, supplied the substance to her every four days, which she sold in bits.

Following her arrest, the NDLEA Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd), directed that the suspect be granted bail and placed on counselling because of her advanced age.

The cases have brought attention to the involvement of elderly Nigerians in the country's illicit drug market and the circumstances that may be pushing some of them into the trade.

For some, the reason may be financial hardship. Unlike younger Nigerians who may be able to engage in physically demanding jobs or move from one job to another, many elderly people depend on pensions, small businesses, family support or informal activities for survival.

The loss of a source of income can therefore leave them particularly vulnerable. Ogunmabo's explanation that she entered the drug trade after losing her provisions shop to fire is one example.

But poverty alone may not explain the growing number of elderly people appearing in drug cases. The arrest of a visually impaired 67-year-old man, Aliyu Adebiyi, in Osun State also points to the role of drug dealers who use vulnerable people to store illicit substances.

Adebiyi of Sokoto Village, Owena Ijesa, Atakumosa East Council of Osun State, was taken into custody by NDLEA operatives on January 20 after 234 kilogrammes of Indian hemp were allegedly found in his house.

In his statement, he reportedly said a drug dealer kept the consignment with him for a fee of N6,000 per month and paid him for three months upfront.

The case reveals how drug dealers recruit elderly people and whether some older suspects are knowingly participating in trafficking or are being exploited because of their economic circumstances.

The illicit drug trade remains a lucrative business in Nigeria, with large quantities of cannabis, cocaine, tramadol and other controlled substances being moved through communities, ports, airports and international borders.

The NDLEA has in recent years intensified its operations against traffickers and dealers across the country.

In one of its operations, the agency intercepted 1,645,560 pills of Tramadol in 100mg, 200mg and 225mg strengths at a warehouse in Greenfield Estate, Amuwo Odofin, Lagos. Another 60,000 pills of 250mg Tramadol were recovered from a wanted drug dealer, Diugwu Alphonsus, in Bariga, Lagos. Raids in the Akala area of Mushin also led to the recovery of 781.7 kilogrammes of Indian hemp.

The scale of such seizures shows the size of the market in which elderly Nigerians are increasingly being found as dealers, couriers or people allegedly keeping drugs for others.

The use of elderly people may also be linked to the belief among traffickers that they are less likely to attract suspicion.

A young person traveling with a large quantity of food items or moving repeatedly through an airport may attract attention from security operatives. An elderly traveler, particularly one appearing to be traveling for family or holiday purposes, may be perceived differently.

This could make older people useful to criminal networks seeking couriers for international routes. The 74-year-old man arrested in Abuja and the 67-year-old grandmother arrested in Lagos were both allegedly travelling to the United Kingdom when they were intercepted.

The case of Adebiyi, who reportedly said he was paid N6,000 monthly to keep 234 kilogrammes of Indian hemp, shows why investigations should not end with the person found in possession of the drugs. The person who supplied the drugs, paid the elderly man and controlled the consignment may remain outside the reach of the law if investigations focus only on the person physically caught with the substance.

In both cases, cocaine was concealed in ordinary-looking items in their luggage.

The cases also show that the involvement of elderly people in the drug trade is not limited to street-level dealing. Some are allegedly involved in international trafficking, where large quantities of drugs are moved across borders.

Others are accused of selling drugs locally, while some may provide storage facilities for established dealers. The different roles suggest that elderly people may be entering the illicit trade through different routes.

For some, it may be the need for money. For others, it could be family influence, recruitment by criminal networks or the expectation that their age would make them less suspicious.

The role of family members is particularly concerning in Ogunmabo's case, where she reportedly identified her daughter as the person supplying her with cannabis.

This indicates that older people can also become involved in drug dealing through existing family relationships. The involvement of elderly Nigerians also suggests the effectiveness of existing social protection measures for older people.

Where an elderly person loses a source of income has no adequate pension or is unable to meet basic household needs, the absence of support can create room for exploitation by criminal networks.

Experts have, therefore, called for greater attention to the economic conditions of elderly Nigerians, particularly those who have no reliable source of income.

However, economic hardship should not be used to excuse deliberate involvement in drug trafficking. The 13 kilogrammes of cocaine allegedly found in Barek's luggage and the 11 kilogrammes allegedly recovered from the 74-year-old man's luggage are far beyond what could reasonably be described as casual possession.

Such cases point to the need for law enforcement agencies to continue tracking the networks behind the couriers and dealers.

The NDLEA's operations have resulted in the arrest of numerous suspects and the seizure of

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Elderly Nigerians

large quantities of illicit substances, but the emergence of elderly suspects presents another challenge for the agency.

Security agencies must be able to identify traffickers regardless of age while also determining whether vulnerable older people are being used by more powerful criminal networks.

The case of Adebiyi, who reportedly said he was paid N6,000 monthly to keep 234 kilogrammes of Indian hemp, shows why investigations should not end with the person found in possession of the drugs.

The person who supplied the drugs, paid the elderly man and controlled the consignment may remain outside the reach of the law if investigations focus only on the person physically caught with the substance.

There is also a need for public awareness among elderly people about the tactics used by drug traffickers.

Older people who are offered money to carry packages, keep bags or allow their homes to be used for storage need to understand that they may be exposing themselves to serious criminal charges.

Family members also have a role to play by providing support for elderly relatives facing financial difficulties rather than allowing them to become dependent on criminal activities.

The increasing arrest of Nigerians aged 60 and above for drug-related offences is a reminder that the country's drug problem is affecting people across age groups.

At least 30 Nigerians aged between 60 and 101 were arrested in drug-related cases in the last one year, according to an assessment by Beacon Security and Innovations Limited (BSIL), raising concerns that organised drug networks may be deliberately recruiting older people to evade law enforcement profiling.

Managing Director of BSIL and security risk management and intelligence expert in Nigeria and the Sahel region, Dr Kabir Adamu, said a review of the company's incident log of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) reports showed that the figure rises further when suspects in their 50s are included.

Adamu said the development pointed to a systemic pattern rather than a series of isolated incidents.

According to him, the cases show that elderly Nigerians are increasingly appearing at different levels of the drug trade, from street-level retailing and courier activities to storage, financing and, in some cases, alleged leadership of major trafficking networks.

He said the individual cases had given a human face to the statistics. "In August, operatives arrested a 101-year-old great-grandmother in Ogun State for allegedly retailing cannabis in sachets to her community, in the same nationwide sweep that intercepted cocaine hidden inside cassava fufu and seized more than a tonne of high-grade cannabis shipped in through Lagos ports.

"Months earlier, an 80-year-old man was picked up in Ekiti State with skunk and methamphetamine, in an operation that, in the same breath, uncovered nearly a tonne of the same substance elsewhere and a separate cocaine consignment concealed in stockfish destined for export.

"And it is not only couriers and retailers: a 63-year-old businessman was arraigned this year as the alleged financier and coordinator behind a Nigerian–Mexican methamphetamine 'superlab' in Ogun State, one of the largest synthetic drug operations uncovered in the country's history, working alongside foreign chemists brought in specifically for their technical expertise."

Adamu noted that, taken together, the cases showed elderly Nigerians occupying "nearly every rung of the trafficking ladder", including couriers, street-level retailers, storage-house keepers and financiers, as well as alleged leadership roles in transnational operations.

He explained that though economic hardship



could have pushed some older people into the trade, the wider pattern suggested a deliberate adaptation by trafficking networks following intensified enforcement.

"The pattern goes beyond individual desperation in old age," he said, adding though economic hardship undoubtedly plays a part for some, "It is more significantly evidence of a deliberate and calculated adaptation by trafficking networks in response to years of intensified enforcement," he said

According to the security expert, one reason organised drug networks may be turning to older Nigerians is the assumption that they are less likely to attract suspicion from law enforcement.

He said trafficking organisations understood that security profiling had traditionally focused on younger and middle-aged men and could therefore recruit people outside that profile.

"An elderly man or woman moving through an airport, a border post, or a local market attracts less scrutiny," Adamu explained.

He also pointed to what he described as a shift from the use of ad-hoc drug mules to more structured, multi-role networks.

According to him, the different roles now allegedly occupied by elderly suspects suggest that their involvement cannot always be dismissed as isolated recruitment of vulnerable individuals.

"The range of roles elderly suspects now occupy, from a grandmother selling sachets locally to a sexagenarian allegedly running a bi-national meth syndicate, suggests these are not one-off recruitments of vulnerable individuals, but calculated insertions into different tiers of otherwise well-organised networks: local distribution, storage and logistics, and, in rarer but more consequential cases, financing and command," he said.

Adamu further linked the development to Nigeria's evolving position in the international drug trade, citing the scale of recent seizures, the production of synthetic drugs locally and the emergence of sophisticated trafficking routes.

He said the production of methamphetamine in industrial quantities, including cases involving foreign technical expertise, as well as large cannabis shipments arriving through maritime routes, pointed to a more complex drug-trafficking environment.

"This evolution requires more sophisticated concealment methods, wider and more diverse recruitment pools, and closer coordination with foreign cartels, all of which create more entry points, including for older recruits," he said.

He added that the development was not peculiar to Nigeria, saying BSIL's monitoring of the Sahel and wider West African region had identified similar cases involving elderly suspects.

According to him, arrests involving people in their late 60s and 70s in neighbouring countries suggested that trafficking networks operating across porous borders and informal maritime routes were applying similar recruitment strategies across the region.

On the implications for national security, Adamu said security agencies needed to review existing profiling and screening procedures at airports, borders and checkpoints to ensure older travellers and traders were not automatically considered low-risk.

"Profiling and screening protocols at ports, borders and checkpoints need to be broadened so that older travellers and traders are not implicitly waved through," he said.

He also stressed the importance of community-level intelligence gathering, noting that elderly retailers could be deeply embedded within the communities where they operate.

"Community-level intelligence gathering matters more than ever, since elderly retailers are often deeply embedded in the very communities enforcement agencies rely on for tips," he explained.

However, Adamu cautioned against treating all elderly suspects in the same way, arguing that security and justice responses should consider the difference between vulnerable individuals and those allegedly occupying senior positions within trafficking organisations.

"Prosecutorial and rehabilitative responses need to distinguish between elderly individuals coerced or economically pressured into low-level roles and those knowingly occupying positions of leadership and financing within these networks," he said.

"A one-size-fits-all response risks either excessive leniency for kingpins or excessive harshness toward genuinely vulnerable people."

Adamu concluded that the increasing involvement of older Nigerians in drug trafficking should be understood as evidence of both progress and gaps in Nigeria's fight against organised drug crime.

"Ultimately, this 'greying' of Nigeria's drug trade is best read as a symptom of success and failure occurring simultaneously: enforcement has become effective enough to force networks to adapt their tactics, but those networks are adapting faster than the profiling and intelligence frameworks meant to catch them.

"Closing that gap will require security agencies to treat this not as an anomaly, but as the new operating pattern of organised drug trafficking in Nigeria," he said.

Professor of Criminology, Adedeji Oyenuga, has attributed the increasing involvement of older Nigerians in drug trafficking to a combination of poverty and the tendency of security agencies to pay less attention to elderly people during crime detection and screening.

Oyenuga, who is also a practising investigator, said his experience had shown that older people were often overlooked when law enforcement agencies considered potential perpetrators of crime.

He said, "Yes, like you, I also realise that we have a lot of cases where older people have been involved in the peddling of drugs, locally and internationally.

"And I think I have a different point of view, in a way, and I'll explain why I think so. Aside from being a criminologist, I'm also a practising investigator, and for many years I have observed that across the world, people pay less attention to older people. In terms of crime perpetration, they pay less attention to older people."

According to him, beyond the perceived low-risk profile of older people, poverty was another factor that could make them vulnerable to recruitment by criminal networks.

He explained that financial security often became uncertain after retirement, particularly for people who had limited savings or inadequate income in old age.

"And that factor is poverty. Now, no matter how much money you made while you were younger, I'm not sure it's going to be enough for you after 60, till the time you are going to die. So, financial security is no longer there for a lot of older people, 60 years and above," he said.

Oyenuga stressed that poverty did not automatically turn people into criminals, but could place them in circumstances where resisting criminal opportunities became more difficult.

"Personally, I don't always say that poverty is a factor for people's involvement in crime. But I say that poverty puts them in a condition where it is difficult for them to resist temptation," he said.

He noted that a retired person facing an uncertain future could be more receptive to an offer from a criminal network, particularly where the recruiters promised protection and companionship.

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Politics

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'New Breeds' Ambush Atiku As Light Dims On Opposition's Search For Single Presidential Contender

Chances have continued to dim that the much-expected single presidential challenger against incumbent President Bola Ahmed Tinubu being championed by some leaders of opposition could bear fruit before campaigns close on January 14, 2027 for the 2027 presidential ballot. As the coalition leaders move to prevail on former Vice President Atiku Abubakar to support a younger candidate, the former Vice President insists that the surest path to defeating Tinubu is by having a younger candidate behind him, thereby making things near impossible for the coalition, LEO SOBECHI reports.

OUT of the 17 political parties that fielded presidential challengers against the incumbent President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, eight are being approached to see how they could rally round one candidate to square-up with the incumbent.

Recall that as sooner as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) published the list of presidential candidates and their political parties, the G100 emerged to canvass for an opposition consensus candidate to defeat the incumbent. The coalition of opposition leaders believe that, armed with the legendary power of incumbency, federal might, college of 35 state governors and a huge financial war chest, defeating the incumbent will not be a walk in the park.

Further, in a bid to accentuate the postulations of the G100, the Movement for Credible Elections (MCE), joined in the effort to ensure that the field for the 2027 presidential contest was not crowded with opposition contenders, some of whom could not boast of more than a federal constituency-size population of support across the federation.

Although it remains doubtful that all eight could subscribe to the shortlisting of presidential candidates, the following political parties have been penciled for contact and mobilization by the MCE: African Democratic Congress (ADC), Allied People's Movement (APM), Accord Party, African Action Congress (AAC) National Democratic Congress (NDC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Young Progressive Party (YPP).

While informing journalists that the MCE plans to meet with the candidates for a closed-door conversation, the movement's media coordinator, James Ezema, explained that the rationale for the closed-door engagements "is to prevent sabotage from political mercenaries and jobbers opposed to the initiative."

He maintained these unnamed saboteurs are "determined to frustrate the negotiations and horse-trading amongst the shortlisted presidential candidates." MCE argued that Nigeria cannot afford another opposition arrangement, where political actors agree on the need for a united front, only to retract "when it becomes necessary to determine the arrowhead and rallying point of that electoral alliance."

Although MCE expressed optimism that the anticipated opposition coalition process would succeed, it discovered that the feasibility of the proposition will not depend on the popularity of individual aspirants to a large extent. The group noted that factors such as credibility, transparency and fairness, as well as due process and level playing field through which the consensus presidential candidate is chosen, are central to its execution.

Waiting For Godot

WHAT the G100 and MCE are doing has some roots in history. In the lead-up to the 2011 presidential election cycle, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and few northern political leaders in the PDP wanted to stop President Goodluck Jonathan from continuing in office as substantive President.

Jonathan had mounted the saddle barely one year earlier through the instrument of a doctrine of necessity after President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua died midway into the first term of the Presidency he won with Jonathan as running mate in 2007.

But, insistent that it was the turn of the north to retain the Presidency, the Northern Political Leaders Forum argued that having served out the remaining period of Yar'Adua's first term, a person from the north should be supported to serve out what could have been the deceased President's second term. So, in a bid to ensure that a plethora of northern presidential aspirants did not split the ballot from northern delegates to the anticipated PDP presidential primary and special convention, the leaders constituted the Northern Political Leaders Consensus Committee.

> *"Then, among the front row candidates, despite the behind the scene suggestions for Atiku to exit the 2027 presidential race, at least to honour the presidential power rotational principle that undulates the Presidency between the North and South, the former Vice President describes such ideas as outlandish."*

The Committee, chaired by a former Minister of Finance, Mallam Adamu Ciroma, had Abdulkadir Sabo Bello as its secretary, and was mandated with the responsibility of selecting a consensus candidate that could run as "Northern PDP Candidate" during the 2010 presidential primary.

In a statement on November 21, 2010, the Consensus Committee, while announcing Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as its choice, made some important remarks, which some members of the MCE are clutching unto in their belief that the search for a consensus opposition contender against Tinubu would not succeed.

Part of the four-paragraph statement by the Ciroma Committee read: "We are glad and proud that we have finally arrived at this outcome after several weeks of hard work and wide consultations. We are proud, because of the unusual honour and extraordinary privilege given us by the four gentlemen, who placed their political destinies in our hands. We are humbled by the strength of their faith. We appreciate their humility and cooperation. We have been reassured by all of them that they will work together to enable Atiku Abubakar clinch their party's ticket in the presidential primaries.

"We thank all Nigerians, supporters and critics alike for their views over these past several weeks. While we note these views and respect each one of them, we insist that no individual, organization or society dreaming of success and greatness can achieve these dreams without respect for others and honouring agreements voluntarily entered into. This is especially so, where these agreements have been transformed into a binding document, a constitution, which governs the conduct of those who subscribe to it."

There are many dissimilarities between the NPLCC and what G100 and MCE are trying to do for next year's presidential ballot. For instance, unlike in 2010 when the Northern Leaders settled for Atiku as the consensus northern challenger against President Goodluck Jonathan, many leading politicians that The Guardian spoke to, said the crucial issue borders on many political parties.

They contended that a lot of consultations are needed to convince party leaders and their candidates to subscribe to a consensus or compromise presidential candidate for the January 16, 2027 ballot.

Again, apart from the fact that the then Ciroma Committee was charged with locating a single northern challenger against incumbent President, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, the search for a consensus choice was among members of the same Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). While it was easy for the Ciroma Committee to settle for the former Vice President ahead of General Ibrahim Babangida, Dr Bukola Saraki, retired General Aliyu Mohammed (Gusau).

Contentious Calculations

IN its recent statement, MCE disclosed that it would conclude its assignment within two weeks and put forward a common candidate. But, the various factors that MCE formulated to guide it towards the intended end put a big hole on its optimism.

According to the statement, MCE disclosed that the process of selecting the consensus presidential candidate would "be based on credibility, transparency, fairness, due process and a level playing field." Unlike the Ciroma Committee, the participating candidates and political parties are yet to agree on the modalities and terms of endorsement.

Also, it disclosed certain criteria for evaluating the aspirants, including "national acceptability, competence, integrity, leadership profile, political electability, policy orientation, commitment to democratic institutions, capacity to unite the country and ability to work with diverse social interests."

Going by the political parties identified by MCE, the following presidential candidates are expected to be visited, interacted with and evaluated: Atiku Abubakar, (ADC); Peter Obi, (NDC); Adewole Adebayo, (SDP); Seyi Makinde, APM); Donald Duke, (PRP); Sandy Onor, PDP); Peter Agada, (YPP) and Omoyele Sowore, (AAC).

From the public utterances of the targeted contenders, while it is easy for the urbane Donald Duke and leaders of his party, PRP, to agree to support a compromise candidate, how far could Prof Pat Utomi and his Political Commission go to convince such candidates as Onor (PDP) and Sowore (AAC) to stand down?

Then, among the front row candidates, despite the behind the scene suggestions for Atiku to exit the 2027 presidential race, at least to honour the presidential power rotational principle that undulates the Presidency between the North and South, the former Vice President describes such ideas as outlandish.

Alternatively, the former Vice President is flying the kite of a possible repeat of the 2019 presidential ballot, which paired him up with the current NDC presidential hopeful, Obi. Feelers from the camp of the 2010 consensus Northern Presidential Candidate, reveal that it was partly in the belief that his ADC platform could ultimately be the rallying party for the opposition coalition that he reluctantly agreed to having Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi as his running mate.

Yet, as the former Vice President holds unto his dream of becoming president, five younger presidential runners-Obi, Makinde, Duke, Adebayo and Sowore-do not betray any pretensions about a possible support for him (Atiku), even as consensus option.

Speaking when he attended the unveiling of the APM's Presidential Campaign Office in Abuja, the NDC presidential candidate, Obi, regretted that all the people leading the country after its independence remain those born before both the Lyttleton and Independence Constitution.

On his part, the APM presidential standard bearer, Makinde, disclosed that his presidential ambition was predicated on the need to build a new movement to rescue the country from poor governance.

While Prince Adebayo of SDP maintains that Nigerians are yearning for a new crop of credible leaders, Sowore maintains that all those who contributed to the poverty and deprivation of Nigerians should be rejected at the polls.

Adding his voice to echo the odds against the former Vice President, a former Kaduna Central Senator, Shehu Sani, urged that the 2027 presidential poll be between just two Southern candidates, including the incumbent and Mr Peter Obi.





Tinubu's Re-election: Undercurrent Issues Firing Uzodimma, Wike's Hostilities

Recriminations about who did what, as well as, what becomes of their political relevance in the post-2027 election national politics seem to be the major bone of contention in the ongoing supremacy battle between the Chairman of Progressive Governors' Forum (PGF), Senator Hope Uzodimma, and the founder of Nigeria's Rainbow Coalition of political leaders. The issues seem to go deeper than the public can see, especially given that this is not the first time both men have fought on different sides of the aisle, LEO SOBECHI writes

Between Conspiracy And Combination

THE saying that the friend of my enemy is my enemy came to life, when the incumbent Rivers State governor, Sir Siminalayi Fubara, fell out with the 27 members of the Rivers State House of Assembly (RSHA). In a veiled bid to get at his political rival and godfather of the 27 lawmakers, Uzodimma, acting as the Chairman of Progressives Governors' Forum (PGF) moved in to support the embattled Fubara.

And, as the supremacy battle between Fubara and the 27 members of RSHA raged, the PGF, which comprise mainly anti-Wike governors, was said to have sold the idea of decampment from PDP to APC to the Rivers State governor. Fubara was convinced that joining APC would avail him of the necessary institutional partisan cover and PGF solidarity to be able to fight off Wike.

But, while the conspiracy against the FCT Minister was building, including the involvement of the National Assembly, Wike activated his close affinity with President Bola Tinubu and the Chairman of the National Assembly, Senator Godswill Akpabio, to douse the attempt to use the instrument of legislation and constitutional stipulations to dislodge his 27 allies from both the House of Assembly and political relevance on account of their hasty defection to APC.

The declaration of a State of Emergency in March 18, 2025, was the culmination of the political quick-wittedness of Wike and the intervention of the presidency. With that saving grace, and latching on the attempt by the PGF elements loyal to Uzodimma to damage his political control of Rivers State, the FCT Minister was said to have opened up discussions with the presidency about the overall implications of the Rivers State political confusion on the president's re-election plans.

In the course of those discussions, it was gathered that the FCT Minister and President Tinubu reviewed the 2023 presidential election, where the president's clinching of Rivers State changed the overall outcome of the presidential ballot that redounded to the president's triumph. The resolve to leave Rivers State under the firm control of the FCT Minister instead of the usual APC convention that cedes political leaders to state governors, was therefore reached in the presidency.

In addition to recalling to great effect Uzodimma's alliance with some inner men of the Buhari's presidency to impose former Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, Wike was said to have picked holes in the numbers that emerged from Imo State after the Presidential and National Assembly election of February 16, 2023.

Presidential Campaign DG Schemes, 2031 Considerations

WHAT becomes of Uzodimma, Wike and Akpabio after the 2027 general elections? That poser becomes consequential when viewed against the backdrop of the recent hostilities between the PGF and the FCT Minister over the place of the nationwide Rainbow Coalition in the electioneering plans for President Tinubu's re-election.

Recall that in the buildup to the APC special convention and presidential primary, the PGF members loyal to Uzodimma was said to have adopted a stance that their support for Presidential Tinubu's re-election is predicated to assurances of retention of Tinubu/Shettima presidential ballot.

North East political leaders were worried by the suggestion in some quarters that some underground moves were being made to substitute the Vice President with a candidate from the North West geopolitical. Sources said that after a series meeting, the North East leaders adopted a wait-and-see stance, noting that their son, Senator Kashim Shettima, had maintained a level head and done nothing to disturb the Tinubu Presidency.

However, while the leaders expressed optimism that the VP would be retained, there were suggestions that attempt could be made to impeach the Vice President to pave the way for his replacement if pressures from the United States for religious balance in the country continue.

That suggestion gained credence when President Tinubu authorized outgoing state governors to seek the APC tickets for their senatorial districts so as to guarantee continued support for the party as well as ensure majority control of the Senate in the 11th National Assembly.

Further, with the possibility of more APC governors getting into the Red Chamber, the Chairman of PGF, Uzodimma, saw it as an opportunity to succeed Akpabio as chairman of National Assembly, given his qualification as a ranking Senator. Recalling how the Rivers State crisis between Fubara and Wike's 27 lawmakers was tilted to Wike's favour, Uzodimma and his North East backers believed that his chairmanship of the 11th National Assembly will be strategic both for Shettima's political interest and his own relevance in the emerging dispensation.

While the Senate's attempt to amend its standing rules was seen as a critical pushback by the Akpabio-led 10th NASS, the PGF chairman explored the possibility of emerging as the Director General of the APC Presidential Campaign Committee. That opening, which could enhance his scheming for the Senate Presidency, was also been sought for by other Senators including former governors Abdulaziz Yari, Adams Oshiomhole and Tanko Almakura.

However, some insiders within the presidency experimented with the idea of conscripting the FCT Minister, Wike, as President Tinubu's campaign DG to arrest the scheming among Uzodimma, Oshiomhole, Al Makura and Yari. But, getting wind of the plot, Uzodimma mobilized the PGF to rebuff the idea, arguing that if indeed the President wanted Wike as DG, the former Rivers State governor should join APC and lead the campaign from the inside rather than as an outsider.

It was therefore in a bid to douse the disagreements among his lieutenants that President Tinubu retained the position of Chairman and appointed Yari as DG with Uzodimma as the secretary. After failing to be named the Director General of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's campaign committee, Uzodimma and Wike renewed their silent supremacy battle.

First Wike taunted the PGF chairman for leading APC to a painful defeat in the Osun gubernatorial contest, claiming that if President Tinubu had wanted Osun to be won by APC, he would have been sent instead of Uzodimma.

To show capacity, the FCT Minister had expanded the Rainbow Coalition to propel support for President Tinubu's re-election noting that he was serious about delivering the President for a second term, since according to him, if Atiku Abubakar or Peter Obi wins the presidential election, they would aggressively come after him.

In addition to Governors Ademola Adeleke, (Osun), Chukwuma Soludo, (Anambra); Alex Otti, (Abia), Wike is working with leaders of the embattled PDP to rally support for Tinubu. They include, Sule Lamido, Dr Bukola Saraki, Senator Emmanuel Bwacha, among others, with the belief that the Presidency would reciprocate by supporting them to preserve their political interest for the 2031 general election cycle, when clashing presidential ambitions could put APC in disarray.

Some of the states captured by the expanded Rainbow Coalition, which happen to be states currently controlled by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) included, Benue, Ebonyi, Enugu, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kwara and Taraba.

It was gathered that peeved by that perceived attempt by Wike to revive his moribund G5, through which he supported President Tinubu's election in 2023 under the auspices of Rainbow Coalition, the PGF Chairman, Uzodimma, mobilized his colleagues to fight off the underground scheme.

Addressing journalists after their closed-door meeting in Abuja, Tuesday, the PGF declared that APC governors would not participate in or support any political alliance capable of undermining the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu or weakening the ruling party.

The PGF chairman, flanked by his counterparts from Kaduna State, (Uba Sani); Kwara State, (AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq), among others, disclosed that "we have unanimously agreed to work together to protect the interests of the party and its candidates ahead of the 2027 general elections."

Pushing back on the attack by the PGF, the FCT Minister reiterated his unflinching support for President Tinubu, noting that the support for Tinubu did not preclude PDP from fielding candidates for other elective positions.

He described the coalition as a platform for other political parties that are pleased with the good works of President Tinubu and are willingly supporting his reelection, even as he recalled that he never met with APC before himself and other G5 members supported the President in 2023.

Maintaining that a similar support has been assured to Tinubu in 2027 for just the presidential election, Wike said he won't be the one to help people to win elections in their states, stressing, "politics is local and those having problems in their states should resolve them instead of using the reelection of the President to whip up sentiments."

But, some chieftains of APC have cried out against the attempt to destabilise President Tinubu's reelection campaigns, saying that the quarrels between supporters of the President are not helpful at this time.

For instance, one of the foundation members of APC, Osita Okechukwu, urged Tinubu to be wary of blacklegs in the APC, stressing that there are no doubt "a few pretender governors within the Governors' Forum, that are not fully in support of the President's second term.

Condemning the press briefing by the PGF, Okechukwu, who was once the Director General of Voice of Nigeria, stated: "In my over 48 years of participation in Nigerian party politics, I have never witnessed a situation where such an elementary political matter was pretentiously thrown open, instead of being addressed through the appropriate partisan political mechanism and channels.

"To the best of my knowledge, some of these PGF members have wittingly or unwittingly used their electorate and recklessly abandoned them, and now want Mr. President to dump Wike. May I ask the PGF, don't you have access to Mr. President, and what is the proverbial caucus meant for? My summation is simple: Mr. President, beware of pretenders."

Beyond Parochialism: Why Yayi's Alleged Ekiti Ancestry Is No-brainer

By Abayomi James Oluwanifise

ABOUT ten years, long after he had left the Presidency and retired to his Otta Farm, former President Olusegun Obasanjo became a subject of some mischievous but criminally nauseating paternity question. From nowhere, a picture started circulating on social media with the subjective poser that the picture did look like Obasanjo. And what were those behind the mischievous question trying to say? That the person in the picture was the father of former President Olusegun. That was not even the issue. The issue then was that the man in that picture, with the irritating insinuation of being Obasanjo's father, was an Igbo man! Can one beat that?

Well, that is why the 'Obasanjo experience' should worry someone like Senator Adeola Olamilekan, popularly known as Yayi, going by the growing but disturbing insinuation that he is from Ekiti State. However, even at that, Yayi should also be amused. Amused in the sense if his opponents have just suddenly realised that he is not from Ogun State but from the state popularly referred to as the 'Fountain of Knowledge'. It shows how redundant some of them are and how bereft of anything negative to pin on him.



This piece will not try to hold any brief for Senator Adeola. During campaign season like this, and when a candidate is seen, even by the harshest of his political adversaries as the man to beat, then anything becomes a political weapon. Even the most mundane of issues are elevated and constructive engagement is sent on sabbatical.

When this rumour first reared its funny head, perhaps the camp of Senator Adeola would have probably waved it a way as one of those malicious rumours that would die naturally with the belief that they usually have the lifespan of a mushroom.

However, the rumour has not only gained a life of its own, it has metamorphosed into a conversation that is gaining traction even if it is arrantly baseless. Baseless because there is a critical missing link which even those bandying the claim around have refused to interrogate. Even an elementary student of law would never be forgiven if he or she does not know that the onus of proof is always on he who accuses. That is why you don't wake up and accuse someone of pilfering without saying what he or she has criminally approximated and, crucially, how he or she did it. And that is why even critical questions must be asked of the intellectual capabilities of those amplifying this puerile nebulosity.

Now, let's raise some critical counterpoise here. Ekiti, where Yayi is claimed to have come from has almost a hundred and forty towns and villages. While each town has the suffix 'Ekiti' added to their distinct names, each has its uniqueness and peculiarities that stand them from the each other. Now, if you vaguely claim someone of the stature of Senator Adeola Olamilekan is from Ekiti State, especially when such classification and identity pigeon-holing is meant to score cheap political points, then it shows how lazy you are as a person if you cannot mention the town or village he comes from and his lineage. Why did I say this? I will explain.

Before going to town with this type of claim, there should be the little matter of which particular town and more so, the family lineage he comes from in the particular town. Let me go a beat personal here. My mother is from Ikere-Ekiti. I started schooling there. Her father's house is in a place called Oke Ugele area of Ikere-Ekiti. Anyone familiar with that town will naturally know where Oke Ugele is in Ikere-Ekiti. Now, more critically, someone also familiar with that geographical location will easily tell you that there are people of the same age bracket with someone claiming to be from that area would have grown up with.

For the sake of argument, let us say Senator Adeola's parents, especially the father, left the town they are claiming he comes from in Ekiti when Adeola himself was a toddler or even before he was born, then there must be a lineage. There must be people his father grew up with. The father must also have parents whose history some people are familiar with. Unfortunately, those bandying this mischievous heresy have never deemed it fit to provide the gerontocratic background of Senator Adeola from Ekiti State. Perhaps, they knew what they wanted to do ab initio: create a storm where there was never a wind in the first place. They can do better.

In this part of the world, nothing is too much to play politics with. Even the death of a child of a political opponent can become a tool. Personal challenges can become handy too. But all these pale into insignificance when compared to questioning someone's ancestral background. And that is why we need to ask critical questions about whether the extent political actors go to in order to score cheap political points actually worth it.

You cannot be loved by all. Therefore, it is taken that Senator Adeola, will have his adversaries. But do not deny him his flowers. Cut him some slack and accord him his respect as a consummate politician who does not only know the game but also understands that power actually is not just a property of the people but also their inheritance. As they say on the streets, he has paid his dues.

• Oluwanifise, a journalist and political analyst, wrote in from Lagos.

Why Nigeria Must Let Its Diaspora Vote

By Boma Lilian Braide

EVERY year, Nigerians abroad wire home upward of $21 billion. The Central Bank puts 2025 remittances at $21.8 billion, among the highest inflows on the continent. This is not an abstract macroeconomic data. It is the nurse in Dublin paying her mother's hospital bill, the Uber driver in Houston covering his younger sister's WAEC fees, the software engineer in Toronto quietly keeping the family compound in Nigeria from falling into disrepair.

Diaspora money buys rice, pays rent, builds houses, and props up a naira that would otherwise be in far deeper trouble. Without it, credible economists agree, Nigeria's external reserves and household economy would be in far worse shape.

Yet when it is time to decide who runs the country that money sustains, these same seventeen million citizens hit a locked door. They are trusted enough to bankroll the nation but not trusted enough to help choose who spends it. It is a modern, bureaucratic version of an old injustice which is, taxation without representation, dressed up in constitutional language. The message from Abuja to its children abroad has been consistent for a generation: send the money, but keep your opinions to yourself.

This is not a new complaint. Diaspora groups raised it loudly ahead of the 2015, 2019, and 2023 general elections, each time collecting promises from politicians courting their goodwill and campaign donations, and each time watching those promises evaporate once the votes at home were counted. The pattern by now is familiar enough to be its own kind of Nigerian tradition.

Look closely and the exclusion starts to look less like an oversight and more like a strategy. Nigerian elections still run substantially on patronage; cash transfers, food items, and intimidation at polling units are tools that work best on a captive, economically vulnerable electorate. They do not work on a doctor in Berlin or a civil servant in London. You cannot hand out five thousand naira and a bag of rice in Houston. You cannot deploy thugs to a polling unit that does not exist. The diaspora is, by circumstance, a harder electorate to manipulate, and a political class built on patronage has little appetite for voters it cannot manage.

Officials have long pointed cost and logistics as the reason external voting remains unworkable, and those concerns are not entirely without merit, organising secure balloting across dozens of countries is genuinely harder than running it within one. But smaller, poorer neighbours have already solved this problem. Senegal reserves fifteen seats in its National Assembly specifically for diaspora deputies. The Republic of Benin runs polling stations inside its embassies and consulates during presidential cycles. Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Cameroon all allow citizens abroad to vote from foreign missions. If these countries, several of them with far smaller budgets and thinner institutional capacity than Nigeria can manage the logistics, the claim that Africa's self-styled "Giant" cannot is harder to sustain as anything more than a lack of political will.

Consider a family compound where the eldest son has travelled to the city for work. Every month he sends home half his salary for food, for the leaking roof, for medical bills that would otherwise go unpaid. Without that money, the compound struggles to survive. Then the family gathers to choose a new head of household, a decision that will shape everyone's future, including his. He calls in and asks to be heard. The elders remind him, gently but firmly, that his voice does not count because he is not physically present on the mat in the village square, though they are careful to remind him that next month's contribution is due on time.

That, in essence, is Nigeria's relationship with its diaspora; fully welcome as a source of income, fully excluded as a source of judgment.

The mechanics of this exclusion sit in Sections 77 and 117 of the 1999 Constitution, which tie voter registration and voting to physical residency within Nigeria's borders, a restriction the Electoral Act reinforces. In practice, this means a nurse in Dublin or an engineer in Toronto must fly home, navigate dangerous roads, and take unpaid leave simply to exercise a right that citizens of Senegal, Ghana, or South Africa can exercise at their nearest embassy. A diaspora voting bill has in fact passed second reading in the National Assembly, and versions of it have surfaced in previous electoral reform efforts, only to stall over the same cited concerns about cost, security, and administrative capacity. The bill's repeated failure to cross the finish line says less about feasibility than about priority.



This is not only a matter of fairness; it carries a real economic cost. Nigeria is losing skilled professionals: doctors, engineers, academicians through the migration wave popularly known as "Japa."

Every year that the country tells these citizens their political voice does not matter, it weakens the incentive for them to reinvest that knowledge, capital, and global network back home. Diaspora communities that feel politically enfranchised tend to invest more, not less, in their countries of origin, a pattern documented across Ghana, India, and the Philippines, where diaspora bonds and enfranchisement have gone hand in hand with rising diaspora investment.

Continued exclusion does not protect Nigeria's democracy; it slowly erodes one of its most valuable assets, one departure lounge at a time. None of this requires reinventing the wheel. The path is well-tested by Nigeria's own neighbours.

The National Assembly should prioritise amending Sections 77 and 117 of the Constitution, alongside the relevant provisions of the Electoral Act, to permit registration and voting from abroad. The Independent National Electoral Commission should be given the legal mandate and the budget, phased in, starting with embassies in countries with the largest Nigerian populations, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada to pilot external voting ahead of the next general election, rather than citing cost as a permanent veto.

A phased rollout, tested first in a handful of missions and expanded over two or three election cycles, would answer the logistical objection without requiring the country to solve every problem at once.

The diaspora, for its part, cannot remain a passive donor to a system that excludes it. Nigerians abroad have the associations, the financial leverage, and the global visibility to organise a sustained, coordinated campaign around a simple demand: if the money counts, the vote must count too. And Nigerians at home have a stake in this fight as well. A diaspora with a vote is a diaspora with a reason to stay engaged, to demand accountability, and to channel resources into local investment rather than remittance alone will yield an outcome that benefits everyone who lives within Nigeria's borders, not just those who send money into it.

Seventeen million Nigerians abroad are already carrying part of the weight of this country's economy. Extending them the ballot is not a favour, and it is not radical. Nigeria does not need a constitutional revolution to get there, only the political will its neighbours have already found. It is simply consistent with what the country already asks of its diaspora everywhere else; full commitment, and nothing less than full citizenship in return. The iron door has stayed shut for long enough. It is time Abuja found the key.

Braide is a lawyer and founder of The Surge Youth Advocacy Group

By **Gbenga Salau**



Three Years On, Blue Line Riders Hail Rail Service, Decry Bus Gaps, Peak-hour Safety Risks, Others

AT Mile 2, the rush-hour crowd moves with a familiar Lagos urgency. Some commuters head for buses, others weave through traffic, while passengers bound for Marina make their way towards the Blue Line station. Before September 2023, commuting by train from Mile 2 to connect Orile, National Theatre, and Lagos Island was a mirage. But in the last three years, moving on trains has become a common sight along the Mile 2-Marina corridor in Lagos, and for many commuters, it is a new way to navigate one of the world's most congested urban environments.

When the Lagos Blue Line commenced commercial operations, it was seen as a major intervention to end the long commuting times, traffic congestion and unreliable public transport system.

Speaking, Seyi John, a resident of Lagos who has been using the train since the commencement of commercial operations on the Blue Rail, said that travel time has never been the same on the Mile 2-Marina corridor, which is why he has not been using buses to connect the Island in the last three years.

"Travel time is extremely reliable because you can calculate the time it will take you to get to the Island right from the comfort of your home; all you need is to get the manifest to pre-plan your movement on a daily basis. The Blue Line rail has been a game-changer on the Mile 2-Marina line since it commenced operations three years ago. Commuting from Mile 2 to Marina, and back, has not been the same for me because riding the Blue Line is precise. I can tell when I will get home without any traffic or other associated problems."

Another resident, Ruth Benjamin, said that using the train makes her journey fast, as it has helped to reduce traffic and save time. She stated that the arrival of the rail service has been tremendously helpful in easing her commute to and from work. She added that commuting by train has also reduced the amount she spends on transport fare each day, as well as the time and stress she experiences. She observed that, because the train provides a fast connection time, many residents now see it as a better commuting option, which contributes to heavy passenger traffic during peak morning and evening periods.

Benjamin also stated that as a result of the train services, commercial bus operators, especially on the Mile 2-CMS corridor, now charge moderate fares. "Before the blue rail started commercial operation, commercial bus operators plying the Mile 2-CMS corridor were usually very arrogant in pushing up their fares, but that is no more," she stated.

Similarly, Kemi Jesugo stated that the ambience of the blue rail is perfect and excellent. "As with the train, the journey is fast, stress-free, and at a fair price." She added that the rail system has reduced the long travel times and traffic stress associated with commuting in Lagos, especially in the Mile 2-Marina area.

Commenting on the fare, Jesugo said it is affordable, although train and bus fares are almost the same. Also, speaking on the affordability of the fare, John said: "For someone like me that does not go out so early in the morning, the cost is fair based on the discount we currently enjoy. This is because there is a 15 per cent discount from 12 noon to 4 pm.

However, travelling from Marina to Mile 2 in the evening remains the best because of the traffic and stress of travelling along that corridor. This is because bus travel time is unpredictable compared to going home via the Blue Line.

"For instance, Marina to Orile in the evening, which is halfway through the journey, is usually between N600 and N700; while Marina to Mile 2 via train is N750. So, it is better to travel back by train because it is cheaper compared to riding buses, besides the stress of joining the yellow buses."

Worth mentioning is that over the last three years, the number of daily trips on the blue rail line has increased from 12 to 94. Commercial operations started on September 4 with 12 trips, increased to 54 trips daily on October 16, and are now running at 94 trips daily. The first phase of the blue rail line, between Marina and Mile 2, is a 13-kilometre track with five stations: Marina, National Theatre, Orile, Alaba, and Mile 2. To board, you need a Cowry Card, a contactless smart card used for public transportation in the state.

Speaking at a press briefing a few days before the commencement of the commercial operations in September 2023, the Managing Director of the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA), Engr. Abimbola Akinajo disclosed that, "though the train is electric, it will run on a locomotive for the first four weeks of operation to allow the electric system to fully come online and sync properly with the physical infrastructure, which will also allow passengers to become familiar with the rail system." She added that about 150,000 passengers were expected to board the train daily.

Meanwhile, a post published on July 16, 2026, by China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) Nigeria through one of its officials, John Zhao, on X, while providing an update on the ongoing construction of the second phase of the project, revealed that the Blue Rail Line has moved more than 8 million passengers in over 1,000 days of operation. CCECC is the technical partner responsible for constructing the Lagos Blue Line.

Similarly, in May 2026, Lagos State Commissioner for Transportation, Oluwaseun Osiyemi, speaking during the 2026 ministerial press briefing to mark the third year of the second term of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, said the Blue Line transported about 3.5 million passengers in 2025, with daily ridership on the corridor rising to 15,000 commuters.

This data from CCECC and the commissioner implied that three years after the Blue Rail Line commenced commercial operation, it is still far from its target of moving 150,000 passengers daily.

The Blue Rail Line project was conceived as an alternative form of intra-city commuting and to move the state away from a single mode of transportation.

With a population of over 20 million residents, the state has become synonymous with chaotic traffic across the city's corridors. In response, former governor and now President Bola Ahmed Tinubu conceived an intermodal transportation system that included a rail system in the early 2000s.

A formal announcement of the construction of the rail system, particularly the blue rail line, was made in December 2003. The initial $135m proposal for the project was part of the Greater Lagos Urban Transportation Project, which the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) was to implement.

In April 2008, the state government approved N70b for the construction of the Okokomaiko-Marina Line, with an estimated 2011 completion date for the first phase (from Mile 2 to Marina). However, the project suffered many delays. The initial 2011 completion date was moved to 2013. Despite the additional two years, the project was still not delivered until 2023.

The Phase II extension of the Blue rail line, which is from Mile 2 to Okokomaiko, is ongoing. It is a 14-kilometre extension and is expected to expand the Blue Line's coverage across the Lagos-Badagry corridor. It is expected to have six stations located at Festac, Alakija, Trade Fair, Volkswagen, LASU and Okokomaiko.

On whether the Blue Rail Line has lived up to its promise of improving transportation in Lagos, John stated that he would not agree that it has improved transportation in Lagos generally. "But along the Lagos-Badagry Expressway, it is a big yes. The biggest improvements are the speed and predictability of travel time, as the Mile 2-Marina train journey is just 18 minutes. It can really happen on our roads."

He said, however, that the operator needs to innovate its operations by increasing the number of coaches during peak periods to accommodate more passengers, and probably return to the usual four coaches during off-peak periods.

No doubt, for Lagos residents living or working along the Blue Rail Line, the train has changed the way they commute along that corridor. However, the experience is different for those outside the rail corridor: completing the last leg of the journey and connecting with buses and other forms of transport still present obstacles, especially at the Marina and National Theatre ends of the train stations.

John observed that overcrowding is something synonymous with the blue rail line on working days during peak periods. "So, overcrowding is part of the daily movement. On the safety part, I think the terminal design would have been better off if it was built with a 'first come, first served' in mind - that way the safety concern will be much minimal; even though there has not been any accident on the corridor in the last three years."

On her part, Jesugo said that sometimes, when she is not in haste, she commutes by bus rather than by train because of the time spent waiting for the next train to arrive or climbing or descending the stairways. "You can be early to the station and still not get a space to sit when finally onboard."

Jesugo observed that special services for pregnant women, old people, and physically challenged persons are not recognised, especially during peak periods, which is unacceptable. "And the system has also failed to ensure decorum among people while entering the coaches during peak periods, which is disheartening.

"At the Marina Terminal, there are fewer Lagos Ride vehicles. So, getting a vehicle to convey individuals to their various destinations is always difficult, simply because the terminal is on the outskirts of CMS Bus Stop, where commercial vehicles are easily available. This made me stop using the train at times. This is because after waiting, I often end up using a bike in order to meet up with my resumption time, as a last option to connect to my office in Ikoyi, which is risky and expensive," Jesugo stated.

Benjamin, who noted that the train stations, Mile 2 and Marina, and the coaches are usually crowded during peak periods, complained about the long queue at the Marina Station while waiting for a bus to Falomo. "It is not a nice experience, because the queues are always long and most of the time, it is not easy getting a bus to Falomo," she stated.

A resident, Segun Ogundele, said that many have not seen the blue rail system as an option because of the location of the Marina station.

"The Marina station is far from the CMS Bus Stop, the main commercial hub. To connect to the CMS area from the train station in the morning, you'll need to take a bus, which means paying extra or walking a long way. Since the train service started, commercial buses, the popular yellow buses, have been charging rates in the region of the train fare. So, with that, the train is more expensive if you include the last-mile fare.

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Editorial

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Isese Day And The Duty To Preserve Culture

THE move by Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states to commemorate *Isese* Day with the declaration of August 20 as a work-free day is a legitimate recognition of Yoruba cultural and religious heritage. It deserves to be welcomed as part of the wider obligation to preserve Nigeria's diverse indigenous traditions. The preservation of culture, however, should be done discerningly. Languages, oral traditions, festivals, arts, knowledge systems and historical practices that enrich society should be protected. On the other hand, customs that violate human dignity, public health, equality or other legitimate social values should evolve or be jettisoned.

Isese Day points to an increasingly visible expression of Yoruba cultural identity. Beyond the recognition, it is important to take the discourse past the granting of a day off to workers. Focus must shift to what it means to preserve culture. While preserving a people's memory is imperative, preserving every practice associated with that memory might not be. The holiday should, therefore, be seen as a window of opportunity to let in a fresh and more mature conversation about cultural preservation.

There is sufficient urgency to do this, no thanks to decades of hurt to cultural sensibilities caused by colonialism, religious intolerance, supposed modernisation and declining interest among the younger generation. But there are grounds for optimism, given the 2008 inscription of Ifa, an extensive corpus of texts, mathematical formulas, history, philosophy and knowledge transmitted through Yoruba communities, on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The UNESCO inventory has demonstrated that the preservation of Nigeria's cultural attributes can have scholarly and developmental dimensions. Indeed, culture survives only when its knowledge base is recorded, taught and made meaningful to younger generations. Besides yearly displays of costumes, processions, drumming and public celebrations, states must now use the occasion to encourage documentation, research, translation of oral literature, preservation of indigenous languages and cultural values, archival work, apprenticeships and responsible cultural tourism.

There is also a firm constitutional premise for this advocacy. Section 38 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and to manifest and propagate religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. If this principle applies to Christianity and Islam, then it rightly does the same for traditional religion. It is the responsibility of government to grant equal protection, dignity and freedom to adherents. The three states have therefore done well in correcting an old imbalance in the public perception of indigenous faiths.

That said, the argument for preserving a people's culture should not include all inherited practices. Yoruba culture has evolved through migration, trade, religion, political change, and contact with other societies. Isese, in itself, is not harmful. However, as society acquires new knowledge over time, there must be a revision of its moral judgments and values. A traditional practice might pulsate with historical or symbolic value, yet it needs to align with contemporary standards of safety, equality, children's rights or public health, morality and safety.

Caution must be exercised to avoid turning the public recognition of Isese Day into political theatre. After the holiday is over, the three states should be able to demonstrate that their intentions were genuinely about preserving culture and enhancing policy. This will be tested by sustained and renewed commitment to sacred spaces, the preservation of traditional archives or state-backed support for learning traditional arts and knowledge.

There is one key question the states will have to handle tactfully. Having declared a holiday for a religious tradition, Lagos, Ogun and Oyo have unwittingly positioned themselves as shapers or influencers of that tradition. They have become patrons, and with patronage comes control, explicitly or implicitly. Sooner or later, the states may have to wade into the definition of what constitutes *Isese* or who genuine adherents are. Which custodians or groups get state backing? Which get sidelined? Which get the benefits of police protection and 'juicy' visits to Government House? These are delicate territories that have dogged Islam and Christianity over the centuries. Unless these are properly managed, the Isese heritage risks becoming the object of politicking.

By recognising *Isese* Day, the states are paving the way to reap additional dividends from cultural tourism. This presents an opportunity to build a serious cultural economy around festivals, museums, traditional crafts, music, fashion, food, performance, scholarship and heritage tourism. Rather than create another market from which outsiders extract value, the initiative, if properly followed through, should generate income for communities, encourage conservation and create opportunities for young people. The states are no strangers to cultural opportunities, but the more fields they have to play in, the merrier.

There is also a larger significance in the move. While Yoruba culture is the immediate beneficiary of the gesture, the nation's pluralistic outlook is the better for it. Nigeria is culturally diverse. No one tradition has the carrying power to function as the default national culture. The takeaway from Isese Day is that every community deserves space to preserve its legitimate heritage within the constitutional order. The recognition of Yoruba traditional religion should therefore strengthen the case for protecting the cultural and religious traditions of other ethnic nationalities. What is sauce for the Yoruba must be sauce for the Hausa, Igbo, Ijaw, Kanuri, Tiv, Nupe and all. The renaissance of one or more cultures should by no means translate to the exclusion of others. Care should also be taken to ensure that these rights or privileges do not imply ethnic superiority. Rather than a reason to bicker, the Isese celebration can become a useful demonstration of how Nigeria should handle difference. Every tradition must be allowed to operate within constitutional space and be afforded the human dignity, respect and protection it deserves.

The need to preserve culture brings Nigeria to where the road bifurcates between cultural amnesia and cultural absolutism. There is no point going either way. The future rests in the middle: preserving what gives people their identity while at the same time reforming what is no longer consistent with the times. The declaration of public holidays has further pushed Isese into the spotlight. What the states do hereafter by way of policy and how the adherents manage the newfound recognition will tell whether Nigeria is ready to build a future in which tradition is preserved and passed on to oncoming generations.

LETTER

Professor Adebayo Williams At 75

SIR: On Wednesday, September 9, 2026, Professor Adebayo Williams, the renowned author, literary critic, and public intellectual, turned seventy-five. He also holds the traditional chieftaincy title of Asiwaju Otun Olufi Gbongan in Osun State. We felicitate with him on this milestone.

This writer is a student of Political Science and Anthropology. Adebayo Williams is a Professor of English Studies and Literary Theory. As far apart as these disciplinary specialities may seem, the former is a student of the latter. I am his Open and Distance Learning (ODL) student. I met him in the classrooms of Newswatch, The Guardian, Nigerian Tribune, The News, Tempo, Africa Today, and much later, the Internet. I am a connoisseur of the wine of good prose. Once I read any writer whose pieces are infused with sophisticated literary merit, I draw close to such an author like a bee to a sweet nectar.

Professor Adebayo Williams is a master prose writer. He writes with ease and elegance; his turns of phrase are sharp and witty; his expressions are full of vigour, and his cadence, rhyme and rhythm musically mellifluous. In his pen, the social sciences and humanities seamlessly interweave in the discourse of society and development. His commentaries on social theory, post-colonialism, political sociology, federalism, nation-building, culture, and democracy are conceptually deep and analytically profound. He is without a scintilla of doubt among the first flight of public intellectuals who have shaped the tenor and direction of contemporary society.

In the era of military authoritarianism, he was a turn in the flesh. He was at the forefront of the struggle against the barbarians who had invaded the gates of our polity. The bile dripping out of his pen was so biting and painful that he was marked down to be taken on the Appian Way of Golgotha. As a clever guerrilla, he melted into the shadows of darkness and materialised in the metropolises.

It was in these climes that he deployed his pen and intellect to the service of the nation and democracy to the fullest. The imagination of the owl of Gbongan was in full flight. His pieces in Africa Today irritated tyrants and antidemocratic forces. His piece in Africa Today, entitled The Road to Kigali, for instance, is a masterpiece that would be a leading article in any anthology on anti-authoritarianism.

His intellectual contributions to the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999 are massive and beyond the pale of this piece. It is deeply surprising to keen observers that his contributions to Nigeria's democratic transformation have not been celebrated, especially under the present administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, his friend and fellow sojourner in exile.

I will appeal to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to confer the prestigious honour of Commander of the Federal Republic (CFR) on him in addition to the medal of the National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM). Professor Adebayo Williams should also be appointed Special Adviser on Arts and Culture to establish and manage a national arts endowment fund to mentor and develop talent.

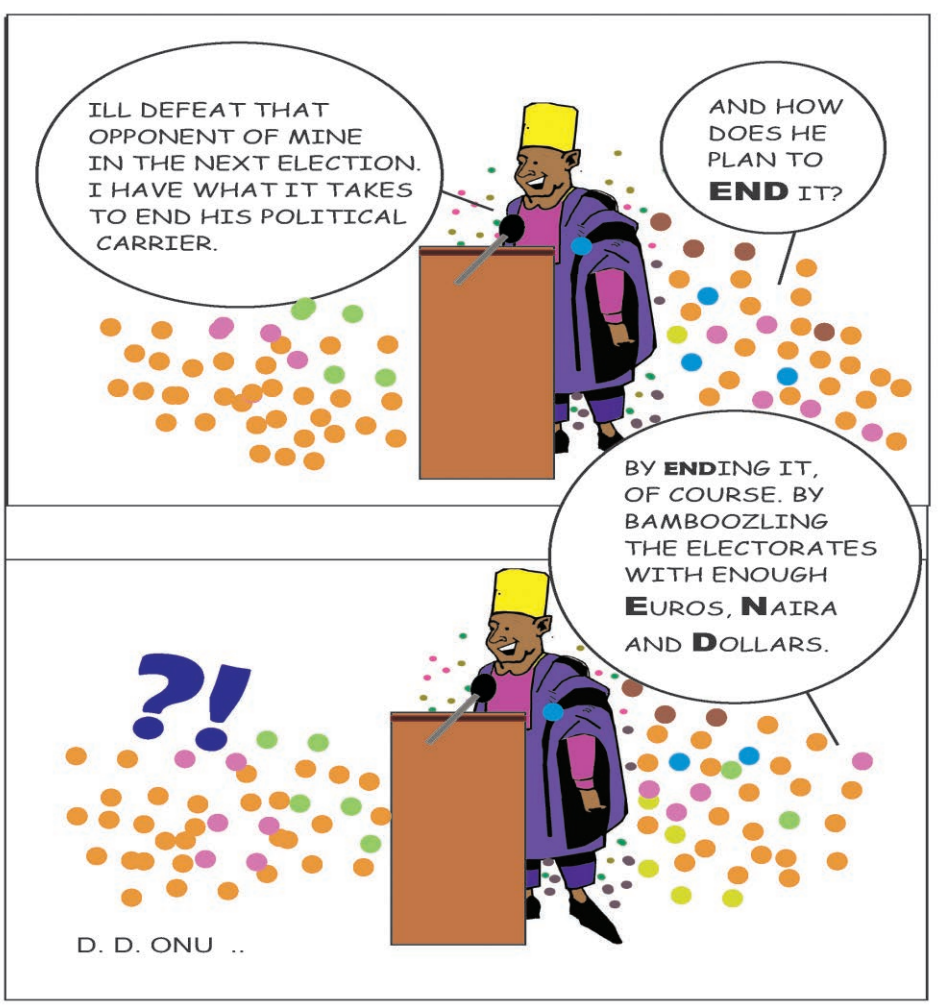
Professor Adebayo Williams is a fine novelist. Some of his novels are: The Year of the Locust; Bulletin from the Land of Living Ghosts; and, The Remains of the Last Emperor. I read these novels while on a fellowship in South Africa in 2006. His works were popular with South African fiction readers. I stayed at the Garden Centre and observed this first-hand. At the Garden Centre bookshop, it was a common sight to see readers trooping in and out to pick up his works.

In The Remains of the Last Emperor, for instance, Professor Adebayo Williams demonstrates literature's power as an instrument of revolutionary transformation. The forces of dialectical and historical materialism coalesce in the masses to pull down a dictator diseased by power. The novel's lessons remain essential to the practice of democracy in contemporary Africa.

I will plead with Professor Adebayo Williams to compile all his works into book form for the benefit of readers and posterity.

We thank God for making Professor Adebayo Williams a blessing to Nigeria and humanity. We wish him a happy birthday and all the best in his endeavours.

• *Atah Pine wrote from Ikpayongo Town, Benue State.*



Opinion

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Steve Osuji's 2027 Prophetic Fantasy

By **Sunday Dare**

THERE is a distinct, exhausting genre of Nigerian commentary that mistakes cynicism for sophistication, bitter partisanship for objective analysis, and venom for editorial depth.

Steve Osuji's intervention on the 2027 presidential landscape fits squarely into this well-worn mould. Dripping with unwarranted condescension, frantic hyperbole, and a palpable disdain for institutional reality, Osuji attempts to paint a picture of an imperiled incumbent and an infallible, messianic opposition. 'But when stripped of its purple prose, partisan hero-worship, and unfounded insinuations, his thesis collapses into a hollow exercise in wishful thinking.

Osuji's commentary is not an analysis; it is a symptom of a political subculture that refuses to reconcile itself with the hard, structural choices required to save Nigeria from decades of managed decay. To dismantle his manufactured outrage, one must drag his assertions back into the harsh, uncompromising light of reality'

The Myth of the "Messianic" Third Force and Electoral Arithmetic

Osuji's primary preoccupation is the elevation of Mr. Peter Obi to a mythological status, describing him as a political phenomenon who supposedly "won" the 2023 election before it was "glitched" away. This is a comforting fairy tale for the opposition, but it collapses upon even elementary statistical scrutiny and objective electoral history.

The assertion that Obi won the 2023 election "by miles" ignores the brutal, mathematical reality of electoral geography in Nigeria. In 2023, a candidate who failed to cross the constitutional threshold of broad national spread—failing catastrophically to garner meaningful, statutory votes in critical states across the northern and central regions of the federation—cannot lay claim to a national mandate.

Winning pockets of hyper-mobilized angst in isolated urban enclaves does not translate to a pan-Nigerian victory. To suggest that a politician who bounces haphazardly from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the Labour Party, and now supposedly to a fledgling outfit like the National Democratic Congress (NDC), represents "organic consistency" is an insult to the lexicon of political integrity.

Osuji gushes over Obi's aversion to traditional campaign structures, framing it as a badge of populist honor. In truth, it is a convenient evasion of institutional accountability. A candidate who fears structured party organs, open programmatic debates, and transparent nationwide organization is not a revolutionary; he is a digital-age populist riding the transient waves of economic anxiety and social media echo chambers.

When Osuji attempts to dismiss all other contenders—labeling veterans like Donald Duke, Omoyele Sowore, and Adewole Adebayo with derogatory tags of "spoilers" and "clowns"—he betrays a deep intolerance for pluralism. Anyone who refuses to bow at the altar of his preferred candidates is summarily excommunicated. This is not journalism; it is partisan gatekeeping disguised as high-minded critique.

Reality of the Tinubu Administration: Courage Over Populist Cowardice

Osuji paints President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration as an "abysmal failure," weeping over imaginary dunghills of poverty while conveniently ignoring the monumental, foundational rot the current administration inherited on May 29, 2023.

For decades, successive Nigerian leaders lacked the political will to confront the twin cancers that were bleeding the nation to death: the criminal, unsustainable fuel subsidy regime and the distorted, multiple foreign exchange markets that served as a massive pipeline for rent-seekers and corrupt arbitrageurs.

Previous administrations kicked the can down the road, preferring popular, debt-financed ruin to necessary, painful surgery. President Tinubu took the bull by the horns on day one, halting the hemorrhage.

To evaluate this administration without acknowledging the structural courage of those reforms is intellectual dishonesty of the highest order. Let's consider the measurable, verifiable milestones achieved under President Tinubu's watch across key sectors.

First, is the "Economic Stabilization and Fiscal Re-engineering". The abolition of the opaque fuel subsidy stopped the bleeding of trillions of naira into private pockets. The unification of the foreign exchange market dismantled a corrupt parallel-market cartel. Consequently, revenue flows to federal, state, and local governments have expanded exponentially, granting sub-nationals unprecedented financial autonomy to execute developmental projects'.'

Second, is the "Macroeconomic Growth and Investor Confidence". Defying doomsday prophecies, Nigeria's real GDP expanded by 4.43% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2026, accelerating from previous quarters. International rating agencies such as Fitch, Moody's, and S&P Global Ratings have recognized these stabilizing fundamentals, with landmark credit upgrades reflecting growing international confidence in Nigeria's structural reforms.

External reserves have surged past $54.08 billion—achieving their highest level in nearly 18 years—while the debt service-to-revenue ratio has experienced a dramatic downward rebalancing away from the unsustainable precipice of the past.

Third, is the "Massive Infrastructure Drive". Unlike past eras where public funds vanished into phantom projects, the administration has prioritized high-impact infrastructure through aggressive Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and the Renewed Hope Infrastructure Development Fund. From the ongoing, ambitious construction of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway and the Sokoto-Badagry Highway to crucial rail modernizations and regional power interventions, the administration is laying the physical tracks for long-term industrialisation.

Fourth, is the "Social Interventions and Human Capital". Recognising the temporary pains associated with macroeconomic adjustments, the administration instituted targeted cushioning mechanisms. The Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFund) has liberated hundreds of thousands of indigent students from financial exclusion, enabling access to higher education. Initiatives like Credicorp, MSME intervention funds, and the implementation of the new national minimum wage are systemic cushions designed to protect the vulnerable.

Fifth, is the "Security and Institutional Integrity". While security challenges inherited over decades cannot vanish overnight, the armed forces have sustained aggressive, coordinated offensives against insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping networks, steadily restoring civil authority to liberated communities. Concurrently, institutions like the EFCC have been empowered to sanitize the financial architecture, striking down illicit financial flows, while Nigeria's standing in international financial governance continues to reap profound dividends.

Debunking the Hollow Insinuations of Flight and Fear

Osuji's snide remarks regarding President Tinubu's working vacation—peddling the stale, gutter narrative that the President is "on the run" or "incommunicado"—reveal a profound misunderstanding of modern governance and basic executive scheduling.

A national leader is not tethered to a physical chair in Abuja to prove competence. In an interconnected global economy, statecraft requires strategic international engagements, economic diplomacy, and moments of tactical reflection away from the suffocating pressure-cooker of domestic political sycophancy. The desperate attempt to weaponize a temporary vacation into a sign of weakness is a classic hallmark of opposition panic. While opposition figures run from pillar to post launching ad hominem missiles and recycling hollow populist slogans, the Tinubu administration continues to execute its mandate, commission landmark infrastructure, and consolidate macroeconomic gains.

Conclusion — Substance Will Trump Demagoguery in 2027

Steve Osuji and his ilk can continue to spin elegies for failed political projections, manufacturing outrage to appease partisan inclination. They can dress up electoral lightweights as messiahs and minimize the historic, painful, but ultimately essential foundational surgery performed by President Tinubu. However, the Nigerian electorate is increasingly discerning. Governance is not a shouting match won by moral posturing and economic illiteracy; it is about taking difficult, consequential decisions that secure the future of a nation.

President Tinubu's administration has faced the structural demons of Nigeria head-on. As the fruits of these bold reforms continue to ripen manifest across macro-fiscal stability, infrastructure delivery, and institutional renewal, the hollow assumptions of partisan polemicists like Steve Osuji will be swept away by the unyielding verdict of progress.

• *Dare (PhD) is Special Adviser to the President on Media and Public communications.*

Osun And One Enduring Lesson Of Yoruba Metaphilosophy

By **Alade Rotimi-John**

THE sociological approach to politics in Yorubaland manifests itself in the ethical imperative of a partisan support for the underdog. Social conscience is, for the people, the essence of the art and science of power relations. Their social ideology is reflected in the social content or purpose of what they conceive politics to be.

Social change and development will appear to be the overriding interest and reason for the people's active participation in partisan politics, even as voters. The social allegiance, attitude and ideology of the Yoruba political persona tend to align with a candidate or politician who represents the values of social change and development and who predictively is of lower estate. The candidate's profile is further enhanced if he has been subjected to harassment and repeated attacks on account of his reasoned populism by an old order that is historically opposed to social change.

The just-concluded electioneering campaign which culminated in the 15th August, 2026 governorship election in Osun State bears ample testimony to the professed sympathies of the people with a perceived underdog.The people have understood the instinct and imagination of the old order as being more engaged in the mere possession of power for its own sake with little or no regard for the public good. That political order is feared rather than honoured or respected. It is despised.

The people of Osun shunned the system of 'aristocratic' patronage as they fully supported the second term bid of Governor Ademola Adeleke going by their massive turnout on election day and by their symbolic vote of approval of his governance style.

Great financial and material rewards have been rudely introduced into the Nigerian political system. Slush funds have noticeably crept in since the turn of this Fourth Republic. Money is wielding enormous influence upon taste and public opinion. The sudden financial prestige and independence of the politician have become proverbial. Virtually every person seeking attention and an easy means to wealth has turned a politician, starting from his local community.

One outstanding characteristic of the politician has however been vulgarity and mediocrity rather than specialisation. The average politician is generally not properly spoken of by the populace. His social status, even though has improved due largely to his proximity to the levers of power and the economic basis of his participation, is held in derision.

In Yorubaland, there is the sociology of the political environment which questions the social provenance and ideology of the politician who is brandishing a new development agenda. What is the content or flavour of his political philosophy?, the people will demand to know. Nibo l'o ti nja bo? (Where is he coming from or where did he receive his tutelage?). His social ideology is expected to necessarily resonate with the people's philosophy of "life more abundant for all" or expressed ideologically as social democracy?

Since the aspirant for public office is a member of society, he can be investigated to learn his biography. Such study may widen to accumulate information about his social or family background and where he is emerging from. Being a member of the community, the aspirant may have pronounced on questions of social and political importance and may have taken part in issues of his time. He will be held accountable for his views.

In spite of the influence of money or cash, the old patterns have not been completely erased by "economic realism". The people rebuff any manifestation of primitive accumulation or display of wealth positioned to purchase their vote and continue to hold them in bondage. Though much evidence abounds respecting this Yoruba political predilection, new or emerging politicians seem not to have taken heed.

The latest Osun experience will tend to validate the position that not much has been learnt about the political sociology of the people. Or, may be the people's political values are still being taken for granted. Politics in Yorubaland occurs in a social context and as an intrinsic part of popular culture. It is indeed a communal art. Music, dance, theatre, poetry, mirthful panegyrics, taunts, acerbic jokes, folklore, farce, allegory, etc are the resplendent array of activities attending a political outing or campaign.

All of these were on display as David Adeleke, otherwise known as Davido, joined the affray on behalf of his uncle, Governor Ademola. Davido's status as an International music icon added much value to the Adeleke campaign train. Hordes of young people who otherwise had been apathetic to the political drama in town, were drawn to the spectacle of live performances by the icon himself. Adeleke's opponents had no answer to Davido's blitzkrieg campaign. They simply retreated into their cocoon.

They had put together a plan involving an unwieldy assemblage of Senators, 16 APC governors, ministers of government in their droves, innumerable number of presidential aides, combat-ready policemen in their thousands, and a fleet of menacingly-looking armoured tanks all besieging Osun State just to demonstrate a fear-inducing "federal might" panoply and in aid of winning the coveted trophy of Governor of Osun State.

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

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NNPC Unveils Smart Stations To Reshape Nigeria's Fuel Retail Sector

By **Suliyat Tella**

NIGERIAN National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Limited) has begun exploring technology-driven solutions to improve fuel retailing and provide customers with a more convenient energy purchasing experience.

The company recently commissioned its first Smart Self-Service Station in Abuja through its downstream subsidiary, NNPC Retail. The facility combines self-service fuelling with digital payment options and other energy solutions, including electric vehicle (EV) charging, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and compressed natural gas (CNG).

The initiative is part of the company's broader transformation agenda, which focuses on improving operational efficiency, strengthening customer relations and positioning NNPC Limited for the future of the energy industry.

In this interview, NNPC Limited's Group Chief Executive Officer, Engr. Bashir Bayo Ojulari, discusses the thinking behind the Smart Self-Service Station, its potential benefits for Nigerians and the company's plans to expand the model across the country.

What is the strategic significance of NNPC Retail's first Smart Self-Service Station?

The commissioning of the Smart Self-Service Station is an important step in NNPC Limited's culture transformation journey, which began more than a year ago. The journey is built around four strategic pillars: Enterprise-First Mindset, Execution Excellence, Profitable Growth and Partner of Choice.

]For NNPC Retail, the station provides an opportunity to translate these principles into a practical customer experience. It demonstrates how technology can be applied to everyday fuel retail operations to improve efficiency and respond to changing consumer expectations.

The initiative also reflects our ambition to build a more customer-focused and digitally enabled energy company. As the energy industry evolves, customers increasingly expect services that are convenient, accessible and transparent. We recognise the need to respond to these expectations while ensuring that our operations remain sustainable.

The Smart Self-Service Station is therefore more than a new retail outlet. It represents an effort to rethink how Nigerians interact with energy service providers and how we can deliver value through innovation.

By introducing a model that combines automated fuelling with digital payments and other energy solutions, we are taking steps towards a more integrated retail experience. This is an important part of our broader transformation agenda.

How does the initiative support NNPC Limited's broader transformation agenda?

The Smart Self-Service Station is a practical demonstration of how we are applying technology to improve our operations. It directly supports our Execution Excellence pillar, which focuses on delivering results efficiently and ensuring that our initiatives create lasting value.

Technology provides opportunities to simplify processes, improve monitoring and make services more responsive to customers. By incorporating digital systems into our retail operations, we are taking steps towards making the fuel purchasing experience more convenient and efficient.

The initiative also supports our ambition to become a genuine Partner of Choice. This means building a business that understands the needs of its customers and responds to them in meaningful ways.

We want Nigerians to see NNPC Limited as a company that is willing to embrace new ideas and improve the way it delivers services. The Smart Station is one of the ways we are demonstrating that commitment.

Transparency is another important consideration. We believe that technology-enabled operations can support greater visibility in transactions and improve accountability across our retail business. These are essential elements of building trust with customers.

The station also introduces additional energy options, including EV charging, LPG and CNG. Their inclusion reflects the need to consider the changing nature of energy consumption and the different solutions customers may require.

We developed the model in collaboration with our technology and retail partners. Our objective is to establish a more connected and adaptable energy retail system that can respond to future developments in the industry.

How soon should Nigerians expect the Smart Station model to be replicated across the country?

We understand that Nigerians want to see the benefits of this innovation extended to more communities as quickly as possible. We share that expectation and recognise the importance of making our services more accessible.

However, our approach is to ensure that expansion is both timely and sustainable. Execution Excellence is not simply about moving quickly; it is also about making sure that what we deliver works effectively and can be maintained over time.







Foundation Gifts Edo Residents Free Healthcare

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE Nkem Hearts Foundation has launched a nationwide healthcare initiative with a two-day medical outreach that provided free medical services to 519 residents in Edo State.

Held on September 9 and 10 at the Edo Specialist Hospital (ESH), the programme marked the beginning of the foundation's plan to extend healthcare support to communities across Nigeria's 36 states.

The outreach was organised in partnership with the Edo Specialist Hospital and offered beneficiaries access to general medical consultations, body mass index (BMI) checks, eye examinations, prescribed glasses, dental care, laboratory tests and medications.

Dental services provided during the exercise included tooth extractions, scaling and polishing. Beneficiaries who required medication also received their prescribed drugs at no cost.

The initiative received the support of the Edo State Government, with the Deputy Governor, Dennis Idahosa, hosting the foundation's team at the State House.

The Commissioner for Health, Edo State, Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, who attended the programme, commended the foundation's efforts and encouraged its team to remain committed to its vision. He also expressed the state government's willingness to collaborate on future initiatives.

Similarly, the Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Marie Bisi Idaomi, praised the foundation for providing practical healthcare support to residents rather than limiting discussions about healthcare access to policy and advocacy.

The Chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee at Edo Specialist Hospital, Victor Ohenhen, officially opened the outreach and played a key role in the programme.

Other officials present included the Permanent Secretary, Edo State Ministry of Health, Paul Eighemhenrio, and the Special Adviser to the Governor on Humanitarian Affairs and Civil Society Organisations, Nina Eniki Adaba. Medical and non-medical volunteers also supported the exercise.

Making healthcare accessible

SPEAKING on the motivation behind the initiative, the founder of Nkem Hearts Foundation, Princess Nkem Onochie, said her decision to organise the outreach was driven by the need to make basic healthcare more accessible.

"The motivation behind this outreach is my belief that access to basic healthcare should not be a privilege. There are many people who need medical attention but are unable to afford it or access it when they need it.

"Through the Nkem Hearts Foundation, I want to do my part in reaching these people and providing practical support where it is most needed," she said.

Onochie explained that the foundation's vision extended beyond Edo State, with plans to take the initiative to all 36 states in phases.

She said the organisation would adopt a systematic approach by covering states within one geopolitical zone before moving to the next.

"Our vision goes beyond Edo State. We hope to take the outreach across all 36 states of the federation, starting with one geopolitical zone at a time and completing the states within each zone before moving to the next," she said.

According to her, the approach would allow the foundation to plan its activities effectively and reach more communities over time. The Edo outreach therefore represents the first phase of a broader programme aimed at bringing medical services closer to people who may otherwise struggle to access them.

The role of partnerships

ONOCHIE also highlighted the importance of collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders in addressing healthcare challenges.

She said the support received from the Edo State Government demonstrated the value of partnerships in delivering community-based interventions.

"I also strongly believe that national development is a shared responsibility. Government has a major role to play, but NGOs and other well-meaning individuals and organisations must also contribute wherever they can," she said.

The founder expressed appreciation to the Edo State Government for its support and cooperation during the outreach.

"We have received tremendous support and encouragement from the Edo State Government, and that cooperation has been a major part of making this outreach possible," she added. She also expressed hope that other state governments would support the foundation as it expands its healthcare programme.

For the foundation, the initiative is part of a wider commitment to supporting vulnerable populations and improving access to essential services.

Supporting vulnerable communities

THE Nkem Hearts Foundation is a non-profit organisation focused on improving the lives of vulnerable people, particularly young people, children living with disabilities and women. Its activities cover healthcare, education, skills development, empowerment and humanitarian support. The organisation also works with government agencies, development partners and local communities to promote inclusion and create opportunities for underserved groups.

Through its programmes, the foundation aims to help individuals overcome barriers that limit their access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities.

Its work includes youth leadership and skills development, support for children living with disabilities, women's economic empowerment and health promotion.

The foundation's healthcare drive is intended to complement these existing efforts by providing direct medical assistance to communities.

The two-day outreach in Edo offered residents the opportunity to access several services in one location, including medical consultations, eye care, dental treatment and laboratory investigations.

For beneficiaries who required further treatment or medication, the programme also provided prescribed drugs at no cost. While the Edo exercise has concluded, the foundation says its nationwide healthcare campaign is only beginning.

Onochie said the organisation remained committed to taking the programme to other parts of the country, with the aim of reaching communities that face challenges in accessing basic medical care. "This is only the beginning, and our hope is to keep going until we have reached every part of the country that we can," she said.

The foundation's next steps will involve planning subsequent outreaches across the geopolitical zones, while seeking partnerships to support the delivery of medical services. The Edo programme has thus set the stage for the foundation's broader ambition of extending free healthcare services to communities across Nigeria.

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With LIFI, Lola Shoneyin Deepens Creative Space

By **Gregory Austin Nwakunor**

THE Lagos International Festival of Illustration (LIFI) returned for its second edition from September 17 to 19, 2026, bringing together 36 Nigerian illustrators and nine internationally acclaimed illustrators from Switzerland, Poland and Italy for three days.

Hosted by the Book Buzz Foundation, LIFI was created to strengthen the illustration ecosystem in Nigeria, with a particular focus on children's book illustration. Through workshops, portfolio clinics and networking sessions, the festival provides opportunities for emerging illustrators to develop their skills and explore different approaches to visual storytelling.

In her opening speech festival organiser and Director Book Buzz Foundation, Lola Shoneyin, said, "last year, we invited illustrators from Spain, Slovenia and Latin America, along with 45 young Nigerian artists to take part in an experiment."

She noted that the turnout this year "is proof that with a good idea, the right network and a lot of passion, much can be achieved."

Shoneyin whose idea of a festival of such nature was inspired by a children book festival in Bologna, Italy, said she was led first to build a community of talented illustrators, create opportunities for work through networking, and help build a professional pipeline for children's book illustrators in Nigeria."

For this year's international illustrators, there are Milly Miljkovic, an illustrator, visual artist, and lecturer at CISA in Lugano. Her research investigates perception across form, space and colour, bridging digital technologies with a deliberate return to manual practices and mixed media experimentation.

Sophie Hofmann, a Swiss illustrator, focuses on children's picture books, illustration commissions and observing everyday's moments and emotions, which she turns into illustrations.

Sonya Trolliet, also from Switzerland, works on ideas that revolve around awkwardness, a sense of otherness, and power dynamics. Experimentation plays a central role in her visual exploration.

For Zosia Frankowska, an illustrator of graphic books, she is interested in birds. She leads nature walks and workshops devoted birds while Zosia Dzier awska is an illustrator and comics author with a passion for storytelling, history and architecture.

Also involved is Joanna Rusinek from Poland who has illustrated more than 100 books; Giulia Orecchia, who likes to explore the expressive potential of images and their role in engaging young audiences. Giulia also leads workshop for children, adults and individuals experiencing mental health challenges; Cynthia Alonso is an Argentine-Italian whose work reflects a deep love of visual storytelling, blending tenderness, nostlgia,and curiosity with a strong sense of narrative. Her books explore emotional depth with warmth and sensitivity, creating stories that resonate with readers of all ages. Elenia Beretta, from Italy, is co-founder of Picturebooks Berlin and organises *Drawing Nights Berlin*, a monthly drawing event.

Between the first edition and now, when the Nigeria Picture Book project began, over 20 spmeting books have been made to fill in the gap. Already, plans are afoot to present 20 of such picture books, written and illustrated by Nigerians on October 7 in Abuja.

"Some of the illustrators in those books were with us at the first LIFI," she said.

This year, the BBF Children's Book Awards will be holding with two new yearly honours: The Mabel, named after Mabel Segun, which recognises excellence in children writing and The Bruce, named for Bruce Onobrakpeya, celebrates excellence in children's book illustration.

Shoneyin admonished the 36 participants this year to improve their craft, learn discipline, because talent is everywhere, but commitment is rare.

She said, "you are not here merely to become good enough for the nigerian market. You are here to become impossible for the global market to ignore."

The festival is supported by the Lagos State government, EUNIC Spaces of Culture, the EUNIC Cluster in Nigeria, Sterling Bank, the Italian Embassy, Pro Helvetia, the Embassy of Poland, the University of Lagos and Yaba College of Technology.



Lola Shoneyin

With *Pure Water*, Idu Explores Ecology, Migration

By **Daniel Anazia**

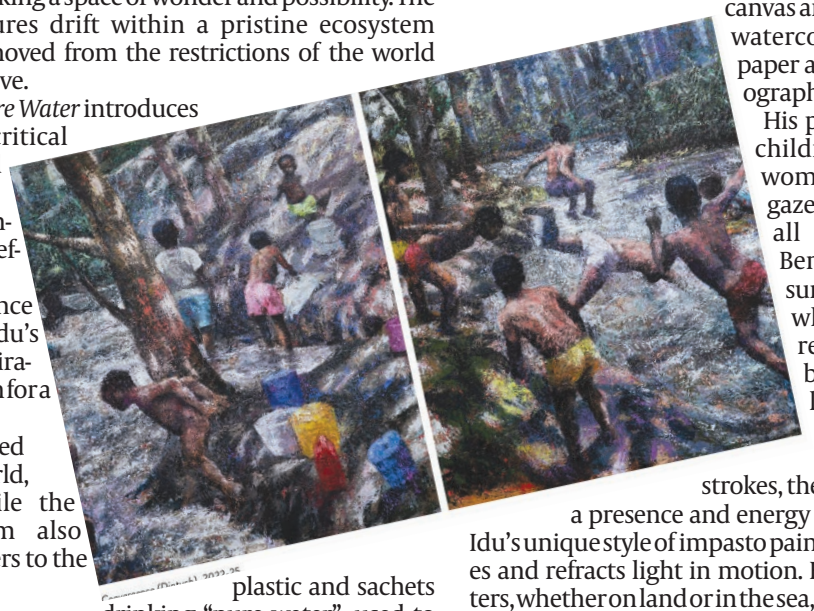
ACCLAIMED multi-media artis,t Chika Idu, has once again opened his creative space to the public with a solo show of his latest work, titled, *Pure Water* at ARAMI, a fine dining restaurant, nestled in the vibrant heart of Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

The show, which is in partnership with SMO Contemporary Art, presents a compelling exploration of ecology, migration, innocence, and liberty through the evocative visages of women and children, swimming in a pristine underwater world.

Rooted deeply in the lived realities of riverine communities, Idu's striking compositions navigate the complex interplay between human survival and aquatic ecosystems.

The work draws the viewer into an immersive natural world in which swimmers float and move with an apparent sense of intention, evoking a space of wonder and possibility. The figures drift within a pristine ecosystem removed from the restrictions of the world above.

Pure Water introduces a critical and ironic reference to Idu's aspiration for a balanced world, while the term also refers to the plastic and sachets drinking "pure water", used to quench the thirst of millions of Nigerians within heavily populated and polluted city centers. These water sachets clog up the drains and waterways, becoming an environmental hazard which affects people's quality of life.



Idu's figures and portraits draw attention to the environmental realities faced by urban and coastal communities, and advocates for "pure waters". His figures swim towards freedom despite all odds.

Through the fluidity of their light speckled under-water reverie, Idu creates scenes of youthful innocence, where children have capacity for freedom and adventure, despite life's uncertain currents and societal pressures.

The show is accompanied by a short film, *From Shore to Studio*, which depicts the artist exploration and documentation of coastal life, and working in his studio to create his masterpieces. His oil and acrylic paintings on canvas and delicate watercolours on paper are a choreography of life.

His portraits of children and women have a gaze that defies all odds. Beneath the surface, where currents are built from layered palette-knife strokes, the water has a presence and energy of its own. Idu's unique style of impasto painting catches and refracts light in motion. His characters, whether on land or in the sea, move with confidence and a sense of adventure.

NAFEST Returns To Enugu With New Competitions, Gaming, Concerts

From **Ajuluchukwu Brown**, Abuja

THE National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST), widely regarded as the country's Culture Olympics, will return to Enugu from November 21 to 28, 2026, following the postponement of last year's edition.

The National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), in partnership with the Enugu State Government, said yesterday that the festival, themed "Connected Culture," would bring together delegations from the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory for eight days of cultural competitions, performances, exhibitions, training and entertainment.

The 2026 edition will retain the refreshed competition formats introduced at NAFEST 2024, including *Swag Show, Dance Off Naija, Sing Off Naija, Naija Home Makeover* and *Jollof War.*

Dambe boxing will also feature alongside other indigenous games, while audiences will be introduced to video games developed by Nigerian studios, incorporating locally created characters, stories and cultural references.



Obi Asika

According to the NCAC, the new formats are designed to connect Nigeria's cultural heritage with contemporary creative expression, particularly among younger audiences.

The festival will also feature capacity-building programmes and masterclasses in film, music, fashion, performing arts and the creator economy, in collaboration with partners including the British Council's Creative Hustle and the National Theatre.

Director-General of NCAC, Obi Asika, said the festival must go beyond celebrating talent to creating opportunities for young creatives.

"NAFEST must not only celebrate talent; it must help develop that talent and connect it to sustainable opportunities," he said.

For Enugu, the festival marks a return after nearly two decades. The state last hosted NAFEST in 2007, while the inaugural national festival was held in Lagos in 1970 and won by the then East Central State.

Governor Peter Mbah said Enugu was preparing to showcase its cultural heritage, hospitality and creative economy, while the Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Dame Ugochi Madueke, said the festival would provide opportunities for young people in the state to connect with Nigeria's creative industries.

Activities will be staged at major venues, including the International Conference Centre and Michael Okpara Square, with traditional and contemporary music, drama, crafts, film, literature, visual arts, exhibitions and major opening and closing concerts also scheduled.

The NCAC said the festival is expected to boost tourism, hospitality, commerce and employment in Enugu while providing a national platform for artists, designers, chefs, game developers, craftspeople and other cultural entrepreneurs.

Broadcast Content Across Border

Compiled by Shaibu Husseini

Cate Blanchett To Headline Tokyo International Filmfest

THE Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) has announced that actor and producer, Cate Blanchett, will attend the festival's 39th edition to celebrate Japan's premiere of five short films supported by the Displacement Film Fund (DFF) of which Uniqlo is a founding partner. The screenings will take place in the same week that Blanchett is to be honoured in Tokyo with the prestigious Praemium Imperiale Award for her achievements in film and theatre. TIFF's 39th edition runs from October 26 to November 4, 2026. Co-founded and led by Blanchett, DFF was established to champion and fund the work of displaced filmmakers, or filmmakers with a proven track record in creating authentic stories focused on the experiences of displaced people. Together with the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR)'s Hubert Bals Fund, she announced the pilot short film funding scheme at IFFR 2025. As previously announced, TIFF will screen the five works comprising the first selection in alignment with the DFF's mission to highlight underrepresented voices through the power of cinema. The five short films supported by the Displacement Film Fund are *Allies In Exile* directed by Hasan Kattan (UK/Syria), *Rotation* by Maryna Er Gorbach (Ukraine/Turkey), *Sense of Water* by Mohammad Rasoulof (Iran/Germany), *Super Afghan Gym* by Shahrbanoo Sadat (Germany) and *Whispers of A Burning Scent* by Mo Harawe (Somalia/Austria/Germany). Following the film screenings, there will be a Q&A session with director Mohammad Rasoulof (Photo, lower right / *Sense of Water*), director Shahrbanoo Sadat (Photo, upper right / *Super Afghan Gym*) and Blanchett. We believe the conversation will foster deeper understanding and awareness of refugee issues. Cate Blanchett has described her feeling thus: "I'm privileged to share the inaugural short films supported through the Displacement Film Fund with audiences at Tokyo International Film Festival. In a world where conflict and persecution are driving displacement and division, cinematic storytelling has a vital role to play in connecting with the experiences of others. Being displaced shouldn't mean filmmakers abandon their creativity; in fact, their stories may feel even more urgent." The Displacement Film Fund champions and funds the work of displaced filmmakers, or filmmakers with a proven track record in creating authentic storytelling on the experiences of displaced people. The fund was announced in January 2025 at the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) by Cate Blanchett, actor, producer and UNHCR Global Goodwill Ambassador, together with IFFR's Hubert Bals Fund. It was founded in partnership with Amahoro Coalition, Master Mind, the Tamer Family Foundation, UNIQLO and Dutch cultural foundation Droom en Daad. The Hubert Bals Fund serves as the managing partner, and UNHCR as the strategic partner. With the addition of The SP Lohia Foundation as a new major partner, the fund confirmed its second edition at IFFR 2026.

DFM 2026 To Host MTN One TV Pitch Session

THE MTN One TV Closed Pitch at DFM 2026 provides established African producers and production companies with an opportunity to pitch bold, authentic and commercially viable African film and television projects to MTN One TV. MTN One TV is seeking stories that are locally rooted, universally resonant and created for youth and mass-market audiences across its key African markets. However, participation in the Pitch Session does not constitute a commission, option, development agreement, production agreement, licence agreement or financial commitment by MTN One TV, Durban FilmMart or any associated partner. Details of the pitch can be sourced from: https://durbanfilmmart.co.za/mtn-one-tv-closed-pitch-at-dfm-2026/. The Durban Filmmart is scheduled to hold from October 9 to 12.

Canex Creations Global African Hub Headlines TIFF Maiden Market

IF there is one platform that has provided the contingent of African filmmakers, executives and industry professional attending this year's Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) opportunity to network and strike deals, then it's the Golden Africa Hub, a pavilion for African creatives sponsored by Canex Creations, the pan-African initiative launched by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) to finance, support and promote Africa's creative and cultural industries. The hub was presented in partnership with Nigerian private equity firm MBO Capital, South African genre powerhouse Gambit Films, Nigerian production outfit Narratives Entertainment and leading Nigerian production and distribution company, FilmOne. Hosted right inside the maiden TIFF market, the hub provided the platform for African creatives to bridge the gap with global executives in the areas of financing, production and distribution. For Head of Canex Creations, Osahon Akpata, the hub was hosted to provide African creatives with access to markets for their works. Through the screening of the works at the market and festival, Akpata was optimistic that filmmakers will be able to explore key North American acquisition and distribution opportunities. So far, the hub has hosted a couple of panel sessions and has screened a couple of works by African filmmakers that are in progress including *The Black Book 2: Old Scores*, by director Editi Effiong and *I'm Coming for You*, the fiction debut of Rotterdam-winning filmmaker Cyrielle Raingou. The hub also featured a special buyers screening of *Muganga — The One Who Treats*, the advocacy-driven drama inspired by the true story of Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Dr. Denis Mukwege, directed by Marie-Hélène Roux and co-produced by Angelina Jolie. The Toronto International Film Festival ends on Sunday, September 20. Some of the African titles screened at this year's edition of TIFF include Mo Abudu's EbonyLife presentation of *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* directed by Daniel Oriahi, South Africa's John Trengove *The Smell of Apples* and Jenna Cato Bass *The Future Tense*.



Osahon Akpata

Cate Blanchett

Switch Visuals, Rixel Studios Set For Nollywood History At TBS

By **Ruth Ononye**

Damilola Osikoya leads ambitious production drive as Black Market prepares to bring thousands together for Guinness World Records attempt in Lagos

ON September 26, Tafawa Balewa Square will become one enormous cinema.

At the centre of the transformation is Switch Visuals Productions, led by its CEO Damilola Osikoya, working alongside Rixel Studios on an ambitious attempt to make Guinness World Records history with the premiere of the new Nollywood feature Black Market.

The plan is audacious. Organisers are targeting 50,000 people watching the same film simultaneously at TBS, exceeding the existing Guinness World Records benchmark of 43,624 people, established in the Philippines in 2015.

But the scale of the September 26 undertaking extends far beyond putting up a screen and filling seats.

For Switch, the challenge is one of experience, production and scale: taking one of Lagos's most recognisable public spaces and helping transform it into the setting for a mass cinematic experience capable of placing Nigerian entertainment on a global stage.

Dami sees that ambition as part of something bigger. "There is nothing more inspiring to me than seeing young people challenge conventions and push the boundaries of innovation," Dami said when the project was announced. "This project is especially close to my heart because it represents what is possible when bold ideas meet determination and collaboration."

That philosophy sits naturally within the trajectory of Switch, a brand increasingly associated with creating experiences at the intersection of entertainment, production and culture. And collaboration is crucial to the scale of the undertaking.

Rixel Studios, led by filmmaker Nora Awolowo, is behind Black Market, its second feature following 2025's Red Circle. Rixel describes itself as a Lagos based full service production company spanning film, photography, audio and graphic media, with innovation and creativity among its stated core values.

Nora has described the record attempt as part of Rixel's determination to find new ways of pushing Nigerian filmmaking beyond conventional boundaries. "We are excited to go on this journey as a team," she said, adding that one of the company's goals as young filmmakers is to continue finding creative ways to innovate.

Together, Switch Visuals and Rixel Studios, with FilmOne Studios and Signet Ring Studios, are therefore attempting something considerably larger than a traditional red carpet premiere.

The September 26 event is planned as an eight-hour experience running from 2:00pm until 10:00pm, with a red carpet from 3:00pm and food, games, music and other creative experiences surrounding the main screening.

The project has also attracted an extensive network of partners, including MTN, Puma, Swoop, PlaystreetNG, Oraimo and Shuttlers, alongside the Lagos State Ministry of Culture.

At the heart of it all, however, remains a Nigerian film.

Directed by Fatimah Binta Gimsay and written by Gimsay and Abdul Tijani-Ahmed, Black Market was shot in Abeokuta and features an ensemble cast including Lateef Adedimeji, Linda Ejiofor-Suleiman, Ibrahim Yekini (Itele D Icon), Scarlet Gomez, Omowunmi Dada, Teniola Aladese, Susan Pwajok and Uzor Arukwe, among others.

For Osikoya, the significance of September 26 is therefore not merely the number Guinness World Records ultimately verifies. It is the statement behind attempting it in the first place.

A Nigerian film. A Nigerian production ecosystem. Tens of thousands of people gathered in the heart of Lagos. If the attempt succeeds, Black Market will enter the record books. But irrespective of the final count, the undertaking demonstrates a different kind of ambition emerging within Nigerian entertainment one in which filmmakers and production companies are no longer thinking only about what appears on the screen, but about the scale of the experience that can be built around it.

Tribute From Bonnie Greer's 'Aburo', Olagoke

By **Ola Alowoloke**

WHEN renowned U.K-based culture advocate and broadcaster, Bonnie Greer (November 16, 1948 to September 15, 2026) passed on, few days ago, the world lost an icon whose passion cuts across global appreciation.

Artist, Lanre Olagoke MBE has described Greer's path with him as "remarkable journey". Olagoke whose works on the UK include empowering the less privileged with creative skills recalls the moments he shared with Greer in the past eight years.

Greer, an American-British playwright and former board member of the British Museum, and London Film School was one of the close associates of Olagoke.

"As I reflect on the remarkable journey we shared over the past eight years, I find it hard to encapsulate the essence of Bonnie Greer, my beloved mentor and dear friend, whom I affectionately called Egbon" Olagoke wrote in a tribute few days ago. "From the moment our paths crossed at the House of St Barnabas in Soho, I knew there was something extraordinary about her. She was a force of nature, a complex tapestry woven from the threads of her experiences and wisdom."

Olagoke disclosed how Greer adopted him as her "Aburo, a term that signifies brotherhood and affection, filling a familial void for both of us in this side of the world." Olagoke recalled how Greer often remarked that she had no relatives in the UK, but all in the United States, but expressed her commitment to the U.K. Olagoke eulogised Greer, noting that in her unique way, she created a family that extended beyond blood, as he was honored to be part of that bonding.

"Through the trials of COVID 19 and the ups and downs of life, we navigated the complexities of our existence together, Olagoke stated. "Bonnie was not just a mentor; she was a profound thinker who challenged me with her probing questions."



Greer and Olagoke

Excerpts from Olagoke's tribute: "She would often ask, 'So who am I to you then?' Her trickster-like approach to conversation compelled me to dig deep and confront truths I might have otherwise overlooked. I once told her that she was "add-normal," a blend of normal and extraordinary, and she accepted this idea, recognizing that as creatives, we exist in a realm that transcends typical definitions.

"Our relationship was nurtured in moments of serendipity, like the second time we met at King's Cross, which solidified our bond. She was a tough cookie to crack; it took years before she finally let me in, revealing aspects of herself that even her closest associates never knew. Bonnie was a myriad of faces—each one more complex than the last. The Bonnie from Chicago was just one dimension; the Bonnie outside the States was an enigma, a reality that only those who lived and worked with her consistently could truly appreciate.

"She had a unique way of choosing those allowed into her inner circle. If you could call her at 3:00 am and she picked up, or if you received immediate replies to your texts regardless of the hour, you began to understand the fullness of who she was. Many knew her in parts, but my privilege was to experience the entirety of her being.

"Bonnie was not just a literary giant; she was a passionate advocate for culture and creativity. We collaborated on various projects, such as the live painting session at the National Gallery inspired by her book, "Miss La La's Hanging By Her Teeth," and the "Reclamation" project, at The British Museum which celebrated African and diasporic history. Each endeavor was a testament to our shared commitment to art and cultural engagement.

"The world has lost a brilliant mind, a fierce advocate for Black history, and a unique spirit on September 16, 2026. She was 77, but her legacy will live on in the hearts of those like me who had the honor of knowing her. Bonnie Greer was not just a mentor or a friend; she was a phenomenon—a beautiful blend of wisdom, challenge, and love.

"Thank you, *Egbon*, for everything. You were truly one of a kind."

Four Writers In Ebedi For International Residency

FOUR female writers from Ghana and Nigeria have arrived in Iseyin, Nigeria for the September/October 2026 edition of the Ebedi International Writers Residency.

The writers are Justina Naaana Ofosuaa Acheampong (Ghana), Jessica Olukayode, Sarah Adeyemo and Sarah Balogun (all from Nigeria).

Since its establishment in 2010, the facility has hosted 424 writers from 12 African Countries many of whom have won international Literary prizes for their works, which were written during their residency period.

In addition to their individual Writing Projects, the writers will also mentor secondary school students in Iseyin during their four-week stay.

The Ebedi International Writers Residency is a private initiative for the free use of writers in need of a conducive environment to complete their ongoing works.

The current writers' stay at the residency was sponsored by the Above Whispers Foundation established by the eminent feminist thinker, gender specialist, policy advocate and writer, Erelu Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi.

Fayemi is a long standing friend of the Ebedi Residency and "we are delighted with this collaboration, which has facilitated the sponsorship of female writers in various residences at Ebedi since 2023 till date," said a statement from the residency.

Bisi Fayemi is the author of *Speaking above a Whisper* (2013), *Speaking for myself* (2013), *Loud Whispers* (2017) and *Where is your Wrapper* (2020).

With *The Woman I Have Become*, Cole-Alegbe Interrogtes Survival, Leadership

By **Isaac Taiwo**

FOR Dr. Adesola Cole-Alegbe, the title of her debut book, *The Woman I Have Become*, is more than a description of her present identity. It is a reflection of a journey shaped by survival, cultural adaptation, self-discovery, mistakes, resilience and leadership.

Cole-Alegbe, a UK-based technology specialist, project manager, business analyst, artificial intelligence (AI) specialist and business development professional, said the book was inspired by a desire to document the experiences that shaped her into the woman she is today.

According to her, the book, which took several years to complete because of repeated bouts of procrastination, chronicles her experience of growing up in the United Kingdom and subsequently adapting to Nigerian culture.

"It is a book about survival. It is a book about adapting to my culture, Nigerian culture, having been raised in the UK for a very long time. It is a book about self-identity. It is a book on my steps to leadership and the mistakes that I've made," she said.

The title, she explained, also reflects the fact that her journey is far from over. Cole-Alegbe said she remains a work in progress, still learning, developing and drawing lessons from past mistakes, while being proud of the woman she has become.

The five-chapter book begins with her journey to Nigeria, examining the transition from her life in the UK to a new environment and culture. The second chapter focuses on adapting to Nigerian culture, exploring the challenges and experiences that came with navigating a culture different from the one in which she was raised. The third chapter takes readers through her university experience in Nigeria, while the fourth recounts her return to the UK and the period when she took on several jobs, including cleaning and other roles she was not necessarily passionate about. The final chapter, her steps to success as a CEO, brings together the lessons, setbacks and decisions that ultimately shaped her professional journey.

For young people, Cole-Alegbe said the book carries an important message about success. She stressed that success does not happen overnight, urging youths to identify their interests rather than simply follow popular trends.

She recalled venturing into makeup and hair because others were doing similar things, before eventually discovering her passion for technology. She also encouraged young people to believe in themselves, particularly those who may have been made to feel inadequate because of their appearance or background.

As AI continues to transform the workplace, Cole-Alegbe urged youths not to rely solely on the technology to complete tasks. Rather, she advocated continuous learning, intellectual development, creativity, innovation and the ability to think independently.

Aderemi Appointed Director At Adegbola Gallery

By **Silver Nwokoro**

NIGERIAN curator and multidisciplinary artist, Adekepemi Aderemi, has been appointed Associate Director of Adegbola Gallery, Lagos.

Aderemi, who has already contributed to the gallery's curatorial programme, will take on an expanded role covering exhibitions, artist development and institutional relationships.

Her appointment, according to the gallery, strengthens its curatorial team as it develops a programme connecting Nigeria's modernist legacies with contemporary artistic practice.

Aderemi's work spans exhibition research and production, public programming, and support for artists at different stages of their careers.

At Adegbola Gallery, she curated *Efuru* and the *Woman of the Lake* in March 2026. Drawing on Flora Nwapa's 1966 novel, the exhibition explored women's lives, independence and community through works by artists across generations, including Ladi Kwali, Susanne Wenger, Ndidi Emefiele, Nengi Omuku and Oluwasemilore Delano.

The exhibition featured painting, pottery, sculpture and textiles, offering different perspectives on women's experiences and their representation in art.

Aderemi had earlier curated *Enduring Legacies: A Collector's Tribute to Masters* in 2025, presented at the Ecobank Pan-African Centre in Lagos.

Curated from Andrew Ine's private collection, the exhibition featured works by Nigerian artists including Bruce Onobrakpeya, Twins Seven Seven and Kolade Oshinowo.

One Nation Festival Set To Unite Nigerians Through Culture, Music

By **Daniel Anazia**

AS Nigeria prepares to mark its Independence Day, the One Nation Festival, a platform where the many expressions of Nigeria come together in one experience, celebrating the people, traditions, talents and contemporary culture that define the nation, will debut on October 1 at the Nautica Beach Resort, a premium waterfront destination for leisure, lifestyle, hospitality, wellness, recreation and entertainment.

Powered by Cruxstone Development & Investment Limited, a premium real estate development and investment company, the festival is designed to bring together people from different backgrounds through a celebration of culture, music, tourism and shared experiences under the theme: "Many Cultures, One People, One Celebration."

According to the organisers, the inaugural edition will feature a dynamic blend of culture and heritage, tourism, sports, music and entertainment, food and hospitality, fashion and lifestyle, family experiences, wellness, and corporate and government engagement.

Speaking about the festival, the General Manager, Cruxstone Development & Investment Limited, Mr. Utibe Bassey, said,

In *Displaced*, Bankole Interrogates Persecution, Loss, Abuse

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

WHEN violence empties a community, the damage goes far beyond destroyed homes and abandoned streets. It leaves families grieving, children traumatised and survivors struggling to understand how to rebuild their lives.

These painful realities, which are too important to ignore frame the drama mission of Felix Bankole. They are the inspiration for *Displaced*, a faith-based film that takes audiences into the difficult world of displacement, persecution, abuse and institutional failure in Northern Nigeria.

For Bankole, the film is not simply another addition to his body of work. It is an attempt to tell stories that, in his view, deserve greater attention while using cinema as a vehicle for faith, reflection and social change.

As president of Vision Drama Missions Outreach International and founder of Vision Film Academy, Bankole has spent years combining filmmaking with Christian evangelism. He has produced more than 50 faith-based films and pioneered Christian media evangelism across more than 30 African countries.

"*Displaced* represents a different chapter in that journey," he said.

He added, "the film was born out of Bankole's encounters with the realities facing Christians and vulnerable communities in Northern Nigeria, where attacks, displacement and insecurity have disrupted lives and communities.

"Northern Nigeria, therefore, was not selected simply because it provided an appropriate backdrop for the story."

Bankole said the region represents the "epicentre of a humanitarian and spiritual crisis that deserves to be brought into public consciousness."

At the centre of the story is Haruna, a man whose life is shattered by loss. His experiences mirror those of survivors who have been forced to leave their homes and endure unimaginable trauma while attempting to hold on to their faith.

Haruna's journey is ultimately not just about survival. It is about what happens when grief is transformed into a search for truth and justice.

Rather than allowing his suffering to push him towards revenge, Haruna gradually finds a sense of purpose in defending the vulnerable and demanding accountability. Through his transformation, Bankole concludes that even the deepest pain can become a force for positive change.

"But *Displaced* does not attempt to present suffering through a romanticised Christian lens. It goes directly into some of the most uncomfortable issues surrounding vulnerable populations, including medical neglect, sexual abuse, corruption and religious hypocrisy," he noted..

For Bankole, addressing these subjects was necessary.

He believes faith-based films should not restrict themselves to safe or comfortable themes while real people continue to struggle with abuse, neglect and injustice. The gospel, he argues, must also speak to people in the darkest places of human suffering.

"That philosophy shaped the way the film was written and produced."

Bankole said the film deliberately avoids creating perfect characters whose only response to difficult situations is to quote scripture. Instead, the characters are allowed to experience anger, grief, confusion and difficult questions.

The result, he hopes, is a story that feels human before it feels instructional.

According to him, "the Christian message runs through the characters' experiences rather than being imposed on the audience. Their struggles, failures and journeys towards healing provide the framework through which themes of faith, forgiveness and redemption emerge."



A scene from *Displaced*

Bankole revealed, "this approach is particularly evident in the character of Pastor Dauda, whose actions expose hypocrisy and failures within a religious institution."

Rather than using the character simply as a vehicle to condemn the church, Bankole wants audiences to see him as a mirror. His presence raises uncomfortable questions about what happens when religious institutions fail to protect the vulnerable or allow abuse, exploitation and hypocrisy to flourish behind closed doors.

Bankole hopes the film will stimulate conversations about safeguarding, financial transparency, abuse and practical support for persecuted Christians.

The story also gains depth through the characters of Bitrus and Hannatu, who represent different responses to trauma.

While one reflects the determination to confront institutional failures and demand structural change, the other embodies endurance, emotional healing and communal support.

Their contrasting perspectives reinforce one of the film's central ideas: recovering from displacement and persecution requires more than physical survival. It requires justice, compassion and healing.

Bringing such a story to the screen, however, was far from easy.

Bankole said, "recreating the atmosphere of displacement camps and insecurity demanded emotional sensitivity from everyone involved in the production. There were moments when the weight of the story became overwhelming for the cast and crew.

"The experience was made even more personal by the filmmakers' encounter with insecurity while working on mission projects, including efforts to build schools and mission houses in vulnerable Northern communities.

"Safety was therefore a constant concern. Securing locations, protecting the production team and maintaining the emotional stamina required to film such difficult material presented significant challenges."

Yet the team pressed on, relying heavily on prayer and collective determination.

The film was shot in Nigeria and the United States, with cross-border collaboration involving international missions and partners. The international dimension, Bankole believes, gives the production a broader perspective while keeping the experiences of affected communities at its core.

Visually and structurally, *Displaced* also marks a departure from the conventional faith-based drama. Rather than relying primarily on familiar living-room settings, the production explores rugged terrains, displacement camps and environments shaped by insecurity and institutional corruption.

For Bankole, "that cinematic shift reflects the seriousness of the story. Ultimately, however, *Displaced* is not intended to leave audiences consumed by sadness."

AFRIFF Represents African Cinema At Lumière Summit in France

By Ngozi Egenuka

THE Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF) has represented African cinema at the inaugural Lumière Summit in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France, where global film and entertainment leaders gathered to discuss the future of the moving-image industry.

Nigeria was represented at the summit by the Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy, Hannatu Musa Musawa, and founder of AFRIFF, Chioma Ude.

Convened by French President, Emmanuel Macron and South Korean President Lee Jae-myung, the summit brought together more than 200 leading figures from the global film and entertainment industry, including Hollywood actor and filmmaker George Clooney, Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos, and executives from Disney and Sony Pictures.

The gathering, described as the Davos Forum of the film industry, featured filmmakers, policymakers, cultural leaders, studio executives and representatives of major entertainment platforms from more than 60 countries and international organisations.

Ude's participation brought AFRIFF and an African industry perspective into discussions on the future of global cinema, with conversations focusing on artificial intelligence, streaming platforms, changing audience behaviour, the sustainability of theatrical film, and new models of international collaboration and financing.

A major outcome of the summit was the launch of the Lumière Partnership, under which France and South Korea pledged a combined €1 billion investment in the film, audiovisual and moving-image industries between 2027 and 2031.

Each country will contribute €500 million, with France's commitment to be mobilised through Bpifrance and South Korea providing an equivalent investment.

The partnership is designed to support the growth of the screen industries while advancing human creativity, copyright protection and cultural diversity.

The summit was held at the Fondation Maeght, a contemporary art institution, as participants examined the technological, economic and cultural changes reshaping cinema.



TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

Nice One, Pastor Eze

IN the late 2020, a video went viral on the Internet where the Police were seen arresting a Pentecostal Pastor who vehemently refused to refund about one million naira a man mistakenly sent to his church account as donation. The man claimed he wanted to send N100,000 only.

According to the man in the video, all efforts to make the pastor understand that the huge sum was sent in error and so, 900,000 should be refunded to him, proved abortive and the last resort was to involve the police. *T4T* and many Nigerians who saw the video were shocked when the pastor stood his grounds claiming it was God that "used" the man to make that mistake because He works in a 'mysterious and miraculous" way. With his hands in cuffs, the Pastor was still adamant that he won't refund the money as he committed no criminal offence. Truly, the "God" of that Pastor is a 'miracle working God'. But trust the Nigeria police, dem collect the money from the Pastor las las.

Fast forward to just last week here, another woman who wanted to send just 1,000 naira 'pere' as offering to Pastor Jerry Eze's church account mistakenly sent 1.6 million naira! In fact, the money was actually N1,640,200.

When she discovered what Pastor Eze's 'miracle working God' made her to do, she said, no, this can't be possible, God was wrong on this. So, she literally removed her 'gele', tied it around her waist, picked her phone up and screamed into it. The video went viral but before the cock that crowed three times when Peter betrayed Jesus, crowed, Pastor Eze refunded the money back to her. What is however not clear is whether the Pastor collected his 1k offering the woman truly and intentionally wanted to send. And it was that same woman who came back online to thank the Pastor and apologise to his 'miracle working God' to wait till when she will be able to pay millions as offering, but for now, she can't use her business money to gamble, not yet.

So, this is T4T telling Pastor Eze, thank you. You did noble unlike that your hungry colleague of 2020 who dug in and refused to refund.

Praise the lord!

Odumeje And His Hype Man

T4T does not care whatsoever you think about Odumeje, the Onitsha, Anambra state based miracle Prophet; he is doing his thing real without apology for it. And he is one of T4T's favourites, just so you know, as he follows him diligently online even if it is for the comic relief only.

And so, earlier in the week, during his miracle healing session, Odumeje was interviewing a young lady. She admitted to drinking a little bit of alcohol. She mentioned a popular alcoholic beverage women are fond of drinking because of its low alcoholic content. Odumeje obviously did not have any idea of the drink. She then mentioned another one similar to the first, just to drive home her point that she was not a heavy drinker. Again, Odumeje had no idea, but his assistant Pastor who doubles as hype man seem to have complete and total knowledge of the two drinks and was even explaining it to Odumeje. Typical of the Prophet, he told the hype man to wait. "How did you know so much about alcohol like this", Odumeje asked in total shock... "and you are a Pastor? You are even explaining that the (he mentioned the name of the drink) has low alcohol, how na?" That was when the entire church and even T4T watching online, removed their clothes, literally, and started rolling on the floor laughing.

One thing is very sure, Odumeje's hype man no doubt follows that portion of the bible that suggested that people should take a little wine for "the stomach".

Man cannot live by bread alone abeg.

Realwarripikin Apologises, But For What Really?

THE internet has been on fire since last Saturday when female comedian Realwarripikin jumped on Afro pop star, Timaya, on stage and Timaya held her from the buttocks. Realwarripikin is married and has children, and so morality policemen and women have been up in arms claiming she had desecrated the marriage altar. A married woman allowed another man to hold her in her yansh? They all screamed, some even threatened to go to court to demand she left the marriage, temporarily, to give her husband time to undergo some traditional cleansing rites. Haba!

And then the comedian came online to apologise to her fans and ask them to help beg her husband as he was angry about the whole incident.

Angry for what, T4T is asking here? He should stop his wife from the comedy trade then. Realwarripikin is an entertainer, the gods have long removed people like her from the list of married women who should do any form of cleansing just because a man touched them on the backside. Did Timaya strip her naked? Did they enter any private room?

Abeg, make all the online morality policemen rest.

www.guardian.ng **NewsExtra**

18 Months Without Power: Mowe Residents Seek NERC Intervention

RESIDENTS of Itesiwaju Omu Arogun Area Community Development Committee (IOAACDC), a community near Mowe in Obafemi Owode Local Council of Ogun State, have appealed to the Minister of Power, Joseph Olasunkanmi Tegbe and the National Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) to intervene in the prolonged power outage affecting the community.

The residents said the area has been without electricity for more than 18 months, forcing some residents to relocate to Lagos, Abeokuta and neighbouring communities in search of better living and working conditions.

According to residents who spoke with our correspondent, the prolonged blackout has made life difficult, with several businesses shutting down because of the high cost of alternative sources of power.

The Owode Egba feeder, which supplies electricity to the community, has reportedly been operating below the capacity required to adequately serve residents.

Residents said officials of the Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC) had attributed the poor supply to inadequate electricity from the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN). From all indications, TCN has performed below expectation at the quantum of supply to such a community where lots of revenue is expected to be generated for the DisCos by virtue of the customers who are placed on Band A and B.



Minister of Power, Joseph Olasunkanmi Tegbe

In a response to the recent petition from the community leaders, Sanuth Haroun Oladipupo, District Manager, Ashimolowo, Mowe/Ibafo Business Hub, acknowledged the poor electricity supply in the area.

Oladipupo said the Owode Egba feeder requires between 13 and 15 megawatts to adequately serve its customers but currently receives only about 5 to 6 megawatts from TCN. "We acknowledged the receipt of your letter regarding poor supply situation in your area of coverage.

"The situation is worrisome and we are trying our best to ensure it improves. The supply from TCN to service Owode Egba feeder is extremely poor to the extent that 13-15 megawatts required is always reduced to 5-6 megawatts which cannot meet our demand to serve our customers.

"We implore you to continue to endure with us as we shall continue to strive to deliver quality services," he said.

Oladipupo also said his office and technical team would work to improve electricity supply to the community.

The residents said they had previously petitioned NERC in Abeokuta about three years ago over the electricity crisis, adding that the regulator directed IBEDC to address the problem and provide a step-down substation for the community.They, however, alleged that the directive was ignored by IBDEC because the order had not been implemented till date.

Kazeem Teniola, a fashion designer in the area, said the prolonged blackout forced him to move his family to Bariga, Lagos, while abandoning the house he built in the community. "I made up my mind to relocate to Lagos because of the epileptic power supply in Itesiwaju Area. Sometimes I want to believe it is a sabotage. We were placed on Band B, yet we are in perpetual darkness. Is IBEDC not losing expected revenue from here? Are their management aware of this? No light to work. Patients are dying in the hospital. Businesses are closing down," he said.

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

ShortStory

Mystery Of The Black He-Goat (2)

By Segun Durowaiye (08055356855)

Continued from GUARDIAN WEEKEND, September 12-13, 2026

AFTER receiving this huge amount of money from Adeosun, the young lady smiled seductively and thus began to talk heartily. "Well, my name is Bose Ajisafe. Like I told you, I'm married with a kid. I'm a caterer. I work with Sweet-Tooth Baking World on Lagos Island, near Tinubu Square. You can check me there on Monday. I'll be expecting you. Let me drop here, we are very close to my husband's house. I don't want trouble; he's a very jealous man. Thank you very much for the ride and money."

"Sweet-Tooth Baking World! I think I know the place. I'll make it a date, sugar," enthused Adeosun, "won't you give me a goodbye kiss, honey?" he added.

"Don't you worry, Ade, I'll give you more than that as time goes on, I told you we're close to my place. See you on Monday," she said and got down. "Okay then, sweetie, I'll be there 1p.m. sharp," he added.

"Bye," Bose said and smiled while moving along the ever-busy Ogunlana Drive. Adeosun waited for a couple of minutes, admiring the shapely queen as she walked away majestically. Her figure made his mind pulsate with indescribable desire and lust. Her movement was something beautiful to behold!

The following Monday Adeosun checked Bose as appointed, and they started dating regularly thereafter. He bought her lots of presents and gifts and Bose in turn reciprocated by submitting to him at all times, notwithstanding the fact that she was married to another man. Adeosun who was in his mid 40s loved every moment of the relationship; he was a Casanova of the highest order. At that particular time he had about four other girlfriends scattered all over Lagos.

He would drive to Bose's place of work every evening to take her to a brothel, after spending hours making love, he would drop her very near her house and give her huge sums of money. Bose's husband, a young man in his late 30s called Taiye Ajisafe, often wondered where on earth Bose got all the money she was spending so recklessly and lavishly. Two months into the relationship between Adeosun and Bose, she bought the most expensive clothing and started using costly jewellery. She would talk rudely and disrespectfully to her husband. Formerly, she used to be quiet, unassuming and straightforward in her ways, but now the reverse was the case. The whole of Surulere was rife with rumours about the unhealthy extramarital affair between Bose and Adeosun. Ajisafe had vowed that he would deal seriously with Adeosun.

It was a lovely weekend, with no inkling or premonition of evil or doom. Adeosun had a wonderful outing with Bose and, as usual, dropped her very near her house. Then Adeosun left for home. About 15 minutes later he was at home. He occupied a three-bedroom flat at Eric Moore area of Surulere. On opening the door of his living room what he saw filled him with unmitigated horror! Lying on his continental rug was the body of a dead, black he-goat!

"What! God Almighty!" he exclaimed, "How did this get in here?" he asked himself. Instantly, he started sweating profusely. The dead, black he-goat had a red piece of cloth tied round its neck with three cowries. Adeosun didn't know what to do. He stood there motionless, gaping and sighing uncontrollably. He was confused and completely perplexed with fear. "Who wants me dead?" he wondered aloud. Then unable to guess the answer and solution to this mystery he turned swiftly and took to his heels, shouting: "Help! Heelp!! Heeelp!!! Something strange is happening here! Heeelp!!!" he continued to scream hysterically…

To be continued.

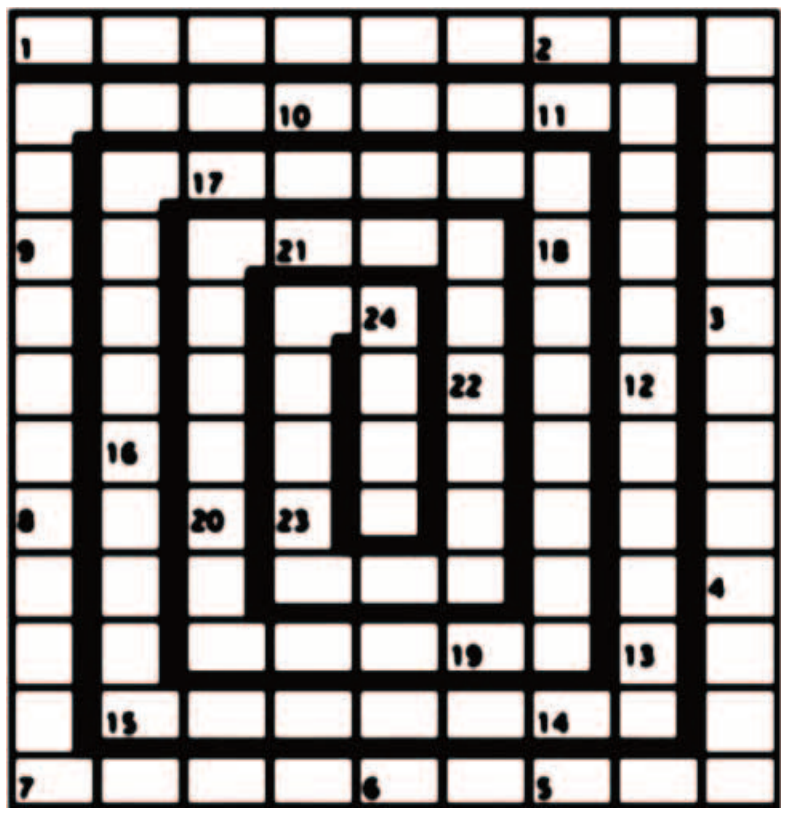
Interested sponsor/sponsors for this SHORT STORY column should please contact: 08023015115 or 08055356855.

Overlapping Word Game

with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
olulana3@yahoo.com

Solution

1 Abeokuta
2 Tangible
3 Legion
4 Onerous
5 Used
6 Editor
7 Orphan
8 Annular
9 Allure
10 Evade
11 Devolve
12 Venous
13 User
14 Erratic
15 Icicle
16 Leisure
17 Recline
18 Negotiate
19 Teacher
20 Erudite
21 Terror
22 Organism
23 Smash
24 Hive



Overlapping Word Game

1 Local council in Jigawa State, (8).
2 Sorcerer, (7).
3 Relating to motion, (7).
4 Make somebody laugh and twitch, (6).
5 Long narrative poem, (4).
6 Frosting for cakes, (5).
7 Local council in Adamawa State, (6).
8 Late Super Eagles' Striker, (6).
9 River in N.E. North America, (7).
10 Object-locating system, (5).
11 A large fleet of ships, (6).
12 Ondo state capital, (5).
13 Local council in Akwa Ibom State, (4).
14 Existing through all time, (7).
15 South American mammal, (6).
16 Cross River State capital, (7).
17 Seize something legally, (6).
18 Shorten by removing part, (8).
19 Intense delight, (7).
20 Sign with specific meaning, (6).
21 Soapy froth, (6).
22 Inconsistent, (7).
23 World's second most populous country, (5).
24 Anambra State capital city, (4).

Word Search

Leaf Shapes and Margins

Ovate	Peltate	Obovate
Entire	Deltoid	Spatulate
Lobed	Palmate	Obicular
Linear	Sagitate	Perfoliate
Parted	Oblong	Orbicular

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

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Birthday

NWUCHE, Prince Chibudom, politician, lawyer, businessman and former Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives will be 65 on September 30, 2026.

He was born on September 30, 1961 at Enugu, then capital of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. He hails from Ochigba town in Ahoada East Local Council Area of Rivers State.

Nwuche began his educational career at St Cyprians State School, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, where he obtained his First School Leaving Certificate. His secondary school education was at the Stella Maris College in Port Harcourt, and graduated with an Ordinary Level School Certificate in 1979.

He then proceeded for his advanced Levels at Lansdowne College, Oxford, United Kingdom.

He attended University of Keele between 1982 and 1985 where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in politics and philosophy, with subsidiary subjects in history and astronomy.



Nwuche

Between 1985 and 1987, Nwuche obtained an LLB (Hons) in Law, with a Second Class Upper Division at Aberystwyth University after which he returned to Nigeria for the mandatory Bar Programme at the Nigerian Law School.

He then obtained a master's degree in law (LLM) at King's College London, specialising in shipping law, international finance, intellectual property and international commercial law.

In 1999, Nwuche ran as a candidate for the seat of Ahoada East/Abua Odual Federal Constituency of Rivers State in the House of Representatives. He won the election and entered the National Assembly in 1999.

On June 4, 1999, he was elected Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives. While in this position, he served as Vice Chairman, National Assembly Joint Committee on the review of the 1999 Constitution.

He read law, Politics, Philosophy, History and Astronomy, all in the United Kingdom. He is principal partner of Rayfield Associates, a law firm and Chairman/Director of several companies.

He is also a patron of a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including the Foundation for Youth Development (FYD) and Citizens for Change.

In February 2023, Nwuche commended the late President Muhammadu Buhari's decision for appending his signature to the amended Electoral Bill represented to him by the National Assembly, noting that through the move, the president had restored confidence of Nigerians in the country's electoral process.

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

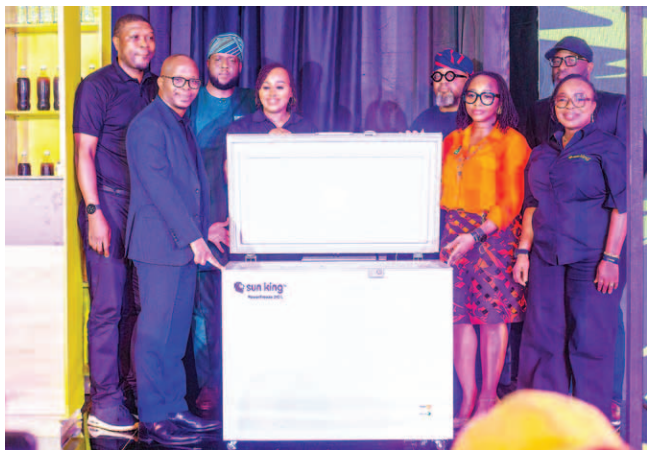
Events



Founder, Nkem Hearts Foundation, Onochie Princess (left); medical personnel of Edo Specialist Hospital (ESH); Commissioner for Health, Edo State, Dr. Cyril Oshiomhole; Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee, ESH, Dr. Victor Ohenhen; and a medical personnel, ESH at the free healthcare delivery in Edo.



Groom's mother, Mrs. Bolanle Fafowora (left); the Groom, Subomi Fafowora; his wife, former Miss Ebonny Okonma, now Mrs. Ebonny Fafowora and the Groom's Father, Mr. Olaniran Fafowora, during their wedding at the Country Club, Ikeja, Lagos.



Partnerships Manager, Anglophone West Africa, Sun King, Mr Bright Ameh Agbo (left); Vice President, Public Policy and Govt Relations, Sun King, Dr Wale Aboyade; acting Component Coordinator, Nigeria Electrification Programme, Rural Electrification Agency, Mr Tobi Ogunlesi; Vice President, Marketing, Sun King, Mrs Catherine Mudachi; Technical Adviser to the Minister of Power and Team Lead, Nigeria's Mission 300 Compact Delivery and Monitoring Unit, Mr Adedayo Olowoniyi; Special Adviser on Climate Change and Circular Economy to the Governor of Lagos State, Mrs Titi Oshodi; Global Head, Treasury and Investor Relations, Sun King, Mrs Victory Olumuyiwa; and Global Head, Paygo Programmes Optimisation, Sun King, Aliyu Abimbola, at the launch of Sun King's Big Power Campaign, held in Lagos.



Bride's parents: Mr. Olubiyi and Dr. (Mrs.) Comfort Otegbeye; the couple, Mr Oruaro and Oluwaseyi Ogbo (middle) during their wedding reception in Lagos ...recently



Managing Director, Arzikin Noma Africa, Ugochukwu Oguike (left); Co-Founder, Ecotutu, Michael Akinsete; Founder, Edan and Sherr Limited, Susan Essien; Founder/Managing Director, YAPU Solutions, Christoph Jungfleisch; Head of Sustainable Sourcing–Africa, Sunbeth Global Concepts, Jason Green; and Global Head, Agricultural Risk Solutions, Leadway Assurance, Fatona Ayoola, during a plenary session at the Agriculture Summit Africa in Abuja.



Programme Manager, Womenpreneur Pitch-A-Ton, Access Bank Plc, Ifeoluwa Oluwatosin Oyeyipo (left); Head, Women Banking, Access Bank Plc, Nene-Kunle Ogunlusi; Group Head, Consumer Banking, Chizoba Iheme and Acting Head, Group Marketing and Retail Analytics, Oge Kasie-Nwanchukwu during the media roundtable session to unveil the Womenpreneur Pitch-A-Ton Season 8, in Lagos

Benin City Business School Set To Open New Chapter In International Business Education

New institution builds global partnerships to expand access to executive education, professional development and international qualifications

A NEW chapter in professional and business education is set to open in Edo State with the establishment of the Benin City Business School (BCBS), an institution designed to connect Nigerian students, professionals, entrepreneurs and public-sector leaders with quality business education, professional development and international educational opportunities.

Established in 2026, BCBS is being positioned as an internationally connected business school with a strong emphasis on executive education, professional certification, leadership development, entrepreneurship, innovation, and pathways to international qualifications.

The initiative is anchored on the belief that access to quality international education should not be limited by geography. Through strategic partnerships with international institutions, BCBS seeks to bring global learning opportunities closer to students and professionals in Edo State, Nigeria, and beyond.

The establishment of the school also builds on Edo State's longstanding reputation as an important centre of education. With a large and diverse population of students, professionals, entrepreneurs and members of the Nigerian Diaspora, the State provides a natural environment for an institution seeking to connect local talent with international opportunities.

A major component of the BCBS initiative is its partnership with British Academy Pathways (BAP) and University Applications Portal (UAPP), which is designed to provide pathways to British and European education through flexible online and virtual learning systems.

The partnership agreement was signed in Benin City by the West African Director of British Academy Pathways, Dr Anthony Atagamen, and the Managing Director of UAPP, Mr. M. D. Shamir. Under the arrangement, BCBS will provide a Nigerian centre for students' study, administration and support, alongside virtual interactive classes and other learner-support services.

The partnership is expected to broaden access to British education through the OTHM pathway, providing students and professionals with an opportunity to pursue internationally oriented qualifications while receiving local academic and administrative support in Nigeria.

Speaking on the partnership, the President of Benin City Business School, Mr. Ojo Akin-Longe, thanked the visiting delegation for making the journey to Benin City and for the confidence reposed in the new institution.

Akin-Longe, a seasoned entrepreneur, administrator and educationist and a former Permanent Secretary for Education in the Edo State Civil Service, said he looked forward to the opportunities that the partnership could create for students, professionals and the wider community.

He expressed appreciation to the representatives of British Academy Pathways and UAPP for taking the time to visit Benin City, noting that the collaboration represented an important opportunity to create meaningful bridges between Nigerian learners and international education.

"We are delighted to welcome our partners to Benin City. We sincerely appreciate the time and effort they have taken to come here, and we look forward to what these collaborating institutions can create together," Akin-Longe said.

Engagement with Edo State Government

The international delegation also visited the Special Adviser to the Edo State Government on Public-Private Partnership, Hon. Kizito Okpebholo, during their visit to the State.

The delegation received assurances of continued government support for educational initiatives of this nature, while the representatives of British Academy Pathways and UAPP expressed their willingness to support BCBS and the Edo State Government with executive development initiatives in areas including security training and development, information technology and entrepreneurship.



Delegation from United Kingdom's British Academy Pathways (BAP) and University Applications Portal (UAPP) during a meeting with Benin City Business School (BCBS) executives and the Special Adviser to the Edo State Governor on Public, Private, Partnership, Kizito Okpebholo, in Benin City.

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

Guardian Fashion
● STYLE ● ELEGANCE ● LIFESTYLE

Sculptural Denim On Fashion Scenes

By **Suliyat Tella**

DENIM has long been a wardrobe staple, associated with the regular jeans, jackets, shirts and skirts. But in today's Nigeria's fashion scene, the familiar fabric is being pushed beyond its traditional boundaries, taking on more sculptural, elaborate and unexpected forms.

Corseted dresses, exaggerated silhouettes, puffy jackets, patchwork ensembles, layered pieces and coordinated sets, denim is now being transformed from an everyday casual fabric into a statement material.

Nigerians have embraced some of these striking interpretations, bringing attention to the growing versatility of the fabric.

What makes the trend particularly interesting is the freedom with which denim is being reworked. Different washes are combined within a single outfit, while distressed finishes, structured tailoring and unconventional cuts create looks that bear little resemblance to the simple jeans-and-shirt combinations traditionally associated with denim.

The evolution also reflects the increasingly experimental nature of Nigerian fashion, where familiar fabrics are often reinterpreted to create distinctive silhouettes. Denim, in this case, becomes more than something to wear casually; it becomes a canvas for construction, creativity and self-expression.

As these looks continue to appear in the fashion world, they offer another glimpse into how Nigerian style continues to challenge conventional ideas about what every day fabrics can become.

Flaunting The Art Of Denim

Yhemolee

Rather than treating denim as a casual staple, this look pushes the fabric towards structured occasion wear. The combination of contrasting washes, fitted construction and exaggerated detailing gives the familiar material a more dramatic, fashion-forward character.

Photo credit : Ibor Edosa Victor (@Edo_artistry)

Diadem

This look demonstrates another side of denim experimentation, using multiple pieces and proportions to create a coordinated statement. The result moves away from the conventional denim shirt-and-jeans combination while retaining the recognisable texture and character of the fabric.

Photo credit: Ibor Edosa Victor (@Edo_artistry)

Jarvis

The look features a structured denim corset with distressed detailing, layered denim panels, cargo-style trousers, and knee-high denim boots for a bold, contemporary streetwear finish with added attitude.

Photo credit : Ibor Edosa Victor (@Edo_artistry)

Jidex

The look features a patchwork denim jacket, oversized cargo trousers, a crisp white T-shirt, and a matching denim cap, creating a relaxed, bold, contemporary streetwear style.

Photo credit : Ibor Edosa Victor (@Edo_artistry)

Thayor

This look features a light-wash denim jacket layered over a fitted corset top and matching floor-length skirt with a thigh-high split, finished with pointed denim heels and silver accessories for elegance.

Photo credit : Ibor Edosa Victor (@Edo_artistry)

Irewole Olaniyan

The look pairs a fitted denim corset with a matching high-waist skirt, featuring a front split and utility pockets. Gold cuffs and statement earrings add glamour for a polished finish.

Kiekie

Unlike the previous looks, this denim outfit follows a different pattern, embellished with white beads and pearl details. Yet, it still reimagines denim as a sophisticated statement ensemble.

Photo credit: Lynos Villarba (@lynos).













Respect As A Way Of Life In Nigeria

By **Maria Diamond, Moyosore Salami** and **Ruth Ononye**

THIS is Nigeria and respect is a way of life – a big part of the people's culture and there is no such thing as unlearning to relearn respect in this part of the world.

Respect has long been one of the social values through which Nigerians are taught to relate to one another. Respect is the way we were, how we are and how we will always be, a people deeply rooted in the culture of respect.

In Nigeria, respect is taught long before a child fully understands what the word means. It is in the greetings before conversation begins. It is in the title placed before an elder's name, in the bowing of heads, in the act of prostration and kneeling to greet elders. It is in the instruction to listen when an older person is speaking, in the welcoming of visitors, to offer assistance when needed and to understand that age, experience and position come with a certain level of honour and regard.

For generations, these lessons have been woven into family life and passed from one generation to another. The exact expressions may differ across Nigeria's diverse communities and traditions, but the underlying principle is familiar: elders are to be honoured, younger people are expected to be humble, and social relationships are guided by an awareness of age and seniority.

The Testing Generation

Over the years, the culture of respect is naturally and effortlessly imbibed by Nigerians from generation to generation, anything otherwise is perceived uncouth until what Elder Ajetunmobi Olarenwaju, aged 65, tagged as the 'testing generation Z'. According to him, the Gen Z as they are popularly called has been relentless about undoing everything in the world. "They want to undo their gender, they want to undo their memory, they want to undo respect, and if possible they would wake up one morning and decide to undo how they breathe and their whole existence. This is why if we are not careful, this testing generation will undo everything that makes us who we are as a people," Olanrewaju said.

A Generation Growing in a rapidly changing society

For many young Nigerians, respect remains important, but the conditions attached to it are changing. They are increasingly questioning whether age should automatically command obedience, whether disagreement should be interpreted as disrespect, and whether cultural practices that once demonstrated honour can still be imposed without consideration for the younger person.

Organic Concept of Respect In Nigeria

IN Nigeria, a younger person is often expected to greet an older person first. Elders are addressed with titles that acknowledge their position or relationship to the younger person. Children are taught to listen when adults speak, to avoid speaking harshly to older people and to offer assistance to those considered senior to them.

In many families, these expectations are not explained as matters open to negotiation. They are simply part of upbringing. To disregard them can therefore be interpreted as more than poor manners. It can be viewed as evidence of a decline in discipline, home training and cultural values.

Is Respect Lost Or Being Redefined?

THE ultimate question remains whether young Nigerians are getting rid of the culture of respect especially for elders or simply redefining the concept?

Ifeoluwa Badejo, aged 25 thinks it's simply redefining. He said: "Here is the thing: the world is at a rapid pace and people are paying more attention to more important developmental situations around the world where kneeling or prostrating to greet elders no longer fit into the scenery. A lot of young people do not have the time or the patience to deal with long routines of accolades in the name of respect. This doesn't necessarily mean they do not have respect, they do but it is simply expressed in admiration which is far from the regulars."

For Faith Omonobi, respect cannot be reduced to age. "Respect should be reciprocal. Being older does not automatically make someone more deserving of respect than a younger person. Every human being deserves respect, young and old. An older person may deserve recognition because of their experience and position, but age alone should not become a permanent exemption from accountability."

Respect Vs Fear

For Chinedo Obiora, aged 24, he thinks that sometimes respect feels like fear. "An older person misbehaves and you can't express how you feel or call them to order because you don't want to be labelled rude or disrespectful. What the older generation call respect is actually fear. Younger people are sometimes expected to demonstrate deference simply because another person is older, regardless of how that person behaves towards them. This is why the younger generations in Nigerians are increasingly becoming unwilling to accept a model of respect that requires them to disregard point of view. Sometimes the traditional definition of respect feels like fear, force and slavery."

Clearly, Obiora thinks being respectful should not mean being helpless. It should not mean accepting insults because the person delivering them is older. It should not mean agreeing with an elder simply because disagreement could attract the accusation of disrespect and it should not mean abandoning personal boundaries to satisfy someone else's expectations. "We are not abandoning or rejecting the value of respect. I only say it should be expressed in ways that are worthy of it."

The Shift

ONE of the most significant changes in the conversation is that younger Nigerians are no longer asking only what they owe older people. They are asking what older people owe them and this is a major shift.

Yusuf Daudu, age 30 said: "The shift does not mean young Nigerians have suddenly become indifferent to elders. Many still care deeply about their parents and grandparents. They still celebrate cultural festivals, participate in family traditions and use familiar titles for older people. What is changing is the willingness to accept certain practices without questioning them. My generation wants to know why we must kneel to greet elders. Why must I obey without complaining? Why can't I disagree when I am not convinced? Why can't I call you by your name just because you're older? Why does being older automatically make you right? Why can't a child obey a parent without losing the ability to question?

"A young employee can respect a superior without accepting humiliation. An elder can demand good manners while still acknowledging that younger people deserve dignity. The culture of respect, therefore, does not have to disappear for its expression to change.

"This is where Nigerian culture of respect is experiencing its most significant shift as the younger generation is not necessarily throwing away old values. It is testing them. It is asking which ones still serve society and which ones have become expressions of hierarchy without the substance of respect," Daudu noted.

Where the Culture Of Respect Stands

RESPECT remains a culture in Nigeria that may never be allowed to be unlearned. From the way children are taught to greet older people to how workers relate with their bosses, age, position and social status often shape how people are expected to behave towards one another.

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



Encomiums As Toriola Wins Lagos "Man of the Year" Award

By **Gbenga Salau**

THE Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Housing, Abdulhafiz Toriola, has emerged the 2026 Lagos State Man of the Year Award (LASMAYA).

Speaking at the award ceremony, Lagos State Head of Service, Bode Agoro, and fellow permanent secretaries described, Toriola, an engineer, who graduated from the University of Lagos, as a role model worthy of emulation.

They also stated that the conferment as a well-deserved recognition of excellence and performance.

Agoro and other speakers made the remarks at the 14th edition of the award held at the Radio Lagos/Eko FM Marquee, Ikeja.

The recognition, organised by the Centre for Policy Development and Political Studies, (CEPODEPS) highlighted Toriola's long-standing dedication to public service, operational excellence, and capacity building within Lagos State's Ministries, Departments, and Agencies.

Speaking at the event which had Commissioner for Housing, Moruf Akinderu-Fatai, colleagues and representatives from the Body of Permanent Secretaries, among other dignitaries, Agoro praised Toriola's leadership across various ministries, including his transformative work in transportation and housing.



Toriola

Agoro, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Kasali Adeniran, noted that his career reflects the core values of Lagos State excellence, performance, impact, and sustainable development.

He commended Toriola's integrity, compassion and commitment to public service, describing him as a role model as well as mentor, while urging him to see the award as a call for greater service.

"This is a well-deserved recognition of excellence and a testimony to the visionary leadership of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

"Toriola has been a role model, leading with empathy, integrity, and unyielding commitment to the welfare of the public," he stated.

The Chief Organiser of the event, Dr Aderemi Aderemi said the award reflects Toriola's exceptional leadership, trustworthiness, achievements as well as contributions to Lagos State, describing him as "a man not given to frivolity.

Other speakers emphasized his approachable nature and mentorship, crediting him with inspiring staff across the civil service.

Toriola was however reminded of the adage that "the reward for good work is more work," as speakers expressed confidence in his continued contributions to the growth of Lagos State.

Receiving the medal and certificate of honour, Toriola who described the award as a privilege and a further call to service thanked the Centre for the recognition and pledged to remain committed to excellence, humanity and the growth of the civil service.

RCCG Rewards 364 Students, Tasks Wealthy Nigerians On Giving Back

By **Isaac Taiwo**

THE Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Region 52, Garden of Peace Parish, Surulere, Lagos has rewarded 364 secondary school students with cash prizes, school bags and academic awards, as part of efforts to promote education and keep children productively engaged during the long vacation.

The five-week holiday programme, which ran from August 3 to September 4, also offered free lessons to students from the church and the wider community, irrespective of their religious backgrounds.

Speaking at the end of the programme and presentation of awards, the Deputy Regional Pastor, RCCG Region 52, Pastor Femi Banire, said the initiative was designed to extend the church's impact beyond its congregation.

Banire said the programme was part of the church's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, following previous interventions in environmental sanitation and medical outreach.

According to him, the holiday lessons were organised to keep children engaged academically instead of allowing them to remain idle throughout the long vacation.

"This one is far-reaching because people came from far and near to attend the five weeks free lesson, which is to make sure that children were not sitting at home doing nothing. And not only that, so that the church also can affect the families," he said.

Banire noted that the programme was deliberately opened to students of different faiths, stressing that the church's intervention was also aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence and community development.

He disclosed that more than N5 million was spent on the initiative, including teachers' remuneration, school bags and cash prizes for outstanding students.

Ebiye Steps In As Charter President Of Rotary Club Of Bourdillion Prestige

By **Onyedika Agbedo**

ROTARIAN Winifred Ebiye has been sworn-in as the Charter President, Rotary Club of Bourdillon Prestige.

Speaking during her investiture ceremony in Lagos, she said: "It is with gratitude and a great sense of responsibility that I accept the privilege of serving as the Charter President of the Rotary Club of Bourdillon Prestige.

"My Rotary journey began in 2006, when my Rotary father, PDG Mightyman Dikuro, introduced me to the Rotary Club of University of Benin. I could not have imagined then where that introduction would lead.

"Over the years, Rotary has taught me that leadership is about relationships, responsibility and, above all, service. The Rotary Club of Bourdillon Prestige may be a new club, but our members have a strong commitment to service. We got chartered on July 14, 2026, with 17 members, and today we welcome six new members."

She added that just ten days after charter, the club executed three service projects, and have delivered seven projects across healthcare, education, environmental sustainability, youth development.

Chairman, 2026 Investiture Planning Committee, Rotarian Nduneche Ezurike, said: "Our name carries an obligation. For us, prestige is not about titles or status; it must be earned through the lives we touch. That is the meaning of our slogan: "Prestige through Service."

Nigeria Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Major General Ike Omar Sanda Nwachukwu, (Rtd.) listed the qualities of leadership that is needed in Nigeria.

Speaking as the keynote speaker, he mentioned character, being knowledge, clear headedness. He also said a good leader must have integrity, be flexibility, and have a sense of humour.

"You must also have compassion and have strategic thinking, personal discipline and accountability, effective communication skills and a sense of fairness, equity and justice. You must also have the quality to respect the rule of law and humility."

He maintained that leadership is about inspiring others by sharing the visions and work together towards common goals while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the followership at all levels.

Premier Plantations Provides Free Eye Care Services To Over 150 Residents

By **Moyosore Salami**

PREMIER Plantations Limited, a subsidiary of Nosak Group, in collaboration with the African Cataract & Eye Foundation, has successfully concluded the second edition of its three-day Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, providing free eye care services to more than 150 residents of the Irrua-Usugbenu community in Esan Central Local Council of Edo State.

The initiative featured more than 25 free cataract surgeries, helping beneficiaries regain their sight and improve their quality of life. In addition, free reading glasses were distributed to individuals with visual impairments, while community members received a range of eye care consultations and treatments. As part of the broader health intervention, children also received free deworming medication.

Speaking on behalf of Nosak Group, the Project Manager of Premier Plantations Limited, Mr. Boniface Iyengunmwena, reaffirmed the company's commitment to improving the wellbeing of its host communities through impactful healthcare and development initiatives.

"This initiative is designed to improve the quality of life of people within our host communities by restoring sight through free cataract surgeries and the provision of reading glasses. Through our partnership with the African Cataract & Eye Foundation, we are contributing to the prevention of avoidable blindness and other eye-related conditions, while bringing hope and renewed confidence to beneficiaries," he said.

Also speaking, the Founder and Director of the African Cataract & Eye Foundation, Dr. Gabriel Okorodudu, expressed appreciation for the partnership and its life-changing impact on beneficiaries.

"When you restore a person's sight, you give them a new opportunity to experience life. It is a transformative gift that restores hope, independence, and dignity. We are delighted to partner with Premier Plantations in making this possible for members of the community," he stated.

Social Platform For Lifting Others, Dignified Giving, Support Birthed

By **Suliyat Tella**

A NEW social media platform designed to change how Nigerians give, receive, and connect has officially launched. Lifteller, unveiled in Lagos over the weekend, is positioning itself as "social media where connection meets compassion", a space for monetary and non-monetary support built on dignity, trust and transparency.

Founder and Chairman of Lifteller, Mr. Uche Elekwachi, said the idea was born from a simple human truth he encountered while studying at Lagos Business School.

"What does it mean to be human? As human beings, we are meant to help one another. Lifteller is about the fusion of goodness. We believe there is enough food and enough money to meet humanity's needs at all times; the reality is simply that some people have more while others do not have enough," Elekwachi said during the launch.

"There are problems in the world that technology can solve. However, there are also problems that require the collective action of humanity. It is about people coming together and saying, 'We can help one another.'

The app, now live on the web, Android and iOS, allows users to "Offer a Lift," "Request a Lift" or "Raise a Lift" for individuals and communities. Requests may cover feeding, housing, transportation, medical expenses, school fees and business seed capital, as well as non-monetary items such as clothes, books and equipment.

Users can fund their wallets through bank transfers, with each user assigned a unique virtual account. Lifteller has integrated with Lotus Bank and is currently in partnership discussions with Fidelity Bank to support secure, fast and compliant transactions.

To safeguard trust on the platform, Lifteller requires users to provide supporting evidence for requests. It also enables comments and reports and provides backend tools for muting or deactivating fraudulent accounts. "This is not a lending or borrowing platform. Whatever you give is given freely. Lifteller is a free-gift platform," Elekwachi clarified.

MD/CEO Mr. Akinshola Samuel Akinde explained that Lifteller goes beyond money. "We also have a non-monetary aspect. You could raise resources for out-of-school children, laptops for tech learners, and sewing machines for fashion students. You post it, people signify interest, and we verify and deliver," Akinde said.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Ameenah Adebayo-Shittu, Leadership and Social Development Expert, commended the vision. Mr. Richard Madiebo, General Manager, Fidelity Bank plc, described the launch as "a revolution in digital giving." Artist Dr. Okey Justice Martins, popularly known as J Martins, who Lifted his fans with 200,000 naira on the platform during the event, urged Nigerians to join and register.



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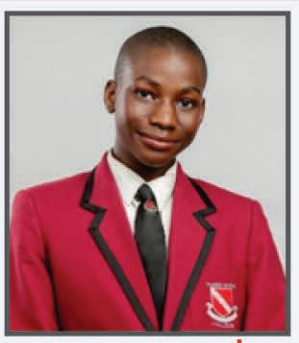
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‘If The Reserved Seats For **Women Bill HB 1349** Is Passed, It Will Be A Corrective Mechanism Of Political Imbalance’

*Honourable Kafilat Adetola Ogbara is the House of Representatives member representing Kosofe Federal Constituency and Chairman of the House Committee on Women Affairs and Social Development. Ogbara is one of the lawmakers at the forefront of the campaign for the proposed Reserved Seats for Women Bill as part of the efforts to address the structural imbalance of women representation in politics by creating dedicated legislative seats for them. In this interview with **SULIYAT TELLA** she speaks about the proposed bill, its current status and prospects ahead of the 2027 elections, the necessity and urgency for a political system where women can compete freely, safely and fairly, while also addressing a fundamental question: will more seats for women ultimately translate into more political power?*

There have been different references to the reserved seats for women, including HB 1349 and other proposals associated with you. Kindly clarify which proposal is currently being championed, when it was introduced and what prompted it?

WHEN I got to the House of Representatives in this 10th Assembly over three years ago, my first assignment was to request to see all the bills that were rejected in the 9th Assembly, particularly all the gender bills.

My advocacy for women’s inclusion generally started more than 20 years ago. Even when I was at the University of Lagos, when I contested to be the ULSU treasurer, my major aim of joining that contest was to ensure the inclusion of a woman. I happened to be the only woman in that executive. I think we had a female assistant secretary, but I have always had this belief that women have been sidelined for too long and there hasn’t been enough recognition for them. The stereotype has become so deep that once they say, “Oh, she’s a woman,” it is as if she is nobody. This is why we are insisting and working tirelessly into ensuring that women are well represented. So when the house nominated me to champion the HB 1349 bill sponsored by Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu, of which I am a co-sponsor, I see it as a calling and the right opportunity to start doing away with the stereotype. I sponsored my own bill separately, HB 1421, which was my original bill on the same reserved seats for women. But my own content has higher numbers, asking for two women in every state and one senator, among others. So, the difference is mainly in the numbers. Every other thing is the same. However because Hon. Benjamin Kalu is the Deputy Speaker and he also sponsored the same reserved seats bill, requesting one seat for women per state, we felt that was more realistic and achievable. So, we decided it was better to put our bills on hold. My bill is still there and still exists, but I have just put it on hold, and we have all come together for HB 1349. It is sponsored by Hon. Benjamin Kalu, and I am a co-sponsor of that bill. So, I am the one championing the bill with the leadership of the house, other members of the National Assembly, Civil society organisations and well-meaning Nigerians. The bill was brought to the floor, I think, about two years ago, in July or so, for second reading, that was when we started planning the advocacy and campaign and everything. I have taken an active role in building legislative and public support for the passage of the bill since then. This bill is mainly a temporary corrective measure to address the structural imbalance that we have. For decades, we all know that women have not been there. The advocacy started with all our women leaders in the past. They stood for the emancipation of women, ensuring that women’s voices were heard.

For this bill, there is a structural plan of about 16 years for us to review it. The intention is to create space for women not to only participate, but represent, build political experience and gradually enable them to ensure that the system is more inclusive by correcting the imbalance and strengthening our democracy.

When we are saying that we want our women to be included, we are not asking that it should be a favour. The government will be investing in National development if you include women. When women win political space, Nigeria wins a broader, stronger and more representative democracy.

We cannot say we have a democracy when the women in the country are not adequately represented. Even our daughters don’t see themselves in the future leadership of Nigeria because of the absence of enough women; when they see women up there, particularly in the legislative arm of government, the next generation of girls sees themselves in the future of Nigeria.

So, we cannot say that we are practising democracy when we are not being inclusive. That is very undemocratic. We need true democrats with democratic values. I must also say that this bill, HB 1349, is asking for a woman Senator in every state. We have three senatorial districts in each State and we want, in addition to the three already elected, a special seat for a woman. It does not mean that out of the three elected in every state, we still cannot have a woman among them. It doesn’t mean that because we are seeking special seats, women cannot contest the conventional seats. That’s not what we are saying. Once we have that special seat, we are going to have one per state, which will be 37 women in Nigeria. For the House of Representatives, we are seeking to have one woman per state for the special seats. It does not mean that women cannot contest the existing House of Representatives seats. For instance, in Lagos State, we have 24 House of Representatives members and I am the only woman there. So, if the special seat bill passes today, another woman can still contest the special seat while I still contest for the conventional seat. The rights, powers and privileges, everything about being a member of the House, are the same. It does not discriminate against them or make them lesser persons on the floor of the House or in the National Assembly. Basically, this is what the bill is seeking to achieve. For the Houses of Assembly in every state, we are seeking to have three special seat members in every state, one from each senatorial district. It does not mean that other women cannot contest for the Houses of Assembly seats across the state as well.

We have 40 seats in Lagos. Women can still contest those seats, get nominated, and women should still contest for the special seats that will be contested by women in every political party.

All women in every political party will be contesting the seats. By the time we went for the public hearing and the advocacy campaign was at a high level, the bill was seeking 37 seats for the Senate, one per state for the House of Representatives, which is also 37 seats and three per state for the House of Assembly, without the inclusion of people living with disabilities. Now, the bill has been reviewed, and they have said that we are not even going to be having general elections for the Reserved Seats Bill. But an electoral-college model will be used, where elected people in every state will be the ones to elect the people who will occupy the special seats.

All political parties will bring forth their candidates who want to contest the seats, and then the elected people in that state, starting from the senators and House of Representatives members, including councillors, will elect the winner for the special seats.

That’s the adjustment we have made, and we have also included people living with disabilities in the special seats bill. I think what we did was to have one senator per Region, one from the North and one from the South. That’s what we did for the Senate for people living with disabilities, and then one representative per geopolitical zone. So, we have included all that in the new bill. Some have advocated that these amendments of the bill should come in the form of an executive bill, but whichever form it comes, we are hopeful that, by the grace of God, the bill will be passed.

What is the broader objective of these seats?

We have very broad objectives. Our broader goal, actually, is to ensure that the number of women continues to increase without the existing barriers while impacting humanity. Presently we have less than 4% representation in Nigeria, and this has become a National and an International embarrassment.

This bill is not just about having more women in Parliament, although that is a goal. If passed, we would have achieved that. It is to ensure that we have more women because the more women we have, the more impact and voices we have, depending on how impactful these women themselves prove to be, so that we can get better representation for women.

Women participate in politics. I say this all the time: a lot of people confuse participation with representation. If you go to our ward meetings and state meetings, we see a lot of women. The percentage is always very high. They are the crowd that will be seated, the dancers, the clappers and the singers. It is the women. But when you check on the high table, it is only the men you find there. Maybe by chance, you find a woman.

So, this is the challenge that we have been facing, and this bill seeks to break that circle of exclusion that has persisted for decades. The broader goal is for us to have a balanced, more inclusive and representative democracy. If we are saying we are having a democracy and our women are not there, and we are half of the population, is that democratic? It’s not democratic at all.

When we have proper representation in parliament, the laws that affect the entire country will have the semblance that they should have. This law will also ensure that we are not replacing merit with gender. This bill will ensure that we are removing the structural barriers that have kept capable women out, especially political gatekeepers, the high cost of elections, because politics is very, very expensive, cultural stereotypes, political violence, you know politics can be very violent and the intimidation and harassment of women. Of course, there is also a lack of equal access to party structures. In most party structures and executives, we find that most of the time, there are many men, and they are the ones who normally take these decisions.

Why create additional seats for women rather than focus on getting more women elected into existing seats? What makes the reserved seats necessary?

We are focusing very hard on having more women because we know that the current system is not giving women what they need, and that is the opportunity and privilege. They deliberately exclude women, and I stand to be corrected on that because I’m speaking from experience and from what I know.

For instance, in the last primary election, we had just two female Senatorial candidates (Lagos and Abia) from across the Country in the ruling party, the ruling party that has over 30 governors. Women have been taken for granted for too long in Politics.

When women are not elected as candidates, they have already lost before Nigerians get to vote. We are not even sure those two that have been selected as candidates will win the general election until after the election. So, if anything happens, by whatever proxy, we may not even have one single woman in the Senate.

If, by the primary election, we are having just two out of 109 senators, just two candidates, that is the height of insult to women, lack of respect and lack of regard for women.

When women are empowered, the Nation is empowered. When women are empowered, poverty is reduced. When women are empowered, insecurity is reduced. When women are empowered, the children are better for it. The future of this country is better for it.

So, we are misplacing our priorities as a Nation and until we realise that, Nigeria is going nowhere. You know, I spoke about the deliberate exclusion of women. You find that in the primary elections we held, we see men who have gone four times, three times, returning. They are just writing their names; But women who have gone one time, two times, my regular examples are Hon. Mariam Onuoha from Imo State, Hon. Zainab Gimba, Hon. Khadija Bukar and more like that. We believe that it is not concluded until they publish the final list.

But if all the women existing in the National Assembly cannot be retained, cannot be returned, despite the fact that they are just writing names, this is the best opportunity that any political party has. If they are truly, genuinely sincere about women’s inclusion, this is the best time that they can include women. Because they are just writing the names, selection and not election so let them write the names of the women across the board. Let them write their names and include capable, eligible women.

These women are very brilliant. They have done so much in their constituencies. They have done so much for themselves, for the nation and for their constituents. Yet, they are facing a lot of barriers, despite the fact that they are also popular in their constituencies.

And this reserved seat, if by the grace of God it is passed, is going to be a corrective mechanism, but not to replace the women who are contesting the elections, like I said. When we have more women in Parliament, they are going to be building their own influence. They would have built their own political power. They would have built some level of financial strength, connections and all that. Their voices will resonate to help other women to be included.


Ogbara

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

When Female Children Bear Brunt Of Mother's Struggles

By **Suliyat Tella** and **Ruth Ononye**

CHILDREN don't choose the circumstances into which they are born. They do not choose their parents, the kind of marriage they had, the financial situation of the home, or the struggles that may follow. Yet, for some children, particularly daughters, the consequences of the difficulties their mothers face become the burdens they are forced to carry from childhood into adulthood.

A daughter is not supposed to be a mother's second chance, she is not compensation for a failed marriage, she is not a weapon for revenge against men, she is not a financial plan, she is not responsible for completing the dreams her mother abandoned. And she should never have to carry the consequences of decisions made before she was old enough to understand them.

Sometimes, the burden comes through anger and resentment. Sometimes, it appears as neglect, excessive responsibility, financial pressure or constant reminders of the sacrifices a mother has made.

In other cases, a daughter becomes the vessel through which her mother attempts to achieve the life she could not have for herself. The daughter may be loved, but still be made to carry responsibilities she never created and expectations she never asked for.

For a lot of women, motherhood does not begin with an easy life but with heavy responsibilities that comes with several challenges including financial pressures, difficult marriages, broken relationships, absent partners, family expectations and the pressure to provide for children.

Some women learn to live with these experiences and continue raising their children as best as they can while others carry the burden and memories of personal life disappointments that were never properly addressed and project it on their children especially the daughters.

In some cases the situation escalates into a toxic behavioural pattern towards their children as though they are responsible for these disappointments. For others it appears in the advice they give their children, the fears they pass on and the expectations they place on their children forgetting that more often than not a mother is the first life teacher and learning example for kids particularly the daughters.

Female children learn what relationships, marriage, sacrifice and womanhood truly means from their mother. Thus making everything a mother says and does powerful, even when they are shaped by experiences that happened long before the daughter was old enough to understand them.

Nigeria's children are already growing up in an environment where violence and psychological aggression are widespread. UNICEF data shows that 90% of Nigerian children aged 1 to 14 experienced physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers. The figure does not mean all such experiences are linked to maternal trauma, but it illustrates the difficult environment in which many children are being raised.

For some children, however, the burden is not always physical. It can come through the stories they hear, the responsibilities they are given or the emotional conflicts they are expected to carry.

Seeing the world through a Mother's Experiences

COMFORT Ubong has seen this happen through a friend whose experience growing up eventually influenced how she viewed her own marriage. She recalled helping the woman's husband secure a job at a bank. At the time, the man was working at a private school in Lagos despite being a second class upper university graduate. She felt he could do better and eventually told him about an opening at a bank. The man applied, went through the interview process and got the job. He later told his wife and mentioned Comfort's role in helping him secure the opportunity. Instead of receiving the news positively, the woman became upset. "She turned it into a fight, Comfort recalled."

The wife questioned why she had helped her husband get another job without speaking to her about it. When Comfort asked why she preferred her husband to remain in a low-paying job rather than take a better opportunity, she explained the experience that had shaped her thinking.

Growing up, her father had been financially comfortable, but according to her, he did not spend money on her mother. He eventually left them for another woman, leaving her mother to raise the children alone. That experience remained with her especially as her mother never missed a chance while raising the two daughters to remind them about not giving room for men to treat them as their father treated her. The rules for this mother were simple: "don't marry a man who is financially stable so that he doesn't leave you as your father left me." After she got married, her mother warned her not to allow history to repeat itself and to avoid ending up as a single mother like her.

For this woman, keeping her husband from becoming financially successful became the only way of protecting her marriage. She felt the best solution was to keep him from being financially stable so he doesn't have enough money to spend on another woman," Comfort said.

This was not necessarily the original experience that was being repeated. It was the fear created by that experience.

Her mother had lived through abandonment and had passed the fear of abandonment to her daughter. Years later, the daughter was making decisions in her own marriage based on a story that had happened to her mother.

This is one way unresolved experiences can travel from one generation to another.

For Adejoke Olakunle, the experience was much more direct. Her parents separated when she was nine. Her mother later remarried and had three children with another man. Adejoke moved into the new household with them, but said she often felt treated differently from her younger siblings.

"There were times she made me go to school without food or money, and then she told me to go and call my father to give me money," she said.

As Adejoke grew older, she said her mother began blaming her for the problems in her current marriage.

According to her, her stepfather was a womaniser. "Anytime he refuses to come home, my mother turns and blames me that I was the reason her husband has refused to come home."

Adejoke was around 13 or 14 at the time. For a child, the responsibility was difficult to understand. She was being made to feel responsible for a relationship between two adults and for the behaviour of a man whose decisions were outside her control.

After graduating secondary school, Adejoke said the situation became worse. "It felt like my mother seeing me reminds her of something she doesn't want to remember," she said.

Eventually, Adejoke began looking for somewhere else to live. At 16, she moved in with her boyfriend. She would return home occasionally, but said her mother did not ask where she had



spent the night or why she had not returned. At 17, after becoming pregnant, she was chased out of the house.

Adejoke's experience illustrates how emotional burdens can sometimes affect a child's sense of belonging. Rather than experience home as a place where she was protected while navigating adolescence, Adejoke began searching for somewhere else to live.

In Amaka Onuha's case, the burden came through a combination of loss, neglect, physical punishment, poverty and an expectation to become responsible for a family that should not have been hers to carry alone.

After her father died, her mother refused to take responsibility for the family in the way Amaka needed. Instead, the young girl was expected to shoulder responsibilities not only for herself but also for her younger siblings. She was constantly beaten and subjected to the consequences of a situation she did not create.

Rather than allowing the circumstances to destroy her completely, Amaka decided to become what she considered a reasonable and responsible child. She began saving money with the hope of learning a skill that would give her a better future and eventually improve her circumstances. But even her attempt to build a better life was met with constant banter from her mother.

Instead of encouraging her to acquire a skill and create a future for herself, her mother repeatedly told her to go and find a rich man who would lift the family out of poverty. The message was that marriage to a wealthy man, rather than education, skills or personal development, was the quickest route out of their hardship.

For a young girl already struggling under the weight of family responsibilities, those words became discouraging and frustrating. She had tried to make a different choice. She had tried to save. She had tried to think about her future. Yet the person from whom she needed encouragement continued to remind her that a wealthy man was the answer.

The constant pressure eventually affected the way she viewed her own life. Instead of seeing her future as something she could build through a skill, education or legitimate work, she began looking for another way to make money and help her family. Sleeping with men and making money from those encounters became a way to contribute financially and escape the poverty that had become such a painful part of her life.

The choice was not presented as something she celebrated. Rather, it became part of the frustration and desperation surrounding her circumstances. The girl who had once tried to save money to learn a skill and build a better future had become so discouraged that she began seeing another path as a means of survival. And the deeper wound was not only the poverty, it was the resentment that developed towards the mother she believed had failed to protect or provide for her. She hated the life she was living, and she hated the person she felt had placed an unbearable burden on her shoulders.

Another woman, Aanuoluwapo David, describes a different form of burden: 'overwhelming responsibilities'.

Her parents separated when she was very young, and she became responsible for her younger siblings. Eventually, she dropped out of school so she could work and support them. "My mum tells me every time they are my responsibility," Aanuoluwapo said.

She said her mother did not have a job but depended on men for her personal needs, while Anuoluwapo was expected to provide for her siblings.

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

Charly Boy…
His Music, Foundation And 999



By **Eniola Daniel**

BORN Charles Chukwuemeka Oputa, also known as CB and His Royal Punkness, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, on June 19, 1950, Charly Boy or Area Fada is an enigmatic character, singer, entertainer and social engineer.

The second son of former Supreme Court Justice, Chukwudifu Oputa, the Oguta-native was born into a Catholic household, describes his parents as liberals who encouraged their children to express themselves freely.

From 1982, when he ventured into the music industry, to 1984, when he independently released the highlife single, *Obodo GiriGiri*, his career has come full circle.

In 1985, he was nearly denied a record deal with Polygram Nigeria owing to his unconventional appearance until he was introduced to the label's managing director, Ton Seysener, who signed him, and *Nwata Miss* was released.

Towards the late 80s, Oputa with the help of stylist and fellow singer/songwriter, the late Tyna Onwudiwe, African Oyibo, created a new punk persona consisting of leather jackets and boots, power bikes, mohawks, and a new direction in music, combining African pop and Afrobeat.

Oputa's most popular album, *1990*, was released in 1988, with the title referring to the year Nigeria's corrupt military government was expected to hand over power to civilians in that year, although this did not commence until 1999.

1990 earned Oputa mixed reviews due to its political nature. It caused national controversy, and several radio stations refused to play the title track. Despite this, *1990* was one of Nigeria's best-selling albums of 1988, and Oputa was credited with using his music to stand up to his government, a lá Fela Kuti. The album included the song, *Big Bottom*, a tribute to the female derriere. In most Nigerian states it was denied airplay on radio owing to its somewhat raunchy lyrics.

Songs like Nwata Miss and Big Bottom became mainstream highlife-pop anthems, celebrated for their infectious rhythms and unabashedly provocative themes.

Charly Boy's music reflects over four decades of pop, highlife, and Afrobeat rebellion, explicitly driving social commentary and challenging conservative Nigerian norms. The Area Fada has leveraged his eccentric, biker-themed alter ego to pioneer an alternative musical era in Nigeria.

In recent years, Charly Boy shifted heavily toward musical activism, aiming his art directly at bad governance, systemic exploitation, and religious corruption.

Long known as the "Area Fada," he has spent decades organising protests, challenging bad governance, and speaking out against societal corruption and injustice in Nigeria.

He frequently advocates for young Nigerians, urging them to challenge status-quo politics, take charge of their civic responsibilities, and shape the country's future.

He maintains strong stances on national identity, recently championing inclusivity and declaring that major diverse hubs like Lagos belong to all Nigerians regardless of tribe.

With songs such as *Our Mumu Don Do* (2017), a revolutionary anthem calling on everyday Nigerians to awake from political docility to *God Of Men* (Fake Pastors) (2020), a heavy-hitting collab with Falz targeting spiritual manipulation to *Naija Matter* (2023), a modern track tackling contemporary Nigerian challenges, his musical style has been a merger traditional highlife guitars with synth-pop and Afrobeat baselines, almost always delivered with a spoken-word or conversational vocal style. His musical legacy remains anchored in how he opened the door for future generations of Nigerian alternative, anti-conformist musicians.

Known as an advocate for the masses, social justice, and good governance, he recently shifted a major part of his public focus toward men's health advocacy.

After surviving a personal battle with prostate cancer, he launched the Charly Boy Foundation to promote early detection, diagnosis, and treatment for men.

His health foundation tackles broader issues affecting aging men, including mental health awareness and diabetes care. High-profile figures like former President Olusegun Obasanjo have backed these health campaigns.

Recently, he had an unforgettable launch of his new book, *999*, with former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, leading the assemblage of distinguished Nigerians present at the event, he couldn't have asked for a more compelling gathering. He speaks on Charly Boy Foundation and his new book *999*.

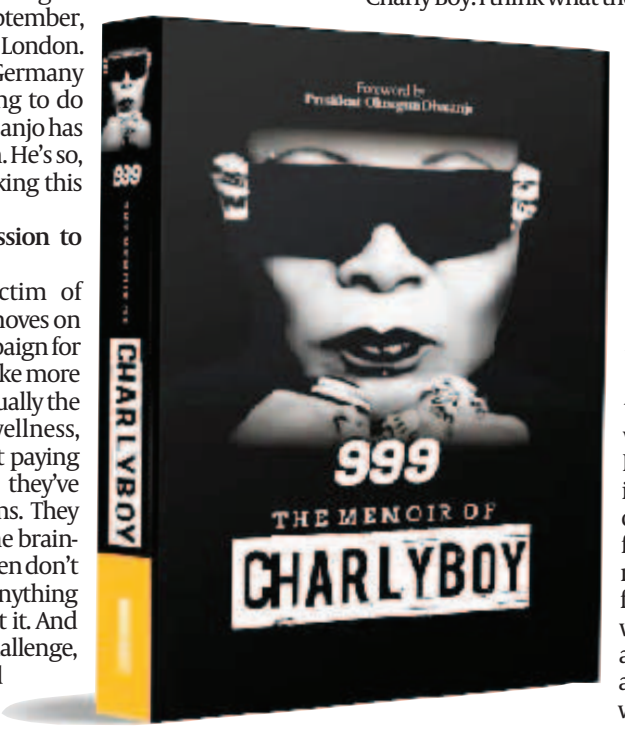
Let us begin by congratulating you on the successful launch of *999*. How did that make you feel, seeing all of the efforts you put into the success it achieved?

First and foremost, I'm the biggest critic of Charly Boy as Mr. Oputa. So, there's hardly anything Charly Boy would do that can impress me like that. But I must say that it turned out to be like a seamless programme, the series of events that played out in the venue. It seemed so seamless. It was exciting. It was typical Charly Boy. And I noticed, as Mr. Oputa, that a lot of people were elevated, so to speak, just being there, witnessing the show, watching the show, and all that played out on stage. So even though as a critic of my creation, Charly Boy, I'll just give that show a 50 per cent in my book because, yeah, I'm that way. It could have been better. But I am happy also about the team that got together to do that job. I mean, it can't get any better.

What essentially would you say guests took away from that book launch?

I know OBJ almost stole the show as he did his *Atilogwu* stunt by jumping off the stage and all the questions that have been playing in people's head that I asked him and he had to answer live and direct, you know, like the rumour that says he's really not a Yoruba man, that he may be an Igbo man. Okay, he fought the civil war, what were the things he regretted doing? And what were the good things he thought he did during the war, and so on and so forth. I like the part Dr. Alban cancelled his gig in Russia just to be in Nigeria to do that small thing he did. You know, the book reviewer took it to another intellectual dimension. And then of course, we had poetry by Dike Chukwumerije. You know how that one is, I'm a big fan of his. And then we had the Symphony band, the Ace band who entertained us. It went all the way from the old jazz thing to contemporary music, which was very, very good.

So, generally on the whole, we all know that book launching can be kind of boring since it's an intellectual thing, more or less an intellectual exercise. But this was very Charly Boyish in nature. So it held attention. And the feedback has been very positive. But the big story is that we're taking it to another level because in September, we're going to go launch in London. After London, we're doing Germany and after Germany, we're going to do Kenya where I know Baba Obasanjo has a lot of things going on for him. He's so, so loved in Kenya. So, we're taking this on a global level.



How strong is this your passion to help men with prostate?

Since I was once a victim of prostate cancer, I just felt it behoves on me to do a very thorough campaign for men so they could be able to take more care of themselves. Men are usually the big culprit in terms of wellness, because it's either they are not paying attention as they should, or they've learned to hide their problems. They can't speak it out because of the brainwashing since time, they say men don't cry. That's if you're a real man, anything that is worrying you, you chest it. And as an advocate of prostate challenge, I've been saying it loud and clear that we should emulate more of our women folk. They talk a lot. Anything that worries them, they're always talking about their problems. So, we should speak out because, first and foremost, since in most families, the man is the head, and if the head is not well and there's a problem with the head, then that means every other thing will derail because the head is not well.

And this is where I also advise women, ensure that your husband or your partner gets the kind of medical attention he should be getting. I know that because of the economic situation, person go chop first before you dey go medicine, yeah? So, aside the carelessness, aside the fear that men do have, okay, is this the end of me? Because a man that is struggling to survive and is also fighting with his penis, which is his precious, his most valuable possession and it seems like the network is not steady down there, then that is big trouble for the man. That is why all of this accumulates to men who just drop and die. So if the head is not well, the other department cannot function and that's why I say it is time for men to start to learn to be a bit selfish. If you fall into a sickness that you know there is no way out, you will soon die, sebi when you do Will, do you add yourself to the Will? You can't add yourself to the Will now, so if you can't be a little bit selfish about your health to think about yourself, you know, some of us have gone through with all our life, we've worked for our partner, our wives, our children, our everything, neglecting ourselves. But that's not fair. It's not fair on the captain of the family. It's not fair. And that is why I've urged men to be a bit selfish.

Share with us a bit about your experience so far with the foundation here in Nigeria. What sort of experiences have you had with men coming forward to open up on their prostate condition to you?

I've had strangers, total strangers, men I don't even know, they call my number and they start to vocalise their testimony. They confide in me so much, you know, sometimes I'm even asking them, is all this information necessary? But it is necessary for me to understand where their head and their mind are. And you know, this particular disease or challenge affects men in various ways because as your mind thinketh…because good and bad things will keep happening to people, but we all react in different ways. And that is why I made it a duty to be out there to talk about my plight, so other men will not hide behind fear or hiding behind all hope is lost. And the community of the people I talk to on a daily has expanded so much, but you see, I'm always doing things that speak to my soul. I don't do things just for doing it or to chase clout, they must speak to my soul. And that is why I've remained consistent, tenacious, and audacious about most of the things that I do.

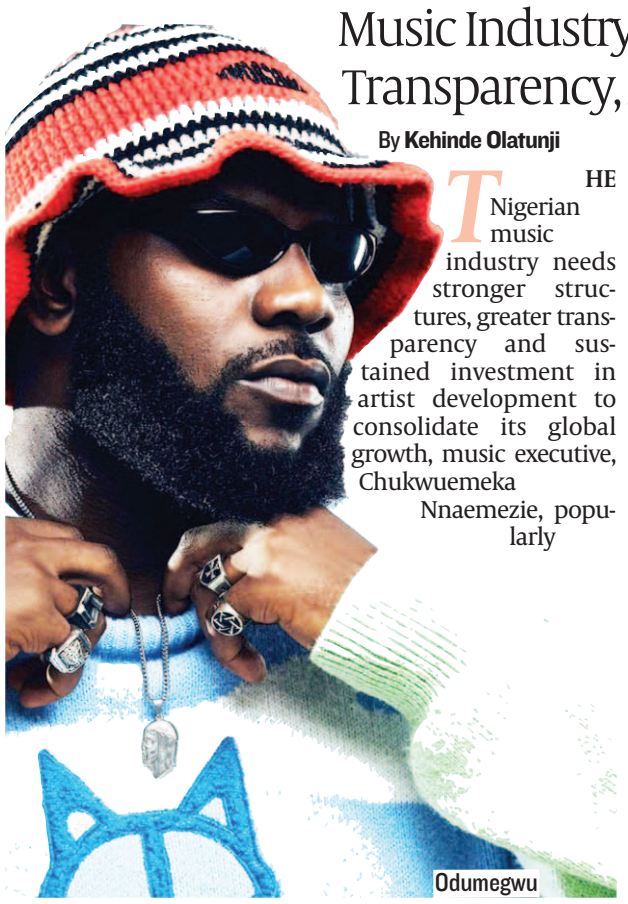
But I must confess that this idea of starting a foundation was not Mr. Oputa's idea in the first place. It was my very good friend, schoolmate, called Leo Stan Ekeh of Zinox Computer, and he was the one who introduced the idea to me. And he said to me, rather than sitting and getting frustrated with what the government is doing or not doing, I know you're a people's person, why don't you face this direction? And ever since he told me that, I have not looked back, because like I said, I do things that speak to my soul and that is why I'm deeply involved. I've been listening to you at several forums, speaking about your own personal experience. Would you say you're impressed with the degree of response from the men who have been coming out?

I am very, very, very impressed. And if it continues like this, I can't imagine how many thousands of men will be influenced by my own personal experience as Mr. Oputa and my own courage in dealing with this problem. And I don't know how to lie. I can't lie. I'll tell you. I'll tell you as it is. And I'll share some experiences, which will even make the listeners cringe. You know, ah! Did you do that? Did you really do that? Yes, I did. You know, people think that when they see me, they say, ah, but why don't you ever age? It's not like I don't age, of course. I'm getting older and my body is doing something different that I don't know, that I never planned for, but I just carry everything with a smile, with some happiness. So, when people see me, I think that's when they see Charly Boy. I think what they're looking at is the spirit that lives in Charly Boy and that's why we can't attribute aging to him like that. It's the spirit that they see and the spirit is youthful and useful, you can imagine, at 70 something. Well, what am I talking about? If OBJ can be jumping, doing Atilogwu at 90 something, me, I never start.

If hopefully, in the coming months, you're done with this tour of the three different countries you mentioned, what level are you hoping to take this to next?

Globally, and I probably will need to do a movie, a short movie, that I want to present in the next Cannes Festival, you know, something focusing on people living with prostate cancer. Because I intend to take this to a different level, I swear to God. And there may be more talks coming up in the future. So, like I said in the beginning, we're using *999*, the book launch to call attention to men's health challenges and the Charlie Boy Foundation, what we do and why we're set up for that.

Music Industry Needs Stronger Structure, Transparency, Artist Development — Nnaemezie


Odumegwu

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

THE Nigerian music industry needs stronger structures, greater transparency and sustained investment in artist development to consolidate its global growth, music executive, Chukwuemeka Nnaemezie, popularly known as Odumegwu, has said.

Nnaemezie, who was born on January 22, 1996, in Anambra State, has worked across A&R, artist management, public relations and distribution with artistes including Flavour, Odumodublack and Jeriq — most recently contributing to A&R and pre-release planning on Jeriq's 2024 album, *King*.

Speaking with *The Guardian*, he said the industry's rapid international growth had not been matched by sufficient infrastructure and professional systems to support artistes and other creative workers.

According to him, areas including royalties, publishing, copyright, intellectual property, streaming revenue and catalogue ownership require greater accountability and understanding among artistes and other industry stakeholders.

"Many artistes create valuable intellectual property without fully understanding the commercial implications of what they own. We need to educate creatives about the business value of their work," he said.

Nnaemezie also called for greater investment in artist development, particularly in identifying and nurturing emerging talents before they attain commercial success.

He said the role of A&R professionals should go beyond identifying potential hit songs to developing artistes, shaping their repertoire, defining their identity and connecting their creativity with sustainable business strategies.

"A&R should not simply mean finding a hit song. It should involve developing artistes, understanding their identity, helping shape their repertoire and connecting their creativity to a sustainable business strategy," he said.

Bovi To Close 2026 World Tour With Benin City, Lagos Shows



By **Eniola Daniel**

AWARD-WINNING comedian, actor and writer Bovi Ugboma will bring his 2026 world tour to a close with two highly anticipated performances in Benin City and Lagos.

Titled *Bovi: Guilty as Charged*, the Nigerian leg will begin in Benin City on October 1 before reaching its grand finale on October 11, 2026 at the Convention Centre, Eko Hotel, Lagos.

The announcement follows a successful international run that began in the United Kingdom at Easter, where Bovi sold out Indigo at The O2. He subsequently took the tour across Canada, performing in six cities, including Toronto, Calgary and Edmonton.

All six Canadian shows sold out, continuing an impressive year on the road for one of Africa's most celebrated comedians.

With the international leg completed, Guilty as Charged now returns to Nigeria for its final two performances. The Benin City show will open the homecoming stretch, while Lagos will provide the closing stage for Bovi's 2026 tour.

Known for his clever observations, fearless humour and gift for turning familiar experiences into memorable stories, Bovi has spent nearly two decades building a career that extends across stand-up comedy, television and film. His live shows have become known for their strong storytelling and sharp commentary on relationships, society, popular culture and everyday life.

Over the years, productions such as *Bovi: Man on Fire* and *Naughty by Nature* have helped establish him as a leading force in Nigerian comedy, drawing audiences at home and internationally. *Guilty as Charged* marks the latest chapter in that journey and brings Bovi back before Nigerian audiences following the tour's sold-out dates abroad.

The Lagos edition will also introduce a first for a Bovi show. Every ticket buyer will have a designated seat and will be able to choose that seat while purchasing a ticket. The arrangement applies across the venue, creating a fully reserved seating experience for the audience.

Asake's *In God We Trust Tour:* Unexplained Cancellation Casts Shadow Over LA Stop

By **Daniel Anazia**

IT'S no longer news that Afrobeats superstar, Asake has abruptly cancelled his highly anticipated concert at The Greek Theatre in Los Angeles, California, United States, which was scheduled for Sunday, September 6, as part of his ongoing *In God We Trust* international tour to support his latest album, *M$NEY*.

The news, however, is that the development has cut one date from the ongoing world tour, leaving many fans on the West Coast disappointed and without explanation. The show was called off just days before the event.

Ticket holders learned of the cancellation through an automated notice rather than any statement from the singer himself nor his team. "Unfortunately, this event has been cancelled. The Asake *In God We Trust* show at The Greek Theatre on Sunday, September 6, 2026 has been cancelled," the message read.

Organisers assured ticket holders that full refunds would be processed automatically to the original payment cards within five business days, with an additional two to three days required for the funds to reflect in customers' accounts and no further action from intending buyers.

Notwithstanding the swift rollout of refunds, neither Asake nor his management team has provided an official explanation for the sudden pullout, a development that has created a vacuum on social media, sparking intense debate across digital platforms.

Some fans pointed to weak ticket sales, while others insist the show was close to selling out before it was scrapped. Both claims remain unverified, as no official word has come from the Mr. M$NEY hitmaker's camp.

The cancelled Los Angeles date was part of his 13-city *In God We Trust* tour, which kicked off in July with itinerary spanning several major cities across the United States, Canada and Europe, including London, Paris, Atlanta, Toronto, Houston and Miami. Beyond the Los Angeles stop, the rest of the run remains unaffected, and no further changes to the schedule have been announced.


Asake

Nurse Tonia Steps Back Into Music With *Jesus Otokinadu,* Rooted In Purpose, Faith

By **Daniel Anazia**

FOR Ann Uwa Anthony, known in the music industry as Nurse Tonia, music is more than a career she once dreamed of pursuing. It is a gift she believes God placed in her long before she became a registered nurse and a woman whose life has taken her across continents.

After years of putting that passion on the back burner, following a difficult period living in Europe that involved an abusive marriage and the heartbreaking loss of a child who passed away just 17 days after birth, she is stepping back into the music scene, a dream she has carried for decades with purpose, faith and a story to tell.

Her return comes with the release of Yesu Mbe A E and Jesus Otokinadu, two deeply personal gospel songs forged out of hardship, reflection and an enduring faith in God. Nurse Tonia's music, which incorporates elements of gospel, old school, Afrobeats, and indigenous rhythms, is a reflection of the dynamic and varied Nigerian music landscape.

"Music has always been in my DNA," she says, recalling her early years and her experiences trying to find a place in Nigeria's music industry in the 1990s. "Unlike today, there was no easy access to digital platforms, streaming services, or the infrastructure available to emerging artistes."

The United States-based registered nurse and Soldier, remembers a period when she and her brother, Ras Murphy Van Anthony, moved from Benin to Lagos following the death of their father.

Without financial security or an established support system, they survived largely through determination, even pleading with event organisers to allow them to perform without payment simply for the opportunity to be heard. Those difficult years, however, did not kill her musical ambition. Instead, they became part of the story she now hopes to tell through music.


Tonia

With about 30 songs already recorded, Nurse Tonia says she could produce several albums. Rather than rushing to release everything, she has opted for a gradual rollout, beginning with singles that can introduce audiences to her sound.

Her music sits comfortably within the Afro-gospel space, blending worship, Afrobeat rhythms and other influences. *Sink in My Destiny* is one of the projects reflecting her spiritual journey and determination not to allow her God-given talent to go unused. But it is *Yesu Mbe* A E that perhaps captures her story most intimately.

The song emerged during a particularly painful period of her life. She recorded the idea on her phone, preserving what she believes was a divine moment of inspiration. She describes singing to God while dealing with profound personal challenges, allowing the melody and words to flow naturally.

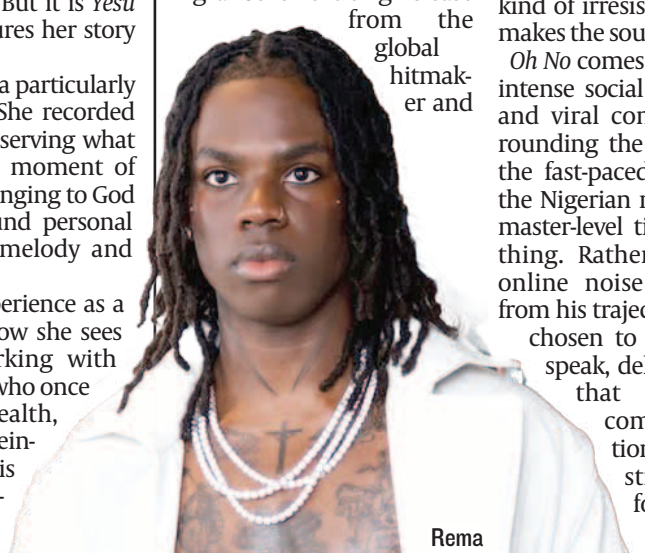
According to her, her experience as a nurse has also reshaped how she sees life. She added that working with patients, including people who once occupied positions of wealth, influence, and fame, has reinforced her belief that life is temporary and that character matters more than status.

From *TEA* To *Oh No,* Rema Turns Up The Heat

By **Daniel Anazia**

BARELY a month after his 2026 first official solo release titled Tea, an energetic nightlife and party anthem centered on romantic chemistry, confidence, and dance floor movement had listeners talking; Afrobeats star Rema is back with another offering, *Oh No*.

The latest offering arrived on Friday, September 11, marking another exciting release from the global hitmaker and extending a productive run of releases for Mavin Records this year that has already produced hits, headlines, and a Grammy-nominated résumé.


Rema

Produced by acclaimed producer Rvssian, the record blends kompa, reggaeton, dancehall and afro-pop while tapping into a multi-award-winning superstar's nostalgic side. Playful and flirtatious, the lyrics capture the rush of infatuation anchored by the kind of irresistible hook that makes the sound effortless.

Oh No comes on the heels of intense social media chatter and viral commentary surrounding the music star. In the fast-paced ecosystem of the Nigerian music industry, master-level timing is everything. Rather than letting online noise distract him from his trajectory, Rema has chosen to let his artistry speak, delivering a track that immediately commands attention across major streaming platforms.





Travel, Tourism and Hospitality stakeholders across the region during the 22nd Akwaaba African Travel Market at the Eko Hotel and Suits recently...

Regional Stakeholders Chart Course To Transform African Travel Into Sustainable Economic Powerhouse @ 22nd Akwaaba

By **Maria Diamond**

POSITIONING Africa through travel and tourism as a globally competitive market in order to attain dynamic economic expansion was the pivot of the 22nd Akwaaba African Travel Market which was held at the Eko Hotel & Suit during the week.

The three-day event featured experts and stakeholders from across Africa who charted the path to transforming African travel into a sustainable economic powerhouse.

The Nigeria's Minister of Art, Culture, and the Creative Economy Hannatu Musawa who commended Ambassador Ikechi Uko, the organiser of Akwaaba Africa Travel Market for his commitment to promoting Nigeria's travel and tourism industry during her keynote speech at the event said there is need for Africa to leverage on data, technology and infrastructure.

Musawa, who stated that effective governance and impactful advocacy are impossible without access to reliable, real-time statistics, highlighted data accuracy and technological integration as the missing links in Africa's travel and tourism growth.

While highlighting recent national digital initiatives including unified tourism applications, designed to consolidate information on travel offerings, heritage sites, and local services across all sub-regions, Musa said by creating centralised digital hubs, destination marketers and investors gain precise insights into traveller behaviour, resource availability, and market opportunities.

According to the Minister, digital tools and robust data gathering serve as critical bridges connecting the various sub-sectors of the travel economy, from transportation and lodging to arts and culinary tourism. She said: "It is only when you know about it that you can speak with power. So, I think the real energy here is to have the knowledge and the facts. Having top-notch statistics is the key to connect different elements within the tourism sector. It is imperative for our people to key into the wider vision and the wider network that we're working on at the national level."

While appreciating the visitors who came into Nigeria to attend the three day event, the Minister said: "Please feel free; Nigeria is a very friendly and hospitable country. We have a lot to offer because we are the gateway into the black global community. So let's work as one West Africa, of course Africa, and the world. The Global South is looking to us, and we are looking at tourism as the next frontier in terms of the economic expansion that we all need as individuals."

Importance of Regional Trade Platforms

THE First Lady of Lagos State, Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu who commended the organiser of Akwaaba African Travel Market Ikechi Uko noted the necessity to the expand scope of modern tourism, which has evolved far beyond traditional leisure trips into a multi-faceted industry encompassing business, gastronomy, sports, medical travel, and the creative arts.

She said: "Akwaaba had, over the years, provided a valuable platform for tourism professionals, bringing together travel operators, marketers, hospitality businesses and other stakeholders from Nigeria and across Africa. Akwaaba has helped to showcase tourism opportunities within Africa, encouraging travellers to explore destinations on the continent rather than looking only outside Africa for holiday experiences."

While reaffirming commitment to positioning Lagos as a primary hub for business, entertainment, and cultural investment, Madam Sanwo-Olu noted that initiatives integrating local culture such as regional culinary showcases like the celebrated Akwaaba African Market "Jollof Rice War" play a vital role in preserving social history while generating tangible economic opportunities for local micro-enterprises.

She urged tourism stakeholders to create more career pathways for young people, particularly in hospitality, culinary arts, travel, events and destination marketing. "Akwaaba's Jollof Rice War is a practical example of tourism-driven youth development, availing participants from the Lagos Boy Child Initiative to have an opportunity and a platform to build on their culinary skills. The Jollof War initiative is a celebration of Africa's culinary heritage, diversity and creativity while giving young people an opportunity to gain practical experience in a professional culinary environment. Food is much more than nourishment. It carries our history, it tells our stories, and it connects communities and creates opportunities."

The First Lady also called for more innovation and stronger government-industry collaboration to help Lagos attract visitors, promote African destinations and unlock tourism opportunities. "The travel, tourism and hospitality sector is an important part of Lagos' identity, economy and global appeal. Lagos has enormous potential as a destination for business, leisure, entertainment and investment. This is why stronger collaboration between government and tourism stakeholders would help Lagos maximise the opportunities within its tourism and hospitality sector. By linking the creative arts, hospitality, and corporate travel, destination managers can build multifaceted travel ecosystems that attract continuous domestic and foreign investment."

Private Sector on the forefront of Intra-Africa tourism inflow

ON his part, the Gambia Minister of Tourism, Arts, and Culture Abdoulie Jobe who noted that the Akwaaba African Travel Market is an opportunity to showcase the potentials in Africa spoke on the necessity to increase intra African tourism inflow.

Jobe said: "I believe we have to do this in partnership with the private sector. Whenever we move as a government with our agencies, the private sector plays a pivotal role, they sit on the table and we have to do everything in partnership with them. This is because it is the private sector that makes the deals and that's why we insist on putting them at the forefront both in planning, preparation and execution."

Describing The Gambia as the Smiling Coast of Africa, the Minister presented a compelling case for strengthening cross-border commercial ties, specifically targeting the Nigerian market. He said: "Nigerians are good travellers and because of the population, we believe that if they know more about destination Gambia, we will have an influx of Nigerians in Gambia. This is why we urge for stronger, formalised partnerships between Gambia tourism boards and Nigerian airlines, tour operators, and hospitality brands."

While encouraging Africans to explore neighbouring destinations not only to drive mutual economic growth but also builds long-term diplomatic and cultural resilience, Jobe said: "By facilitating easier transit, synchronised visa policies, and joint marketing campaigns, African nations can retain valuable travel capital within the continent while showcasing their shared culinary, artistic, and historical assets."

Structure, Public Policy Intervention to eradicate Travel, Tourism Impediments

TRANSFORMING African travel into a sustainable economic powerhouse requires a fundamental overhaul of governance structures, seamless intra-African connectivity, strategic regional partnership and data-driven policymaking.

It is based on this that stakeholders in the private sector at the Akwaaba 2026 unanimously agreed on the urgent need for governments to move beyond surface-level promotional events and focus on institutionalising clear, supportive policies.

Speaking to this, the President of the Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria (FTAN), Aliyu Badaki during his speech at the event said that the current state of tourism in the region stems directly from a lack of coordinated, sustainable planning.

According to him, African nations cannot continue operating under archaic frameworks while expecting modern economic returns. "Unlocking the continent's true potential demands deliberate public policy intervention, dedicated funding mechanisms, and structured collaboration between government authorities and private operators."

Badaki also called for proper structures and stronger coordination to transform Nigeria's tourism sector and improve the performance of tourism businesses.

According to him Nigeria's tourism potential could contribute more to national development if the government and key stakeholders adopt new approaches instead of continuing with existing practices.

He urged the government and critical stakeholders to put proper structures in place to strengthen tourism businesses and promote Nigeria as a destination

Badaki said: "FTAN Tourism Transformation Agenda, which formed part of the platform that brought its current leadership into office, was driven by the need to change the way tourism is developed and managed in Nigeria.

"Nigeria is blessed with tourism attractions and opportunities that can contribute more to the country's development if the sector receives the right support and coordination."

The FTAN boss also commended Akwaaba Africa Travel Expo for reaching its 22nd consecutive edition, describing its longevity as a significant achievement. "He said the event had continued to provide a platform for tourism stakeholders from Nigeria and across West Africa to meet, exchange ideas and promote the region.

"As the umbrella body of the private sector in tourism businesses, we'll always lend our support to Akwaaba and well-meaning people that are into such a thing like this to promote our nation and West Africa and Africa in general."

Championing Intra-African Connectivity

THE founder of the Akwaaba African Travel Market Ikechi Uko during his remark said the platform's core mission is centred on empowering young operators, opening global market access for local travel firms, and championing intra-African connectivity.

According to Uko, Akwaaba was created as an African travel platform designed around the continent's realities. "Akwaaba allows participants to connect more naturally, taking into consideration everyday realities such as traffic and delays."

Uko also identified visa processing, baggage policies and payment systems among the issues the event seeks to bring into industry conversations. "Keeping discussions connected to real travel experiences are part of what makes Akwaaba relevant to both industry players and travellers.

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From The Rector

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Appreciation Brings Appreciation: Thank You, Is The Currency (1)

By **Stephen Wolemonwu**

"So, Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." ***Luke 17:17–19***

Introduction

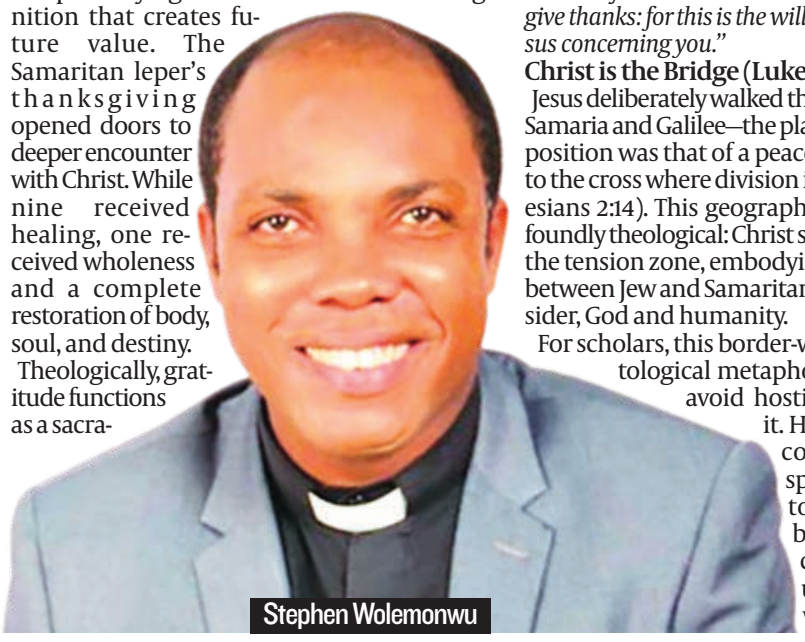
THERE is a currency that costs nothing to print, yet it buys access to favour, healing, and deeper relationship: *"Thank You."* In Luke 17, Jesus healed ten lepers, but only one returned to show gratitude. Nine received cleansing; one received wholeness. This story reminds us that appreciation is not weakness, but wealth. Gratitude is the currency of the Kingdom, and it multiplies blessings.

We live in a world where entitlement often overshadows thanksgiving. People expect miracles, breakthroughs, and opportunities, yet few return to acknowledge the source. The gospel narrative of the ten lepers is not merely a healing story; but a theological revelation about gratitude, stewardship, and divine economy. For scholars and theologians, this passage invites us to reflect on the intersection of Christology, anthropology, and ethics. For everyday believers, it is a call to cultivate a lifestyle of thanksgiving.

Gratitude as Currency

Gratitude is more than manners; it is spiritual capital. Saying "Thank You" is an act of recognition that creates future value. The Samaritan leper's thanksgiving opened doors to deeper encounter with Christ. While nine received healing, one received wholeness and a complete restoration of body, soul, and destiny.

Theologically, gratitude functions as a sacrament of remembrance. It acknowledges God as the giver and positions the believer to receive more. In economic terms, thanksgiving is the exchange rate of heaven: it turns little into much, cleansing into wholeness, and favour into fullness. Paul captures this divine economy in **1 Thessalonians 5:18:** *"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*



Stephen Wolemonwu

Christ is the Bridge (Luke 17:11)

Jesus deliberately walked the border between Samaria and Galilee—the place of hostility. His position was that of a peacemaker, pointing to the cross where division is destroyed (Ephesians 2:14). This geographical detail is profoundly theological: Christ situates Himself in the tension zone, embodying reconciliation between Jew and Samaritan, insider and outsider, God and humanity.

For scholars, this border-walking is a Christological metaphor. Jesus does not avoid hostility; He inhabits it. His ministry is not confined to safe spaces but extends to contested boundaries. The cross itself is the ultimate border, where divine and human, life and death, holiness and sin converge. Gratitude, like the cross, bridges hostility and creates unity.

The Power of Affliction (Luke 17:12–13)

Leprosy erased prejudice; affliction united Jew and Samaritan. Pain created solidarity where privilege and prejudice had once divided. In the colony of lepers, distinctions of ethnicity, class, and status became irrelevant. They were simply broken men in need of mercy.

This solidarity of suffering is echoed in modern contexts. Affliction often draws unlikely companions together. In prisons, hospitals, refugee camps, and disaster zones, human distinctions collapse under the weight of shared pain.

Theologically, affliction is a leveller: sin makes all humanity equal before God. Gratitude, however, distinguishes one life from the rest.

Modern "leprosy" includes gossip, unforgiveness, labelling, and isolation. Just as lepers were branded "unclean," society today brands people with names like "failure," "divorced," "addict," or "unworthy." These labels isolate and corrode relationships. Sin is the ultimate leprosy, separating humanity from God (Isaiah 59:2). Yet Jesus remains the cure, healing the broken-hearted and restoring relationships.

• *The Ven. Stephen Wolemonwu, Rector, The Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor stephenwolemonwu@gmail.com, 08035413812.*

Exhort Christ's Name By Upholding His Values, Badagry LG Chair Tells CMS Society Members

By **Chris Irekamba**

MEMBERS of the Christ Morning Star Society (CMS), Lagos Chapter, have been advised to uphold the values associated with the name of Christ by serving as shining examples within the Church and the wider society.

The Chairman of Badagry Local Council of Lagos State, Babatunde Humpe, gave the admonition while speaking as the Special Guest of Honour during the 45th anniversary celebration of the Society, held last Sundayat the Cathedral Church of St. Thomas Badagry, Lagos.

Humpe said members of the society had consistently demonstrated commitment to the work of God and should continue to strengthen their support for both the Church and humanity.

"I have observed the activities of your society right from my days as the People's Warden of the church. You have demonstrated uncommon love for the work of God, and I charge you to continue to do more," he said.

The council chairman further encouraged members to extend their charitable activities beyond the Church by supporting efforts aimed at improving the welfare of citizens.

He said:"As you support the work of God, continue to extend this love to humanity by supporting government at all levels in delivering the dividends of democracy to the people. I am impressed with the yearly palliative programme you organise for the less privileged in our churches. Please continue."

Humpe also stressed the importance of prayers and constructive engagement with leaders, noting that government alone cannot meet all the needs of the people.

In his sermon, the Dean of the Cathedral, Ven. Dickson Ilegbusi, commended the activities of the society and urged members to continue reflecting the light of God through their actions and commitment to the propagation of the gospel.

As part of the anniversary celebration, the Lagos Chapter of the society, led by its President, Star Olusegun Sobowale, distributed food palliatives to indigent families within the church and the surrounding commu-



Chapter Publicity Secretary, Star Tunji Oguntuase (left); Badagry Local Council Chairman, Babatunde Humpe; Chapter President, Star Olusegun Sobowale; Chapter Vice President, Adeola Odofin and Diocese of Lagos West Auditor, Star Okeowo Oderinde, during the 45th anniversary celebration of Christ Morning Star, Lagos Chapterat the Cathedral Church of St. Thomas, Badagry, Lagos

GKS Youths' Assembly Ends With Unique Prizes, Bursary

By **Chris Irekamba**

THE 2026 Youths' Assembly of the God's Kingdom Society (GKS), the Church of the Living God, has ended with a Special Thanksgiving Service held at the Apapa Service Hall, Lagos, where prizes were presented to participating branches and individuals in the Lagos Zone.

The prizes covered sporting activities held earlier at the Egbe premises of the Church, as well as the Bible Quiz competition held at the Apapa Service Hall, Lagos.

The Lagos Chapter of the League of Freedomites, a philanthropic organisation in the Church, also awarded bursaries to three youths.

According to the Chairman of the League, Professor Chris Osegenwune, the bursary is awarded to dedicated, hard-working, brilliant and indigent youths to encourage them to remain focused and God-fearing.

He explained that beneficiaries studying in higher institutions must have a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.5 and above, as attested to by their respective institutions.

The beneficiaries were Esther Obarafo of the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, who is studying Library and Information Science; Vera Ohunyo of the Department of Mass Communication, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN); and Deborah Ekiseowei, who is studying History and International Studies at the Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa State.



GKS President, Brother Felix Adedokun

Each bursary is valued at N100,000 yearly.

A major spiritual activity of the Youths' Assembly was the Bible Quiz, conducted by a Senior and Executive Minister, Brother J.N.W. Preye Chukwudi, assisted by Chidima Ochiaga and Professor Chris Osegenwune.

Youths from the 10 branches that make up the Lagos Zone participated in the highly competitive quiz in both the junior and senior categories.

In the junior category, Shogunle Branch emerged first with 60 marks, while Okota and Egbe branches came second and third.

In the senior category, Lagos Island Branch emerged winner with 53 points, Egbe Branch came second with 49 points, while Shogunle Branch placed third with 48 points.

In the combined Bible Quiz results, Lagos Island Branch emerged overall first, followed by Egbe and Shogunle branches in second and third positions.

The best overall quiz contestant, Brother Efe Enukpere of Egbe Branch, received the prestigious Eviano Ekelemu Memorial Prize of 100,000 and additional N100,000 from Umoh family, League of Freedomites wives, Gracious Sisters International and free sponsorship to the 2026 Feast of Tabernacles and a plaque.

The overall best-performing female contestant, Sister Soyem Okudaye of Lekki-Ajah Branch, received a prize of N50,000, and unique price of N1m, donated by Brother Emmanuel Akporhuerhe to branches across the zone for upholding the exhortation of Saint Paul in Hebrews 10:25, by attendance to Bible Study meeting, was distributed to best three branches in the zone.

Egbe, Okota and Shogunle branches went home with N500,000;N300,000 and N200,000 each to be shared by regular attendees and officiants.

Other cash prizes were also presented by the League of Freedomites Wives and the Umoh Family. The Youth Assembly held at the United Kingdom was presided over by Minister Timothy Mazi-Rapu. Three zones such as London, Midland and Northern came together at GKS Nothingham branch. At the end of the Quiz competition, the Northern branch came first with 50 points, while London had 48 points and Midland 44 points and settled for the second/third positions.

Living Waters

By Pastor Lazarus Muoka

Founder/General Overseer
The Lord's Chosen Charismatic
Revival Ministries Worldwide



• For more messages and testimonies visit: www.tlccrm.org 08056889396

Take A Stand

Text: Ephesians 6:13-14 (KJV)
"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore…"

THERE comes a time in every person's life when a decision must be made. There are moments when you can no longer remain neutral, silent, undecided, or indifferent. There comes a time when you must take a stand. The world is full of voices, pressures, temptations, opinions, and influences competing for the heart of man. But in the midst of all these voices, God is calling His people to stand.

The Bible says in Ephesians 6:13, *"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Notice that the Scripture does not say, "having done all, run away." It says, "having done all, to stand."*

To stand means to remain firm. It means to refuse to be moved from what is right, even when it is difficult. It means to remain faithful to God when others are turning away. It means to choose truth when falsehood is popular, holiness when sin is celebrated, righteousness when unrighteousness is accepted, and Christ when the world is rejecting Him.

We are living in a generation where many people are afraid to take a stand. Some are afraid of what people will say. Some are afraid of losing friends. Some are afraid of being rejected. Some want to please everybody, and in trying to please everybody, they end up displeasing God.

But the child of God must understand that there are times when pleasing God requires standing against the crowd.

Joshua stood before Israel and said in Joshua 24:15, *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve… but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."*

Joshua had made his decision. He did not say, *"Let me watch what everybody else will do." He did not say, "Let me follow the majority." He said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."*

That is the language of a person who has taken a stand.

There is power in knowing where you stand. A person who does not know where he stands can easily be moved by circumstances. When people praise him, he moves in one direction. When they criticise him, he moves in another. When temptation comes, he compromises. When persecution comes, he retreats. But when your heart is settled in God, you can stand even when everything around you is shaking.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:58, *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."*

God wants believers who are steadfast and unmoveable.

YOU cannot afford to be a Christian only when it is convenient. You cannot serve God only when there is no opposition. You cannot follow Christ only when following Him brings comfort. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

Following Christ requires a stand.There was a time when Daniel and his friends found themselves in a strange land surrounded by ungodliness. Babylon had its own culture, its own values, its own system, and its own pressure. But Daniel refused to allow Babylon to change his commitment to God.

Daniel 1:8 says, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself…"

Daniel made up his mind before the temptation became stronger.

This is an important lesson for us. If you wait until temptation comes before deciding what you will do, you may fall. But when you settle your heart beforehand that you will obey God, you will be stronger when the test arrives.

There are decisions that must be settled in your heart: "I will serve God. I will remain faithful. I will not return to the world. I will not compromise my salvation. I will not exchange eternity for temporary pleasure. I will not allow the opinions of men to separate me from God."

You must take a stand for holiness.The Bible says in Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Holiness is not outdated. Righteousness is not old-fashioned. God has not changed His standard because the world has changed its values. The world may redefine sin, but God's Word remains true.

Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

If God's Word says something is wrong, it is wrong regardless of how many people approve of it. If God's Word says something is right, it remains right even when nobody supports it.

Take a stand for the truth.

PAUL told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."*

The truth must not be abandoned because people do not want to hear it. The responsibility of the believer is not to make everybody comfortable but to remain faithful to God.

Jesus said in John 14:6, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Take a stand for Christ.

There is no salvation outside Christ. There is no substitute for Jesus. Religion cannot replace Him. Good works cannot replace Him. Money cannot replace Him. Education cannot replace Him. Position cannot replace Him.

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."*

Therefore, do not be ashamed of Jesus.Romans 1:16 says, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."*

Perhaps you have been hiding your faith because of your friends. Perhaps you are afraid that people will laugh at you because you attend church, pray, read your Bible, or refuse certain sinful practices. Remember that the approval of men cannot take you to heaven.

Jesus said in Matthew 10:32-33, *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."*

Take a stand even when you are alone.

Sometimes the greatest test of your faith is not when everybody is watching, but when nobody is watching. Joseph was in Egypt when he faced temptation. His family was not there. His father was not there. His brothers were not there. But Joseph knew that God was watching.

When temptation came, he said in Genesis *39:9, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"*

That is a man who had taken a stand.Joseph understood that sin was not merely breaking somebody's rule. Sin was offending God.

May God give us men and women who will say, *"I would rather lose an opportunity than lose my fellowship with God. I would rather be rejected by men than rejected by God. I would rather suffer for righteousness than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."*

The Bible says in Hebrews 11:25, speaking of *Moses, that he choose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."*

Taking a stand may cost you something. It may cost you a friendship. It may cost you an opportunity. It may make you unpopular. It may bring persecution. But whatever it costs to remain faithful to God is worth it.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:26, *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"*

What will it profit you to gain the world and lose your soul? What will it profit you to become successful but lose your relationship with God? What will it profit you to be celebrated on earth but rejected in eternity?

One day, every person will stand before God. Romans 14:12 says, *"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."*

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

'We Thank God For Ending Barrenness Of Seven Years, Six Months'

MY name is Sister Goodness Ezekiel, my baby's name is Emmanuel Chiemerie Ezekiel and my husband's name is Ezekiel Nweke.

The couple said they came to appreciate God for ending barrenness of seven years, and six months in their marriage.

Recountinghow God visited their marriage, Brother Ezekiel Nweke said theygot married in 2015, and after that, they were expecting to have children, but nothing happened.

He said: "Then, we went to the hospital and doctor said it was infection. We treated infection severally but all to no avail. In October 2021, l had a dream, in that dream, God told me that I was going to have a son and his name will be called "Chiemerie."When l woke up, we prayed and claimed God'spromise. Exactly October 2022, God fulfilled His promise to me, my wife took in, and in June, my wife was delivered of a bouncing baby boy safe and sound in Chosen hospital. Praise the Lord!"

They prayed for the G.O and all the Chosen members Worldwide, heaven at last in Jesus name. Amen.



Lagos State Deputy Governor,Dr Obafemi Hamzat (second right), receiving the Award of Excellence during the youth programme organised by The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries held recently at the church's headquarters in Ijesha, Lagos. With him, are government officials from Lagos State and some church youth leaders at the event

God Will Judge Sinners (1)

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor W. F. Kumuyi



MANY people conceive of God only as being so loving He cannot demand accountability from anyone, much less judge them sternly, and watch them serve their jail term in all eternity. Yet, sinners in every generation will not escape judgment if they fail to repent. A time is coming when judgment will be set at the Great White Throne, when all sinners will appear before God to be judged for their conducts while on earth.

Those who died without repentance prior to the judgment will go to hell, a place of punishment while their bodies remain in the grave. However, at the time of judgment, their bodies will resurrect to unite with their spirits and souls. Then, they will be *"judged... according to their works."* Eventually, they will be "cast into the lake of fire" forever. But for the believer, on the day of resurrection, the spirit and soul, which had been with God will be joined with the resurrected body and the complete man will live in heaven forever. If a beloved child of God dies, believers should not sorrow as those who have no hope. Instead, they should be comforted by the fact that such person is resting in the presence of God.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." God is a great and incorruptible Judge who will try all sinners that ever lived on earth. And He will do so on His impeccable Judgment Seat of God.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The judgment seat of Christ is without blemish. It is pure, righteous and without any miscarriage of justice. Sinners will appear before the impeccable, righteous judgment seat of the Lord. Hence, our duty, as believers, is to warn all men of the impending judgment of those who die without salvation. As we perform this responsibility, we should also be conscious of the judgment because God is the silent Listener to every conversation, the quiet Observer and Recorder of every action. No doubt, "He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth."

Once delivered, God's sentence on the guilty is irreversible just like the Scripture says in Romans 3:10-19. Except a person repents before he dies, there shall be an irreversible judgment upon him. God is a righteous and holy Judge; He weighs our actions, behaviours and thoughts, whether they are good or evil. He is not just the Judge of a section of the society, group of people or nation; He is the Judge of all the earth who "shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness." Therefore, believers must proclaim nothing else but His revealed judgment. He wants "all men everywhere to repent," because He has "appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained...", namely, Jesus Christ.

It is Jesus, the innocent One that became the substitute for all mankind, justifying those who repent, with grace. Christ is full of grace and truth. He grants us His grace, which transforms us and takes away our punishment. Although He sacrificed His on the cross, it was not for His sins; but for our sake He suffered for the sins we committed and bore our judgment. Repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way of escape from God's impending judgment. All who are cleansed by His blood should abide in Him, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of theirfaith.

• ***Further Reading (King James Version): Revelation 20:11-15; Daniel 7:9,10; Revelation 20:11,13; Daniel 7:9,10; 2 Corinthians 5:10,11; Psalm 96:10-13; Genesis 18:25; Psalm 9:8,17; Amos 3:2-4,8; Acts 17:30,31; Matthew 27:4,19,24,46; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:5-10.***

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus Prof. Mercy Olumide



Stop Talking And Listen (3)

Conditions for effective listening to God (Cont)

YOU won't know that the Holy Spirit has come if you are waiting for a certain feeling; you will know he has come because Jesus promised he would. When the Holy Spirit is working within you, you will believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son and that eternal life comes through him (1Jn 5:5); you will begin to act as Christ directs (Romans 8:5; Galatians 5:22,23); you will find help in your daily problems and in your prayers (Rom 8:26,27); you will be empowered to serve God and do his will (Acts 1:8; Rom 12:6ff); and you will become part of God's plan to build up his church (Eph 4:12,13)

Those who are true sheep of Christ hear His voice

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." (Jn 10:27)

"My sheep hear My voice."

Those who are true sheep of Christ obey His voice and fellow Him; they are in constant fellowship with the shepherd. "Hear" and "follow" are in the present tense, denoting repeated or habitual activity. To those who are following, the shepherd gives eternal life. Those sheep who stray from the shepherd and refuse to listen prove that they are not His sheep (15:1-6). Also see John 10:4,14.

Read John 10:1-21, Jesus is the Good Shepherd

And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 14I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 27My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." (Jn 10:4,14,27)

Those who are true sheep of Christ obey His voice and follow Him; they are in constant fellowship with the shepherd. "Hear" and "follow" are in the present tense, denoting repeating or habitual activity. To those who are following, the shepherd gives eternal life. Those sheep who stray from the shepherd and refuse to listen prove that they are not His sheep (15:1-6).

Read John 12:27-30, what were the different reactions to the voice of God?

"Father, glorify Your name."Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."29Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."30Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake" (Jn 12:28,29,30)

God's methods of Communication

• The Holy Bible, The Word of God—Heb.4:12; Ps. 19:7-9.

• Holy Spirit—Acts 1:16;10:19;11:12; 16:6,7;28:25, 20:23.

• God's son, Jesus Christ—The Gospels, Jn. 6:63; Acts 1:4,5,7,8; 9:4,5,6,10-12; 15-16; 18:9,10;23:11; Acts 26:14-18; Heb. 1:1,2; 2:3; the Book of Rev; The book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus,concerning Jesus, and from Jesus.

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Maximising God's Grace (7)

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: 2 Corinthians 6: I-2

By Abel Ukachi Amadi



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)*

ONE of the greatest deceptions of human existence is the illusion of "tomorrow." We treat tomorrow as if it is a guaranteed possession, a vast bank account of time that will never run dry. We tell ourselves, "I will decide for Christ tomorrow. I will quit that sinful habit tomorrow. I will surrender my life to God tomorrow." If there is one strategy the enemy uses more than any other to keep people from the fullness of God, it is to convince them that tomorrow is not late.

Procrastination is harmless when it comes to chores, but it is fatal when it comes to eternity. The Apostle Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, sounds a spiritual alarm. He does not say salvation will be easier next year. He does not say God will be more loving after you get your life together. He declares with absolute urgency: Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Today, we must confront the urgency of God's grace. Grace is not a static concept to be stored away for a rainy day. It is a living, breathing, immediate invitation from the Creator of the universe.

To understand the urgency, we must understand what the "accepted time" actually means. In the original Greek text, the word used for "accepted" carries the meaning of a highly favourable season—a time of extraordinary delight, goodwill, and divine favour. Right now, the doors of Heaven's throne room are wide open. God is not hiding behind a veil of wrath; He is extending the scepter of His mercy. The "accepted time" means that God is actively ready to receive you, forgive you, heal you, and transform your life right this second. Relying on tomorrow is a gamble because the Bible warns us in Proverbs 27:1, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Life is fragile. We are not promised another heartbeat. The rich fool in Luke 12:16-21 built bigger barns and planned for decades, but God said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." In Noah's time, people watched the ark being built for decades. They assumed they had time and went about their businesses, laughing off the warnings, until the day came when God shut the door (Genesis 7:16). Do not wait for the door of grace to close before you realise the value of the Ark.

Why is God so insistent on the word "now"? Because "now" is the only space where life actually happens. You cannot repent in the past, and you cannot serve God in the future. You can only live, choose, and believe right now.

If you do not know Christ, the clock is ticking, and today is your moment of salvation. Now implies that you can step out of darkness and into the marvelous light of salvation.

•Today's Nugget: The favourable Season is now.Prayer: Lord Jesus come into my life now. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com, Rev. Abel UkachiAmadi, General Superintendent,Assemblies of God Nigeria.

At Thanksgiving Service, Adeboye Enjoins Nigerians To Make God Senior Advocate, Counsellor

By Isaac Taiwo

THE General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adeboye has enjoined Nigerians to make God their Senior Advocate and Counsellor.

He gave the advise during the monthly Thanksgiving Service organised by the church to specially pray for members of the bench and bar in all sectors of the economy including their families.

Themed: "Wonderful Counsellor," the cleric described Counsellor as an adviser, and a problem solver. He said there is no Counsellor like Jesus, adding that Jesus is the Wisdom/Power of God, and also the Wisdom personified.

"He can break all protocols.He suspended the law of gravity to walk on the water. He raised the dead even the one who was dead for four days.There is no Advocate like Jesus Who, according to the scriptures is standing for us before The Father," Adeboye said.

The General Overseer said Jesus had many names such as Son of God, Son of Man, Lamb of God, The Resurrection and the Life, The only Way, the Truth and the Life, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, An Advocate and Counsellor, which makes Him unique.

The Special Assistant to the General Overseer on Administration and Pastor of Region 1, Dele Balogun said lawyers and judges need wisdom of God and courage to discharge their duties.

He said: "Young lawyers should be dedicated and hard working. They shouldn't think of making money first."

Chief Judge of Ogun State, Justice MosunmolaDipeolu, who was at the service acknowledged that they now had more female judges in most states in Nigeria than before.

"What we privileged female Judges should have at the back of our mind is that we are what we are by the grace of God. It is not because we are the most brilliant persons that we find ourselves in this position, it is the mercy of God."

She counseled her colleagues to pray for more wisdom and God's guidance, especially as Nigerians prepare for 2027 general elections.



Pastor Enoch Adeboye

By **Suliyat Tella**



Despite Climate Law, Flood Still Ravages Communities Five Years After

IN November 2021, Nigeria took a significant step by signing the Climate Change Act, the country's first comprehensive climate legislation. The law established the National Council on Climate Change and set out a framework to help the country respond to climate change by identifying climate risks, strengthening adaptation measures and building resilience in vulnerable communities.

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in global temperatures and weather patterns, primarily driven by human activities such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation. It results in sea-level rise, extreme rainfall, droughts, and temperature changes. These global shifts can increase the frequency and intensity of weather-related events, including flooding.

Driven by melting ice and thermal expansion (as warm water takes up more space), global sea levels have risen approximately 8-9 inches since 1880, owing to global heating. As sea levels continue to rise, it's estimated that 2.5 million Americans will be at risk from a severe coastal flood by 2050.

Every year, the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) also publishes its Annual Flood Outlook, identifying states and communities likely to experience flooding and encouraging governments and residents to prepare ahead of the rainy season.

Yet, despite these forecasts, many residents say they still find themselves reacting to disasters rather than preventing them.

Sea level rise's impact extends beyond just high tide flooding, as higher background water levels can also amplify coinciding flood events: from a storm's deluge amplified by a warmer atmosphere to more deadly and destructive storm surge from a hurricane supercharged by record-warmth in the Atlantic.

Rather than focusing solely on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the Act also recognises that climate change is already affecting Nigerians through flooding, extreme weather condition, drought and rising temperatures. It, therefore, aims to strengthen adaptation by helping communities prepare for these impacts instead of merely responding after disasters occur.

Flooding remains Nigeria's most common and recurring natural disaster, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In its assessment of the 2022 floods, the organisation described the disaster as even more devastating than the one recorded in 2012, with severe consequences for households, agriculture, infrastructure, businesses and food security across several states.

Four years after, however, many communities continue to experience devastating floods every rainy season, prompting questions about how far climate adaptation measures have translated into visible protection on the ground.

However, many believe that the flood crisis is primarily a legal and governance challenge rather than a purely infrastructural one.

Findings show that despite multiple policy instruments, enforcement remains weak, institutional mandates are fragmented, and dredging, sandfilling, and reclamation activities continue to heighten flood risk.

But while climate change plays a role, it's not the main culprit. The deeper, more immediate cause lies in the country's broken systems—infrastructure decay, poor planning and governance failures.

For residents of Ayinke Street in Shogunle, Oshodi, Lagos, that gap between policy and reality became painfully clear when floodwater swept through their community after heavy rainfall, destroying homes, household belongings, vehicles and important personal documents.

When floodwater broke through a collapsed fence bordering the Nigerian Air Force premises, it rushed into surrounding houses with a force many residents said they had never witnessed.

Among those affected was Ebesuwa Olaodupe, who was at work when the incident occurred. At home were his wife, their four-year-old daughter and their three-week-old baby.

"My wife called me while she was at home with our children. Nobody expected the water to come with such force," he recalled.

According to him, the floodwater rose rapidly, reaching chest level inside his apartment and leaving little time for residents to salvage their belongings.

"The flood was so high that it collapsed the fence. The water flowed into neighbouring houses. This house was the first target before it spread to other houses," he said.

By the time he returned, the damage had already been done."Our electronics are already damaged. Chairs, wardrobes, mattresses and many valuable items have been destroyed. We cannot even quantify what we have lost. Certificates have been carried away. Important documents are nowhere to be found."

The destruction extended beyond his own household. Vehicles parked within the community were submerged, while neighbouring homes suffered similar losses as floodwater swept through the area.

For many residents, the ordeal did not end after the water receded. Olaodupe said they had yet to receive any form of government assistance or compensation despite the scale of the destruction.

"We need people to come to our aid. Let them come and assess what has been damaged and assist those who have lost their properties."

While compensation would provide temporary relief, he believes preventing a recurrence should be the priority. He pointed to poor road infrastructure, weak drainage systems and the deteriorating condition of the fence as factors that worsened the flooding.

"The road is not well tarred and we are paying taxes. There should be a proper canal that can channel this water so that what happened will not happen again."

Scenes like those in Shogunle have become increasingly familiar across Nigeria during the rainy season.

From Niger and Kogi to Benue, Bayelsa, Anambra and parts of Lagos, communities continue to count losses after heavy rainfall triggers flooding that destroys homes, farmlands, businesses and public infrastructure.

While the causes may differ from one location to another, residents often tell a similar story of inadequate drainage, weak infrastructure, poor planning and limited preparedness.

For Dr Oghenerukevwe, another Lagos resident, the rainy season turned what should have been an ordinary journey to work into a frightening experience.

After a night of persistent rainfall, she booked a ride as usual for her morning commute. Several Uber and Bolt drivers cancelled the request because her neighbourhood was already flooded. Eventually, one driver accepted.

"When he arrived, I honestly thought he was driving an SUV," she said. "Instead, I met him scooping water out of his back seat because floodwater had already entered the car."

Hoping to avoid the worst of the flooding, they abandoned the usual route and chose another road that appeared safer. The decision proved costly. "As we approached Kunsela Road in Ikate, the car suddenly dropped into an open drainage hidden beneath the floodwater."

Within seconds, water rushed into the vehicle. The water got to the back seat "and I had to stand on the seats, so, I wouldn't get soaked."

The engine stopped almost immediately, leaving them stranded in rising floodwater.

A group of young men soon approached and offered to help, but only after demanding 25,000 before they would push the vehicle out of the flooded drainage.

"Once I agreed, they pushed us all the way to safety. After I paid them, they immediately moved on to help other cars and people who had also fallen into the same drainage or become trapped in the flood."

Having lived in Lagos for two years, she believes flooding has become noticeably worse. "It wasn't this bad last year," she said.

While residents point to damaged homes, submerged vehicles and lost livelihoods as evidence of the growing flood challenge, experts say the problem extends beyond heavy rainfall. They argue that although climate change has increased the intensity and frequency of rainfall, the scale of destruction seen in many communities is also linked to poor urban planning, blocked drainage systems, unchecked development and weak climate adaptation measures.

Ecotoxicologist and pollution management specialist, Dr Temitope Sogbamu, said Lagos geographical location makes it particularly vulnerable to flooding, but stressed that natural factors alone do not explain what many communities experience today.

She explained that Lagos is a coastal city bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and the Lagos Lagoon, making communities along the coastline and lagoon naturally susceptible to flooding. However, years of rapid urbanisation and human activities have significantly increased that vulnerability.

According to her, many of the areas now occupied by residential estates and communities were originally wetlands or water bodies that have since been reclaimed through sand filling.

"Lagos is a coastal city and so communities that are often most vulnerable are those living along the coastline, along the Lagos Lagoon and on the fringes of the Atlantic Ocean," she said.

"Because of the strong urbanisation, we have experienced in recent years, some of these areas are either sand-filled or reclaimed from the water. Already there is a lot of pressure on the lagoon, and areas that ordinarily should not have settlements now have people living there."

While low-income settlements are often identified as flood hotspots, Sogbamu noted that recent flooding has shown that even planned neighbourhoods are no longer immune.

She cited parts of Lekki and Ibeju-Lekki, where expensive residential developments have also experienced severe flooding after heavy rainfall.

"Some people assume flooding only affects informal settlements, but that is no longer the case. The Lekki and Ibeju-Lekki areas that have experienced flooding recently are not slums. They are planned communities, but the flood management systems that existed when many of those developments were built are no longer sufficient."

She attributed this to changing rainfall patterns associated with climate change. According to her, rainfall has become heavier, more intense and more frequent than in previous years, placing enormous pressure on drainage infrastructure that was designed for different weather conditions. However, she cautioned against blaming climate change alone.

Sogbamu said blocked drainage channels, indiscriminate waste disposal and construction on natural waterways have compounded the problem in many parts of the country.

"There are places where drainage channels exist, but they are clogged with plastics and other solid waste," she said.

"When rain falls, the water has nowhere to go because the drains are blocked. In some places, people have even built structures directly on drainage channels that should allow stormwater to flow freely."

She noted that the consequences are particularly severe in low-lying communities where floodwater from different parts of Lagos eventually converges.

"In communities like Ilaje and Iwaya, the problem is not only that rain enters people's homes. These communities also receive runoff from many other parts of Lagos because the drainage channels eventually discharge into the lagoon through those areas." She noted.

"The floodwater carries plastics, refuse and even feces. So residents are not just dealing with floodwater; they are exposed to serious public health risks."

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

Nojeem Jimoh At 74: The Editor Who Built Journalists

By **Suliyat Tella**

LONG before digital technology disrupted the operations of the newsroom, Alhaji Najeem Jimoh was part of a generation of journalists who learnt to chase stories, question authority and hold themselves to the demands of the profession.

His years at The PUNCH Newspaper placed him at the center of an important period in Nigerian journalism. As editor between 1986 and 1988, Jimoh earned a reputation for being hands-on, demanding and deeply involved in the development of young journalists. Decades later, many of those who passed through his newsroom still remember the opportunities he gave them and the lessons they learnt from him.

Now 74, Jimoh's career gives a record of positions held and newspapers edited. It is also a story about mentorship and the influence one journalist can have on generations that follow.

His path into journalism was shaped partly by activism. As a Mass Communication student at the University of Lagos, Jimoh was involved in student union activities and was suspended from the university for a year. He returned to complete his studies, graduating in 1978 with a second-class upper degree. He later obtained a master's degree in Political Science from the same university.

The experience appears to have strengthened the questioning spirit that would become part of his professional identity. Journalism gave him another avenue to engage with society, interrogate those in power and draw attention to issues affecting ordinary Nigerians.

He started his professional career at *Daily Times* before joining The PUNCH. There, he rose through the ranks and eventually became editor.

The newsroom under Jimoh was not one where the editor just sat in an office waiting for copies to arrive. He was known to move among reporters, discuss stories and take an active interest in the newspaper's daily production.

Former colleagues have recalled his ability to combine authority with informality. He could sit with reporters eating groundnuts, maize or roasted plantain, joke with them and still expect them to produce work that met his standards.

Jimoh demanded hard work, enterprise and a strong sense of news. For young reporters, the newsroom became a place where they were expected to learn quickly and prove themselves.

Some of the profession's notable names did just that.

Azu Ishiekwene was still a Mass Communication student at the University of Lagos when he first encountered Jimoh. In 1986, he approached The PUNCH seeking a vacation job, carrying a note from Professor Olatunji Dare.

Jimoh, in his characteristic manner, reportedly nicknamed the young student Aparutu, a Yoruba expression for a joker or clown. But behind the teasing was an opportunity. He found a place for Ishiekwene in the newsroom.

That vacation job became the beginning of a journalism career that would eventually take Ishiekwene to the editorship of The PUNCH.

Ishiekwene has since spoken and written about Jimoh's influence on his life, describing him as a mentor and life coach.

Lekan Otufodunrin is another journalist whose career was given an early push by Jimoh. He has recalled how the former editor employed him at The PUNCH in 1987, giving him an opportunity to begin his newspaper career.

These stories are important to understanding Jimoh's legacy because they show that his influence was not limited to the pages of the newspaper.

The ability to recognise talent is one thing; giving that talent an opportunity is another. Jimoh appears to have done both.

His former deputy, Demola Osinubi, was among the journalists he trusted during his time as editor. Accounts of the period also show an editor who was deliberate about assembling people he believed could strengthen the newsroom.

For Jimoh, journalism was a collective enterprise. A strong newspaper required reporters who could find stories, writers who could tell them well and editors who could recognise what mattered.

> *Jimoh's generation worked in newsrooms before smartphones, social media and the constant pressure of digital publishing. Stories were chased physically. Newspapers were produced under tight deadlines, and editors had to make decisions that could shape the following day's national conversation. Today's journalists work in a very different environment, but the fundamentals remain.*

His own approach was informed by his activist background. Colleagues have described him as a crusader who brought a strong sense of social responsibility to journalism.

During his time at The PUNCH, the newspaper continued to develop the direct, people-centred voice for which it became known.

His career later expanded beyond newspaper editing.

Jimoh ventured into broadcasting and served as Executive Vice-Chairman of FM93.7. He also published Hammer between 1990 and 1992, demonstrating an ability to navigate different sides of the media industry.

The changes in the media landscape did not diminish his relevance. Rather, they gave him more opportunities to remain involved in journalism and public communication.

His experience has also taken him into media consultancy, including work with the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board.

Recognition has followed him through the years. In 2025, the Diamond Awards for Media Excellence conferred Honorary Fellowship on Jimoh alongside veteran journalists Dare Babarinsa and Owei Lakemfa.

> *The newsroom has changed since Jimoh's years at The PUNCH. The tools are different, the deadlines are faster and the audience is no longer waiting for tomorrow's newspaper to know what happened today. But the need for good journalists has not changed. Nor the need for people who are willing to build them. Jimoh did not only participate in the profession; he helped shape the people who would carry it forward*

The honour recognised a career that has stretched across generations of Nigerian journalism, but the tributes from people who worked with him offer perhaps a more personal measure of his contribution.

The journalists he mentored remember the opportunities, friends remember the counsel, and those close to him speak of his warmth and loyalty.

Ambassador Sarafa Tunji Isola, Nigeria's former High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, describes Jimoh as an elder brother and confidant. In a tribute to mark his 74th birthday, Isola highlighted his wisdom, humility, integrity and willingness to guide others.

According to Isola, being an *Egbon* comes with responsibility. It means providing direction, offering encouragement, correcting when necessary and speaking honestly, even when the truth is uncomfortable.

That description is not far removed from the professional image of Jimoh.

The Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, also reflected on Jimoh's professional legacy in his birthday message.

The Sultan described him as an accomplished journalist and distinguished media professional whose decades of service contributed to the development of Nigerian journalism and public discourse.

He urged young and aspiring journalists to study and emulate Jimoh's professionalism, courage, discipline and commitment to responsible journalism.

The message is particularly relevant at a time when journalism has changed dramatically.

Jimoh's generation worked in newsrooms before smartphones, social media and the constant pressure of digital publishing. Stories were chased physically. Newspapers were produced under tight deadlines, and editors had to make decisions that could shape the following day's national conversation.

Today's journalists work in a very different environment, but the fundamentals remain.

News still requires curiosity. Reporting still demands accuracy. Good journalism still requires courage and judgement. And young journalists still need experienced professionals willing to teach them the craft. Jimoh's career embodies that last part particularly well.

His greatest legacy may not be the years he spent occupying the editor's chair. It may be the journalists who sat across from him, received an assignment, got their copies corrected, learnt from their mistakes and eventually went on to lead newsrooms themselves. That is a different kind of influence.

It does not always appear on a résumé or in an award citation. It is seen in the careers of people who remember that someone gave them a chance when they were still finding their feet.

His 74th birthday, therefore, is an opportunity to look beyond longevity and consider legacy.

There is the student activist who found his way into journalism. There is the reporter who rose through the ranks to become an editor. There is the media professional who moved between print and broadcasting. There is the mentor whose former protégés continue to work in the industry.

And there is the *Egbon* remembered by friends for his counsel, discretion and affection.

The newsroom has changed since Jimoh's years at The PUNCH. The tools are different, the deadlines are faster and the audience is no longer waiting for tomorrow's newspaper to know what happened today.

But the need for good journalists has not changed. Neither has the need for people who are willing to build them. Jimoh did not only participate in the profession; he helped shape the people who would carry it forward.

At 74, that remains a legacy worth celebrating.

Lagos, Ogun's Waste-to-Energy Ambition On The Slab As Refuse Crisis Deepens

As Lagos battles mounting refuse and irregular waste collection, its renewed push to convert waste into energy is raising fresh questions over the feasibility, sustainability and regulation of the ambitious transition. With the state seeking to phase out ageing dumpsites and replace them with waste-to-energy plants and other waste-valourisation solutions, the latest drive is also reviving concerns over the fate of previous projects that failed to move beyond ambitious plans, ***WALIAT MUSA*** *writes.*

LAGOS State's renewed push to move away from ageing dumpsites and convert municipal waste into energy is facing a crucial test on the streets, where rising refuse generation, irregular collection and the emergence of informal dumping points are exposing weaknesses in the state's waste management system.

The challenge has become more pronounced as the volume of waste generated in the state has risen sharply. Deputy Governor Obafemi Hamzat said recently that Lagos now generates about 17,000 tonnes of waste daily, up from the 13,000-tonne estimate previously used by the government.

Hamzat, who disclosed this during a radio programme monitored by the media, attributed the increase to population growth, urbanisation and the growing number of people operating within the informal sector.

He said the higher volume had placed additional pressure on the Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) and other waste management operators, making effective planning and service delivery more difficult.

The new figure has altered the scale of the waste management challenge facing Lagos and raises questions about whether the state's planned transition to waste-to-energy can move faster than the underlying collection and disposal infrastructure required to sustain it.

In May 2026, LAWMA and its network of licensed Private Sector Participation (PSP) operators evacuated 418,500 tonnes of waste across the state, representing an average of 13,200 tonnes daily, according to the authority's operational performance report.

LAWMA said 442 PSP operators were active across Lagos, while 27 routes were under review as part of efforts to optimise service coverage and improve collection efficiency.

The authority also deployed 77 compactor trucks, five skip trucks and 12 other operational equipment units during the period.

From a simple calculation, the May evacuation average of 13,200 tonnes was about 3,800 tonnes below the new 17,000-tonne daily generation estimate.

While the figures relate to different periods and should not be treated as a formal measure of an existing backlog, the difference underscores the scale of the collection challenge confronting the state.

The contradiction is becoming increasingly visible in communities across Lagos, where residents continue to complain about irregular evacuation while refuse accumulates along roadsides, markets, residential areas and drainage channels.

The development is particularly significant because the state is simultaneously preparing to reduce its dependence on conventional dumpsites and build a system in which waste becomes a source of energy and other recoverable materials.

In June, Lagos State Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, Tokunbo Wahab, said a new Transfer Loading Station at the Olusosun dumpsite was expected to be completed before the end of 2026 and would be capable of handling about 2,500 tonnes of waste daily for transfer to a Material Recovery Facility in Ikorodu.

The project, carried out by concessionaire, Zoomlion, is part of the state's wider landfill management and waste-to-wealth programme.

Wahab said the state could no longer sustain the linear system of collecting waste and dumping it, describing the transition towards recovery, recycling and energy generation as necessary.

The development is important because it signals a shift from simply finding more land on which to dump the state's growing waste to building infrastructure capable of sorting, recovering, transporting and converting it into economic value.

But the scale of the proposed infrastructure also exposes the magnitude of the challenge. The planned Olusosun transfer station is designed for 2,500 tonnes daily, while the proposed waste-to-energy facility at Epe has previously been described as capable of processing between 2,250 and 2,500 tonnes of waste daily.

In March, LAWMA Managing Director, Dr. MuyiwaGbadegesin, said the Epe facility was planned to process about 3,000 tonnes daily as part of a broader five-to-10-year waste management infrastructure programme.

Even at 3,000 tonnes daily, however, the proposed Epe facility would handle only a fraction of the 17,000 tonnes it generates each day, says government sources.

That means waste-to-energy cannot, on its own, solve Lagos' waste problem. The state will still require an efficient network for collection, transportation, sorting, recycling, composting, refuse-derived fuel production and controlled disposal of residual waste.

That is where concerns over the readiness of the existing system become critical.

Indeed, in May, Gbadegesin disclosed that Lagos was yet to have a comprehensive Waste Management Master Plan, while calling for increased investment in infrastructure across the waste value chain, including landfill development, material recovery facilities, waste-to-energy projects, biogas plants and mechanical street-sweeping systems.

The disclosure is significant because the state's waste-to-energy ambitions are being pursued while the authority responsible for managing the system is still seeking to close basic infrastructure and planning gaps.The concern is not merely theoretical.

The Guardian observation of a new informal dumping point around the Ayobo-Agric Road axis of Igando, where waste pickers reportedly use an emerging site to dispose of refuse, illustrates how gaps in formal collection and disposal can create parallel waste channels even as government plans to shut down existing dumpsites.

A scavenger at the site, Salisu Ibrahim, told *The Guardian* that there was yet to be any move to decommission the site, raising questions about the coordination between the government's long-term waste transition plans and what is happening on the ground.

Residents' complaints over irregular collection further complicate the picture. In some neighbourhoods, residents told *The Guardian* that waste collection can be infrequent, forcing households to seek alternative disposal arrangements.

The problem is therefore not simply how Lagos will generate electricity from waste. It is whether the state can establish a sufficiently reliable and organised waste stream to keep sophisticated waste-conversion infrastructure operating continuously. That distinction is critical.

Waste-to-energy facilities require a dependable feedstock. If waste is not consistently collected, transported and properly sorted, the quantity and quality of material reaching a facility can become unpredictable.

Mixed waste can also affect the quality of feedstock available for different conversion technologies.

This is one of the reasons environmental experts have repeatedly stressed the importance of source separation and regulation.

Programme Coordinator, Green Recovery Nigeria, Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), Folake Salawu, attributed the failure of several waste-to-energy and recycling initiatives in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos, to poor waste sorting practices and weak regulation.

She said sorting often begins at dumpsites rather than at source, affecting the quality of feedstock required for energy generation.

"EIA and social impact assessment must be conducted before citing any waste to energy in any place in Nigeria," she said.

Salawu warned that poorly regulated waste-to-energy projects and landfill decommissioning could create additional environmental problems, including noise, air and water pollution, depending on the technology deployed.

She also called for the formal identification, training and organisation of waste pickers, arguing that the informal waste economy should not simply be displaced as Lagos modernises its waste management system.

Energy expert, Prof. Dayo Ayoade, also questioned the viability of waste-to-energy projects in an environment where waste streams remain poorly organised and regulatory enforcement is weak.

He warned that decommissioning existing landfills could create environmental liabilities if proper assessments were not conducted, particularly where soil and groundwater have been contaminated over years of waste disposal.

"Before this decommission is done, have we done an environmental impact assessment, there's a law in place for this, but we don't seem to follow the laws," Ayoade said.

He argued that government must assess the environmental and energy costs associated with landfill rehabilitation and decommissioning against the benefits expected from the new system.

He also questioned whether informal waste pickers could be effectively integrated into a formalised system without proper organisation and accountability, stressing that waste-to-energy facilities require a sustainable and reliable waste stream to operate continuously.

For Lagos, the concern is amplified by the history of previous attempts to turn waste into energy.

An analysis of previous initiatives by *The Guardian* shows that the state has pursued various waste-to-energy and waste-valorisation schemes over the years, including landfill gas capture projects under the Clean Development Mechanism, the Ikosi biogas initiative and the Cleaner Lagos Initiative.

Several of those initiatives failed to develop into sustainable, large-scale operations, reinforcing concerns over whether the current push can overcome the institutional, financial, technical and regulatory challenges that affected earlier efforts.

The Epe project represents the most ambitious component of the current transition.

Lagos State entered into a partnership with Dutch firm Harvest Waste Consortium for a waste-to-energy facility at Epe, with earlier plans putting the plant's processing capacity at about 2,250 tonnes of waste daily and its electricity output at between 60MW and 75MW.

Later statements from LAWMA have placed the proposed processing capacity as high as 3,000 tonnes daily.

LAWMA has also said the Epe landfill has been closed to facilitate the transition to the proposed facility. The project is expected to form part of a wider move away from conventional landfill disposal.

Yet the rise in daily waste generation means the state's challenge is growing alongside the infrastructure being developed to address it.

The latest 17,000-tonne estimate represents an increase of about 31 per cent over the 13,000-tonne figure previously cited by the state.



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

Hitech Races For Deadline On Upgraded 800-km Coastal Highway

After an analysis of the ongoing construction work of the 48 kilometres First Phase of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, ***NDUKA NWOSU*** *says its completion time about now will make Hitech a reliable time keeper with an efficient track record of quality delivery. The good news is that tHitech Construction Company Limited is living up to its billing of quality delivery and a time line that does not disappoint. This reporter undertook a tour of the project for an update, just to remind Okere where we are to date.*

FOR a start: Recently, the coastal highway was upgraded by 100 kilometres making it an 800 coastal highway primarily to accommodate Edo State at a cost estimate of N750 billion based on the Federal Government benchmark of N7.5 billion for every standard construction of a two lane project or road.

The initial 30-kilometre portion of the road from Ahmadu Bello Way Victoria Island to the Lekki Deep Seaport has been completed and commissioned, while sand filling and construction work are ongoing for the remaining 17.47 kilometers with a cost profile of N1.067 trillion for the Phase One of the 47.47 project awarded under an Engineering, Procurement, Construction, and Financing (EPC&F) model with a cost estimate of N7. 5 billion for a kilometre of two standard lanes.

Currently about 167 kilometres are being actively constructed across different states such as Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Ogun state, with the total cost of expenditure for the road project pegged at $11billion to $13 billion or N15 trillion.

Of the 48 kilometres Ahmadu Bello Way Victoria Island to Lekki Deep Seaport, plus the multi-state expansion wor, with a 97-kilometre stretch from Lagos to the Olokola Free Trade Zone in the Ilaje Council Area from Irokun to Oke-Ipare in Ogun State, there has been massive sand filling, active paving, structural work and fly overs.

Between Cross River and Akwa Ibom states, there is also a 65-kilometre long road established to complement simultaneous regional fronts. A new 100 kilometre long road stretches from Ondo State to Edo State and connects Delta State.

If the superhighway is completed within the projected time frame of eight years, it would have beaten the completion time of the 11.8 kilometres Third Mainland Bridge, which many believe was a project of the Ibrahim Babangida regime. The project actually started in the 1970s under different administrations and was completed by the military government in 1990. It would also have beaten President Jonathan's East-West Road currently lying comatose with a promise by the present administration that it would complete the equally ambitious road project.

Many critics think otherwise and are not in a hurry to applaud this crash in time travel from 15 hours and possibly 20 hours, given the disheveled state of the country's roads, to six or seven hours through the super highway.

This is despite Umahi's repeated statements from the flag-off of the project till date that due process was followed in awarding the contract for the execution of what he called a transformative project, describing President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as a visionary and courageous leader.

On the issue on ground, former Cross River State Governor, Donald Duke, has weighed in, saying the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway is a fraud and would not go beyond Epe.

A quick fact check on whether His Excellency Donald Duke, now a Presidential candidate of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), who was a success in the development of tourism in Cross River State, actually made those statements, confirmed he did.

He stated the coastal highway would not go beyond Epe questioning its affordability and adding it was a misplaced priority.

As governor, Duke was exceptional in raising the tourist attraction potential of Cross River State with Tinapa as an export free zone. He also heavily marketed Aftica's biggest street party-the Calabar Carnival, whose market value about now will even be more enhanced by the arrival of the coastal highway, with other state governments across the country learning from him.

In his second term in office in 2007, I had the privilege of doing a comprehensive cover story on Calabar as a tourist attraction centre.

Duke later invited my family for a documentary with Channels television.

We took part in the carnival, saw the historical sanctuary sites including the home of Mary Slessor, the Ekpe Fraternity halls and all the monuments reminding you why Calabar was once capital of colonial Nigeria. We ended up at the equally interesting holiday resort the Obudu Cattle Ranch. It was fun including President Obasanjo's visit to declare Tinapa open.

> *If the superhighway is completed within the projected time frame of eight years, it would have beaten the completion time of the 11.8-kilometre Third Mainland Bridge, which had about 20 years of completion time.*

Did the sponsors of the coastal highway have all these concepts in mind in arriving at Calabar as its take off point from the South South?

Certainly, a President Donald Duke in 2027 will not order the closure of the coastal highway for all the new opportunities it would open for tourism, especially in Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa states.

Yes educated and civilised argument, the type our sister Kemi Badenoch applies in her leadership of the opposition Conservative Party in the British parliament against the Labour Party is the way to go.

President Tinubu has a good reason to brand His Excellency Ambassador Gilbert Chagoury his partner in daring. The miracle city called Eko Atlantic stands as an eloquent testimony in the adventure series of daring.

This reporter undertook a tour of the project for an update on where it is to date.

At 80 plus, Ambassador Chagoury has seen it all, 'for what shall it profit a man to inherit the earth and lose the kingdom of heaven?' A philanthropist with decades of doing good in his native Lebanon where he has been involved in infrastructure development, building institutions and recreating civilisations, in America and elsewhere in the world with his donations to religious organisations, that receive his support in the work they do, as ambassador and economic adviser to many African countries and back here in his chosen country with countless scores of philanthropic activities. At this moment, he is giving back to Nigeria, what Nigeria has given to him, and a solid tourism route is one such gift.

Today, as the Hitech works day and night to actualise the President's expectations, the possibilities of a greater future are unfolding.

In his earlier X account, Presidential Spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, recounted the experience describing the president as "the man who had the vision to tame the Atlantic and spring out a 10-million square metre city out of its bowels, the man who envisioned the Lekki Deep Sea Port and the Lekki Free Trade Zone, relished the start of the coastal road."

According to the president, the project would revolutionise transportation in Nigeria and bolster the unique economic strength of each zone.

President Tinubu also commended the Minister of Works, David Umahi, for being diligent and for his efforts towards the qualitative execution of the strategic coastal highway project.

He applauded the Chairman of Hitech Construction Company, Ambassador Chagoury, and Ronald Chagoury, whose company is handling the project, for being worthy stakeholders and for believing in the future of Nigeria.

"Together, we worked to tame the Atlantic, and we turned a disaster into a great asset of value. We lost weight and took insults, but eventually, we tamed the Atlantic. We achieved our goals," the President said, recounting how the indigenous company successfully executed a project to prevent the Atlantic Ocean from overrunning Victoria Island.

"Do not be afraid. We will do this road, and it will be a success for Nigeria, and we will do even more of this," President Tinubu added..

He said the project would ensure that future generations have something memorable to treasure. It would be a while serving as a good precedent set for others to follow in the timely provision of world-class infrastructure.

As he pust it: "We have a road that will outlive all of us here. That is how to build the future. This project is more than a mere road. It is a symbol of hope, unity, and prosperity.

"It will connect communities, bring prosperity to people, and create opportunities for millions of our people. For our nation to excel, we just have to be bold and courageous in our endeavours," the President said.

President Tinubu added that it would provide direct employment for thousands of people and indirect jobs for tens of thousands. Of course this dream is being realsed with more economic opportunities and a fast-track of economic development underway.



What Nigeria's Telecoms Sector's Tax Numbers Actually Say About The Economy

By **Olukola Adesola**

THERE is a number buried in MTN Nigeria's half-year results for 2026 that deserves more attention than it received. In the first six months of the year, the company contributed N622.6 billion in taxes and levies to the Nigerian government. In the same period, it spent N620.5 billion on capital expenditure, building out the network infrastructure that carries a growing share of the country's economic activity.

Set those two figures side by side and something interesting emerges. Here is a private company that spent almost exactly the same amount expanding the country's infrastructure as it handed to the state in direct fiscal contributions, in just half a year. And it did this quietly, without the kind of public ceremony that typically accompanies government infrastructure announcements. The roads do not carry plaques. The base stations do not hold ribbon-cuttings.

That is worth pausing on, because Nigeria has been having a sustained and necessary conversation about domestic revenue mobilisation, and the telecoms sector sits at the centre of it in ways that are seldom examined with the seriousness the numbers warrant.

The country's tax-to-GDP ratio has been one of the lowest in the world for years. The OECD's most recent internationally comparable figure was 8.2 per cent in 2023, compared with an average of 16.1 per cent across 38 African countries. The Nigeria Revenue Service says it has since improved to around 13 per cent, buoyed by four new tax reform laws that took effect on 1 January this year. Collections in the first seven months of 2026 reached N27.1 trillion, already matching 96 per cent of the full-year figure for 2025. Non-oil revenue now accounts for 76 per cent of total collections, a structural shift that would have seemed improbable a decade ago.

Within that shift, telecommunications has been doing an unusual amount of heavy lifting. The sector contributed 9.72 per cent of Nigeria's real GDP in the second quarter of 2026, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, making it the country's fourth-largest economic contributor behind crop production, trade and real estate. In nominal terms, the broader Information and Communication sector generated N14.64 trillion in Q2 alone, representing 12.27 per cent of aggregate nominal GDP.

Those are the proportions of an economic pillar, and a taxable one at that.

MTN Nigeria, as the sector's largest player, offers the most visible window into what that fiscal relationship actually looks like. The company's revenue in the first half of 2026 reached N2.99 trillion. Its profit before tax was N1.09 trillion. Its current tax liabilities climbed to N640.4 billion, up from N88 billion in the corresponding period of 2025, reflecting the stronger earnings performance. And when the board approved an interim dividend of N26 per share in July, the N545.89 billion payout triggered an additional N54.59 billion in withholding tax for the government before a single investor received a naira.

Add that withholding tax to the N622.6 billion in direct taxes and levies already remitted, and the fiscal picture for just one company in just one half-year becomes difficult to ignore. It is the kind of contribution that, in a country with a broader and deeper tax base, would be one line item among thousands. In Nigeria, it stands out precisely because the base remains narrow and the burden falls disproportionately on the companies that are actually visible to the revenue authorities.

The company is profitable, growing, and generating the kind of returns that make the investment case self-sustaining. The more interesting question is the one for Nigeria's fiscal policymakers: what is the right relationship between the state and the private entities that are simultaneously its largest infrastructure investors and its most reliable non-oil revenue sources?

The question is sharpened by what is happening on the ground. The Nigerian Communications Commission's 110th Board Meeting, held on September 9, noted that mobile network operators have now deployed 8,526 out of 12,179 committed coverage and capacity sites across the country, a 70 per cent completion rate. That figure had been approximately 5,000 at the NCC's 109th Board Meeting in May, which means operators collectively brought more than 3,500 additional sites online in roughly three and a half months. The acceleration is significant, and the capital required to deliver it is substantial.

The companies building this infrastructure and paying these taxes are doing what Nigeria's economic planners have spent years asking the private sector to do: invest at scale, generate employment, contribute to government revenue, and build the digital backbone of a diversifying economy. The least the country can do in return is to protect the infrastructure it builds, rationalise the fiscal demands placed upon it, and treat the relationship between the state and its most productive private-sector contributors as one that must be actively maintained.

But the same NCC communiqué contained a less comfortable observation. Fibre cuts, it noted, contributed to a sharp rise in network disruptions in June, underscoring a persistent tension in Nigeria's infrastructure story. Operators invest billions in layingfibre and building towers. Then the infrastructure is damaged, sometimes by road construction, sometimes by vandalism, sometimes by sheer indifference to the presence of buried cables. The NCC called for stronger protection of critical communications infrastructure, a plea it has made before and will almost certainly need to make again.

The economics of this cycle are worth spelling out. Every fibre cut costs money to repair, disrupts service for subscribers, and generates the kind of network quality complaints that dominate social media conversations about telecoms. Those complaints, in turn, create regulatory and reputational pressure on operators to invest even more in network resilience, which they are doing, but at a cost that compounds on top of the taxes, levies, spectrum fees, operating licence obligations, and energy expenditure that already define the cost structure of running a telecom network in Nigeria.

Dr Muda Yusuf, Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise, made the broader point in a recent assessment of Nigeria's productive economy. "No manufacturing economy can achieve sustained competitiveness where firms face unreliable electricity, high logistics costs, expensive finance, multiple regulatory charges and deficient infrastructure," he said at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry's mid-year economic review. He was speaking about the economy at large, but the description fits the telecoms sector with uncomfortable precision.

Meanwhile, the NCC's September communiqué also confirmed the launch of a framework for zero-rating educational platforms and content, with a go-live date of October 1. The initiative, developed in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education, will require operators to cover the cost of providing students with free access to educational resources. It is a worthy objective, and one that speaks to the broader expectation that telecoms companies should contribute to national development in ways that go beyond connectivity and tax payments. But it also illustrates the expanding list of demands placed on a sector that is simultaneously expected to build infrastructure, pay taxes, improve quality, reduce prices, and now subsidise education.

None of these demands is unreasonable in isolation. Together, they describe a fiscal and regulatory relationship that depends heavily on the continued willingness of private capital to keep deploying at scale in a market where the cost of doing business rises faster than the prices consumers are willing to pay.

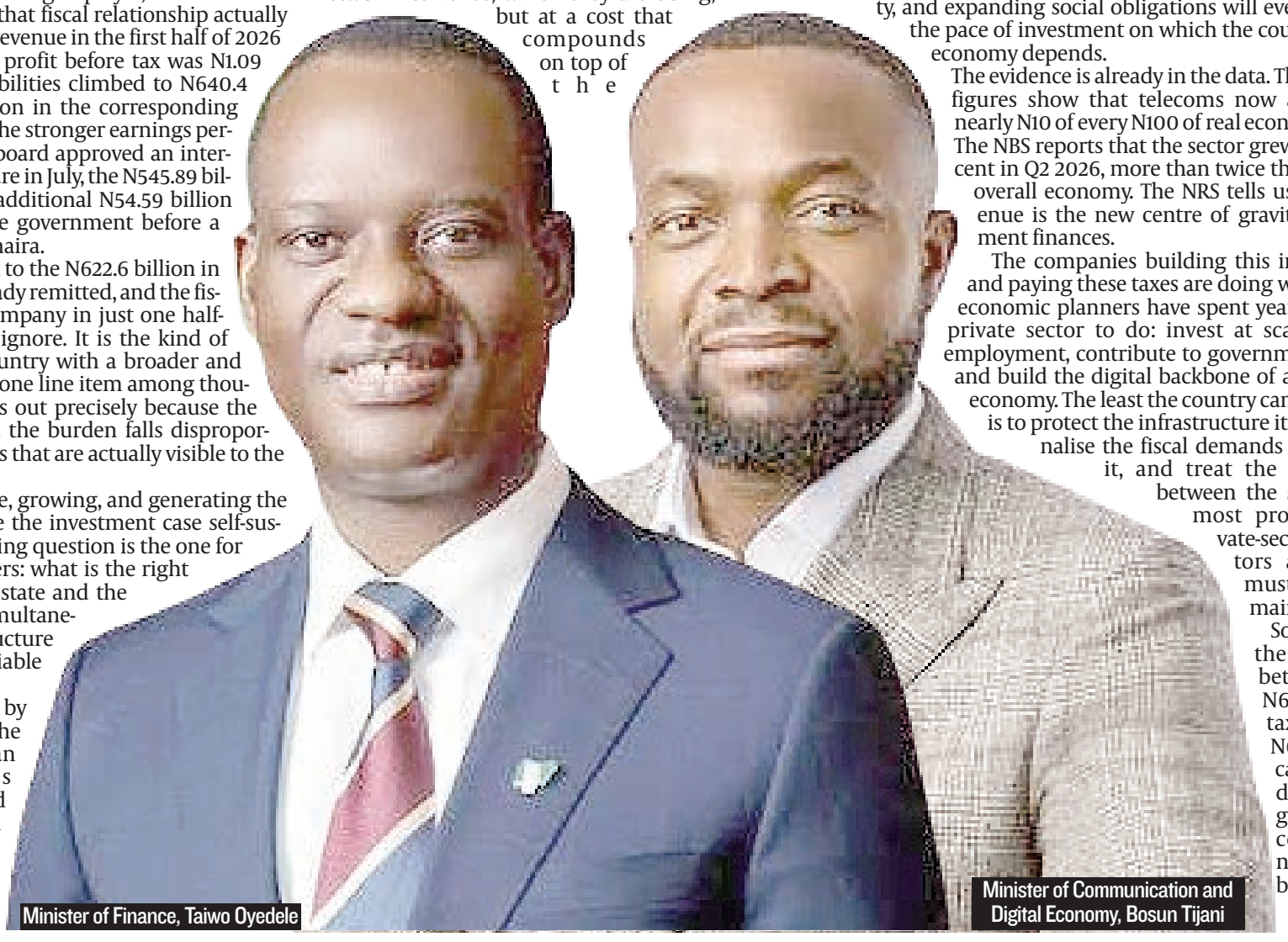
The telecoms sector's cumulative investment in Nigeria over the past two decades is estimated at more than $75 billion. That figure, cited by the NCC and industry bodies, represents one of the largest sustained deployments of private capital in any Nigerian sector outside oil and gas. MTN alone says it has invested more than N1.6 trillion in the last 18 months, with capital expenditure in 2025 more than doubling to approximately N1 trillion.

These are the spending patterns of companies that believe in the structural opportunity, even as the operating environment repeatedly tests that belief. The question for Nigeria is whether the policy environment will continue to reward that belief, or whether the cumulative weight of taxation, regulation, infrastructure vulnerability, and expanding social obligations will eventually slow the pace of investment on which the country's digital economy depends.

The evidence is already in the data. The NCC's own figures show that telecoms now accounts for nearly N10 of every N100 of real economic output. The NBS reports that the sector grew by 10.38 per cent in Q2 2026, more than twice the pace of the overall economy. The NRS tells us non-oil revenue is the new centre of gravity in government finances.

The companies building this infrastructure and paying these taxes are doing what Nigeria's economic planners have spent years asking the private sector to do: invest at scale, generate employment, contribute to government revenue, and build the digital backbone of a diversifying economy. The least the country can do in return is to protect the infrastructure it builds, rationalise the fiscal demands placed upon it, and treat the relationship between the state and its most productive private-sector contributors as one that must be actively maintained.

Somewhere in the interplay between a N622.6 billion tax bill and a N620.5 billion capital expenditure programme, that conversation needs to begin.



Minister of Finance, Taiwo Oyedele

Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Bosun Tijani

By Ifeanyi Igwebike Mbanefo



The House Of Gas:

How NLNG Built Corporate Home In Port Harcourt

ON Port Harcourt's eastern edge, where asphalt yields to creeks, mangroves, industrial yards and the humid breath of the Niger Delta, a composed campus rises behind secure gates.

The address is plain: NLNG Road, off the Eastern By-Pass. Yet this is more than an office complex. Here, Nigeria LNG Limited thinks, governs, negotiates, remembers and prepares for the next movement of gas, capital, people and time.

Commissioned by the then Rivers State Governo, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, on May 19, 2021, the facility is officially NLNG's corporate headquarters. Its deeper identity is more intimate: the House of Gas.

It is a campus rather than a solitary monument; a village of disciplined functions rather than a shrine to one executive or one era. It contains offices, meeting rooms, a boardroom, library, press centre, crèche, gymnasium, banking halls, ATM gallery, fire station, warehouse, landscaped grounds and a transit lounge linking Port Harcourt with Bonny Island.

But buildings are the visible ending of a longer story. Before concrete, glass and landscaped green, there was a corporate problem: NLNG had outgrown its home. Before that problem could be solved, its leaders needed memory, patience, technical discipline, negotiating nerve and the courage to walk away from a bad deal.

Lagos: The First Home

For decades, NLNG's corporate life was rooted in Lagos. The choice made sense. Lagos was Nigeria's commercial capital, home to bankers, lawyers, consultants, diplomats, traders and international visitors. Even after the Federal Government and NNPC moved to Abuja in the early 1990s, Lagos remained where contracts were negotiated, financing arranged and commercial relationships maintained.

NLNG stayed.

In 1997, shortly after Steve Ollerearnshaw became Managing Director, the company moved into C&C Towers on Sanusi Fafunwa Street, Victoria Island. The building had been designed as apartments, not offices. Its small rooms gave the company a temporary, almost domestic atmosphere — as though an enterprise of global ambition had been asked to inhabit converted bedrooms.

Yet the building had one blessing: a large ground-floor hall. It became the canteen and the venue for monthly all-staff briefings. Initially, employees listened cautiously while managers spoke. Gradually, staff began asking difficult questions. Managers had to answer. Rumours could be confronted before they hardened into resentment. NLNG was building not only systems, but a shared voice.

The canteen captured the company's evolving identity. Nigerian staff came for hot meals; expatriates asked for sandwiches. Some Nigerian employees placed sandwiches on plates already filled with jollof rice and stew. The culinary outcome was uncertain, but the symbolism was clear: NLNG was Nigerian in purpose, international in method and still learning how to bring its worlds together.

The company maintained a small London office near St James's Park, managed by Elizabeth McGregor. For young Nigerian staff posted there, it became a practical finishing school in international work: navigating cultures, legal systems, time zones and demanding corporate standards.

There was also a bungalow office in Abuja for dealings with NNPC and the Federal Government. In 1999, NLNG opened a logistics base in Port Harcourt.

At first, it was a foothold. In time, it became destiny.

The Sky and the Ground

NLNG's early memory was formed not only through board papers and commercial milestones, but through the vulnerability of people travelling across Nigeria's difficult infrastructure.

During one harmattan approach into Port Harcourt, a pilot reportedly mistook a road for the runway before correcting course. The incident ended safely, but carried a larger lesson: in Nigeria, the gravest risks are not always where manuals expect them.

On another occasion, a chartered King Air carrying members of the NLNG community to Abuja developed a landing-gear failure. The gear would not deploy. Emergency support in Abuja was unavailable, so the pilot turned back towards Lagos.

In the cabin, the co-pilot lifted the floor and tried to lower the gear manually. On the Lagos tarmac, fire engines waited beside the runway.

Mrs Victoria Ihonde, one of NLNG's directors, held a prayer book and began reading aloud. Her voice gave terrified passengers a rhythm. Steve Ollerearnshaw, facing what appeared to be his final minutes, considered writing a farewell message to his wife.

The aircraft landed. A wheel collapsed, then another. The plane skidded onto the grass, its nose struck the ground and the cabin fell into the dreadful silence that follows impact.

Everyone survived.

The story reached the front pages. The aircraft spent six months under repair. Ollerearnshaw flew again the next day, like a rider returning to the saddle after a violent fall.

Such episodes became part of NLNG's folklore: reminders that corporate history is human first.

A Global Education

NLNG's board meetings took place across the worlds represented by its shareholders: with NNPC in Abuja; Shell in The Hague or Amsterdam; Elf in Paris; and Agip in Milan or near the Italian Lakes.

There were memorable settings — a Loire Valley château associated with an Elf meeting, a World Cup match in which Nigeria defeated Spain 2–1, and a boat trip on Lake Como. But these were more than executive excursions. They were a global education.

NLNG's Nigerian personnel observed how mature institutions worked: how board papers were prepared, questions framed, dissent managed, technical advice respected and decisions recorded. Governance was learned through exposure and repetition.

The company also learned how quickly trust can be attacked. At one point, fraudsters used forged NLNG letterheads and a false Ikeja address to target small contractors in a "419" scam. They vanished before the police arrived.

A successful institution attracts partners, but also impostors. Reputation must be defended as carefully as revenue.

When the Base Became Too Small

By 2008, NLNG's Integrated Support and Operations Base—the ISB/OSB—in Port Harcourt was inadequate. It had been designed for a three-train operation, but NLNG had expanded. Personnel, contractors, visitors, support staff and logistics had multiplied. Temporary structures spread across the site. Accommodation was insufficient. Jetty operations strained. Movement between functions became congested, inefficient and less safe.

Refurbishment could not cure a structural limitation. NLNG needed land.

Next door stood Heliconia Park, owned by Prodeco/Interoil. Its masterplan included an international hotel, school, restaurant, security facilities, helipad and utilities.

For NLNG, the attraction was not simply acreage, but shared infrastructure — power, water treatment, helipad services and other facilities that could reduce duplication.

The park offered approximately 46,000 square metres. The opportunity would not remain open indefinitely. Management studies showed that acquisition would permit an optimal ISB/OSB layout, provide room for expansion and prevent NLNG from scattering critical operations across disconnected sites.

The first lesson of the House of Gas is simple: major projects are often won or lost before construction. Site selection governs security, circulation, utility costs, staff welfare, growth and design coherence.

Chima Ibeneche, then Managing Director, saw the strategic truth. He sought Board authority to negotiate. The Board agreed.

Ibeneche: The Strategic Foundation

In 2009, Ibeneche requested approval to acquire the land for US$20.7 million, excluding transfer fees. The arrangement included a right of first refusal for the landowner's construction company to develop the site.

Questions arose concerning Nigerian Content and Due Process. They were not bureaucratic ornaments; they concerned the legitimacy of the transaction, procurement integrity and NLNG's long-term protection. Ibeneche provided clarification and carried the project through its most vulnerable stage, when it was still a proposition in boardrooms and a future dependent on judgement.

His contribution deserves high honour because it was not theatrical. He understood that a headquarters would shape institutional identity. Lagos had commercial convenience. Bonny Island was the industrial heart. Port Harcourt stood between them: close to operations, rooted in the region and capable of sustaining a serious corporate centre.

Ibeneche helped establish the logic for moving NLNG's corporate home towards Port Harcourt. The decision asked whether the company would remain psychologically distant from the Niger Delta or place its centre of authority in the region from which its industrial purpose flowed.

He was also generally credited with helping move Shell's centre of gravity from Warri to Port Harcourt. Ibeneche did not simply acquire land; he helped reposition a national institution.

Omotowa: The Chessboard Master

When Babs Omotowa succeeded Ibeneche as Managing Director, the project changed in scale and ambition.

By 2011, NLNG was considering moving its head office from Lagos to Port Harcourt. The project now required a genuine corporate home: a place for leadership, governance, communications, corporate services, employee welfare and institutional memory.

But the original land transaction contained a dangerous condition. The seller's construction subsidiary had effectively been reserved as the single-source builder.

For a less disciplined organisation, that clause could become a trap: one contractor, one design route, one price story and endless opportunity for escalation. Omotowa saw the danger. He recognised the "elephant trap" — a convenient arrangement that could make NLNG captive to its own sunk costs.

His response was strategic, not theatrical.

First, he changed the seller's advantage. The single-source entitlement would become a right of first refusal. The seller could match the lowest competitive bid, but could no longer dictate price or hold NLNG hostage.

The lesson is fundamental: honour legitimate commitments, but never let an inherited clause extinguish competition, transparency or value.

Second, Omotowa proposed a phased engineering, procurement and construction strategy. The preferred contractor would submit a Phase One proposal. That proposal would be independently benchmarked and negotiated. If it failed the test, management would return to the Board for approval of an open competitive tender.

The Board approved the approach.

By July 2011, Omotowa recommended rejecting award of the EPC contract to the single-source contractor. The Board endorsed a comprehensive review of design, cost and execution strategy.

It approved negotiations for the contractor to relinquish its single-source right, acquisition of additional land for a complete redesign, removal of multi-storey car parks, inclusion of power, water and waste-management infrastructure, design reviews by shareholder subject-matter experts, and fresh assessment of cost, constructability and long-term operational value.

Each move reflected disciplined thinking. More land allowed an efficient layout instead of expensive vertical congestion. Removing multi-storey parking reduced construction and maintenance burdens. Bringing utilities into the scope prevented improvised solutions later. Independent technical review ensured confidence was tested rather than assumed.

This is Omotowa's great lesson for private, public and corporate Nigeria: do not confuse speed with progress, paperwork with wisdom, or a contractor's confidence with value. Major projects need stage gates — moments when enthusiasm submits to evidence.

The seller rejected the strategy and insisted on its single-source rights. A stalemate followed. It came down to who would blink first.

The Chokehold

The negotiations became exhausting. The contractor appeared unwilling to engage meaningfully, believing it possessed too much leverage. NLNG risked becoming captive to its own sunk costs.

Omotowa did not respond with anger. He introduced an alternative.

He applied to the Rivers State government for land in the Greater Port Harcourt Area, Governor Rotimi Amaechi's decongestion and smart-city initiative. The project aimed to relieve pressure on old Port Harcourt and create organised residential, commercial and industrial zones.

'Realtors In The Cell' To Address Rising Concerns In Real Estate Agency

By Maria Diamond

LEGAL entrepreneur, author, media personality and founder of Prince Joel Real Estate Academy Ltd, Dr. Prince Joel, has announced a high-impact seminar themed, 'Realtors In The Cell'.

The seminar, which is billed to hold in Asaba, Port Harcourt, Owerri, Lagos and Abuja respectively will focus on tackling Property Transactions: Contracts and Criminal Liability under the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 while addressing the rising cases of arrest, detention, and prosecution of real estate agents across Nigeria.

Remarking on the ideology behind the seminar, Joel explained that though the real estate industry is one of Nigeria's fastest growing sectors, this growth comes with diverse risk.

He said: "On a daily basis, realtors are being invited, detained, and charged by Police, EFCC, and other agencies over property transactions gone wrong and to bridge this knowledge gap, we are leading conversations through the seminar to help real estate professionals avoid legal trouble, fraud charges, jail time."

The Issues

Joel said realtors are dragged on a daily basis for the following reasons:

.Failed transactions and inability to deliver plots
.Selling land without proper title or due diligence
.Double allocation and land grabbing disputes
.Breach of trust and criminal conversion of client funds
.'Omo onile' attacks and community issues
.Poor documentation, fake receipts, and forged C of O
.Conspiracy and fraud charges under the law.

"This is why this seminar will save careers, businesses, and lives. As a participant you will learn about Your legal rights during arrest - bail, detention, and what police must do under ACJA 2015; How to structure safe property transactions from Offer Letter to Governor's Consent; Essential Contract Documents - How to draft agreements that protect you; Red Flags in Property Deals - How to spot fraud before it happens; Your Liability as an Agent - Sections 419, 97, and 390 of the Criminal Code explained simply; What to do when a deal goes bad - Avoiding jail and civil liability."

According to Joel, the seminar will help professional realtors "stay out of jail, learn how to avoid arrest and prosecution over deals, protect your money and reputation, learn legal ways to handle clients and developers, gain legal knowledge, understand the law in simple language, no legal jargon, learn from real cases including my personal experience. Participants will also get the opportunity to network, connect with lawyers, developers, EFCC, police legal unit, and investors."

On the categories of participants eligible to attend the seminar, Joel said: "Real estate agents, marketers and realtors; property developers and estate companies; property investors and home buyers; lawyers and legal practitioners; Estate surveyors, valuers and mortgage bankers as well as anyone involved in buying, selling, or marketing property in Nigeria."

Joel further said the invitation for the seminar, which holds in Asaba, September 28, 2026; Port Harcourt October 16, 2026; Owerri, October 30, 2027; Lagos, November 6, 2026 and Abuja November 20, 2026 respectively is extended to all key stakeholders in the real estate industry. The legal department of the police in each City will discuss the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015.



Elevate 2026 To Tackle Wealth Creation, Business Resilience

By Maria Diamond

COMING at a time when economic uncertainty is forcing Nigerians to rethink traditional approaches to earning, investing and preserving wealth, Smart Stewards, a financial education and wealth-coaching organisation, is set to tackle generational wealth, business resilience and the future of wealth creation through its 11th Summit, Elevate 2026 scheduled to hold on Saturday, September 19, 2026 in Lagos.

The summit, according to organisers, is a call for a new generation of Africans to think beyond income and begin building assets, institutions, businesses and legacies that can withstand economic shocks and create opportunities for those who come after them.

Themed, 'Build A Wealth Dynasty The Economy Can't Shake: You, Your Children, Their Children', the summit will bring together more than 3,000 entrepreneurs, professionals, executives, founders, investors and aspiring wealth creators.

As the economic pressures continue to reshape how individuals and businesses earn, invest and preserve wealth, Smart Stewards is bringing some of Nigeria's most influential builders and wealth creators together for a national conversation on how to build wealth that can outlive its founders.



Founder and Lead Coach of Smart Stewards, Sola Adesakin

Elevate 2026 seeks to shift the conversation from simply making money to building assets, businesses and financial systems capable of creating value across generations.

The programme will feature two major experiences: the main summit which will take place in the early hours of the day free and open to the public. This will provide practical insights into earning, saving, investing and building sustainable wealth, with speakers including Dr Ini Abimbola, Dr Niyi Adesanya, Coach Bola Matel-Okoh and Bishop Funke Felix-Adejumo.

Adeyemi Makes List Of Nigeria's 100 Under 40 Leaders

By Ruth Ononye

KIKELOMO Adeyemi, a strategic partnerships and commercial growth executive, has been named as one of the 100 Under- 40 awardee in Business and Entrepreneurship at the 2026 Achievers Summit Africa - a yearly gathering of entrepreneurs, business leaders, investors, innovators and policymakers shaping Africa's enterprise ecosystem.

She was recognised for her contributions to strategic partnerships, business development and commercial growth, over a career spanning banking, fintech, wealth management, investment advisory, real estate and consumer-facing businesses.

The award was presented at the 100 Under 40 Awards and Gala Night recently, at the Lagos Oriental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, following the Achievers Summit conference, which brought together founders, investors, policymakers and industry experts to discuss entrepreneurship, enterprise development and Africa's evolving workforce.



Synergy Between ITPN, AAAU To Bridge Gap In Tourism, Aviation Sectors – Odusanwo

By Maria Diamond

TO drive comprehensive capacity growth across Nigeria's aviation and tourism value chains, the Institute for Tourism Professionals of Nigeria (ITPN) has said that a strategic partnership with the African Aviation and Aerospace University (AAAU), Abuja, will strengthen sustainable manpower development in both sectors.

This, according to the National President of the ITPN, Chief Abiodun Odusanwo, will be directly aligning with the Federal Government's vision for an integrated travel and tourism economy.

Odusanwo, who stated during an official visit to the Acting Vice Chancellor of AAAU, Dr. Mustapha Sheikh Abdullah, in Abuja that while tourism fuels the demand for air travel, aviation enables seamless access to destinations, also highlighted the urgent need for the collaboration. He noted that the partnership seeks to leverage the complementary strengths of both institutions.

He further said that ITPN is recognised by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) as Nigeria's premier awarding body for travel and tourism, structured within the National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) and National Occupational Standards (NOS). "This established framework perfectly aligns with AAAU's core mandate as a specialised institution dedicated to advanced aviation skills training and acquisition," Odunsanwo stated.

He emphasised that the initiative was a symbiotic relationship between aviation and tourism and the collaboration would address critical skill gaps by harmonising training standards and fostering knowledge exchange, which would ultimately elevate service delivery, improve passenger experiences, and stimulate economic growth.

Seinde Signature Unveils *Advent Calendar*

By Maria Diamond

THE gifting season came early this year at the Seinde Signature, Nigeria's foremost destination for niche and luxury fragrances with the unveiling of its 'Advent Calendar' a 12-collection from 12 top most niche fragrances in the world conceived for collector, connoisseur and luxury gift-givers.

Curated as Seinde Signature's distinctive expression of the concept of luxury gifting, one rooted in the world of fine and niche perfumery, the Advent Calendar collection was inspired by the spirit of advent calendars embraced by some of the world's most prestigious luxury houses like Harrods.



General Manager, Seinde Signature, Ore-Oluwa Olusola and Founder and CEO Seinde Signature Olaseinde Olufemi Olusola during the official unveiling of the Advent Calendar collection in Lagos.

The Seinde Signature's Advent Calendar collection comes as a quiet but significant statement about the evolution of Nigeria's luxury market, and about the capacity of a Nigerian fragrance house to conceive, curate and execute an experience with genuine international sensibility.

The selection brings together an exceptional constellation of international niche houses, including Masque Milano, Agatho, Electimuss, Sarah Baker, Christian Provenzano, Fugazzi, Régalien, Pana Dora, 100BON, Jeroboam, Alghabra and Botanicae.

Accolades Flow As Tinubu, MSSN Celebrate Oloyede's 10 Years At JAMB

From **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja

ACCOLADES poured in for the immediate past Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Professor Is-haq Oloyede, as President Bola Tinubu, the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN), political office holders, Islamic scholars and other dignitaries celebrated his 10-year stewardship of the examination body.

The tributes came at a civic reception organised in honour of Oloyede in Abuja, where they described his career in public service as an example of integrity, accountability, fiscal discipline and commitment to institutional development.

Tinubu was represented at the occasion by the Director-General of the Department of State Services (DSS), Oluwatosin Ajayi.

The event, organised under the theme, "The Oloyede Blueprint: Integrity, Innovation and Accountability in Public Service," also featured the Oloyede Legacy Tribute Lecture, which examined the place of ethical leadership and fiscal discipline in public administration.

Former Governor of Kano State, Senator Ibrahim Shekarau, who congratulated Oloyede, described him as a worthy ambassador of MSSN and an example of the organisation's values.

Shekarau said one of the objectives of MSSN was to put into practice the teachings of Islam, adding that Oloyede had demonstrated those values in his career.

"We congratulate you. We thank Allah for you. You are indeed a very good example and ambassador of the MSSN," he said.

The former governor recalled that Oloyede had initially indicated that he would not accept a second term as JAMB registrar after completing his first tenure. According to him, the then Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu, had made efforts to persuade Oloyede to continue in office because of his contributions to the examination body.

Shekarau said Oloyede had expressed concerns about the demands of supervising the institution and travelling from one part of the country to another, but that he personally advised him to accept the second term.

The former Kano governor said: "I remember when he finished his first time he said he wouldn't do second time, but the minister then, Adamu, was running helter-skelter to ensure he accepts. "He narrated the trouble in supervising and travelling from one place to another. And I told him he has to accept and he did. The reward for hard work is more work."

Shekarau urged the current leadership of MSSN to ensure that veterans of the organisation were carried along in its activities, saying their presence and lifestyles could inspire younger members.

"I challenge the current national leadership to ensure that in all their events they should ensure that veterans of the MSSN are carried along. Their presence and lifestyle will serve as inspiration to the younger ones," he said.



Shekarau (second left); Oloyede (second right) and MSSN officials at the reception in Abuja

He also urged Oloyede to remain available for national service, saying Nigeria still required people with his experience and values. "We are not begging for any appointment. If appointment comes, you will have to take. You are not yet done.

"Your presence is needed looking at the governance issues in Nigeria and we need a lot of Oloyedes," he said.

Chairman of the Local Organising Committee, Muzzamil Sani Hanga, said Oloyede's conduct in public office reflected prudence, accountability and commitment to service. Hanga praised the former JAMB registrar for what he described as his prudent management of resources and ability to mobilise support for causes he believed in.

He said Oloyede had also contributed significantly to the development of MSSN and had demonstrated that leadership could be exercised without personal demands for appointments or material benefits.

"He is very prudent with money without having any worry of accounting. He can also raise donations.

"For the first time in the history of the Supreme Council, he has been able to rally millions for the council", he added. Hanga described Oloyede as indefatigable, saying there were many lessons younger members could draw from his life and service. He said the former JAMB registrar had remained committed to MSSN and Islam without using his position to seek personal favours.

"One thing is that he remains true to MSSN and Islam. He is not begging for anything and we are contented with him like that. He is not looking for any appointment from anybody," he said.

Rather than seeking another appointment for Oloyede, Hanga said the society wished him peace of mind and hoped he would be reunited with his children.

The National Amir of MSSN, Mustapha Olumide, said the reception was organised to celebrate Oloyede as a scholar, administrator and public servant whose career had been associated with integrity, innovation and accountability. He said Oloyede's experience demonstrated that ethical leadership could produce measurable improvements in public institutions.

Olumide cited Oloyede's tenure as Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin and his 10 years as JAMB registrar as examples of how technology, ingenuity, transparency, efficiency and accountability could be deployed to improve public institutions. He said Oloyede's record showed that integrity should be regarded as an asset in public service rather than an obstacle to achieving results.

According to him, public officers should understand that decisions taken while in office could affect institutions and citizens long after they had left. He said the true measure of leadership was not the privileges attached to an office but the strength of the institutions and systems left behind.

Delivering a part of the Oloyede Legacy Tribute Lecture, titled "Public Office as Public Trust: Lessons in Fiscal Discipline from the Oloyede Era," Dr. Usman Bugaje said Oloyede's career demonstrated the importance of meritocracy, responsible leadership and institutional discipline.

He said the qualities of merit and integrity were increasingly important in a society facing challenges associated with declining standards and tolerance for corruption. He also drew attention to Nigeria's infrastructure deficit and broader governance challenges, arguing that the country needed stronger institutions and greater accountability. Bugaje said the values demonstrated by Oloyede should encourage public officers to place institutional interests above personal considerations.

The National Missioner of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Sheikh AbdulRahman Ahmad, in a separate lecture titled "Faith in Action: The Role of Muslim Intellectuals in Nation Building," said MSSN had played an important role in producing leaders across different sectors of Nigerian society.

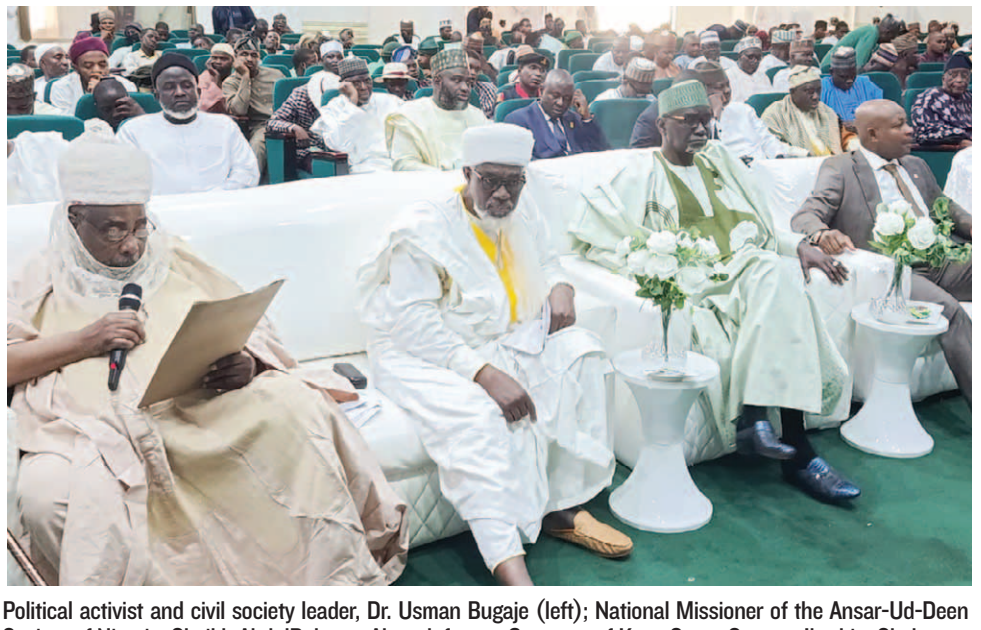
He said former members of the organisation could be found among governors, professors, judges, ministers, permanent secretaries and other professionals. Ahmad, however, raised concerns about the continuity of the leadership development model that shaped previous generations of MSSN members.

He asked whether the organisation was still providing young members with the kind of training, exposure and leadership opportunities that had helped shape earlier generations. "If we have grandfathers becoming president of MSSN, where is the training of our young ones?" He asked.

Ahmad said the society needed to deliberately prepare younger members to take over leadership responsibilities rather than allow older generations to dominate its structures. He also used Oloyede's career as an example of how faith, conviction and integrity could influence conduct in public office.

According to him, Oloyede demonstrated that it was possible to confront corruption and exercise authority without making the pursuit of appointments or political influence the primary objective.

He said the former JAMB registrar's experience showed that individuals who remained committed to their values could attract responsibilities without aggressively seeking positions. The Director-General of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), Abike Dabiri-Erewa, also paid tribute to Oloyede, recalling his support during the early stages of the commission. Dabiri-Erewa said Oloyede was among the first people to assist NiDCOM when it commenced operations, including by providing space for the commission. "One of the first persons to help us when we started NiDCOM is Oloyede. He gave us a space," she said. She described him as a selfless person and expressed appreciation for his contributions to public service. Dabiri-Erewa said his career provided an example of how public officials could serve the country while maintaining personal and institutional integrity. Responding to the tributes, Oloyede called for the restoration of the values and structures of the old MSSN, saying the organisation played an important role in developing the leadership capacities of his generation. He urged former members to contribute their experience, resources and networks to rebuilding the organisation and creating opportunities for younger Muslim boys and girls. "I want to appeal to us, I want to beg us to do whatever we can to make sure that we restore MSSN to boost young boys and girls," he said.



Political activist and civil society leader, Dr. Usman Bugaje (left); National Missioner of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Sheikh AbdulRahman Ahmad; former Governor of Kano State, Senator Ibrahim Shekarau; and Director-General of the Department of State Services (DSS), Oluwatosin Ajayi.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Ogra Urges Companies To Turn Local Challenges Into Continental Solutions

By **Sulaimon Salau**

THE Senior Special Assistant to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Digital Engagement and New Media and President of Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), Mr. O'tega Ogra, has challenged Nigerian businesses to build brands and solutions that go beyond Lagos and compete across Africa and the world.

Ogra stated this while delivering the keynote address at The Industry Newspaper's Top 50 Nigerian Companies of Impact 2026 Awards in Lagos, themed "Building Resilience, Driving Growth: Nigerian Companies Shaping the Next Decade."

He opened with the example of Bergmans Security Consultant and Supplies Limited, a Nigerian firm now leading the $3.1 billion AfCFTA customs modernisation project. "A few days ago, Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of AfCFTA, arrived at Nigeria Customs and saw B'Odogwu, our Unified Customs Management System, already running," Ogra said.

"The Secretariat had options. Companies from outside Africa wanted the work too. It chose an African company."

Presco Approve N14.66 Final Dividend, Takes Total To N44.66 Per Share

By **Sulaimon Salau**

NIGERIA'S leading fully integrated agro-industrial company, at its 33rd Annual General Meeting (AGM), where shareholders adopted the company's audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025, approved key business and governance resolutions. The AGM also highlighted Presco's record 2025 performance, its expanded regional platform and priorities for 2026.

Presco delivered record financial performance in 2025. Revenue rose 59.3 per cent to N330.6b, Profit Before Tax (PBT) increased 57.1 per cent to N177.9b and Profit After Tax (PAT) rose 56.1 per cent to N121.4b. EBITDA grew 43.7 per cent to N211.8b, while total assets increased 94.9 per cent to N926b. A landmark N236.7b rights issue more than doubled total equity to N442.7b, strengthening the balance sheet and supporting the company's growth plans.

Shareholders approved a final dividend of N14.66 per 50 kobo ordinary share, taking the total dividend for 2025 to N44.66 per share.

Unchecked Importation Of Products Places Additional Pressure On Nigerian Businesses – Adeniyi

By **Sulaimon Salau**

• Customs Commits To Expose Unfair Competition, Check Weakening Demand For Local Products

THE Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has reiterated its commitment towards protecting Nigerian farmers, manufacturers, and businesses from prohibited imports, false declarations, and other practices that undermine domestic production and job creation.

The Comptroller-General of Customs, Adewale Adeniyi, while parading the intercepted 56 containers laden with prohibited goods with a total duty paid value of N5.53 billion before newsmen at the Port Harcourt II Area Command, Onne, Rivers State, said the consignments comprised 45 20-foot containers of foreign vegetable oil, nine 40-foot containers of used clothing, and two 20-foot containers of Channy tomato paste.

He reiterated that confiscating them aligned with the Federal Government's broader economic objectives, particularly policies promoting made-in-Nigeria products.

Adeniyi disclosed that: "The intervention formed part of intelligence-driven and risk-based operations aimed at preventing prohibited, restricted and improperly declared consignments from entering the Nigerian market, thereby crippling the overall productivity of our local businesses."

According to him, unchecked importation of products that could be produced or processed locally places additional pressure on Nigerian farmers, manufacturers and other domestic producers by exposing them to unfair competition, weakening demand for local products and discouraging investment across domestic value chains.

"The economic impact is especially significant in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Large-scale importation of products that Nigeria can produce or process may undermine the Federal Government's efforts to promote local industries, strengthen food security, create jobs, and diversify the economy," he said.

Adeniyi stressed that Customs enforcement was not designed to frustrate legitimate businesses, but to ensure that Nigerians and compliant businesses operated within a fair, secure and predictable trading environment, adding, "The Service's risk-based approach enabled it to facilitate legitimate cargo while directing enhanced scrutiny towards consignments considered high-risk."

The CGC also commended the Customs Area Controller, Comptroller Aliyu Alkali, and officers of the Port Harcourt II Area Command for the interceptions, while advising importers and other stakeholders to establish the admissibility of their intended imports before commencing transactions and to make accurate declarations concerning the description, quantity, value, origin and classification of goods.



Deputy Comptroller, Customs, A A Omini (left); Managing Director, SIFAX Shipping, Okota Terminal, Kayode Kolade; Group Coordinating Director, SIFAX Group, Mrs Wunmi Eniola-Jegede; and Deputy Director, Strategy and Operations, SIFAX Group, Oliver Omajuwa, during the commissioning of SIFAX Shipping Terminal in Okota, Lagos

"Reliable Power Supply Critical To Africa's Economic Growth"

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

SCHNEIDER Electric has called for greater attention to the reliability of electricity supply in Africa, saying dependable power is essential to sustaining economic growth and supporting businesses and critical services across the continent.

President of Schneider Electric's Middle East and Africa, Walid Sheta, made the call in a statement titled, 'Africa Does Not Have an Electricity Problem. It Has a Reliability Problem.'

According to him, about 53 per cent of Sub-Saharan Africa has access to electricity, while more than 560 million people remain without power.

Sheta said the figures did not fully reflect the challenges faced by consumers because many connected households, businesses and public institutions continue to experience unreliable supply.

He cited health facilities, schools and factories as examples of institutions affected by interruptions in electricity supply, with some businesses forced to operate diesel generators alongside their grid connections.

The Schneider Electric executive said reliable electricity was particularly important as African economies continue to grow amid rising costs of fuel, fertiliser, shipping and food.

"This matters now because Africa has earned a moment it cannot afford to waste. The IMF estimates the region grew 4.5 per cent in 2025, the fastest pace in a decade, with 10 economies above 6 per cent, and Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Uganda among the fastest-growing in the world. That growth was hard-won through reform, and it is now colliding with rising imported costs: fuel, fertiliser, shipping," he said.

Quoting the IMF, he said a 20 per cent increase in international food prices could push more than 20 million people in the region into moderate or severe food insecurity.

Interswitch Parleys Portal Providers to Strengthen Digital Payment In Nigeria

By **Sulaimon Salau**

FOR efficient, secure and reliable payment, Interswitch has rallied the education portal providers from across Southwest Nigeria to strengthen digital payment collection in the schooling ecosystem.

At the meeting, the company met with education technology partners and portal providers in Ibadan to explore the evolving payment needs of schools and identify practical approaches to improving payment collection, operational efficiency and the overall experience for educational institutions, parents and students.

Speaking at the event, Head, Digital Payments, Interswitch, Blessing Ogbonna, said the forum reflects the company's commitment to working closely with ecosystem partners to develop payment solutions that respond to the evolving needs of the education sector.

"Education is one of the sectors where seamless, reliable and secure digital payment solutions can make a significant difference. Through Interswitch Connect, we are creating opportunities to engage directly with portal providers, understand their evolving needs and work together to strengthen payment collection across schools and education platforms. We believe collaboration remains essential to building solutions that deliver value for institutions and the people they serve."

Beyond strengthening relationships with portal providers, the forum underscored the value of sustained dialogue across the education technology ecosystem. As digital payment continues to evolve, closer collaboration between payment providers, technology partners and educational institutions will be essential to improving operational efficiency, addressing emerging challenges and supporting better outcomes for schools and the communities they serve.

The inaugural Interswitch Connect, Portal Providers Edition, according to Ogbonna, reinforces Interswitch's commitment to enabling digital transformation through collaboration, innovation and customer-focused payment solutions.

Red Star Express Revenue Rises By 8.5% To N23.49b

By **Sulaimon Salau**

RED Star Express Plc has recorded an 8.5 per cent increase in its group revenue for the financial year ended March 31, 2026.

The revenue increased to N23.49 billion from N22.66 billion recorded in the previous financial year.

The logistics and courier services company also reported a 16.2 per cent increase in Profit Before Tax (PBT), which rose from N924.72 million in 2025 to N1.07 billion in the year under review. Profit after tax also increased by 7.1 per cent, from N546.26 million to N585.26 million.

The figures were disclosed at the company's 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) held physically and virtually.

Commenting on the performance, the Chairman of Red Star Express Plc, Suleiman Barau, said the financial year demonstrated the group's ability to sustain growth despite the challenging business environment.

Barau said the performance indicated the company's continued focus on growth and long-term value creation for shareholders.

He emphasised that the board had recommended a dividend of 45 kobo per ordinary share for the financial year, up from the 35 kobo paid in the previous year.

inDrive Calls For Stronger Ecosystem Support To Unlock Nigerian Talent

By **Eno Bassey**

A GLOBAL mobility and delivery services platform, inDrive, has called for greater collaboration among employers, investors, policymakers, and other stakeholders to create stronger ecosystems that provide more opportunities for Nigerian talent to grow and apply their skills.

The call was made during a panel session with the theme "*Building and Reshaping the Tech Talent Story*" at GITEX Nigeria 2026: Day One, the largest technology and start-up show in West Africa, in Lagos, recently. The session examined the role of global companies in developing local talent to meet evolving industry standards, as well as the challenges entrepreneurs face in turning technical skills and innovative ideas into scalable businesses.

The Country Manager, inDrive Nigeria, Timothy Oladimeji, said Nigeria has significant talent, but needs more opportunities across sectors for trained individuals to apply and further develop their skills.

He urged investors, stakeholders, policymakers, and private-sector organisations to strengthen the ecosystem through collaboration.

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How Climate Change, Insecurity Is Rewriting Nigeria's Farming Calendar

*As rainfall patterns grow less predictable and extreme weather events disrupt traditional seasons, farmers are being forced to rethink long-established agricultural practices, while insecurity further limits access to farmlands and threaten food production, **SILVER NWOKORO** reports.*

FOR Nigerian farmers, knowing when to plant has always been as important as knowing what to plant. But the weather patterns that once provided a dependable guide are becoming increasingly difficult to read, forcing farmers to adjust to a changing agricultural calendar.

Across the country, the familiar sequence of early rains, planting, steady rainfall, harvesting and the onset of the dry season is becoming less predictable. Rains may arrive earlier or later than expected, stop abruptly after planting, or fall in intense bursts capable of flooding farms and washing away newly planted crops. The consequences are being felt most sharply by smallholder farmers who depend largely on rain-fed agriculture.

For decades, farmers have relied on experience passed down through generations to determine when the soil is ready, when the rains have become established and when particular crops should go into the ground. Today, those traditional indicators are increasingly being disrupted by changing temperatures and rainfall patterns.

A farmer who plants after an early rainfall may discover that the rains disappear for weeks, leaving seeds and seedlings vulnerable. Another who delays planting in anticipation of more reliable rainfall may face a shortened growing season. Heavy rainfall, meanwhile, can destroy crops that have barely emerged from the soil.

The uncertainty is gradually transforming farming from a practice governed by familiar seasonal patterns into one requiring constant adjustment. Climate change is not necessarily eliminating Nigeria's wet and dry seasons, but it is altering the conditions under which farmers have traditionally operated.

There is also the growing challenge of insecurity in the country, which has prevented many farmers from accessing their farms or, in some cases, stopped them from farming altogether. For farmers who depend on agriculture for their livelihood, the inability to cultivate land during the planting season means more than a missed opportunity; it translates into lost income, reduced food production and further pressure on an already strained food supply.

In some farming communities, insecurity has forced farmers to abandon their fields, while others are unable to travel to farms for fear of attacks, kidnapping or violence. This creates another form of agricultural loss that is often overlooked in discussions about food production. It is not only the crops that fail after being planted that constitute a loss; land that could have been cultivated but remains unused because farmers cannot safely access it also represents lost production.

Recently, in June 2026, suspected bandits attacked farmers working on farmlands in Ghandi District of Rabah Local Council Area of Sokoto State, killing four and abducting at least 12 others. A month later, at least 23 farmers were reportedly killed while working on their farms in Kaura Namoda local council area of Zamfara State. The killings renewed fears among farming communities, with reports that many farmers had abandoned their farmlands because of persistent attacks.



The situation has also been reported in Niger State, where a June attack in Pandogari, Rafi local council, forced farmers to flee their fields after armed bandits reportedly surrounded farmlands shortly after rainfall. The incident illustrates the cruel contradiction confronting farmers: the rain may finally arrive and signal that it is time to plant, yet insecurity may make it too dangerous to enter the farm.

In Plateau State, fresh killings in Barkin Ladi in May prompted Governor Caleb Mutfwang to assure farmers of security and appeal to them not to abandon their farms ahead of the farming season.

The problem is not confined to the northern parts of the country. In August, Afenifere warned that kidnappings, killings and attacks on farmers across the Southwest were driving agricultural workers away from their farms. It cited reported cases involving farmers in Ondo, Ogun and Oyo states and warned that the trend was reducing food production and discouraging agricultural investment.

For farmers, the consequences go beyond the immediate loss of lives and property. When insecurity prevents them from cultivating during the planting window, the land remains idle and the expected harvest disappears from the agricultural calendar. When farmers cannot safely weed, apply fertiliser or return to harvest their crops, an entire production cycle can be disrupted.

Recent assessments have similarly noted that insecurity has forced farmers to abandon fields or prevented them from accessing markets to sell their produce.

Thus, Nigeria's agricultural crisis is no longer only about whether the rain comes at the right time. For many farmers, the more immediate question is whether they can safely reach their farms when the rain does come. Climate change may be rewriting the farming calendar, but insecurity is preventing some farmers from participating in that calendar.

Lamenting on the situation, a Principal Consultant at Greenfield Agroallied Consult and Farming Systems Limited, Durojaiye Olusegun Philip said climate change has significantly disrupted Nigeria's agricultural calendar, with erratic rainfall, rising temperatures and prolonged dry spells contributing to crop failures, food inflation and growing food insecurity, an agroecology expert has said.

The expert said the country could quantify its agricultural losses, but warned that such assessment must be based on reliable data covering the entire agricultural value chain.

According to him, losses should not be attributed solely to post-harvest waste, as farmers also suffer losses when crops fail on the field due to excessive heat, inadequate rainfall or prolonged dry spells.

He said: "When we say we are quantifying losses, we need to look at crop failures, direct crop failures. Now if a farmer has gone to the field, he has cultivated, he has planted the crop, then the crop failed due to high temperature as a result of no rainfall or no water and the crops got withered, they dried off and they died. Yes, it's part of the data because losses are not only associated or attributed to post-harvest."

He explained that a comprehensive assessment should cover losses from planting through harvesting, sorting, transportation, storage and processing.

Philip said losses arising from farmers being unable to cultivate their farms due to insecurity could also be quantified by determining the acreage that would ordinarily have been cultivated and the expected yield.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

AfDB Group Launches $5.1b Response Plan To Offset Energy, Fertiliser Shocks In African Countries

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

THE Board of Directors of the African Development Bank Group has approved a new framework to mitigate the impact of the global energy and fertiliser crisis on African countries.

The Global Energy And Fertiliser Crisis Response Framework (GEFCRF), approved on September 1, 2026, enables the Bank Group to deliver timely, targeted support to address the immediate needs stemming from the crisis and to strengthen African member countries against future shocks.

Building on successful experiences from the Bank's COVID-19 Response Facility and the African Emergency Food Production Facility, the framework is designed to provide immediate relief while laying foundations for stronger, more self-reliant and resilient African economies

The framework will be financed through an additional USD 4.1 billion in African Development Bank lending and up to USD 960 million from the African Development Fund, the Bank Group's concessional lending arm. The additional resources will increase the Bank's 2026 lending target to approximately USD 12.7 billion, enabling the Bank Group to provide timely and targeted support to countries affected by the crisis while strengthening resilience to future shocks.

The response is temporary and valid for one year from the Board's approval date, after which it will be reviewed before extending. The GEFCRF will be demand-driven, with support tailored to address the specific vulnerability levels with an appropriate financial and policy response.

The ongoing crisis in the Middle East continues to pose a significant external shock to African economies, reflected in rising global prices for energy, food, fertilizers and other commodities on which many African countries remain heavily dependent and import massively.

Disruptions to global trade routes and logistics, including key maritime corridors, are compounding these pressures by increasing transport costs, delaying deliveries, and amplifying supply chain fragility.

The GEFCRF will work across four main pillars to – stabilise macroeconomic conditions: Provide rapid counter-cyclical financing, short-term buffers, and coordinated fiscal, monetary, and debt policy responses during shocks; secure critical food, energy and fertiliser supply systems: Use emergency and trade finance to protect food, energy, and fertiliser supplies, while supporting vulnerable populations in particular vulnerable women and stabilising markets.

It will also protect essential spending and vulnerable households: Safeguard priority public expenditures and deploy targeted social protection to cushion vulnerable groups in particular women and youth, reduce reliance on broad subsidies and prevent deepening of fragility; and sustain reforms for medium to long-term resilience building: Policy space preserved for medium-term reforms that reduce dependence on volatile external energy, food and fertiliser markets, establish foundations for diversified supply chains and regional solutions and enhance fiscal resilience and crisis-response readiness.

Ilorin Court Orders Police To Investigate Lawyer, Others Over Alleged Intimidation

From **Mansur Aramide**, Ilorin

An Upper Area Court sitting in Akerebiata, Ilorin, Kwara State, has ordered the police to investigate a lawyer, Oluwanike Omotayo, and eight others over criminal allegations filed against them.

The complaint, filed by Oyekanmi Isijola, borders on alleged criminal conspiracy, intimidation, forgery and criminal defamation, among other offences. The court gave the order while ruling on a preliminary objection filed by the first defendant, Omotayo, during the week.

The court held that it had jurisdiction to hear the complaint and directed the police to thoroughly investigate the allegations against the defendants. It also ordered the police to report the outcome of the investigation to the court.

The other defendants are Olawaseyi Catherine, Mary Isijola, Ganiyu Adesina, Ayodele Isijola, Idowu Owoeye, Kayode Adeoba, Idaya Babalola and Funmilola Somotun. They were, however, all absent during the court proceedings.

Counsel to the complainant, M.B. Afolayan, welcomed the court's decision, while the matter was subsequently adjourned.

Renewed Hope Students' Group Plans Forums On Policy, National Development

By **Moyosore Salami**

The Renewed Hope Project 2027, Lagos State Students Coordination, has announced plans to organise policy and development forums and campus town-hall meetings to engage students on education, employment, entrepreneurship, leadership and governance.

The State Students Coordinator of the group, Suleiman Sanni, disclosed this in Lagos at the inauguration of the Renewed Hope Project 2027, Lagos State Students Coordination.

Sanni said the forums would provide opportunities for students across tertiary institutions to discuss issues affecting them and participate in conversations on political and national development.

He said the engagement would be taken to campuses through town-hall meetings where students could ask questions, raise concerns and interact with political and institutional stakeholders.

According to him, the proposed policy and development symposiums would focus on education policy, youth employment, entrepreneurship, technology, leadership, governance and other issues affecting young Nigerians.

FG, CBN Move To End Personality-driven Economic Management

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

The Federal Government and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have moved to institutionalise coordination between fiscal and monetary policy, replacing an arrangement that had largely depended on the working relationship between successive economic managers.

The Federal Ministry of Finance and the CBN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Abuja on Friday, to establish a structured framework for aligning macroeconomic assumptions, economic forecasts, government financing and liquidity management.

The agreement is designed to reduce policy conflicts between fiscal and monetary authorities while strengthening the government's response to inflation, particularly pressures arising from food, energy and logistics costs.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, said the significance of the agreement went beyond the signing itself, describing it as a move towards stronger economic institutions.

"Our mandates are distinct, but our outcomes are interconnected. Strong economies are not built around strong personalities. They are built around strong institutions," Oyedele said.

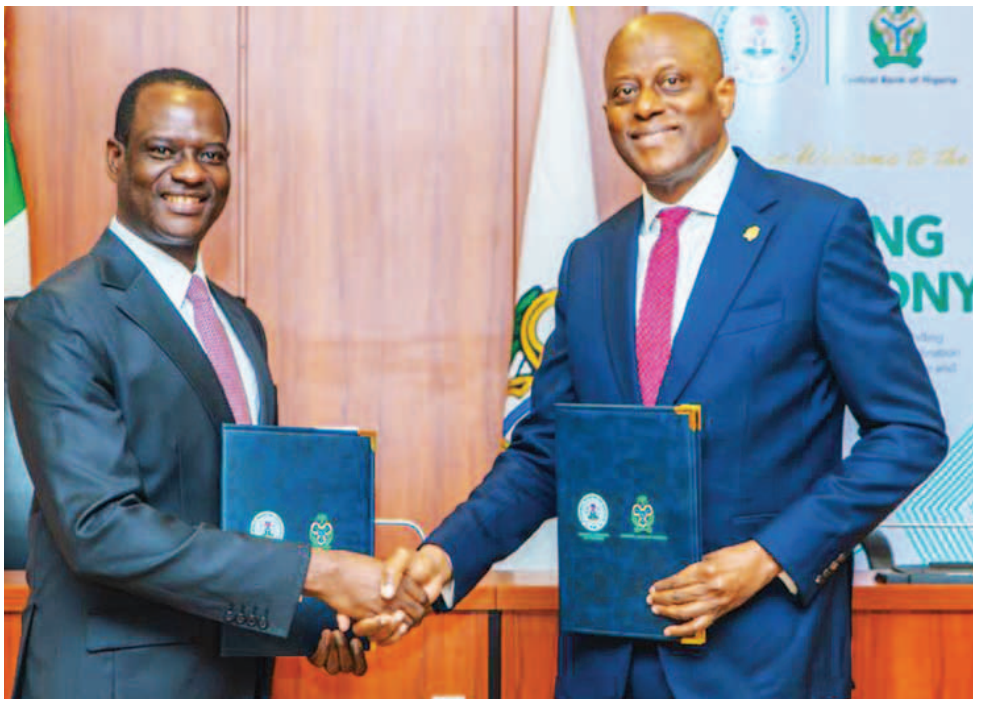
Under the framework, the two institutions will work with more consistent projections for inflation, GDP growth, government revenue, liquidity, financing requirements and the external sector, while establishing stronger information-sharing mechanisms where fiscal and monetary measures could otherwise work at cross-purposes.

The framework also provides for closer coordination of government financing and cash management in an effort to limit the crowding out of private-sector credit.

On inflation, the government and the CBN are to pursue a whole-of-government approach combining disciplined fiscal spending with measures aimed at reducing supply-side costs, including grain reserves, farmer support, rural road investment and engagement with state governments over road levies and farm-access infrastructure.

The agreement further provides for expanded economic data, including producer-price, employment and productivity statistics, to support the CBN's transition towards an inflation-targeting framework.

The CBN Governor Olayemi Cardoso said the agreement demonstrated Nigeria's determination to strengthen its economic policy architecture, adding that institutional collaboration could improve policy outcomes, investor confidence and economic stability.



Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Taiwo Oyedele (left) and the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, after the signing of the Fiscal-Monetary Policy Coordination Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the CBN Head Office, Abuja... on Friday.

Kings College: PTA Chairmen Challenge Minister To Prove N20m Admission Fee Claim

By **Gloria Nwafor**

The Chairmen of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in some of the federal unity schools have challenged the Federal Government to produce evidence backing allegations that PTA interests in some schools demand as much as N20 million for admission.

The PTA chairmen, in a rejoinder to comments attributed to the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, during his media engagements on Wednesday, also demanded proof of alleged N100 to N150 million legal fees reportedly incurred by PTA chairmen in connection with the controversy over the proposed concession of King's College, Lagos.

They urged the Ministry of Education to identify the schools, PTA officials, dates of transactions, bank accounts, admission documents and beneficiaries linked to the alleged N20 million payments, saying sweeping allegations should not be used to criminalise PTA officials across the country.

The statement, jointly signed by PTA chairmen and representatives of Federal Unity Schools, including King's College, Lagos, Federal Government College, Ijanikin, Federal Government College, Port Harcourt, and others, said any individual found to have committed a criminal offence should be identified, investigated and prosecuted according to law.

The chairmen also challenged the minister to identify the court, suit number, parties and PTA officials allegedly responsible for paying between N100 and N150 million in legal fees over the King's College matter.

"If such payment was made, let the evidence be produced. If no such payment was made, then the allegation should be withdrawn," they said.

The PTA leaders said their opposition to aspects of the King's College concession should not be interpreted as opposition to development or private-sector participation in public education.

They said parents supported the rehabilitation of schools, improved infrastructure and partnerships that would benefit students, but insisted that any arrangement capable of changing the ownership, control or management of a national public educational institution must comply with due process and provide sufficient transparency.

Dangote Refinery Says IPO Returns Remain On Target Beyond War Era

By **Waliat Musa**

Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals has indicated that the unusually high crude oil price triggered by the U.S.-Iran war will not determine the profitability of its Initial Public Offering (IPO), arguing that the refinery's returns are driven by margins rather than the cost of crude.

The Vice President of Dangote Refinery, Edwin Devakumar, disclosed this during a media interaction on Friday at the refinery in Lagos, assuring prospective shareholders of sustainable returns and dividend payments in foreign exchange.

Responding to concerns that unusually high crude oil prices driven by the U.S.-Iran war could affect the value of shares when the conflict ends and prices return to normal, Edwin said the cost of crude would not directly determine the company's profitability.

He explained that the refinery's profitability was primarily driven by its margins, with product prices moving alongside crude oil prices.

"Well, see, the crude price will not directly have an impact on the profitability. Because, let us say you are a trader, you are importing stationary and selling, you want to have a 20 per cent profit margin, whatever is your import price, you will add the 20 per cent and keep your profit margin. So your import price is not going to affect your profitability.

"You are focused on your margins. So, the same way, when the crude price goes up, our product price will go up. The crude price comes down, the product price will come down." he said.

However, he acknowledged that the disruption to global refining and product supply had created additional profitability for the company, warning that the gain would not necessarily be sustained after the crisis.

Devakumar, however, said the refinery's long-term investment projections were not dependent on the temporary market windfall, noting that the company had calculated its expected profits and returns before committing the investment.

Obi Preaches Production Agenda In Italy, Seeks Global Partnerships

By **John Akubo**, Abuja

The presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Peter Obi, has taken his campaign for a production-driven economy to Italy, where he held meetings with stakeholders on economic collaboration, institutional development and youth opportunities.

Obi disclosed this in a statement via his X-Handle after his arrival in Italy as part of his ongoing international consultations and engagements ahead of the 2027 elections.

The former Anambra State Governor said the discussions focused on areas capable of strengthening Nigeria's economic capacity, particularly by harnessing the potential of the country's large youthful population.

According to him, Nigeria must urgently shift from a consumption-based economy to one driven by production, investment and enterprise.

Obi said sustained investment in education, healthcare and enterprise development would be critical to creating a functional society where young Nigerians can build productive lives.

Presidency Mourns Presidential Writer, Peter Onwubuariri

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

For 12 years, Peter Chukwuemeka Onwubuariri worked largely away from the glare of the cameras and microphones that defined the Presidential Villa.

He was not usually the face at presidential briefings or the voice delivering statements to journalists. Yet, behind many of the statements, speeches, briefings and media engagements that emanated from the Villa, he was the quiet hand of a professional who took pride in doing his work effectively and without seeking recognition.

That quiet presidential writer, journalist and public servant died on September 7, 2026, at a hospital in Kano after a prolonged illness. He was 48.

In a tribute, the Deputy Director, Information/Public Relations, Office of the Special Adviser to the President, Media and Publicity, Oche Echeija Egwa, described Onwubuariri as a dedicated journalist, accomplished public servant and valuable member of the Presidential Media and Publicity team.

Egwa said the deceased's 12 years at the Presidential Villa contributed significantly to the communication operations of three successive administrations.

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CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Miss. Ngei Oluka Tampio, Ngei Tampio Oluka, Tampio Oluka Ngei, Tampio Rosemary Ngei, Tampio Deborah Ngei and Ngei Tampio. (referring to one and the same person) now wish to be known as Miss Tampio Oluka Ngei. Former documents remain valid. General Public, NYSC please note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: That I am the same person as Monyei Grace Esohe, Enofe Grace Esohe and Enofe, G. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: This is to confirm that I, Yetunde Olatokunbo Oremule as the same person as Yetunde Olatokunbo Demuren. All former documents remain valid. Banks, public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Chinoyerem Godswill Chilaka Now wish to be addressed as Chinonyerem Godswill Chilaka all former documents remain valid general public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Lois Oghenevwaire Omotor now wish to be addressed as Oghenevwaire Lois Omotor all former documents remain valid general public take note.

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CORRECTIONS OF NAME: I, formerly known as Esan Goodness Adeola. now wish to be addressed as Osunbitan Goodness Adeola. All former documents remain valid, Banks ,general public take note.

CORRECTIONS OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Ahiaba Yawo Yawo instead of Ahiaba Dotsa Yawo. Former documents remain valid. French language village, StanBIC IBTC .and public note.

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DARAMOLA: I, formerly Miss. Daramola, Tinuola Oluwaseun now wish to be known as Mrs. Uzoukwu Tinuola Oluwaseun. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Hijazi Ahmad now wish to be addressed as Hijazi Ahmad Ali all former documents remain valid general public take note.

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EZEJIOFOR: I, formerly Miss Ezejiofor Maryrose Ujunwa, now wish to be known as Mrs. Eboh Maryrose Kelechukwu Ujunwa. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

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NNAMANI: I, Formerly Miss Nnamani Chinenye Blessing, now wish to be known as Mrs. Ugwu Chinenye Blessing. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

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NWOKE: I Formerly Esther Onyinyechi Nwoke now wish to be addressed as Esther Onyinyechi Badmus. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

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OBIDIEGWU: I, formerly Chidimma Cynthia Obidiegwu now wish to be addressed as Chidimma Cynthia Chijioke-Amaechi all former documents remain valid general public take note.

ODIBO: I, formerly known as Miss Odibo Victory now wish to be addressed as Mrs, Aikhu Victory, Aall former documents remains valid , General public take note.

ODION: I formerly known as Odion Saturday now wish to be addressed as, Odion Saturday Ejodamen. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OGBANJE: I formerly known Mr. Mathias Ogbanje Akor now wish to be addressed as Mr. Mathias Ochigbo Akor.. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

OGBOMON: I formerly known as Ogbomon Doris now wish to be addressed as John Doris. My DOB is 12-12-1978 not 04-06-1980, All former documents remains valid, public note.

OGECHI: I, formerly known as Ononiwu Chigaemezu Ogechi and Ononiwu Chigaemezu Miriam now wish to be addressed as Ononiwu Miriam Chigaemezurum. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

OGECHI: I ,formerly known as Vitalis Perpetua Ogech now wish to be addressed as Aondover Perpetua Princess-Ogech.. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

OKOLIE: I formerly known as Miss Okolie Rita Onyebuchi now wish to be known as Mrs Chukwuemeka Rita Onyebuchi.all former document remain valid general public note.

OLASEHINDE: I, formerly Arifalo-Adedipe Philip Julius, Arifalo-Adedipe Philip Julius Olasehinde now wish to be addressed as Arifalo-Adedipe Philip Julius. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

OLAYEMI: I, formerly Olayemi Oyeleye/Oyeneye Oladapo now wish to be addressed as Olayemi Oyeleye Adewumi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OMANGE: I, formerly known as Esther Oriyomi Omange now wish to be addressed as Esther Oriyomi Asani. .All former documents remain valid. General public note.

OMISHAKIN: I, formerly known as Mercy Akpan Benjamin now wish to be addressed asMercy Omishakin . All former documents remain valid general public take note .

OMO: I formerly known as Abu Akhere Omo now wish to be addressed as Abu Akhere, My DOB is, 01-04-1992 not 01-07-1993. All former documents remains valid, public note.

OMONDIAGBE: I, formerly known as Miss. Uwayemwen Cara Omondiagbe now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Uwayemwen Cara Fasoranti All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

ONONIWU: I, formerly Ononiwu Chigaemezu Ogechi and Ononiwu Chigaemezu Miriam now wish to be addressed as Ononiwu Miriam Chigaemezurum. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

OYEKANMI: I, formerly Olajumoke Oyekanmi, wish to be addressed as Mrs. Olajumoke Olubukunola Oyekanmi. All existing documents remain valid. Public, take note.

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RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME: My name was arranged as Mukalo Emmanuel Oghenero instead of Mukalo Oghenero Emmanuel..My DOB is 22/05/1999 not 23/05/1999. All former documents remain valid. Pblic note.

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TDAFE: I, formerly known as Tdafe Idoghor Edafe, Tdafe Idoghor Anthony now wish to be known as Tony Idoghor Edafe. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

UDEOGANANYA: I, formerly known as Udeogananya Hyacienth Njaba now wish to be addressed as Okechukwu Chukwudi Gilbert all former documents remain valid . General public take note.

News Extra

Abiodun Appoints Oso SUBEB Secretary

OGUN State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, has approved the appointment of Mrs. Olubunmi Omotayo Oso as Secretary of the Ogun State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB).

The appointment, according to the Head of Service, Mr. Iskeel Olanrewaju Saka, is aimed at strengthening leadership continuity and improving operational efficiency in the state's basic education administration.

Saka said the appointment was made in accordance with the Ogun State Universal Basic Education Board Law, 2005, and established procedures for appointing qualified officers to senior positions in the state public service.

He charged Oso to deploy her wealth of experience and professional expertise to advance the implementation of the state's education policies and contribute to the realisation of the "Building Our Future Together" agenda of the Abiodun administration.

Oso, born on November 21, 1972, joined the Ogun State Civil Service on June 11, 1999, as an Education Officer II.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, a Postgraduate Diploma in Education and a Master's degree in Education Administration and Planning.

Before her appointment, she was the Director of Public Schools in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and a member of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN).

Lagos Art Exhibition To Re-examine 1914 Amalgamation Debate Ahead Of Independence Anniversary

By Isaac Chibuife

SIXTY-SIX years after Nigeria gained independence, a new art exhibition will reexamine the country's 1914 amalgamation and its implications for national unity.

The exhibition, organised by Mind of the Masters Creative Art Gallery, is titled The Amalgamation: Woven by Diversity and will run from October 1 to 30 at the Art Hotel, Oniru, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Curated by DrMudiareOnobrakpeya, son of veteran artist, Prof. Bruce Onobrakpeya, the exhibition will feature visual art, spoken-word poetry, performing arts and fashion.

Speaking on the exhibition, the founder of Mind of the Masters Creative Art Gallery and President of the West African Specialty Coffee Association (WASCA), Larry Segun-Lean said it would trace Nigeria's journey from the 1914 amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates under Lord Frederick Lugard to the present.

Segun-Lean said the decision to open the exhibition on October 1 was deliberate, as it coincides with the country's independence anniversary and provides an opportunity to reflect on the historical circumstances that brought the two protectorates with different histories.

Group Urges Youths To Shun Misinformation, Disinformation

By Silver Nwokoro

NAIJA Collective has urged youths to shun misinformation and disinformation, stressing the need for young people to develop the skills required to identify and counter false information, propaganda and misleading content.

The organisation made the call at a media literacy training for young people held at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), which focused on Digital, Media and Information Literacy.

The training brought together young people, including students from diverse disciplines, media enthusiasts and journalists. The workshop exposed participants to how unverified information spreads rapidly through the media and the ways it can mislead unsuspecting consumers.

The facilitator of the training and media communications trainer, AbdulkerimuOare, said the programme was particularly important for young people because of their active participation in the digital media space.

Oare said information now moved faster than ever, with people consuming large volumes of information and content daily. He, however, noted that information shared by individuals could be driven by different motives and intentions, making it necessary for users to examine the content they consume.

Sports

Nigerian Football: Many Problems, One Solution



AT the end of the visit by a FIFA/CAF delegation on the recent challenges in Nigerian football, and the conversations that were held with various selected stakeholders, it appears to me as if there is a general convergence in thought and direction on the way forward.

To start with, there is unanimity in the call for a sweeping change, for a reset, and for reforms in the organizational structure of the country's football house. There appears also to be agreement that the process of resolving the present challenge shall not be easy, and will require Nigerian football state holders to face hard and harsh realities, and be willing to accept and implement FIFA's verdict.

At the end of FIFA intervention, fresh elections will be held under FIFA/CAF monitoring, and the newly elected Executives Board will carry on with dealing with the other less contentious issues, and consolidate the reforms.

The National Sports Commission appears to be working in tandem with FIFA/ CAF on resolving this matter, this time, permanently!

There is something different in what I see emerging this time around. In the past solutions proffered were always long and more difficult to implement than the problems themselves, They never offered an easy passage for practical implementation.

This time around, with the fall out from the visit by the FIFA delegation, it appears to me that there is a convergence of agreement on the one critical issue that, when fixed, would create a pathway for resolving other smaller issues (into the future) without disrupting the equilibrium of the whole system again.

This FIFA delegation seemed to have identified and nailed the root cause during their conversations this week.

There was a general agreement that the most fundamental challenge to be addressed is that of determining the proper Congress of the NFA. That is, which bodies constitute the full membership of the NFA organisation. Who are those constituent-bodies that are registered as private organisations and registered with the NFA? Which are the bodies affiliated to the NFA? Which are those that are not members but whose role in Nigerian football adds value to enhancing the game in the country? Which amongst the bodies should be a voting member of the 'Electoral College' that elects the leadership?

Understanding the State Football Associations, their role and status, is critical in this whole matter. Is their representation in the present Congress justified?

The underlying unwritten consensus after FIFA's visit is that the matter of the representation of State FAs in the NFA congress is the key to resolving the major problem in the organisation and development of football in the country.

I can see it even clearer now!

Once that matter is sorted out, the structure of Nigeria's football organising body would become more reflective of proper membership with identified constituencies, affiliated and honourary bodies, and so on. Everyone will be clearly identified and offered their rightful seat at the table of Nigerian football.

I believe that FIFA will come back with a solution that will lead to better understanding of the issues and problems with the present system, and also lead to a transparent and honest solution that can be implemented quickly.

Nigerian football administration is about to be truly reformed. I feel it in my bones.

The best administrators and stakeholders shall emerge through a simple and clear process that will eliminate all the convoluted, complicated, expensive, political, manipulative, and corruption-laden processes that had been the bane of our football development, and had slowed down Nigeria's rise to the top of world football.

Truly, a new dawn for Nigerian football beckons in the horizon.

FIFA's Council To Decide On NFF Normalisation Committee

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE Governing Council of World Football ruling body (FIFA), will be the one to decide on the planned Normalisation Committee to reform Nigeria football, a source close to the body has said.

Top officials of both the Confederations of African Football (CAF) and FIFA returned to their respective bases on Thursday after spending four days with various stakholders in Nigeria.

A source told The Guardian, on Friday, that the visit by CAF and FIFA was basically 'a fact finding mission' adding that they will submit their reports to FIFA governing council soon for final delibration on the steps to take in reforming the nation's football.

"Basically, what those officials of CAF and FIFA came for was a fact finding mission in Nigeria. They are not the one to decide which steps to follow in process that will lead to the reform of football in Nigeria. Now that they have gotten what they came for, they will submit their report to the governing council of FIFA soon to decide on which way to go.

"One thing is certain. FIFA will not align with those clamouring for Interim body to reposition Nigeria football. Yes, Interim Committee worked for Nigeria in 2006, but we have a different sceniaro at hand because then in 2006, Fanny Amun, who was Secretary General of the NFF was a staff of the Sports Ministry, and when the Ibrahim Galadima-led NFF board was removed from office, the structure of Nigeria football was intact.

Business

TETFund-Sponsored ICT Experience Centres: Exposing Students, Lecturers To Contemporary Technologies

THE commissioning of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)-sponsored Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Experience Centre under the auspices of the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI), at the Kwara State University (KWASU), Malete, was a promise kept.

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono on assumption of office three years ago, expressed need to strengthen capacity of public institutions to produce graduates that compete with their counterparts across the globe.

Since then, the Fund under his leadership has invested heavily in both human development and facility upgrade.

The inaugurated ICT Centre in KWASU early in the week was one of six tertiary institutions selected for the pilot phase of the strategic intervention under the Year 2024 activities of the Fund, each institution representing the country's six geo-political zones.

Already, the centre at Ekiti State University was commissioned on May 30, that of the University of Cross River State on September 4, Anambra State Polytechnic on September 10 while those of Kaduna State University and Taraba State University are expected to be commissioned soon.

Unrelated in his resolve towards innovation, Echono and his team are working towards the next phase of the intervention, which is expected to cover 15 institutions in Adamawa, Bayelsa, Borno, Delta, Edo, Enugu, Imo, Katsina and Nasarawa States. Others are, Niger, Ondo, Osun, Rivers, Yobe and Zamfara States, where construction is currently ongoing.

Equipped with ICT laboratories, interactive digital displays, conference facilities and exhibition spaces, the centres provide enabling environments for learning, creativity, research and needed technological advancement.

The First Lady and National Chairman, Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI), Senator Oluremi Tinubu, who commissioned the centre in KWASU, said it does not only represent opportunity, innovation, knowledge and hope for future generations of Kwara State people but also, a testament to government's commitment to advancing education and digital inclusion in Nigeria.

"This initiative aligns with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration, which places great emphasis on youth empowerment, education, innovation and economic transformation. Mr President remains committed to creating opportunities that will equip Nigerian youth with the knowledge and skills required to thrive in a modern and competitive world.

"To our dear students, this centre has been established to help you learn, innovate, develop solutions and unlock your full potential. I encourage you to take ownership of it, maximize the opportunities it provides and use technology positively to transform your lives, communities and our nation.

The First Lady further commended Echono and the entire Board and Management of TETFund for their continued investment in infrastructure and human capital development across the country's tertiary institutions.

Arc. Echono in his remarks, said the intervention was born out of growing importance of technology to education and national development.

The N1 billion per zone centre is designed to equip students and lecturers with critical digital skills in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cybersecurity, Robotics and Software Development.

"As technology continues to transform economies and societies, the Board of Trustees recognised the need to align Nigeria's education system with emerging global technological and industry standards. The Fund therefore seeks to expose students and lecturers to contemporary technologies and their applications in security, agriculture, healthcare, media, mining and other sectors.

"Through practical training and digital skills acquisition, TETFund seeks to enhance graduate employability, foster innovation and position Nigeria to participate more effectively in the global technology-driven economy."

Echono also acknowledged the significant role of the First Lady, whose passion for the empowerment and advancement of young people he said, has provided invaluable support and encouragement to the initiative.

"Her commitment reinforces the national aspiration to equip the youth with relevant skills and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to development and participate effectively in the emerging technology-driven global economy.

"We are confident that these centres will provide enduring platforms for translating this vision into tangible opportunities for our young people", Echono said.

The E.S explained that the centre is equipped with modern digital devices, computer systems and relevant software to facilitate training, practical learning and skills development.

"The facility is appropriately furnished and fully air-conditioned, with supporting power and municipal infrastructure. Beyond providing digital equipment, it offers a conducive environment for acquiring practical competencies, exploring ideas and developing innovative solutions. We are confident that it will become a vibrant hub for digital learning, creativity and innovation within the University and the North-Central geopolitical zone."

Echono also expressed confidence that the university will take full ownership of the centre and ensure that facilities and equipment are properly maintained, secured and regularly updated in line with technological advancements.

"Its sustainability and optimal utilisation are critical to its long-term impact. We therefore trust that the Centre will provide maximum value to students and lecturers and serve as a catalyst for creativity, innovation and technological advancement.

"Our resolve as a Fund remains focused on ensuring that our interventions are sustained, responsive and continuously improved to meet emerging needs in tertiary education. We shall continue to engage beneficiary institutions and stakeholders in supporting relevant and impactful initiatives that provide skills and opportunities for our young people."

For the elated Vice Chancellor of KWASU, Professor Shaykh-Luqman Alade Jimoh, the intervention represents vision, belief and an investment in the youth.


Echono

TheGuardianSports

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Davis Cup: Nigeria Seek To Break 30-year-old Jinx In Rabat

By Gowon Akpodonor

AFTER four failed attempts, Nigeria's Davis Cup team, will this Saturday, seek to break a 30-year-old jinx against host Morocco in the 2026 Davis Cup World Group II tie.

The encounter in Rabat is historic, having lost all four previous Davis Cup encounters against Morocco. Nigeria secured promotion to the World Cup Group 11 for the first time in 30 years after the win over Uzbekistan in February this year in Lagos.

Team Nigeria, left for Rabat on Monday ahead of the highly anticipated Davis Cup World Group II tie against the host nation. The two-day clash scheduled for September 19-20 will hold at the Union Sportive des Cheminots de Tennis du Maroc.

Prior to the draw, on Friday, a meet-and-greet was held where players, coaches and officials of both countries interacted in a cordial atmosphere. The session, which was witnessed by International Tennis Federation (ITF) representatives, set the tone for the formal ceremony.

Nigeria's No.1, Canice Abua, will open proceedings against Morocco's Karim Bennani in the first singles rubber this Saturday morning. In the second singles of Day One, Nigeria's Daniel Adeleye will take on Morocco's Yassine Dlimi.

Action resumes on Sunday with the crucial doubles rubber. Morocco will present the pair of Younes Lalami and Yassine Dlimi against Nigeria's Michael Emmanuel and Yusuf Abubakar.

The reverse singles will follow. Karim Bennani will face Daniel Adeleye, while the potentially decisive fifth rubber will pit Yassine Dlimi against Canice Abua.

All five rubbers will be best-of-three tiebreak sets on clay.

The tie holds huge significance for Nigeria, who are seeking to break a 50-year winless run against Morocco. Nigeria has lost all four previous Davis Cup meetings between the two nations since 1973.

The Nigerian contingent, which arrived in Rabat on Monday after an intensive training camp in Lagos, is led by Head Coach Benson Ishicheli and was ably represented at the draw ceremony by NTF Vice President Datti Yusuf.

Nigeria secured promotion to World Group II for the first time in three decades after a 3-1 victory over Uzbekistan at the Lagos Lawn Tennis Club, Onikan in February, while Morocco dropped from World Group I after losing to Colombia.

The winner of the tie will advance to the 2027 World Group I Play-offs, while the loser remains in World Group II.

The team, led by the Secretary General of the Nigeria Tennis Federation, Shammah Aliyu Makpa, believes the early arrival is a deliberate strategy to allow the players to acclimatise to the weather, adjust to the court surface and get into the right frame of mind for the showdown.



Nigeria's Davis Cup team against Morocco

Speaking on the team's readiness, Aliyu expressed confidence in the players' mental and physical state ahead of the tie, while also appreciating the support from the National Sports Commission (NSC) and other partners.

"I want to first of all, on behalf of the Tennis Federation, appreciate the leadership of the National Sports Commission, Chairman, Malam Shehu Dikko and Director General, Bukola Olopade, for making this possible. They have been supporting us since day one. Their financial and moral support has been one of our motivating factors. I must admit that they are the main source of the improvement we are experiencing in our federation today.

"I want to also appreciate the Country Club of Lagos for allowing us use their facilities for over three weeks camping in Lagos," he said.

Speaking further, Aliyu said: "We know it won't be an easy task but we are also equal to the challenge. This is another opportunity for us to break the jinx because we have never defeated Morocco in the Davis Cup before.

"If we can qualify for this stage after over 30 years of waiting, then I will say it is still possible to defeat Morocco and qualify for the Davis Cup World Group I," he stated.

The tie carries huge significance for Nigerian tennis. Having lost all four previous Davis Cup encounters against Morocco, the current squad sees this as a golden chance to rewrite history as they eye a historic first win over the Moroccans and a ticket to the Davis Cup World Group I. Nigeria booked this World Group II playoff spot after a hard-fought victory over Uzbekistan back in February, ending over three decades of waiting to reach this stage.

Expect Tougher Challenge, Colombia Warn Falconets

By Gowon Akpodonor

AFRICA'S only surviving team in the 2026 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup, Nigeria's Falconets, has been told to prepare for a tougher challenge in this Sunday's quarterfinal clash in Poland.

Nigeria booked a place in the last eight with in an emphatic fashion, defeating England 3-0 on Thursday, while Colombia beat host Poland 1-0 through an own goal scored by the Polish in their encounter.

This Sunday's quarter-final clash will take place in Lodz, with a place in semi-finals at stake.


The Falconets celebrate after beating England 3-0. They will face Colombia on Sunday

Colombia team captain, Juana Ortegon, has declared that they will approach the quarterfinal match against Nigeria with the same fighting spirit that has carried them into the last eight.

Ortegon said the Colombians never stop fighting, regardless of how difficult a match becomes.

"This team is all about fighting until the end. We always fight and do our best. We never stop trying to go forward, and in the end we scored,' Ortegon said.

The captain stressed that Colombia would take the tournament one match at a time, beginning with their meeting with Nigeria.

"We will play match by match. We are very happy to be in the quarter-finals, so we will think about Nigeria first, but this team will always compete to win,' she added.

Despite Colombia's ambition to go all the way, Ortegon insisted the players remain focused on the immediate challenge.

"Our dream is to win the world title, but we are going match by match,' she said.

Mourinho Vs Simeone: Two Football Philosophers Collide In Madrid Derby

THE Madrid Derby returns this Sunday, bringing a fresh chapter to the iconic rivalry between José Mourinho and Diego Simeone.

The Madrid Derby has never been short of tactical intrigue, but this Sunday's meeting at the Riyadh Air Metropolitano offers something slightly different. José Mourinho and Diego Simeone, two managers who have built their careers around control, organisation, and game management, are both attempting to take familiar ideas in new directions.

Mourinho is still shaping his latest Real Madrid project, while Simeone is adapting Atlético Madrid to a squad that has undergone significant change. Their teams may share some footballing principles, but the way each manager applies them tells a very different story.

That contrast will be on display when Atlético and Real Madrid meet at 4:15 pm on Sunday, with SuperSport bringing the Madrid Derby live to viewers.

For Mourinho, the challenge is to give Real Madrid more than one way to control a match. He has spoken about pressing high, recovering the ball in advanced areas, and attacking quickly after winning possession, while also insisting that his side must know how to defend deeper when required.

The early weeks have shown both the possibilities and the problems in that approach. Real Madrid's 3-2 victory at Elche on Tuesday was a good example. Mourinho's side led 2-0 but allowed Elche to draw level before Carlos Espí scored in stoppage time to restore Madrid's lead and secure the win.

Simeone's challenge is different. He has spent nearly 15 years establishing Atlético's identity around compact defending, intensity, organisation and quick transitions. Now, that identity has to accommodate a significantly changed squad.


Jose Mourinho and Diego Simeone have plenty in common

Simeone described Atlético as a "work in progress" ahead of Wednesday's meeting with Osasuna. Seven players left during the summer, five arrived and several academy players have been brought into the first-team group. His task is to adapt the team without losing the principles that have defined his Atlético side.

That is what makes the Mourinho-Simeone comparison more interesting than the usual debate about defensive football. Both managers value structure, transitions and control, but they use those principles differently. Mourinho is trying to make Real Madrid more flexible between high pressing and deeper defending, while Simeone is adapting an established Atlético framework to a changing squad.

Their history adds context. Mourinho took charge of Real Madrid in 2010, while Simeone became Atlético manager in December 2011. Their teams met repeatedly during a period when Atlético began to challenge the established order in Spanish football, including a Copa del Rey final victory over Mourinho's Madrid in 2013 and Simeone's La Liga title in 2013/14.

More than a decade later, the circumstances have changed. Mourinho is beginning another chapter at Real Madrid, while Simeone is attempting to refresh an Atlético team without stripping away its identity. Sunday's derby will offer another test of how quickly both managers can turn their ideas into results.

Sardauna Stadium Project Thrills Football Stakeholders In Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto

THE Sardauna Memorial Community Stadium, in Gusau, Zamfara State, is now the 'new Mecca' for football stakeholders in north-west Nigeria.

On Thursday, representatives of football stakeholders from Zamfara, Kebbi and Sokoto States paid an unscheduled visit to the stadium to see, first hand, the much talked about project and to appreciate what Monimichelle Sports Facilities Construction Ltd is delivering in Gusau.

"From the Monimichelle PU Hybrid Synthetic playing surface to the stadium infrastructure and supporting facilities, our objective has always been clear, build to the standard required for serious football, not simply to create something that looks good in pictures," the Chief Executive Officer of Monimichelle, Ebi Egbe, told *The Guardian*.

"For us, quality is in the details, the playing surface, flatness, ball behaviour, drainage, irrigation, player and officials' facilities, seating and the overall functionality of the stadium.

"It was gratifying to see football stakeholders from three states take time to inspect the facility and acknowledge the work being done. This is what sports infrastructure should be about: building facilities that can serve football, develop talent and create a lasting legacy for the people. Sardauna Memorial Community Stadium, Gusau is another Monimichelle project, another statement of what is possible when quality comes first," Egbe stated.

Saturday Premier League Fixtures

Saturday's Premier League Fixtures
Tottenham Vs Aston Villa 12:30
Brighton Vs Arsenal 15:00
Everton Vs Ipswich 15:00
Newcastle Vs Hull City 15:00
Nott' Forest Vs Coventry City 17:30
Osasuna Vs Rayo Vallecano 13:00

Saturday Spanish La Liga

Athletic Club Vs Alavés 15:15
Celta Vigo Vs Racing Santander 17:30
Sevilla Vs Barcelona 20:00

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INSIDE STUFF WITH MARTINS OLOJA



(08052097817 SMS only) martins.oloja@guardian.ng Continue on X: @MartinsOloja

Chimamanda, Don't Go, Let Go, Let God…

THIS is 'so long a letter' to **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**, a significant brand ambassador of Nigeria to the world. It is an appeal for her to believe an ancient word that is ever so true: that the land of her birth will soon fulfill destiny. And so the wickedness of the wicked concerning the country she now hates to return to, will soon come to an end.

'The Interview That Broke Our Hearts'

LAST week, *The New York Times* published your interview. And one line landed like a stone in the middle of Nigeria. You said you would not like to return to Nigeria: That the loss of your son to curious absence of reliable healthcare is the reason. We read it in Lagos, in Abuja, in Enugu, in Cape Town, in London, in Atlanta. We read it in silence. No one can argue with grief. No one can argue with a mother's pain. The death of a child because hospitals failed is the cruelest indictment of a state. It is a wound that no GDP figure, no press release, no mega rally can bandage.

We are sorry, **Chimamanda**. Nigeria failed you. The political and business elite who built hospitals abroad and let ours rot failed you. The system that uses, sorry weaponises poverty as policy instrument failed you.

But this special appeal is not to debate your pain. It is to plead with your purpose. Reason: You are not just **Chimamanda** the person. You are Chimamanda the voice. The voice that began with 2003 "Purple Hibiscus", which follows Kambili Achike, a 15-year-old Nigerian teenage girl who struggles in the shadow of her father, Eugene. The voice that told the world about **"Half of a Yellow Sun."** The voice that warned the West of **"The Danger of a Single Story."**

The voice that wove her identity around Nigeria and the black race! The voice that taught the world to see us differently. If that voice goes silent on Nigeria, who will speak for us?

So we plead: **Let go. And let God.** But don't let go of Nigeria. And here is the thing, "You cannot write a love letter to a country for 20 years and then burn it because the house caught fire. You stay and help put out the fire."

You Wove Your Identity Around Us. We Wove Our Hope Around You.

LET us remember who you are to us. **"Half of a Yellow Sun"**(2006). You took us back to Biafra. Not with politics, but with ***Olanna, Odenigbo, Ugwu***. You made the world feel the hunger, the air raids, the love in war. You made Igbo history global literature. You did not run from the hard story. You told it. **"Americanah"** (2013). You took ***Ifemelu*** to America and back. You wrote about hair, about race, about "Dear Non-American Black." You told the world that the black experience is not a single story. You used your Nigerian lens to correct the world. **"The Danger of a Single Story"** (2009). That TED Talk. 30 million views. You told the world: **Don't reduce Africa to war and poverty.** Don't reduce Nigeria to 419 and corruption. For 20 years, you have carried Nigeria on your back in every interview, every essay, every novel. You made "Naija" literary. You made our English, our food, our



Chimamanda

arguments, our grief, world-class.

Chimamanda, if you leave now, the political elite who ran down our hospitals will clap. They will say: "See, even she has given up." And the single story you fought against will win. You cannot let that happen.

'We understand the bitterness. You are not alone in it'.

YOUR pain is valid. The strange absence of reliable healthcare in Nigeria is a national shame. Children die. Mothers die. Fathers fly abroad for malaria.

The elite have houses in London, Dubai, Houston, Cape Town. They have insurance in Switzerland. There is no law stopping them. But there should be a law of conscience. **We are bitter too, Chimamanda.**

Citizen **Martins Oloja** writes every week in ***The Guardian***: "Your PVC is your power of mass destruction", he once wrote. "#2027: How Your Voter Card Can Reshape Nigeria…", he wrote just last week. He is bitter about corruption. Doctors are bitter. They are leaving in thousands. Teachers are bitter. Schools have no roofs. Mothers in IDP camps are bitter. We are all in this bitterness together. Weep not, our dear Chimamanda!

But bitterness without action becomes exile. And exile, however justified, hands victory to those who caused the pain. What is more painful, He/she who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day. You have run. You have survived. You have told the story. Now come back and fight. Not with guns. With your voice.

'If you stay away, they win'.

LET us be blunt about what happens if you don't return.

1. **The elite celebrate:** The governors who didn't build hospitals. The ministers who flew abroad for checkups. The contractors who stole health budgets. They will say: "Even Chimamanda agrees Nigeria is finished." Your absence becomes their alibi.
2. **The single story returns:** For 20 years you fought it. "Africa is not just war." "Nigeria is not just fraud." If you stay away, the world goes back to writing us as a country that even its best minds abandoned.
3. **The next generation loses a model:** A girl in Nsukka reading **"Americanah"** needs to know that the woman who wrote it believes Nsukka is worth fighting for. A boy in Kano needs to know that excellence does not require exile.

Our dear **Chimamanda**, Nigeria is the most populous black nation on earth. Now more than 230 million people. If you, with all your influence and bold voice, give up, what message do we send to the 100 million under 30? We cannot afford for you to be discouraged.

'God did not make a mistake'. "For such a time as this".

YOU are a storyteller. So you know about calling. **Esther** in the Bible was told: "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

You, **Chimamanda**, were born Nigerian "for such a time as this." This is the time of danger. Yes. Hospitals are failing. Schools are failing. Food inflation is choking us. Energy tariffs are driving away business. Crazy port charges are still driving away even foreign direct investors. But this is also the time of possibilities. How do I know? Nigerians are angry in a new way. They are not just protesting. They are organising. They are using PVCs as weapons. They just did it in Osun State. They are refusing mega rallies. They are reading, writing, recording, demanding.

This is the time a writer is needed most.

NOT in New York explaining us. But here, with us, shaping us. **Let go of the pain. Let God.** But don't let go of the critical assignment.

'What "stay and fight" looks like - It doesn't mean you must live in Lagos Traffic'.

We are not asking you to move back tomorrow and queue at LUTH. "Stay and fight" can look like this:

1. **Remain our conscience abroad:** Use "The New York Times", "The New Yorker", "TIME", "Los Angeles Times" your platform. Not just to say why you left, but to say what must change for you to return. Name the hospitals. Name the budgets. Shame the elite.
2. **'Build with us:** Start a Foundation. Partner with three (3) teaching hospitals. Fund 100 doctors' training. Digitise medical records. You have the network. You have the credibility.
3. **Join the coalition:** Join Wole Soyinka. Join Femi Falana. Join Aisha Yesufu. Join Oby Ezekwesili. Join Omoyele Sowore. Join the doctors, the nurses, the journalists writing daily against poor leadership. One voice is loud. A chorus is unstoppable.
4. **Write the next novel here:** Write about the Nigeria that is fighting back. About the nurse in Enugu who saves three (3) babies with a candle light. About the community health centre that works in Kano. Give us a new story to fight for. You don't have to be president. You have to be present.

The irony - You wrote about leaving and coming back: Chimamanda, re-read "Americanah". Ifemelu left. She was hurt. America broke her. But she came back. Not because Nigeria was perfect. But because it was hers. Because "home" is not where you are comfortable. It is where you are responsible. You wrote that book. Now live that chapter.

Nigeria is not asking for perfection. We are asking for presence.

WE are asking the woman who told the world about the danger of a single story not to reduce Nigeria to a single tragedy. **What we promise you if you come back to the fight:** We cannot promise you a working hospital tomorrow. That would be a lie. But we promise you this:

1. **We will fight with you:** There are millions of Nigerians who are tired of transactional leadership. Who want good schools, functional hospitals, stable and affordable electricity. Stand with us and we will stand with you.
2. **We will protect your voice:** The government may not like what you say. But 200 million people will hear it. And they will act on it.
3. **We will build the Nigeria in your books:** The Nigeria of Olanna's courage. Of Ifemelu's honesty. Of Ugwu's resilience. It is not dead. It is waiting.

In rounding off, accept my plea: **Please, don't let them win, Chimamanda.** We know the grief. We know the anger. No mother should bury a child because a hospital had no oxygen. But if you let that grief turn into permanent distance, then the men who stole the health budget have killed twice. Once in the hospital. And again in your heart. Don't give them that second victory.

Finally, **let go. Let God heal you.** But don't let go of Nigeria. The most populous black nation on earth needs its best storyteller in the room while we rewrite the ending. As an oracle of the Most High, I decree and declare that, "Nigeria will fulfill destiny after this present danger we all face."

We don't need to run away. God didn't make a mistake by creating us to be here. Come. Fight. Write. Build. Reason: A country that loses Chimamanda has lost more than a citizen. It has lost its mirror. And we cannot afford to live with. out seeing ourselves clearly anymore.

With love, with grief, with "hope of a better day, which our Kenya's iconic Ngugi wa Thiong'o says, is the only comfort we can give to a weeping child.

Sincerely, Your Small Brother,

Citizen **Martins Oloja**, Ajagba, Irele LGA, Ondo State, Nigeria.

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